Music and the Making of Portugal and Spain

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The Battle for the Greatest Musical Emblem

The National Anthem and the Symbolic Construction of Francoist Spain

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Many different political groups, including “Alfonsist” monarchists, Traditionalist Communion Carlists, the Fascist-oriented party Falange, large sections of the army, and the Church, participated in and supported the coup against the government of the Second Spanish Republic on July 17, 1936. The ideological differences among the army generals at the head of putschists meant the movement lacked a well-defined political profile. Their goal was to seize control of the State in one swift move, to create a military government inspired by the early years of Miguel Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship (1923–1925), and to solve the country’s severe political problems. Notwithstanding their profound differences, all rebel generals shared two basic ideals: they supported a centralist and historicist form of Spanish nationalism that was firmly opposed to any form of decentralization or secessionism; and they shared vague anti-communist feelings that rejected communism stricto sensu, liberal democracies, socialism, and anarchism alike (Moradiellos 2000, 40; Losada Málvarez 1990, 25–35). While the political project that was to emerge from the coup was initially uncertain, all the rebels rapidly embraced a ferociously messianic form of nationalism saturated by myths and symbols. This led to the development of a salvationist rhetoric that made constant reference to the need to save the motherland, a goal that became the ultimate motivation and justification for the coup (Saz 2003).
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The different political and social forces that supported the movement were no less heterogeneous than its leadership. The only common ground for Traditionalist Carlists, “Alfonsoist” monarchists, Falange, and the Church was their loath of democracy, liberalism, the Popular Front, and communism. However, the goals they intended to achieve by supporting the coup could not have been more different. Their common denominator was their fierce nationalism, which encouraged them to come together and to overlook their differences to save the motherland. The war, which was an unexpected outcome and the result of the rebel’s initial failure to make the coup work, compelled these heterogeneous forces to group together for the long haul.

Once it was clear that the war was going to be long, Franco’s government began to consolidate its power base through measures such as the organization of, and legislation for, national symbols (Núñez Seixas 2006, 320–27). This chapter focuses on the institutionalization of one of the key symbols of early Francoism: the national anthem. As we shall see, Franco’s government did not create a new national anthem but used an existing one, the “Marcha granadera” (“March of the Grenadiers”), coercing Spaniards to unite under it. As Esteban Buch argues, “the trajectory [... of anthems, marches, flags, and banners is like a gravitational field that ends up capturing the history of that which they symbolise, provided, naturally, that these are symbols that work. The draws of all states, political movements, even of clubs and institutions are full of failed symbols, of aborted marches” (2004). In the context of the Spanish anthem, the final outcome of this process is clear: the “Marcha granadera” did not only represent Francoist Spain during the nearly four decades in which the regime was in power, but it has also survived the dictator’s death to become part of the nascent democratic system that followed. Before the national anthem was formally recognized by all, however, it needed to overcome the opposition of one of the most powerful ideological factions within the regime: the Falange. This chapter examines the disputes surrounding the “Marcha granadera,” and the ways in which Franco’s government overcame reticence towards it and consolidated its symbolic hegemony as the national anthem. This study follows the trail left by previous works on the symbolic construction of Francoist Spain (Box 2010; 2014), emphasizing the role played by specialists such as musicologist Nemesio Otaño (1880–1956). As Gabriella Elgenius (2011) argues, processes of national construction imply the negotiation, updating, and endorsement of symbols in an ongoing process of reinvention. Historian Carmen Ortiz (1999) has studied the ways in which the Franco regime seized traditional poetic forms—lyric and especially epic—as a means to legitimize the political winners of the Civil War and to inculcate in the popular masses a heroic cult surrounding Franco.
By focusing on the national anthem, I examine the ways in which the dictatorship used military music which, according to Philip Bohlman, aims to generate “moments of unisonality” (2004, 146), and to exalt Franco’s personality, thus in turn reinforcing his charisma.

