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***The Catholic Church in Catalonia. From Cataclysm in the Civil War to the "Euphoria" of the 1950s***  
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# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CATALONIA. FROM CATAclySM IN THE CIVIL WAR TO THE "EUPHORIA" OF THE 1950s

ANDREW DOWLING

## ABSTRACT

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In the summer of 1936, with the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan Church underwent a ferocious assault, without precedent in modern European history. Catalan society in the early decades of the twentieth century had been divided over its relationship to the Catholic Church, with some sectors being profoundly anti-clerical. Yet by the early 1960s, attitudes towards the Catholic Church had changed. This article is concerned with reconstructing Catalan and Catalanist Catholicism from one of profound crisis during the Civil War to its re-emergence from the confines of Spanish National Catholicism. Francoist victory in the Spanish Civil War meant the ending of indigenous Catholic traditions. However, from the mid-1940s we can trace the slow reconstruction of Catalan traditions, language and culture. All of the major expressions of Catalan identity until the 1960s were enabled due to this Catholic patronage. Whilst the Church was unable to reverse secularization trends, this involvement in cultural activity would transform its place within wider Catalan society. By the end of the period examined in this article, historic and deep rooted anti-clericalism in Catalonia was ending.

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In July 1936, on the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan Church underwent a ferocious assault, without precedent in modern European history. One third of the religious killings that took place in Spain during the Civil War occurred in Catalonia. In fact, it is no exaggeration to state that, in proportionate terms, Catalonia experienced the greatest anti-religious outbreak in modern European history. As will be seen, Francoist victory in the Civil War gave the Church a perhaps unique opportunity, not only to restore its position, but to become a part of the Francoist triumvirate of power, in alliance with the *Falange* and the military. However, this restoration would give the Church an opportunity to become not only central to the Catalan nation, but to play an important role in the reconstruction and revival of Catalanism.

The Church had been involved in the late nineteenth-century formulation of conservative Catalanism. However, the Catalanism that emerged on the left became expressed through Republicanism, a movement that contained within it a discourse of anti-clericalism. The anti-clerical riots of the Tragic Week of 1909 were an early demonstration

that the position of the Church was greatly threatened amongst the urban masses in Catalonia (Connelly Ulmann 329). The Catalan Church would largely retain its influence in rural Catalonia but the next quarter century demonstrated that most urban areas were lost to it and, in particular the city of Barcelona. Throughout this period there were debates in the Church as to how to end the process of secularization. One response lay behind the foundation of the monthly *La paraula cristiana* by Canon Carles Cardó which sought a "liberal" turn on the part of the Church to reach the atheist and irreligious sectors of the population.<sup>1</sup> Cardó called for activism: "Any decades more of abstention and in our Catalonia, Catholicism would be nothing more than a memory" (*La paraula cristiana* 3). As will subsequently be seen, the Franco regime would provide the greatest opportunity to the Church to undertake its program of re-Christianization. Re-Christianization as ideology and strategy represented an attempt by the Church in Catalonia to reverse the forces of secularization and anti-clericalism that had become deeply embedded in the culture.

The successful fusion of Catalanist Republicans into one party, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* at the beginning of the Spanish Second Republic (1931) would mean that the Church's influence amongst the political class would decline as the Catalan autonomous government, the *Generalitat*, came to be governed by liberal Catalanists. The Church would suffer a double displacement. It was closest politically to the *Lliga Regionalista*, itself discredited by its support for Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923-1930). Secondly, the onset of the Republic would bring forward a new political class of largely secular modernizers, who saw the Church as an agent of backwardness and as a barrier to "progress." The Church's position in Catalan society appeared to be negated by both "liberals" and revolutionaries in Catalonia.

During the course of the Republic, the *Lliga* continued to see itself as defender of the Church. The *Lliga*-led *Front Català d'Ordre*, the reactionary coalition created to fight the February 1936 election, made the Catholic religion one of its principal banners of propaganda (Garcia Jordan 133).

