

A COMPARISON OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND THE RISE OF  
FASCISM IN ITALY AND GERMANY

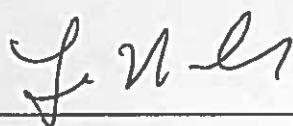
By

Garrick Alexander Dickson

Concentration: History

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts in Social Sciences

Approved by:



Dr. Leo Gruber, Committee Chair

7-27-2020

Date



Dr. Jerra Jenrette, Committee Member

7/27/20

Date



Prof. Amanda Frantz-Mamani, Committee Member

7-27-20

Date

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The interwar period between the First and Second World Wars in Europe is a fascinating period of study for a political and military historian. The period saw some of the most radical changes to the European map since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and the peace that established this period led to a general dissatisfaction with the political status quo. It was a period that saw the old guard being swept away, with new ideologies rising to challenge the political norms of liberalism and socialism. Italy and Germany are the two major countries that spring to mind when one thinks of ideological change during this time. Both saw a rise in the far-right that ultimately allowed those fringe organizations to seize power, but they were not the only major European countries to experience social upheaval before the Second World War. Spain, while neutral during the First World War, could not escape the changes or problems sweeping across Europe. However, whereas the Italian far-right and German far-right obtained their power through the established political systems in those countries, Spain ignited into a three-year-long civil war that saw anywhere between two hundred and fifty thousand to a million people killed. This horrific conflict, itself a prelude to World War II, ended with the overthrow of the Second Spanish Republic and the creation of an authoritarian regime under Francisco Franco. Why did such a violent and ruinous war occur in Spain, but not in Italy or Germany?

To answer this question is the purpose of this thesis. In order to do so, it becomes necessary to examine what historic, political, economic, and social influences contributed to the Nationalist and Republican schism in Spain, and then comparing these influences to those that sparked the rise of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the prior decades.

As separate entities, each of the regimes under discussion in this paper have been subjected to extensive academic research, whether that be large overarching studies of the individual regimes or a concentration on one specific aspect of their rise to power. More so than any other, Nazi Germany and the rise of Hitler have captured both the majority of academic curiosity and public attention. It can be hard to resist studying the Nazis considering the staggering atrocities they committed in their pursuit of power, and the scope of Hitler's ambitions for Europe. Mussolini and Fascist Italy, as the junior partner to Hitler during World War II, have received plenty of research, especially by political scientists and historians that have been interested in where fascism first became a fully voiced philosophy. Franco's rise to power during the Spanish Civil War, and the formation of his political power base, may be overshadowed in history and international public attention by the eruption of the Second World War in 1939, but it has similarly been analyzed by historians for decades.

Prominent modern historians on Germany such as Richard Evans and Rainer Zitelmann have focused primarily on the background of the Nazis and attempting to isolate what specific events allowed Hitler to gain power in the dying days of the

Weimar Republic. Evans, in his *The Coming of the Third Reich: How the Nazis Destroyed Democracy and Seized Power in Germany*, takes a holistic approach to determining the issues the Nazis exploited. Political and socio-economic issues are his main focus, and the root of his argument that the Nazis and their leader were masters of capitalizing on a crisis, or if one did not exist, in creating one.<sup>1</sup> Zitelmann, as an example of a historian that has focused on an extremely specific aspect to Hitler's rise, argues in his work, *Hitler: The Policies of Seduction*, that the Nazis, specifically Hitler, had this dream of a modernized Germany that was on the leading edge of technology, and this is what allowed him to attract such a powerful following.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, Italian historians that focus on the rise of fascism in the 1920s typically debate the major problem that ultimately allowed Mussolini and his fascists to gain such widespread support and power. Historians have developed three different hypotheses, or schools of thought, on what ultimately helped the Fascists gain an edge over their political opponents. The first school of thought is encapsulated in the argument presented by Martin Blinkhorn in his book *Mussolini and Fascist Italy*. Blinkhorn argues that the dire economic conditions in Italy following the Great War allowed Mussolini and his followers to present themselves as the only party with solutions to the crisis while presenting their opponents as mired in old and failed ideas.<sup>3</sup> Dennis Mack Smith, in *Mussolini: A Biography*, summarizes the second

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: Penguins Books, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Rainer Zitelmann, *Hitler: The Policies of Seduction* (London: Allison & Busby, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Martin Blinkhorn, *Mussolini and Fascist Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

theory that, much like Hitler and the Nazis would do a decade later, Mussolini and the Fascists gained power by exploiting the unstable political situation and weakness of the different and short-lived liberal governments.<sup>4</sup> The third theory takes a more narrow approach by focusing on the weakness of King Victor Emmanuel and how his fear and Mussolini's bullying personality overshadowed the monarch. A masterful example of this argument exists in Tobias Abse's essay "The Rise of Fascism in an Industrial City," as he shows how Milan and northern Italy became the focal point of this new movement and how Emmanuel's hands-off policy in dealing with the new upstarts and his fear of Mussolini's march on Rome prompted his decision to appoint the man as prime minister.<sup>5</sup> Each of these schools of thought showcase a different aspect of the influences that can play a role in any government's rise or fall in *Rethinking Italian Fascism*.

The study of the Spanish Civil War has been dominated since the 1970s by the debate over which side is responsible for the brutality of the war, and more importantly, who bears ultimate responsibility for the mass atrocities that occurred. Two schools of thought have emerged regarding the Spanish Civil War. Julian Casanova's work, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, argues that because the right rose up in rebellion with the military, they are ultimately to blame for the conflict while the Republicans were trying to preserve order.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to Casanova's point,

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<sup>4</sup> Dennis Mack Smith, *Mussolini: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> Tobias Abse, "The Rise of Fascism in an Industrial City," *Rethinking Italian Fascism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Julian Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Stanley Payne's *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic* argues that the Spanish left had not constructed a stable parliamentary system and had striven to exclude the right and centrist political opinions. Payne also argues that the actions taken by key leaders such as Manuel Azana of the Republicans accelerated the eruption of war.<sup>7</sup>

What seems to be missing in the historiography of fascism and the three primary nations that embraced that ideology are works that compare and contrast all three simultaneously in a holistic manner. In the course of research for this paper, it quickly became apparent that many comparisons only would focus on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, to the general sidelining or brief overview of Nationalist Spain. A previously mentioned author, Stanley Payne, one of the foremost writers on the Spanish Civil War, wrote an essay for Tel Aviv University that only took into consideration Italy and Spain, but excluded Germany.<sup>8</sup> The essay is a strong comparison and examination of the relationship between Italy and Spain during the civil war and during the Second World War, while also taking into consideration their respective political backgrounds. Another work, the *Anatomy of Fascism* by Robert Paxton, compares and examines Germany and Italy in regard to the ideologic development of their respective fascist movements. In the course of his monograph, Paxton only touches upon Spain and other lesser fascist movements as examples to show how much weaker their movements were than those in Italy and Germany.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Stanley Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Stanley Payne, "Fascist Italy and Spain, 1922-1945" *Mediterranean Historical Review* 13, (June 1998): 99-115, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518969808569738>.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage, 2005).

Besides examining monographs and essays for three-way comparisons, the background research for this paper also touched into university courses devoted to fascism. One in particular, Comparative Fascism: Italy, Germany, and Spain, from NYC Madrid outlines an intensive course in understanding fascist theory while examining the different fascist movements created in the twentieth century. However, only two class periods were designated to touch upon Spain while a good majority of the course outline seems devoted to Italy and Germany.<sup>10</sup>

In the course of the research for this paper and historiography, a few works found, such as the essay “Fascism in Italy, Germany, and Spain,” by Jitendra Kuman go into the history of each country, and the rise of fascism, but they do not compare the three together.<sup>11</sup> Other works found, such as an essay by Jonathan Dunnage titled “Political Right-Wing Dictatorships: Some Preliminary Comparisons of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Franco’s Spain,” compare the three nations but in a narrow way. Dunnage, for example, focuses on the role of police in the political violence of each nation and the expansion of secret police organizations such as the Gestapo as a means to control the population.<sup>12</sup> Another essay by Paul Ginsborg titled “Family Politics: Domestic Life, Devastation and Survival 1900-1950,” examines how the

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<sup>10</sup> Francisco Seijo, “Comparative Fascism: Italy, Germany, Spain,” (Syllabus, NYU Madrid, 2018).  
<https://www.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu/univPrgms/documents/summer/CAS%20Summer%20Abroad/Sample%20Syllabi/2019/2019-Summer-in-Madrid/SampleSyllabus2018-MadridHIST-UA9290-Seijo.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Jitendra Kuman, “Fascism in Italy, Germany, and Spain,” (University of Delhi, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Dunnage, “Policing Right-Wing Dictatorships: Some Preliminary Comparisons of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Franco’s Spain,” *Crime, History & Societies*, 2006.



lives of families changed under totalitarian regimes such as the three nations central to this paper, but also the Soviet Union and Turkey.<sup>13</sup>

Because of this lack of all-inclusive and broad comparisons, this author makes use of political documents such as the constitutions and laws created by the regimes and manifestos created during the time period in question. In addition to these political primary sources, secondary sources such as monographs, journal entries, and essays are used to construct background knowledge of the rise of each fascist government and to complement the primary resources and how those documents altered the political landscape of each country.

In addition to the sources relegated for each country, it was important to find sources to examine fascism as an ideology by itself and its development and characteristics. Like many other ideologies, such as liberalism, communism, Marxism, and so on, an agreed upon definition of fascism is almost impossible to create. Every interpretation of fascism is different, varying from one state to another, creating the issue where any definition is too narrow or too broad. Benito Mussolini himself described fascism by saying, “the Fascist conception of the State is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value. Thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian.”<sup>14</sup> This statement is one of the accepted traits of fascism by scholars: the authoritarian regime. However, not all authoritarian

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Ginsborg, “Family Politics: Domestic Life, Devastation and Survival 1900-1950” (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Benito Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism,” accessed July 23, 2020, <http://faculty.smu.edu/bkcarter/THE%20DOCTRINE%20OF%20FASCISM.doc>.

regimes are fascist. Sergio Panunzio, a former syndicalist and associate of Mussolini, stated that “the spirit of fascism was National Syndicalism.”<sup>15</sup> National Syndicalism is the idea that labor workers and industrial leaders in a country would band together in a mass general strike to bring about the end of the liberal democratic system, and then reconstruct society and government around a strong national focus and imperialistic tendencies. National Syndicalism, as it formed in Italy, was opposed to the ideas of international cooperation and favored a robust militarism and nationalism to guide both foreign and domestic economic policies. Many National Syndicalists, such as Mussolini and Panunzio, would go on to become fascist leaders and thinkers following the end of the First World War.

What constitutes the determining factors of a fascist regime varies from scholar to scholar, even if the aforementioned are generally the starting foundation for a developing fascist regime. Umberto Eco, a cultural theorist from Italy, argues there are fourteen general properties of fascist ideology. These properties are: the cult of tradition, the rejection of modernism, the cult of action for action’s sake, disagreement is treason, fear of difference, appeal to a frustrated middle class, obsession with a plot, rhetoric that the enemy is both too strong and too weak, pacifism is trafficking with the enemy, contempt for the weak, everybody is educated to become a hero, machismo, selective populism, and newspeak.<sup>16</sup> He also argues there is no possible way for these properties to form into a coherent system, but that a

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<sup>15</sup> Sergio Panunzio, “La meta del Fascismo,” *Il Popolo d’Italia*, 1925, quoted in Roger Griffin, *Fascism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 46.