The Return of an Anthem That Was Never Fully Gone

In a decree issued on February 27, 1937, Franco’s Government established the “Marcha granadera” as the national anthem of the insurgents. This march replaced the national anthem of the Second Republic—the “Himno de Riego”—in the territories where the coup succeeded, and in those progressively taken over by Franco’s troops. According to the 1937 decree, “national music” was to return through the military coup, as the “Marcha granadera” would be heard in all “squares, churches, and cathedrals,” raising the enthusiasm of the “good Spaniards” who longed for a country that was “great, free, and traditional” (BOE 1937a, 548). Franco’s government looked to the past in search of the new anthem, rather than create something new, as it had done with other symbols (Box 2010, 286–317). In this sense, the use of the word “traditional” in the decree was an accurate way to describe the “Marcha granadera.” Although this was the first time it was officially established as the national anthem, this piece was already part of Spain’s history. In 1768, under Charles III’s reign, the Granadera, which had originally been used by Grenadier elite infantry units, was established as “Spain’s honor march,” to honor members of the royalty, the military authorities that represented them, and the Eucharist (Fernández de Latorre 1999).

Like other military tunes, this march is based on an arpeggiated major chord, making it suitable to solemnize special occasions in the eyes of many contemporary observers. The march’s institutional role was consolidated throughout the nineteenth century. From 1836, the “Marcha granadera” became known as the “Marcha real” (“Royal March”), owing to its close and explicit links to the throne and the Church (Lolo 2000, 415). It was to be listened to with a deferential and respectful attitude—standing and with hats off—but was not conceived to be sung, and therefore had no lyrics, in a clear departure from traditional anthems (Buch 2002). This particularity illustrated the conservative Spanish elites’ mistrust of popular patriotism, and fitted the elites’ hierarchical, disciplined, and non-participative notion of citizenship.

The “Marcha real” became institutionalized and was disseminated by the State as part of attempts in Spain, and other European kingdoms, to merge monarchy and nation from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In this way,
it ceased being just a march and acquired a status closer to that of a national anthem. At this point, some monarchists warned that the absence of lyrics was a serious shortcoming, particularly if the march was to become a vehicle for patriotism. It was not until the 1920s, however, in the context of Miguel Primo de Rivera’s strongly nationalistic dictatorship—which promoted official symbols and suppressed non-state nationalisms—that lyrics were officially commissioned. In 1927, in celebration of the 25th anniversary of Alfonso XIII’s coronation—who had supported Primo de Rivera’s coup—the Catholic and conservative author Eduardo Marquina (1879–1946) was asked to write several poems for the King to choose from. Marquina was not new to glorifying Spain’s history, having previously produced plays such as *Las hijas del Cid* (*El Cid’s Daughters*, 1908), based on the adventures of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar “El Cid,” the hero *par excellence* in nationalist narratives of Spanish history, and *En Flandes se ha puesto el sol* (*The Sun Has Set in Flanders*, 1910), inspired by the final days of the Spanish rule in the Netherlands. In response to his new commission, Marquina presented twelve poems pregnant with historical myths, landscapes, and ancestral legacies. The King chose three to suit the “Marcha granadera”: “La bandera de España” (“Spain’s Flag”), a salute to the colours of the flag; “España guía” (“Spain the Guider”), about the willingness to die for Spain; and “¡Viva España!” (“Long Live Spain!”), dedicated to the twenty nations that use Spanish as their national language.

A performance of the March with the new lyrics premiered on a programme that was broadcast in several Spanish cities by Unión Radio to commemorate the King’s 25th anniversary, following several speeches, including one by Miguel Primo de Rivera (Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas 2017, 182). A few days later, the anthem was sung by the royal family during a thanksgiving mass in the palace, and this soon became the custom. Afterwards, the sung anthem became a regular feature in events attended by the dictator or the King. It was also incorporated into the repertoire of several musical ensembles, such as the Coral Vallisoletana and the Unión Patriótica choir, and was recorded during a live performance with a view to distributing and popularizing it (Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas 2017, 182).

