

Catholicism and Citizenship Under the Franco Dictatorship

Abstract This chapter looks at the contribution of transnational Catholic networks to the recovery and reconstruction of citizenship within the dictatorial context of Franco's Spain. The scarcely-studied contribution of nonconformist Catholics to the revival of citizenship under Franco was fomented above all by a transnational phenomenon: the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965. This chapter explores how Catholic activists redefined their religious leadership in terms of social and political activism. They used the cultural, economic and symbolic resources emanating from their position in order to empower their communities and diffuse models of participative democracy not only in their churches, but in much wider circles as among students and workers.

Keywords Catholics · Opposition to the Franco Dictatorship · Second Vatican Council

It is no coincidence that the words 'citizens' and 'citizenship' barely passed Franco's lips during his many years in power. The dictatorship that dominated Spain for nearly four decades indicated its profound hostility to the very idea of citizenship from the outset through its rejection of liberalism, parliamentarianism, democracy and civil society. A foremost ally in the construction of Franco's New State was the Catholic Church. No official ceremony in Francoist Spain, whether civil, military or even Falangist, was complete without the legitimising and sanctifying presence of the Church.

In return, the Church amassed a power and presence within Spanish society that was virtually unparalleled within post-war Europe. The recovery of citizenship under the dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s is therefore associated not with the Church, but with the workers' movement, the student unions and the regional nationalists: what is traditionally referred to as the 'anti-Franco opposition'. However, recent research has drawn attention to the rebuilding of citizenship by very different groups, which not only included professional associations, such as doctors and teachers, but also groups which—paradoxically—were actually created by the regime itself: the neighbourhood-, family- and housewives' associations. Still, there was another source of opposition during the late Franco regime that represented an even greater paradox for the dictatorship: the Catholic Church.¹

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the little-studied contribution of nonconformist Catholic clergy and laity to the revival of citizenship under the Franco regime, drawing primarily on interviews with the activists themselves. Dissident Catholicism provided an apprenticeship in citizenship for activists from a wide range of networks, including journals and other publications; the youth and worker sections of *Acción Católica Especializada* (ACE, Specialised Catholic Action); Catholic trade unions; and the worker-priest movement. In terms of participatory practices, discourses of empowerment, and engagement with the marginalised and the working class, faith-based networks had a good deal in common with their secular counterparts. In addition, Catholics were heavily involved with organisations other than their own: political student groups, left-wing parties, neighbourhood associations and secular trade unions. All in all, nonconformist Catholicism not only made a substantial contribution to the struggle for citizenship under the dictatorship, but also provided considerable—if largely ignored—support for the citizens' movement that underpinned the Transition.²

THE NEW STATE AND THE CHURCH UNDER EARLY FRANCOISM

One of the defining features of the Second Republic (1931–1939) that the Francoist counterrevolution was determined to destroy was civil society. It had flourished under Spain's first democracy, while representing a threat to myriad conservative interests, including both the army and the Church.

This was especially true after the left-wing Popular Front coalition won the general election of February 1936. The military insurgents of July 1936 correspondingly banned the political parties, trade unions, student bodies and other groups that had made up civil society under the Republic. The only remnants of civil society that were permitted under the New State were pro-regime business groups, cultural associations, sports clubs, and bullfighting fraternities. Political activists who had fought for the Republic during the Civil War (1936–1939)—whether republicans, socialists, anarchists, communists or regional nationalists—were ruthlessly repressed, both during and after the conflict. A panoply of special courts, prominent amongst which was the Special Court for the Repression of Freemasonry and Communism, was set up to root out and punish the losing side. Hundreds of thousands of republicans spent time in jail. Up to 30,000 were shot. New administrative, professional and penal codes were passed that deprived many thousands of republicans of their jobs, professional qualifications and possessions. This vindictive division of society into the victors and the vanquished—the principal pillar of the New State’s legitimising discourse—was even extended to the fiscal sphere: the pro-insurgent provinces of Alava and Navarra retained their pre-civil war fiscal privileges, whereas those of the ‘traitorous provinces’ of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya had them eliminated.³ This vengeful spirit was embodied by the leading Falangist publication *Arriba*, which declared that “our irresponsible enemies” should be considered “irredeemable, unforgiveable and criminal” and should suffer “irrevocable exclusion, without which the existence of the Motherland would be threatened”.⁴

The alliance between the Catholic Church and the Francoist New State was forged during the Civil War (1936–1939). They were brought together not only by their shared anti-liberal, anti-democratic and anti-secular values, but also by the unprecedented persecution suffered by the Church in the republican zone. Hundreds of churches, monasteries and convents were desecrated, ransacked and torched during the conflict. Worse still, more than 6700 members of the clergy, including 13 bishops, were massacred by the republicans. There is no comparable wave of anticlerical violence in modern Western European history.⁵ The Church’s support for the cause of the self-proclaimed ‘Nationalists’ constituted an overwhelming coup for the insurgents: it enormously enhanced their legitimacy, both at home and abroad, and provided their divergent forces with a powerful common denominator.

The triumph of the counterrevolutionaries in 1939 was also a victory for the Catholic Church. All the anticlerical and secularising measures of the Second Republic were reversed by the new regime. This unyielding backlash contrasts vividly with that of Spain's neighbour, Portugal. Upon the establishment of the Salazar regime in the aftermath of the First Republic (1910–1926), the dictator, despite his own deeply-held religious convictions, retained certain republican reforms, including civil marriage, divorce and, most strikingly, the separation of Church and State. Clearly the Civil War had produced a far more profound rift within Spanish society than the overthrow of the First Republic had in Portugal.

