

From Ashes Reborn:  
The Fascist Repression of Female Prisoners in Francoist Spain and Nazi Germany  
A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Bachelor of Arts  
Degree with Honors in History

Mary Kathleen Sands

Washington & Lee University

May 1, 2016



---

Professor William L. Patch



---

Professor Richard Bidlack



---

Professor Gwyn E. Campbell

## Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
PART I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW.....	4
PART II: THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND THE GERMAN ‘OTHER’ .....	15
PART III: FRANCO’S PRISONS AND THE SPANISH ‘OTHER’ .....	31
CONCLUSION.....	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	61

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to first and foremost thank my thesis advisor, Professor William Patch of the Washington & Lee University History Department. Professor Patch's extraordinary knowledge of the subject area and detailed input and feedback were extremely helpful throughout the entire process of researching, writing and editing this thesis.

I would also like to thank Professor Richard Bidlack of the History Department and Professor Gwyn Campbell of the Romance Languages Department for serving as readers for this thesis. Both took time out of busy schedules to offer thoughtful and detailed feedback on the project. Special thanks also to Professor Ellen Mayock of the Romance Languages Department for suggesting and lending so much helpful source material.

Finally, I would like to thank the family and friends who were so patient and supportive throughout the time that I was working on this project and who came to see the defense.

## Part I: Introduction and Overview

“Blood sin and desecration of the race are the original sin in this world and the end of a humanity which surrenders to it.” – Adolph Hitler

“The whole secret of the campaigns unleashed against Spain can be explained in two words: Masonry and Communism... we have to extirpate these two evils from our land.” – Francisco Franco

In September of 1939, German armies marched into Poland, conquering territory that they would control for the next six years. There they began to expand a network of concentration camps already established in Germany, which would eventually grow to hold millions of prisoners and to exterminate millions more. In the closing months of the Second World War, Allied troops began to penetrate deep into this territory that had been long held by Nazi Germany. They encountered and liberated the camps, the conditions of which were like nothing ever seen before. These discoveries generated a multitude of images of dead and dying prisoners, their skeletons almost completely visible, sitting or lying on the muddy or bloody ground. What followed was a wave of international horror and condemnation and the trials and punishment of many prominent Nazis at Nuremberg.

In the spring of 1939, General Francisco Franco captured Madrid and ended the three-year Spanish Civil War. He immediately began a brutally repressive campaign against the defeated Republicans, summarily executing or imprisoning those who did not go into exile. Those Republicans who remained in Spain but avoided summary execution were crowded into an inadequate prison system where they faced many of the conditions of the Nazi concentration camps, including starvation, beatings, forced labor, and death from disease. At the close of the Second World War, however, the situation remained unchanged, and Franco retained control of the country until his death thirty years later.

One of the most unusual aspects of the situation of the prisoners in both Spain and Germany was that between 1940 and 1945 most of them were neither prisoners of war nor criminals; the majority were civilians, and large numbers of those interned were women and even children. They were imprisoned because they were part of a population of ‘undesirables,’ whether that was defined in racial, political or ideological terms, and they would stay there until the ‘threat’ that they posed to society was neutralized. The principal difference between the imprisoned female populations in Spain and Germany was that Hitler’s regime punished female political opponents but sought to exterminate the racially or biologically ‘impure’ woman, which necessitated her physical destruction. Franco’s regime sought to exterminate the ideologically ‘impure’ woman, which could, but did not necessarily, involve the destruction of her physical body.

The fundamental differences in the political histories of Spain and Germany up to and during the Second World War raise a valid question: why compare them at all? The answer is manifold. First, the central question that this paper examines is whether the Francoist regime in Spain can be considered a fascist regime as opposed to an authoritarian one. While Franco’s dictatorship was undeniably brutal and repressive, especially in the earliest years, there has been much disagreement among historians over whether it can properly be termed fascist. This paper will examine this question from the angle of the Francoist regime’s treatment of imprisoned women. Before beginning that analysis, however, it is important to establish what the term ‘fascist’ means and how it will be defined and evaluated in this paper. ‘Fascism’ is not at all an easily defined or a consistently applied term. Stanley Payne notes that the term is often used pejoratively “to connote ‘violent,’ ‘brutal,’ ‘repressive,’ or ‘dictatorial,’” but that these descriptions might

also be applied accurately to various other regimes, including Communist ones.<sup>1</sup> Payne proposes the following definition of fascism: “a form of revolutionary ultranationalism for national rebirth that is based on a primarily vitalist philosophy, is structured on extreme elitism, mass mobilization, and the *Führerprinzip*, positively values violence as end as well as means and tends to normatize war and/or the military virtues.”<sup>2</sup> Although ‘fascist’ is often used as a synonym of ‘violent,’ Payne maintains that the “only unique feature of the fascist relationship to violence [is] the theoretical evaluation by many fascist movements that violence possessed a certain positive and therapeutic value in and of itself.”<sup>3</sup> When fascist regimes face challenges to their authority, they react violently but with the intention of creating a new worldview or national body. Authoritarian reactions to challenges, on the other hand, are violent without any intention of creating a new mentality. Because ‘ultranationalism’ is such an important feature of fascism, however, a large degree of difference exists among all of the individual national movements, and so it is important to consider the features of each movement individually.<sup>4</sup>

While a majority of scholars consider German National Socialism to have been a fascist movement, the status of fascism in Spain is less clear-cut. During the Second Spanish Republic (1931-36), José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the former dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera, founded the Spanish Falange, an organization “formed [...] on the model of Mussolini’s fascism, but with distinctive Spanish features.”<sup>5</sup> In

---

<sup>1</sup> Payne, Stanley G. *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945*. Madison, WI: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 14

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 11

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>5</sup> Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power. *Right-Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World*. New York: Routledge, 2002. 85.

essence, “the Falange offered a revolutionary social program in answer to the critical social needs of Spain, but unlike the ‘foreign imports’ such as Marxism [...] it reinforced the position of Catholicism and professed support for a more traditional role for women in Spanish life.”<sup>6</sup> José Antonio himself seemed ambivalent about how closely he wanted to associate with Italian fascism; although he met with Mussolini and publicly praised him, he purportedly “stopped using the term *fascist* before the end of 1934 and the term *totalitarian* before the end of 1935.”<sup>7</sup> José Antonio died in 1936, shortly before Francisco Franco took control of all Nationalist forces, and in April 1937 Franco subsumed the Falange under the new *Partido Único*, a union of “Falangists, Carlists, and all other members of various rightist and other groups who were willing to join.”<sup>8</sup> However, José Antonio’s sister Pilar notes that in creating the *Partido Único* “Franco adopted all but one of the 27 points that were the basis of the original Falangist manifesto, eliminating the point that ‘tended to avoid all participation with other groups.’”<sup>9</sup> Payne concludes that Franco’s government was at best semi-fascist in its composition, although the fact that it adopted twenty-six of the Falange’s 27 points, along with many other trappings and elements of Falangism prior to the defeat of the Axis powers, suggest that he may have underestimated the Falangist influence in the government.<sup>10</sup> He certainly underestimates the Falangist influence in the realm of ‘women’s affairs.’

Although traditionally the debates over which regimes qualify as ‘fascist’ have largely overlooked the role of women in fascist states, the experience of women under a

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 92

<sup>7</sup> Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 263

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 264

<sup>9</sup> Garofalo, Emilia. 2001. *The female temper of a Spanish generation: Cultural images of women in the second republic (1931-1939)*. 250. “tendía a evitar toda participación con otros grupos”

<sup>10</sup> Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 266

particular regime must be factored into its evaluation. Women participated in, were targeted by, and constituted a crucial element of fascist policy in Italy, Spain and Germany. In general, they served two purposes: producing children for the State and working to carry out fascist welfare policies. Italian women were “essential agents of Fascist domestic policy” because they provided the welfare services that Mussolini used as a propaganda machine and exploited for political support during the depression.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, “in Franco’s New State, social service for women became the equivalent of military service for men [...and] brought women into the apparatus of the state for the first time.”<sup>12</sup> However, this service was “stripped of any emancipationist ideology. It was to be selfless service by an army of dutiful women carrying out orders for the greater good of the state and nation.”<sup>13</sup> In Germany, women participated in social work but were also expected to acquiesce to extremely invasive state policies regarding their reproductive capacity; for roughly 160,000 German women, this meant submitting to sterilization, while for other women it meant producing as many healthy ‘Aryan’ children as possible.<sup>14</sup> In short, women were to fill the role of the self-abnegating maternal figure; if they were not at home with multiple children of their own, then they filled that role for the needy ‘children’ of the Fatherland, winning hearts and minds to their cause in the process.

In Spain, the women’s organization that fulfilled this function was the *Auxilio Social*, the social service branch of the *Sección Femenina*, which was the female branch

---

<sup>11</sup> Passmore, Kevin. *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*. New Brunswick, NJ: Manchester University Press, 2003.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 211

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 19

<sup>14</sup> Bock, Gisela. 1983. “Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State”. *Signs* 8 (3). University of Chicago Press. 413.



of the Spanish Falange. Pilar Primo de Rivera, the sister of the Falange's founder José Antonio, headed the S.F. from its inception until Franco's death. Unlike the Falange itself, which lost its leader in the Spanish Civil War and then was incorporated into the *Partido Único* and forced to compromise with other rightist elements under Franco, the S.F. remained dominant and largely autonomous in the realm of 'women's affairs' until the end of Franco's regime.<sup>15</sup> Thus, somewhat ironically, the experience of Spanish women under Franco was more directly and overtly tied to fascist ideology and activity than the experience of Spanish men.

Payne's analysis of Franco's regime largely neglects the experience of women in Franco's New State and pays little attention to the specific techniques and conditions of the repression that was unleashed against them. It also overlooks the importance of the *Sección Femenina*, the most autonomous branch of the Falange and the one responsible for the training and formation of the young women who would be future state employees, including prison guards. This analysis will examine the experience of women imprisoned under Franco using testimonials and autobiographies compiled and published by former prisoners, as well as interviews with the original members of the *Sección Femenina*. It will also examine for the purposes of comparison the experience of women imprisoned under the Third Reich through the published testimonies of several survivors of the camps.

Because "generic fascism is an abstraction which never existed in pure empirical form," the best standard against which to judge any aspect of Franco's regime in practice is Nazi Germany, the only nation in Europe where a fascist party was in full control of the national government and able to implement (if incompletely) fascist doctrine and

---

<sup>15</sup>Bacchetta, P. and Margaret Power, 87

policy.<sup>16</sup> Nazi Germany was also the creator of probably the most original and enduring symbol of fascist violence: the concentration camp system. In seeking to determine whether Francoist Spain was fascist from the angle of its implementation of violence against imprisoned women, then, Nazi Germany offers a valuable and well-documented standard of comparison.

While a comparison between Francoist Spain and Nazi Germany in terms of the treatment of imprisoned women is useful, there are manifold differences between the situations in each country that complicate the comparison. First, the political histories of the two nations were distinct and, in the period leading up to the Second World War, the progression of each was almost the inverse of the other. As Stanley Payne points out, “Spain had been independent since approximately the eleventh century, and it achieved the first true world empire in human history, long maintaining the status of an established power.”<sup>17</sup> Also, “because of its geographic location and limited external ambitions, the country avoided involvement in the major wars of the twentieth century.”<sup>18</sup> Germany, which did not exist as a nation until 1871, shared among its many states a common language and culture which formed the basis of German nationalism. Spain, in contrast, consisted of several autonomous regions with their own languages and cultures, most notably Catalonia and the Basque Country.<sup>19</sup> While Germany had progressed through a world war and an ill-fated Republic to the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Spain had gone from the dictatorship of General

---

<sup>16</sup> Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 4 and 10

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 253

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

Miguel Primo de Rivera to its own ill-fated Republic to an all-consuming civil war.<sup>20</sup> The situation of each nation at the beginning of 1939 was thus very distinct from the political, social, and economic situation of the other. It is worth noting, however, that both nations existed and operated within the same wider context of European politics; that they both had experience of the various political and social movements (fascism, socialism, communism) that exploded in the interwar period; that both experienced the negative effects of the Great Depression; and that both finished the year 1939 under the control of a strong and brutal dictator at the head of a rightist government.