The attempted military coup of July 1936 failed in Catalonia and its defeat resulted in a radicalization of the CNT-led working class and the subsequent outbreak of revolution. One consequence of this revolution was the assassination of over 2,000 priests and members of

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<sup>1</sup> Canon Carles Cardó worked closely with the Bishop of Tarragona, Francesc Vidal i Barraquer, in an attempt to create greater distance by the Catalan Church from Spanish ultra-reactionary Catholicism, seen as particularly counter-productive in the case of the city of Barcelona, with both strong worker and Catalanist traditions.

religious orders (Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya *La repressió* 179).<sup>2</sup> The killings were accompanied by a sustained attack on the buildings of the Catholic Church. What occurred in Catalonia was a veritable pogrom against Catholicism. Some explanation of why it was the Catholic Church that was attacked with such vehemence is obviously required. It was noted in 1938 that in "certain churches political sermons against liberalism and socialism had been preached during the election (of 1936), particularly in Barcelona" (Parliamentary Committee 22). It is commonly held to be the case that anarchism in Catalonia bears the primary responsibility for the attack on the Church.

Strikingly, it was not until one month after the outbreak of Civil War, with news of the atrocities committed within Nationalist controlled Spain, as the drive on Madrid proceeded, that the fiercest attack on the Church took place. That is, following a month of largely spontaneous attacks. In a front page editorial entitled "Down with the Church," the anarchist daily, *Solidaridad Obrera*, declared, "Thirty centuries [*sic*] of religious obscurantism have poisoned the minds of the Spanish people. The priest, the friar and the Jesuit ruled in Spain. These people have to be eradicated." Hostility was not without a class component: "Bishops and Cardinals have to be shot" (*¡Abajo la Iglesia!* 1). Amongst the factors that contributed to popular anti-clericalism was the belief in the "horrors" that took place in convents, where it was believed that unmarried pregnant women were mummified alive (Pérez Ledesma 231). The Church was believed to hold great wealth (anarchists claimed to have discovered the enormous sum of 17 million pesetas from the churches in Vic) ("Dieciséis millones" 1). Other contributory factors were the existence of deeply rooted anti-clericalism since the Middle Ages; the anti-clerical riots and attacks on the Church in the nineteenth century (Esdaile 59, 70); the events of the Tragic Week of 1909 and the discourse of the radical republicanism known as *Lerrouxisme*. Furthermore, as Jaume Barrull has demonstrated for Lleida, where 65% of the priests were murdered, there were "no urban masses nor any libertarian tradition" (Barrull Pelegrí 36-40). All of which are a reminder that anarchism fed on already existing Catalan anti-clerical traditions.

After the revolution and the wave of anti-clerical killings, it is perhaps not surprising that the Church in Catalonia saw its only hope of salvation, indeed its very continuance, in the victory of the Spanish Nationalists. However, in spite of the traumatic position of the Church in Catalonia, it was viewed with suspicion by the Francoists. A San Sebastián newspaper declared: "Although to a lesser extent than in the Basque Country, in Catalonia there also existed a group of false

<sup>2</sup> Their figure is 2039.

Catholics inclined to serve tribal nationalism at the expense of the Church" (Sole i Sabaté and Villarroya *L'ocupació* 32). The choice between Franco and the "incontrolats,"<sup>3</sup> the Catalan Church chose Franco. Two of the principal promoters of the idea that the Civil War was a "religious crusade" were two Catalan Bishops, Isidre Gomá and Enric Pla i Daniel, representative of an ultra-conservative tradition within Catalan Catholicism. The Bishop of Tarragona, Francesc de Asís Vidal i Barraquer, was representative of another tradition and opposed the Spanish bishops collective pastoral of July 1937 as he believed it would be counter-productive for the Church to associate itself so directly with the Francoists and he feared the consequences for Catholics in "Red" territory. The consequences of his opposition were marginalization by the Spanish hierarchy and life that would end in exile.

During the first months of the Civil War in Catalonia, there had emerged a system of parallel government. However, the events of May 1937 in Barcelona instituted the restoration of state power in Catalonia (Graham 531). This victory permitted the cautious restoration of Catholic activity in Catalonia (Manent i Segimon and Raventós i Giralt 97-124).

With Franco's victory in the Civil War, the Catholic Church was restored to power on the wave of National Catholicism that reigned throughout the 1940s and 1950s. This ideology was above all "anti-modern," it was the theology of the Reconquest (Piñol 86, Álvarez Bolado 195). As one Church commentator has noted: The Catholic Church remained silent on the terror that was institutionalized as construction of the New State proceeded apace. As Bada has noted, "At no moment... did the Episcopacy of Catalonia nor any of its members raise the subject of the repression" (120).