The relationship between the Church and the New State was succinctly spelled out in the *Fuero de los Españoles* (Charter of the Spaniards) of 1945: “the profession and practice of the Catholic Religion, which is that of the State, will benefit from official protection”. In practice, this meant that the Church, with the robust backing of the dictatorship, did not merely recover its educational, business and media interests, but greatly expanded them. Illustrative of the new situation was the *recatolización* (conversion) campaign of the 1940s. The city of Valencia, to take one example, was divided up between 81 conversion centres. 1500 members of the laity, and 250 missionaries, were then unleashed on the local populace in an effort to ‘reclaim’ them for the faith. In national terms, the campaign of *recatolización* was without parallel in the history of modern Spain. Under Franco, the Church reached the apogee of its social, economic and cultural power in the twentieth century. Still, the Church's presence was not limited to these spheres alone. It also accrued far-reaching political power. During the Second World War, the *Movimiento* (Movement), which was dominated by the Falange, was the leading political force within Franco's Spain as a result of the dictatorship's alignment with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Accordingly, in 1945, following the final defeat of the Axis, the regime found itself dangerously isolated. In an effort to appease the Allies, it downplayed its fascist trappings or, in some cases, ditched them altogether. Above all, the New State was redefined as a ‘National-Catholic’ regime. The new-found ascendancy of the Catholics over the Falangists was reflected in the major Cabinet reshuffle of 1945. The political influence of the mainstream Catholics would remain formidable until the rise of the Opus Dei ‘technocrats’ in the late 1950s. During this period, Catholicism in Spain enjoyed a political power that was unmatched in Europe, with the possible exception of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The dictatorship's international ostracism in 1945 led it to replace the fascist-inspired *El Fuero del Trabajo* (Labour Charter) of 1938 with the *Fuero de los Españoles* in July 1945. It was apposite that the document which enshrined the relationship between Church and State should also set out the limits to citizenship in the 'new Spain'.⁶ The *fueros* referred not to 'citizens' or 'citizenship' but to 'Spaniards', and their 'obligations' were placed firmly above their 'rights'. In theory, the list of entitlements was not insubstantial, but, in practice, these rights were almost completely invalidated by the proviso that 'the Cortes will pass the necessary laws for the exercise of the rights recognised in this bill'. Hardly any of these rights became a reality. The joke at the time was that Spain enjoyed the greatest number of rights in the world: in addition to the conventional liberal rights, it also boasted 'the right to arrest', 'the right to torture', 'the right to carry out surveillance', and so on. In short, Spaniards suffered "the loss of the condition of citizens under Francoism",⁷ or, as a Spanish socialist leader told President Eisenhower, they were now "ex-citizens".⁸ Spaniards were no longer citizens of a democratic State, but subjects of an authoritarian one.

The centrality of the Catholic Church to Spanish life under the dictatorship was illustrated by the fact that the main institutional channel for sociability during the 1940s and 1950s was, in fact, the Church—especially the local parish. The parishes dedicated themselves to traditional ceremonies and other activities that did nothing to challenge the authoritarian precepts of the regime: an approach that was entirely in accordance with the outlook of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This overwhelming conformity notwithstanding, there were nonconformist strains within the Church. The first one was ACE. Established in the wake of the Second World War as a product of the nascent National-Catholic State, the apostolic associations of the ACE were designed, like the Movement's *Sindicatos Verticales* (SS. VV., Vertical Syndicates), to replace the left-wing worker organisations of the 1930s. Thus, the *Juventud Obrera Católica* (JOC, Catholic Worker Youth) aimed to indoctrinate working class youth; the *Hermanidad Obrera de Acción Católica* (HOAC, Workers' Brotherhood of Catholic Action) was intended to fulfil the same function in relation to rural workers; while the *Juventud Estudiantil Católica* (JEC, Catholic Student Youth) was meant to win the hearts and minds of students, both in schools and universities.⁹

The ACE enjoyed a notable degree of autonomy within the dictatorship, partly because of the nature of the pact between State and Church,

which gave the latter even more leeway following the Concordat of 1953. Another reason was that the ACE was led by the formidable Enrique Plá i Deniel, who, despite his own conservative views, was fiercely protective of the apostolic associations right up until his death in 1965. The relative autonomy of the ACE was also of its own making: a result of the way in which it was organised. Rather than the ecclesiastical authorities exercising tight, top-down control of the associations, as had often occurred in the past, the workers themselves were largely allowed to run them, making the associations much more sensitive to their needs. As a result, they were much more radical than traditional working-class Catholic bodies. Both the workers and the clerical cadres of the ACE were further radicalised by the wretched living and working conditions of the 1940s and 1950s, along with the harsh repression of those years. The upshot was that the ACE developed a momentum of its own. In no time at all, HOAC and JOC became outspoken critics of the Movement's trade unions—the Vertical Syndicates—and outright proponents of the right to strike, freedom of the press, and even workers' control of industry. The two associations not only supported the illegal strikes of 1951, 1956 and 1958, but also helped to found most of the clandestine trade unions that emerged prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), such as the *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores* (1958) (Syndical Federation of Workers); *Acción Sindical de Trabajadores* (1960) (Syndical Action of Workers); and the *Unión Sindical Obrera* (1960) (Syndical Workers' Union). The last two unions, in particular, were the result of JOC's national congress in 1960, which brought together up to 10,000 delegates. The radicalism of the ACE was also a product of its transnationalism. All of the associations of the ACE belonged to worldwide apostolic bodies, which, through their congresses, seminars and other activities, not only provided the ACE with material support, but also exposed it to ideas and values that were very different from those espoused by the Spanish Church hierarchy. In sum, the international apostolic associations of the Catholic Church enhanced the nonconformist outlook of the ACE.