There was also a major difference in the geographic scale and location of the repression and imprisonment of ‘undesirables’ under each regime. Beginning in 1939, Germany embarked on a war of external conquest, rapidly expanding in territory. The Nazis built many of their most notorious camps, such as Auschwitz, Sobibor and Treblinka, in occupied Polish territory. These camps were needed to accommodate the massive increase in prison populations after 1939, while camps such as Ravensbrück, Bergen-Belsen and Dachau were built in Germany, at first often to house the huge wave of political prisoners arrested in 1933 and 1934.<sup>21</sup> Wherever the camps were located, they housed prisoners from all over occupied Europe; Ravensbrück, for example, held women prisoners from 23 nations.<sup>22</sup> Spain, by contrast, experienced a civil war that, on the Nationalist side, was a war of internal conquest; Franco sought to gain control of all

---

<sup>20</sup> First World War 1914-1919, Weimar Republic 1920-1933, Hitler comes to power in 1933; Primo de Rivera dictatorship 1923-1930, Second Spanish Republic 1931-1936, Spanish Civil War 1936-1939

<sup>21</sup> Koonz, Claudia. *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987. 315.

<sup>22</sup> Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. Weitzman. *Women in the Holocaust*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998. 307

Spanish territory, but not to gain territory from other nations. The inmates of his prisons were, for that reason, almost all Spanish, as were the prison guards and administrators.

The issue of religion was another major difference between Nazi Germany and Francoist Spain. In Spain, “[c]ulture and tradition [...] were identified with religion more exclusively than in many other lands, creating a climate of national Catholicism that would long resist modern secularization.”<sup>23</sup> During and after the Spanish Civil War, Franco allied himself very closely with the Spanish Catholic Church, which took an active role in the repression of Republican prisoners. A “Catholic religious (if politically anticlerical) identity [...] was central [even] to Falangism,” which meant that Spanish fascism lacked the “philosophy [...] involving the attempt to realize a new modern, self-determined, and secular culture” which is one of Stanley Payne’s criteria in defining a movement as fascist.<sup>24</sup> Germany, on the other hand, did aspire to create such a secular culture with citizens who venerated Hitler and lived by the tenets of his Party. Despite Hitler’s 1933 Concordat with the Roman Catholic Church, he was not a supporter of the religious establishments in Germany and “particularly detested the Spanish Catholic Church.”<sup>25</sup> The Nazis sought to introduce various new national holidays and traditions based around party history and principles. Matthew Stibbe argues, for example, that under the Nazis “Mother’s Day was intended [...] to be] a fundamental part of the public celebration of National Socialism as a new national religion or *ersatz* political faith which would eventually replace Christianity in the hearts and minds of most Germans.”<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 253

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 261 and 7

<sup>25</sup> Payne, Stanley G. *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 20

<sup>26</sup> Stibbe, Matthew. *Women in the Third Reich*. London: Arnold, 2003. 42

While the political and social histories of Spain and Germany leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War were extremely different, by the year 1939 strong similarities between them had emerged. Both countries were controlled by rightist regimes headed by militant dictators. Both regimes were also virulently anti-Communist, and both orchestrated and supervised systematic, brutal crackdowns on undesirable ‘others’ within the territories they controlled. In Nazi Germany, of course, these attacks were primarily racially motivated, although many attacks were also staged against political opponents of Nazism.

The Nazi Holocaust and the Francoist repression had another trait in common: both targeted women as political agents rather than merely conquered property. As Joan Ringelheim writes in her article “The Split between Gender and the Holocaust,” the “Nazi’s ‘final solution’ was one of the first such events in history that did not treat the female population primarily as spoils of war but instead explicitly sentenced women and children to death.”<sup>27</sup> In Spain as well, women were condemned to death or imprisonment because of their political affiliations or activism, though they represented a much smaller proportion of those executed: in the first two years following the Civil War, the records show eighty-seven women shot in the East Cemetery of Madrid alone.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the period from 1939 to 1945 during which Franco’s and Hitler’s dictatorships overlapped encompass by far the worst atrocities committed by both regimes. The Nazis, although they had persecuted female political opponents and hereditarily ill or ‘unfit’ women since the beginning of the regime in 1933, began expanding and operating their concentration camp system during these years. On May 15,

---

<sup>27</sup>Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. Weitzman, 344

<sup>28</sup>Holgado, Fernando Hernández. *Mujeres Encarceladas: La Prisión De Ventas, De La República Al Franquismo, 1931-1941*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003. 289

1939, the first female prisoners arrived at Ravensbrück, a notorious women's camp that would not be liberated until 1945 at the end of the war.<sup>29</sup> The spring of 1939 also marked Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War and the beginning of his harsh reprisals against the defeated Republicans. Within a month of the Nationalist victory over 3,500 women would be imprisoned in Madrid's Ventas prison alone, and from 1939 until 1944 an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 prisoners would be executed in Spain as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

Although Franco's regime lasted until 1975, the worst of the repression ended as the Allied forces liberated the German camps; as Payne notes, "the ultimate structure of the Franco regime was largely dependent on world affairs," and with the political situation in Spain firmly under control and the Allied nations again at liberty to observe and condemn the atrocities committed there, the violence against Republicans lessened considerably after 1945.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. Weitzman, 306

<sup>30</sup> González, Shirley Mangini. *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.101, and Holgado, 138

<sup>31</sup> Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 267

## Part II: The Concentration Camps and the German 'Other'

Germany's loss in the First World War devastated the country and created a power vacuum that resulted in the creation of a new, democratically elected government that came to be known as the Weimar Republic. Under the Weimar Republic women were granted suffrage in 1918, but their political participation was at first largely contained and contextualized by 'apolitical' institutions, such as church or community groups.<sup>32</sup> At first, women's support largely went to the center parties, but as the years wore on in Weimar Germany the more extreme parties began to close their gender gaps. The Nazi Party, unlike the conservative but more moderate DNVP, did not allow women to serve as its government representatives or to fill higher party offices, but it still managed to attract female voters; in the 1930 elections, while only 15 percent of the total women's vote went to the NSDAP, women cast about 48 percent of the votes that the Party received.<sup>33</sup> By the 1932 elections, the voting gap between men and women had disappeared for the Nazis.<sup>34</sup>

Many of the women who were initially attracted to Nazism were from the middle class and felt a deep identification with middle-class values, ideology and professions.<sup>35</sup> Many of them were also Protestants; Protestant women, unlike Catholics and Socialists, could not rely on strong community networks to offer social service, education, and doctrine.<sup>36</sup> Nazism, which Hitler referred to as a 'movement' rather than a 'party,' offered a community and a world view which many of these women found attractive.<sup>37</sup> Far from

---

<sup>32</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan. *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984. 203

<sup>33</sup> Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power, 141 and Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. Weitzman, 86

<sup>34</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 34

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 211

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 209

demanding gender equality within the movement, Nazi women wanted “more masculine men” and “more feminine women.”<sup>38</sup> They also wanted to expand women’s dominion over “Kinder, Küche, Kirche” to include “Krankenhaus und Kultur” (hospitals and culture).<sup>39</sup> The function of women in the movement was to develop a Nazi ‘culture’ and way of life as well as to provide social services to party members and families.<sup>40</sup> Gertrude Scholtz-Klink later took over in this area, recruiting and organizing Nazi women to perform practical services.<sup>41</sup> Under Scholtz-Klink, more than four million women joined the Nazi *Frauenwerk* organizations and participated in its social projects and services.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Nazi Party claimed that it would restore and protect family life, Claudia Koonz contends that in this area “Nazi policy was deeply revolutionary because it aimed at the creation of a family unit that was not a defense against public invasion as much as the gateway to intervention.”<sup>43</sup> In the case of racially ‘fit’ and ‘desirable’ women, this intervention was intended to promote childbearing to the greatest extent possible. The Nazis implemented many ‘radical’ pro-woman policies, such as the extension of government aid to unmarried mothers who bore ‘racially fit’ children, easier access to divorce on the grounds that new marriages would produce new babies, and equal pay in some industries with the aim of encouraging employers not to hire women for heavy work.<sup>44</sup> They also offered marriage loans to racially ‘desirable’ couples, which would be forgiven on a sliding scale according to the number of children the marriage

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 213

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 213

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 210

<sup>41</sup> Koonz, 180-1

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 183

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 180

<sup>44</sup> Stephenson, Jill. *Women in Nazi Society*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1975, 192-3 and Durham, Martin. *Women and Fascism*. New York: Routledge, 1998, 24



produced. In 1939, forty-two percent of marrying couples took out a marriage loan.<sup>45</sup> The marriage rate and the birth rate both rose under the Third Reich, although both had been extremely low during the preceding years of the Weimar Republic and the Great Depression, and likely rose more as a result of the return to full employment than of Nazi efforts to increase them.<sup>46</sup> The divorce rate also rose under the Nazis following the enactment of the 1938 Marriage Law, though this increase did not necessarily indicate a failure of their policies since new ‘Aryan’ children were much more important to Nazi leaders than happy marriages.<sup>47</sup> Those who qualified for Party membership were especially incentivized to have children; Frau Wilhelmine Haferkamp, the wife of a former Party member, claims that her husband joined the Party because they were pregnant with their fourth child and membership would bring them fifty marks per child per month, more ration cards, paid high school for all of the children and chances for them to advance socially and professionally. The Haferkamps eventually had ten children.<sup>48</sup>

The NSDAP clearly considered women first and foremost as mothers or potential mothers.<sup>49</sup> According to Koonz, at the beginning of the Third Reich this emphasis on maternity led many women to expect that the regime’s pro-family programs would increase their influence on their children.<sup>50</sup> They were mistaken. With rearmament in 1935-6, mothers went to work while children spent their time in Nazi youth groups, making it “starkly clear [that motherhood] would henceforth be viewed entirely in

---

<sup>45</sup> Stibbe, 44

<sup>46</sup> Durham, 22

<sup>47</sup> Stibbe, 45 and Koonz, 185

<sup>48</sup> Owings, Alison. *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011, 19

<sup>49</sup> Durham, 18

<sup>50</sup> Koonz, 195

biological terms, just as Hitler's enemies had warned."<sup>51</sup> National Socialism demanded loyalty to the Führer over the father, connected children more closely with teachers and youth groups, and encouraged mothers to take on work outside the home, undercutting family ideology.<sup>52</sup> Nazi youth group leaders encouraged children to report on their families and made it easier for children to rebel against their parents.<sup>53</sup> Nazi women were expected to prioritize their obligations to the race, the State, and the *Volk* over their responsibilities to their individual homes and families.<sup>54</sup>

Nazism did not make provisions for women as a whole but rather distinguished between 'desirable' and 'undesirable' women, offering benefits to the former while violently attacking the latter. These 'undesirable' women typically fell into at least one of three categories: political adversaries of Nazism, the hereditarily ill or 'feeble,' and non-Aryan or racially 'inferior' women. When Hitler first seized power, the Nazis immediately took violent repressive measures against the political opposition, including women. Female parliamentary representatives for the Communist, Socialist, and moderate liberal parties from the national to the municipal level were targeted. Many were arrested, assaulted, tortured, imprisoned and murdered, while some were taken and held in place of their male relatives who had escaped.<sup>55</sup> About one-third of the female Reichstag delegates who had served during the Weimar Republic were arrested soon after Hitler's takeover.<sup>56</sup> Koonz notes that the legal system, including the courts and the police, became instruments of Nazi oppression and violence almost overnight, a change for

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 197

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 178

<sup>53</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 212

<sup>54</sup> Stibbe, 43

<sup>55</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 298

<sup>56</sup> Koonz, 321

which even the most cynical Germans were unprepared.<sup>57</sup> Communists in particular were early targets of the Nazi regime; of the 300,000 or so Communist Party members in Germany in January 1933, half were imprisoned or had been executed by January of the following year.<sup>58</sup> Two female former politicians, ex-Reichstag delegate Olga Koerner and ex-city councilwoman Emma Beier, were sentenced to two years in prison for possession of expired Communist Party membership cards which the Gestapo found in their houses.<sup>59</sup>