For at least the early years of the dictatorship, the regime could count on the support, whether active or passive, of Catholic bourgeois and the Church. Sectors of Catalan society that would be the bulwark of the regime elsewhere in Spain would, however, later become Catalanist centers of opposition to it. The Franco regime was initially welcomed after the profound trauma of the Civil War. The profundity of the cataclysm for the Church left it reeling, unable to comprehend what had befallen it. As one Catalan theologian asked, "Why did they not burn the *Capitania General* [military government]? Why did they not put the University of Barcelona to the torch? Why wasn't it the Colon hotel?...when people got inside these buildings they didn't think of burning them down" (Rucabado *Iglesias* 139).<sup>4</sup> Some of the

<sup>3</sup> Literally those "out of control," the term that came to be applied to those who had been most active in the attack on the Church.

<sup>4</sup> See also *La Custodia* by the same author.

prominent figures of pre-war liberal Catholicism, including Bishop Vidal i Barraquer and Canon Carles Cardó, initially believed that "salvation" for the Church would come with Franco. In fact, due to their liberalism and Catalanism, they remained in exile in the 1940s. Francoism was also determined to end Catalan religious exceptionalism. The *Federació de Joves Cristians*, reaching a membership of 18,000 in 1936, was one of many entities banned in the Francoist New State (*La Federació* 264).

After the traumas of the Civil War, the Church devoted itself to its own reconstruction, both spiritually and physically. In Catalonia the Church had more work to do than in any other area of the Spanish State in this twin process. Of the more than 6,000 members of religious orders executed throughout Spain, over a third had been killed in Catalonia. The Catalan Church suffered proportionately the fiercest anti-religious attack in all of twentieth century, indeed modern, European history. More than four thousand churches and other religious buildings were destroyed in Catalonia, of which over 220 were razed to the ground in two days alone. Religious life had been almost wiped out. The Bishop of Vic declared in February 1939: "Truly pathetic is the picture that presents itself before our eyes...unbaptized children; others spiritually undernourished having been deprived of the bread of the catechism; marriages without blessing; the dead without the sacraments; morality thrown to the ground, with vice enthroned" (*Después de la Liberación* ).

The decade of the 1940s was marked by the enormous programs of building, rebuilding and the restoration of churches, with regular calls from the pulpit for financial help in this project. The open air and schools were used where there were no religious buildings available or while they awaited the blessing of the bishop of the diocese due to their profanation.

In this period the Church centered its attention on its program of re-Christianization. In February 1941, the Bishop of Vic emphasized the need "to re-Christianize the Spanish people, who have been poisoned by Marxist utopias and to return them to faith and patriotism... [the] secret of our imperial grandeur" (Bada 45). Francoist victory not only restored the Catholic Church but gave it unprecedented power and influence over society. The Church became the arbiter of control over morality and an agency of social control. Strong Catalan anti-clerical traditions were crushed in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and an attempt was made to displace them with the moral hegemony of National Catholicism. The urgency to the program of re-Christianization was made glaringly apparent in a survey conducted for *Acción Católica* in 1941 on religious belief amongst workers aged between fourteen and thirty-five in the diocese

of Barcelona. To the dismay of the faithful, it found that not more than *three* per cent of workers defined themselves as Catholics: "That horrifying 97% means that all young people are in terrible danger of disaster...distracted by the cinema, dances, pornography and evil friends" ("1ª Jornada de Estudios Obrera"). If the "flock" was in danger, the position of the "shepherds" was, for the Church, equally traumatic. Thirty per cent of the priests of Catalonia had been killed in the war. The consequences of this situation are given expression by the following appeal made in the early days of the regime: "There is a pressing need...to which few have paid sufficient attention: that is the lack of priests... Leave a people fifty years without priests and they will worship the beasts" ("Mensaje a los seminaristas").<sup>5</sup> Catholic priests returned to churches blackened by fire, with strong memories of the fate that had befallen their less fortunate colleagues. It would be several years before the trauma would lift and Catholic sectors would seek to revive indigenous Catholic traditions. Whatever the personal predilections of Catalan priests and laity towards the regime, what was undeniable was that their "salvation" and that of their religion came at the hands of Franco's forces:

The day arrived when Catalonia, victim of its own mistakes, found itself shipwrecked in the abyss of a revolution whose only aim was to scorn and destroy it... Today, Catalonia redeemed gives itself with fervor... to the fruitful task of material and spiritual resurgence and says to Franco: You saved me from a death without resurrection. (*Homenaje de Cataluña* 1)

Services of thanksgiving for the "liberation" took place throughout Catalonia. At Montserrat a special service was given commemorating the Carlist *requeté* dead, who with the permission of Abbot Escarré, had been buried at the monastery. In 1942, in welcoming a visit of Franco to the monastery, the abbot declared: "We remember with thanks how, three years ago, under the impulse of your arms, the doors of our basilica were re-opened after having been closed for thirty months... [This meant that] we could begin again the splendid and traditional worship of our Black Madonna." Escarré also noted that Franco's victory permitted the monastery "to continue (its) cultural tasks" ("Discurso del abad mitrado" 3).