During the early Franco years, the ACE offered workers the only relatively free space for debate and organisation. From this perspective, the ACE was very different from the Movement, its official rival in terms of mass organisation. Whereas the Movement strove to control and indoctrinate the workers, the ACE sought to enable and empower them. Much the same could be said for their respective student bodies: whereas the Movement's *Sindicato Español Universitario* (SEU) (Spanish University

Union) aimed to keep students in line with regime orthodoxy, the JEC engaged with clandestine unions. Hardly surprisingly, the SEU became increasingly out of touch with students' aspirations—it was to suffer the indignity of being the only Francoist institution to be dissolved during the dictator's lifetime—while the JEC aligned itself with the burgeoning anti-Francoist movement. On the other hand, the Movement was a far bigger organisation than the ACE. Millions of industrial and other workers were obliged to sign up to the Vertical Syndicates, whereas membership of the ACE was never that high: the HOAC and JOC estimated that they had a strong presence amongst only 150–180,000 workers in the 1950s. Still, there is no question that the ACE did, in part, fill the vacuum created by the repression of the left-wing parties and unions of the Second Republic, though not as either the dictatorship or the Church hierarchy had envisaged.

The transnationalism of the JOC, HOAC and JEC was a result not only of the international organisations to which they belonged, but also of other tendencies within the worldwide Catholic Church. Firstly, there were the new currents within post-war European theology, especially in France and Germany. These initially found expression in Spain in the 'National Catholic Conversations' of 1951 in San Sebastián. These 'Conversations' introduced new perspectives into the arid theological terrain of the Spanish Church. The principal figure in the 'Conversations' was the philosopher José Luis Aranguren, who not only defended Catholic thinking that was independent of the Church, but also called for far greater emphasis on individual contemplation, as well as advocating a more tolerant approach to Protestantism. Such liberalism was regarded by the Spanish Church hierarchy as unsound, if not actually heretical. However, the introduction of these innovative ideas into Spain made dissident Catholics feel part of a wider movement, and therefore less isolated. A second transnational phenomenon that was encouraging to nonconformist Catholics in Spain was the worker-priest movement that emerged in Western Europe after WWII. In repudiating the financial support and traditional evangelisation of the Church, the worker-priests signalled a radical break with the *modus vivendi* of the Catholic priesthood. They were a source of inspiration to the apostolic associations in Spain because they eliminated virtually all barriers between clergy and laity, and, more than any other group, embodied the empowerment of the rank-and-file clergy. Indeed, the worker-priests could be regarded as the most uncompromising expression of the approach

undertaken by the apostolic associations. Banned by the Pope in 1954 as a result of the ideological tensions generated by the Cold War, the movement was revived eleven years later.

THE REVOLUTION OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

The struggle for citizenship by Spanish Catholics was revolutionised by the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965.¹⁰ The ideas and reforms approved by the Council, in its quest to adapt the Church to the challenge of modernity, turned the Catholic world upside down. It transformed relations within the Church by abolishing the clergy's monopoly on the liturgy, by embracing 'the apostolate of the laity', and by envisioning an institution that was made up not of the clergy alone, but of all believers: 'the people of God'. In other words, the Council undermined the traditional hierarchical matrix of the Church by empowering both the rank-and-file clergy and the laity. This had far-reaching ramifications not only for relations within the Church, but also for those outside of it. The Church's relationship with society at large was also radically altered by the Council's embracing of parliamentary democracy and its corresponding acceptance of the freedoms of expression, association and conscience. Indeed, the Council reached out, in an unprecedented move, to other faiths and even political philosophies, such as Marxism, which had hitherto been regarded as innately hostile to Catholicism. In fact, it was out of the dialogue between Catholicism and Marxism that a radical new theology was born: liberation theology. In more concrete terms, the Council vigorously defended civil liberties and human rights—especially those of the most vulnerable and exploited. Accordingly, a new language of social justice and human rights emerged within the Church, along with a vision of the Catholic community that made it compatible with democracy. As a result, the Church became a champion of citizenship, advocating social and political activism in defence of the underprivileged. In short, the Council had opened up the Catholic Church as never before to the poor and marginalised within both the developing and developed worlds.

This revolution within Catholicism obviously represented a direct threat to the long-standing alliance between the Spanish Church and the Francoist State. This was made evident by the mobilisation of Catholics throughout Spain—not just those in the ACE—in an effort to realise the changes proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council, as reflected in a torrent of new journals, study groups and communities. Conciliar Catholics

drew on the ideas, practices and experiences of the student and worker movements, as well as radical reappraisals of Catholic thought, such as liberation theology. All of this made progressive Catholics feel part of a much broader, transnational movement of protest. For many Catholics in Spain, the Council constituted a watershed, either persuading them to become activists or else strengthening their existing militancy. The result was a Catholic activism that went far beyond the relatively restricted circles of the 1940s and 1950s. Francisca Sauquillo followed an unusual path for a scion of the Madrid upper classes insofar as she embarked on a law degree having attended an elitist Catholic school. However, her first year at university was to change her further still:

The change, for me, came about in the year in which I arrived at the university, where I immersed myself in the Christian communities. (...) I'm talking about 1961, right when the Second Vatican Council begins (sic), which affected me deeply. The two encyclicals: the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, because it opened up a new horizon for me in terms of the subject of labour relations, and the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, because it also changed my mentality. (...) During the university years I believed deeply in the Church that was emerging from the Second Vatican Council, which I believed was a Church that wanted to liberate the world from injustice.¹¹

'INTERNAL' ACTIVISM

The evangelisation of the Second Vatican Council transformed relations within the Church. A first step in the new evangelisation was the removal of the outward signs of ecclesiastical authority in an attempt to reduce the distance between the clergy and the laity. Thus, liturgical vestments were abandoned, as were the habitually formal modes of social address. Spanish priests would drop the use of 'Don' and adopt the colloquial version of their name: for example, 'Don Pedro' became 'Perico'. The third-person form of address—*usted*—was replaced by the informal *tú*. The use of *tú*, one priest recounts, "knocked down many barriers".¹² Hence, language became a means by which the gulf between the clergy and the faithful was diminished.