<sup>16</sup> Umberto Eco, “Eternal Fascism” (*The New York Review of Books*, June 1995).

fascist system can form around even just one of them.<sup>17</sup> Emilio Gentile, an Italian historian specializing in fascism, argues there are ten constituent elements to fascism. Gentile's elements of fascism are: a mass movement with multiclass membership, an anti-ideological platform that is antimaterialist, anti-individualist, antiliberal, antidemocratic, etc. that is also populist in tendency, a culture founded on mystical thought, a totalitarian conception of politics, a civil ethic founded on total dedication to the national community, a single state party that also provides for the armed defense of the regime, a repressive police apparatus, a political system organized by hierarchy, a cooperative organization of the economy that suppresses labor unions and consolidates key industries under the regime, and an imperialistic foreign policy.<sup>18</sup>

Another theorist that attempts to form a comprehensive list of fascism components or categories is Dimitri Kitsikis, a Greek Turkologist and Sinologist. Kitsikis argues that fascism can be identified through analyzing these categories: the idea of class and the importance of agrarianism, the extent of private ownership and circulation of the economy, the difference between a nation and state, the attitudes towards democracy and political parties, the importance of a charismatic leader, and the attitudes towards tradition, the individual's role in society, equality and hierarchy,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Emilio Gentile, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 5-6.

women, religion, rationalism, intellectualism and elitism, and their opinions on the Third World.<sup>19</sup>

Stanley G. Payne, a historian of fascism, structured another list of possible characteristics that might identify fascism. The characteristics he lists are broken down into three sections: Ideology and Goals, the Fascist Negations, and Style and Organization.<sup>20</sup> Under Ideology and Goals, traits such as the espousal of an idealist and vitalist philosophy to create a new modern culture, the creation of a new nationalist authoritarian state, reorganization of the economy, willingness to use war and violence, and imperialism, are found. Fascist Negations is relatively straightforward as it includes the rejection of all other ideologies such as liberalism, communism, and conservatism. Style and Organization include the attempted mass mobilization to create a party militia, emphasis on emotional and mystical symbolism, emphasis on masculine domination, focus on the youth to affect the initial political transformation, and the tendency to an authoritarian and charismatic style of command.<sup>21</sup>

Other theorists, such as Roger Griffin, a historian and political scientist, do not have a specific checklist such as Umberto, Kitsikis, or Gentile, but they do have what they believe is a definition of what constitutes fascism. Griffin, having formed his definition from a 1990s consensus of social sciences, argues that:

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<sup>19</sup> Dimitri Kitsikis, *The Third Ideology* (Athens: Hestia Books, 1998), 12-20.

<sup>20</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

Fascism is a genuinely revolutionary, trans-class form of anti-liberal nationalism. As such is it an ideology deeply bound up with modernization and modernity, one which has assumed a considerable variety of external forms to adapt itself to the particular historical and national context in which it appears ... In the inter-war period it manifested itself primarily in the form of an elite-led “armed party” which attempted, mostly unsuccessfully, to generate a populist mass movement ... to end the degeneration affecting the nation under liberalism, and to bring about a radical renewal of its social, political, and cultural life...<sup>22</sup>

In essence, Griffin says that the above can be condensed into one sentence; “Fascism is a political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palligenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.”<sup>23</sup>

For this thesis, a coherent definition needs to be followed to guide the narrative being presented. In that regard, several components of the aforementioned scholars combine into a more streamlined definition presented here. The first trait of this definition will be the universally agreed upon distinction of an authoritarian or totalitarian government. The second trait is a vocal and charismatic leader that can unite the various factions within the far-right and right wing of the political spectrum into a cohesive movement and political party. The third trait is an idealization of the military and imperialism, and the glorification of strength and heroism to the Nation as a state. The fourth trait will be a central control over various aspects of the economy, particularly those of the military-industrial complex as a means to strengthen the military and the imperialistic foreign policy. The fifth trait is a

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Griffin and Alessandro Campi (ed.), “The Palingenetic Core of generic fascist ideology,” *Che cose’ il fascismo? Interpretazioni e prospettive di ricerche* (Ideazione Editrice, 2003), 97-122.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

persuasive propaganda machine that influences significant portions of the general population to believe in the power of the leader or the single state party, while also entrenching traditional gender roles. The sixth trait is the government's use of repressive means, up to and including violence, to suppress political challenges and threats to the regime. The seventh trait is the creation of a nebulous "Other" that has contributed to or supposedly created the problems that the nation as a whole has been dealing with and the new regime feels it must eliminate, whether that be internal or external peoples or rival countries in the world. The eighth trait is a rejection or significant alteration of the ideologies typically associated with the left, such as socialism and Marxism, and the center, such as liberal democracies and republics.

Each of these traits alone might not be enough to create a fascist state, or explain how one might form within a nation, but together they are a brief list that makes it easier for the general population to grasp what constitutes fascism. For the purposes of this paper, the definition of fascism is: an authoritarian party or government with a central powerful leader that embraces a militant nationalism in their mission to eliminate their perceived enemies, and espouses their philosophies through the use of propaganda against a nebulous "Other". With a definition established, and as a means to begin answering the overarching question of this thesis, it becomes vital to examine the rise of each regime in question. Italy, as the first nation to embrace fascism, will be examined first.

## Chapter II

### Rise of Fascism in Italy

If there is a single common underlying reason for why fascism and nationalism began to take root in Europe, one need only look as far as the First World War. Then known as the Great War, or the War to End All Wars, the First World War saw a fundamental transformation in the power balance of Europe, both internationally as several nations underwent radical changes or reduction and internally with political upheaval born from discontent with how the war was fought and resolved.

Like all Great Powers in Europe, Italy became involved in the First World War. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, when Austria-Hungary invaded Serbia, Italy was in a defensive alliance known as the Triple Alliance with the German Empire and the chief aggressor of the war, Austria.<sup>24</sup> Secretly, Italy had also entered into an agreement with France that each would remain neutral in an attack upon one or the other. Because of the nature of the treaties between the European powers, Italy initially elected to stay neutral in the conflict as it needed to appraise what side of the war would benefit it the most and resolve the political dialogue occurring in the Kingdom of Italy. Anti-interventionism was running high on the Italian peninsula, most prevalently seen in the months leading up to the war. The left side of the

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<sup>24</sup> *Germany History in Documents and Images*, "The Triple Alliance, 1882," GHDI, accessed July 23, 2020, <http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/subdocument.cfm?documentid=1860>.

political spectrum was generally in favor of staying out of the brewing conflict, with Italian socialists preaching for national pacifism. In June of 1914, the socialists had organized various acts of civil disobedience in protest of the government killing three anti-militarist demonstrators.<sup>25</sup> The far-right, encapsulated in the militarist nationalist movement, supported entry into the emerging conflict in Europe. There were several street-level clashes, the first of many, between the socialists and nationalists that were broken up when King Victor Emmanuel III dispatched the army to restore order. By August of 1914, the debate shifted to which side Italy should join. Socialists argued for approaching the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia as a way to reclaim Italian lands controlled by Austria-Hungary. Nationalists wanted to preserve the alliance with Germany and Austria and fight against the French to recover possessions taken from the Italians in North Africa. During this period of debate, one significant event occurred that would change the course of Italian history and steer it towards the inevitable rise of fascism.

A young rising star in the Italian Socialist Party, Benito Mussolini had become one of the more outspoken socialists in Italy. A prolific writer of essays and newspaper articles, the young Mussolini was in charge of the Socialist Party's newspaper *Avanti!*<sup>26</sup> Initially, Mussolini was for Italy remaining neutral in the war raging in France, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe. However, he began to listen to and agree with anti-Austrian sentiments coming from other wings of the socialists and

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Clark, *Modern Italy: 1871-1982* (Harlow: Longman, 1984), 180.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Delzell, ed., *Mediterranean Fascism 1919-1945* (New York: Walker and Company, 1971), 4.



eventually declared his support for the war.<sup>27</sup> Mussolini advocated for the overthrow of the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns, the royal families in Austria and Germany respectively, and desired to see Italy take back cities and regions like Trento and Trieste from the Austrians to complete the reunification of Italy begun in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> Mussolini's stance on intervention brought him into conflict with the leaders of the Socialist Party and other socialists that opposed the war. He began to attack and criticize these opponents openly, and in November of 1914, he was expelled from the party.<sup>29</sup>

Following his expulsion, Mussolini underwent a radical change in ideology. Believing the socialists' ideas were flawed and outdated, he began the creation and consolidation of views into a new political ideology. He fully embraced the ideas of revolutionary nationalism, rejecting his earlier ideas that the nation did not exist. In a speech he gave, he declared that "The nation has not disappeared. We used to believe that the concept was totally without substance. Instead we see the nation arise as a palpitating reality before us!"<sup>30</sup> Mussolini further rejected the idea of class conflict, instead coming to believe that a revolutionary vanguard cannot come just from the proletariat, but must come from all parts of society.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Emil Ludwig, *Nine Etched from Life* (Manchester, NH: Ayer Company, 1989), 321.

<sup>28</sup> Ludwig, 321.

<sup>29</sup> Delzell, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Anthony Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 191.

<sup>31</sup> Gregor, 192.

To espouse upon his new ideas, and advocate for the war effort, he founded the newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* in October of 1914 with himself as editor-in-chief.<sup>32</sup> In addition to his newspaper, Mussolini created the *Fasci Rivoluzionari d'Azione Internazionalista*. Mussolini received monetary support from the Entente and Italian companies that stood to profit from the country going to war, with neither financier caring what he wrote as long as he helped bring Italy into the war.<sup>33</sup> Even as the small movement was starting to form, it came into conflict with the socialists, with the anti-interventionists reacting with levels of violence that even other socialists began to decry. These attacks on the fledgling fascist movement shaped how Mussolini and the fascists viewed the use of political force, leading to a widespread embrace of such measures.

Mussolini, like other militarists, joined the Italian army as Italy entered the war in 1915. Emmanuel III decided to side with the Entente against the Central Powers of Germany, Austria, and the Ottoman Empire. The Entente promised in the London Pact of 1915 that if Italy joined their war, after victory they would receive Trentino, South Tyrol, Austrian Littoral, Eastern Friuli, Istria, parts of western Carniola, and north-western Dalmatia.<sup>34</sup> The offer was too tempting for the king and

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<sup>32</sup> Spencer Tucker, *Encyclopedia of World War I: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 826.

<sup>33</sup> Denis Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 284.

<sup>34</sup> "Treaty of London, 1915," accessed July 23, 2020, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The\\_Treaty\\_of\\_London](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Treaty_of_London).

his advisors to reject, and it was signed on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915. Italy declared war soon after in May of 1915, with the main thrust of their assaults towards the Isonzo Valley.

The Italian front of the war can be summed up in one phrase; sheer stubbornness leads to a bloody stalemate. Throughout 1915, 1916, and 1917, the Italian front of the war was characterized by eleven Battles of Isonzo, all of which were bitter disappointments for the Italians. Hundreds of thousands of troops were sacrificed during those battles, as Italian High Command clung to old Napoleonic tactics that the other Great Powers had moved past in the trenches of the Western Front and the massiveness of the Eastern.<sup>35</sup> In October of 1917, the Austrians began a counteroffensive that saw the Italians pushed back to the Piave River, where the stalemate would ensue again until near the end of the war.<sup>36</sup> By October of 1918, the Central Powers had little left to support the war, and the Italians launched an assault to break the Austrian lines. They finally met with success, driving the Austrians back and occupying the regions they desired, with a little extra by the time the armistice formed.<sup>37</sup>

In contrast to the front in the disputed lands, Italy enjoyed greater success in defending Albania from the Central Powers, eventually establishing a protectorate over Albania in 1917. In North Africa, they met with some success against the Ottoman forces at first, but ultimately suffered reversals that would force them on the

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<sup>35</sup> Holger Afflerbach ed., *The Purpose of the First World War: War Aims and Military Strategies* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2015), 240-242.