Even women who were not politically active prior to the advent of the Third Reich fell victim to its political repression. In the earliest years of the regime, the largest category of female political prisoners were those charged with making ‘offensive’ comments.<sup>60</sup> Many more were arrested in place of male relatives or even male employers, and some of these women were tortured with the hope that they would reveal where the wanted men were hiding.<sup>61</sup> A full three-quarters of the women imprisoned in the Hohenstein jail (thirty-three out of forty-five) by the end of 1935 were held in place of male relatives.<sup>62</sup> Prison conditions were harsh; new arrivals were welcomed with jeers and “dirty tricks” such as being purposely tripped, called sluts, and having water thrown on their skirts and then being mocked for ‘urinating.’<sup>63</sup> Some of these women were forced to leave young children behind with no support, and even after they were released they struggled to find jobs because of their ‘criminal’ records.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 316

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 315

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 313

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 299

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 303

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 299

There were, however, many women who were active in the anti-Nazi resistance movements. Women were well suited to resistance activities in Germany because these activities were generally nonviolent, and therefore depended less on brute strength and fighting skills and more on deception, inconspicuousness, and interpersonal and emotional manipulation, all culturally considered ‘feminine’ skills.<sup>65</sup> However, when deception failed, these women were often arrested, interrogated, put on trial and sentenced to terms in prison or in concentration camps. Frau Lotte Müller was a Communist Party activist who was arrested for, among other activities, helping Belgian, Norwegian, and Dutch Communists make their way to Spain during its civil war to fight for the Republic.<sup>66</sup> A Nazi court sent her to Ravensbrück in “protective custody” to be “reeducated,” and she spent 1,095 days there, only surviving because she worked as a plumber.<sup>67</sup> Katharina Jacob was another Communist activist working in Hamburg. Her husband became a KPD delegate to the Hamburg city Parliament in 1933, and after the Nazi takeover he immediately went underground while she began to work in the resistance, secretly distributing leaflets encouraging workers to sabotage industrial machinery.<sup>68</sup> She was arrested on three different occasions by the Gestapo and served time in the Fuhlsbüttel concentration camp and in the Lübeck-Lauerhof prison.<sup>69</sup>

One of the many struggles that Jacob faced while incarcerated was the constant threat of losing her young daughter Ursel. Prior to 1939, many of the women arrested by the Nazis, including Jacob, were arrested for political reasons but were still considered healthy ‘Aryans’: therefore, their children had value to the Nazis, who wanted to control

---

<sup>65</sup> Koonz, 310

<sup>66</sup> Owings, 160

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 158 and 156

<sup>68</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 352

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 352-3

their education to ensure that they grew up to be loyal citizens of the Nazi State. Many children of imprisoned mothers were taken into custody by the Nazis and became wards of the State.<sup>70</sup> While Jacob was in Lübeck-Lauerhof she learned that the Hamburg district court had denied her custody of Ursel.<sup>71</sup> Luckily for Jacob, Ursel's Social Democrat teacher was able to intervene and become her guardian; otherwise, she would have been sent to a Nazi boarding school.<sup>72</sup> Jacob eventually gained her freedom and returned home to her daughter, but Ursel was soon afterward packed off to Saxony for a year by a Nazi program that sent city children to live in the countryside.<sup>73</sup> Marie Vassiltchikov, a Russian princess working in Berlin during the war who was involved in the 20<sup>th</sup> of July plot to kill Hitler, recounted the fates of the conspirators who were arrested (she escaped detection) and of their families: she states that "Alex [...] has been able to rescue Adam [Trott]'s children, and they are back in the country, but his wife Clarita is still in prison. The Stauffenberg children are in an orphanage under a different name, but this has leaked out, so it may be possible to find them one day."<sup>74</sup> Her brother George, who published her diaries after her death, added:

The children of the plotters alone numbered about fifty, some of them babies. The Nazi's original plan had been to kill off the parents and the older brothers and sisters and to scatter the others, under new identities, among SS schools and families, to be brought up as Nazis. For some reason this plan was abandoned, and in October 1944, some of the children were allowed to go home, while the rest were hidden away in ordinary boarding schools.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, the children old enough to have absorbed their parents' anti-Nazi ideas were considered dangerous opponents; the young ones, however, were so valuable due to their

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 300

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 354

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 355

<sup>74</sup> Vassiltchikov, Marie, writer. *Berlin Diaries 1940-1945*. Audio book. Part 2 - Track 18

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

‘Aryan’ qualities that not even the general campaign of revenge and reprisals that followed the assassination attempt led to their physical harm. This drive to protect and control ‘Aryan’ children extended even to families where neither parent was arrested; Wally Grodka, an ‘Aryan’ German woman, had her daughter taken by force by the Gestapo when she insisted on going through with a second marriage to a Jewish man.<sup>76</sup>

The second category of women systematically persecuted by the Nazis were the hereditarily ‘unfit.’ These women generally were not jailed, but they were often forcibly sterilized and even euthanized. ‘Scientific racism,’ including ideas of eugenics and sterilization, was espoused in Weimar Germany by both the Left and the Right and promoted as the cure to many social ills.<sup>77</sup> Pope Pius XI had declared his absolute opposition to eugenics, which meant most Catholics also opposed it, but in Germany Protestant social workers expressed enthusiastic support for the idea.<sup>78</sup> Bock explains that the discourse on sterilization and social hygiene had, since the end of the previous century, focused heavily on women as either ‘mothers of the race’ or the culprits behind ‘race suicide’ or racial degeneration.<sup>79</sup> The 1929 book *Sterilization on Social and Race Hygienic Grounds*, well known in Germany, claimed that “the number of degenerate individuals born depends mainly on the number of degenerate women capable of procreation.”<sup>80</sup> Therefore, as Bock concludes, “the sterilization of degenerate women is, for reasons of racial hygiene, more important than the sterilization of men.”<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup>Stoltzfus, Nathan. *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996, 55

<sup>77</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 274

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 206

<sup>79</sup> Bock, 401

<sup>80</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 275

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Under Hitler, a sterilization law meant to prevent ‘lives unworthy of life’ came into effect on January 1, 1934, and listed nine categories which were grounds for sterilization: five dealt with mental ‘feebleness’ or ‘invalidity,’ three were for physical ‘invalidity,’ and the last was for alcoholism.<sup>82</sup> The Nazis believed most mental illness to be hereditary, and by sterilizing those affected they hoped to cleanse the German population of these various disorders. By the beginning of World War II, around 320,000 people had been sterilized in Germany under this law, and roughly half of that number were women.<sup>83</sup> About three-quarters of all those sterilized were judged mentally ‘infirm,’ either because of ‘feeble-mindedness’ or ‘schizophrenia’; slightly more than fifty-three percent of the women sterilized were considered ‘feeble-minded.’<sup>84</sup> Around 400 women and 80 men died from complications of the sterilization procedure.<sup>85</sup> The highest percentage of victims of sterilization were from the working class: among those women who were sterilized, domestic servants, unskilled industrial or agricultural laborers, and unemployed housewives married to unskilled industrial or agricultural laborers were the largest categories represented, although prostitutes and single mothers were often targeted as well.<sup>86</sup> Many prostitutes were classified as ‘asocials,’ a designation that, within race hygiene theory, became so thoroughly established as a hereditary disease it became a central category of eugenic practice. When a wartime labor shortage after 1940 prompted the release of many ‘asocials’ from the camps where they had been interned, a new law was in development to ensure their sterilization.<sup>87</sup> Some psychiatric patients

---

<sup>82</sup> Bock, 412

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 413

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 414

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 418

entered sex-segregated private hospitals to avoid sterilization, but from 1939-41 about 100,000 of these patients were euthanized in the T4 program, while many more died of starvation.<sup>88</sup> During this same period, about 5,000 hereditarily ill or disabled children under the age of sixteen were killed under the T4 program for being ‘unworthy of life.’<sup>89</sup>

After the outbreak of war in 1939, two new trends emerged in relation to imprisoned women. First, women began to be rounded up in groups on the basis of racial ‘inferiority’ rather than individually on the basis of political activism or hereditary ‘unfitness.’ This was particularly true of Jewish women, who prior to 1939 had been arrested only if they fell into another category of ‘undesirable,’ such as prostitutes, lesbians, vagrants, or ‘shirkers,’ or if they engaged in sexual relations with Aryans.<sup>90</sup> Second, as concentration camps within and outside of Germany were built and expanded, women were sent to them with increasing frequency. The conditions of the camps were famously appalling, and often proved fatal. Women’s camps were usually staffed by female Nazi guards; at Moringen, the first women’s concentration camp, day to day operations were overseen by men but carried out by female guards recruited from the Nazi women’s organization *Frauenschaft*.<sup>91</sup> At Ravensbrück, one of the most infamous women’s camps, 500-550 SS women in uniform supervised prisoners, 300 in the main camp and the rest on outside labor crews.<sup>92</sup> The often cruel and vicious behavior of these guards contributed to the overall strain and misery of the camps.

As the war went on, overcrowding in the camps became more and more of an issue. Ravensbrück was a camp built to house around six thousand women; eventually it

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 415

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 300

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 305

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 309



held six times that many.<sup>93</sup> Olga Lengyel, describing her first impressions of Auschwitz-Birkenau upon her arrival in May 1944, notes that her barrack was so full that “not all the occupants were able to sleep at the same time, for there was an acute shortage of space. Some had to spend the entire night squatting in awkward positions.”<sup>94</sup> The ‘acute shortage of space’ was a common feature of camp life, along with hard labor and a starvation diet, and many prisoners took ill and died as a result.<sup>95</sup> Hygiene was nearly non-existent; in January of 1943, there was only one faucet for drinking and washing to meet the needs of 12,000 women prisoners at Aushwitz-Birkenau. Prisoners were not protected from exposure either; on the same day that Lengyel crowded into her new barrack with her fellow prisoners, their group was forced to stand outside for hours in scant clothing; she states that this “test in endurance was to claim many victims. Cases of pneumonia, otitis, and meningitis were soon to appear, many to prove fatal.”<sup>96</sup> At night, her group was given “miserably filthy, odorous blankets [...with only] one blanket for every ten persons,” as well as “twenty bowls [of soup]- twenty bowls for 1,500 persons! Each bowl held about one and a half quarts.”<sup>97</sup> Similarly, in Ravensbrück prisoners were fed on two pieces of bread per day, supplemented with “rotten turnip soup and one spoonful of marmalade a week.”<sup>98</sup>

Violence in the camps was another tax on prisoners’ stamina. Initially, women did not suffer physical violence to the same degree that male prisoners did. SS Captain Max Koegel, the first camp director of Ravensbrück, wrote in 1939 to the Inspector of

---

<sup>93</sup> Owings, 156

<sup>94</sup> Lengyel, Olga. *Five Chimneys: The Story of Auschwitz*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1983. iBook. 98

<sup>95</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 311 and 304

<sup>96</sup> Lengyel, 88

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 98 and 101

<sup>98</sup> Owings, 165

Concentration Camps asking that thirty to forty solitary confinement cells be built in the camp. According to Milton, this letter indicates that solitary confinement was the most severe punishment faced by German female inmates, although their strong solidarity and dependence on each other for physical and emotional survival made it a harsh one.<sup>99</sup> After Himmler inspected the camp in January 1940, however, corporal punishment was introduced for the women of Ravensbrück.<sup>100</sup> If male prisoners suffered more physical violence, though, women were almost exclusively the targets of sexual violence and humiliation. Ofer and Weitzman explain that while the SS rarely raped women in the camps, the threats and stories of sexual violence were a constant source of terror for prisoners.<sup>101</sup> Women were sometimes raped or abused by male prisoners, as was the case for a female inmate in Auschwitz who was raped by a Polish prisoner after he lured her with the offer of food.<sup>102</sup> Sexual humiliation was a nearly universal experience thanks to the inspections that women underwent upon their arrival at the camps. Lengyel relates:

