

**The Faith and the Fury: Popular Anticlerical
Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1931 – 1936**

Maria Angharad Thomas

Royal Holloway University of London

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Maria Angharad Thomas, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the motives, mentalities and collective identities which lay behind acts of popular anticlerical violence and iconoclasm during the pre-war Spanish Second Republic (1931-1936) and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The five year period following the proclamation of the democratic Second Republic in April 1931 was marked by physical assaults upon the property and public ritual of the Spanish Catholic Church. These grassroots attacks were generally carried out by rural and urban anticlerical workers who were frustrated by the Republic's practical inability to tackle the Church's vast power. On 17-18 July 1936, a rightwing military rebellion divided Spain geographically, provoking the radical fragmentation of power in territory which remained under Republican authority. The coup marked the beginning of a conflict which developed into a full-scale civil war. Anticlerical protagonists, with the reconfigured structure of political opportunities working in their favour, participated in an unprecedented wave of iconoclasm and violence against the clergy. During the first six months of the conflict, innumerable religious buildings were destroyed and almost 7,000 religious personnel were killed. This thesis challenges standard interpretations which link these acts to irrationality, criminality and primitiveness. It focuses directly upon the agents of anticlerical violence, exploring the connections between the anticlerical outpouring of July 1936 and those forms of anticlericalism that were already emerging before the coup. It argues that Spanish popular anticlericalism was a phenomenon which was undergoing a radical process of reconfiguration during the first three decades of the twentieth century. During a period of rapid social, cultural and political change, anticlerical acts took on new, explicitly political meanings, becoming both a catalyst and a symptom of social change. After 17-18 July 1936, anticlerical violence became an implicitly constructive force for many of its protagonists: an instrument with which to build a new society.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCPCE - Archivo del Comité Central del Partido Comunista Español

ADM - Archivo Diocesano de Madrid-Alcalá

AGA - Archivo General de la Administración

AHN - Archivo Histórico Nacional

AHPA - Archivo Histórico Provincial de Almería

AMM - Archivo Militar de Madrid

ASV – Archivo Secreto Vaticano

ATM – Audiencia Territorial de Madrid

ATTMA - Archivo del Tribunal Togado Militar de Almería

CDMH - Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica

CEDA – Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas

CG – Causa General

CNT – Confederación Nacional de Trabajo

FAI – Federación Anarquista Ibérica

FNTT – Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra

FO – Foreign Office

INE – Instituto Nacional de Estadística

IR – Izquierda Republicana

JJEE, TRP - Jurisdicciones Especiales, Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas

JJLL – Juventudes Libertarias

JSU – Juventudes Socialista Unificadas

Interior – Ministerio del Interior

LSEA - LSE Archive

NA - National Archives

PCE – Partido Comunista de España

PRRD – Persecución Religiosa Reorganización Diócesis

PSOE – Partido Socialista Obrero Español

PS Madrid – Político-Social Madrid

PS-Santander – Político-Social Santander

UGT – Unión General de Trabajadores

UP – Unión Patriótica

Introduction

*And the God of Love they paint for us/Does not exist.
We guess the impossibility of God, God the eternally mute,
God the unfeeling, the uncouth/The abyss.
The God who Christ says lives/In Heaven is unjust*
Federico García Lorca¹

*...those men who walk through the streets dressed as women with black clothes on.
They're bad, really bad, always on the side of the rich and never with
poor people like us.*

A working class mother in Andalucía explains the figure of the priest to her six-year-old son²

At the beginning of May 1936, rumours began to circulate in several workers' districts of Madrid that nuns and members of Catholic lay associations were distributing poisoned sweets to workers' children. As reports of the alleged clerical maleficence flew from mouth to mouth, anger and anxiety mounted among local people. On 4 May, large crowds took to the streets, protesting against the 'poisoning' outside churches and religious schools. In the popular neighbourhood of Cuatro Caminos, crowd members set fire to a church and its adjacent religious school. The attack marked the beginning of a wave of anticlerical incendiarism which lasted for most of the day. Across the Spanish capital, more than ten ecclesiastical buildings were left gutted, while several more suffered partial damages. A number of nuns were jostled, insulted, injured and forced to leave their convents. Several people assumed by their assailants to be 'poisoners' were attacked in the street.³ As the government issued a statement to the press regarding the falsehood of the rumours, construction workers in nearby Nuevos Ministerios declared a spontaneous strike in protest against 'the attitude attributed to rightist elements concerning the distribution of poisoned sweets.'⁴

¹ Federico García Lorca in Ian Gibson, *Federico García Lorca: A Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p.65.

² Abel Paz, *Chumberas y alacranes* (Barcelona: Diego Camacho, 1994), p.61. Anarchist activist and writer Abel Paz, who was a child in Almería in the 1920s, recalls an early conversation with his mother.

³ Archivo Secreto Vaticano (ASV), *Relato de los hechos antirreligiosos del 3-4 de mayo en Madrid* (05/05/1936) in José Ramón Hernández Figueiredo, *Destrucción del patrimonio religioso en la Segunda República: 1931 – 1936* (Madrid: BAC, 2009), pp.207-8. All further ASV references are to this volume; Archivo Histórico Nacional, Causa General (AHN, CG) legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/323; 1514: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 31/2, 31/13, 31/56, 31/59, 31/60; 31/79; 31/91; 31/92; *El Debate*, 27/05/1936; *El Socialista*, 05/05/1936; British National Archives, Foreign Office (NA, FO) 371/20521, Chilton to FO, 04/05/1936; John Langdon Davies, *Behind the Spanish Barricades* (London: Reportage Press, 2007), p.51; Claude Bowers, *My Mission to Spain: Watching the Rehearsal for World War Two* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1954), pp.224-25

⁴ José Luis González Gullón, 'El bulo de los caramelos envenenados (3 y 4 de mayo de 1936)', in Alfonso Bullón de Mendoza and Luis E. Togores (eds.), *La otra memoria* (Madrid: Actas, 2011), pp. 650-60.

The five-year period following the proclamation of the democratic Spanish Second Republic in April 1931 was marked by numerous physical assaults upon the property and public ritual of the Spanish Catholic Church. Grassroots attacks like the one outlined above were generally carried out by rural and urban anticlerical workers who were deeply frustrated by the Republic's practical inability to tackle the Church's vast social, cultural, political and economic power. On 17-18 July 1936, a rightwing military rebellion aimed at halting the social and political changes inaugurated by the Republic divided Spain geographically, provoking the radical fragmentation of power in territory which remained under Republican authority. The coup marked the beginning of a conflict which developed into a full-scale civil war. Anticlerical protagonists, with the reconfigured structure of political opportunities working in their favour, participated in an unprecedented wave of iconoclasm and violence against the clergy. Innumerable religious buildings and liturgical objects were destroyed and almost 7,000 priests, monks and nuns were killed, the vast majority during the first six months of the conflict.⁵

The current historiographical status of this subject inevitably reflects the victory of the Church-backed rebel forces over the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. The Franco dictatorship, in close collaboration with religious personnel, had a monopoly on writing the history of the anticlerical violence and iconoclasm of the pre-war Republic and the civil war. This official history was grounded in the construction and continual reinforcement of a Manichean image of the 'two Spains': one comprised of the war's Catholic, patriotic victors; the other populated by defeated, 'red', foreign 'enemies of the fatherland'. The Franco regime used the image of the 'martyrs' of the conflict – the dead of its own 'side' – in order to legitimise itself in perpetuity.⁶ Within this framework, the protagonists of anticlerical acts were portrayed as 'red barbarians' bent upon destroying the true, Catholic Spain.⁷ Their actions, detached entirely from their

⁵ Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España, 1936 – 1939* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1961), p.762.

⁶ Helen Graham, *The War and its Shadow: Spain's civil war in Europe's long twentieth century* (forthcoming April 2012, SAP), chapter one, chapter seven.

⁷ For examples of this discourse of 'enemies', 'barbarians' and 'martyrs', see the published version of the Causa General, *Causa general: la dominación roja en España: avance de la información instruída por el Ministerio Público en 1943* (Astorga: Akrón, 2008), *passim*. For more specific examples, see AHN, CG, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/375, 4/411; Archivo Diocesano de Madrid, Persecución

authentic historical and social context, were portrayed as irrational, frenzied explosions of evil. Unfortunately, many elements of this discourse have also outlived the dictatorship which forged it. The persistence of these Francoist myths is largely the consequence of the way in which the country made its transition to democracy following the dictator's death in 1975. The transition was underpinned by a tacit agreement known as the *pacto de olvido* (pact of forgetting) which enforced the idea that the discussion of Spain's recent, painful past was undesirable and somehow harmful.⁸

This discourse regarding the dangers of 'stirring up the past' is still strongly prevalent in present day Spain.⁹ However, from the early 1990s it has been broken to some degree by the activities of civic associations devoted to unearthing the remains of the victims of repression in the rebel zone during the civil war, and by the policies and political discourse of the Socialist government elected in 2004. Historians have also played a crucial role in breaking the silence. From the 1980s onwards, there began an 'unfreezing' of the writing of history within Spain, especially that of the republican experience during the war. As Spanish historians gradually abandoned initial doubts regarding the fragility of their democracy and the limits imposed by the *pacto de olvido*, the history of religious and 'antireligious' violence was readdressed and reanalysed. Today, a significant number of Spanish historians are making innovative efforts to contextualise and historicise the phenomenon of the anticlerical violence of the 1930s.¹⁰ This thesis, which sits alongside their work, will unravel a multifaceted theme whose complexities were, for many years, systematically obscured by the combined propagandistic efforts of the Franco dictatorship and the Spanish Catholic Church.

Religiosa Reorganización Diócesis (ADM, PPRD), Caja 4/3, *Culto*. See also Paul Preston, *El holocausto español: Odio y exterminio en la Guerra Civil y después* (Barcelona: Debate, 2011), p. 652.

⁸ Michael Richards, *Autarky and the Franco Dictatorship in Spain, 1936-1951* (PhD, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1995), p. 14. See also Helen Graham, 'The uses of history', in *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 138-50 and Paul Preston, 'The Civil War Seventy Years On', in *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution, Reaction and Revenge* (London: Harper Collins, 2006), pp.1-16.

⁹ On the discourse against 'stirring up the past', see Giles Tremlett, *Ghosts of Spain: Travels through a Country's Hidden Past* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), pp. 3-33.

¹⁰ The most important works are Julián Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco* (Crítica: Barcelona, 2005); José Luis Ledesma, *Los días de llamas de la revolución: Violencia y política en la retaguardia republicana durante la guerra civil* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2003); María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo en Aragón: Protesta y movilización política, 1900 – 1939* (Universidad de Zaragoza, 2002).

This thesis focuses directly upon the protagonists of anticlerical violence, aiming to unravel the motives, mentalities and collective identities which underscored their actions during the pre-war Second Republic (1931-1936) and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). It explores the connections between the anticlerical outpouring triggered by the military rebellion of 17-18 July 1936 and those forms of anticlericalism that were already emerging before the coup. The gradual construction of anticlerical collective identities in Spain from the late nineteenth century onwards is examined in detail, as is the crucially important theme of the dual political mobilisation of anticlericals and Catholics which occurred from 1931 under the auspices of the mass democracy inaugurated by the Second Republic. The thesis then analyses the anticlerical paroxysm which began in July 1936. It argues that Spanish popular anticlericalism was a phenomenon which was undergoing a process of radical reconfiguration during the first three decades of the twentieth century. During a period of rapid social, cultural and political change, anticlerical acts took on new, explicitly political meanings. After 17-18 July 1936, anticlerical violence became an implicitly constructive force for many of its protagonists: an instrument with which to build a new society.

Analysing popular anticlericalism before 1931

As the first chapter of this thesis argues, an analysis of the anticlericalism of the pre-war Republic and the civil war needs to be informed by a detailed awareness of how anticlerical collective identities were forged among worker constituencies during the late nineteenth century.¹¹ With this in mind, chapter one charts the process by which long-existent popular oral criticism of the clergy transformed into a fiercely politicised anticlerical discourse during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹² The dawn of the liberal age in Spain in the early nineteenth century heralded a wave of secularising challenges to the previously untouchable position of power which the Spanish Catholic Church had enjoyed under the Old Regime. The Church hierarchy and many individual priests - hoping to cover what they saw as the Church's vulnerability - opted for an aggressive response to the threat posed by liberal politics. From the restoration of Fernando VII in 1814, the Church allied itself closely with the monarchy

¹¹ This exploration of collective identity is inspired to a large degree by the work of Spanish sociologically and culturally oriented historians like Manuel Pérez Ledesma, José Álvarez Junco and Rafael Cruz. Their key, co-edited text is *Cultura y movilización en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1997).

¹² See Manuel Pérez Ledesma, 'Studies on Anticlericalism in Contemporary Spain', *International Review of Social History* 46 (2001), pp.227-55.

and with wealthy sectors. The liberal disentailment measures of the 1830s, which appropriated huge amounts of the clergy's land and property, rendered this alliance essential to the institution's survival. This situation was viewed among some urban worker and middling class constituencies as an unholy communion between power, capital and religion which patently contradicted the Church's ostensible Christian commitment to protecting the poor and defenceless. The Spanish Church's defensiveness – which was shared by Church hierarchies across Europe as urbanisation and industrialisation spread during the nineteenth century – also reflected an intense fear that the urban poor would transfer their allegiances to emerging workers' political movements.¹³

During this period, popular anticlericalism not only became definitively politicised; it also assumed a violent character for the first time. Historians of the contemporary period in Spain such as Manuel Pérez Ledesma and Demetrio Castro have noted that from the birth of liberalism onwards, outbreaks of popular anticlerical violence were closely linked to moments of revolutionary or political crisis, during which the Church's opposition to progressive political ideas posed a threat to the liberal order (i.e. comprising the monarchical system and established property relations).¹⁴ Clerical participation in the first Carlist War (1833-1840), for example - a conflict which pitched the defenders of local rights and traditional religion against the centralising Liberal state - contributed to a growing perception among some popular sectors in urban Spain that the clergy were warmongering enemies and that Spain's monasteries were sources of war.¹⁵ In July 1834, in the midst of tension provoked by the conflict and at the height of a virulent cholera epidemic, rumours that Madrid's monks had caused the outbreak by

¹³ Bruce Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations in Spain, July 1936', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.27, No.2 (April 1985), p.247; Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp.42-55; Salomón Chéiz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.13.

¹⁴ Pérez Ledesma, 'Studies on Anticlericalism', pp. 227-255; Demetrio Castro Alfin, 'Cultura. política y cultura política en la violencia anticlerical', in Cruz and Pérez Ledesma, *Cultura y movilización*, p.96.

¹⁵ Antonio Moliner Prada, 'Anticlericalismo y Revolución Liberal (1873-1874)', in Emilio La Parra López and Manuel Suárez Cortina (eds.), *El anticlericalismo en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007), pp. 17-68. See also Joan Connelly Ullman, 'The Warp and Woof of Parliamentary Politics in Spain, 1808-1939: Anticlericalism versus "Neo-Catholicism"', *European Studies Review* 13/2 (1983), pp.145-76.

poisoning the city's water supply sparked the massacre of seventy-eight male religious personnel and the destruction of numerous religious buildings.¹⁶

With the establishment of the Restoration Monarchy (1874-1931), the Catholic Church regained the institutional backing of the political regime. Chapter one, whose historical scope begins in the late nineteenth century, assesses the growth and politicisation of anticlericalism among rural and urban workers during the Restoration Monarchy and the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923-1930). It examines the ways in which workers experienced the Church on a daily basis, explaining the mechanisms by which such large numbers of the rural and urban poor came to perceive the Church as the ally of the wealthy, and as part of the Restoration Monarchy's machinery of repression.¹⁷ Crucially, it assesses the ways in which the industrialisation and rural-urban emigration underway from the late nineteenth century – and the political, social and cultural changes which these processes triggered – altered the face of popular anticlericalism. This analysis scrutinises the 'cultural worlds' constructed by newly politicised anarchist, socialist and republican workers in urban Spain and in parts of the rural world, revealing that they were strongly underpinned by both anticlerical ideas and Christian moral convictions.¹⁸

The chapter also analyses the dual Catholic and anticlerical mobilisation which occurred during the first decade of the twentieth century. As the Spanish historians Julio de la Cueva, Feliciano Montero and María Pilar Salomón Chéliz have demonstrated in a number of recent works, the Spanish Catholic hierarchy, intent upon fending off perceived threats posed by liberalism, republicanism and leftwing workers' organisations, mobilised its followers on a huge scale during this period. These politically mobilised Catholics clashed repeatedly on the streets with anticlerical

¹⁶ Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875 – 1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 2; Nigel Townson, 'Anticlericalismo y secularización en España: ¿Una excepción europea?', in Nigel Townson (ed.), *¿Es España diferente?* (Madrid: Santillana, 2010), pp.115-16.

¹⁷ Works which have tackled the issue of poor sectors' daily experience of the Church as a one of their key themes are Joan Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study of Anti-clericalism in Spain, 1875-1912* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968); Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*; Lannon, *Privilege*.

¹⁸ Chris Ealham, *Class, Culture and Conflict in Barcelona, 1898-1937* (London and New York: Routledge/Cañada Blanch, 2005), p.39 and 'The myth of the maddened crowd: class, culture and space in the revolutionary urbanist Project in Barcelona, 1936 – 1937', in Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (eds.), *The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 111-39.

workers.¹⁹ The anticlerical demonstrations were driven - at least to a certain degree - by the proposed secularising measures of the Liberal Party, parliamentary debate over the religious question, the populist mobilisation tactics of republican political parties, and by cultural events such as the 1901 premier of *Electra*, an anticlerical play by Benito Pérez Galdós. Popular anticlerical mobilisation thus occurred against a backdrop of intense and mounting intellectual and bourgeois republican anticlericalism.²⁰ The anticlerical discourse of these sectors was, of course, a crucial staging post in delegitimising the Catholic Church by undermining its status as the Spain's moral authority. The chapter recognises the enormous importance of these political and literary discourses. However, as the focus of this thesis is popular anticlericalism, they are only discussed in terms of their intersections with the development of popular anticlerical identities. Chapter one takes the reader up to 1930-1931, the period which saw the fall of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and the proclamation of the Second Republic.

The Second Republic: 1931-1936

The second chapter of this thesis explains that the simultaneous mass political mobilisation of leftwing anticlericals and Catholics during the pre-war Republican years generated an enormous intensification in popular anticlerical sentiment. The coming of the Second Republic in April 1931 - a regime which promised to initiate urgent labour, agricultural and educational reforms in order to address the perilous position of Spain's poorest social constituencies - was greeted with enthusiasm by large numbers of anticlerical workers. Collective hope that the Republic's first Republican-Socialist governing coalition would be able to limit the Church's vast power over people's everyday lives ran extremely high. In contrast, the birth of a democratic, pluralistic regime whose leading politicians were unswervingly committed to secularising reform was received with suspicion and pessimism by the overwhelming majority of the

¹⁹ Julio de la Cueva Merino, 'Movilización popular e identidad anticlerical 1898-1910', *Ayer*, No. 27, (1997), pp.120-21; María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, 'El anticlericalismo en la calle. Republicanismo, populismo, radicalismo y protesta popular (1898 - 1913)', in Julio de la Cueva and Feliciano Montero (eds.), *La secularización conflictiva: España 1898 - 1931* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007), p.127; Julio de la Cueva and Feliciano Montero, 'Clericalismo y anticlericalismo entre dos siglos: percepciones recíprocas', in de la Cueva and Montero, *Secularización conflictiva*, pp.112-13.

²⁰ Manuel Suárez Cortina, 'Anticlericalismo, religión y política en la Restauración', in La Parra López and Suárez Cortina, *Anticlericalismo*, pp.127-32; Enrique A. Sanabria, *Republicanism and Anticlerical Nationalism in Spain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.155.

Spanish bishops.²¹ As the British historian Frances Lannon has observed, this sense of collective foreboding contrasted sharply with the rapturous ecclesiastical reactions that had greeted the 1923 coup which established the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. During the spring and summer of 1931, the ecclesiastical hierarchy began to construct a discourse which portrayed the Church as a helpless victim of Republican ‘persecution’, and which impelled lay Catholics to mobilise politically in defence of religion.²²

Central to chapter two is an examination of the process by which huge numbers of anticlericals became locked in a struggle with politically mobilised Catholics to define the meanings of public spaces. As ever-growing number of rural and urban workers joined leftwing parties and trade unions (principally the socialist UGT and the anarchist CNT), and as Catholics intent upon defending the ‘rights of the Church’ flocked to support lay associations and newly formed Catholic political parties, this battle gathered intensity.²³ The chapter also explains how the Church’s enthusiastic backing of the rightwing CEDA party, a political force which was seen by many on the left as the Spanish equivalent of the German and Italian fascist parties, forged an enduring mental linkage between Catholicism and what many workers on the left understood as ‘fascism’.²⁴

The chapter places its focus on the motives and intentions of the protagonists of iconoclastic acts, arguing that as the Republic revealed its practical inability to tackle the power and public presence of the Church, anticlerical workers became increasingly frustrated, and ever-more determined to resolve the ‘religious question’ on the streets. This determination was evident as early as May 1931, when a wave of church burning began in Madrid and spread to Seville, Cadiz, Malaga and Alicante.²⁵ However, following the elections of February 1936, which returned progressive forces to power

²¹ Mary Vincent, *Catholicism and the Second Republic: Religion and Politics in Salamanca 1930-1936* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.172-73; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp. 30-31; Juan de Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco*, Vol.I (Vienne-Toulouse: Egi-Indarra, 1958), pp.338-39.

²² Frances Lannon, ‘The Church’s Crusade against the Republic’, in Paul Preston (ed.), *Revolution and War in Spain* (London: Methuen, 1984), p.37 and *Privilege*, p.170.

²³ Rafael Cruz, *En el nombre del pueblo* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2006), pp.50-61.

²⁴ Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform Reaction and Revolution in the Second Spanish Republic 1931-1936* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 130, 145-6, 205-7.

²⁵ On May 1931’s church burnings, see Miguel Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1966), pp.241-64; Henry Buckley, *Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1940) pp. 63-66; Antonio Fernández García, *Los incendios de iglesias de mayo de 1931* (Madrid: Artes Graficas Municipales, 1999), *passim*.

after two years of reactionary, church-backed government, the collective urge to carry out secularisation ‘from below’ reached unprecedented levels of intensity.

The Civil War: 1936 – 1939

The consequences of the military rebellion of 17-18 July 1936 allowed anticlerical protagonists to exercise this grassroots ‘secularising urge’ without restraints for several months. Chapters three, four, five and six of this thesis are dedicated to analysing the outburst of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm which occurred at the beginning of the conflict. The coup was justified by the officers who orchestrated it as necessary to restore ‘order’ to Spain, saving the country from alleged ‘communist’ unrest generated by the Popular Front election victory of February 1936.²⁶ The failure of the rebellion, which was defeated in many regions by the armed workers, security forces and military that remained loyal to the Republic, divided Spain geographically. The coup was successful in many northern and central regions, where the rebels derived support from significant sections of the conservative Catholic peasantry and provincial middle classes who had been left aggrieved by the Republic’s secularisation reforms. Most of urban, industrial Spain remained in Republican hands.²⁷

In territory which remained under the authority of the Republican government, the coup provoked the virtual collapse of the state. With the police and armed forces dislocated, and the government’s normal functions paralysed, a radical atomisation of power occurred on the Republican home front. As the Spanish historian Julián Casanova explains, the wave of revolutionary grassroots violence directed against the coup’s perceived supporters was the immediate result of a chaotic race by various groups to fill the ‘power vacuum’ generated by this paralysis. As the state lost its monopoly upon the exercise of violence, there emerged in its place a *pueblo armado* (‘the people’ armed) composed of local committees, quasi-police patrols, ‘committees of public safety’ and *checks* (unofficial prisons).²⁸ This sudden collapse of centralised power transformed the structure of political opportunities, radically augmenting the theatre of action available to the anticlerical protagonists of the moment. Significant too

²⁶ Hilari Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense: The Catholic Church and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge/Canada Blanch, 2007), pp.39-49.

²⁷ Graham, *Introduction*, pp.37-38.

²⁸ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, p.174. See also ‘Rebelión y Revolución: “Abajo la Iglesia, que caiga el poder”: La violencia desde abajo’, in Santos Juliá (Coord.), *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), p.155.

is the fact that of all the ecclesiastical victims who died during the war, seventy-one percent were killed *before the end of September 1936* – i.e. before the government regained control of the state apparatus, which indicates the huge impact on events caused by this atomisation of power.²⁹

Yet political opportunities alone are never sufficient to explain human actions. By July 1936, the popular enmity towards the Church which had been developing since the nineteenth century had been intensified and decisively politicised by the experience of the mass mobilisation of anticlerical workers and Catholics during the peacetime Republican years. The Church's representatives, perceived by their assailants as absolute ideological and political enemies, reactionary allies of the rebel generals - and more widely as symbols of the injustice and repression of a past which had to be eliminated - were attacked furiously. According to the reliable figures of ecclesiastical historian Antonio Montero Moreno, 6,832 religious personnel, among them 4,184 priests and seminarians, 2,365 monks and 283 nuns, were the victims of extrajudicial execution after 17-18 July 1936.³⁰ At the time of the coup Spain had over 115,000 religious personnel. Around 45,000 of them were nuns, 15,000 were monks, and the remainder were lay priests. This means that six percent of all Spanish religious personnel perished in the violence.³¹ Of the overall total of those killed in grassroots violence in the Republican zone, these religious victims made up 13.9 percent.³² Acts of

²⁹ This figure has been calculated by José Luis Ledesma using data from Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 763-64. It takes the total figure of those killed in July, August and September (4226: 966 in July, 2213 in August and 1087 in September) as a percentage of the 5,971 victims whose dates of death are known. The figures declined as the war progressed (580 in October 1936, 596 in November, 252 in December, 216 for the entire year of 1937, 44 in 1938 and 17 in 1939). José Luis Ledesma, 'Violence beyond Politics? Anticlerical Persecution in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)' (Paper prepared for presentation to the Program on Order, Conflict, and Violence, Yale University, May 9, 2008) and 'Delenda est ecclesia: de la violencia anticlerical y la guerra civil de 1936', Seminario de historia, UCM/UNED/Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, (25/06/2009), pp.11-12

³⁰ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.762. More recent research, due to repetitions in Montero Moreno's original 'headcount', has lowered the figure to 6,788. Ángel David Martín Rubio, *Los mitos de la represión en la guerra civil* (Baracaldo: Grafite, 2005), p.234. Recent research into female religious personnel killed during the war has raised the number of nuns killed to 296. Gregorio Rodríguez Sánchez, *El hábito y la cruz: religiosas asesinadas en la guerra civil española* (Madrid: Edibesa, 2006), pp.551-60. Twelve bishops and the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Orihuela fell victim to the violence. The Bishop of Barcelona, Dr Manuel Irurita Almandoz, who disappeared after being detained by a militia patrol in December 1936 is included in this figure. His death has never been decisively proven and historians continue to speculate concerning his true fate. Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.199-217; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.325-26; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.416-21.

³¹ Preston, *Holocausto*, p. 323; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.430, 762.

³² The figure is calculated using Montero Moreno's figures as a percentage of the overall victims. The most recent, reliable figures place the number of victims of republican repression at 49, 272. Francisco Espinosa Maestre (ed.), *Violencia roja y azul: España 1936-1950* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2010), p.78.

iconoclasm were also extremely prolific. The sacking, desecration and burning of religious buildings - along with the destruction of their images – was witnessed across the Republican zone, as were the carnival-style mockery of religious rituals and the grisly exhumation of religious remains for public display.³³

Because anticlerical violence formed a part of a heterogeneous ‘spontaneous revolution’ which was - by its very nature - regionalist and localised, in a country that was highly regionally diverse in social and cultural terms, it is difficult to make sweeping conclusions concerning the scale and nature of the violence. Yet an examination of its geographical distribution is possible. No area of Republican Spain completely escaped anticlerical violence, but regions which lost the highest levels of religious personnel in absolute terms were, logically, the ones which contained densely populated urban hubs. Although the secular clergy were often thin on the ground in these places, the concentration of religious orders was high. This explains why the provinces of Barcelona and Madrid lost the highest gross numbers of clergy: 1,009 and 1,030 respectively.³⁴

If one considers where in Republican Spain lost the highest percentage of its secular clergy, it is clear that this occurred in the areas which suffered the most extreme collapse of government authority and fragmentation of power - namely eastern Aragón and Catalonia. The diocese that had the highest proportion of clerical deaths – 87.8 percent or 123 out of 140 religious personnel – was Barbastro in Aragón. There the killing was also fuelled by the entry of roving militia columns. The dioceses which register the second and third highest percentage losses (65.8 percent and 61.9 percent) are Lérida and Tortosa, in western and southern Catalonia respectively. At the other end of the scale, the lowest percentage losses of clergy occurred in the Basque Provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, where religious practice and respect for the clergy were deeply rooted in the population and where the collapse of central government authority was relatively rapidly repaired by the emergence of an autonomous Basque government. Even before this government emerged in October 1936, the political authority exercised

³³ Casanova, ‘Rebelión y revolución’, p.155.

³⁴ Martín Rubio, *Mitos de la represión*, pp.234-36.

in various forms by the PNV (the Basque nationalist party) substituted for the lack of central government authority following the coup.³⁵

This fragmentation of power was entirely absent from the rebel zone, where the state machinery of coercion was controlled by the military authorities from the outset. In order to analyse the anticlerical violence of 1936 in its proper context, it is essential that we are aware of the religious, church-endorsed violence which began in rebel Spain during the same time period. The generals, who would quickly begin to count on the Church's ideological coercion as a key weapon, did not mention religion in their declaration of rebellion, instead invoking goals of reconstruction, order and discipline. Yet despite its lack of active involvement in the coup, the Church became rapidly and completely implicated in the rebel war effort.³⁶ By July 1936, the institution was already unshakeably allied with the reactionary groups which conspired to overthrow the government. Catholic press organs, political parties and associations had been mobilised against the 'persecutory' secularising Republic and the dangerous modernising change it represented since 1931. The Church hierarchy and the Catholic press, in open 'political partnership' with the CEDA, had played an enormous role in generating the tensions, fears and hatreds which prevailed in Spain during the spring and summer of 1936, and which made the military coup feasible. The sectors which rebelled against the government in July 1936 all understood that the traditional conservative order they sought to restore to Spain would be underpinned by Catholicism.³⁷

The anticlerical violence which began in the Republican zone after July 17-18 1936 then reinforced conservative views forged before 1936 of a demonic Republic which persecuted religion, allowing the Church to amplify the victimist discourse which it had developed between 1931 and 1936 and to justify its already established support for the rebels.³⁸ The ecclesiastical hierarchy could now unreservedly espouse the idea of the war as a 'crusade' against an 'alien Spain' infected with foreign communist ideas which

³⁵ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.763-64; Ledesma, 'Delenda est ecclesia', p.34; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.217-21.

³⁶ Juan de Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco*, Vol.2 (Vienne-Toulouse: Editorial Egi-Indarra, 1960), pp.56-57; Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp.50-51.

³⁷ Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.199-201; On the CEDA as the Church's 'primary political partner' see Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), pp. 190-94.

³⁸ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.57-62.

had to be destroyed in order to impose the order, religion and hierarchy of the true, Catholic Spain. The enemy, capable of such barbarous crimes against Christianity, was presented as alien, inhuman and bestial.³⁹ As the second chapter of this thesis discusses, this dehumanising, alienating rhetoric had been deeply embedded into the discursive framework of the CEDA and other rightwing Catholic forces since the early Republican period. The nationalistic, Catholic ‘crusade’ which the discourse set out to legitimise also far predated the beginning of the civil war. Now, with the Church’s ideological weight placed firmly behind the rebels, religion provided the ideological legitimisation of the ‘crusade’. Nationally and internationally, the Church’s ‘consecration of the uprising’ enabled the rebels to present themselves as the defenders of Catholic values.⁴⁰

The Church hierarchy, in its public statements and later in its field masses, its blessing of troops and guns, and its commemoration of rebel victories, ended up playing a larger role than any other component of the Francoist coalition in constructing and reinforcing the concept of the ‘two Spains’.⁴¹ In September 1936, *The Two Cities*, a pastoral letter issued by Bishop of Salamanca Enrique Pla y Deniel, defined the war as a ‘crusade’ and justified the rising as necessary to reconquer Spain ‘for religion, for the fatherland and for civilisation.’⁴² A month later, Cardinal Isidro Gomá portrayed the war as a choice between religion and irreligion, Christianity and barbarism – and two civilisations which could not coexist.⁴³ July 1937’s Collective Letter, signed by all but five Spanish bishops, officially confirmed the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s backing for the ‘crusade’ and the now indissoluble union between ‘cross and sword’.⁴⁴ In 1938, when the Republican government tentatively proposed an internationally brokered peace deal,

³⁹ Guiliiana di Febo, ‘De la victoria incondicional a la no reconciliación. El discurso de la propaganda (1937 – 1939)’, in F.J. Lorenzo Pinar (ed.), *Tolerancia y Fundamentalismos en la Historia* (Universidad de Salamanca, 2007), p. 253.

⁴⁰ Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp. 33-34, 190-194. ‘Consecration’ in Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p. 55.

⁴¹ Herbert R. Southworth, *El mito de la cruzada de Franco* (Debolsillo: Spain, 2008) p.76; Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco*, Vol. II, pp.72-73. For general works on the communion between church and dictatorship, see also Alfonso Botti, *Cielo y dinero: el nacionalcatolicismo en España, 1881 – 1975* (Alianza: Madrid, 1992); Alfonso Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra, para ganar la paz: Iglesia y Guerra Civil, 1936-1939* (Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid, 1995).

⁴² Quotes from Enrique Pla y Deniel, *Las dos ciudades: carta pastoral*, 30/09/1936 (Salamanca: Calatrava, September 1936), pp. 29-31. See also Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp.70-71; Álvarez Bolado, *Para ganar la guerra*, pp. 28-34.

⁴³ Isidro Gomá y Tomás, ‘El caso de España. Instrucción a sus diocesanos y respuesta a unas consultas sobre la guerra actual’ (Pamplona: November 1936), reproduced in Gonzalo Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia en España, 1931-1939, Vol II.: La Guerra Civil, 1936-1939* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1993), pp. 197-86. See also Lannon, *Privilege*, pp. 202-3.

⁴⁴ Raguer, *Gunpowder and incense*, pp.106-25. ‘Cross and sword’ in Javier Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz: Violencia durante la Guerra Civil y la dictadura franquista* (Alianza: Madrid, 2008), p.101.

the bishops opined that conciliatory measures would only postpone the inevitable confrontation between good and evil underway on Spanish soil. Gomá, inciting Catholics to the violent extirpation of the enemy, stated that the question had to be decided on the battlefield because ‘no purification is possible except that of arms.’⁴⁵

Of course, ecclesiastical opinion was not monolithic. A minority of priests and bishops, though shocked by anticlerical violence, viewed the ‘crusade’ as a distortion of Christian morals. The Catalan cardinal Vidal i Barraquer, for example, refused to sign the Collective Letter on the grounds that the Church’s involvement in the war would compromise the institution politically, harm its pastoral mission and provoke reprisals against Catholics in Republican territory.⁴⁶ Ecclesiastical figures like Canon Gallegos Rocafull and the Madrid parish priest Leocadio Lobo involved themselves in Republican propaganda work, explaining the anticlerical violence of 1936 as a reaction to the Church’s political allegiances and insensitivity to the plight of the poor.⁴⁷ But although ecclesiastical positions were nuanced, if the clergy strayed too far from the ideological line of the ‘crusade’, its leaders had no qualms about executing those who, religiously speaking, belonged to their ‘side’. This was the fate of the sixteen Basque priests executed by the authorities in October 1936 after the province of Guipúzcoa fell to the rebels. Their ‘crime’ was their perceived support for the Republic and the goals of the Basque nationalist party. Priests, ex-priests and illustrious Catholics were also executed by the authorities in several other parts of rebel Spain for questioning the repression against sectors whom the rebels had deemed ‘enemies’.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Gomá quote in di Febo, ‘De la victoria incondicional’, p. 251-55. See also Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.302-3.

⁴⁶ Lannon, *Privilege*, p.205, 210-11; Raguier, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.112.

⁴⁷ Fr. Leocadio Lobo, *Open Letter to the Editor of The Times* (June 1938) and *Primate and Priest* (Press Department of the Spanish Embassy in London) José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull, *Crusade or Class War?: The Spanish Military Revolt* (London, 1937), LSE Archives, COLL MISC 0091/38 and 0091/13; Lannon, *Privilege*, p.211; Daniel Avasa, *Católicos del bando rojo* (Barcelona: Styria, 2009), pp. 207-14, 273-82; José María Gallegos Rocafull, *La pequeña grey. Testimonio religioso sobre la guerra civil española* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 2007), *passim*.

⁴⁸ Juan de Iturralde, *La Guerra de Franco, los Vascos y la Iglesia, Tomo II: Cómo pudo seguir y triunfar la guerra* (San Sebastián: Gráf. Izarra, 1978), pp. 331-41; Peter Anderson, *From the Pulpit to the Dock: Basque Priests in Franco’s Military Courts in 1937*, in S. Ott (ed.) *War, Exile, Justice and Everyday Life, 1936-1945* (Reno, Nevada, USA: Center for Basque Studies/University of Nevada Press, 2011), pp. 59-83. The chapter explores the theme of the numerous PNV-supporting priests imprisoned in Francoist jails following the occupation of the province of Vizcaya; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.161-70.

On a grassroots level, the Church was implicated in social and political cleansing in rebel Spain from the outset.⁴⁹ The repression of perceived social and political enemies belonging to the ‘other Spain’ was controlled by the military high command and sanctioned by the Church. It began immediately, even in areas of notable Catholic support for the rebels. In both zones, ‘religious’ and ‘irreligious’ violence was executed with the aim of ‘cleansing’ people who were incompatible with each group’s vision of society. In Republican Spain, this violence occurred in a situation of state disintegration and was opposed by the authorities. In rebel Spain, it was a systematic exercise in making an ‘investment in terror’ which would endure for years, and in creating complicity between the authorities and those who participated in that terror.⁵⁰ The forging of this ‘pact of blood’ was a conscious strategy for the foundation of the new rebel state and social order.⁵¹

Although some priests participated in killings, instances of direct clerical involvement in the violence were relatively scarce.⁵² An obvious exception to this pattern was northerly Navarre, where clerical volunteers joined the military rising on a mass scale with the same crusading spirit that had inspired their participation in the Carlist Wars of the nineteenth century.⁵³ The role of priests after July 1936 was more usually to justify social cleansing from the pulpit, where they exhorted the local population to join the ‘real’ Spain which had risen against evil, or from the radio, where they spoke of the purging as the ‘work of God.’⁵⁴ The Church was the chief architect of local ritualistic violence. Lannon notes that there was little embarrassment among Catholics when the repression orchestrated by the rebel authorities in Badajoz in August 1936 was scheduled to coincide with the feast of Assumption of the Virgin.⁵⁵ In central and northern Spain, executions sometimes occurred on saints’ days and feast days and were followed by village dances which the local population were obliged to attend. In

⁴⁹ See, for example, French Catholic Georges Bernanos’ classic account of clerical cooperation with the military authorities in Mallorca: *Los grandes cementerios bajo la luna* (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2009).

⁵⁰ Preston, *Holocausto*, p. 612.

⁵¹ Preston, *Civil War*, p.3.

⁵² Preston, *Holocausto*, pp. 430-31.

⁵³ Javier Ugarte Tellería, *La Nueva Covadonga Insurgente: orígenes sociales y culturales de la sublevación de 1936 in Navarra y el País Vasco* (Biblioteca Nueva: Madrid, 1998), pp.149-58; Iturralde, *El Catolicismo y la Cruzada de Franco*, Vol.I, pp.68-69; Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp.54-55.

⁵⁴ On preaching from the pulpit see Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz*, p.100. On ‘radio priests’, Francisco Moreno Gómez, *La guerra civil en Córdoba* (Madrid: Alpuerto, 1985), pp. 463-64.

⁵⁵ Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 209.

what looked like a terrible mirror image of the festive mockery of religious ceremonies and grisly exhibition of religious remains underway in the Republican zone, society was being remade through violence grounded in quasi-religious ritual which functioned to dehumanise the victims and tie perpetrators and observers together with bonds of blood.⁵⁶

As the war progressed, the Church's legitimisation of the destruction of the 'other Spain' allowed it gradually to secure moral and cultural primacy in the new state that was being constructed in rebel-controlled territory. Before the end of the war, the Church had already secured numerous new powers - especially in education - affirmed in legal texts by the rebel authorities. This marked the beginning of a process whereby the Church acquired a virtually unparalleled level of control over the spheres of morality and education in postwar Spanish society.⁵⁷ With the insurgent victory, as Italian historian Giuliana di Febo indicates, 'the other Spain, the Republican one, was cancelled.'⁵⁸ The ecclesiastical hierarchy, enjoying a gradual restoration of the Church's rights and privileges which would culminate in the declaration of a Confessional State and the Concordat of 1953 with the Vatican, was on hand to cooperate in the unpleasant business of 'cancelling' the Republic's legacy and of attempting to extinguish the imaginaries of republicans. It would be achieved through the expansion and institutionalisation of the processes of social purification, mass denunciation, revenge and collective punishment which had marked the civil war.⁵⁹

From the very beginning of the conflict, the Church had been implicated in the processes of military justice which would form the foundations of the post-war Francoist state and its prison universe. Priests and monks were a constant presence in jails, where they administered 'spiritual assistance' to prisoners condemned to death. These religious personnel invited, cajoled – and occasionally coerced - prisoners into

⁵⁶ Graham, *The War and its Shadow*, chapter two; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.114-15; Ángela Cenarro Lagunas, 'El Triunfo de la reacción: fascistas y conservadores en Teruel', in Julián Casanova (ed.), *El Pasado Oculto. Fascismo y Violencia en Aragón (1939-1939)*, (Zaragoza: Mira Editores, 1999), p.75. On quasi-religious ritual and exhumations in republican Spain, see Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations' pp.253-260 and *Discourse and the Construction of Society: comparative studies of myth, ritual and classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.103-28.

⁵⁷ María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, 'La defensa de la orden social: fascismo y religión en Huesca', in Casanova, *El pasado oculto*, p.166-67; Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp.55-62.

⁵⁸ di Febo, 'De la victoria incondicional', p. 264.

⁵⁹ Graham, *The War and its Shadow*, chapter two.

‘making their peace with God’ before they faced the rebel firing squads.⁶⁰ Parish priests cooperated fully with military courts in the rebel zone, supplying detailed reports of the social conduct and political activities of the accused during the Republican period.⁶¹ In the concentration camp sphere, priests wielded power in deciding the fates of prisoners of war, supplying information to commissions of classification concerning the private and public lives of the accused. These reports ranged from paternalistic justifications of prisoners’ crimes, to condemnations of their irreligious lives. Sometimes, the priest’s verdict was resumed in one, chilling word: *fusilable* (executable).⁶²

From 1939, the clerical role in the military justice system mushroomed. The intellectual architect of the Francoist penal system, the Jesuit priest José A. Pérez de Pulgar, claimed that the social and political convulsion of the war demanded ‘exceptional measures’ which would change entirely the psychology, moral state and social condition of those prisoners who were ‘redeemable’. Religious personnel ensured that the inmates of prisons, reformatories and other correctional facilities could not escape ‘the weight of memory and the omnipresent image of the martyrs of the war’.⁶³ One priest’s assertion that God had ‘his glory reserved for those who fulfilled his law and the eternal punishment of hell for those who ignore it’ was transformed into the horrendous daily experience of thousands of men and women.⁶⁴

On the outside, as the Church concentrated on restoring its massive physical presence in Spain’s public spaces⁶⁵, it continued to develop its divisive discourse concerning anticlerical violence, invoking the memory of the ‘martyrs of the crusade’ butchered at the hands of the ‘red barbarians’. This discourse elevated Franco to the position of ‘Caudillo of Spain by the grace of God’, the man who had saved the country

⁶⁰ Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco*, Vol.2, pp.73-75; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.98-170; Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz*, p.101; On coercion and ‘making peace’, Gutmaro Gómez Bravo and Jorge Marco, *La obra del miedo: Violencia y sociedad en la España franquista, 1936-1950* (Barcelona: Península, 2011), pp.122-29. For a critical firsthand account see Gumersindo de Estella, *Fusilados en Zaragoza, 1936 – 1939. Tres años de asistencia espiritual a los reos* (Zaragoza: Mira Editores, 2003).

⁶¹ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp. 130-39; Peter Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials: Terror and Complicity, 1939-1945* (New York and Oxon: Cañada Blanch, 2010), p. 127.

⁶² Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz*, p.101.

⁶³ Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *El exilio interior: cárcel y represión en la España franquista 1939 – 1950* (Taurus: Madrid, 2009), pp. 46-57; See also Gómez Bravo and Marco, *Obra del miedo*, pp. 147-58.

⁶⁴ ‘Eternal punishment of hell’ in Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz*, p.103. On the construction of the ‘martyrs’, see Mary Vincent, ‘The Martyrs and the Saints: Masculinity and the Construction of the Francoist Crusade’, *History Workshop Journal* 47 (1999), esp. pp. 88-89.

⁶⁵ On peacetime Church-Francoist mobilisation see Giuliana di febo, *Ritos de guerra y de victoria en la España franquista*, (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2002), *passim*.

from irreligious, anarchic chaos.⁶⁶ It would also underpin the compilation of the *Causa General*, an enormous judicial investigation into ‘Republican wrongdoing’ commissioned by the Franco regime in April 1940.⁶⁷

Francoism, the *Causa General* and the martyrologies

The colossal and sprawling *Causa General* is the largest and most widely consulted documental source for researchers into repression in the Republican zone during the civil war. It is the principal primary source used in this thesis. It was a key instrument in the construction and reaffirmation of the Franco dictatorship’s Manichean narrative of the civil war’s meaning - a narrative which reduced the republican wartime and peacetime experiences to ‘an aberrant and intolerable heap of tragic and bloody episodes of suffering’.⁶⁸ The basic message of the investigation, as historian Helen Graham notes, was ‘that atrocities had been committed only by Republicans and endured only by Franco supporters.’⁶⁹ The Church was at the forefront of the creation and dissemination of this representation, which formed the base of the Franco regime’s political legitimacy, serving to justify *a posteriori* the military coup.⁷⁰ The Francoist state building project, based around extinguishing every last ember of the collective identities and political cultures which comprised the alien ‘anti-Spain’, had been underway since the very beginning of war. The prison camps and jails, the military trials, and the mass denunciation within communities were all tools directed towards those whose ideological ideas and political pasts made them aliens in the ‘new Spain’. Those who were not condemned to death by military trial would be coerced into adapting to the Francoist mould and adopting the values of the new society.⁷¹

The foundations of the *Causa General* were also laid during the war. As the rebels occupied new territory, military prosecutors initiated investigations into violent acts and killings committed during Republican incumbency. The investigations were known as

⁶⁶ ‘Caudillo de España por la Gracia de Dios’ in Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, p.144; On the construction of the ‘martyrs’, see Mary Vincent, ‘The Martyrs and the Saints: Masculinity and the Construction of the Francoist Crusade’, *History Workshop Journal* 47 (1999), esp. pp. 88-89 and Peter Anderson, ‘In the Name of the Martyrs: Memory and Retribution in Francoist Southern Spain’, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 8, Issue 3 (2011), pp. 355-70.

⁶⁷ ‘Republican wrongdoing’ in Preston, *Civil War*, p.9 and *Holocausto*, p. 652.

⁶⁸ José Luis Ledesma, ‘La “Causa General”: Fuente Sobre la “Represión”, la Guerra Civil (y el Franquismo)’, *Spagna Contemporanea*, 28 (2005), p.207.

⁶⁹ Graham, *Introduction*, p.133.

⁷⁰ Ledesma, ‘La “Causa General”, pp.206-7.

⁷¹ Gómez Bravo, *Exilio interior*, p.46; Gómez Bravo and Marco, *Obra del miedo*, p.66, 154-55.

the *Causas Generales Militares*. The procedures, which rested upon denunciations from community members, were a means of imposing social control upon the population. They were a key tool of the ‘social cleansing’ being carried out by the insurgents, and part of a propagandistic rewriting of the war’s history before it had ended. Thus, in April 1939, when Franco proclaimed the insurgent victory, the Francoist state was already partially constructed. The repression orchestrated in areas where the coup had been successful, and in regions which had fallen to the insurgents during the war, had partly mobilised the embryonic ‘Francoist nation’, violently implanting the concept of the two diametrically opposed Spains in the minds of its population. To consolidate this nation, the regime increased its repressive repertoire. In the judicial field, the military tribunals, the Tribunal of the Repression of Masonry and Communism and the Tribunal of Political Responsibilities functioned together to spread the fear of denunciation through every community. The *Causa General*, which united the records of the *Causas Generales Militares*, and began to search for documentary proof of the war’s ‘Red Terror’, was a key plank of the repressive network.

The *Causa General* did not have judicial authority and thus could not pass legal sentence. The object of its investigations was no less far reaching for all that. It aimed to shape an enduring historical legacy in memory of the insurgent crusade. The decree that established it announced that it would ‘make known all the crime that was committed, revealing how it was prepared, organised, inspired and directed.’ This meticulous ‘database of red terror’ was a huge propagandistic exercise intended both for internal and international consumption.⁷² Until the end of the 1950s, *Causa General* investigations were a key component of the regime’s punitive arsenal. To obtain their evidence and locate their suspects, the *Causa General*’s investigators worked with the Civil Guard, police bodies and the tribunals, and also with prison and concentration camp authorities. With the fear of denunciation and the thirst for revenge firmly embedded in the mental landscapes of the population, the *Causa General* was endlessly

⁷² *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 04/05/1940; ‘Database’ in Ledesma, ‘Causa General’, p.206 (complete article, pp.203-220). See also Pablo Gil Vico, ‘Ideología y represión: la Causa General: evolución histórica de un mecanismo jurídico-político del régimen franquista’, *Revista de Estudios Políticos* (nueva época) 101 (1998), pp. 159-189; David Ruiz, ‘Marco jurídico e institucional’, Glicerio Sánchez Recio, ‘La “Causa General” como fuente para la investigación histórica’, and Manuel Ortiz Heras, ‘Las posibilidades de la Causa General como fuente para proyectos de investigación’, all in Isidro Sánchez, Manuel Ortiz and David Ruiz (Coords.), *España franquista: Causa General y actitudes sociales ante la dictadura* (Albacete: Universidad De Castilla-La Mancha, 1993), pp. 13-21, 23-28 and 29-52.

nourished by information supplied by people with various motives: grief, ideological conviction, financial compensation, and the fear of facing punishment themselves.⁷³

In the early years of Francoism, this ‘evidence’ began to form the basis of a body of ‘martyrological’ literature, generally written by ecclesiastical personnel or ideologically committed lay Catholics. During the war and in the immediate post-war period, martyrologists like Luis Carreras, Antonio Castro Albarrán and Antonio Pérez de Olaguer reconstructed the story of the ‘persecuted church’ with accounts which generally exaggerated the numbers of victims.⁷⁴ One of the ‘classic’ martyrologies of the period, *Los mártires de la Iglesia (Testigos de su fe)*, was published under the name of Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel, the mitred abbot of the Valle de los Caídos. In actual fact, the 371-page tome was penned by Carlos Luis Álvarez, a journalist who wrote under the pseudonym of Cándido. The author, who had been given just a month to write it, later admitted that his work consisted of ‘a mixture of invention and plagiarism’.⁷⁵ Joan Estelrich’s celebrated 1937 martyrology *La Persecución Religiosa en España* was another work of propagandistic exaggeration. The author, who was paid by the Catalan regionalist politician turned Franco enthusiast Francesc Cambó to produce propaganda, asserted that eighty percent of Spain’s religious personnel had perished in the conflict.⁷⁶ Although this current of literature is an important historiographical source, it is deeply problematic because it is contaminated by the epistemological categories of the *Causa General*. The martyrologies incorporate –and help to construct and prop up – the *Causa General*’s Manichean representation of the civil war.

Antonio Montero Moreno’s 1961 *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España*, an exhaustive investigation conducted using state and ecclesiastical documentation,

⁷³ Paul Preston, *Civil War*, p.10; Graham, *War and its Shadow*, chapter seven.

⁷⁴ Examples are Luis Carreras, *Grandeza cristiana de España. Notas sobre la persecución religiosa* (Toulouse: Les Frères Douladoure, 1938). English version: *The Glory of Martyred Spain: Notes on the Religious Persecution* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1939); Antonio Pérez de Olaguer, *El terror rojo en Cataluña* (Burgos: Ediciones Antisectarios, Burgos, 1937); Aniceto de Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima. La Iglesia española mártir de la revolución roja* (Salamanca: Nacional, 1940) and *Este es el cortejo: Héroes y mártires de la cruzada española* (Salamanca: Tip. Cervantes, 1941); Antonio Aracil, *Dolor y triunfo: Héroes y mártires en pueblos de Andalucía durante el Movimiento Nacional* (Barcelona: Tip. Católica Casals, 1944); Joaquín Arrarás Iribarren, *Historia de la cruzada española* (Madrid: Ediciones Españolas. S.A, 1941).

⁷⁵ Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel, *Los mártires de la Iglesia (Testigos de su fe)* (Barcelona: AHR, 1956); Cándido, *Memorias prohibidas* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1995) pp.147-51; Preston, *Holocausto español*, p.323.

⁷⁶ Joan Estelrich, *La persecución religiosa en España* (Buenos Aires: Difusión, 1937); Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.126.

constituted a certain change and continuity in the martyrological writing of history.⁷⁷ The key change was that the author, a priest who would go on to become Archbishop of Mérida-Badajoz, arrived at a set of reliable statistics - still used by modern scholars from across the historiographical spectrum - regarding the numbers of religious personnel killed. He thus discredited the ill-founded exaggerations of the period.⁷⁸ Evidence of change was also present in Montero Moreno's conciliatory stance: 'The only answer is for us always to acquaint ourselves thoroughly with the facts only after being shorn of every means of fermenting the passions.'⁷⁹ Montero Moreno's temperate approach was undoubtedly driven by the spirit of reform and renewal developing within the international Catholic Church during the 1960s - a spirit which would be embodied by the liberal resolutions of the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965. However, although the teachings of Vatican II would eventually unleash a prolonged, modernising debate within the Spanish Catholic Church, these winds of change would take some time to permeate the still overwhelmingly integrist Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁸⁰ In 1961, the bishops' collective interpretation of the civil war had not changed since the 1940s. Accordingly, Montero Moreno's 'camouflaged affirmation that the two sides of the conflict both had their share of truth and reason' left diverse members of the Spanish Church scandalised.⁸¹

Yet Montero Moreno's conclusions reinforced certain continuity too. While free of the vitriol of his predecessors, they were essentially the same ones as always: the Church was a passive victim rather than an actor in the events. Montero's theorising concerning the causes of anticlerical violence absolved the Church of all implication in the violence, practically ignoring its social and political role and perpetuating the well-worn image of the persecuted victim.⁸² Work completed in the martyrological tradition right up to the 1980s and 1990s shows that Montero Moreno was more of an anomaly

⁷⁷ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*.

⁷⁸ Montero Moreno's figures (already used in this chapter) were: 6,832 religious personnel (4,184 priests and seminarians, 2,365 monks and 283 religious nuns), pp. 763-64.

⁷⁹ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa* (introduction).

⁸⁰ F.L. Cross (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.1682-1683; Manuel Ortiz Heras, 'Iglesia y control social. De controladora a controlada', in Julio de la Cueva Merino and Ángel Luis López Villaverde (eds.), *Clericalismo y asociacionismo católico en España: de la restauración a la transición* (Universidad de Castilla la Mancha, 2005), pp.161-62; Nigel Townson, *España en cambio. El segundo franquismo, 1959-1975* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2009), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

⁸¹ Fray Arturo Alonso Lobo in Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp.4-6.

⁸² Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, introduction; Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp.4-6.

than a trendsetter. Two works of the 1990s, Gonzalo Redondo's history of the Church during the Republic and the civil war⁸³ and José Luis Alfaya's study of the 'cyclone of barbarity' unleashed in the diocese of Madrid-Alcalá after 17-18 July 1936⁸⁴, presented the conflict in black and white terms and played a crucial role in mustering support for, and maintaining interest in, the beatification process instigated by John Paul II in 1985.

Today, in a trend which corresponds with the highly integrist nature of the current Spanish Episcopate, martyrological literature is more abundant than ever. The most prolific 'modern martyrologist' in Spain today is Vicente Cárcel Orti, honorary prelate and head of the Chancellery of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura - the Catholic Church's highest judicial authority. His work generalises the secularising measures of the Republican period and the anticlerical violence of 1936 into one enormous, unprovoked assault against religion, and indeed against God.⁸⁵ His arguments are echoed in the avalanche of 'journalistic martyrologies' published in recent years. Usually devoid of primary research, these books consist of rehashed compilations of earlier material. Their intellectual reasoning, apparently based on the conviction that 'the right to historical memory should not polarise public opinion'⁸⁶, is also a thinly veiled recycling of Francoist arguments.⁸⁷

As the British historian Mary Vincent has indicated, The martyrologies, produced with the specific aim achieving the beatification of the victims, are written according to the Church's analytical concepts - specifically that of martyrdom.⁸⁸ They focus on the blameless, virtuous and exemplary lives of religious personnel. The courageous deaths they die display 'Christian virtues'⁸⁹ of unquestioning acceptance of the will of God,

⁸³ Gonzalo Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia en España, 1936-1939* (2 vols.) (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, S.A., 1993).

⁸⁴ José Luis Alfaya, *Como un río de fuego: Madrid, 1936* (Barcelona: Ediciones Internacionales Universitarias, 1998) p.278.

⁸⁵ Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La gran persecución: España, 1931-1939* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2000). By the same autor see *Persecuciones religiosas Y mártires del siglo XX* (Ediciones Palabra, 2001), *La persecución religiosa en España durante la Segunda Republica, 1931-1939* (Ediciones Rialp, 1990).

⁸⁶ Quote from J. Alberti, *La Iglesia en Llamas: La persecución religiosa en España durante la Guerra Civil* (Barcelona, Ediciones Destino, 2008).

⁸⁷ See, for example, José Javier Esparza, *El terror rojo en España: una revisión de la "Causa General"* (Barcelona: Ediciones Altera, 2007); Ángel David Martín Rubio, *Paz, Piedad, Perdón...y Verdad (Estudio definitivo sobre la represión en las dos zonas de la Guerra Civil)* (Spain: Editorial Fénix, 1997); Miquel Mir and Mariano Santamaria, *La otra memoria histórica* (Madrid: Nowtilus 2011).

⁸⁸ Mary Vincent, "'The keys to the kingdom": Religious Violence in the Spanish Civil War, July-August 1936', in Ealham and Richards, *Splintering*, pp.73-75.

⁸⁹ Vincent 'Keys', p.73.

redemptive suffering and strength in resisting the evil embodied by their attackers.⁹⁰ Vincent observes that this approach empties the civil war of historical meaning, turning it into another stage in the eternal struggle between good and evil. The perpetrators of anticlerical violence become anonymous agents of that evil. In the same way that the documentation of the *Causa General* presents anticlerical protagonists as a homogenous, faceless ‘mobs’, ‘hordes’ and ‘rabblés’, the martyrologies deem the meanings of anticlerical acts and the identities and motivations of their protagonists irrelevant, leaving them unexplored.⁹¹ As the author of one recent work on religious persecution in Madrid explained, ‘we are not that interested in the identification of those who are guilty of the acts...we are only looking for justice for the victims by recognising their heroism in death and in martyrdom.’⁹²

The ‘unfreezing of history’

This Manichean discourse has cast a long shadow over the historiography of anticlerical violence. The Franco regime continued to make use of the dominant ‘martyrs and barbarians’ interpretation of the war throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The process of ‘collective forgetting’ which underlay Spain’s democratic transition permitted the continued existence of many elements of the regime and its political and social discourse. The politicians who constructed Spain’s democratic system agreed on the need for reconciliation, amnesty, renunciation of revenge and an end to ‘the discourse of the war’. This agreement, which effectively stifled the construction of alternative narratives of the civil war’s meaning, permitted church-constructed discursive elements

⁹⁰ Examples of this style are Vicente Cárcel Orti, *Mártires españoles del Siglo XX* (Madrid: BAC, 1995); Francisco Escámez Mañas, ‘Hermanita de los Ancianos Desamparados, Mártir’, in José Ruiz Fernández and Juan Pedro Vázquez Guzmán, *Religiosidad Popular y Almería: IV Jornadas* (Almería: Instituto de estudios almerienses, 2005); Martín Ibarra Benlloch, ‘La persecución de los cristianos de los primeros siglos y la persecución a los cristianos de la diócesis de Barbastro de 1936 a 1938’ in Bullón de Mendoza, *La otra memoria*, pp.699-711; M^a Encarnación González (ed.), *Quiénes son y de dónde vienen. 498 mártires del siglo XX en España* (Madrid: Edice, 2007).

⁹¹ For this depiction, see AHN, CG, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, Exp. 2/375; Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Madrid-Alcalá (BOOM) (Madrid, Imp. del Asilo del S.C de Jesús), 16/01/1939, Núm. 1,661, *Circular del Excmo. Sr. Obispo invitando a los sacerdotes, autoridades y fieles a la recuperación de las sagrada reliquias de San Isidro*, 16/05/1939, p.57; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Culto*. For an analysis of this discourse, see Carmen González, Martínez, ‘La Causa General de Murcia: Técnicas de Estudio’, in Sánchez, Ortiz and Ruiz, *España franquista*, pp.69-71.

⁹² José Francisco Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa y Guerra Civil: la Iglesia en Madrid 1936-1939* (Madrid: La Esefera de los Libros, 2006), p.18. Along the same lines, see Antonio Montero Moreno in Octavio Marcos, *Testimonio martirial de los Hermanos de San Juan de Dios en los días de la persecución religiosa española* (Madrid: H.H. San Juan de Dios, 1980), pp.45-46. For an analysis of this style of writing, see Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.73;

like the glorification of the civil war's martyrs and the vilification of their killers to survive – and indeed to flourish – in the new democratic age.⁹³

The Spanish Catholic Church did enjoy a brief period of 'liberalisation' during the final years of the Franco regime and the transition, something which was due partly to ordinary priests' responses to the modernising challenge posed by the Second Vatican Council. As churchmen mobilised around issues like human rights, social inequality and regional nationalisms, the institution became increasingly identified with worker protest and grassroots opposition to the dictatorship. From above, Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, who was appointed Primate of Spain in February 1969, played a fundamental role in the Church's movement toward more moderate, conciliatory positions. Committed to the spirit of Vatican II, he worked to distance the institution from the dictatorship and build its democratic credentials. In 1971, a guarded statement from the Church hierarchy questioned publicly the institution's relationship with the dictatorship and effectively apologised for its role in the civil war and its aftermath.⁹⁴

The change, however, was temporary. From the 1980s onwards, with the highly conservative Pope John Paul II in the Vatican, the Spanish Church moved once again towards integrist positions. Today, the rhetoric of 'martyrs and barbarians', concealed for a brief period but never truly questioned or reassessed, manifests itself frequently in the Catholic hierarchy's vociferous support of the beatification of 'fallen', and in its opposition to organisations who seek recognition and compensation for the families of republican victims of the Franco regime.⁹⁵ In August 2011, when Pope Benedict XVI visited Madrid to oversee an international mass meeting of young Catholics, the official guide distributed to these 'pilgrims' explained that: 'during the 1930s...the Church in Spain suffered the bloodiest persecution known in the history of Christianity, with almost 7,000 martyrs.'⁹⁶ On a broader scale, the Church's vigorous mobilisation of its

⁹³ Juliá, *Víctimas*, p.50.

⁹⁴ Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (London: Methuen, 1986), pp.29-37; Cross (ed.), *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p.1682-3; Graham, *Introduction*, p.145; Townson, *España en cambio*, pp.xxxvi-xxxvii; Rafael Cruz, 'El mitin y el motín. La acción colectiva y los movimientos sociales en la España del Siglo XX' in Rafael Cruz (ed.), *Repertorios: la política de enfrentamiento en el Siglo XX* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2008), pp.237-58; For a critical view see Alfredo Grimaldos, *Iglesia en España, 1977-2008* (Barcelona: Península, 2008), p.11-13.

⁹⁵ 'Beatifican a 498 religiosos católicos', *BBC Mundo*, 30/10/2007; Santos Julia, 'Religión y muerte en la España del 36', *El País*, 21/10/2007; Jaime González Sempere, 'Beatificaciones Excluyentes', *El País*, 21/10/2007; Cárcel Ortí in *El Correo*, 27/10/07; Grimaldos, *Iglesia en España*, pp.18-24.

⁹⁶ *Público*, 25/08/2011.

followers against legislation on abortion, homosexual marriage, express divorce and secular education initiatives during the current Socialist administration has displayed a religious institution unable to accept social and political pluralism. Indeed, the president of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, Antonio Rouco Varela, maintains that Spain must be saved from ‘anticlericalism and aggressive laicism’.⁹⁷ Echoes of the alienating, dehumanising, language of the ‘crusade’ are still present on the lips of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as they discuss contemporary progressive, secular social movements. When members of the 15-M movement for ‘real democracy’ announced their decision to demonstrate against the economic cost of the Pope’s August visit, they were branded ‘parasites’ by the spokesman of the Episcopal Conference.⁹⁸

In 2011 the Church, of course, no longer has the power to prevent the rigorous investigation of the Spanish Civil War by historians. The days of the dictatorship and the early years of democracy, when the only written history of the war was either the regime’s propagandistic version or the interpretive ventures of British and North American historians, have been left far behind.⁹⁹ As we saw in the introduction to this chapter, since the 1980s many historians working both inside and outside of Spain have been making bold contributions to the ‘unfreezing’ of the writing of the history of the violence in both zones of during the civil war. Their work, along with studies by British and North American historians and Spanish and North American anthropologists, provides a wealth of interpretive lines of enquiry for this study. The most important ones, which form the basis of this investigation, will be outlined below along with an explanation of how this thesis fits into and advances the existing literature.

The contribution of this thesis

This thesis defines anticlericalism as a phenomenon which was undergoing a process of change and reconfiguration during the first third of the twentieth century. Its aim of

⁹⁷ The quote is from ‘Cruzada papal contra el laicismo en España’, *Público*, 14/08/2011. For other, similar positions, see ‘El Gobierno replica a los obispos que el matrimonio gay es un derecho’, *ABC*, 22/07/2004; ‘Los obispos denuncian “la asfixia” que sufre la familia’, *ABC*, 28/12/2008; J.A. González Casanova, ‘Educación para la ciudadanía’, *El País*, 02/05/2007.

⁹⁸ ‘La Conferencia Episcopal acusa a los manifestantes laicos de “parasitar” y “aprovecharse” del Papa’, *El País*, 12/08/2011.

⁹⁹ Key texts in this genre are Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961); Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); Brennan, *Labyrinth*; Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

investigating anticlericalism as a meaningful social, political and cultural phenomenon is not only complicated by years of Francoist and ecclesiastical propaganda. During the peacetime Republican years and the civil war, Spanish leftwing and republican political observers consistently branded acts of iconoclasm and anticlerical violence as primitive, anachronistic and illogical. Actions like the burning of religious stages had a lengthy history in Spain, belonging to a long-established 'traditional' repertoire of local protest which pre-dated 'modern' political mobilisation. Anticlerical violence and iconoclasm, which had once been prevalent across Europe, had all but disappeared from the societies of Spain's more secular neighbours by the twentieth century.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, incidents like the church burnings of May 1931 or May 1936's 'case of the poisoned sweets' were interpreted by progressive politicians and journalists as 'stupid nonsense', 'collective madness' or 'a lamentable regression to past eras of political ignorance.'¹⁰¹

After 17-18 July 1936, this rhetoric became even more forceful. The Republican authorities, initially unable to control the outburst of anticlerical violence, were acutely embarrassed by it, especially given that it occurred at a moment in which securing the diplomatic and material support of Britain and France for the Republican war effort was vital. Aware that violent anticlerical collective action was exerting irrecoverable damage upon the Republic's international reputation, Republican politicians, writers and propagandists portrayed the popular assault upon the Church as the work of 'uncontrollable' mobs of criminals - a 'stupid destruction' carried out by the 'enraged pueblo'.¹⁰² This interpretation was buttressed by the accounts of many international diplomatic observers who attributed anticlerical acts to 'armed hooligans', 'the mob' and to Spaniards' 'atavistic propensity to burn convents in times of excitement.'¹⁰³ This

¹⁰⁰ For this repertoire, see Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Massachusetts: Addison Mesley, 1978), pp. 151-58. Applied to Spain, see Cruz, 'El mitin y el motín', pp.67-69. For European anticlerical violence see Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, *Culture wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in nineteenth-century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.74-76.

¹⁰¹ The quotes, in order, are from Manuel Azaña cited in Manuel Delgado, *La ira sagrada: anticlericalismo, iconoclastia y antiritualismo en la España contemporánea*, (Barcelona: Humanidades, 1992), p.35; Clara Campoamor, *La revolución española vista por una republicana* (Sevilla: Espuela de Playa, 2009), p.50; *El Socialista*, 05/05/1936.

¹⁰² Quotes, in order, from 'La Iglesia católica en la zona facciosa' (Servicio Español de Información, Valencia, 1937) in Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, p.35(n); Arturo Barea, *La forja de un rebelde: la llama* (Barcelona: Random House, 2007), p. 147.

¹⁰³ Quotes, in order, from NA: FO 371/20525 King to Eden, 01/08/1936; NA: FO371/20527, King to FO, 06/08/1936; NA: FO371/15773: Grahame to Henderson, 25/05/1931. On British diplomats and anticlerical violence, see Maria Thomas, 'The front line of Albion's Perfidy. Inputs into the making of British policy towards Spain: The racism and snobbery of Norman King', *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 20 (2007), pp.116-17

explanation, which was later embraced by numerous historians, is often uncomfortably similar to the image of anticlerical protagonists crafted by the Church and the Franco regime. It is also simplistic, limiting and - as this thesis will demonstrate - fundamentally inaccurate.¹⁰⁴

Chapter one highlights this inaccuracy by explaining that anticlerical modes of thought and forms of collective action, far from being 'traditional' and somehow outmoded by the 1930s, crucially underpinned the 'cultural words' constructed by socialist, anarchist and republican activists from the late nineteenth century onwards. Drawing on British historian Chris Ealham's exploration of CNT activists' construction of an anarchist-orientated 'workers' public sphere' in Barcelona at the beginning of the twentieth century, the chapter argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, workers across Spain were building an overlapping network of alternative political, cultural and social spaces which was undergirded by anticlericalism. Crucially, the chapter contends that the birth of this 'anticlerical workers' public sphere' was a clear product of the process of rapid social and political change unleashed in Spain by the industrialisation and rural-urban emigration which began at the turn of the century and accelerated following the First World War.¹⁰⁵

Since the 1980s, this theme of the evolution of the anticlerical cultural world has been addressed most notably by the Spanish historian José Álvarez Junco. In his work on populist republican mobilisation in Barcelona, and in his seminal article on anticlericalism in the Spanish workers' movement, Álvarez Junco lays down a culturally oriented approach to the study of anticlericalism which investigates the mechanisms of transmission by which popular perceptions of the clergy - and thus collective anticlerical identities - were forged. Chapter one uses this interpretative framework, paying particular attention to one of Álvarez Junco's key assertions: that popular criticism of the clergy was rooted in the Christian moral tradition.¹⁰⁶ The theory that popular anticlericalism stemmed from ethical disgust provoked by the Church's 'betrayal' of the poor, which is also explored in chapter six of this thesis, had previously

¹⁰⁴ See Thomas, *Spanish Civil War*; pp.171-73; Gabriel Cabanellas, *La Guerra de los mil días. Nacimiento, vida y muerte de la Segunda Republica: Volumen I* (Grijalbo: Buenos Aires, 1973), p.308.

¹⁰⁵ Ealham, *Class*, pp.39-49.

¹⁰⁶ José Álvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo en el movimiento obrero', in Gabriel Jackson, *Octubre 1934. Cincuenta años para la reflexión* (Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1985) and *The Emergence of Mass Politics in Spain* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002); Pérez Ledesma, 'Studies on Anticlericalism', pp.231-32.

been expounded by the British historians Gerald Brenan and Eric Hobsbawm, who suggested that the millenarian, ascetic Spanish anarchist movement constituted a kind of substitute religion for its followers, filling the moral void left by the absent Church.¹⁰⁷

This chapter is innovative in that it focuses primarily upon workers' grassroots experience of the Church, revealing how poor rural and urban sectors experienced clerical 'betrayal' on a daily basis. This is important because historians whose work addresses anticlerical collective identities often tend to focus solely on the discourse of the leftwing and republican press, ignoring the ways in which daily encounters with the clergy provoked and intensified anticlerical attitudes.¹⁰⁸ One exception to this trend is the work of the Spanish historian of twentieth-century anticlericalism, Maria Pilar Salomón Chéliz, which deals with the development of popular anticlerical imaginaries at local level (in this case in Zaragoza). Salomón Chéliz analyses the Church's economic role within communities, its involvement in local politics and its propagandistic activities. She uses letters of complaint sent to bishops by parishioners and town councils to reveal the issues which generated tension between the community and local priests.¹⁰⁹ Chapter one, and this thesis in general, will take lessons from Salomón Chéliz's detailed empirical approach to studying 'anticlerical daily experience' while also not losing sight of the wider theoretical topics signalled by Álvarez Junco.

