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1

Spanish Opposition before 1945

Republican opposition

The Spanish Second Republic succeeded the discredited monarchy of Alfonso XIII in 1931. There followed five troubled years, during which reforming and counter-reforming republican governments alternated, until a centre-left coalition – the *Frente Popular* – won a narrow electoral majority in February 1936. To an alarmed Spanish Right this victory seemed but the prelude to social revolution. Their response was the military rebellion of July 1936, which by October had come under the overall command of General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde, thenceforth Head of State of Nationalist Spain. It was, thus, in its defence of the Second Republic that republican opposition to Franco was born.¹ Nor was it extinguished by the military defeat of March 1939. For, far from seeking reconciliation with his former enemies, Franco in victory was determined to eliminate all vestiges of the Republic from his *New Spain*. Militant republicans therefore suffered persecution or fled into exile. And yet, from this collective disaster a new republican unity was not forged. In the five years following the defeat of 1939 the divisions of the *Frente Popular* lost none of their virulence, and the republicans failed to establish a credible focus for an anti-Franco opposition which could serve as a point of reference for Spaniards and foreign governments alike.

In explaining republican disunity, there is first the fact of defeat and its aftermath to be taken into account. The former *Frente Popular* bloc in Spain was left in disarray as most of its leadership fled the country, and its widespread dispersion compounded the difficulties of concerted action and consultation in exile.² After 1939, moreover, the unity and effectiveness of party organisations were seriously compromised by the

replication of executive committees in and outside Spain. For those ordinary members of the Second Republic's organisations who did remain in Spain there was, too, the sheer struggle for survival in the face of daily repression on an unprecedented scale. On the other hand, many of those who sought refuge in France, or French territory, fared little better, surviving initial internment and forced labour only to suffer persecution under Vichy or the German Occupation.³

To these formidable geographic and physical obstacles were added political and ideological divisions inherited from the Civil War and before. Antagonism between the communists and the other *Frente Popular* parties was an immediate stumbling block.⁴ An uncompromising anti-communist stance was adopted by the moderates of the *republican* parties, by the anarcho-sindicalist MLE and by a significant section of the PSOE. Yet, differences with the PCE did not automatically ensure cooperation between the non-communists. The desirability of collaboration with other political organisations was constantly debated within the libertarian movement, while the adamant refusal of many *republicans* to admit any alternative to the 1931 Constitution came up against the pragmatism of a section of the PSOE and, again, of the libertarians. Initially, though, tensions focused on the Second Republic's last prime minister, Juan Negrín López.⁵

The disruptive potential of the rivalry between *negrinistas* and anti-*negrinistas* was demonstrated even before the final collapse of the Second Republic. On 1 February 1939 the rump *Cortes* (Spain's legislative assembly) of the Second Republic met for the last time on Spanish soil in the castle of Figueras, a few miles from the French border. Five days later the surviving republican deputies dispersed in flight to France. With them went the President of the Republic, Manuel Azaña y Díaz, and the President of the *Cortes*, Diego Martínez Barrio, together with Negrín, who accompanied Azaña as far as the first French village before returning temporarily to Spain.⁶ On 27 February, the day Britain and France recognised the Franco government, Azaña resigned as President of the Republic. Under the 1931 Constitution the President of the *Cortes* should then have assumed the temporary office of President of the Republic, but, at the first session in exile of the *Diputación Permanente de Cortes* (Standing Committee of the *Cortes*) in Paris on 3 March, Martínez Barrio refused to do this unless Negrín agreed to an immediate end to the Civil War. When this assurance was not given, the office of President of the Republic was left vacant.⁷

Leaving aside the constitutional challenge to Negrín's government arising out of Colonel Segismundo Casado López's anti-communist

military *coup* in Madrid of 4 March, Negrín's opponents were quick to exploit the anomaly of a sitting government answerable to neither *Cortes* nor President of the Republic.⁸ In the circumstances, they argued, the *Diputación Permanente* enjoyed constitutional precedence over the Council of Ministers, and this automatically entailed the resignation of Negrín's government. Not surprisingly, Negrín disagreed. At the end of March an uneasy compromise was reached, with Negrín's government recognised as the legitimate representative of republican legality in exile, though answerable to the *Diputación Permanente*. But, on 26 July 1939, the *Diputación Permanente* finally declared itself to be the 'sole indisputable institution remaining of our constitutional structure', and thus denied the Negrín government its constitutionality.⁹ With good will, an amicable solution to the constitutional crisis might have been found. As it was, the situation had been exploited for political advantage and signified, as the far from pro-*negrinista* Spanish historian, Salvador de Madariaga, later pointed out, the 'end of the Spanish Revolutionary Government as a juridical and political entity'.¹⁰