<sup>36</sup> Ronald Seth, *Caporetto: The Scapegoat Battle* (Ithaca: Macdonald, 1965), 167.

<sup>37</sup> John Gooch, *The Italian Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 289.

defensive in Libya and Cyrenaica for the rest of the war. Overall, while Italian participation in the war had been lackluster in terms of results, it had provided an excellent way to tie up hundreds of thousands of Central Power troops from deploying to the Western Front. At the Paris Peace Conference that would lead to the infamous Treaty of Versailles, Italy received much of the land promised to them by the Entente. However, northern Dalmatia was excluded, and Italy did not gain any of the expected rewards from the German colonial possessions that were being absorbed by the other powers.<sup>38</sup> While they were ostensibly part of the “Big Four,” it swiftly became clear to the Italians they were the least respected member between the British, the French, and the Americans. Back home, the territorial gains were viewed as nowhere close to the compensation deserved for the cost in 700,000 lives and the twelve billion lira debt accrued to fight the war.<sup>39</sup>

Mussolini, who had achieved the rank of corporal in the army before being discharged after suffering injury from an accidental mortar explosion, redoubled his efforts in forming a cohesive fascist movement. He continued to develop the ideology system of the fascists, borrowing heavily from several sources. Nietzsche was a significant influence on his developing philosophy, but his favorite source to draw upon for inspiration was Plato’s *The Republic*. Mussolini found that many of the ideas expounded in *The Republic*, such as rule by a select elite, the militarization of the state by creating a class of warriors, and demanding that citizens perform civic duties

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<sup>38</sup> “Treaty of Versailles, 1919,” accessed July 23, 2020, <https://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versailles.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, 186.

to the betterment of the state, aligned with his own.<sup>40</sup> Plato, however, never advocated for aggressive war, believing the state should only engage in conflicts of defense.<sup>41</sup> Nor were Plato's ideas on property adopted as they were communist-like in regards to private property.<sup>42</sup> Mussolini's ideal foreign policy goal was to create *spazio vitale* or vital space by conquering and expanding the Italian sphere of influence into a new Roman Empire.<sup>43</sup> This idea of needing space for the nation to grow would also be adopted by Hitler and the Nazis with their *Lebensraum* policy. In Mussolini's mind, he believed that a nation's economic growth was tied directly to territorial size and colonial strength.<sup>44</sup>

Race and the role of women also factored heavily into his evolving philosophy. As was typical in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mussolini believed in the superiority of the Italian race, specifically whites, over all other groups. He proposed that there was a natural law that called for the strong to dominate the weak and inferior races and cultures, such as the Slavs in Southern Europe or Africans in North Africa.<sup>45</sup> He was obsessed with birth rates, believing that the low birth rates in countries such as the United States would lead to their eventual decay and their subjugation by faster growing populations such as in Asia or Africa.<sup>46</sup> This belief

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<sup>40</sup> Ray Moseley, *Mussolini: The Last 600 Days of Il Duce* (Dallas: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2004), 39.

<sup>41</sup> Allan Bloom (trans.), *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 246.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle Kallis, *Fascist Ideology Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 48.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>46</sup> Bruce Strang, *On the Fiery March* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 21.

directly led Mussolini to embrace natalism, as he thought that Italy could only rival the other Great Powers by reaching a higher population. His ideal number was sixty million before he felt Italy would be ready to fight a major war, and this goal led directly to his organization's incentives for women to have more children.<sup>47</sup>

Following the war in 1919, he renamed his fascist group into the *Fasci di Combattimento*, attracting many disgruntled veterans returning from the various theaters of the war, along with syndicalist inclined socialists. With his group growing, and his ambitions demanding for it to develop further, Mussolini and two of his supporters, Alceste de Ambris and Filippo Marinetti, published *The Manifesto of the Italian Fasci of Combat* on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1919 in *Il Popolo d'Italia*.<sup>48</sup> The new manifesto was the first time the developing fascist ideology was distributed in a widespread manner. The manifesto itself was divided into four sections to outline the movement's political, social, economic, and military objectives.

Politically, the manifesto called for universal suffrage for men and women with proportional representation and a lowered voting age. This idea, in particular, was extraordinary in Europe and the United States as there was an ongoing political battle against granting women the right to vote. It also called for the abolition of the

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<sup>47</sup> Kallis, 52.

<sup>48</sup> "The Manifesto of the Italian Fasci of Combat," accessed August 8, 2020, <http://web.tiscalinet.it/regno76/testi/manifesti/II%20manifesto%20dei%20fasci%20di%20combattimento.htm>.

Senate, which was viewed as nothing more than a hand-picked council for the king, and the convening of a National Assembly to craft a new constitution.<sup>49</sup>

Socially, the manifesto demanded laws that would create an eight-hour workday and guarantee a minimum wage. It also called for worker representation in the functioning of industry, and a reorganization of the railway and transportation sectors in Italy. In addition, the manifesto called for a revision of the country's draft laws and the lowering of the retirement age from 65 to 55.<sup>50</sup>

In regard to military affairs, Mussolini and his fascists advocated the creation of a national militia for home defense, which would be a way for his growing paramilitary organization known as the blackshirts to become official. They also demanded the entire armament industry be nationalized and desired a peaceful yet competitive foreign policy.<sup>51</sup>

In the last section, the Manifesto called for a strong progressive tax on capital, essentially an early version of the capital gains tax seen in the modern era. It also called for the complete seizure of all property from the Catholic Church and the abolition of the bishops. They also called for revisions in all military contracts, stating the government should seize eighty-five percent of all profits from those contracts.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Many of the stated points in the manifesto would either be changed or dropped in the coming years as the ideology continued to evolve and Mussolini gained further power, especially after his electoral defeat in November of 1919 where he realized he could not move more left than the socialists. However, it is important to note how close several of these early fascist positions are to what their political opponents were campaigning to achieve. It is one example that shows the political spectrum is not a straight line, but more of a curve that has the ends nearly touch. But while this closeness existed, it did nothing to prevent both fascists and socialists from utterly despising each other, as shown in the increase of political violence starting in 1919.

In 1919, Italy was suffering from high unemployment and significant levels of inflation due to the demobilization of the army and a shortage of goods that increased prices for many basics of life. Tensions were threatening to explode as the socialists, anarchists, and trade unions were experiencing a massive surge in membership from disenfranchised workers. The Italian Socialist Party at this time boasted of a membership of 250,000, while the major trade union reached two million members.<sup>53</sup> With their new growth, socialists and syndicalists organized factory occupations and an unheard amount of strikes, 1,881 in 1920 alone, with much of this activity centered in the northern regions of the country, mainly around Turin and Milan.<sup>54</sup> It seemed likely that, much like Russia, Italy was on the cusp of a socialist revolution if only the

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<sup>53</sup> Immanuel Ness, *The International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2009).

<sup>54</sup> Megan Trudell, "Gramsci: the Turin Years," *International Socialism* No.114, 2007.



socialists and anarchists capitalized on their momentum. This period of significant social upheaval was known as the two red years or *Biennio Rosso*,<sup>55</sup> and it may indeed have led to a revolution except for Mussolini's challenge for power.

The new paramilitary arm of the fascists, the blackshirts, were primarily formed from the veterans of the war that were flocking to Mussolini's ideology. Mussolini recognized an opportunity in the dire situation, allying with business leaders to attack socialists, workers, and peasants in the name of preserving order and internal peace. These blackshirts made their first major counterattack on the socialists by assaulting the officers of Mussolini's former paper, *Avanti!*<sup>56</sup> From there, they continued to antagonize the socialists, attempting to violently suppress them in such incidents like attacking striking peasants in the Po Valley or breaking industrial strikes in cities like Milan and Turin. The Italian government generally turned a blind eye to the blackshirts' attacks on the socialists as fear of a communist or socialist revolution had a firm hold upon the king, the prime minister, and the rest of the government. Through a combination of the fascists' actions, mass layoffs and wage cuts stemming from an industrial crisis, and the main socialist leaders' lethargic inability to capitalize on the political situation in northern Italy, the socialist movement lost ground and declined as the fascists started to ascend.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> William Pelz, *Against Capitalism: The European Left on the March* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 126.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, 298.

<sup>57</sup> Pelz, 128.

To further differentiate themselves from their rivals, and to also increase recruitment, Mussolini abandoned several of the tenets outlined in the original manifesto. He began to support the Catholic Church, eliminating any mention of anti-clerical stances from the fascist platform. He also distanced himself from previous opposition to Emmanuel III and the government, seeing an opportunity to work within the system to take control.<sup>58</sup> In 1921, Mussolini reorganized the fasci into the National Fascist Party and was able to win enough support to be elected to the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the Italian parliament.<sup>59</sup> With Mussolini, there were thirty-four other deputies with fascist or nationalist inclinations elected, creating a sizable enough block in the parliament that the majority Liberal party could not form a working coalition government. With the government in disarray, Mussolini approached the Socialists for a peace agreement as a way to stop the violence, coming to terms with his rivals in the summer of 1921. The Pact of Pacification, as the deal was called, only lasted until November of 1921, where Mussolini was forced to end it by the Third Fascist Congress or risk losing his support base.<sup>60</sup> With the peace collapsed, the stage had been set for the events next year that would catapult Mussolini to the head of the Italian government as, by this time, the National Fascist Party boasted over 300,000 members and had made several powerful alliances with elements of the military and the business elite.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Smith, 298.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, 300.

<sup>60</sup> Payne, 100.

<sup>61</sup> Delzell, 26.

In August, an anti-fascist strike was called by elements within the socialist movement, but it failed to garner the support of the Italian's People Party, instead splitting the Catholic-based political group down the middle with pro-fascists and anti-fascists.<sup>62</sup> The government was unstable, with Prime Minister Luigi Facta barely hanging onto his position in the face of the growing threats on both sides of the political spectrum. As was their way, the fascists turned out and suppressed the strike where it occurred, encouraging them and Mussolini, now styled "Il Duce," by his supporters, to orchestrate their bid for power.

Mussolini remained in Milan as several of his underlings began putting their plan into action. The plan by the fascists was to lead a march to Rome, demanding the resignation of the prime minister and the creation of a new government under fascist control.<sup>63</sup> As the roughly 30,000 blackshirts began the March on Rome as it was called, Emmanuel III faced a critical choice. The news was coming in that blackshirts had spread throughout the country and started staging themselves near strategic points such as the vital Po Valley that would need to be seized in case of a military-style coup or if a civil war erupted.<sup>64</sup> Prime Minister Facta urged the king to implement martial law, as only the king had the power to declare such under the Albertine Statute, the constitution that was the basis for the Kingdom of Italy.<sup>65</sup> The king saw

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<sup>62</sup> John Molony, *The emergence of political Catholicism in Italy: Partito popolare 1919-1926* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 11.