As very little direct testimony exists from rural and urban workers regarding the emotions provoked by their contact with the Church, this anticlerical daily experience has been collected using memoirs of grassroots political activists from the period – people who were neither political leaders nor national figures, but who left a written record of how they perceived the clergy. The chapter also uses selected press sources, and the crucial evidence found in the invaluable studies conducted by North American anthropologists in rural Spanish communities during the 1980s and 1990s. In this way, the chapter assembles an image of the experiences which lay behind the perception of

¹⁰⁷ Brenan, *Labyrinth*, pp.189-90; Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1959), pp. 77-84.

¹⁰⁸ For examples of this approach see de la Cueva Merino, 'Movilización popular e identidad anticlerical'; Demetrio Castro, 'Palabras de fuego. El anticlericalismo republicano', *Journal of Contemporary Spanish Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 2005), p.209.

¹⁰⁹ Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, pp. 171-228.

the Church as a treacherous ally of the wealthy and a fundamental component of the repressive machinery of the political regime.¹¹⁰

Workers' experience of this repressive machinery was a reflection of the central state's steadily increasing intrusion into people's intimate, domestic space during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The theme of the fluid, ever-changing boundaries between 'private' and 'public' space runs through this thesis. Chapter one draws ideas from the work of the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas to present the forging of the anticlerical 'workers' public sphere' as part of an attempt by its architects to gain control of their own private universes, fending off attacks upon the domestic orbit waged by both state and Church.¹¹¹ Chapter two reveals that this struggle to articulate the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' continued into the Republican era, during which the state loomed ever larger in people's everyday lives, both in terms of public order policy and welfare legislation.¹¹²

Space is important to this thesis in another way. Chapters one and two interpret the dual anticlerical and Catholic mobilisation of both the first decade of the twentieth century and the 1930s as a struggle by competing groups to construct and fix the meanings of Spain's public spaces. The thesis draws on the work of the Spanish anthropologist Manuel Delgado, who has indicated that the Church's dominant presence in the built environment was a key element of the 'weft of sacralisations which powerfully ordered social life.'¹¹³ The long-established power held by the Church to disseminate the rites, conceptions and symbols which pervaded Spain's landscape and defined its society allowed the institution to reinforce and replicate the hierarchical, deeply unequal social order. In this situation, as the Spanish historian Santos Juliá has

¹¹⁰ Dave Gilmore, *The People of the Plain: Class and Community in Lower Andalusia* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1980); Jerome R. Mintz, *The Anarchists of Casas Viejas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); George A. Collier, *Socialists of Rural Andalusia: Unacknowledged Revolutionaries of the Second Republic* (California: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp.136-8; Richard Maddox, *El Castillo: The Politics of Tradition in an Andalusian Town* (University of Illinois, 1993) and 'Revolutionary Anticlericalism and Hegemonic Processes in an Andalusian Town, August 1936', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 22, no. 1 (February 1995).

¹¹¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Massachusetts: MIT, 1989), pp.14-26.

¹¹² On public order, see Ealham, *Class*, pp.60-121. On changing boundaries between 'public' and 'private' see Pilar Folguera, 'Relaciones privadas y cambio social', in Pilar Folguera (ed.), *Otras visiones de España* (Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 1993), p.189.

¹¹³ Manuel Delgado, 'Violencia anticlerical e iconoclasta en la España contemporánea', in J. Muñoz, J. Ledesma and J. Rodrigo (coords.), *Culturas y políticas de la violencia España siglo XX* (Madrid: Siete mares 2005), p.98.

indicated, counter-hegemonic demonstrations and secular rituals staged by anticlerical protagonists became part of a fierce semiotic struggle to reorganise the built environment according to their own, alternative conceptions of society.¹¹⁴

The work of the culturally-orientated historians Rafael Cruz and Pamela Radcliff is crucial here. Both scholars have portrayed the Spain of the pre-war Republic - and in particular its urban space - as a symbolic battleground between competing conceptions of Spanish society and of the *pueblo* (the people). Importantly for this study, they have also signalled the inability of the Republican government to forge a common set of secular, republican values, symbols and definitions capable of competing with the dominant Catholic ones.¹¹⁵ This thesis relates these ideas to the Republic's failed bid to challenge the Church's domination of public spaces, and the grassroots battle waged by politicised and increasingly frustrated anticlerical workers to secularise the street.

As Cruz demonstrates, between 1931 and 1936 Catholics mobilised against the Republic using a highly politicised version of its 'traditional' repertoire of pilgrimages, processions and open air masses.¹¹⁶ Simultaneously, anticlerical workers deployed a mixture of newer, political forms of collective action like mass demonstrations and political meetings alongside 'traditional' modalities like church burning.¹¹⁷ This commingling of 'traditional' and newer, political forms of collective action, which had also been witnessed during the mobilisation of the 1910s, is interpreted in chapter two as evidence that anticlericalism was a phenomenon in flux whose protagonists were increasingly imbuing their acts with political meanings. The chapter rejects the standard interpretation of anticlerical collective action as an anachronistic vestige of a pre-political age. Instead, the phenomenon is reassessed as an integral component of the making of mass democracy in Spain.

Having ascertained the crucial importance of anticlerical mobilisation during the peacetime Republican years, this study then asks an obvious yet crucial question: who

¹¹⁴ Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, pp.22-25; Santos Juliá, 'Fieles y mártires: raíces religiosas de algunas prácticas sindicales de la España de los años treinta', *Revista de Occidente*, Nº 23 (1983).

¹¹⁵ Pamela Radcliff, 'La representación de la nación. El conflicto en torno a la identidad nacional y las prácticas simbólicas en la Segunda República', in Cruz and Pérez Ledesma, *Cultura y movilización*, pp. 305-25 and *From Mobilization to Civil War: The Politics of Polarization in the Spanish City of Gijón, 1900-1907* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), *passim*.

¹¹⁶ Cruz, *Pueblo*, *passim*.

¹¹⁷ Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp. 50-62 and *Repertorios*, pp. 63-82.

were the anticlericals? This question has remained largely unaddressed by historians due to a number of significant obstacles. Firstly, the work of a Francoist and ecclesiastical propagandists on the one hand, and Republican politicians and historians sympathetic to the Republic on the other, has effectively stripped the anticlerical protagonists of the 1930s of their identities. With radically divergent motives and from diametrically opposed ideological standpoints, both groups have contributed to the construction of an image of a faceless, 'irrational', 'uncontrollable' anticlerical mob. Secondly, documentation relating to anticlerical collective action during the peacetime Republican years is sparse and difficult to locate. Although historians have access to the records of the Interior Ministry, various regional tribunals, and the police reports which appear sporadically in the *Causa General*, there exists no source which gives detailed information regarding the protagonists of church burning and anticlerical disturbances before July 1936.

The absence of detailed judicial records relating to this period means that chapter three's mission to 'profile' the protagonists of anticlerical acts must focus on the period after July 1936. The chapter adopts the holistic approach suggested in the 1960s by the British Marxist historian George Rudé, who contended that 'the nature of disturbances...is intimately connected with the composition (social, occupational and other) of those taking part in them'.¹¹⁸ It assesses the social class, political affiliation and age of those who attacked religious personnel and church property during the early months of the civil war using information gathered from the records of Francoist military tribunals in two sample regions: Madrid and Almeria.

Chapter three draws several conceptual lines of enquiry from investigations into violence in the Republican zone carried out by José Luis Ledesma. Ledesma, whose work focuses on the north-easterly region of Zaragoza, has completed a meticulous study of the protagonists and victims of all types of revolutionary violence in the region. Crucially, Ledesma's analysis of the 'faces of the repression' suggests that the prevailing image of anticlerical violence as an entirely proletarian phenomenon is oversimplified. He argues that a number of revolutionary protagonists came from rural

¹¹⁸ George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730 - 1848* (London: Serif, 1995), pp. 9, 195, 198-99, 214-15 and (in general) *The Crowd in The French Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1959).

and urban middling sectors. For these people, ‘demanding justice against the enemy could mean an immediate way of participating in the construction of a new society and in the unprecedented “political” sphere that accompanied it.’¹¹⁹ Chapter three carries out a survey of the professional occupation – and therefore the social class – of anticlerical protagonists in Madrid and Almeria, revealing a similarly nuanced picture of middle class anticlerical participation in both regions.

After 17-18 July, in the wake of the virtual collapse of the central state, a fragmented tapestry of competing new powers began to emerge on Republican territory.¹²⁰ These structures have been explored in recent, innovative studies by Ledesma and Julián Casanova – and in the encyclopaedic account of repression in both zones recently completed by Paul Preston.¹²¹ Chapter three’s assessment of the political affiliations of the protagonists of anticlerical acts explores these structures. The chapter also challenges the enduring myth of complete anarchist responsibility for anticlerical violence, testing the theses of more credible recent studies that the perpetrators belonged to political groups drawn from across the left and republican political spectrum.¹²² It also reveals that although many anticlerical actors had been affiliated to socialist, anarchist and republican political organisations before the coup, a significant number of them had no history of political activism. The chapter’s findings support Ledesma’s hypothesis that for many protagonists, committing anticlerical acts provided a means of advancing within the new political and social structures which were being forged in the post-coup disorder. These ideas are explored further in chapter five, which presents anticlerical violence as a ‘building block’ - a tool of social construction.¹²³

The exercise of ‘profiling’ anticlerical protagonists also entails an analysis of their gender. Chapter four takes as its starting point the observation of the British historian Mary Vincent that anticlerical violence after 17-18 July 1936 was ‘overwhelmingly

¹¹⁹ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.235-49 and “‘La santa ira popular’ del 36: La violencia en guerra civil y revolución, entre cultura y política”, in Muñoz, Ledesma and Rodrigo, *Culturas y políticas de la violencia*, pp. 189.

¹²⁰ Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 79-130

¹²¹ Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.307-408.

¹²² For the myth, see See Brenan, *Labyrinth*, p.189; Albert Manet, ‘La Iglesia católica durante la Guerra Civil’, in VV.AA, *Cataluña en la Guerra Civil* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de la Vanguardia, 1975), p.86; Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.201-2. For the debunking, see Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.244-68; Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.76; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, pp.32-34.

¹²³ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.225-26 and *Spanish Republic*, pp.192-202; José Luis Ledesma ‘Qué violencia para qué retaguardia o la Republica en guerra de 1936’, *Ayer* 76 (2010), pp. 83-113.

male on male'.¹²⁴ Female religious personnel comprised a tiny proportion of the victims, and female anticlerical protagonists were outnumbered overwhelmingly by their male counterparts.¹²⁵ The chapter explores Álvarez Junco's assertion that the anticlerical violence of 1936 - and the discourse which surrounded it - was in many ways a product of the culture of sexism and patriarchy which dominated 1930s Spanish society.¹²⁶ By the 1930s, fierce censure of the clergy's sexual misbehaviour was deeply embedded in popular discourse and filled the pages of the leftwing and republican press. According to Álvarez Junco, these allegations were a demonstration that male workers saw themselves as being in 'competition' with priests for access to, and control of, women.¹²⁷ Chapter three uses this explanation to explain the 'masculinisation' of anticlerical violence. It also takes Álvarez Junco's thesis one step further, suggesting that this sense of competition increased as male workers met with ever greater challenges to women's traditional position in the domestic sphere. As working class men began to lose their traditional control of 'the home', their perceived rivalry with priests became ever greater.¹²⁸

The chapter also links the fate of Spain's nuns to themes of masculine control and sexism. It confirms Frances Lannon's assertion that nuns generally escaped the violence meted out to monks and priests because they were perceived as powerless victims of clerical control.¹²⁹ The chapter also looks at the changing position of women in Spain at the beginning of the twentieth century through the lens of anticlerical collective action. It defends the thesis that female participation in anticlerical and iconoclastic acts, though numerically minimal, both reflected and contributed to a process by which women were gradually leaving the purely domestic sphere and achieving 'visibility'. It reveals that for some women, participation in iconoclasm at the beginning of the conflict served as a launch pad into political mobilisation and a means of challenging traditional, church-enforced norms of 'appropriate' female behaviour. Yet the chapter

¹²⁴ Vincent, 'Keys', p.86.

¹²⁵ Preston, *Holocausto*, p.323.

¹²⁶ Álvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo' p.287.

¹²⁷ Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, p.81.

¹²⁸ Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, 1995); Danièle Bussy Genevois, 'El retorno de la hija prodiga: mujeres entre lo público y lo privado', in Folguera, *Otras visiones de España*, p.120.

¹²⁹ Frances Lannon, 'Los cuerpos de las mujeres y el cuerpo político católico: autoridades e identidades en conflicto en España durante las décadas de 1920 y 1930', *Historia Social* 35(1999), pp.73-76; Vincent, 'Keys', p.86.

also points out that the masculinisation of anticlerical violence was broadly symptomatic of the limits of the spontaneous revolution of 1936 in the fields of gender equality and female emancipation. As the North American anthropologist Richard Maddox has observed, the revolutionary egalitarian rhetoric of 1936 was inevitably ‘diluted by preoccupations with male prestige, honour and patriarchal authority.’ Indeed, the relative marginality of women in the anticlerical violence demonstrates that the strength of the image of female anticlerical perpetrators was to a large extent a post-hoc Francoist creation grounded in fears of the challenge to ‘tradition’ posed by ‘out of control’ Republican women.¹³⁰

As chapters three and four show, the revolution of 1936 was heterogeneous, fragmented and frequently contradictory. However, as this thesis argues, it was neither illogical nor irrational. Chapter five draws upon José Luis Ledesma’s ideas regarding socially constructive violence and Chris Ealham’s interpretation of the iconoclasm of 1936 as ‘creative destruction’.¹³¹ It explores the ‘logic’ of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm, presenting them as tools which were used by their agents to reconfigure power and social relations within communities and to reconstruct the meanings of public spaces. The work of the North American historian Natalie Zemon Davis, who explains that religious, ritualistic violence became a tool for the remaking of social relations in sixteenth-century France, is important here. The chapter applies Zemon Davis’ ideas to the anticlerical outburst of 1936, assessing how protagonists used ritualistic, festive violence both rid the community of perceived sources of ‘pollution’ and to deny the gravity of their own actions.¹³² The chapter also explores the ideas presented in the North American anthropologist Bruce Lincoln’s seminal 1985 article on ‘revolutionary exhumations’. Lincoln, guided by the prior anthropological investigations into millenarian activities by the anthropologists Peter Worsely, Kenelm Burridge and Max Gluckmann, presents the ‘obscene’, socially transgressive anticlerical acts which occurred on Republican soil after 17-18 July 1936 as a means of generating

¹³⁰ Maddox, *El Castillo*, p.160; On Francoism and ‘out of control women’ see Graham, *The War and its Shadow*, chapters two and three.

¹³¹ Ledesma, ‘Santa ira popular’, pp.147-92; ‘Creative destruction’ in Ealham, *Class*, p.185.

¹³² Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (United States of America: Polity Press, 1987), pp.181-82.

complicity and cohesion within the groups which carried them out, enabling perpetrators to pass a ‘point of no return.’¹³³

This idea that anticlerical violence – and indeed all types of revolutionary violence – underlay attempts to construct a new society in many parts of Republican Spain is central to chapter five. Accordingly, the chapter explores Ledesma’s observations that the vast tapestry of newly formed and busily producing ‘micro-powers’ which appeared in the Republican zone 17-18 July 1936 used revolutionary violence not only to eliminate perceived enemies, but also to open and secure ‘political spaces’ for themselves within the new social and political order under construction. In particular, the chapter explores the contention that many protagonists from middling sectors, and people who has not been politically mobilised before the coup, participated in iconoclastic and anticlerical acts as a means of achieving power and prestige in the radically new revolutionary circumstances.¹³⁴ The chapter also revisits this thesis’ crucial theme of space and grassroots secularisation. It argues that iconoclastic acts like the gutting of churches and their conversion into educational, political, social and cultural nuclei of the community constituted an attempt by anticlerical protagonists to construct the secular society which the Republic had been unable to give them.¹³⁵

Chapter six continues to explore the ‘logic’ of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm. Inspired by the assertions of both Mary Vincent and Manuel Delgado that the forms which anticlerical violence assumed are, analytically speaking, as important as its effects,¹³⁶ it dismantles the well established myth of the anticlericalism and iconoclasm of 1936 as the irrational work of the ‘maddened crowd’.¹³⁷ Using eyewitness accounts from foreign and Spanish observers, as well as ecclesiastical and Francoist documentation, the chapter reveals that anticlerical and iconoclastic acts were

¹³³ Lincoln, ‘Revolutionary Exhumations’, p.258; Max Gluckman, *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (Great Britain: Routledge, 2004); Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of ‘Cargo’ Cults in Melanesia* (New York: Schocken, 1968); Kenelm Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth* (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 165-68.

¹³⁴ Ledesma, ‘La “santa ira popular”’, pp. 179-82.

¹³⁵ On the ‘resymbolisation’ of religious spaces and objects, see Carmen González Martínez and Magdalena Garrido Caballero, ‘Violencia iconoclasta e instrumentalización política durante la Guerra Civil Española y la Posguerra’, in A. Azuela de la Cueva y C. González Martínez (eds.), *México y España: Huellas contemporáneas: resimbolización, imaginarios, iconoclastia* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2010), pp. 131-54.

¹³⁶ Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.75.

¹³⁷ Ealham, ‘Maddened Crowd’, p. 111.

frequently orchestrated in a highly thorough, planned and orderly manner. It also challenges standard interpretations which link anticlerical violence and iconoclasm to criminality, examining the moral code which underscored many anticlerical incidents. The chapter also nuances the standard interpretation of anticlerical violence as ‘indiscriminate’, ‘blanket’ repression.¹³⁸ It uses the definitions of ‘indiscriminate’ and ‘selective’ violence employed by the Greek political scientist Stathis N. Kalyvas, who argues that indiscriminate violence occurs when the individual guilt of the victim replaced by ‘guilt by association’. The chapter argues that at a local level, priests’ lack of ‘individual guilt’ (or, more specifically, the individual profiles, actions and histories of religious personnel) could often function to save them from violence.¹³⁹

Chapter six also examines the role played by people from outside the community in catalysing and driving iconoclasm and anticlerical violence. Using the regions of Almeria and Madrid as case studies, it focuses on anticlerical acts in rural communities. It examines Julián Casanova’s assertion that the arrival of armed militiamen unknown to the local populous acted as a catalyst for revolutionary violence as it allowed the breaking of neighbourly bonds and community solidarities.¹⁴⁰ This process has recently been analysed by Paul Preston, who also observes that in Catalonia, local defence committees sometimes agreed reciprocally to ‘cleanse’ one another’s territory, first giving each other the crucial local knowledge necessary to carry out the purge.¹⁴¹ Later, ‘outsiders’ provided a scapegoat for local people who were unable to admit that killings had been committed by – and against – members of the same closely knit communities. In Zaragoza, a region which was affected cataclysmically by the entry of roaming militia columns, Ledesma notes that for incoming militias, who had little knowledge of the town or the location of its priests, the ‘inside knowledge’ of the local population was a crucial factor in anticlerical killing.¹⁴² Chapter six, which examines Madrid and Almeria, two areas which were not affected significantly by the entry of militia columns, investigates the interactions and dissonances between ‘outsiders’ and

¹³⁸ For this interpretation, see Julio de la Cueva, ‘Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (July 1998), pp.361-62.

¹³⁹ Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge, 2009), pp.141-43.

¹⁴⁰ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.215-16, 221-25 and *Spanish Republic*, pp.209-11.

¹⁴¹ Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.316-17, 321-22.

¹⁴² Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.250-60.

‘insiders’ which functioned to drive – and occasionally to prevent – acts of anticlericalism and iconoclasm.

Finally, chapter six returns to the themes proposed by Hobsbawm, Brennan and Álvarez Junco regarding anticlericalism and the Christian moral tradition. A number of authors, observing the quasi-religious, ritualistic forms of anticlerical violence, have argued that its protagonists retained some vestige of religious faith. In this context, these authors view attacks on religious property as an attempt to ‘purify’ a Church which had lost its path, allying itself with the wealthy and ‘betraying’ the poor.¹⁴³ The chapter uses observations by Santos Juliá, Manuel Pérez Ledesma and Álvarez Junco regarding the religious frameworks and discursive elements of the Spanish socialist, anarchist and republican movements to suggest that for many anticlerical protagonists in the 1930s, ‘traditional’ religious and newer political modes of thought melded and mingled. The mixture of rational, organised and politically motivated destruction and killing with ritualistic forms and Christian moral influences is perfectly demonstrative of anticlericalism as a phenomenon in flux - a phenomenon which sprung from a society which was undergoing rapid processes of social, political and cultural change.¹⁴⁴

Methodology and sources

Despite the wide range of conceptual avenues provided by the secondary sources outlined above, to date there is still no full-length study which addresses anticlerical violence in the 1930s. While the construction of an exhaustive national study lies beyond the logistical possibilities of one doctoral thesis, it is possible to take a thematic approach, addressing the topics and themes explained above. In order to discuss these on a national level, the study draws its evidence and examples from a wide range of Spanish regions using a selection of memoirs and travelogues written by foreign and Spanish observers of 1930s Spain, selected secondary sources, and the more reliable

¹⁴³ Brennan, *Labyrinth*, pp.189-90; Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, pp.77-84; Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.161; Maurici Serrahima in Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), p.153; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, pp.287-95 and *La ideología política del anarquismo español* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1976), pp.204-14 and *Mass Politics*, pp.68-80; Santos Juliá Díaz, *Madrid: 1931-1934, De la fiesta popular a la lucha de clases* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1984), pp.173-76 and ‘Fieles y mártires’, pp.61-76.

components of the martyrological literature. However, the bulk of the primary empirical research has been conducted in two regions: Madrid and Almeria.¹⁴⁵

The focus on Madrid and Almeria relates to the analytical possibilities presented by these regions as they connect to the key themes of this thesis. Madrid, as Spain's capital city and the driving nucleus of the rapid political changes underway in the 1930s, is a natural choice, especially given its lively history as a site of populist republican anticlericalism. The province provided the backdrop to some of the most famous anticlerical incidents of the 1930s, from the church burnings of May 1931, to May 1936's 'case of the poisoned sweets', to the 'assassination' of the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the beginning of the civil war in August 1936. Yet surprisingly, although historians have conducted a number of indispensable studies of Republic-era grassroots political mobilisation in the capital, no analytically serious, non-martyrological study of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm in the region exists.¹⁴⁶

Almeria, on Spain's south-eastern seaboard, is an area which national studies of 1930s Spain tend to overlook. This makes it intriguing 'unchartered territory' for this thesis. Furthermore, as the region remained under Republican control for the entire war, it constitutes a good location to examine the political texture of the Republican home front, shorn of the urgencies and instabilities being experienced in areas located closer to active military fronts. The province's history during the 1930s has been addressed in two important studies by the local historian Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze. These works are largely political histories which only deal with anticlericalism in passing, but they will be useful as tools with which to contextualise primary source information.¹⁴⁷ Beyond this, this thesis will draw lessons from the new generation of historians from the University of Almeria who are currently producing innovative, conceptually interesting

¹⁴⁵ For example, Langdon Davies, *Barricades* (London: Reportage Press, 2007); Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (London: Pluto Press, 1986); Mary Low and Juan Breá, *Red Spanish Notebook* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1937); Augustin Souchy Bauer, *With the Peasants of Aragón* (Orkney, Cienfuegos Press, 1982); Jason Gurney, *Crusade in Spain*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1974). Peadar O'Donnell. *Salud! An Irishman in Spain*, London: Methuen, 1937). For more reliable martyrological texts, see Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*; Alfaya, *Río de fuego*; Rodríguez Sánchez, *El habito y la cruz*.

¹⁴⁶ For these studies, see Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*; Sandra Souto Kustrín, 'Y ¿Madrid? ¿Qué hace Madrid?' *Movimiento revolucionario y acción colectiva: 1933-1936* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2004).

¹⁴⁷ Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería* (Granada:Cajal, Granada, 1986) and *Almería 1936-1937: Sublevación militar y alteraciones en la retaguardia republicana* (Almería: Universidad de Almería, 1996).

studies which address the province's experience during the Republic and the civil war from below.¹⁴⁸

Although Madrid and Almeria lost similar proportions of their secular clergy (30 percent in Madrid and 32 percent in Almeria), the fact that this constituted 334 in Madrid and just 65 in Almeria reveals a huge difference in the size and populations of the two regions. Figures for gross losses of the regular and secular clergy also reveal a stark contrast in the scale of anticlerical violence in the two provinces. While Almeria lost 105 religious personnel, Madrid lost 1,009 – almost ten times as many.¹⁴⁹ The contrast of a large urban conurbation with a province which was still largely rural in the 1930s is vital to the mapping of the regional and urban/rural quantitative and qualitative differences in the violence. Because Almeria was subject to the entry of very few roaming militia columns during the civil war, it is also an ideal place to study the internal urban-rural dynamic, and how the arrival of 'outsiders' affected anticlerical violence in villages and small towns. Almeria, while not possessing a strong regional nationalist dynamic, was an area imbued with a notable federal, republican and socialist sentiment. And while far from being an epicentre of republican change in the sense that 1930s Madrid was, it was nevertheless an area where mass politics and mobilisation were taking hold. As the dominant syndical force in both provinces was socialism rather than anarchism, they are also ideal places to investigate the 'anarchist myth'. Both regions suffered considerable iconoclasm and anticlerical violence after 17-18 July 1936, despite their relative lack of anarchist influence. One of the challenges of this thesis is to explain how and why this was the case.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Sofía Rodríguez López, *Mujeres en Guerra: Almería 1936-1939* (Sevilla: Fundación Blas Infante, 2003); and 'El discurso anticlerical en Almería 1900-1953', in Ruiz Fernández and Vázquez Guzmán, *Religiosidad Popular y Almería*; Óscar Rodríguez Barreira, 'Discurso anticlerical en la prensa almeriense durante la guerra civil', in Ruiz Fernández and Vázquez Guzmán, *Religiosidad Popular y Almería* and 'El pueblo contra los pueblos. Intervención gubernativa y clientelismo en las instituciones locales durante la Segunda República', *Ayer* 83 (2011), pp. 175-212.

¹⁴⁹ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.763-64. The figure of 1,009 in Madrid is from Martín Rubio, *Mitos de la represión*, pp. 234-241. Although Martín Rubio places the figure for Almeria at 107, this study uses the figure of 105 - the result of the meticulous count carried out by the Almerian historian Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze. *Represión en la retaguardia republicana. Almería 1936-1939* (Almería: Librería Universitaria, 1997), *passim*. By the same autor, see 'Anticlericalismo en Almería', in Valeriano Sánchez Ramos and José Ruiz Fernández (coords.), *Actas de las primeras jornadas de religiosidad popular, Almería 1996* (Almería: Instituto de estudios almerienses, 1997), pp.192-95.

¹⁵⁰ On socialist mobilisation in Almeria at the turn of the century, see Fernando Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina: Los orígenes del socialismo almeriense, 1880 – 1903* (Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 2003).

The reasons for choosing Madrid and Almeria are also practical. The *Causa General* is unevenly developed, but despite its methodological drawbacks, its sheer volume and breadth make it an indispensable source. Its sections on Almeria and Madrid are undoubtedly two of the most instructive ones, rich in description and replete with details of the political affiliations and full names of the accused. This information is vital for chapter three's task of profiling the protagonists of anticlerical acts because it facilitates access to the records of Francoist military judicial processes kept in military archives in Madrid and Almeria. Like the *Causa General*, these *Consejos de Guerra* are deeply politically partial. Their sentences are frequently based upon detainees' 'collective guilt' (meaning their membership of political organisations linked to the Republic) rather than their specific actions.¹⁵¹ However, if the *Consejos* are approached by historians with an awareness of the repressive purposes for which they were created, they are a very useful source because of their empirical detail. In the case of Almeria, the *Consejos* are used in chapter three alongside the qualitatively similar records of the Francoist *Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas* (Tribunal of Political Responsibilities), housed in the city's municipal archives. Although these sources have been consulted by historians working on military justice and Francoist repression, this is the first study to use them for the purposes of analysing anticlerical violence.

This nucleus of primary source material is complemented by Spanish archival documentation from the peacetime Republican years, specifically the records of the Interior Ministry and Madrid's regional tribunal, the *Audiencia Territorial de Madrid*. For the period between 1931 and 1936, these sources, together with consular reports from the British Foreign office, Spanish and British press reports, and Spanish ecclesiastical gazettes, supply a rich selection of empirical detail. While it is certain that they tell historians little about the identities of the perpetrators of anticlerical actions, they contain invaluable information regarding the forms, catalysts and contexts of the acts. They make it possible to chart the development of the process of dual anticlerical and Catholic mobilisation underway during the period.

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *The Francoist Military Trials: Terror and Complicity, 1939-1945*, pp.100-2; Gómez Bravo and Marco, *Obra del miedo*, pp. 196-200.

For the civil war period, the study uses documents from Madrid's diocesan archives to complement the documentation of the *Causa General*. These reports, written by the priests engaged in the 'reconstruction and reorganisation' of Spanish dioceses following the civil war, are of course contaminated by the epistemological categories of the martyrologies, the *Consejos de Guerra* and the *Causa General*. However, they provide considerable empirical detail regarding the forms and effects of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm after 17-18 July 1936. Finally, selected records from the *Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica* in Salamanca, which outline the activities of leftwing and republican political organisations during the civil war and the Republican peacetime years, provide valuable secondary details regarding secular education initiatives and political mobilisations.

The fundamental disadvantage presented by the majority of these sources, of course, is that they offer no direct elucidation of anticlerical actors' motives for committing their acts. In the case of Francoist documentation, anticlerical 'voices' which explain the feelings and sensations generated by the Church are drowned out by the deafening, radically dualistic discourse of the ideological products which the regime deployed to consolidate and legitimate itself. The official Republican sources, meanwhile, describe anticlerical incidents but rarely succeed in identifying their agents. This lack of anticlerical voices has been overcome to some degree in this thesis through the use of contemporary memoirs, local anthropological studies and literary and press sources. The verbal statements which accompanied anticlerical acts after 17-18 July 1936, which are recorded sporadically in Francoist and Catholic sources, as well as a detailed analysis of the forms which the violence assumed, are used as a valuable interpretive tool.

All of these sources – fragmented, limited and politically partial as they often are - have been used to construct a theoretically aware yet empirically detailed survey of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm in 1930s Spain which places especial focus upon the opening months of the civil war. This thesis, though constrained in many respects by the methodological limits imposed by the available sources, addresses anticlericalism, iconoclasm and anticlerical violence in 1930s Spain from below, presenting it as a nuanced and changing phenomenon. In this way, the study advances the existing understanding of anticlerical violence by placing the focus firmly upon its protagonists:

their collective identities, their motives, their experience, their profiles, their logic, and their goals.

Chapter One: The Construction of Anticlerical Collective Identities Before 1931

The atheist who was at the point of death called for a priest and a lawyer to be at his side. They were happy, since they assumed that he wanted to confess and make out his will. But when they came in, he said, 'I don't want to confess or make out my will. I just want to die as Christ did, between two thieves.'
Andalusian anarchist Pepe Pareja¹⁵²

*Capitalist oppression, state repression, clerical tyranny and the immiserisation of the proletariat were more than simple abstractions propounded by ideologues. They were experienced on a daily basis by workers.*¹⁵³
Chris Ealham

On 11 May 1931, less than a month after the peaceful proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic, local people gathered in several districts of Madrid and collaborated in physical attacks upon churches, convents, monasteries and Catholic educational buildings. The anticlerical collective action was an immediate reaction to an incident in which a group of rightists played the Royal March on a gramophone through an open window on the busy Calle de Alcalá. Passersby who heard the monarchist anthem, outraged by this public attack upon the new Republican regime, assaulted the offices of monarchist newspaper the *ABC*. The following day, they attacked religious buildings.¹⁵⁴ As a wave of popular anticlerical incendiarism spread through the capital, eleven convents were burnt, and many more religious buildings damaged. On the walls of the Jesuit church on the centric Gran Vía, workers left a large, blunt message in chalk: 'The justice of the people on thieves.'¹⁵⁵

This episode indicates that by 1931, anticlerical sentiment was widespread among urban workers, many of whom saw a clear connection between the Catholic Church and the reactionary politics of the previous monarchical regime, and with ethically reprehensible characteristics like dishonesty and corruption. The protagonists of the incident shared a collective identity which enabled them to recognise themselves and each other as being 'against' clericalism. Anticlericalism had a lengthy history in Spain,

¹⁵² Mintz, *Anarchists*, p.71.

¹⁵³ Ealham, *Class*, p.39.

¹⁵⁴ Archivo Histórico Nacional, Ministerio del Interior (AHN, Interior A), legajo 16/12 (Madrid); *El Sol*, 12/05/1931; *El Liberal*, 12/05/1931; *El Socialista*, 12/05/1931; *La Vanguardia*, 12/01/1931; *ABC*, 17/05/1933; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p. 25; Maura, *Así cayó Alfonso XIII*, pp.241-64; Buckley, *Life and Death*, pp. 63-66; Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 26-27; D. Fernández García, *Los incendios de iglesias de mayo de 1931*.

¹⁵⁵ Julio Caro Baroja, *Introducción de una historia contemporánea del anticlericalismo español* (Madrid: Istmo, 1980), p.230; Lawrence Fernsworth, *Spain's Struggle for Freedom* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p.131.

and attacks upon Church property had long formed part of a 'traditional' repertoire of local protest. Yet in the first three decades of the twentieth century, social, cultural and political change sparked by industrialisation, rural-urban migration, urbanisation, and the effects of the First World War altered the face of Spanish popular anticlericalism. Newly politicised workers increasingly identified the Church as part of the repressive machinery of the exclusive and tightly controlled Restoration Monarchy political system (1874-1931). Finding themselves excluded entirely from the 'official public sphere' embodied by the state, they began to compete with diverse actors to define and defend the fluid and changing limits of their own private and public spheres.¹⁵⁶

Rejecting furiously both the intrusions of the ever-expanding state into their domestic space, and the Church's influence over innumerable aspects everyday life, a loose conglomeration of socialist, anarchist and republican activists began to construct their own, strongly anticlerical 'workers' public sphere.'¹⁵⁷ This new and expanding space, which grew out of workers' desires to gain control of their own private universes, was grounded in alternative forms of community socialisation, educational and cultural activities, and the development of new, laic rituals. This fundamentally anticlerical 'counter-hegemonic project' challenged the Church's power to construct and order public spaces in a way which reflected and reinforced the dominant, hierarchical conception of the social order. From the turn of the century onwards, anticlerical worker constituencies found themselves engaged in a semiotic struggle with politicised Catholic forces to construct and fix the meanings of public spaces. As they tried to shift the balance of power in the built environment away from the Church, 'traditional' anticlerical protest commingled with a repertoire of newer, more discernibly 'political' modalities of collective action.¹⁵⁸

By April 1931, large numbers of rural and urban workers, despite the many divergences in their personal circumstances and particular political affiliations, shared a clear anticlerical identity. The enlarged opportunities for political mobilisation heralded

¹⁵⁶ For a discussion of the development of the 'true public sphere' within the private sphere (albeit in a bourgeois rather than proletarian context), see Habermas, *Public Sphere*, pp.14-26; Dena Goodman, 'Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime', *History and Theory*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (February 1992), p.20.

¹⁵⁷ On the 'proletarian public sphere' see Donald Bell, *Sesto San Giovanni: Workers, Culture and Politics in an Italian Town* (New Brunswick: RUP, 1986), p.66.

¹⁵⁸ Ealham, *Class*, pp.39 -49; Juliá, 'Fieles y mártires', pp. 120-21.

by the Republic would allow them to expand their struggle against clerical influence, but their battle to define and fix the boundaries of their own public and private space – a battle which placed them in direct conflict with the Church in numerous areas - was already well underway. This chapter will investigate how and why this situation arose, examining the processes by which the shared identities of those who engaged in anticlerical collective action during the pre-war Republic and the civil war were forged before 1931.

Anticlerical popular culture: from mockery to mobilisation

Spanish popular anticlericalism had existed, in some shape or form, since the early middle ages. During the first third of the twentieth century, the collective identities of anticlerical actors were inflected by a deeply rooted discourse - initially oral and later recorded in satirical literature - which heaped scorn and derision upon the clergy. Scholars who collected demonstrations of popular culture at the turn of the century uncovered an abundance of sayings, stories and folk songs which criticised the clergy from an ethical standpoint. Priests were depicted as lazy, gluttonous, money-grabbing and malicious: essentially a ‘synopsis and compendium of all the capital sins.’¹⁵⁹ This early discourse reserved its most swingeing criticism for the lecherous exploits of the man who ‘everyone calls father, except for his own children, who call him uncle.’ Priests stood accused of hounding their female parishioners sexually and organising orgies within monasteries and convents.¹⁶⁰

These shared opinions, of course, stemmed originally from lived experience of clerical behaviour. The medieval practice of *barraganía*, for example, by which the secular clergy had been permitted by the church authorities to live with concubines, was preserved *de facto* well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by those priests who cohabited with their ‘housekeepers’ or ‘nieces.’¹⁶¹ Traditional anticlerical lore which portrayed priests as slothful parasites, meanwhile, was confirmed by workers’ daily

¹⁵⁹ Quote from Pérez Ledesma, ‘Studies on Anticlericalism’, pp.227-55. See also William James Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1998* (Catholic University of America Press, 2000), p.12; Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.80-83, 157-61.

¹⁶⁰ This popular saying is recorded in Ramon J. Sender, *Réquiem por un campesino Español* (Barcelona, Ediciones Destino, 2008), p. 61. See also, José Esteban, *Refranero anticlerical* (Madrid: Vosa, 1994), pp. 80-81, 90-99, 110; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, pp.82, 98-103, 174-78.

¹⁶¹ Brennan, *Labyrinth*, pp.48-49; Victoria Sau, *Diccionario ideológico feminista*, vol. 1 (Barcelona: Icaria, 2000), pp.55-57; Arturo Barea, *La forja de un rebelde: La forja* (Barcelona: Random House, 2006), pp.25-27.

experiences of living in communities alongside men who, comparatively speaking, worked very little. The syndicalist leader Angel Pestaña, who grew up in northerly León at the turn of the century, recalls being told by his father, an impoverished miner and railway worker, that: ‘I work twelve or thirteen hours to earn fourteen *reales*...and a priest, by just wielding his benediction and saying a few words that nobody understands, earns five *duros*.’¹⁶² Or, as one agricultural labourer from Casas Viejas in southerly Cádiz observed: ‘[the priests] are in the church for only two hours. The rest of the time they should have a job.’¹⁶³ This image of priests, therefore, passed down through the generations by word of mouth within families and communities, and cemented into the popular consciousness through continued direct experience, survived well into the 1930s. Indeed, ideas regarding clerical laziness, gormandising and licentiousness would underscore acts of anticlerical violence during the pre-war Republican period and the civil war.¹⁶⁴

From the late nineteenth century onwards, however, this traditional ethically-driven censure became increasingly vehement and politicised. From 1874, the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy, which had been left deeply shaken by the liberal secularising attempts of the mid-nineteenth century, and which was terrified by the threats which progressive politics and emerging workers’ movements posed to the Church’s privileged position, enjoyed the institutional protection of the Restoration Monarchy.¹⁶⁵ The Church relied on the regime, whose formal constitutionalism belied the violent mistreatment which Spain’s poor urban and rural sectors endured daily at the hands of the state security forces, in order to defend and augment its political, economic and cultural power. In these circumstances, religious personnel became the guarantors of a rigidly hierarchical social and cultural order. Correspondingly, many rural and urban workers started to see the institution as the brutal ideological backbone of a political system which excluded and oppressed them, and as the unwavering ally of a state which

¹⁶² Ángel Pestaña, *Lo que aprendí en la vida* (Bilbao: Zero, 1973), p.9

¹⁶³ Quote from Mintz, *Anarchists*, p.72,73 (n). For these criticisms in the press, see *Fray Lazo*, 03/09/1931 and *La Traca*, 03/09/1931 in Julio de la Cueva, ‘El Anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica y la Guerra Civil’, in Suarez Cortina and La Parra Lopez, *Anticlericalismo*, pp. 222-24; Rafael Comiche Carmona, ‘¡Trabaja!’, *Estudios*, No. 96, 08/1931, p.6; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, pp.283-89.

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, militiamen’s endless searches for the Church’s ‘hidden treasure’. AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/45, Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/24.

¹⁶⁵ Frances Lannon, ‘The Social Praxis and Cultural Politics of Spanish Catholicism’, in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.40-44; Townson, ‘Anticlericalismo y secularización’, pp.119-20.

intruded with growing intensity into their private lives. Crucially, many of these actors conserved a certain degree of religious belief and Christian moral conviction, meaning that they interpreted the Church's unholy social and political alliances as a 'betrayal'.¹⁶⁶

In what was still an overwhelmingly rural country, this association was experienced painfully in Spain's 'deep south', where many of the starving agricultural day labourers who worked on the great estates of large landowners saw the Church as the ally of their exploitative employers and of the violent state security forces. When the first libertarian 'apostles of the idea' arrived in Andalucía at the end of the 1860s, these labourers, deserted and deceived by a Church which had, in their eyes, abandoned the poor, joined the anticlerical, millenarian anarchist movement in staggering numbers. Their burning hatred of the Church contrasted sharply with Catholicism's meaning in other parts of the rural world. In central and northern Spain, large numbers of conservative and intensely Catholic peasant smallholders were intimately bound - spiritually and economically - to a Church which represented salvation, succour, and protection from new and frightening social, cultural and political influences. While Catholic agricultural credit unions provided lifesaving practical assistance to small, often extremely poor farmers, religious ritual and worship underpinned the community and marked the rhythm of daily life.¹⁶⁷

The shift in anticlerical mentalities was also connected to social, economic and political changes triggered by industrialisation and urbanisation from the late nineteenth century onwards. Those who flocked to Spain's cities in search of work - a process of demographic mobility which accelerated after 1914 as a result of the industrial boom caused by the First World War - lived in sprawling, insalubrious districts which the institutional Church seemed both unable and unwilling to penetrate. Leftwing political unions and parties provided migrants with orientation, socialisation and protection against intransigent employers. Through membership of the anarchist and socialist trade unions (the CNT and the UGT), urban workers both assimilated and participated in the construction of a strongly anticlerical discourse. Simultaneously, populist republican

¹⁶⁶ Bruce Lincoln, 'Notes toward a theory of Religion and Revolution,' in Bruce Lincoln (ed.), *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Collection of Essays* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp.266-92.

¹⁶⁷ Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.5; Preston, *CSCW*, pp.42-46; William Christian, *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p.18; José Martín Blázquez, *I Helped to Build an Army: Civil War Memoirs of a Spanish Staff Officer* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1939), p.2.

parties – which began to attract support on an unprecedented mass scale - contributed to this discourse by using anticlericalism as a mobilising tool.

These processes occurred against a backdrop of increased bourgeois intellectual and political anticlericalism. This upsurge, connected in complex ways to the national ‘flurry of collective soul searching’ sparked by Spain’s final loss of empire in 1898, saw members of the dynastic Liberal Party renew their historic commitment to secularisation. Middle class republican anticlerical intellectuals simultaneously stepped up their propagandistic, educational and literary activity.¹⁶⁸ Although this context is crucial to the analysis of anticlericalism at the beginning of the twentieth century, the ‘anticlerical world’ constructed by workers during this period was grounded above all in their collective daily experience of a Church which, for reasons which we will now explore, they identified as part of a ‘vast repressive coalition that structured everyday life against them.’¹⁶⁹

‘Those criminal hands’: Catholicism and state repression¹⁷⁰

In his study of the emergence of the ‘bourgeois public sphere’ in eighteenth-century Europe, the German social theorist Jürgen Habermas conceives the intimate realm of the bourgeois family as ‘private and thus shielded from outside intrusion, a refuge from the coercion of the state and the necessities of labour.’¹⁷¹ Yet any family’s capacity to carve out a truly secluded, private space for itself depends, of course, upon its social position and economic resources.¹⁷² In turn-of-the-century Spain, where the boundaries between ‘private’ and ‘public’ were by no means articulated, working class families in both the city and the countryside were so utterly besieged by incursions into their domestic orbits by employers, the Church, and the coercive forces of the state, that it seems reasonable to suggest that the ‘private sphere’ (as we would think of it today) scarcely existed for many of these protagonists.

¹⁶⁸ Quote from Sanabria, *Republicanism*, p.155. On 1898 and anticlericalism, see also Suárez Cortina, ‘Anticlericalismo, religión y política en la Restauración’, pp.127-32; Sanabria, *Republicanism*, p.155.

¹⁶⁹ Quote from Ealham, *Class*, p.39. See also Helen Graham, ‘Women and Social Change’, in Graham and Labanyi (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp.99-115 and *Introduction*, pp.3-6; Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp.12-13; Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp.151-58.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Criminal hands’ in Federico Urales, ‘La Iglesia y el Estado contra el Individuo’, *La Revista Blanca*, No. 165, 1/5/1905, p.652.

¹⁷¹ James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.6-7; Habermas, *Public Sphere*, pp.47-49

¹⁷² Mats G. Hansson, *The Private Sphere: An Emotional Territory and Its Agent* (New York: Springer, 2008), p.15.

The landless day labourers of rural Andalucía, for example, were denied any claims upon intimate space by the landowners and estate stewards who treated them as sub-human, the *caciques* (local political bosses) who intimidated them into voting for the political parties of the Restoration Monarchy's rigged electoral system, and the civil guard (the militarised rural police force) who shot or beat them savagely for gathering acorns or firewood from estate land. These workers, whose lives were a constant fight against starvation, endured long hours, inhuman working conditions, brutally low wages and long periods of seasonal unemployment. During ploughing and the harvest (a period of several months), they had no choice but to leave their families and sleep communally in appalling, far-flung barracks (*cortijos*). The sporadic risings and rebellions which this state of abject misery provoked were put down with extreme violence by the civil guard and the army, at the orders of a state which saw the protests as a localised public order problem rather than a product of extreme social inequality.¹⁷³

The Church's presence was negligible in the 'deep south' - parishes were enormous and religious observance was extremely low - but the Church's implication in the 'systematic abuse of the powerless', was obvious to many workers.¹⁷⁴ Day labourers needed only to glance at those who attended mass every Sunday to see all of the social sectors which oppressed them assembled in one place. Furthermore, within those southern rural communities which had not yet been abandoned entirely by organised Catholicism, the local priest wielded power and patronage. Labourers' chances of employment were often made dependent on attendance at mass and participation in religious processions. In disputes between day labourers and employers, the local priest invariably backed the latter. Cases of priests recruiting strike-breakers were not uncommon.¹⁷⁵

Violent, church-legitimated intrusions into intimate space also marked the lives of Spain's poor urban classes. Urban workers, many of them recent emigrants from the countryside who received starvation wages and suffered unregulated working

¹⁷³ Preston, *CSCW*, pp.101-2, 111, 134-5, 140, 148-9, 184-5; Lannon, 'The Church's crusade against the Republic', pp.43-44; Graham, *Republic*, p.3; Shubert, *Social History*, pp.151-8; Brennan, *Labyrinth*, pp.117-122; Juan Díaz del Moral, *Las agitaciones campesinas del periodo bolchevista: 1918-1920* (Sevilla: Editoriales Andaluzas Unidas), pp.161-65.

¹⁷⁴ Quote from Graham, *Introduction*, p.5. See also *Spanish Republic*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷⁵ Mintz, *Anarchists*, pp.67-74; Collier, *Socialists*, pp.136-38; Gilmore, *People of the Plain*, pp.152-54.

conditions, found themselves beset on all sides by ever increasing state incursions into their everyday lives. In cities like Madrid and Barcelona, the introduction of police beats and street illumination enabled the authorities to survey every corner of the urban space. The state, again viewing worker protest as a mere public order issue, endorsed and encouraged police terror towards workers, especially those assumed to be members of the rapidly growing anarchist movement. Unionists were pursued by the police in the street, in their workplaces and in their homes; their freedom of movement was further limited by curfews and declarations of martial law. They lived in fear of a growing repertoire of ruthless and arbitrary measures such as detention without trial, internal deportation, extra judicial murder and arrest on grounds of ‘moral guilt’.¹⁷⁶

For many union activists, the clergy was plainly implicated in these violent attempts to block their construction of alternative social and political spaces. Urban workers’ districts, much like the ‘deep south’, had largely been abandoned by the Church; most religious buildings and personnel were clustered in city centres or in richer suburbs.¹⁷⁷ Yet the participation of the security forces in the recurrent religious processions which traversed the urban topography constituted a striking visual reminder of the bond between ‘cross and sabre’.¹⁷⁸ In addition, intermittent edicts issued by civil governors against blasphemy – a firmly embedded element of popular culture which the state transformed into an arrestable and fineable offence – underlined further the connection between religious and state authority.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, when working class political activists were arrested on spurious grounds, brought to trial and executed by the authorities, the Church’s attitude was unambiguous. In Barcelona, for example, the authorities reacted to a spate of bomb attacks between 1893 and 1896 with declarations of martial law and wholesale arrests of anarchists, republicans and anticlerical publicists. The tortures suffered by these

¹⁷⁶ Ealham, *Class*, pp.16-22, 39.

¹⁷⁷ Shubert, *Social History*, p.166; Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp.12-13; Lannon, *Privilege*, p.18; Julio Penedo Cobo, ‘Implantación del clero en el Ensanche Norte durante la Restauración’, in Ángel Bahamonde Magro and Luis Enrique Otero Carvajal (eds.), *La sociedad madrileña durante la Restauración, 1876-1931* (Madrid: Consejería de Cultura, 1989), pp.251-65.

¹⁷⁸ Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p.196. ‘Cross and sabre’ in Casanova, ‘Rebelión y revolución’, p.153.

¹⁷⁹ *El Debate*, 20/12/1921; AHN, Interior A, Legajo 13/1 (Cácares). For Manuel Delgado’s meditations upon Antonio Machado’s idea of blasphemy as a form of ‘dialogue with the divine’, see *Lucas iconoclastas: anticlericalismo, espacio y ritual en la España contemporánea*, (Barcelona: Ariel, 2001), pp.129-45.

detainees in the dungeons of the city's Montjuich prison, and the executions which followed, sent waves of fury through workers' districts.¹⁸⁰ In a situation where lists of suspects had been compiled by the Catholic *Asociación de Padres de Familia* (Association of Catholic Parents), the Jesuits and other Catholic groups, and where Jesuit ministers had been present at the executions, the Church's implication in the repression was total. As the anarchist writer Juan Montseny, who was imprisoned in Montjuich, explained:

I have seen the ministers of God bless those criminal hands...which in Montjuich burned buttocks, tore off fingernails and twisted testicles...And one must believe that those in power were in agreement with God when they committed that horrible crime, because the representative of the first, the military judge who conducted the trial, and the representatives of the second, the Jesuits who tried to make the martyrs confess, embraced each other in the moats of the castle of the damned, as they [the victims] fell, destroyed by the mausers...¹⁸¹

In workers' districts, events like the Montjuich tortures formed part of what anarchist activist Emil Salut refers to as a 'conglomeration of acts of violence and of dreadful public calamities' which underscored everyday life, generating 'an unhealthy atmosphere, like a mixture of sadness and panic.' Salut, who grew up in Barcelona's poverty-stricken Fifth District at the turn of the century, reveals how sights like public executions and bedraggled prisoners being marched through the streets on foot became part of an all-enveloping tapestry of daily violence - a tapestry into which the Church, by both action and association, was tightly woven.¹⁸²

This accumulated 'sadness and panic' erupted dramatically in Barcelona in July 1909. When reservists, who were mainly married men with children, were called up to fight in the tremendously unpopular colonial war in Morocco, mass anti-war demonstrations escalated into a wave of church burnings and anticlerical disturbances. Conscription, perhaps the archetypal example of the state's invasion of the domestic orbit, only affected the poor because the rich could buy themselves out of military service. That workers chose to protest against this injustice by attacking religious

¹⁸⁰ Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.56-9; Brenan, *Labyrinth*, pp.164-5; Emil Salut, *Vivers de revolucionaris: apunts històrics del districte cinquè* (Barcelona: Libreria Catalònia, 1938), pp.9-15.

¹⁸¹ Urales, *Revista Blanca*, no.165, p.652; Federica Montseny in F. Urales, 'Una cultura de la acracia, ejercicio de un proyecto de libertad solidara', *Anthropos*, 78 (1987), p.30 and 'Las tumbas olvidadas', *La Revista Blanca*, No. 215, 1/5/1932, p.710.

¹⁸² Quotes from Salut, *Vivers*, pp.9-20. See also William H. Robinson, *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí* (New Haven and London: Cleveland Museum of Art/Yale University Press), pp.120-22.

property was a clear indication that state repression and ecclesiastical authority had become firmly interwoven in the popular consciousness. As one young conscript, who later joined the anarchist CNT, wrote in his diary: 'I opened my eyes to the injustices of life...on a freezing cold day in January 1914 in the port of Barcelona as a priest blessed us, the soldiers who were being sent to Morocco.'¹⁸³

As the army and the civil guard across Spain continued to protect employers' interests from the demands of politically organised workers, the activities of confessional trade unions became one of the most bitterly resented clerical intrusions into workers' daily lives. The Catholic trade union movement, which from the turn of the century set out to compete with anarchist and socialist unions by attracting workers to 'cross-class' syndicates allied to employers, provoked enormous hostility. The period following the First World War was marked by spiralling inflation, shortages and plummeting living standards both in the rural world and among the huge numbers of people who had flocked to Spain's cities from the countryside during the war 'boom' years. Labour relations consequently became ever more conflictive across Spain - especially in Catalonia and the rural south. In the midst of this social upheaval, workers identified Catholic unions with mounting fury as the reactionary, 'treacherous' saboteurs.¹⁸⁴

Religious institutions, economic repression and 'persecutory religiosity'¹⁸⁵

For poor urban constituencies, this image of the Church as a cog in the Restoration Monarchy's ever expanding 'architecture of repression' was reinforced by contact with religious personnel in punitive institutions. In large cities and provincial capitals, the inefficient central state permitted monks and nuns to run borstals and prisons.¹⁸⁶ In these centres, and in other ostensibly charitable institutions like orphanages, 'hostels for the poor and defenceless', 'domestic service convents' and mental hospitals, the clergy

¹⁸³ Quote from Miquel Mir, *Diario de un pistolero anarquista* (Barcelona: Destino, 2009), p.167.

See also Ullman, *Tragic Week*, esp. parts three and four; Joaquín Romero Maura, 'La rosa de fuego': El obrerismo barcelonés de 1899 a 1909 (Madrid: Alianza, 1989), pp.509-542.

¹⁸⁴ Graham, *Republic*, pp.3, 7-10; Preston, *Civil War*, pp.33-34; Adrian Shubert, 'El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias' in Jackson, *Octubre 1934*, pp. 246-48.

¹⁸⁵ 'Persecutory religiosity' in Gabriele Ranzato, *La difficile modernità, e altri saggi sulla storia della Spagna contemporanea* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1997), p.147.

¹⁸⁶ 'Architecture of state repression' in Ealham, 'Maddened Crowd' p.26. Also *Class*, p.39; Fernando Álvarez Uría, *Miserables y locos: Medicina mental y orden social en la España del siglo XIX* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1983), pp.120-27.

validated a series of highly authoritarian practices – such as intimidating patients into attending mass - which intensified anticlerical sentiment. In workers' districts, these establishments acquired an infamous reputation for the physical, psychological, and sometimes sexual abuse which occurred behind their tightly padlocked doors.¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, in women's prisons and homes for unmarried mothers, strenuous attempts were made to 'moralise' proletarian women.¹⁸⁸ Until the Republican period, when the reforms of Director General of Prisons Victoria Kent would initiate the secularisation of the prison sector, women's prisons were staffed by nuns.¹⁸⁹ The inmates of the Barcelona's female prison – mainly poor women who had turned to prostitution due to economic hardship - were imprisoned in the building's dungeons and subjected to harsh punishments and disciplinary practices by the female religious personnel who served as guards. Their methods, which were no doubt aimed at achieving the 'moral rectification' of people seen by the Church as 'fallen women', transformed the prison into 'a symbol of horror' for local people.¹⁹⁰ Religious prison staff also participated in the practice of separating newborn babies from convicts and taking them to church-run children's homes, something which could only have provoked desperate distress and fierce resentment. From the 1910s onwards, legislation allowed babies born in jail to stay with their mothers until the age of three. These children grew up within the prison walls, experiencing the same embittering, authoritarian regime endured by adult prisoners.¹⁹¹

Furthermore, the work regime which prevailed within penal and charitable institutions fixed the Church as an economic exploiter in the eyes of inmates. Prison authorities used the moral argument that idleness was 'the source and origin of all sin' to legitimise an unregulated system of forced labour. Inmates were paid either poorly or

¹⁸⁷ Ealham, *Class*, p.185; David Jato Miranda, *Madrid, capital republicana. Del 18 de julio al 6 de noviembre de 1936* (Barcelona: Ediciones Acervo, 1976), pp. 303-4; Rosa Regás in *Actas del congreso 'narrativa española: del realismo a la renovación'* (Jerez de la Frontera: Fundación Caballero Bonald, 2001) pp.43-44; José Berrueto Silvente, *Por el sendero de mis recuerdos* (Santa Coloma de Gramanet: Grupo de estudios histórico-sociales, 1987), p.24.

¹⁸⁸ Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *Crimen y castigo: cárceles, justicia y violencia en la España del siglo XIX* (Madrid: Catarata, 2005), p.162.

¹⁸⁹ Shirley Mangini, *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.32.

¹⁹⁰ Ealham, *Class*, p.185; Langdon Davies, *Barricades*, pp. 112-13

¹⁹¹ Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *Los delitos y las penas: La ciudad judicial y penitenciaria: Alcalá de Henares, 1800-1900* (Álcala de Henares: Fundación Colegio del Rey, 2006), pp.110-19 and *Crimen y castigo*, pp.161-72.

not at all for long hours of work, and the goods they produced were sold externally. Kent, commenting on Madrid's pre-Republic women's prison on the Calle de Quiñones noted: 'the nuns...exploited the prisoners, who spent their lives sewing without receiving any payment in return.'¹⁹² This use of detainees as 'cheap labour' also provoked anger among workers on the outside. Penal institutions - along with monasteries and convents which made food and clothing - undercut workers from the same productive sectors, producing a downward push on wages. Seamstresses eking a marginal existence, for example, were unable to compete with the economic might of religious institutions (which were exempt from taxes and thus able to sell their goods at low prices.) For those who saw their livelihoods threatened by this situation, Catholic productive activities reinforced age-old anticlerical stereotypes regarding the greed, laziness and malevolence of religious personnel.¹⁹³

For an ever-growing urban multitude of cooks, maids, servants, cleaners and doormen, priests' entanglement in the exploitive workings of the domestic service industry reinforced this image of the Church as an economic exploiter. Although the majority of the rapidly expanding army of women employed as maids served in the houses of rich families, priests and religious personnel also routinely contracted female cooks, housekeepers and servants.¹⁹⁴ The fact that priests were figures of power and authority in one of the most exploitative, poorly paid and humiliating occupations of all generated an extremely personalised latent social resentment which would come to the fore spectacularly in the summer of 1936.¹⁹⁵

Escaping the 'prison school': education and charity¹⁹⁶

Many workers' children, however, collided head-on with Catholic 'persecutory religiosity' long before reaching adulthood. As well as allowing the Church to govern

¹⁹² Zenaida Gutiérrez Vega, *Victoria Kent: Una vida al servicio del humanismo liberal* (Universidad de Málaga, 2001), p.102; Fernando Hernández Holgado, *Mujeres encarceladas: La prisión de Ventas: de la República al franquismo, 1931-1931* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), pp.50-59.

¹⁹³ NA: FO371/15773: Grahame to Henderson, 13/05/1931; Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week*, pp.37-8; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p. 84; Frances Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.72-7, 183-84.

¹⁹⁴ Rosa María Capel Martínez, *La mujer española en el mundo del trabajo. 1900-1930* (Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 1980), pp.12-13; Shubert, *Social History*, pp.40-1; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.63-4; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/286, 4/32.

¹⁹⁵ María Gloria Nuñez Pérez, *Trabajadoras en la Segunda República. Un estudio sobre la actividad económica extradoméstica, 1931-1936* (Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1989), pp.384-9, 586-94, 619-634, 641; Sofía Rodríguez López, *Mujeres*, p.47; Jato Miranda, *Madrid, capital republicana*, pp. 301-2; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp. 63-64.

¹⁹⁶ 'Prison school' in Salut, *Vivers*, p.22.

penal institutions, the ecclesiastical hierarchy's close alliance with the Restoration Monarchy's political elite allowed it to maintain an almost total monopoly over the primary education sector. For the Church - once again the beneficiary of the central state's inefficiency and lack of resources - this pedagogical hegemony was a powerful tool of social, political and cultural control.¹⁹⁷ In charitable primary schools run by monks and nuns, poor children were indoctrinated with the spiritual values which underpinned the monarchical order and reinforced their lowly position within it: obedience to authority and the docile acceptance of social inequality.¹⁹⁸

Church-run primary schools practiced rigid, class-based segregation. In Bilbao, the Society of the Sacred Heart ran two primary schools: one for middle and upper class girls, and another for poorer students. The buildings were adjacent but the two groups of children had separate doors, uniforms, teachers, curriculums, first communion ceremonies and pews at mass.¹⁹⁹ The few working class children who made it as far as secondary school discovered that their more affluent classmates continued to enforce the by now deeply ingrained divisions. The broadcaster and writer Arturo Barea, who attended a Catholic secondary school in Madrid on a scholarship in the 1910s, found that 'poor boys' were not supposed to mix with paying students because it 'would set a bad example'.²⁰⁰

The draconian disciplinary practices and physical violence which prevailed in schools where 'before you learn the letter A, the first thing you learn is to form a line and be silent', fostered intense anticlericalism among pupils. The anarchist militant and historian José Peirats reveals that at his school in Barcelona, 'the educational programme, administered by those pious people (nuns and priests), consisted of a lot of sacred history...and a great deal of slapping.'²⁰¹ The 'despotism of the teachers', the humiliating punishments - such as making pupils go thirsty and refusing visits to the toilet - and the priests' insistence that José would go to hell if he did not confess his sins, left him with 'a burning hatred for the priesthood which would stay with him for

¹⁹⁷ Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, pp.19-91.

¹⁹⁸ Callahan, *Catholic Church*, p. 323.

¹⁹⁹ Frances Lannon, 'The Socio-Political Role of the Spanish Catholic Church: A Case Study', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 14, No. 2 (April 1979), pp.199- 201.

²⁰⁰ Barea, *Forja*, pp.141-43.

²⁰¹ Josep Peirats Valls, *De mi paso por la vida: memorias* (Barcelona: Flor del Viento, 2009), pp.124-25.

the rest of his life.²⁰² Emil Salut's memoirs present a similarly terrifying picture of the 'severe punishments' and 'moral oppression' dealt out to pupils by priests 'who either lacked patience or had too much rancour' at his 'prison-school' in Barcelona's Fifth District.²⁰³

Pupils also directly experienced the Church's crusade against ideological and political pluralism. Religious staff tried to maintain the Catholic 'monopoly on truth' by limiting children's capacity for independent thought, stifling their talent and creative possibilities.²⁰⁴ In Huesca, precocious six-year-old future anarchist Félix Carrasquer was reprimanded by his 'nervous and authoritarian' teacher for knowing how to read. School, he was told, was a place for 'obedience', and not for 'protests and pretensions'.²⁰⁵ Peirats noted that at his sister's catechistic school 'they didn't teach her anything except for how to pray'; needlework classes and catechism recital was the only education that many poor girls received.²⁰⁶ Religious teachers mercilessly attacked any indication of progressive political ideas or divergence from 'Catholic morality'. Barea and his classmates were told that the local protestant school was full of bomb-throwing anarchists, and that reading books by the republican novelist and politician Blasco Ibañez was akin to 'giving arms to Satan'. For many pupils, this social and ideological rigidity jarred so violently precisely because it was at odds with the progressive social and cultural influences which they increasingly encountered on the street and at home. Peirats' shocked reaction his school's authoritarianism, for example, was provoked principally by the contrast he saw between the liberal ambience of his family home, characterised by the support and understanding of his 'free thinking, even atheistic' parents, and the obscurantism and severity of school.²⁰⁷

Peirats also noted that the nuns at his sister's school compensated for their gaping pedagogical shortcomings with 'Catholic patronage': 'from time to time, some very

²⁰² José Peirats Valls, 'Una experiencia histórica del pensamiento libertario', *Anthropos Suplementos*, 18 (1990), p.9 and *Unpublished memoirs*, Tomo 1, Libro I, p.12.

²⁰³ Salut, *Vivers*, pp.20-26.

²⁰⁴ NA: FO371/17426: Grahame to Simon (commenting on anticlericalism of Ramón Pérez de Ayala), 25/05/1933.

²⁰⁵ Félix Carrasquer, 'Proyecto de una sociedad libertaria: experiencias históricas y actualidad', *Anthropos* 90 (1988), p.13.

²⁰⁶ Peirats, *De mi paso*, p.118; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.17-20; Brennan, *Labyrinth*, pp.49-50.

²⁰⁷ Barea, *Forja*, p.130, 153; Chris Ealham in José Peirats, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, Volume II (Hastings: Christie Books, 2005), introduction, pp.v-vii.

haughty women came and gave presents to the students.’²⁰⁸ At the schools of the Sacred Heart, the only interaction between the two groups of girls occurred, ‘in an annual gift of clothes where one group was always the benefactor and the other the beneficiary.’ The Spanish Catholic Church’s traditional notion of ‘charity’, which remained virtually unaltered despite the enormous, Europe-wide social change and worker mobilisation of the first three decades of the twentieth century, obeyed a ‘static, hierarchical theory of society in which the poor are ordained by God to be poor and stay poor.’ As Frances Lannon indicates, this principle was devoid of any analysis or questioning of the causes and consequences of poverty. Social inequality was seen as natural and desirable.²⁰⁹

In the absence of state welfare provision, many workers had to rely upon church assistance in order to feed and clothe their families. This ‘charity’ constituted both a humiliation and a deeply unwelcome intrusion into their personal lives. Priests frequently granted aid on the basis of religious and political tests. Arturo Barea’s mother, a washerwoman who obtained clothes and milk for her children through church-run charity schemes, ‘paid’ for this help by figuring in the lists of those who attended mass, and by presenting a certificate to show she had had a Catholic wedding and received Communion during lent.²¹⁰ Priests also used their financial muscle to involve themselves in electoral campaigns, staging charity initiatives on the eve of elections, and discriminating against those who did not support their favoured candidates. In a situation where non-believers were left hungry and church-goers were given financial and practical assistance, the indignity of having to feign religious belief to receive charity generated enormous resentment.²¹¹

Domestic space and the ‘Catholic compass’: confession, gender and the rites of passage

Fury provoked by the Church’s use of education and charity as ideological weapons was echoed in many workers’ attitudes towards confession. In circumstances which saw both rural and urban workers battling to defend their privacy against the incursions of the state (such as the house searches and house arrests carried out by the state security forces against political activists), many saw confession as yet another profoundly

²⁰⁸ Peirats, *De mi paso*, pp. 118-19.

²⁰⁹ Lannon, ‘The Socio-Political Role of the Spanish Catholic Church’, pp.199- 201.

²¹⁰ Barea, *Llama*, pp.68-69.

²¹¹ Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.86.

unacceptable intrusion into family life and marital relations. The North American anthropologist Jerome Mintz explains that in Casas Viejas (Cadiz), villagers who ‘fought for every vestige of privacy in a crowded environment’ unanimously gave the confessional a wide berth.²¹² This rejection was connected to a deeply ingrained yet continually evolving anticlerical discourse, reproduced constantly in the leftwing and republican press, which portrayed women as the helpless victims of priests’ depraved, sexually predatory behaviour. In a situation where women, in general terms, were more religious than men, politically active men lived in fear of their wives’ visits to the confessional. Many men were not only convinced that their indiscreet, impressionable partners would reveal details of their political activities to priests – they were also certain that the sordid anonymity of the confessional booth provided the ideal atmosphere for seduction.²¹³

This increasing sense of ‘competition’ with priests for sexual and ideological control of women was linked to working men’s misgivings regarding the encroachment on the home by the state, and the disruption of ‘traditional’ gender roles in the first three decades of the twentieth century. As rising numbers of women crossed the invisible boundaries which had previously excluded them from the workplace and from political activism, censoring priests on sexual grounds became a means of reinforcing control over women, and re-establishing ‘traditional’ relations in the home. The intrinsically misogynistic idea that women were politically untrustworthy, ignorant, and likely to undermine their husbands’ authority by supporting the reactionary causes extolled by their confessors was pervasive across the leftwing and republican political spectrum.²¹⁴ As one of the characters of Miguel de Unamuno’s *San Manuel Bueno, Mártir* exclaims bitterly: ‘In this Spain of henpecked husbands, the priests control the women and the women control the men.’²¹⁵ As will be discussed in chapter four, ‘Gender, Sexuality and Anticlerical Violence’, these perceptions would have extremely important

²¹² Mintz, *Anarchists*, p.69.

²¹³ Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.287; Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.85.; Langdon Davies, *Barricades*, pp.151; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, p.64(n).

²¹⁴ María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, ‘Beatas sojuzgadas por el clero: la imagen de las mujeres en el discurso anticlerical en la España del primer tercio del siglo XX’, *Feminismo/s: revista del Centro de Estudios sobre la mujer de la Universidad de Alicante*, no. 2 (2003), pp.47-8; Sanabria, *Republicanism*, pp.127-149; Manuel Delgado, *Las palabras de otro hombre: anticlericalismo y misoginia* (Barcelona: Muchnik, D.L., 1993).

²¹⁵ Miguel de Unamuno, *San Manuel Bueno, Mártir* (Spain: Ediciones Cátedra, 2008), p.136.

implications regarding the forms and levels of anticlerical violence directed at male and female religious personnel at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

Religious rites of passage provoked similar revulsion regarding Catholicism's intrusion into the domestic sphere. The Church exercised its long-established power to mark and control the most intimate moments of individuals' lives through baptism, canonical marriage, last rites and funerals. Although many workers tried to break away from this pervasive 'Catholic compass' by abandoning Catholic rites of passage altogether, the Church's monopoly upon life and death was virtually inescapable. As we have already seen, those who relied upon Catholic charity to survive were required to prove their families' religiousness with marriage certificates. Furthermore, during the Restoration Monarchy, civil marriage and funeral ceremonies - although technically legal - were blocked frequently on a local level by a coalition of local religious and state authority.²¹⁶

Even when non-religious burials were authorised, the authorities often prevented civil funeral processions from passing through the streets. The funerals then took place in secular zones of segregated cemeteries, places which were small, dirty, and neglected by the authorities. Furthermore, the Church possessed the sole legal right to declare if someone had died within the Catholic faith, meaning that convinced anticlericals who had been baptised as children sometimes ended up being 'kidnapped' (as their families described it) and buried in Catholic zones of cemeteries. This legal privilege also fed resentment in the opposite direction, as it permitted the Church to deny Catholic burial to the morally or politically 'suspect'. Salut recalls that one of his neighbours, whose anarchist son was executed in Montjuich, appealed to the Mayor, the Captain General and the Bishop of Barcelona for permission to bury him next to his Catholic mother. The authorisation was categorically denied: mother and son were separated by the 'great wall of stone' which divided Catholics from non-believers.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, pp.108-12; Leandro Carro, 'Escritos autobiográficos', *Estudios de Historia Social*, 3-33 (1985), p. 340.

²¹⁷ Rafael Cruz, 'El Sabor Fúnebre de la Política Española entre 1876 y 1940', in Jesús Casquete and Rafael Cruz (eds.), *Políticas de la muerte: usos y abusos del ritual fúnebre en la Europa del Siglo XX* (Madrid: Catarata, 2009), pp.80-83; Salut, *Vivers*, pp.9-15.

