THE CHURCH IN THE CONFLAGRATION: ARCHBISHOP ISIDRO GOMÁ’S
CENTRAL ROLE IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1936-1939

By

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Abstract

Many scholars have written extensively about the religious undertones of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). However, little has been written about the leader of the Catholic Church in Spain during this period, the Archbishop Isidro Gomá y Tomás. Fortunately, the recent publication of Gomá’s archives has made it possible to examine more deeply his role in the Civil War. This thesis explores Gomá’s position as an intermediary between the Nationalist government, the Vatican, and the Spanish clergy and bishops, among others. First, I analyze the Archbishop’s intermediary role in the Basque conflict. Then, I untangle his position as the Vatican’s representative to the Franco government and as the organizer of a collective Church response to the Civil War. Lastly, I explore Gomá’s pastoral addresses and the rhetorical support they lent to the conflict. The detailed narratives I provide within these three sections draw from the Gomá Archives and demonstrate that an understanding of the Archbishop’s actions during the Civil War leads to a richer understanding of the religious dimensions of the period overall.
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I. Introduction: Crosses, Memory and the Wounds of the Past

A cursory search of the internet for news items related to the Valle de los Caídos—The Valley of the Fallen—results in a sizeable array of stories and items of interest. In terms of background, this landmark finds itself nestled high in the Sierra de Guadarrama range on the edge of the Community of Madrid boundaries, and is comprised currently of a Benedictine abbey, lodging quarters for guests, a choirboys’ school, and the Basilica and monument to the fallen of the Spanish Civil War.¹ The inspiringly beautiful landscape in which this complex is located, however, distracts from the massive controversies that have surrounded this monument (and hence the presence of many easily-accessible, contemporary news stories relating to the matter).²

It is important to understand that the massive centerpiece of the monument, a granite cross of nearly 500 feet in height, is, for some, “the largest, and most recent, piece of fascist religious monumental architecture to have been erected in western Europe.”³ Indeed, although it is currently described somewhat innocuously by the Spanish State agency tasked with national heritage sites—Patrimonio Nacional—as a religious site and resting place for many Civil War dead, it must be remembered that it was erected, in part, by Republican prisoners-of-war.⁴ As to

² Regarding the physical presence of the Valle de los Caidos, Giles Tremlett writes: “The [Valley] is a delightful, shallow dip in the folds of the Sierra de Guadarrama. Overlooked by dramatic outcrops of bare granite, it is populated mainly by pines but punctuated by a scattering of oak, ilex and poplar…Few of my Madrid friends had ever been here, to one of the most bucolic, verdant spots within striking distance of a city [Madrid] that spends half the year marooned in the middle of a burnt, parched flatland.” See also, Tremlett, Ghosts of Spain: Travels through Spain and its Silent Past (New York: Walker & Company, 2006), 43.
³ Ibid., 44. See document 1 in the Appendix.
⁴ “Abadía Benedictina de la Santa Cruz del Valle de los Caídos,” Patrimonio Nacional, last modified 2014, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.patrimonionacional.es/real-sitio/palacios/6258.; See also, Tremlett, Ghosts of Spain, 48.; To the credit of the website maintained by the Santa Cruz Abbey at the monument, mention, even if evasive in tone, is made of the fact that the vanquished prisoners of the Republican side could reduce their criminal penalties through work on the monument (See “La historia de la Basílica,” El Valle de los Caidos: Abadía de la Santa Cruz, last modified 2010, accessed March 10, 2016, http://www.valledeloscaidos.es/monumento/historia.). The same website does, however, seek to define the massive cross as “a symbol connected with the need to heal wounds, oust antagonisms and return to each other; “Su simbología conectaba con la necesidad de cicatrizar heridas, deponer
the origins of the monument of *Valle de los Caídos*, Giles Tremlett comments that “Franco knew that the bigger and more impressive the monument, the longer his name would last. The Valley was his great passion...The scale and drama of the Valley of the Fallen guarantee the name of Francisco Franco will survive for centuries.”

No matter whose remains rest at the site, whether Nationalist or Republican fallen, Franco was certainly preoccupied at the time of its construction with consolidating the Nationalist triumph. For him the Valley was arguably a physical reminder to all that his “crusade” had prevailed.

That it is impossible to reconcile the meaning of *Valle de los Caídos* today is easily verified by aforementioned contemporary news sources. As recently as November 21, 2015, it was reported that the State Federation of Memory Forums (an organization focused on historical memory issues) called for the removal of the cross at the Valley of the Fallen, and also demanded that the religious orders present be transferred elsewhere and the remains of Franco be exhumed and delivered to his family. For this group, *Valle de los Caídos* is “shameful” and a “massive reminder of fascism in its national-catholic, Spanish form.” An article from November 20, 2015, asks the question, “Who is putting fresh flowers on Franco’s tomb?” Indeed, there are still “nostalgics”—nóstalgicos—that tend to the tomb and support the memory of the deceased dictator, and for them: “The *Caudillo* was, is and will always be the solution to all the antagonismos y volver a encontrarse juntos.” That was arguably not Franco’s original purpose. (See “La historia de la Basílica,” El Valle de los Caídos: Abadía de la Santa Cruz.)

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6 Ibid., 47. The idea of the Civil War as a “crusade” is an idea that I will examine in detail later in this paper.
9 Ibid., “un recordatorio gigantesco del fascismo en su variante nacional-católica española.”
problems that are presented in false and convulsive times of democracy.” Now, I hardly intend to enter into questions of historical memory and the reality of the wounds of civil war that surely fester in one way or another, even in contemporary Spain. However, the symbol of this massive cross at the Valley of the Fallen is a reminder of one simple truth: religion, or rather, the Catholic Church, was a major player in the course of the Spanish Civil War.

This paper will support the assessment that the Civil War must be understood, in part, as a conflict with religious undertones, in which the Spanish Catholic Church was deeply involved in the support of the Nationalist side. As a corollary to this, then, I ultimately argue that in order to fully understand the religious dimensions of the Spanish Civil War, one must look at the writings and the dealings of the leader of the Spanish Church throughout the Civil War: Isidro Tomás y Gomá. As a figure who received information from diverse parties—Franco, the Nationalist governing Council, local priests and Bishops, the Vatican and the Pope himself—Archbishop Gomá was uniquely positioned to drive the Iberian Church’s goals and posture in relation to the unfolding of the war and the Nationalist agenda. I argue that Gomá’s voice mattered immensely, and that by understanding his words and actions, and the words of those saved in the correspondence in his Archive, a more nuanced picture of the Catholic Church in the War can be attained. I proceed in the next section to outline the importance of Gomá’s archival documents, and define the theoretical methodologies that will guide the remainder of this thesis.

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11 Ibid., “El Caudillo fue, es y será la solución a todos los problemas que se plantean en épocas convulsas y falsarias de la democracia.”

12 See appendix, document #2, for a photograph of the Archbishop Gomá. Gomá was born in La Riba, Tarragona on August 19, 1869, and entered the seminary and was later ordained a priest in 1895. An academic with degrees in theology and philosophy, Gomá served as the rector of the Seminary of the Archdiocese of Tarragona for some twenty years. Gomá was named Bishop of Tarazona in 1927, and began his tenure as the primate of Spain when nominated as the Archbishop of Toledo in 1933. He became a Cardinal in 1935. He was the official representative of the Holy See before the Franco government from December 1936 to October 1937, upon which time the Vatican recognized the Nationalist government and appointed its own ambassador. This information is taken from James W. Cortada, ed., Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 243-244. As an interesting side note, Gomá was not in his diocese of Toledo at the outbreak of the war, where anticlerical reprisals claimed the lives of nearly 48% of the secular clergy; See José M. Sánchez, The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1987), 76.
**Methodology**

I argue, ultimately, that it is useful, in terms of a historiographical technique, to utilize the Gomá Archives as a means to form a narrative of the Civil War.\(^{13}\) This narrative depends necessarily on the meticulously saved documents of the Archbishop of Toledo, and though not biographical in nature, necessarily relies on Gomá himself as a central figure through which myriad social, political and international interactions can be processed and better analyzed and understood. As the head of the Church in Spain, Gomá advocated before the Vatican and represented the interests of the burgeoning insurgents on the Nationalist side of the Civil War. Likewise, Gomá found himself often negotiating ways in which to defend the interests of the Vatican in the face of military leaders more concerned with waging war and administering the State. And so, while an image of Gomá certainly emerges from this process of Archival research, it is not purely for biographical ends. There are countless figures that had frequent correspondence with the Archbishop, and it is in organizing these documents that meaning is identified in these relationships. Needless to say, the subject of the Spanish Civil War is not without lack of available scholarship. Indeed, it almost seems fruitless at first glance to try to trudge through the historical documents that so many before have pieced together in their own seminal narratives. However, within the subject of religion in the Civil War, there are still opportunities to reevaluate and search anew for strands of historical meaning. Isidro Tomás y Gomá was the head of the Catholic Church\(^{14}\) in Spain during the entire course of the Civil War, and many important documents from his Archive have been published in the last decade or so in


\(^{14}\) Though Christendom is by no means limited to the Catholic Church, because Catholicism so dominated Spain, and is the central focus of so much of the present paper, I will use ‘Church’ to refer simply to the Catholic Church.
a series of thirteen volumes. It was upon finding these published volumes of ample primary source material that I began to consider a study of the Gomá Archive as a way to begin to approach the generally broad theme of religion’s place in the Spanish Civil War.

Because Gomá, given his stature as the Archbishop of Toledo, was a Cardinal, his role as religious figure during the Civil War is magnified. Furthermore, he was the direct link for a time between the Vatican and the Franco government, which also positions Gomá’s archival documents as potentially fruitful in better understanding the ideas and opinions of the Spanish Church hierarchy during this period. In their introduction to the first volume of the Civil War Documents of the Gomá archive, José Andrés-Gallego and Antón M. Pazos remark that the Cardinal saved even the most seemingly inconsequential papers, “without a doubt because he was conscious of the transcendence of the role that he was to play.” Indeed, it is commendable that these editors have undertaken the difficult task of sifting through these archival documents and making them available to the public (that is, as is to be expected, the Spanish-speaking public). For them, not publishing the documents as they went along combing through the mass of materials would “deprive…historians of a document repository that was worth the effort to put out for everyone’s benefit.” And so, in accordance with this mission, Andrés-Gallego and Pazos, along with other collaborators over the years, have indeed organized and published over the course of 13 volumes the contents of the Gomá Archive for the Civil War years. To have

15 José Andrés-Gallego and Antón M. Pazos, eds., *Archivo Gomá: Documentos de la Guerra Civil: 1: Julio-Diciembre de 1936* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), 2001. Note that hereafter, I will refer to all thirteen Archival volumes as “AG” followed by the volume number and the individual document and page number.


17 AG 1, pg. 11: “El cardenal Gomá tenía la costumbre de guardar absolutamente todos los papeles que recibía y copia de los que enviaba, sin duda porque era consciente de la trascendencia de la función que le tocó desempeñar.”

18 Ibid., 10: “De hecho, algo hemos publicado basándonos en él [el archivo]. Pero esta tarea tendría que prolongarse tanto, que equivalía a privar durante años—bastantes años—a los demás historiadores de un depósito documental que valía la pena poner a disposición de todos.”
such a wealth of primary source material available without even setting foot in the Toledo Diocese Archive is an opportunity made possible through these efforts.

I will proceed with this paper with the Gomá documents as the backbone. I intend to explore whether the historical documents associated with this one principal historical figure will enable me to draw broader conclusions about other historical actors involved in the Spanish Civil War, especially as far as religion and the Church is involved. In terms of an initial methodology, I roughly categorized the archival documents into four different topics in order to facilitate my analyses: Gomá’s relationship with the Vatican and its representatives; Gomá’s correspondence with the various Spanish Bishops and other Spanish Church officials; Gomá’s interactions with the Nationalist forces and other political leaders; and finally, miscellaneous documents and those that relate to figures and organizations not easily grouped, such as Catholic periodicals, discourses, Falangists, and other religious orders.

Beginning with the outbreak of the Civil War, three principal means of archival organization stand out (based on the initial four categories of correspondence that I identified), and these will guide the subsequent organization of this paper. And while any organization will necessarily include overlap and some degree of artificiality due to the preference of the investigator, the general outline is as follows for the entire thirteen volumes of the Gomá Archives: documents dealing with the long and difficult affair of the war in the Basque Country, especially those letters from the Bishop of Vitoria, Mateo Múgica; documents that speak to the dynamic relationship between the Spanish clergy (led by Gomá), the Nationalist government in Spain and the Vatican; and finally, documents of a more miscellaneous nature, but which all help elucidate more local, moral and philosophical concerns of Spanish Catholicism. In crafting three principle narratives regarding the aforementioned document collections, it will become more
apparent that the Gomá Archive is useful in bringing together disparate actors and trends within a relatively short historical period of the Spanish Civil War.

As a last comment on the analyses that will shortly be presented, I will utilize one principal theoretical framework to further guide and provide nuance to my conclusions, namely the dual ideas of political-religion and religious-politics as defined and discussed by Juan Linz.19 Linz argued, in part, that there was a difference between the politicization of religion (in which an organized religion or Church sustained a secular leader through its support), and examples of religion being imbued into the very being of a political leader (in that the politician was the ultimate authority, such as in the case of Stalin or Mao—political religion).20 This central idea pervades Cardinal Gomá’s and the Nationalists’ actions, and constitutes a theoretical framework that provides further cohesion to the organization of the documents that I specifically have chosen to provide a meaningful Civil War narrative. Ultimately, this paper will seek to define Gomá’s contribution to the Civil War as the way in which he navigated the Church’s relationship with the Nationalist governing body, supporting its mission wholeheartedly in some cases while defending the autonomy of the Church in other moments.

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20 Ibid., 17, 25, 33.
II: The Ever Present “Basque Question”

The Spanish Civil War was a constant territorial ebb and flow between a receding Republic and the insurgent Nationalist rebels. Indeed at its onset, as Franco, Mola and the military made its way from Africa to the mainland, loyalties were tested and outbreaks of rebellion began in the Iberian Peninsula, with few regions successfully resisting (including the Basques).\(^{21}\) Indeed, the Basque Country was the site of particularly fierce regionalism that combated the Nationalist advance at its onset. By October 1, 1936, a formal Basque government formed under the leadership of José Antonio Aguirre, with a strange alliance of different political interests, including Basque Nationalists, republicans and socialists, with anarchists left out (but without causing problems). While their regional autonomy was supported by the Republic, however, the Basques were arguably more closely related religiously with the conservative Nationalists.\(^{22}\) This tenuous alliance certainly colored the many ideological struggles between the Church, the Basques and the Nationalists.

Carlist Complaints and a Bishop’s Defense

One of the principal sources of communication with Bishop Gomá regarding Basque issues was correspondence with Mateo Múgica Urrestarazu. The Bishop of Vitoria, Múgica was a conservative who had in the past been at odds with Miguel Maura of the Republican government, and spent some time outside of Spain.\(^{23}\) The archive, however, bears out that to be a conservative was not enough to assuage suspicions of Nationalist leaders, especially the inner circle of the Junta de Defensa Nacional de Burgos.\(^{24}\) This section will demonstrate initial


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 104. See Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, 70, 74-76.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 81-84.

\(^{24}\) National Defense *Junta* of Burgos - Nationalist governing body; AG 1:1-20, pg. 7; see footnote 91.
tensions that emerged among Catholic figures and the newly coalescing Nationalists governing body, between which Gomá often found himself taking on the role of the mediator (or attempted the same, at least).

In a letter from September 2, 1936, Múgica wrote to Gomá to speak specifically about the seminaries in Vitoria and to defend himself against grumblings from the military hierarchy. Regarding the notion put forth by some newspapers that religious figures and institutions of religious instruction in Vitoria increasingly embraced partisan politics, Múgica retorted that “in the Seminary never was there a Director or Professor who dared speak of Basque nationalism, praising it either directly or indirectly.” He also claimed to have fired a music professor who was indeed engaged in nationalist politics. There were, though, strains of nationalism among priests, who were much more prone to be exposed to the political philosophies of their families in Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, despite warnings from the religious leadership in the region, both past and present. Gomá found himself often trying to navigate these fissures that formed between Basque clergy (even those apparently committed to the Church) and the Junta de Defensa and military leaders.