<sup>63</sup> Francis Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 60.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>65</sup> "Albertine Statute, Articles 1-23," accessed August 13, 2020, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Statuto\\_Albertino](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Statuto_Albertino).

only two options: sack his prime minister and replace him with Mussolini, or risk a civil war that he and his conservative base might lose as Mussolini had swaths of support from the military and the elites. The choice was rather clear to Emmanuel III. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1922, Mussolini was asked by the king to form a new cabinet and government, effectively giving Mussolini control over Italy.<sup>66</sup>

Il Duce did not participate in the March to Rome, except for a few photo opportunities, and while the march was touted as a great victory and a seizure of power, everything that had occurred was legal. Emmanuel III, under the constitution, had the ability to remove and appoint his prime minister when he so chose, and in choosing to bring Mussolini into that position, the entire situation was a legitimate transfer of power.<sup>67</sup>

Even though he had just achieved one of the most powerful positions in Italy, Mussolini knew his hold on power was built on a shaky parliamentary coalition between the fascists, nationalists, conservatives, and liberals. He needed to find a way to consolidate power under the fascists and himself, making 1923 a pivotal year for the fascist leader. In his first year in office, Mussolini petitioned the parliament to grant him emergency dictatorial powers for one year, another perfectly legal maneuver under the Italian constitution.<sup>68</sup> Mussolini began integrating the blackshirts into the military command structure, reorganizing them into a state-sponsored militia,

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<sup>66</sup> Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929* (Abington: Routledge, 2008), 75.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>68</sup> Albertine Statute.

much as had been promised in the original Fascist Manifesto.<sup>69</sup> He also oversaw the implementation of legislation that favored the wealthy elite of the country such as dismantling the unions, privatizing certain sections of the economy, and redesigning rent laws.<sup>70</sup>

During this spate of legislation, Mussolini introduced the Acerbo Law. The new electoral law stated that the party gaining the largest share of the vote, with a set minimum of twenty-five percent, would control two-thirds of the seats in the Italian parliament while the other third was split proportionally among the other parties.<sup>71</sup> It was a blatant power grab by Il Duce as it was no mystery that the blackshirts would ensure the National Fascist Party would reach twenty-five percent in the next election, through whatever means were necessary. And yet, besides protests from the Socialists, a majority of the chamber passed the law.<sup>72</sup> When the election of 1924 was called, the Fascists garnered the required the percentage of the vote, with allegations of vote rigging, intimidation, and outright violence against opponents that might vote against them or were running in the elections.<sup>73</sup> The National Fascist Party would become the sole political party by 1928, with all others outlawed.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life Under the Fascist Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 117.

<sup>70</sup> Jim Powell, "The Economic Leadership Secrets of Benito Mussolini," *Forbes* (February, 2012).

<sup>71</sup> "Acerbo Law of 1923," quoted in Alexander DeGrand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 24.

<sup>72</sup> Payne, 114.

<sup>73</sup> Alexander DeGrand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 26.

<sup>74</sup> Payne, 115.

With his majority secured, Mussolini worked on finishing his consolidation of power and the implementation of his fascist agenda, both domestically and internationally. The primary concern for Mussolini and his fascists was restarting the economy after the last few years of turmoil, while simultaneously restoring order and crushing dissent. To that end, many pro-business and liberal principles were adopted such as abolishing certain taxes like the inheritance or luxury taxes, establishing life insurance for workers, and direct financing of banks and industrial companies with state funds.<sup>75</sup> Mussolini also pushed for higher production of Italian grain as the agrarian sector of the economy was a significant portion of Italy's GDP at the time. However, slowly but surely, Mussolini began a policy known as corporatism, or economic dirigisme, where while the factories, farms, and companies remained in private hands, the state would direct where and what was to be produced.<sup>76</sup> By 1933, with the Great Depression still raging in parts of the world, Mussolini boasted that "Three-fourths of the Italian economy, industrial and agricultural, is in the hands of the state."<sup>77</sup> By the time World War II erupted, only the Soviet Union had a higher rate of state control of the economy.<sup>78</sup>

Another major state affair Mussolini handled in the early years of his rule over Italy was the successful negotiations with the Catholic Church. During the unification

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<sup>75</sup> Daniel Guerin, Francis Merrill, trans., *Fascism and Big Business* (Atlanta: Pathfinder Press, 2000), 191-193.

<sup>76</sup> Ivan Berend, *An Economic History of Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 93.

<sup>77</sup> Carl Schmidt, *The Corporate State in Action* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1939), 160.

<sup>78</sup> Patricia Knight, *Mussolini and Fascism: Questions and Analysis in History* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 65.

of Italy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Rome and the Papal State had been conquered, reducing the Papacy to little more than a prisoner within the Vatican. Relations between the government had been tepid at best from that point, but Mussolini recognized a way to resolve the lingering question over Rome leftover from unification. While he had been against the Church previously, he knew a large portion of the country was still Catholic, and by making amends with the Pope, he might gain further support from the populace.

In February 1929, Mussolini and the Papacy negotiated an agreement known as the Lateran Treaty between the Kingdom of Italy and the Holy See. The treaty established the microstate of the Vatican, including diplomatic recognition from the Italian government while the Papacy recognized the state of Italy as legitimate. The treaty also stipulated the introduction of religious education into all state-funded schools in Italy, and fifty million pounds sterling transferred from Italian banks to a Swiss company that acted as the holder of the Vatican's funds.<sup>79</sup>

Ultimately, however, Mussolini's goal remained the establishment of vital space with the expansion of Italy's territory and colonial possessions, while projecting a robust national front to the rest of the Great Powers. He had put the League of Nations, an international body formed with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, to the test during the Corfu Incident of 1923. In that crisis, Italian troops entered and occupied the island of Corfu after an Italian general, and his staff, was

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<sup>79</sup> "Lateran Pacts of 1929," accessed July 23, 2020, <http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/treaty.htm>.

murdered in Greek territory while he negotiated a border dispute between Albania and Greece.<sup>80</sup> While the island was eventually returned to the Greeks after a negotiated settlement, it showed the ineffectiveness of the League of Nations when a Great Power decided to expand.<sup>81</sup> The only other military operation Italy would oversee during the 1920s was the continued pacification of Libya as Mussolini focused on the economy and domestic issues, but come the 1930s, Italy would begin showing its desire for greater territory.

In October of 1935, Mussolini gave the order for Italian colonial forces in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland to invade Ethiopia. In a way, the invasion was Mussolini's idea to wipe away the stigma leftover from the First Italo-Ethiopian War in 1885 when the weaker African country defeated the Italians.<sup>82</sup> The war would last just over a year and a half, but by the end, Italy had conquered Ethiopia, combining their east African territories into Italian East Africa. In the face of Italian aggression, the League of Nations was once again ineffective and began to fracture as greater concerns started to develop in Germany as Hitler rose to power and the Spanish Civil War raged on the Iberian Peninsula.

In his rise to power and his subsequent consolidation, Mussolini used a combination of political violence and legal methods to accrue his power. He also demonstrated a willingness to adapt the ideological system of the fascists as the

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<sup>80</sup> Michael Brechner, Jonathan Wilkenfield, *A Study of Crisis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 583.

<sup>81</sup> Michael Fry, Erik Goldstein, Richard Langhorne, *Guide to International Relations and Diplomacy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 214.

<sup>82</sup> Kallis, 124.



domestic situation changed around them. This adaptability, along with the alliances he forged with the wealthy elite and the military, placed him in the perfect position to act against the greatest fear of the Italian government: the radical left. By using the blackshirts in the brutal fashion he did, Mussolini was able to weaken any possible opposition to his rise to power or subsequent takeover. In his position as prime minister, he took steps to reduce his enemies further by hurriedly rebuilding the Italian economy and scoring several key diplomatic victories. Mussolini recognized he had to change the country and its people slowly, not rush into any extreme or controversial changes to government or society.

## Chapter III

### Rise of Fascism in Germany

Much like the events that occurred in Italy, it is difficult to imagine the rise of Hitler and the Nazis to power in Germany without World War I. As previously stated, many countries in Europe underwent or experienced radical changes and movements that would alter their course in history because of the war. Germany, perhaps, is the most significant country that saw upheaval both during and following the war, especially when the occurrences of the late 1930s and 1940s are taken into account when judging such consequence. However, before delving into the rise of the Nazis, it is essential to examine Germany as it was before it fought the War to End all Wars.

The Germany that would participate in the First World War formed in 1871 as a result of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. During the course of the war against France, the North German Confederation led by Prussia and its chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, utterly routed the forces of the Second French Empire under Napoleon III.<sup>83</sup> At the Battle of Sedan, Napoleon III himself was captured by the victorious Prussians, forcing a French capitulation even though a provisional government tried

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<sup>83</sup> Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France 1870-1871* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 173.

to maintain the war for another five months.<sup>84</sup> This major victory spurred such patriotic fervor back in the German lands that prompted Bismarck and the King of Prussia, Wilhelm I, to seek unification of the German lands into one German Empire, excluding Austria.<sup>85</sup> The Treaty of Frankfurt of 1871 ended the war, forcing France, now reformed into the Third French Republic, to cede control of Alsace and Lorraine to the newly formed German Empire and recognize the new power in central Europe diplomatically.<sup>86</sup> The German unification and their victory over France would have far-reaching consequences when it came to the balance of power in Europe, results that can be traced directly to the reasons for the outbreak of World War I.

Bismarck and Wilhelm I began focusing their efforts on creating a delicate balance of power in Europe that the Germans would control for the next twenty years. The main reason for this system they were constructing was to isolate and keep France weak, as they were aware the French held a fierce desire to reclaim their lost territories. A complicated system of overlapping treaties formed the foundation for this balance of power, perhaps the most significant being the League of the Three Emperors, an agreement between Germany, Austria and Russia about their respective spheres of influence and terms of neutrality if another party attacked one of the signatories.<sup>87</sup> The Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy was also

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<sup>84</sup> Robert Baldick, *The Siege of Paris* (London: New English Library, 1974), 20-21.

<sup>85</sup> Howard, 432.

<sup>86</sup> "Treaty of Frankfurt, 1871," accessed August 13, 2020, <http://gander.chez.com/traite-de-francfort.htm>.

<sup>87</sup> "The Three Emperors' League, 1881," The Avalon Project, accessed July 23, 2020, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/empleagu.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/empleagu.asp).

created with a similar purpose as the League of Three Emperors, guaranteed neutrality in case of an attack on one of the signatories if they did not join in defense of the nation under attack.<sup>88</sup> The League of the Three Emperors would eventually collapse due to Austrian and Russian interests in the Balkans, but Bismarck was able to keep the peace in place with the Reinsurance Treaty of 1887 with Russia.<sup>89</sup> The German Chancellor knew that if he allowed any of the Great Powers to drift away from German alliances, the French might see an opportunity to secure an ally for themselves.

Bismarck also oversaw the mass industrialization of Germany as he was determined to make the new empire the dominant industrial power in Europe, a position enjoyed by Britain at the time of the unification. Bismarck diverted funds that may have gone to an overseas colonial empire to the development of Germany's industrial and agricultural sectors, while also establishing the first welfare state by promising German workers such benefits as health care, accident coverage, maternity benefits, and a national pension.<sup>90</sup> By the early 1900s, Germany had achieved their industrial goal, boasting the largest rail network in Europe at 63,000 kilometers, extensive factories, and becoming the dominant exporter on the continent and second largest exporter in the world.<sup>91</sup> Only Great Britain exported more materials

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<sup>88</sup> "The Triple Alliance, 1882," GHDI, accessed July 23, 2020, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1860](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1860).

<sup>89</sup> "Reinsurance Treaty, 1887," GHDI, accessed July 23, 2020, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1862](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1862).

<sup>90</sup> E. P. Hennock, *The Origin of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850-1914: Social Policies Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 86, 184.

<sup>91</sup> Edgar Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany, 1850-1918* (New York: Routledge, 2006), Table 1.

worldwide, and only the United States possessed a larger industrial base and rail network than Germany. Germany had become a leader in chemical and electronic research and development, earning multiple Nobel prizes during this period.<sup>92</sup> It would be this extensive industrial base and scientific leadership that would shift to war production in 1914.