Now [after being sorted] we were compelled to undergo a thorough examination in the Nazi manner, oral, rectal, and vaginal- another horrible experience. We had to lie across a table, stark naked while they probed. All that in the presence of drunken soldiers who sat around the table, chuckling obscenely.<sup>103</sup>

Of course, in addition to beatings and sexual abuse, women faced the constant threat of extermination and murder. Lengyel explains that, after a short time in the camps, the truth of her situation dawned on her: if and when “the internees in Auschwitz, or in other

---

<sup>99</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 307

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. Weitzman, 340

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 341

<sup>103</sup> Lengyel, 78

[slave] camps in the area, were no longer judged useful they were dispatched to Birkenau to die in the ovens. It was as simple and cold-blooded as that.”<sup>104</sup>

The group most closely and consistently linked with this last specter of extermination and cremation at the hands of the Nazis were, of course, the Jews. The persecution of Jews under the Third Reich began almost immediately after Hitler seized power, although plans for the “Final Solution” were not developed until the Wannsee conference in January 1942. The 1933 Aryan Clause which effectively fired all Jews from civil service was the first heavy blow to the Jewish middle and upper classes; Jewish women, especially those in the medical and legal professions, also experienced institutional betrayal early as the women’s professional organizations had to decide whether to eject all non-Aryans from their groups, which they eventually did.<sup>105</sup> The Nazis worked hard to portray their racist beliefs as reflective of natural hierarchies that needed to be encoded in the law; apparently they succeeded to a great extent, as, according to Nathan Stoltzfus, contact between Christians and Jews was nearly nonexistent by 1935.<sup>106</sup> *Mischlinge*, or those of mixed Jewish blood, were often included in this “social discrimination” even if they no longer followed Jewish customs or the Jewish faith, showing how deeply ideas of race and racial inferiority had penetrated Nazi society.<sup>107</sup>

The large numbers of Jewish men who had fled or been arrested by the Nazis early on meant that after October 1941, as deportations of Jews became more and more common, there were more German-Jewish women than German-Jewish men deported

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 95

<sup>105</sup> Stoltzfus, 43-4 and Koonz, 355

<sup>106</sup> Stoltzfus, 47 and Koonz, 371

<sup>107</sup> Stoltzfus, 62

and sent to the camps.<sup>108</sup> Gabrielle Pfingsten has argued that “Jewish women were persecuted and murdered all the more aggressively because, as women, they were potential bearers of the next Jewish generation.”<sup>109</sup> Upon arrival in the camps, pregnant women were immediately sent to the gas chambers; young children were as well, and because their mothers were usually not separated from them, most Jewish women with babies and toddlers died immediately with their children.<sup>110</sup> The treatment of Jewish mothers and children is one of the most revolting and revealing elements of Holocaust testimonies. Children were targeted explicitly for extermination along with their parents. According to Isaiah Trunk, “the pronounced motive for this systematic extermination of the Jewish children by the Nazis and their confederates was the desire to sever the biological roots of the Jewish people, depriving even a remnant handful of survivors of the remotest possibility of regeneration.”<sup>111</sup> Some of these children followed their mothers into the gas chambers; others were murdered outright by German and Ukrainian soldiers, who threw “live children into fires or garbage pits [...] assault[ed] them with hand grenades [...] and] grabbed them by their little feet and smash[ed] them head first into walls.”<sup>112</sup> A survivor of the Lodz ghetto, identified only as M.L., witnessed in May 1943 “the Hitlerites and their Ukrainian henchmen [storm] into the camp and [grab] every child to the age of fourteen- babies, too.”<sup>113</sup> The soldier corralled the children in a

---

<sup>108</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 301

<sup>109</sup> Stibbe, 60

<sup>110</sup> Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, 312

<sup>111</sup> Trunk, Isaiah. *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis*. New York: Stein and Day, 1979, 68

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 71

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 124

cemetery, and when the children, sensing danger, scattered, the soldiers hunted them with hand grenades until they all lay dead or dying on the ground.<sup>114</sup>

The German case offers some valuable insight into what fascist policies regarding women looked like in practice. First, individual women were considered political allies and particularly political adversaries, especially during the initial seizure of power. Sometimes they were persecuted on the basis of their own history of political activity, and sometimes they were treated as surrogates for male members of their group (whether a family group, political group, or social group) who had escaped. Second, most policy related to women focused on their reproductive capacity and responsibilities. Their responsibility to reproduce, or to sacrifice their reproductive capacity through sterilization, was owed to the State rather than to their individual family or social group. Thus, the State promoted and incentivized reproduction for ‘desirable’ women while attempting to discourage or prevent reproduction by ‘undesirable’ women.

The first set of women to fall prey to these discriminatory reproductive policies were hereditarily ill or ‘unfit’ women. The Nazi state intended to purge the nation of all ‘useless eaters’ and ‘lives unworthy of life,’ and they had no reservations about forcing women to undergo sterilization or abortion in order to achieve these ends. They also euthanized many disabled or mentally ill women and children, or allowed them to die of starvation in pursuit of the same goals. After 1939, the Nazi regime turned its attention to racially ‘unfit’ women, particularly Jews. These women were sent to concentration camps, where they were either killed upon arrival in the gas chambers or forced into slave labor, living in appalling conditions and subsisting on a diet insufficient to keep them

---

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 124-5

alive long-term. The aim was to exterminate 'undesirables' in the most efficient and profitable manner possible.

Children under the Third Reich were not accorded any more special consideration or protection than women; their fate depended upon their biological and racial 'fitness.' Jewish children and children with disabilities or debilitating illnesses were ruthlessly murdered, and young children sometimes fared worse than their parents or adult counterparts because they were incapable of performing slave labor, which might have bought them some time. The exceptions were the young children of politically anti-Nazi parents, who, because of their status as healthy 'Aryans,' were simply taken from their families to be indoctrinated and educated as Nazis. Many elements of this violent and discriminatory treatment of 'undesirable' women and children appeared also in Spain, where, following the conclusion of the Civil War, Franco's regime led a brutally repressive campaign against 'Red' women in an effort to purge Spanish society of Republican ideals and sympathizers.

### Part III: Franco's Prisons and the Spanish 'Other'

The society of Franco's New Spain was not simply a re-creation of traditional Spanish society with a dictator put in place of the king. While Franco and the Falange particularly did make heavy use of symbolism and rhetoric rooted in a "stylized mystification of [Spain's distant] past," the features and practices of New Spanish society were very heavily influenced by what the country had been through in the two decades preceding the end of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>115</sup> The situation of the women imprisoned under Franco, the prejudices that they faced and the abuse that they suffered (often in the name of 'rehabilitation'), cannot fully be understood or appreciated without a working knowledge of the cultural and historical context of their imprisonment.

The first major shift in Spanish government in the twentieth century began with the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923-1930), which gave a military charge to Spanish political affairs.<sup>116</sup> Under Primo, citizenship was closely linked to military service, which meant that women could not be citizens.<sup>117</sup> Women were expected to play supporting roles to male leaders and protectors, and to function primarily as symbols and supporters.<sup>118</sup> However, this supporting role often brought them into public in symbolic and ceremonial capacities.<sup>119</sup> This ceremonial presence chiefly consisted of presiding over military parades and displays in the capacity of 'godmother to the flag,' but it brought women into the public sphere and helped to set the stage for the radical

---

<sup>115</sup> Durgan, Andrew. *The Spanish Civil War*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 123

<sup>116</sup> Del, Rey Reguillo Fernando, Manuel Álvarez Tardío, and Nick Rider. *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited from Democratic Hopes to the Civil War (1931-1936)*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2012,

11

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 239

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 194

changes in politics and women's rights that took place during the Second Spanish Republic.<sup>120</sup>

Although Spain did not participate in the First World War, the event that gave rise to many of the other European republics of the interwar years, the collapse of Primo de Rivera's regime in 1930 created a corresponding vacuum of power in Spain.<sup>121</sup> The result was the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931. Over the course of its five-year existence, the Republic was beset by serious issues, including deep animosity and violent clashes between rightist and leftist forces. However, the Republic did manage to enact some truly revolutionary reforms in Spain, particularly during its early years. Women gained suffrage in October of 1931, soon after the proclamation of the Republic, and the Constitution that accorded it to them also granted the right to civil marriage and divorce.<sup>122</sup> In spite of these liberal pro-woman policies, there was a deep fear on the Left that women, who were perceived to be more devoutly religious than men, would vote almost as a bloc for the Right.<sup>123</sup> Those on the Right made the same assumption, and as a result the Carlists (monarchists) and the Catholic Party *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA) were the first to establish women's organizations.<sup>124</sup> However, many women were active on the Left as well as Right, and leftist women activists were often more daring. Matilde de la Torre, an activist and politician, was elected in 1933 as a socialist to represent Asturias to the Cortes.<sup>125</sup> Torre promoted very liberal policies, especially with regard to women; among other things, she "openly

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>122</sup> Garofalo, 8

<sup>123</sup> Durgan, 12

<sup>124</sup> Passmore, 201

<sup>125</sup> Garofalo, 265



advocat[ed] the use of birth control.”<sup>126</sup> These liberal reforms and policies deeply offended Spanish conservatives and especially the Spanish Catholic Church, and as tensions between the Right and the Left worsened and began to turn violent, the stage for the impending civil war was set.

On July 17, 1936, a group of Spanish generals, including one General Francisco Franco, raised a rebellion against the Republic’s Popular Front government.<sup>127</sup> The coup failed to take control of the entire country, but the government failed to put it down completely, and so the Spanish Civil War began. Generally, the working classes, the progressive middle class, Catalonia and the Basque Country remained loyal to the Popular Front government.<sup>128</sup> The rebels, in contrast, derived their support from the Church, from the upper classes and from rightist groups including the Spanish Falange.<sup>129</sup> Germany and Italy provided the Nationalist forces with supplies and tactical aid.<sup>130</sup> Foreign aid to the Republic came mostly from the Soviet Union, but its assistance went directly to the Spanish Communist Party, which consequently increased its influence and its visibility on the Republican side.<sup>131</sup> Conflicts between communists and other groups on the left deepened, but in spite of the divisions within the Republican forces and the inferior quality and number of their supplies and weapons, the war dragged on. Durgan states that most military historians take a dim view of General Franco’s abilities as a commander because his advance was slow and seemingly timid.<sup>132</sup> However, Durgan’s interpretation is that the “slowness of the war was in fact due to Franco’s aim to

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 286

<sup>127</sup> Boyd, Carolyn P. "History, Politics, and Culture 1936-1975." In *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*, 86-103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 87

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 88-9

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 32

<sup>131</sup> Boyd, 90

<sup>132</sup> Durgan, 34

annihilate the enemy” as he gained territory rather than rushing to take control of a country still full of Republican sympathizers.<sup>133</sup> This approach fits with Franco’s campaign of violence against defeated Republican forces and sympathizers after the war, and it gives an indication of the concerted effort that he would later make to root out all those who still held Republican ideals from the society of his New State.