General Fidel Dávila Arrondo very much wanted for the Bishop of Vitoria to remove himself from his diocese, along with other religious figures. Apparently part of this motivation came from a set of letters from a Basque Carlist group who was not pleased with how Múgica was dealing with the perceived crisis of Basque nationalism invading the ecclesiastical ranks.

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25 AG 1:1-37, pg. 105: “En el Seminario jamás osó hablar ningún Director o Profesor de nacionalismo vasco, enalteciéndolo directa o indirectamente.”
26 It should be noted that the nationalist sentiment in the Basque regions was clearly not to be confused with the National Front, or military uprising that fought against Republican Spain. Basque nationalism was, however, Catholic, which complicated, as will be seen, the struggle for Franco’s forces to take the Basque lands by force.
27 AG 1:1-37, pg. 106.
28 AG 1:1-51, pg. 139-140.
This Junta Carlista de Guerra de Guipúzcoa had sought that Múgica take action against priests it accused of being Basque nationalists. In a veiled threat, the Junta Carlista lamented the situation of separatism in the region and remarked, “in these conditions it would be most lamentable for us if the Military Authority found itself needed to intervene in the ecclesiastical authority of Guipúzcoa.” In an increasingly apparent battle of words and posturing (despite which, intense cordiality still pervades the writing between the different parties), Múgica responded assuring the Junta’s president, Fidel Azurza, that he was doing everything to reprimand any clergy that appeared to overstep their spiritual mission and advocate for political ends. He cautioned especially that accusations not be made, however, without the proper facts.

In response, the nascent power struggle between these local absolutists and the religious hierarchy is more apparent, in that the Junta Carlista asserts that any prior efforts to control the Basque clergy “have lacked efficient punishments and it is urgent to turn to decisive means [of correction], such as are the times in which we live.” The Junta Carlista quickly complained of this exchange with the Bishop and followed through on its threat, making it clear to the Junta de Defensa Nacional that it did not approve of Múgica’s reticent attitude towards wavering clergy members:

The Junta does not find the Bishop’s attitude satisfactory since this matter is not about only punishing recent, actual offenses, but also purifying the atmosphere of the Province by removing from its contact those elements that would, by their Basque nationalist tradition and the nature of their charge, so quick to exercise spiritual influence, be able to neutralize and render the actions that we are carrying out useless, and for which exceptional energy and persistence are needed.”

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29 Roughly translated as “The Carlist Committee, or Junta, of War in Guipúzcoa.”
30 AG 1:1-51, pg. 138: “En estas condiciones nos sería muy lamentable se viese precisada la Autoridad militar a intervenir en la jurisdicción eclesiástica de Guipúzcoa.”
31 AG 1:1-52, pg. 140.
32 AG 1:1-53, pg. 142: “…han carecido esos correctivos de toda eficacia y urge recurrir a medios decisivos, como lo son los momentos en que vivimos.”
33 AG 1:1-54, pg. 143: “La Junta no encuentra satisfactoria esta actitud del Sr. Obispo ya que no se trata en este caso de sancionar faltas concretas recientes sino de purificar el ambiente de la provincia apartando de su contacto a aquellos elementos que por su tradición nacionalista vasca y el carácter de sus cargos, tan propicio a ejercer influencia espiritual, pueden neutralizar y hacer inútil la gestión que estamos llevando a cabo y para la cual se necesita una energía y una persistencia excepcionales.”
The truth in all of this exchange from the *Junta Carlista* was that prudence would not be sufficient in their eyes to react to the elements of nationalism among the Basque clergy. No, rather decisive action had to purge the land of these ideological strains. It is perhaps no surprise that a decisively absolutist group such as this would oppose a Bishop whose flock was much more apt to support the burgeoning democracy under the Spanish Republic and, therefore, opposed to the advance of Franco’s forces.

The apparently increasing desire to remove the Bishop of Vitoria surely took its toll on the religious leader. Múgica wrote to Gomá at the end of September of 1936 to express his willingness to remove himself from his diocese. His frustration, however, is palpable in his words and in his reminder to Gomá that he always maintained political neutrality and that any clergy accused of insurgent politics surely was not under his instruction. Nevertheless, by October 9, Gomá had spoken with the Bishop in person, and had secured his acceptance of the removal request, which Gomá communicated to General Dávila.\(^{34}\) Gomá viewed this whole episode as rather untenable, but nonetheless completed his task in communicating the will of all parties involved. In fact, Gomá saw no fault in the Vitorian Bishop. Where the *Junta de Defensa* desired that Múgica be sacked entirely, though, Gomá had been able to convince General Dávila that Múgica be permitted to take a leave of absence, citing his personal security in tumultuous times as one important factor.\(^{35}\)

Ultimately Gomá’s intercession on behalf of Múgica also came about because of the *Junta de Defensa’s* communication with the Holy See itself. In fact, the President of the *Junta* at the time, General Cabanellas, urged the Vatican to remove the Bishop from his diocese. In the midst of this conflict, Gomá also communicated with the Vatican, likely to ameliorate the

\(^{34}\) AG 1:1-94, pg. 193; also, see footnote 374 of AG 1-93, pg. 192.

\(^{35}\) Rodríguez Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá y la Guerra de España*, 43-44.
Nationalist request, and not force the Vatican into a position that its own Spanish Archbishop did not favor. That is, Múgica was completely willing to do whatever the Vatican decided, and in light of this, Gomá had reason to request that the Vatican only provisionally transfer the Bishop away from Vitoria. After much correspondence, the Holy See consented to the suggestion, to which Múgica responded by leaving to Rome and abandoning, in his mind only temporarily, his beloved home.\textsuperscript{36} Gomá was not pleased with the reaction of the \textit{Junta de Defensa}, and saw it as a potential precedent for Nationalist overreach in Church affairs. However, at this early stage in the war (which the Church saw as potentially ending quite quickly with a Nationalist victory), these types of clashes could be minimized. Gomá did not appreciate the Nationalist posture, and genuinely respected Múgica as a man equally committed to sustaining Catholic values in his diocese and rooting out Marxist influences.\textsuperscript{37} But no matter the uncomfortable positions Gomá was forced to confront as Nationalist priorities infringed on Church diocesan administration, his commitment to the cause against foreign influence and Marxism overshadowed all else. This episode with Múgica underscores Gomá’s role as a mediator, quick to negotiate among various parties in the Nationalist government and at the Vatican.

\textbf{A Bishop’s Warning Unheeded and the Vicar’s Task}

Mateo Múgica’s warnings to the \textit{Junta Carlista} (that no rash decisions be taken against Basque clergy or priests) quickly were vindicated. Cardinal Gomá saw it necessary on November 8 to communicate to the Vatican Foreign Secretary Eugenio Pacelli the unfortunate news of the shootings of several Basque priests by the military authorities of the Francoist government. In his report, Gomá communicates several observations. However, the horrors of any shootings that are

\textsuperscript{37} Rodríguez Aisa, \textit{El Cardenal Gomá y la Guerra de España}, 46.
included in the letter are muted in as much as the Basque nationalists are blamed for having protracted the war in the first place:

…make it known that the tremendous hostility of the national military element against the [Basque] nationalist party, because of their alliance with the red army, has forced the nationalists to prolong a fight that would have ended months ago, with the resulting spilling of blood…This hostility has translated into anxious reprisals when the national armies have reconquered part of the territory where the [Basque] nationalism predominates.\(^38\)

This was a tense moment, for “anxious” nationalists were not the most likely to exercise discretion. For example, it was reported that one military judge by the name of Llamas “dispatches with” (shoots) those who are Basque nationalists, without question.\(^39\) In total, the military killed eleven priests. And one of these cases, that of the Archpriest of Mondragón (José Arín) especially caused an uproar, given the fact that he was never considered a political person.\(^40\) And so, a lack of evidence marked these clearly extrajudicial killings and Gomá quickly called for restraint, such that the Church itself could exercise its own intra-ecclesiastical judicial authority. And with claims that Franco himself was perturbed by the unfolding situation, the Archbishop seemed assured that no further shootings would occur. To be sure though, Gomá mused to the Vicar General of Vitoria, Antonio Pérez Ormazábal, that priests who exhibit Basque nationalist tendencies should be “confined or enclosed forcefully in the diocesan Seminary, until circumstances normalize.”\(^41\) The Bishopric of Vitoria (it is unclear who composed this group), in a later letter from November 27 to the civil authorities, reaffirmed the need to proceed with caution when dealing with political dissidents and “demanded” a solution.\(^42\)

The Bishopric especially warned against the possibility of the killings enflaming Basque

\(^{38}\) AG 1: 1-163, pg. 284: “…consta la tremenda animadversión del elemento militar nacional contra el partido nacionalista que, por su alianza con el ejército rojo, ha obligado a los nacionales a prolongar una lucha que meses ha habría terminado, con el consiguiente derramamiento de sangre…Esta animadversión se ha traducido en ansias de represalia cuando los ejércitos nacionales han reconquistado parte del territorio donde predomina el nacionalismo.”

\(^{39}\) Ibid., pg. 284: “sacerdote que llegue y sea nacionalista, lo despacho enseguida.”

\(^{40}\) Ibid., pg. 284-285.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., pg. 285-286: “…confinamiento o al encierro forzoso en el Seminario diocesano, hasta que se normalicen las circunstancias.”

\(^{42}\) AG 1:1-219, pg. 365-366.
passions even more than before, and that some would take advantage of the suspicious atmosphere to take revenge on one another through false denunciations.

As the Civil War stretched into a new year, Ormazábal continued more active communication with Archbishop Gomá, though military authorities surely had their own doubts about this man’s efficacy, perhaps just as much as they did with Mateo Múgica. The Vatican was also becoming more interested in how matters were playing out in the Basque territory. The Gomá archives trace a web of letters that indicate that the Archbishop often found himself as a common factor in all of these discussions about how to react to the Basque nationalist clergy and also negotiate the actions of the military. On New Year’s Day 1937, Gomá hinted to Secretary Pacelli that a strong response by the Holy See against the “Basque-marxist” union would, according to General Franco himself, be a decisive factor in the fight. Pacelli responded confirming the Vatican’s desire to help with this ideological war. However, he made it clear that if the Bishop of Vitoria had failed, then perhaps “an act of the Holy See…would [also] remain without effect, and could maybe worsen the situation, multiplying still more the victims.” He also expressed these same sentiments in a letter directed at the Nationalist government’s early representative to the Vatican, the Marques of Magaz. In the end, as Franco desired that Gomá directly request the intervention of the Holy See, the Archbishop presented the Nationalists’ case to the Vatican in February of 1937. However, in as much as the Pope felt that Franco must give some concessions of autonomy to the Basques, the Nationalists balked at any offers of

43 AG 2: 2-2, pg. 19.
44 AG 2: 2-51, pg. 104; “…un acto de la Santa Sede en este sentido, en las condiciones actuales, quedaría sin efecto, y quizás empeoraría la situación multiplicando todavía más las víctimas.
45 Antonio Magaz was a “confidential agent” to the Vatican, See Hilari Raguer, Gunpowder and Incense, 53; See also AG 2: 2-52, pg. 105-106. It is worth noting as an aside, that Gomá confided in the Holy See that the Head of State (Franco) was not pleased with how Magaz communicated with the Vatican: “…en mi visita al Jefe del Estado me manifestó delicadamente su disconformidad con el proceder de dicho señor Marqués, cuyos documentos dirigidos a la Santa Sede…no fueron del agrado del General Franco. Me pareció que estaba dispuesto a sustituirle.” Even in this indirect way, it is interesting to see how Franco negotiated delicate issues with the Vatican by means of the sympathetic Archbishop of Toledo, Gomá. (See AG 2: 2-269, pg. 362-363.)
mediation. Franco wanted a letter from the Pope himself chastising the Basque clergy, and this the Vatican would not allow. Gomá was an important intermediary between the Franco government and the Vatican, but in the end, he was quicker to try to carry out the requests of the Junta than those desires of the very Pope himself. In this regard, Gomá represented a Catholic Church that, though loyal in all outward regards to the Vatican, was increasingly thinking of its own place in a new Spanish regime, and acted accordingly to maintain good relations with Francisco Franco.

Correspondence between Gomá and Ormazábal, and also with the military governor of Guipúzcoa, Alfonso Velarde, reveals tensions with regard to how to treat Basque nationalist priests. Of course, in a display of what is imaginably proper manners and positive rhetoric, Ormazábal described to Gomá an excellent working relationship with Velarde. Even so, the Vicar General was worried that the military government sanctioned priests without much pretext. He was puzzled, for example, by a 15,000 peseta fine against a priest named Feliciano Cebaína that was levied without any apparent cause. Ormazábal was skeptical of the sanctions against the Basque priests for several reasons. First, he felt that condemnation should be tied to direct separatism or attacks against the military itself, of which he felt there was little evidence. Second, he argued that there was little evidence of priests openly advocating for political causes on behalf of Basque nationalism (whether or not it was actually occurring). Finally, the Vicar General defended even the use of the Basque language as not worthy in itself of warranting severe fines levied by the military government. He defended by name several priests, including the parish priest of Ezquioga, whose only “sin…has been that of not believing in the apparitions

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46 Rodríguez Aisa, El Cardenal Gomá y la Guerra de España, 204-213.
of the Virgin.” He was a man who otherwise was “apolitical and still is.”

Perceived zealous reactions on the part of the military authorities worried Ormazábal. They certainly bothered Archbishop Gomá as well, who urged Ormazábal to resist arbitrary fines, and encouraged him to continue fighting for the rights of the accused priests, insofar as the law permitted. He assured the Vicar that Franco was interested in making sure that priests had many opportunities to defend their actions. In practice, however, there was no way for Gomá to ensure that the Vicar could make any such defense. Once again Gomá created a rhetorical alliance with the priests on the ground, but did not seem to worry himself with the details of how Basque clergy were actually treated, assuming that Franco’s word would hold true. Gomá probably did feel some degree of indignation towards at least the attitude and tone that the military governor displayed.

Even so, as he was apparently irritated by the Spanish Church’s desire to move priests around in a sort of shell game as a means to mute the spread and coalescence of Basque nationalism, Antonio Velarde wrote forcefully against these measures:

> I believe, as we had agreed, that it is very opportune that punishments be given for past actions that have caused such damage, for the worst that we can do is take priests to Vitoria so that a few days later they return to their parishes, as if nothing had happened, which makes them emboldened…We have to avoid it.