By the time Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Bosnia, Bismarck's carefully crafted alliance system had cracked. Bismarck himself had resigned in 1890 when Wilhelm II came to power in the German Empire, and the new Kaiser desired to project German power far more aggressively than the old chancellor.<sup>93</sup> Wilhelm II allowed the agreements with Russia to lapse, which promptly led to France allying with the Eastern European empire.<sup>94</sup> Wilhelm II also desired to challenge British naval dominance and form an overseas colonial empire, a desire born from his admiration and jealousy of the British. This challenge to their hegemony of the seas led Britain to set aside centuries of animosity with France and form an alliance with them known as the *Entente Cordiale*.<sup>95</sup> Wilhelm II's aggressiveness led to several diplomatic issues that only further isolated the Germans, the most fatal being the blank check of support he gave the Austrian emperor after

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<sup>92</sup> Jochen Streb, "Technological and Geographical Knowledge Spillover in the German Empire 1877-1918," *Economic History Review*, vol. 59, no. 2, (2006), 373.

<sup>93</sup> Isabel Hull, *The Entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1888-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85.

<sup>94</sup> "The Franco-Russian Alliance Military Convention, 1892," The Avalon Project, accessed July 23, 2020, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/frumil.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/frumil.asp).

<sup>95</sup> "Entente Cordiale, 1904," accessed July 23, 2020, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The\\_Entente\\_Cordiale\\_Between\\_The\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_and\\_France](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Entente_Cordiale_Between_The_United_Kingdom_and_France).

Ferdinand's death. With full German support behind them, Austria invaded Serbia for its alleged part in the assassination, triggering the various alliances among the nations of Europe and starting World War I.

Germany and Austria found themselves fighting a two-front war, with France to the west and Russia to the east. Britain had not formally entered the war yet, but they would do so once Germany invaded Belgium and Luxembourg as a way to outflank the French. The Germans made a swift advance, but it was forced to a halt by a combination of the Germans diverting forces to deal with a Russian invasion of East Prussia and a fierce British and French defense at the First Battle of the Marne. The Western Front would devolve into a seemingly endless stalemate of trench warfare, while the Eastern Front saw great success from the Central Powers. The Russian armies were poorly organized and supplied, and could not hold against the Germans and Austrians, being forced back hundreds of kilometers from the borders of the two Central Powers. By 1917, the Russians were in the throes of the Russian Revolution, and the new Bolshevik government under Vladimir Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk to end their participation of the war and cede all the occupied lands, land that includes much of what would be Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, and parts of Ukraine, to the Central Powers.<sup>96</sup> The Germans were able to divert hundreds of thousands of troops back to the west, badly needed reinforcements

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<sup>96</sup> "Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 1918," accessed July 23, 2020, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The\\_Peace\\_Treaty\\_of\\_Brest-Litovsk](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Peace_Treaty_of_Brest-Litovsk).

in light of the entrance of the United States into the war and a slowly growing economic crisis in the German Empire.

It is the Western Front; however, that would prove to be a formative experience for a young man who would become of one the world's vilest leaders. A struggling artist living in Munich, Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian Army in August of 1914, although this was likely a clerical error as he was an Austrian citizen and he had already been rejected for service by the Austrian army.<sup>97</sup> Hitler was posted to one of the reserve regiments and became a dispatch runner on the Western Front, being present at several of the major battles of the war such as Ypres, the Somme, and Arras.<sup>98</sup> Hitler was often commended by his officers for his bravery, earning several military decorations, and he often described the war as "the greatest of all experiences."<sup>99</sup> He was wounded by shrapnel by an exploding shell in 1916 during the Battle of the Somme and suffered a bout of blindness after being exposed to mustard gas in 1918. It was during his hospitalization from the mustard gas attack that he received the news of the German capitulation to the Entente.<sup>100</sup>

Germany in 1918 was barely keeping their war effort together. A British blockade was starving the country of vital food and material imports, and discontent was spreading among the population from the rationing and the length of the

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<sup>97</sup> Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 90.

<sup>98</sup> William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1960), 30.

<sup>99</sup> John Keegan, *The Mask of Command: A Study of Generalship* (New York: Pimlico, 1987), 238.

<sup>100</sup> Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 59.

conflict.<sup>101</sup> Most of the governments involved in the war had assumed it would be a quick affair, but the Great War had been anything but. An extremely bloody four years of stalemated conflict and massive casualties had drained much of the fighting strength of the combatants, especially in the Central Powers. However, the Entente, equally drained, was starting to receive fresh American reinforcements and supplies in the form of 10,000 men a day and hundreds of supply shipments crossing the Atlantic.<sup>102</sup> The surge in American support was a part of Woodrow Wilson's desire to make the world "safe for democracy."<sup>103</sup> In a desperate bid to end the war on their terms, the Germans under Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff launched a massive spring offensive, and while it initially met with success and broke the stalemate of the trenches, the German military could not capitalize on their momentum.<sup>104</sup> In August, the Entente and the Americans launched their Hundred Day Offensive, the last major campaign of the war, devastating the German defenses and reclaiming territory taken by the Germans in the Spring Offensive and then some.<sup>105</sup> With their enemies advancing, their allies capitulating, and the home front erupting into revolt and revolution, the Kaiser abdicated and the new emerging government, known as the Weimar Republic, sued for peace.

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<sup>101</sup> Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 141.

<sup>102</sup> Alexander Barnes, "Over There: Army Expeditionary Forces Logistics in World War I," *Army Logician*, vol. 41, no. 4, (2009).

<sup>103</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "Address to Congress Asking for a Declaration of War," National Archives, accessed July 23, 2020, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Wilson%27s\\_War\\_Message\\_to\\_Congress](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Wilson%27s_War_Message_to_Congress).

<sup>104</sup> Peter Hart, *1918: A Very British Victory* (London: Phoenix Books, 2008), 298-300.

<sup>105</sup> Spencer Tucker, *World War I: A-D*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 1256.



As was briefly touched upon in the previous chapter, the Treaty of Versailles was the document that ended the First World War. However, the document and the negotiations that surrounded it are directly responsible for the anger and discontent that would lead to the Second World War in 1939. Italy was disappointed with its reward from being on the side of the victors, but it would be Germany that suffered a bitter humiliation of being on the losing side of the war and be on the receiving end of vicious revenge.

France went into the conference at Versailles looking to permanently damage their rival for all the damage wrought on French soil, secure France's security, and repay them for the embarrassment from the Franco-Prussian War. The French negotiator, Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, wanted to see Germany reduced militarily, economically, and territorially, and insisted that Germany repay the Entente powers for all the damages and lives lost during the war.<sup>106</sup>

Britain, under Prime Minister David Lloyd George, sought a middle ground between what the French desired, and the optimism that existed in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. Britain wanted Germany to remain economically viable as they wanted to maintain trade, but George wanted part of the German reparations to go towards war pensions and widows' allowances. He also desired the

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<sup>106</sup> Loius Slavicek, *The Treaty of Versailles* (New York: Chelsea House, 2010), 43.

reduction of the German Navy, and Britain would absorb most of the colonial territory controlled by the Germans.<sup>107</sup>

The American delegation, under Woodrow Wilson, tried to push the aforementioned Fourteen Points plan to establish peace in Europe. Wilson's ideas involved rebuilding the European economy, self-determination for the various ethnic groups under imperial control, free trade, creating mandates instead of the annexation of colonies, and the creation of the League of Nations.<sup>108</sup> He was opposed to the harsh punishment France wanted to inflict upon Germany, and he was opposed to Britain gaining more colonial possessions, but in the end, France and Britain achieved their ends. Wilson's consolation prize was the creation of the League of Nations, but the United States Senate refused to ratify the treaty and thus Wilson could not even claim a victory on that issue. As for Germany, it was sign the treaty or the war would resume. Backed into a corner, and knowing that prosecuting a new war with French and British forces already occupying the Rhineland as part of the armistice agreement would be impossible, the German delegation begrudgingly signed the treaty.

The treaty reduced Germany by roughly ten percent of its total territory, most of that being divided up by its various neighbors and the newly created Poland, and stripped all territory gained from the peace with Russia and all of its colonies. The German army was reduced to a paltry 100,000 men to be used mainly as a security

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>108</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "Address to Congress on the Fourteen Points," National Archives, accessed July 23, 2020, [https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President\\_Wilson%27s\\_Fourteen\\_Points](https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Fourteen_Points).

force, while the navy was reduced to a skeleton of its former size with a ban on U-boats. War reparations were demanded, a rough equivalent of twenty billion gold marks, but it was never decided on what Germany should pay with as the Entente were willing to accept any and all methods of payment. The Rhineland was to be completely demilitarized, and the Saar coal mines were forced to send shipments to France for fifteen years. However, while all of this could have been suffered in silence, the greatest insult to the Germans was Article 231 of the treaty, which placed blame for the war squarely upon Germany.<sup>109</sup>

The reaction back in Germany to the peace treaty was utter outrage, especially from military veterans who had fought in the trenches in the west and backcountry in the east. Germans from across the entire political spectrum decried the treaty as an insult to the nation's honor, mainly because of Article 231, with the first chancellor of the Weimar Republic, Philipp Scheidemann, choosing to resign rather than sign the document.<sup>110</sup> However, some politicians supported the treaty, mostly from the socialist and communist parties, but also some Jewish politicians. These politicians, and their support for ratifying such a humiliating treaty, gave birth to the conspiracy that the government and certain sections of the population stabbed the German war effort in the back.<sup>111</sup> The belief in this conspiracy, held by many conservative and nationalist groups, was also held by many military veterans, including Adolf Hitler.

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<sup>109</sup> Treaty of Versailles, 1919.

<sup>110</sup> Slavicek, 114.

<sup>111</sup> Eberhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 140.

After the peace was concluded, Hitler opted to remain with the army as he had found no success selling his art and he did not have any skills in a trade or advanced education. In 1919, the military fatefully assigned him as part of an intelligence unit that was to infiltrate the German Workers' Party, a small fringe nationalist political party based in Munich.<sup>112</sup> As the young army man began attending meetings, he came to the attention of the party chairman, Anton Drexler. Drexler was impressed with Hitler's oratory skills and started sharing his views with him, emphasizing the anti-Semitic, nationalistic, anti-capitalist, and anti-Marxist platform of the party.<sup>113</sup> Hitler also came to the attention of Dietrich Eckart, one of the founders of the German Workers' Party, and the two began exchanging ideas while Eckart introduced Hitler to more of the Munich political and social scene.<sup>114</sup> By the time Hitler was discharged from the army in 1920, he was fully invested in the German Workers' Party. It would be Hitler himself who designed the infamous swastika banner as the party renamed itself to the National Socialist German Workers' Party, forever after known colloquially as the Nazi Party, as an appeal to a broader audience.<sup>115</sup>

To further draw attention and recruits to the party, Hitler and the Nazi leadership revealed their Twenty-Five Program in 1920. Much like Mussolini's manifesto, the program outlined the Nazis' objectives, many of which would remain

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<sup>112</sup> Kershaw 1999, 109.