Prominent amongst Negrín's opponents was his fellow socialist, Indalecio Prieto y Tuero.¹¹ Prieto had been appointed Minister of Defence in Negrín's government in May 1937 but the two men soon fell out over the prosecution of the Civil War. The consequent strained relations between them led Negrín to relieve Prieto of his post in April 1938. Although not at first an acrimonious separation, by the spring of 1939 the gap that opened up between them had become unbridgeable. In exile Negrín's determination to remain true to the institutions of the Second Republic was matched only by Prieto's determined search for alternatives. Early support for Prieto came from the moderate wings of the *republican* and Catalan nationalist parties, while Negrín's backers included left-wing *republicans* and Catalan nationalists, and – intermitently – the PCE. The libertarians and Basque nationalists tended to remain aloof.¹² It was, though, the relative strengths of the rival camps within the PSOE that mattered most, for, given the pivotal position of the PSOE within the former *Frente Popular* bloc, through its capacity for alliances to its left or right, the repercussions of this *prietista-negrinista* rivalry seriously affected the course of republican unity.

In exile in Mexico Prieto was able to strengthen his position by gaining control of a sizeable portion of the Second Republic's remaining assets, estimated at between \$40 and \$50 million, which had arrived

at Vera Cruz in March 1939 in the hold of a yacht chartered by the Negrín government.¹³ Bolstered by these funds, Prieto extended his influence over the local PSOE, until, by January 1940, a distinct *prietista* group had emerged. The *prietistas* were thus well placed to exploit the unexpected transfer of exiled republican political life to Mexico after the Fall of France in 1940. Indeed, in October they formed their own PSOE executive committee, which was then challenged by the *negrinistas* of the original executive committee in France. As a result two PSOE executive committees coexisted uneasily in Mexico during most of World War II.¹⁴

Apart from a short trip to New York, Negrín remained in France until forced to flee to Britain on 24 June 1940. There he founded the *Hogar Español* in October 1941 as a forum for all republican groups and later the *Instituto Español* and the *Fundación Luis Vives*. These politico-cultural initiatives notwithstanding, Negrín's scope for political activity was severely circumscribed by a British government wary of the propaganda value to Franco of his presence in London. Besides his physical distance from the main centre of exiled republican activity in Mexico, Negrín's political isolation also owed much to his insistence on the exclusive claim of his government to republican legality in exile. Given his determination not to weaken this constitutional position, Negrín was understandably reluctant to associate himself with any attempts to rebuild republican unity on an alternative basis.¹⁵

None the less, tentative steps were taken to re-establish republican unity in exile. In October 1940 a *republican* initiative led to the creation of *Acción Republicana Española* (ARE). Although it managed to achieve a degree of *republican*-socialist collaboration, its political base proved too narrow for it to serve as the nucleus of a broader republican front.¹⁶ More successful, to begin with at least, was a bid by the exiled PCE to create a 'united front' of the Spanish Left. Having recognised Negrín's government as the sole legitimate executive power of the exiled Republic in August 1941, the PCE received the backing of *negrinista* socialists and *republicans* and formed the Mexican based *Unión Democrática Española* (UDE) in March 1942.¹⁷ By September, however, fears of a Franco alliance with the Axis Powers had persuaded the PCE of the need for a broader Spanish government of national unity, which support for Negrín and the Second Republic was now seen as preventing. *Republicans* and *negrinistas* therefore withdrew from the UDE and it collapsed

in January 1943. Having forfeited *negrinista* support, and with no hope of enticing the anti-communist *prietistas* to join them, the PCE was subsequently unable to gain any significant non-communist adherence to the UDE's successor in France – the *Unión Nacional Española* (UNE) – which the PCE had set up in November 1942 as an alternative basis for its projected government of national unity.¹⁸

Even so, the formation of the UNE alarmed the moderate democrats of the exiled republican opposition. As expectations of Axis defeat grew, after the allied landings in French North Africa in November 1942, they feared that any commitment by the Allies to the eventual overthrow of Franco could be compromised if the republican opposition were seen to be too closely identified with the communists. Consequently, in the autumn of 1943 a small group of exiled Catalan nationalists in Mexico initiated a round of inter-party negotiations. The collaboration of the *prietista* socialists proved decisive and on 25 November 1943, together with the Catalan parties, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* and *Acció Catalana Republicana*, and the *republicans* of *Izquierda Republicana* and *Unión Republicana*, they signed a pact establishing the *Junta Española de Liberación* (JEL).¹⁹ The JEL's founding manifesto of 23 December was clearly intended to advertise the democratic credentials of the republican opposition to the western democracies. It stressed adherence to the Atlantic Charter and to the cause of the United Nations and, by offering a 'moderate' democratic alternative to Negrín's discredited government, it sought to remove the communist stigma attached to the Second Republic as well as to pre-empt any move towards a monarchist restoration in Spain by the Allies.²⁰