He also transmitted the criteria by which accused nationalists were to be judged. First, the _exaltados_—exalted ones—were of the utmost concern, as they “take part in political fights, attempt to be proselytes and do not hesitate to ostentatiously make known their anti-Spanish views.” Second, Velarde characterized the “nationalists” as those who “completely profess

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49 Ibid., pg. 427.
50 AG 2: 2-133, pg. 212-214.
51 AG 2: Anexo 2 al documento 2-323, pg. 430: “Creo, según habíamos convenido, que es muy oportuno el que se dé la sensación de castigos por la actuación pasada que tanta daño ha producido, pues lo peor que podemos hacer es llevar sacerdotes a Vitoria para que a los pocos días regresen a sus parroquias, como si no hubiera pasado nada, lo que hace que se envalenton en….Tenemos que evitarlo.”
52 Ibid., pg. 431: “exaltados,…tomando parte en sus luchas políticas, atentos a hacer prosélitos y no recatándose sino incluso haciendo gala y ostentación de sus ideas antiespañolas.”
their separatist ideals, but not with the passion of the *exaltados*.”53 And finally, “sympathizers” were those who supported the cause of the Basque nationalists but did not do so openly, except among “family and close friends, who among these, are inclined…as enemies of Spain.”54 Agents of the Office of Information and Public Order of the military government compiled the information necessary to make the attached list of priests as organized by these three aforementioned criteria, and transmitted it to the Vicar General.55 Ormazábal responded in a typically detached fashion, not exhibiting fierce emotion. But he emphasized (as though it had not been done already) the need for proof in order to truly act against any of the accused priests. For, the punishment for many of these, especially the *exaltados*, was to be removal from the country. The Vicar General suggested that such drastic measures, with its resulting economic impact on the families of the accused, should not be taken lightly.56 He expressed his frustration in writing to Gomá on February 5, given his reiterated stance that there be proof before any actions against priests.57

Lacking in specific reassurances or directives like in earlier correspondence, Gomá indicated to Ormazábal that he agreed that no condemnation should be carried out without proper evidence. Furthermore, the Archbishop seemed confident that increased collaboration with the military governor would ensure that the diocese itself be able to manage the affairs of the Basque

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53 Ibid., pg. 431; “nacionalistas,...Profesan totalmente las ideas separatistas, pero no con el ardor de los anteriores.”
54 Ibid.: “simpatizantes,...sus familiares y amistades más cercanas, ahora que éstos, se inclinan y sonríen siempre a los enemigos de España.”
55 Ibid., pg. 431-446. The list of accused priests takes up several pages, and several hold the ignominious title (at least to the military) of *exaltados* and *nacionalistas*.
56 AG 2: Anexo 4 al documento 2-323, pg. 448-449.
57 AG 3: 3-57, pg. 121. In April of 1937, Ormazábal and Velarde continued to argue over the issue of burden of proof in charging Basque priests. In a heated letter, Ormazábal wrote of not wanting the “terrible remorse of having condemned without any type trial, which couldn’t exist, where there had been no proof provided.” (“...el terrible remordimiento de haber condenado sin juicio de ninguna clase, porque no pudo existir, donde no hubo aportación de pruebas.”) See also, AG 5:5-147, pg. 212-217.
clergy.\textsuperscript{58} The weight of trying to manage the diocese, however, was weighing on the Vicar General:

Pardon the bother. I may be an annoyance, but I am he to whom God our Lord has wanted to test, charging him with perhaps the most miserable diocese on the face of the land, and who has weak shoulders to carry it.\textsuperscript{59}

It became increasingly obvious that without direct intervention from the Church hierarchy, Velarde had no reason to acquiesce to the Vicar’s demands. In one archival document, a man named Antonio González claimed that the military authorities had little confidence in the Vicar, and were not pleased with what they perceived as his fear and inability to actually deal with elements of Basque nationalism. Granted, González seemed to have a more favorable attitude towards Velarde, and this may have easily colored his criticisms of Ormazábal. The point that bears mention, even so, is that the Basque problem was not one with easy resolutions. And less so could any general agreement actually be carried out. According to González, the back-and-forth between the two was simply a means for the Vicar to avoid making the difficult decisions in punishing those clergy who opposed the Spanish Nationalist movement (which was nearing conquest of Bilbao).\textsuperscript{60} On February 15, in a letter to the Vitorian Bishopric, Ormazábal reiterated the problems of “the anti-Catholic conduct of Basque nationalism,” and urged that they press for accused priests to either leave the dioceses, or at least hide with friends until the time when they could return to their ecclesiastical duties. Attached to this letter were the names of eleven priests that the Vicar urged to leave.\textsuperscript{61} No matter the rosy words that appeared in print between these different parties, there was no doubt a tension between military engagement and the sentiments

\textsuperscript{58} AG 2: 2-331, pg. 456-457.
\textsuperscript{59} AG 3: 3-117, pg. 214; “Perdona la molestia. Soy un pesado, pero a quien Dios Nuestro Señor ha querido probar cargándole con la diócesis tal vez más desgraciada de la tierra, y que tiene hombros muy débiles para llevarla.”
\textsuperscript{60} AG 3: 3-130, pg. 229-230. See also Hugh Thomas, \textit{The Spanish Civil War}, 2001 Paperback ed., (New York: Modern Library, 1989), 667-674. The fall of Bilbao was one event of many that truly began to turn international opinion against the Nationalists, even among some catholic groups, for the Basques, although aligned with the Republic, were, very much Christian to their core.
\textsuperscript{61} AG 3:3-127, pg. 224-225. See also, Anexo al documento 3-127.
of the Spanish Church. Gomá wanted continued collaboration with the military governor in Guipúzcoa, Velarde. But no doubt the killings of priests (often on accusations of espionage or the diffusion of propaganda) weighed on his mind.\textsuperscript{62} Unfortunately, Gomá was limited by a lack of deference by General Dávila and the \textit{Junta de Defensa} in allowing ecclesiastical prerogative to deal with wayward Basque clergy.

Perhaps one of the ironies in the narrative that has thus far been presented is that Ormazábal was just as powerless in forcing the hand of the military governor as was Archbishop Gomá, but the Vicar simply did not know that. Gomá was certainly sincere in the counsel he offered to Ormazábal, but he was struggling himself more than he led on in securing the continued rights of the Church in being able to organize its Basque dioceses in the way it saw fit.

At the same time, and surely to add to the urgency of Gomá’s dealings with the Nationalists, the Vatican was urgently seeking Gomá’s assistance in trying to broker a peaceful surrender of the Basque government in Bilbao and prevent reprisals against Basque nationalist clergy. On June 18, 1937, immediately prior to of the fall of Bilbao, the Vatican made a last request that the Archbishop intervene to gain assurances from the government that Bilbao’s impending defeat would not lead to indiscriminate reprisals.\textsuperscript{63} Gomá met with Franco and relayed part of his conversation to the Vatican on June 25, 1937:

He [Franco] emphasized strongly that his will was that any repression be as limited as possible, and that the Priests especially be treated with benevolence, and that those subject to a trial would not receive any punishment without the Ecclesiastical Authorities prior agreement…also he entrusted General Dávila with the military jurisdiction, since he was known by all by his profound Catholic convictions…\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{62} AG 3:3-129, pg. 227-228. The issue of reprisals against Basque priests would certainly not end with the Civil War. See Anabella Barroso Arahuetes, “Iglesia vasca, una Iglesia de vencedores y vencidos. La represión del clero vasco durante el franquismo,” \textit{Ayer}, La Represión bajo el franquismo ser., 43 (2001): 87-109.
\textsuperscript{63} Rodríguez Aisa, \textit{El Cardenal Gomá y la Guerra de España}, 222.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.; see AG 6:6-149, pg. 202; see also AG 6:6-163, pg. 227: “Reiteróme su volunta decidida de que la represión fuese lo más suave posible, y de que, especialmente los sacerdotes, fuesen tratados con benevolencia, los sometidos a juicio, y que no se impusiera sanción alguna sin previo acuerdo con la autoridad eclesiástica…y que se encargara de la jurisdicción militar el propio General Dávila, conocido de todos por sus profundas convicciones católicas…”
Dávila worked with Gomá, but impatiently requested that Basque nationalist clergy be removed from the province quickly, so that the Nationalists’ deference would not be tested.65 Gomá labored to comply, and other Bishops affirmed their willingness to receive Basque priests. However, Gomá personally complained that the Nationalist government did not understand the burden that such a large-scale transfer of clergy entailed (as opposed to a less disruptive transfer within the same Basque region).66 Still, Gomá appears to have largely succeeded in negotiating the tense end of Basque hostilities, at least in terms of the treatment of Basque nationalist priests. The Basque theatre especially tested his role as an intermediary between Franco and the Vatican, but he arguably succeeded in at least upholding his duty as the leader of all Spanish clergy, even those Basques with whom he vehemently disagreed on ideological grounds. That Franco was so agreeable, at least in writing, to the ultimate decision to lessen the punishment against the Basque Church, is cited by one scholar as a principal reason for which Pope Pius XI warmed to full recognition of the rebel government by the Holy See.67 Whether Franco actively manipulated these circumstances to his advantage or not, it was Gomá who ultimately facilitated the strengthening of ties between the Vatican and the Nationalist Front. He managed the monumental rhetorical task of condemning the influence of Communism in the Basque Church (and thus reinforcing his commitment to the Nationalist force) while also protecting those same priests from fierce Nationalist reprisals.

**Horrors in Guernica and a Priest’s Protest**

The physical horrors and brutalities of a Civil War do not receive ample mention in Gomá’s correspondence. Despite this, it is unlikely that the Archbishop simply ignored these

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66 Ibid., pg. 228; AG 7:7-3, pg. 17.
67 Ibid., pg. 223-224; see footnote 136 especially.
realities, but either way, one Spanish priest did not allow the Church hierarchy to avoid the truth of what was occurring in the Basque country. This man, Alberto Onaindía, was present the day that the city of Guernica was bombed. Onaindía’s account is harrowing:

“The German airplanes bombed the population during nearly three long hours. Fighter planes and bombers, twin-engine and trimotor, [shot bullets?] and threw fire bombs as the disheveled people fled for the streets and the mountains, shot always by the machine guns on the planes. My car was also shot at and in its vicinity several bombs fell that caused various victims. Three hours of fear and horrific scenes. Children and women buried in the ditches, mothers that prayed out loud, a God-fearing town assassinated by criminals that do not feel the least bit of humanity. Señor Cardinal, for dignity’s sake, for the sake of the honor of the Gospel, for the sake of the inner depths of Christ’s mercy, a similar horrendous, outrageous, apocalyptic and Dantesque crime cannot be committed.

The village burned completely and the poor people that took refuge in the places prepared for bombings found themselves compelled to leave and were gunned down. There will be thousands of victims. The infirm burnt alive, the wounded buried and reduced to ashes…never could anyone suspect that that was war. There are laws that regulate war. There is, above all, an eternal law, that of God, that prohibits killing, assassinating the innocent. All of that was trampled on that Monday in Guernica.”

This was no doubt an unparalleled and harrowing experience (and as a small aside, there is perhaps no other document in the Gomá Archives that so captures the wrenching emotion and pain that war inflicts on all involved). The Spanish Church could not avoid this event, no matter the eloquence of their rhetorical posturing in correspondence with the Vatican and with the

68 See Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 231-233. The German Commander Richthofen led the bombings (although it is not clear that he agreed with the Nationalist requests, wondering why ground soldiers did not attack), which utilized a massive initial attack from “a single Heinkel 111 bomber” and then less than an hour later the Junkers 52 arrived and engaged in massive carpet-bombing, and “the incendiaries were sprinkled down from the Junkers in two-pound aluminium tubes like metallic confetti.”

69 Literally, Dante-esque scenes, such as if Guernica had been plunged into the very depths of hell.

70 AG 5:5-211, pg. 282-283: “La aviación alemana bombardeó la población durante casi tres largas horas. Aviones de caza y bombardero, bimotores y trimotores, arrojaron metralla y bombas incendiarias mientras la gente alocada huía por carreteras y montes ametralladas siempre por la aviación. Mi coche fue también ametrallado y en su derredor cayeron varias bombas que causaron varias víctimas. Tres horas de espanto y de escenas dantescas. Niños y mujeres hundidos en las cunetas, madres que rezaban a alta voz, un pueblo creyente asesinado por criminales que no sienten el menor alarde de humanidad. Sr. Cardenal, por dignidad, por honor al evangelio, por las entrañas de misericordia de Cristo no se puede cometer semejante crimen horrible, inaudito, apocalíptico, dantesco.” / “La villa ardía totalmente y la pobre gente refugiada en lugares preparados para bombardeos se veía precisada salir fuera y era ametrallada. Habrá miles de víctimas. Los enfermos quemados vivos, los heridos sepultados y reducidos a cenizas…Jamás pudo nadie sospechar que eso fuera la guerra. Hay leyes que regulan la guerra. hay, sobre godo, una ley eterna, la de Dios, que impide matar, asesinar al inocente. Todo eso se pisoteó el lunes en Guernica.” See also, Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*, 232: here Beevor writes that “According to the Basque government, approximately a third of the town’s population were casualties – 1,654 killed and 889 wounded, although more recent research indicates that no more than between 200 and 300 died.”
Franco government. Onaindía demanded a response from Gomá condemning the bombings. Gomá did indeed express his regret that such a horror occurred. However, his response was a frank case of victim blaming:

I lament more than any that which has occurred in Vizcaya. I have been suffering for her for months, God as my witness. I especially feel for the destruction of her villas, the place of such pure faith and patriotism in other times. But one did not need to be a prophet to predict what has happened…[Guernica] has been the victim of talentless leaders without conscience… [and] the people are paying the price for keeping perverse alliances with such evil.

That is, given the resistance in Vizcaya, a bombing should not have been a surprise, no matter how horrendous. Furthermore, Gomá’s “simple advice” was that Bilbao surrender, for if not, Guernica was to be a type and shadow of that city’s own impending destruction. Further minimizing a sense of fraternal mourning that Onaindía perhaps expected, Gomá sent copies of the priest’s letter and his own response to Ramón Serrano Suñer, advising him to do what he would with the information. Gomá did not allow the bombings to affect his view of the military leadership.

No matter the attempts the Spanish Church made to minimize the fallout from the Guernica issue, news reached the Vatican. Carmelo Blay mused to Gomá that Mateo Múgica

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71 AG 5:5-211, pg. 284.
72 AG 5:5-255, pg. 357: “Lamento como el que más lo que ocurre en Vizcaya. Hace meses que sufre por ello, Dios es testigo. Especialmente lamento la destrucción de sus villas, donde tuvieron su asiento otros tiempos la fe y el patriotismo más puros. Pero no se necesitaba ser profeta para predecir lo que ocurre…[Guernica] que ha sido víctima de dirigentes sin talento y sin conciencia…[y] los pueblos pagan sus pactos con el mal y su protevria en mantenerlos.”
73 Ibid. It is worth mentioning here that the types of violence that the Nationalists exacted upon the Republicans were largely methodical, and planned out. Earlier anticlerical violence on the Republican side at the outbreak of the war occurred as a ground-up movement, without the direct sanctioning of the Republic. See Mary Vincent, “‘The keys of the kingdom’: religious violence in the Spanish civil war, July-August 1936”, in Ealham and Richards, The Splintering of Spain: Cultural History and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, 68-89.
74 Francisco Franco’s brother-in-law; Suñer had been an active leader of right-wing movements during the Second Republic, and during the Civil War held many posts in the Nationalist Government. See Cortada, ed., Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War, 435-436.
75 AG 5:5-257, pg. 358.
76 A lesser-known Valencian Priest who was a member of the “Pontifical Spanish School of Rome” and served as a translator and confidante to Pope Pius XII and the Secretary of State, Pacelli. He resided at the Vatican for many years, including during the Spanish Second Republic and Civil War. See Vicente Cárceel Ortí, “La Nunciatura de Madrid y la Embajada de España en el Vaticano (1931-1939),” Archivum Historiae Pontificiae 44, (2006), 289.
(living in Rome at the time) blamed the military for the bombings and was spreading that account. To Blay, it was unimaginable that the Nationalists would engage in such tactics, calling any such news a lie.\textsuperscript{77} While unfruitful to conjecture about the thoughts of any individual, it is difficult to imagine that Gomá, in his personal reflections, did not recognize the terrible horror exacted by the Nationalists (via the German air force) in Guernica. On May 7, 1937, the Nationalist Office of Information wrote to Gomá indicating their opinion that the bombings in Guernica were causing international outcries (though they did not take any responsibility for the event) and hurting the image of the Nationalist movement.\textsuperscript{78} In fact, Franco would maintain for years thereafter that the Basques had sabotaged their own city.\textsuperscript{79} The government also accused Onaindía of being a “frenzied Basque separatist” who was also a participant in the campaign to defame the military because of the bombings and desired that the Archbishop’s Council of Valladolid take action against him.\textsuperscript{80} Within that same day, a telegram from Valladolid confirmed that the priest was considered removed from his post, as Onaindía had fled to Paris.\textsuperscript{81} Ultimately, this Basque priest faced, because of what must be assumed to be a truthful account, the full wrath of the Francoist forces, and his own superiors did not feel compelled to defend him. Whether or not he was an avowed separatist was not important, for to attribute separatism to his name was the only acceptable course of action once he contested the military’s account of Guernica. It is not clear if Gomá responded again to Onaindía’s letters. His early statement must have been the final word, then, in that he was committed to defending the innocent, but that

\textsuperscript{77} AG 5:5-264, pg. 364-365; See footnote 557. For a discussion of the polemics of the actual events at Guernica and the propaganda that arose from the bombings, see Robert Stradling, \textit{Your Children Will Be Next: Bombing and Propaganda in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939} (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 215-229.

\textsuperscript{78} Beevor, \textit{The Battle for Spain}, 232-233.


\textsuperscript{80} AG 5:5-277, pg. 378-379; “furibundo vasco separatista.” See also anexo 1 a documento 5-277, pg. 379. Here the military attacks the validity of Onaindítas account, accusing him of having always been against the military campaigns.

\textsuperscript{81} AG 5: anexo 2 a documento 5-277, pg. 379-380; AG 5:5-278, pg. 380.
many in the Basque regions had actively fraternized with the Marxist enemy and he would not openly condemn Nationalist actions against them.