<sup>113</sup> Kershaw 2008, 82.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 88.

their aims as they claimed power in the 1930s. Listed in the program, the Nazis demanded the unification of all Germans into a greater Germany and equal rights for all Germans outside of Germany.<sup>116</sup> The Nazis also demanded further territory to provide sustenance for the nation and as a place for a surplus population to grow to, otherwise known as the policy of *Lebensraum*.<sup>117</sup> The program also addressed citizenship and the rights of immigrants, determining only those of German race could be citizens and all others living in the country either had to leave or obtain guest visas.<sup>118</sup>

The program further called for social and economic reforms, many of which were similar to those within the *Fascist Manifesto*. Among these changes, the Nazis pushed for nationalization of specific industries and segments of the economy, land reform, and an expanded education and healthcare system for the betterment of all citizens.<sup>119</sup> Curiously, the Nazis also demanded changes to censorship and speech laws, declaring they wanted all employees of the press to be German, non-German newspapers had to have permission to be published and distributed, and non-Germans could not hold stakes in a press organization or risk deportation or criminal imprisonment.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> “Program of the NSDAP, 1920,” GHDI, accessed July 23, 2020, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=3910](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3910).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

Hitler's ability to manipulate a crowd and his aggressive speechmaking swiftly landed him as the party's head of propaganda and its leading public figure. When there was a potential mutiny from some of the other leading members of the party, Hitler tendered his resignation, but it was refused as the party leadership knew they needed him or the party would collapse. Hitler would only rejoin if he were made the chairman of the party, usurping Drexler's position, and the party acquiesced.<sup>121</sup> An extremely effective demagogue, Hitler made good use of his personal magnetism, his deep understanding of crowd psychology, oratory and visual cues, and soaring nationalistic rhetoric filled with mentions of scapegoats that were causing economic hardship for the German people.<sup>122</sup>

At this time, the German economy under the Weimar Republic was suffering through one of the worst bouts of hyperinflation ever recorded. The German currency, the mark, had degraded to one trillionth of its value, with much of the devaluing coming from the government printing obscene amounts of money.<sup>123</sup> The government was also dealing with its inability to pay the war reparations demanded by France and Britain, with French forces occupying the Ruhr Valley and confiscating all goods produced and materials gathered or mined, further restricting the number of products Germany could trade.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Kershaw 2008, 103.

<sup>122</sup> Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky & Konecky, 1999), 376.

<sup>123</sup> Adam Fergusson, *When Money Dies: The Nightmare of Deficit Spending, Devaluation, and Hyperinflation in Weimar Germany* (New York: PublicAffairs, 1996), 36.

<sup>124</sup> Sally Marks, "The Myths of Reparations," *Central European History*, vol. 11, no. 3 1978, 244.

This was the economic and political backdrop as Hitler was regularly speaking to large audiences among Munich's beer halls, attracting recruits into the party that would become nearly as infamous as he would. Rudolf Hess, Ernst Rohm, and Hermann Goering were just a few of the Nazis' new converts during this period. Rohm in particular quickly gained power as the head of the party's paramilitary organization, the SA or brownshirts. Much like Mussolini's blackshirts, the SA was created to protect party meetings and to attack the party's political opponents, especially rival socialist and communist groups.<sup>125</sup>

Germany, since the armistice had gone into place, had been plagued with street-level violence between nationalistic paramilitary groups known as Freikorps and socialist and communist revolutionaries. These Freikorps, mainly consisting of former soldiers, were instrumental in putting down several communist attempts to overthrow regions of Germany, such as in the Spartacist Uprising, alongside the German army.<sup>126</sup> The Weimar government, even though it had formed as a liberal democracy, had little patience for revolutionaries and suppressed them as best they could, but these attempts also weakened and split the more moderate socialists and liberals that formed the government. Into this political crisis, Hitler and the Nazis decided to attempt their coup known as the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923.

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<sup>125</sup> Bruce Campbell, *The SA Generals and The Rise of Nazism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 19-20.

<sup>126</sup> William Pelz, *Against Capitalism: The European Left on the March* (New York: International Academic Publishers, 2007), 116-118.

Hitler believed, at this point, that the Weimar Republic needed to be deposed. Hitler was inspired by the triumphant March on Rome a year earlier that had catapulted Mussolini to power in Italy, and he sought to emulate this success by first taking control of Munich before marching on Berlin.<sup>127</sup> The putsch did not go as planned as the police and army intervened, and Hitler was arrested along with several of his supporters for treason. In a highly publicized trial that was covered across Germany, Hitler demonstrated his nationalistic rhetoric as a defense for his actions, taking full responsibility for the attempted coup.<sup>128</sup> Hitler declared during his trial he felt it had been his best chance to overthrow the criminals of November 1918, once again stressing his belief in the conspiracy of the army being stabbed in the back. The judge, being sympathetic to Hitler, sentenced the Nazi leader to five years in prison, but Hitler would only serve nine months of that term before the Bavarian Supreme Court overturned his sentence for good behavior.<sup>129</sup> The Bavarian government approached the Austrian government about extraditing Hitler to Austria, but their request was denied, and Hitler renounced his Austrian citizenship in 1925.<sup>130</sup>

It was during these nine months that Hitler dictated and developed *Mein Kampf*, his autobiography, and outlined his political beliefs. Much like his mentor, Eckart, Hitler espoused an anti-Semitic and anti-communist ideology, declaring that both Jews and communists were the two evils existing within the world.<sup>131</sup> He

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<sup>127</sup> Kershaw 2008, 125-127.

<sup>128</sup> Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003), 21-22.

<sup>129</sup> Kershaw 1999, 239.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 237-238.

<sup>131</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973).



believed that these two forces were manipulating the crises in Germany and around the world, and that the Weimar Republic's parliament needed to be destroyed and cleansed of their influence. Hitler expounded upon his desire for *Lebensraum* in the book, musing that "if we speak of soil in Europe today, we can primarily have in mind only Russia and her vassal border states."<sup>132</sup> In essence, Hitler was laying out his desires to conquer and annex much of Eastern Europe into the German sphere of influence, and away from the inferior Slavic peoples and governments.<sup>133</sup> Much of *Mein Kampf* is dominated with Hitler's belief in eugenics, in the superiority of the Germanic and Nordic races over all others, and he ties together these ideas with a strong belief in social Darwinism.<sup>134</sup> The strong, being the Aryan race, would subjugate or destroy the weak, being the Jews and other peoples labeled inferior beyond redemption.

While Hitler had been released from prison early, the Nazi Party itself had been banned in Bavaria because of the Beer Hall Putsch. Hitler quickly lobbied to have the ban lifted as he had come to a conclusion in prison that it would be better to gain power through the legal political process and not through forceful revolution.<sup>135</sup> The ban was soon lifted after Hitler met with the prime minister of Bavaria, but Hitler himself was banned from giving public speeches after an inflammatory speech he gave in February 1925, a ban that would stay in place until 1927.<sup>136</sup> During this time,

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Kershaw 2008, 158.

<sup>136</sup> Shirer, 129.

Hitler and the Nazis attempted to expand their operations into northern Germany, but they did not make much headway as the economy had recovered to a degree and the Weimar government had brought some stability back to Germany. However, no one could have predicted the United States stock market crash in October of 1929.

The Great Depression entirely altered the political landscape in Germany as millions of citizens lost their jobs and the major banks collapsed.<sup>137</sup> The Weimar government was at a complete loss on how to handle the crisis, with multiple governments rising and falling in quick succession. German chancellors were forced to rule through presidential decrees, utilizing the powers of Paul Hindenburg, the World War I hero and the president of the Weimar Republic. Hitler and the Nazis recognized that the Great Depression was precisely the catastrophe they needed to gain power. Before the Depression, the Nazis had only been able to achieve a handful of seats in the Reichstag, the German Parliament, with their peak number being thirty-two in 1924.<sup>138</sup> The first election after the Depression hit, in September 1930, the Nazis obtained 107 seats in the Reichstag and captured eighteen percent of the vote.<sup>139</sup>

The Nazis were making grandiose promises to fix the enormous issues facing the nation, reassuring the population they would strengthen the economy, provide jobs, and most importantly, begin chipping away at the hated Treaty of Versailles.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Shirer, 136-137.

<sup>138</sup> Dieter Nohlen & Philip Stöver, *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Publishers, 2010), 790.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Shirer, 136-137.

Hitler himself could not run for public office until 1932 when he finally obtained German citizenship, but he was relentless in his campaigning for the Nazi Party.<sup>141</sup> He delivered messages targeting the worst off peoples in Germany; farmers, war veterans, the middle class, and industrialists all flocked to the Nazi banner because of Hitler's speeches. He was constantly traveling across the country to give speeches, while Joseph Goebbels, the Nazis' propaganda man, peppered the country with pamphlets and posters.<sup>142</sup> In a way, the campaign the Nazis undertook in Germany was the first modern political campaign.

By the beginning of 1933, Hitler was poised to take the chancellorship. 1932 had seen two parliamentary elections in quick succession, each one failing to form a coalition government among the various parties as the Nazis and communists refused to join with the moderates. Under pressure from a former chancellor, Franz von Papen, Hindenburg had a choice to make, much like Emmanuel III had in Italy a decade prior. He could appoint Hitler to the chancellorship, bringing the Nazi leader into the fold and possibly forming a stable government, or he could attempt yet another election that would likely prove ineffective. On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1933, Hindenburg appointed Hitler to the chancellorship.<sup>143</sup>

Hitler swiftly started to consolidate his power by asking Hindenburg for a new parliamentary election for March. Before the elections, the Reichstag building was set

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<sup>141</sup> Shirer, 130.

<sup>142</sup> Bullock, 201.

<sup>143</sup> Shirer, 184.

on fire, with some historians believing the Nazis did the deed, while others think a Dutch communist named Marinus van der Lubbe set the blaze.<sup>144</sup> Regardless of who was responsible, Hitler capitalized on the outrage and had Hindenburg pass the Reichstag Fire Decree as a way to suspend fundamental rights and detention without trial.<sup>145</sup> This decree was perfectly legal under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, and with it, the new government brutally suppressed the communists, their primary opponents. When elections took place, the Nazis had grown their support to forty-three percent of the vote, but they still did not have an absolute majority by themselves.<sup>146</sup>

To fix this issue, Hitler had the Enabling Act of 1933 introduced to the new Reichstag. The Enabling Act was designed to give Hitler and his cabinet emergency powers for four months, enabling them to issue decrees and laws without consulting the Reichstag first.<sup>147</sup> The act was passed by a vote of 441-84, with only the Social Democrats voting against it as the communists' representatives had all been arrested or seized by the SA.<sup>148</sup> By June, all other political parties had been disbanded, along with the major labor unions.<sup>149</sup> The only remaining obstacle to complete control by Hitler was the ailing Hindenburg, who finally died in 1934. Upon his death, the office

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<sup>144</sup> Bullock, 262.

<sup>145</sup> "Reichstag Fire Decree, 1933," GHDI, accessed July 23, 2020, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=2325](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2325).

<sup>146</sup> Shirer, 265.

<sup>147</sup> "Enabling Act, 1933," GHDI, accessed July 23, 2020, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1496](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1496).

<sup>148</sup> Shirer, 196.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

of president was abolished and its powers transferred to those of the chancellor.<sup>150</sup>

Through completely legal means, and some brutal suppression and violence, Hitler and the Nazis had achieved absolute control over Germany.

Keeping to their word, the Nazis launched a massive public works and rearmament program to fight against the lingering effects of the Great Depression. Part of this program was one of the largest infrastructure programs in German history, with the Nazis sponsoring the building of dams, the Autobahn, railroads, and renovations to many of the cities and structures around Germany.<sup>151</sup> By 1936, unemployment had fallen to just one million people, down from a high of six million in 1932.<sup>152</sup> However, while all of this was going on, Hitler's significant investments lay within the rearmament program.

In direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany began building up its military again, increasing the size of the army and navy beyond the mandated 100,000 men. New weapons and technologies were being developed, along with plans for a massively expanded air force. The Rhineland was remilitarized, with its industries turned towards the production of war materials yet again.<sup>153</sup> Each of these actions, while concerning, brought little more than protests from France and Britain. The two Western powers did not desire to fight another war and felt appeasement and

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 226-227.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 259-261.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>153</sup> Kershaw 1999, 586.

alterations to the Treaty of Versailles would temper Hitler's ambitions. They were wrong.