Another important change involved the use of space: above all, the presbytery and the parish church. Nonconformist clergy made themselves more accessible to the congregation by opening up the presbytery or even by moving out of Church property. Making the presbytery available to parishioners, such as by turning it into a space in which community projects could be planned and pursued, naturally brought the clergy and the laity closer together. Lay perceptions of the clergy were changed even more when a priest chose to live outside Church property. Julio Pérez Pinillos, a priest in the working-class district of Vallecas in Madrid, discovered as much when he moved into “a normal house (...) where ordinary people live”:

Your mental make-up is clerical, from the clergy, from a clergy that is removed from society, isn't it? So, when you go in there, logically, you go in to become just one more person.¹³

The barriers that separated the clergy from the faithful could also be lowered by altering the way in which the priest addressed his congregation. In accordance with the Second Vatican Council, the altar in many churches was reversed so that the priest would face his parishioners instead of having his back to them. A far more radical step altogether was for the priest to *build* his very own church. This marked a complete rupture with tradition: instead of occupying an extant church, the priest relied on the commitment, endeavour and support of his parishioners to construct the building. Not even the Vatican Council itself had foreseen such an empowerment of the laity. The church of Pérez Pinillos in Vallecas was:

built (in the 1960s) by the people from the area. This was amazing because they felt that they were the builders of their own church.

This particular construction had a very simple structure because the parishioners, as builders of the church, decided that ‘the school has needs, and so does the area, which should be prioritised over the needs of the church’.¹⁴ The very name of a church could reflect the shift towards a much more egalitarian and empowering environment. The sign over the entrance to Mariano Gamo’s church in the neighbourhood of Moratalaz just outside Madrid read: *Casa del pueblo de dios*—‘House of the People of God’. This ostensibly referred to the Vatican Council’s definition of the Church as ‘the people of God’, but it was also a subversive reference to the

‘*Casa del pueblo*’: the name given to a local branch of the socialist movement before the dictatorship.

The sacraments were also handled by dissident priests in a more open manner in an effort to involve the laity. Priest Pedro Requeno, whose parish was in the working-class town of Getafe on the outskirts of Madrid, broke with tradition by going to the homes of his parishioners in order to explain a sacrament such as baptism. This was to foster a greater “closeness”:

When we went to people’s homes, the people felt that they were ‘playing at home’ more, and that therefore they had more freedom to express themselves, to say what they felt about the Church, negative experiences that they’d had.¹⁵

The words of a catechismal song written by the priest Mariano Gamo—yet another example of rank-and-file empowerment—captured the spirit of the Second Vatican Council:

Poor of the World

Join in Fellowship

Make the Earth the Kingdom of the Lord

Make the Earth the Kingdom of Love

The fact that these lyrics were sung to the melody of *The International* was probably less in tune with the spirit of the Council. Still, such was the impact of this new catechismal song that, after Franco’s death in 1975, the youngsters who had attended Mariano Gamo’s classes were affronted to discover that “they’ve copied our catechism song”.¹⁶

The new evangelisation, therefore, did much to break down the traditional, top-down relationship between priest and parishioner. Many progressive priests, drawing on the worker and student movements of the 1960s, took the process a step further by actively engaging in forms of participatory democracy. An important means of empowerment was study and discussion groups. Parishioners were encouraged to speak out and pose their own questions: something for which neither the educational system nor the Church had prepared them. Unsurprisingly, this type of open discussion was an entirely new experience for the large majority of believers. Not content with democratising traditional activities, some priests took the process further still by introducing their congregation to the popular

assembly. In Franco's Spain, where even relatively small gatherings required a special permit, the holding of a popular assembly was an overtly subversive act. Still, Mariano Gamo organised an assembly every Sunday once the main Mass was over. The parish council would choose the subject for the assembly, the priest would provide an introductory talk, and then the topic would be publicly debated. These assemblies, recounts Gamo, were "open to everyone", both non-believers and believers, and they would "try to tackle all problems, absolutely all", ranging from ecclesiastical issues, such as the celibacy of the priesthood, to local ones, such as the failure of a housing scheme, to national matters, such as the declaration of a state of emergency, or international concerns, such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Gamo regarded these collective exchanges as "a Christian response" to "the country's political and social situation". These responses were, by definition, collective in nature because the Church "had defined itself as a community, as a collective, to which the Council had given the name of 'people of God'". From this perspective, the 12 o'clock mass "was the culmination, the most important act, of the entire week".