Alberto de Onaindía, despite the opposition that he faced and the lack of a clear response from the Hierarchy, continued to defend himself in writings to Gomá on May 17. The attacks from Queipo de Llano (a military leader) especially struck the priest as evidence that those who sought to discredit him had forgotten the respect deserving of a clergymen. Indeed, Onaindía felt a deep disappointment that he had been left to fend for himself without support of his “brethren” in the Cabildo of Valladolid. Even so, he openly defended members of the Nationalist Basque Party leadership as men of faith, morality and conscience, who were protecting the interests of their own territories. Furthermore, Onaindía was troubled by Gomá’s reaction in his earlier letter, questioning why the Spanish Episcopate did not intervene to halt the mass destruction condoned (even if they denied it) by the military. The priest’s closing remarks were certainly timely: “If one day the Lord permits that Vizcaya be defeated by force, I hope that in a Christian feeling of war and triumph, they [the Nationalists] will put themselves above their passions and vengeance.” Several priests from Bilbao also wrote directly to the Pope, providing their eyewitness accounts of the bombings at Durango and Guernica, and countering the Nationalist claims:

These facts that we here record, and of whose reality we give conscious, firm and serene testimony before Your Holiness, are the same that the Basque officials have published in their official bulletins, and whose truthfulness has been desired to be denied, attributing ruins and fires to the soldier of the very [Republican] Government.

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82 AG 5:5-336, pg. 440: “Las afirmación de un hecho real vivido y sufrido por mí ha levantado las pasiones hasta hacer olvidar el respeto que se merece un sacerdote.”
83 AG 5:5-336, pg. 443-444, 446.
84 Ibid., pg. 449: “Si un día permite el Señor que Bizkaya sea vencida por la fuerza, espero que el sentido cristiano de la guerra y del triunfo sabrán sobreponerse a la pasión y la venganza.” It should be noted that despite a lack of meaningful response from the Spanish Church, Onaindía still advocated for exiled Basque priests and their welfare in the face of persecution. See also AG 6:6-221, pg. 282-285.
85 AG 6:6-488, pg. 631: “Estos hechos aquí consignamos, y de cuya realidad damos testimonio consciente, firme y sereno ante Vuestra Santidad son los mismos que en sus informaciones oficiales ha publicado el gobierno vasco y cuya verdad se ha querido negar, atribuyendo ruinas e incendios a los soldados del mismo Gobierno…”
These types of fissures within the Catholic community were not perhaps as rare as the Archival documents might indicate. It is necessary to remember that it was the upper Spanish Catholic hierarchy that was resolute in supporting the Nationalists, and not necessarily the lower clergy. Even so, Gomá was much more concerned with maintaining the loyalty of the Bishops, whose voices would have been received with much more credence by the Vatican. The Basque priests’ account nevertheless reflects that the Nationalist military was powerless to control public opinion: the indiscriminate bombings in Guernica proved to be a major source of international outcry. Regardless of the disturbing news arriving from the battlefront in the Basque region (and no less the firsthand accounts of the bombings at Guernica), Gomá actively defended the Spanish Church’s continued collaboration with the Nationalist forces. Apparently he was, at least publicly, content with a telegram from Nicholas Franco in September of 1937 that pledged, on behalf of the Government, to “[continue] being generous with the prisoners that have surrendered, but justice demands the punishment of the crimes of some of them.”

Ultimately, the Basque theater of war presented a difficult ideological front for the Spanish Church. It was here that profoundly devout Catholics fought for their own regional homeland before falling to the hegemony of the Spanish Nationalists. And despite his own commitment to the values of the Church and to his Christian religion, Cardinal Gomá proved to be a firm antagonist against Basque nationalist interests. Not even the harrowing account received from Roberto de Onaindía sufficiently moved Gomá to some different course of action (at least as evidenced by his public responses). In a complex struggle where Basque Catholics clashed with the Nationalist forces in Vizcaya, Bilbao, Guipúzcoa and elsewhere, Gomá

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87 AG 7:7-356, pg. 381-382: “continuará siendo generoso con los prisioneros que se han rendido pero la justicia exige el castigo de los crímenes algunos de ellos…”; For Gomá’s response, see AG 7:7-357, pg. 382.
evaluated his own position and evidence suggests that he chose to continue his own alliance with Franco’s forces as a means to secure the best future outcome of his leadership and that of the Spanish episcopate, no matter any personal reservations or conflicts of conscience (of which it is not useful to speculate). The Basque surrender also marked a turning point at which all of Spanish Catholicism essentially unified in their support for the Nationalist forces. Gomá’s commitment to this cause did not escape the Vatican’s notice, as they tended to defer to Gomá’s judgement in terms of approaching more formal relations with the Franco government.

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III: The Constant Posturing of the Church and the State

Momentum for a Collective Church Response

As evidenced by the incident in Guernica, warring factions in Spain had to constantly monitor perceptions of their actions so as to not lose in the court of international opinion. Indeed, the Nationalists had massive advantages in terms of a methodical, relentless military fueled by a “crusade” ideology and mentality, all the while backed by the influence of Germany. 89 The Republicans were forced into the role of the defenders in this whole uprising. Certainly, then, as international perceptions did not often favor the Nationalists, the political hierarchy desired to send its message by means of the global channels of the Church. In a conversation with Gomá (and relayed to Cardinal Pacelli on May 12, 1937), Francisco Franco complained that many foreign Catholic periodicals (obviously not tied directly to any Church hierarchies) distorted the facts of the Spanish conflict. 90 He especially lamented that so much criticism came from England and France, which were not actually officially involved in the Civil War. And as a result, Franco requested that Gomá begin to craft a collective Spanish Episcopal letter to be distributed throughout the world in order to put the record straight, so to speak, in terms of the differences between the “two Spains” and the goals of the Nationalists. 91

In order to have the support of the Vatican in publishing an Episcopal declaration, Gomá assured the Holy See that he would secure the vote of the entire Spanish episcopate in order to facilitate approval. On February 22, 1937, the Archbishop made just such a request to the Spanish bishops, emphasizing the need for a common commitment during such “grave” times. 92

90 This certainly stung the leader because he always saw himself as a defender of Spanish Catholicism and a leader of the “Crusade.” See also Raguer, Gunpowder and Incense, 106.
91 AG 5:5-299, pg. 399-400.
92 AG 3:3-192, pg. 293-294.
In a manner perhaps to be expected, many responses to this request were positive. Lino Rodrigo, the Bishop of Huesca, wrote that, “the initiative to publish a collective Episcopal document seems to me very opportune.”\(^9^3\) Cardinal Ilundain, the Archbishop of Seville, replied that if in “your [Goma’s] high opinion and in your great knowledge of the present conditions of things, esteem a collective document necessary…count me in.”\(^9^4\) Ilundain did, however, suggest that the text of such a document be circulated before any Bishops be required to definitively sign on to the publication. Even those who did not see an immediate need for a collective declaration did not necessarily oppose that Gomá continue in such an endeavor.\(^9^5\) An often outspoken Bishop, Enrique Plá y Deniel saw the need to include certain details in the Episcopal letter, such as a criticism of what he called the “illicitness of the cohabitation between the Basque nationalists and the communists” — certainly not shying away from confrontation.\(^9^6\) Mateo Múgica replied in a detached tone, saying that he had no immediate reason to oppose any such letter, but that he would indeed need to see the text before he could sign his name to it. A much longer response, however, came from Cardinal Vidal y Barraquer:

I do not consider the publication of a collective Episcopal document opportune in these times: the circumstances in which the Dioceses and their respective Prelates now find themselves are not all the same; one must not give the least pretext, that is sought for with eagerness, for new reprisals and violence and to give color to those already committed…in the regions subjected to the Reds, it could not favor the cause of the just, to whom the complete news of the document would arrive with difficulty, running the risk of increasing their dangers and anguishes.\(^9^7\)

\(^9^3\) AG 4:4-17, pg. 31: “Me parece oportunísima la iniciativa de publicar un Documento colectivo del Episcopado…”

\(^9^4\) AG 3:4-16, pg. 30: “Si V. en su alto criterio y en su mayor conocimiento de la condición presente de las cosas, estima necesario un documento colectivo…cuénteme adherido a su parecer.”

\(^9^5\) AG 3:4-2, pg. 14-15. Here, Tomás Gutiérrez, Bishop of Osma, warned simply to not squander the opportunity that a collective letter presented, instead advising to wait until the timing was perfect. He did not appear to oppose the concept of the letter, however.

\(^9^6\) AG 4:4-59, pg. 96: “…de la ilicitud del contubernio de los nacionalistas vascos con los comunistas…”

\(^9^7\) AG 4:4-412, pg. 298: “No considero oportuna en estos instantes la publicación de un Documento colectivo del Episcopado: las circunstancias en que se encuentran ahora las Diócesis y sus respectivos Prelados no son iguales; no hay que dar el menor pretexto, que se busca con afán, para nuevas represalias y violencias y para colorear las tantas ya cometidas…en las regiones sometidas a los rojos no podría favorecer la causa de los buenos, a quienes difícilmente llegaría la noticia completa del Documento, corriendo el riesgo de aumentar sus peligros y angustias…” See also, Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, 112, 123.
Barraquer also echoed the sentiment that one must not publish a document of such importance, with the weight of the entire Spanish Episcopate, without serious considerations first.

On May 15, 1937, Gomá wrote expressly to the various Spanish Archbishops in order to communicate that Franco himself was extremely interested in the publication of the Episcopal document. Franco wanted the Spanish Church to “draft a document in which are given, with all objectivity, the characteristics of our war and the national movement that sustains it,” and Gomá felt that, among other sentiments, a sense of patriotism obliged them to accept (though he wanted to consult the Archbishops before going to the entire Spanish bishopric). Having received a positive reception after this, by June 7, Gomá oversaw the drafting of the initial document and transmitted it for review by the entire Spanish Episcopate. Near unanimity, however, did not suffice for a document of such import, and Gomá continued his attempts to convince Múgica and Barraquer, who were the only major sources of consistent resistance.

On June 8, 1937, Gomá notified Barraquer of the unanimous Metropolitan decision to accept the Episcopal document, in a perhaps not-so-veiled attempt to pressure the Archbishop into ultimately providing his signature: “The vote of the Metropolitan Brotherhood is favorable to the publication of a collective document. I will eventually write to you about that, but today I have neither the mind nor the time to do it.” Gomá did not actually need to write further (and probably did not plan to do so), for Barraquer quickly replied reaffirming his concerns, especially that an Episcopal letter would lend itself to inflaming tensions and causing a prolongation of the war. For him, his decision derived from the hope of an ultimate cessation of

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98 AG 5:5-316, pg. 420-421: “…redacte un Documento en que se den, con toda objetividad, las características de nuestra guerra y del movimiento nacional que la sostiene.”
99 AG 6:6-49, pg. 73.
100 AG 6:6-59, pg. 84-85: “El voto de los Hermanos Metropolitanos es favorable a la publicación de un documento colectivo. Le escribiré sobre ello, que hoy ni tengo criterio ni tiempo para ello.”
conflict and a return to peace. Soon thereafter Barraquer reiterated in a separate letter that the international community would eventually become aware of the closeness with which Franco was involved in the publishing of the Collective document, much to the detriment of the Spanish Church’s reputation and cause. Gomá did not manage to sway the stubborn (or perhaps to another observer, principled) Archbishop Barraquer. Furthermore, Mateo Múgica recused himself from responsibility to sign the letter, given he was not even in Spain (though this arguably was an excuse to avoid an outward display of personal reticence). While these men were but two out of many Spanish clergy, given their important positions in the Basque and Catalonia regions, their signatures would have been welcome additions to Gomá’s project.

It is worth emphasizing that the Collective letter underwent several revisions before it ever received wide circulation. Pastorals were generally letters of instruction and support to Church members, but this Episcopal document took on a global audience of Spanish clergy at the prodding of General Franco. Indeed, this project’s purpose “was not to illuminate the consciences of Spanish Catholics but to refute…the international propaganda that was adverse to the [Nationalist] Movement.” In comparison to earlier Pastorals (of which an analysis is made in later sections), the Collective Letter avoided the same tone of a “Holy War.” Catholic leaders from around the world responded favorably to the Spanish collective letter. In fact, their responses were propaganda in themselves. The Chilean Church hierarchy, for example, wrote:

102 AG 6:6-152, pg. 205-208. See also AG 6:6-285, pg. 390-391. On July 9, Barraquer wrote once again to warn Gomá that the project of the Collective letter would only be interpreted as a political document, which would detract from any religious content and Christian messages.
103 Rodríguez, El Cardenal Gomá, 248-249. See also Lannon, Privilege, Persecution and Prophecy, 204: The only other Bishop not to sign was Francisco Javier Irastorza Loinaz of Orihuela, as “he was living in England with papal dispensation from his diocese—probably in disgrace because of financial irregularities…”
104 Raguer, Gunpowder and Incense, 109.
105 Ibid., 114-115. The Collective letter was unique precisely because it addressed those outside of the Spanish nation. See Sánchez, The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy, 91.
Also, a motive of intense gratitude it is for us that the Collective Letter confirms to us, with the sinister and terrifying eloquence of the facts, that which the world has to fear of communism, which, directed from Russia, has executed in Spain its program of action with such refined cruelty and with acts of savagery unknown until now in human history.\footnote{AG 8:8-45, pg. 61-63: “Motivo también de intensa gratitud es para nosotros vuestra Carta Colectiva por confirmarnos, con la siniestra y aterradora elocuencia de los hechos, lo que el mundo tiene que temer del comunismo, que, dirigido desde Rusia, ha ejecutado en España su programa de acción con tan refinada crueldad y con actos de salvajismo desconocidos hasta ahora en la historia humana.”}

Arguably, then, Barraquer’s prediction of the politicization of the document was not too far from the mark. The United States Catholic delegation, writing from its annual assembly, thanked Gomá for fighting in Spain to “promote and convert into a beautiful reality the social principles of the Encyclicals of our Holy Father [the Pope].”\footnote{AG 8:8-306, pg. 366-369: “…tratan de fomentar y convertir en hermosa realidad los principios sociales de las Encíclicas de nuestro Santo Padre.”} A fiery American Catholic figure, Father Coughlin also actively supported the Nationalist cause in his radio transmissions and railed against “the crimson cross of Communism upon which the brothers of Christ [have] been crucified.” In fact, it was an outspoken American Catholic population that likely stayed President Roosevelt’s hand in intervening on behalf of the Republic (which a majority of Americans actually supported).\footnote{Hochschild, Spain in our Hearts, 171.}

Though only few appear in the Archival records, some individuals harshly rebuked the Collective letter. The Basque Priest Onaindía was, naturally, one such voice, and he did not mask his displeasure in the slightest degree:

It seems childish to me, and pardon me Señor Cardinal this descriptor, to think that at this point in the war, that those from one side are the truth and those from the other are error; that they are light and these are darkness; the first of civilization and the last of Communism; that they are the just and these are the criminals; it serves the propagandist well to accuse exclusively the adversary of crimes and avoid one’s own…Also, to suppose that the military victory of one army against another should produce union, intelligence, coexistence, and the life of charity towards those that before have fought, continues to be ridiculous.\footnote{AG 12:12-70, pg. 128: “Me parece infantil y perdóneme Sr. Cardenal este calificativo, el pensar a estas alturas de la guerra, que los de un bando son la verdad y los del otro el error; aquéllos la luz y éstos las tinieblas; los primeros la civilización y los últimos el comunismo; aquéllos los justos y éstos los criminales; Bien está que sirva de mercancía para la propaganda el acusar de crímenes exclusivamente al adversario y el callar los propios…Además, el suponer que el triunfo militar de un ejército contra otro ha de producir la unión, la inteligencia, la convivencia, y la vida de caridad contra los que antes han luchado, no deja de ser muy peregrino.”}
The idea that reconciliation could come from a brutal conflict perplexed Onaindía, and compelled him to respond (to the head of the Spanish Church, Gomá, no less). In the end, the Collective letter represented a concerted effort by Archbishop Gomá to accede to the will of Francisco Franco.\textsuperscript{110} After all, Gomá had many other channels by which he could have sounded the alarm, so to speak, against Marxist influences and threats to the Church. Indeed, he could have sent the letter directly to the Vatican first. But in the end, Gomá proved to be a sort of pawn in Franco’s plans (wittingly or otherwise) by so decidedly agreeing to push for international diffusion of the Collective document. And while the Vatican eventually voiced muted support for the letter’s intentions (nine months later), it sought to distance itself from the controversy that it had engendered.\textsuperscript{111} It is also telling that almost all of the other Bishops signed the letter. There was cohesion among the ranks of the clergy that held leadership within the Church, with only minor dissensions or conflicts of opinion.\textsuperscript{112} This was Gomá’s achievement, and surely cemented the Spanish Church’s place in history as one of the most active in defending its interests and openly aligning itself with political movements. But any pretensions of reconciliation and defense of Catholicism, however, surely were lost as Franco pressed onward towards victory.