By having their secretary of the Foreign Office make the announcement, Hitler and the Nazis made it clear what their foreign policy objectives were. Hitler might stress he wanted to pursue these goals peacefully, such as the unification of Austria and Germany or the restoration of Germany's 1914 borders, it was hard to imagine a German zone of influence in Eastern Europe being created in any way but by force.<sup>154</sup>

1936 was the year that began the inevitable march to war. Between the Rhineland remilitarizing in March and Nazi troops being deployed to Spain to assist Franco and the Falangist/Nationalist faction of the Spanish Civil War, it was clear to Britain and France that Germany was building up for war. An alliance between Germany and Italy formed, while Japan joined the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany, paving the way for the Pact of Steel in a few years. Austria was annexed in 1938 with the *Anschluss*, with Czechoslovakia following shortly after Hitler demanded the Sudetenland and then seized the rest in 1939. Poland was next on Hitler's list, and it would be his demands for Danzig and the subsequent invasion of Poland, that would spark the European theater of World War II.

Much like with Mussolini, Hitler was able to seize power through completely legal means, manipulating the constitution of the Weimar Republic to form his

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 490-492.

dictatorship. While he had initially desired to see a nationalistic revolution, after his failed putsch, Hitler recognized the need for legitimacy by working through the system. That was not to say, in the years' long campaign to the chancellorship, that violence was not used. The Nazis were utterly brutal in their persecution of their political opponents, breaking apart their meetings, utilizing assassinations and intimidation on their prominent members. The SA, and later the SS, were extremely effective in suppressing dissent or eliminating undesirables, and because the Weimar government was not opposed to their brutal methods against the communists after the events of 1918 and 1919, they were allowed to grow unchecked. Ultimately, Hitler was able to make effective use of a crisis and manipulate the massive audiences he attracted at his speeches to gain power, and once he did, only a six-year-long war would shatter his hold on Germany.

## Chapter IV

### Turmoil of the Nineteenth Century

The outbreak of the conflict in 1936 known as the Spanish Civil War was the latest in a long line of political upheavals that had plagued the Iberian Peninsula since the end of the Napoleonic Wars in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Economic backwardness and division, sentiments towards the Catholic Church and the strength of clerics in the country, nationalistic movements in Catalonia and the Basque region, and a deep-seated cultural and political divide among the population in Spain exacerbated the problems any government that formed had to address. It was inevitable in this climate that some struggle would erupt, but no one could have known at the time the level of damage it would cause to Spain and its people, and how it would act as a testing ground for tactics used in 1939.

As the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815 with Napoleon Bonaparte's exile and the restoration of the Bourbon family to the throne of France and Ferdinand VII to the throne of Spain, Spain was in incredibly rough shape. The Peninsular war fought between French forces, and those of Britain and its allied Portuguese troops and Spanish guerrillas had ravaged the Iberian Peninsula. Spain's long-term economic development had atrophied severely due to the significant loss of population it suffered, along with the warring armies seizing any and all livestock and food stores they could find. Industry was limited to Catalonia's textile factories, and its transportation network, what little had existed before the war, was rudimentary at best



when compared to other nations embracing the Industrial Revolution. The result was a profoundly impoverished Spanish population, as they relied heavily on livestock for their income, and the country was already suffering from the gradual shrinking of its colonial empire during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1820, the country was one of Europe's poorest, a reversal of fortunes from the previous two centuries when it had been a world power.

Compounding Spain's economic issues was the reluctance and outright hostility of Ferdinand VII and his conservative supporters in enforcing the Constitution of 1812. The constitution, created during the Napoleonic Wars, established a similar system to the British balance of power, with the monarch operating through a system of ministers that answered to a parliament.<sup>155</sup> The constitution also established suffrage that was not tied to the need to own property, along with reworking the provincial governments to a more effective system rather than the historical local structures of power.<sup>156</sup> Most significantly however was the establishment of citizenship and civil rights for many of those that lived under Spanish rule at home and in the colonies, at the time of the constitution's creation that is. Article 1 of the Constitution read: "The Spanish nation is the collectivity of the Spaniards of both hemispheres."<sup>157</sup> Ferdinand VII, however, wanted a return to the absolutism that his forebears had ruled with prior to Napoleon as the constitution

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<sup>155</sup> "Spanish Constitution of 1812," accessed July 23, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071012231715/http://www.constitucion.es/otras\\_constituciones/espana/1812.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20071012231715/http://www.constitucion.es/otras_constituciones/espana/1812.html).

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

limited his powers, and likely most importantly, his income as revenue from the colonies was originally diverted into the royal treasury, but the constitution instead had it diverted to the administrative apparatus. In 1814, he abolished the constitution with the support of his conservative supporters and the Catholic Church and returned Spain to an absolute monarchy.<sup>158</sup>

With a return to absolutism, Ferdinand VII sought to entrench the traditional political and economic forces in Spain by setting high tariffs on foreign imports and forcing the population to rely on homegrown goods.<sup>159</sup> His government was also not interested in embracing industry, with the only railroad being built around Madrid and nowhere close to exploitable resources like coal or iron.<sup>160</sup> These policies were not enough to fund the army or the government itself, indeed the foreign import market completely collapsed as other European nations decided it was not profitable to export goods to Spain, and in 1820, a segment of the army revolted in Cadiz. Other forces began expressing support for the men revolting, and as a way to placate them, Ferdinand VII was forced to accept the Constitution of 1812 and Spain entered a period known as the *trienio liberal*.

During the three years that consist of this period, Ferdinand was essentially placed under house arrest by the Spanish parliament while they went about the business of creating a liberal government. They reorganized Spain into new provinces

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<sup>158</sup> Miguel Artola, *La España de Fernando VII* (Buenos Aires: Espasa, 1999), 406.

<sup>159</sup> Carlos Santiago-Caballero, Leandro Escosura, "The Napoleonic Wars: A Watershed in Spanish History," *EHES Working Papers in Economic History no. 1* (European Historical Economics Society, April 2018), 14.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

and attempted to reduce regional autonomy in places such as Aragon, Navarre, and Catalonia.<sup>161</sup> The new liberal government also made attempts to limit the power of the Catholic Church in Spain and pushed for greater industrialization.<sup>162</sup> The rapid expansion of power by the liberal government in Spain alarmed the rest of Europe, particularly France, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. In 1822, a congress of European nations known as the Congress of Verona authorized France to intervene in Spain to put down the dangerous liberals and restore Ferdinand to power.<sup>163</sup> 100,000 French troops marched into Spain and quickly defeated the disorganized and divided Spanish army, suppressing the liberals and successfully placing Ferdinand VII back on the throne as an absolute monarch.<sup>164</sup>

A tumultuous peace was created following his restoration, with Ferdinand focusing on punishing the liberals and other opposition. Harsh censorship policies were enacted along with the exile or detainment and execution of prominent liberals. Other attempts at revolution, to restore the government created in 1820, were continually put down by Ferdinand and a royal militia he established. However, Ferdinand fed into the instability in the country by issuing his Pragmatic Sanction of 1830. The proclamation, which widened the right of succession to female heirs along with male heirs, by the king was done to allow his infant daughter to be his direct

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<sup>161</sup> Charles Fehrenbach, "Moderados and Exaltados: the liberal opposition to Ferdinand VII, 1814-1823," *Hispanic American Historical Review* no. 50, (1970), 62.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>163</sup> "Treaty of the Congress of Verona, 1823," accessed July, 24, 2020, <https://maechtekonngresse.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/pages/toc.html?collection=editions&filterstring=V>.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

successor, rather than his brother Infante Carlos.<sup>165</sup> This act, combined with Ferdinand's declining health, resulted in a split in Spanish politics as liberals and reformers gravitated to the regent Maria Christina while conservatives and absolutists threw their support behind Carlos. When Ferdinand died in 1833, leaving his three-year-old daughter Isabella as queen with her mother as regent, Carlos declared himself the legitimate king as Charles V and triggered the First Carlist War.

In the initial stages of the war, the Carlist faction under General Tomás Zumalacárregui were able to achieve many early victories, particularly in the northern territories around the Basque region. In the south, however, the Carlists were unable to gain any foothold against the forces supporting Isabella II and her regency. Any territory they were able to take was quickly retaken by loyalist forces, and the war effort for the Carlists took a turn for the worst once Zumalacárregui died in 1835 from a bullet wound in the leg that was treated improperly.<sup>166</sup> The fighting would continue for another three years, but the momentum in the war was in the hands of the liberal supporters of Isabella. The war ended with the Convention of Vergara in August of 1839 which saw the majority of Carlists forces in the Basque region surrender<sup>167</sup>, although sporadic fighting would continue into 1840 in the northeast.

A significant event that occurred during the First Carlist War was the creation of a new constitution in 1837 for the Spanish government. The new constitution was

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<sup>165</sup> "Pragmatic Sanction of 1830," accessed August 8, 2020, [https://www.heraldica.org/topics/national/sp\\_succ.htm#1830](https://www.heraldica.org/topics/national/sp_succ.htm#1830).

<sup>166</sup> Edgar Holt, *The Carlist Wars in Spain* (Chester Springs: Dufour Editions, 1967).

<sup>167</sup> "Convention of Vergara, 1839," accessed August 12, 2020, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9d/Convenio\\_de\\_Vergara.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9d/Convenio_de_Vergara.jpg).

formed after sergeants of the Spanish Royal Guard instigated a coup against the reigning regent for Isabella II in 1836, prompting the regent, Maria Christina, to create a government dominated by the progressives.<sup>168</sup> The new constitution had some concessions to entice the moderates to support it, but otherwise, the new ruling law had similarities to previous constitutions. Enshrined in the Constitution were the principle of national sovereignty, the recognition of a range of rights for citizens, a division of governmental powers, an increased role for the legislature and limitations on royal power.<sup>169</sup> The parliament was similar in structure to that of other constitutional monarchies at the time, with a broad electorate choosing representatives to the Chamber of Deputies, while the Senate was appointed by the monarch.<sup>170</sup> The monarch had the power to assemble and dissolve the legislature. Rather than universal suffrage, suffrage was limited to those who paid taxes of at least 200 *reales*, constricting voters, all men as women still had no right to vote, to about five percent of Spain's population at the time.<sup>171</sup>

Following the war, Isabella II's mother and regent attempted to eliminate the new constitution she had been saddled with, desiring a return once again to autocracy. However, her efforts only served to antagonize the liberal reformers that had supported the government during the war and their influence was strong enough to

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<sup>168</sup> "Spanish Constitution of 1837," accessed July 23, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041629/http://www.constitucion.es/otras\\_constituciones/espana/1837.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041629/http://www.constitucion.es/otras_constituciones/espana/1837.html).

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

force Maria Christina out of the regency and the appointment of a hero of the Carlist War, General Baldomero Espartero.<sup>172</sup> Espartero attempted to enact reforms, but he was an inexperienced politician at best, and he generally defaulted to authoritarian methods to ensure his rule. Coups were launched in 1841 and 1842 to try and force Espartero out of power, but he crushed these efforts through the use of military force such as bombarding Barcelona with artillery in the 1842 coup attempt.<sup>173</sup> Espartero was eventually forced out in 1843 when two generals, Ramon Narvaez and Francisco Serrano, enacted their own uprising and Espartero fled to England.<sup>174</sup> The uprising ushered in the rule of a moderate government and the recognition of Isabella II by the legislature as having come of age, even though she was only thirteen at the time.<sup>175</sup>

From the start, Isabella II's reign was marked by governmental instability. The first president of the government under Isabella, Salustiano Olózaga, lasted only fifteen days before he was forced from office after he tried to dissolve the legislature in Isabella's name. His successor, Luis Gonzalez Bravo, dissolved the legislature and ruled through royal decree. Foreseeing further unrest in northern Spain by Carlist elements, Bravo established the *Guardia Civil* as a national police force that could maintain some semblance of order without the corruption prevalent in the older municipal leagues.<sup>176</sup> Bravo, while he lasted longer than Olózaga, was only in power for six months before he was replaced by Ramon Narváez.