The relative autonomy of the Church under the dictatorship meant that the police were reluctant to act against these assemblies, even though they represented a clear and unequivocal challenge to the regime's power and legitimacy. Still, an assembly that debated the bankruptcy of a building firm which wiped out the savings of many local people prompted the police to surround the church. Even more seriously, an assembly in April 1968 that broached the subject of the original meaning of 1 May, or Labour Day, led to the church being surrounded by the police's white vans (commonly known as the 'milkvans'). As Gamo recounts, those present discussed the question thus:

What do we do? So people intervened etc., 'No, we stay here'. The dominant feeling is that 'we remain here until the Bishop comes to get us out'. (...) After half an hour, the Auxiliary Bishop appeared, having already spoken to the police, of course (...) And when we left, the Bishop led from the front.

Those observing events from the plaza outside burst into applause when they saw the people leaving the church unharmed. "Never have I seen such spontaneous and generous public applause", recalls the priest.¹⁷ This incident not only offers an outstanding example of the autonomy of the Church under the Franco regime—a workers' assembly on the same issue would have been swiftly quashed by the police—but the congregation of

the La Montaña church also became aware of their own power. In other words, these assemblies provided people with a sense of their own capacity for change through collective means. Thus, participatory practices, such as the popular assembly, tested the boundaries of the regime, as well as contesting them. In short, these activities contributed to the development not only of a citizens' consciousness, but also its praxis, even within a dictatorial setting such as that of Spain.

'EXTERNAL' ACTIVISM

The most extreme form of new evangelisation was that of the worker-priests. The movement had its origins in France during the Second World War. The JOC-associated chaplain Henri Godin aimed to halt the de-Christianisation of working-class France by redefining its workplaces and communities as missionary territory. Priests took up employment in factories and other manual occupations, undertaking their mission by living and labouring alongside workers who had left the Church (many of whom had joined the Communist Party). However, the advance of the Cold War meant that the worker-priests were regarded with ever greater suspicion by the ecclesiastical hierarchy: the very act of 'going to the people' often meant that worker-priests operated in strongholds of the Communist Party. By the early 1950s, the upper echelons of the Church were alarmed by the sympathy of many worker-priests for the cause of Communism. The upshot was that Pope Pius XII banned the worker-priest movement in 1954, thus bringing its first wave to a close.¹⁸

The second wave of worker-priests did not emerge until the mid-1960s. This was made possible by the decision of the Second Vatican Council to lift the ban in 1965. The relatively high number of priests in Spain who chose to become workers was partly due to the ground-breaking evangelisation of the Council and partly to the rapid urban expansion of the 1960s—in particular, that of the working-class neighbourhoods that were struggling to absorb the influx of rural migrants in search of work.¹⁹ The second wave of worker-priests, like the first, inverted the traditional profile of a priest by rejecting the ecclesiastical vestments, adopting an informal language, living outside Church accommodation and by foregoing an institutional salary. Renouncing the income, status and privileges of a normal priest for the life of a manual labourer was a matter of principle for a worker-priest. "Something which is fundamental to evangelisation", stresses Pedro Requeno, who became a worker-priest after six years as a

conventional parish priest, “is the incarnation: living with, and like, the people”.²⁰ The commitment of a worker-priest had to be absolute. As Julio Pérez Pinillos, who also became a worker-priest, insists:

No evangelisation is serious if it doesn't start with how one lives one's life. (...) And we discover God by discovering the human being. That's the way forward. Don't get sidetracked. It's not a question of reading many more things; it's not a question of much more study. (...) This is the change that takes place and the reference, the reference, is the working-class world, which I didn't know. So, get immersed in the world of the working-class.²¹

The integration of the worker-priests into the life of the working class, together with the rejection of all ecclesiastical support, made them at once part of, and separate from, the Church. Their determination to remove all distinctions between themselves and the laity made them the personification of the anti-hierarchical and collective values with which so many progressive Catholics identified. The worker-priests' promotion of a social type of citizenship was also reflected in their commitment to the goals of their fellow workers, such as the right to hold large gatherings, to strike, and to form independent trade unions. The individual example set by the worker-priests did much to foment the egalitarian ideals and participatory practices that underpinned the construction of a social citizenship.

As the above examples demonstrate, the language of social justice and citizenship adopted by the Second Vatican Council furnished Catholics with a much stronger and more inclusive ‘external’ vision of activism; that is to say, it encouraged them not just to concentrate on the ‘internal’ life of the Church, but to look outward at the ‘external’ world. In practice, this meant that progressive clergy attempted, at the community level, to rebuild the civil society that had been devastated by the dictatorship. Pedro Requeno was closely involved in the effort to establish a neighbourhood association in Getafe:

It was born within the church itself. (...) It was run, directed completely by the neighbours themselves, who appointed their own committee (...) (but) until the association established itself and had its own place, it operated from our premises or from our own house. (...) Anything that boosted the civil fabric, whether neighbourly, trade unionist or political, had to be supported.²²

Yet activism in the neighbourhood associations was not limited to the clergy alone. José Molina, a Catholic in the Maoist *Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores* (ORT) (Revolutionary Organisation of Workers), helped establish the first neighbourhood association in the working-class district of Vallecas in Madrid. The founding aim of the association was to fight an expropriation order on 12,000 dwellings. "From that moment on", he relates:

a neighbourhood association movement was launched. We saw that there were some extraordinary possibilities there to organise people, to introduce ideas, to create struggle, social movements, etc.