In Casas Viejas, Mintz found that although villagers chose to ignore mass, marriage and confession, the segregation of the local cemetery along class and religious lines forced them into baptising their children. With the rich buried in niches, the poor in the ground, and non-baptised children and suicides in non-consecrated ground, parents – who evidently preserved certain vestiges of religious faith - lived in fear of their children being denied a ‘proper burial’.²¹⁸ Baptisms, like weddings, communions and funeral ceremonies, came at a price. The Church’s practice of charging for these services provoked strong moral objections, ‘turning the altar into a bank’ for many workers, and reinforcing traditional anticlerical ideas about clerical covetousness and corruption.²¹⁹ The idea that this greed also compelled priests to manipulate the death rites for their own financial benefit was widespread. Popular stories and the anticlerical press suggested that priests used the administering of the viaticum to convince the dying to donate their riches to the Church – or, in the more extreme cases, that the impatient priest assassinated the moribund himself.²²⁰

Furthermore, the incorporation of distinctions of status and wealth into Catholic ceremonies revealed the Church as the spiritual perpetuator of the deeply unequal social order. Baptisms, weddings and funerals were divided into three ‘classes’ based on cost. The decoration of the church; the ringing of the bells; the number of ministers officiating; even whether or not the priest made the effort to shave: all these things depended upon the client’s economic resources. North American anthropologist Dave Gilmore, conducting fieldwork in the province of Seville in the 1970s, was told by one day labourer that the rich received elaborate funeral ceremonies with hymns and bell ringing, while the poor were simply ‘thrown away.’²²¹ As one worker told the Irish writer Peadar O’Donnell in 1936, the Church, devoid of all spiritual content, had become, ‘a chain store dealing in funerals, baptisms, marriages, hospitals, education, money-lending, banks...’²²²

In numerous rural and urban communities, this profound antipathy towards the clerical acquisitiveness, interference in family life and reinforcement of social

²¹⁸ Mintz, *Anarchists*, p.69.

²¹⁹ Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.180.

²²⁰ Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.294.

²²¹ Gilmore, *People of the Plain*, p.147

²²² O’ Donnell, *Salud!*, p.37, 94; Barea, *Forja*, pp.177-82, 193.

inequality represented by the Catholic rites of passage generated a situation in which many workers - especially men - avoided entering the local church at any cost. Their participation in weddings, baptisms and funerals was usually limited to gathering outside the building, smoking, chatting and making jokes. For large numbers of avowed anticlericals, these acts of quiet, daily resistance against Catholic ideological hegemony transformed religious stages into proscribed spaces which belonged to an alien - and in their eyes offensive - cultural world.²²³

The foundations of the anticlerical ‘workers’ public sphere’

Workers’ gradual, progressively articulated responses to the Church’s hold over education, individual consciences, and the intimate processes of life and death were intrinsically constructive. Although anticlericalism was never a centralised, organised movement, a desire to break free from the Church’s pervasive influence was a common element of the overlapping network of political, cultural and social spaces which anarchist, socialist and republican workers’ groups opened from the late nineteenth century onwards. The tapestry of alternative cultural, and educational institutions which loosely constituted the ‘workers’ public sphere’ functioned to ‘structure attention’ away from Catholic and monarchical hegemony and towards workers’ political and cultural agendas.²²⁴ This sphere, based as it was on a rejection of the power of the state and the Church to control everyday lives, was grounded in what might traditionally be labeled the ‘private sphere’.²²⁵ It thus became the terrain on which the struggle ‘against the constant intrusion of clericalism, in teaching, in culture, in the press and in all manifestations of public life’ unfolded.²²⁶

When workers joined unions and political parties, they became involved immediately in the forging of a common identity based on collective experience, values and perceptions. The UGT-affiliated construction worker in Madrid; the socialist dockworker in Bilbao; the Andalusian anarchist day labourer; the Catalan anarcho-syndicalist; the Valencian or Barcelonan republican: all of these actors were

²²³ Gilmore, *People of the Plain*, p.148; Mintz, *Anarchists*, pp.70-71.

²²⁴ ‘Structuring attention’ in Radcliff, *Mobilization*, pp. 195-7; Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), p.37; Salomón Chéiz, ‘El Anticlericalismo en la Calle’, p.127.

²²⁵ On the idea that the institutions of private socialisation comprise the ‘authentic’ public sphere, see Habermas, *Public Sphere*, pp.14-26; Goodman, ‘Public Sphere and Private Life’, pp.19- 20.

²²⁶ Montseny, ‘Una cultura de la acracia’, p.32.

participating continuously in the construction of their shared cultural worlds.²²⁷ This process rested upon the creation of new loci and forms of socialisation. The tavern had long been a refuge for those (almost exclusively male) workers who boycotted religious spaces, serving as a centre of political discussion as well as relaxation. Yet from the late nineteenth century onwards, republicans, socialists and anarchists founded and developed the new spaces - like union headquarters, associations, *ateneos* (athenaeums) and *casas del pueblo* - which undergirded the workers' public sphere, enabling members to meet, talk and share ideas.²²⁸ In the absence of state leisure provision, they offered recreational activities such as literary nights, open-air excursions, rambling clubs and concerts.²²⁹

In Barcelona, for example, the Radical Republican Party led by populist anticlerical politician Alejandro Lerroux formed countless republican workers' centres, youth groups and women's organisations during the first decade of the twentieth century. Lerroux's republican *meriendas democráticas* (people's picnics) were family events which allowed thousands of workers to socialise and relax in a rural setting.²³⁰ The sports clubs and hiking expeditions organised by Barcelona's anarcho-syndicalists; or the cultural outings and gymnastic activities spearheaded by the socialist youth organisation in Madrid: these initiatives were driven by a common desire to open spaces to which workers could escape, however briefly, leaving behind the repressive structures and restrictions of everyday city life.²³¹

These, were, of course, not merely social activities. Anarchist and socialist leaders, despite holding divergent conceptions of society, worker organisation and political action, shared a profound conviction that the 'conquest of culture' – to be achieved through education, reading, and continual self-improvement - was the key to worker

²²⁷ Álvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo', p.287.

²²⁸ Óscar Freán Hernández, 'La creación de una identidad colectiva: sociabilidad y vida cotidiana de la clase obrera gallega', in Alberto Valín (dir.), *La sociabilidad en la historia contemporánea* (Ourense: Duen de Bux, 2001), pp.40-42.

²²⁹ Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina*, pp.179-80; Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p.277; Freán Hernández, 'Identidad colectiva', pp.145-6; Ealham, *Class*, p.45 and in *CNT*, pp.vi-vii.

²³⁰ Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.153-55,96; Romero Maura, Rosa de fuego, pp.444-45.

²³¹ Francisco de Luis Martín, 'Las juventudes socialistas como frente cultural pedagógico del socialismo español', *Historia Contemporánea*, 8 (1992), pp.253-54; Ealham, *Class*, p.45.

emancipation, the defeat of capitalism and the construction a new society.²³² Together with populist anticlerical republican leaders like Lerroux and Valencia's Vicente Blasco Ibañez, they believed that such 'progress' could only be achieved if the Church's obscurantist cultural hegemony was shattered.²³³ In this context, the theatrical productions, musical performances and literary evenings held at *casas del pueblo* and athenaeums had a strong social, political - and anticlerical - content. At anarchist athenaeums, for example, José Fola Igarbide's 1895 play *The Modern Christ* was a firm favourite.²³⁴ Fola Igarbide's 'anarchist-Christian' work, which dealt with classic anarchist themes like early Christianity's 'socialist' ideals and the idea of Christ as 'the saviour of the poor', resonated with many workers.²³⁵

The books, leaflets, newspapers and journals which newly unionised workers could access were also saturated with anticlerical ideas. The pride of every athenaeum or *casa del pueblo* was its lending library, where members could read a variety of post-Enlightenment literary and political texts.²³⁶ On the shelves of these 'central universities of the workers' movement', philosophical and political works by Marx, Bakunin and Nietzsche jostled for space with radical bourgeois authors like Ibsen, Zola and Victor Hugo, socially critical Russian literature by Gorky and Tolstoy, and contemporary Spanish anarchist, republican and socialist writers like Juan Montseny, Timoteo Orbe or Ángel Samblancat.²³⁷ From the turn of the century onwards, the sudden proliferation of affordable series of 'classic' and contemporary literary, historical and political books constituted an authentic 'democratisation' of reading. The *Novela Ilustrada* collection, edited by Blasco Ibañez; the *Novela Ideal* series published by the editorial team of the anarchist *Revista Blanca*; or Eduardo Zamacois's *Cuento Semanal*: these collections, which ranged from the 'classic' to the robustly political,

²³² The phrase is from the socialist leader Julián Besteiro. Francisco de Luis Martín, *La cultura socialista en España, 1923-1930* (Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1993), p.30; on the anarchists see Ealham, *Class*, pp.45-46; Brenan, *Labyrinth*, p.188-97.

²³³ Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.71-81. On Blasco Ibañez, see Ramiro Reig, *Blasquistas y clericales. La lucha por la ciudad de Valencia de 1900* (Valencia: Institucio Valenciana d'Estudis i Investigacio, 1986); Sanabria, *Republicanism*, pp.59-63.

²³⁴ Ealham, *Class*, p.45; Freán Hernández, 'Identidad colectiva', pp.136-38.

²³⁵ Jesús María Barraón Muñoz, 'El retorno de Cristo y el teatro de José Fola Igarbide', *Estudios de Literatura*, no. 23 (1998), p.43; Álvarez Junco, *Anarquismo español*, pp.204-14.

²³⁶ Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.153-55; Ealham, *Class*, p.45; Freán Hernández, 'Identidad colectiva', p.138; Francisco de Luis Martín and Luis Arias González, *Las Casas del Pueblo socialistas en España: 1900-1936* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1997), pp.55-56; Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina*, pp.209-10.

²³⁷ 'Central universities' in de Luis Martín, *Cultura socialista*, p.16; Luis Arias González and Francisco de Luis Martín, *La narrativa breve socialista en España* (Madrid: Centro de Estudio Históricas UGT, 1998), pp.8-9.

flung open gates of culture which had previously been tightly closed to worker constituencies.²³⁸

As workers – many of whom were learning to read for the first time - discovered these ‘living books which did not die on the shelf of a library, but which were passed from hand to hand’, they encountered myriad anticlerical ideas.²³⁹ Marxist political philosophy which portrayed religious institutions as promoters of repression and ignorance; Tolstoy’s Christian anarchism; Zola’s indictments of the Church’s social role; anarchist pamphlets on ‘The Victims of the Confessional’, ‘The Religious Plague’ or ‘The Twelve Proofs of the Non-Existence of God’: all of these texts spoke directly to their readers because their ideas connected with an image of the Church which had been forged over years through direct daily experience.²⁴⁰

The anarchist, socialist and republican press – which workers could read in the libraries of *casas del pueblo* and athenaeums – was bursting with anticlerical short stories, news articles and opinion pieces. The Radical Republican propaganda machine assembled by Alejandro Lerroux in Barcelona during the first decade of the twentieth century lambasted the clergy for its moral corruption and opposition to scientific and social progress. Lerroux used anticlericalism’s imaginative power as a tool of political mobilisation, exhorting his followers to topple the Church, wipe out ‘the clerical beast’, and ‘purify the iniquitous status quo.’²⁴¹ Lerroux’s rabid journalistic priest bashing was complemented by *El Motín*, a vigorously anticlerical republican newspaper which many workers’ centres held in their libraries. Its articles, which were reprinted frequently in the anarchist press, denounced the clergy’s fanaticism and sexual immorality, blaming

²³⁸ Alberto Sánchez Álvarez-Insúa, ‘Colecciones literarias’, in Jesús A. Martínez (dir.), *Historia de la edición en España 1836-1936* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001), p.392-94; José Luis Melero, ‘Algunas notas sobre La Novela Roja y una novela olvidada de Gil Bel’, *Revista de Cultura Aragonesa*, no. 79-80 (1997); Barea, *Forja*, pp.128-29.

²³⁹ Quote from Freán Hernández, ‘Identidad colectiva’, p.138; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.287.

²⁴⁰ ‘Biblioteca Generación Consciente’, *Generación Consciente*, No. 5, 10/1923; Emilio Zola, ‘Paris: Libro Primero’, *La Revista Blanca*, No. 55, 1/10/1900, p.213; Also in *La Revista Blanca*: Han Ryner, ‘Tolstoi, o el último cristiano’, No. 77 (segunda época), 1/8/1926, p.140; ‘Ediciones de folletos de La Revista Blanca’, No. 370 (se), 21/2/1936, p.161.

²⁴¹ Quotes from Discurso de Alejandro Lerroux (Septiembre 1906), *Estudios*, No. 98, 10/1931, p.7 and Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp. 72-81. See also ‘Los antecedentes del radicalismo en España y la personalidad de Alejandro Lerroux’ in J.L García Delgado (ed.), *La Segunda Republica Española. Bienio Rectificador y Frente Popular, 1934 – 1936* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1998) p.45.

these ‘enemies of liberty’ for Spain’s ‘moral degeneration’.²⁴² Although the socialist leadership condemned anticlericalism as a bourgeois phenomenon which distracted workers from fighting capitalism, the socialist press nevertheless lambasted the Church regularly for its educational role and its legitimisation of social inequality. It also launched frequent ethical attacks upon clerical hypocrisy, avariciousness and lasciviousness.²⁴³

The vociferously anticlerical anarchist press, meanwhile, portrayed the Church as a repugnant component of the machinery of coercion which needed to disappear along with the state. Church and state constituted ‘one single tyranny...the leeching mouths of a vampire which lives off the blood of the people.’²⁴⁴ For many anarchists, the Church’s unholy communion with the powerful and the wealthy represented an absolute betrayal of true Christian principles. It is unsurprising that this millenarian, anti-hierarchical political culture, whose theorists anticipated ‘the dawn of a new era, enriched with peace and human wellbeing’, was received with such enthusiasm by disenfranchised anarchist day labourers in the ‘deep south’.²⁴⁵ Anarchism’s strict ethical code and ascetic lifestyle replaced - while simultaneously melding with - a Christian morality which the Church had been distorted and corrupted.²⁴⁶

The theory that Spanish anarchism became a kind of ‘substitute religion’ for its followers seems plausible in this context, but it must be remembered that the discourses and organisational frameworks of the socialist and populist republican movements were similarly saturated with religious elements.²⁴⁷ Socialists, republicans and anarchists alike, influenced by the Catholic-generated dominant cultural discourse of the era and

²⁴² Quotes from *El Motín*, 15/01/1901, 17/12/1908, p.1 and Sanabria, *Republicanism*, p.92. See also Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, pp.285-86; Berruezo Silvente, *Sendero*, p.22.

²⁴³ See, for example, Ramón Lamonedá on the sexual exploits of priest Don Perfecto Satisfecho, *Vida Socialista*, No. 46, 13/11/1919, pp.12-14, in Arias González and de Luis Martín, *Narrativa breve*, pp.14, 215-17.

²⁴⁴ Urales in *La Revista Blanca*, No. 165, p.652; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, pp.285-87; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.125.

²⁴⁵ Quote from Soledad Gustavo (Tereas Mañé), ‘El Anarquismo y la mujer’, *La Revista Blanca*, No. 47, 01/07/1900, pp.7-8. For further examples of this discourse (in *La Revista blanca*), see Federico Urales (Juan Montseny), ‘La evolución de la filosofía en España’, No. 51, 01/08/1900; Urales ‘La enseñanza en España’, No. 138, 01/04/1904, p.577; E. Zaldo, ‘lo que es la iglesia’, No. 75, 01/08/1901, pp.669-70, ‘Sobre los orígenes del cristianismo’ and ‘Crónica de la quincena’, No. 159 (segunda época), 01/01/1930, pp. II, 366; ‘Del ideal en el arte’, *Generación Consciente*, 01/1926, p.41. See also Brenan, *Labyrinth*, pp.139-66.

²⁴⁶ On moral criticisms, see Gurney, *Crusade*, pp. 59-61.

²⁴⁷ Brenan, *Labyrinth*, p.188-197; Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, pp. 77-84.

evidently infused with a considerable amount of residual belief in Christian moral principles, accused the Church of betraying the values of the gospel, exonerated militants' austerity and moral stringency, made endless biblical allusions, discussed redemption and martyrdom, and constructed highly eschatological images of a wicked, sinful past and a projected utopian future.²⁴⁸

Activists tried to move closer to this 'utopian future' by channelling workers' 'thirst for the acquisition of knowledge' into secular educational structures, opening educational spaces grounded in reason and rationalism in a bid to challenge the Church's power to impose its moral values upon the individual.²⁴⁹ At *casas del pueblo* and republican and anarchist athenaeums, workers took night classes in subjects like literacy, arithmetic, foreign languages and political theory.²⁵⁰ At anarchist athenaeums, classes which taught men and women about anatomy, hygiene, contraceptive methods and sexual relations tried to break the Church's power to 'engender false ideas and harmful prejudices' concerning intimate, conjugal matters. Those who attended these classes could expand their knowledge by reading articles in anarchist newspapers and journals which gave practical advice on relationships, childrearing and sexual health.²⁵¹

Socialist and anarchist centres also established secular primary schools aimed at removing children from the Church's educational ambit. Socialist schools practiced secular, rationalist, anti-dogmatic teaching, emphasising the centrality of the child to the educational process. They avoided tight timetables and strict discipline while

²⁴⁸ On this religious framework and discourse, see Juliá, *Madrid*, pp.173-76 and 'Fieles y mártires', pp.61-76; Álvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo', pp.290-95 and *Mass Politics*, pp.68-80; Manuel Pérez Ledesma, 'Pablo Iglesias ¿Santo?', *Anthropos*, No.45-46-47 (1985), pp.171-75; Julio de la Cueva, 'The Stick and the Candle: Clericals and Anticlericals in Northern Spain, 1898-1913', *European History Quarterly*, 26 (April 1996), p.258.

²⁴⁹ Freán Hernández, 'Identidad colectiva', p.139.

²⁵⁰ José Ma Aristóteles Magán Perales, 'Las "casas del pueblo" de Ontur, Tarazona de la Mancha y Almansa', *Revista de estudios albacetenses*, 48 (2004); p.203; Ealham, *Class*, p.46; Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.153-55, 96.

²⁵¹ Quote from Un Medico Rural, 'La Educación sexual', *Estudios*, No. 94, 06/1931, p.2. See also Juan Grave, 'La anarquía: su fin y sus medios', *La Revista Blanca*, No. 54, 15/9/1900, pp.168-69; Dr. D. Drysdale, 'Confidencias sexuales: enfermedades de los órganos genitales de la mujer', *Generación Consciente*, No. 12, 7/1924, p.61; See also 'La psicología en la vida moderna aplicada a la niñez', No. 25, 8/1925, p.153; Casquivano, 'del amor libre', No. 1, 6/6/1923, pp.11-12; Mary Nash, 'Un/contested identities: motherhood, sex and reform and the modernisation of gender identity in early twentieth-century Spain', in Pamela Beth Radcliff and Victoria Lorée Enders, *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female identity in modern Spain* (State University of New York Press, 1999), p.38.

encouraging play and open air activities.²⁵² At libertarian-inspired rationalist schools, children were encouraged to think independently, to formulate ideas without respect for existing dogma, and to express themselves spontaneously. These coeducational centres, which were either run by the CNT or by libertarian pedagogue Francisco Ferrer Guardia's Modern School, were a counterpoint to the Church's repressive pedagogical practices and emphasis on blind faith and obedience. Pupils flourished in a stimulating, non-coercive, egalitarian environment where adults treated them with respect and listened to their opinions.²⁵³

Simultaneously, initiatives of solidarity and mutual aid provided a riposte to the Catholic charity which, as many workers saw it, functioned to 'foment the people's ignorance' and to prevent them from 'seeing further that they should.'²⁵⁴ Socialist mutual insurance societies, run by the *casas del pueblo*, provided medical and financial assistance to members in the event of illness or accident.²⁵⁵ The republicans followed the same principle, founding 'centres of culture and assistance' and offering medical aid, legal services and cooperatives selling essential products at cheap prices.²⁵⁶ The anarchist movement defied Catholic 'charity from above and humility from below' by forging networks of mutual aid and worker solidarity based on existing community bonds. In Barcelona, CNT union centres provided new emigrants with orientation and advice on housing and employment, as well as innumerable urban services and facilities.²⁵⁷

New community bonds and joint identities formed around socialisation, literature, education and solidarity, were strengthened by the elaboration of a repertoire of counter rituals grounded in the rejection of the invasive Catholic rites of passage. Anarchists in Cadiz, for example, dispensed with baptism in favour of ceremonies which initiated

²⁵² de Luis Martín, *Cultura socialista*, pp.27-32, 91; de Luis Martín and Arias González, *Casas del Pueblo*, pp.55-56.

²⁵³ Paz, *Chumberas*, p. 91-97; Ealham, *Class*, pp.45-7 and in *CNT*, pp.vi-vii; Freán Hernández, 'Identidad colectiva', p.149; Montseny, 'Una cultura de la acracia', p.29.

²⁵⁴ Augusto Mendive, *El Pedestal* (Madrid: Biblioteca Renovación, 1911) in Arias González and de Luis Martín, *Narrativa breve socialista*, p.224.

²⁵⁵ Magán Perales, 'Casas del pueblo' p.204; Barea, *Forja*, p.325.

²⁵⁶ Quote from Freán Hernández, 'Identidad colectiva', p.145; Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.153-55.

²⁵⁷ Quote from Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p. 196. On mutual assistance, see Julián Casanova, *Anarquismo y revolución en la sociedad rural aragonesa, 1936-1938* (Madrid: Siglo XXI 1985), p.163; Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years, 1868-1936* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1998), p.85; Ealham, *Class*, pp.43-45; Demetrio Berian Azqueta, *Prat de Llobregat, ayer: un pueblo sin estado, relatos y semblanzas* (n.p.n.d), pp.129-30.

newborn children into the anarchist movement.²⁵⁸ In towns and cities across Spain, republican workers began to celebrate their children's inscription into the civil registry by marching from the registry office to the republican centre with flags, banners and music. When authorisation was obtained for civil weddings, the town hall replaced the church as the focal point of the celebrations; republican flags and the chords of 'The Marseilles' ousted hymns and religious objects. The secular funeral ceremonies of republican, anarchist and socialist militants – especially when the deceased were victims of violence by the security forces – were characterised by proclamations of worker solidarity and political songs and symbols.²⁵⁹ As the following section will argue, these rituals – in combination with mass secular public celebrations which challenged Catholic power in the street - significantly inflected power relations in the built landscape and the structures of public space.

'Spacing' the built environment: counter hegemonic claims and parallel mobilisation

The Spanish landscape at the turn of the century was one 'haunted by the Church'.²⁶⁰ Catholicism's innumerable, highly visual external manifestations, from statues and cathedrals to processions and open-air masses, were part of a process by which the Church constituted and 'ordered' urban and rural public spaces, striving to imprint a homogenous, unchanging meaning upon the built environment. This 'spacing' - to employ the terminology of German sociologist Martina Löw – endlessly reproduced an inflexible, hierarchical conception of the social order which viewed social inequality as divinely ordained and rejected political and cultural pluralism.²⁶¹ The Church's spatial reproduction and reinforcement of this hierarchy underpinned and legitimated the Restoration Monarchy, presenting the existing social structure as 'timeless and universal'.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868-1903* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp.84-87.

²⁵⁹ Salomón Chéliz 'El anticlericalismo', p.137; Cruz, *Políticas de la Muerte*, pp.80-5; de la Cueva, 'Movilización popular', p.115; Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina*, pp.209-10.

²⁶⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1991), p.255.

²⁶¹ Martina Löw in Beat Kumin (ed.), *Political Space in Pre-industrial Europe* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate 2009), p.9.

²⁶² On the 'spatial re-enactment' of a regime's ideology, see John M. Najemy, 'Florentine Politics and Urban Spaces', in R. Crum and J. Paoletti (eds.), *Renaissance Florence: A Social History* (Cambridge University press, 2006), p.32; 'Timeless and universal' in James C. Scott in Kumin, *Political Space*, pp.1-2. On the Spanish case see Delgado, *Luces iconoclastas*, pp.34-46.

In restoration Spain, the Church's physical presence was everywhere. For politicised, anticlerical workers, the vast network of churches, cathedrals, convents, monasteries and religious monuments which covered Spain's topography was not a web of 'points of access to the holy'.²⁶³ Instead, these structures displayed the glaring wealth of a Church which had thrown its lot in with the monarchy and the rich. In the countryside, the poor generally occupied humble dwellings on the fringes of the village or town. The church, in contrast, was normally located in the central plaza along with the homes of the rich and the town hall. Even the humblest church buildings contained religious objects and statues donated by wealthy Catholics.²⁶⁴ Many monastery buildings were situated on the outskirts of villages, and peasant day labourers often worked on their vast expanses of land.²⁶⁵ This structuring of space and display of wealth linked religion and power, emphasising the Church's position at the centre of society and at the top of the social scale. One poem published in the anarchist *Revista Blanca* in the 1920s described: 'a village where the church raises its hundred-year-old spire /like an insult to the people/over the miserable huts/inhabited by the glebe/ those infected hovels/into which the pariahs are crammed.'²⁶⁶

The hierarchical social structure was also perpetuated by the subdivision of Catholic spaces.²⁶⁷ The organisation of cemeteries by social class was just one element of a 'weft of sacralisations which powerfully ordered social life.'²⁶⁸ Mass, for example, was an intrinsically exclusive ceremony, as its norms required churchgoers to dress formally, something which was beyond the economic possibilities of most workers.²⁶⁹ Those who did attend found their 'places' clearly designated according to status: the rich sat on pews or chairs while the poor 'knelt on the stones'.²⁷⁰ The same was true of Catholic festivals, which structured the Spanish calendar and which were so entrenched in popular culture and community socialisation that numerous non-Catholics attended

²⁶³ Quote from Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.3-4.

²⁶⁴ Collier, *Socialists*, p.31; Barea, *Forja*, p.105.

²⁶⁵ Callahan, *Catholic Church*, p.12.

²⁶⁶ Solano Palacio, 'La Aldea', *La Revista Blanca*, No. 145 (se), 1/6/1929,p.xii (suplemento).

²⁶⁷ For an analysis of these 'subdivisions' in early modern Europe, see Sarah Hamilton and Andrew Spicer, *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in medieval and early modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.20.

²⁶⁸ Quote from Delgado, 'Violencia anticlerical', p.98. See also Dave Gilmore, 'The Social Organization of Space: Class, Cognition and Residence in a Spanish Town', *American Ethnologist*, 3 (1977), pp. 437-51.

²⁶⁹ Mintz, *Anarchists*, p.69.

²⁷⁰ Barea, *Forja*, p.104.

them. Urban processions were led by the cathedral's canons, followed by the clergy and the pious rich. The order of the procession then moved down the hierarchical scale until it arrived at the poor children from charitable schools, 'with their clean pinafores, their ribbons and their broken candles,' followed by working class families.²⁷¹ In the countryside, these parades contained fewer 'layers,' but their intrinsic structure was identical.²⁷²

These rituals also obliged the poor, quite literally, to bear the weight of the rich's religious fervour. In most places, workers were paid for - or coerced into - carrying the spine-crushingly heavy floats which were integral to Holy Week's 'extravagant dramaturgy'. In Seville, for example, weighty silver floats bedecked with religious figures 'garbed in the richest of rich robes, with gold embroidery' were heaved through the streets by the city's wharf labourers.²⁷³ The fact that these festivities were subsidised by the regime and attended by municipal authorities and state security forces also underlined the Church-throne union.²⁷⁴ Across Spain, this repertoire of hierarchical spacing was backed up by constant visual and acoustic reminders of Catholicism's omnipresence. Streets named after saints and religious institutions; the 'multiple ringing of the bells of multiple bell towers'; the cathedrals, convents and churches which 'absorbed' the urban skyline: these elements reminded workers incessantly of the pervasiveness of the Catholic ritual order.²⁷⁵

At the turn of the century, the Church was in a state of buoyancy which enabled it to augment dramatically this physical presence. Protected by the state and assisted economically by Catholic patrons, it was making a rapid recovery from the liberal reforms of the mid nineteenth century, which had suppressed the male religious orders and sold their property. As legal restrictions on religious orders were lifted, new congregations were founded and new convents, monasteries and religious schools were

²⁷¹ Barea, *Forja*, p.194.

²⁷² Radcliff, *Mobilization*, pp. 202-24.

²⁷³ Quote from Bowers, *Mission*, pp.136-40. See also Vincent, 'Keys', p.79; Low and Breá, *Notebook*, pp.75-77; Gilmore, *People of the Plain*, p.153.

²⁷⁴ Radcliff, *Mobilization*, pp. 202-4; James Scott in Kumin, *Political Space*, p.2.

²⁷⁵ Quote from Carlos Serrano, '1900 o la difícil modernidad en España', in Carlos Serrano and Serge Salauin (eds.), *1900 en España* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1991), p. 201; Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p. 202; Vicente Gay, 'La enseñanza en España', *La Revista Blanca*, No. 132, 15/12/1903, p.364; *El Motín*, 15/01/1901.

constructed.²⁷⁶ Yet the Church was also on the defensive. The unsettling memory of a nineteenth century punctuated by liberal challenges to its power, and collective anxiety generated by laicisation initiatives beyond Spain's borders, contributed to a mounting fear of change, modernisation and loss of 'tradition' among hierarchy, clergy and laity alike. The birth of the anticlerical workers' public sphere, with its cultural and social alternatives and repertoire of secular rituals, fuelled these fears. From the late nineteenth century, as politicised workers began to restructure public spaces according to their conceptions of how society *should* be organised, newly mobilised Catholic forces fought to maintain semiotic control of the urban and rural landscape.²⁷⁷

The alternatives to the Catholic rites of passage elaborated within the workers' public sphere – and discussed in the previous section – challenged the Church's power over the collective commemoration of intimate life events. Workers also began to undermine religious festivals as the dominant form of mass socialisation. Although the masked revelry of the pre-lent carnival had previously afforded worker constituencies certain 'social licence' to challenge subversively the established order, they now invented 'traditions' which defied Catholic behavioural norms, forging an alternative type of community bond.²⁷⁸ Radical republican groups, for example, began to organise 'parties of promiscuation' on Good Friday. These events filled the Christian calendar's 'most solemn day' with singing, dancing and audacious meat consumption.²⁷⁹ 'New traditions' often appropriated religious patterns. The *romería* (a procession to a shrine followed by festivities), was 'secularised' by republican groups, who filled the soundscapes and landscapes of towns and cities with their symbols and songs on key republican historical dates. As workers entered previously semantically exclusive public spaces *en masse*, they reordered them and imbued them with new meanings, articulating their images of 'what the world would be' when their conception of the social order triumphed. On May Day, celebrated in Spain from 1890, workers strived to display a

²⁷⁶ Mary Vincent, *Spain 1833 – 2002: People and State* (Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 26, 62-63.

²⁷⁷ Lannon, 'Social Praxis', pp.40-44; Julio Penedo Cobo, 'Implantación del clero', pp.252-6; Castro Alfin, 'Palabras de fuego', p.209.

²⁷⁸ Dave D. Gilmore, *Carnival and Culture: Sex, Symbol and Status in Spain* (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1998), pp.3-4; and *People of the Plain*, p.149. On 'inventing traditions' see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp.1-14.

²⁷⁹ Quote from De la Cueva, 'The Stick and the Candle', p.258. See also Salomón Chéliz 'El anticlericalismo', p.127.

peaceful, pacifistic, disciplined group capable of offering alternatives and solutions to existing injustices.²⁸⁰

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Church was also working to ‘re-stamp’ threatened public spaces with Catholic meaning. It mobilised its followers on an unprecedented scale using parish community networks, weaving a tapestry of propagandistic, Catholic-Agrarian, student, women’s and union organisations. Those who joined and supported these organisations – generally peasant smallholders and the expanding urban, but especially the provincial middling sectors – shared an acute fear of change and the loss of a ‘traditional’ way of life based around religion. They attached political meanings to the Church’s vast ritual repertoire, using processions, pilgrimages, masses of reparation, and the construction of new monuments to maintain the established balance of power in Spain’s public spaces. Politically mobilised anticlerical workers responded to this ‘crusade’ by taking action at a grassroots level, sabotaging Catholic events and expanding their own repertoire of counter rituals. In a situation where many participants in anticlerical mobilisation were newly politicised, recent emigrants to cities, ‘traditional’ modalities of collective action such as riots and burnings or stonings of churches commingled with newer, political protest forms like political rallies and demonstrations.²⁸¹

The first decade of the twentieth century thus saw a dramatic parallel mobilisation of anticlericals and Catholics. Yet it is important to remember that these ‘blocs’ were not merely reacting to one another’s actions. Just as the construction of the workers’ public sphere was an ongoing process influenced by innumerable shared experiences and political and cultural coordinates, so those who mobilised in the name of Catholicism shared a complex map of experiences, fears and expectations which informed their actions. Catholic attitudes at this time, for example, responded just as much to the perceived threat posed by intellectual and political anticlericalism as they did to the actions of anticlerical workers’ organisations. The propagandistic activity of

²⁸⁰ Temma Kaplan, *Red city, blue period: social movements in Picasso’s Barcelona* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.25; Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.153-5, 96; Radcliff, *Mobilization*, pp.204-5.

²⁸¹ Julio de la Cueva Merino, ‘Clericalismo y movilización católica en la España de la Restauración’, in de la Cueva Merino and López Villaverde, *Clericalismo y asociacionismo católico de la restauración a la transición*, pp.31-50; Feliciano Montero, ‘Del movimiento católico a la Acción Católica: Continuidad y cambio, 1900-1930’, in De la Cueva and Montero, *Secularización conflictiva*, pp.169-181; Salomón Chéliz ‘El anticlericalismo’, pp.126-133.

the Free Institute of Education (founded in 1876 in response to the state's expulsion of university teachers who refused to teach in accordance with orthodox Catholicism); the 'regenerationist' republican intellectuals who attributed 'national decline' to the Church; the Liberal Party's endorsement of secularisation between 1901 and 1913; the premier of the anticlerical play *Electra* by Benito Pérez Galdós in 1901 – all these elements gravely endangered the Church's 'monopoly on the truth'. The fact that both Galdós' play and the parliamentary debate on the 'religious question' sparked an escalation in grassroots popular anticlerical protest only served to enhance Catholics' feelings of beleaguerment.²⁸²

The Church's hegemonic strategies concerning public spaces became more elaborate as the perceived threat posed by the forces of liberalism, progressive politics and the labour movement increased. In June and July 1899, the ecclesiastical authorities had decided to place plaques dedicated to the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on public buildings in several Spanish cities. The cult was strongly associated with the reactionary, widely resented Jesuit order. It had been transformed by the Church into a symbol of 'reparation' for 'secularising offences', becoming a 'defiant badge of activism for all politically mobilised Catholics.'²⁸³ As Catholic manifestations of support for the plaques collided with popular anticlerical demonstrations, the symbols of Catholicism clashed with those of the anticlerical public sphere in streets across Spain. The decade which followed, which culminated in the Tragic Week's dramatic mass popular attacks upon religious buildings in Barcelona, was characterised by these semiotic scuffles to influence the balance of power in public spaces across the country.²⁸⁴

By 1919, the Church had expanded its defence strategy. In the aftermath of war and revolution across Europe and in the wake of the challenge to traditional social power that it signified, the Restoration Monarchy was in crisis. The Catholic hierarchy saw its great protector overwhelmed by urban and rural labour unrest sparked partly by the crippling economic effects of the First World War. The Church, of course, was

²⁸² De la Cueva, 'The Stick and the Candle', p.45; and Julio de la Cueva and Feliciano Montero, 'Clericalismo y anticlericalismo entre dos siglos: percepciones recíprocas' in de la Cueva and Montero, *Secularización conflictiva*, pp.112-13; Callahan, *Catholic Church*, pp.48-56.

²⁸³ 'Reparation' in Cruz, *Pueblo*, p.29; 'Defiant badge' in William Christian, *Moving Crucifixes in Modern Spain* (Princeton University Press, 1992), p.4 and *Visionaries*, p. 5,391-94.

²⁸⁴ Salomón Chéliz, 'El anticlericalismo', pp.126-33.

implicated fully in labour conflict due to the increasingly vigorous efforts of Catholic unions to undermine the UGT and the CNT.²⁸⁵ In a bid to recover the traditional hierarchical ‘spacing’ of the built environment, Church and regime collaborated in the construction of a twenty-eight metre tall monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the Spain’s geographical centre point: the Hill of Los Ángeles in Getafe near Madrid. In May, King Alfonso XIII unveiled the colossal statue and consecrated Spain unilaterally to the Sacred Heart. There could be no clearer reaffirmation of the authority of the Church and the regime, the seemingly unbreakable connection between the two, and the Church’s position at the centre of society. In the years following 1919, town councils in the rest of Spain scrambled to erect their own Sacred Hearts. The inscription carved into the statues’ bases sent a blunt message to those who dared to challenge Catholic hegemony: ‘I will reign in Spain’.²⁸⁶

In 1923, the ‘soft’ military coup staged in by Barcelona’s Captain General, Miguel Primo de Rivera – who intended to quell worker protest and restore ‘order’ – effectively returned control of the built landscape to the Church. The ecclesiastical hierarchy, clinging to its traditional conception of the social order, threw its spiritual weight behind the resulting dictatorship’s curtailment of individual liberties and suppression of the anarchist movement. Yet although the coup was intended to halt the political and social changes which so terrified Spain’s elites, by the 1920s, neither the Church, the dictatorship or the monarchy was able to fend off the ever accelerating changes underway. The economic boom of the 1920s, and the dictatorship’s public works projects, drew ever greater numbers of agricultural workers to cities. The anticlerical workers’ public sphere, despite the suppression of the anarchist movement, continued to evolve.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, the vigilance and public order measures of the Primo dictatorship penetrated domestic space far more profoundly than those of the previous regime. The creation of centres of ‘civic information and investigation’, for example, processed denunciations of the regime’s critics made by ordinary citizens. The

²⁸⁵ Adrian Shubert, ‘El fracaso’, pp. 246-48; Callahan, *Catholic Church*, pp.321-33.

²⁸⁶ BOOM, *Tomo XLIV, Año 1931* (Madrid, Imp. Del Asilo del S.C de Jesús, Calle de Juan Bravo, 3, 1931), Núm. 1,534, 16/05/1931, p. 191; Luis Cano, *Reinaré en España: la mentalidad católica a la llegada de la Segunda República* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2009), pp. 86-94; Joaquín Álvarez Cruz, *El Monumento al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús en Bilbao* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2003), p.6; Guiliana di Febo, *La santa de la raza: un culto barroco en la España franquista, 1937-1962* (Barcelona: Icaria, 1988), pp.51-53; María Antonia Herradón Figueroa, ‘Reinaré en España: la devoción al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús’, *Revista de dialectología y tradiciones populares* 2 (2009), pp. 193-218.

²⁸⁷ Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.59-65; Graham, *Introduction*, pp. 5-6; Preston, *Civil War*, pp.30-32.

paramilitary forces and members of the UP (*Unión Patriótica* – the regime’s political party) who ran the centres had the authority to search the houses of regime opponents to close any association which conducted ‘political debates’. The ‘politically suspect’, arrested in their homes or meeting places on the basis of anonymous denunciations, could be held without charges for months on end. In this context, the opening and reinforcement of alternative spaces became increasingly dangerous, and ever more important, for the integrants of the anticlerical workers’ public sphere.²⁸⁸

All this meant that by 1930-1931, the period which saw the fall of the dictatorship and the proclamation of the Republic, anticlerical discourse and action was already markedly politicised, widespread and indelibly connected to social and political change. Anticlerical workers, excluded violently from the ‘official public sphere’ represented first by the Restoration Monarchy and then by the dictatorship, had developed a series of overlapping counter-hegemonic projects which would play a crucial role in the development of mass democracy in Spain after 1931.

²⁸⁸ Alejandro Quiroga, ‘Miguel Primo de Rivera: La espada y la palabra’, in Alejandro Quiroga Fernández de Soto and Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco (eds.), *Soldados de Dios y Apóstoles de la Patria: Las derechas españolas en la Europa de entreguerras* (Granada: Comares, 2010), pp. 58-60.

Chapter Two: Expectation, Mobilisation and Grassroots Secularisation during the Second Republic

We have proclaimed the Republic. What do we do about the priest?
Telegram sent to the Interior Ministry by a provincial mayor, 14 April 1931²⁸⁹

Faced with the danger of the separation of Church and state, the expulsion of the religious orders and the confiscation of their property...the crozier and mitres have begun to move, preparing their defence. And if the people do not take action, this parliamentary resolution [the Republic's Constitution] - written under the pressure of the masses who opined on the issue by burning the convents - will be annulled by the onslaught which this black army is prepared to deliver.
Anarchist writer and educator Floreal Ocaña, October 1931²⁹⁰

On 14 April 1931, a group of men, caught up in the popular euphoria which greeted the proclamation of the Second Republic, attempted to scale the monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Getafe in order to adorn it with a Phrygian hat and a republican banner.²⁹¹ This jubilant attempt to superimpose progressive political symbols upon such a colossal icon of Catholic hegemony was part of the wave of 'popular expectation and boundless enthusiasm' generated by the fall of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the flight of King Alfonso XIII and the coming to power of a Republican-Socialist provisional government with secularising intentions. The many workers who already shared a profound anticlerical identity in April 1931 hoped that the birth of the Republic would mean the end of the Church's invasive control of everyday lives, and of its power to structure public spaces as a reflection and reinforcement of its hierarchical conception of society. With the Church's model of social relations rendered redundant in the new republican, democratic, secular age, the symbols, rituals and values of the anticlerical workers' public sphere could occupy centre stage.²⁹²

These hopes, as this chapter will demonstrate, would not be fulfilled. From April 1931 onwards, the Church's mobilisation of its followers against the Republic would see mass democracy develop in Spain as a struggle between mass mobilised Catholicism on the one hand, and a secularising Republic supported by - but also in constant tension with - the constituents of the anticlerical workers' public sphere on the other. The campaign waged against secularising legislation by the forces of organised

²⁸⁹ de la Cueva, 'El anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica y la Guerra Civil', p.214.

²⁹⁰ Floreal Ocaña, 'La Ciencia y La Religión', *Estudios*, No. 98, 10/1931, pp.15-17.

²⁹¹ *Semanario Católico de Reus*, 06/06/1931, p.391 in Christian, *Visionaries*, p. 469(n).

²⁹² 'Boundless enthusiasm' from Valeriano Orobón Fernández, 'La CNT y la Revolución', in Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, p.21.

Catholicism would result in the repeated frustration of workers' hopes in the areas which had preoccupied them for years: education and welfare, the rites of passage, and the 'spacing' of the built environment. The slowness and ineffectiveness of reform, and the government's inability to combat the Church's ever-increasing public presence, would see mounting numbers of politically mobilised anticlerical workers positioning themselves at the vanguard of the secularisation of the street, carrying out grassroots anticlerical collective action with the aim of shifting the balance of power in Spain's public spaces away from Catholic forces.

During the same period, the central state's intrusion into intimate space would reach unparalleled levels. As the Church's influence over intimate space persisted, workers would struggle harder - and in greater numbers - than ever before to fend off this dual intrusion in a bid to fix the boundaries of their own private space, and to reshape and redefine public spaces. From 1933, these efforts would be spurred on by the emergence of an increasingly powerful shared mental linkage among leftwing worker constituencies between the mass Catholic rightwing political coalition party, the CEDA, and the looming threat of European fascism. This chapter will examine a five-year period marked by an unprecedented parallel mass political mobilisation of anticlericals and Catholics, an ever stronger alliance between the Church and reactionary political groups, an enormous intensification in popular anticlerical sentiment, and an ever more acute determination among anticlerical workers to secularise society from below.

The birth of the Republic: anticlerical expectation, grassroots responses and the expansion of the anticlerical workers' public sphere

The Republican-Socialist coalition which governed between 1931 and 1933 sought to modernise Spain socially, culturally politically and economically. Republican politicians aimed to redistribute social and economic power, using reformist legislation on labour, agriculture and education to address the poverty and disenfranchisement of enormous numbers of rural and urban workers. Seeing the Church as the principal obstacle to Spain's modernisation and 'Europeanization', they set out to oust the institution from the 'sacred centre' of society.²⁹³ For these reformers, whose shared

²⁹³ Cultural historian Lynn Hunt defines this 'sacred centre' as the heart of the 'cultural frame' of a society. 'It gives the members of a society their sense of place. It is the heart of things, the place where culture, society and politics come together'. *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 87.

experience of the non-sectarian *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Institute of Education) was a crucial mark of identity, breaking the Church's cultural power to disseminate the rites, conceptions and symbols which pervaded the country's landscape and defined its society would be as important as limiting its economic power and political influence.²⁹⁴ Radical and far reaching secularisation measures – most crucially in the educational sphere - would be the only means of eliminating the 'Catholic quality' of citizenship in order to craft a joint republican cultural identity. The inalienable rights of the 'citizenship of God' had to be subordinated, definitively, to republican law and to the secular state.²⁹⁵

From the very day of the Republic's proclamation, popular collective action regarding the 'religious question' ran far ahead of governmental plans. On 14 April 1931, in the town of Purchil (Granada), local UGT members celebrated by going from house to house removing plaques dedicated to Sacred Heart of Jesus from walls and doors.²⁹⁶ In Seville, on the evening of the same day, demonstrators congregated in the central Plaza del Triunfo, where they stoned and decapitated a monument to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. One intrepid anticlerical scaled the wall of the Episcopal Palace and hung a republican flag from the balcony.²⁹⁷ In Malaga's city centre, workers toppled a statue of the Marques of Larios (a prominent monarchist oligarch and Catholic 'benefactor') from its pedestal. As the night unfolded, the grassroots spatial reconfiguration continued. Workers dragged 'the Marques' to the port and flung him into the sea, put up signs reading 'Calle 14 de April' (Fourteenth of April Street) on the city's principal thoroughfare, burned the headquarters of Malaga's clerical, monarchist newspaper, and attempted to set fire to a Jesuit seminary.²⁹⁸

These triumphant, forceful attacks upon the symbols of Catholic power, which occurred before the government had announced any secularising measures (and over

²⁹⁴ Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, pp.22-5; Manuel Tuñón de Lara, 'Grandes corrientes culturales', J.L García Delgado (ed.), *Los orígenes culturales de la Segunda República* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1993), pp.6-8.

²⁹⁵ 'Citizenship of God' a quote from Gomá in Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.43-52; Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.17.

²⁹⁶ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 1009/40519, Antonio Ávila García.

²⁹⁷ Leandro Álvarez Rey, *La derecha en la II República: Sevilla, 1931 – 1936* (Universidad de Sevilla, 1993), pp.188-89.

²⁹⁸ NA: FO371/15774: Young to FO, 20/10/1931; Antonio García Sánchez, 'La política republicana', in Fernando Arcas Cubero and Antonio García Sánchez (coords.), *Málaga republicana: historia e imágenes 1931-1936* (Centro de Ediciones, Diputación de Málaga, 2003), pp.9-14.

eight months before the secularising constitution was approved by parliament) demonstrate that the coming of the new regime raised huge and unrealistic expectations that the Republic would be able to curb rapidly the Church's domination of public spaces and its power over everyday lives. The wave of church burning which began in Madrid on 10 May 1931 and spread to Seville, Cadiz, Malaga and Alicante corresponded to the same popular anxiety concerning the Church's links with monarchist political forces and impatience to resolve the 'religious question' immediately.²⁹⁹ In Granada, the day after the Madrid disturbances, demonstrators forcibly entered the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the centric Gran Vía with the flag of the local *Casa del Pueblo* held aloft. While some of the group's members burned the church's religious objects on a bonfire in the street, others sacked the adjoining Jesuit residence, flinging books, papers and garments from its windows.³⁰⁰

One worker in Madrid, who was later tried for his participation in the fiery events of May, described his actions as his 'duty as a citizen.'³⁰¹ Yet an ever-widening gulf was obviously developing between the authorities' 'top down' attempts to dismantle the Church's power and to construct and reinforce republican 'citizenship', and the battle for secularisation which increasingly politicised and ever more anticlerical workers were fighting on the street. In the following months, debate over the secularising constitution and the announcement of secularising measures that would directly affect peoples' daily experiences of the Church elevated popular expectation even further. With the removal of crucifixes from state schoolrooms, the prohibition of the religious orders from teaching and involvement in commerce, the creation of secular cemeteries, and the legalisation of divorce and civil marriage, anticlerical workers saw the Church's power to interfere in their lives contested – and their own freedom of action increased thereby.³⁰²

²⁹⁹Vicente Cárcel Ortí (ed.), *La II República y la Guerra Civil en el Archivo Secreto Vaticano. Vol. I: Documentos del año 1931 (febrero-julio)* (Madrid: BAC, 2011), Doc. 86, p.346; NA: FO371/15773, Grahame to FO, 12/05/1931; AHN, Interior A, legajo 16/12 (Madrid); *El Sol*, 12/05/1931; *El Liberal*, 12/05/1931; *El Socialista*, 12/05/1931; *La Vanguardia*, 12/01/1931; *ABC*, 17/05/1933; Maura, *Alfonso XIII*, pp.241-64.

³⁰⁰*La Vanguardia*, 14/05/1931; *El Defensor de Granada*, 12/04/1931, 13/04/1931; Juan Manuel Barrios Rozúa, *Iconoclastia 1930-1936: la ciudad de Dios frente a la modernidad* (Universidad de Granada, 2007), pp.128-29.

³⁰¹*ABC*, 17/05/1933.

³⁰²Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.181-6; de la Cueva, 'El anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica', pp. 228-44; *Constitución de la Republica Española* (Toledo: Librería Miguel Hernández, 1993), pp.8-13; *Ley de Divorcio de 1932* (Barcelona: Biblioteca Calamus Scriptoruis, 1981).

Yet in the years which followed, this popular excitement ended repeatedly in bitter frustration provoked by the Church's undiminished presence and power. The increasing determination of large numbers of anticlerical workers to resolve this problem on the street cannot be understood without an examination of the vertiginous process of politicisation and unionisation sparked by the coming of the Republic. As we saw in the previous chapter, the first three decades of the twentieth century had seen the gradual construction of a workers' public sphere grounded in alternative forms of socialisation, cultural initiatives, and the invention of secular rituals. Anticlericalism was a common element of the overlapping political cultures and ideas which comprised this counter-hegemonic project. Now, in a radically new democratic context which allowed workers to organise politically and take industrial action openly for the first time, the ranks of workers' organisations swelled. In a situation where the populist republican political parties of the early twentieth century had either disappeared or changed beyond all recognition, the socialist UGT and the anarchist CNT became the principal beneficiaries of the new state of affairs.³⁰³

In the case of the UGT, which received 2,000 new affiliates each day during the Republic's first three months, this vast increase had much to do with people's expectations of the opportunities which the new regime could offer them.³⁰⁴ With the socialists represented in government, and the UGT in charge of a nationwide system of urban and rural labour arbitration boards (the *jurados mixtos*), membership of the union was now viewed as necessary to obtain work in many places.³⁰⁵ This generated a particularly large influx of the south's disenfranchised day labourers into the FNTT (the socialist Landworkers' Federation, founded in 1930); they hoped that their desperate working and living conditions would be ameliorated by government land reform. Unskilled urban labourers, such as Madrid's construction workers, also flocked to join the UGT.³⁰⁶ The anarchist movement, which had been driven into 'enforced slumber'

³⁰³ Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp.20-21.

³⁰⁴ Marta Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT: Entre la democracia y la revolución: 1931-1936* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2008), pp.17-18.

³⁰⁵ In Francoist military court records, workers' often explain Republic-era union membership by asserting that it was 'impossible to find work' without belonging to the UGT. Archivo del Tribunal Togado Militar de Almería, Almería (ATTMA), Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y otros.

³⁰⁶ Helen Graham, *Socialism and War* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.3 and *Republic*, p.26, 62; Edward E. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp.289-91; Collier, *Socialists*, pp. 54-64.

by the dictatorship, now found itself free to make its presence felt through propaganda, rallies and incitement to revolutionary action. Its membership spiralled, especially in Andalucía and Catalonia. The *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (FAI), a group which had been formed in 1927 within the CNT in order to defend anarchist orthodoxy, also increased its influence between 1931 and 1936. The Spanish Communist Party (PCE) emerged from clandestinely and began to attract new members, although it would remain a fairly minor political player until the civil war years. Young people mobilised massively across the progressive political spectrum, many joining republican, socialist and communist youth movements.³⁰⁷

These newly mobilised workers were propelled into a political and cultural world which was underscored by anticlerical ideas. Although the discourse of the CNT, whose political ideology also dictated its opposition to the bourgeois state represented by the Republic, was more vociferously anticlerical than that of the UGT, rank and file members of both organisations shared a collective identity grounded, at least in part, in a fierce rejection of the institutional Church. As workers socialised within their communities at political meetings and cultural events held at a rapidly expanding network of anarchist athenaeums and socialist *casas del pueblo*, they shared perceptions of religion, political ideas and experiences of what many saw as the hypocritical and politically interested actions of the clergy. Pre-existing anticlerical attitudes were thereby reaffirmed, amplified and – as time went by – radicalised.³⁰⁸

‘Burying the flags of the wicked’: Catholic mobilisation³⁰⁹

Progressive political groups were not the only organisations which flourished and evolved under the auspices of the mass democracy inaugurated by the Republic. The ecclesiastical hierarchy – despite some nuances in opinion between individual bishops – received the new regime with a mixture of outrage, distrust and foreboding. Since the

³⁰⁷ ‘Enforced slumber’ in Julián Casanova, *Anarchism, the Republic and Civil War in Spain* (Oxon: Routledge/Cañada Blanch, 2005), pp.3-14; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.152-53; Ealham, *Class*, pp.86-91; Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.13-37 and ‘Las organizaciones juveniles: entre el frentepopulismo y el izquierdismo socialista’, in Manuel Ballarín and José Luis Ledesma (eds.), *La República del Frente Popular: Reformas, conflictos y conspiraciones* (Zaragoza: Fundación Rey de Corral de Investigaciones Marxistas, 2010), p.61.

³⁰⁸ Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.287; ‘¿Derrumbamiento de un régimen o caída de un individuo?’, and ‘La República española y el clero’, *La Revista Blanca*, No. 192 (se), 15/05/1931, p.587; Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.28-29.

³⁰⁹ ADM, PRRD, Caja 7, *Proceso de Martirio de los Salesianos*.

late nineteenth century, the Church had been endeavouring actively to fend off threats to its power posed by liberalism, republicanism and workers' political groups. Now, with their longstanding nightmare embodied suddenly in the pluralistic, democratic Second Republic, the ecclesiastical hierarchy felt, in the words of the Spanish Catholic historian Juan de Iturralde, 'that an abyss was opening before their feet'.³¹⁰ The Vatican, though taken aback by the regime change, limited itself to preaching Leo XII's doctrine of obedience to the legitimate authorities. Although many bishops shared this public caution, the public proclamations of some of the most vocal members of the episcopate offered an apocalyptic image of the new regime. The most infamous example of this espousal of anti-Republican views is the royalist pastoral issued on 1 May 1931 by the monarchist, strongly integrist Cardinal Primate of Toledo, Pedro Segura. The pastoral, which praised Alfonso XIII and urged Catholics to mobilise politically against the Republic, earned Segura his expulsion from Spain by the Republican authorities.³¹¹

From the very moment of the Republic's proclamation, the Church attempted to confront this new unfavourable state of affairs by using the new political framework to its advantage.³¹² During the spring and summer of 1931, the ecclesiastical hierarchy began to develop a highly politicised discourse which portrayed the Church – and indeed all of Spain's Catholics – as victims of persecution by a regime which was committing the 'extremely grave error' of 'confronting an authority which cannot renounce its divine mandate'. Bishops and priests urged Catholics to mobilise against secularising measures and in defence of the Church's 'sacrosanct and inalienable rights'.³¹³

Catholics from diverse social backgrounds acted upon these instructions. They were united by an acute fear of change, and of the disruption or even disappearance of the religious ritual structures which underscored 'traditional' community life.³¹⁴ Catholic

³¹⁰ Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco* (vol.I), p. 338.

³¹¹ Cárcel Ortí, *Archivo Secreto Vaticano*, Doc.81, p.341; Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.17.

³¹² Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.179-80; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.30-31; On nuances in ecclesiastical opinion and mistrust of pluralist regimes, see Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp.172-73.

³¹³ Quotes from BOOM, Tomo XLIV, 01/06/1931, Núm. 1,537, *Declaración Colectiva*, p.221; 15/06/1931, *Declaración de los Metropolitanos*, p.260; 01/08/1932 and Núm. 1,588, 'Horas Graves', p.273. See also Carta pastoral de Bernardo Martínez Noval (obispo de Almería), 23/10/1931 in Manuel Pérez Montoya, *Las derechas almerienses durante la II República: el primer bienio 1931-1933* (Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 1991), p.135.

³¹⁴ Graham, *Introduction*, pp. 10-12; Christian, *Visionaries*, esp.pp.13-37, 127-44.

smallholding peasants in central and northern Spain, provincial and urban middling sectors, members of the already existent but newly radicalised *Juventud Católica de España* (JCE – the Catholic youth organisation), and huge numbers of women, all lent their services to a rapidly expanding network of propagandistic organisations and lay associations. This network, which had been under construction since the turn of the century, counted on the elite, Jesuit-influenced *Asociación Nacional de Propagandistas* (ANCP), on press organs like *El Debate* and *El Diario de Valencia*, and on the *Confederación Nacional-Católico Agraria* (CNCA) smallholders' union.³¹⁵ Its hub was *Acción Católica* (Catholic Action), an apostolic lay organisation directed by the Spanish episcopate. AC's diocesan and parish *juntas* provided the Church with a readymade social-organisational infrastructure through which to mobilise its 'soldiers of Christ'.³¹⁶

Although these associations claimed that they operated 'outside of and above party politics', they were actually what made political Catholicism's 'whirlwind eruption onto the republican scene' possible. Catholics, ordered by their bishops and priests to vote for political parties which 'respect the rights of religion', found their 'saviour' in José María Gil Robles, a young lawyer from Salamanca who wanted to hoist 'the flag which unites Catholics', mobilising them under the auspices of his party, *Acción Popular*.³¹⁷ Spain's ostensibly 'apolitical' lay organisations were inseparably connected to AP. On a local level, the leaders of AP and other rightwing political parties were often the same people who directed Catholic-agrarian, women's and youth groups.³¹⁸ Furthermore, as many parish priests urged their parishioners to join *Acción Católica*, they also railed against the new regime from the pulpit, wholeheartedly embracing AP's campaign against the secularising constitution.³¹⁹ One priest from Castellón de la Plana, for example, told his parishioners in September 1931 that: 'Republicans must be spat on

³¹⁵ Preston, *CSCW*, p.39; de la Cueva and Montero, 'Clericalismo y anticlericalismo', p. 101; Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp.2-3. Juan José Castillo, *Proprietarios muy pobres: sobre la subordinación política del pequeño campesino en España* (Madrid: Servicio de publicaciones agrarias, 1979).

³¹⁶ BOOM, 15/01/2002, Núm. 1,551, 15/01/1932, *Declaración Colectiva*, pp.22-41; Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.51-9; Graham, *Republic*, p.30.

³¹⁷ Quotes from Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.36-37. See also Félix Bilbao, Obispo de Tortosa, *Breve Catecismo de la Acción Católica* (Madrid: Imp. Sáez Hermanos, 1934), pp. 22-23; 'Arzobispado de Sevilla. Exhortación Pastoral', *El Correo de Andalucía*, 06-07/05/1631 in Álvarez Rey, *Derecha*, p.190.

³¹⁸ Álvarez Rey, *Derecha*, pp.213-15; Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp.183-84. For appeals to join AC see NA: FO371/17426: Clive to Simon, 01/06/1933.

³¹⁹ *La Vanguardia*, 26/03/1932; 'Se multa a un párroco por hacer campaña contra el matrimonio civil', 'En Barruelo de Santullán: el alcalde manda encarcelar a un fraile que atacaba a la República desde el púlpito', *El Socialista*, 20/03/1933, 15/14/1933; AHN, Interior A, Legajo 53/12 (Teruel); 53/16 (Madrid).

and not even given the time of day. We must be prepared to arrive at a civil war before we allow the separation of Church and state. Non-religious schools do not create men, but savages.³²⁰

Anticlerical mobilisation and secularisation from below

As ever increasing numbers of Catholics used the Church's traditional repertoire of religious ritual to restore threatened Catholic hegemony in the street and to protest politically against the Republic, they were met with sabotage attempts or counterdemonstrations from groups of politically organised anticlerical workers. For decades, workers like these had been attempting – in a situation of limited resources and highly restricted political opportunities – to combat the Church's vast influence in education and welfare, the rites of passage, and in the built environment. The alternatives which they proposed, such as rationalist schools and neighbourhood solidarity networks, formed the foundations of the workers' public sphere. Now, as the government tried to address these problems from above, workers' dissatisfaction with the meagre practical results of secularising legislation meant that official reform attempts frequently spilled over into public battles. An examination of three key areas of reform which translated into grassroots action (the 'republicanisation' of the landscape, the rites of passage, and educational and welfare and institutions) will reveal what Republican legislators attempted to do, why they failed in the eyes of anticlerical workers, and how these constituencies imposed their own solutions.

i) Republicanising public spaces

In order to tackle the Church's use of religious ritual to imbue public spaces with Catholic meaning, republican reformers passed a law stating that authorisation had to be obtained from the Interior Ministry for all public Catholic ceremonies.³²¹ In a bid to dismantle the deeply embedded mental 'Catholic calendar' shared by many Spaniards, they turned feast days and saints' days into ordinary working days. Yet defensive action alone would not be enough. The removal of the Church from the 'sacred centre' of society would require the construction of a secular republican 'centre' to supersede the Catholic one. With the goal of transforming the date of the Republic's proclamation on

³²⁰ Quote from *Crisol*, 25/09/1931 in Alejandro López López, *El boicot de las derechas a las reformas de la Segunda República* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Agrarios, Pesqueros y Alimentarios, 1984), pp.252-53; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.46.

³²¹ *Constitución*, p.9; Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.57-59.

14 April into a key collective reference point, the government spearheaded nationwide celebrations of the anniversary. This attempt to ‘afford amusement and stimulate republican feelings’ - as one British diplomat described it - saw the days on and around the fourteenth filled with concerts, boat races and illuminations. Although these events were most spectacular in Madrid, the festivities extended to provincial capitals and small towns.³²²

Another strategy to bring ‘the presence of the Republic’ to towns and villages consisted of altering religious or monarchical street names to commemorate the new ‘secular saints’ of the moment.³²³ Generally, this substitution was orchestrated at a local level by the municipal authorities. Throughout 1931 and 1932, the central plazas of innumerable cities, towns and villages were renamed in the Republic’s honour. Streets named after Fermín Galán and Ángel García Hernández, two military captains executed for leading the failed republican rising at Jaca in December 1930, were inaugurated in countless cities and towns.³²⁴ Spanish Socialism’s founding father Pablo Iglesias also lent his name to numerous thoroughfares.³²⁵ The ceremonies in which these plaques were unveiled worked to imprint secular, progressive meanings upon a locality’s landscape and soundscape. People gathered in the plaza to listen to political speeches; they then paraded through the streets with the flags of republican and workers’ societies, singing emblematic songs like ‘The Marseillaise’. Municipal authorities also endeavoured to take down religious statues and erect ones to the Republic’s political and cultural icons. Across Spain, the continued presence of numerous highly visible statues to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was particularly problematic due to the cult’s firm connection with Jesuitism, militant Catholicism and monarchism. For this reason, the town council of Villafranca de los Barros (Badajoz)

³²² Quote from NA: FO371/15774: Grahame to Simon, 12/04/1932, Grahame to FO, 19/04/1933; *El Socialista*, 14/04/1932, 15/04/1933; Manuel Azaña, *Obras completas*, Vol. IV (Madrid: Ediciones Giner, 1990), pp. 371-72, 487-88.

³²³ Azaña in Manuel de Puelles Benítez, ‘El sistema educativo republicano: un proyecto frustrado’, *Historia Contemporánea*, 6 (1991), p. 159; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.300.

³²⁴ *El Socialista*, 10/09/1931; *El Sol*, 21/04/1934; NA: FO371/18597, Grahame to Simon, 30/10/1934; Archivo Histórico Nacional, Audiencia Territorial de Madrid (AHN, ATM): Legajo 1/36: sumario 156/934, *Atentado en un convento de religiosas*; AHN, Interior A, Legajo 53/12 (Teruel).

³²⁵ *ABC*, 05/01/1932, p.41; José Luis Lindo Martínez, ‘Acoso y derribo al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús en Aranjuez’, Instituto de Estudios Históricos del Sur de Madrid ‘Jiménez de Gregorio’, *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Históricos del Sur de Madrid ‘Jiménez de Gregorio’* (Madrid: Universidad Carlos III, 2004), p. 4; *La Vanguardia*, 19/09/1931, 08/10/1932; *El Socialista*, 03/05/1932, 13/03/1932.

voted to remove the town's Sacred Heart from the Plaza de Altozano, carrying out the decision in April 1932.³²⁶

Many anticlerical workers embraced these measures enthusiastically, hoping that they would tip the balance of power in the built environment away from the Church. They were left disappointed in several respects. Firstly, a mixture of Catholic opposition and republican caution meant that few religious monuments actually disappeared from the streets between 1931 and 1936. In Aranjuez (Madrid), republican town councillors saw a scheme to dismantle the town's monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus blocked in various legal channels by the parish priest throughout the entire five-year period. In Bilbao, mass protests from Catholic and Basque nationalist groups forced the overturning of the town council's decision to dismantle the city's forty metre tall Sacred Heart.³²⁷ Simultaneously, ambitious municipal projects to erect statues to Galán and García Hernández and to the Andalusian federal republican Fermín Salvochea were shelved due to lack of funds.³²⁸ In a landscape which continued to be dominated by Catholic architecture, the monument to Pablo Iglesias inaugurated in May 1936 in Madrid's Parque del Oeste was a minimal and belatedly established presence. It was also a presence which generally only reached large cities, leaving the provincial landscape filled with Catholic iconography.³²⁹

Anticlericals simultaneously faced the tremendously increased public presence of politically mobilised Catholics. On the street - and on traditional religious stages like monuments, churches and hermitages - Catholic groups, committed to what one Salesian novice referred to as 'burying of the flags of the wicked', used religious ritual to defy initiatives to 'republicanise' the landscape.³³⁰ With public Catholic ritual

³²⁶ *El Socialista*, 10/09/1931; Amparo Cabeza de Vaca y Munilla, *Bajo Cielos de plomo: unas memorias y el diario de Rafael Salazar Alonso* (Madrid: Actas 2009), p.30.

³²⁷ Lindo Martínez, 'Sagrado Corazón', p. 10; *La Voz*, 05/01/1933, p.2; *ABC*, 10/03/1933, 17/02/1933 p.17, *La Vanguardia*, 14/02/1933, p.4, 25/02/1933, p. 2, 23/02/1933, p. 2, 15/03/1933, p.11 ,20/05/1933, p.21; Joaquín Álvarez Cruz, *El Monumento al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*, p.11.

³²⁸ *El Socialista*, 14/04/1932; Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica, Sección Político-Social Madrid (CDMH, PS-Madrid), Caja 621, legajo 815; Caja 1627, legajo 795; María Losada Urigüen, 'El movimiento de Jaca y Cuatro Vientos: historia, memoria y movilización', *Movimientos sociales en la España contemporánea* (2008), p. 16; Rafael Serrano García, *Figuras de 'La Gloriosa': aproximación biográfica al sexenio democrático* (Universidad de Valladolid, 2006), p.122.

³²⁹ *El Socialista*, 05/05/1936; Pedro María Egea Bruno, 'Luis Quintanilla: dibujos de la Guerra Civil', in *Imafronte*, No. 19-29 (2007-8), p. 12; Bowers, *Mission*, pp.223-4; Radcliff, 'La representación de la nación', pp.312-25.

³³⁰ 'Flags' in ADM, PRRD, Caja 7, *Proceso de Martirio de los Salesianos*.

restricted by law and religious festivals removed from the official calendar, processions, holy retreats, festivals and open air masses were imbued instantly with political meaning. As ‘processions become demonstrations, pilgrimages become marches, and Sunday sermons become meetings’³³¹ across Spain, priests, bishops and lay associations urged Catholics to travel, ‘in fervent and mass pilgrimage’ to key religious sites like the Hill of Los Ángeles in Getafe. In huge open air ceremonies, they asked for ‘reparation’ for the Church’s sufferings and prayed for Spain’s salvation.³³²

While this mobilisation was funded by wealthy Catholic benefactors, the Republic – struggling to pay off the debts of the dictatorship and to carry out sweeping reform during a period of worldwide economic depression – was unable to stage celebrations capable of competing with the intense visual power of events like Holy Week and Corpus Christi. In 1933, the government’s decision to delay the Republic’s anniversary festivities because Good Friday fell on 14 April seemed to be a tacit admission of the futility of confronting the Church’s dramaturgical power head-on.³³³ Ironically, the unevenness of this battle stemmed largely from republican politicians’ reluctance to encourage their supporters to take to the streets in defence of secularising legislation. In the face of a tidal wave of Catholic collective action, the Republic’s fear of the ‘uncontrollability’ of mass worker mobilisation seriously limited its possibilities of wresting spatial hegemony from the Church.³³⁴ As anticlerical workers saw Catholicism’s (now acutely political) public presence eclipsing that of the Republic, the annual celebration of May Day - organised by workers’ unions who declared a general strike and occupied the streets - became the only real mass public challenge to Catholic hegemony. In May 1932, as the constituents of the workers’ public sphere flooded the principal arteries of cities and towns with the symbols, sounds, myths and traditions of their counter-hegemonic project, the Republic’s prime minister, Manuel Azaña, tellingly spent the entire day in his house, later describing Madrid’s ‘general paralysis’ in his diary.³³⁵

³³¹ Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp. 50-62.

³³² ‘Mass pilgrimage’ in BOOM Núm. 1,534, 16/05/1931, p. 191; Núm. 1,561, 10/06/1932, *Nueva Junta del Cerro de los Ángeles*, pp. 213-214; *ABC* (Andalucía), 12/06/1932

³³³ NA: FO371/17426: Grahame to FO, 19/04/1933; *La Vanguardia*, 12/08/1931; Hernández Figueiredo, *Patrimonio religioso*, p.149.

³³⁴ Graham, *Republic*, pp.24-26, 77.

³³⁵ ‘Paralysis’ in Azaña, *Obras completas (IV)*, pp. 487-88. For other accounts, see *El Socialista*, 01/05/1932; *El Sol*, 02/05/1936; NA: FO371/17426: Grahame to Simon, 06/05/1933; Radcliff, *Mobilization*, pp. 201-25.

Fear that Catholic mobilisation might annul entirely the government's secularisation initiatives compelled workers to develop various grassroots secularisation strategies. The most direct tactic was the burning of religious property. Church burning was witnessed most dramatically in May 1931, but it occurred consistently – on a much smaller scale – throughout the entire peacetime Republican period. This type of collective action had a lengthy history in Spain, forming part of a 'traditional' local protest repertoire. From the turn of the century, however, workers faced with the first wave of politicised Catholic mobilisation had begun to attach firm political meanings and goals to the incineration of religious stages. 'Traditional' forms of anticlerical protest commingled with newer, discernibly 'political' modalities of collective action. Ever growing numbers of unionised, politically aware workers incorporated church burning into a putatively more 'modern' protest repertoire of political meetings, rallies, demonstrations and strikes.

As historians rely mainly on press sources for information regarding church burnings, it is difficult to discern the immediate causes of the attacks and the identities of their protagonists. One thing, however, is starkly clear: the destruction of religious stages provided anticlerical actors with an instant means of radically altering a locality's topography. In Tomares (Seville) in April 1932, unidentified anticlericals destroyed the town's religious monuments, including the iron cross and image of Jesus which marked the entrance to the municipality. In the workers' district of Puente de Vallecas in Madrid, unknown protagonists doused the church doors with petrol and set them alight in January 1933. Two months later in Rioja (Almeria), 'unknown authors' broke into the parish church, burning its images and religious ornaments. The building collapsed completely under the heat of the flames.³³⁶ These episodes are a tiny sample of a lengthy list of acts of small-scale, grassroots iconoclasm carried out during the period. Nevertheless, they display unambiguously that in the absence of successful 'top down' initiatives to wrest control of public spaces from the Church, people used church burning as an instant means of secularising the landscapes of their localities.

³³⁶ These incidents are recorded in *ABC*, 26/04/1932, 13/01/1933; and *La Vanguardia*, 31/03/1933 respectively.