Even so, the JEL's apparent unity masked a serious *republican*-socialist division. Martínez Barrio, President of the JEL, and the *republicans* remained firmly committed to the 1931 Constitution. Against them, Prieto, the JEL's Secretary, held that this would achieve little except alienate the democracies and perpetuate the hatreds of the Civil War. As an alternative he proposed, in a speech in Havana, Cuba, on 11 July 1942, that a plebiscite should be held in Spain, supervised by the countries of Spanish America, to decide the future of the Spanish state.²¹ By maintaining 'the most absolute fidelity' to the principles of the 1931 Constitution, until Spain, 'in the full exercise of her sovereign powers', decided to reform them, the JEL Christmas Manifesto attempted a compromise. But Prieto continued to press for his plebiscitary option, until it was finally accepted in September 1944 by all the JEL parties except *Izquierda Republicana*. Towards the end of the year, however, Martínez Barrio and the *republicans* were convinced that with German defeat now

inevitable circumstances at last favoured the restoration of the Second Republic. *Prietista* obstructiveness, when the exiled republican *Cortes* was reconvened in January 1945 (see Chapter 3), brought things to a head and Martínez Barrio resigned from the presidency of the JEL on 1 February 1945.²² With that the JEL lost whatever effectiveness it had had as a forum for republican unity and anti-Franco opposition.²³

In the meantime, Prieto's authority, together with the JEL's, had been weakened by the resumption of Spanish republican political activity in 1944, first in liberated French North Africa and then in metropolitan France itself. This was signalled by the decision of the first PSOE Congress in exile in Toulouse of 24–25 September to rename itself the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español en Francia y su Imperio* (PSOE-in-France). The purpose of this change was to enhance the authority of the PSOE in Spain over *all* exiled PSOE organisations, and thereby weaken the *prietista* pretensions to PSOE leadership. The affirmation of Congress support for the Second Republic's 1931 Constitution further isolated the *prietistas*.²⁴

Brief mention must be made of one other attempt towards the end of 1944 to unify the exiled anti-Franco opposition: by Miguel Maura, former leader of the *Partido Republicano Conservador* and Minister of the Interior in the Second Republic's first provisional government. Hoping to create an opposition front extending from republicans to monarchists, Maura had begun, very much on his own initiative, sounding out different political groups. What little interest his project might have received was forfeited, however, in December by his inept press statement claiming the support of almost the entire republican opposition. The subsequent flurry of *démentis* lost him all credibility and, although he persisted with his initiative well into 1945, it was not taken seriously by either the republican opposition or the British and French governments.²⁵

During the German occupation of France a significant minority of the Spanish republican opposition had fought alongside the French Resistance.²⁶ With the gradual liberation of French territory in 1944 a force of some 12 000–15 000 Spanish guerrilla fighters, 5 000 of whom were concentrated just north of the Pyrenees, thus became available for action against the Franco regime. So, in the third week of September, there began, largely under PCE direction, a number of small-scale incursions into Spanish territory until, on 18 October, an estimated 2 500–3 000 guerrilla fighters entered Spain in what became known as the

'invasion of the Val d'Arán'. Contrary to the guerrilla leaders' expectations, however, the local population did not rebel and vigorous counteraction by Franco's *Guardia Civil* halted the advance in two days. The 'invasion' thus amounted to little more than a quixotic skirmish, albeit at heavy human cost. In political terms, moreover, it proved an irrelevance and scarcely affected efforts elsewhere to establish a united anti-Franco opposition.²⁷

In fact, although guerrilla action against the Franco regime was sustained over wide areas of Spain until the early 1950s, it did not, whatever its military impact, contribute significantly to the consolidation of a broad anti-Franco opposition front. The mainly communist-dominated guerrilla groups failed to achieve the political integration previously obtained by the French and Italian Resistance movements and so, unable to mobilise local populations, who lived in constant fear of reprisals from Franco's forces, the guerrilla fighters were gradually reduced to banditry. In the final analysis, though, it was the reluctance of the non-communist republican opposition leadership to sanction violence as a means of removing Franco that marginalised the guerrilla struggle and correspondingly enhanced the political alternative.²⁸