However, Marquina’s verses were not printed in any decree or government order. The reason for this may have been that, from the beginning, conservative circles harbored doubts about the suitability of the verses chosen for the “Marcha real,” while Catholic institutions disliked the lack of religious references. Miguel Primo de Rivera himself promoted alternative lyrics, penned by the writer and president of the Cádiz-based Unión Patriótica, José María Pemán (1897–1981). These lyrics focused on the sense of pride that, he claimed, had guided Spanish
history and should also guide its future. These verses had no more success than Marquina’s, however, and, at the time Primo de Rivera’s regime ended in 1930, the “Marcha real” still had no lyrics, and continued to be sung only occasionally and not in an official capacity. The search for other anthems continued, focusing on songs deemed capable of expressing nationalist sentiment, such as the “Marcha de Cádiz”—extracted from the zarzuela Cádiz by Federico Chueca (1846–1908) and Joaquín Valverde (1846–1910) (Nagore 2011, 840–41)—and the pasodoble La banderita (Moreno Luzón 2018).

The greatest rival for the “Marcha real” was without doubt the “Himno de Riego,” which Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas have described as the Spanish equivalent to the revolutionary “La Marselleise” (2017, 417). This piece was written on the initiative of Rafael del Riego, who led the mutiny against Ferdinand VII in 1820 and was a symbol of the liberal revolution that restored the Spanish Constitution of 1812. Conceived as a means to raise the spirits of the troops at the beginning of the revolt, this anthem not only became one of the most famous patriotic anthems of the period but was also, according to Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas, “the closest thing to a national anthem Spain had during the 19th century” (2017, 37). The anthem was regarded in this way as early as April 1820, and in April 1822 was officially elevated to the status of “honor march,” the same rank enjoyed by the granaderos, by an excited liberal parliamentary majority that emphasized its Spanish “indigenous” character (Nagore 2011, 827–34). The lyrics, written by the military officer Evaristo Fernández de San Miguel, merged nationalistic and liberal principles without any reference to the King or to religion. The “Himno de Riego” exhorted the troops—referred to in the lyrics as “sons of El Cid”—to heed the call of the motherland and to break free from the chains that constrained them, under the leadership of their caudillo. The absolutist victory in 1823 brought back the emblems of the monarchy—among them the “Marcha real”—that exalted the Church and the King above the liberal nation.

The “Himno de Riego” never really ceased being perceived as a partisan anthem that represented only the radical liberals, and this perception seriously hampered its wider acceptance. Not even during the Second Republic did its use become fully consolidated, with supporters of the republican-socialist coalition headed by Manuel Azaña being divided over it. Some of its detractors denounced its “anachronism,” its inability to represent the recent revolution, and “the high significance of our democratic and modern republican regime” (Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas 2017, 206). Others deemed it of poor quality and somewhat populist. The government therefore hesitated, and, despite making it the national anthem, it did so only provisionally, while final regula-
tions were being enacted to determine the “national march” (Diario Oficial del Ministerio de la Guerra 1931).

The “Marcha real,” for its part, became a weapon in the hands of the monarchist sectors. With King Alfonso XIII in exile, monarchists adopted a radical counter-revolutionary stance as soon as the Republic was proclaimed. In response to this threat, the constitutional parliament passed the National Defence Act (October 1931)—inspired by the analogous 1922 act in Germany—which punished the use of alternative symbols to represent the nation. The first article listed a series of “acts of aggression against the Republic,” including the “exaltation of the monarchic regime and of those people that are thought to represent it; and the use of symbols to allude to one or the other” (Gaceta de Madrid 1931), such as the “Marcha real.” For the enemies of the republican regime, this persecution shrouded the “Marcha real” in a halo of martyrdom. However, this did not make it any more acceptable to some of its Francoist detractors.