In other cases, the arson was more obviously a reaction to political events staged by rightwing groups committed to ‘defending the Church’ by blocking republican legislation. In January 1932, violence erupted in Bilbao as people left a meeting addressed by Catholic and Basque nationalist politicians. Republicans and socialists gathered outside the venue, singing ‘The International’. The two groups began to quarrel, shots were fired, and the socialist-republican group attacked the headquarters of the ultra-Catholic Carlist *Comuni3n Tradicionalista* party. The group then tried to set fire to the clerical *Gazeta del Norte* newspaper, a Catholic bookshop, the offices of *Acci3n Cat3lica* and a convent. The UGT called a general strike in response to the rightwing ‘provocation’. The following day, republican, socialist and anarchist leaders in nearby Santurce staged a protest rally. When a local Carlist began to fire into the crowd, its indignant members responded by launching an incendiary attack on Santurce’s parish church, reducing much of its interior to splinters and ash.³³⁷

During the pre-war Republican period, acts of anticlerical arson became a common grassroots response to perceived rightwing provocation. Yet the above example does not only demonstrate the indelible connection which many anticlericals saw between the Church and their political enemies. It also showcases perfectly a moment of rapid change in which newer, political and generally non-violent forms of collective action were being employed alongside ‘traditional’ church burnings by actors who imbued the latter with strong political meanings. The explicit political significance of anticlerical arson at this time is also made clear by the iconoclastic element of the period’s anarchist uprisings. In late January 1932, a revolutionary general strike called by the CNT sparked an insurreccional movement in parts of Aragon. In the village of Castel de Cabra (Teruel), revolutionaries proclaimed libertarian communism, occupied the town hall, destroyed the municipal archive and attempted to burn the church.³³⁸ Participants in December 1933’s anarchist uprising accompanied their attacks on strategic targets like civil guard barracks and town halls with the incineration of churches, convents and religious objects in diverse locations including Zaragoza, Granada, Asturias and La Rioja. Although the Church was not the principal target of these revolutionary attempts,

³³⁷ This incident in *La Voz*, 20/01/1932; *Luz*, 29/01/1932; *El Siglo Futuro*, 21/01/1932; *El Sol*, 19/01/1932; *La Vanguardia*, 21/01/1932; *ABC*, 19/01/1932, 21/01/1932; NA: FO371/15774: Grahame to FO, 20/01/1932.

³³⁸ *ABC*, 26/01/1932, 27/01/1932; *La Vanguardia*, 26/01/1932; Casanova, *Anarquismo y revoluci3n*, p. 30; Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform*, p.297.

its implication in the machinery of repression meant that those who set out to ‘purify all that which had previously justified the existence of a capitalist society’ clamoured for its disappearance.³³⁹

Another equally direct tactic was the sabotage of politicised Catholic shows of strength. In Huescar (Granada), local leftists sabotaged a procession to the town’s patron saints in March 1932. Taking advantage of a custom by which the faithful ‘disputed the ownership of the saints’, they seized the statues and carried them to the Catholic Agrarian Centre in mocking procession. Although nobody was injured in the ensuing clashes between Catholics and anticlericals, several of the images were damaged.³⁴⁰ In the same month, Seville’s lay confraternities (whose directors were, for the most part, militants of *Acción Popular* and *Comunión Tradicionalista*) decided to withdraw from the city’s famous Holy Week processions. Despite the absence of any official prohibition, this protest against the harm being exacted upon ‘religious sentiments’ by the Republic was manipulated by Catholic propagandists to present an image of a city ‘martyred’ by republican persecution. The only procession that did occur, which departed from the workers’ district of Triana, was sabotaged by groups who launched stones, insults – and at one point, gunshots - at the floats.³⁴¹ A month later, Almeria’s Catholics travelled en masse to the Hill of San Cristobal – the site of the city’s monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus – to celebrate an act of ‘reparation’. Groups of workers gathered to protest, clashing violently with the event’s participants.³⁴²

In cities, towns and villages across Spain, workers also tackled Catholic mobilisation with a growing repertoire of lay counter rituals which had been gestating since the late nineteenth century. These invented customs served to confront Catholicism publicly and to project the secular values of an envisaged future society upon the landscape. In October 1932 in the town of Libros (Teruel), Catholics gathered in the parish church to celebrate a mass in honour of the Virgen del Pilar. A group of

³³⁹ Quote from Casanova, *Anarchism*, p.75. Details of these events in *El Sol*, 10/12/1932; *La Voz*, 11/12/1933; *La Libertad*, 12/12/1933; *ABC*, 10/12/1933; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, pp.281-83.

³⁴⁰ *El Sol*, 30/03/1932; *El Defensor de Granada*, 30/03/1932, 05/04/1932; Barrios Rozúa, *Iconoclastia*, p.223.

³⁴¹ *La Vanguardia*, 24/03/1932, 25/03/1932; Álvarez Rey, *Derecha*, pp. 215-35.

³⁴² AHN, Interior A, Legajo 16/18, 60/21 (Almería); *Diario de Almería*, 23/04/1932 in Pérez Montoya, *Las derechas almerienses*, pp.131-32.

anticlericals staged a dance outside the building, later continuing the event in the local republican centre. In May of the same year, a similar incident had occurred in nearby Burbáguena, when musicians had congregated in the central plaza, noisily interrupting the festival of San Pedro Mártir.³⁴³ In Pechina (Almería), local leftists developed a tradition of gathering near to the parish church in Good Friday to cook and eat a lamb. All of these counter rituals were deliberate public demonstrations of atheism and transgression of Catholic ‘rules’. They functioned – as they had been doing for decades – to forge an alternative type of community bond.³⁴⁴

ii) The rites of passage

Republican reformers attempted to disable the ‘Catholic compass’ which marked people’s most intimate life processes by introducing civil marriage and divorce and by secularising Spain’s cemeteries. Civil marriage became the only legally recognised form of matrimony, cemeteries passed to the jurisdiction of the municipalities, and burials became secular ‘by default’: Catholics who wished to receive religious funerals had to leave formal, independently authenticated instructions. Many anticlerical workers derived a new sense of freedom from the apparent success of these reforms. In the case of the cemeteries, Republican municipal authorities generally succeeded in ‘desegregating’ graveyards which had previously been divided into Catholic and non-Catholic sections. In Almería, for example, the republican councillor and future mayor, Antonio Ortiz Estrella, attended the funeral of a local journalist in June 1931 at the city’s main cemetery, where he delivered an impassioned speech proclaiming ‘equality among the dead’ and calling for the dividing wall to be demolished. His orders were later carried out to the letter in accordance with the January 1932 Law of Cemeteries.³⁴⁵

However, the distress felt by many Catholics regarding such unequivocal measures in such a sensitive area turned the protection of the Catholic rites of passage into a key area of Catholic mobilisation.³⁴⁶ Funeral processions and ceremonies became a means of challenging the Republic’s authority and protesting politically.³⁴⁷ In January 1933,

³⁴³ Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, pp.287-88.

³⁴⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1, Almería, exp. 2/478.

³⁴⁵ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 250/12270, Antonio Ortiz Estrella; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/382; AHN Interior, Legajo 60/21 (Almería); BOOM, Núm. 1571, 01/10/1932, *Sobre incautación de cementerios*, p.380-81.

³⁴⁶ Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp.187-89; *Constitución*, p.8; BOOM, Núm. 1,555, 15/03/1932, *Ministerio de Justicia: Ley sobre los cementerios*, pp. 117-18.

³⁴⁷ For examples of Catholics seeking authorisation for funerals see AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^a.

for example, the funeral of Bishop of Salamanca Frutos Valiente, which was attended by over 20,000 Catholics, became an ‘occasion for contemplating the tragedies of the Republic’. The funeral oration, delivered by the vehemently anti-Republican canon Aniceto Castro Albarrán, portrayed the bishop’s death as a direct result of religious persecution. Frutos, he claimed, ‘died prematurely, because the pain of the Church broke his enormous heart.’³⁴⁸

At a local level, priests frequently refused to recognise the new legal situation, attempting to impose Catholic rites of passage upon non-Catholics. In December 1932, the President of the Republican Radical Socialist Association of Catarroso (Navarre) protested to the Civil Governor regarding the burial of Laureano Bozal Caballero, a republican activist ‘known in all of Navarre for his secular beliefs.’ The telegram alleged that members of Bozal Caballero’s family, in collusion with the local priest, had taken advantage of the absence of a will to give him a Catholic burial.³⁴⁹ In May 1932, riots erupted in Villarrubia de Santiago (Toledo) when news spread that a young girl, who had been named three months earlier in a secular celebration, had been taken to the parish church against her parents’ wishes (the Interior Ministry document does not reveal by whom) and baptised. The priest, aware that he had contravened the girl’s parents’ wishes, presented himself voluntarily at the jail, where he was imprisoned to save him from the crowd that gathered to protest.³⁵⁰

Workers took measures locally to confront this politicisation of the rites of passage. Blocking Catholic funeral processions was one tactic. In October 1932, in Fuente Ovejuna (Córdoba), the despairing Civil Governor communicated to the Interior Ministry that in the village of Cardencho, the burial of a Catholic woman who had died three days earlier was being obstructed by villagers who would not tolerate the presence of priests at the funeral, or the public transferral of the body to the cemetery.³⁵¹ In many places, Republican town councils attempted to reduce the public presence of the Church during funeral processions to a bare minimum. In Pechina (Almería), burials officiated by priests were officially prohibited by the local authorities from 1932 onwards. Funeral corteges could, however, pass hurriedly in front of the church,

³⁴⁸ Vincent, *Catholicism*, pp.189-90.

³⁴⁹ AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^o/8/10 (Navarra).

³⁵⁰ AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^o/7 (Toledo).

³⁵¹ AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^o/8/4 (Córdoba).

whereupon the minister emerged to bless the mortal remains ‘for the amount of time strictly necessary.’³⁵² In October 1932, in Tembleque (Toledo), the town council decided to prohibit the presence of priests dressed in religious clothes and carrying religious ornaments in public ceremonies. The mayor explained that the decision was taken to avoid social disturbances because ‘the people don’t want to see them’.³⁵³

Simultaneously, workers transformed the funeral ceremonies of their friends, family members and political comrades into statements of political belief and defiance of mobilised Catholicism.³⁵⁴ This practice was by no means new, but it became far more widespread and overarching in the new political context. In Perales de Tajuña (Madrid), the parish priest reported that during the pre-war Republican period, workers from the town began to stage funeral processions complete with red flags and political symbols, honouring the dead with the clenched fist salute.³⁵⁵ Funeral processions like this would become a prominent feature of the post-February 1936 Popular Front period. For anarchist, socialist and republican activists, they were a powerful collective means of affirming the ‘revolutionary memory’ of comrades who had died in street violence provoked by rightwing groups or at the hands of the security forces.³⁵⁶

iii) Education, welfare and charity

For reformist republicans like Manuel Azaña, the secularisation of Spain’s education system was a ‘matter of public health’. Halting the Church’s teaching activities would be the only way to forge a new generation of republican citizens educated in democracy, science and reason and free of Catholic ‘obscurantism’. Action began in May 1931, when the government ordered the removal of religious symbols from state schoolrooms. In December, the Constitution reinforced this symbolic ousting by announcing the intention to ban the religious orders from teaching. Under the Law of Confessions and Congregations, passed by parliament in May 1933, deadlines of 1 October and 31

³⁵² Quote from AHN, CG legajo 1164-1, Almería, exp. 2/478. For other instances, see AHN, Interior A, legajo 53/12 (Teruel); ADM, PRRD, Caja6, *Pueblos: Las Rozas; El Debate*, 13/03/1936; José Manuel Macarro Vera, *Socialismo, República y revolución en Andalucía (1931-1936)* (Universidad de Sevilla, 2000), pp.250-52.

³⁵³ AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^a/7 (Toledo).

³⁵⁴ Souto Kustrín, ‘Organizaciones juveniles’, p.65.

³⁵⁵ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Perales de Tajuña*.

³⁵⁶ ‘Revolutionary memory’ in Brian Bunk, “‘Your Comrades will not Forget’”: Revolutionary Memory and the Breakdown of the Spanish Second Republic, 1934-1936’, *History and Memory*, 14, 1-2 (2002), pp.65-92; See also *Ideal*, 14/03/1936; Cruz, *Políticas de la muerte*, pp. 91-98 and ‘Júbilo, enfrentamiento y violencia en la movilización de 1936’, in Ballarín and Ledesma, *Reformas, conflictos y conspiraciones*, pp.131-32.

December 1933 were set for the closure of secondary and primary religious schools respectively.³⁵⁷ Simultaneously, the government initiated an urgent school building programme aimed at replacing Catholic educational centres with a national system of secular primary education. The Republic's aspiration was to provide a public school teacher and schoolroom for every village, bringing education and culture to the almost a million children who in April 1931 received absolutely no teaching.³⁵⁸ The Ministry of Education also began to form 'teaching missions' to bring basic literacy classes, mobile libraries, civic education, theatre and literature to the most 'culturally neglected' corners of the country.³⁵⁹

Since the late nineteenth century, anticlerical workers had been developing grassroots pedagogical and cultural initiatives – such as rationalist schools, night classes and theatre groups – to challenge the Church's educational hegemony. The government's stated aims therefore engendered enormous anxiety to see results. This expectation was plainly visible during May 1931's church burnings. In Madrid, numerous religious educational establishments – including many which administered free education to the 'humble classes' - were attacked. The *Colegio de San José*, the *Colegio de Nuestra Merced* and the school of the *Hijas de María Auxiliadora* all educated poor children in the workers' district of Cuatro Caminos. Panicked anxiety that this situation might persist led to the burning of all three institutions.³⁶⁰ In Valencia, meanwhile, crowds assaulted and sacked the *Colegio de Vocaciones* and the *Colegio de Santo Tomás* – two more 'schools for poor students'.³⁶¹ In Malaga, the British consul recorded that a week after the church burnings in that city: 'at a church where...I had seen an excited mob smashing up the interior, I found workmen quietly bricking up the

³⁵⁷ Azaña quoted in Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.17. Information from Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 190-1; de la Cueva, 'El anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica', pp.243-44; Puelles Benítez, 'El sistema educativo republicano', p. 161.

³⁵⁸ *El Socialista*, 01/09/1932; Casanova, *Republic*, pp.42-43.

³⁵⁹ Josep Renau, *Arte en peligro, 1936-1939* (Ayuntamiento de Valencia, 1980), pp.105-9; Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.48-9; Sandie Holguín, *Creating Spaniards: Culture and National Identity in Republican Spain* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), pp.56-80; Graham, *Republic*, p.36.

³⁶⁰ Descriptions in *El Socialista*, 12/05/1931; *El Sol*, 12/05/1931; *ABC*, 17/11/1939; AHN, CG legajo 1514: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 31/13; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, p.54; Hernández Figueiredo, *Patrimonio religioso*, pp.63-66.

³⁶¹ Quote from *The Times*, 13/05/1931. See also ASV, *Informe del arzobispo de Valencia sobre la situación general de la archidiócesis* (21/05/1931).

door-less entrances, at one of which hung the notice, scrawled in an illiterate hand: “Respect this building. It will be for a school”³⁶².

Given the existence of such elevated shared hopes for instant educational changes, it is unsurprising that the spark ignited by government plans soon mixed with frustration generated by the practical ineffectiveness of the measures. Firstly, the Republic’s financial limitations coupled with a shortage of trained personnel meant that secularising legislation was applied patchily and inefficiently. Secondly, the religious orders involved in teaching frequently managed to circumvent the prohibitions. Many formed commercial companies to operate their schools as private enterprises and continued to teach in civilian clothes.³⁶³ Thirdly, although the Republic did make laudable progress in raising literacy rates and bringing education to rural and urban worker constituencies, its ambitious school building project never came close to constructing the 27,000 new schools which would have been needed to offset the closing of Church schools and provide universal primary education.³⁶⁴ On a local level, city and town councils responsible for building the establishments often saw their projects founder due to lack of resources or opposition from local elites. Arturo Barea’s description of the ‘new school’ in the town of Novés (Toledo) in early 1936 is demonstrative of these frustrated plans. Almost five years after the proclamation of the Republic, the building, which consisted of four half-finished walls, presented a forlorn symbol of the dashing of popular hopes concerning secular education.³⁶⁵

Finally, the legislation, combined with the emotive issue of the removal of crucifixes from state schoolrooms, hugely spurred Catholic mobilisation. During 1931 and 1932 demonstrations demanding the return of the crucifixes and the restoration of Catholic teaching thronged the streets of towns and cities across Spain. They were frequently led by provincial and rural lower middle class women, who mobilised in large numbers during the Republican period under the auspices of the Catholic associational movement. These women, whose social identities were constructed around Catholic belief, ritual and socialisation, took collective action against accelerating changes which

³⁶² NA: FO371/15774: Young to FO, 20/10/1931.

³⁶³ Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.184-6; Buckley, *Life and Death*, pp.99-100; Álvarez Rey, *Derecha*, pp.209-10.

³⁶⁴ *El Socialista*, 15/04/1933; Casanova, *Republic*, pp.41-2; Collier, *Socialists*, pp.91-93

³⁶⁵ Barea, *La llama*, pp. 24, 58.

threatened their familiar, 'traditional', religious world.³⁶⁶ In the town of Burgo de Osma (Soria), several local women burst into the town hall in January 1932, interrupting a session of the town council to demand the return of the crucifixes to the town's classrooms.³⁶⁷ In Alhedín (Granada) in May 1932, a group of townspeople participating in a religious procession observed that the schoolteacher, Ángel Matarán, closed the shutters of his classroom as the party passed the school. When the procession ended, the crowd, which included numerous women, commented indignantly on this supposed 'gesture against the religious event'. They rushed to the school, hanging crucifixes on its walls and expelling Señor Matarán from his class. The teacher made a hurried exit from the building chased by his pupils, some of whom threw stones at him.³⁶⁸

As well as sparking this defiant political use of religious ritual, the Republic's educational measures also triggered a flurry of practical and organisational activity on the part of lay associations. The already existent *Asociación Católica de Padres de Familia* (Association of Catholic Parents) redoubled its propagandistic efforts, working alongside the *Cruzados de la Enseñanza* (Crusaders of Teaching), an organisation established in August 1933 to 'save Catholic teaching from the deadly blow which its enemies wish to deal out to it.'³⁶⁹ By March 1934, these 'crusaders' controlled 116 primary schools and had opened 37 new ones in the diocese of Madrid-Alcalá alone. This mixture of Catholic opposition and republican financial limitations combined with the coming to power of a conservative and counter-reforming Republican government in November 1933 – a month before the 'deadline' on religious primary education arrived - to ensure that the religious orders remained a strong presence in the educational system throughout the peacetime Republican years.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ For examples, see Interior A, legajo 53^a/7 (Toledo); AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^a/8 (Sevilla). For analysis, see Graham, 'Women and Social Change', pp. 104-5; Christian, *Visionaries*, pp.29-40, 141.

³⁶⁷ AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^a/3 (Soria).

³⁶⁸ *Ideal*, 08/05/1932.

³⁶⁹ Quote from BOOM Núm. 1,590, 01/09/1933; *Exhortación Pastoral*, p.305. See also BOOM, Núm. 1,556, 02/05/1932, *Exhortación Pastoral*, pp.156-62. Núm 1,588, 01/08/1933 *Las Escuelas Católicas*, pp.285-88.

³⁷⁰ BOOM, Núm. 1,603, 15/03/1934, *Inauguración de dos escuelas católicas*, p.105; Núm. 1,605, 16/04/1934, *Inauguración de escuelas*, p.142. On these organisations, see José Andrés Gallego, *La iglesia en la España contemporánea* (Madrid: Encuentro, 1999), pp. 207-9.

To confront a situation in which Catholic presence in education appeared to be ‘expanding in alarming terms’ rather than decreasing, workers used several tactics.³⁷¹ As we have already seen, attacks upon religious educational establishments were a highly visible, instant means of challenging the Church in the educational sphere. On a local level, anticlerical workers also sabotaged or disrupted Catholic educational activities. In Navalperal de Pinares (Ávila), disturbances broke out in May 1932 when local socialist activists protested against the proselytising activities of the town’s female catechists. The protesters, who alleged that the women were luring children to catechism classes at the parish church under false pretences, took to the streets with pictures of Pablo Iglesias pinned to their chests. When the catechism class left the church with their tutors singing hymns, the demonstrators filled the soundscape with their stock repertoire of ‘socialist anthems’. As the two groups clashed, several people were injured.³⁷²

Fear and resentment regarding what one socialist politician referred to as the Church’s ongoing ‘seizure of childhood’ also fed into the expansion of the network of alternative anarchist and socialist educational projects which had been under construction since the late nineteenth century.³⁷³ While socialist *casas del pueblo* ran ever more classes for adults, children, and young people, organisations like the Madrid based *Salud y Cultura* (Health and Culture) organised children’s excursions to the countryside aimed at bringing ‘health, culture and socialist education’ to their young affiliates.³⁷⁴ In Barcelona, the CNT redoubled its grassroots efforts to deal with illiteracy and lack of educational provision in workers’ districts, establishing new athenaeums and schools. Future CNT activist Abel Paz, who attended the anarchist-run *Escuela Natura* in Barcelona’s Clot neighbourhood during the Republic, recalls that this alternative education generated a strong sense of secular, anticlerical collective identity among pupils. Although local Catholics perceived them as ‘cursed children, without baptism or holy communion’, Paz and his classmates enjoyed their rebel status thoroughly because, in Clot at least, ‘we were the majority, or at least the ones who shouted the loudest.’³⁷⁵

³⁷¹ Rodolfo Llopis in *Claridad*, 10/08/1935.

³⁷² *El Socialista*, 14/04/1932; *ABC*, 07/04/1932; *La Vanguardia*, 08/04/1932.

³⁷³ Matilde de la Torre in *El Socialista*, 20/01/1933.

³⁷⁴ *El Socialista*, 01/11/1933, 08/08/1934.

³⁷⁵ Quote from Paz, *Chumberas*, pp.96-97. See also Ealham, *Class*, pp.86-87.

Workers also used grassroots community initiatives to tackle the Church's continued presence in hospitals and welfare institutions. Catholic 'charity' - which for many workers had become synonymous with ideological manipulation, humiliation and social inequality – was a source of accumulated social hurt and visceral anticlerical feeling. Although many republican politicians shared Azaña's conviction that religious welfare work was an inadmissible 'vehicle for proselytism', resources and trained personnel were so limited that the authorities could do little more than remove chaplains, chapels and religious symbols from institutions and make them subject to state inspection.³⁷⁶ Consequently, traditional Catholic charity structures changed little. Throughout the pre-war Republican period, the socialist press continued to denounce poor conditions, authoritarian practices, physical and sexual abuse, and political proselytising within some Catholic charitable institutions.³⁷⁷ Although the spring 1936 Popular Front period saw some belated attempts by municipal authorities to enforce the substitution of the female religious orders with trained, state-employed nurses, nuns continued to be a huge presence in welfare right up until July 1936.³⁷⁸

One incident which occurred in January 1932 demonstrates the humiliation and bitterness provoked by the Church's continuing charitable initiatives. In Lamiako (Vizcaya) two priests were attacked by an 18-year-old unemployed worker from the district whose mother had visited the parish church two weeks earlier to ask for economic aid. The church's chaplain, who was in charge of distributing a Christmas donation from a local industrialist, refused to help her on the grounds that her family did not attend mass. Her enraged son set out for revenge, taking his brother's gun from its hiding place beneath a mattress and roaming the streets for four hours in search of the chaplain. When he located him in the train station, he shot him – according to reports of the Interior Ministry - for 'distributing aid in a bad way.'³⁷⁹

Acts of physical violence, however, were not the habitual anticlerical response to Catholic charity. At a time of economic depression and rising unemployment, working

³⁷⁶ Quote from Azaña in Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.181-5. See also Vincent, *Catholicism*, p.187; Victor Manuel Arbolea, *La iglesia que buscó la concordia* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2008), p.175.

³⁷⁷ *El Socialista*, 02/05/1931, 11/11/1932, 13/09/1933, 15/02/1936.

³⁷⁸ *El Sol*, 19/03/1936; *El Debate*, 09/03/1936; 11/03/1936, 19/03/1936, 03/05/1936; *El Socialista*, 04/07/1936, 15/07/1936, 18/07/1936; *La Vanguardia*, 03/07/1936

³⁷⁹ AHN, Interior A, legajo 53^o/13 (Vizcaya).

class activists – especially those connected to the anarchist movement - continued to propose alternatives to the state’s ineffective and insubstantial welfare measures and the Church’s intrusive charity initiatives. They expanded the community networks of solidarity and mutual aid which they had been weaving for decades, formulating ‘communal responses to poverty’.³⁸⁰ In some cases, workers robbed churches and hermitages both as a survival strategy, and to fund their political, cultural and solidarity initiatives. Indeed, burglaries of religious property reached unparalleled levels during the 1930s.³⁸¹ Of course, the press reports which describe these thefts provide little idea of the motives of their protagonists or the final destination of the goods they stole. However, it would not be unreasonable to interpret their actions as a response to the Church’s extravagant, still highly visible wealth, and the way in which the institution used its economic resources to control individual consciences through charitable welfare.

In April 1931, the socialist writer Volney Conde Pelayo commented that: ‘If the fabulous riches of the Church in our country were sold, there would be enough money to undertake public works projects which would remedy the anguished situation of the working class....the workers could be saved from hunger.’³⁸² The thieves who broke into the church of Liria (Valencia) in December 1931 and stripped jewels and pearls from a statue of the Virgin; the burglars who entered a church in Villalgordo del Júcar (Albacete), stealing the collection boxes and attempting to set the building on fire in June 1935; or the unidentified intruders who took jewels from the parish church of Alcanadre (La Rioja) in February 1936, leaving a note which ‘gravely insulted the priest’: all of these protagonists were carrying out acts of grassroots ‘proletarian appropriation’ which seemed to be driven by the same spirit which had inspired Conde Pelayo’s observations.³⁸³

One initiative carried out by a Barcelonan anarchist group in 1934 supports this thesis unambiguously. When the group’s members heard that a village church in nearby Tarragona had purchased a statue of the Virgin with ‘donations from the religious rich’,

³⁸⁰ Ealham, *Class*, p.86,110.

³⁸¹ On burglaries, Pilar Salomón, *Anticlericalismo*, pp.279-80. For examples, see *El Sol*, 25/12/1932. See also *La Vanguardia*, 13/07/1932; *La Vanguardia*, 02/09/1932; *La Voz*, 21/11/1933.

³⁸² The article appeared in both *El Socialista*, 23/04/1931 and *Estudios*, No. 94, 06/1931, p.21.

³⁸³ The incidents (in order) in *El Debate*, 19/02/1936; *ABC*, 08/06/1935; *El Socialista*, 01/10/1931; *ABC*, 01/10/1931. On ‘proletarian appropriation’, Ealham, *Class*, pp. 85-87, 103-4,125-27.

they decided to take action. Disgusted by such a gesture of wasteful opulence at a time when ever rising numbers of unemployed workers lived in abject poverty, and encouraged by the well known Spanish concept that ‘he who steals from a thief receives a hundred years of pardon’, the group resolved to steal the figure and use the money to help the local poor. They broke into the church, taking the statue other valuable objects. The Church - whether it liked it or not - now found itself funding genuine, disinterested schemes to help the poorest sectors of society.³⁸⁴

Encroachment, state repression and the *bienio negro*

The Republic’s failure to provide the educational centres, welfare facilities and unemployment relief which its politicians had promised when they took office provoked bitter frustration among workers. Indeed, anxiety caused by the slow pace of change regarding the ‘religious question’ was just one strand of a pervasive sensation of exasperation aroused by the sluggish tempo of the government’s entire reform programme. Many workers willed the central state to arrive in their communities and homes in the form of public works projects to ameliorate unemployment, and through educational, welfare, labour and land reform.³⁸⁵ However, at the same time, many working class actors also experienced certain republican measures as an invasion of their domestic space - another component of the ever-expanding central state’s encroachment on the home. The entry of teaching missions into small rural communities, for example, is likely to have provoked considerable uneasiness. Although the dynamism of the ‘missionaries’ made striking impression upon many people, practices such as lecturing a village’s adult population on the organisation of the state and on their duties as citizens had unequivocally paternalistic – and even evangelical - overtones.³⁸⁶

This disquiet regarding the state’s cultural intrusion into the home was compounded by welfare measures instituted during the Republic’s first term which affected domestic space. Legislative attempts to secularise, democratise, and redress imbalances in the circumstances of women and the family included the introduction of divorce, maternity

³⁸⁴ Berian Azqueta, *Prat de Llobregat, ayer*, pp.129-30.

³⁸⁵ On unemployment relief, see Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.11-12.

³⁸⁶ Chris Cobb, ‘The Republican State and Mass Educational-Cultural Initiatives’, in Graham and Labanyi *Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp.136-37.

and old age benefits, and the legal right to investigate paternity.³⁸⁷ As issues like divorce were debated in parliament and the press, intimate matters moved ever further into the public domain.³⁸⁸ Furthermore, as journalists, writers and political figures talked with growing preoccupation about the body, frequently linking health, hygiene and sport to the wellbeing of the Republic (a trend which was developing across Europe during the interwar period), the profound ‘permeability’ between ‘public’ and ‘private’ was manifest.³⁸⁹ To be sure, this new state of affairs was underscored by a very different set of ideological precepts to those of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. However, it was in many ways a continuation of the regime’s interventionist rhetoric and policy regarding physical wellbeing and ‘patriotic motherhood’.³⁹⁰ This accelerating encroachment on the home meant that many workers – and especially women - ended up feeling alienated by state welfare initiatives (ineffective though they often were), viewing them as an intrusion upon their ‘territory’. These misgivings cut across the boundaries of political ideologies and mobilisation, grounded as they were in long established and deeply rooted family, local and regional custom.³⁹¹

Workers experienced state intrusion more explicitly and more violently through republican ‘public order’. Draconian law enforcement methods by no means disappeared along with the monarchy. On the contrary, republican legislators – obsessed with maintaining ‘order’ in the face of worker protest – institutionalised existing despotic practices and augmented the state’s capacity to invade workers’ intimate space. Across rural and urban Spain, the security forces clashed violently with protesting workers throughout the pre-war Republican years. In Barcelona, where impoverished tenants crippled by the weight of rocketing unemployment and an unregulated housing market staged a rent strike in the summer of 1931, they were hounded by the security forces on the streets and in their homes. The imposition of curfews; the banning of rallies and meetings; ‘preventative detention’; police ‘swoops’ on houses, bars, political centres and workplaces; forcible evictions: measures like these, which drastically reduced workers’ available space, were legitimised by the *Ley de Defensa de la*

³⁸⁷ Mary Nash, *Mujer, Familia y Trabajo en España: 1875-1936* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1983), pp.26-59.

³⁸⁸ *ABC*, 17/10/1931; *La Vanguardia*, 13/02/1932.

³⁸⁹ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 77-105.

³⁹⁰ Alejandro Quiroga, *Making Spaniards: Primo de Rivera and the Nationalisation of the Masses* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), pp.103-4.

³⁹¹ Pilar Folguera, ‘Relaciones privadas y cambio social’ and Danièle Bussy Genevois, ‘El retorno de la hija prodiga: mujeres entre lo público y lo privado’, in Folguera, *Otras visiones de España*, pp.189, 120.

República (Law for the Defence of the Republic) of October 1931 and the *Ley de Orden Público* (Public Order Act) of 1933. The Republic's anti-vagrancy measures, which legalised the detention and internment of the jobless, street traders and itinerant labourers, further eroded the few remaining spaces open to workers.

As workers struggled to defend and define their own private space in a profoundly hostile environment, they saw ample proof of the Church's continued position as a cog in what appeared to be an unchanged - or even more brutal - apparatus of repression. In Barcelona, jubilant anarchist workers had celebrated the Republic's proclamation by releasing female prisoners from the detested, nun-staffed women's prison on the Calle Amàlia.³⁹² In Almeria, the only building attacked in May 1931 had been a church-run reformatory for young criminals, which was invaded by inhabitants of the Barrio Alto workers' district who destroyed furniture and religious objects.³⁹³ Yet the disappearance of Catholicism from penal institutions was, predictably, a complicated process. Although republican prison reform gradually replaced the religious orders who staffed penal institutions with trained personnel, workers imprisoned during 1931 and 1932 were still met with nuns, crucifixes and religious symbols.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, the mentalities of many prison staff remained unaltered. Communist activist Dolores Ibárruri, incarcerated in Madrid's women's prison on the Calle de Quiñones in May 1932, discovered that while prisoners were allowed to sing religious hymns, renditions of 'The International' and other 'revolutionary' songs were met with anger and threats by the authorities.³⁹⁵

As anticlericals continued to struggle against combined intrusions into the domestic sphere by Church and state, their apprehension and anger regarding the Church's political agenda mounted. The organisation of Catholic forces into a structured, centralised political movement came in February 1933, with the founding of the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), a confederation of rightwing groups led by *Acción Popular*'s José María Gil Robles. The CEDA's

³⁹² For these measures, see Ealham, *Class*, pp. 60-121; Graham, *Republic*, pp.35-40; Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.62-4, 118-9, 176-80; Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.38-39.

³⁹³ AHN, Interior A, Legajo 30/3 (Almería); *La Vanguardia*, 14/05/1931; Cárcel Ortí, *Archivo Secreto Vaticano*, Doc. 93, p.362; Macarro Vera, *Socialismo*, p.244.

³⁹⁴ Hernández Holgado, *Mujeres encarceladas*, pp.55-58; Gutiérrez Vega, *Victoria Kent: Una vida al servicio del humanismo liberal*, pp. 89-119.

³⁹⁵ Dolores Ibárruri, *Memorias de la Pasionaria: La lucha y la vida* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985), pp.135-44, 151-70.

tremendous mobilising success among provincial and rural middle class Catholics stemmed from its ability to draw upon widely shared social fears regarding the perceived threat which the Republic and the organised left posed to religion, tradition, community and the family. CEDA propaganda asserted that Spanish national identity, which was synonymous with Catholicism, was under attack from the foreign creeds of ‘rebellious enemies’ who belonged to a menacing, irreligious ‘anti-Spain’.³⁹⁶ By employing this imagery, the CEDA drew upon a fear of proletarian ‘revolution’ and ‘disorder’ which had haunted conservative sectors across Europe since the French Revolution, and which had become more and more acute following the destabilising disruptions to traditional social hierarchies caused by the First World War and the Russian Revolution.³⁹⁷

During the 1933 election campaign, as Gil Robles called for the overturning of secularisation measures and the restoration of a confessional state, he employed an oratorical style and political rhetoric heavily influenced by German and Italian fascism. The CEDA’s potent mixture of religious ritual and paramilitary and fascist imagery, coupled with Gil Robles’ refusal to declare loyalty to the Republican state and widely publicised intention to ‘smash’ Marxism, produced alarm among workers. At mass rallies, impassioned members of the party’s youth movement, the JAP - which was much closer to fascist modes and beliefs than even the CEDA - hailed Gil Robles as their *jefe* (‘chief’, with a clear political allusion to *Duce* or *Führer*).³⁹⁸ In a European context marked by the gradual crushing of the left by rightwing authoritarian or fascist regimes, many anticlerical workers became convinced that the CEDA was a church-endorsed version of Hitler’s and Mussolini’s parties which would ‘stop at nothing to impose fascism’.³⁹⁹ Of course, from a twenty-first century historian’s perspective, it is clear that these connections were simplistic. Indeed, historiographical debate over whether the CEDA and the JAP can be defined as fascist organisations continues.⁴⁰⁰ Yet

³⁹⁶ ‘Rebellious enemy’ and ‘anti-Spain’ in Lowe, *Catholicism*, p. 34.

³⁹⁷ On this ‘haunting’, see Robert Gerwarth, ‘The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War’, *Past and Present*, no. 200 (August, 2008), pp.190-93

³⁹⁸ Preston, *CSCW*, pp. 130, 145-6, 193-195, 205-7; Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp.4, 15-35; Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.50-62.

³⁹⁹ Quote from Federica Montseny, ‘Glosas: la mano de Dios’, *La Revista Blanca*, No. 276, 04/04/1934, p.400.

⁴⁰⁰ See Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp. 233-35; Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 330-36.

at the time, huge numbers of workers – their perceptions shaped by the information which appeared in the Spanish press regarding Nazi and Fascist theatrical mass rallies and persecution of leftists – judged that the CEDA’s ‘fascist’ style and rhetoric, and Gil Robles’ widely publicised corporativist ambitions, rendered the party ‘virtually indistinguishable’ from contemporary fascist movements.⁴⁰¹

The extraordinary growth of the CEDA, and the fervent support it received from the religious press, the Catholic associational movement, and large numbers of priests, created a shared mental linkage among anticlerical workers between Catholicism and what they understood as ‘fascism’. The praise which *El Debate* heaped upon the Nazi regime, which was then reported in the socialist and anarchist press, enhanced this perception.⁴⁰² Furthermore, the sight of groups of cloistered nuns being ‘escorted’ to vote for the CEDA in luxurious automobiles, something which was a common feature of both the 1933 and 1936 elections in many Spanish cities, added to the impression the Church was now virtually indistinguishable from fascism.⁴⁰³ This view of the Church as a dangerous political enemy was reinforced by the Catholic labour movement’s renewed attempts to undermine the CNT and the UGT through strikebreaking and the general fomenting of yellow unionism. Many workers considered Catholic unions to be hateful enemy organisations ‘formed by the employer class in order to counteract and attack us’ and ‘made up of traitors.’⁴⁰⁴

Collective fear that the CEDA would obliterate Spanish democracy from within was the driving force behind the workers’ rebellion of October 1934. The conservative government which had taken power following the rightist election victory in November 1933 - which was headed by Alejandro Lerroux’s (by now deeply conservative) Radical Party and sustained from outside the cabinet by CEDA votes - had initiated a gradual overturning of republican reformist social and labour legislation. During the period which came to be known as the *bienio negro* (two black years), relations between

⁴⁰¹ Preston, *CSCW*, p.130.

⁴⁰² *El Socialista*, 21/07/1933.

⁴⁰³ Cedric Salter, *Try-Out in Spain* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1943), p.4; Pierre Vilar, *La guerra civil española* (Barcelona: Critica, 1986), pp. 34-5; Father Leocadio Lobo, *Open Letter to the Editor of The Times* (June 1938), LSEA, COLL MISC 0091/38; *La Vanguardia*, 25/10/1933; 21/11/1933; 05/12/1933.

⁴⁰⁴ Quote from AHN, Interior A, legajo 5^a/5 (Madrid). See also Adrian Shubert, ‘El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias’, pp. 246 – 248; Callahan, *Catholic Church*, p.323; Lannon, ‘The Church’s Crusade against the Republic’, pp.45-46; de la Cueva, ‘Religious Persecution’, p.365.

employers and workers in metropolitan and rural Spain became ever more conflictive, with the Church fully implicated in the struggle due its unambiguous political allegiances, its supporters' vehement opposition to agricultural and labour reform, and the activities of the yellow unions. The new government modified, overruled or simply ignored the first term's secularising legislation, giving the Church and its followers a free rein to make their presence felt on the street and in the classroom.⁴⁰⁵ Workers faced ever more violent incursions into their rapidly diminishing personal space by the state security forces, which crushed political protest, closed workers' centres and backed up the intransigent and vindictive actions of employers and landlords.⁴⁰⁶ In another vivid reminder of the Church's absolute implication in the climate of repression and reprisal, arrests and trials on charges of blasphemy or 'offences against religion' became increasingly common.⁴⁰⁷

In these intensely conflictive, fear-saturated circumstances, workers responded to the government's decision to grant the CEDA the most sensitive ministerial portfolios (Agriculture, Labour and Justice) by staging a general strike intended to prevent – in their eyes - the combined forces of fascism and clericalism from destroying the Republic. Although the movement failed in most of Spain, in the northern coalmining region of Asturias, where workers' rejection of Catholic yellow unions was extremely fierce, the strike turned into a fortnight-long armed rebellion. The depth of revulsion and anger felt by the region's armed workers regarding the Church's political antagonism, trade union activity and undiminished presence in education and in public spaces was soon made starkly clear: the revolution's protagonists destroyed over fifty religious buildings and killed thirty-four male religious personnel.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ de la Cueva, 'El Anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica', p.248; Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, p.59.

⁴⁰⁶ Brian D. Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion: Martyrdom, Gender, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War* (Durham and London: North Carolina, 2007), p.21; Graham, *Republic*, p.38; Preston, *Civil War*, pp.72-77.

⁴⁰⁷ AHN, ATM, Legajo 225/1: Sumario 309/34 (Alejandro Martín López, Fernando García Esteban): *Escarnio a la Religión y Daños*; Legajo 311/2: Sumario 53/36 (Periódico Línea): *Escarnio al Culto Cristiano*; Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.60-61; Preston, *CSCW*, p.134.

⁴⁰⁸ Bunk, *Ghosts*, pp.32-3; Hernández Figueiredo, *Patrimonio religioso*, pp.168-90; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.41-47; Preston, *Civil War*, pp.77-80; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/76; *El Sol*, 30/10/1934.

The execution of eight *Hermanos de Las Escuelas Cristianas* (Brothers of the Christian Schools) in Turón is particularly significant.⁴⁰⁹ The monks, detained at the orders of the village's 'revolutionary committee' on 5 October, ran free schools where miners' children were taught in the traditional mode to defer to the 'people of order'. Furthermore, they ran their establishments - which had remained completely untouched by republican educational reform - under the patronage of *Hulleras de Turón*, the largest and most hated mining firm in the area. The monks' opposition to independent labour unions and involvement in strikebreaking was widely known.⁴¹⁰ The killings saw concrete political motives mixing with more 'traditional', ethical criticisms of the clergy: the committee's decision to execute the monks was also influenced by the persistent rumour that they engaged in homosexual practices with their pupils. The involvement of several of the brothers' former students in the revolutionary events leaves few doubts regarding the ardent anticlericalism provoked by Church education, and the intense frustration caused by the continued functioning of religious schools.⁴¹¹

Finally, the indelible connection which had been forged in leftwing, working class imaginaries between 'fascism' and all strands of Catholicism was clear from the moment in which the monks were detained. When the miners arrived at the school, they claimed they were searching for 'arms hidden by the fascists of the Catholic Youth'. In the Asturian capital Oviedo, militiamen who transferred the city's seminarians to prison in the town of Mieres on 6 October chanted: '*¡llevamos fascistas! ¡Llevamos curas!*' (We're taking fascists and priests away!). The Church's ministers were viewed by these men as inseparable from the politicians of the CEDA, who were in turn viewed as indistinguishable from the Nazis or from Mussolini's National Fascist Party. As Antonio Montero Moreno astutely observes, 'for the armed proletarians totalitarian politics and religious ministry meant the same thing.'⁴¹²

The government's repression of the rebellion was severe and extensive. In Asturias, where the colonial Army of Africa had been dispatched to crush the resistance,

⁴⁰⁹ *La Revolución de octubre en España: La rebelión del gobierno de la generalidad* (Madrid: En Servicio de La Republica, 1935), pp.24-25.

⁴¹⁰ Juan Ignacio Pocarobba, *Los dilemas de Iglesia española en 1934, Jornada en la UBA: Asturias 1934* (Feb. 2007), p.1; Adrian Shubert, 'Entre Arbolea y Comillas: El fracaso del sindicalismo católico en Asturias', and Domingo Benavides, 'Arbolea y su interpretación de la Revolución de Octubre' in Jackson, *Octubre 1934*, pp.246-51; Callahan, *Catholic Church*, p.323.

⁴¹¹ Álvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo', pp.299-300; Bunk, *Ghosts*, p.41.

⁴¹² Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.43.

thousands of workers were imprisoned and tortured. As constitutional guarantees were suspended across Spain, political centres were closed and the socialist and anarchist press was silenced.⁴¹³ For incarcerated workers and their families, the Church's implication in the repression was patent. In the villages and towns of Asturias, workers were imprisoned and tortured by the army and the security forces in churches and religious schools transformed into makeshift jails. One miner from Mieres was forced by soldiers to kneel and pray while his brother, who had been hung from the porch of the church, was beaten into unconsciousness.⁴¹⁴ As well as this brutal firsthand experience, workers faced an avalanche of propaganda produced in the aftermath of the rebellion by the Catholic press, associational movement and political parties like *Acción Popular*. While Catholic representatives in parliament expressed approval of the repression, endless articles and speeches employed images of martyrdom and Catholic suffering to condemn and dehumanise Spain's foreign, 'barbarous' enemies.⁴¹⁵ All this meant that by the time 1936 elections arrived – with centre-left forces united in a 'Popular Front' coalition around the issue of amnesty for the prisoners of October and the need to save the Republic from 'religious fascism' - the Church's position as an absolute enemy was beyond doubt for huge numbers of workers.⁴¹⁶

Anticlerical collective action during the Popular Front period: renewed hope, redoubled action

After the experience of the *bienio negro*, the Popular Front election victory of 16 February 1936 and the return to power of a progressive government with a reformist programme generated an 'explosion' of popular expectation. On a local level, people who had endured years of frustration regarding the slowness and ineffectiveness of republican reform began to pre-empt government action on an unprecedented scale, taking matters definitively into their own hands. As progressive town councils started to govern, local power relations were turned upside down, and anticlerical collective action – along with other forms of direct action like land occupations and industrial

⁴¹³ Preston, *Civil War*, p.79-80 and *CSCW*, pp.176-79.

⁴¹⁴ 'Ferocidad de la Represión en Asturias: Mieres', *La Revista Blanca*, No. 365, 15/1/1936; Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p.297.

⁴¹⁵ Bunk, *Ghosts*, pp.42-60; On support from Catholics in parliament, Lannon, 'The Church's Crusade', p.46.

⁴¹⁶ 'Religious fascism' in 'Consultorio General', *La Revista Blanca*, No. 360, 13/12/1935, pp.1172.

strikes - accelerated.⁴¹⁷ On 19 February in Valencia, around 3,000 people celebrated the Popular Front victory by ceremoniously burying an effigy of Gil Robles and taking another one representing ex-prime minister Alejandro Lerroux to prison. Simultaneously, unknown protagonists burned down a church and two chapels, building a bonfire of religious objects in the plaza. The jovial, carnival-esque nature of the incident belied a shared urgency – by now more zealous and more widespread than ever - to reconfigure society locally along secular lines.⁴¹⁸

This urgency compelled many activists to repossess Catholic spaces by force, converting them into institutions which would serve cultural and political purposes. In Bejar (Salamanca), workers seized the church three days after the Popular Front election victory and transformed it into a dancehall.⁴¹⁹ In Arévalo (Ávila), the parish church was ‘violently opened’ by men affiliated to the *Casa del Pueblo* in March 1936. They moved their furniture inside and began to conduct meetings.⁴²⁰ In Rozas del Puerto Real (Madrid), local men seized the rectory in April, hanging a huge red flag from it and declaring it the new *Casa del Pueblo*.⁴²¹ In March, the Bishop of Cartagena summarised this new approach: ‘The workers now have the tactic of taking all of the religious items to the plaza or the road...they burn them in a bonfire leaving the building for other uses which they think appropriate.’⁴²²

Attempts to expropriate and reuse religious buildings only rarely came to fruition in the spring of 1936 because anticlerical actors were still - for the most part - limited by the state’s control of the forces of coercion. Yet these efforts display that the Republic’s abortive secularisation bid, especially in the educational sphere, had impacted deeply upon popular imaginaries. In Antequera in Malaga, workers broke into the parish church in late February, stripping the building of its religious decorations and adorning it with a red flag. They only agreed to end their occupation when the mayor promised

⁴¹⁷ Eduardo González Calleja, ‘La dialéctica de las pistolas. La violencia y la fragmentación del poder político durante la Segunda Republica’, in Muñoz, Ledesma y Rodrigo, *Culturas y políticas de la violencia*, p.137; Francisco Sánchez Pérez, ‘La primavera de 1936: algunas observaciones sobre Francia y España’, in Ballarín y Ledesma *Reformas, conflictos y conspiraciones*, pp.98-99; Preston, *Civil War*, pp.86-87.

⁴¹⁸ Cruz, *Pueblo*, pp.113-14.

⁴¹⁹ CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508.

⁴²⁰ ASV, *Informe del obispo de Ávila a Tedeschini* (24/03/1936).

⁴²¹ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Rozas del Puerto Real*; ASV, *Rozas de Puerto Real; Informe del obispo de Madrid-Alcalá a Tedeschini* (Madrid, 02/04/1936).

⁴²² ASV, *Informe del obispo de Cartagena a Tedeschini* (17/03/1936).

that the church would be turned into a secular school. In San Roque (Cadiz) on the same day, a commission of local workers informed the parish priest that he had two hours to vacate the church building, which was also to be redeployed school.⁴²³ In May 1936 in Madrid, local people responded to rumours that nuns were distributing poisoned sweets to workers' children by staging arson attacks upon religious buildings. Large crowds of demonstrators gathered outside religious schools in workers' districts of the city to demand the closure of the establishments. Outside the *Colegio de María Auxiliadora* in Cuatro Caminos (a charitable school for workers' children which had evaded republican secularisation measures), a spokesman explained to the director that 'as the Republic needs hygienic, clean places for its schools, the group has come to take possession.'⁴²⁴

During incidents like these, the practice of burning a locality's parish archive and its property registers along with its religious buildings, Catholic union centres and right wing political headquarters was common. In Cehegín and Yecla (Murcia), Elche (Alicante), and a multitude of other towns and villages across Spain, records of property ownership, taxes and Catholic-regulated births, deaths and marriages were reduced to ashes by local people.⁴²⁵ This burning was a highly symbolic, public attempt to expunge the external manifestations of clerical and capitalist repression from the local topography.⁴²⁶ As we will see in chapter five, 'Anticlerical Violence as a Building Block', the radical fragmentation of power provoked across the Republican zone by the military coup of July 1936 would give anticlericals the opportunity to destroy the physical manifestations of clerical tyranny – and to seize and redeploy religious objects and property - on a vast scale. This process would underscore attempts to construct a new society in many parts of the country.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508.

⁴²⁴ Quote from AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/323. See also 1514: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 31/2, 31/13, 31/56 31/59; 31/79; 31/91; 31/92; *El Debate*, 27/05/1936; *El Socialista*, 05/05/1936; FO371/20521, Chilton to FO, 04/05/1936; Langdon Davies, *Barricades* p.51; Bowers, *Mission*, pp.224-25; ASV, *Relato de los hechos antirreligiosos del 3-4 de mayo en Madrid* (05/05/1936). For the Franco regime's propagandistic interpretation of the incident, see Regina García, *El bulo de los caramelos envenenados* (Madrid: Temas Españoles, 1953).

⁴²⁵ CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508; FO371/20521, Mackness to FO, 04/04/1936; ASV, *Informe de un testigo presencial dirigido al obispo de Cartagena* (Yecla, 18/03/1936); *Informe del A.A de Orihuela al nuncio* (Orihuela, 03/03/1936); *Informe del obispo de Cartagena a Tedeschini* (Cartagena, 17/03/1936); Bowers, *Mission*, pp.202-3.

⁴²⁶ Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations' pp.259-60.

⁴²⁷ José Luis Ledesma, 'Santa ira popular', pp.179-82.

Anticlerical collective action in the spring of 1936 also arose as a response to ever mounting fear of a fascist takeover in Spain. Many JAP members, horrified by the CEDA's electoral defeat and by what they saw as a state sponsored 'revolution' unfolding in Spain, were moving towards more intransigent positions and increasingly involving themselves in street violence. Simultaneously, significant numbers of radicalised and disillusioned *japistas* joined the ranks of the *Falange Española* (Spanish Falanx), a previously small and politically unimportant fascist party formed in October 1933.⁴²⁸ As anticlerical workers saw the Falange's presence increasing radically on Spain's streets, the anarchist and socialist press continued to underline the immense danger posed by 'Vaticanist fascism' in Spain and to report upon the crushing of liberties by fascist and authoritarian regimes in Austria, Italy and Germany.⁴²⁹

For many workers, the Church's implication in this new wave of rightwing paramilitary mobilisation was manifest – and not only because the ranks of the JAP and the Falange were full of militant Catholics. In the months after the February elections, numerous priests actively involved themselves in the formation and organisation of the Falange's Catholic youth groups. Leocadio Lobo, the parish priest of San Ginés in Madrid, lamented that in May 1936: 'I had to refuse to continue with the preparation of young men for fulfilling their Easter duties, because each one of them carried a pistol in his pocket'.⁴³⁰ Public statements of support for the Falange from high profile ecclesiastics, which were reported in the progressive press, added further to the impression that the Church was 'at the service of fascism.' Less than a week before the February 1936 elections, for example, the Bishop of Pamplona, Marcelino Olaechea Loizaga, had blessed the Falange's flag in a ceremony held at the Episcopal Palace, posing for photographs with the organisation's activists.⁴³¹

At the same time, stories concerning discoveries of weapons and explosives in religious buildings appeared with ever greater frequency in the press. Reports like these had sporadically featured in newspapers since 1931, alongside occasional allegations that shots had been fired from convents during anticlerical demonstrations and political

⁴²⁸ Lowe, *Catholicism*, pp. 117-53; Bowers, *Mission*, p.253.

⁴²⁹ On 'vaticanist fascism' see Peirats, *CNT*, Vol. I, p. 148 ; *El Socialista*, 16/02/1936, 01/03/1936, 18/07/1936.

⁴³⁰ Lobo, *Open Letter*.

⁴³¹ *El Socialista*, 16/02/1936; Mikel Sorauren, José M. Jimeno Jurío and Vicente Huici Urmeneta, *Historia contemporánea de Navarra* (San Sebastián: Txertoa, 1982), p.161.

disturbances.⁴³² The popular perception of priests as warmongering and malicious was in fact rooted in and conditioned by nineteenth-century collective memories of the clergy's participation in the Carlist Wars. The image of the 'blunderbuss friar' plotting against the constitutional government from a monastery filled with weapons - kept alive by the progressive press and by word of mouth transmission - undoubtedly inflected workers' shared perceptions of the clergy's anti-republican activities.⁴³³

In the political context of the spring of 1936, beneath the fearful shadow cast by rightist paramilitary street violence and the increasingly inflammatory parliamentary declarations of Gil Robles and other rightwing deputies, reports of clerical maleficence - from poisoned sweets to pistols hidden in confessional booths - captured workers' attention and imagination as never before. As spring turned to summer, searches of convents, carried out at by municipal authorities at the behest of panicked local people, became ever more common.⁴³⁴ In these tense circumstances, it is unsurprising that leftwing activists frequently responded to Falangist provocation by burning churches and destroying religious property.⁴³⁵ In Cadiz, for example, when people affiliated to the *Casa del Pueblo* launched a far-reaching arson attack upon the city's ecclesiastical architecture in March, they also pulled down and destroyed the flag of Nazi Germany's consulate.⁴³⁶ In May 1936, during the fiery days of the poisoned sweets, the crowds' demands for secular education were interspersed with bitter remonstrations against the 'fascist clerical swine'.⁴³⁷ In Valladolid, which had become both an important nucleus of Falangist mobilisation and a key centre of militant Catholicism by 1936, the city's anarchists called a general strike in June 1936 to coincide with the festival of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These activists, who called the strike as a protest over growing Falangist

⁴³² *Heraldo de Madrid*, 13/05/1931; *La Vanguardia*, 11/09/1931; *Luz*, 20/01/1932, 31/08/1932; *El Sol*, 31/08/1932.

⁴³³ *El Socialista*, 02/01/1932; de la Cueva, 'El anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica', p.222; Moliner Prada, 'Anticlericalismo y Revolución Liberal', pp. 17-68.

⁴³⁴ For examples, see *Claridad*, 18/04/1936; *El Defensor de Granada*, 24/03/1936; Lobo, *Open Letter*; CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508; Juan Ruiz Peinado Vallejo, *Cuando la muerte no quiere* (Mexico: Imp. Azteca, 1967), p.126; Inflammatory parliamentary declarations: 'El debate trágico del 16 de junio' in Ricardo de la Cierva, *Los documentos de la primavera trágica* (Secretaría General Técnica: sección de Estudios sobre la guerra de España, 1967) pp.495-534.

⁴³⁵ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.25.

⁴³⁶ CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508; NA: FO371/20520, Chilton to FO, 17/03/1936.

⁴³⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1514: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 31/2, 31/56 (which contains 'swine' quote), and 31/60; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/195.

violence in the city, evidently saw religious ritual and fascist mobilisation as being tightly intertwined.⁴³⁸

By July 1936, the month in which the military coup plunged Spain into immediate chaos and eventual civil war, popular anticlerical attitudes were more widespread, politicised and radicalised than ever before. The eagerness for change ignited by republican reform had left anticlerical workers bitterly frustrated when mass Catholic mobilisation enabled the Church to increase its influence over education, welfare and the built environment. As shared determination to secularise society from below became ever more acute, these workers clashed on the street with Catholic forces which they saw as being intrinsically linked to the detested forces of repression, authoritarianism and - from 1933 onwards - European fascism. The parallel mobilisation of these two 'blocs', and the conflictive dynamic into which they became locked, generated an increasingly intense struggle to control public spaces which underlay the making of mass democracy. All this meant that in July 1936, the cycle of anticlerical mobilisation – and wider anarchist, socialist and republican political mobilisation - which had begun in April 1931 and been revived in February 1936 was at an extremely high point. As the following chapters will reveal, this situation would yield cataclysmic consequences for the clergy in the months after 17-18 July.

⁴³⁸ Ignacio Martín Jiménez, *La Guerra Civil en Valladolid* (Valladolid: Ámbito Ediciones, 2000), pp. 12-40; di Febo, *Santa de la raza*, pp.57-59.

Chapter Three: Profiling the Protagonists of Anticlerical Violence

The motley tinsel and imitation marble made of wood, the futile extravagance of a decadent baroque, had lost their substance save for a floorful of twisted iron, charred wood and blackened plaster...I asked my friends who had done it and why. 'Well', one answered, 'in every movement there are men who are in the movement for good motives and others who are there for bad; and ours is no exception. We have our bad men. When they set fire to the churches we went and pulled out everything of value that we could.' 'They', always 'they'; who were 'they' who had thus purified with fire the house of prayer turned into a den of thieves?

John Langdon Davies⁴³⁹

In Almeria, the military coup which would rapidly escalate into the Spanish Civil War was defeated by armed workers and loyal members of the security forces on 21 July 1936. With the organs of Republican authority paralysed, the 'people in arms' - most of whom had never been able to access weapons before - rapidly assumed the fragmented mantle of power, forming local committees and militia patrols in towns and villages across the province.⁴⁴⁰ In the large south-westerly town of Berja, during the days immediately following the coup, militiamen linked to the newly constituted local committee ransacked at least three of the town's churches, publicly burning their contents along with those of the parish archive. Outside a hermitage dedicated to Berja's patron saint, the Virgen de Gádor, people made a bonfire of the building's religious statues, images and altarpieces.⁴⁴¹ Antonio Vargas Rodríguez, a twenty-seven-year-old hatter and member of the committee, bedecked himself in priestly robes and made mocking gestures. He was accompanied in this effervescent iconoclasm by forty-year-old José González Rodríguez, who belonged to the moderate republican *Unión Republicana* party and worked as *comerciante* (a term used to describe small business owners and traders), and Manuel Roda Vicente, an adolescent bakery assistant with no history of political activism.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Langdon Davies, *Barricades*, p.90.

⁴⁴⁰ Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, *Desarrollo sin reformistas: dictadura y campesinado en el nacimiento de nueva sociedad en Almería, 1939-1975* (Instituto de Estudios Almerienses: Diputación de Almería, 1999), p.32; Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, pp.83-118. 'People in arms' in Casanova, 'Rebelión y revolución', p.117.

⁴⁴¹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 5/86, 5/87; Gerald Brenan, *South from Granada* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), p.276; José Ruiz Fernández, *De la Segunda República a la Guerra Civil: Berja 1931-1939* (Almería: Arráez Editores, 1999), p.144.

⁴⁴² Archivo Histórico Provincial de Almería, Jurisdicciones Especiales, Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas (AHPA, JJEE, TRP) Expedientes: Manuel Roda Vicente, José González Rodríguez, Antonio Vargas Rodríguez.

For a number of reasons already elucidated in the introduction to this thesis, the faces of people who participated in anticlerical incidents like these – episodes which formed part of a ‘spontaneous revolution’ on territory which remained under Republican authority after 17-18 July - have become ‘lost in the crowd’. The purpose of this chapter is to recover them. Despite the recent publication of numerous enlightening local studies of the grassroots revolutionary violence of 1936, historians still lack specific details regarding the individuals who destroyed religious property and attacked priests at the beginning of the civil war.⁴⁴³ To be sure, a general image has emerged - both from specific works on anticlericalism and from general histories of the civil war - which portrays the anticlerical protagonist as male, belonging to the rural or urban working classes, relatively youthful, and affiliated to a leftwing political organisation.⁴⁴⁴ Many historians have also emphasised - and indeed overemphasised - the violent anticlerical actions of members of the CNT-FAI. These arguments have often been based more on the rabidly anticlerical rhetoric of some sectors of the anarchist movement than upon its members’ specific, verifiable actions.⁴⁴⁵ To date, there exists no study which thoroughly examines the political affiliation, social class, age and gender of those who participated in anticlerical collective action during the civil war.

The two chapters which follow endeavour to construct a picture of those who committed acts of anticlerical violence from 17-18 July 1936 onwards in this study’s two sample provinces: Madrid and Almeria. Dealing firstly with class, political affiliation and age, and then with gender, they are based upon a sample of one hundred and fifty-one anticlerical perpetrators drawn from the Franco dictatorship’s military court records. Although these *consejos de guerra* – the cornerstone of the Franco regime’s vast project of repression, social control and political cleansing – must be approached with extreme caution, the detailed information which they provide does allow us to go some way towards peeling away layers of time, propaganda, and

⁴⁴³ Some of these studies are Ledesma, *Días de llamas*; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*; Carmen González Martínez and Garrido Caballero, ‘Violencia iconoclasta’, pp. 131-54; Manuel Ortiz Heras, *Violencia política en la II República y el primer franquismo: Albacete, 1936-1950* (Spain: Siglo XXI, 1996), pp.99-109; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.269- 76.

⁴⁴⁴ For this image, see (in general), Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*; Vincent, ‘Keys’; de la Cueva, ‘El anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica’.

⁴⁴⁵ See Brenan, *Labyrinth*, p.189; Manet, *Cataluña en la Guerra Civil*, p.86; Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.201-2.

politically-interested history in order to uncover the ‘anticlerical faces in the crowd’ of Almeria and Madrid.⁴⁴⁶

Class and profession

i) The rural world

By July 1936, in a country where the majority of the population lived in localities of fewer than ten thousand inhabitants,⁴⁴⁷ significant numbers of Spain’s rural workers unequivocally identified representatives of the Church as ‘class enemies’. Of course, in 1930s Spain, an unevenly developed country in the throes of rapid processes of industrialisation, mass politicisation and other forms of social change, ostensibly ‘modern’, political categories like class would still not have formed part of the mental landscapes of significant sectors of the rural population. However, bitter condemnations of the priest’s hypocritical practice of ‘siding with the rich’ - bluntly evident in his association with local elites and with the repressive state security forces - were commonplace. The dual Catholic and anticlerical mobilisation of 1931-1936, which was focused in urban centres and provincial capitals but which also deeply marked small towns and villages, hardened and politicised this already strongly negative collective view of the Church in many rural localities.⁴⁴⁸

As we saw in chapter one, the landless day labourers (*jornaleros*) who worked on southern Spain’s great estates (*latifundios*) were the rural group who, generally speaking, rejected the institutional Church most vehemently. Many *jornaleros* saw the clergy as being inextricably associated with the large landowners who used the profoundly unequal property structures of the ‘deep south’ to exploit and demean them. Between 1931 and 1936, expectation aroused by republican labour and agrarian reforms turned to anger regarding the slow tempo and limited results of the measures. Many day labourers, large numbers of whom joined the socialist FNTT or the anarchist CNT for the first time after 1931, adopted increasingly militant, assertive and uncompromising attitudes regarding issues like wages, working hours and land redistribution. Those who obstructed their hopes – on both a local and parliamentary level – were the same sectors,

⁴⁴⁶ On the *consejos*, see Anderson, *Francoist Military Trials*, pp.100-2; Gómez Bravo and Marco, *Obra del miedo*, pp. 196-200; Gómez Bravo, *Exilio interior*, p.46.

⁴⁴⁷ Julio Montero Díaz and Javier Cervera Gil, *La Guerra Civil Española Mes a Mes, Vol. 19: La Iglesia frente a la guerra, Noviembre 1937* (Madrid: Unidad Editorial, 2005), p.9.

⁴⁴⁸ Gurney, *Crusade*, pp.59-61; Paz, *Chumberas*, p.61.

traditionally associated with Catholicism, who opposed secularising reform and who battled to re-impose the Church's presence upon the landscape. Questions of religious reform and land reform thus became inseparably interknit.⁴⁴⁹ However, in order to argue that anticlerical violence after July 1936 was a phenomenon grounded in class identities and conflictive class relations, an analysis of the professional occupations (and thus the social class) of the study's sample of anticlerical protagonists is required.

Almeria, located in the eastern half of Andalucía, was an eminently agrarian province in the 1930s: sixty percent of its active workforce was employed in the agricultural sector and forty-eight percent of its inhabitants lived in populations of fewer than five thousand. It was also an extremely poor province whose two main export industries – mining and agriculture (namely the grape trade) – were sunk in a profound crisis. The standard of living experienced by the rural poor was barely above subsistence: the province was marked by well above average infant mortality and illiteracy rates, and high levels of unemployment and emigration.⁴⁵⁰

Yet Almeria, despite being part of a region which historians have traditionally associated with large property, was not itself a *latifundio* province.⁴⁵¹ Its patterns of land ownership were very different from those of provinces like Seville, Huelva and Córdoba - all dominated by huge estates. In Almeria, smallholdings (*minifundio*) were the predominant form of ownership and exploitation. Small plots of land (those under ten hectares) - which were either owned directly by peasant smallholders or leased by tenant farmers from larger landowners - made up ninety-seven percent of the total number of rural properties, occupying forty-two percent of the province's agricultural land. In contrast, properties of more than one hundred hectares comprised just 0.25 percent of total property and twenty-seven percent of the territory.⁴⁵² This coexistence between small, large and medium-sized exploitations meant that Almeria's rural society was composed of a diverse amalgam of small, medium and large landowners, as well as

⁴⁴⁹ Lannon, 'The Church's Crusade', pp.44-46; Malefakis, *Peasant Revolution*, pp.285-387; Collier, *Socialists*, pp.136-39.

⁴⁵⁰ *Estadísticas del siglo XX en Andalucía* (IEA: Consejería de Economía y Hacienda, 2002), pp.65-79; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp.47-52; Pérez Montoya, *Las derechas almerienses*, pp.17-19.

⁴⁵¹ On this identification, see Edward Malefakis, 'Los campesinos, la política y la guerra civil en España, 1931-39', *Agricultura y Sociedad*, No.8 (1978), p.15 and *Peasant Revolution*, pp. 20-25.

⁴⁵² Calculation mine, using figures from Pascual Carrión, *Los latifundios en España: su importancia, origen, consecuencias y solución* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1975. 2^a edición), pp.80-81.

a varied collection of tenant farmers, sharecroppers, day labourers and professions linked to rural trade. Rural Almeria, then, despite its severe economic inequalities and the intense hardship endured by the poorest sectors of its population, reflected a heterogeneous social reality which did not obey a simplistic division between rich landowners and poor labourers.⁴⁵³

The province of Madrid in New Castile also presents a heterogeneous picture. In the 1930s, Madrid was far less ruralised than Almeria: sixty-nine percent of the population lived in the provincial capital, and just 3.24 percent were employed in the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, in a situation where very few of the province's one hundred and ninety-six municipalities exceeded ten thousand inhabitants, Madrid still had a strong rural identity. As in Almeria, property relations and social and economic inequalities in the countryside played a key part in deciding the clergy's fate after July 1936. Madrid, like Almeria, was not a *latifundio* province. While properties smaller than ten hectares comprised ninety-nine percent of property and fifty percent of the agricultural surface area, those greater than one hundred hectares made up just 0.16 percent of property and thirty-two percent of the territory.⁴⁵⁴ Although large property owners were a significant presence – and one which was profoundly resented by many *jornaleros* – they existed alongside a diverse mixture of small and medium property owners, tenant farmers, and workers employed in rural commerce or in traditional occupations like charcoal burning. In rapidly expanding populations on the outskirts of the city like Vallecas and Vicálvero, which hovered on the ever-changing boundary between 'rural' and 'urban', agrarian activities mingled with small-scale industry.⁴⁵⁵

The social diversity of both of these provinces is reflected in the occupations of their rural anticlerical protagonists. As might be expected, large numbers of Almeria's and Madrid's *jornaleros* took advantage of the new horizon of political opportunities

⁴⁵³ Miguel Ángel del Arco Blanco, *Hambre de Siglos: mundo rural y apoyos sociales del franquismo en Andalucía Oriental, 1936-1951* (Granada: Comares, 2007), pp.26-31; Óscar Rodríguez Barreira, *Poder y actitudes sociales durante la posguerra en Almería: 1939-1953* (Almería: UAL, CD-ROM), p.141-52; Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, *Dictadura y campesinado*, pp.34-44; Andrés Sánchez Picón, *La Integración de la economía almeriense en el mercado mundial: 1778-1936* (Instituto de estudios almerienses, 1992); Joaquín Bosque Maurel, 'Latifundio y minifundio en Andalucía Oriental', *Estudios geográficos de Andalucía Oriental* (Madrid: Instituto 'Juan Sebastián Elcano'. C.S.I.C/Departamento de Geografía, Universidad de Granada, 1974); Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, pp.119-21.

⁴⁵⁴ Calculation mine using Carrión, *Latifundios*, pp.80-81.

⁴⁵⁵ Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.2-9, 402; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.57-62; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 60201/3220, Pedro Verdugo Vicente, Tomas Viajandre Mariscal, Pilar Martínez Cadenas.

generated by the coup to launch physical attacks upon Catholic personnel and property, demonstrating publicly a profound anticlerical resentment which had accumulated over years of social hurt and Church-legitimated repression. Indeed, landless labourers represent the largest single rural occupational grouping of anticlerical protagonists in both provinces. In Madrid they comprise forty percent of the sample; in Almeria the figure is thirty-two percent. In Nacimiento, for example, a town in the centre of the province of Almeria, a small group of local day labourers stripped the parish church of all of its religious objects and burned them following the coup. The group, which included the secretary of the local FNNTT, all went on to serve as militiamen or armed guards at the orders of the newly formed local committee. In the village of El Vellón, in the mountains to the northeast of Madrid, of the six men tried for forcing local rightists to destroy the town's religious objects and detaining the parish priest, five were local day labourers.⁴⁵⁶

Yet day labourers were not the only rural anticlerical actors on the fragmented revolutionary stage of summer 1936. In both Madrid and Almeria, they were accompanied in their iconoclastic collective action by a varied cast of small and medium-sized peasant landowners and autonomous labourers (*labradores* and *agricultores*), and peasants belonging to a category known as *del campo*, a group which encompassed sharecroppers, tenants and farm workers. Most of the latter group spent their lives teetering perilously on the edge of economic ruin, something which obliged them to labour on larger properties during certain periods in order to supplement their tiny family incomes. If we group all of these diverse labels together under the umbrella term of 'small peasants', they comprise a far from negligible proportion of nine percent of Madrid's rural anticlerical protagonists, and seventeen percent of the Almeria sample.⁴⁵⁷

The extreme permeability of the social, economic and cultural dividing lines which separated landless labourers from the many struggling peasants who lived 'on the

⁴⁵⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 70,485; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 70485/4913, Desiderio Consentini García, Román Martín García, Alejandro García Díaz, Celestino Arias Fernández. See also the similar case of Vavalcarnero (Madrid): AMM, Consejo de Guerra 25161/4620, Esteban Lucas Valdes, Manuel Cañaveral Alonso y Julián Rodríguez Plaza.

⁴⁵⁷ Mario López Martínez, *Orden público y luchas agrarias en Andalucía* (Córdoba: Ediciones Libertarais, 1995), pp. 33-44; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.282-4; Castillo, *Proprietarios*, pp.9-36, 267-330.

frontier between property and labour power, between poverty and survival’ suggests that their experiences and perceptions of the Church and its links to ‘the powerful’ probably overlapped to a large degree.⁴⁵⁸ In the case of sharecroppers and tenant farmers, for example, the owners of the land they worked – who effectively owned their economic fortunes and their lives - would generally have been wealthy churchgoers.⁴⁵⁹ This hypothesis is supported by these sectors’ joint participation in anticlerical attacks. In a pattern which was repeated throughout rural Madrid and Almeria, day labourers were usually the predominant force on the local committees which carried out or coordinated anticlerical acts. However, small peasants and those employed in traditional rural professions like charcoal burning and milling also took their places – albeit in far smaller numbers – on the new organs of revolutionary power. In Oria, a mountain town in northern Almeria, for example, the group of local men who publicly burned the local church’s organ, altarpieces, confessional booths and pulpit after the coup contained not only three day labourers but also an *agricultor* and a *labrador*. All of them went on to become either members of the local committee or armed guards in the locality.⁴⁶⁰ In Estremera, to the east of Madrid, FNTT-affiliated *labrador* Primitivo Camacho Sánchez participated in the sacking of the town’s church and nuns’ convent on 22 July 1936. Camacho Sánchez, who enjoyed a comfortable economic situation which – according to Estremera’s mayor - rendered his union membership ‘unnecessary’, was spotted by neighbours dressed in a nun’s habit hurling religious statues from the convent’s balcony.⁴⁶¹

Occupations linked to rural trade, the service sector and the liberal professions – such as artisans, bakers, small business owners and traders (*comerciantes*), and teachers – also form a small yet significant proportion of the sample. The agents of anticlerical destruction in Berja (Almeria), for example, who appeared at the beginning of this chapter, included a hatter, a bakery assistant and a *comerciante*.⁴⁶² In the case of

⁴⁵⁸ Jorge Marco Carretero, *Resistencia armada en la posguerra. Andalucía Oriental, 1939-1952* (Universidad Complutense de Madrid: Tesis Doctoral, 2011), p.117.