The assault on the Catalan Church had occurred from within Catalonia (in contrast to the Basque Country), yet its restoration came from without, through the military victory of Franco's troops. The Franco regime restored Catholicism, its price being the ending of Catalanism. It would, however, be the restoration of Catholicism that would permit the Church in Catalonia not only to revive Catalanism

<sup>5</sup> See also "La necesidad de fomentar las vocaciones."

but to shape its reformulation. Whilst the Catalan clergy and faithful welcomed being able to practice their religion again, resentment would grow over time at the nature of the imposition of Spanish National Catholicism and that this spirit did not emanate from within indigenous Catalan traditions. As the innumerable projects of reconstruction approached their completion, sectors of the Church began to concern themselves with their relationship with Catalan identity and in particular the Catalan language. In these sectors, Josep Torras i Bages was seen as the founding father of Catholic Catalanism. Torras i Bages had led clerical involvement in the emergent movement of Catalanism in the late nineteenth century. The revival of Torras's thought took place under Franco as he became an icon for the Catholic Catalanists and for other groups of Catholics within Catalonia. As one observer put it in the late 1940s, "Much of what is Vic today and much of the universality achieved by Balmaes in the decades to follow...is due to the illustrious and greatly loved figure of Torras i Bages" (Llopis 2). One of the groups of the Catholic Catalanists was called appropriately enough the *Grup Torras i Bages*, which was itself the predecessor to the group of the 1950s known as CC, Crist i Catalunya or Catòlics Catalans.<sup>6</sup>

Bishop Torras i Bages greatly influenced the thought of Abbot Escarré who shared his messianic goal of a Christian Catalonia or, more accurately, a re-Christianized Catalonia. The Catalan Church shared the state's goal of re-Christianizing the population, yet it was considered particularly urgent in Catalonia because secularization was so advanced. The urban masses were not just secular but fervently anti-religious. However, as the population was still overwhelmingly Catalan speaking the imposition of religious services in Spanish further preoccupied the Catalan Church because it threatened to alienate those elements of Catalan society that had remained loyal to it. The Catalan Church could not afford to lose the support of the Catalan-speaking peasantry and middle-class. Spanish Catholic fundamentalism was therefore viewed in an ambivalent way because of this potential to alienate these Catalan Catholic sectors. Whilst they shared most elements of the Francoist state religious program, particularly the emphasis on re-Christianization of the population, the means chosen were strikingly different. The monastery of Montserrat would lead those Catholics that wanted this re-Christianization to be undertaken in the spirit of Catalan Church traditions.

In many studies of this period prominence is given to the events of April 1947 known as *l'entronització de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*. It is sometimes referred to as "the first public manifestation of Cata-

<sup>6</sup> See Raguer i Suñer.



lanism" since the Civil War.<sup>7</sup> The origins of the event lie in the decision to pay homage to the Black Madonna through a religious ceremony of enthronement. The monastery is "the site of one of the longest continuous cults of the Virgin Mary" (Warner 274). 1947 was an international year of Marianism and the event at Montserrat took place in an already existing atmosphere of religious revivalism. The event's fundamental function was one of re-Christianization.<sup>8</sup> The historic figures of Catalan Catholicism had themselves been revived in these years. 1945 had been celebrated as the centenary of Verdaguer and 100,000 copies of his works had been sold during the year ("Un record de llibreries").<sup>9</sup> 1946 was the turn of Torras i Bages and 1948 was celebrated as the year of Balmes.<sup>10</sup> The events of April 1947 have to be seen in the context of the revivalism and re-construction that was a product of the spiritual fervor of these years. In a pastoral letter, the Bishop of Barcelona noted that, in 1947 alone, 113 churches had been built and another thirteen were under construction (*Circular de la Junta*).