The Roman Catholic Church was a major supporter of the Nationalist campaign, and this support was central to the legitimacy and the mass support that the Nationalist cause later enjoyed.<sup>134</sup> The Church had for centuries played a central role in Spanish society, and at the beginning of the twentieth century its influence was still very strong. In 1931, about 113,290 out of twenty-three million Spaniards were members of the clergy.<sup>135</sup> The status of the Church and its clergy during the Republic was complicated; on the one hand, the Church was resented as a bastion of power and privilege that protected conservative interests and the status quo, while on the other hand many Spaniards, particularly in rural areas, remained deeply religious and were suspicious of the Left’s rejection of Catholicism.<sup>136</sup> The resentment of many leftists towards the Church led radicals in the Republican zone in the early days of the war to execute roughly 6,800 clergy, including monks and nuns, as “enemies of the people.”<sup>137</sup> This anticlerical violence reinforced the alliance between the Church and the Nationalist forces and gave the Republican forces a reputation for brutality and cruelty among the Church and other rightist groups. Catholicism was nearly universal among the political groups in favor of the rebellion, with only “the partial exception of the Falange,” with the

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 118

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 8

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 9 and 13

<sup>137</sup> Boyd, 89

result that Catholicism became the unifying ideology of the regime.<sup>138</sup> In return for the Church's support, Franco restored the monopoly that it had held over education.<sup>139</sup>

The Falange's women's organization, known as the *Sección Femenina*, also had a part to play during the war and in Franco's New State. Headed by José Antonio Primo de Rivera's sister Pilar, the *Sección Femenina* was created in June 1934, at which point it consisted of Pilar and six close friends and relatives who all had brothers or lovers in the Falange.<sup>140</sup> The S.F. grew quickly, reaching about 800 members in 1935, exploding to include 9,000 members in 1936, totaling 200,000 members the following year and then doubling again to 400,000 members in 1938.<sup>141</sup> Ultimately, the *Sección Femenina* grew to become the most important section of the Falange, and the only one to exceed its Italian counterpart in size and influence.<sup>142</sup> It also became, following Franco's victory, the only state organization in charge of 'women's affairs' for the duration of the regime.<sup>143</sup> Three quarters of the women involved with the *Sección Femenina* in 1938 worked in the *Auxilio Social*, where they supplied food and basic necessities to the poor and "taught them to 'love God and understand the Falange.'"<sup>144</sup> Garofalo states that "[a]rguably, a 'new fascist woman' did indeed exist as the unprecedented mobilization and organization of Nationalist women during this era engaged them in collective action," although she adds that "this movement was inextricably bounded by the tenets of the Nationalist-Catholic alliance."<sup>145</sup> The women of the *Sección Femenina* performed duties traditionally associated with Catholic womanhood- charity, moral education,

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 120

<sup>140</sup> Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power, 86

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Passmore, 212

<sup>143</sup> Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power, 87

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 87 [300,000 out of 400,000]

<sup>145</sup> Garofalo, 20

obedient service to men in authority- but under the Falange they did it in a new way, publicly, collectively, and in the service of the *patria* rather than of their patriarch. Service in the *Sección Femenina* became compulsory at the end of the war for women between the ages of 17 and 35, and remained so until Franco's death in 1975.<sup>146</sup>

While most historians consider the *Sección Femenina* to be an organization deeply rooted in conservative and reactionary Catholicism, its founders saw themselves differently. Their public activism and participation (albeit in a secondary role) in the Falange's violent conflicts led them to consider themselves progressive, and led some male Church members to doubt whether such work was appropriate for Catholic women, a fact which the founding women later recalled with pride.<sup>147</sup> These women privileged their identity as Falangists over their identity as Catholics, and carefully distinguished themselves from other Catholic women's organizations.<sup>148</sup> Part of this differentiation stemmed from their belief in a social program that would promote a Spain still rooted in Catholic values but committed to the advancement of all social groups rather than the preservation of the privilege that was threatened by the Left.<sup>149</sup> One of the original members of the *Sección Femenina*, Concha, explained their political outlook as such:

We had a political dissatisfaction: we weren't of the left, nor were we of the right. The right seemed to us to be to blame for many things that had happened in Spain. We didn't have a close rapport with the left because communist ideas weren't for us: in general, we upheld a Catholic concept of life and a concept of respect for the family, of family tradition, of customs. But of infantile behavior [blind exaggerated religiosity]: we didn't like this business of the very inflexible right.<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Durgan, 116 and Linhard, Tabea Alexa. *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005, 42

<sup>147</sup> Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power, 93

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 92

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 91

Her concept of womanhood in the *Sección Femenina* reflects the same revolutionary spirit:

I believe, that in the Sección Femenina, a new woman emerged. Because, in the Sección Femenina, the old taboos, or all these prejudices, were broken. A new woman emerged, brave, open, free, but with a great concept of religion, of the *patria*, of duty- then that mixture formed us. The Sección Femenina formed us, all of us who passed through.<sup>151</sup>

Admittedly, the concept of gender roles promoted by the *Sección Femenina* in reality was far from revolutionary; the ‘old taboos’ which Concha considered broken seem to be related to (unmarried) women working publicly in the body politic and in service to the State. The *Sección Femenina* in fact reinforced the taboos against women pursuing higher education and working outside of the home once married, but it was new and different in its insistence that all women had an obligation to serve the State through collective participation in public programs and organizations. Thus, the women of the Falange shared their male counterparts’ interest in the ‘formation’ of a new national spirit, although in their case it was a ‘new woman [that] emerged.’ They also shared the concept of duty to the *patria*, although their duties were prescribed by gender, based in Catholic tradition, and were always subordinate to the efforts of men.

The *Sección Femenina* also developed “a constructed historical myth of the Spanish past,” geared specifically towards women and venerating the almost mythological figures of Isabel I and Saint Teresa of Avila.<sup>152</sup> The Falange had already chosen the yoke and arrows of Ferdinand and Isabel as its standard symbol, to evoke ideas of “religious and territorial unity,” as the two of them had been jointly responsible for the unification of Castille and Aragon, the conquest of Granada and the conversion of

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 96

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 97

many of its inhabitants, the expulsion of the Jews from Spanish territory, the financing of Columbus's journey to and conquests in the Americas, and the strengthening of political and dynastic ties with Portugal.<sup>153</sup> Saint Teresa of Avila, on the other hand, a female activist and reformer in the Catholic Church during the Counterreformation, offered a model that emphasized "morality, obedience and traditional values" in opposition to the corrupt and immoral figure of the 'red' woman.<sup>154</sup> With Isabel I and Teresa of Avila as models, the idea of an "activist woman defending 'true' Spanish values was thus not contradictory, but internally coherent."<sup>155</sup> This standard of an active, dutiful, patriotic, yet still Catholic and subservient woman would be the standard against which women in New Spanish society were judged, with serious consequences for those who did compare favorably.

The repression of Republican forces and sympathizers, including women, by the Nationalists began during the war and intensified at the end of it. Although summary executions and atrocities were numerous on both sides, the extra-judicial killings in the Nationalist zone (*sacas* and *paseos*) were systematic and condoned by the command structure both during and after the war.<sup>156</sup> In my view, this terror was not only a psychological weapon employed against the opposition forces, but also an early indication of the Francoist regime's propensity to categorize, contain and punish all 'reds' or leftist sympathizers in its effort to 'save' the fatherland and convert it into the purified, united 'New Spain' presented in its propaganda. Durgan estimates that by the

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>154</sup> Holgado, 124; "Como epítome de la pureza de la raza- parte integrante de la 'identidad de la mujer como guardiana de la moralidad, la obediencia y de los valores de la tradición'- el modelo teresiano se oponía al de la 'roja impura' en la misma medida en que su 'feminismo cristiano' se enfrentaba al feminismo europeo, laico, extranjerizante y emancipador"

<sup>155</sup> Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power, 91

<sup>156</sup> Durgan, 105

end of the war 270,000 prisoners were jailed in Nationalist prisons and concentration camps.<sup>157</sup> The Law of Political Responsibilities enacted in February of 1939 created a long list of new political crimes and “applied them retroactively to October 1934.”<sup>158</sup> The 1940 Law for the Suppression of Masonry and Communism criminalized all support of or sympathy for any doctrines that ran contrary to the Franco regime’s definition of “national values.”<sup>159</sup> Tens of thousands of those arrested under these laws were condemned to death; thousands more were forced into hard labor, working especially on reconstruction efforts and war monuments such as the Valley of the Fallen.<sup>160</sup> Those ‘reds’ who avoided prison still faced a harsh reality in post-war Spain: according to Boyd, between 1940 and 1945 there were more than 200,000 excess deaths compared to the 1935 mortality rate, most due to disease and lack of proper nutrition.<sup>161</sup> Those who were most in need were unlikely to receive aid, as most of it came from organizations such as the *Sección Femenina* that refused help to those with Republican backgrounds.<sup>162</sup> During the post-war years an estimated 200,000 Spaniards died of starvation and deprivation.<sup>163</sup>

Women had a large role to play in the reconstitution of Spanish society after the war. According to Shirley Mangini, “[w]omen became responsible for the new order that was to take hold in Spain. They were to make their men happy, since they had obviously ‘failed’ them before.”<sup>164</sup> The *Sección Femenina* and the Church were jointly responsible for educating and socializing women to embody and respect traditional virtues, including

---

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 127; According to Boyd, by the end of 1939 the official number of political prisoners was 270,219

<sup>158</sup> Boyd, 95

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 96

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Durgan, 126

<sup>164</sup> Mangini, 102

“piety, self-sacrifice, humility, and above all, chastity.”<sup>165</sup> These ideas served to reinforce the repressive patriarchal structure of the State, and such repressive policies were particularly harsh on leftist or Republican women, those considered most lacking in the ‘traditional virtues,’ particularly piety and chastity. As Mangini observes, “[if] being a leftist meant that you were a disgraced ‘Red,’ being a female leftist meant that you were a ‘Red whore.’”<sup>166</sup> ‘Red’ women were brutalized throughout Spain both during and after the war; they often had property confiscated, and were publicly purged, shaved, and humiliated regardless of their level of political activity or lack thereof.<sup>167</sup> They were frequently the victims of rape, especially by colonial troops, and they comprised roughly one-tenth of the victims of summary execution at the hands of the Nationalists.<sup>168</sup> As Maud Joly writes, these “violent gestures [were made] against women considered ‘wayward, violent and threatening to the social and sexual order,” as a way of asserting both Nationalist and male dominance over society.<sup>169</sup> Joly adds that “the exhibition of the women with their heads shaved also happened on the occasion of the Catholic masses [...the exhibition] thus was about the demonstration of a return to the moral order.”<sup>170</sup> The treatment of ‘red’ women in prison would mirror the treatment that they received outside of prison throughout Spain, but in prison the repression and the efforts to ‘socialize them in the traditional virtues’ would be unrelenting and inescapable.

---

<sup>165</sup> Boyd, 96

<sup>166</sup> Mangini, 106

<sup>167</sup> Durgan, 106

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Joly, Maud. “Las violencias sexuadas de la guerra civil española: paradigma para una lectura cultural del conflicto.” *Historia Social*, No. 61 (2008), pp. 89-107. Fundación Instituto de Historia Social, 91; “[L]os gestos violentos [dirigidos] contra mujeres consideradas como ‘desviadas, violentas y amenazantes para el orden social y sexual’”

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 102; “La exhibición de las mujeres rapadas se producía también con ocasión de las misas [...] Se trataba entonces de la demostración de una vuelta al orden moral”



In the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, the ‘reds’ were not just a defeated group that was now to be punished, but rather a category or type of person(s) considered an enemy of and not fit to live in the society of Franco’s New Spain. The categorization, containment, and repression or destruction of ‘red’ men and women would be the largest work undertaken by the regime in its early years. An integral part of this repression involved imprisoning all those suspected of being ‘red,’ sometimes on the evidence of previous political activity but often, especially in the case of women, just on the basis of a denunciation.<sup>171</sup> These mass arrests and the violent treatment of these incarcerated women were intended to purge the society of ‘New Spain’ of the ideologically ‘impure’ woman, either by causing her physical death or by breaking down her political and social identity and reforming her in the image of acceptable New Spanish womanhood.