Partisan Music Versus State Music

Franco’s supporters used multiple anthems and songs, as illustrated by the aforementioned decree of February 1937 (BOE 1937a). This order, in addition to declaring the “Marcha real” the new national anthem—which Franco’s government insisted on referring to by the name of “Marcha granadera”—equally recognized as national chants the anthem of the Fascist-oriented party Falange, “Cara al sol,” the anthem of the traditionalist and legitimist Carlist movement, “Oriamendi,” and the anthem of the Legión. All these anthems were to be listened to “at the official events in which they are played, while standing, as an homage to the Motherland and in remembrance of the Crusade’s glorious fallen” (BOE 1937a, 549). These requirements were aimed at recognizing the different political factions that had come together under Francoism, while giving the “Marcha granadera” a pre-eminent position among the symbolic emblems of the state.

These four anthems are quoted in Amanecer en los Jardines de España (Sunrise in the Gardens of Spain), composed in 1937 by Ernesto Halffter. Halffter was in Lisbon when the Spanish Civil War started and expressed his support for Franco’s side from this city (Silva 2010). Commissioned by the National Delegation of Press and Propaganda, this piece was included in an album alongside a speech by Franco (Contreras Zubillaga, 2021). The title of the work is inspired by Noche en los jardines de España, by his mentor Manuel de Falla. Amanecer en los Jardines de España follows a clear narrative related to the Civil War. It begins with the funeral sequence Dies Irae, rendered pianissimo by the brass section in a low tessitura, representing the death of the Second Republic, and ends with a
climax on the notes of the “Marcha granadera,” the emblem of the New Spain, led by a solo violin, representing the “leader” around which all other instruments should rally in a “new light” of orchestral clarity.

Despite the pre-eminent role of the “Marcha granadera” in Halffter’s work, and despite claims made in the February 1937 decree regarding the rise of a popular and spontaneous expression of support in favour of the new anthem, this tune was practically absent during the initial months of the Civil War. Rather, the dominant anthem in the rebel camp during the mobilization brought about by the coup was “Cara al sol” (Cruz 2005, 170), which continued to compete with the “Marcha granadera” to become Spain's national anthem. A telling incident occurred on March 1, 1937, during the official “re-premiere” of the national anthem: after the Italian ambassador Roberto Cantalupo presented his credentials in Salamanca, Franco stood on the balcony to salute the crowd, while the music band began playing the “Marcha granadera.” At this moment, a group of Falangists began to sing “Cara al sol” loudly (Vegas Latapié 1987, 157–58). The official press did not comment on the incident. The conservative and monarchist newspaper ABC, in fact, recounted the emotion of the audience as they reportedly heard the “Marcha granadera” being restored as the official anthem (Anon. 1937a, 9–11).

A few months later, however, the same newspaper covered another incident concerning the “Marcha granadera,” in Seville this time (Anon. 1937b, 11). The success of the July 17 coup in Seville represented a great symbolic victory for the rebels given its status as capital of Andalusia and its revolutionary history (Jackson 1965, 237). According to ABC, at the end of a concert in which the national anthem was played, a young lady noticed that one member of the audience did not stand up and raise his right arm. When she invited him to do so and show due respect, he claimed to have an injured foot as an excuse. After other people and, finally, the authorities intervened, it became clear that the man’s intention was simply to disobey the order to stand up and make the fascist salute (April 25, 1937 [BOE 1937b]).

The veiled criticism of this kind of behavior in the press, and its insistent calls to comply with the government’s orders and show respect for the national anthem, suggests that these incidents were not exceptional. ABC repeatedly published a message under the heading “Respect for the national anthem.” According to the note, the “Spanish” and “traditional” nature of the “Crusade”—the name with which the Spanish Catholic Church referred to the Civil War to legitimize the cause of Franco’s side—required that no anthem other than the “Marcha granadera” should be sung, and implied that doing otherwise was tantamount to showing contempt for Spain. The text exhorted all Spaniards to not only listen
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to the national anthem standing and with due respect but also to become its zealous guardians too, and to impose respect on those who, “owing to cynicism, rebelliousness or spiritual weakness,” disrespected the anthem (Anon. 1937c, 9). The number of times this message was published in a newspaper as widely read as was ABC during the summer of 1937—no less than fifteen—suggests that the July incident regarding the “Marcha granadera” was not a mere anecdote.