The *Commissió Abat Oliba* was the Montserrat-inspired organizing committee responsible for the mobilization. The *Commissió* was permitted by the Civil Governor of Barcelona to use the Catalan language for its campaign and leaflets were sent out to all Catalan parishes. This was a further demonstration of the recuperation of the language for religious purposes. From the mid-1940s, poems by Verdaguer and Maragall, poems dedicated to Torras i Bages or to the Black Madonna of Montserrat could be found in journals imbued with the theology of Spanish National Catholicism.<sup>11</sup> One of the organizers of *l'entronització*, Josep Benet, stated that the aim of the event was 'the reconquest of the Fatherland for Christ'. In the *Commissió's* bulletin it was added: "Everybody has to bear in mind that in the religious history of our people, the ceremonies have to be start of the spiritual

7 Amongst English language works, Hank Johnson's *Tales of Nationalism* and Daniel Conversi's *The Basques and the Catalans. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* attach a pivotal role to these events. Conversi erroneously states that Escarré became anti-Francoist in 1947, see Conversi, p. 128.

8 See *La Vanguardia* and *Avui*, April 1997 for how the fiftieth anniversary was treated in the Catalan press.

9 *J.A.C.E.*, August 1945. This edition includes substantial quotes of Verdaguer in Catalan.

10 On the significance of the centenary of Torras i Bages see, *Circular de la Junta Diocesana de Acció Catòlica*, 1 November 1946. For Balmes see, *Noticiari de la Unió Diocesana de Hombres de Acció Catòlica de Barcelona*, 15 February, 15 March, 15 May and July-August 1948.

11 See "Cirerer de claustre," "Goigs a llaor de Sant Cugat," "Jesús Infant," "Nadal," "Neguit," "L'ombra del bisbe Torras," "Ombres i clavors" and "Vara Florida."

renaissance and re-Christianization of the country" (Benet qtd in Grau 115)<sup>12</sup> The Catalan Church and broad sections of Catalan Catholicism, from the Catalanists to ultra-reactionaries within Spanish National Catholicism made their individual commitment to the Black Madonna on 27 April 1947. Although in later years, the events of *l'entronització* would attain mythic status, commissions participated throughout Spain, including Madrid ("Fiestas" 7). The Bishop of Tarragona declared: "It is the time of the glorification of the Virgin and it is also the time to ask God for his protection, to save and defend us from our enemies, who from inside Spain and without, conspire against the Christian faith" ("Pastoral del cardinal-arzobispo de Tarragona" 10). Abbot Escarré sent a personal telegram to Franco thanking him for his support over *l'entronització* and expressed his continued loyalty to the Caudillo ("Gratitud al Caudillo").

Whilst the nature of *l'entronització* has been subject to subsequent exaggeration, the event did give the Catholic Catalanists the first major boost in the reconstruction of an indigenous Catholicism. From early in the Franco regime it became clear that the only Catalanism that could be expressed, without immediate repression, would be through the Church. Permission for small scale publishing in Catalan had already been granted in the early 1940s, and significantly only on religious subjects. The first publication in Catalan was that by Monsignor Camil Geis in August 1942, an ecclesiastical work entitled *Rosa Mística*. In November 1943 the complete works of Verdaguer were published.<sup>13</sup> Another event of note at this time was the international Marian Congress of Barcelona of December 1947 ("Congregaciones Marianas"). In 1949, the millennial celebrations of Abbot Oliba were a further stimulus to Catalan-language religious revival.<sup>14</sup> In September 1948, the Catalan language was used in a homily at Montserrat monastery for the first time, a usage that would continue thereafter. This religious usage of the Catalan language would become a launchpad for a pre-political program of a Catholic-led revival of cultural Catalanism.

The 1950s produced indications of the challenges that the Franco

<sup>12</sup> See also *Circular de la Comissió Abat Oliba*, November-December 1946 and March 1947. Somewhat bizarrely, *Conversi* describes Josep Benet as a 'left-wing secular nationalist', see *Conversi*, p.127.

<sup>13</sup> Jacint Verdaguer, religious poet and writer, was considered to be one of the central figures of the nineteenth century Catalan cultural renaissance, the *Renaixença*. Verse by Verdaguer in Catalan was published by the Barcelona weekly, *Destino*, as early as 22 February 1941.

<sup>14</sup> J.A.C.E., October 1947 and *Noticiari, Confradia de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, September-October 1949. Abbot Oliba was the medieval founder of the monastery.

regime would face in its final years: student opposition, a protesting and organizing working class and opposition from the Basque Country and Catalonia. The Catholic Church had as yet made no breach with the regime and it was during this decade that the Church achieved an enormous consolidation in its power and influence, a period that has been described as "the years of euphoria" (Bach 96, Perry and Echeverría 242). These years represent a period of Catholic cultural and moral hegemony. Catholic Catalanism used this situation to consolidate the small openings obtained in the 1940s. Some of the earliest attempts to break from the confines of Spanish National Catholicism and re-integrate into the mainstream of European Catholicism occurred in Catalonia.