⁴⁵⁹ For a striking literary demonstration of links between Catholicism and the exploitative *amos* of tenant farmers in rural Valencia, see the story of ‘Tío Barret’ in Vicente Blasco Ibañez, *La barraca* (Valencia: Real Academia de Cultura Valenciana, 1998).

⁴⁶⁰ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 235/30.0221, Tomas Gala Benavente, Consejo de Guerra 708/30770, Martín Soler Masegosa; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almeria, pieza No. 10, Exp. 2/124.

⁴⁶¹ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 980/59212, Primitivo Camacho Sanchez.

⁴⁶² AHPA, JJEE, TRP: Expedientes: Manuel Roda Vicente, José González Rodríguez, Antonio Vargas Rodríguez.

Madrid, where many (mainly unskilled, immigrant) workers from pueblos like Vallecas travelled daily to the city to work, occupations like bricklayer, plasterer, shop and clerical worker and domestic servant also added to the assortment of anticlerical protagonists.⁴⁶³ Finally, those engaged in ‘women’s work’ (*sus labores* in the language of Francoist military justice, a term which was applied indiscriminately to women in order to reinforce conservative, Catholic stereotypes of the ‘correct’ female role) also form a significant part of the anticlerical sample. In rural Madrid, these ‘housewives’ make up a quarter of the sampled protagonists; in Almeria they comprise nineteen percent. As the following chapter will show, although women’s participation in iconoclastic acts was of a lesser order compared to that of their male counterparts, it was imbued with a particular logic and meaning which derived from women’s social role within communities and from their direct daily experiences of the clergy.⁴⁶⁴

These findings certainly do not undermine the idea of anticlerical violence as a largely proletarian, class-driven phenomenon. However, they do indicate a more complex reality than that which many historians currently depict. Firstly, evidence of the participation of rural middling sectors challenges (often politically prejudiced) representations from across the historiographical spectrum which portray anticlerical violence, and especially church burnings, as the work of an proletarian ‘rabble’ or ‘lower class mob’.⁴⁶⁵ Secondly, that there were anticlerical protagonists among the middling classes also suggests that we need to modify the widely accepted idea of the smallholding peasantry – and especially the Castilian smallholding peasantry - as a redoubt of rightwing politics and anti-Republican sentiment during the pre-war Republican years. Historians have observed that these sectors’ self-perception as ‘landowners’ generally gave rise to socially conservative attitudes. After 1931, Catholic

⁴⁶³ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 65900/3810, Pedro Verdugo Vicente; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 70485/4913, Desiderio Consentini García, Román Martín García, Alejandro García Díaz, Celestino Arias Fernández.

⁴⁶⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 29,581; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 630/29581-29605-29633-29677-29679-10193, Dolores Tieso Serrano y Otras; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 48637/1131, Pilar Martínez Cadenas. In many cases, the application of the term *sus labores* became a final act of ideological repression against women who had ‘overreached what the Church and the people of order considered to be their station in life.’ When María Domínguez, the first female mayor of a Spanish town, was executed in November 1936, her profession was recorded in the civil register as *sus labors*. Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.111-12.

⁴⁶⁵ The image of a lower class ‘mob’ or ‘rabble’ burning churches spans the historiographical spectrum, from the dictatorship’s representation of the ‘armed rabble’ (Causa General, *La dominación roja en España*, *passim*.) to accounts by historians politically sympathetic to the Republic (Cabanellas, *Guerra de los mil días*, Vol.1, p.308).

smallholders – many of whom already belonged to the counterrevolutionary, church-backed *Confederación Nacional Católica Agraria* (CNCA) - mobilised in response to rightwing propaganda which presented republican agrarian reform as a threat to their economic interests and secularising legislation as a danger to their families and communities. ‘Hundreds and thousands of poor peasants, with little property but a great love for order and religion’, alarmed by the growth of the FNTT and by rising levels of rural protest, became the foot soldiers of the CEDA’s crusade against the Republic - and later of the rebel war effort. Although this theory has most relevance in regions of high religious observance and CNCA strength like Old Castile, recent studies of the province of Jaén have revealed a similar ‘rightward shift’ among Andalusian smallholders, sharecroppers and tenant farmers.⁴⁶⁶

This shift indisputably occurred. However, the evidence already presented here of the involvement of rural middling sectors in the burning of religious property and attacks against priests in Madrid and Almeria, indicate that these social constituencies had not been uniformly incorporated to the orbit of Catholic conservatism between 1931 and 1936. Of course, this had much to do with diminished levels of religious observance and belief in the two provinces. Although Almeria was not one of the most prominent points of the rural south’s ‘atlas of dechristianisation’, community life in many towns and villages – for smallholders and day labourers alike – had ceased to revolve around the institutional Church by the early 1930s. Although some workers still participated in popular, individualistic forms of religion like visits to shrines and devotion to local saints, reports by Almeria’s rural parish priests describe low mass attendance and an almost complete rejection of the sacraments in many communities.⁴⁶⁷ Diocesan documentation from Madrid reveals that the province by no means fulfilled the stereotype of a Castilian province populated by conservative, Catholic smallholders. Many parish priests in the pueblos surrounding the capital record that most of their

⁴⁶⁶ Quote from Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp.47, 69-70. See also Graham, *Republic*, pp.3-5; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.282-84; José Castillo, *Proprietarios*, pp. 267-330; Preston, *CSCW*, pp.44-45;; Francisco Cobo Romero, *Revolución campesina y contrarrevolución franquista en Andalucía* (Editorial Universidad de Granada, 2004), pp. 229-50 and (in general) *De campesinos a electores. Modernización agraria en Andalucía, politización campesina y derechización de los pequeños propietarios y arrendatarios* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2003).

⁴⁶⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/160, 2/218, 2/220; ‘Atlas of dechristianisation’ from Francisco de Tarín in Shubert, *Social History*, p.161; José Ruíz Fernández and Valeriano Sánchez Ramos, *La religiosidad popular y Almería: Actas de las III Jornadas* (Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 2004). On ‘popular religiosity’ combined with a rejection of the official Church, see Callahan, *Catholic Church*, pp.229-35; Shubert, *Social History*, pp.163-65.

parishioners were ‘sadly apathetic’ or openly hostile towards religion during the early 1930s. Even when priests underline the ‘unity’ and absence of ‘class conflict’ in certain communities, they rarely mention religion as a unifying force. Generally speaking, acts of religious worship were celebrated by a small minority belonging to – to quote the parish priest of the village of Talamanca - ‘the social class which has something to lose.’⁴⁶⁸

As chapter five will discuss, many actors drawn from what José Luis Ledesma has termed the ‘rural mesocracy’ saw anticlerical violence – and indeed all forms of revolutionary violence – as a way of securing ‘political spaces’ for themselves in the new revolutionary social order under construction.⁴⁶⁹ Above all though, the anticlerical protagonism of rural middling sectors highlights the methodological dangers of assigning ideological beliefs and expected modes of behaviour to historical actors based upon their membership of a particular socio-economic group. This is especially relevant to the question of Spanish anticlericalism, which was never a clearly articulated or coordinated political or social movement. Anticlerical identities crisscrossed and merged with innumerable political, social and class identities. Like all historical subjects, anticlerical actors were influenced by an enormous web of overlapping motives and influences grounded in daily experience, political and social convictions, internal community dynamics, neighbourly and family loyalties, and personal disputes or differences of opinion.⁴⁷⁰ Historians have yet to assemble a complex picture of anticlerical violence in other parts of New Castile, or indeed in the rest of Spain. However, the extremely high numbers of religious personnel killed in both Toledo and Ciudad Real (47.6 percent and 39.9 percent of these provinces’ total clergy respectively)⁴⁷¹, suggest that the theme of rural anticlericalism could provide historians with a window through which to re-examine prevalent ideas regarding the religious, ‘conservative smallholders of Castile’.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁸ Quotes from ADM, PRRD, Caja 6: *Pueblos: El Pardo, Patones, Pozuelo de Alarcón, Pueblo Nuevo, Torrejón de la Calzada, Rozas de Puerto Real, Robledillo, Talamanca*; BOOM, 02/05/1935, *Crónica de la Misión General en la Diócesis*. Núm. 1,630 02/05/1935.

⁴⁶⁹ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.240-41 and ‘Qué violencia’, pp.106-7.

⁴⁷⁰ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1963); Santos Juliá, *Historia social/sociología histórica* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2010), p.67; Cruz and Pérez Ledesma, *Cultura y movilización*.

⁴⁷¹ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 753-74; Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, pp.210-11; Ángel David Martín Rubio, *Mitos de la represión*, pp. 234-41.

⁴⁷² ‘Conservative smallholders of Castile’ in Preston, *CSCW*, p.42.

ii) The city

The sample of urban anticlerical protagonists assessed by this study reveals a similarly differentiated picture. As we saw in chapter one, what many among Spain's urban poor experienced daily as the Church's entanglement in the machinery of power and state repression had already fixed the priest as a class enemy before 1931. Huge numbers of urban workers vehemently rejected a Church which they saw as an economic exploiter and enforcer of social inequality; they looked instead to working class unions to furnish them with ways of interpreting the world, as well as with forms of protection and socialisation. After 1931, huge numbers of workers joined the UGT or the CNT. The dual Catholic and anticlerical mobilisation of the pre-war Republican years was most pronounced and most conflictive on the streets of Spain's urban nuclei; this simultaneity produced a radicalisation of anticlerical attitudes among urban workers. These constituencies, now viewing the priest as an odious political opponent as well as a class enemy, became ever more determined to combat the Church's public presence on the streets.

The provincial capital of Almeria, which in 1930 had 53, 977 inhabitants, was clearly not an urban metropolis. The city's denizens maintained extremely strong economic, cultural and social links with the surrounding countryside.⁴⁷³ However, the urban population was growing rapidly by the 1930s, as rural workers hit hard by the general economic downturn and the province's grape and mining crises migrated to the city in search of work. These new city dwellers lived on the capital's outskirts in shanty hut districts which lacked sanitation and which contrasted sharply with the opulent avenues of the city centre. Professionally, they were concentrated in artisanal workshops and small factories; some also worked in the city's port in trades like barrel making. Many found employment in the service sector, working in shops, bakeries, restaurants and bars, and also as domestic servants. The city was also home to a growing workforce of white collar workers like bank clerks and administrative employees. Although these employees were, to a certain degree, socially and culturally distinct from the city's manual workers, they generally endured a similarly impecunious, hunger-

⁴⁷³ Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE): Series históricas de población: Almería. All further statistics on population are from the INE.

ridden existence. Almeria's fishermen, possibly the most indigent professional grouping of all, formed another key strand of the proletarian workforce.⁴⁷⁴

Madrid, which had a population of 952,832 inhabitants in 1930, was much larger and a good deal more urbanised by comparison with Almeria.⁴⁷⁵ Emigration to Madrid had been rising rapidly since the turn of the century and the city had almost doubled in size between 1910 and 1930. Yet 1930s Madrid, a city described by Manuel Azaña as 'a badly constructed one-horse town which contains the outline of a great capital', was clearly not a great metropolis like Barcelona or an industrial hub along the lines of Bilbao.⁴⁷⁶ Its ever-growing yet highly atomised workers were employed in *ateliers*, small industrial and manufacturing concerns, the domestic service sector, and small businesses. From the 1920s onwards, however, the majority of the city's unskilled immigrant workers found employment on Madrid's ever-multiplying building sites and public works projects. These workers, as in Almeria but on a much larger scale, lived in rapidly expanding districts which lacked basic facilities like lighting and paving. The capital also contained an ever-swelling army of white collar workers, most of whom, despite their apparently elevated social position, endured what Arturo Barea described as: 'The horrible hunger, hidden and shameful, of office workers, which prevailed in hundreds of homes in Madrid.'⁴⁷⁷

In a situation where anticlerical sentiment was most widespread among the poor urban sectors which saw the Church as an agent repression and an enforcer of poverty, it is unsurprising that blue collar workers comprise the sample's largest or joint largest professional grouping in both urban centres. These manual workers, who range from carpentry workshop employees to casually contracted urban day labourers, amount to thirty-seven percent of the sample in Madrid and thirty-nine percent in Almeria. Those working in the service sector - in this case in places like shops, bakeries and markets -

⁴⁷⁴ Ángel Aguilera Gómez, *La historia silenciada: 1930-1989* (Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 1990), pp. 12-16; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp.50-51; Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze y Muñoz and Áurea Vidal Gómez, 'Benito Vizcaíno Vita: Socialista almeriense en el exilio', *III Congreso sobre el republicanismo: Los exilios en España* (Priego de Córdoba: Patrono Niceto Alcalá-Zamora y Torres, 2005), pp. 691-705.

⁴⁷⁵ Instituto Nacional de Estadística: Series históricas de población: Madrid.

⁴⁷⁶ Azaña quoted in Santos Juliá, 'De poblachón mal construido a esbozo de gran capital: Madrid en el umbral de los años treinta', in Bahamonde Magro and Otero Carvajal, *La sociedad madrileña durante la Restauración*, pp.138-39.

⁴⁷⁷ Barea quote from Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.3-11; Shubert, *Social History*, pp.129-30; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.59-65.

then comprise thirty-seven percent in Madrid and twenty-two percent in Almeria. In July 1936, most of these protagonists suddenly exchanged daily penury and marginalisation for participation in the newly formed and busily multiplying ‘micro-powers’ which fought to ‘control the disorder’ provoked by the coup across urban Spain. As members of neighbourhood committees, investigation groups, militia patrols and unofficial prisons (*checas*), they took violent, retaliatory measures against the religious personnel who, as they saw it, repressed them on a quotidian basis, and against the religious property which symbolised and reminded them of this repression. As will be discussed further in the following chapters, the most common form of extrajudicial execution was the *paseo*, a form of ‘summary justice’ by which the victim was ‘taken for a ride’ in an automobile and shot.⁴⁷⁸

Although the statistics do not display the indirect role played by domestic servants like maids, cooks and doormen in anticlerical violence, denunciations of priests made by domestic staff in both cities were extremely significant. Ardent social resentment of the clergy as class enemies, which mixed potently with an angry rejection of Catholic ‘charity’, impelled countless domestic servants to reveal the whereabouts of their clerical employers to committees and militia patrols. While it is true that many maids - who were often young emigrants from the countryside with scarce access to external political and social influences - may not have possessed a class identity in any articulated, political sense in July 1936, this did not prevent significant numbers of them from exercising fully the irresistible new power which they derived from their intimate knowledge of the comings and goings in the residences of the rich. As class relations were torn apart and reconstructed from below, servants involved themselves actively in the process of denunciation, provoking the permanent disappearances of their employers and exacting drastic changes in property relations.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁸ ‘Control the disorder’ in Casanova, ‘Rebelión y revolución’, p.117. For blue collar protagonists, see ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera, Consejo de Guerra 598/1689 Andrés Hernández López; AHN, CG legajo 1530-2, Exp. 10/1-10/43.

⁴⁷⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/13, 2/15, 2/261, 2/316, 3/5, 3/80, 2/129, 2/316, 3/264, 2/283, 2/284, 4/32, 4/257; María Gloria Nuñez Pérez, *Trabajadoras en la Segunda República. Un estudio sobre la actividad económica extradoméstica, 1931-1936* (Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1989), pp.384-89, 586-94, 619-634, 641; Rodríguez López, *Mujeres*, p.47; Jato Miranda, *Madrid, capital republicana*, pp. 301-2, 320-22; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp. 63-64; El Preso 831, *Del Madrid Rojo: Últimos días de la Cárcel Modelo* (Cádiz: Establecimientos Cerón, 1937), pp.9-10; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.358.

Among countless examples of this phenomenon is the case of the Almerian Dominican friar Juan Aguilar, detained by police in September 1936 after being denounced by the maid of his house for keeping prayer cards in his room.⁴⁸⁰ In November 1936, ‘María’, the maid of a house on Madrid’s northerly Calle del Españolito, denounced her four female employers to militiamen on the grounds that they owned religious objects and a pre-republican flag, and because two of them were nuns. Following the women’s detention, María became the ‘owner’ of the house, marrying her boyfriend and living there with him.⁴⁸¹ More dramatically, when local people assaulted the National Orphanage of El Pardo (northwest of Madrid) on 21 July 1936, the sub-director of studies recognised two women who had worked there as servants as two of the most vociferous members of the attacking crowd.⁴⁸² In Almeria, the Mother Superior of the *Siervas de Maria* recalled that when local people attacked her convent in July: ‘Of course, the worst ones [among the crowd of attackers] were those who had been serving in the convent for twenty years...one of the sons of a servant who lived in a cottage owned by the community...said that we were hiding arms and munitions.’⁴⁸³

The predominance of blue collar workers and service sector employees in the sample does, to a large degree, reinforce existing ideas of anticlerical violence as a worker-driven, class-based phenomenon. However, the anticlerical protagonism of urban middling sectors – business owners, white collar workers and liberal professions like teachers, lawyers and pharmacists – was far from negligible in both cities. In Almeria, liberal professions and white collar workers make up twenty-eight and eleven percent of the sample respectively. In Madrid, sixteen percent of the sampled perpetrators are small business owners, five percent are white collar workers, and a further five percent belong to the liberal professions. The *Izquierda Republicana*-affiliated Almerian lawyer Eduardo Rodríguez Sánchez, for example, formed part of the crowd which assaulted Almeria’s Church of the *Virgen del Mar* on 22 July 1936. As the building blazed,

⁴⁸⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/35; Bernado Martín del Rey, *Ofrendas del cautiverio: crónicas de Almería roja* (Almería: Tall. de La Independencia, 1941), p. 68.

⁴⁸¹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/348.

⁴⁸² AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/342; ADM, PRRD Caja 6.

⁴⁸³ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/398.

Rodriguez Sánchez gesticulated before the crowd, calling for destruction of the building and the searching of the adjoining convent for arms.⁴⁸⁴

In Madrid, the militia group that took control of the city-centre Church of El Carmen in Madrid, jointly unleashing a formidable wave of iconoclasm and sacrophobic violence which will be examined in full in chapter five, was comprised of a diverse selection of professions. The hastily assembled group ranged from blue collar and service sector workers such as painters and fish market employees to postal workers and bookshop owners.⁴⁸⁵ The anticlerical actions of two men belonging to a militia group linked to the *Circulo Socialista* of Madrid's Latina-Inclusa district, Hilario de La Cruz Martín and Martin Dionisio San Miguel, provide another example of middle class anticlerical protagonism. The men, a toyshop owner and a dentist respectively, committed a long series of anticlerical acts – including the detention of priests, the destruction of public religious symbols and the looting of religious buildings – in the early months of the conflict.⁴⁸⁶

The idea that urban middle class actors sometimes involved themselves in anticlerical violence and iconoclasm in order to participate in the tumultuous process of constructing a new revolutionary order, and to secure their positions within it, will be examined extensively in chapter five, which deals with anticlerical violence as an instrument of social construction. Most importantly, though, the characteristics of urban anticlericals from Madrid and Almeria - which bear similarities to the heterogeneous social composition of the rural anticlerical protagonists - again indicate that causal links between social class, ideology and violent collective action should not be oversimplified. An examination of the protagonists' political affiliations, another variable which must be approached with caution in order to avoid reductionist interpretations which establish rigid connections between human actions and political militancy, will allow us to nuance further this already complex picture.

⁴⁸⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/176.

⁴⁸⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1530-2, Exp. 10/1-10/43.

⁴⁸⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, causa núm. 19,442/22,267; AHN, CG, legajo 1532, exp. 37/31-34, legajo 1354, exp. 1/278, legajo 1530, exp. 1/13, 1/14; CDMH, PS-MADRID, 916, 16; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 2736/10601-62920, Hilario de la Cruz Martin.

Political affiliation

i) The rural world

In Almeria, anarchism was the first labour movement to put down roots among rural and urban workers, in the 1870s. However, the socialist movement - which began among the barrel makers of the provincial capital's port – grew steadily from the 1880s onwards, finding support in the capital, in mining areas and among agricultural workers in *pueblos* close to the capital. By 1931, the UGT, with 12,905 militants, was by far the province's prevalent form of worker organisation. The CNT, in contrast, had just 1,800 members. The FNTT grew vertiginously in Almeria between 1931 and 1936, as huge numbers of the province's day labours – but also numerous smallholders and tenant farmers – looked to the organisation in order to improve their perilous living conditions. Despite the growth of the CNT and the existence of some rural pockets of anarchist and communist activism, the FNTT's hegemony among Almeria's impoverished agricultural labourers was manifest during the Republican peacetime years.⁴⁸⁷

Between 1931 and 1936, many of the province's agricultural workers experienced the same cycle of hope, disappointment and anger regarding the limitations of labour and agrarian reform that was seen throughout the rural south. Demonstrations and strikes calling for land redistribution, for the application of republican laws governing wages and working hours, and for the introduction of public works projects to ease the province's chronic unemployment accelerated across the peacetime Republican period.⁴⁸⁸ Landowners' obstruction of legislation on a local level, the security forces' violent defence of these landowners' interests, and then the gradual overturning of reform by the conservative government which came to power in 1933, provoked mounting desperation among workers and a radicalisation of FNTT rank and file members. Pockets of Almeria's rural workforce joined the national harvest strike called

⁴⁸⁷ Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina*, pp.179-231; Cazorla Sánchez, *Desarrollo*, pp.26-31; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp. 57-59; Paul Preston, 'The Agrarian War in the South', in *War and Revolution*, p.163, 175-6. By June 1932, the FNTT had 10,920 affiliates in Almeria. Macarro Vera, *Socialismo*, p.49.

⁴⁸⁸ *La Vanguardia*, 15/01/1933; AHN, Interior A, Legajo 60/21 (Almería); Antonio M. Calero, *Movimientos Sociales en Andalucía: 1820-1936* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1987), pp.84-94. Macarro Vera, *Socialismo*, pp.44-50,102, 117,294,328,353.

by the FNTT in June 1934, downing tools in areas of traditional socialist strength like Pechina, Huércal and Gádor.⁴⁸⁹

Workers often staged strikes and protests to coincide with religious festivals, a practice which demonstrated the extent to which they associated the Church with the conservative elites that stood in the way of their hopes of improving their living and working conditions. In the tiny locality of Benitalga, for example, FNTT militants chose the village's patron saint's feast day in March 1933 to demonstrate against the conservative town council's opposition to the union's demands.⁴⁹⁰ Anticlerical collective action marked rural Almeria deeply between 1931 and 1936. As we saw in chapter two, the Republic's legislative attempts to limit the Church's public presence played out intensely on a local level in many of the province's towns and villages. Anticlerical workers, frustrated by the combined ineffectiveness of labour, land, and secularising reform, confronted Catholicism's politicised public rituals - especially those related to rites of passage - with a repertoire of demonstration, counter-ritual, sabotage and incendiarism.⁴⁹¹

In the province of Madrid, the socialist UGT had also taken the lead in worker organisation from the late 1880s. Although the syndicate traditionally drew its strength from skilled urban workers, it had also made significant inroads among agricultural labourers. As in Almeria, FNTT membership grew rapidly after April 1931 in the Madrid countryside; by June 1932, the organisation had 11,020 members and societies in seventy-nine of the province's *pueblos*. Rural Madrid experienced high levels of collective action during the pre-war Republican years - only ten other Spanish provinces lived through greater numbers of agricultural strikes and protests during the period. Newly affiliated workers, who had had extremely high expectations and assumed that union membership would bring a certain and rapid material improvement to their lives, found themselves instead facing a worsening economic crisis with falling living standards, unemployment and increasingly intransigent employers. They took action to

⁴⁸⁹ Antonio López Castillo, *El Republicanismo del centro: El Partido Republicano Radical de Almería durante la Segunda República: 1931-1936* (Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 2006), pp.97-99; Pérez Montoya, *Las derechas almerienses*, pp.20-21.

⁴⁹⁰ *El Debate*, 26/03/1933; Malefakis, *Peasant Revolution*, p.309.

⁴⁹¹ AHN, Interior A, Legajo 16/18 (Almería); AHN, CG legajo 1164-1, Almería, exp. 2/478; CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508; ASV, *Informe del obispo de Almería a Tedescini* (23/03/1936); *La Vanguardia*, 31/03/1933; Macarro Vera, *Socialismo*, p.412.

call for increased salaries, the fulfilment of the *bases de trabajo* (agreements between landowners and workers on wages and conditions), and the application of republican social and labour legislation.⁴⁹²

Outbursts of anticlerical conflict, such as clashes during religious processions, attempts by anticlericals to stop local Catholics attending mass, and the destruction of religious buildings and symbols became an ever-present feature of rural life in Madrid between 1931 and 1936, although the collective action increased in scale and frequency after the Popular Front election victory in February 1936.⁴⁹³ This conflictive atmosphere was particularly fraught in pueblos on the edge of the capital like Vallecas, where the bulk of the population comprised unskilled, poorly paid, often illiterate immigrant workers, the majority of whom were fiercely anticlerical. These workers - many of whom travelled daily to the city to work or to seek employment - joined socialist and anarchist trade unions in large numbers after 1931. In localities like Vallecas and Villaverde, even before July 1936, these people had developed a wide repertoire of grassroots anticlerical action which ranged from verbally intimidating priests to adorning religious buildings with graffiti, stoning and burning churches, and destroying parish archives.⁴⁹⁴

It is clear, then, that by July 1936 anticlerical sentiment and leftwing political mobilisation were tightly bound together in the rural worlds of this study's two sample regions. As in the urban world, political activism brought workers into contact with other militants who shared anticlerical attitudes forged through everyday experience, propelling them into a cultural world underscored by anticlerical ideas. The battle to control public spaces waged against Catholic forces in both provinces between 1931 and 1936 then provoked a hardening and radicalisation of these attitudes. In a situation where socialism was by far the dominant form of worker organisation in Madrid and Almeria, it is unsurprising that those who belonged to the FNTT or PSOE at the time of the coup make up the largest percentage of rural anticlerical protagonists in both

⁴⁹² Shubert, *Social History*, pp.129-35; Bizcarrondo, *Historia de la UGT*, pp.17-25; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.150-71; Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.6-7, 26-27, 406-7.

⁴⁹³ CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 152, legajo 1508; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6: *Pueblos: Rozas del Puerto Real, Perales de Tajuña, Tielmes, Torrelaguna*.

⁴⁹⁴ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6: *Pueblos: Vallecas, Villaverde, Las Rozas de Madrid*; AHN, ATM, Legajo 1/1, Sumario 279/34, *Sumario por incendio en la Iglesia Parroquial de Villaverde*; Souto Kustrín, *Madrid*, pp.2-9.

provinces: fifty percent in Almeria and seventy-one percent in Madrid. An extremely small proportion of these activists traced their UGT membership back to the 1920s or 1910s, but the majority had joined the FNTT after 1931 in response to the new political opportunities offered by the coming of the Republic. If we analyse the cases where the precise date of affiliation is known, it is clear the majority of these post-1931 militants joined the FNTT in the spring of 1936, as part of the vast wave of expectation and grassroots mobilisation sparked by the Popular Front election victory. These statistics thus clearly display the extent to which politics and political mobilisation had penetrated large sections of the rural world by 1936.⁴⁹⁵

Anarchist militants, as one might expect in two provinces where the CNT-FAI enjoyed scarce influence before July 1936, make up just three and two percent of Madrid's and Almeria's respective samples. These figures obviously challenge the idea, voiced most vociferously by Gerald Brenan but reproduced by innumerable historians, that anarchist activists uniformly took the lead role in anticlerical violence across the Republican zone.⁴⁹⁶ Regions of great anarchist strength like Valencia, Catalonia and Aragon experienced extremely high levels of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm after July 1936, and historians have demonstrated that the widespread participation of CNT-FAI members in that violence is beyond doubt.⁴⁹⁷ Historians have also noted that the ferociously anticlerical anarchist press and certain anarchist leaders, drawing on a long tradition of anarchist anti-theistic and anticlerical discourse, applauded the 'purification with fire' of the Church and called openly for people to take 'justice' against the clergy into their own hands during the summer of 1936.⁴⁹⁸ However, this evidence does not change the fact that areas of traditional socialist strength, including this study's two sample provinces, were also transformed into sites of church burning and mass clerical death after 17-18 July 1936. In Madrid and Almeria, local people demonstrated with their actions that they rejected the Church just as fiercely as their Catalan or Valencian

⁴⁹⁵ On this upsurge, see Cruz, 'Júbilo, enfrentamiento y violencia', pp.121-37.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Without going far wrong one may say that all the churches recently burned in Spain were burned by anarchists and that most of the priests were killed by them.' Brenan, *Labyrinth*, p.189.

⁴⁹⁷ Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.307-354; On anticlerical violence and iconoclasm in Catalonia, see Josep Maria Solé i Sabaté and Joan Villarroja i Font, *La repressió a la retaguarda de Catalunya, 1936 – 1939* (Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1989); Josep M. Martí i Bonet, *El martiri dels temples a la diòcesi de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Arxiu Diocesà de Barcelona, 2008).

⁴⁹⁸ *Solidaridad Obrera*, 06/08/1936, 15/09/1936 in Casanova, 'Rebelión y revolución', p.155-56 and *Iglesia de Franco*, p.183; *CNT*, 30/07/1936 in Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.308-9, 315, 359-60; Casanova, *Anarchism*, pp.45-46. On intellectual anarchist anticlericalism, see Álvarez Junco, *Anarquismo*, pp.29-36, 204-14.

anarchist counterparts. Furthermore, both Toledo and Ciudad Real, where the UGT-FNNT was also the dominant form of worker organisation, lost higher proportions of their clergy than either Barcelona or Valencia.⁴⁹⁹

Alongside this large proportion of socialists, members of *Izquierda Republicana*, Manuel Azaña's bourgeois republican political party – and even one representative of Diego Martínez Barrios' *Union Republicana* party - are also present in the sample, comprising four percent in Madrid and seven percent in Almeria. These moderate republicans, whose parties shared a political culture infused with anticlerical ideas, were generally employed in professions associated with the 'rural mesocracy'. Their anticlerical participation, though not statistically overwhelming, once again highlights the danger of defining anticlerical violence as a phenomenon solely associated with proletarian political forces.⁵⁰⁰ Indeed, the cross-political universality of anticlerical violence after July 1936 seems to indicate that, as José Luis Ledesma has already suggested, historians must search for the significance of and reasons for the violence of 1936 'somewhere more meaningful than [in] the acronyms printed upon [the protagonists'] political or union membership cards'.⁵⁰¹

As chapter one has shown, shared daily experience of the Church forged a collective anticlerical identity which cut across ideological demarcation lines. The chapter also indicated that vehement anticlerical discourse was by no means confined to the anarchist movement - the political cultures of socialists and republicans were similarly impregnated with anticlericalism. Within this frame of shared anticlerical attitudes, the radically new political and social context of the summer of 1936 is absolutely crucial to explaining anticlerical actors' behaviour. The military coup exacted a tremendous centrifugal force on all pre-existing political organisations, provoking extreme social dislocation and political fragmentation across the Republican zone. As new, cross-political bodies like local committees and militia patrols rapidly articulated themselves in the rural world, actors from across the leftwing and republican political spectrum scrambled to find a place in the new order. In a situation where new power structures

⁴⁹⁹ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*; Vincent, 'Keys', p.76; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, pp.32-34; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.241-44; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.354.

⁵⁰⁰ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 224/2088 Luis Martínez Merlos; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/75; AHPA, JJEE, TP Expediente: José Rodríguez González.

⁵⁰¹ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.243-44.

were being forged from below, it is logical that economically comfortable and politically moderate members of bourgeois republican organisations should seek to demonstrate publicly their revolutionary anticlerical credentials, thus securing their places on the new organs of revolutionary power.

In exploring this question of social construction, the protagonism of rural anticlerical actors with no history of political activism is crucial. Those unaffiliated to any union or political party in July 1936 made up seventeen percent of the rural protagonists in Madrid and thirty-six percent in Almeria. While this is a reflection of Almeria as a more ruralised, comparatively more isolated society than Madrid, it also displays that anticlerical violence cannot be explained merely by connecting its protagonists to pre-1936 political organisations. For many non-politicised members of rural communities, participation in iconoclastic acts at the very beginning of the conflict was a means of becoming involved in the creation of new power structures. For these actors – many who are described by their neighbours as having had ‘leftist’ family members, friends or ‘sympathies’ before July 1936 – collaboration with new local powers provided a sudden opportunity both to participate in the revolutionary excitement of the moment, and to become ‘important’ within the community.⁵⁰² Manuel Roda Vicente, the fifteen-year-old bakery assistant who participated in the destruction of Berja’s religious stages, for example, was immediately recruited by the town’s revolutionary committee to serve as an armed guard.⁵⁰³

Finally, it is worth noting that the inward-looking, extremely close-knit nature of rural social relations meant that for those who had few ideological sympathies either for the Republican regime or the unfolding revolution, participation in symbolic iconoclastic acts was a potential route to protection and safety. In both provinces, the sample contains a smattering of people described as being ‘supporters of the Church’, ‘from rightist parties’ and ‘from rightist families’ whose participation in church burning almost certainly corresponded to a desire to invent quickly a new ‘revolutionary’ identity. As the revolution unfolded, these actors feigned anticlericalism in order to

⁵⁰² ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 20,424/109,267; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 2430/111111, Ángel Altares Velilla.

⁵⁰³ AHPA, JJEE, TRP, Expedientes: Manuel Roda Vicente.

deflect attention from themselves in localities where all the inhabitants had an intimate knowledge of the political and religious allegiances of their neighbours.⁵⁰⁴

ii) The city

The networks of micro-powers being woven in Spain's cities after the coup were naturally far more complex than the power structures developing within small towns and villages. Nevertheless, the distribution of political affiliation among anticlerical protagonists in the urban world shares certain similarities with the rural picture outlined above. In the city of Almeria, as in the countryside of the province, the UGT had been the predominant worker force since the turn of the century. By April 1931, anarchist influence in the capital was extremely scarce. The anarchist movement did grow between 1931 and 1936, but its support was limited to the city's dock workers and to certain sectors of the railway industry. The communist party (PCE), which derived its comparatively miniscule support from the capital's bakers' and waiters' unions, significantly increased both its profile and membership during the post-February 1936 Popular Front period. Both these political forces, however, remained marginal before July 1936, dwarfed by the UGT's proletarian hegemony.⁵⁰⁵

The huge numbers of urban workers who flocked to join trade unions in Almeria from April 1931 hoped thereby to improve their abysmal living and working conditions and thus achieve some protection from the painful effects of the economic crisis. As employers tried to combat losses by firing workers and ignoring republican labour legislation, relations with their workers became more and more conflictive in the city. In a process which was occurring across Spain, politicised, frustrated and increasingly militant workers used strike action and public protest to defend their interests and to focus political attention on their demands. The revolutionary general strike of October 1934, which was put down with considerable violence by Almeria's security forces, was

⁵⁰⁴ Quotes from AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, Causa núm. 62,615; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 44/19.094, Antonio Gaitán Suarez y Otros; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Torrejón de Ardoz*.

⁵⁰⁵ Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp.48-59, 82-86; Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina*, pp.179-231.

spearheaded by the city's bakers and dock workers, and supported by unionised workers employed in workshops, small factories and electricity companies.⁵⁰⁶

In urban Almeria, frustration generated among workers by unemployment and employer intransigence mixed explosively with exasperation provoked by the Church's ongoing – and indeed growing – influence and public presence. The attack on a church-run borstal by residents of the Barrio Alto workers' district in May 1931; the disruptions which surrounded religious acts conducted on the Hill of San Cristóbal in 1932; the thwarted attempt by anarchist activists to burn two convents and a religious school in December 1933; the arson attack waged upon the church and rectory of the fishermen's neighbourhood of El Alquián following the February 1936 elections: incidents like these indicate that between 1931 and 1936, Almeria's urban anticlerical workers were engaged in a concerted struggle to wrest dominance of the built environment away from Catholic forces. Almeria may not have been a key national flashpoint of anticlerical mobilisation or an epicentre of republican change, but the city – like so many Spanish urban nuclei – was gripped by the conflict between those set upon defending the Church and those striving to secularise society on a grassroots level.⁵⁰⁷

Madrid, on the other hand, as the driving nucleus of the rapid political changes underway in the 1930s, was a key centre of both anticlerical and general worker mobilisation. As in Almeria, the UGT had had virtually monopolised Madrid's unions from the turn of the century, deriving its strength from skilled secondary sector workers (such as craftsmen, printers and skilled industrial workers). However, changes in the building industry which took hold in the 1920s saw construction companies hiring ever greater numbers of immigrant workers. For these unprotected, unskilled labourers, the UGT's disciplined approach to industrial relations – which relied on state arbitration and vested sole power to call strikes in the union executive – proved inadequate. The UGT did grow enormously in Madrid between 1931 and 1936, but the newly legalised

⁵⁰⁶ *La Vanguardia*, 18/07/1931, 02/06/1932, 25/12/1932, 15/01/1933; Montoya, *Las derechas almerienses*, pp.19-21; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, p.59; López Castillo, *El Republicanismo del centro*, pp. 97-99.

⁵⁰⁷ AHN, Interior A, Legajo 16/18, 60/21(Almería); AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/217, 4/402; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 762/76, Guillermo García Alonso, Consejo de Guerra 1236/12.382, José Torres Fuentes; *La Vanguardia*, 14/05/1931, 25/05/1932, 01/01/1934; Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze y Muñoz, *Católicos, monárquicos y fascistas en Almería durante la Segunda República* (Universidad de Almería, 1998), p.67 and *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, p.88; Macarro Vera, *Socialismo*, p.244.

CNT, whose decentralised, flexible and dynamic approach to industrial action seemed far more logical to many of these workers, started to become a key industrial player. By 1936, the organisation had almost tripled in size, and its mobilising capacity was impressive. As workers took industrial action to defend their rights in the workplace, the CNT popularised a new repertoire of mobilisation structured around mass strikes and assemblies. The CNT's swift growth, coupled with anger provoked by the overturning of labour reform by the conservative government elected in 1933, gave rise to the unmistakable radicalisation of UGT activists and leaders in the capital.⁵⁰⁸

This large-scale labour mobilisation functioned to reconstruct the meanings of public spaces which had previously been dominated by the Church. Madrid was also an enormously significant centre of explicit grassroots anticlerical collective action between 1931 and 1936. Although the dramatic and intensely symbolic church burnings of May 1931 have received the greatest attention from historians, smaller-scale, grassroots anticlerical incidents characterised the pre-war Republican years in the capital. These outbursts were especially common in the city's poorest districts, where workers' fury over the Church's undiminished power and presence was channelled into acts like the sabotage of religious processions, the destruction of religious landmarks and statues, and attempts to burn convents, churches and religious schools.⁵⁰⁹ These incidents became more widespread in the capital after February 1936, as urban workers driven by a mixture of expectation generated by the Popular Front victory and fear produced by the prospect of a church-backed fascist takeover took the secularization of society into their own hands on an unprecedented scale.⁵¹⁰

Given the socialist predominance in both capitals, and the absolute connection between worker mobilisation and anticlerical collective action, it is perhaps predictable that activists already affiliated to the PSOE or the UGT in July 1936 outnumber their anarchist and communist counterparts in this study's anticlerical sample. In Madrid, socialist militants comprise twenty-five percent, compared with the nine percent

⁵⁰⁸ Shubert, *Social History*, pp.128-30; Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, pp.151-90, 258-65; Sánchez Pérez, 'La primavera de 1936', pp.112-19.

⁵⁰⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/267; NA: FO371/15773: Grahame to FO, 07/07/1931; AHN, ATM: Legajo 1/36: sumario 156/934, *Atentado en un convento de religiosas*, sumario 149/934: *Incendio en un convento de religiosas*.

⁵¹⁰ Hernández Figueiredo, *Patrimonio religioso*, pp.284-90; NA: FO371/20520, Chilton to FO, 11/03/1936; *The Times*, 03/12/1936.

represented by CNT members and the eight percent composed of communist activists. In Almeria, socialist affiliates make up thirty-three percent; CNT-FAI and PCE activists, meanwhile, constitute twenty-eight and six percent respectively. As in the countryside, *Izquierda Republicana* members also represent a noteworthy proportion: eight percent in Madrid and eleven percent in Almeria. Most of these protagonists participated in church burnings and detentions and killings of priests as members of newly formed, cross-political militia groups and committees. The socially diverse group which established its headquarters and *checa* in Madrid's Church of El Carmen, for example, was made up of a heterogeneous mixture of communists, members of the JSU (the recently amalgamated socialist and communist youth organisation), anarchist sympathisers, members of the IR youth organisation, and non-affiliated protagonists.⁵¹¹

The notable anticlerical protagonism of anarchist militants in Almeria, a city where the anarchist movement lacked influence before July 1936, requires some elucidation. The key new power constituted in the city immediately after the coup was the Central Antifascist Committee. Formed on either the 22 or 23 July and comprised of socialist, communist and anarchist representatives, it assumed responsibility for the organisation of the war effort and the home front. This socialist-dominated committee immediately established the Delegation of Prisoners and Public Order, placing it in the hands of FAI representative Juan del Águila Aguilera. The Delegation became Almeria's key agent of anticlerical violence: the majority of the one hundred and five religious personnel who suffered extrajudicial execution in the province perished in *sacas* (a term meaning the removal of prisoners from jail and their collective killing) orchestrated by the organisation between mid August and late September 1936.⁵¹² The implication of the Delegation's FAI component and its anarchist collaborators – which included the three del Águila Aguilera brothers and a number of their fellow *faístas* – in these killings is beyond doubt. However, although the authors of the executions made strenuous efforts to hide their acts from public view, it is inconceivable that members of the cross-party

⁵¹¹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/189, 9/28, legajo 1530-2, exps. 10/1-10/43; Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramón Caballero Tato; *ABC*, 01/08/1936.

⁵¹² ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera, Consejo de Guerra 176/2169, Francisco Camacho Enríquez y Otros; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almeria, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/591- 2/501, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/3; Quirosa, 'Anticlericalismo en Almería', pp.192-95 and *Almería 1936-1937*, pp. 86-100 and *Represión en la retaguardia republicana. Almería 1936-1939*; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 19.340/39, Cayetano Martínez Artés in Eusebio Rodríguez Padilla, 'Actuación política, procesamiento y muerte de Cayetano Martínez Artés', *El Eco de Alhama*, No. 21 (July 2006); Aguilera Gómez, *La historia silenciada*, pp.125-27.

Central Committee were unaware that they were occurring. Furthermore, details of the exact membership of this shadowy delegation remain elusive. Given the cross-political character of Almeria's newly constructed powers, it seems unlikely that anarchist activists were the sole authors of the executions. They were, however, the ones who were captured and tried by court martial for the acts.⁵¹³

Above all, the actions of the Delegation of Prisoners and Public Order in Almeria demonstrate how the extreme fragmentation of power in Spain's cities enabled previously powerless groups and individuals to transform entirely their position and status. In Madrid, the expanding network of overlapping micro-powers was far larger than in Almeria, and far too unwieldy for any one delegation or committee to achieve anything approaching a monopoly on anticlerical violence. However, as in Almeria, newly articulated anarchist-dominated bodies rapidly achieved prestige and power. In Madrid, the anarchist movement, despite its mushrooming membership and ever-growing mobilising power, had remained a secondary force to the UGT between 1931 and 1936. Now, new anarchist patrols, militia groups and *checas* assumed an active role in the 'cleansing' of the home front, using anticlerical and other forms of revolutionary violence as a means of opening spaces for themselves in the new revolutionary order. The most infamous example of this violent space creation was the CNT-run *checa* which operated out of the Cinema Europa on the Calle de Bravo Murillo. Run by the infamous anarchist ex-convict Felipe Sandoval, its militiamen unleashed a formidable wave of extrajudicial assassinations during the conflict's first few months. A significant proportion of the people that they killed, according to testimony given by the victims' family members before the *Causa General*, were religious personnel.⁵¹⁴

Once again, however, the coup's centrifugal force operating upon Madrid's existing political organisations, and the obvious political diversity of the anticlerical protagonists

⁵¹³ ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 176/2169, Francisco Camacho Enríquez y Otros; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 765/385, Domingo Segura Moreno; Juan Ruiz-Peinado Vallejo, *Cuando la muerte no quiere* (México: La Impresora Azteca, 1967), pp. 224-44; Cazorla Sánchez, *Desarrollo*, pp.32-33; On the trial of the del Águila Aguilera brothers and 'responsibilities', see Óscar Rodríguez Barreira, *Miserias del Poder* (Valencia: PUV, 2011, forthcoming).

⁵¹⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp , 3/228, legajo 1530: exps. 1/201-255, 15/7-12; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.367, 375-78, 383-84; Javier Cervera Gil, *Madrid en guerra. La ciudad clandestina 1936-1939* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998), pp.60-68; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, p. 469.

contained within the perpetrator sample, caution against interpreting ideological affiliation too statically in regard of anticlerical motivation.⁵¹⁵ The reports of the *Causa General* suggest that one *checa* was involved in far more anticlerical killings than any other: the *Comité Provincial de Investigación Pública*. Known popularly as the *Checa de Fomento*, it initially operated out of the *Circulo de Bellas Artes* on the Calle de Alcalá, later moving to the Calle de Fomento. During the conflict's first months, its militias routinely detained priests and monks, executing them and abandoning their bodies on parkland or at roadsides. The semi-official *checa* was established on the initiative of Director General of Security Manuel Muñoz on 4 August 1936. Comprised of thirty representatives of the Madrid's leftwing political parties and trade unions, its creation constituted an attempt to regain state control of the fragmented forces of coercion. While it is true that anarchist representatives enjoyed great *de facto* power within the CPIP, the organisation itself was a chaotic amalgamation of the fragmented remnants of state power, and members of all the city's Popular Front parties and unions. In Madrid's complex 'seething hotbed of powers', new, cross-political organs like the CPIP, the *checa* of the Church of El Carmen, and innumerable others, became key forces. These heterogeneous organs, which had very little in common with pre-existing political structures, render it difficult, and indeed misleading, to talk of 'anarchist', 'socialist' or any other 'brand' of violence – at least in the regions addressed by this study.⁵¹⁶

This argument becomes especially pertinent if one considers that the largest group of protagonists in the Madrid sample, forty-two percent, are people who had no previous experience of political activism. In urban Almeria, non-affiliated perpetrators make up twenty-two percent of the sample. As in the rural world, these agents used anticlerical violence to demonstrate their adhesion to the revolutionary events underway and to secure places on new organs of power. Iconoclasm and anticlericalism served as a springboard into political activism: these previously apolitical actors usually went on to join the UGT, the CNT-FAI, the JSU or the PCE. The latter force would achieve mass

⁵¹⁵ Graham, *Republic*, p. 87.

⁵¹⁶ ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/7, *Sacerdotes Mártires*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/13, 2/15, 2/31, 2/33, 2/41, 2/45, 2/98, 2/139, 2/220, 2/228, 2/244, 2/253, 2/255, 2/284, 2/285, 3/82, 3/88, 3/306; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.374-75; Cervera Gil, *Madrid en Guerra*, p.62; Gabriele Ranzato, *El eclipse de la democracia: la guerra civil española y sus orígenes, 1931-1939* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2006), p.391; Alfaya, *Río de fuego*, p.74; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.451-69; Albertí, *La Iglesia en llamas*, pp. 358-60; Ledesma, 'Santa ira popular', p.179.

political mobilisation across class boundaries from the summer of 1936 onwards, becoming the largest and most dynamic political force on Republican territory.⁵¹⁷ The huge number of non-affiliated protagonists in Madrid – almost twice as many as in Almeria – indicates a direct correlation between the size of a conurbation and the opportunities for ‘social mobility’ open to protagonists after 17-18 July 1936. Madrid, an enormous, churning sea of new powers, offered greater anonymity and more abundant opportunities than either urban Almeria, or than the rural ambits of both provinces.⁵¹⁸

Protagonists who had been affiliated to middle class republican parties before July 1936 also took advantage of anonymity and political opportunities in both cities to link themselves to new revolutionary powers, and subsequently to affiliate themselves to proletarian political forces like the CNT.⁵¹⁹ The chaotic new situation in metropolitan Spain also allowed actors with rightist political pasts to conceal their histories and demonstrate their adhesion to the revolution. In the *Colonia Popular Madrileña*, for example, a planned workers’ neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city, a large crowd of local people made a public bonfire of the images and statues of the local chapel on 20 July 1936. One well-known local Falangist, Jaime de la Osa, was seen by his neighbours participating in the iconoclasm.⁵²⁰ Elsewhere in Madrid, fifty-six-year-old dentist Martín Dionisio San Miguel, who had belonged to the Falange since 1933, quickly realised that his safety was gravely threatened by revolutionary events. He changed his name to the distinctly more proletarian Martín Llanos and offered his services to the *Circulo Socialista* of the city’s Latina-Inclusa district. As the group’s chauffeur, he collaborated in a multitude of anticlerical acts which ranged from the destruction of the large cross which stood in the centric *Puerta Cerrada* plaza, to the ransacking of various religious buildings (including Madrid’s Episcopal palace), to detentions of religious personnel.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/189, 9/28, legajo 1530-2, exps. 10/1-10/43; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 176/2169, Francisco Camacho Enríquez (José Hernández Barroso); Graham, *Republic*, p.183.

⁵¹⁸ Delgado, *Luces iconoclastas*, pp. 50-51.

⁵¹⁹ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 19012/430 Enrique Juan Escobar Benavente; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 305/1210, Manuel Palenzuela Cuerva; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, Exp. 3/290.

⁵²⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/3.

⁵²¹ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, causa núm. 19,442/22,267; AHN, CG, legajo 1532, exp. 37/31-34, legajo 1354, exp. 1/278, legajo 1530, exp. 1/13, 1/14; CDMH, PS-MADRID,916,16; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 2736/10601-62920, Hilario de la Cruz Martin.

Age

i) The rural world

Another group which used anticlerical acts to increase the political spaces available to them were young people. The story of Manuel Roda Vicente, the fifteen-year-old who took a lead role in iconoclasm in Berja, shows that in the rural world, anticlerical protagonism frequently allowed the very young to immerse themselves in the political life of the community. In a similar scenario, Emilio Gómez Camacho, who was just thirteen in July 1936, collaborated enthusiastically in anticlerical destruction in his hometown of Gádor (Almeria), flinging the church's images into the street to be burned and parading through the town in priests' robes. His audacious iconoclasm earned him the confidence of the leaders of the new committee. These two extremely young anticlerical actors are not exceptions: people under the age of twenty comprise eighteen percent of the rural sample in Madrid and ten percent in Almeria. Those between twenty-one and twenty-two constitute thirty-three percent of the sampled rural protagonists in Madrid and thirty-four percent in Almeria. This means that people under thirty account for over fifty percent of each sample.⁵²²

For many of these young people, participation in revolutionary collective action formed the spectacular starting blocks of their political militancy. Non-affiliated youngsters - undoubtedly spurred on by new local leaders and militiamen who already belonged to political organisations - went on to join the FNTT, the CNT, the JSU or the PCE. In Huebro (Almeria), the three García Gil brothers, Antonio, Manuel and José - who were all aged between twenty-three and thirty - participated in the sacking of the parish church and the burning of its images on 20 July 1936. The brothers, not one of whom had been politically active before the coup, became 'militiamen at the service of the committee'. They all joined the FNTT in the weeks which followed.⁵²³ As the following chapter will demonstrate, women experienced this 'catapulting' particularly intensely.

⁵²² ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros.

⁵²³ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 44/19.094, Antonio Gaitán Suarez y Otros. For further examples see ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 20,424/109,267. For similar events, see also AMM, Consejo de Guerra 2430/111111, Ángel Altares Velilla, Consejo de Guerra 84/53799 Celestino Arias Fernández, Florentino González Alonso, Pablo García Díaz, Agustín Ortega García, Desiderio Consentini García, Lucio Díaz Alonso.

The majority of these youthful protagonists, however – and especially those drawn from the twenty to twenty-nine age category – already had experience of political militancy by July 1936. These politically active youths would have been invested with a politicised anticlerical awareness which caused them to identify the Church clearly as an ideological opponent. Some of them traced their activism back to 1931, to the beginning of the period of widespread youth mobilisation ushered in by the Republic. The majority, however, had mobilised politically during the upsurge in frenetic grassroots political activity sparked by the Popular Front election victory. These youthful actors, who had joined the FNTT and the JSU or (in far lower numbers) the CNT and its youth wing in the spring of 1936, were a crucial force in Madrid and Almería's post-July 1936 rural anticlerical collective action.⁵²⁴

Yet this action was by no means an exclusively youth-driven phenomenon. The age distribution of the remainder of the rural protagonists in both provinces reveals a fairly even split between actors aged between thirty and thirty-nine, between forty and forty-nine, and those over fifty. Above all, this distribution reveals the extent to which family and neighbourly ties – which were extremely strong in small rural communities and which traversed generational divisions – contributed to people's participation in anticlerical activity. Examples abound of people taking part in anticlerical acts alongside their siblings, parents and other family members.⁵²⁵ José Gómez Oyonarte, for example, a nineteen-year-old JSU member who destroyed religious images in Gádor after the coup, was joined by his fifty-two-year-old mother in the iconoclastic outburst which left the parish church 'devastated'. Two of the assassins of the priest of the village of Corpa (Madrid) - who shot their victim after discovering him hiding in some fields where they had been reaping - were father and son.⁵²⁶ It is possible that

⁵²⁴ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 708/30770, Martín Soler Masegosa; AHPA, JJEE, TRP, Expedientes: José García Martínez.

⁵²⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, causa núm.5260/59,123/70,204; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 29661/4365, Claudio Caballero de Abajo; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 630/29581-29605-29633-29677-29679-10193, Dolores Tieso Serrano, Carmen Caballero de Abajo, Lucía Pérez Contreras, Juliana Sanz Rubio, Victoria Contreras Castro, Guillermina de Pablo.

⁵²⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 20,424/109,267; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 2430/111111, Ángel Altares Vellilla; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros; 'Devastation' in Luis Carlos Navarro Pérez, 'Carlos Ibarra Pérez, Secretario Provincial de la Federación Española de Trabajadores de la Tierra de Almería y Alcalde de Gádor (Almería)', in José Luis Casas Sánchez and Francisco Durán Alcalá, *II congreso sobre el republicanismo en la historia*

anticlerical violence crossed age boundaries precisely because it contained elements of both ‘traditional’ collective community action and political modalities of protest. Apolitical, middle-aged mother and politically mobilised and educated son may have explained their negative conceptions of the Church in different ways, but anticlericalism – and the modalities which it assumed when demonstrated violently - were familiar to both.

ii) The city

Urban Madrid, which had been one of the key nuclei of youth mobilisation during the pre-war Republican years, contained a significant force of politically mobilised young people who eagerly involved themselves in revolutionary collective action during the conflict’s first months.⁵²⁷ Not only were eight percent of the sample’s anticlerical protagonists already affiliated to the JSU in July 1936, thirty-three percent of them were under the age of twenty, and thirty-nine percent were aged between twenty and twenty-nine. Although the real explosion in youth mobilisation would take place from July 1936 onwards in response to the unique circumstances and opportunities of the civil war, these statistics clearly reveal that significant sectors of Madrid’s young people were both strongly politicised and profoundly anticlerical before the war. It is also clear that previously powerless young people were able to play a key part in anticlerical acts due to the capital’s tremendous political fragmentation, and the opportunities this offered to both political activists and the non-affiliated to establish their own micro-powers. The average age of the ‘Militias of the Church of El Carmen’, for example, who spontaneously formed their group and established their headquarters at the end of July 1936, was just twenty-seven.⁵²⁸

Young people also played a significant role in anticlerical violence in urban Almeria - although their participation was by no means as dramatic as it was in Madrid. Youthful sectors had also mobilised politically in the provincial capital between 1931 and 1936. Although the sample has not uncovered any JSU activists, several members

de España: Historia y Biografía (Priego de Córdoba: Patronato Niceto Alcalá-Zamora y Torres, 2003), p.797(n).

⁵²⁷ On this mobilisation, see Eduardo González Calleja and Sandra Souto Kustrín, ‘De la dictadura a la República: orígenes y auge de los movimientos juveniles en España’, *Hispania*, 225 (2007), p.87.

⁵²⁸ This is an average of the ages of the thirteen members whose ages are known. AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/189, 9/28, legajo 1530-2, exps. 10/1-10/43; Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramón Caballero Tato.

of the *Juventudes Libertarias* (JLL, the anarchist youth organisation) are present. People under the age of thirty represent a far from negligible thirty-eight percent of the sample. This relative numerical inferiority in comparison to Madrid can be attributed to the fact that coercive and logistic control in the city after July 1936 was largely, if not exclusively, concentrated in the Central Antifascist Committee and the Delegation of Public Order and Prisoners. The members of these bodies who have been identified by the study normally had some experience of union activism, and occasionally leadership; most of them fell within the thirty to thirty-nine age bracket. In Almeria, people in this age band make up fifty percent, whereas in Madrid they represent only eleven. In a conurbation which was seventeen times smaller than Madrid, the level of social and political fragmentation provoked by the coup was much lower than in the Spanish capital, something which reduced young peoples' possibilities of participating in the forging of new power structures.⁵²⁹

Finally, protagonists over the age of forty form a significant proportion of both samples: twelve percent in Almeria and seventeen percent in Madrid. These urban age distributions are more weighted towards youthful sectors than those of the rural sample, but they still indicate that anticlerical violence in cities in the summer of 1936 – as in the rural world - was a cross-generational phenomenon. The seventeen-year old anarchist confectionary shop worker and self proclaimed 'man without religion' Francisco del Águila Aguilera, who collaborated in the burning Almeria's *Convento de las Claras* and allegedly in the assassinations of several religious personnel; the forty-year-old painter Alejandro Estébanez Quintana, who took part in sacrophobic destruction in Madrid's Iglesia del Carmen; the fifty-one-year-old UGT-affiliated casual day labourer and vegetable stall owner José Rosa Barrau' who was seen by his neighbours collaborating in the destruction of Almeria's Church of Santiago: all of these people participated in acts which were a deeply politicised tool of revolutionary social transformation unique to the moment, but which were also underscored by long-existent, 'traditional' anticlerical attitudes and repertoires of collective action. Anticlericalism's status as a phenomenon in flux, whose meanings were being

⁵²⁹ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 765/385, Domingo Segura Moreno; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 814/336 Juan Garrido Almecija.

rearticulated and redefined constantly, goes a long way towards explaining this diversity of ages.⁵³⁰

The anticlerical protagonists who populate the pages of this chapter constitute a small, regionally-based sample. A profound examination of the social, professional and political composition of agents of anticlerical and iconoclastic acts in all Republican regions lies beyond the scope of the study. However, Madrid's and Almeria's anticlerical perpetrators have provided some surprising results, and have indicated important avenues for further study. The prevalent image of the young, male, politically affiliated, working class anticlerical protagonist has not been contradicted: the results of the sample prove that the violence and iconoclasm was profoundly political and inescapably intertwined with class conflict and leftwing political activism. However, the prevalent image has been nuanced significantly – at least in the study's two sample provinces. The participation of members of rural and urban middling sectors, who were also often affiliated to bourgeois republican political parties, proves – at least on a regional level - José Luis Ledesma's assertion that: 'once again in history, the revolution had origins other than the mere "revolt of the stomach" or the rebellion of the most oppressed.'⁵³¹

The anticlerical protagonism of people from across the Popular Front political spectrum – as well as those with no history of political activism – obliges us to re-evaluate old myths surrounding 'anarchist violence'. More suggestively, it should also require historians to examine anticlerical violence after July 1936 as a phenomenon which was underscored by widely shared perceptions and experiences of the Church, and which unfolded in the way it did due to the extreme social and political fragmentation which the coup provoked on Republican territory. As existing political organisations and social and political structures were violently thrown into flux by the coup, a diverse selection of actors – young and old; anarchist, republican and socialist; politicised and apolitical – seized upon anticlerical violence as a tool with which to contribute to the construction of a new social order and to open their own spaces within

⁵³⁰ 'Man without religion' in ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera; CG legajo 1530-2, Exp. 10/1-10/43; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, Exp. 3/291; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 183/10116.

⁵³¹ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.240-41. Ledesma observes that historians have arrived at similar conclusions regarding the French Revolution. Albert Soboul, *The sans-culottes: the popular movement and revolutionary government, 1793-1794* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

it. This question, which will be examined in greater detail in chapter five, offers the real key to explaining the revolutionary violence of 1936.

Chapter Four: ‘We have come to place you at liberty and to burn the convent’⁵³²: Gender, Sexuality and Anticlerical Violence

Though the nuns were threatened frequently by the committee and the militiamen, they were not molested physically at all...in spite of exhortations which the reds made to them, telling them that they were now completely free.

Report from Madrid’s Diocesan Archive on the civil war experiences of Ciempozuelos’ Oblate nuns.⁵³³

*It is eleven o’ clock in the morning. The gong sounds. Mass?
It is to remind the women to prepare the midday meal.*

Anarchist Augustin Souchy Bauer on revolutionary changes in Beceite, Teruel.⁵³⁴

Male rural and urban workers were the principal agents of the wave of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm which began in July 1936. Although women did take part in attacks upon church property - and occasionally upon religious personnel - they were outnumbered considerably by their male counterparts. This chapter, which constitutes the second part of the analysis of ‘anticlerical faces in the crowd’, addresses the gender composition of those who participated in violent anticlerical collective action from 17-18 July 1936 onwards. It uses the same sample of anticlerical protagonists from Madrid and Almeria employed in the previous chapter combined with other primary and secondary source material. The first half of the chapter explores anticlerical violence as an overwhelmingly ‘male’ phenomenon whose logic and rhetoric were derived from the sexist cultural norms of 1930s Spanish society. In doing so, it looks at the complex relationship between male sexuality, masculinity and anticlerical violence. It examines the ways in which the rapid social changes underway during the first third of the twentieth century, and the unfolding struggles waged by diverse agents to define and fix the fluid, unstable boundaries between ‘private’ and ‘public’, affected the ways in which both priests and nuns were treated by their attackers.

While anticlerical violence was indisputably both male dominated and masculinised, men did not completely drown out female anticlerical voices in 1936. The second half of the chapter examines female-driven anticlerical violence as a phenomenon which, in spite of its numerical inferiority, possessed its own specific logic and significance. On one hand, female anticlerical action is examined in the context of Spain’s long tradition

⁵³² The quote appears in Connelly Ullman, *Tragic Week*, p.213.

⁵³³ ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/28: *Estado actual material y moral de la Parroquia de Ciempozuelos*

⁵³⁴ Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, p.70.

of ‘spontaneous’ female mobilisation, which women carried out on a local level to address specific grievances which affected the ‘traditional’ feminine spheres of family and community. On the other hand, it examines the way in which female anticlerical violence both reflected and contributed to a process – well underway by July 1936 – by which women were gradually leaving the purely domestic sphere and achieving ‘visibility’. For many women, participation in iconoclasm at the beginning of the conflict acted as a springboard into political mobilisation and a means of challenging traditional, church-enforced perceptions of ‘correct’ female behaviour. In its interactions with gender, then, anticlerical violence emerges once again as a phenomenon which was tied to ‘traditional’ modes of thought and forms of protest, but which also reflected and catalysed social change.

The maleness of anticlerical violence

Statistics from Madrid and Almeria demonstrate, strikingly and unambiguously, the ‘maleness’ of violence and destruction carried out against religious buildings, objects and personnel during the first few months after 17-18 July 1936. In the province of Madrid, eighty-six percent of the protagonists identified by the sample are men; in Almeria, the figure is even higher at ninety-two percent. The vast majority of their victims, too, were male. In Almeria, of the one hundred and five religious personnel killed, not one was a woman.⁵³⁵ And although more nuns perished in the province of Madrid than in any other part of the Republican zone, victims of anticlerical violence in the capital were still, in their enormous majority, priests and monks.⁵³⁶ Across the entire Republican zone, ninety-seven percent of the victims of anticlerical violence were men.⁵³⁷ These arresting percentages pose a crucial question: why was the anticlerical component of the revolution so ‘overwhelmingly male on male’?⁵³⁸

As we have seen, anticlerical violence formed part of a wider revolutionary process which occurred in most parts of Republican Spain when the July military coup plunged the state into disarray. As recent studies, and the previous chapter of this thesis, have

⁵³⁵ Martín Rubio, *Mitos de la represión*, p.234.

⁵³⁶ The 107 nuns killed in the province represent 10.6% of the overall total of 1,009 religious victims in Madrid. The calculations are mine, using data from Rodríguez Sánchez, *El hábito y la cruz*, pp.551-60; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp-762-63; and Martín Rubio, *Mitos de la represión*, p.235.

⁵³⁷ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la Persecución Religiosa*, p.762; Rodríguez Sánchez, *El hábito y la cruz*, pp.551-60.

⁵³⁸ Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.86.

demonstrated, the agents of revolutionary attempts to obliterate the symbols and representatives of the oppressive old order and radically to reconfigure social relations within communities were, for the most part, men.⁵³⁹ In a patriarchal society whose ‘traditional’ cultural norms still confined most women (especially rural women, who constituted the vast majority) to the home, restricting their social and political opportunities, it is unsurprising that men were the chief actors in the revolutionary changes. In spite of certain superstructural changes initiated by the Republic, and also in spite of an accelerating process of social and political mobilisation of young urban women in the 1920s and especially the 1930s, women were still far from being at the vanguard of radical change in July 1936.⁵⁴⁰

The relatively low levels of female participation in the anticlerical collective action of 1936 probably provide sufficient evidence to justify José Álvarez Junco’s assertion that popular anticlericalism was a ‘product of the dominant patriarchal and misogynistic culture.’⁵⁴¹ Yet the forms of anticlerical violence, and the discourse which surrounded it in the summer of 1936, reflect the machismo and misogyny ubiquitous in Spanish society in other, more complex ways. Mary Vincent has observed that for rural and urban male workers, attacks upon priests became a clear means of asserting their own masculinity and sexual potency – a potency which was culturally inseparable from the raw, revolutionary, proletarian power they now possessed. Many workers, who would have known from experience that the local priest’s working day was far shorter than their own, identified with the leftwing and republican anticlerical press’s endless portrayal of priests as lazy, bourgeois, leechlike class enemies. They constructed the priest as the diametric opposite to their own, virile, working class power. In this context, priests’ chastity was seen as proof of weakness, effeminacy and ‘unnatural’ sexuality.⁵⁴²

This belief that priests were not ‘real’ men explains to some degree why they were so often stripped, humiliated and tortured sexually. Militiamen almost always forced

⁵³⁹ Ortiz Heras, *Violencia política*, pp.99-109; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.269- 276.

⁵⁴⁰ Graham, ‘Women and Social Change’, pp.99-115; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.7-17; Carmen González Martínez, ‘Mujeres antifascistas españolas: trayectoria histórica de una organización femenina de lucha’, in *Las mujeres y la Guerra Civil Española*, III Jornadas de estudios monográficos, Salamanca, octubre 1989 (Ministerio de Asuntos sociales: Instituto de la Mujer, 1991), pp.54-55; Mangini, *Memories of Resistance*, pp.4-6.

⁵⁴¹ José Álvarez Junco quoted in Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, p.205.

⁵⁴² Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, pp.81-83; Vincent, ‘Keys’, pp.86-89; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, pp.162-68; de la Cueva, ‘El anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica’, p.223.

captured priests to remove their cassocks; these flowing, feminine ‘frocks’ (as militiamen often described them) were powerful symbols of the clergy’s ‘abnormal’ sexuality and their idiosyncratic ‘otherness’.⁵⁴³ In Almeria’s *Cuartel de Milicianos* prison, the parish priest of the nearby town of Garrucha was forced by guards to strip. They then refused to provide him with replacement clothes, inviting his fellow prisoners to contemplate his ordinary, fleshy, male body.⁵⁴⁴ Aboard Almeria’s *Astoy Mendi* prison ship, guards ordered one monk from the city’s Santa Domingo convent to undress; they then painted the initials ‘UHP’ (a phrase meaning ‘proletarian brothers, unite!’ which emphasised the necessity for collaboration and cooperation between members of all working class organisations) on his torso.⁵⁴⁵ In Torrelaguna (Madrid), the parish coadjutor (assistant priest) and the chaplain of the Carmelite convent were detained by militiamen and driven to the outskirts of the town. Their captors stripped them naked, tied their feet together and then forced them to run across a field full of burrs and thistles. When this macabre game ended, they were both shot and their corpses were thrown into a nearby river.⁵⁴⁶

As militiamen attempted to impose what was, in reality, an extremely inflexible and narrow definition of male sexuality upon priests, they brought prostitutes into prisons to inveigle clerical inmates into breaking their chastity vows. In the town of Instinción (Almeria), militiamen tried to convince the Chaplain of the *Esclavas de la Divina Infantita* to marry one of the convent’s nuns.⁵⁴⁷ In Balserany (Barcelona) in late July, the executioners of one young monk from the *Hermanos de Las Escuelas Cristanas* allowed a seventeen-year-old girl to approach him as he faced the firing squad. Her attempts at seduction and marriage proposals were forcefully rejected.⁵⁴⁸ In its most extreme cases, this masculinised violence manifested itself in gruesome sexual torture. Priests’ corpses, recovered from roadsides and fields, were found ‘mutilated’ or

⁵⁴³ ‘Frocks’ in Vincent, ‘Keys’, pp.85-86; Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, p.82; Miguel Ángel Melero Vargas, ‘Sobre el asesinato de siete capuchinos en Antequera’, Lucía Prieto Borrego (coord.), *Guerra y Franquismo en la provincia de Málaga* (Universidad de Málaga, 2005), pp.46-47; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/51.

⁵⁴⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/71.

⁵⁴⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/63.

⁵⁴⁶ ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/7, *Sacerdotes Mártires*; Caja 6, *Pueblos: Torrelaguna*; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, p.439.

⁵⁴⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/414

⁵⁴⁸ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.616-71. See also Cárcel Ortí, *La Gran Persecución*, pp.227-28.; Alfonso Bullón de Mendoza and Alvaro de Diego, *Historias orales de la guerra civil* (Barcelona: Ariel Historia, 2000), pp.208-9; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.187-88.

‘destroyed’; sexual organs were removed from many cadavers.⁵⁴⁹ Two graphically demonstrative examples of this mutilation are those of the Catalan priest Tomas Comas y Boada, whose attackers tied him to a tree, cut off his genitals and burned him alive, or that of the bishop of Barbastro, who bled to death over several hours in August 1936 after a local man amputated his testicles.⁵⁵⁰

In the discourse which surrounded this violence, disgust provoked by priestly celibacy was, paradoxically, accompanied by intense ethical censure of the clergy’s predatory sexual behaviour. Spanish working class women may have been physically absent from the bulk of 1936’s macabre anticlerical proceedings, but their changing position in relation to men lay, nevertheless, at the core of the masculinised violence. By the 1930s, many working men, intent upon defending their traditional control over women in the face of the rapid social and cultural changes of the 1920s and 1930s, became engaged in an increasingly fierce competition with priests for access to, and control of, women.⁵⁵¹

Ethical criticism regarding the clergy’s ‘natural lechery’ had long been rooted in the popular consciousness and rumours of improper sexual relationships between parish priests and female parishioners were a common feature of many communities.⁵⁵² In the first three decades of the twentieth century, condemnations of priest’s ‘sexual incontinence’, channelled through the leftwing and republican anticlerical press, became ever more vehement. As we saw in chapter one, this criticism frequently revolved around the confessional, portrayed as a devious clerical means of invading intimate space, interfering in conjugal relations and seducing women.⁵⁵³ In a situation where the

⁵⁴⁹ Quotes from ADM, PRRD, Caja 2, *Informe de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Aravaca* and Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, p.402. See also Lucía Prieto Borrego, ‘La violencia anticlerical en las comarcas de Marbella y Ronda durante la Guerra Civil’, *Baetica. Estudios de Arte, Geografía e Historia* 25 (2003), p.673; Alfaya, *Río de fuego*, pp.73-75. AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/6; 1457-2: Tarragona, pieza No.10, exp.8/12.

⁵⁵⁰ On the first case, see AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, Exp. 9/6; On the second, AHN, CG legajo 1415: Huesca, pieza No. 10, Exps. 4/294-306, 4/309-218; AHN, CG, legajo 1409-1: Barbastro, pieza No. 1; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.294; Esparza, *El terror*, pp. 93-95.

⁵⁵¹ José Álvarez Junco, *Octubre 1934*, p.287; Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.87.

⁵⁵² Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.171; Gilmore, *People of the Plain*, pp.148-9.