Underlying and informing the treatment of these female political prisoners were concepts of race and sex that marked the ‘red’ woman as ‘other’ not just socially but also pseudo-scientifically. Before the war had even ended, in the summer of 1938, Franco authorized the creation of the Office of Psychological Investigations, a new institution “whose fundamental end would be to investigate the biopsychic roots of Marxism,” with “the end of initiating and developing a program of psychiatric investigations on captured men and women.”<sup>172</sup> At the head of this new program was Antonio Vallejo Nágera, Franco’s Chief of Military Psychiatric Services. Vallejo considered his subjects to be

---

<sup>171</sup> Holgado, 117

<sup>172</sup> Vinyes, Ricard. *Irredentas: Las Presas Políticas Y Sus Hijos En Las Cárceles Franquistas*. Madrid: Temas De Hoy, 2010, 51; “cuya finalidad primordial será investigar las raíces biopsíquicas del marxismo” and with “la finalidad de iniciar y desarrollar un programa de investigaciones psiquiátricas en los hombres y mujeres capturados”

“parasites of society,” and his research aimed to support that opinion with scientific data.<sup>173</sup>

He set out to prove his theory by doing psychological experiments on groups of prisoners. One of the two groups of subjects that he used consisted of fifty female prisoners in Málaga who ranged from fifteen to fifty years old, although most of them were in their early twenties. Thirty-three of the fifty had been sentenced to death, and the rest had sentences ranging from twelve years to life.<sup>174</sup> Vallejo and his team questioned the women extensively, seeking to establish facts about their personal history, class status and socioeconomic background as well as their political beliefs and activism. Vallejo was particularly struck and confused by the fact that many of them came from comfortable economic backgrounds, and some were well educated. Vallejo concluded:

In order to understand the exceptionally active participation of the feminine sex in the Marxist revolution [one must remember] its characteristic psychic instability, the weakness of its mental balance, its minimal resistance to environmental influences, its insecure control of personality (...) when the brakes that contain a woman socially disappear and her impulsive instincts are freed, the instinct of cruelty awakens in the feminine sex and exceeds all imaginable expectations, precisely because she lacks the inhibitions of intelligence and logic (...). Feminine cruelty is characterized by not being satisfied with the execution of the crime, but rather increasing during its commission.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 58

<sup>174</sup> Vinyes, Ricard. 2001. “Construyendo a Caín: Diagnósis Y Terapia Del Disidente: Las Investigaciones Psiquiátricas Militares De Antonio Vallejo Nágera Con Presas Y Presos Políticos”. *Ayer*, no. 44. Asociación de Historia Contemporánea, 246

<sup>175</sup> Vinyes, Construyendo a Caín, 248; “Recuérdese para comprender la activísima participación del sexo femenino en la revolución marxista su característica labilidad psíquica, la debilidad del equilibrio mental, la menor resistencia a las influencias ambientales, la inseguridad del control sobre la personalidad (...) cuando desaparecen los frenos que contienen socialmente a la mujer y se liberan las inhibiciones fenatrices de las impulsiones instintivas, entonces despiértase en el sexo femenino el instinto de crueldad y rebasa todas las posibilidades imaginadas, precisamente por faltarle las inhibiciones inteligentes y lógicas (...). Caracteriza la crueldad femenina que no queda satisfecha con la ejecución del crimen, sino que aumenta durante su comisión”

Vallejo's conclusions and characterizations of women who embraced Marxism (or liberalism) "result[ed] in a brutal penalization of women."<sup>176</sup>

Vallejo believed in a concept of 'race' that was synonymous with the concept of '*Hispanidad*' (Spanishness), which consisted "not of a language, culture, territory or idea, but rather of a distinguishing spiritual feeling; [it is] that part of the universal spirit that cannot be assimilated," although apparently it could be taught and developed.<sup>177</sup> Vallejo believed that the leftists that he studied had been corrupted as a result of the degeneration of this 'Spanish spirit,' and he theorized that "the degeneration of the race resides [...] in external factors that act in an unfavorable manner on the germinal plasma."<sup>178</sup> He concluded that "to favor or to hinder racial development [...] is a problem of the environment."<sup>179</sup> He therefore sought to develop a therapy that would 'transform' the prisoners, and his solution focused on external environmental factors.<sup>180</sup> First, he believed that prisoners should be placed in a controlled, 'moral' environment where they would hopefully improve. He was in line with the "official discourse [...] of the necessity of morally and ethically liquidating, purging and segregating [the prisoners]."<sup>181</sup> Vallejo, as a result of his Catholic beliefs, could not and did not approve of sterilization or of the outright and indiscriminate murder of those considered 'undesirable.'<sup>182</sup> He concluded

---

<sup>176</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas* 68; "El resultado fue una penalización femenina brutal"

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*; "La raza es la Hispanidad, sostiene Vallejo, la cual no consiste en una lengua, cultura, territorio o idea, sino en un sentimiento espiritual diferencial: aquella parte del espíritu universal que no es asimilable"

<sup>178</sup> Vinyes, *Construyendo a Caín*, 234; "la degeneración de la raza reside a nuestro entender en factores externos que actúan de una manera desfavorable sobre el plasma germinal"

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*; "Favorecer o entorpecer el desarrollo racial, ese es el *problema* del ambiente"

<sup>180</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 64

<sup>181</sup> Vinyes, *Construyendo a Caín*, 239; "todos coincidían en un mismo diagnóstico del adversario generado por un ambiente y un discurso oficial de gran presencia y densidad: la necesidad de liquidar moralmente y éticamente, depurando y segregando"

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 236 and Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 58

that the incarceration of both sexes separately was the best way to ensure that they could not reproduce and pass along their defects.<sup>183</sup>

Vallejo did not oversee all of the prisons or prison policy in Francoist Spain, but he was closely connected to the School of Penitentiary Studies. In April of 1940 he gave a conference at the school for those training to be prison functionaries on the “necessity of liquidating [the adversary] morally and ethically.”<sup>184</sup> The next year he began teaching an intensive course in the Universidad Central for medical students who would enter the Prison Corps.<sup>185</sup> Vinyes speculates that Vallejo “probably [...] charted an unprecedented course by psychiatrizing [political] dissidence, and precisely for this reason the banality of his scientific rhetoric won the applause of the New State and penetrated the penitentiary universe of New Spanish society in various ways.”<sup>186</sup>

The effort to arrest all those connected in any way with the Republican side at the end of the war resulted in massive prison populations, for women as well as men. Fernando Hernández Holgado observes that in the post-war years, the prisons in Spain were inhabited for the first time by a majority of political rather than common female prisoners.<sup>187</sup> According to Shirley Mangini, statistics on the number of female prisoners are hard to compile because there has been little research done on the subject; however, records of the Vital Statistics Office in Madrid confirm that in 1939, 23,232 Spanish women were incarcerated.<sup>188</sup> This number is enormous, considering that the capacity of

---

<sup>183</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 58

<sup>184</sup> Vinyes, *Construyendo a Caín*, 239-40

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 240

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 250

<sup>187</sup> Holgado, 114; “Se produce el fenómeno insólito en la historia de España de una cárcel habitada en su inmensa mayoría no por presas comunes [...] sino por presas políticas”

<sup>188</sup> Mangini, 101

the country's existing prisons in 1939 was about 20,000 in total.<sup>189</sup> In the very early days of the Nationalist victory, Las Ventas, the women's prison in Madrid, "became a true warehouse of female political prisoners, epitome and symbol of the repression."<sup>190</sup> The repression in Madrid was especially harsh because the city had resisted capture by the Nationalists for so long, which meant both that there were still large numbers of active Republicans there in 1939 and that the Nationalist hatred for them was particularly bitter.<sup>191</sup>

Part of the reason that the number of women prisoners was so high was that the Nationalists arrested women for being related to or associated with 'reds' as well as for active political participation. As during the political repression of 1933-34 in Germany, most arrests of women were arbitrary and many were 'preventative holdings,' where women were held in place of male relatives or even employers that had disappeared.<sup>192</sup> Fernando Hernández Holgado explains that the most baseless or trivial accusation or denunciation could lead to the "frequent sentence of 'incitation,' 'provocation,' 'excitation,' 'aid' or 'adhesion' to the military rebellion according to the preeminent Code of Justice," which carried penalties of between six and thirty years in prison and even execution by firing squad.<sup>193</sup> Tomasa Cuevas recounts the story of a woman called La Gregoria who was arrested and executed because her husband was "a real fighting man for many years, but not her: she cared for her house and her children, [but] you

---

<sup>189</sup> Holgado, 137

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 120; "En pocos meses, Ventas se convirtió en un verdadero almacén de reclusas políticas, epítome y símbolo de la represión"

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 121

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 117 and Mangini, 100

<sup>193</sup> Holgado, 117; "La acusación más nimia o la delación más peregrina podían acarrear la frecuente sentencia de 'inducción,' 'provocación,' 'excitación,' 'auxilio' o 'adhesión' a la rebelión militar según el preeminente Código de Justicia homónimo, con sus correspondientes condenas a seis, doce, treinta años de prisión e incluso a muerte por fusilamiento"

talked politics to her and the poor woman knew nothing, and they killed her, they killed her husband, her sister, her mother, [and] her cousin.”<sup>194</sup> Cuevas also relays a story of a group of young girls who “went to jail because a young girlfriend of theirs had died and they gave her a wreath of red carnations, and because the carnations were red, they threw all of the girls in jail.”<sup>195</sup> Julia García Pariente, one of the women interviewed by Cuevas, tells the story of the arrest of her family:

They arrested my mother because [...] she went down to the laundry room and saw that the water was very dirty, and when she mentioned it the woman who had denounced me was there [...] they went for the guards and they took my mother, and my sister went down, and when she asked why they were taking my mother [...] they took my sister to jail too.<sup>196</sup>

Both Pariente’s mother and her sister were held for several months without ever being charged or tried.<sup>197</sup> The number of arrests and convictions for trivial or symbolic offenses led to massive overcrowding in the prisons, compounding and contributing to the abysmal living conditions there.

The conditions of the prisons, while due in part simply to a lack of resources in the wake of the war, seem based on the cases of intentional neglect or cruelty to have been intended to break or even kill the women condemned to live under them. Shirley Mangini points out that political prisoners generally do not feel guilt for their ‘crimes,’ and so the only way to ‘reform’ them was through brainwashing or torture to break down

---

<sup>194</sup> Cuevas, Tomasa. *Cárcel De Mujeres*. Barcelona: Ediciones Sirocco, 1985, 79; “[su marido era] hombre muy luchador desde muchos años, pero ella nada: su casa y sus hijos, le hablabas de política y no sabía nada la pobre y la mataron a ella, mataron al marido, a la hermana, a la madre, a la prima”

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 78; “La muchacha [...] entró en la cárcel porque había muerto una chica joven amiga de ellas y le regalaron una corona con claveles rojos, y porque eran claveles rojos, metieron a todas las chicas en la cárcel”

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 86; “A mi madre la detuvieron porque [...] bajó al lavadero y vio que el agua estaba muy sucia, y al decirlo estaba allí la que a mí me había denunciado [...] Fueron por las guardias y se llevaron a mi madre, y mi hermana bajó, y al preguntar que por qué se la llevaban [...] se llevaron a mi hermana también a la cárcel”

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

their resistance and their identity.<sup>198</sup> This process began in Franco's prisons with the discomfort caused by severe overcrowding. In April of 1939, there were already over 3,500 women imprisoned in Ventas, a prison with kitchens equipped to feed 450 people.<sup>199</sup> At the height of the post-war repression, there were anywhere between 10,000 and 14,000 women in Ventas at once.<sup>200</sup> While it is impossible to know the exact number of women held there, Hernández suggests that it may be more enlightening to examine the accounts of the victims of the repression in order to understand the problems of overcrowding, as their descriptions of the conditions there are often more informative than the mere statement of numbers.<sup>201</sup> One prisoner in Ventas, for example, recounts how she "entered a cell, number seven, which she would never forget: conceived to hold two prisoners, up to thirteen slept in it."<sup>202</sup> The situation in the Guadalajara prison was similar: between eighteen and twenty women lived in cells built to house one to two inmates. Even these cells were only available after a transfer of prisoners freed the space; previously, nearly seventy women had crammed into a room designed to accommodate a maximum of thirty people.<sup>203</sup> Just as in Olga Lengyel's experience of the camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, these crowded conditions were not conducive to hygiene, and starvation and disease soon took their toll.