\textbf{The Creeping Nazi Menace}

As leader of the Spanish Church, and after having been for some time at the onset of the Civil War the defacto representative of the Franco government before the Holy See, Isidro Tomás y Gomá faithfully considered all information and directives that came from the Pope and

\textsuperscript{110} Because of the origins and audience of the Letter, it may not be surprising that the Vatican waited many months to acknowledge receipt of the document and only then did the Pope make a statement of the “noble” ideals of the document. Raguer argues that “the Holy See distanced itself from the Collective Letter and from the bellicose attitude of the Spanish bishops.” See Raguer, \textit{Gunpowder and Incense}, 123-125.

\textsuperscript{111} “Prelates Back Franco Cause in Spanish War: Churchmen’s Stand has Vatican O.K.,” \textit{Chicago Daily Tribune}, September 3, 1937, 1.

\textsuperscript{112} AG 6: anexo 1 a 6-242, pg. 329-330.The table here that organizes the original responses of the various Bishops to the request to draft a collective letter is reproduced in the Appendix as document 3.
his close advisors. Despite loyalty to the Nationalists, Gomá still weighed heavily the advice and requests of the Vatican. And as the German Reich’s actions and attitude towards the Catholic Church in 1937 troubled Pope Pius XI, he wrote an encyclical titled *Mit brennender Sorge*—With Burning Concern—directed towards German Catholics as a means to defend the Faith and comment on the state of Vatican-German relations.\(^\text{113}\) Published on March 14, 1937, its distribution was restricted within Germany itself, but Vatican officials still asked other Archbishops elsewhere to see to its rapid diffusion, including a request to Gomá on April 7.\(^\text{114}\) The Archival documents attest to the conflict Gomá faced in deciding how to obey the Vatican’s directive, given the Nationalists’ own growing alliance with the German Reich. For Gomá worried, as did the Vatican, of the negative affect that Nazi ideology could have on the Spanish homeland. And as far as relations between the Holy See and the Spanish Church are concerned, this constant preoccupation with Nazism as a worrisome ideology is evident throughout the ensuing months of the Civil War.

At the end of April, 1937, Gomá did advise all Spanish bishops to post the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* in the official ecclesiastical bulletins. However, he confided that he did not see it as prudent that the encyclical be given, as previously requested, the “largest possible distribution,” arguably because of a negative reaction from the Nationalist *Junta*. Texts buried in local religious bulletins did not, for the Archbishop’s purposes, risk isolating the government while technically following the Vatican’s requests.\(^\text{115}\) Gomá informed the Vatican Secretary Pacelli that this was his intention, but that despite the “delicate” situation, the reaction of those

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\(^{114}\) AG 5:5-45, pg. 70-71: Document is in Italian, but the message is very short and clear: requesting “maximum possible distribution” (por la maggiore diffusione possibile).

exposed to the Encyclical (such as some Catholic periodicals) was favorable. Bishop Plá y Deniel urged restraint as well, arguing that an encyclical directed at the German citizens did not require full publication in the Spanish bulletins. He did however, support the goals of the encyclical, but felt that the distribution of its message did not require the physical reproduction of its text. In response on May 6, Gomá agreed with Deniel’s sentiments. The Spanish Church delayed publishing the encyclical even in the ecclesiastical bulletins, but did not avoid the reality of a future distribution when the political atmosphere was more conducive. Gomá sought to approach the matter in a deliberate, “pragmatic” fashion.

Despite avoiding outward displays that would place the Spanish religious hierarchy in open conflict with the will of the National Front, Gomá nevertheless openly supported efforts to identify and oppose what he and the Vatican perceived as Nazi-oriented ideology that threatened the standing of a Catholic nation. A newspaper editor, Francisco de Luis, aware of several radio transmissions in Germany regarding relations with the Vatican, among other international news stories, wrote to inform Gomá of what he had found. One radiogram from June 4, 1937, indicated the German National-Socialist party’s commitment to dominate all matters of State interest, including domains in which the Church may have had past involvement, namely in education. The French Periodical *Les Temps* commented that despite negotiations in a 1933 concordat between the Reich and the Vatican, the Holy See found itself powerless to stop what it perceived as efforts to inculcate extreme nationalism in Germany’s youth. Where Spanish nationalists openly utilized (or perhaps, as some argue, co-opted) the Church hierarchy for its

117 AG 5:5-241. pg. 336-337.  
118 AG 5:5-269, pg. 369-370.  
120 AG 6: Anexo 1 a documento 6-28, pg. 41.  
121 AG 6: Anexo 2 a documento 6-28, pg. 47.
own gain and purposes, the German Reich sustained itself in its own ideology, which threatened German Catholicism.

As the months progressed, Gomá continued to receive information that elicited concern regarding the influence of Germany on Franco and also on the Spanish nation as a whole. Indeed, the Archbishop wrote to Cardinal Ilundáin alluding to his concern that the Spanish Falange was being infiltrated by Nazi influence:

…some men are mobilizing whose ideology is completely distinct from ours and who seek to influence the Falange, which in some places and in some things is too much of a docile instrument.

I believe that we must be alert, guarding against the wolf that lurks around our flock of sheep.122

That Gomá had to navigate the misgivings of his own soul in the context of his outward political relationship is evident in the context of a letter from the Nationalist Oficina de Información, warning of anti-Nationalist rhetoric from the Republican Embassy in France. According to the correspondence from September 23, 1937, the Republicans circulated the idea that a close relationship between Franco and the Germans would necessarily mean the arrival in Spain of “anti-religious” Nazism, to the detriment of the Catholic Church (which Gomá believed but could not openly admit).123 Motives of the Republican embassy aside, the Franco government resented the notion that the Germans’ influence was something that they could not control, something that Gomá likely feared. Nonetheless, by February 20, 1938, Gomá wrote to Cardinal Segura resolved to publish Mit brennender Sorge, supposing that any prior tensions did not warrant delay.124

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122 AG 6:6-204, pg. 266: “…se están moviendo ciertos señores cuya ideología es totalmente distinta de la nuestra y que procuran inculcar en Falange, que en algunos sitios y en algunas cosas es demasiado dócil instrumento. Creo que debemos estar alerta, vigilando al lobo que merodea alrededor de nuestro aprisco.”
123 AG 6:6-784, pg. 542.
Archbishop Gomá ultimately did not avoid communicating his suspicions relating to German influence. Writing to Franco on July 5, 1938, Gomá expressed concern over cultural agreements with Germany, which meant that Spanish youth were visiting Germany. The Archbishop echoed the sentiment of a letter he had received elsewhere that stated that it was dangerous that Spanish youth whose “religious sentiments” were not yet well formed should go to that country, as it would leave them unable to make sense of any “pagan” customs they encountered, shattering their faith. This information also reached Serrano Suñer who in reply accepted the warning, reassuring Gomá that “we take special caution to avoid the danger that there could be for our young ones, that don’t have their spirit well developed.” This did not reassure Gomá, however. On August 23, he wrote to Monsignor Cicognani at the Vatican relaying precisely his misgivings with how quickly Franco and his advisors brushed aside his concerns, given their trust in the “Spanish spirit, deeply influenced by the spirit of the Catholic faith.” It may seem ironic that Gomá would questions such motivations, but it also may in fact indicate that he knew, deep down, that the military’s religious rhetoric was but for show.

Potential fascist influence no doubt concerned the Vatican as well, as would be seen manifest at the close of the Civil War. After all, when the military regime sought to renegotiate an 1851 Concordat (by which the Spanish government had the first prerogative to name Bishops to vacant dioceses) that the Holy See no longer recognized, the Vatican continued to resist. This was not

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126 AG 11: Anexo 1 a 11-74, pg. 115-117.
127 AG 11:11-70, pg. 106: “...cuidamos con especial interés de evitar el peligro que pueda haber para algunos de nuestros jóvenes, que no tengan bien madurado su espíritu…”
128 Gaetano Cicognani. He was the first apostolic diplomat to the Franco government, and he served from 1938 to 1953. See Ortí, “La Nunciatura de Madrid y la Embajada de España en el Vaticano (1931-1939),” 286.
129 See AG 11:11-230, pg. 335: “…el espíritu español, influido hondamente por el espiritu de la fe católica…”
130 “Accord for Spain Seen by Primate,” New York Times, January 14, 1940, 36. For more information on the conflict over the naming of Bishops, see Raguer, Gunpowder and Incense, 189-195.
necessarily a breaking point however, at least during the Civil War, as Gomá personally had advocated for continued and full recognition of the Nationalist government by the Vatican.

Gomá did not replicate this same national self-confidence. Instead, he warned of the trend by which the State, by means of the Interior Ministry, was allowing Falange influence to penetrate traditionally Catholic news sources. In fact, by relating the Falange to a broader fascist impulse, Gomá made it clear to Cicognani that he feared that Nazi propaganda would still permeate the Spanish consciousness. In short, even if the Nazi fears were an abstract obstacle to the Spanish Church, they reveal fissures in the relationship between the Vatican and the Franco government, between which Gomá had to navigate. The Archbishop did not approve of Franco’s closeness to the German Reich, especially as elucidated in his correspondence with the Vatican. And yet, he did not desire to openly contradict the Nationalist regime. For, in the course of the war, victory was not achieved as quickly as perhaps earlier imagined. And as time passed, Gomá had to continue to support Franco’s movements, for to do otherwise would compromise any advantage the Church would have in shaping the priorities of any new governing regime. Franco’s voice is so often silent and so speculation is to be avoided. But still, these interactions arguably reveal that Franco had found that he could retain the loyal support of the Church as long as he downplayed its concerns regarding German cooperation. Gomá often accepted Franco’s word without question, preferring any reason to maintain the alliance than to compromise it. Perhaps Gomá felt that his continued role as leader of the Spanish Church would enable him to further influence any of Franco’s actions after the Nationalists ultimate victory.

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131 AG 11:11-230, pg. 336. See also AG 13:13-246, pg. 344. Here Gomá also tells Cicognani that the governing hierarchy assured maintained “Catholic orthodoxy,” even in the face of a German-Spanish cultural agreement.
The Catholic Press: Threats to Autonomy and Editorial Integrity

Just as Gomá alluded in his letter to Cicognani, the slow absorption by the Franco regime of the various Catholic periodicals presented another challenge in the relationship between political and religious hierarchies. It is worth recalling that Francisco Franco had complained to Cardinal Gomá in May 1937 that much of the Catholic press in Europe, especially England and France, opposed the actions against the Republic. Arguably this type of opposition engendered some resentment on the part of the Franco. In light of this, Spanish newspapers, even traditionally conservative publications, were not immune from scrutiny, either. It is based on this observation that a discussion of Spanish Catholic news sources can be initiated, specifically the tensions between the government and the Spanish Church resulting from publications from the religious press.

The tentacles (as they surely must have appeared in Gomá’s mind) of the Spanish Falange appeared to fixate on one Catholic youth periodical early on: Pelayos. As a publication for children, Pelayos presents an interesting case study in how perceived fascist tendencies infiltrated publication realms the Catholic Church sought to insulate. On October 25, 1937, Mariano Vilaseca, a priest, wrote to Cardinal Gomá warning of the impending union of Pelayos with a separate Falangist publication, Flecha. He warned that Flecha represented “purely pagan patriotism, without a religious background, including irreverence towards the Gospel…” Indeed, references to paganism linked German influence to the Falange organization and Vilaseca did not waver in opposing what he saw as an attempt to corrupt children. The fight for editorial independence was a long one. Vilaseca continued his communications with Gomá in August of 1938, warning that calls from the Interior Ministry to “unite” the two publications was

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132 AG 5:5-299, pg. 398-399.
133 AG 8:8-162, pg. 184: “…de puro patriotismo pagano, sin fondo religioso, incluso con irreverencias al Evangelio…”
in reality a move to “absorb” *Pelayos* into *Flecha*, threatening to bring “a doctrinal orientation that does not interest the Christian upbringing of youth.”\(^{134}\) The following September, the Interior Ministry tried to negotiate with Vilaseca, proposing the fusion of the publications with input from the Church. However, Vilaseca remained incredulous. He expressed to Gomá that if *Flecha* would be supported by the Nationalist hierarchy, that he desired that it at least be clearly separate from the Church publication, such as he had observed in other European nations.\(^{135}\) Whereas government leaders tried to assuage the concerns of the Spanish clergy, it was often to no avail. Tensions emerged as traditionally Catholic publications, even those oriented towards children, faced absorption into what they viewed as fascist organizations.\(^{136}\)

Especially towards the latter end of the Civil War, when the demands of waging war seemed to distance Nationalist priorities from those of the Church, Archbishop Gomá defended the autonomy of Spanish Catholic periodicals and publications. In an outline in the Archives from July 1938, Gomá declared that the Church has a right to its own press and that such publications have had a positive effect in “constituting a truly national consciousness to defend Spain.”\(^{137}\) The Cardinal likewise warned one prolific writer, Friar Justo Pérez de Urbel, to be aware of the impending restrictions on Catholic publications. Gomá did not want what he saw as Urbel’s apolitical writings to be swallowed up into some government-supported Falange takeover.\(^{138}\)

In addition to increased direct meddling in Catholic press affairs, Gomá worried about censorship against these publications as another way to curb religious influence in writings of

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\(^{134}\) AG 11:11-215, pg. 313-315: “…una orientación doctrinal que no convenga a la formación cristiana de la niñez…”

\(^{135}\) AG 11:11-257, pg. 376-378.

\(^{136}\) See also AG 12: 12-95. Here, the pressure against the Catholic press was manifest in other publications, including *El Noticiero de Zaragoza*. The editorial board of the paper visited Gomá to warn that the Press and Propaganda Unit of the government sought to turn the publication into a Falange daily.

\(^{137}\) AG 11:11-329, pg. 486.

\(^{138}\) AG 12:12-44, page unclear from copy.
general circulation. Writing to Serrano Suñer on January 6, 1939, the Archbishop criticized forcefully the “abusive” practices of the government in censoring religious texts. One of the examples given of a military address is illuminating:

In a devotional for the Soldier, without saying anything to the author, the word *King*, a theological and liturgical title applied to Christ which is important as one of the divine prerogatives of our Redeemer, and one of the most rooted beliefs in the conscience of learned Catholics, has been eliminated by censorship.139

In conjunction with this criticism, Gomá also questioned why the government censors would repress texts of religious value while permitting other “heterodox” writings and publications, including a play by Gonzalo Torrente Ballester called *El Viaje del Joven Tobias*.140 In fact, an archival document from June 1938 from the critic Teodoro Toni outlines problems that the Church would have with the aforementioned work. Subtitled as “a miracle represented in seven dialogues,” Toni submitted that *El Viaje del Joven Tobias* contained sacrilegious undertones as a retelling of the Biblical Tobit.141 Gomá also denounced the work, which illuminates in general terms the fact that the Church really did condone censorship (as seen in more detail in the next section) — The Church simply found itself at odds with the government regarding what was appropriate to censor. When government agencies targeted Catholic publications, Gomá made his displeasure known in private correspondence, but avoided public criticisms that might have caused greater ruptures between the Church-State relationship. As the war continued and Nationalist victory was more of a reality, Gomá surely weighed his options and found it more favorable to have good relations with the Nationalists than to press too hard where their views diverged. After all, in a Franco government, Gomá surely thought that his presence and favor with the leadership would have enabled him to shape the regime’s political agenda where the

139 AG 13:13-19, pg. 37-38: “…En un devocionario para el Soldado, sin decir nada al autor, se ha eliminado por la censura la palabra *Rey*, aplicada a Cristo, título teológico y litúrgico, que importa una de las divinas prerrogativas de nuestro redentor, y una de las creencias más arraigadas en la conciencia de los católicos instruidos.”
140 The Travels of Young Tobias; See AG 13:13-19, pg. 38.
Church and its privileges were involved. He would not want to put that type of influence in jeopardy.
IV: Catholic Ideology and Morals during the War

The philosophy underlying much of the Spanish Church’s international and local interactions during the Civil War is arguably best understood foremost as nothing less than a crusade. That Spanish clergy viewed themselves as engaged in this type of holy war is literally confirmed in several archival documents that speak to the preoccupation with a Papal Bull of the Crusade, apparently in effect since the original religious excursions of centuries past. Among a set of items Cardinal Gomá sent to Giuseppe Pizzardo, the Vatican Secretary for “Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs,” was precisely a letter regarding the continued effect of the Bull of the Crusade.\(^{142}\) This pronouncement was originally a promise of indulgences to those who fought the Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula during the period of reconquista beginning in the 1100s. It is meaningful, then, that Gomá still invoked its use during the present conflict. Writing from Pamplona on November 9, 1936, Gomá wrote to Cardinal Pacelli at the Vatican that due to the interruption of the printing at Toledo of the *Documents of Crusade and Pardons*, there would be a delay in communicating its contents to all Dioceses. In fact, because of the deaths of the priests at Toledo, Gomá took upon himself the title of “General Coordinator of the Crusade” in order to “facilitate for the faithful in the Spanish territory the pleasure of the privileges of the Crusade, so kindly granted by the Holy See.”\(^{143}\)

Gomá later wrote to the Spanish Bishops explaining several of the criteria relating to this privilege as allowed by the Vatican. The benefits were to last for a year from the date in which the Crusade documents were received. Furthermore, religious leaders tasked with administering the Bull in dioceses still not under Nationalist control could still print simple copies of the

\(^{142}\) AG 1:1-165, pg. 287-88.
\(^{143}\) AG 1:1-167, pg. 293-295: Gomá’s title could also be translated as inspector or commissioner: “Comisario General de Cruzada”; “al par que faciliten a los fieles del territorio español el disfrute de los privilegios de la Cruzada, tan benignamente concedidos por la Santa Sede.”
instructions and administer privileges and collect alms and other donations. The Archbishop of Mallorca, José Miralles, confirmed receipt of these instructions on January 7, 1937, and by March, Carmelo Blay wrote that the notice of the extension of privileges through the Bull of the Crusade had been printed in Italian newspapers for the benefit of expatriate Spaniards. The diffusion of these instructions was meaningful for it illuminates the importance of claiming these religious pardons and indulgences in what was then for the Church a modern-day crusade. This was a call to arms, or at least a call to donate funds to the local dioceses, and thereby support the Nationalist cause.