For the republican political opposition in Spain itself the obstacles to establishing a united and effective political anti-Franco opposition were formidable and, not surprisingly, progress towards rebuilding party organisations was slow and hazardous. Once again, though, it was the PCE that attempted to lead the way with the formation of its *Junta Suprema de la Unión Nacional Española* (JSUNE) in Spain in September 1943. Most observers at the time, however, considered this to be little more than a phantom organisation, and it subsequently played no part in moves to establish republican unity.²⁹ Yet, the effect of the JSUNE's creation was to spur the CNT in Spain into seeking cooperation with the rest of the non-communist republican opposition. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1943, a libertarian, Juan José Luque Argente, was instructed to open talks with the PSOE. The *republicans* of the *Comité Nacional Republicano* were soon brought in and the tripartite negotiations culminated in June 1944 in the creation of the *Alianza Nacional de Fuerzas Democráticas* (ANFD). Luque was appointed the ANFD National Council's first General Secretary.³⁰

The ANFD's founding manifesto of June 1944 – not published until October – stressed, like the JEL before it, its democratic credentials. Once

a provisional government had re-established political freedoms in Spain, it would hold elections and submit the record of its time in office for approval by the *Cortes*. This body would then decide the future of the country, a secret clause in the ANFD agreement having declared the 1931 Constitution invalid. The manifesto ruled out a violent reversal of the regime by either *guerrilleros* or the Allies but, in a bid for the latter's support, it stressed the commitment of an eventual post-Franco government to the Atlantic Charter, good neighbourliness and the collective organisation of peace.³¹

Disappointingly, though, the support of the Allies was not forthcoming. This, and the failure to secure the adherence of the communists and of the Basque and Catalan nationalists, was an evident weakness, while the ANFD's pragmatic position on the 1931 Constitution promised conflict at some later date with the exiled *republicans* and *negrinistas*. Without wider support it was difficult to see how the ANFD could constitute an effective anti-Franco force and so, denied an opening to the left, it therefore looked to the right: to the monarchist opposition. Again the impetus came from the libertarians, a number of whom were disillusioned with republicanism, and contact was soon established with several members of the Spanish Right in Madrid, including two monarchist generals, Alfredo Kindelán y Duany and Antonio Aranda Mata, and with José María Gil-Robles y Quiñones in exile in Portugal. By mid-November 1944 ANFD libertarians and *republicans* had reached a fair measure of agreement with the monarchists on the need to exclude the communists from further negotiations, secure the cooperation of the socialists and encourage Anglo-American intervention; for the moment, though, the question of a monarchy or republic was left in abeyance. Unfortunately, as a result of the infiltration of the ANFD by a government agent, there were widespread arrests in December and the talks stalled.³²

Taking into account the professed anti-monarchism of the December 1943 JEL manifesto and the anti-republican sentiments of the Pretender to the Spanish throne, the ANFD initiative was a bold step forward in the search for anti-Franco unity. Whether the monarchist response to the ANFD's overtures pointed to the existence of a monarchist anti-Franco opposition of any consequence is looked at next.

Monarchist opposition

The monarchy had been restored to Spain under the Constitution of 1876 essentially to preserve the gains of Spanish 19th century liberal-

ism within an established conservative order. It was its subsequent inability to fulfil this function that led, almost half a century later, to its downfall. By 1923 social and regional discontent, exacerbated by the persistent failure of successive restoration governments to undertake any fundamental reform of Spain's archaic social and economic structures, had reached such a pitch that recourse to dictatorship seemed the only way of safeguarding Spain's social order. However, through his collusion in this violation of the 1876 Constitution, Alfonso XIII inevitably tied the fortunes of the Spanish monarchy to the personal success of General Miguel Primo de Rivera. When the latter's dictatorship collapsed in 1930, the ensuing crisis left the King isolated. Attacked from the left and undefended on the right, Alfonso unwisely chose to treat Spain's municipal elections of April 1931 as a plebiscite on the monarchy. When early voting returns confirmed the strength of anti-monarchist feeling in Spain's major towns and cities, he admitted defeat and fled the country.³³

At a loss for a viable authoritarian alternative to the Republic, after the failure of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, the traditional upholders of the monarchy could do little in 1931 but acquiesce in its temporary eclipse. As was to be expected, however, monarchist tolerance of the reforming governments of the Second Republic was short-lived. While only a minority – the 'insurrectionary Alfonsists' – actively conspired and propagandised against the Republic, such was the fear of social revolution engendered by the *Frente Popular* that monarchist support for the military rebellion of July 1936 was – regardless of dynastic allegiance – almost universal.³⁴