An insight into the Church's growing engagement with the Catalan language and culture is revealed in an extensive correspondence between the civil governor of the province of Barcelona, General Acedo Colunga, and two figures of the central government in Madrid. The origins of the correspondence lie in a complaint directed personally to Franco by a disgruntled Rightist, Angel Escutia, who protested about the use of Catalan in Church services and the increased appearance of what he felt to be acts of a "separatist nature." "The days following 1939 seem so far away...the principle of authority is not as iron-fisted as it was then". Escutia noted that 'the attitude of the lower clergy is very influential, because in this province [Barcelona], in almost all of the parishes, religious acts are celebrated using Catalan and Your Excellency can suppose the effect this causes amongst the faithful' (Escutia). In his response to enquiries from Madrid, Acedo Colunga reviewed the situation as he then saw it. He referred to "*españolismo* amongst the masses and even in the middle classes...There is no separatist Catalanism" (Letter to Franco Salgado-Araujo).<sup>15</sup> In his correspondence with Blas Pérez, the minister in Madrid responsible for the civil governors, Acedo Colunga acknowledged "that there is an increase in preaching in Catalan...I am the first to be charmed by the *sardana* and I understand and respect the Catalan language, but naturally, the increase in the usage of Catalan for religious purposes and in other public arenas cannot be permitted." (Letter to Blas Pérez). Acedo announced that he was working in tandem with the Spanish Bishop of Barcelona, Gregorio Modrego, and that both had agreed to labor together to reverse the process of Catalanization. Acedo also commented on the notable rivalry that existed between Modrego and the Abbot of Montserrat. This personal rivalry symbolized the division between a Spanish hierarchy imbued with the values of National Catholicism and Escarré, who was

<sup>15</sup> Franco Salgado-Araujo was Franco's personal assistant.

increasingly distancing himself from an initial loyalty to the regime. Acedo further commented that it was his belief that about thirty-five to forty per cent of the clergy in Catalonia were Catalanist, "some of a moderate Catalanism, that can be thought of as regionalism, and others, though fewer, that exhibit an irritating nationalism" (Letter to Blas Pérez).

The significance of these comments for the regime is to be found in the problems inherent in disciplining the Church, as in the following year, 1952, the biennial celebration of world Catholicism, the International Eucharist Congress, was to take place in Barcelona. The fact that this Congress was to take place on Spanish soil was seen as a triumph for the regime and a further indicator of its increasing international acceptance. To make matters more complicated for the regime's attempts at controlling the Catalanization of the Church, the closing act of the Congress was to take place at Montserrat. The *Moreneta* or Black Madonna of Montserrat was also the patroness of the Congress, and in the official bulletin, the hymn of the Congress was printed in Catalan (*Boletín Informativo*).<sup>16</sup>

The first half of the twentieth century had seen the formation of a number of lay organizations, "all affecting a military style and all dedicated to winning the world for the Virgin Mary" and these too emerged in Catalonia (Carroll 21). There were three principal Catalan Marian groups of the 1950s that developed in the direction of Catalanism. Firstly, the *Congregacions Marianes* of the Jesuits, a body that in 1954 constituted the *Acadèmia de la Llengua Catalana*. A second group was the *Confraria de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, which was created in the mid-1940s and was based in the private school *Virtèlia* in Barcelona. The third sector was enrolled in the *Lliga Espiritual de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, which was a revival of the formation that had been created by Bishop Torras i Bages in 1899. These organizations received a spiritual boost at the end of 1950 when Pope Pius XII proclaimed the doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven as part of Catholic dogma. Its significance for Catalonia was noted given "its outstanding Marian tradition" ("¡Gaudeamus in Dominio!"). This event also encouraged the production of Marian works in the Catalan language.<sup>17</sup> The Catalan Marian groups devoted to the *Moreneta* would expand their range of activity in the 1950s.