Members of the fascist-oriented Falange party clearly expressed their opposition to the new anthem. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, there existed significant ideological differences among the political groups that participated in and supported the coup against the government of the Second Spanish Republic. These differences pointed to the very heart of the definition of Spain and could be summed up in the binary opposition restoration/revolution. According to Zira Box (2010, 30), these differences translated into a fight between attempts to politicize religion, championed by the monarchical sectors, the conservative right, and the Church, on one side, and a Falangist project of sacralization of the nation on the other. The militants of the Falange were not willing to accept a hymn historically linked to the monarchy, to which, moreover, some attributed a foreign origin, alleging that it was originally a gift from the King of Prussia to Spain’s Charles III.

The most common way to express contempt for the national anthem by some Falangists was to remain seated and to refuse to perform the fascist salute. An order given to the Sección Femenina (Female Section, the women’s branch of the Falange), intercepted by military censers in March 1937, explicitly commanded members not to show any respect for the “Marcha granadera,” arguing that the Falange recognized no anthem but “Cara al sol.” The note forbade members of the Sección Femenina from standing up for, “let alone saluting,” any other anthem (Rodríguez Jiménez 2000, 271). The Falange’s resistance towards the “Marcha granadera” contrasted with the scarce hostility it showed towards the imposition by Franco’s government of the red and yellow flag, which did not prompt the Falange to defend its own red and black flag. This different attitude suggests that the Falange attached to “Cara al sol” substantially more symbolic value than to the flag. In contrast to the red and black flag, which was a legacy of the fascist organization Unión de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista (with which Falange merged in 1934), “Cara al sol” had been created by a group of intellectuals that included José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange turned into “martyr” after being imprisoned by the Republicans and shot in November 1936.

The different versions of the process that led to the composition of “Cara al sol” all stress the role played by José Antonio in its composition. They corrobo-rate the story according to which the Spanish fascist anthem was the result of
a meeting that came to gain legendary status within the Falangist imagination (Suárez-Pajares 2016). According to Falangist writer Agustín de Foxá (1906–1959), who co-authored the lyrics, several party members asked José Antonio to write an anthem they could sing after their rallies. The latter summoned several Falangist writer-friends to pen the lyrics for a march that had been composed by Juan Tellería (1895–1949).

The result is an anthem that summarizes Falangist values close to fascism, such as national character, youth, the cult of the leader and the fallen, and the palingenetic myth of the nation being reborn after a period of decadence. According to de Foxá, the sun in the title and the opening verse symbolizes the direct, ardent, and impetuous character of Falangists: “We do everything under the light of the sun; that’s the way you go to war, with the sun on your face, without blinking; that’s the way we look at Spanish history blinding us” (1939). The reference in the lyrics to “The shirt that was yesterday embroidered in red” contained an oblique allusion to the two most important women in every young male Falangist’s life: his mother and his girlfriend, comrades in the struggle. The line “Death will find me, and I shall not see you again” summarized José Antonio’s notion of death: “the hero does not seek death, as one commits suicide. He simply accepts it as part of his duty. Because Falange’s military ethos is to look at death face to face, and to give one’s life for the Motherland” (de Foxá 1939). The stars in the second stanza—“I shall stand next to my stern comrades who stand guard over the stars, and are always present in our toils”—are a metaphoric reference to fallen Falangists standing guard in heaven. The line “If they tell you that I fell, I shall be at my post there,” describes the destiny awaiting all Falangists: to join the host of the fallen, who remain close to the living. These lines were followed by José Antonio’s prophetic verses—“Victorious flags will return with the happy stroll of peace”—reflecting a prescient intuition of Franco’s sword, which would bring victory to the national-syndicalist cause. Victory, however, could not be achieved without pain, death and, finally, resurrection: “Pain opens the door to life,” wrote de Foxá, just as “the soil must be broken up to reap its harvest.” The five arrow-like roses, the organization’s emblem, were the symbol of the “generous and fertile” blood spilt by heroic Falangists. The final verses—“The spring, coming from the sky, the earth and the sea, will laugh again. Get up squads! To victory! In Spain, the sun is coming out!”—foretell the triumph of national-syndicalism and the coming of a new age of peace and happiness, far from “the sad nostalgic autumns of liberal romanticism” and the “hard winters of Moscow,” in De Foxá’s words.