⁵⁵³ ‘Sexual incontinence’ in Julio de la Cueva Merino, *Clericales y anticlericales: el conflicto entre confesionalidad y secularización en Cantabria, 1875-1923* (Universidad de Cantabria, 1991), p. 321. On this discourse, see María Pilar Salomón Chéliz, ‘Las mujeres en la cultura política republicana: religión y anticlericalismo’, *Historia Social*, no.53 (2005), pp.103-118 and ‘Beatas sojuzgadas por el clero’, pp.47-48; Maddox, *El Castillo*, pp.160-61.

priest could ‘talk to [women] alone, and of intimate matters...seduce them with his honeyed words and advise them on delicate matters such as the marriage bed’, the secular clergy became, for many men, predatory rivals ‘with all women under their power.’⁵⁵⁴

For many working men, personal, tangible experience of lecherous priestly behaviour combined with layers of traditional anticlerical lore and myth, and with newer political discourse, to weave a mental tapestry of visceral anticlerical resentment. In Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, for example, local anarchist activist Eduardo Puente Carracedo had unleashed a furious campaign of disruption against the city’s religious events during the pre-war Republican years. On one dramatic occasion, he had sabotaged a procession by riding into it on a donkey bearing a crucifix. His anticlericalism sprung principally from the ferocious ethical disgust inspired by the fact that a young cousin of his, made pregnant by a canon of the city’s Cathedral, had died when she was forced to have an abortion.⁵⁵⁵ After July 17-18 1936, this angry ethical castigation was present in the way in which militiamen taunted captured priests. In Almería’s *Ingenio* prison, communist bakery worker turned prison guard Francisco Martínez Matarin interrogated one detained priest daily regarding his sexual misconduct. On one occasion, Martínez Matarin displayed a photograph in which his prisoner appeared surrounded by grinning children from the *Cofradia de Niños Hebreos* and asked him if they were all his.⁵⁵⁶

The growing intensity of men’s perceived sexual competition with priests can only be understood in connection with the battle being waged by various protagonists to define and fix the boundaries between the private and public spheres during the first three decades of the twentieth century. On one hand, the state began to extend its influence ever further into the domestic sphere - into people’s homes and private lives. As we saw in chapters one and two, on the most negative, violent level, this growing state penetration meant the arbitrary and draconian public order measures of the Restoration Monarchy or the Second Republic’s drastic legislation against street

⁵⁵⁴ Álvarez Junco, *Mass Politics*, p.81.

⁵⁵⁵ Carlos Fernández Santander, *Alzamiento y guerra civil en Galicia: 1936-1939*, 2 Vols. (Sada-A Coruña: Edición do Castro, 2000), pp.222-23.

⁵⁵⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/27, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/4.

vendors and the homeless.⁵⁵⁷ But it could also be seen in the Republic's reformist push for state-driven political, economic, social and cultural modernisation.⁵⁵⁸

On the other hand, the social and cultural changes sparked by industrialisation and rural-urban migration underway from the late nineteenth century onwards saw women moving, falteringly and unevenly, from the exclusively domestic orbit into positions of increased public visibility. Although the nineteenth-century Spanish workforce did already have a female component, women now entered the world of industrial labour and – in spite of considerable obstacles – the labour movement itself on a much greater scale than before. In 1931, intense public discussion sparked by the Republic's legislation of female suffrage and legal equality left men in no doubt that women's 'traditional' position was in flux. In a situation where male activists' revolutionary politics rarely extended to a reevaluation of the traditional female role of wife and mother, the male left's attempts to reinforce control over women by keeping them in the domestic orbit compelled male activists to redouble their verbal (and later physical) attacks upon potential challenges to existing patriarchal relations in the home. This led them, inevitably, to their traditional rival: the priest. Most anticlerical protagonists were, of course, working class men who had themselves possessed very little real power before July 1936. Their actions and attitudes should, therefore, necessarily be differentiated from the patriarchal conservatism and traditionalism of Spain's oligarchic elites. However, in a situation where the negligible power that working men did possess was generally concentrated in the family and in sentimental relationships, it is unsurprising that they strove to protect the established balance of power in the home⁵⁵⁹

This mentality, which was pervasive across the leftwing political spectrum, corresponded to an image of women as weak, suggestible, and in need of male authority and guidance. In this context, women were seen by many anticlerical workers as an ideological and political liability as well as a sexual one. By the 1930s, men were statistically far less religiously observant than women; in the urban workers' districts and parts of the rural south where mass attendance was practically non-existent, the

⁵⁵⁷ Ealham, *Class*, pp.17-22, 63-84.

⁵⁵⁸ Graham, 'Women and Social Change', pp.100, 107; Pilar Folguera, 'Espacio público y espacio privado en el Madrid de la Restauración: su influencia en la vida cotidiana', in Bahamonde Magro and Otero Carvajal, *La sociedad madrileña durante la Restauración*, pp.315-26.

⁵⁵⁹ Frances Lannon, 'Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol.I (1991), p.222; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.20-25.

community's tiny 'religious minority' was always female.⁵⁶⁰ The left wing and republican anticlerical press, seizing upon this 'ignorant' and 'superstitious' ongoing female devotion, claimed that confessors persuaded credulous women to assume ultra-Catholic, rightwing political positions. This meant that through the confessional, that symbol *par excellence* of the Church's battle to control individual consciences, women would readily reveal details of their husbands' 'sinful' political activities to eager clerical ears. This assumption had permeated the 1931 parliamentary and media debate over female voting rights. According to many on the anticlerical left, female suffrage threatened 'to extend the disruption which the clergy brought into the home to the sphere of public power'. Female voters, already 'instruments of [the priest's] concupiscence' would also become naive pawns in 'his mercenary calculations' in the political arena.⁵⁶¹

Given this ferocious battle against clerical interference in the domestic sphere, it is unsurprising that the confessional booth made a dramatic entrance into the public arena after July 1936. A postcard issued by the illustrated magazine *Mundo Gráfico* revealed that in Madrid, militiamen had moved cubicles 'which once collected whispered secrets' from churches to central plazas and roundabouts. The booths, completely demystified and stripped of their former power and meaning, were used by boisterous militiamen to hear people's 'confessions' or employed as sentry boxes or newspaper kiosks. Also in Madrid, members of the CNT found a new practical use for the confessional booth of Covent of the Sacred Hearts on the city-centre Calle de Fuencarral in Madrid, converting it into a henhouse.⁵⁶²

The same sentiments lay behind the 'revolutionary exhumations' carried out across the Republican zone after July 1936. On one hand, the digging up and public display of mummified religious remains from church crypts was intended as a crushing ethical

⁵⁶⁰ 'Religious minority' in Lannon, 'Los cuerpos de las mujeres', p.66. See also *Privilege*, pp.17-19. See also Shubert, *Social History*, pp.161-3. For primary evidence, ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pozuelo de Alarcón*; BOOM, 02/05/1935, *Crónica de la Misión General en la Diócesis*, Núm. 1,630 02/05/1935.

⁵⁶¹ *El Radical*, 16/10/1933 in Salomón Chéliz, 'Beatas sojuzgadas por el clero', pp.43-46. Or, as John Langdon Davies bluntly explained in 1936, 'every worker who has a woman in his house who goes to confessional knows that he is being betrayed.' *Barricades*, p.151.

⁵⁶² Quote from Archivo General de la Administración (AGA) (03) 084.001 F/00778, 32.001/7: Glorieta de Bilbao; (03) 084.001 F/00778, 32.001/22: Confesionario, Olavido; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/376; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/1147, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/103Bullón de Mendoza, *Historias orales*, p.215.

indictment of priests' sexual hounding of women. Those who disinterred the bodies, influenced by years of popular hearsay and graphic stories in the anticlerical press, presented the corpses of women and young children as 'proof' of orgies, sexual abuse and pregnancy within convents. On the other hand, the exhumations provided a brutal opportunity to attack the Church in its own private space. These actions, which will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter, were perceived as a way of holding up the clergy's 'rotten soul' up to public scrutiny, turning the tables firmly on lascivious priests and their sexual and ideological incursions into the home.⁵⁶³ These actions, although revolutionary, were underscored by an attitude towards women which revealed anticlericalism as a collective identity strongly characterised by masculine, sexist concerns and rooted in patriarchal perceptions of gender roles and gender relations. Anticlerical protagonists were proletarian actors who only possessed influence and power during the brief revolutionary period following the military coup. Nevertheless, their apparently radical discourse of liberation not only excluded woman - it also saw them as a reactionary obstacle to 'progress'.⁵⁶⁴

'Liberating' the nuns

These assumptions governed women's treatment at the hands of anticlericals after July 1936. Priests and monks, seen as powerful and therefore individually bearing responsibility for the Church's myriad perceived crimes, were 'punished' in huge numbers as workers took 'justice' - which had previously been administered by the now fragmented state - into their own hands. Nuns, however, like the rest of the female population, were generally viewed by their potential attackers as helpless victims of priests' masculine power. This assumption translated into the idea that female members of the religious orders, devoid of the ability to make reasoned judgements and decisions, had been duped into becoming nuns. This image of powerless victimhood generally saved nuns from the violence meted out to their male counterparts.⁵⁶⁵ It also managed to override years of anticlerical propaganda and popular hearsay which accused nuns of

⁵⁶³ 'Rotten soul' in Mateo Santos, 'Reportaje del movimiento revolucionario en Barcelona', cited in Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *Cine y Guerra Civil Española, del mito a la memoria* (Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2006), p.75. 'Revolutionary Exhumations' in Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations', p.258. For examples, see AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/189, 9/28; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Cosas Sagradas: Cementerios y Sepulturas*.

⁵⁶⁴ Mangini, *Memories of Resistance*, pp.25-27.

⁵⁶⁵ Vincent, *Keys*, p.86.

infanticide, abortion, and the kidnapping and torture of young women.⁵⁶⁶ Similarly, it ignored the ideological power as ‘cultural reproducers of Catholic Spain’ possessed by the thousands of nuns still employed as teachers. Indeed, the 1930s anticlerical press generally objected to nuns’ educative role not on the grounds of their power as indoctrinators, but due to their failure to conform to gender stereotypes: education and social work, it was alleged, should be left to those women who ‘know what a mother’s love is.’⁵⁶⁷ Accordingly, across the entire Republican zone, the 296 nuns killed represent just 4.3% of the overall victims of anticlerical violence.⁵⁶⁸

As these figures show, female religious personnel did not entirely escape death. In Madrid, the 107 nuns killed represent 10.6 percent of the province’s 1,009 religious victims. This figure – much higher proportionally than anywhere else in Republican Spain - can be explained in terms of the mounting public panic generated in the capital throughout October and November by air raids and the advance of rebel troops. In November, against a backdrop of renewed political fragmentation provoked by the departure of the government to Valencia, a desperate scramble occurred to track down and execute the city’s ‘fifth column’ of traitors and spies. A mixture of intense paranoia and extreme political opportunity ‘demolished the dykes of gender’ which had protected female religious personnel in places like Almeria; amid *sacas* and mass shootings, over seventy nuns were executed during late October and November 1936.⁵⁶⁹

Yet these killings were by no means the norm. In Madrid, Almeria and countless other Republican regions, nuns were usually spared from physical harm, but obliged by militiamen to abandon their residences and to carry out manual tasks to aid the war effort. Sometimes they were allowed to remain in their convents and work under supervision, but only if they removed religious symbols from the walls.⁵⁷⁰ In Alcalá de

⁵⁶⁶ Castro, ‘Palabras de fuego’, p.205; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.64(n).

⁵⁶⁷ Quote from Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, p.191; Lannon, ‘Los cuerpos de las mujeres’, pp.72-74.

⁵⁶⁸ Rodríguez Sánchez, *El hábito y la cruz*, pp.551-60; Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa*, pp.762-63.

⁵⁶⁹ AHN, CG, legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/258-9, 3/141-2, 4/42-3, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/100, 5/8; ‘Dykes of gender’ in Ledesma, ‘Una retaguardia al rojo’, in Espinosa Maestre, *Violencia roja y azul*, pp.180-81; Rodríguez Sánchez, *El hábito y la cruz*, pp. 21-186, 551-609; Martín Rubio, *Mitos de la represión*, p.235; Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa*, pp.762-63; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, p.190.

⁵⁷⁰ For examples, see ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/2, *Servicio de Prensa de la Delegación de Asuntos Religiosos*, 01/01/37, Caja 1/56, *Franciscanas Misioneras de María*, Caja 5/28, *Estado actual material y poral de la parroquia de Ciempozuelos*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 5/65, 5/256, 5/346,

Henares (Madrid), for example, three *Religiosas Adoratrices* detained by FAI militiamen in October 1936 were taken to a requisitioned convent where they worked with sixty other nuns, making clothes for militiamen out of church decorations.⁵⁷¹ In Cuevas de Almanzora (Almeria), the town committee evicted the *Hijas de la Caridad* from their school and hospital, but called them back almost immediately because they were needed to care for the sick and wounded.⁵⁷²

Although these nuns complained of being obliged to watch religious objects being burnt, threatened, mocked, and made to listen to blasphemy, ‘speeches of a Soviet tone’ and ‘words which could not be heard without blushing’, their own testimony before the *Causa General* reveals that they rarely suffered physical or sexual abuse. A typical rural case was that of the Almerian nun Madre Adoración Bautista de San Pedro, who was apprehended in the town of Chirivel by local militiamen following the coup and taken to the central plaza. She remained physically unharmed, but her tormenters subjected her to a barrage of ‘dirty’ words and phrases which only subsided when local people protested over the nun’s treatment and persuaded the militiamen to take her home.⁵⁷³ In spite of strenuous claims made by Francoist propaganda to the contrary, there are very few documented cases of nuns being raped during the conflict.⁵⁷⁴ Testimony from Madrid reveals that although nuns were sometimes strip searched upon being apprehended, this sensitive task was usually delegated to militiawomen.⁵⁷⁵ When Cardenal Gomá returned to his Episcopal Palace in Toledo after the city fell to the rebels in October 1936, he discovered that militiamen had slept in his bed, drained his wine collection, damaged his religious ornaments and left over two hundred pairs of

5/409, 5/420, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/78; Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa*, pp.430-434; Ibárruri, *Memorias*, pp.319-25; Gregorio Gallego, *Madrid, Corazón que se desangra* (Madrid: Gráficas Elica, 1976), pp.108-13; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.366-68.

⁵⁷¹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/10, 5/11.

⁵⁷² AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/192.

⁵⁷³ ‘Speeches’ in AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, 5/382. Adoración Bautista de San Pedro and blush-inducing words in AHN, CG, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/193. Other cases in AHN, CG, legajo 1164-1, 2/478, 5/199, legajo 1530 exp. 1/206.

⁵⁷⁴ The sexual molestation and murder of five nuns in the village of Riudarenes in Girona, and the rape and murder of three nuns in Peralta de la Sal (Huesca) are two of the few recorded cases. Josep Sanabre Sanromá, *Martirologio de la iglesia en la diócesis de Barcelona durante la persecución religiosa 1936-1936* (Barcelona: Imp. de la Editorial Librería Religiosa 1943), pp.183-211; 470-1; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.322-23, 343.

⁵⁷⁵ Examples in AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 5/253,5/270.

shoes in his entrance hall. His nun housekeepers, however, had been scrupulously respected by the palace's new occupants.⁵⁷⁶

It is clear, then, that while male chastity was seen as a sign of effeminacy and weakness and therefore gruesomely attacked, female virginity - tied up as it was with ideas of masculine self control and *miliciano* honour – was respected fervently and almost universally.⁵⁷⁷ Yet while nuns' decision to renounce the 'traditional' female role of wife and mother may have been respected, it was by no means understood. Conversely, in a society which presented few opportunities for women in the first third of the twentieth century, entry into the religious orders was often one of the few ways for women to overcome the daily marginalisation they faced, albeit at the expense of a putatively more modern understanding of their social and sexual liberty.⁵⁷⁸ Yet for many working men, this rejection of domesticity was deemed so 'unnatural' that it could only have occurred under priestly coercion.

This is demonstrated amply by the rhetoric of 'liberation' which accompanied militiamen's dealings with nuns in 1936. An enthusiasm for moving women from the convent to the family had featured heavily in anticlerical press and political discourse since first decade of the twentieth century; its most infamous proponent had been Alejandro Lerroux, the Radical anticlerical politician who in 1906 had urged his followers to 'lift the veils of the novices and elevate them to the category of mothers.'⁵⁷⁹ In the 1930s, as men tried to control the rapidly shifting, permeable boundaries of the private and public spheres, they struggled with growing desperation to reassert their masculine power and their control over the family and over intimate, domestic space. In August 1936, a militiaman arrived at the *Asilo de las R.R. Oblatas del Santísimo Redentor* in the town of Ciempozuelos near Madrid and excitedly told nuns that they were 'now completely free'. What this actually meant to these men, of course, was that these women were 'free' to return to the home and become the servants of men rather than the servants of God.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁶ Carta del Cardenal Gomá a D. Luis de Despujol, 06/10/1936, José Andrés-Gallego and Antón M. Pazos (eds.), *Archivo Gomá: Documentos de la Guerra Civil*, Vol. I, Julio-Diciembre 1936 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001), pp.182-84.

⁵⁷⁷ Vincent, 'Keys', p.86.

⁵⁷⁸ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, p.191.

⁵⁷⁹ Lerroux in Lannon, 'Los cuerpos de las mujeres', pp.73-76.

⁵⁸⁰ ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/28, *Estado actual material y moral de la Parroquia de Ciempozuelos*.

Invisibility and visibility: women's position before 1936

The actions and attitudes examined in relation to the maleness of anticlerical violence indicate that in July 1936, Spanish women – especially those from worker constituencies - still had the economic, social and cultural odds stacked heavily against them. The Constitution of December 1931 had given women the same legal rights as men, permitting them to vote and stand for parliament and legalising divorce. Yet this ‘emancipation from above’ failed to alter significantly the daily social reality of huge numbers of Spanish women, especially those from poorer constituencies.⁵⁸¹ In what was still a profoundly sexist society, pervasive cultural perceptions of ‘appropriate’ female behaviour linking women rigidly to motherhood, childrearing and to the home operated right across the political and social spectrum.⁵⁸² The Catholic Church played a fundamental role in maintaining and ideologically reproducing these conservative assumptions, but, as we have seen, they were pervasive on the anticlerical political left as well as on the right. They were also stronger in the countryside, which in the 1930s was home to the majority of the population. Rural proletarian women, largely untouched by the urban mobilisation and politicisation of the 1920s and 1930s, had to balance caring for their families with long days of exhausting agricultural labour, while their possibilities of employment and political mobilisation were further constrained by lack of education. Before April 1931, if the overall quality of education for Spaniards of modest means had been abysmal, education for women in these categories had been much worse. Although the reformist initiatives of the Republic reduced illiteracy rates significantly, women continued to lag behind men.⁵⁸³

Although urban women had been entering the industrial labour force in expanding numbers since the first decade of the twentieth century, they were concentrated in unskilled jobs, paid less than men, and still expected to balance housework and childcare with the demands of the workplace. The double burden of wage and domestic labour left little time for either educational or political activity. Furthermore, powerful prejudices concerning the ‘unnatural’ nature of female employment meant that the

⁵⁸¹ Quote from Graham , ‘Women and Social Change’, p.101; Danièle Bussy Genevois, ‘Del otoño del 33 al verano del 34: ¿los meses claves de la condición social femenina?’, in *Las mujeres y la Guerra Civil Española*, pp.15-16.

⁵⁸² Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.10-11.

⁵⁸³ In the province of Almería, female illiteracy rates fell from 51.6% in 1930 to 41% in 1940. On a national scale, female illiteracy fell from 47.5% in 1930 to 36.4% in 1936. Male illiteracy for the same years stood at 36.9% and 24.8%. Rodríguez López, *Mujeres*, pp.65, 99-100; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.17-19.

female workforce was both 'invisible' and fragmented; women carried out much of their labour in small textile workshops or at home. The experience of working in this way also provided a tangible, economic base to anticlericalism among urban working women; they found themselves consistently 'undercut' by nuns who, thanks to tax exemption, could charge lower prices for their services and goods.⁵⁸⁴ Although women did begin to join the labour movement and attend workers' cultural centres in the 1920s and especially from April 1931, they collided frequently with hostility from male anarchist and socialist militants, whose sexist attitudes contradicted entirely the rhetorical and token support they expressed for female education and emancipation.⁵⁸⁵

During the pre-war Republican years, while the political right mobilised (especially provincial, middle class) women extremely effectively in defence of 'traditional' Catholic family values, leftwing female mobilisation was less successful. While it is true that more women on the left were entering the political arena than ever before, getting involved in trade union activities, political parties, demonstrations, election campaigns and cultural and educational initiatives, it is also true they were doing so in smaller numbers than their rightist counterparts. Furthermore, the terms on which they mobilised scrupulously obeyed traditional gender constructions: women in anarchist and socialist groups were placed in a subordinate position to male leaders, and were most commonly involved in fundraising, administrative support, welfare, educational or relief work. The same was true, of course, on the Catholic political right, where women were easily mobilised in defence of 'traditional' family values and gender relations. In July 1936, then, although the limits of female action and the boundaries of the traditional 'female sphere' were changing quickly, women's public visibility and political voice were still severely restricted.⁵⁸⁶

Anticlerical mobilisation and 'female disorderliness'⁵⁸⁷

In 1936, women's partial and fraught exit from the purely domestic sphere and their achieving of a certain level of 'visibility' beyond it was reflected in the dynamics of

⁵⁸⁴ Connelly Ullman, *Tragic Week*, p.38; Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p. 84; Lannon, *Privilege*, pp.72-7, 183-84.

⁵⁸⁵ Ealham, *Class*, pp. 44-47; Radcliff, *Mobilization*, p. 247.

⁵⁸⁶ Álvaro Soto Carmona, *El trabajo industrial en la España contemporánea: 1864-1936* (Barcelona: Editorial Anthropos, 1989), pp.687-99; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.20-7; Graham, 'Women and Social Change', pp.100-9; Rodríguez López, *Mujeres*, pp. 39-83.

⁵⁸⁷ The phrase belongs to Natalie Zemon Davis, who uses it in the context of female protagonism in popular protest in sixteenth-century France. *Society and Culture*, p.131.

female involvement in anticlerical collective action. The violence was, as we have seen, patently male dominated. Yet women did commit anticlerical acts and had clear motives for doing so, something which is not reflected in the existing literature on the subject. Francoist military court records, along with the *Causa General* and the martyrologies, exhibit a certain ‘schizophrenia’ concerning women. On the one hand, women are portrayed in accordance with the Franco regime’s construction of ‘correct’ female behaviour: as powerless, subservient figures that look on passively and with incomprehension - generally from the doorways of their houses - as male actors perform.⁵⁸⁸ On the other hand, those women who dared to cross the threshold into the street after July 1936, disrupting ‘traditional’ cultural perceptions of female ‘morality’ are depicted, in extremely exaggerated terms, as ‘the terror of the town’, ‘perverse’, ‘abnormal’ and even mentally disturbed.⁵⁸⁹ The reports also obsessively attempt to link female anticlerical protagonists to prostitution, something which again displays the Francoist construction of women who symbolised social and cultural change as sexually transgressive ‘red whores’.⁵⁹⁰

Recent research into repression in the Republican zone during the civil war has tried to unpack this damaging, politically partial representation of uncontrollable ‘red women’. Yet in doing so, it has frequently assigned women a passive, silent role in the anticlerical proceedings. Women watch, ‘transfixed’ and ‘stunned’. They stand still, ‘observing what men do and undo’ and then ‘continuing with the same quiet tasks as always.’⁵⁹¹ This portrait is oversimplified and inaccurate. Firstly, there are some exceptional cases of women killing religious personnel. Josefa Coso, the militiawoman who shot the Bishop of Jaén’s sister in Vallecas (Madrid) in August 1936, was ordered

⁵⁸⁸ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 224/2088 Luis Martínez Merlos; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, Exp. 3/75; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 25161/4620, Esteban Lucas Valdes, Manuel Cañaveral Alonso y Julián Rodríguez Plaza.

⁵⁸⁹ ‘Terror of the town’ in Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm.47, 968. Similar language in AMM, Consejo de Guerra 630/29581-29605-29633-29677-29679-10193, Dolores Tieso Serrano y Otras; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm.47, 968. For ‘abnormality’, ‘mental disturbance’ and ‘perverse instincts’ see ATTMA, Consejos de Guerra 314/10.169, Margarita Rodríguez Ibáñez; 254/45.846, Trinidad Salmerón Ruiz; 6/20.828, Ana María Sánchez Magaña. Cited in Sofía Rodríguez López, ‘Mujeres perversas. La caricaturización femenina como expresión del poder entre la guerra civil y el franquismo’, *Asparkia. Revista de Investigación Feminista*, nº 16 (2005), pp. 177-99.

⁵⁹⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/104. On this discourse, see Vincent, ‘The Martyrs and the Saints’, p.89; Giuliana di Febo, *Resistencia y movimiento de mujeres en España 1936-1976* (Barcelona: Icaria, 1979), p.18; Graham, *Introduction*, pp.29-32 and *The War and its Shadow*, chapters two and three; Maud Joly, ‘Las Violencias Sexuadas de la Guerra Civil Española: Paradigma para una lectura cultural del conflicto’, *Historia Social*, no.61 (2008), pp.91-98.

⁵⁹¹ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.271-2; Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, p.225.

to do so by a fellow militiaman after the victim protested: ‘This is a disgrace! I’m just a poor woman’.⁵⁹² In the town centre of Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), the coadjutor of the parish of San Pedro was shot in the forehead by a militiawoman in front of his own church in July 1936; her male cohorts then ‘riddled him with bullets, revelling in his agony.’⁵⁹³ These episodes, however, were not the norm. A much more usual role for women in the months after July 1936 was as participants in the sacking of churches, the destruction and ‘recycling’ of religious objects, and in the sacrophobic rituals which accompanied these acts.

Given that the dynamic of change unleashed by female political and social mobilisation in the 1920s and 1930s was an urban phenomenon whose roots lay in industrialisation and rural-urban emigration, it may seem incongruous initially that the samples from both Madrid and Almeria reflect a higher level of female anticlerical collective action in the countryside than in the city. In the city of Madrid, four percent of the sample protagonists are women; in the surrounding countryside, the figure is markedly higher at twenty-five percent. In Almeria, the figures are five percent for the provincial capital and twelve percent for the *pueblos*. Of course, the greater anonymity which large conurbations afforded female protagonists must be taken into account. Within small villages, where denunciations among community members powered the Francoist system of military justice, everybody would have known what had happened to the priest during the war, and who had been present when the saints were burned. Women known for their own political activism, or for belonging to leftist families, were (ironically enough given their traditional restriction to the domestic sphere) far more visible in the countryside than in the cities.⁵⁹⁴

Yet women’s ‘high visibility’ within rural communities (meaning that more women were found, detained and brought to trial by the Francoist authorities) is only one part of the explanation. The modalities of female participation in anticlerical violence in *pueblos* across the Republican zone reflected their ‘traditional’ role as defenders of the

⁵⁹² AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/23, 1009-2, exp. 13/5: Montero Moreno, *La Persecución Religiosa*, p.395; Luis Miguel Sánchez Tostado, *La Guerra Civil en Jaén: Historia de un horror inolvidable* (Jaén: Catena 3: 2007), pp.148-49.

⁵⁹³ Quote from Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, p.404.

⁵⁹⁴ Anderson, *Francoist Military Trials*, pp.75-91 and ‘Singling Out Victims: Denunciation and Collusion in the Post-Civil War Francoist Repression in Spain, 1939-1945’, *European History Quarterly*, 39.1, (2008), pp.18-19.

domestic sphere: of the home, the family and the community – a role which was more sharply drawn in the countryside than in the cities. It slotted fairly neatly into a long tradition of ‘spontaneous’ female mobilisation in Spain which stretched back at least to the nineteenth century. According to the North American historian Temma Kaplan, female-led insurrections were driven by a ‘female consciousness [which] centres upon the rights of gender, on social concerns, on survival.’⁵⁹⁵ At times of social turmoil, women used existent neighbourhood networks to initiate subsistence riots, demonstrations to demand price controls, rent strikes or antiwar protests. Women, responsible for managing the family economy, acted to resolve specific grievances which affected the quality of life within families and communities. Although Kaplan’s work deals primarily with the mobilisation of urban women, her observations were equally applicable to the countryside. For the most part excluded from the political sphere, women were acting, quite literally, on their own doorsteps – in the only spaces which genuinely belonged to them. During the pre-war Republican years, as the effects of the world economic crisis hit families hard, this brand of grassroots insurrectionism continued with force; female-led hunger marches and bread riots existed alongside, and frequently commingled with, newer, political forms of protest.⁵⁹⁶

Given this mixing of ‘traditional’ and political repertoires in female mobilisation, it seems logical that violence against Church property, itself a ‘traditional’ form of protest whose meanings were changing radically in the 1930s, registered a significant female presence in 1936.⁵⁹⁷ In Cuevas de los Medinas, a very poor population of around sixty inhabitants on the outskirts of Almeria, proletarian women took the lead role in destroying the parish church’s religious objects and altars and dismantling its bells in July 1936. This female protagonism was not an isolated outburst. According to the parish priest, female inhabitants had led a comprehensive anticlerical campaign against him since his arrival in the district in June 1935. At a time of extreme economic hardship and social unrest triggered by the conservative Catholic-backed government’s

⁵⁹⁵ Quote from Temma Kaplan, ‘Female consciousness and collective action: Barcelona 1910-1918’, *Signs* (Spring 1982), pp. 545, 561. See also *Red city*, pp.106-25; Carlos Gil Andrés, *Echarse a la calle: Amotinados, huelguistas y revolucionarios: La Rioja, 1890-1936* (Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza), pp.92-101; Shubert, *Social History*, pp.195-196; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.28-31; Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture*, p.131, 145-47.

⁵⁹⁶ Bussy Genevois, ‘El retorno de la hija prodiga’, p. 130; Graham, ‘Women and Social Change’, p.102; Rodríguez López, *Mujeres*, pp.78-79; Fernando Martínez López, *La barbería de Almedina*, p.190; Christian, *Crucifijos*, p.18.

⁵⁹⁷ Cruz, ‘El Mitin y el Motín’, pp.67-69.

overturning of agrarian and labour reform, women subjected the priest to an avalanche of threats, riots, ‘propaganda against religion’ and ‘mini insurrections’ to impede the celebration of mass. The priest, rendered unable to ‘carry out the normal functions of the Church’, observed that the male population, although ‘in agreement’ with the women, played no part in the collective action.⁵⁹⁸

The women of Cuevas de los Medinas were acting within an established frame of ‘community defence’ at a time when the Church, indelibly associated with state repression and social injustice, had become, for them, a harmful enemy. Indeed, it is unsurprising that women, who bore the brunt of the Church’s intrusion into the intimate sphere, felt compelled to take action against clerical influence. Tales of priests’ sexual harassment of women were undoubtedly in significant part an exaggerated component of male anticlerical fantasy and a product of patriarchal modes, but these stories also contained elements which originally derived from women’s daily experience.⁵⁹⁹ And while there were more pious women than pious men in 1930s Spain, many women resented enormously the hypocritical sexual and personal morals which priests imposed upon them – and upon their families – through the confessional. As one peasant woman in the Valencian village of Olivares told British university lecturer Helen Grant during the civil war: ‘The priests told us it was wicked for women to smoke but it did not stop them from seducing the prettiest girls in the vestry.’⁶⁰⁰ In the hamlet of Ramacastañas (Avila) in the conflict’s early days, one local woman celebrated visually the destruction of the priest’s power to interfere in family life. Dressed from head to toe in priestly robes, she occupied a confessional booth which had been positioned in the street, periodically shouting ‘Who wants to confess?’, and awaiting her ‘penitents’.⁶⁰¹

Although this rejection of clerical interference in intimate space was enormously significant, in the summer of 1936, female community-motivated action focussed primarily upon the injustice of the Church’s disproportionate, ostentatious wealth. In Gádor, a small town to the north of Almeria, a group of five women of varying ages, who were all illiterate and from the local community, attended the burning of the parish

⁵⁹⁸ Quotes from the priest himself in AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/119, 2/220.

⁵⁹⁹ Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo*, p.171.

⁶⁰⁰ Helen Grant, ‘From a Spanish Diary’, in Jim Fyrt and Sally Alexander (eds.), *Women’s Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991), pp.184-85.

⁶⁰¹ Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa*, p.648.

church; they then took possession of the vestments, habits and altar cloths that survived the flames. As they carried them to their houses, the group's apparent leader, 52 year old housewife and mother of five Antonia Oyonarte Rodríguez, loudly bewailed the injustice that 'the saints have so much clothing when we ourselves are naked'. The women then used the items to make espadrilles, trousers and shirts for their families.⁶⁰²

These actions, which tried to reverse Catholic-enforced social inequality through grassroots wealth redistribution, extended across the Republican zone after July 1936. When the Convent of the Augustine monks in Madrid was burned by crowds in July 1936, local women saved the white religious clothes from the fire, exclaiming: 'now we have material to make underwear for ourselves and our daughters!'⁶⁰³ In Móstoles (Madrid), one woman who worked at the town's hospital gleefully used religious objects to fuel her cooking fire, exclaiming that her *cocido madrileño* (a traditional stew) tasted so much better cooked 'with the beards of these sanctimonious so-and-sos.'⁶⁰⁴ Women were using the restricted power they possessed to carry out their own, personal, domestic revolution; they were 'desacralising' and 'proletarianising' objects which to them were useless, extravagant and offensive, transforming them into things which they and their families desperately needed and could use on a daily basis.

The persistence/enduring nature of such forms of traditional grassroots action, much of which occurred at a local level, carried out by rural women who – despite the revolutionary fervour of the moment – did not profess any specific political identity, can also be seen as symptomatic of resentment generated among many women during the 1930s by the increasing penetration of the community by both state welfare initiatives and new forms of political organisation. As we saw in chapter two, republican attempts to 'nationalise' women often ended up alienating them; measures like maternity and old age benefits, and even divorce reform, were often perceived as an encroachment on their terrain and therefore as a violation of family and local custom.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/1147 Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/103.

⁶⁰³ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, Exp. 6/33.

⁶⁰⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 60474.

⁶⁰⁵ Bussy Genevois, 'El retorno de la hija prodiga', p.120.

In this context, many women continued to act as defenders of family and community, occasionally tolerating, but never embracing enthusiastically, external influences. In the village of Alcalá del Obispo (Huesca), for example, where local people used wooden saints to light cooking fires at the beginning of the conflict, one local woman commented: ‘Ever since the wooden statues went out of the church the food has been coming into the village. My man and my sons have got work now... We don’t know about politics, it’s not our business. But I do know that those wooden saints have been good for something at last.’ The Church, although it had long existed within the boundaries of the community, was by now perceived by many women as a damaging, ‘alien’ influence which, like the unwelcome interventions of the central state, needed to be attacked and expelled.⁶⁰⁶

Anticlericalism and female political mobilisation

Female anticlerical collective action, then, was linked firmly to ‘traditional’ modalities of protest. But the ways in which women intervened in iconoclastic acts at the beginning of the conflict were also indicative of the dynamic of change unleashed by female political mobilisation in the 1920s, speeded up by the expanded political opportunities generated by the Republic, and then sent into accelerated overdrive by the military coup and the development of the civil war. The overall-clad militiawoman who brought the female ‘domestic revolution’ to the Convent of the *Religiosas Dominicanas de Santa Catalina* in Alcalá de Henares (Madrid) in July 1936, seizing the chalice cloths while her militia patrol conducted a search and exclaiming: ‘Wow! What cushions we can make with these!’ had evidently achieved ‘visibility’, entering into the new ‘politics’ of the moment.⁶⁰⁷

In both rural and urban Spain, churches were assaulted and religious property destroyed or ‘recycled’ by women (most frequently young women) who had mobilised politically from April 1931 onwards. Most of them had joined leftist political parties, trade unions and youth groups in the spring of 1936, as part of the tremendous expansion in grassroots political mobilisation sparked by the Popular Front election victory.⁶⁰⁸ Some female anticlerical protagonists, in contrast, made their first, dramatic

⁶⁰⁶ Low and Breá, *Red Spanish Notebook*, pp.75-77.

⁶⁰⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/174.

⁶⁰⁸ Rafael Cruz, ‘Júbilo, enfrentamiento y movilización’, pp.124-25.

entrance into the political arena in the summer of 1936, as part of the immense wave of female political affiliation to antifascist organisations, political parties and trade unions which occurred after July 17-18 1936. This mobilisation torrent was a result of women's eagerness to participate in the war effort, both on the home front and on the military front. But it was also sparked, indisputably, by their shared experiences of participation in anticlerical collective action - and in all types of revolutionary collective action - in the days and months after the coup.⁶⁰⁹

For working class women who were already politically active in July 1936, anticlerical collective action often served to propel them even further into 'visibility'. In the village of Daganzo de Arriba (northeast of Madrid), four local women - all under the age of twenty-one and all employed as domestic servants or engaged in what the misogynistic language of Francoist military justice termed *sus labores* ('women's work') participated in the sacking of the parish church and the destruction of religious objects in July 1936. Their collective action had shades of the 'spontaneous', community and family driven mobilisation outlined above: they all took religious vestments back to their houses and one of the girls made curtains from them. Furthermore, when militiamen from the village returned from nearby Alcalá de Henares with goods looted from the town's convents, the girls carried out a *reparto* (a traditional form of popular protest by which food and goods were seized and redistributed in times of economic hardship) among the villagers.⁶¹⁰

These actions also had far wider, political goals. These were politically conscious women who had all joined the UGT during the Popular Front period or earlier, and had played a prominent part in strike action in the locality in May 1936. They identified the Church as a clear political enemy and an obstacle to change, sharing the frustration and anger generated among many politically affiliated workers by Catholic political mobilisation and the corresponding expansion of the Church's public presence. According to testimony from their rightwing neighbours, one of the women, Victoria Contreras Castro, had coordinated disruptions of rightwing Catholic political meetings

⁶⁰⁹ Angelina Puig i Valls, 'Mujeres de Pedro Martínez (Granada) durante la Guerra Civil' and Mary Nash, 'La miliciana: otra opción de combatividad femenina', in *Las mujeres y la Guerra Civil Española*, pp. 41-44, pp.99-102.

⁶¹⁰ Collier, *Socialists*, p. 243; Jorge Marco, *Entre la fiesta y la huelga: Protesta social y repertorios de acción colectiva (1931-1936)*, paper given to the Seminario de Investigación, Departamento de Historia Contemporánea de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 3ª Sesión (31/1/2008), p.17.

during the pre-war Republican period. In a clear demonstration that political mobilisation had definitively reached rural women by the 1930s, she and her friends had caused a 'great commotion' when women from *Acción Popular* came to the village to give a meeting. They protested outside and threw stones at the speakers as they left. In a village of just over seven hundred inhabitants, the girls were known for their 'mockery' of and 'opposition to' religious people.

In the weeks after the iconoclastic attack, the group played a key role in descralising and proletarianising the church, organising political meetings, plays and dances in the building. They involved themselves more heavily in the political life of the village and in the war effort. During the conflict, three of them joined the JSU, while Contreras Castro became President of the Daganzo section of the PCE. According to neighbours, nineteen-year-old Carmen Caballero appeared daily in the street selling *Mundo Obrero* (the communist daily) 'even when the weather was bad and it was raining.' The women also collaborated in the establishment of a village cooperative association, distributing objects and clothes taken from rightists' abandoned houses to villagers. In March 1938, they founded a branch of International Red Aid (a humanitarian organisation controlled by the Comintern which had first appeared in Spain in 1934) with two more female friends who had returned to the village from Madrid.⁶¹¹

This liberating experience of being catapulted fully and unexpectedly into political life in a moment of intense political and social change was shared by many Spanish women. In Vallecas, a town on the outskirts of Madrid described by the parish priest as 'ninety percent leftwing'⁶¹², twenty-four year old Concepción García Nicolás participated in the burning of the parish church's images on 22 July 1936. She was joined by another local woman, Pilar Martínez Cadenas, who was seen later that day clad in priestly garments dancing with a male friend dressed in penitential robes. Martínez Cadenas was also accused by several neighbours of having intervened in the exhumation of religious remains from the church crypt. She had not belonged to a political organisation before the coup, but said at her trial that she had attended political demonstrations 'out of curiosity' along with 'the vast majority of the town.' García

⁶¹¹ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 29,581; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 630/29581-29605-29633-29677-29679-10193, Dolores Tieso Serrano y Otras.

⁶¹² ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, Vallecas: Parroquia de San Pedro.

Nicolás, in contrast, had joined the Socialist Party at some point before July 1936. The two women, having propelled themselves spectacularly into public visibility, both became ‘militiawoman at the orders of the committee’. Like their counterparts in Daganzo, they also joined the JSU and participated in political meetings and events.⁶¹³

Forty kilometres away in the village of Nuevo Baztán, the three teenage Yebes de Gracia sisters, who do not appear to have been active in any political organisation before July 1936, participated with other local people in the sacking of the parish church and the burning of its contents. All of them became ‘armed militiawomen’ in the village and went on to join the Communist Party; they were later accused by their neighbours of denouncing rightwing people and requisitioning food and valuable objects from private houses.⁶¹⁴

As these protagonists assumed new social roles and public functions which had previously been off limits to women, they were being exposed to exhilarating, entirely novel experiences. Through their participation in collective action and their political militancy, they were forcefully challenging the pervasive stereotype by which ‘respectable’ woman stayed at home and avoided involvement in public life. The most striking subversion of gender norms during the civil war was conducted by the minority of women who took up arms and fought alongside men on several fronts at the beginning of the conflict. The armed *miliciana*, clad in blue overalls, became a powerful symbol of revolution and antifascist resistance. Although this female ‘sartorial proletarianisation’ was used principally to recruit men to the Republican army, it also identified women with the revolutionary changes underway and proclaimed the demolition of gender barriers.⁶¹⁵ The way in which Francoist court records emphasise obsessively the clothing of female anticlerical protagonists reveals how profoundly these changes challenged and disrupted conservative assumptions about women. María Arredondo Escribano, a CNT militant from Villaverde (Madrid) who was accused of participation in the destruction of the monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Getafe, ‘went all around the town dressed as a militiawoman in her overalls’; the three Yebes de

⁶¹³ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, Causa núm 48,537; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 60201/3220, Pedro Verdugo Vicente, Tomas Viajandre Mariscal, Pilar Martínez Cadenas; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 48637/1131, Pilar Martínez Cadenas ; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 48537/3343, Concepción García Nicolás.

⁶¹⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm.47,968.

⁶¹⁵ Mary Nash, ‘La miliciana’, pp. 43-44; Lannon, ‘Women and Images of Women’, pp.216-17.

Gracia sisters all ‘dressed in the overalls of the *miliciana* and served as armed guards.’⁶¹⁶

As seen in the cases above, revolutionary female collective action at the beginning of the conflict was frequently followed by affiliation to the socialist, anarchist and communist, political parties and youth movements. Women also enrolled in the two exclusively female organisations, the libertarian *Mujeres Libres* and the communist-inspired (yet not ideologically communist), cross-class *Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas* in vast numbers. Membership of ML and AMA involved women directly in war work, propagandistic activities, welfare initiatives, and cultural, educational and social activities. Serious ideological differences between the two organisations (encapsulated in the conflict between ML’s emphasis on the practical skills training and education necessary for female workers to achieve personal emancipation, and AMA’s prioritisation of the practical needs of the war effort) did not detract from the undoubtedly exhilarating experience of being active in either one of them at a grassroots level.⁶¹⁷

The changes to women’s roles and possibilities brought about by the conflict were undoubtedly substantial. Yet despite ever-mushrooming grassroots female militancy in political organisations and youth groups, and also in spite of the high profile presence of female figures like Dolores Ibárruri and Margarita Nelken in parliament and in the public eye during the civil war, politics in all its forms continued to be a male-owned, male-dominated space. The women who we have seen as protagonists in anticlerical acts - groundbreaking and courageous as they were – were generally not incorporated into the new revolutionary power structures forged at the beginning of the conflict. Village, town and neighbourhood committees were almost always a male-only affair; the most that women like Concepción García Nicolás or Dionisa Yebes de Gracia could hope for to achieve was the subordinate position of ‘militiawoman at the orders of the

⁶¹⁶ Quotes in order, from AMM, Consejo de Guerra 52600/4766, María Arredondo Escribano; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm.47, 968; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm.5260; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 52600/4766, María Arredondo Escribano.

⁶¹⁷ Helen Graham, ‘Lucía Sánchez Saornil (1895-1970)’ in Immanuel Ness (ed.), *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest: 1500 to Present* (Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/book?id=g9781405184649_9781405184649; Puig i Valls, ‘Mujeres de Pedro Martínez’, pp. 43-44; Graham, ‘Women and Social Change’, pp.110-114; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.63-95; Lannon, ‘Women and Images of Women’, pp.219-24.

committee.’⁶¹⁸ Alejandra García Montalvo, a seventeen year old member of *Mujeres Antifascistas*, admitted at her trial that after the parish church in her hometown of Carabaña (Madrid) was sacked: ‘she was sent by the UGT committee to clean and sweep it’.⁶¹⁹ One young woman, questioned by a military court in 1941 about anticlerical killings in Almeria, revealed that at the city’s CNT headquarters, the kitchen was staffed by women who never entered the important rooms where the Committee discussed its business.⁶²⁰

The lived experiences outlined above are generally indicative of the way in which serious changes in women’s social position were ‘postponed for another day’ in the Republican zone during the war.⁶²¹ Many women, despite having been thrust into ‘unprecedented and dizzying public responsibility’, found that male attitudes towards them remained largely static. The *milicianas*, July 1936’s heroic symbols of antifascist resistance and female emancipation, usually faced a highly gendered division of labour when they made it to the front. While a few women, such as the POUM commander Mika Etchebéhère, achieved positions of command, most *milicianas* found that they were expected to take care of the cooking, washing, cleaning and nursing. The Communist Fifth Regiment’s female battalion, for example, was involved solely in support work. Furthermore, women at the front often faced mockery, sexual harassment or the assumption that they were there as prostitutes.

As the revolutionary excitement of the conflict’s early days faded, women’s organisations and political leaderships coincided in ordering women to abandon the trenches, constraining female war resistance to women’s ‘natural sphere.’ Correspondingly, the image of the *miliciana* was abandoned. Women, in general, hung up their overalls and opted for less elaborate versions of the clothes they had worn before.⁶²² Although women’s new roles as industrial war workers constituted a revolutionary change, female workers were incorporated into the labour force according to traditional constructions of their natural characteristics. Tender, maternal and

⁶¹⁸ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 48537/3343, Concepción García Nicolás; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 60474; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros.

⁶¹⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 40,753; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 5061/40753, Alejandra García Montalvo.

⁶²⁰ ATTMA, Informe 81/17-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera.

⁶²¹ Lannon, ‘Women and Images of Women’, p.223.

⁶²² Nash, ‘La miliciana’, pp.98-101; Vincent, ‘Martyrs and the Saints’, p.75.

inherently non-violent, they were exhorted to engage their 'sweet womanly souls' in factory, nursing and welfare work, and into the fabrication of coats, uniforms and blankets for militiamen.⁶²³ Their contact with the front was eventually limited to becoming 'war godmothers' (soldiers' pen-friends), or visiting the trenches periodically to talk with soldiers and to bring them clothes and blankets. While AMA wholeheartedly supported this state of affairs, *Mujeres Libres* was powerless to change it; the organisation lacked sufficient force and faced too many obstacles to foreground its radical feminist agenda.⁶²⁴

In July 1936, as we will see in the following chapter, attempts to construct a new society began in many parts of Republican Spain. Anticlerical violence underlay the redrawing of community boundaries and the reconfiguration of social relations. Although women sometimes participated in this collective action, the 'society under construction' never really took them into account. Male on male anticlerical violence, grounded in a masculinised struggle to prevent a blurring of gender roles and to keep women in the domestic sphere, is one of the most striking indicators of the limits of 'liberation' in 1936. CNT militant Pilar Vivancos, describing revolutionary events in her home village of Beceite (Aragón), enthused about collectivisation and direct democracy, but lamented that female emancipation simply 'wasn't posed as part of the revolutionary process.' Women, left out of the local committee, still belonged 'in the kitchen or working the land'.⁶²⁵ The German anarchist Augustin Souchy Bauer returned from his wartime tour of collectivised Aragonese communities with ecstatically positive impressions. 'Former mysticism', he wrote, had been transformed into 'concrete wellbeing': religious practice had been abandoned and churches were being used for cultural, political and logistical ends. As he waxed lyrical about revolutionary changes in Beceite, he inadvertently expressed the fundamental contradiction of the revolution: 'It is eleven o' clock in the morning. The gong sounds. Mass? It is to remind the women to prepare the midday meal.'⁶²⁶

⁶²³ Gema Iglesias Rodríguez, 'Derechos y deberes de las mujeres durante la Guerra Civil española: "los hombres al frente, las mujeres al retaguardia"', in *Las Mujeres y la Guerra Civil Española*, pp.109-115; Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, pp.101-2.

⁶²⁴ Rodríguez López, *Mujeres*, pp.136 – 8; Graham, 'Women and Social Change', p.114.

⁶²⁵ Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, pp.288-89.

⁶²⁶ Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, pp.70, 97.

Chapter Five: Anticlerical Violence as a Building Block

*Theodotus: Will you destroy the past?
Caesar: Ay, and build the future with its ruins.
George Bernard Shaw, Caesar and Cleopatra.*⁶²⁷

*The church, vestige of centuries of oppression and Vaticanist tyranny, is cleaned up in every way; if before it was a centre of moral corruption and religious deception, today it is the headquarters of the Committee, where problems vital to the district, and issues which interest the workers, are addressed...mystic, dark silence has disappeared to make way for the civilisation that is being forged amid the thunder of the cannons.
Almeria's UGT newspaper ¡Adelante!, September 1936.*⁶²⁸

As we have witnessed in the previous two chapters, the conditions created by the failed military coup of 17-18 July 1936 allowed a social and political revolution to occur on territory which remained under Republican authority. The coup plunged the state into disarray, paralysing the government's normal functions. With the police and armed forces dislocated, *de facto* power passed to the armed workers who had contributed to the defeat of the rebellion, and weapons were thrust into the centre of communities. The radical change in the structure of political opportunities vastly expanded the theatre of action available to the protagonists of the moment. Rural and urban workers, whose daily lives had been marked by the draconian public order practices of the Restoration Monarchy, the Primo de Rivera dictatorship and, to a large degree, the Second Republic, suddenly found themselves in a radically new context which legitimised their own violent acts as a means of exacting change. As a fragmented, chaotic tapestry of new armed micro-powers began to emerge, an accelerated atomisation of power occurred.⁶²⁹ These new powers, still in the process of articulating and defining themselves, did not only use violence to eliminate their perceived enemies. Instead, anticlerical violence – and all types of revolutionary violence – became part of attempts to construct a new social and political order, and a means of competing for a position of power within it.⁶³⁰

The mass clerical death and iconoclasm of the first six months of the civil war could never have occurred without the paralysation of the state provoked by the coup. As we saw in chapter two, the same pattern had occurred on a much smaller scale during the

⁶²⁷ George Bernard Shaw, *Caesar and Cleopatra* (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2007), p.5.

⁶²⁸ Pedro Montoya Guerrero, 'La labor de un Comité de barriada', *¡Adelante!*, 25/09/1936. Cited in Sofía Rodríguez López, 'El discurso anticlerical en Almería 1900-1953', p.216(n).

⁶²⁹ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, p.174.

⁶³⁰ Ledesma, 'Santa ira popular', pp.179-82.

revolutionary uprising in Asturias in October 1934, when the temporary collapse of government authority in the region placed executive power briefly and explosively in the hands of local revolutionary committees. With power fragmented, and restrictions on violent behaviour temporarily absent, the revolution's protagonists killed thirty-four male religious personnel and destroyed numerous ecclesiastical buildings. It is clear, therefore, that serious, fatal episodes of anticlerical violence in the 1930s occurred during revolutionary outbursts which took place when the state lost its monopoly on violence.⁶³¹

In the summer of 1936, once these conditions had been generated to an extreme degree, anticlerical violence underlay the tearing down and remaking of social relations by protagonists who, to quote Bruce Lincoln, 'felt a new heaven and earth emerging at that very moment...and rejoiced in the overthrow of the old.'⁶³² Anticlerical acts, so often portrayed by historians as irrational and nonsensical, were in fact imbued by their protagonists with a logic and meaning grounded in the reconfiguration of power within communities and the secularisation of public spaces.⁶³³ This chapter will analyse this logic, focussing on four main aspects: the physical 'cleansing' of the Church from the built environment of the projected new society; the role of anticlerical violence in producing group complicity; the transformation of religious buildings into articulating structures of the revolution; and the use of anticlerical violence as a means of securing 'political spaces' within the new order.

Splinters, ash and rubble: obliterating the sources of clerical power

The revolution which unfolded on Republican territory after 17-18 July 1936 was far from homogeneous. As chapter three demonstrated, its protagonists were drawn from across the leftwing and republican political spectrum and were usually linked to newly constituted, politically heterogeneous bodies. Many of them had not been politically active prior to the coup. Although most of them belonged to the rural and urban working classes, the anticlerical protagonism of middling sectors was far from insignificant. The samples examined in chapter three clearly displayed the dangers of attempting to explain complex human actions solely with recourse to social class,

⁶³¹ Details in AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/76; ASV, Informe del deán ovetense al nuncio Tedeschini (Gijón, 15/11/1934).

⁶³² Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations', p. 260.

⁶³³ Ledesma, 'Santa ira popular', pp.147-92.

ideology or political affiliation. This means, of course, that it would be both unwise and impossible to assign one concrete, ideologically grounded meaning to the revolution and its anticlerical component.

The specific actions of the diverse protagonists of anticlerical violence and iconoclasm after July 1936 offer the real key to uncovering their goals and motives. In an overwhelmingly regionally diverse country, with very varied levels of cultural, social and political development, the uniformity with which religious property and personnel were attacked in the vast majority of Republican regions is remarkable. An initial trigger of assaults on the Church was the widespread belief among armed workers that the clergy had participated in the uprising, and that it fully supported the military rebels. The strength and profundity of this conviction was evident in militiamen's fervid obsession with searching and re-searching ecclesiastical properties for hidden weapons in villages, towns and cities across Spain.⁶³⁴ It was also demonstrated by the allegation, widely repeated and firmly believed by militiamen, members of the public, and some sectors of the leftwing and republican press, that shots had been fired upon workers from churches and belfries during the battle to defeat the military rebels.⁶³⁵ These accusations, which multiplied as the panic of the moment mixed explosively with deeply entrenched popular ideas regarding the clergy's immorality, warmongering tendencies and reactionary political allegiances, were – with a few dramatic exceptions – unfounded. What the rumours do indicate, however, is the extent to which the clergy had come to be perceived as an absolute ideological enemy for huge numbers of rural and urban workers.⁶³⁶

The motives behind the anticlerical assault, of course, ran far deeper than the Church's perceived support for the rebels. Across almost the entire Republican zone,

⁶³⁴ For examples see AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/41, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/173, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/24, 2/469, 2/477, 2/478, 2/503, 2/492, 3/176, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/216; ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/28, *Estado actual material y moral de la parroquia de Ciempozuelos*.

⁶³⁵ For examples, see ADM, PRRD, Caja 6: *Pueblos: Somosierra*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/41; 'La Iglesia, beligerante. Los templos encerraban grandes cantidades de armamentos', *El Socialista*, 12/98/1936 in Álvarez Lopera, *Bienes culturales*, p.56; Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense*, pp. 128-29; José Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), pp.27-28; Preston, *Holocausto*, p. 366.

⁶³⁶ For these exceptions see Martín Blázquez, *Army*, pp.114-15; Peinado Vallejo, *Cuando la muerte*, pp.188-89; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.311-13; Fernsworth, *Struggle*, pp.192-98; Luis Romero, *Tres días de Julio* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2006, 3rd edition), pp.518-26.

burning religious objects and killing religious personnel formed a crucial cornerstone of a proletarian revolution which targeted the representatives of the repressive old order (and the *de facto* pillars of power during the Republic): priests, large landowners, *caciques*, industrialists, army officers and others associated with the political right. The same protagonists who burned churches and detained priests also attacked civil guard barracks and the political headquarters of rightist organisations. They formed local committees and militia groups, collectivised land and factories, seized and redistributed the food and livestock of the rich, and executed their perceived ‘enemies’.⁶³⁷

Yet anticlerical violence was far more than just another strand of the revolution. Across Spain, the Church was the first and most ferociously targeted objective of what Spanish anarchist Joan Peiró referred to as the ‘holy rage of the people’.⁶³⁸ In towns where local committees worked to avoid revolutionary ‘cleansing’, the destruction of religious symbols was often the only revolutionary act committed.⁶³⁹ In over a hundred locations throughout the Republican zone, the only victim or victims of revolutionary violence were members of the clergy.⁶⁴⁰ The attempt to extirpate the Church from the community became a kind of revolutionary rite of passage, an instant and highly symbolic means of breaking with the past.⁶⁴¹ The unyielding public physical targeting of the Church was a conscious attack upon the overwhelming and longstanding public physicality of Catholic architecture and ritual, and the inflated political, social and cultural influence which Catholicism still enjoyed in 1936; it constituted an attempt to alter irreversibly the balance of power in the built environment, eliminating definitively the physical and symbolic space occupied by the Church.⁶⁴²

Although members of the clergy in fact account for a comparatively small proportion of the overall victims in the Republican zone (13.9 percent), anticlerical protagonists exhibited a ferocious dedication to eliminating every last trace of Catholic cultural and

⁶³⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 62,847; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 70,485; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 84/53799 Celestino Arias Fernández y otros; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 365/18945, Alejandro Tapia Jiménez.

⁶³⁸ Ledesma, ‘Santa ira popular’, p.151; Casanova, ‘Rebelión y revolución’; Ranzato, *Eclipse*, p.402. See also Ledesma, ‘Delenda est ecclesia’, pp.11-12.

⁶³⁹ ADM, PRRD Caja 6, *Robledillo, Pradena del Rincón*; Collier, *Socialists*, p.151.

⁶⁴⁰ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 763-64; Ledesma, ‘Una retaguardia al rojo’, pp. 180-83; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, pp.52-53; Bullón de Mendoza, *Historias orales*, p.207.

⁶⁴¹ See De la Cueva Merino, Julio, “‘Si los curas y frailes supieran...’ La violencia anticlerical’, in Juliá, Santos (ed.), *Violencia política en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid: Santillana, 2000), pp.226-27.

⁶⁴² González Martínez and Garrido Caballero, ‘Violencia iconoclasta’, p.140.

physical influence – a dedication which was simply not present in attacks upon other ‘enemy’ institutions. Throughout the Republican zone, churches were entirely stripped of religious imagery; statues, pews, confessional booths and images were then piled up, doused with petrol and burned publicly along with religious items seized during house searches. The procedure was almost identical in rural and urban Spain. In the village of Bentarique (Almeria), for example, local people set fire to the parish church’s images, ornaments and vestments following the coup. Militiamen from the locality then went from house to house conducting searches, throwing religious paintings into the street and burning them in front of their owners.⁶⁴³ In the workers’ neighbourhood of Entrevías (Madrid), people from the locality destroyed the parish church’s altar with their bare hands; they then burned the church’s images and documents.⁶⁴⁴

The choice of fire as a tool of destruction was convenient, but it also served a cathartic purpose. Its capacity to destroy utterly the religious icons offered symbolic proof that the pernicious influence of the Church was being expunged from the landscape forever, and that the ‘just city’ was being constructed – quite literally - over the ashes of the old, corrupt one.⁶⁴⁵ This logic explains why Madrid’s cathedral was burned by militiamen on seven separate occasions, or why local people from Vallecas (Madrid) torched the town’s rectory three times during the war.⁶⁴⁶ The fact that people routinely burned property registers and the books of the parish archive along with religious objects reinforces the idea that the aim of these acts was to eliminate all the sources of past tyranny and injustice at once.⁶⁴⁷ The achievement of what Helen Graham refers to as the ‘*tabula rasa*: a satisfyingly instantaneous dissolution of political oppression as well as a reparation for accumulated social hurts’ would pave the way for the creation of a new society.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴³ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/151.

⁶⁴⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/270.

⁶⁴⁵ Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.69.

⁶⁴⁶ ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Relación de sacerdotes asesinados*; Caja 1/48, *Tercera relación de Informes*.

⁶⁴⁷ In the diocese of Madrid-Alcalá, almost fifty percent of all the parish archives were destroyed completely by fire (103 from a total of 232). Ninety-eight percent suffered ‘considerable losses’. ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/7, *Información de las parroquias de fuera de la capital*, Caja 1/23. For more examples see *Iglesia Parroquial de Valdemorillo*, Caja 2/25, *Acta de Declaración*, Caja 4/3, *Casas Parroquiales*, Caja 5/56, *Estadística-Resumen de los Arciprestazgos de Brihuega y Tamajón*, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para ‘de Rebus Hispanie*, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Ventas*; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/217, 2/218, 2/151, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/217, 3/284/416, legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/192, 4/213.

⁶⁴⁸ Graham, *Republic*, p.86 and *The War and its Shadow*, chapter two.

The painstaking and highly physically demanding destruction of symbols which did not succumb to the flames also supports the idea that the revolutionaries were creating a ‘clean slate’ upon which to construct a new order. Not one religious fragment could remain. Solid marble and granite statues and altars were slowly and meticulously reduced to smithereens with chisels, pickaxes and hammers.⁶⁴⁹ In Almeria and Madrid, colossal monuments to the Sacred Heart of Jesus were blown up using firecrackers and dynamite.⁶⁵⁰ Statues from Madrid’s Convent of the *Celadores del Culto Eucarístico* were flattened with a truck by militiamen.⁶⁵¹ In the churchyard of Monflorite (Aragón) in March 1937, George Orwell observed that the anonymous hand of ‘some industrious atheist’ had meticulously chipped off all the religious references and symbols from the gravestones using a chisel.⁶⁵² In the desert of Las Palmas (Castellón), the writer Julio Caro Baroja contemplated a mutilated representation of the Stations of the Cross. The image, which contained numerous individual figures, had been attacked by an unknown anticlerical who had ‘chiselled away all of the faces, one by one’.⁶⁵³ In Barcelona, the poet Sylvia Townsend Warner recorded that churches had been ‘cleaned out exactly as sick-rooms are cleaned out after a pestilence. Everything that could preserve the contagion has been destroyed’.⁶⁵⁴ In a vivid demonstration of the symbols of the new proletarian power demolishing those of the old, in Hoyos de Pinares (Ávila), local people waited until 29 September, the day of the town’s patron saint, to stage a mocking procession in which an enormous granite crucifix was dragged through the streets from the church to the building of the town council (now the headquarters of the local committee). A local man dressed as an altar boy flung the cross from the balcony to the street below, where it shattered into smithereens.⁶⁵⁵

Passing the ‘point of no return’: Complicity and social cohesion

⁶⁴⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/120, 2/147, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/409, 3/410; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/72; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6: *Pueblos: Tetuán*.

⁶⁵⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/95, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/290, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/43; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 52600/4766, María Arredondo Escribano; 3343/65138, Benito Alfaro Martín; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 305/1210, Manuel Palenzuela Cuerva.

⁶⁵¹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/72.

⁶⁵² George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1986), pp.56-57.

⁶⁵³ Julio Caro Baroja, *Historia del Anticlericalismo Español* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 2008), p.226.

⁶⁵⁴ Sylvia Townsend Warner, ‘Barcelona’, in Valentine Cunningham (ed.), *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp.140-41.

⁶⁵⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, causa núm. 5,537; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 5537/1102, Florencio Santamaría Fernández.

The objective of this violence was evidently the physical and symbolic elimination of the Church. However, it also served a unifying function, forging and reinforcing bonds within the newly formed groups which took the lead in the acts, and within the wider community. As militiamen and local people carried out the highly visual ‘purification’ of the community in towns, villages and neighbourhoods across Republican Spain, ridding it of perceived sources of ‘pollution’ and redrawing its external boundaries, social ties within the group were made and reinforced with blood and fire. The discourse which impregnated the Republican zone in the summer of 1936, saturated with references to ‘hygiene’, ‘cleansing’ and the removal of ‘the unhealthy people’ reflects this obsession with identifying and eliminating pollution - an obsession which also existed in the rebel zone, although it operated in a very different way.⁶⁵⁶

For the protagonists of the revolution, religious personnel - long criticised for their laziness, gluttony and acquisitiveness - were paradigmatic sources of this pollution, and thus prime targets for purification. Above all, priests, monks and nuns were seen as corrupters and contaminators due to alleged immoral, depraved, ‘unclean’ sexual behaviour. Priests were purged from the new society under construction in a way which was perceived as first exposing their pollution and then forcefully obliterating it. In Madrid, the Superior of the *Padres Paules* religious order, Reverend Padre Ibáñez, was apprehended by militiamen on 26 July and taken to their headquarters established in a former religious school. The men stripped him and forced him to parade through the building’s corridors surrounded by local boys who whipped him with straps and sticks. The following day, his attackers quartered him alive and buried him in the garden.⁶⁵⁷ Burning - the archetypal method of absolute destruction and complete purification - was employed far more frequently in priests’ executions than in those of non-religious victims. There are several recorded cases of religious personnel being burned to death, and the post-mortem burning of the corpses of bishops, monks and priests was common.⁶⁵⁸ In September 1936 in Murcia, one parish priest was shot following an

⁶⁵⁶ For examples, see AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 62,847, legajo 1406, exp. 6/10; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 764/11134, José Segura Cortes; Casanova *Iglesia de Franco*, p.174; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, p.112 (n); Ranzato, *Eclipse*, p.412.

⁶⁵⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/61-2, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 5/192, 5/193; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.375-76.

⁶⁵⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/17, 2/23, 2/30, 2/414, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/26, legajo 1557-1 Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/332 9/6, 9/92, legajo 1457-2, exp .8/12. The case of the bishops of Almería and Guadix, who were killed by members of the city’s

assault on the provincial prison. His body, accompanied by a large crowd of local people, was carried in mock procession through the streets to his church. The dead priest, his testicles cut off and inserted into his mouth, was hoisted up onto the bell tower and burned along with the building. When the grisly drama ended, the large numbers of people who had gathered to observe it resumed their celebration of the traditional fiestas of September.⁶⁵⁹

This highly visual purging of these ‘polluters’, as Natalie Zemon Davis has observed for the case of Protestant violence in sixteenth century France, constituted a bid to purify social relations, creating ‘a new kind of unity’ within the body social.⁶⁶⁰ Although the context of 1930s Spain, characterised by accelerating industrialisation, urbanisation and social change, was very different to the one described by Zemon Davis, symbolic rituals of purging and cleansing enacted upon the body of the enemy - like the whipping and burning outlined above – had the same basic goal: they were emblematic actions which would purge and purify the body politic.⁶⁶¹ Priests, to employ the French philosopher René Girard’s phrase, were sacrificed in order to ‘sop up impurities’, extirpating from the community its ills and dangers in order to protect its members and draw and reinforce its new external boundaries.⁶⁶²

The ritualistic, almost ‘festive’ quality of the violence displayed in these examples is also demonstrative. The macabre ‘games’ which the punishers played with the punished allowed people to commit transgressive acts by hiding them from the full meaning what they were doing. Aboard one of Bilbao’s prison ships, one priest was chased daily around the deck by guards who, ‘happy with their new sport’, threw his religious objects into the water and hit him with sticks as he ran. This jarring shift between what Zemon Davis calls ‘the rites of violence and the realm of comedy’ allowed the torturers to deny both the gravity of their own actions and the humanity of their victim: they

Delegation of Public Order and Prisoners on the outskirts of Almería is one example. Their bodies were covered with petrol and burned.

⁶⁵⁹ AHN, CG, Legajo 1066: Murcia, Caja 1, cited in González Martínez and Garrido Caballero, ‘Violencia iconoclasta’, p.144.

⁶⁶⁰ Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture*, p.160.

⁶⁶¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London: Ark, 1984), p.128.

⁶⁶² René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, (London: Continuum Press, 2009) pp.98-100.

eventually tied him up with ropes and threw him overboard.⁶⁶³ This humiliation and dehumanisation reduced clerical victims to the level of animals, allowing their attackers to kill them without guilt.⁶⁶⁴ That the ‘conditions for a guilt free massacre’ had been generated was demonstrated most graphically by the pre and post mortem removal of genitalia and other body parts from priests and monks. Ears - traditionally cut from defeated bulls at the end of bullfights – were one of the most commonly amputated body parts.⁶⁶⁵

Anticlerical protagonists also attacked the clerical laziness which ‘polluted’ society by forcing priests to perform manual tasks which were ‘demeaning’ for them, but which formed part of workers’ everyday lives. The bishops of Almeria and Guadix, incarcerated in Almeria’s prison ship *Astoy-Mendi* in August 1936, were obliged by their jailers to swap their cassocks for trousers and shirts and made to carry out ‘forced and humiliating work’. Tellingly, their fellow prisoners were forbidden from helping them: this punishment was intended solely to teach the bishops a lesson. When it became evident that they were too weak for heavy physical labour, the head of the ship put them to work on the deck taking in food brought to prisoners by their families. Crowds gathered to enjoy the spectacle of the previously powerful and untouchable bishops carrying out menial tasks wearing workmen’s clothes.⁶⁶⁶ On the *Jaime I*, another Almerian prison ship, religious personnel were ordered by their jailers to shovel coal from one side of the deck to the other until they were completely black, dehydrated and physically exhausted.⁶⁶⁷ In the town of Tíjola, also in Almeria, a group of priests was ordered by their captors to work in the streets fixing a sewer. According to one

⁶⁶³ ADM, PRRD, Caja 7, *Proceso de Martirio de los Salesianos*; Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture*, p.181-82; Graham, *The War and its Shadow*, chapter two.

⁶⁶⁴ Troy Duster, *Conditions for a Guilt Free Massacre* quoted in Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture*, pp.181-82; de la Cueva, ‘Anticlericalismo en la Segunda Republica’, pp.261-63.

⁶⁶⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/6, 9/94; AHN, CG legajo legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/30, 2/79, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/5; AHN, CG legajo 1415: Huesca, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/294-4/306, 4/309-218; AHN, CG, legajo 1409-1: Barbastro, pieza No. 1; Esparza, *Terror rojo*, pp. 93-95. Bullón de Mendoza, *Historias orales*, p.206.

⁶⁶⁶ ‘Humiliating work’ in AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/21, 2/22, 2/499, 6/12, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/48; Juan López Martín, *Tras las pisadas del buen pastor: Diego Ventaja Milán, Obispo Mártir* (Madrid: BAC, 1993), pp.165-67; Rafael de Haro, *Testigo de su Fe: Biografía de Manuel Medina Olmos* (Madrid: BAC, 1993), pp.198-99.

⁶⁶⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/92; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/32, 2/505, 2/506, 2/508; Martín del Rey, *Almería roja*, pp.126-27; Peinado Vallejo, *Cuando la muerte*, p.244.

witness, 'the main objective was that the people saw them and laughed because they were involved in such tasks.'⁶⁶⁸

These ironic, violently jocular punishments, which built group cohesion by graphically enforcing the division between 'us' and 'them', between workers and exploiters, saw men perceived by their attackers as idle 'polluters' of society being forced to perform gruelling, labour-intensive jobs. The forms of humiliation selected were almost certainly inflected by the ritual forms of Spain's February carnival, a 'morally inversive and politically subversive' event during which workers capsized and ridiculed existing social hierarchies.⁶⁶⁹ They can also be related to the rituals of 'status reversal' and 'symbolic retribution' which formed part of a traditional European repertoire of parodic, festive rites stretching back at least to the medieval and early modern period.⁶⁷⁰ These irreverent rituals had functioned simultaneously to undermine and reinforce traditional societal structures and norms. As the North American political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott observes, these rituals involved the 'breaking of routine codes of deference, and the profanation of the existing social order'.⁶⁷¹ They offered a glimpse of an alternative world where the poor and disenfranchised were 'on top', only to restore the established status quo when the designated festival period ended. In July 1936, however, the workers who forced priests to mend sewers and transport coal had no intention of returning to 'normal life'. The observations of the North American historian Abbot Gleason, who describes acts of symbolic retribution in revolutionary Russia as '*tableaux vivants*, gestures bathed in revolutionary meaning and pointing towards a permanent new order of things' are entirely applicable to the Spanish case. For their protagonists, 'rituals of reversal' were a crucial tool in the tearing apart and reconfiguring of social relations.⁶⁷²

⁶⁶⁸ Quote in AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/468, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/2.

⁶⁶⁹ Gilmore, *Carnival*, pp.4-5; Vincent, 'Keys', pp.84-85.

⁶⁷⁰ Zemon Davis, *Culture and Society*, pp.101-51; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p.81. See also Victor Witter Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2008), pp. 166-81.

⁶⁷¹ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 287(n), 331.

⁶⁷² Abbot Gleason, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites, *Bolshevik culture: experiment and order in the Russian Revolution* (Indiana University Press, 1985), pp.2-4.