However, this was not due to the commitment and endeavour of the ORT alone, as Molina readily admits:

The Church was fundamental for the development of certain social movements, certain movements and struggles (...) because it gave us legal cover, because it lent us the churches, because it provided resources. Yesterday a priest was telling me that he had had very compromising documents in his sacristy, for example, hidden there to avoid a police search, because you knew that the police were not going to go in there, didn't you?²³

As these testimonies show, dissident Catholics not only took part in the 'internal' activism of self-reflection and Church-orientated reform, but also in the 'external' activism of the broader movements and struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, even joining groups with an anti-religious outlook, such as the ORT, or the *Partido Comunista de España* (PCE) (Communist Party of Spain). Catholic activists were therefore to be found in neighbourhood associations, student groups, trade unions and other forms of 'external' activism that struggled to give disenfranchised people a voice and to provide them with a meaningful role in the decision-making processes. In short, both 'internal' and 'external' activists aspired to make people aware of their rights as citizens and to act upon them.

Opportunities for activism in the rural domain were much more limited than in urban settings such as Getafe, Moratalaz and Vallecas, due mostly to the greater control exercised by the authorities over the much smaller and scattered communities. This also entailed far more acute logistical problems in terms of the organisation of anti-system or clandestine

activities. Nevertheless, Catholics in rural areas did try to revive civil society by educating the laity in the values of citizenship, even in remote parts. An example can be seen in the province of Albacete.²⁴ The *Movimiento Rural de Adultos* (MRA, Rural Adult Movement), an offshoot of the ACE, was specifically set up to educate the rural populace on the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Young priests from the MRA and HOAC, for example, journeyed to the impoverished Sierra del Segura to spread the conciliar message amongst the day labourers there, who often had to travel to other parts of Spain and France in search of work. These priests involved the workers in parish activities, such as picnics and spiritual exercises, in an attempt to overcome their social isolation and political inertia. Training centres, rural schools and boarding schools were set up with the objective of presenting the workers, both male and female, with an alternative vision to that of the regime. At the JOC's School of Housekeeping and Women's Education in the provincial capital, young female workers, relates Encarna Calero, "took decisions, gave their opinions and ran the centre".²⁵ Popular Culture Courses for women, organised by Christian base communities, aspired to "open the mind and the heart to the world beyond the house and the family". A more general aim of the centre at Fuensanta, where these courses were held, was to help "the people of our villages to participate responsibly in civic-political tasks". In the Sierra del Segura, the priests of the MRA tried to develop the social conscience of the workers by discussing not only daily issues, but also broader, political ones, as well as by holding clandestine assemblies. According to a Guardia Civil report, the priests criticised 'the authorities, the official norms, laws and orders, and the regime, in an effort to illuminate the ignorant'.²⁶

Another means of fomenting social citizenship that was pursued by the MRA was to get people to take part in the organisation of the *fiesta* (annual holiday) of a locality rather than let it be 'organised from above'. The laity of *pueblos* in Albacete were encouraged by dissident priests to contribute to the drawing up of the *fiesta*'s programme of activities and its organisation. Progressive clergy helped provide a 'democratic alternative' to the traditional hostelry in one locality and a 'democratic picnic for the working class and peasantry' in another.²⁷ These types of initiatives helped revive popular participation in communal events as well as boosting associational life.

Yet another means of rejuvenating civil society was that promoted jointly by Catholics and Communists in the agricultural co-operatives. Certain co-operatives were mobilised in order to provide community services and hold cultural events. In the co-operative of Villalgordo del Júcar, the police believed that there were “some Communists and the priest [was] linked to the workers”.²⁸ The most militant co-operative of all was that of San Antonio Abad de Villamalea. Run by left-wing priests together with Communist activists, the co-operative, according to Óscar Martín and Damián González, “created a dense local network of cultural and social services, while at the same time channelling the most heartfelt social claims of the residents, thereby contributing to a broad anti-Francoist politicisation”.²⁹

The levels of mobilisation and organisation achieved in rural areas may not have been comparable to those in the urban arena, but there was still a transnational dimension to its Catholic activism. After all, the MRA was itself a product of the Second Vatican Council. More specifically, the centre at Fuensanta brought together Catholics from Spain and France in order to discuss the problems of migratory workers. Thus, progressive Catholics in the countryside, like those in the city, fought to rebuild civil society from the bottom up.

Dissident clergy in the province of Albacete had to contend not only with the hostility of the police and other State authorities, but also with that of their very own bishops. At the national level, the Church hierarchy defended the alliance with the Francoist dictatorship almost to the very end. It was illustrative of the situation that following the death of Enrique Plá i Deniel, head of the ACE, in 1965, the long-standing tensions between the apostolic associations and the upper echelons of the Church, which had been greatly intensified by the Second Vatican Council, came to a head. There was a tremendous backlash against the ACE in the late 1960s.³⁰ Leonardo Aragón, who joined the JEC in 1964 and would later become its European and then worldwide President, recounts the hierarchy’s determination to bring the apostolic associations to heel. The bishops who oversaw Catholic Action:

declared us, we could say, ‘undesirables’. We no longer had any judicial status. The Church ceased to recognise us. But we carried on. We would meet where we could. The situation, as a result, was a much more difficult one, but this occurred in Madrid and at the national level. The JEC practically exploded, disappeared, because they wouldn’t accept the type of

approach that we had. So we kept going and even held a semi-clandestine national meeting or two. We held a meeting in Murcia, I remember, because we thought it was the safest place.³¹

The backlash was successful insofar as many ACE activists not only resigned from their positions, but also left the Church altogether and joined the secular currents of the anti-Francoist opposition. Feliciano Montero, a JEC activist, recalls that:

Many activists reach the conclusion that their option is a fundamentally political and trade-unionist option, and that the least important thing is Catholic Christian identity or living it. If, furthermore, it's rejected within the Church itself, well then 'goodbye and good riddance'.³²

Despite the hierarchy's purge of the ACE, and the flood of desertions from it, the Church did not officially break with the dictatorship until 1973.