“Cara al sol” was a collective work that bore the signature of the fallen leader and represented the whole Falangist imaginary. “Cara al sol” could be sung with
raised arms by the ecstatic crowd, satisfying fascism’s emphasis on the aesthetic of mass events and ceremonial symbols. As such, it was difficult for the Falangists to accept that “Cara al sol” could play only a secondary role, especially relative to a march without lyrics whose only prop seemed to be tradition. The Falange aspired to turn its own symbols into the emblems of the New State, following the example of Fascist Italy and especially Nazi Germany.

The Re-Symbolization of the National Anthem

The Falange’s attitude towards the “Marcha granadera” questioned Franco’s authority, or at least so the government thought. The fascist radicalism of the Falange, so different from the Catholic, traditionalist leanings of the other forces integrating the government, adding to its revolutionary and violent style, and its cult of the state that bordered on “paganism,” deeply worried all the other members of the counter-revolutionary coalition in the government. Franco’s government did not remain idle before the Falangist challenge. The government launched a strategic propaganda campaign to defend the notion that the “Marcha granadera” represented, above all, Spain, and in this way sought to reduce any hostility towards the anthem and to consolidate its position. As a result of this propaganda, the anthem stopped being called the “Marcha real” and was no longer associated with the monarchy, becoming instead a symbol of “eternal” and “natural” Spain. This move was also a way to suppress any monarchist enthusiasm that might try to restore the King after the war. The French monarchist aristocrat Auguste de Beaupoil (Count of Saint-Aulaire) still believed in 1938 that Franco aspired only to act as a regent for the duration of the hostilities, and that the restoration of the red and yellow flag and the “Marcha real” were unequivocal signs of Franco’s will to restore the monarchy (Beaupoil 1938, 272–73). Nothing could be further from the truth: the dictator was concerned only with consolidating his power. The monarchic groups on Franco’s side were in the minority among a coalition of forces that had little if any interest in restoring the monarchy at the end of the war.

The government enjoyed the support of the Jesuit composer and musicologist Nemesio Otaño. Most of his career as an organist and choir conductor was devoted to religious music and to implementing in Spain the reform of religious music commissioned by Pius X in 1903 (García Sánchez 2009). He was arrested and jailed after the coup and set free following the swift victory of the rebels in Guipúzcoa. Following this episode, the National Delegation of Press and Propaganda used his expertise in military music, which was another of his specialities, along with folklore. In a letter to the director of the Orfeón
Donostiarra, Juan Gorostidi, Otaño claimed that Franco had requested his services to gather support for the national anthem (Otaño 1936). Few people knew the “Marcha granadera” as well as Otaño. In 1921, to mark the bringing of El Cid’s remains to the Burgos Cathedral, he wrote a version of the march for choir and orchestra. Alfonso XIII, who was in attendance, commissioned him to write a study about Spanish military music. This job led him to visit numerous archives and libraries, where he amassed a large volume of musical examples that, he claimed, had been submitted to the military authorities, and that he was asked to use in order to make the “Marcha granadera” more popular. Otaño revealed to his friend, Juan Gorostidi, that the hostility of the Falange towards the “Marcha Granadera” had forced Franco “to act carefully” (1936). Gorostidi wanted the issue of the anthem to be settled “spontaneously” by the majority of the population.

Far from leaving the matter to popular “spontaneous” support, Franco wanted to control public opinion through the propaganda campaign led by Otaño from late 1936 onwards, which included radio broadcasts and press articles. According to Otaño, the strategy worked. As he told Gorostidi, the misgivings of those who opposed the march receded thanks to the dissemination of his articles highlighting its military origins, and those who had criticized its monarchical links no longer dared to express their dissent openly (Otaño 1936).