Monarchist participation in the reactionary coalition of July 1936 arose, then, out of a confident expectation that the military insurrection would lead to the restoration of the monarchy. There was confidence, too, in Franco, whose elevation in September 1936 to *generalísimo* was due in part to the belief of at least two generals on the rebel *Junta de Defensa Nacional*, Kindelán and Luis Orgaz Yoldi, that he was firmly committed to the monarchy. Franco, though, was careful never to specify the time and nature of any monarchist restoration for his *New Spain*. During the Civil War he stalled by pointing to the pressures of command and, after victory, to the demands of establishing the new regime. Nevertheless, he could ill afford to alienate the monarchists, who constituted an important element in the balance of political forces

supporting him, and so he temporised. His studied vagueness inevitably frustrated a number of monarchists who looked to a rapid restoration of the monarchy, and it was from this group that a monarchist opposition would eventually emerge both in Spain and in exile.

And yet, this monarchist opposition, even at its height, formed only a small and often ill-defined minority within the regime's larger monarchist 'family'. Clearly, the goal of restoring the monarchy to Spain was shared by all monarchists. However, the principal difference that arose between the monarchist opposition and the rest of the monarchist 'family' was over the role each side assigned Franco. For Franco's monarchist collaborators – the *franquista* monarchists – the restoration was to be effected 'neither without Franco, nor against him'.³⁵ They saw the monarchy as complementing and completing the Francoist system. For the monarchist opposition, on the other hand, the Spanish monarchy could not be identified with one side only – albeit the winning one – of the Civil War without abandoning its aspiration to reconcile the whole of the Spanish nation. For them the Spanish monarchy constituted an alternative to, and not a continuation of, the Franco regime. Thus, while the *franquista* monarchists saw Franco as the instrument of an eventual restoration, the monarchist opposition saw him as an obstacle to it.

Unlike the republican opposition, which was structured round the political organisations inherited from the Second Republic, the monarchist opposition consisted mostly of individuals and informal groups, often acting independently of each other. Nor was the composition of these groups necessarily homogeneous: the coexistence of opposition and *franquista* monarchists within the same groups was not uncommon. Numerically, moreover, the monarchist opposition was insignificant. Its handful of exiles hardly compared in number with the republican diaspora, while within Spain itself even the majority *franquista* monarchists were generally confined to a small social and political *élite*. But it was precisely its membership of this *élite* that enabled the monarchist opposition to exercise an influence out of all proportion to its size, for, unlike the republican opposition in whose rejection the Spanish Right closed ranks behind Franco, the monarchist opposition did have the potential to provide an ideological and constitutional alternative to the Franco regime which was acceptable to the Right.

The influence of this monarchist *élite* was felt particularly strongly in the Army, the mainstay of the Franco dictatorship.³⁶ But even here active monarchist opposition only ever came from a handful of senior officers. An early attempt to extend this opposition was made by

Eugenio Vegas Latapié, a founder member of the reactionary monarchist society, *Acción Española*.³⁷ At first a supporter of Franco, who appointed him General Secretary for Press and Propaganda in April 1937, Vegas had quickly resigned out of frustration with Franco's dilatoriness over the monarchy and, after the Civil War, began working against the new regime. Thus, in 1942 he tried to set up a number of secret pro-monarchist committees to win over sympathetic but uncommitted officers for a monarchist *coup* against Franco. His monarchist propagandising was cut short when his conspiring came to light and, in June 1942, he fled to Portugal and from there to Switzerland, where he was appointed head of Don Juan's Political Secretariat.³⁸

Another member of *Acción Española*, the distinguished academic, Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, had been appointed Minister of Education in Franco's first Council of Ministers in January 1938. He, too, soon became disillusioned with Franco and was relieved of this post in April 1939 after describing him as a 'boarding-house Bonaparte'. Sainz Rodríguez shared Vegas' conviction that a restoration of the monarchy depended above all on winning over the Army and so, in the autumn of 1941, he began conspiring with a number of monarchist generals to remove Franco (see below). When, in June 1942, his subversive activities were discovered, he, too, was obliged to flee Spain and took up residence in Portugal.³⁹