**Pastoral Rhetoric in Support of the “Crusade”**

Two of Isidro Gomá’s pastoral letters stand out particularly in the archival record as they help to further clarify how the Church hierarchy viewed the conflict that embroiled their country. The first of these, of which a textual analysis is fruitful, is the “Spanish Case” or *Caso de España*. In its introduction, Gomá explains that his words must go beyond the borders of his own diocese, in order to combat misinformation. He writes of the magnitude of this struggle of image and of identity:

> Because they tell us, things that are made difficult for us to believe, that some Spaniards, at least somewhat unscrupulous, occupy themselves in twisting the facts of this war outside of Spain, such that, together with the deplorable foreign information that arrives these days, it is required of us to say what we think about the nature of the conflict in which Spain either perishes or is redeemed.146

Gomá no doubt was taken aback by the ferocity of the conflict by November 23, 1936, when he penned the letter. His purpose was to somehow justify the Church’s involvement in the horror of war. Gomá is quick to avoid any responsibility on the part of the Church for the previous July’s

144 AG 1:1-320, pg. 536.
145 AG 2:2-30, pg. 78; AG 4:4-4, pg. 18.
146 AG 2:2-15, pg. 44: “Porque nos dicen, cosas que se nos hace difícil creer, que unos españoles, a lo menos poco escrupulosos, se ocupan en tergiversar los hechos de esta guerra fuera de España, al par que, junto con la deplorable información extranjera que llega estos mismos días, se nos requiere para que digamos nuestro parecer sobre la naturaleza del conflicto en que España perece o se redime.”
military uprising and avoids mentioning its causes. Instead he emphasizes that “Spain was nearly in the depths of the abyss, and [the military] wanted to save it by force of the sword. Perhaps there was already no other remedy.”[^147] While avoiding direct mention of Republican-era leaders whose laicism conflicted with that of the Church, Gomá was clearly pained by the events preceding the war. Indeed, he takes a moment in his letter to recall the destruction of Church properties and archives, and the murders of clergy during the uprising’s early moments. For him, this was not purely a Civil War. No, this war was to be a microcosm of an international fight against Marxism, and its ideological standard-bearers. In the most apocalyptic of terms: “Here [in Spain] two civilizations have confronted each other, the two antithetical forms of social life. Christ and the Antichrist engage in battle in our land.”[^148]

The *Caso de España* truly was a local pastoral that expanded to have an international focus and rhetorical message. Even if its audience was the Spanish diocese, its message was intended to reach the halls of the Kremlin. To be sure, Gomá saw as anathema the extreme secularism of Marxism. But regarding the Communist ideology of the worker, the Cardinal made sure to state his more nuanced, and perhaps surprising, view:

War against Marxist communism such as it is now, is not against the proletariat, which is corrupted in grand measure by Marxist preaching. It would by a calumny and a crime, germ of a future class war in which the religion would forcefully find itself enveloped, to attribute [to this war] a relationship with the sword to bring down the working class…

Do not fear the workers, whoever they may be and no matter where they find themselves affiliated with groups or syndicates that fight to improve their class. Neither the sword nor religion are their adversaries: the sword, because it is occupied in the heroic effort of pacifying Spain, without which tranquil and remunerative work are impossible; religion, because it was always the refuge of the helpless and the definitive factor of charity and social justice.

...This is a complex war or war of civilizations; but never shall it be called a class war.

The sense of religion and homeland that have lifted Spain against the Anti-Spain demonstrates that[^149].

[^147]: AG 2:2-15, pg. 46: “Estaba España ya casi en el fondo del abismo, y se la quiso salvar por la fuerza de la espada. Quizás no había ya otro remedio.”
[^148]: Ibid., pg. 48-51: “Aquí se han enfrentado las dos civilizaciones, las dos formas antitéticas de la vida social. Cristo y el Anticristo se dan la batalla en nuestro suelo.” See also Hochschild, *Spain in our Hearts*, 70.
[^149]: Ibid., pg. 48-49: “Guerra contra el comunismo marxista como es la actual, no lo es contra el proletariado, corrompido en gran parte por las predicaciones marxistas. Sería una calumnia y un crimen, germen de una futura guerra de clases en la que forzosamente se vería envuelta la religión, atribuir a ésta un consorcio con la espada para
Gomá was appealing to the common humanity of all Spaniards, such that his diocesans might not automatically desire ill will against the working class that would otherwise easily associate with the forces of Communism. Indeed, it was Marxism and its leaders, and not the lowly citizen, that deserved the scourge of the sword. Even if this rhetorical plea never gained traction in practice (for the anti-Nationalists invariably included significant working-class support), Gomá’s words at least suggest that he was looking towards the future when reconciliation and peace would become more likely. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the conflict, Gomá tried to avoid the characterization of Spain as somehow an isolated theater and instead emphasized that Spain’s war was a flashpoint for a fight of more global consequence. To be sure, the Archbishop does specifically counter those who might call out the old tensions of Spain, with its past of Islamist rule, its more recent history of military *pronunciamientos* and its reputation for bellicosity and transatlantic conquest. Indeed, the Dominican priest Ignacio G. Menéndez-Reigada argued that whereas past crusades had been clashes of religion, the current fight was markedly different in that the forces of religion were fighting against those whose ideology and influence had no root in God at all.151 Gomá’s writings here, then, ultimately placed the Republicans in a category of amorality and secularism along with the proverbial specter of global Marxism.

Not long after *El Caso de España*, the Cardinal dedicated himself to producing a somewhat longer, and more deeply doctrinal, pastoral letter to commemorate Lent (*la cuaresma*).
Writing to Secretary Pacelli at the beginning of February 1937, Gomá indicated the military’s concern that perhaps the citizens of the Nationalist-held territory did not understand the “abnegation and self-sacrifice” of the Nationalist forces.\textsuperscript{152} This sentiment coincided with the general idea of self-discipline of the Lent season. Within \textit{La cuaresma de España} Gomá methodically addresses the Toledo diocesans with a message the outlines the Christian underpinnings of the Civil War, while citing Biblical doctrine prodigiously.

The first idea that Gomá sought to define in his address was the perhaps paradoxical reality that the Church could be involved in a violent war. After all, God is peace, and the hope of the faithful Christian is that of an afterlife of eternal peace. Gomá’s first objective, then, is to equate war as the child of sin, the result of unbridled worldly passion.\textsuperscript{153} And where sin can be resolved through penance and restitution (emphasized precisely in this time of Lent), social and national excess can, indeed, be resolved through holy conflict. Gomá stated that the present Civil War was precisely a means to correct the excesses of, assumedly, the Republican politics of the mid-1930s. Of the purpose of \textit{La Cuaresma de España}, the cardinal writes:

\begin{quote}
In the present writings we are going to direct ourselves principally to our country. Let us verify if deep down in this struggle there is any moral digression of social character; let us make, in this case, the public confession of the sins of Spain; let us accept the penitence that God imposes on us, which is the war itself, and let us ask Him, with purpose of correction, that He illuminate the path of our future history. The war coincides with Holy Lent: let us indicate the means by which Spain can, in the national sense, sanctify its Lent season.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{quote}

Gomá proceeds to outline after this doctrinal logic the ways in which war can in fact have moral value. Given that God is ultimately an executor of justice, war can be a means, according to this pastoral, by which God can punish (and bring to justice) whole communities that have fallen.

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\textsuperscript{152} AG 3:3-47, pg. 82.  
\textsuperscript{153} AG 3: Anexo al documento 3-47, pg. 84.  
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., pg. 85: “En el presente Escrito vamos a dirigirnos principalmente a nuestro país. Averigüemos si en el fondo de la contienda hay alguna desviación moral de carácter social; hagamos, en este caso, la confesión pública de los pecados de España; aceptemos la penitencia que Dios nos impone, que es la guerra misma, y pidámosle, con propósito de enmienda, que ilumine la ruta de nuestra historia futura. La guerra coincide con la santa Cuaresma: indiquemos los medios con que España puede, en el aspecto nacional, santificar su Cuaresma.”
\end{flushleft}
away from Catholic social and moral values. And if nations are understood as a collection of individuals who have the capacity to make choices, moral or otherwise, Gomá states that “our war could be the instrument of the justice of God, with which he will try to purify us of our collective misery.”\textsuperscript{155} This was the pastoral’s first doctrinal answer to the dilemma of how the Spanish Church could support the movement of the Nationalists against Republican Spain. National moral decay necessitated it.

Returning to the idea of sin, Gomá argues that Spain must offer a collective confession. And what is, ultimately, the sin for which Spain must offer an admission of guilt? It is, as already mentioned, the actions of the Republican governments in seeking a severe separation of church and state.\textsuperscript{156} Gomá goes as far as condemning the changing of institutions, such as marriage, from a religious to a civil responsibility.\textsuperscript{157} Secularization indeed leads to the upheaval of religious privileges and institutions. But the Spanish Church, with its traditional financial support from the Spanish government and its entrenched culture of religious education and local clerical involvement, was unprepared for that type of upheaval during the era of the Republic. This could be added to the list of sins for which Spain had to confess. Before moving on to other considerations, Gomá reaffirms his authority as Bishop, in that he has the duty to teach and exhort his people to become aware of their moral “blindness” such that a proper correction can be made.\textsuperscript{158} Confession is the first step in this national renewal. But penitence must follow soon thereafter.

Gomá clearly does not shirk from difficult ideas in \textit{La Cuaresma de España}. Penitence may bring with it pain, but this pain is necessary: “Accepting penitence is another decisive step,

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., pg. 87: “...nuestra guerra bien pudiera ser el instrumento de la justicia de Dios, con que tratará de purificarnos de nuestra miseria colectiva…”
\textsuperscript{156} AG 3: Anexo al documento 3-47, pg. 88.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., pg. 92.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., pg. 94.
because in the pain that it causes there is a means to the help that lifts us.”

To continue with this metaphor at the national level, the Cardinal encourages Spaniards to think on the pain of war. That is, pain suffered physically by the countless dead (focusing, of course, on the Nationalist martyrs), the pain of the maimed and wounded, the pain of losing sacred sites (mentioning specifically the defacing of the monument of Christ at the *Sagrado Corazón de Jesús en el Cerro de los Angeles*), the pain of “thousands” of assassinated priests and the pain of losing the cultural riches of religious art. Indeed, “there will not remain any Spaniard, when this terrible war has finally ended, that hasn’t suffered devastation in it.” Here, Gomá enters into philosophy of the highest order, for he claims that “we would not be able to enjoy the future exaltation of Spain if we didn’t now feel its tribulation.” This was certainly a cogent and, perhaps, reassuring sentiment for Gomá’s diocesans. However, reality must be remembered. To individuals and families torn between the opposing forces of the war, it is difficult to accept pain as an inevitable and necessary (even expiatory) process that will ultimately bring victory in the crusade. As they were steeped with religious meaning, Gomá’s words made for good theology, but did not reflect the highly polarized state of the Spanish citizenry, where religion was but an ephemeral ideal easily forgotten in the face of hunger and repression.

Gomá concludes his pastoral with a prayer, words of advice for personal improvement and predictions for the future. He reminds his audience that there are special prayers needed.

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159 Ibid., pg. 95: “La aceptación de la penitencia es otro paso decisivo, porque en el dolor que causa está un resorte que ayuda a levantarnos.”


162 AG 3: Anexo al documento 3-47, pg. 98: “No podríamos gozarnos en la exaltación futura de España si no sintiéramos ahora su tribulación.”
during times of war and conflict. Prayer is a force for support especially for those fighting directly on the front lines, not only for protection, but as a means of strength and bravery. Soldiers themselves were encouraged to pray the rosary to solidify their standing before God:

“the principal means to valor is in the cleanliness of heart and in the security of divine assistance.”\(^{163}\) Gomá returns to the theme of Lent to make a special plea that Spaniards reflect on their lives and look for areas to improve. Indeed, it is especially noteworthy that these devices for holy improvement (prayer and fasting) be associated with the acts of fighting in the war. If we return momentarily to the initial paradox of the Church as a force for peace even as it supports war, then Gomá continues to successfully set forth a doctrinal framework that connects the Nationalist military itself to the diocesans that make up the Cardinal’s flock. That is, prayer was a rhetorical tool to link the Spanish citizen with the fighter.\(^{164}\)

In terms of exhortations to personal, and surely national, improvement, Gomá focuses on what could be seen as typical themes. Specifically, he states that vigilance cannot end even when the physical conflict is over. Or in other words, the nation cannot betray God once the country has been liberated. The Cardinal reminds his flock of the need for morality, the importance of political leaders that support Catholicism and especially a rejection of “Sovietism” (sovietismo).\(^{165}\) In this same strand of thinking, Gomá quotes General Franco, whose injunction is that Spanish society “[defend] against the anarchy and terrorism of Bolshevism.”\(^{166}\) Despite warnings of infiltrators, Gomá portends a future of hope. His words trust heavily in the renewed

\(^{163}\) Ibid., pg. 98-99: “El principal resorte del valor está en la limpieza de conciencia y en la seguridad del divino socorro.”
\(^{164}\) Ibid., pg. 100.
\(^{165}\) Ibid., pg. 102-103.
\(^{166}\) Ibid., pg. 103: “Defensa contra la anarquía y el terrorismo bolchevique.”
faithfulness of Spaniards, as a means to honor the Nationalist martyrs.\textsuperscript{167} And their blood will not be in vain:

...we add that the blood of thousands of Spaniards that has been spilt for their God and their faith, whose final shout has been to the victory of Christ King, whose death has been so refined as the life of Christians, is a living prayer for Spain, that ascends to the Heavens from the earth that was steeped in it [the blood], and that has a voice that will not ignore the Heart of Him for whom they died. The blood of the first martyrs was a seed of Christians, and wouldn’t it be the seed of a new Spain, Catholic, robust, for which so many Catholic Spaniards gave for her and their God?\textsuperscript{168}

This final passage in this Lent address solemnly seals the outcome of the war, in that it justifies bloodshed as a means to preserve the testimony of the martyrs, both of the primordial Church and its later Spanish counterparts. Specifically directed at the diocesans of Toledo, but with an audience of all of Spain given his stature as the Primate of Spain, Gomá’s pastoral made a compelling case for Church support of the Nationalist insurgents. By interpreting war as a necessary event sanctioned at times by God, the Cardinal managed to create a doctrinal narrative that supported a process of confession, penitence, prayer and self improvement on a national level. War was the crucible that would help to refine the Catholic sensibilities of the Spanish people. In the face of this rhetoric, however, it is unlikely that Gomá could imagine the institutionalized reprisals that Franco would oversee at the end of the war. Nor could the Archbishop have imagined that his vision of ultimate forgiveness would be drowned out by the cries of retribution against those who had not rebelled. In light of this, Francisco Franco could not have asked for a better ideological support in the form of an idealistic Cardinal.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., pg. 104.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., pg. 105: “...añadimos que la sangre de millares de españoles que la han derramado por su Dios y su fe, cuyo grito postrero ha sido un vítor a Cristo Rey, cuya muerte ha sido tan acrisolada como su vida de cristianos, es una plegaria viva por España, que sube al cielo desde la tierra que se empapó de ella, y que tiene una voz que no desoirá el Corazón de Aquel por quien murieron. La sangre de los primeros mártires fue semilla de cristianos, y ¿no sería semilla de una nueva España, católica, robusta, la que dieron por ella y su Dios tantos católicos españoles?”
Cinema, Censorship and Decency on the Big Screen

The Spanish Civil War provided Catholic and other religious-oriented groups with the opportunity to exert greater influence and power in their respective spheres of influence. José Mayáns of the National Confederation of Parents of Families (Confederación) wrote to General Dávila on January 26, 1937 (with a copy directed to Cardinal Gomá) regarding the issue of censorship in the film industry. As a means for the diffusion of information in its varied forms, film worried both civil and religious leaders alike. Mayáns reminded Dávila specifically of the words of Pope Pius XI, who urged vigilance in the face of increased film consumption.