In spite of the hostility of the *Falange*, repository of ultra-Righ-

<sup>16</sup> See, as well: No.14, March 1952; *Noticario de al Unión Diocesana de Hombres de Acción Católica*, Nos.94, July-August 1951; 96, November 1951 and 97, December 1951. For the build-up to the Congreso, see *La Vanguardia Española*, 1-6, 8-10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22-23, 25, 27 and 30 April 1952.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Frassinetti and Liguori.

tism, to the visible revival of aspects of Catalanism, the Francoist attempt at the complete extirpation of Catalan culture and the cultural submergence of Catalonia within Spain was being slowly defeated. The regime would limit itself to the control and prevention of the outbreak of "political" manifestations of this cultural revival. Representative of the advances of religious-led Catalanization through the Church were Catalan-language religious publications that attained wider diffusion. In Tarragona, Ramon Muntanyola produced the Catalan language parish bulletin, *La Veu de la Parròquia* until 1950, which was followed by the creation of *Ressò* in 1950. *Ressò* was published eleven times before its closure due to the opposition of the Bishop of Tarragona. This short-lived publication was much more than a parish journal in the Catalan language, as it demonstrated by its change of title in June 1951 to *Ressò, cròniques i comentaris d'actualitat*. It contained articles on culture, literature and current affairs and included contributions from prominent figures of Catalan Catholicism such as Maurici Serrahima, Carles Cardó, Carles Riba and Joan Triadó. As Muntanyola later remarked, "we can consider *Ressò* as a significant predecessor of *Serra d'Or*" (Muntanyola 141). In May 1949 the monthly *Germinàbit* was created as the newsletter of the *Unió de l'Escolania de Montserrat* (Choir Boys' Union of Montserrat). At the end of 1959 *Germinàbit* would fuse with *Serra d'Or* to become *Serra d'Or, Segona Epoca* becoming a wide-ranging cultural and religious monthly in the Catalan language. Whilst in tone *Germinàbit* was distinct from pro-regime Catholic publications, it gave expression to a fervent Catalan Catholic viewpoint: "We have at the summit of Montserrat, a *Moreneta* that is so beautiful and so much our own, that it even speaks to us in Catalan" ("Rosa d'April... Guieu-nos cap al cel").

The religious Catalanization in Catalan life and the cult around the *Moreneta* was noted in an article by Anselm Albareda, who remarked that in 1956 there were now 10,000 women in Catalonia who bore the name Montserrat, "a fact which was unknown in previous centuries" ("*Montserrat i Catalunya*"). In 1958 the monastery created *Qüestions de Vida Cristiana*, a Catalan language theological-cultural publication. As was noted: "Recently and quietly, and growing every day, Montserrat has begun again its editorial task, which dried up in a most violent way in 1936" ("*Una nova publicació montserratina*"). Until the 1960s, many of the movements of Catalan Catholicism were narrow in scope and membership, but the revival of *escoltisme* (the Catalan boy-scout movement) was the greatest contributor to a pre-mass mobilization of the population. Through the scouts, large numbers of Catalan youth were given the opportunity to study the Catalan language, and were introduced to Catalan history and culture. The Catalan scouts closely followed the prescription of Lord Baden-

Powell's scout movement, which he had founded in England at the height of the British Empire. The idea behind the creation of the Catalanist scouts lay with the Anglophile figure, Josep Maria Batista i Roca, who published the *Manual d'Excursionisme* in 1927. The following year Batista i Roca produced his scouting manifesto: "If we have been successful in ordering the anarchy that there has been in our language... why do we not also try and succeed in putting in order that chaotic attitude that exists in the Catalan young of today?" (Castells 23).

The principal figure in the reconstruction of the Catalan scouting movement in the 1950s was Monsignor Antoni Batlle, for whom scouting gave the young the opportunity "to make men of them" and "to love the word of God" (*Antics Escoltes*). In 1948, Batlle was appointed by the Bishop of Barcelona to be responsible for the scouts within Catalonia. Although Bishop Modrego remained firmly within the orbit of Spanish National Catholicism, his tolerance of scouting and other cultural manifestations has to be seen in the light of Catholic rivalry with the "materialist" *Falange* as mobilizers of the young. The Catalan scouts were imbued with notions of duty, Catholicism and Catalan patriotism. Although the scouts had a great deal of protection under the "umbrella" of the Catholic Church, their activities did not escape the attention of the State, particularly the *Falange*. The *Falange* youth movement saw the scouts as not only rivals for youth mobilization, but as dangerous "separatists":

Today the groupings of the *Minyons de Muntanya* (lit. mountain boys) that are flowering in a multitude of religious associations of the province (of Barcelona), hastily announce themselves to be "apolitical"...Why do their members adorn themselves with a "prudent" hostility...towards the youth movements of the regime and adopt styles that are absent of all national (i.e. Spanish) spirit? (*Atajo*)<sup>18</sup>