Sainz Rodríguez and Vegas' hopes of turning military discontent to the advantage of the monarchist cause had not been entirely misplaced, for criticism of Franco by his senior generals, especially in the first three years of World War II, was not uncommon. Until the autumn of 1942 there was considerable resentment at the extent of falangist influence in the new regime and alarm at Franco's pro-Axis foreign policy. Consequently, in October 1941, a group of senior generals, headed by the monarchists, Aranda and Kindelán, in conjunction with the civilians Vegas, Sainz Rodríguez and Gil-Robles, plotted for the replacement of Franco, in the event of a German invasion of Spain, by a joint military-civilian provisional *junta*; if the Germans went on to occupy the whole of Spain, it was planned that the generals on the *junta* would transfer to Spanish Morocco while the civilians would go to the Canaries, which Britain would then be invited to occupy. Within a few weeks, however, the monarchists substituted the plan for a *junta* with one for a regency of three generals, under whom it was envisaged that Aranda would form a military-civilian government. As the original anti-German thrust of the conspiracy became subordinated to an anti-Franco monarchist plot, it lost much of its earlier support from other senior officers. In any

case, as a German invasion never occurred, the planned *coup* became redundant.⁴⁰

After the replacement of Franco's brother-in-law, the pro-Axis Ramón Serrano Suñer, as Minister of Foreign Affairs by the monarchist sympathiser, General Francisco Gómez Jordana y Souza, in September 1942, military discontent with Franco abated, until the allied landings in French North Africa two months later. The Pretender to the Spanish throne, Don Juan, then called upon Franco to return to a policy of strict neutrality. General Kindelán followed this up with an outspoken speech criticising the immorality and 'profound discontent' of the Franco regime, after which he was removed from his post as Captain-General of Spain's IV Military Region.⁴¹

The following summer first General Orgaz, High Commissioner of Spanish Morocco, informed Sainz Rodríguez in Portugal of his readiness to rise against Franco, and then General Aranda, who had been replaced as Director of the Army's War School (*Escuela Superior*) by Kindelán in December 1942, proposed yet again a joint military-civilian government, but this time under a regency council along the lines of the Badoglio government recently formed in Italy. Franco's close adviser, Luis Carrero Blanco – appointed Under-Secretary of the Presidency in May 1941 – was sufficiently alarmed by all this to instruct the three Armed Forces Ministers to take the monarchist conspiracies seriously. His fears, though, proved groundless. In a letter to Gil-Robles in September, Orgaz himself had to admit that the bulk of the officer corps remained loyal to Franco and that support for his projected *coup* was not forthcoming.⁴²

In fact, the furthest the monarchist generals were prepared to go in the autumn of 1943 was to send a collective letter to Franco on 15 September. This, though, amounted to no more than a mildly worded petition which respectfully asked him to consider whether the time had not yet come to grant Spain a monarchy. Franco easily dealt with the challenge, interviewing the generals individually and alternately cajoling and threatening them into submission.⁴³ In fact, the letter was the last serious monarchist challenge to Franco from his generals. As Germany's military defeat came closer, apprehension over Franco's pro-Axis sympathies was replaced by uncertainty over the Allies' plans for Spain and the alarming possibility of a republican restoration. Finally, the effect of the 'red invasion' of the Val d'Arán in October 1944 was to dissuade almost all Franco's senior generals from further serious moves to destabilise his regime, and they closed ranks behind their *Caudillo*.

The key figure of the exiled monarchist opposition after the death of Alfonso XIII in February 1941 was, of course, the exiled Pretender to the Spanish throne, Don Juan. The fourth of Alfonso XIII's five children and his third son, Don Juan was named heir to the Spanish throne in 1933 after his two elder brothers, Don Alfonso and Don Jaime, renounced their claims, the former following his morganatic marriage to a Cuban heiress and the latter because of a physical disability. Until 1946 Don Juan – who was also given the title of the Count of Barcelona – lived in a villa on the outskirts of Lausanne after moving from Italy to Switzerland in 1942.⁴⁴

The Pretender's attitude towards the Franco regime was obviously crucial to the emergence of a credible monarchist opposition, and his advisers frequently pressed him to define his position in some form of public declaration or manifesto. However, Don Juan needed to move cautiously. A direct call for a monarchist *coup* against Franco, with its attendant risk of civil war, was out of the question. In the immediate post-Civil War period commitment in Spain to a *juanista* restoration was difficult to gauge and Franco's intentions were in any case obscure. In the early years of World War II, moreover, the British government, though warning Don Juan against accepting Axis support, made no move itself to assist in the restoration of the Spanish monarchy. So, it seemed to Don Juan at first that a policy of monarchist collaboration with Franco was the only feasible option.