For him, movies had drastically different potential effects:

> Everyone knows how much pain bad movies produce in people’s souls, which glorify the lusts and the pleasures which offer opportunities to sin…however, good representations can exercise a profoundly moralizing influence upon those who see them.

And given that there was a place for film in society, then, it was natural that governments would be expected (in support of national religion) to provide a means to censor unsavory elements within certain movies. Given Dávila’s high rank within the Franco government, Mayán’s group sought his ear as they outlined their proposals for modifying the censorship that the Nationalist government undertook. That is, they argued that Spain was too focused on the censorship of political propaganda opposed to the Nationalist cause and did not focus on the moral censorship that should also take place. To make up for this, the suggestions were threefold: first, prohibit anyone younger than 16 to attend a film that had not previously been authorized by the censorship committee; second, that with consequence of penalties of sanctions, industry officials must obtain certificates from the regional censors where they desire to premier their films (and,

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169 “Confederación Católica Nacional de Padres de Familia”.
170 AG 3: anexo al documento 3-77, pg. 147-148: “Todos saben cuánto daño producen en las almas las películas malas como alabando la concupiscencia y los placeres ofrecen ocasión de pecado…En cambio las buenas representaciones pueden ejercer una in- // fluencia profundamente moralizadora sobre aquellos que las ven.”
171 Ibid., pg. 149.
of course, a member of the Confederación should be present in these committees); and finally, that the government not restrict the group’s weekly periodical, which also critiqued the morality of available movies.\textsuperscript{172} Cardinal Gomá supported these criteria in a letter a month later on February 21, and promised to advocate for them upon meeting with Dávila in Burgos.\textsuperscript{173}

The matter did not come to rest here, for the recommendations of the Confederación were only slowly, if at all, integrated by the Government into the censorship committee organization. By not being itself integrated fully into the committees, nor any representative of the Mujeres Católicas for that matter, the Confederación felt that the Government was diminishing the importance of moral censorship in the first place. Indeed, Mayáns stated that “the foundation of morality is in religion, and if one truly wants to respect the integrity of its precepts, nobody is better chosen to define them than the ecclesiastical authority” or its representatives.\textsuperscript{174} In his view, the political leaders did not respect this so-called integrity. And furthermore, Mayáns encouraged greater participation from his and other organizations precisely because he felt that local government officials would not be able to effectively deal with the sheer quantity of film materials, inevitably allowing inappropriate material and themes to reach the population.\textsuperscript{175} The warning was clear:

Our Spain, scoured in great measure by the poison that dirty, atheist and foreign-like movies have distilled, offers a present example in living flesh of the fatal consequences of… the clever onslaught of Communism, ‘camouflaged’ slyly in the unsuspected medium of movies.\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., pg. 149-150.
\textsuperscript{173} AG 3:3-182, pg. 279.
\textsuperscript{174} AG 5: anexo 1 a 5-88, pg. 131: “El fundamento de la Moral está en la Religión, y si de veras quiere respetarse la integridad de sus preceptos, nadie mejor indicado para definirlos que la Autoridad eclesiástica…”
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., pg. 132.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., pg. 133-134: “Nuestra España, estragada en buena porción por el ‘tóxico’ que destilaron las películas sucias, atesas y extranjeras que distinguió el sensacionalismo, ofrece al presente un ejemplo en carne viva de las fatales consecuencias que acarrea la criminal lenidad con que la Sociedad y el Estado asistieron a las sagaces embestidas del Comunismo, ‘camuflado’ arteramente en cantidad insospechada de películas.”

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Essentially, Mayáns, reiterating the content of his previous letter, saw attention to moral censorship as naturally allowing for the prevention of all matter of Marxist, Masonic and Semitic propaganda that may have found its way into Spanish films. He saw ecclesiastical involvement, along with the counsel of his own organization, as the means to ensure proper and thorough censorship.

The Junta de Censura (censorship committee) circulated its instructions to the regional committees by May 4, 1937, and these included many provisions for moral censorship. Its principal directive was that censors proceed with “extreme rigor, not authorizing those productions that, by more or less hidden means, make light of or combat the religious principles and moral fundamentals of the distinct towns.”¹⁷⁷ The Junta urged vigilance in removing any problematic thematic or visual content from all films. The instructions warned against movies that included nudity, inappropriate dancing, gratuitous love scenes, cabaret scenes, adultery, suicide, divorce, and scenes of overt aggression. Naturally, political themes, international issues, and commentaries on war also found themselves targets of the censors.¹⁷⁸ The Junta acknowledged the connection between religiously-based and political morality and control that Mayáns had so carefully crafted. Even so, some committee members questioned the effectiveness of the program of censorship. José Táboas Salvador, a censor from La Coruña, complained that one of the Governor’s representatives was an art critic, and he judged the aesthetic value of film, and as a consequence accepted everything.¹⁷⁹ A notice from the Association of Parents of Families of Seville also lamented a lack of unity among the criteria that committees used, which made the task of effectively policing film difficult.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ AG 5:5-249, pg. 347.
¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pg. 347-350.
¹⁷⁹ AG 5:5-397, pg. 512.
¹⁸⁰ “Asociación de Padres de familia de Sevilla”; AG 8:8-435, pg. 534.
By 1938, another barrier to effective censorship arose, apart from complacent government officials and committee members. This new obstacle came in the form of the film industry itself. One of the Spanish Parents Associations (whose information was relayed to Gomá by way of Cardinal Segura) stated that ever since revisions to the censorship laws took place, the film businesses began certain ploys to undermine them and other religious organizations. Though the Association did not indicate any proof, it specifically named none other than Paramount Pictures as one of the offenders.\(^{181}\) The fact that many studios published announcements for upcoming movies that had not yet been approved was, however, evidence enough for the Association that the censorship truly had no teeth. They recommended that the *Junta de Censura* be made free of any influence from the film industry, warning that any progress that had been made in controlling movie production would otherwise be for naught.\(^{182}\)

Over the course of not too many months, organizations that actively fought for Catholic morality managed to garner the attention of the *Junta*, and they would not soon remove themselves from the issue of censorship. Again, this period was indicative of how auxiliaries to the Catholic Church (but separate from the official clergy and hierarchy) made inroads in establishing their opinions. The Nationalist government no doubt saw the political expediency that censorship entailed. But complaints from the moral organizations also reveal that political officials were not as bound to religiosity when movie industries influenced them. Even so, censorship was a key component of an ideological war, and Franco saw its effectiveness as he later consolidated his regime.

\(^{181}\) AG 9: anexo 2 a 9-107, pg. 162.
\(^{182}\) Ibid., pg. 162-16.
The Church and State inside the Classroom

A key component of the Spanish Church’s efforts to reclaim its self-proclaimed rights as part of the Spanish State was that of controlling education. Once again, the major actor in this movement was the National Catholic Confederation of Parents of Families, which communicated with the Nationalists’ Commission on Culture and Teaching. In correspondence from August 9, 1937, the Confederation made manifest its desire that “all teaching should be Catholic.” In effect, a secular education could not be effective unless a religious education existed in the same pedagogical environment as well. Cardinal Gomá wrote to the Vatican with several important points regarding the institution of religion classes in the curriculum for the bachillerato. Gomá involved himself directly with the Nationalist authorities in order to define the means by which these classes would be reintegrated into the secondary education. Namely, the Commission of Culture would be tasked with approving priests to take up teaching posts, for periods of two years. Furthermore, Gomá noted that (perhaps to allay any reticence on the part of the Vatican) the Commission was composed of several “genuinely Catholic” people. However, some elements in the military hierarchy no doubt occupied themselves more with the politics of waging a Civil War, and were not necessarily amenable to a strong Catholic organization to compete with its authority. The situation was nonetheless developing such that religious instruction would reenter the classroom.

AG 7:7-67, pg. 90: “toda enseñanza debe ser católica.”
AG 8:8-29, pg. 45-46: “…netamente católicas.”
Ibid., pg. 46; See also 8:8-338, pg. 402; in this letter Gomá writes to the Spanish Bishops regarding the pending reinstitution of religion classes in the bachillerato.
A beaming salutation from the National Catholic Confederation of Parents to Franco himself on January 20, 1938 hints at these efforts to consolidate a union between the priorities of the military hierarchy and varied Church and religious interests:

The National Catholic Confederation of Parents of Families that is so intensely living the glorious moments of our achievements, believes it an inexcusable duty to come to your excellence in this the dawn of the year of total Victory…to show its most profound gratitude to the powers of the State in its great work undertaken regarding national education…187

Pedro Sáinz Rodríguez, National Education minister, wrote to Gomá on July 21, 1938 in order to reaffirm the government’s desire to work closely with the Church leadership. In short, religious instruction was a major component of national education interrupted during the democratic years of the Republic. Even under a rapidly coalescing Nationalist government, however, the military hierarchy still oversaw the placement of priests in teaching positions, even if with what could be considered as advice and consent of the Spanish Church. Sáinz Rodríguez also managed after the war to make religious study an obligation as well for University students.188 Orthodox control in the school system, then, did appear to reward the Church’s involvement in the Civil War.

**Decency and Divorce: Morality Campaigns and the Women Who Organized Them**

The Gomá archives preserve various trends in which Catholic groups implored the Archbishop to support their campaigns for public morality. On June 10, 1937, María de Madariaga, President of the Feminine Youth wing of Acción Católica, and Carmen Blat, Vice President of the Confederation of Catholic Women, communicated their intention to combine forces in a “campaign of morality and austerity.”189 Though an analysis of womanhood in the

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187 AG 9:9-87, pg. 131: “La Confederación Católica Nacional de Padres de Familia que tan intensamente está viviendo los momentos gloriosos de nuestra gesta, cree inexcusable deber acudir a Vuestra Excelencia en los albores del año de la Victoria total…para mostrar su más profundo agradecimiento a los poderes del Estado ante la gran obra realizada en orden a la educación nacional…”

188 This was achieved through the 1943 law on higher education. See Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy: The Catholic Church in Spain, 1875-1975* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 221.

189 AG 6:6-70, pg. 94-95. “Confederación de Mujeres Católicas,” “Juventudes Femeninas de Acción Católica,” “campaña de moralidad y austeridad.”
Civil War period is not the purpose of this section, it is, however, worth mentioning that these two women signed their names in this letter to Gomá as “Sus hijas,” or, “your daughters.” Indeed, it was the purpose of their correspondence to gain the Archbishop’s approval, in order to have “greater spiritual and moral efficacy in the campaign.” Not only does this small detail reinforce the inherent sense of respect towards the patriarchy of the Spanish Church, but also indicates that women were a key means of ideological support within the movements on the Right. And in terms of an overall hierarchy, the moral directives of the Church upon women would be supported and carried out also by women. Madariaga and Blat attached a detailed report to this letter outlining the purposes of the proposed morality campaign.

One of the principal goals of the modesty and austerity campaigns was to “awake the conscience of all women towards duties of Religion and of Homeland.” The general idea that Madariaga and Blat proposed was to organize, with help from other wings of Acción Católica, propaganda within the various regional capitals with the help of the presiding Church leaders. The propaganda was to take on various forms: pamphlets, radio addresses, periodicals, signs and other media. And the general thread was to remind Spaniards of the historical role of women in supporting religiosity and patriotism as rooted in a Catholic nation, and the role that women surely were and should be playing in the current “Crusade.” Indeed, for every man that died in battle, there was a woman who birthed him or was married to him or was herself his daughter.

And given that Madariaga and Blat conceived of the Virgin [Mary] as the “immaculate patron of Spain, Captain of the Spanish armies,” their propaganda campaign clearly was meant to engage

190 Ibid., pg. 95.
191 AG 6: Anexo a Documento 6-70, pg. 95: “Despertar la conciencia de toda mujer hacia estos deberes de Religión y de Patria.”
192 Franco utilized morality as a means to control women and national psychology in the immediate aftermath of the war. And women really were integral parts of the even more integral unit of the family, according to the Nationalist government and the Church. See Richards, time of silence, pg. 64: “The traditional Spanish family was seen as an agent of quarantine facilitating the healthy growth of a ‘patriotic morality’ and acted ‘as a type of cell in the social body which forms the race.’”
women in the fight for Spain (not unlike in the way that Gomá compared war to a necessary means, at times, to reassert Catholic morality and purge the State of undesirable elements). As a group, women contributed to the war in many ways, and the women of Acción Católica planned to highlight these as part of their ideological messaging: that is, photographs or accounts of women’s work in “munitions depots, factories, workshops, hospitals, charity dining halls” and other places. Where women could not engage directly in battle, the Confederación de Mujeres Católicas urged participation by these other means.

Beyond ideological posturing, these leaders within Acción Católica laid out several specific points of morality that women necessarily would follow in order to be fully committed to the causes previously outlined. Among these were the commitments to not attend indecent movies or theater productions and to leave productions that become inappropriate; to avoid places generally reserved for the enjoyment of men (cafés and clubs); to not smoke in public or in private; to not read printed materials that “are not in complete accordance with Christian morality;” and to not participate in dances or parties that are not also attended by one’s parents or spouse or that are morally questionable. A woman’s body and appearance itself was likewise a subject of much regulation as part of the proposed commitments to the cause. Specifically (and perhaps rather humorously to the modern reader), women were to “completely abstain from cosmetics and plucking one’s eyebrows,” and also to only wear stockings that fully covered the legs. These types of physical moral codes arguably served two functions: that of keeping a woman from falling into vanity and also avoiding improper attention from men. And in their

193 AG: anexo a 6-70, pg. 96-97: “La Virgen Inmaculada Patrona de España, Capitana de los Ejércitos españoles.”
194 Ibid., pg. 97: “polvorines, fabricas, talleres, hospitales, comedores de beneficencia y refugiados…”
195 Ibid., pg. 97-98; See specifically points 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10: “que no estén en completo acuerdo de la moral cristiana.”
196 Ibid., pg. 97-98; see points 7 and 8: “abstenerse en absoluto de pinturas, depilado de cejas, etc.”; See also Timothy Mitchell, Betrayal of the Innocents: Desire, Power, and the Catholic Church in Spain, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 93-94: Even on the Republican side, “an anarchist/sexologist named Félix
In his closing, he invoked a “paternal” blessing on the members of Acción Católica and its holy enterprises,” which no doubt mirrors the gender dynamics echoed in the original letter from Madariaga and Blat. Paternalism from Gomá may have seemed like the proper thing to do from a Pastor figure to protect the morality of his flock. But for the Nationalists, any restrictions on behavior simply served the purpose “to keep women in their place.” In this way a Church’s sense of morality served the misogynistic authoritarianism of the Franco regime.