Otaño set great store by giving public talks and concerts, which he organized carefully, aiming to avoid that they be regarded as a barefaced exercise in propaganda around the national anthem. His strategy was “to take things slowly,” weaving a historical account of military marches from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century and presenting musical examples that were well received thanks to their “historical importance and singular character” (Otaño 1936). The “Marcha granadera” was an “historical landmark,” the pinnacle of this account, in which the Jesuit emphasized the eighteenth-century origin and military associations of the march while side-lining its links to the Bourbon monarchy and the name “Marcha real.” At an event of the Orfeón Donostiarra, Otaño claimed, without entering into deeper political considerations, that the “Marcha granadera” was historically legitimized and had a proven military and ceremonial record. He added that the recovery of the march was a homage to those who had been persecuted by the Republic and all the victims of “red” repression, because it had been forbidden by the forces of the “revolution” (Otaño 1937a).

Otaño propagated these arguments through a number of public talks in different cities under the control of Franco’s troops, in which the musical examples were illustrated by choirs and orchestras. Otaño was even planning a tour of
Portugal and Spain (Otaño 1937b). These events not only served as acts of propaganda around the anthem, but they also openly proselytized in support of Franco. In fact, the final act in these talks was always reserved for the anthem “¡Franco!, ¡Franco!,” which included elements from the “Marcha granadera” (Contreras Zubillaga, 2021). In this way, a clear association was established between the ideal of “restoring” Spain and the cult of the Generalísimo, which was then on the rise, using the prestige of the “Marcha granadera” to exalt his personality and reinforce his charisma. From the moment he was appointed leader of the rebels, Franco had played with the symbolic associations surrounding his figure, such as the red and yellow flag and the national anthem, to increase his popularity. He ordered that his photograph be shown in all cinemas while the anthem was played. Franco identified himself with the nation subliminally, posing as the saviour of Spain and the embodiment of its virtues. This propaganda complemented his speeches, the newspaper stories that glorified his figure, his radio broadcasts, and the documentaries made about him (Sevillano 2010, 61–64; Zenobi 2011, 256–57).

**Paradoxes of the National Anthem in Early Francoist Spain**

In the wake of the Civil War, the regime’s apologists continued to present the “Marcha granadera” as an historical embodiment of Spain with no attachments to the monarchy. In his early work about the meaning of national symbols, published in 1941, the pro-Franco politician Antonio María de Puelles y Puelles insisted it was a mistake to link the anthem to the Crown because the march paid homage to God and people of non-royal status long before it became associated with the monarchy (Puelles y Puelles 1941, 179). The Falange’s rejection of the march continued, although their demonstrations became less loud and frequent over time. A decree passed in July 1942 ordered that the anthem’s pre-eminence be respected at all times (BOE 1942). This evidence ties in with Otaño’s disappointment at what he thought was the authorities’ disregard for the march once hostilities had come to an end. In the preface to his *Toques de guerra del ejército español* (*War Tunes of the Spanish Army*), Otaño wrote that the “Marcha granadera” had not achieved real status as an anthem because it could not be sung, as it had no official lyrics (Otaño 1939, x). He asked the competent authorities to provide lyrics with the greatest urgency (Otaño 1940a; 1940b).

As Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas have pointed out, the search for lyrics for the anthem became an intermittent obsession from the early twentieth
century onwards, until today, when the Spanish anthem continues to be one of the very few with no lyrics (2013, 66). Otaño had proposed a text in which God was asked to protect Spain. Of all the available lyrics, however, those by José María Pemán were the most popular by some distance. They are an adaptation of those he wrote in 1928 for General Primo de Rivera. They begin with a sonorous hail to Spain and mix the glorification of Spain’s imperial past (“through the blue of the sea / the route of the sun”) with Spain’s resurgence, through a reference to the Falangist salute (“raise your arms, sons of Spain,” instead of “raise your heads,” as in the 1928 lyrics). Moreover, they expressed solidarity for the labourers responsible for the country’s reconstruction (“anvils and bearings sing together”), an endeavor presided over by God (“new anthems of faith”). The lyrics, therefore, combined classic topos in Spanish nationalist discourse, such as the imperial past and colonialism in America, with the call for a new beginning, which was characteristic of the rhetoric of contemporary fascist regimes. The changes introduced by Pemán in his lyrics—and the aforementioned order mandating the fascist salute while listening to the national anthem (BOE 1937b)—were evidence that the government’s counter-revolutionary coalition underwent a process of increased Fascist influence under the sway of the Falange. The latter, for its part, softened its radicalism and opened itself somewhat to the influence of Catholicism, a move which was critical for it to survive in the government.