The individual paths traced in this chapter should not obscure the larger picture of the contribution made by Catholic activists to the rebuilding of civil society at the national level. A Catholic diplomat, Julio Cerón, founded the *Frente de Liberación Popular* (FLP) (Popular Liberation Front) in 1956. Popularly known as the 'Felipe' or 'el Frente' (The Front), in the 1960s, this became the second-largest clandestine student organisation in the land. HOAC activists also founded two illegal trade unions in the 1960s: *Solidaridad de Obreros Catalanes* (Solidarity of Catalan Workers) and the *Federación Sindical Democrática* (Democratic Union Federation). However, the Catholics' greatest contribution of all to the mobilisation of civil society under the Franco dictatorship was the creation, alongside other activists, of what became the principal force of the anti-Francoist opposition: the *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) (Workers' Commissions).³³ This was not a Catholic union, but Catholics constituted the core of the *Comisiones* in the Basque country and Catalonia between 1962 and 1966. They also played a major role in the Madrid organisation, a delegation of priests petitioning the Archbishop of Madrid, in 1967, to permit the capital's parishes to be used as meeting places for the *Comisiones Obreras*. As late as 1973, the presence of Catholics within the *Comisiones* at the national level was, as Guy Hermet underlines, "significant".³⁴ Catholics were prominent, too, in the struggle for regional rights, both Basque and Catalan. To take the most outstanding example, the most violent of all the anti-Francoist forces, *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA, Basque Fatherland and

Freedom), was not only founded in 1959 in a Catholic seminary, but also enjoyed considerable support from the Basque Church thereafter. The Catalan Church was also heavily committed to the regionalist cause, as shown by the expulsion from Spain, in 1965, of the head of Monserrat Abbey—the foremost symbol of Catalan identity—as a result of his championing of Catalan culture.

Thus, Catholics, both clerical and lay, were heavily involved in the neighbourhood associations, the clandestine trade unions, the illegal student groups, and the regional nationalist movements that did so much to reconstruct the civil society that had been devastated by the Francoist State. In so doing, they recovered and rebuilt the ideals, values and practices of social citizenship which the dictatorship had, for so long, denied the Spanish people.

CONCLUSIONS

Under the Franco regime, citizenship was overwhelmingly reconstructed from the ‘bottom up’ through popular organisation and collective mobilisation. This grassroots battle was not confined to what is traditionally regarded as the anti-Francoist opposition, but included a number of other currents which advanced discourses and practices in defence of a culture of citizenship. Catholics were prominent within this struggle, whether by means of faith-based or secular networks, providing a training ground for activists in the apostolic-, labour-, student- and neighbourhood movements. They contested the authoritarian outlook and structures of the dictatorship, not only through their new evangelisation, but also their associational activism, as well as through the propagation of a new language of community, social justice, and human rights. In this way, clerical and lay Catholics alike made a major contribution to the citizens’ movement that provided much of the popular impetus for the transition from dictatorship to democracy.

NOTES

1. On the Church under the dictatorship, see Feliciano Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos en la España de Franco. Crónica de una intolerancia (1936–1975)* (Madrid: Trotta, 1991); William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875–1998* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press,

- 2000); Guy Hermet, *Los católicos en la España franquista*, 2 volumes (Madrid: C.I.S.-Siglo XXI, 1985 and 1986); and Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain 1875–1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). On the later Franco regime in particular, see William J. Callahan, “The Spanish Church: Change and Continuity,” in *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959–75*, ed. Nigel Townson (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007) and Feliciano Montero, *La Iglesia: de la colaboración a la disidencia (1956–1975)* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2009).
2. On the contribution of progressive Catholicism to the rebuilding of civil society in the 1960s and 1970s see, in addition to the general works cited above, Péter Apor, Rebecca Clifford and Nigel Townson, “Faith,” in *Europe’s 1968: Voices of Protest*, eds. Robert Gildea, James Mark & Anette Warring (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Rebecca Clifford and Nigel Townson, “The Church in Crisis: Catholic Activism and ‘1968,’” *Cultural & Social History*, 8, 4 (2011); Pamela Radcliff, “La Iglesia católica y la transición a la democracia,” in *Religión y política en la España contemporánea*, ed. Carolyn Boyd (Madrid: CEPC, 2007), and, more broadly, “Associations and the Social Origins of the Transition during the Late Franco Regime,” in *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959–1975*, ed. Nigel Townson (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007), 140–162.
 3. On the repression, see *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil*, ed. Santos Juliá (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999); Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth Century Spain* (London: Harper Press, 2012); and Julius Ruiz, *Franco’s Justice: Repression in Madrid after the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
 4. *Arriba* 3 April 1941. Cited by Juan Pan-Montojo, “Ciudadanos y contribuyentes,” in *De súbditos a ciudadanos: Una historia de la ciudadanía en España*, ed. Manuel Pérez Ledesma (Madrid: CEPC, 2007), 512 note 73.
 5. The classic study on the religious persecution is Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España, 1936–1939* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1961).
 6. On citizenship under the dictatorship, see *De súbditos a ciudadanos: Una historia de la ciudadanía en España*, ed. Manuel Pérez Ledesma (Madrid: CEPC, 2007), especially the chapters by Marcello Caprarella, “La ciudadanía secuestrada. La etapa franquista,” Pamela Radcliff, “La ciudadanía y la transición a la democracia,” and Juan Pan-Montojo, “Ciudadanos y contribuyentes”.