The impulse to expose clerical corruption and to cleanse society of that corruption was also evident in the wave of ‘revolutionary exhumations’ carried out across Republican territory after July 1936, in which the corpses of priests, nuns and saints were dug up from church crypts by militiamen and publicly displayed.⁶⁷³ Anticlericals presented the decaying bodies of men, women and children as evidence of rape, pregnancy, murder and torture within convents. At the Church of El Carmen in Madrid, militiamen told reporters that disinterred mummies were nuns who had died in childbirth and been buried with their offspring.⁶⁷⁴ At the Salesian convent in Barcelona, an anarchist documentary filmed in July 1936 described disinterred mummies as ‘nuns and friars martyred by the religious themselves...twisted, distorted by torture.’⁶⁷⁵ In Madrid, at the Capuchin convent, and at several convents in Barcelona, penitential instruments discovered by militiamen were presented as ‘instruments of torture’ and ‘profane sexual implements’.⁶⁷⁶ In Canjayar (Almeria), local people exhibited bones dug up from the cemetery with a sign saying: ‘Here is the crime of the priests and the monks.’⁶⁷⁷

As well as being a direct and vicious ethical criticism of the clergy’s sexual transgressions, the exhumations constituted a far more literal demonstration of the Church’s corruption. In exhibiting the putrefying, decaying flesh of the saints, the exhumers were violently disproving the Catholic belief that the bodies of those purified of sin through the sacraments of the Church did not decay. These acts of ‘profanophany’ – a term coined by Bruce Lincoln to describe a revelation of profanity, temporality and corruption inherent to something or someone – instantly and very intentionally undid years of Catholic mythmaking. The Church, which had hidden its hypocrisy, greed and corruption beneath layers of scripture and sanctity, was now displayed as vulnerable,

⁶⁷³ The term ‘revolutionary exhumations’ is Bruce Lincoln’s. ‘Revolutionary Exhumations’.

⁶⁷⁴ AHN CG legajo 1530-2, exp. 10/1-10/43, 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/189, 9/28, legajo 1557-2, Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/73; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Cosas Sagradas: Cementerios y Sepulturas*; ABC, 01/08/1936; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramón Caballero Tato; Pedro Montoliú Camps, *Madrid en la Guerra Civil: La Historia* (Madrid: Silex, 1998), pp.75-77.

⁶⁷⁵ Mateo Santos, ‘Reportaje del movimiento revolucionario en Barcelona’, in Alfonso del Amo and Ma. Luisa Ibáñez, *Catálogo General del Cine de la Guerra Civil* (Cátedra/Filmoteca Española, 1996), pp. 790-91.

⁶⁷⁶ ABC, 01/08/1936; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 431-2n; AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/42.

⁶⁷⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/151, 2/451, 4/418.

subject to death and decay, and deserving of derision and mockery.⁶⁷⁸ As the same anarchist documentary explained, ‘the Catholic Church, in this and in other acts, has left its rotten soul exposed. In a few hours, it has undone the terrifying lie of twenty centuries.’⁶⁷⁹ This same demystifying of the dead had also been seen in revolutionary Russia, where the Bolshevik authorities had sought to disprove the same notion that the saints’ bodies did not decompose, and in eighteenth century France too, where the new Republican government had coordinated the public exhumation of the preserved corpses of the former kings, and their transferral to common graves.⁶⁸⁰

These exhumations, like all the acts of anticlerical violence described in chapters three to six of this thesis, occurred in a period of revolutionary upheaval during which the ‘rules’ of the old order had ceased to exist, and the boundaries and norms of the new society had yet to be drawn. As all the factors which had limited the possibility of revolutionary action disappeared simultaneously, the established bounds of violent behaviour were broken and the social norms which governed ‘civilised’ conduct were ‘wantonly and even gleefully trampled.’ As Lincoln explains, the extravagant public flouting of basic norms like respect for the dead constituted a ‘spontaneous dramatisation of *absolute* liberation from all bonds of the past, even those of common decency’.⁶⁸¹ Actions like the exhumation of the dead and the sexual mutilation of priests – acts which the South African anthropologist Max Gluckman terms the rituals of ‘collective obscenity’ – also served another purpose: that of binding their perpetrators together in the joint transgression of moral codes.⁶⁸²

Like so many of the new powers involved in anticlerical acts in the summer of 1936, the militia group which took control of the Church of El Carmen was a politically heterogeneous body which had been formed rapidly in the first week of the conflict. It was comprised of anarchist sympathisers, members of the JSU, the PCE and the youth

⁶⁷⁸ Lincoln, ‘Revolutionary Exhumation’, p.258.

⁶⁷⁹ Santos, *Reportaje del movimiento revolucionario*.

⁶⁸⁰ Daniel Peris, *Storming the heavens: the Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Cornell University Press, 1998), p.86; Stephen Anthony Smith, *The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.150; Suzanne Glover Lindsay, ‘Mummies and Tombs: Turenne, Napoléon, and Death Ritual’, *The Art Bulletin*, College Art Association, Vol. 82, No.3 (Sep. 2000), pp. 476-502.

⁶⁸¹ Lincoln, ‘Revolutionary Exhumations’, pp.250-54.

⁶⁸² ‘Collective obscenity’ in Gluckman, *Tribal Africa*, pp.137-41. See also Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, pp.98-100; Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, pp.250-51; Burrige, *New Heaven, New Earth*, pp. 165-68.

wing of *Izquierda Republicana*. A large proportion of its roughly twenty members had not been politically active prior to the coup. These diverse and only recently united members engaged in countless ‘rituals of collective obscenity’. As well as exhuming and displaying mummies, they dressed up in religious clothing and were photographed with bones and skulls; they danced to *rumbas* and *pasodobles* next to unearthed religious remains; they took disinterred skulls to local bars and ordered beer for them; and one militiaman publicly had sex with his girlfriend on the church floor.⁶⁸³ Group members performed this litany of indecent acts together, collectively transgressing social norms. This joint implication had a cohesive function; it generated loyalty to the group and forged and strengthened bonds between members. The actions also became an emblem of collective anticlerical and antifascist identity, linking these *milicianos* to other groups and communities which had committed anticlerical acts.

The wider community was also made complicit in this crossing of boundaries. Queues to see the mummies at the Church of El Carmen stretched from the door of the church, all the way down the road to the *Puerta del Sol* (a distance of roughly 200 metres) for several days.⁶⁸⁴ In Barcelona more than forty thousand people filed past the bodies exhibited outside the city’s Salesian convent.⁶⁸⁵ These observers were, by their mere presence, implicated in the obscene trampling of the old rules and the violent forging of a new society wrenched from the ruins of the old one. Local committees, conscious of the importance of securing the fidelity of the community at a time when social boundaries were fluid and loyalty was constantly in doubt, rang church bells and even issued edicts to summon neighbours to church burnings and exhibitions of exhumed remains.⁶⁸⁶ The passersby who laughed at corpses of Franciscan monks bedecked with ‘Marxist paraphernalia’ in the parish of San Pedro Apóstol in Almería; the people who jeered as they watched the priest in Murcia go up in flames with his church; the men, women and children who observed the Salesian mummies with disdain and without fear, ‘as though they were visiting Madame Tussauds waxworks’; the boys who taunted the naked Reverend Padre Ibáñez in Madrid: all of these actors belonged to

⁶⁸³ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/189, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/28, legajo 1530-2, exp. 10/1-10/43; Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramón Caballero Tato; *ABC*, 01/08/1936.

⁶⁸⁴ Montoliú Camps, *Madrid en la Guerra*, pp.75 -77.

⁶⁸⁵ Pérez de Olaguer, *El terror rojo en Cataluña*, pp.18-21; *The Times*, 01/08/1936.

⁶⁸⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3 Madrid, pieza No. 10, Sumario 25,161, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, Exp. 2/75; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 25161/4620, Esteban Lucas Valdes, Manuel Cañaverol Alonso y Julián Rodríguez Plaza; Montero Moreno, *La persecución religiosa*, p.64(n) .

a community which had passed the ‘point of no return’.⁶⁸⁷ Condemned as they already were – although perhaps at this stage they did not know just *how* condemned - by the Church-sanctioned rebel ‘crusade’ simply for their association with the Republic, they were now separated from their enemies by a river of blood.⁶⁸⁸

Expropriation, desacralisation, proletarianisation: restructuring the built environment

As the above sections show, the fiery purifying zeal which marked the civil war’s early months resulted in the destruction of numerous religious buildings. Indeed, ‘the church in flames’ is one of the conflict’s most iconic and enduring images. The vision forged by ecclesiastical historians in the 1940s of a ‘frenetic destruction’ which left ‘an enormous part of Spanish territory without churches’ is still presented by today’s modern martyrologists.⁶⁸⁹ Something which many historians have failed to analyse, however, is the process by which iconoclasm was used to reorder and restructure the built environment after the coup. Anticlerical protagonists, imbuing their acts with a firm ‘topographical logic’,⁶⁹⁰ desacralised religious buildings, emptying them of Catholic symbolism. These ecclesiastical structures were then used to serve not only the military and logistical needs of the war and the revolution, but also the cultural and educational necessities of a society under construction.

In April 1939, the recently arrived priest of Colmenarejo (Madrid) reported to the diocesan authorities on conditions in the parish after almost three years of ‘red occupation’. With a mixture of outrage and astonishment, he revealed that on entering the village: ‘I found the parish church converted into a magnificent hall for cinema and theatre. The reds had carried out all the construction work necessary to adapt the building to these purposes, in such a way that were it not for its external architecture, nobody would say that it was a church...Statues, clothes, objects of worship, archive etc.

⁶⁸⁷ Lincoln, ‘Revolutionary Exhumations’, pp.253-60. Lincoln draws a comparison with Danton’s comments to the future Louis XVIII regarding the terror of the French Revolution: ‘It was my will that the whole youth of Paris should arrive at the front covered with blood which would guarantee their fidelity. I wished to put a river of blood between them and the enemy.’

⁶⁸⁸ ‘Marxist paraphernalia’ in AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/204; ‘Waxworks’ from NA: FO 371/20527 Norman King to FO, 06/08/1936. On the same scene, see Jean-Richard Bloch in Francisque Gay, *Dans les flammes et dans le sang: Les crimes contra les églises et les prêtres en Espagne* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1936), pp. 35-36.

⁶⁸⁹ Quotes from Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, pp.127-34. For modern versions of the image, see Cárcel Orti, *La gran persecución* and Alberti, *La Iglesia en llamas*.

⁶⁹⁰ Delgado, *Luces iconoclastas*, pp.47-48.

– everything has disappeared.’ Colmenarejo’s principle religious stage, scrupulously emptied of Catholic symbolism, had been transformed by local people into a cultural and social focal point of the community.⁶⁹¹

The same sequence occurred repeatedly throughout Republican territory after the coup. Statistics from Madrid’s diocesan archive reveal that relatively few of the province’s churches were destroyed completely. Of the six hundred and fifty churches which stood in the capital and the surrounding *pueblos* in July 1936, only one hundred and eight were ‘totally destroyed’ (meaning that the walls and roof had collapsed and that the building was reduced to rubble or ash). This represents 16.6 percent. The remaining churches, excluding the four percent which remained completely intact, suffered either ‘light’ or ‘heavy’ damage (meaning that the contents were sacked and destroyed, and some harm was inflicted upon the interior structure). Reports of gutted churches standing empty are almost impossible to find. This means that a staggering 79.4 percent of churches were put to new uses.⁶⁹² In Almeria, only four churches were completely razed.⁶⁹³ In Barcelona, the proletarian revolution which astonished and impressed international observers such as Franz Borkenau, John Cornford and George Orwell destroyed only five percent of the city’s ecclesiastical structures; the remainder of the buildings were given radically new cultural, educational and logistical identities.⁶⁹⁴

It is significant that most of the religious buildings obliterated during the war were destroyed during the first few days of the conflict. In Almeria, the insurgents surrendered on 21 July and a triumphant mass of armed workers celebrated their victory in the streets.⁶⁹⁵ Over the following two days, as the atmosphere of ‘revolutionary festival’⁶⁹⁶ mixed with paranoia generated by isolated shots from insurgent snipers, six

⁶⁹¹ Quoted from ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/23, *Relación de lo actuado por el presbiterio Don Crescencio Gutiérrez Caridad*. See also Caja 1/48, *Tercera relación de informes*.

⁶⁹² ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para ‘de Rebus Hispanie’*; Caja 4/8, *Respuesta a la Circular de la Junta Nacional de Reconstrucción de Templos*; Alfaya, *Río de fuego*, pp.262-70.

⁶⁹³ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.629-30.

⁶⁹⁴ Statistics on Ealham, *Class*, p. 187; Martí i Bonet, *El martiri dels temples*, pp.89-90. For astonished foreigners, see Borkenau, *Cockpit*, p.69; Orwell, *Homage*, pp.16-17; Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *Journey to the frontier. Julian Bell and John Cornford: their lives in the 1930s* (London: Constable, 1966), p.316.

⁶⁹⁵ Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, pp. 83-84.

⁶⁹⁶ The phrase is Ealham’s, used with reference to revolutionary Barcelona. *Class*, p.173.

churches were completely or partially burned by groups of local people.⁶⁹⁷ In Madrid, the coup was suffocated on 20 July when civilians and loyal members of the security forces stormed the insurgent-held Montaña barracks; people made incendiary attacks upon around forty-six of the capital's religious buildings between 18 and 21 July.⁶⁹⁸ The churches of Nuestra Señora de Covadonga, San Nicolás, San Lorenzo, San Cayetano and Nuestra Señora de los Dolores – all located in the city centre – were completely consumed by fire.

In the chaotic days during and immediately after the coup, attacks on church property were qualitatively similar to the iconoclastic outbursts of May 1931, October 1934 and the spring of 1936. A climate of extreme uncertainty and confusion, exacerbated by government censorship, imbued the days after 17-18 July.⁶⁹⁹ Workers had little information available to them; they did not know if the uprising would be defeated, or when - or if – the government would re-establish control. They were unaware that they stood at the beginning of both a profound revolutionary process and a long civil war.⁷⁰⁰ This meant that attacks on churches were initially more destructive than constructive; workers aimed to inflict the greatest amount of damage possible upon their sworn ecclesiastical enemy before their available theatre of action closed rapidly (as it had done following outbursts of iconoclasm between 1931 and spring 1936). However, it quickly became clear in Madrid, Almeria - and across nearly the entire Republican zone - that power lay in their hands. As they began to organise the war and the revolution, forming militia groups and committees, the nature of their iconoclasm shifted perceptibly. Although religious symbols were still destroyed and churches still attacked, a new stage of 'creative destruction' began.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁷ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 250/12270, Antonio Ortiz Estrella; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/204, 2/375, 2/383, 2/458, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/34, 3/35; Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, pp. 83-4; Ángel Aguilera Gómez, *La historia silenciada (1930-1989)* Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses, 1990), pp. 121-24; Peinado Vallejo, *Cuando la muerte*, pp. 99, 171, 177.

⁶⁹⁸ ADM, PRRD Caja1/8, *Informes recibidos de las parroquias*; AHN, ATM, Legajo 273/2: Sumario 323/36: No. 10, *Incendio en la iglesia de San Andrés*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/57; Alfaya, *Río de fuego*, p. 63; Jato Miranda, *Madrid, capital republicana*, pp. 93-7, 131-35.

⁶⁹⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/192, 4/213, 4/254; ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/10: *Relación de las Iglesias de Madrid*; NA: FO371/20528: Wyatt Hayward to FO, 10/08/1936, Milanés to FCO, 27/07/1936; 'First Uncensored News from Madrid', *The Times*, 05/08/1936. On uncertainty, see Barea, *Llama*, pp. 144-47 and Gallego, *Madrid*, pp. 41-50.

⁷⁰⁰ Ledesma, 'Qué violencia', pp. 93-94.

⁷⁰¹ Phrase from Ealham, *Class*, p.185.

From the first week of the conflict onwards, the creative destruction assumed a general pattern across Republican territory. Parish churches in villages, towns and city barrios were stripped of their altars, statues and images, generally by local people and members of newly formed committees and militia groups. While the religious objects were paraded mockingly through the streets and then burned outside the church or in the town square, the desacralised buildings were designated for new, secular purposes.⁷⁰² The new secular identities given to churches were flexible; they were adapted according to the changing necessities of the war and the home front. In Fuentidueña del Tajo, a town around fifty kilometres southeast of Madrid where land was collectivised by local syndicates following the coup, the church became a cornerstone of the new social order. It was used at different stages as a granary, a garage, a prison and an entertainment centre.⁷⁰³ In Galapagar, to the northeast of Madrid, the church was employed as a prison, a stable, a dancehall, and a theatre.

On the most practical level, religious buildings played a key part in addressing the logistical needs of the war and the civilian population. In many communities, churches were used as barracks and militia recruiting stations or to store weapons and gunpowder, while their towers were transformed into anti-aircraft lookout points.⁷⁰⁴ Refugee shelters and hospitals for wounded troops and civilians were also set up in gutted ecclesiastical structures.⁷⁰⁵ In order to deal with the massive increase in the prison population, jails – both state endorsed and unofficial – were established in former churches. In Almería, two convents near the city centre - the *Convento de las Puras* and the *Convento de las Adoratrices* were used to confine those accused of participation in the uprising.⁷⁰⁶ For the civilian population, churches, convents and rectories also became focal points of the organisation of industry, agriculture and trade. In previously exclusive spaces where the well-to-do had attended mass, workers set up consumer

⁷⁰² ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Relación de sacerdotes asesinados*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/30.

⁷⁰³ ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/7, *Información de las parroquias*; Ignacio Martínez de Pison, *Enterrar a los Muertos* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2005), pp. 111-12.

⁷⁰⁴ APCE, *Sobre la actuación del clero en el norte de España*, Caja 95/11; ADM, PRDD, Caja 1/48, *Tercera relación de informes de las parroquias de fuera de la Capital*, Caja 1/55: *Información sobre la Parroquia de San Miguel*; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/369,3/170.

⁷⁰⁵ ADM, PRDD, Caja 4/37, *Relación de edificios*, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Villaverde*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/256; CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 1591, legajo 2672; CDMH, PS-Santander, Caja 13, exp. 28; CDMH, Fotografías-Kati Horna, foto 52: *Iglesia habilitada en pueblo colectivizado*, foto 217, 'Pueblos en el camino de Madrid a Alcalá de Henares'.

⁷⁰⁶ ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/160, 2/378; Martín del Rey, *Almería roja*, p. 32.

collectives, stables, workshops, garages, markets and warehouses.⁷⁰⁷ In Pechina (Almeria), the church was used to store and barrel the grape harvest. When religious personnel re-entered the Cathedral of Almeria in 1939, they found one of its side chapels completely free of images and altars and full to the roof with sacks of lentils.⁷⁰⁸

Although this reallocation of religious property was driven by practical considerations, it also constituted an ecstatic demonstration of the implantation of workers' new power: a Church seen by anticlericals as repressive and obscurantist had been conquered by the proletarian values of the revolution.⁷⁰⁹ The 'resymbolisation' of religious spaces communicated the disgust which years of exposure to the Church's exorbitant wealth had inspired among worker constituencies. This was evident in the 'proletarianisation' of religious objects which would have appeared extravagant and useless to the revolution's protagonists. Church bells were melted down to make arms, marble flagstones were used to pave political centres, fonts were redeployed as feeding troughs for livestock and wooden statues were burnt to cook food.⁷¹⁰ Militiamen drank wine from chalices or used them to shave with.⁷¹¹ In Albánchez (Almeria), CNT activists who occupied the hermitage of San Roque on the outskirts of the town transformed the portable platform used to carry statues during religious professions into a large table to be employed during political meetings.⁷¹²

Workers who proletarianised the symbols of Catholic power, converting them into practical, useful everyday objects were constructing and proclaiming a new reality in which they had control of their own lives for the first time.⁷¹³ They were using their new power to build a society in which the overlapping, sometimes contradictory political, social, cultural and educative projects which had been developing within the anticlerical

⁷⁰⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/9, 2/218, 4/175, 4/176; ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para 'de Rebus Hispanie'*; CDMH, Fotografías-Kati Horna, foto 51: 'Mujeres esperando en la sacristía su ración de comida', foto 49: 'Alcañiz: Iglesia habilitada como almacén'; Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, pp.35-97; Pedro G. Romero, *Silo: Archivo F.X* (Barcelona: Abadía de Santo Domingo de Silos, 2009), pp.192-97.

⁷⁰⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/480, 2/431.

⁷⁰⁹ Ealham, *Class*, pp. 187-8; González Martínez and Garrido Caballero 'Violencia iconoclasta', p.138.

⁷¹⁰ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 42604/4253, Ángel Campos López; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/120, 2/204, 2/402, 2/147, 2/155, 2/156, 2/478, legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 60474; ADM, Caja 1/48, *Tercera relación de informes*.

⁷¹¹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/103, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/80, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/77, 6/33, 5/12, 5/174.

⁷¹² AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/450.

⁷¹³ On this 'reconstruction of reality' through symbols, see Raymond Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p.73.

worker's public sphere since the late nineteenth century could finally be thrust into the light. As counter-hegemonic projects became hegemonic ones – at least on a local scale – anticlerical protagonists attempted to banish Catholic hierarchy, superstition and oppression to the annals of history.

This goal of 'converting...spaces of darkness and obscurantism into spaces of light and reason' is best demonstrated by the transformation of churches and convents into social, cultural and educational community focal points.⁷¹⁴ In Alcoy (Alicante), the local committee constructed an Olympic-size municipal swimming pool using the stone blocks which had formed the walls of the town's most important church. In Almeria capital, the Church of San Augustin was also converted into public swimming baths.⁷¹⁵ The founding of Alcalá de Henares' Antifascist Women's Centre in the *Iglesia de las Siervas de María*; the transformation of Almeria's *Convento del Servicio Domestico* into an anarchist-run popular kitchen; the establishment of a dancehall in the parish church of Torres de la Alamada near Madrid: all of these actions forged new community bonds based upon a shared proletarian and antifascist identity.⁷¹⁶ The cinemas and theatres which were installed in countless churches – especially in small towns and villages – were crucial in reinforcing community links through socialisation and shared cultural experience. In the *pueblos* around Madrid, the overwhelming majority of parish churches were refurbished as cinemas.⁷¹⁷ The movie theatres, which would have shown a mixture of propaganda films, commercial productions and children's films, were a striking manifestation of the Church's literal and symbolic ousting from the centre of society. Crucially, in a period filled with personal and collective loss and suffering, they also provided 'a space in which people could dream...a respite from their immediate painful predicament.'⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁴ Ealham, *Class*, p. 187.

⁷¹⁵ Miguel Ors Montenegro and José Miguel Santacreu Soler, *La Guerra Civil en la Comunidad Valenciana, Vol. 9: Violencia y represión en la retaguardia* (Valencia: Editorial Prensa Valenciana, 2006), p.91; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.354; López Martín, *Pisadas*, p.144.

⁷¹⁶ ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/4, *Informes de las parroquias*, Caja 1/10, *Relación de las Iglesias*; ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera.

⁷¹⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/53, 3/59, 4/58, legajo 1907-4: *Documentos del periodo republicano*; legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/262; ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/10, *Relación de las iglesias*, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para 'de Rebus Hispanie'*.

⁷¹⁸ Graham, *Civil War*, P.79; Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, pp. 41-3; Ealham, 'Maddened Crowd', p.129.

The secular schools installed in ecclesiastical structures were another crucial plank in the construction of this new society of ‘light and reason’.⁷¹⁹ Workers who rejected the Church’s use of education as an ideological weapon - many of whom had been educated in or collaborated with alternative socialist, anarchist and republican secular educational centres before and during the pre-war Republican period - had been left frustrated by the failure of republican secularisation measures. They now set out to build the lay education system which the Republic had failed to give them.⁷²⁰ In Alcaudique (Almeria), villagers sacked the parish church immediately after the coup. The still-functioning town council of nearby Berja – which now existed alongside the newly constituted local committee - swiftly went about organising the building’s conversion into a public school, encouraging local people to donate money to fund the necessary building work.⁷²¹ In the town of Canjáyar (also in Almeria), the rectory served as both the school and the teacher’s living quarters. Seventy kilometres away in Pechina, the nuns’ convent was redeployed as a nursery school.⁷²²

In *pueblos* across Asturias, primary schools previously staffed by religious personnel and managed by the *Hullera Española* – a mining company hated by workers due to its exploitative practices and its attacks upon independent labour unions – were seized by local committees after the coup with the aim of reorganising them as secular education centres. Spaces where workers’ children had been taught to accept their place within the social order and to be grateful for Catholic charity would now form the foundations of a new secular society.⁷²³ In eastern Aragón, Augustin Souchy Bauer observed that many communities where anarchism was the predominant proletarian political force had founded schools in former convents which followed the philosophy of Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, the Barcelonan freethinker who founded the secular Modern School in 1901.⁷²⁴

In communities across Republican Spain, people were making revolutionary attempts to build the secular educational system which would underpin the new order. However, their revolution was far from homogeneous. Newly created militia groups; village and neighbourhood committees; patrols; previously existing unions and political

⁷¹⁹ ‘Light and reason’ in Ealham, ‘Maddened crowd’, p.123.

⁷²⁰ CDMH, PS-Madrid, Caja 304, legajo 2668; Caja1591, legajo 2672.

⁷²¹ Ruiz Fernández, *Berja*, p.144.

⁷²² AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/304, 2/480.

⁷²³ CDMH, PS-Santander, Caja 13, exp. 28; Callahan, *Catholic Church*, p.323.

⁷²⁴ Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, pp. 35-37.

organisations; still existent yet fragmented municipal bodies; neighbours who collaborated with these powers within communities: each one had a different individual understanding of what the revolution meant and which new order was being constructed.⁷²⁵ The transformation of religious spaces into political headquarters was, of course, necessary for the administration and organisation of the community; it was also an enormously symbolic demonstration of the destruction of the old reactionary Catholic power and its replacement with workers' politics. However, in a context of atomised power and political rivalry, it also became a way for political groups to secure and affirm publicly their 'space' within the new order.⁷²⁶

In the countryside around Madrid, where, as we have seen, the socialist FNTT was the prevalent form of worker organisation, rectories were quickly marked out in towns and villages as new *casas del pueblo*. In many cases, the president of the *casa* also went to live in the building.⁷²⁷ In communities where the priest had been the 'lord and master', his previously closed and isolated house moved from the 'darkness' to the 'light', becoming a centre of worker socialisation and political education.⁷²⁸ The action also immediately secured a highly visible position for the socialist organisation within the new order. In rural Almeria, where the FNTT similarly dominated the labour movement, gutted churches in the towns of Huercal, Canjáyar and Vera were occupied rapidly by local Socialist Workers' Societies.⁷²⁹ In Madrid's city centre, the grandiose *Seminario Mayor* – where novice priests had been trained before the July 1936 – was used as a centre of the JSU. On one hand, this transformation symbolised the triumph of a new logic and set of beliefs over the superstitious, outdated ones of the past. On the other, it allowed the expanding communist movement – which was mobilising people rapidly across class and age boundaries with its amorphous patriotic, optimistic message regarding the war effort - to secure physical and political space.⁷³⁰

As workers' political organisations imprinted their new power onto the architecture of villages, towns and cities, middle class republican political parties – generally excluded from the new workers' bodies formed after the coup – strove to recapture lost

⁷²⁵ Ledesma, 'Qué violencia', pp. 83-113.

⁷²⁶ González Martínez and Garrido Caballero, 'Violencia iconoclasta', p.146.

⁷²⁷ ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/7, *Información de las parroquias*, Caja 1/49, *Tercera Relación*.

⁷²⁸ 'Lord and master' in Souchy Bauer, *Peasants*, pp. 108-9.

⁷²⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/287, 2/304, 2/269.

⁷³⁰ ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Cosas sagradas*; Graham, *Republic*, pp.131-214.

physical and political space. Almería's Central Antifascist Committee, which contained only representatives of workers' parties and unions, effectively usurped the City Council and the Civil Government following the coup.⁷³¹ The leaders of *Izquierda Republicana*, finding themselves suddenly surplus to requirements, quickly set up their *Agrupación Local* in the former Dominican Convent, aiming to reassert their diminished public presence while simultaneously affirming their anticlerical credentials.

⁷³² As was mentioned in chapter three, and as the next section will demonstrate, anticlerical violence and iconoclasm became crucial means of opening, securing and protecting 'spaces of political power and authority' for its protagonists.⁷³³

Obtaining political spaces

After 17-18 July, as innumerable committees, 'investigation groups', patrols and columns struggled to articulate, establish and consolidate themselves, violence against religious property and personnel became a way for these new micro-powers to create political spaces for themselves in the quickly developing and unstable revolutionary order. The government's arming of the workers in response to the coup provoked the invasion of public spaces by weapons and the sudden legitimisation of violence as a means of defending the community. As individuals and groups – most of who had arms and power for the first time in their lives - rushed to impose competing meanings upon their improvised revolution, the implementation, control and prevention of repressive practices against the clergy and other perceived enemies became a key source of authority, power and legitimacy in a social order under construction.⁷³⁴

Anticlerical violence was used in the rural world by newly constituted local committees to announce their arrival and to affirm their revolutionary credentials, thus defending themselves against challenges to their new authority.⁷³⁵ As chapter six, 'The Physiognomy of Anticlerical Violence', will explore, these challenges sometimes came from within the community, but were more commonly mounted by militia columns arriving from urban conurbations or from neighbouring rural localities. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the highly symbolic operation of publicly destroying the church's

⁷³¹ Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, pp. 86-88; Aguilera Gómez, *La historia silenciada*, pp.125-27.

⁷³² *Diario de Almería*, 11/09/1936 in Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, p.93.

⁷³³ The phrase is José Luis Ledesma's. 'Qué violencia para qué retaguardia', pp.106-7.

⁷³⁴ Ledesma, 'Santa ira popular', pp.151-53, 179-80; Ledesma, 'Qué violencia', pp.106-7; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, p.244.

⁷³⁵ González Martínez and Garrido Caballero, 'Violencia iconoclasta', p.144.

contents or punishing the priest served as a revolutionary rite of passage in many communities.⁷³⁶ In numerous towns and villages, the first acts carried out by committees were the detention of the priest and the burning of the church's liturgical artefacts. Between 22 and 23 July in Vallecas (Madrid), the local people who burned the contents of the parish church on an enormous bonfire and dug up religious remains carried out these actions on the orders of the newly constituted local committee.⁷³⁷

In other places, the order was inverted: people used recognition and legitimacy gained through committing iconoclastic acts to secure their places on the committee. In the tiny village of Huebro (Almeria), a group of local men – some affiliated to the FNTT, some to the CNT, one affiliated to IR, and some who had no political affiliation - detained the village priest on 20 July. They then collaborated with men from the neighbouring town of Nijar in the sacking of the church, the smashing of its altars and the public burning of images and objects of worship. One of the men, Antonio Gaitán Suárez, was seen participating in the iconoclasm armed with a shotgun confiscated from the priest. Gaitán Suárez, along with another of the protagonists, Cayetano Nieto Torres, was subsequently chosen to represent Huebro on Nijar's Local Popular Front Committee, which assumed responsibility for both localities.⁷³⁸

The above examples demonstrate that on a local level, anticlerical violence – or merely the threat of that violence - enabled individuals to advance rapidly within the evolving political and social order. Across Republican Spain, people who had little or no experience of political responsibility took their places on town, village and neighbourhood committees, forming part of what José Luis Ledesma calls the 'new leading minority'.⁷³⁹ The committee of the village of Nuevo Baztán in Madrid provides an example of this minority's ascent. Of the five committee members which this study has identified, four were day labourers and one was a peasant smallholder. Although they had all belonged to the FNTT before the coup, not one of them had occupied a leadership post within the organisation. On 2 August 1936, less than two weeks after the committee was formed, these men – along with two more 'armed guards at the orders of

⁷³⁶ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, p.253 and 'Santa Ira Popular', p.166.

⁷³⁷ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 60201/3220, Pedro Verdugo Vicente, Tomas Viajandre Mariscal, Pilar Martínez Cadenas, Consejo de Guerra 48637/1131, Pilar Martínez Cadenas; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Vallecas*.

⁷³⁸ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 44/19.094, Antonio Gaitán Suarez y Otros.

⁷³⁹ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, p-238-40.

the committee' - participated in the killing of the priest of the neighbouring village of Corpa. The assassination, carried out when the men discovered their victim hiding in some fields between the two localities, was a vivid demonstration of the protagonists' new power, and their assumption of the role of protectors of the community.⁷⁴⁰

Committees tried to cement their monopoly on the violence – and thus upon their own power - by assuming complete responsibility for the detention and judgment of 'enemies' and for the 'cleansing' of the community. To do this, they relied upon a wide network of collaborators, many of whom had not been politically active before the coup, who were eager to carve a niche for themselves within the new order. The unpleasant business of patrolling the locality, helping to elaborate blacklists, and denouncing and detaining suspected 'fascists' was invariably carried out by these shadowy 'militiamen and women at the service of the committee.' In the small town of Gádor (Almeria), a group of young day labourers armed by the committee carried out patrols and detained rightists who had been denounced by local people in the first months after the coup. Three of them, all younger than twenty-five and all impatient to share in the new revolutionary power, coordinated the sacking of the church and the destruction of its images in August 1936.⁷⁴¹ In the town of Belmonte in Cuenca, another young day labourer turned 'militiaman at the disposition of the committee', Ángel Campos López, was involved in the searching of convents and seminaries, the destruction of religious objects, and the detention of four of the town's *Padres Trinitarios* monks, who were imprisoned and later assassinated.⁷⁴²

This network of militiamen and community members, with the local committee at the centre endeavouring to control the violence, emerged in most of the towns and villages which remained in Republican territory after the coup. The situation in cities was more complex. In order to achieve power and prestige, new groups needed to compete with innumerable rival micro-powers, all of whom aimed to 'control the

⁷⁴⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 20,424/109,267; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 2430/111111, Ángel Altares Velilla, Consejo de Guerra 84/53799 Celestino Arias Fernández, Florentino González Alonso, Pablo García Díaz, Agustín Ortega García, Desiderio Consentini García, Lucio Díaz Alonso.

⁷⁴¹ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 382/11487, Emilio Gómez Camacho y Otros.

⁷⁴² AMM, Consejo de Guerra 42604/4253, Ángel Campos López; Pedro Aliaga Asensio, *Entre palmas y olivos: mártires trinitarios de Jaén y Cuenca* (Córdoba-Madrid: Trinitarios Provincia España Sur, 2007), pp.71-107.

disorder' using violent practices.⁷⁴³ In Madrid, in the first few weeks after the coup, a multitude of political parties, trade unions and newly formed militia groups set up squads to eliminate 'enemies'. Anxious for a stake in the administering of 'popular justice', they established *checas* in requisitioned buildings, many of which were former convents and churches. They also formed 'revolutionary tribunals' to judge detainees. According to the *Causa General*, almost two hundred *checas* existed in the city during first few weeks after the coup.⁷⁴⁴ These groups used the infamous *paseo* to assassinate members of the clergy in the first months of the conflict. Religious personnel also perished in *sacas* (the removal of prisoners from jail and their collective execution).

In the summer of 1936, in the Spanish capital, a city which Julián Casanova describes as 'one big *checa*', any group wanting to situate itself within the new order needed to utilise this repressive repertoire.⁷⁴⁵ The militiamen who occupied the Church of El Carmen belonged to a new group which, like all the other busily producing micro-powers, aimed to open and secure a political space. The group's attempts to win notoriety and respect included the establishment of a *checa* in the church's side chapels, the detention of a handful of rightist and religious prisoners, and the execution by *paseo* of one Falangist.⁷⁴⁶ A close examination of events at the church reveals that the group's actions were aimed primarily at building a revolutionary reputation. Firstly, the leader of the politically heterogeneous group, José Olmeda, set up the *checa* using a falsified order from the CNT. He then distributed fake CNT membership cards to the group's members, who ranged from anarchist sympathisers to apolitical teenagers. The militiamen, not one of whom was actually affiliated to the CNT, were then accepted by the press and other micro-powers alike as the 'anarchist militias of the Church of El Carmen'.⁷⁴⁷

This tactic of linking the group to the anarchist trade union, one of the key players in the new revolutionary situation, was a clear bid to win political capital and respect. The militiamen were not alone in employing this strategy. As we saw in chapter three, a

⁷⁴³ Casanova, 'Rebelión y Revolución', p.117.

⁷⁴⁴ CDMH, PS-Madrid, caja 452, legajo 538; *Causa General*, *La dominación roja en España*, pp.83-92; Cervera Gil, *Madrid en guerra*, pp.64-72; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.356.

⁷⁴⁵ Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp. 170-72, 197-99, 340-41; Ledesma, 'La Santa Ira Popular' in *Culturas y Políticas de la Violencia*, p.159.

⁷⁴⁶ CG legajo 1530-2, exp. 10/1-10/43, legajo 1557, exp.2/3; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramon Caballero Tato.

⁷⁴⁷ *ABC*, 01/08/1936; *CNT*, 07/08/1936.

significant proportion of those who committed anticlerical acts after July 17-18 1936 had not been politically active before the coup. Some, like José Olmeda, saw an opportunity to secure a political space in the new revolutionary situation. Others, such as Francisco Sacristan Meller, a sixteen-year-old boy from a Catholic family who was hiding at the church under the group's protection, used anticlericalism to avoid being seen as enemies of the new order.

The nature of the *checa*, and of 'revolutionary justice' at the Church of El Carmen also reveals much regarding the group's 'political space building'. In a period where the *paseo* became a widespread means of administering brutal, immediate punishment, the group executed just *one* prisoner during its six week occupation the church.⁷⁴⁸ This reluctance to carry out killings was linked to the strange atmosphere of amiable cohabitation which emerged between prisoners and militiamen. Manuel González, a priest detained by the group, declared before the *Causa General* that the militiamen treated him 'with respect and even with affection', taking his constant attempts to turn the radio down and to dissuade them from committing 'sacrilegious' acts in good humour. On one occasion, they refused to hand the priest over to another militia group which arrived at the church demanding to know why he had not been killed. These details suggest that the somewhat anomalous single *paseo* was probably carried out to send a message to competing micro-powers regarding the group's status as a 'serious' revolutionary power. Significantly, the victim was a Galician Falange leader, something which avoided the guilt connected to selecting a victim from within the community.⁷⁴⁹

The exhibition of mummies exhumed from the church's crypt and the burlesque imitations of religious ritual staged for the visiting public were another part of the bid for notoriety. The militiamen, who were essentially acting in their own neighbourhood and defending a small slice of carefully selected terrain, were probably unaware of just how far the impact caused by their daring iconoclasm would resonate. The CNT newspaper and the *ABC* (the old monarchist newspaper, now under Republican control) both ran articles in the first week of August describing the macabre 'discoveries'. The

⁷⁴⁸ Juan García Oliver, *El eco de los pasos* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1978), p.347.

⁷⁴⁹ AMM, Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramón Caballero Tato; CG legajo 1530-2, exps. 10/1-10/43.

ABC article mentioned the protagonists by name and featured a photograph of the group dressed in religious garments posing with skulls and religious objects. Although the edition which contained the photograph was immediately withdrawn by order of the Republican police, the spectacular exercise in reputation building had already achieved more than its desired effect.⁷⁵⁰

The CNT's reaction to the group's activities displays how existing political organisations sought to defend their own positions by controlling violence committed by new micro-powers, thus maintaining a monopoly upon repressive practices. By the end of August, the Republican authorities in Madrid were taking their first tentative and highly problematic steps towards 'stemming the revolutionary tide' of unauthorised violent acts.⁷⁵¹ The CNT leadership in Madrid, in contrast, acted swiftly, violently and expeditiously when faced with a challenge to its reputation and power. When investigations revealed that the group had falsified their CNT cards and stolen valuable objects from the church, Amor Nuño Pérez, secretary of the Madrid Federation of the CNT, ordered their detention. Olmeda and his girlfriend were brought to summary trial and executed; the remaining members were sent to the front. The church, meanwhile, was placed under the custody of Manuel González, the priest who had lived there.⁷⁵²

This case shows that conditions in Spain's cities allowed new groups to achieve power and status rapidly – even if that power was unstable and transitory. The fragmentation of power also permitted ambitious individuals to use violence in order to advance within the new, fragmented hierarchy. Although Almeria's tangle of emergent powers was smaller and less chaotic than in Madrid, the new situation nevertheless worked in favour of previously powerless individuals in search of political space. In Almeria, the Central Antifascist Committee replaced the still existent yet entirely ineffective Republican municipal authorities.⁷⁵³ The story of one of the committee's FAI representatives, Juan del Águila Aguilera, who we met briefly in chapter three, is a dramatic example of one individual's vertiginous, violent ascent. Before the military

⁷⁵⁰ Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.64, 431-32; *CNT*, 07/08/1936; *ABC*, 01/08/1936; Jato Miranda, *Madrid*, p.280.

⁷⁵¹ 'Tide' in Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.390-91; Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, pp.174-79.

⁷⁵² CG legajo 1530-2, exps. 10/1-10/43, legajo 1557, exp.2/3; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 353/17862, Carmen Corao Monterde y Ramón Caballero Tato; Cervera Gil, *Madrid en guerra*, p.62.

⁷⁵³ Quirosa, *Almería 1936-1937*, pp. 88-100; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 19.340/39, Cayetano Martínez Artés in Eusebio Rodríguez Padilla, 'Cayetano Martínez Artés'.

uprising, del Águila, a twenty-four-year-old Almerian chauffer who had belonged to the anarchist movement since his late teens, enjoyed neither power nor prestige in Almeria. He participated in the defeat of the coup in Barcelona, where he was on the run from the police, wanted for his role in the 1934 murder of an industrialist. When del Águila returned to his newly proletarianised home city in late July and presented himself at FAI headquarters, he was chosen to represent the organisation on the Central Antifascist Committee. The committee, no doubt impressed by his revolutionary credentials and the friendship he claimed to enjoy with famed Barcelonan anarchists like Buenaventura Durruti and Francisco Ascaso, put him in charge of the newly constituted Delegation of Prisoners and Public Order.

Del Águila, suddenly one of the most powerful men in Almeria, worked assiduously to secure the Delegation's monopoly on repression. Acting without the explicit authorisation of the Central Committee, the Delegation carried out at least seven *sacas* from the city's jails during August and September 1936. The bishops of Almeria and Guadix, two of a long list of the *sacas*' ecclesiastical victims, were executed along with six priests and seven laymen at the end of August. These anticlerical killings, despite being carried out at night and shrouded in secrecy, quickly became public knowledge.⁷⁵⁴ According to testimony given by del Águila at his 1940 military trial, the Delegation also endeavoured to track down and punish the culprits of killings committed without its consent.⁷⁵⁵ The expeditious 'justice' implemented by del Águila directly challenged the authority of Almeria's 'Special Popular Tribunals', which were created at the end of August as part of the central government's strategy to curb extrajudicial violence by re-establishing control of the machinery of coercion.⁷⁵⁶ From early November 1936 onwards, as Almeria's Civil Governor Gabriel Morón worked to restore authority to the Republican municipal authorities, the Delegation was gradually divested of its functions. When it was officially outlawed in January 1937, del Águila, deprived of his

⁷⁵⁴ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 176/2169, Francisco Camacho Enríquez y Otros.

⁷⁵⁵ ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera; Martín del Rey, *Almería roja*, pp. 61-70; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp. 273-77; Quirosa, 'Anticlericalismo en Almería', pp. 192-95.

⁷⁵⁶ Peinado Vallejo, *Cuando la muerte*, pp. 238-42; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp. 141-44.

high profile role in the home front's power structure, became just another FAI activist.⁷⁵⁷

As we saw in chapter three, another group who used anticlerical violence to create political space within the emerging new order were the rural and urban middle classes. It is perfectly possible that some middle class protagonists attacked the Church because they genuinely saw its disappearance as crucial to the forging of a new egalitarian society. However, it is also probable that, driven by a still widely prevalent clientelist notion of politics, they pinned their colours to the anticlerical mast in order to avoid being left out in the cold as the new revolutionary order took shape.⁷⁵⁸ Examples of middling sectors using anticlerical violence and iconoclasm as an opportunity for upward social mobility abound in urban and rural localities. In María, a mountain town to the north of Almeria, the local committee coordinated the sacking of the church and the destruction of its images in September 1936. The iconoclasm, far from being instigated by the town's disenfranchised, exploited day labourers, was directed by a committee dominated by the 'rural mesocracy'. The committee's members included a *labrador*, an *agricultor*, a *comerciante*, a postman and a primary school teacher. In July 1936, all of these men would have possessed far more social and economic capital than the committee's two day labourers. A number of the men, such as Juan Miguel Bautista Herrero, a *comerciante* (a term used to describe small business owners and traders) and President of *Izquierda Republicana* in María, had already occupied positions of political power before the coup. Symbolic iconoclastic acts served to ensure that they did not lose this power in the new revolutionary context.

With lower middle class sectors at the helm, the committee's anticlericalism was far less radical than initial appearances suggested. One woman whose house was searched by FNTT-affiliated *agricultor* and committee member Tomas Martínez Cerezuela at the beginning of the conflict revealed that on finding several statues of saints hidden in a drawer, he told her 'not to worry at all, and that nothing would happen to her, because he had saints in his house as well.' Another of the committee's members, the *industrial*

⁷⁵⁷ ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera; Rodríguez Padilla, 'Cayetano Martínez Artés'; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, p. 173; Rafael Quirosa-Cheyrouze y Muñoz, 'El final de la guerra civil: Almería, marzo de 1939', *Andalucía en la historia*, No. 5 (2004), pp.27-31.

⁷⁵⁸ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.240-41.

(small scale industrialist) Luis Martínez Merlos, retrieved a statue of María's patron saint, the Virgen de la Cabeza, from a sanctuary on the outskirts of the town in the first moments after the coup. It remained hidden in his family home until the end of the conflict.⁷⁵⁹ In late November 1936, when Morón began to recentralise power in the province, replacing committees with town councils, the committee's more affluent members welcomed the return to the pre-coup status quo (a status quo which did not, however, include religious normality). The majority of them were made councillors and Bautista Herrero became deputy mayor.⁷⁶⁰

This use of anticlericalism to win social capital also occurred in metropolitan Spain. One *comerciante* from Almeria, José Hernández Barroso, who later served as a juror on the city's Special Popular Tribunals, was condemned by a military court in 1942 for his participation in the *sacas* of August and September. Hernández Barroso, who had not been politically affiliated before the coup, joined the FAI in the first days of the conflict. He was subsequently seen on the prison ship *Astoy Mendi* reading out the names of detainees who were to be driven to the *Pozos de Tabernas* (a cluster of natural holes in the desert to the north of the city) and executed.⁷⁶¹ Also in Almeria, lawyer Enrique Juan Escobar Benavente, who had been secretary of Felipe Sánchez Román's moderate, middle class *Partido Nacional Republicano* until its dissolution following the February 1936 elections, strove to link himself with the fiery anticlericalism of the moment. At the beginning of the war, Escobar Benavente formed part of the crowd which attacked the Convent of Santo Domingo; he also searched the building with his brother, seizing religious objects and books. In mid August, this moderate republican turned anticlerical revolutionary wrote to the FAI, offering his unconditional services to them as 'just another worker' in the 'fight against papal fascism'. Eager to collaborate in the cleansing of the home front, he also denounced his neighbours several times before Almeria's Central Antifascist Committee because they listened to *Radio Nacional*, the insurgent radio station broadcast from Seville.⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/78, 4/327, 4/328.

⁷⁶⁰ 'Saints' in ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 224/2088 Luis Martínez Merlos; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/75, AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/434; Boletín Oficial de Almería (BOA), 26/02/1937, p.1

⁷⁶¹ ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 176/2169, Francisco Camacho Enríquez.

⁷⁶² Quotes from ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 19012/430, Enrique Juan Escobar Benavente; *Lista de abogados del ilustro Colegio de Almería* (Imprenta Rivera, October 1932); Pérez Montoya, *Las derechas almerienses*, p.131.

As individual bourgeois republicans jumped hurriedly onto the revolutionary anticlerical bandwagon, the fragmented and virtually powerless Republican municipal authorities also used iconoclasm to regain lost political space. Although town councils and Civil Governors never condoned anticlerical violence, they frequently played a part in the dismantling of monuments and the renaming of streets. In Navalcarnero near Madrid, the town council continued to exist alongside the newly formed committee after July 1936. In September, the deputy mayor called three day labourers affiliated to the *Casa del Pueblo* to his office and ordered them to remove and destroy the images from the parish church. On leaving the building, the men went to the church, loudly proclaiming that they had been ordered to burn the saints. They collected the images and took them to the outskirts of the town, ringing the church bells to summon local people to the burning. ‘Amid great laughter’, the men burned most of the images and threw the rest into a ravine.⁷⁶³

These attempts by municipal authorities to repair their battered prestige by seizing the iconoclastic initiative were also seen in Almería at the end of July 1936. On receiving word that local people intent upon tearing down the city’s monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus had congregated on the Hill of San Cristóbal, the mayor, Antonio Ortiz Estrella, sent municipal stonemason and IR member Manuel Palenzuela Cuerva to the hill to ‘direct’ the demolition.⁷⁶⁴ His appeals for scaffolding to be erected and for the statue to be dismantled ‘calmly’ fell on deaf ears. As the frustrated municipal employee left the scene, the monument was blown up with firecrackers.⁷⁶⁵ In Getafe, the town council also tried to stake a claim in the iconoclastic dismantling of the monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Hill of Los Ángeles. Following its demolition by militiamen, the mayor of Getafe approved the changing of the hill’s name to the ‘Red Hill’; he also published a letter in republican daily newspaper *El Liberal* praising the destruction of an ‘anti-aesthetic monument’ which had transformed the hill into a ‘vipers nest of people without consciences’. Finally, he proposed that church bells be

⁷⁶³ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3 Madrid, pieza No. 10, Sumario 25,161.

⁷⁶⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/290; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 305/1210, Manuel Palenzuela Cuerva.

⁷⁶⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1853-3 Madrid, pieza No. 10, Sumario 25,161; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 25161/4620, Esteban Lucas Valdes, Manuel Cañaverál Alonso y Julián Rodríguez Plaza; López Martín, *Diego Ventaja Milán, Obispo Mártir*, p.142.

melted down across Spain to construct a monument to the ‘heroic achievement’ of the militias who had defeated the military coup.⁷⁶⁶

The examples which fill this chapter, and which range from the above-mentioned displaced Republican authorities, through to newly empowered committee members, indicate that during the revolutionary period which followed the military coup, diverse actors used anticlerical violence to reconfigure the power structures of their communities, redrawing external boundaries and reordering public spaces. Their actions, although sometimes chaotic in appearance and frequently improvised according to the necessities of the moment, cannot be described as illogical or irrational. Indeed, it seems far more reasonable to argue that the heterodox, overlapping network of individuals and micro-powers which emerged after 17-18 July 1936 suffered from an ‘excess’ of logic. Anticlerical violence – along with all forms of revolutionary violence – was used by a hugely heterogeneous tapestry of competing individuals and groups as a means of imposing their own meanings and definitions upon a new society under construction, while simultaneously opening and securing physical and political spaces within it.

⁷⁶⁶ Quotes from *El Liberal*, 26/08/1936. See also *Heraldo de Madrid*, 29/08/1936; BOOM, Núm. 1,666, 01/08/1939, *La fiesta de desagravio al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*, p.206; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/29.

Chapter Six: The Physiognomy of Anticlerical Violence

It was reported that in the garden of a suburban villa a religious plaque...was being used as a private praying centre. The local Comité to whom this was reported sent two men with hammers. Seriously, without a vestige of either rage or contempt, they smashed it to bits. Their expressions were exactly those of two conscientious decontaminating officers dealing with a bag of infected linen which had been discovered in a house which was supposed to be free of infection.

British writer Sylvia Townsend Warner describes iconoclasm in Barcelona ⁷⁶⁷

Enter, enter. The door is open; you have opened it yourselves with the fire and iron of hatred. By destroying the Church, you have restored the Church, which was founded for you, the poor, the oppressed, the desperate.

Catholic poet Joan Maragall on 1909's 'Tragic Week' ⁷⁶⁸

This chapter analyses the key characteristics of the violence directed against religious personnel and property at the beginning of the civil war. The previous chapter demonstrated that anticlerical and iconoclastic acts were qualitatively very different from other kinds of revolutionary collective action which were being carried out during the same period. The people who burned churches and killed priests exhibited a rigorous, meticulous dedication to the task of obliterating the Church from the public spaces and body politic of the new society which they were attempting to construct. Their actions, enormously symbolic and often highly public, functioned as a 'revolutionary rite of passage' in innumerable localities. This chapter is a detailed examination of the modalities which anticlerical violence assumed after July 1936; it will explain what the 'performance' of the violence reveals about the motives, imaginaries, and cultural and ideological perspectives of its agents. ⁷⁶⁹

Firstly, following on from chapter five's exploration of anticlerical protagonists' 'excess of logic', this chapter reassesses and problematises long-established images of anticlerical violence as a spontaneous, irrational phenomenon driven by the anger of 'the crowd'. Secondly, the chapter reevaluates the related idea of violence against the clergy as an 'indiscriminate' repression which generated a situation in which, quite simply, 'the churches were burned because they were churches and the priests were shot for being priests.' ⁷⁷⁰ Thirdly, it examines interactions between external and internal

⁷⁶⁷ Townsend Warner, 'Barcelona', pp.140-41.

⁷⁶⁸ Hilari Raguier, 'Joan Maragall y la Semana Trágica', *El País*, 25/7/2009.

⁷⁶⁹ For the interpretative importance of anticlerical violence's forms/'performance', see Vincent, 'Keys', pp.75-76; Delgado, 'Violencia anticlerical', pp.96-98

⁷⁷⁰ Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, p.51.

agents of anticlerical violence during the first few months of the conflict. Many accounts have underlined the role played by people from outside the community in initiating and driving anticlerical violence and iconoclasm. Using documentation from Madrid and Almeria, the chapter examines iconoclastic and anticlerical acts in the tightly knit communities of the rural world in order to construct a complex image of this internal-external dynamic.

Finally, the chapter looks at the presence of numerous religious elements in the anticlerical outburst of July 1936, from the ‘popular sacrophobic fiesta’⁷⁷¹ which often preceded the destruction of religious objects to ritualistic killings of priests. These religious forms reveal a great deal about anticlerical protagonists’ complex relationship with religious belief and popular religious tradition, and more widely about the processes of social change, political mobilisation and secularisation underway in Spain during the early twentieth century. A detailed examination of these four characteristics will allow us to construct an image of the ‘face’ – or faces – of the civil war’s anticlerical collective action.

The ‘myth of the maddened crowd’: re-examining spontaneous ‘mob violence’⁷⁷²

As we saw in the introduction, authors from across the historiographical spectrum have contributed to the construction of an enduring image of the anticlerical violence of 1936 as a spontaneous, irrational destructive explosion protagonised by furious ‘sacrilegious rabbles’, ‘uncouth hordes’ and ‘miserable mobs’. The authors of these accounts, with hugely divergent motives and from radically differing ideological standpoints, have forged a vision of furious crowd violence characterised by chaos, irrationality, criminality and madness. These types of depictions are especially widespread in accounts of church burnings and the destruction of liturgical objects, but are also found in innumerable descriptions of violence against the clergy.⁷⁷³ This section demonstrates that these distorted and ideologically-interested representations have ignored the

⁷⁷¹ Ealham, ‘Maddened Crowd’, p.128.

⁷⁷² Ealham, ‘Maddened Crowd’, pp.111.

⁷⁷³ ‘Sacrilegious rabble’ in BOOM, 16/01/1939, Núm. 1,661, *Circular del Excmo. Sr. Obispo*, 16/05/1939, p.57; ‘Hordes’ in ADM, PPRD, Caja 4/3; ‘Miserable mobs’ in Miguel de Unamuno in Ranzato, *Eclipse*, p.414. See also AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/375; Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, p.144.

complexities of this supposed ‘mob violence’, obscuring the true face of the anticlerical outburst.

This is not to say, of course, that the months after 17-18 July 1936 were devoid of violent anticlerical acts committed by sizeable crowds of angry people. As the Irish republican writer Peadar O’ Donnell observed in 1936, in the sudden absence of state authority, as previously existing constraints upon violent behaviour vanished, the ‘old bruises’ of Church-legitimated repression and Catholic political militancy ‘stung like new welts.’⁷⁷⁴ In this context, numerous actors took advantage of the anonymity and diffusion of responsibility afforded by membership of ‘the crowd’ in order to discharge years of accumulated anticlerical resentment and anger against religious property. Certain eyewitnesses have emphasised the disorderly, impassioned nature of this collective destruction. The socialist writer and broadcaster Arturo Barea, for example, who witnessed multiple church burnings in central Madrid on 19 July, described crowds filled with screaming, applauding, excited people. In front of the Church of San Lorenzo, he recalled seeing ‘a frenetic multitude howling and dancing, almost in the flames themselves.’⁷⁷⁵

However, firsthand accounts like this one, of corybantic, unrestrained mass collective action against ecclesiastical property, are not the norm. To begin with, in cases where church burnings and other iconoclastic acts *were* carried out and observed by crowds, a diverse range of eyewitnesses have emphasised the orderly, disciplined behaviour of participants. The fervently Catholic correspondent for *The Times*, Lawrence Fernsworth, saw numerous religious buildings and their contents being destroyed in Barcelona following the defeat of the coup. As he toured the smouldering religious edifices of the ‘flame-streaked’ Catalan capital on 20 July, he discovered ‘orderly crowds’ laughing at the destruction of liturgical objects. According to Fernsworth, these crowds behaved, ‘not as excited mobs but calmly as spectators observing a spectacle.’⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁷⁴ ‘Welts’ in O’Donnell, *Salud!*, p.68. See also Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp.193-93.

⁷⁷⁵ Barea, *Llama* pp.144-47.

⁷⁷⁶ Quotes from Fernsworth, *Struggle*, pp.192-200 and *The Times*, 23/07/1936, 24/07/1936. See also Paul Preston, *We Saw Spain Die: Foreign Correspondents in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Constable, 2009), pp.11-12; Ealham, *Class*, pp.186-89.

Fernsworth was not alone. The Austrian sociologist Franz Borkenau, who witnessed a church burning in Barcelona's Plaza de Cataluña on the night of 5 August, had imagined that the destruction would be characterised by the 'demonic excitement of the mob.' He was left somewhat disappointed by a well organised, businesslike act which seemed more 'administrative' than 'passionate'. With the fire brigade present to prevent flames spreading to adjoining buildings, a small crowd of people contemplated the blaze in silence, 'not regretting the burning, but certainly not very excited about the matter.' They scrupulously obeyed orders – presumably issued by firemen and by the militiamen who coordinated the act - forbidding them from approaching the building.⁷⁷⁷ The British writer Sylvia Townsend Warner presents a similar image of measured, clinical iconoclasm in the Catalan capital. At some point during autumn 1936, Townsend Warner watched two militiamen destroying a religious plaque which had been found in the garden of a suburban villa. The men, who had been sent by the local committee, smashed the image to smithereens 'without a vestige of either rage or contempt' while a quiet crowd of around twelve people looked on. Their facial expressions, Townsend Warner recalled, 'were exactly those of two conscientious decontaminating officers dealing with a bag of infected linen which had been discovered in a house which was supposed to be free of infection.'⁷⁷⁸

This same calm atmosphere of necessary destruction characterised many iconoclastic episodes in the rural world. Borkenau visited the Catalan fishing town of Sitges on 20 August, where he bore witness to a ceremony in which local people's religious possessions were burnt on the beach. Three weeks previously in the same village, Peadar O' Donnell had observed townspeople destroying the parish church's liturgical items. Both events were ordered and coordinated by the local committee and orchestrated by local men, although witness statements suggest that people from other localities collaborated in the destruction. According to both writers, the incidents were marked by a distinct lack of excitement or 'passion' on the part of both direct participants and onlookers. Again, church burning became an 'administrative business', an unpleasant but necessary means to an end. Sitges' iconoclasts were very thorough - the beginning of the conflict also saw the sacking of three hermitages, a sanctuary, four

⁷⁷⁷ Borkenau, *Cockpit*, p. 74.

⁷⁷⁸ Townsend Warner, 'Barcelona', pp.140-41.

chapels and the headquarters of *Acción Social Católica*.⁷⁷⁹ As we saw in chapter five, within innumerable communities the elimination of Catholic symbols became a crucial, ineluctable procedure in the violent forging of a new social structure. The ‘administrative’ approach to iconoclasm displayed in the above examples is a clear indication that many anticlerical protagonists – in both the rural and urban worlds - had creative, constructive goals in mind.

This carefully orchestrated ‘creative destruction’⁷⁸⁰ required planning and coordination. While it can certainly be described as improvised, it was by no means entirely spontaneous. Furthermore, a close reading of the *Causa General* reveals that in both rural and metropolitan Spain, its protagonists were usually small militia groups or local and neighbourhood committees rather than large multitudes. Iconoclastic acts, far from being impassioned explosions of mass fury, were often intricately planned and organised by local committees, occasionally in collaboration with the enfeebled surviving fragments of municipal authority. Committees and local authorities frequently issued written orders or proclamations calling for local people to hand in their religious ornaments, and for churches to be emptied and their contents destroyed. These orders outlined the date, time and specific location of the burning. In many towns, church bells were rung to ensure local people’s attendance at the event.⁷⁸¹ As the Italian historian Gabriele Ranzato notes, these bodies ‘planned and carried out the devastation with the same conscientious and meticulous fervour which they would have invested in the organisation of public works projects.’⁷⁸²

New local powers went to great lengths to coordinate and ‘choreograph’ iconoclastic events. In Albánchez (Almeria), the local committee organised the transportation of religious artefacts from the hermitage and the church to the site of the town’s weekly market on the outskirts of the locality. In a ceremony planned to coincide exactly with the busiest point of Thursday’s market day, the images were transported through the

⁷⁷⁹ ‘Administrative business’ in Borkenau, *Cockpit*, pp.112-13. Details of destruction in Sitges in AHN, CG legajo 1603, exps. 6/20, 6/21, 6/40, 6/41, 6/270-6/280 O’Donnell, *Salud!*, pp.70-78; Donal O’ Drisceoil, *Radical Irish Lives: Peadar O’Donnell* (Cork University Press, 2001), p. 94.

⁷⁸⁰ Ealham, *Class* p.185.

⁷⁸¹ For examples, see ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 365/18945, Alejandro Tapia Jiménez; AHN, CG legajo 1853-3 Madrid, pieza No. 10, Sumario 25,161; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 25161/4620, Esteban Lucas Valdes, Manuel Cañaverl Alonso y Julián Rodríguez Plaza; Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, pp.143-44; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, p.112 (n).

⁷⁸² Ranzato, *Eclipse*, pp.411-12.

streets and burnt while a great proportion of the town's inhabitants looked on.⁷⁸³ In the village of Perales de Tajuña (Madrid), the local committee drove the church's images around the locality in a truck before depositing them in a pre-designated site and burning them.⁷⁸⁴ In Alhama de Almería (Almeria), the town's new powers instructed a number of the locality's rightists (the only people who owned trucks) to transport the church's artefacts to the town's environs for burning.⁷⁸⁵

This carefully planned destruction was also witnessed in Spain's cities. The process of demolishing the brobdingnagian monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Hill of Los Ángeles in Getafe, for example, lasted between eight and ten days, and was the result of collaboration between Getafe's local committee and militia groups from several parts of the province of Madrid. Faced with the far from straightforward task of destroying a twenty-eight metre tall, solid stone sculpture, the determined iconoclasts bore numerous holes in it using gimlets and drills, and filled them with dynamite. By the time 'Jesus' was reduced to rubble on the night of 7 August, his dismantlers had already taken great care in chiselling off all of the sculptural representations carved into the monument's base. Two weeks earlier in Almeria, militia groups had exacted a similarly intricate demolition procedure upon the city's monument to the Sacred Heart.⁷⁸⁶

In places where town and city councils retained some vestige of control following the coup, iconoclastic dismantling work was sometimes planned and orchestrated by municipal bodies themselves. In Girona (the provincial capital of Girona in Catalonia), in the week following the coup, the municipal authorities sent brigades of men to demolish the *Iglesia del Mercadal* and the *Convento de las Bernadas*.⁷⁸⁷ In Castellón de la Plana (the provincial capital of Castellón on the east coast of Spain) the city council ordered the demolition of the city's principal church, the *Iglesia Mayor de Santa María*,

⁷⁸³ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/175, 4/176.

⁷⁸⁴ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Perales de Tajuña*.

⁷⁸⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/422.

⁷⁸⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 5/95, 9/29, legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, causa núm. 65,138, sumario núm. 5260, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/290; AMM, Consejo de Guerra 3343/65138, Benito Alfaro Martín, Consejo de Guerra 52600/4766, María Arredondo Escribano; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 305/1210, Manuel Palenzuela Cuerva; Martín del Rey, *Almería roja*; López Martín, *Pisadas*, p.142.

⁷⁸⁷ Delgado, *Luces iconoclastas*, p.47; Joaquín Pla Cargol, *Gerona histórica* (Gerona: Dalmáu Carles, 1945), p.139.

in September 1936. The building, described by one councillor as a ‘despicable’ monument which undermined the ‘moral order’, was gradually dismantled over the course of several months. Its materials were used in other municipal building projects.⁷⁸⁸

This preoccupation with the ‘moral order’, underscored by a forceful ethical condemnation of the Church and its ministers, strongly pervaded iconoclastic incidents. Across Republican Spain, priceless chalices, paintings and sculptures were hurled onto bonfires or pulverised with hammers. Yet acts of theft motivated by personal gain – although they undoubtedly occurred - appear to have been relatively rare. Indeed, many anticlerical protagonists were eager to demonstrate the contrast between the ethics of the new revolutionary state of affairs, and the Church’s perceived covetousness and profligacy. In the small town of Parla (Madrid), local people burned or destroyed almost the entire contents of the parish church following the coup. However, the local committee collected the kneelers, which had been made by local people and donated to the church, and returned them to their owners.⁷⁸⁹ In Barcelona, Fernsworth noted that: ‘it seemed to be a rule that while you might burn churches, you must not commit robbery, at least not on any personal account.’⁷⁹⁰

By the 1930s, this ‘rule’ appeared to be firmly embedded into popular anticlerical imaginaries. Significantly, a similar code of behaviour had underlain iconoclastic episodes during the pre-war Republican years, especially the May 1931 church burnings. In an account of church burning in Malaga, the British consul, Mr Young – who conducted an extensive tour of the city during the events - recorded that he had not witnessed ‘any act of plunder or personal assault.’ At the door of one church, he recalled seeing ‘a respectable elderly workman...snatching from the hands of departing boys bits of lace and embroidery and with a gesture of disgust throwing them back onto the heap prepared for burning.’ According to republican newspaper *El Sol*, church burning in Madrid had followed a similar procedure: those setting the fires either incinerated objects of value or handed them in to the authorities. As in the summer of 1936, eyewitnesses also underlined the ‘calmness’ and ‘serenity’ of spectators and

⁷⁸⁸ Quotes in AHN, CG legajo 1406, exps. 6/17-6/26, 7/9-7/11, 7/32-7/48; Pelai Pagès, *La guerra civil als Països Catalans* (University of Valencia, 2007), p.242; Ranzato, *Eclipse* pp.411-12.

⁷⁸⁹ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6: *Pueblos: Parla*.

⁷⁹⁰ Fernsworth, *Struggle*, p.198. See also Ealham, *Class* p.127.

participants. Young was profoundly impressed by the actions of crowds which, as he interpreted it, 'were not out for blind destruction, but for systematic reconstruction.'⁷⁹¹

Now, in the radically new context of summer 1936, religious artefacts which were not burned were converted into useful everyday objects, melted down to make arms or sold to finance the war effort. As we saw in chapter five, this process established a firm dichotomy between clerical extravagance and hypocrisy, and the new, proletarian logic of the moment. It is likely that the impulse among militiamen to demonstrate 'moral superiority' increased as searches of church property carried out by militia groups confirmed age-old commonplaces regarding the Church's exorbitant wealth. Reports of the huge quantities of cash, government bonds, jewels and gold found in ecclesiastical buildings or upon the persons of the clergy appeared regularly in the republican press throughout late July August and September 1936, provoking vast popular indignation.⁷⁹²

Against this backdrop, many militiamen handed in money and jewels found during searches of ecclesiastical property to the authorities.⁷⁹³ Furthermore, although vast amounts of religious art were destroyed during the early months of the conflict, a proportion of anticlerical protagonists did take extemporaneous, somewhat chaotic steps to safeguard works of art which they considered to be of cultural or historic value. At one church in Barcelona, shortly after the defeat of the coup, the British writer Ralph Bates volunteered his artistic expertise to a group of iconoclasts who aimed to save 'anything that possibly has artistic or secular value' from the bonfire they had constructed. As part of a hastily improvised 'technical commission', he assisted the church burners in dividing genuine works of art from worthless imitations.⁷⁹⁴ In late July, also in Barcelona, the leader of an FAI patrol which was searching the house of *Unió Democràtica* member Maurici Serrahima demolished a statue of San Francisco

⁷⁹¹ NA: FO371/15774: Young to FO, 20/10/1931 'Calmness and serenity' in *El Sol*, 12/05/1931. See also Juliá Díaz, *Madrid*, p.43.

⁷⁹² *El Liberal*, 27/07/1936, 19/08/1936 01/09/1936; *El Socialista*, 04/08/1936, 15/08/1936, 18/08/1936; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.391; 'The Church in Spain, Report on Conditions by British Clergy', *The Times*, 16/02/1937; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.365-66; 381-82.

⁷⁹³ Federico Escofet Alsina in Preston, *Holocausto*, p.312.

⁷⁹⁴ Langdon Davies, *Barricades*, pp.141-43;

with the words: ‘We are smashing this...because we know it’s a plaster reproduction. Were it the original in wood we certainly would not break it, for it is a work of art.’⁷⁹⁵

It would, of course, be both naive and inaccurate to suggest that such a heterogeneous collection of anticlerical protagonists all shared this respect for art, or that they all saw it as something belonging to ‘the people’, integral to their new society under construction. However, it is undoubtedly true that across Spain, large quantities of ecclesiastical art were saved from burning and protected by militia groups. In many cases, this art was then handed into juntas devoted to safeguarding cultural heritage set up by municipal authorities. In Madrid the national *Junta de Incautación y Protección del Tesoro Artístico*, created by government decree on 23 July 1936, officially assumed responsibility for the task of organising the protection of Republican Spain’s artistic treasures.⁷⁹⁶

It is true that collaboration between the Junta and militia organisations was fraught with problems, largely because many groups who had requisitioned churches and other buildings immediately after the coup were unwilling to surrender the prestige and political space afforded to them as the ‘protectors of heritage’. Yet in spite of this, cases of militia groups spontaneously handing over religious artefacts to the Junta in the early months of the conflict were far from uncommon. In Madrid, a number of empty ecclesiastical properties, including the enormous Church of San Francisco el Grande, were transformed by the Junta into warehouses filled with meticulously catalogued art treasures rescued from ecclesiastical buildings.⁷⁹⁷ In Catalonia, the Generalitat’s ministry of culture, which worked from the first moment to recover artistic objects from churches and convents, received and classified ‘piles of saints and virgins, crucifixes

⁷⁹⁵ Quote appears in Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p.153. On this theme, see also Fernsworth, *Struggle*, p.198; Ealham, ‘Maddened Crowd’, pp.126-28.

⁷⁹⁶ José Álvarez Lopera, *La política de bienes culturales del gobierno republicano durante la guerra civil española*, Vol.I (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1982), pp.59-69; Miguel Cabañas Bravo, *Arte y propaganda en guerra* (Madrid: Subdirección General de los Archivos Estatales, 2007), pp.53-55; Víctor de la Vega Almagro, *Tesoro artístico y guerra civil: el caso de Cuenca* (Cuenca : Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2007), pp.127-33; González Martínez and Garrido Caballero, ‘Violencia iconoclasta’, pp. 139-40.