According to the textbooks, generations of Spaniards raised under Francoism had to sing the anthem with Pemán’s lyrics at school. Learning the anthem was part of the subject “Formation of the National Spirit,” which was in force until the enactment of the General Education Act in August 1970. The fact that these lyrics were never officially imposed by law or decree, however, raises some doubts about the obligation to sing and to learn them. Once all power was unified around the figure of the dictator, Franco and his supporters ceased to use the anthem to gain followers for the regime. This role was left to “Cara al sol” until the final days of the regime and even beyond it. The long-lasting Franco dictatorship drew its legitimacy from the use of a set of symbols that were combined in various ways: the military, monarchist marches, the exaltation of the dictator, historical reminiscences of the Civil War, the fusion of the State’s ideology with Catholicism, and Falangist paraphernalia. The national emblems that had been re-signified during the war became identified with Franco and his regime during the authorities’ trips, rallies in support of the regime, popular festivities, and sports events.
Conclusions

Despite these obstacles, the “Marcha granadera” ended up representing Franco’s Spain for nearly four decades. This and later debates about its adoption by the democratic regime that followed the death of Franco in 1975 have overshadowed the intricate process that led to its institutionalization. The success of a symbol that represents the Spanish nation still today makes it difficult to imagine that the anthem was at the center of an intense negotiation through which different factions tried to shape the incipient regime following the Civil War.

In this chapter, I have brought this process of institutionalization to the foreground and have examined the dynamics underlying it. The “Marcha granadera” was not spontaneously adopted by the masses that rallied behind the “national” cause but was accepted by the majority only by legal mandate. There was no voluntary and spontaneous consensus but rather a premeditated strategy to impose the “Marcha” as the national anthem. The regime’s master stroke was to sever the links between the march and the Crown, presenting the “Marcha granadera” as the natural symbolic embodiment of Spain. This severance was not accidental but rather was meant to undermine the monarchists’ prominent position following the coup; to identify the dictator with traditional national symbols; and to legitimize a regime that was not only not a monarchy but, in fact, replaced it symbolically in several ways.

The process that led to the imposition of the anthem during the Civil War acted as a backdrop to the political struggles that characterized the regime until the end in different ways. The central players in this struggle over the anthem were the Falangists. As one of the main factions within the movement, the Falangists sternly resisted sanctioning a symbol that they did not see as their own. Thus, the history of the national anthem expresses the heterogeneity of the National Movement and is a privileged window through which to examine the conflicts and internal dynamics of the regime.

Notes

1. A coalition of Catholic right-wing parties under the CEDA (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas).

2. The rebels reinstated the two-colored flag (red and yellow), to the detriment of the Second Republic’s three-colored version (red, yellow, and purple). The purple had been added in remembrance of Castile’s Comuneros, one of Spanish liberals’ favourite myths.

3. Amanecer en los jardines de España by Ernesto Halffter, Columbia C 3901/3810–3. The other side of the record contains Franco’s “Alocución a la Nueva España” (“Address to the New Spain”).
4. The city of Pamplona, in which Carlists and the “Alfonsist” monarchists were in the majority, was the exception to this situation during the July 18 coup, when the use of the “Marcha granadera” was widespread (Box 2010, 301).

5. According to Albano García Sánchez, Otaño was obsessed about achieving public prominence. One should be wary of this claim that the dictator had been personally involved in his appointment (2015, 341).

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