Within the Archive, another document of importance to moral issues is preserved from October 12, 1937. Here, the National Confederation of Parents of Families wrote to Franco specifically to advocate for the repeal of the Law of Divorce enshrined in the 1931 Constitution. For them, marriage was a bond that should remain unbreakable by the whims of mankind. And as such, the Confederación expressed its concern that in a “Catholic Nation the State give its subjects the means to disobey the laws of the Church.” The Confederación expressly rejected the Law of Divorce as a prime example of the “liberal and secular” trends that the past

Martí Ibáñez…wanted women as far away from the front as possible. In his view, sexual relations were sapping the strength and energy of the soldiers and thereby endangering the outcome of the war.”

197 AG 6:6-126, pg. 177: “La Cruzada de referencia es sin duda obra gratísima a Dios, enteramente con la misión moralizadora de nuestra Religión, perfectamente encuadrada en las actividades de Acción Católica, y utilísima a la // Patria, a la que tanto interesa tener mujeres dignas que eleven cuanto sea posible el nivel de la moral que en Noblece, vigoriza y engrandece a los pueblos.”
198 Hochschild, Spain in our Hearts, 38.
199 “Confederación Nacional de Padres de Familia”
200 AG 8:8-74, pg. 91: “Ni parece bien, que en una Nación Católica brinde el Estado a sus súbditos el medio de desacatar las leyes de la Iglesia...”
Republican Cortes had enacted as law. Furthermore, the group argued that anyone with a desire to protect the family (what it considered as the principal unite of society) would protect the integrity of marriage unions.\textsuperscript{201} It is meaningful that Franco was the recipient of this plea, for ultimately the Nationalist leader would focus heavily on moral issues as a means to consolidate his regime after the Civil War and repress dissent. And surely the mingling of political and religious power was not one of equal footing. That is to say, what the Confederación saw as a moral cause whose outcome was that of removing divorce provisions from the law (for religious reasons), the political hierarchy may have viewed as a purely political tool by which the State could use a moral issue as the pretext to exert further State control over the masses.

Archbishop Gomá, naturally, involved himself in the evolving issue surrounding the Law of Divorce. In writing to the Ministry of Justice in Vitoria on March 1, 1938, he expressed concerns that proposed reforms did not address the root of the legal issues surrounding divorce. Namely, Gomá argued that the proposed changes did not, among other things, remove the secular definition of marriage.\textsuperscript{202} That is, civil marriage would still coincide with the Church ceremony that was considered a sacrament. The editors of the Archival documents mention that perhaps the Cardinal’s opposition to proposed changes in the law underlies a strategy to have some sort of negotiating power with the future Franco government, such that the repeal would be assured in exchange for diplomatic recognition.\textsuperscript{203} Gomá was ultimately pleased with the

\textsuperscript{201} AG 8:8-74, pg. 93. See also Mitchell, Betrayal of the Innocents, 98: Referencing Florenciana Carrión, “when people on the Nationalist side were talking about women, they were talking about morality; when they were talking about morality, they were talking about the family; when they were talking about morality, they were talking about the family; hence they were talking about society, hence about Spain. Hence, Woman equals Spain. Therefore debates about hemlines or female sports were not trivial. Woman was wife and mother, nucleus of the family; as the fundamental national unit, the family had to be defended from egalitarian feminism, divorce, and pornography.”

\textsuperscript{202} AG 9:9-283, pg. 408.

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., pg. 409; see footnote 788.
outcome, as expressed to Monsignor Antoniutti\textsuperscript{204}, for “in this case, divorce would not be recognized, nor would civil marriage be required except for those…who had declared themselves not belonging to the Catholic religion.”\textsuperscript{205} In two clear cases elaborated in the Gomá archive, morality and adhesion to Church practices occupied the time of the Spanish religious hierarchy. Catholic groups outside the Church clearly saw the opportunity to exert their own power by means of propaganda, and the Civil authorities arguably saw the benefit in collaborating with the Church in matters of religious sacraments, namely marriage. Moral issues were ultimately matters of salvation for faithful Catholic Spaniards. For the State, however, the underlying purpose of maintaining and extolling Christian virtues was much more likely a nuanced means to gain the continued support of the Spanish Bishops and have an additional tool to control the populaces’ behavior.\textsuperscript{206}

\textsuperscript{204} Ildebrando Antoniutti. He was the first major figure sent to Nationalist Spain by the Vatican, and his tenure lasted from 1937 to 1938. He was tasked initially (and without the official accreditation before Franco) to embark on a charitable mission to help Basque orphans. See Cárce Orí, “La Nunciatura de Madrid y la Embajada de España en el Vaticano,” 278.

\textsuperscript{205} AG 9:9-293, pg. 449-450: “En este caso no se reconocería el divorcio vincular, ni se daría más matrimonio civil que el que se pactara entre quien o quienes hubiesen declarado no pertenecer a la Religión católica.”

\textsuperscript{206} That morality was more of a rhetorical tool and not an actual reality is mentioned in Mitchell, \textit{Betrayal of the Innocents}, 97: “In reality, Franco’s troops were warlike but hardly monklike: bordellos abounded in the areas controlled by the Nationalists and the Church simply looked the other way.”
V. Conclusion: The Cardinal’s Death and Franco’s Ascendancy

On May 20, 1939, Gomá attended a “solemn” occasion of thanksgiving at the Santa Bárbara church in Madrid. It was here that Franco presented a “sword of victory” to Gomá to celebrate the end of the war. Recorded by Anastasio Granados, Gomá wrote of the event, “it is to give thanks to God for the happy ending of the Crusade, in which atheistic Communism and the secular enemies of immortal Spain were defeated.” The sword then went to the treasury of the Toledo diocese. Frances Lannon describes this event in terms of its rich symbolism (which I present in its entirety because of how pointedly it addresses the real issue at hand):

When…Franco presented his victory sword to Cardinal Gomá…the gesture symbolized the close interdependence of the victorious army and the Church, but in reverse. It was not so much that generals had fought for the Church, but rather that the Church had offered its ideological and propagandist services to the insurgent army. Franco, Mola, and their fellow-conspirators fathered the coup that developed into a civil war: but the Spanish bishops were the godfathers of the Crusade, of the theory that the generals—even if they were non-believers or Masons—and their troops, even if they were African Muslims, fought for Catholic Spain against anti-patriotic error and corruption, for Christ against anti-Christ.

Indeed, time after time, especially as elucidated through the nuanced correspondences throughout the Gomá Archive, the Spanish religious hierarchy went against what may have been its inner conscience in order to support the warring faction that most likely would uphold the Church’s interests. Even after horrors in Guernica, the killings of Catholic Basque priests, and the reservations of the Vatican itself, Gomá pressed forward as an advocate for the Nationalist cause: evidence if ever their needed to be of the soundness of Juan Linz’s political theories presented in the introduction.

Cardinal Gomá neared death after the end of the war, and his concerns for Spain did not diminish after the Nationalist victory. For in the wings the specter of the Falange influence (and its potential connections with international fascism) pervaded the new Franco regime. A fierce

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207 Granados, El Cardenal Gomá, 220. See document 4 in the appendix.
208 Lannon, Persecution, Privilege and Prophecy, 203.
209 Linz, “El uso religioso de la política.”
critic of German Nazism and Communism alike, Pope Pius XI had preceded Gomá in death on February 10, 1939.\textsuperscript{210} Interestingly enough, Eugenio Pacelli, the Vatican Foreign Secretary with whom Gomá had on so many occasions written, became the next Pope, Pius XII. In writing to him, Gomá lamented the “uncertainty of the political stability of the new regime; the more or less totalitarian ideology of the predominant political sector; and the brush of the State against the people and interests of the Church.”\textsuperscript{211} By February of 1940, Gomá’s health prevented any public appearances, and Franco made one last visit to his side on July 8 in Madrid. The Cardinal’s health finally failed him on August 22, 1940, and Enrique Plá y Deniel soon became the new Archbishop of Toledo (holding the position until 1969.)\textsuperscript{212} From the viewpoint of a historical periodization, it is meaningful that the deaths of both Pius XI and Gomá occurred so closely at the end of the Civil War. Without entering into a discussion that would necessarily require an additional paper, nevertheless it stands to reason that Francisco Franco saw himself much more able to dominate the ideological message of the new regime, taking advantage of the transition to Plá y Deniel and Pius XII (who has often been characterized as less forceful than his predecessor).

In closing, Franco and his government quickly consolidated their power beginning in 1939. The 1940s were an extremely difficult period for Spaniards, who faced the very real prospects of mass unemployment, starvation and homelessness.\textsuperscript{213} Lacking substantive infrastructure, and still reeling from war, the Spanish government did not attempt any sense of reconciliation that the Church had for so long predicted and used as a pretext for its continued

\textsuperscript{211} Rodríguez, El Cardenal Gomá, 333.
support. The regime responded to any remnants of resistance with ruthless violence, until “opposition militants started to abandon politics and to join the mass of Spaniards who lay low.”\textsuperscript{214} Indeed, by utilizing the ideology of the “Holy Crusade” as supported by the Spanish Church, Franco felt justified in completely purging and “purifying” Spain of those who espoused Republican ideals. In this system, a “healing of wounds” simply was not possible, for there was to be no negotiation with the perceived forces of evil.\textsuperscript{215} In the national silence that ensued, some figures looked back in retrospect with regret, namely Mateo Múgica. The former Bishop of Vitoria wrote, in response to a letter he received, that during the beginning of the war information was scarce and decisions had to be made quickly, especially in the face of so much anticlerical violence.\textsuperscript{216} It is not clear if Gomá knew how much Múgica privately worked to sway the Vatican in speaking out in favor of the persecuted Basques. Even so, after Goma’s death, Múgica wrote the following, even though the Holy See did not make his earlier protests known publicly:

…before I present myself before our Lord Jesus Christ, Sovereign Judge of all, I believe the moment has come to express it [his protest]; and I express it concretely, serenely, energetically. That is the only way that a Bishop can be calm, as the one charged with authentically and specially observing and making sure the laws and directives of the Church are observed.\textsuperscript{217}

The ensuing decades ultimately saw realignment in the feelings of the Church, but at the juncture of 1940, Franco successfully quashed any dissent, and began a campaign regenerating a New Spain.

The Gomá Archives as constituted in the thirteen printed volumes utilized for this paper have certainly proven important in allowing for scholarship outside of the physical confines of a

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{216} Mateo Múgica, \textit{Imperativos de mi conciencia}, (Buenos Aires: Liga de los Amigos de los Vascos, 1945), 9-11.
\textsuperscript{217} Múgica, \textit{Imperativos de mi conciencia}, 20: “…antes de que me presente ante Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Soberano Juez de todos, creo llegado el momento de formularla, y la formulo concretamente, serenamente, enérgicamente. Sólo así puede quedar tranquilo un Obispo, especial y autentico encargado de observar y hacer observar las leyes y cánones de la Iglesia.” The translation into English is somewhat difficult here, which is why the Spanish original is especially important to read in order to fully grasp the emotion in Múgica’s words.
diocese library (and the borders of Spain itself). English-language scholarship has often cited Gomá’s writings directly from only a handful of Spanish publications that have included them, which is, again, why this project was important in evaluating directly the Cardinal’s words. The narratives that can be gleaned are clearly not without limits. Direct correspondence between Gomá and Franco were lacking, if ever extant in the first place. But Gomá was indeed a prolific writer and maintained studious records, to the point that, even advanced in age, he helped to save texts from the burning Episcopal Palace in Toledo in 1939.²¹⁸ To attempt any biographical analysis is futile here. But the voice of the Cardinal that so pervades the archival records is of a man committed to his cause. He alluded to the Falange, the Nazis, and other groups often in an attempt to dissuade anti-Catholic elements from entering the new Spanish State. He was arguably a man who believed deeply in his earthly mission as one called to leadership in the Catholic Church.

Nonetheless, Juan Linz proved correct in his analysis of the interplay of politics and religion in this case. For Franco easily manipulated the ideology, authority, and the organizational power of the Spanish Church to define the Nationalist uprising, justify the military’s actions in the war, and then forcefully undertake the consolidation of his regime after 1939.²¹⁹ The Church was ultimately powerless and only later (beginning with figures like Múgica) did the errors of the moment begin to sink in to the Church’s collective mind. Franco’s

²¹⁹ Linz, “El uso religioso de la política,” 25-26: “[la] fusión entre religión y nacionalismo, que en muchos casos implica la politización de la religión con el fin de lograr los objetivos tradicionales de la nación, ha supuesto una tentación para importantes segmentos del clero en numerosas sociedades…Mi intuición es que en muchos casos, como, por ejemplo, en algunos ideólogos del nacional-católicismo en España, la raíz estaba en una sincera convicción religiosa, aunque hay claros ejemplos en los que la religión se instrumentalizó para una agenda política diferente.” / “[the] fusion of religion and nationalism, which in many cases implies the politicization of religion with the goal of achieving the traditional objectives of the nation, has been a temptation for important segments of the clergy in numerous societies…My intuition is that in many cases, like, for example, in some ideologues of the National Catholicism in Spain, the root was in a sincere religious conviction, even though there are clear examples in which religion was instrumental for a different political agenda.”
appeal had been irresistible though. For even as Franco looked towards the future, “[his] eye was on the past. His was a war of earlier centuries against modernity, of traditional Catholicism against the secular world.” The Church had been a willing participant in the fight and had chosen not to worry itself with the details of an increasingly sinister authoritarianism that was taking root. Its alliance with the rebels had been one of expediency in order to maintain the integrity of the Church. That same alliance ultimately cost the Church its moral independence in the years to come.

I do not pretend that the Vatican archives and papers from other diplomatic and religious sources would not be necessary to better extend any conclusions drawn here. Even so, Gomá’s papers, given that he was the head of the Spanish Church and as a Cardinal with the direct ear of the Holy See, have proven to be indispensable in defining the position of the Church throughout the Spanish conflict. Because of the close working relationship of the Church and the government, Gomá received information from many channels, and often served as the middleman between the Vatican, Franco, the Spanish clergy and other foreign actors. In his eyes, his daily life was one devoted to God. What modern observers may see as twisted rationalization on the Archbishop’s part was, in reality, an honest effort to find a theological and Catholic justification for conflict against the atheistic force of international Communism. Francisco Franco benefited from this willingness on the part of a very strong an outspoken Cardinal. In fact, had he lived longer, Gomá easily could have become a critic of Franco’s immediate and rampant reprisals against the defeated, which were clear human rights abuses. His death left a void, for he led an active ministry during his brief tenure as Primate of Spain. In the end, Gomá’s importance cannot be minimized for those attempting to understand the religious dynamics of the Spanish Civil War.

220 Hochschild, Spain in Our Hearts, 69.
Appendix

1. Photograph of the Cross at the Valley of the Fallen.

http://www.valledeloscaidos.es/photos/monumento/monumento1.jpg
2. The Cardinal Isidro Gomá y Tomás, Primate of Spain and Archbishop of Toledo. (Seated, left)

3. Table of responses to possible Collective Episcopal Document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monografía sucesos</th>
<th>Documento colectivo</th>
<th>Cuestación</th>
<th>Iniciativas</th>
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<td>Ávila</td>
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<td>Muy oportuno</td>
<td>Excelente iniciativa</td>
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<td>Conveniente</td>
<td>Muy conforme</td>
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<td>Preferible reservarla para más adelante</td>
<td>Muy bien</td>
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<td>C. Rodrigo</td>
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<td>Da a entender que sí</td>
<td>Admirable</td>
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<td>Módulo</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Lo deja al criterio del Sr. Cardenal. Se refiere a carta del 4 de enero</td>
<td>Difiérase</td>
<td>Conforme</td>
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<td>Da a entender que sí</td>
<td>Sí</td>
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<td>Cosa obligada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salamanca</td>
<td>Módulo</td>
<td>Útil si puede ratificar las ideas generales expuestas antes individualmente por los Prelados. Dañoso y contraproducente si no se pueden abordar con libertad tales cuestiones</td>
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<td>Solsona</td>
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<td>Cartagena</td>
<td>Módulo</td>
<td>Muy bien</td>
<td>Sí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granada</td>
<td>Módulo</td>
<td>Hay razones en pro y en contra, se inclina a la conveniencia</td>
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<td>Astorga</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sobrerenana conveniente</td>
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<td>Jaca</td>
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<td>Cádiz</td>
<td>Módulo</td>
<td>Muy conveniente</td>
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4. Sword of Victory presented to Gomá.

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