7. Manuel Pérez Ledesma, "Presentación," in *De súbditos a ciudadanos: Una historia de la ciudadanía en España*, ed. Manuel Pérez Ledesma (Madrid: CEPC, 2007), 16.
8. The quote is from Indalecio Prieto in his *Carta de un ex-ciudadano español al Presidente de los Estados Unidos Dwight D. Eisenhower* (1959), cited by Manuel Pérez Ledesma, "El lenguaje de la ciudadanía en la España contemporánea," in *De súbditos a ciudadanos: Una historia de la ciudadanía en España*, ed. Manuel Pérez Ledesma (Madrid: CEPC, 2007), 474 note 66.
9. On the ACE, see Feliciano Montero, *La Acción Católica y el franquismo: Auge y crisis de la Acción Católica Especializada en los años sesenta* (Madrid: UNED, 2000). On the specific apostolic associations, see José Castaño Colomer, *La JOC en España (1946–1970)* (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1978); Javier Domínguez, *Organizaciones obreras cristianas en la oposición al franquismo* (Bilbao: Mensajero, 1975); and Feliciano Montero, *Juventud Estudiantil Católica 1947–1997* (Madrid: JEC, 1998).
10. On the impact of the Second Vatican Council in Spain, see Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos*, Chaps. 6 and 7; Callahan, *The Catholic Church*, 501 and 509–534; Hermet, *Los católicos en la España franquista. II.*, Chaps. 6 and 7; and Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy*, 224–225 and 246–253.
11. All the interviews in this chapter were conducted by Nigel Townson as part of the international research project, 'Around 1968: Activism, Networks, Trajectories' (2007–2011), which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the British Academy, and the Leverhulme Trust. The interview with Francisca Sauquillo Pérez was conducted by Nigel Townson (henceforth 'NT') in Madrid on 1 September 2009.
12. Interview with Mariano Gamo Sánchez, conducted by NT, Moratalaz (Madrid), 26 July 2009.
13. Interview with Julio Pérez Pinillos, conducted by NT, Rivas Vaciamadrid, 19 April 2010.
14. Interview with Julio Pérez Pinillos.
15. Interview with Pedro Requeno Regaño, conducted by NT, Getafe, 28 August 2009.
16. Interview with Mariano Gamo Sánchez.
17. Interview with Mariano Gamo Sánchez.
18. On the first wave of worker-priests, see Oscar L. Arnal, *Priests in Working-Class Blue: The History of the Worker-Priests (1943–1954)* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990) and Emile Poulat, *Les Prêtres-ouvriers. Naissance et fin* (Paris: Cerf, 1999).

19. On the worker-priest movement in Spain, see Jaime Botey, *Curas obreros: Compromiso de la Iglesia con el mundo obrero* (Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, 2011); José Centeno García, Luis Díez Maestro and Julio Pérez Pinillos, eds. *Curas obreros: Cuarenta y cinco años de testimonio 1963–2008* (Barcelona: Herder, 2009); Julio Pérez Pinillos, *Los Curas Obreros en España* (Madrid: Nueva Utopía, 2004); and Esteban Tabares Carrasco, *Los Curas Obreros, su compromiso y su espíritu* (Madrid: Nueva Utopía, 2005).
20. Interview with Pedro Requeno Regaño, conducted by NT, Getafe, 26 July 2009.
21. Interview with Julio Pérez Pinillos.
22. Interview with Pedro Requeno Regaño, conducted by NT, Getafe, 28 August 2009.
23. Interview with José Molina Blázquez, conducted by NT, Madrid, 1 June 2010.
24. On nonconformist Catholicism in the province of Albacete, see Óscar J. Martín García, *A tientas con la democracia: movilización, actitudes y cambio en la provincia de Albacete, 1966–1977* (Madrid: Catarata, 2008); Damián A. González Madrid and Óscar J. Martín García, “Cristianos conscientes en el mundo rural’. El movimiento de curas rurales en la diócesis de Albacete (1965–1977),” in *De la cruzada al desencanche: la Iglesia española entre el franquismo y la transición*, eds. Manuel Ortiz Heras and Damián A. González Madrid (Madrid: Sílex, 2011); and Óscar Martín García and Damián González Madrid, “Movimientos católicos, ciudadanía y construcción de enclaves democráticos en la provincia de Albacete durante el franquismo final,” *Ayer*, 91, 3 (2013).
25. Citation from Martín García and González Madrid, “Movimientos católicos”, 201.
26. Quotes from Martín García and González Madrid, “Movimientos católicos”, 200–202.
27. Quotes from Martín García and González Madrid, “Movimientos católicos”, 203.
28. Quote from Martín García and González Madrid, “Movimientos católicos”, 204.
29. Martín García and González Madrid, “Movimientos católicos”, 204.
30. On the bitter conflict between the Church hierarchy and Catholic Action, see Blázquez, *La traición*, 165–166; Callahan, *The Catholic Church*, 519–523; Hermet, *Los católicos en la España franquista. II*, 344–347; Lannon, *Privilege*, 235–237; and Montero, *La Iglesia*, 168–170 and 229–239.
31. Interview with Leonardo Aragón Marín, conducted by NT, Madrid, 14 April 2008.

32. Interview with Feliciano Montero García, conducted by NT, Madrid, 15 December 2008.
33. See Blázquez, *La traición*, 131, 140, and 179–180; Callahan, *The Catholic Church*, 505; Hermet, *Los católicos la España franquista. I.*, 299–302 and *Los católicos la España franquista. II.*, 409–410; and Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy*, 235.
34. Hermet, *Los católicos en la España franquista. I.*, 301.

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2017, XVII, 144 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-61835-7