⁷⁹⁷ Isabel Argerich and Judith Ara, *Arte protegido: memoria de la Junta del Tesoro Artístico durante la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2009), pp.27-35, 43-44, 296; Renau, *Arte en peligro*, p.93; Sir Frederic Kenyon, *Art Treasures of Spain* and James G. Mann, *How Spanish Art Treasures are being Saved*, pp.5-24, LSEA, COLL MISC 0091/18; Stephen Spender ‘Pictures in Spain’, in Murray A. Sperber, *And I Remember Spain: A Civil War Anthology* (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1974), pp.141-42.

and paintings and carvings', many of which were either stored in an isolated church in the Pyrenean town of Olot, or placed in public museums.⁷⁹⁸

The findings outlined above, which display a clear moral purpose and a distinct lack of criminal intent among a significant proportion of the anticlerical protagonists of 1936, introduce significant nuances into the pervasive image of these actors as 'uncontrollable criminals' – or indeed criminals of any type. Indeed, of this study's sample of one hundred and fifty one anticlerical protagonists from Madrid and Almeria, only three are listed as having previous criminal convictions. Of course, historians must not ignore the fact that the wave of grassroots violence which engulfed Republican Spain following the coup indisputably possessed 'an element of sheer criminality.' The opening of the prisons in many localities meant that people who had been jailed for armed robbery, murder and other violent acts were released onto the streets of Republican Spain's towns and cities. These criminals undoubtedly swelled the ranks of newly formed armed groups, vigilante patrols and *checas*, taking advantage of the radically new, chaotic revolutionary situation to commit acts of robbery and murder. Members of the clergy were prominent among their victims, especially in large cities like Madrid and Barcelona.⁷⁹⁹

It is quite possible that some of these recently released prisoners participated in the small but cataclysmic collection of anticlerical killings which were perpetrated by large crowds of people at the beginning of the conflict. These incidents generally occurred in cities and large provincial capitals, places which afforded greater anonymity to protagonists. In Antequera in Malaga, one monk from the city's Capuchin convent, Padre Luis de Valencina, was assaulted by a large mass of enraged people on 3 August 1936 as Red Cross representatives attempted to remove him from his convent on a stretcher in order to take him to hospital. As the crowd overwhelmed the stretcher bearers, vociferating loudly for the friar to be killed, Padre Luis was positioned against a wall and shot dead. When his body fell to the floor, an unidentified protagonist pounded his head in with a rifle butt. The crowd's members, all of them effectively freed from any individual responsibility for the killing in the feverish confusion of the

⁷⁹⁸ Quote from Langdon Davies, *Barricades*, p.139. See also *The Salvage of Catalonia's Historical and Artistic Patrimony* (Comisaria de Propaganda de la Generalitat de Catalunya (1937, Barcelona), LSEA, COLL MISC 0091/29; Romero, *Silo: Archivo F.X.*, p.210-11.

⁷⁹⁹ Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.307-9, 316-17, 355, 357; Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp.192-93.

moment, quickly dispersed, leaving the friar's battered corpse sprawled on the ground.⁸⁰⁰

In Jaén this diffusion of responsibility had similarly deadly results for the monks of the provincial capital's Clarentine convent. On 20 July 1936, as a large concentration of people gathered outside the building to demand that it be searched for arms, the back door was dynamited open by unknown crowd members. As the monks tried to escape, they were 'hunted down' and killed by members of the multitude in the convent grounds and in the surrounding area. Five monks, along with a layman who had been mistaken for a friar by his attackers, perished in the convulsion.⁸⁰¹ A similarly infamous example of unrestrained large-scale collective violence took place in Madrid on 11-12 August when two expeditions of rightwing prisoners from Jaén, who were being transferred to Alcalá de Henares by train, were assaulted by crowds of militiamen and local people who had gathered at the stations of Atocha and Santa Catalina Vallecas respectively. These crowds, whose size and physical and armed force rendered station staff and civil guards incapable of preventing their actions, were comprised of militiamen and local people. Anxious to punish the 'fascist' passengers, they participated in two waves of enraged mass killing which left 204 people – including the Bishop of Jaen, his sister, the Dean of the Cathedral, five priests and a seminarian – dead.⁸⁰²

These striking episodes, however, are exceptional flashpoints in the global picture of the anticlerical violence of 1936. Their tumultuous, frenetic nature should not obscure the fact that most physical violence against religious personnel was not carried out by large, infuriated crowds. As we saw in chapters three and five, actors belonging to the tangled web of armed micro-powers which emerged on Republican territory following the coup were by far the most prolific agents of anticlerical violence in 1936. The overwhelming majority of extrajudicial anticlerical executions were not the work of the 'mobs', 'hordes' and 'multitudes' of Francoist propagandistic legend; they were planned and carried out by members of newly formed bodies like militia patrols, militia

⁸⁰⁰ AHN, CG, legajo 1060: Málaga, pieza No. 10, exps. 9/7, 9/20; Melero Vargas, 'Sobre el asesinato de siete capuchinos', p.43.

⁸⁰¹ AHN, CG, legajo 1009, exps.15/11, 15/12, 15/13, legajo 1009-2, exps. 13/36, 13/37; Sánchez Tostado, *Jaén* pp.101-7; Vincent, 'Keys', pp.74-75

⁸⁰² AHN, CG, legajo 1009-2, exp. 13/5; Sánchez Tostado, *Jaén*, pp. 146-54; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.371-72; Ledesma, 'Santa ira popular', p.159.

groups who operated *checas*, and local committees. The extirpative murders which they perpetrated, far from being the work of exalted madmen, ‘drunk with wicked instincts’⁸⁰³, followed a brutal yet entirely coherent logic: the clergy, as absolute ideological, political and social enemies, had to be punished for their wrongdoings and obliterated from society.⁸⁰⁴ In early August, this logic fell remorselessly upon Cipriano Martínez Gil, the parish priest of El Pardo (Madrid). Imprisoned in the town’s jail by the town’s committee on 21 July, a group of militiamen from the town removed him from the building in August and shot him against the cemetery wall.⁸⁰⁵ The parish priest of the town of Móstoles (Madrid), Ernesto Peces Roldan, was executed by a militia group who detained him in his house, drove him away in a truck, and killed him by the side of the road.⁸⁰⁶

The *paseo*, displayed in the above example, became the anticlerical punishment *par excellence* in rural and urban localities during the first months of the war. Members of the clergy were detained in their homes, convents or monasteries, generally by small groups of men, driven to the outskirts of the locality and shot. This was the fate which befell the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate of Pozuelo de Alarcón (Madrid). On the night of either 23 or 24 July, militiamen from the town arrived at the Oblates’ religious house and detained the seven monks who were supposedly the ‘most prominent fascist sympathizers’. They loaded them into cars, shot them in an undetermined location and abandoned their bodies in the Casa de Campo (the park which separated Pozuelo from the capital).⁸⁰⁷ In Almeria capital, the parish priest of Viator, Antonio Martínez García, was detained by militiamen from his parish on 16 September. The group took the priest, who had been in hiding in the city since the beginning of the conflict, to a bridge near his parish and shot him.⁸⁰⁸ On 1 September, in Carabanchel Alto near Madrid, three cars of assault guards and militiamen arrived at the hospital run by the monks of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God. They ordered the monks to climb into a bus and drove them to a riverbed known as *Charco Cabrera*.

⁸⁰³ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/375

⁸⁰⁴ Casanova, *Spanish Republic*, pp.192-93.

⁸⁰⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/57,9/27, 9/28; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/7, *Sacerdotes Mártires*, Caja 6, *Pueblos: El Pardo*; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, p.390.

⁸⁰⁶ Alfaya, *Río de fuego*, p. 65; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.419-22.

⁸⁰⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/92, legajo1509, exp. 1/68; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.321.

⁸⁰⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/74, 2/75

They told their victims to alight from the vehicle, whereupon they lined them up and shot them.⁸⁰⁹

Examples of these kinds of killings, which were at their peak between late July and September 1936 but which continued into December, are interminable. While they can be described as highly cruel and coldly brutal, they evidently have very little in common with the images of the ‘maddened crowd’ which characterise so many accounts of anticlerical violence. Like the destruction of religious property, anticlerical assassinations were generally carried out by small groups of people who shared a clear purpose. Many historians have pointed towards the ‘indiscriminate’, random nature of these acts, noting that innumerable members of the clergy were executed simply because they belonged to a Church perceived as iniquitous, bellicose and ‘fascist’. While this was undoubtedly the case, these: ‘imputations of randomness’ have further contributed to the forging of an enduring association between anticlerical violence and irrationality.⁸¹⁰ However, as the next section will demonstrate, attacks upon both religious property and religious personnel were often more selective than many accounts have suggested.

Reassessing ‘indiscriminate violence’

The contention that the Spanish clergy suffered indiscriminate persecution during the civil war is widespread among historians. Many ecclesiastical scholars have employed the concept of ‘religious persecution’ in order to present the Church as a blameless victim of the ‘evil’ represented by its attackers.⁸¹¹ Numerous lay historians, meanwhile, have labelled the violence as ‘indiscriminate’. They have based their assertions on the observation that the anticlerical cataclysm of 1936 claimed the lives of large numbers of priests and monks who had not supported the coup, who were involved in demanding social and medical work, and who had no public or political role.⁸¹² After 17-18 July, as fear, anger and long-germinating anticlerical resentment mixed potently with political

⁸⁰⁹ *Orden Hospitalaria de San Juan de Dios: Violencias, profanaciones y asesinatos cometidos por los marxistas en los establecimientos de San Juan de Dios* (Imp. El Día de Palencia, 1938) in AHN, CG, legajo 1913/5: Hermanos de San Juan de Dios; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 6/124, 6/125; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 324-25; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.395-97.

⁸¹⁰ ‘Imputations of randomness’ and irrationality in Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, pp.141-43.

⁸¹¹ Cárcel Ortí, *La gran persecución*, pp.15-17; Guijarro, *Persecución religiosa*, pp.17-19.

⁸¹² Lannon, *Privilege*, pp. 76-77; Ledesma, *Violencia roja y azul*, p.182. de la Cueva, ‘Religious Persecution’, pp.361-62; Vincent, ‘Keys’, p.72; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, p.51.

opportunity, anticlerical protagonists often displayed scant interest in priests' individual profiles, attitudes and actions. Faced with the unpleasant yet urgent task of making the Church 'disappear forever', many attached little importance to ascertaining the individual culpability of their victims.⁸¹³ As Hilari Raguer notes, vengeance was meted out 'against the just and the wicked alike.'⁸¹⁴ According to the Greek political scientist Stathis N. Kalyvas, this replacement of individual guilt with 'the concept of guilt by association' is what makes it possible to draw a distinction between 'indiscriminate' and 'selective' violence.⁸¹⁵

Carabanchel's Brothers of Saint John of God, whose fate was outlined in the previous section, are a case in point. The monks had no history of political militancy and lived in isolation caring for their epileptic patients. Yet the religious order to which they belonged suffered extremely high losses during the conflict's early months. In Calafell (Tarragona), Malaga and Valencia, militia groups took monks from the institutions where they cared for the mentally ill and for sick children and executed them. In Valencia on 4 October 1936, eleven friars from a hospital for poor children run by the order were detained by militiamen affiliated to the FAI and shot on the nearby beach of Cabañal.⁸¹⁶ The *Sanatorio Psiquiátrico de San José* in the town of Ciempozuelos (Madrid), which proportioned medical care to more than a thousand mentally infirm patients, lost fifty-three of its members. The monks were detained by the militiamen from the town on 7 August 1936, taken to the *Dirección General de Seguridad* in Madrid, and jailed in the prison of San Antón. They perished in the November 1936 massacres at Paracuellos.⁸¹⁷

Priests and monks who were involved in social initiatives with workers also found that their benevolent intentions did not save them from extermination.⁸¹⁸ In Almeria, the

⁸¹³ Vincent, 'Keys', p.69.

⁸¹⁴ Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.126

⁸¹⁵ Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, pp.141-43.

⁸¹⁶ *Orden Hospitalaria de San Juan de Dios: Violencias, profanaciones y asesinatos cometidos por los marxistas en los establecimientos de San Juan de Dios* (Imp. El Día de Palencia, 1938), AHN, CG, legajo 1913/5: Hermanos de San Juan de Dios; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/229; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.224-227, 260-65, 284-86.

⁸¹⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/229; ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/28: *Estado actual material y moral de la parroquia de Ciempozuelos*; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.324-25; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.409-10; Marcos, *Testimonio martirial de los Hermanos de San Juan de Dios*.

⁸¹⁸ Lannon, *Privilege*, p.77.

elderly Jesuit monk Manuel Luque Fontanilla had earned a reputation as the ‘Father of the poor’ due to the time which he devoted to visiting the provincial capital’s most deprived districts, talking with their residents, and distributing food, clothes and money. The well-known monk’s frugal existence, and the years which he had spent labouring ‘in any place where poverty exists’ did not save him from death. Detained in late July and incarcerated in city’s Adoratrice convent (which had been turned into a prison), he was moved to the prison ship *Astoy Mendi* in August. Remarks of his fellow clerical prisoners to the effect that: ‘if Father Luque is not saved, none of us will be’ proved prophetic: the Jesuit perished along with numerous other religious and rightwing prisoners in the *sacas* conducted by the Delegation of Public Order and Prisoners at the end of August 1936. One of his assassins, FAI member Rafael del Águila Aguilera, admitted at his trial that among the clerical victims of the *saca*, Father Luque was the only person he recognised.⁸¹⁹

Yet historians must exercise caution when using such examples as proof of the indiscriminate nature of the anticlerical violence of 1936. It is undoubtedly true that many ‘just’ priests and monks - to employ Raguer’s terminology – became the victims of a wave of violence which they had played no direct role in unleashing. However, it is also important to recognise that the only available accounts of the positive sentiments which orders like the Brothers of Saint John of God and priests like Father Luque inspired among worker constituencies come from the politically partial postwar propaganda of the Catholic Church and the Francoist authorities.⁸²⁰ Indeed, as we saw in chapter one, the religious, labour and disciplinary regimes which prevailed in numerous medical and charity institutions run by religious personnel provoked powerful anticlerical resentment in many workers’ communities. Similarly, Catholic ‘charity’, which the clergy frequently used as an ideological weapon, provoked bitter feelings of humiliation and anger among many workers. In the same way, priests who directed social projects at worker constituencies were frequently viewed with extreme suspicion by the targets of their attentions.

⁸¹⁹ ATTMA, Informe 81/17-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/37, 2/38, 2/39, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/30, 3/31, 6/3; Bernardo Martín del Rey, *Vida, Martirio y Muerte del Santo P. Luque* (Almería: Tall. Yugo, 1941), pp.67-99 and *Almería roja*, p.45; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.273-75.

⁸²⁰ See AHN, CG, legajo 1913/5: Hermanos de San Juan de Dios; Martín del Rey, *Almería roja*, p.45.

Contemporary historians may consider themselves capable of distinguishing with ease between the relative ‘culpability’ of a rightist, politically active priest, and a monk devoted to caring for the sick. However, these divisions were incredibly blurred among workers in 1930s Spain. Many religious personnel, due to their status as members of the Church, but also because of their specific actions, were perceived by their attackers as pieces in the all-encompassing jigsaw of clerical dominance and oppression. Indeed, there is some evidence that resentment generated by the ‘apostolic labour’ of certain members of the clergy may have contributed to their deaths. In the workers’ district of Puente de Vallecas (Madrid), the parish priest’s attempts to organise Catholic schools, soup kitchens and other charity initiatives for the poor had been rejected fiercely by local workers during the peacetime Republican period. Faced with unrelenting hostility from the population, the priest had already left the district by July 1936 and was in hiding in central Madrid. He was detained by militiamen on 9 August and incarcerated in the prison of San Antón. He perished in the massacres of Paracuellos on 28 November. While his parishioners may not have directly provoked his detention, they had evidently seen no reason to prevent it.⁸²¹ In central Madrid, a group of militiamen detained one nun from the *Hijas de la Caridad* order, Sor Lorenza Díaz Bolaños, on 17 November 1936 at the flat where she was hiding. They then shot her in a place called Las Vistillas. Sor Lorenza, who had worked at the *Instituto Nacional de Reeducción de Inválidos* in the town of Carabanchel Bajo until July 1936, had been denounced by a local young man who had once been her patient, but who had been expelled from the institution for ‘bad behaviour’.⁸²²

As these examples demonstrate, without a detailed knowledge of how each religious institution was perceived within the community which it served, and how each victim of anticlerical violence was seen by his or her attacker, it is extremely difficult to prove decisively that religious personnel were the victims of indiscriminate repression. Anticlerical violence was a fragmented, decentralised phenomenon which, unlike the repression unfolding in the rebel zone, did not respond to a coordinated plan. Acts of violence against the clergy were perpetrated by a heterogeneous selection of agents spread across a large geographical area. In this context, there were also many cases of

⁸²¹ ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/7, *Sacerdotes Mártires*.

⁸²² ADM, Caja 3/41, *Hijas de la Caridad fusiladas en Madrid*; Rodríguez Sánchez, *El hábito y la cruz*, p.605.

clergy spared from death by their would-be assailants for a variety of reasons which corresponded directly to their locally-known individual profiles; and to factors like their history in the community, their political activity (or lack of it) and their relationships with local people.

In Mojácar in Almeria, for example, the local committee coordinated the destruction of the town's religious objects and the sacking of the church following the defeat of the coup. The parish priest, meanwhile, was informed by the committee that they had no violent intentions towards him, given that he had only arrived in the town on 16 July 1936 and had done nothing to warrant being detained. The relieved priest left his new parish promptly and returned to his family home in nearby Viator.⁸²³ In Sorbas (also in Almeria), one of the leaders of the town's newly formed local committee, Domingo Martínez, arranged for the parish priest and his family to be driven to the relative safety of their hometown of Senés in late July. They remained there, unharmed, until the end of the conflict. Martínez, despite his atheism, and his position at the head of the new, militantly secular revolutionary order in Sorbas, had an enduring personal respect for the priest and had known him since childhood.⁸²⁴ These stories indicate that, at least in the rural world, priests were sometimes spared by revolutionaries on the basis of their specific actions. However, as the following section will demonstrate, local powers' capacity to be 'selective' was frequently undermined by the entry into small towns and villages of militiamen from outside the community.

Forasteros and lugareños: internal and external anticlerical agency

Within innumerable localities, especially small towns and villages, the actions of anticlerical actors who came from outside of a given community played a key role in triggering and impelling anticlerical violence. In the accounts which appear in the *Causa General*, the diocesan archives, and in martyrological texts, local people and parish priests repeatedly emphasise the involvement of *forasteros* (outsiders) in killings of the clergy and in the destruction of religious property. A significant proportion of eyewitnesses and chroniclers, appalled by 'the idea that that such atrocities could be committed by locals, people known by everyone as members of the community',

⁸²³ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/118.

⁸²⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/176.

bluntly refuse to accept that *lugareños* (local people) played any part in the acts.⁸²⁵ The priest of the small town of Piñuecas (Madrid), for example, was asked the following question in a survey sent to him in July 1939 by the diocesan authorities: ‘Were the authors of the outrages from the locality?’ His response was unequivocal: ‘No, no, no!’⁸²⁶

In many tightly knit rural communities, where village solidarities could often transcend politics and class, the entry of armed militia groups, patrols and columns ‘from outside’ provided the trigger that permitted anticlerical violence. This occurred most spectacularly in the Republican eastern half of Aragon. At the beginning of the conflict, roaming militia columns from Catalonia and Valencia en route to the Aragon front entered towns and villages in Zaragoza, Huesca and Teruel and instigated a process which allowed the breaking - and indeed violent trampling - of neighbourly bonds. As armed militiamen alien to the local populace and oblivious to intercommunity loyalties entered rural localities, weapons were thrust into the centre of public space, and legality and ‘normal’ behaviour were replaced by force and firepower. Once this had occurred, local people frequently collaborated with the newcomers in the revolutionary ‘cleansing’ of the community. These ‘outsiders’ then became an alibi to excuse bloodshed committed by – and against – members of the community. A similarly cataclysmic process took place in Catalonia, where roving anarchist patrols served as the detonator of anticlerical assassination in countless rural localities.⁸²⁷

While some militia columns did pass through Almeria and Madrid, patterns of anticlerical collective action were not significantly influenced by their entry in either region. However, in accounts of anticlerical acts in both provinces, the shadowy figure of the *forastero* still looms large. This section will investigate who these ‘outsiders’ were, revealing how interactions between rural and urban localities, and between individual rural vicinities, affected the dynamics of anticlerical violence in both provinces. Within a significant proportion of towns and villages, local people, organised and encouraged by newly formed committees, took the lead in the sacking of the

⁸²⁵ Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.224-25; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/7, *Sacerdotes Mártires*, Caja 4/19, *Borrador de la información pedida para Roma* Caja 6, *Pueblos: Piñuecas*; AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/90; Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, p.240.

⁸²⁶ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Piñuecas*.

⁸²⁷ Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.237-40, 244-55; Preston, *Holocausto*, pp.316-19, 343-45.

community's ecclesiastical buildings and the destruction of its religious objects. This was the case in Álbánchez (in the centre of the province of Almería). According to the testimony of a canon of Almería's cathedral who took refuge in his hometown following the coup, those who publicly burned the images of the hermitage and the parish church in August 1936 'all came from Álbánchez.' Thirty kilometres to the east in Vera, people loaded images, paintings, confessional booths and furniture from the Franciscan convent and the parish church into trucks, drove them to the bullring and burned them. According to the town's parish priest, the 'directors and the actors' of the incident were all from the locality. In San Agustín de Guadalix (northeast of Madrid), 'those from the town' orchestrated the public burning and mockery of the community's religious images in the early days of the conflict.⁸²⁸

In many towns, however, local committees were reluctant to take such striking, irreversible iconoclastic action. On these occasions, the intervention of militiamen from neighbouring towns where the new local authorities had already instigated a process of anticlerical 'cleansing' often served as a detonator for action. In Bacares (45 kilometres north of Almería's provincial capital), where the parish priest appears to have enjoyed an amiable, non-conflictive relationship with local people, the committee constituted following the defeat of the coup allowed worship to continue until 25 July. The town's new leaders displayed no intention of destroying the community's religious objects or detaining the priest. However, in the nearby – and significantly larger and more politically mobilised – mining town of Serón, the new local powers had imprisoned the town's priests and destroyed its religious objects shortly after the defeat of the coup. Throughout late July and early August, Serón's committee repeatedly sent messages to the leaders of Bacares telling them to expel the priest and burn the church. The alternative, they were told, was that their revolutionary neighbours would arrive to resolve the problem 'with dynamite and hand bombs'. The committee, eager to prove that Bacares was not a 'refuge for fascists', urged the priest to leave the town. On 17 August, they orchestrated the revolutionary gesture of burning the town's religious images.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/450; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Agustín de Guadalix*.

⁸²⁹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/150, 2/151, 2/158, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/374, 4/375.

In other rural locations, iconoclasm was detonated by the direct entry into communities of armed groups from nearby towns and villages. In Torrejón de la Calzada (to the south of Madrid), the arrival in the town of armed militiamen from the neighbouring town of Torrejón de Velasco in the conflict's early days served as the catalyst for the destruction of the parish church's images and altarpieces. Numerous community members assisted the newcomers in their statue-smashing undertaking. According to the parish priest's interpretation, the townspeople's actions were the result of their profound 'fear of the outsiders.' Be that as it may, it is also undoubtedly true that the unknown actors' eruption onto the scene made it easier for local people to break the collective trepidation which had previously surrounded the prospect of anticlerical destruction.⁸³⁰

Events in Lucainena de las Torres (twenty-five kilometres northeast of Almería's provincial capital) followed a similar pattern. Mass continued to be held in the town until the arrival in the locality of a group of between fifteen and twenty militiamen from nearby Tabernas on 24 July. Announcing that they had come to 'make the revolution', they collaborated with the committee and local people in the requisitioning of the church. On discovering the whereabouts of the parish priest, they asked local people if they had any specific complaints against him. When the locals replied negatively, the newcomers announced that he was free to continue living in the town, provided that he removed his cassock. The militiamen departed later that evening. Their 'revolution' may have appeared mild in comparison with the cataclysmic events unfolding in Catalonia, Aragon or Valencia, but the arrival of the outsiders indisputably imbued the locals of Lucainena with an iconoclastic impetus which had previously been absent from the community. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that they reduced the town's religious images to ashes, splinters and fragments three days later. This detonation had a knock on effect: militiamen from Lucainena then set off to the nearby hamlet of Polopos to ensure that local people had requisitioned the church and destroyed the community's religious paraphernalia.⁸³¹

⁸³⁰ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, Pueblos: *Torrejón de Velasco, Torrejón de la Calzada*.

⁸³¹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/155, 2/156, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/85, 3/86. See also exps. 3/141, 4/304.

External impetus for iconoclastic action in the countryside was also frequently provided by agents from the urban world: from Almeria's capital, or from the national capital in the case of Madrid. In the hamlet (*barriada*) of Los Molinos de Viento, a squadron of men from Almeria who had participated in the defeat of the city's military barracks burst into the small community on 22 July. The men, armed with rifles and shotguns and wearing military helmets appropriated from the barracks, went to the coadjutor's (assistant priest) house and ordered him to hand over the key to the church. When he refused, they entered the building by force, removed all of its religious objects and burned them in the town square. The coadjutor's account of events does not comment upon the contribution made by local people to the iconoclasm, but the ease with which the newcomers located the priest's house indicates at least some degree of collaboration between internal and external actors.⁸³² In the province of Madrid, militiamen from the capital arrived in Aravaca (northwest of the city) on 21 July and proceeded to incinerate the town's hermitage and chapel. Though the participation of local people in the events is not explicitly mentioned in the priest's report, it is clear that the appearance of a group of completely unknown people from the capital functioned as a trigger for further iconoclasm: three days later, local people collaborated in the burning of the church door, the building's contents and the parish archive.⁸³³

In Tijola (in the centre-west of the province of Almeria), the iconoclastic trigger came from further afield than the provincial capital. A revolutionary committee had been formed in the town on 29 July. Although its members had taken possession of the church, they had also issued an edict calling upon local people to take the building's religious artefacts to their homes for safekeeping. However, the arrival in Tijola in mid August of militia columns from Valencia - who were passing through the locality on their way to the Granada front - shattered the temporary tranquility. On August 17, the local committee, most probably at the orders of the recent arrivals, publicly ordered the immediate destruction of images stored in private houses. They collected them, transported them to the outskirts of the *pueblo* and burned them.⁸³⁴ These examples appear to indicate that the process of iconoclastic 'detonation' was blunter, more

⁸³² AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/483. See also exps. 3/408, 3/409, 3/410

⁸³³ ADM, PRRD, Caja 2/20, *Informe sobre la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Aravaca*; AHN, CG, legajo 1510, exp. 1/20.

⁸³⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/469, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/26, 3/27, 6/25; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 365/18945, Alejandro Tapia Jiménez.

decisive and more destructive when the ‘outsiders’ were completely unknown to the local populous. While people from neighbouring towns would have shared ties of local custom, culture, and in some cases family, ‘alien’ militiamen from the capital city or from other regions had far greater power to break community solidarities and behavioural norms.

The fiery destruction of religious property indisputably involved the trampling of established norms of ‘civilised’ behaviour. However, in order to commit acts of lethal violence against religious personnel, anticlerical protagonists needed to cross an entirely different boundary. Not only were anticlericals violating fundamental ‘rules’ related to killing in general; they were also breaking the taboos which surrounded the murder of a community member, of somebody from ‘inside’. Political mobilisation in the rural world during the 1920s and 1930s meant that by July 1936, new political and class identities were competing and colliding with traditional ones grounded in village solidarities. However, the idea that the *patria chica* was an independent unit which stood alone against the outside world was still widespread in many rural communities. In this context, and as the above examples demonstrate, many local committees made the instant revolutionary gesture of ‘sacrificing’ the community’s religious ornaments in order to avoid bloodshed. While there are a significant number of reports from both provinces which describe iconoclastic acts orchestrated solely by members of a given community, descriptions of anticlerical killings committed without any kind of external intervention are difficult to find. Of course, this relates partly to the eagerness of community members to look outwards rather than inwards in explaining the bloodletting. However, it is also abundantly clear that some kind of external catalyst was usually needed to break the taboos and neighbourly solidarities which prevented inter-community killing from occurring.⁸³⁵

The origins of the agents who catalysed anticlerical killings in localities other than their own are not always easy to ascertain. In many cases, rural communities were penetrated by armed groups from nearby towns and villages. However, it appears that militiamen from ‘the city’ – who were unknown to rural actors, and in many ways

⁸³⁵ Graham, *Introduction*, p.25; Jesús Izquierdo, ‘De palabras y cosas en el cambio agrario: el desafío de la historia conceptual’, *I Seminario Anual de la SEHA* (25/11/2010), p.16; Ledesma, *Días de llamas*, pp.117-27.

culturally different from them – played the largest role in unleashing anticlerical killing in both provinces. Sometimes these anticlerical agitators arrived entirely against the will of the new local authorities, who were striving to protect religious personnel. This was the case in Griñon (southwest of Madrid), where the town's militiamen and the local mayor evacuated the majority of the *Hermanos de Las Escuelas Cristianas* from their residence in the town on 28 July. They tried to protect the ten remaining monks by flying a red flag over the building 'so that militiamen who came from Madrid would understand that that the building had been requisitioned.' Their efforts proved fruitless. The following day, a large group of militiamen arrived from the capital, entered the residence and began to search it. After obliging the monks to prepare a meal for them, they took them to the patio and shot them.⁸³⁶

The entry into the community of external agents had similarly tragic results in Chirivel (in the north of the province of Almeria). From the beginning of the conflict, the town's authorities had allowed the parish priest, Juan Soler García, to remain in the community without being harmed. Yet on 23 August, as the priest was walking on the outskirts of the *pueblo* with a friend, a van full of militiamen pulled up beside him and accused him of being a priest. The fact that they were aware of who he was even though he was dressed in civilian clothes suggests that the men were from a nearby locality. When he confirmed his identity, his assailants shot him in the head. According to the report which appears in the *Causa General*, a large number of traumatised townspeople collected his body and held a wake for him in on one of their houses.⁸³⁷

In the mountain town of Cercedilla (northwest of Madrid), the entry of militiamen into the community also had explosive consequences. On this occasion however, the opposition of local people to the violence was far less evident. On 5 August, three carloads of militiamen who were stationed at the nearby front of Alto de los Leones arrived in the locality enquiring if it had been 'cleansed' of 'fascist' elements. The group swiftly initiated the 'cleansing' operation, taking the parish priest and the chaplain of a local sanatorium to the town square. In full public view, they executed

⁸³⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 6/99-6/103, legajo 1509, exps. 3/130-3/134; Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.417-19; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.322.

⁸³⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp.2/30; Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp.284-85.

their victims and set fire to their bodies. The evidence does not make it clear whether or not local people collaborated in the dramatic public death ceremony. However, the ease with which the militiamen discovered that the town had not been ‘cleansed’ of religious personnel, and the speed with which they located the two priests, indicates that some collaboration occurred between internal and external agents.⁸³⁸ Elsewhere in the province of Madrid, it is likely that the same type of assistance was proffered to militiamen from another mountain town, Torrelaguna (northeast of the capital). Torrelaguna’s new armed powers had initiated anticlerical killing in their own locality on 29 July. A group of around ten townspeople detained the parish coadjutor and the chaplain of the Carmelite order, took them in a van to the outskirts of the town and executed them. Intent upon spreading their wave of anticlerical ‘purification’ to the surrounding area, they made anticlerical incursions in a number of neighboring localities in the weeks which followed. On 9 August, for example, men from the town went to the nearby locality of Redueña, localised the parish priest, drove him away and assassinated him at the roadside.⁸³⁹

In cases like these, proof of collaboration between internal and external agents is usually difficult to pinpoint and based largely on circumstantial evidence, namely the swiftness with which the newcomers manage to accomplish their violent goals. However, in other rural locations cooperation between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ was far more explicit. In many localities, new local authorities, paralysed by the taboo of committing murder within the community, intentionally involved ‘outsiders’ in anticlerical killing. This was the case in María (in the north of the province of Almería) where the local committee sent the town’s parish priest into hiding on 8 September, dispatching him to a country house several kilometres from the *pueblo*. The militiamen who tracked him down and killed him on 13 October came from the nearby town of Orce, and had allegedly been informed of his whereabouts by members of María’s committee.⁸⁴⁰ In some localities, local committees enlisted the help of militiamen from the city. In Zurgena (in the centre of the province of Almería), five of the locality’s priests were detained on 18 August by a committee formed of workers from the town’s

⁸³⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1510, exp. 1/24; Ledesma, ‘Una retaguardia al rojo’, p.181. Some accounts place this occurrence on 4 rather than 5 August: Guijarro, *Persecución Religiosa*, pp.427-28. I am grateful to José Luis Ledesma for having provided me with additional information regarding this incident.

⁸³⁹ Guijarro, *Persecución religiosa*, pp.339-40; AHN, CG, legajo 1510, exp.3/300, 3/303; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Torrelaguna*.

⁸⁴⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/433, 2/434, 3/76, 4/324, 4/325, 4/326.

marble factory. Although they were judged, absolved and placed at liberty by an improvised tribunal on 1 September, militiamen from the provincial capital arrived in the town later that day and detained them. The same committee which had freed the clerical detainees, unwilling to accept the overpowering burden of committing anticlerical murder, had informed the militiaman of the priests' presence in the town. Their tipoff had the desired effect: the newcomers loaded the priests into a truck, drove them away and shot them.⁸⁴¹

Local committees used the potent influence of 'the city' in another crucial way. In both provinces, committees apprehended priests and transported them to the capital. As a general rule, they then handed them over to the Central Committee or to the Police Commissary in the case of Almeria, or to the *Dirección General de Seguridad* in Madrid. For local leaders, this neat manoeuvre removed the uncomfortable presence of priests within communities. It simultaneously extricated local powers from any liability for the fate of local religious personnel. From the moment they arrived in the two provinces' respective capitals, rural religious personnel effectively got 'lost' in a complicated tapestry of prisons, tribunals and *checas*. Responsibility for their lives and deaths was absorbed by the ever-multiplying repressive machinery of the city.⁸⁴² This phenomenon was far more pronounced in Almeria than in Madrid. Indeed, of the province's assassinated religious personnel whose place of death is known (from both the provincial capital and the countryside), seventy percent of them were killed either in the capital itself or in the *sacas* conducted in August and September from the city's prison ships.⁸⁴³ Although similar statistics are not available for Madrid, documentation from the diocesan archives and the *Causa General* reveals far more cases of religious personnel being killed within or close to their communities than those which occurred in Almeria. This difference can be attributed to the fact that the comparatively more ruralised nature of the Almeria's society generated stronger community loyalties and greater qualms concerning the killing of priests. It is also clear that the immense size of the Spanish capital spawned an enormous collection of militia groups which brought their 'cleansing' mission to the surrounding countryside. This phenomenon, as we have seen throughout the section, also occurred in Almeria, but on a much smaller scale.

⁸⁴¹ Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.277

⁸⁴² See, for example AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/27, 2/150, 2/468, 3/25, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/272, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/31.

⁸⁴³ Calculation mine, using data from Quirosa, *Política y Guerra Civil en Almería*, pp.282-305.

Finally, it is important to underline that in both provinces, some local authorities, driven by the same community solidarities which were being violently broken and remade in other localities, successfully prevented external agents from detaining religious personnel. In Parla (southwest of Madrid), at the very beginning of the conflict, a number of militia groups from the surrounding area came to the locality in search of the parish priest, who was in hiding in the town. The committee saved him from detention and possible death by telling the militiamen that he had already fled. In the tiny locality of Robledillo (northeast of Madrid), the acting parish priest remained hidden in several locations on the outskirts of the village – including a hayloft and the adjacent mountains – for three months, until he managed to cross over into the rebel zone. During this time, not one local person denounced him to the numerous militia groups which arrived in Robledillo and enquired about his whereabouts.⁸⁴⁴ In the town of Nijar (in the southwest of the province of Almeria), the local committee took possession of the church on 22 July 1936. They allowed the priest to remain in the locality but advised him to remove his cassock. According to testimony from the priest himself, who finally abandoned the Nijar in July 1937, militiamen from other localities came to look for him on three or four occasions, but their attempts were consistently resisted by local people.⁸⁴⁵

Religious modalities

These *lugareños* and *forasteros*, in spite of the complexity of their interactions and the dissonances which arose between them, had one very evident thing in common: a shared repertoire of anticlerical collective action. Towering pyres of religious objects; ritualistic, public killings of priests and monks; the burning of victims' corpses; burlesque processions with liturgical ornaments: these ritual forms and patterns, which have filled the pages of this thesis, were witnessed across Republican territory during the early months of the civil war. The repertoire of actions employed by the anticlerical protagonists of 1936 was deeply inflected by the modalities of public Catholic ritual. Nowhere was this more evident than in the quasi-ceremonial rites which accompanied the destruction of objects of worship in innumerable urban and rural localities during

⁸⁴⁴ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Parla, Robledillo*.

⁸⁴⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 5/78.

the days following the coup.⁸⁴⁶ At the Augustine convent in the Calle de Recoletos in central Madrid, militiamen smashed the building's religious objects, placed a dog in the tabernacle and staged a derisive procession.⁸⁴⁷ In the fishermen's neighbourhood of El Alquián (east of Almeria), local people destroyed the church's contents and then traversed the barrio bedecked in religious robes. They sang 'mocking songs' and tore the pages from the parish archive's books as they went.⁸⁴⁸

Religious forms also characterised assaults upon the clergy. In some cases, assailants subjected their victims to the same types of symbolic punishments which were dealt out to mannequins during celebrations of traditional festivals like San Juan and San Pedro. In popular religious rituals like Resurrection Sunday's 'Judas burning', which was still celebrated in many towns and villages across Spain during the period, people stoned, lynched, burned or shot straw figures representing Judas.⁸⁴⁹ After 17-18 July 1936, anticlerical 'counter ritual violence' frequently echoed these festive modalities. As we saw in chapter five, the pre and post-mortem burning of priests was a significant facet of the violence. In prison in Instinción (Almeria) in September 1936, militiamen forced one chaplain to drink petrol; they then doused him in the liquid, set fire to him and dragged his burning body along the ground.⁸⁵⁰ Priests were also stoned, hanged and ceremoniously thrown to their deaths from great heights.⁸⁵¹ One Madrid priest was killed by militiamen in August 1936 in the city's Pradera de San Isidro (a park southwest of the city). His attackers positioned him on the edge of an embankment and then shot him, causing him to plummet to the grassland below.⁸⁵²

Most obviously, these forms indicate that the Church's extensive repertoire of theatrical, baroque ritual was deeply embedded in Spanish culture, and in the consciousnesses of Catholics and anticlericals alike. The anticlerical protagonists of

⁸⁴⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/59, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/27; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Culto*; AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/150.

⁸⁴⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/33.

⁸⁴⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/218.

⁸⁴⁹ ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Tielmes*; José Ortega Ortega, 'Sobre la "Quema del Judas" y la ruptura ritual de Cantaron', in L. Álvarez Munarriz, F. Flores Arroyuelo, A. González Blanco (eds.), *Cultura y sociedad en Murcia*, Vol. I (Universidad de Murcia, 1993), pp.579-80; Casanova, 'Rebelión y revolución', p.155; Ranzato, *Eclipse*, pp.412-13.

⁸⁵⁰ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/414.

⁸⁵¹ AHN, CG legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 6/119, 9/91, legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, causa núm. 52,877, legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/17; ATTMA, Informe 81/17-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera.

⁸⁵² AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/286, 4/91.

1936 inhabited a world saturated with Catholic cultural reference points and religious architecture and ritual. These people, who had spent their lives endlessly witnessing Catholic processions, festivals and pilgrimages, and who had been left bitterly disappointed by the failure of the Republic's attempts to secularise public spaces, now quite naturally attacked the Church and its ministers using the institution's own ritual repertoire. Cases of militiamen destroying hosts or parodying mass did occur occasionally during this period. However, assaults upon these 'private' rites, which took place within the Church walls and were thus unfamiliar to those who rejected official religion, were far less common than the tragicomic burlesques of public Catholic ritual outlined above.⁸⁵³

The attacks bore the mark of religious ritual in another sense. The commingling of religious and secular forms, of the sacred and the profane, had long been a characteristic of the popular 'religion of the streets' in Spain. The protagonists of the iconoclastic explosion of 1936 would certainly have observed, and quite possibly participated in, the ironical festivities of the pre-Lenten Carnival, or the mixing of Catholic, Pagan and secular elements which typified the fiery celebrations of the *Noche de San Juan* or the Valencian *Fallas*. The context of the irreverent parodies of 1936 and the intent which lay behind them were, of course, new. As social relations were reconfigured, and community boundaries redrawn, Catholic ritual – inescapably known to *everybody* and profoundly resented by many - was held up to public ridicule and then banished forcibly from the new society under construction. The forms of these parodies, however, inevitably bore the marks of workers' direct and prolonged contact with the 'extravagant dramaturgy' of Catholic ritual and with the potent mixture of belief and profanity which characterised so many traditional religious celebrations.⁸⁵⁴

The fact that religious ritual forms were so deeply imprinted upon the shared imaginaries of the Church's attackers explains to a large degree why the popular sacraphobic fiesta of 1936 unfolded in the way it did. Certain anthropologists, historians, and contemporary observers, however, have moved beyond this explanation,

⁸⁵³ Vincent, 'Keys', p.79; For some isolated cases from Almería, Ciudad Real, Castellón, Gerona and Vich, see AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/155, 2/157, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 9/36; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p. 641, 645; Carreras, *Martyred Spain*, p.98.

⁸⁵⁴ Vincent, 'Keys', p.79; Delgado, *Luces iconoclastas*, pp.172-76.

interpreting the forms of the anticlerical violence as an indication that many of its agents, despite their rejection of the institutional Church, preserved some religious faith.⁸⁵⁵ The ways in which many anticlericals interacted with the images they attacked certainly displayed some degree of belief in their power. Militiamen's painstaking attempts to expunge every last trace of Catholic presence – both visible and hidden – from communities suggests that they viewed religious symbols as threatening and 'dangerous'. Attacks upon far-flung rural shrines and hermitages, for example, buildings which were often situated several kilometres from the nearest town or village, were widespread after 17-18 July 1936. Of the one hundred and fourteen basilicas, sanctuaries and hermitages which stood in the dioceses of Madrid-Alcalá in 1936, only seventeen survived the conflict without suffering any damage.⁸⁵⁶ These assaults required considerable time, planning and effort, but for their protagonists, they were absolutely necessary. In Antas in Almeria, townspeople made an eight kilometre return journey under the blazing August sun in order to burn a hermitage dedicated to the town's patron saint.⁸⁵⁷

This same dedication to obliterating every last reference to Catholicism was evident in the door-to-door searches for religious objects which marked the conflict's early months. In rural and urban localities, militiamen obliged local people to part with statues, prayer cards, medals and paintings; they then burnt the objects publicly, often in front of their owners.⁸⁵⁸ This eagerness to purge Catholicism from private, domestic space was evidently a swinging, long-germinating response to the Church's ongoing capacity to control everyday lives and interfere in intimate, personal issues. Militiamen's repertoire of house searches, dawn raids, detentions and confiscation of property was also indicative of these actors' assimilation of the draconian measures which they had suffered for years at the hands of the security forces of the ever-

⁸⁵⁵ Langdon Davies, *Barricades*, p.90; Brenan, *Labyrinth*, pp.189-90.

⁸⁵⁶ Alfaya, *Río de fuego*, pp.262-70; ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para 'de Rebus Hispanie'*; Caja 4/8, *Respuesta a la circular de la Junta Nacional de Reconstrucción de Templos*, Caja1/7, *Información de las parroquias de fuera de la capital*, Caja 4/3, *Cosas Sagradas*.

⁸⁵⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/222. For other examples, see AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/468, 4/175, 4/176, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/272, legajo 1853-3: Madrid, pieza No. 10, sumario núm. 60474, legajo 1603: Sitges, exp.6/279; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Torrejón de Ardoz Vallecás*; Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, p.133,140; Delgado, *Luces iconoclastas*, pp.47-48.

⁸⁵⁸ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/153, 2/154, 2/157, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/378, legajo 1603: Sitges, exp.6/271; Borkenau, *Cockpit*, pp.117-18; Bullón de Mendoza, *Historias orales*, p.215; Delgado, *Ira sagrada*, p.112.

expanding central state. Most simply, though, the assault on religion in the domestic sphere demonstrated a desire to break the private emotional power of religious signs and symbols.

Bruce Lincoln's interpretation of destructive acts like these - and of iconoclastic actions in general - is that: 'an act of iconoclasm is never an attempt to destroy an icon's sacred power, for iconoclasts act with the assurance that it has none'. According to this reading, the anticlerical protagonists of 1936 were certain that religious artefacts lacked power; they merely sought to demonstrate this powerlessness by exhibiting the objects' impotence under attack.⁸⁵⁹ Abbot Gleason posits a similar opinion in his work on revolutionary Russia, arguing that: 'Unlike the medieval iconoclasts who smashed religious icons because they thought such images evil, revolutionary iconoclasts cleared away the signs of the past in order to raise up new ones.'⁸⁶⁰ This dichotomy, which states that anticlerical protagonists were *either* entirely desacralised 'non-religious men' *or* primitive statue smashers mired in superstition is, of course, erroneous.⁸⁶¹ In 1930s Spain, an unevenly developed country which was undergoing rapid processes of industrialisation, modernisation and mass political mobilisation, 'traditional' religious and 'new' secular, political modes of thought and behaviour inevitably melded and mingled in the mental landscapes of those who attacked the Church.

As Mary Vincent has astutely indicated, the fact that many iconoclasts went to great lengths to demonstrate the powerlessness of images and artefacts - as opposed to simply proclaiming it - offers another indication of the possible religious belief of many anticlericals.⁸⁶² During the siege of the *Álcazar* in Toledo, a group of militiamen paraded a statue of Christ in front of the fortress, shouting to the rebel soldiers within: 'Here we have the Cristo de la Vega! We're going to burn it. If you are Catholics, come down and stop us. We'd stop you if you did the same with a figure of Lenin.' In the absence of any response from the *Álcazar*'s defenders, the iconoclasts hacked the image to pieces with axes and burned the shards.⁸⁶³ This strategy of demonstrating publicly the

⁸⁵⁹ Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations', p.256.

⁸⁶⁰ Gleason, *Bolshevik culture*, p.2.

⁸⁶¹ See Maddox, *El Castillo*, p.146. On the practical inexistence of 'non-religious men' see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace, 1959), pp.204-5.

⁸⁶² Vincent, 'Keys', p.79.

⁸⁶³ Carreras, *Martyred Spain*, p.99.

impotence of the image's venerators – or of any divine force - to save it, was also seen in one village in Huelva in late July 1936. In 'Los Olivos', local socialist militants staged an imitation bullfight using the Virgin's veil as a toreador's cape: men carrying wooden saints charged at the 'toreador'. The 'vanquished' statues, their vulnerability and uselessness exposed, were then tossed into a bonfire while local people looked on. This routine of 'challenge-verification' was repeated in Sotillo de la Adrada (Ávila), where militiamen 'defeated' a statue of the town's patron saint in a bullfight and then 'executed' it.⁸⁶⁴

The notion that an emotional and spiritual linkage existed between iconoclast and image is also reflected in the fact that many anticlerical actors treated statues and icons not as inanimate, powerless lumps of wood or stone, but *as if they were people*. In a twisted mirror image of Catholic enthusiasm for Baroque apparitions in which statues momentarily assumed human characteristics as they bled, moved or sweated, anticlerical protagonists also endowed liturgical artefacts with personhood.⁸⁶⁵ The 'execution by firing squad' of the gigantic monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus near Madrid is the most striking example of this practice. Images were also whipped, kicked, punched, beheaded, beaten with sticks, drowned, thrown into ravines, humiliated publicly, and lined up in town squares to be riddled with bullets. Like the priests who were tortured by their assailants, statues were left with their eyes gauged out, their noses cut off, or their extremities amputated.⁸⁶⁶

In Lucainena de las Torres (Almeria) at the end of July 1936, militiamen took a statue of Jesus to a watering hole, insulted it, kicked and punched it, and 'forced' it to drink water usually consumed by the town's livestock.⁸⁶⁷ In early August in Almeria capital, in the Convent of the Adoratrices (which had been turned into a prison), one

⁸⁶⁴ Collier, *Socialists*, pp.150-51. 'Los Olivos' was the fictional name which Collier gave to the village where he conducted his fieldwork; Vincent, 'Keys', p.79; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.652; Ranzato, *Eclipse*, p.413.

⁸⁶⁵ There had been a widely publicised spate of these apparitions across Spain during the late 1910s and early 1920s. This particular hierophantic tradition, however, dated back to the early modern period; it was periodically 'reactivated', generally during periods of social, economic and political instability. Christian, *Crucifixes*, pp.6-50; Vincent, 'Keys', p.80.

⁸⁶⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/155, 2/156, 2/157, 2/158, 2/375, 2/458, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/143, 4/41, legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 4/164, 4/178, legajo 1557-2: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 5/193, 5/252; ADM, PRRD, Caja 6, Pueblos: *Pradena del Rincón*; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la Persecución Religiosa*, p. 649, 652; Ranzato, *Eclipse* pp.412-13; López Martín, *Pisadas*, p.146; Sánchez Tostado, *Jaén*, p.101.

⁸⁶⁷ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/155, 2/156.

detainee observed a militiaman punching the face and hands of a statue of the founder of the Adoratrice order. The determined iconoclast knocked the figure over, stamped on its chest and speared its eyes out.⁸⁶⁸ In much the same way, local people who burned images in one village in the Sierra de Arcena (Huelva) denied the power and very existence of biblical figures, while simultaneously describing them as if they were real people: ‘The Virgin was a shameless whore and God had no sense of justice...A mother who turns away and sees her children go hungry is a whore.’⁸⁶⁹

This bestowal of personhood upon images, and these traces of belief in the power of Catholic artefacts, did not always lead to scornful ‘assassination’. In early twentieth-century Spain, many people who repudiated official religion and its representatives maintained a personal and communal devotion to individual saints, shrines and symbols. This tendency was especially pronounced in the rural world, where many people saw local devotional symbols as being bound to community life and traditional customs, rather than to priests, the sacraments and the institutional Church.⁸⁷⁰ This explains why one woman in Velez Blanco (Almeria), who had been present at the burning of the town’s religious objects, rescued an image of Beatriz de Silva (the founder of the Conceptionist order) from the flames on the grounds that it would protect her son from the ‘evils’ which were to come.⁸⁷¹ Examples of images of local devotion being saved by the iconoclasts themselves are not difficult to find. In María (Almeria), workers burned the parish church’s ornaments in September 1936. The town’s patron saint, however, the Virgen de la Cabeza, was rescued by the leader of the local committee. It remained hidden in his family home until the end of the war. At the beach of Torre García (Almeria), a group of fishermen prevented a hermitage dedicated to the Virgen del Mar (the patron saint of Almeria) from being burnt in the early days of the conflict. The area’s fishermen, who were ‘almost without exception of anarchist affiliation’, had traditionally invoked the patroness during storms, recognising the figure as a talisman of luck and protection.⁸⁷²

⁸⁶⁸ Martín del Rey, *Almería roja*, pp.38-39.

⁸⁶⁹ Maddox, ‘Revolutionary anticlericalism’, p.135.

⁸⁷⁰ Callahan, *Catholic Church*, pp.229-35; Shubert, *Social History*, pp.163-65; Gilmore, *People of the Plain*, pp.150-52.

⁸⁷¹ AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza, No. 10, exp. 4/304.

⁸⁷² AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/328; ATTMA, Consejo de Guerra 224/2088 Luis Martínez Merlos; Brenan, *Granada*, p. 221; Juan Goytisolo, *Campos de Níjar* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1979), p.68. For further examples, see AHN, CG legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/315, 4/316: Bullón de Mendoza, *Historias orales*, pp.214, 216.

Some iconoclasts went further than merely protecting selected statues from destruction. On numerous occasions, anticlericals ‘reclaimed’ the artefacts, imbuing them with new political and social meanings and converting them into symbols of the new order which they were striving to construct.⁸⁷³ At one Madrid church, militiamen repositioned the right arm of a wooden crucifix so that it appeared to be giving the clenched fist salute; the ‘Marxist Jesus’ was placed on public display. Also in the capital, the militia group which took possession of the Church of San José on the central Calle de Alcalá dressed a statue of the Infant Jesus in militiamen’s overalls and exhibited it in the atrium along with a sign reading: ‘I was a fascist, now I’ve become a communist.’⁸⁷⁴ In Barcelona in late July, a full sized statue of Jesus Christ – painted with the initials of the CNT and adorned with a paper hat bearing an anti-Nazi symbol – was displayed in one of Barcelona’s public parks.⁸⁷⁵ This resymbolisation had also been witnessed during the revolutionary events of October 1934. In Bembibre (León), townspeople had saved a statue of Jesus from the flames of their burning church, exhibiting it in the town square with a sign that said: ‘Red Christ. We did not burn you because you are one of us.’⁸⁷⁶

This reclamation and resymbolisation was a clear ethical indictment of the Church’s betrayal of the moral of the gospels and of the Christian values which it was supposed to represent. Events like the rescue of the ‘Red Christ of Bembibre’ certainly lend weight to the idea that anticlerical attacks constituted a protest regarding the Church’s abject betrayal of the poor; an attempt to ‘purify’ the institution, cleansing it of its materialistic sins.⁸⁷⁷ The ‘recruitment’ of Catholic images to the revolution also displays the extent to which Christian moral and religious modes of thought melded with ‘modern’ political and ideological ideas in the imaginaries of anticlerical protagonists,

⁸⁷³ José María Semprún y Gurrea, *A Catholic Looks at Spain* (London: Spanish Embassy Press Department, 1937), p.47, LSEA, COLL MISC 0091/18.

⁸⁷⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exps. 3/52 and 9/27; ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/3, *Culto*, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para ‘de Rebus Hispanie’*; Carlos González Posada, *Diario de la revolución y de la guerra: 1936-1939* (Granada: Comares, 2011), p.58; Montoliú Camps, *Madrid en la Guerra Civil*, p.77.

⁸⁷⁵ Abel Paz, *Viaje al pasado* (Madrid: Fundación de Estudios libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, 2002), p.57; Romero, *Silo: Archivo F.X.*, pp.279-80.

⁸⁷⁶ *ABC*, 26/10/1934; *El Siglo Futuro*, 07/09/1935; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.287.

⁸⁷⁷ For several versions of this interpretation, see Salvador de Madariaga in *Eclipse*, p.410; Brenan, *Labyrinth*, pp.189-90; Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, pp.77-84; Ragner, *Gunpowder and Incense*, p.161; Maurici Serrahima in Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, p.153; Álvarez Junco, ‘El anticlericalismo’, p.287.

and of leftwing militants in general. As we saw in chapter one, the discourses and frameworks of the Spanish anarchist, republican and socialist movements were saturated with religious symbolism and millenarian rhetoric and underscored by a strong sense of Christian morality. During the early twentieth century, many newly politicised workers, a large number of who had experienced Catholic educational and family environments – and who all lived surrounded by the hegemonic Catholic culture – inevitably applied Christian moral ideas to their political activism.

Testimony from ordinary workers regarding this question is, naturally, difficult to unearth, but rank and file activists who later rose to prominence within leftwing organisations have commented on the phenomenon. The communist politician Dolores Ibárruri, who grew up within a highly Catholic Basque mining family, explained in her memoirs that the revelatory discovery of Marxist ideology during her early twenties did not prevent her ‘former Catholic beliefs’ from leaving ‘a shadow, a fear, a doubt in the depths of my consciousness’.⁸⁷⁸ The prominent anarcho-syndicalist Diego Abad de Santillán, meanwhile, found that after abandoning the Catholicism which had marked his childhood and formative years: ‘the one thing which I was never, ever able to separate myself from was the moral frame of mind (*tesitura*) which I had lived since I took my first steps’.⁸⁷⁹

To some degree, then, leftwing organisations did fill the moral void left by the abandonment of Catholicism, constituting a kind of ‘substitute religion’ for at least some activists. Gabriel, the ex-seminarian protagonist of Blasco Ibañez’s *La Catedral*, who decides to ‘say farewell to God’, transforming his conscience into ‘a wasteland flattened by a gale’, provides an eloquent literary representation of ideological belief replacing, while simultaneously intermingling with, religious faith. Desperate to ‘believe in something, to dedicate the faith of his character to the defence of an ideal’, Gabriel joins the anarchist movement, interpreting the work of theorists like Bakunin as ‘the future Gospel of Saint Paul.’⁸⁸⁰ After April 1931, this mixing of religious and political modes of thought had combined irresistibly with the enormous expectations raised by the coming of the Republic among workers. As republican politicians’ strove

⁸⁷⁸ Dolores Ibárruri, *They Shall Not Pass: The Autobiography of La Pasionaria* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966), pp.61-62.

⁸⁷⁹ Diego Abad de Santillán, *Memorias 1897-1936* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977), p.29.

⁸⁸⁰ Vicente Blasco Ibañez, *La Catedral* (Seville: Paréntesis, 2009), pp. 81-82.

to displace the Church from the sacred centre of society, replacing Catholic ideals and cultural reference points with republican ones, many of its followers inevitably came to see the regime as a kind of 'saviour' or 'redeemer'. In a striking visual demonstration of this process, the militiamen who transformed the Madrid Church of San Justo y Pastor into a tavern in the summer of 1936 hung 'a magnificent portrait of Manuel Azaña' in the monstrance above the main altar.⁸⁸¹

Within this framework, Bruce Lincoln's interpretation of the anticlerical counter ritual violence of 1936 as 'something akin to the horrific founding ritual of a new religion' takes on new significance.⁸⁸² The unflinching dedication which numerous killers of priests displayed to 'converting' their victims to the cause of 1936's messy, heterogeneous revolution indicates that many anticlerical actors had assimilated and internalised Catholic dogma regarding pre-death confession and repentance. Indeed, militiamen's attempts to make captured priests renounce religion and embrace leftwing political ideas provided a twisted mirror image of the behaviour of prison chaplains in the rebel zone. There, Catholic ministers tried to make inmates on the verge of execution repent of the 'sins' of their republican pasts, dying with the words: 'Long live Christ the King!' on their trembling lips.⁸⁸³ Across the Republican zone, attempts to make priests defile and ridicule their own religious convictions by blaspheming were extremely common. Militiamen also frequently promised religious personnel that they would be saved if they apostatised.⁸⁸⁴ Attackers tried to coerce priests, nuns and monks into making declarations in favour of proletarian unions and parties, giving the clenched fist salute, or replacing their shouts of 'Long live Christ the King!' with renditions of 'The International' and cries of 'long live the Republic!', 'long live communism!' or 'long live the justice of the FAI!'⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁸¹ ADM, PRRD, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para 'de Rebus Hispanie'*, Caja 1/8, *Informes recibidos de las parroquias*; Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, p.139.

⁸⁸² Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations', pp.260.

⁸⁸³ Iturralde, *El catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco*, Vol.I, pp.71-75; Casanova, *Iglesia de Franco*, pp.146-47, 195-96; Gómez Bravo and Marco, *La obra del miedo*, pp.122-29.

⁸⁸⁴ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/33, 2/414, 2/507, 3/63, 3/73; Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa*, p. 266; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, p.617; Preston, *Holocausto*, p.343.

⁸⁸⁵ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 2/160, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 6/5, ADM, PRRD, Caja 4/7, *Sacerdotes Mártires*, Caja 6, *Pueblos: Torrelaguna*; Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, pp.618-19, 292-93; de Castro Albarrán, *La gran víctima*, p.203; ATTMA, Informe 81/137-A, Juan del Águila Aguilera/Francisco del Águila Aguilera.

These attempts to demonstrate publicly the powerlessness of captured religious personnel to defend their faith were complemented by another tactic: that of coercing Catholics and members of the clergy into destroying their own personal religious objects and those of the community. At the Salesian monastery in Mohernando (Guadalajara) militiamen ‘invited’ the youngest members of the community to assist them in burning their monastery’s liturgical ornaments.⁸⁸⁶ Proclaiming the bankruptcy of a religion which still exacted such a strong emotional and spiritual influence over so many was simply not enough. Catholicism’s power had to be challenged, faced down and then broken, publicly and forcefully, so that it could be superseded by a new set of ideological and political beliefs, or, as Lincoln would have it, by a ‘new religion.’ Although the orchestrators of this ‘breaking’ had revolutionary political and social goals, the repertoire of weaponry which they used in their bid to obliterate the Church and its ministers was inevitably inflected by the dominant Catholic culture and by their own experiences of the Church.

As we have seen throughout the course of this chapter, the ‘face’ of anticlerical violence in 1936 was generally more rational and measured than many analysts have suggested. Carried out by actors with specific, constructive goals, the violence could also assume certain selective characteristics. Although the Church was undoubtedly targeted as an institution in 1936, individual priests whose specific ‘profiles’ revealed no history of inter-community conflict or political militancy were often protected by newly formed local powers. This protection, however, was generally only possible when local committees managed to avoid the breaking of neighbourly solidarities provoked by the entry of groups from outside the community. Finally, virtually all of the anticlerical protagonists of 1936 made use of a repertoire of collective action which was deeply influenced by Catholic ritual and Christian modes of thought. Although this mixing of politicised, almost clinical anticlericalism with the fury provoked by residual religious belief and ‘betrayal’ may appear contradictory, in the rapidly modernising society in flux that was 1930s Spain, it was entirely logical and wholly comprehensible.

⁸⁸⁶ AHN, CG legajo 1164-1: Almería, pieza No. 10, exps. 2/148, 3/422, legajo 1164-2: Almería, pieza No. 10, exp. 4/422; AHN, CG legajo 1557-1: Madrid, pieza No. 10, exp. 3/52; ADM, PRRD, Caja 1/64, *Parroquia de Fuencarral*, Caja 5/72, *Información especial para ‘de Rebus Hispanie’*, Caja 6, Pueblos: *Pozuelo de Alarcon*, Caja 7: *Procesos de Martirio de los Salesianos*.

Conclusions

El aire limpio y justo/Donde hoy nos levantamos/Contra vosotros todos/Contra vuestra moral y contra vuestras leyes/Contra vuestra sociedad contra vuestro dios/contra vosotros mismos vientres sentados. – Luis Cernuda⁸⁸⁷

England had her reformation four centuries ago, spread over many years. Andalucía has had hers in twenty-four hours, with the Puritan movement of the Commonwealth thrown in. History has speeded up in the making since the War.

The British Consul in Malaga, Mr Young, on May 1931's church burnings⁸⁸⁸

In October 1931, the British Consul in Malaga, Mr Young, offered his impressions of the outburst of church burning which had spread across Spain in May of that year. Young compared the iconoclasts who had destroyed more than forty of Malaga's ecclesiastical structures to the Protestant Reformers of sixteenth-century Europe. He also interpreted the fiery grassroots secularisation underway on Spain's streets as being indicative of a 'speeding up of history' triggered by the Great War of 1914-18. His observations were both incisive and prophetic. This thesis has posited Spanish anticlericalism as a long-existing, 'traditional' phenomenon whose nature was undergoing a radical transformation during the first three decades of the twentieth century. This change occurred alongside – and as a crucial part of – the rapid processes of modernisation and mass political mobilisation which were taking place in Spain from the late nineteenth century, and which accelerated as a result of the 1914-18 war.

At the dawn of the Republic in 1931, there already existed a significant and ever-expanding conglomeration of social actors – drawn overwhelmingly from the rural and urban poor – who had spent decades attempting to challenge the huge sway which the powerful Spanish Catholic Church held over their everyday lives. Chapter one used empirical evidence to explain how these workers' direct quotidian experiences of the Church (for instance through charitable initiatives and institutions, education and penal establishments) provoked and reinforced visceral, politicised anticlericalism. The chapter charted the evolution of an anticlerical 'worker's public sphere', integrated by anarchist, socialist and republican activists and sympathisers. These workers, driven by a desire to protect their private universes against the interventions of both the Church

⁸⁸⁷ The clean and just air/Where today we rise up/Against all of you/Against your morality and your law/Against your society against your God/Against your *vientres sentados* (an untranslatable metaphor which describes privileged, self-satisfied, complacent people) Luis Cernuda, 'Vientres sentados', Antonio Rivero Taravillo, *Luis Cernuda. años españoles (1902-1938)* (Barcelona : Tusquets, 2008).

⁸⁸⁸ NA: FO371/15774: Young to FO, 20/10/1931; Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia*, Vol. I, p.139 (n).

and the state, constructed an overlapping network of alternative spaces (like political headquarters, cultural centres and schools) which was underscored by anticlerical ideas. From the turn of the century onwards, these anticlericals – whose counter-hegemonic project directly challenged the Church's power to construct and fix the meanings of Spain's public spaces, became engaged in a fierce battle with politically mobilising Catholics for ownership of the street.

The parallel anticlerical/Catholic mobilisation which occurred under the auspices of the mass democracy set in motion by the Second Republic thus constituted the intensification of a process which was already well underway by April 1931. The new political framework hugely increased the opportunities for collective action available to popular anticlerical sectors and enabled them to stake a small claim in political power for the first time. This new framework also provided the Church with a means of mobilising its followers politically against the secularising Republic. The result was a vast, simultaneous and interactive mass mobilisation of Catholic and anticlerical forces which underlay the making of mass democracy in Spain. Chapter two presented a detailed analysis of the nature and consequences of this process. It argued that the interaction between these two 'blocs' between 1931 and 1936, combined with the intense frustration provoked among rural and urban worker constituencies by the ineffectiveness of the Republic's secularising measures, produced a cumulative hardening and radicalisation of collective anticlerical attitudes.

The repertoire of protest employed by these anticlericals conflated 'traditional' modalities of local protest (the archetypal example being church burning) with newer, explicitly political forms of collective action. This commingling revealed twentieth-century anticlericalism as a phenomenon in flux, a product of an unevenly developed country which was changing rapidly in social and political terms during the 1930s. Popular anticlericalism both reflected these changes and formed part of them. The melding of protest repertoires was also a reflection of popular anticlericalism's status as a heterogeneous, hybrid and disparate popular movement which traversed boundaries of political ideology and mobilisation, city/countryside, age, education and gender. The amorphousness and inclusiveness of anticlerical identity meant that after the July 1936 coup, when diverse social actors took advantage of the radically expanded horizon of political opportunity generated by the paralysis of the Republican state to stage a

spontaneous revolution, anticlericalism became the common language of the revolt, and the cornerstone of that revolution. All this means that popular anticlericalism – far from being the pre-political ‘anachronism’ described by numerous contemporary observers and historians - was in reality a constantly evolving phenomenon which constituted a new political mode in July 1936.

The question of who the anticlerical revolutionaries of 1936 actually *were* was tackled in chapter three via the assembling of an extensive sample of anticlerical perpetrators drawn from the provinces of Madrid and Almeria. Although the results did not contradict significantly the prevailing idea of the anticlerical protagonist as male, young, working class, and affiliated to a leftwing political organisation, they did introduce some important nuances into the image. Crucially, the results highlighted the significant participation of urban and rural middling sectors, members of middle class republican parties, very young people, the recently mobilised (who had joined socialist, anarchist and communist organisations in the spring of 1936) and those who had not been politically active at all prior to the coup. This diversity displays the danger of simplistically connecting political affiliation and social class to anticlerical protagonism. Anticlericalism embraced a wide cohort of ordinary people across the left and republican organised political base, but it also extended far beyond the boundaries of conventional politics. The intergenerational quality of iconoclastic attacks after July 1936, which saw non-affiliated, middle-aged parents participating in church burnings alongside their politically militant offspring, provides important evidence of the far-reaching nature of anticlerical identity.

The involvement of middling sectors and non-politically mobilised people suggested that for anticlerical protagonists – who had a wide range of motives for getting involved in revolutionary violence and iconoclasm after July 1936 – anticlericalism was being used as an instrument with which to configure a new social structure. After the coup, killing a priest or burning a church instantly became a highly symbolic way of achieving irreversible and lasting change – of obliterating past sources of oppression and ‘pollution’ in order to create a ‘clean slate’ upon which to construct a new, secular society. This search for the *tabula rasa* explains the meticulous dedication which the anticlericals displayed to obliterating every last reference to Catholicism from the community. The idea that this was constructive violence is also reflected, very literally,

in the conversion of churches into cultural, educational and logistical foci of the new order. This construction could also be seen, far more gruesomely, in the forging of group complicity through the joint performance of violent and 'obscene' acts. The macabre collective violence of 1936 permitted its perpetrators to cross a collective 'point of no return' which tied them together with bonds of blood.

Anticlerical and iconoclastic acts also allowed the innumerable, diversiform 'micro-powers' which were emerging in the wake of state paralysis to compete for political power and revolutionary prestige within the developing new order. In a situation where manifold groups and individuals were competing to 'control the chaos', anticlerical acts sent a clear message to other groups – and to onlookers from the wider community – regarding the revolutionary credentials and 'seriousness' of a local committee, patrol or militia organisation. In the new, proletarian, revolutionary context, numerous protagonists drawn from the urban and rural middling classes – still imbued with widely prevalent clientelist modes of thought - entered this 'competition', taking part in acts of anticlericalism and iconoclasm in the hope of opening and securing 'political spaces' within the new order. While it is perfectly possible that these sectors genuinely saw the Church as an oppressive force worthy of obliteration, it is also true that their sudden conversion to revolutionary anticlericalism immediately allowed them to share in the patronage of the new revolutionary order. The non-affiliated also used anticlerical violence as a springboard into political mobilisation. Their anticlerical protagonism in the opening moments of the conflict, something which demonstrated publicly their allegiance to the revolution, earned them places on newly established micro-powers and then spurred them on to join existing worker organisations like the UGT, the JSU or the CNT.

This fragmented and complex revolutionary tangle also contained more female protagonists than many accounts have suggested. Chapter four revealed that women, whose 'visibility' and opportunities for political and social action were still severely restricted in the 1930s, used participation in iconoclasm as a way of getting involved in the new order and of propelling themselves from 'invisibility' into 'visibility'. Although their involvement in physical violence was minimal, significant numbers of women took part in the burning of religious buildings and the destruction of liturgical artefacts. Their position, however, in a revolution which was both male-dominated and

masculinised, was for the most part a subordinate one. Chapter four, which assessed the gendered dimension of anticlerical violence (as it affected both men and women) in a long-term historical perspective, revealed that attacks upon male religious personnel in 1936 - and the discourse which accompanied them - reflected the machismo and sexism which pervaded 1930s Spanish society. The sexual humiliation and abuse which male religious personnel were subjected to by their attackers was also indicative of the anxiety felt by many working men regarding accelerating changes to women's social role and position and the disruption of traditional gender relations in the home. Many anticlericals attacked the priest as a perceived rival for ideological and sexual control of women. These sexist modes of thought, which interpreted female religious personnel as the powerless victims of clerical coercion, also functioned to save many nuns from violence.

The masculinised forms of anticlerical violence revealed a great deal about the mentalities and motives of its protagonists. The violence also exhibited numerous other forms and characteristics which enabled this study to draw significant conclusions concerning the shared perceptions and goals of its agents. The final chapter of the thesis made use of a substantial amount of archival sources and contemporary memoir accounts (by both Spaniards and foreigners) in order to question fundamental historiographical assumptions about the shape and nature post-July 1936 anticlerical violence and destruction, namely the supposed irrationalism, spontaneity and indiscriminate character of the violence. Crucially, the chapter indicated that historians have often made the mistake of projecting late twentieth and twenty-first century evaluations of clerical 'goodness' and 'blamelessness' upon the shared perceptions of 1930s actors – perceptions which had often been forged by years of direct, negative lived experience of the Church's role in welfare and charity.

Chapter six also presented a complex picture of the interactions which occurred in rural communities between 'external and 'internal' agents of violence. It revealed that in many cases, violence carried out within rural communities – something which, in a context of tightly-knit, cross-class social relations, supposed the breaking of a powerful taboo – was often catalysed and spurred on by the entry of 'outsider' groups from neighbouring towns or from the provincial capital. These outsiders then provided community members with the ideal means of excusing and justifying the violation of

this taboo. Many rural anticlericals also used the influence of ‘the city’, in order to escape responsibility for the punishment of their communities’ religious personnel. In both Almeria and Madrid, local committees who were reluctant to punish the *pueblo*’s priests often transported them to the capital, where they became absorbed in the expanding and chaotic urban repressive machinery.

Anticlerical actors from both the rural and urban spheres shared a very definite repertoire of anticlerical punishment and sacrophobic destruction which was deeply inflected by the religious ritual modalities of the dominant Catholic culture. In 1936, the mixture of residual religious belief and politicised anticlerical fury exhibited by revolutionaries was a reflection of anticlericalism’s status as a ‘phenomenon in flux’, characterised by both traditional and ‘modern’ political modes of thought and behaviour. On the one hand, the anticlericals’ interaction with the images and priests that they attacked seemed to be indicative of what Mr Young had interpreted in 1931 as a Christian-inspired bid to cleanse the Church of its perceived sins and wrongdoings. Indeed, the political cultures linked to anticlericalism had long lambasted the Church for its ‘betrayal’ of the gospels and its unchristian indifference to the sufferings of the poor. On the other hand, the cold, abrupt *paseos* inflicted upon religious personnel, and the highly organised destruction of religious buildings and objects, reflected the brutal logic of protagonists who were invested with a clear set of political goals. Anticlerical violence in 1930s Spain was, then, a complex and changing phenomenon which encompassed a highly heterogeneous collection of social actors. It constituted a reflection of Spain’s uneven development and the rapid forms of social change being undergone during the period – or, as Mr Young termed it, of the ‘speeding up of history’. Characterised by multiple internal logics and diverse modalities, it was an emblematic product, and a vital historical component, of its time.

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