The death of Monsignor Batlle in 1955 and his funeral brought about a gathering of the groupings of Catalan Catholicism. Antoni Tarner described the atmosphere at the funeral and remarked that within the sectors of Catalan Catholicism, in spite of Batlle's death, there was a feeling of "euphoria." Furthermore, the bringing together of former and present scouts was "effective for the good of the Church and the Fatherland" (Tarner).<sup>19</sup> The following year, 1956, Abbot Escarré gave his own seal of approval to the work of Batlle. Speaking to a group of scouts, Escarré declared: "Each one of you is a young Catalan Christian and tomorrow you will be a young Catalan citizen! I recommend to you but one thing: that you be true Catalans and that

<sup>18</sup> This was a youth publication of the *Falange*.

<sup>19</sup> See also *Centro Excursionista de Cataluña* and *El Ciervo*.

you be true Christians" (Escarré 54). Escarré did not see the encouragement that he gave to the scouts as an oppositional activity per se. In the same year that he paid homage to Battle and the Catalanist scout movement, he provided the introduction to a work that commemorated the Carlist militia that had fought for Franco during the Civil War (Nonell iii).

Catholic-led reconstruction also occurred in other areas. The *sardana* had, during the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, become the Catalan national dance. During the Franco regime, it actually expanded its range and became confirmed as the national dance, displacing remaining local and regional dances that had resisted its hegemony.<sup>20</sup> In the expansion of the *sardana*, its "civilizing" and non-"decadent" nature was constantly evoked. "When you dance the *sardana*, never forget that it is not like any other dance. It is not any old dance that can be danced happily and wildly...No! The *sardana* can only be danced if all that it represents is taken into account" (*Agrupación Cultural*). For Serra d'Or, "the Black Madonna has endowed our national dance with life since the *Renai-xença*... Happy are the people that can pray by dancing" ("La Sardana a Montserrat"). Another Catholic publication noted that, in contrast to other popular dances, it puts the dancer in a position of surrender and innocence, seen as vital "not only for dancing but for living" ("La dansa més Bella").<sup>21</sup>

The emergence of these entities was confirmation of the reconstruction of Catalan civil society and a public sphere. One Catalanist commented in 1955, "I am convinced...of the vitality of Catalanism...in fact I believe that today, Catalanism is...the only living force in Spain" (Fontseré).<sup>22</sup> As has been noted, the Catalanism that had emerged by the 1950s had re-emerged through Catholicism. It is notable that the base for the subsequent transformation of Catalanism and its revival was laid during the religious-led revival of Catalan language and culture during the 1940s.

By the end of the 1950s, Catalan cultural manifestations are increasingly suffused with a Catalan Catholicism, revealing how cultural forms had been become dependent on religious patronage. However, the hoped for re-Christianization of the populace was not achieved and the Catalan people remained largely secular. However,

<sup>20</sup> For this expansion see *Ressò*, Christmas 1951 and *Agrupación Folklorica de Barcelona*, No. 15, August 1952.

<sup>21</sup> For other examples of this "Catholicization" of the *sardana*, see *Agrupación Cultural Folklorica de Barcelona*, Nos. 11, March and 16, September 1952 and No. 21, February 1953.

<sup>22</sup> Anonymous individual cited in Fontseré.

given the turbulent history of Catholicism in modern Catalonia, it was striking that the Catalan anti-clerical tradition did end, a process cemented by the Church's close relations with the Catalan opposition during the 1960s, including the communist opposition of the PSUC. As *Nous Horitzons* declared: "progressive Catholics deserve our support" ("Alguns aspects"). During the final decade of the Franco regime, churches and the monastery of Montserrat became sanctuaries for the opposition forces. Indicative of the breach made with the Franco regime, in 1963, Abbot Escarré gave his famous interview to *Le Monde* criticizing the regime that would lead to his exiling to Italy (Minobis 219-222). The origins of this transformation in the Church's position within Catalanism and Catalonia's political culture is to be found in the extraordinary circumstances encountered post-1939. The Franco regime restored the Church to a position of preeminence yet the belligerent and anti-Catalan nature of Spanish National Catholicism would ensure a break with the regime would take place. Through this break with the dictatorship, the Catalan Church, from being the subject of popular rage at the start of the Civil War, would become broadly accepted as an embodiment of the nation.

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