---

<sup>198</sup> Mangini, 99

<sup>199</sup> Holgado, 138

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 141 and Mangini, 101; "11,000 según las funcionarias cuando querían justificar tanta deficiencia"

<sup>201</sup> Holgado, 137; "Quizá el problema de los números de la represión carcelaria sea como el de los árboles que no dejan ver el bosque. A menudo resulta mucho más informativa y provechosa la descripción del paisaje de la represión a través de las diversas vivencias de sus víctimas que la mera cuantificación de datos, para colmo dudosos"

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 138; "ingresó en una celda, la número siete, que no olvidaría nunca: concebida para albergar a dos reclusas, dormían hasta trece en ella"

<sup>203</sup> Cuevas, Tomasa, Mary E. Giles, and Tomasa Cuevas. *Prison of Women: Testimonies of War and Resistance in Spain, 1939-1975*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, 26 and 31

The resources devoted to the prisons were scant, and many prisoners relied heavily on packages of food, medicine, and basic hygienic supplies sent to them by family members on the outside. Prisoners in the early years of the Francoist dictatorship were often moved from prison to prison without notice, however, and so many went for long periods without anyone knowing how to get a package to them.<sup>204</sup> This circumstance, combined with the widespread scarcity of food and other necessities and the inability of many family members to spare resources in any case, led to a high death toll from starvation. Tomasa Cuevas writes of the many women who died of hunger in Guadalajara, and also of the Amorebieta prison where women “died in droves.”<sup>205</sup> In the jail known as ‘la Central’ former prisoners recalled that “there was water and they did not give it to us, they brought up water from the river in gasoline tanks.”<sup>206</sup> Cuevas, describing her arrival in Guadalajara, writes:

They [...] took me to a room called ‘the room of scabies.’ The size of the room was meant for ten, at the most twelve women [...] we must have numbered about sixty. There were so many women that some even rested their head on [...] our toilet. Everyone had scabies. I caught it, too.<sup>207</sup>

Hernández concludes from available death records that in Ventas between 1939 and 1945, disease was the greatest killer of women, over and above execution.<sup>208</sup>

Overcrowding, starvation and disease were the constant conditions of life in Francoist prisons, but the monotony of existence there was often broken by episodes of violence, physical, sexual, and psychological. This violence was intended to break down women’s resistance and to destroy their sense of individual and group identity. Torture

---

<sup>204</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 106

<sup>205</sup> Cuevas, *Cárcel de Mujeres*, 81

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> Cuevas, *Prison of Women*, 25

<sup>208</sup> Holgado, 226



during interrogations consisted of beatings and other abuse but also included electric shocks, a technique that had been recently introduced in Spain by agents of the Gestapo.<sup>209</sup> Many women were tortured with electric shocks to their inner ears, and were later sent to the Quiñones mental hospital due to severe headaches and other residual damage from this treatment.<sup>210</sup> According to Juana Doña, a long-term inmate of Francoist prisons, rape was another technique of torture and an act of power that was “perpetrated on teenagers, women and old ladies alike.”<sup>211</sup> Camaño, another witness to life in Spanish post-war prisons, recalls that “[t]he first thing the police did when a woman entered jail was to try to take advantage of her. If that was impossible- beatings, head-shavings, cod-liver oil; if she was easy, she was discredited for the rest of her life.”<sup>212</sup> Mangini adds that there were “some humiliations [...] uniquely macabre and reserved for women, such as forcing them to parade around nude, or to stand or sit in grotesque positions in front of male interrogators.”<sup>213</sup> Finally, the threat of violence functioned as a constant form of psychological torture. Women who had been condemned to death were not informed ahead of time of the date for which their execution was scheduled, a practice that seems intentionally cruel and torturous, considering that it would have cost the authorities nothing to inform the women and their families of the planned date. One woman recalls that to be under the death penalty “was to be in a state of constant tension [...] besides the hunger there and the suffering that you always felt, to be always thinking ‘Oh my God, if

---

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 141

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 144-5

<sup>211</sup> Mangini, 130

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 106

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 127-8

this will be my turn!”<sup>214</sup> The strain was augmented by the seeming arbitrariness of the death sentences and selections; one woman, ‘la señora Paca,’ was executed in her seventies for no apparent crime.<sup>215</sup> Another woman, Dolores, was executed “because [her group] detained some nuns in Brihuega and the men sent Dolores to frisk them so that the men wouldn’t have to.”<sup>216</sup>

In addition to these harsh living conditions, Franco’s regime chose to staff the prisons with surviving relatives of Nationalist soldiers who had died at the hands of ‘reds’ in the war. In November 1940, the *Sección Femenina Auxiliar*, which had been the organization of prison guards under the Republic, changed its name to the *Sección Femenina del Cuerpo de Prisiones* (Feminine Section of the Prison Corps).<sup>217</sup> This change reflected a change in personnel; all of the guards employed and trained during the Republic had been fired, and their places were given to female relatives of Nationalist ‘victims of the Red barbarity’ who were slain during the war.<sup>218</sup> All of the women who were hired were vetted to assure their loyalty to the regime; their appointments were often checked against records of their service during the war. Some had served in hospitals and other aid organizations, usually with the *Sección Femenina*.<sup>219</sup> Additionally, as six months’ service in the *Sección Femenina* had become obligatory at the end of the war for all women between the ages of 17 and 35 who wanted to be employed by or have documents issued by the State, it is very likely that the majority of the guards had been

---

<sup>214</sup> Cuevas, *Cárcel de Mujeres*, 79; “[La pena de muerte] era estar completamente en tensión cómo se vivía allí, además de pasar el hambre que se pasaba y el sufrimiento que tenías, siempre con el ¡Ay, Dios mío, si me va a tocar a mí!”

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 77; “a la pobre Dolores la mataron porque detuvieron a unas monjas en Brihuega y por no cachearla los hombres mandaron a Dolores cachear las monjas, por eso la mataron”

<sup>217</sup> Holgado, 124

<sup>218</sup> Holgado, 214

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 217

through the training for Falange women as well.<sup>220</sup> Finally, after the frantic scramble for personnel in the early years, hiring requirements became more stringent- records for Carmen Antiga Roldán, a guard hired in 1942, show that her appointment was not finalized until she had completed the requisite courses in the School of Penitentiary Studies, where Antonio Vallejo Nágera taught.<sup>221</sup> In short, the functionaries in the prisons were strongly allied with the State's view of imprisoned women, which explains the frequent cruelty on their part that appears in the narratives of former prisoners.

The return of the nuns was another repressive feature of Francoist prisons, and one unprecedented in Germany, where nuns were sometimes camp inmates but never camp functionaries.<sup>222</sup> The role of the nuns in Spanish prisons had become much more politicized than it had been previously. By December 1940 there were over 340 nuns from fifteen different orders working in forty prisons; sometimes, due to a lack of space, convents were even converted into prisons and the nuns there were recruited to run them.<sup>223</sup> A new order known as *Las Cruzadas Evangélicas* (The Evangelical Crusades) was created during the war to 'reeducate' imprisoned women and became the most important and influential order in the prisons.<sup>224</sup> Shirley Mangini explains that the mission of this new order was to "reform 'wayward' women" who had transgressed either political or sexual standards, in which project they cooperated with the *Sección Femenina*.<sup>225</sup> The nuns were also incorporated into the government of the State; the

---

<sup>220</sup> Linhard, 42

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Owings, 160

<sup>223</sup> Holgado, 219 and 220

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 220

<sup>225</sup> Mangini, 119

mothers superior of the nuns working in the prisons represented their orders on the State Disciplinary Board.<sup>226</sup>

The nuns and the priests who worked in prisons used a variety of tactics to emotionally manipulate imprisoned women into taking part in a variety of Catholic rituals. Condemned women were not allowed to write final letters to their families or to breastfeed their babies unless they confessed in chapel the night before their execution.<sup>227</sup> At first glance these attempts align with the general Christianizing mission of the Catholic Church, but there were political undertones to the effort as well. Rejection of Catholicism was a central tenet of Spanish Communism and many other leftist movements. Forcing women who were about to be executed for their connections to or involvement with these movements to confess to a priest implied a symbolic victory over the woman in addition to the physical victory that was her execution. This tension appears in the retellings of the story of the ‘Thirteen Roses,’ thirteen young women, formerly members of the Youth Socialist League, in the Ventas prison in Madrid who were executed together. Although some of them wrote final letters to their families, which suggests that they complied with the chapel requirements and confessed, when formerly imprisoned women retell the story they insist that “the priest came to give them confession, but they refused.”<sup>228</sup> The refusal of this Catholic ritual seems to symbolize the courage and solidarity of ‘red’ women in the face of fascist violence. The nearly synonymous nature of Catholic and fascist violence, juxtaposed against the solidarity of the imprisoned women, appears in force at the end of the story; Villa, a former prison inmate, claims that “Carmen Castro, the nun who was in charge of the imprisoned

---

<sup>226</sup> Holgado, 220

<sup>227</sup> Holgado, 165 and Mangini, 119

<sup>228</sup> Linhard, 149

minors, had left the petitions for the pardon that the family members and friends had avidly written waiting on her desk until after the executions.”<sup>229</sup>

The imposition of religious rituals as political statements went beyond the experience of condemned women. Babies were also often baptized without their mothers’ permission; in Ventas, the authorities held a special baptismal ceremony for the first three children born in the prison where they “imposed the names of illustrious Falangists [María del Pilar, María Paz and Julio]” on the infants, whose mothers were all condemned to death.<sup>230</sup> Even adults were sometimes baptized against their will: Matilde Landa, a dedicated and well-known Communist activist, was imprisoned early on in Ventas. Later she was transferred to Palma de Mallorca, where the priests constantly attempted to coerce her into getting baptized by promising better conditions for other prisoners. She refused, and after the pressure became too intense she jumped (or was pushed- the official story has been disputed) out of a window. As she lay dying on the pavement below, one of the priests baptized her.<sup>231</sup>

The baptism of babies without the consent of their mothers was just one step in the Nationalist effort to reclaim the children of ‘red’ women. Vallejo believed that ‘red’ mothers constituted a corrupting environment that would damage their children and make them as degenerate as themselves. However, he also believed that “the segregation of these subjects from childhood would be able to liberate society from such a terrible plague [of democracy].”<sup>232</sup> To this end, the San Isidro Prison for Nursing Mothers was opened in Madrid, where women were allowed to spend only one hour a day with their

---

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 153

<sup>230</sup> Vinyes, *Construyendo a Caín*, 239

<sup>231</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 63

<sup>232</sup> Vinyes, *Construyendo a Caín*, 237-8; “*la segregación de estos sujetos desde la infancia podría liberar a la sociedad de plaga tan temible*”

children so as not to contaminate them.<sup>233</sup> This single hour with the children was often taken away as punishment, and when the children were not with their mothers they were left out on the patio or in the garden in all weathers, mostly unattended.<sup>234</sup> Theoretically this treatment was less harmful than being left to be raised by ‘degenerate’ parents:

Vallejo [...] insisted on combating the degenerative propensity of the children raised in Republican environments by segregating them in the appropriate centers (that is, the Falangist or Catholic aid network), in which would be promoted: ‘an exaltation of the racial biopsychic qualities and the elimination of environmental factors that over the course of generations leads to the degeneration of the biotype.’<sup>235</sup>

The presence of children in the prisons created “a crude contradiction between the public discourse of the regime, exalter of the maternal figure and self-proclaimed defender of childhood, and the secret and opaque discourse of terror.”<sup>236</sup> Shirley Mangini adds that “[i]t is ironic that precisely what Franco held as the most priceless commodity in Spanish society after the war- the reproductive capacity of its women, which could replenish Spain with able-bodied males- also represented the most tragic aspect of prison life for women.”<sup>237</sup> These cruel contradictions in the regime’s attitude towards imprisoned mothers and children appear in Tomasa Cuevas’s story of a woman named Elena Tortajada, who was “denounced and detained with her two-month-old son. They condemned her to death. As the law did not allow a mother to be killed while she was

---

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 240

<sup>234</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas* 76

<sup>235</sup> Vinyes, *Construyendo a Caín*, 238; “Aún en la posguerra, Vallejo alertaba sobre el daño que podía hacer - y hacía, escribió - el ambiente democrático en niños y niñas, e insistía en combatir la propensión degenerativa de los muchachos criados en ambientes republicanos segregándolos en centros adecuados (es decir, la red asistencial falangista o católica), en los cuales se promoviese: «una exaltación de las cualidades biopsíquicas raciales y eliminación de los factores ambientales que en el curso de las generaciones conducen a la degeneración del biotipo”