Soon, however, the allied landings in French North Africa of November 1942 exposed the vulnerability of the Franco regime and improved Don Juan's bargaining position. In a series of letters and telegrams exchanged over the next fourteen months, the Pretender gradually distanced himself from Franco.⁴⁵ This move from collaboration to opposition was initiated on 11 November 1942 with a statement published in *Le Journal de Genève* – the so-called Geneva Manifesto – in which the Pretender disassociated himself completely from Franco's pro-Axis foreign policy and demanded instead a policy of 'absolute neutrality'.⁴⁶ It culminated in a long letter of 14 February 1944 to Don Alfonso de Orleans y Borbón, Don Juan's uncle and, since the previous June, his official representative in Spain, in which Don Juan argued that Franco's refusal to modify his foreign policy towards the Allies and to return to strict neutrality had left him no choice but to make his opposition to Franco public.⁴⁷

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that under Don Juan's leadership the emergent monarchist opposition constituted, from its start, a *democratic* challenge to the Franco regime.⁴⁸ In his first political dec-

laration of 11 October 1935 the young Prince had unreservedly identified himself with *Acción Española's* 'crusade' against the Second Republic and, in July 1936, while Alfonso XIII was appealing to Benito Mussolini and Pope Pius XI on behalf of the rebels, Don Juan had had himself smuggled into Spain to fight for the nationalist cause. Franco's military successes in the Civil War prompted a series of congratulatory telegrams from father and son alike. In October 1936 Don Juan condemned the Second Republic as the 'culmination of a process of negation of the Spanish spirit', and on the first anniversary of his father's death, he spoke of opposing the 'red revolution, with a militant racial policy, imbued with the Christian spirit'.⁴⁹

Don Juan believed that the ideals of the *National Crusade* were embodied in the 'Traditional Catholic Monarchy', which, in spite of its glaring illiberalism, he nevertheless held to be essentially moderate. In his view, the Franco regime represented one extreme – totalitarianism – with no greater claim to legitimacy than the other extreme – anarchism. It followed that the monarchy, by holding true to the ideals which had inspired the 1936 rebellion, occupied the middle ground between the two! Against this Franco maintained that the monarchy Don Juan represented was deeply flawed. For him the authentic traditional monarchy was that of the medieval *reyes católicos*, and of Charles I and Philip II. The Alfonsist monarchy, by contrast, had forfeited its traditional rights by turning 'liberal' and, as such, it had contributed in no small measure to the spread of marxism in Spain. Spain's decadence, for which the Alfonsist monarchy shared responsibility, could only be remedied, Franco maintained, by the revolution he was then carrying through.⁵⁰

Yet, Franco never intended the total abolition of the monarchy. In his scheme of things, it did have a role to play in his *New Spain* and was intended to be the crowning piece on his work of national regeneration, the completion of his 'national revolution'. In a statement to the Argentinian newspaper, *La Prensa*, of 28 January 1944, however, Don Juan insisted that the monarchy was *not* 'the crowning or final touch to the structure created by the present regime'.⁵¹ This, then, was the issue that defined monarchist opposition to Franco and, on 25 January 1944, the Pretender unambiguously stated his position:

The information which I have received from extensive and authentic national sources increases the divergence between our respective

visions of the international situation and over the repercussions which world events may have on our internal policies. Your Excellency is one of the very few Spaniards left who believe in the stability of the national-syndicalist regime and in the identification of the people with a regime, under which our still unreconciled Nation is supposed to find strength enough to resist the attacks of extremists at the end of the world war; all of which Your Excellency will supposedly achieve through adjustments and concessions to those Nations which may well feel ill disposed to the policy followed so far towards them.

This way of judging the present and the future is totally opposed to mine and, therefore, our attitudes cannot be reconciled. I am convinced that Your Excellency and the regime you embody cannot survive the end of the war, and that, if the Monarchy is not restored beforehand, you will be destroyed by the defeated of the Civil War, who will take advantage of the new international situation, which with every passing day comes out more strongly against the totalitarian regime which Your Excellency fashioned and established.⁵²

Franco was unmoved, replying on 7 February that he would not relinquish power and that he placed full responsibility for any delay in restoring the traditional monarchy on Don Juan's shoulders alone. A week later, as already mentioned, Don Juan sent a long explanatory letter to Don Alfonso de Orleans, which was passed on to Franco: Don Juan could not, he said, 'commune' with the principles of the *Falange*.⁵³ There would be no further exchanges of political correspondence between Franco and Don Juan until after the Lausanne Manifesto of March 1945.

To an extent Don Juan's opposition to Franco was influenced by advice he received from José María Gil-Robles in exile in Portugal, whom he would appoint his official representative outside Spain in February 1944. This former leader of the right-wing clericalist *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA) had left Spain with his family in February 1936 and by the beginning of 1937 was living in Portugal.⁵⁴ In July 1942 he met the newly exiled Sainz Rodríguez in Lisbon and from October was joining him there in conversations with the British Ambassador to Spain, Sir Samuel Hoare. But although privately convinced by then of the need for a monarchist restoration, it was not until the following May that he declared to *La Prensa* that it was the 'sacred duty' of all those having some influence on public opinion in Spain to support the monarchy. This was followed by a letter to Aranda in December in which he formally declared himself a monarchist and

pledged the ‘mass of opinion which formerly supported my party to the service of the Monarchist cause . . .’⁵⁵

Gil-Robles’ vision of monarchy, though deeply conservative, avoided both the narrow traditionalism of *Acción Española* and the expedient *coup* strategy of the monarchist generals.⁵⁶ He persuaded Don Juan that the role of the monarchy was not simply to substitute Franco as protector of the Spanish Right. There was, instead, a need for a radical departure from the policies of reprisal pursued by the Dictator, since these would never bring peace to Spain, and only the monarchy could act as a force for reconciliation. In this way Gil-Robles held out the possibility of a change of regime and an end to the divisions of the Civil War, but without the threat of social revolution so feared by the Spanish Right.

Despite Gil-Robles’ urging, however, the Pretender’s break with Franco in January 1944 was not as final as first appeared. The simultaneous imposition of Anglo-American oil sanctions on Spain was an unfortunate coincidence obliging Don Juan to counter Franco-inspired stories that he was merely a tool of foreign interests. So, almost immediately after his statement to *La Prensa*, in a telegram of 3 February 1944, Don Juan confirmed his break with Franco but at the same time appealed for an agreement with him. In April he indicated to General Juan Vigón, Franco’s Air Minister, his willingness to meet Franco, a call which he repeated in October. In March, moreover, he noticeably failed to support 50 Spanish university professors sanctioned by Franco for signing a letter, widely circulated in Madrid, expressing loyalty to the Pretender. Thus, for most of 1944, the monarchist cause seemed to flounder, causing Don Juan himself, in a letter of 23 September to Gil-Robles, to lament its ‘basic lack of unity of direction, its permanent contradiction in aims and absolute sterility of action’.⁵⁷

Conclusion

For the Spanish anti-Franco opposition, both monarchist and republican, doubts over German invincibility in the Second World War had been growing since the winter of 1942 until the Normandy Landings of June 1944 bore out their initial scepticism. During this period the opposition became convinced that in the post-war order there would be no place for Franco’s anomalous regime. The Dictator would depart under allied pressure, so they thought, and from the ranks of the anti-Franco opposition, some would be called upon by the Allies to form the government of a new Spain. But the worrying question was – who?

Republicans and monarchists were both apprehensive that the other side could be chosen: hence their mutual eagerness to jettison whatever ideological baggage they believed compromised them in the eyes of the western democracies. A significant part of the non-communist republican opposition sought to erase the communist stigma attached to the Second Republic: hence the move to disqualify the Negrín government in February 1939 and then the formation of the JEL in Mexico and the ANFD in Spain as alternatives to the communist initiatives. In similar fashion, the Pretender to the Spanish throne tried to distance the monarchist cause from Franco, whose falangism he condemned as a fascist distortion of the original noble ideals of the National Rising.

And yet attempts to create a unified non-communist anti-Franco opposition had only limited success. By the end of 1944 it exhibited a bewildering complexity to the outside observer. On the republican side – a politically irrelevant guerrilla war within Spain and a recently defeated guerrilla force north of the Pyrenees; the leadership of the non-communist *Frente Popular* organisations scattered in France, Mexico and Britain, and the communist leadership in the USSR; reconstituted party organisations in France, Spain and North Africa, and sister, but rival, organisations in Mexico and Britain; three surviving ‘united front’ organisations – the communist UNE, the *prietista* socialist-republican JEL and the libertarian-socialist-republican ANFD. On the monarchist side, there was an exiled monarchist circle round the Pretender in Switzerland and another in Portugal, both by 1944 opposed to the Franco regime but not necessarily in full agreement with the small monarchist opposition inside Spain itself. With a few notable exceptions, the monarchist generals, who had plotted intermittently from 1941 to 1943, seemed reconciled to the Franco regime. Indeed, opposition to Franco from the majority of monarchists in Spain was either questionable or non-existent. It was, then, this broad array of opposition alternatives that presented itself to British foreign policy makers when in 1944 they turned to the ‘problem of Spain’.

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