<sup>236</sup> Holgado, 158; La presencia de niños en la cárcel “daba así una cruda contradicción entre el discurso público del régimen, ensalzador de la figura maternal y autoproclamado defensor de la infancia, y el discurso opaco y oculto del terror”

<sup>237</sup> Mangini, 120

still nursing her baby, that is, before the child was nine months old, the day after he turned nine months they executed her.”<sup>238</sup>

A 1940 law mandated that children could stay in prison with their mothers until the age of three, and many did, principally because they had no family left outside of prison to care for them or any relatives that they did have had no way to feed them.<sup>239</sup> In recounting all of the different hardships of prison life, Mangini notes that “[a]ll of the women agree [...] that the worst fate was to have a child in prison.”<sup>240</sup> The poor living conditions in the prisons were particularly harsh on young children, and many took ill and died gruesome deaths. Even when medical care was available, and it was frequently denied to children as a form of punishment for their mothers, the lack of supplies and the terrible hygiene meant that a trip to a prison infirmary for a child in the early years of the regime was effectively a death sentence.<sup>241</sup> Childbirth in the prisons was similarly unsafe and horribly unsanitary. Nieves Waldemer, who was eight months pregnant when she entered Guadalajara, describes her experience:

I gave birth in the upstairs infirmary. Within half an hour I had to go downstairs because the baby was fussing so badly. When they put us on the ground with the blanket I found out what the matter was: there was a bunch of bedbugs, at least forty, under him. Afterward they put me in a room with four women who had chest problems. One of them suffered hemoptysis [...] I spent the whole time with my back turned to her so none of the blood [that she coughed up] would touch the baby.<sup>242</sup>

Waldemer’s son lived, but the majority of the children who went to prison with their mothers or were born there died from a combination of starvation, dysentery, rat bites,

---

<sup>238</sup> Cuevas, *Cárcel de Mujeres*, 164

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.* and Holgado, 158

<sup>240</sup> Mangini, 121

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-121 and 160

<sup>242</sup> Cuevas, *Cárcel de Mujeres*, 45-6

food poisoning, and medical neglect.<sup>243</sup> They also suffered acutely from a lack of water, and the contamination of the little that was available. Julia García Pariente went to jail with a young baby, and suffered through a summer with no water available except the small amount brought up from the river in empty gasoline tanks, which “tasted of gasoline.”<sup>244</sup> When medical neglect, starvation and disease did not kill children, prison officials sometimes did: Ángeles Mora witnessed “the murder of a child in front of his mother; they grabbed him by the feet and with one blow smashed his head against the wall.”<sup>245</sup> Children were also sometimes taken with their parents to interrogations, and were either forced to watch their parents be tortured or were tortured themselves in an effort to get their parents to talk.<sup>246</sup>

The children who did not stay with their mothers in prison often ended up in group homes or asylums run by either the Church or the State. Sometimes these children were left behind when their parents were arrested, as was the case with the woman called La Gregoria who was executed for her husband’s political activism. Her three young children, the oldest eleven years old, were left abandoned and “nobody took charge of them until after they had executed the mother, when the city government put them in a foundling hospital.”<sup>247</sup> Being taken to or born in prison did not guarantee that a child would stay with its mother, however; according to Vinyes, “[m]any babies born in prison [were] taken to be baptized and not returned.”<sup>248</sup> Usually, boys were sent to public

---

<sup>243</sup> Mangini, 119-121

<sup>244</sup> Cuevas, *Cárcel de Mujeres*, 85

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 166; “Yo había presenciado el asesinato de un niño delante de su madre; lo cogieron por los pies y le machacaron de un golpe la cabeza contra la pared”

<sup>246</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 101

<sup>247</sup> Cuevas, *Cárcel de Mujeres*, 80; “La Gregoria tenía tres hijos pequeños (el mayor tenía once años) y “nadie se encargó de ellos hasta que después que la mataron a la madre, cuando el Ayuntamiento les puso en la inclusa”

<sup>248</sup> Vinyes, *Irredentas*, 85



children's shelters, while girls went to convents or other religious institutions.<sup>249</sup>

Religious centers that took in the children of imprisoned women received four *pesetas* per child per day from the State to subsidize their upbringing.<sup>250</sup> In 1944 there were over 12,000 children in these public and religious institutions.<sup>251</sup> The admission of a child to one of these centers meant that custody of the child no longer went to the parents but instead belonged to the State, although Francoist propaganda denied that this was the case.<sup>252</sup> Some of these children were adopted by more 'worthy' families, and in some cases officials gave the adoptive parents instructions on how to change the child's identifying information so that the biological family would not be able to find him or her.<sup>253</sup>

Interestingly, Franco's regime made an effort to repatriate Spanish Republican children who had escaped or been sent abroad during the late years of the Civil War. Some children had left Spain with their families because their parents were fleeing certain death or imprisonment at the hand of the Nationalists, while others had been sent by themselves to live in the Soviet Union, France or England in order to protect them from the war. The Falange's Foreign Service was in charge of attempting to repatriate these children so that they could be educated and raised as 'Spaniards,' of course according to the Falange's definition of the term. They were not always successful; they faced many unexpected obstacles from the host nations, such as requirements for proof of the parents' explicit permission for the child to be returned and reimbursement for the

---

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 81

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 82

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 83

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 84

cost of maintaining the child during his or her stay.<sup>254</sup> In other instances, however, the children were returned; in the Soviet Union, for example, the invading German army captured colonies of Spanish refugee children and returned them to Spain.<sup>255</sup>

---

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 93

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 86

## Conclusion

Considering the major differences in the social and political situations in Spain and Germany during this period, it is surprising how similar the repressive tactics taken against 'deviant' women were in each regime. In both Spain and Germany massive populations of women were arrested and held in miserable conditions, although the state of the Spanish archives makes it especially difficult to estimate the total number in Spain, a point that merits further research. These women endured physical, sexual, and psychological violence, extreme overcrowding, starvation and disease, all while living filthy and frightening conditions. Many were arrested solely on the basis of their relationships to men who were wanted by the regimes, while some had been detained on the basis of their personal political convictions and activities. In Germany, many apolitical women were targeted for sterilization or extermination due to their biological, psychological or racial 'unfitness.' In Spain, ideas of political opposition, mental inferiority and racial 'degeneration' all united in the figure of the 'Red' woman, who was considered politically and sexually deviant as well as unfit to reproduce or raise children. In both cases, imprisoned women suffered deprivation, violence, and often the loss of their children, even when they themselves had committed no crime.

There were also important differences in the experience of female prisoners under the Third Reich and Franco's New State. The heavy involvement of the Catholic Church in Franco's New Spain complicated the situation of the imprisoned women there. Sterilization, forced abortion, eugenics, the murder of pregnant or nursing women, and the execution of children, all of which were official policy under the Nazis, were prohibited in Spain by Catholic doctrine. However, as Vallejo's thoughts on separating

the sexes by sex-segregated incarceration show, in some ways the conditions of the prisons themselves accomplished the same objects. Incarcerated women generally did not conceive children during their long prison sentences, and many of the children that they brought with them or gave birth to in prison died as a result of the poor living conditions and medical neglect.

The presence of Catholic clergy in the Spanish prisons was another distinguishing feature of the Francoist repression. While the presence of priests and nuns in the prisons seems to imply a conservative approach to prison policy, in reality the Spanish clergy had become politicized during the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent early stages of the repression. They adopted many of the trappings and symbols of Spanish fascism, including the leading of prisoners in the fascist salute during or prior to religious rituals, and they used confession and baptism as weapons to negate imprisoned women's agency over their children and their bodies while also attacking their political convictions. Overall, both regimes exerted fascist violence against these women in an attempt to modify, purify and indoctrinate the populations that they ruled. While the treatment of imprisoned women in Spain did not include some of the more extreme elements of the German system, such as assembly-line extermination, the process of conceptualizing, identifying, arresting and punishing 'deviant' women in Spain was remarkably similar to that of Germany. And, while the goal in Spain was a society purged of Republicanism rather than of hereditary illness or a particular racial group, both regimes used violence against imprisoned women in an attempt to purge their respective societies and reform them into reflections of what the 'true' Spain or Germany should be.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Buber-Neumann, Margarete. *Under Two Dictators: Prisoner of Stalin and Hitler*. London: Pimlico, 2008.

Chacón, Dulce. *La Voz Dormida*. Madrid: Punto De Lectura, 2006.

Cuevas, Tomasa. *Cárcel De Mujeres*. Barcelona: Ediciones Sirocco, 1985.

Cuevas, Tomasa, Mary E. Giles, and Tomasa Cuevas. *Prison of Women: Testimonies of War and Resistance in Spain, 1939-1975*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Fénelon, Fania, and Marcelle Routier. *Playing for Time*. New York: Atheneum, 1977.

*La Voz Dormida*. Directed by Benito Zambrano. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2012. DVD.

Lengyel, Olga. *Five Chimneys: The Story of Auschwitz*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1983. iBook.

Lingens, Ella. *Prisoners of Fear*. London: Gollancz, 1948.

O'Neill, Carlota. *Una Mujer En La Guerra De España*. Madrid: Oberon, 2003.

Owings, Alison. *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.

*Playing for Time*. Directed by Daniel Mann. 1980. DVD.

Vassiltchikov, Marie, writer. *Berlin Diaries 1940-1945*. Audio book.

### Secondary Sources

Bacchetta, P., and Margaret Power. *Right-wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists around the World*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Bock, Gisela. 1983. "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State". *Signs* 8 (3). University of Chicago Press: 400–421.

Bolloten, Burnett. *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counterrevolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

- Boyd, Carolyn P. "History, Politics, and Culture 1936-1975." In *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*, 86-103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Bridenthal, Renate, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan. *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984.
- Del, Rey Reguillo Fernando, Manuel Álvarez Tardío, and Nick Rider. *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited from Democratic Hopes to the Civil War (1931-1936)*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2012.
- Durgan, Andrew. *The Spanish Civil War*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Durham, Martin. *Women and Fascism*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Garofalo, Emilia. *The Female Temper of a Spanish Generation: Cultural Images of Women in the Second Republic (1931-1939)*. PhD diss., 2001.
- González, Shirley Mangini. *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Holgado, Fernando Hernández. *Mujeres Encarceladas: La Prisión De Ventas, De La República Al Franquismo, 1931-1941*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2003.
- Joly, Maud. "Las violencias sexuadas de la guerra civil española: paradigma para una lectura cultural del conflicto." *Historia Social*, No. 61 (2008), pp. 89-107. Fundación Instituto de Historia Social.
- Koonz, Claudia. *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.
- Linhard, Tabea Alexa. *Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005.
- Nash, Mary. *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*. Denver, CO: Arden Press, 1995.
- Ofer, Dalia, and Lenore J. Weitzman. *Women in the Holocaust*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Passmore, Kevin. *Women, Gender, and Fascism in Europe, 1919-45*. New Brunswick, NJ: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Payne, Stanley G. *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Payne, Stanley G. *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Payne, Stanley G. *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945*. Madison, WI: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Ruiz, Julius. "Seventy Years On: Historians and Repression During and After the Spanish Civil War." *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Jul., 2009), pp. 449-472. Sage Publications, Ltd.

Sneeringer, Julia. *Winning Women's Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2002.

Stephenson, Jill. *Women in Nazi Society*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1975.

Stibbe, Matthew. *Women in the Third Reich*. London: Arnold, 2003.

Stoltzfus, Nathan. *Resistance of the Heart: Inter-marriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996.

Trunk, Isaiah. *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis*. New York: Stein and Day, 1979.

Vinyes, Ricard. 2001. "Construyendo a Caín: Diagnósis Y Terapia Del Disidente: Las Investigaciones Psiquiátricas Militares De Antonio Vallejo Nágera Con Presas Y Presos Políticos". *Ayer*, no. 44. Asociación de Historia Contemporánea: 227-50.

Vinyes, Ricard. *Irredentas: Las Presas Políticas Y Sus Hijos En Las Cárceles Franquistas*. Madrid: Temas De Hoy, 2010.