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<sup>172</sup> Raymond Carr, *Spain: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Location 2363.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 2363.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 2363.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, Location 2373.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 2373.

Narváez and the moderate majority in the Cortes began enacting reforms that were more in line with their political stances, starting with the creation of yet another new constitution in 1845. All references to the idea of national sovereignty mentioned in the 1837 document were omitted with a heavy emphasis on centralization over regional autonomy. Power would be shared between the Crown and Parliament with the king or queen having immense executive powers and be responsible for the complete composition of the Senate. The legislature would have powers over legislation and the budget.<sup>177</sup> Although the constitution declared rights such as freedom of expression, these rights were subject to laws passed by the parliament, and none of the men in the Cortes had intentions of losing their monopoly on power.

Narváez continued his policy of conservative and moderate reforms by enacting an electoral law in 1846 that curtailed the already limited voting pool to roughly one percent of the population through the use of a new property bar and a higher financial hurdle. Narváez also oversaw the first major tax reform of Spain since the days of Charles IV. The new reforms, named after finance minister Alejandro Mon and his close colleague Ramón de Santillán, were designed to stabilize Spain's finances and replace many of the old taxes. The two men developed a two-tier system of direct and indirect taxes that would apply equally to citizens. The direct taxes would levy property, crops, and livestock and impose limits on tenancy while also financing a subsidy for industry and trade. The indirect taxes revolved

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<sup>177</sup> "Spanish Constitution of 1845," accessed July 23, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041635/http://www.constitucion.es/otras\\_constituciones/espana/1845.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041635/http://www.constitucion.es/otras_constituciones/espana/1845.html).

mainly around consumption taxes, essentially imposing duties on items such as alcohol, olive oil, and soap. Real estate was also subject to the new indirect taxes through levies on mortgages, leases, title transfers, and rent increases.

Narváez also sought to ease relations with the Catholic Church that had been strained since the Carlist War by ending the policy known as *desamortizacion* or the confiscation of church lands. Prior to this policy, the Catholic Church had been the single largest landowner in the country, with much of that land not being put to use. During the rebellion, the Spanish government had confiscated and sold church owned lands as a means to cover the growing costs of the war. The land was sold to middle class landowners that were encouraged to start their own enterprises, but also to some of the wealthiest landholders in Spain to increase their own holdings.<sup>178</sup> Under his successor, Bravo Murillo, the government came to the Concordat of 1851 with the Catholic Church.

The Concordat of 1851 retrenched the influence of Catholicism in Spain by stating Roman Catholicism would be the only religion of Spain and guaranteeing several concessions and rights to the clergy.<sup>179</sup> Education in all colleges and universities had to conform to Catholic doctrine with bishops retaining the right to oversee and preach to the students.<sup>180</sup> The church would be allowed to acquire new property in exchange for renouncing their right to the lands and property previously

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<sup>178</sup> Carr, Location 2373.

<sup>179</sup> “Concordat of 1851,” accessed August 12, 2020, <http://www.concordatwatch.eu/topic-34511.834>.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*



taken.<sup>181</sup> The Spanish government also agreed to pay the salaries of bishops and priests and promised to prevent the publication or circulation of written materials deemed by the church as immoral or harmful.<sup>182</sup>

Murillo pursued an aggressive economic policy focused on advancing Spanish industry and commerce. Murillo and his efforts were centered in the northern regions of Catalonia and Basque as a means of advancing Spain's textile and metallurgy industries. Murillo also began a serious effort to construct a wider railway system in Spain in order to mitigate some of the isolation experienced by the interior of the country. Even through these policies, agriculture remained the strongest part of the Spanish economy and public infrastructure remained limited. Murillo himself would be forced out of office in 1852 by the Cortes after he announced policies that threatened the legislature's power.

His successor, Federico Roncali, only governed briefly before the Spanish military convinced Isabella to replace him with General Francisco Lersundi. The Cortes, angered by the military's interfering in government affairs, positioned Luis Sartorius as the next head of government. Sartorius was considered incredibly corrupt and had been known to falsify election results in favor of himself and his allies. His appointment severely agitated the progressives and sparked street protests in February of 1854.

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<sup>181</sup> Concordat of 1851.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

The February street protests evolved into a major rebellion by late June of 1854 when General Leopoldo O'Donnell was able to unite the diverse opposition forces.<sup>183</sup> Troops taking part in the rebellion were met by government loyalists in Vicalvaro, but the confrontation was a stalemate. O'Donnell demanded a new government be created to end the corruption rampant in the current moderate administration, but he made clear that he respected the queen. In July, O'Donnell and other rebels issued the Manifesto of Manzanares, which stated:

We wish to preserve the Throne, but without the *camarilla* that dishonors it; we wish the rigorous practice of the fundamental laws, above all those of elections and the press (...); we wish seniority and merit to be respected in civil and military employment (...); we wish to lift from the populations the centralization that is devouring them, giving them the local independence necessary to conserve and augment their own interests; and as a guarantee of all that we wish and to place ourselves on a solid basis, the National Militia. These are our intentions, which we express frankly without imposing these on the Nation. The organs of government that ought to be constituted in free provinces, the Cortes generales that will later bring them together, the Nation itself, finally, will set the definitive bases for the liberal regeneration to which we aspire. We have consecrated our swords to the national will, and will not sheathe them until that will is satisfied.<sup>184</sup>

Faced with growing unrest as more of the populace across the country joined with the rebels, Isabella acceded to the demands of the rebels. To head up the new progressive government, Baldomero Espartero was appointed as president of the government, a turnaround of political fortunes for the former regent.

The new progressive period of government was called the *bienio progresista* or the progressive biennium and was meant to be a counter to the previous decade

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<sup>183</sup> Carr, Location 2389.

<sup>184</sup> "Manifesto of Manzanares," accessed August 8, 2020, [https://gl.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifesto\\_de\\_Manzanares](https://gl.wikisource.org/wiki/Manifesto_de_Manzanares).

that had been dominated by the moderates. As a way of beginning the supposed new era of Spanish politics, the progressives annulled the Constitution of 1845 and began designing a new constitution that would be based on the 1837 constitution and include new rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of political association. The work on a new constitution stalled as internal factions within the progressives could not agree on the text of the document.<sup>185</sup>

In the midst of the political wrangling, Espartero and O'Donnell began another major economic reform. Finance Minister Pascual Madoz reintroduced the policy of confiscation by targeting civil properties such as hospitals, hospices, charity homes, and municipal buildings and reselling them. The confiscation policy was designed to once again refill the government's coffers, but only served to restrict the ability of the public from using previously open access facilities. The government also promised immense benefits and privileges to anyone who would invest in developing Spain's fledging rail system, inviting foreign investors to flock to a potential new market. Another major policy of the progressive government was to reform the banking and corporate laws of the country as a means to boost industrial development.<sup>186</sup>

However, the progressive government of Espartero and O'Donnell quickly fell out of favor with the queen as discontent grew from the confiscation policies. Isabella once again switched her support to the moderates, allowing Narváez to return as head

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<sup>185</sup> Carr, Location 2389.

<sup>186</sup> Carr, Location 2424.

of a new government. Immediately, Narváez repealed or ended the policies enacted by the progressives and also restored the Constitution of 1845. Isabella began to tire of Narváez due to his authoritarian tendencies and decided to replace him with Francisco Peñaranda. Peñaranda was unable to pass policies through the Cortes as he had none of the intimidating presence of Narváez. Even conservative policies that his party should have supported were stalled in the legislature, and desiring to see progress of some sort, Isabella replaced Peñaranda with Francisco Istúriz. Istúriz lacked any sort of support from the conservatives and was even actively opposed by members of his own party such as Bravo Murillo. His government lasted just three months before he was replaced by Isabella. Isabella, thoroughly annoyed with the moderates and worried about the newest coup O'Donnell had launched, once again called upon O'Donnell to form a new government.

O'Donnell had managed to create a compromise faction of centrists, progressives, and moderates that had grown tired of their own party that he called the Liberal Union. O'Donnell and his alliance were able to bring much needed political stability to Spain for the next five years, allowing Isabella to pursue some international efforts in projecting Spanish power. Spanish troops would take part in the French expedition to Cochinchina (today the southern third of Vietnam), the allied intervention in Mexico, and a small expansion of the Spanish Empire through a successful campaign in Morocco. These foreign conflicts served to pull attention away from the Cortes and the political bickering that plagued the legislature.

O'Donnell was also able to secure a new agreement with the Catholic Church in 1859 that discussed the possibility of legal confiscation of lands from the church.

Unfortunately for the general, his coalition fell apart in 1863 and his opponents among the moderates convinced the queen to replace him. The remaining few years of her reign saw Isabella switch between governments run by Narváez and O'Donnell, stoking discontent about the queen's ability to form a working government among many in the Cortes, military, and the population at large. O'Donnell's death in 1867 served as another catalyst for what was to come as many of his supporters flocked to the discontented movement facing the queen.

In September of 1868, Isabella II saw the complete collapse of her power. Warning signs had begun to form in 1866 when General Juan Prim led a revolt of soldiers in Madrid, that while put down, had shown a deep underlying frustration with the monarch and her back and forth approach to ruling.<sup>187</sup> Her vacillation and constant embrace of ultra-conservative positions had aggravated the moderates, progressives, and the liberals, creating an opposition to Isabella that crossed ideological and party lines for the moment.<sup>188</sup> The queen was quickly becoming the symbol, and many believed the reason, for Spain's difficulties. The spark that lit the powder keg of discontent was a mutiny of naval forces in Cádiz under Admiral Juan Topete, which was swiftly followed by Generals Prim and Serrano denouncing the government. A significant majority of the army sided with the generals, leaving

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<sup>187</sup> Carr, Location 2452.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 2452.

Isabella with relatively few loyalists forces. These troops were defeated at the Battle of Alcolea by the revolutionaries and forced Isabella to flee Spain to live in exile in France. The monarchical system that had ruled Spain since the unification of Aragon and Castille and the days of Ferdinand II and Isabella I had fallen, for the moment. By the time her official reign ended in exile, Isabella II had gone through thirty-five presidents of her government and had gone through three different revolts and coups that significantly altered her government.

The era that followed the Glorious Revolution as it became known would see the first experiments by Spain in democratic government, experiments that would be plagued by extreme instability, in what is called the *Sexenio Democrático* or the democratic six years. The fall of monarchy exposed the deep divides between the alliance of forces that overthrew Isabella II as none of them had the political momentum necessary to guide the country on their own. Francisco Serrano assumed leadership of the government while the Cortes debated on the direction the country would pursue. The idea of a republic was rejected in favor of a constitutional monarchy, with the Cortes creating the new Constitution of 1869 to outline what they hoped to create. The document reflected the progressive and democratic set of ideals being embraced by the Cortes: it returned to the concept of national sovereignty as its source, which strengthened representative institutions,<sup>189</sup> and an ambitious declaration

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<sup>189</sup> “Spanish Constitution of 1869,” accessed July 23, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041650/http://www.constitucion.es/otras\\_constituciones/espana/1869.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041650/http://www.constitucion.es/otras_constituciones/espana/1869.html).

of rights was included which, for the first time, stipulated the freedom of worship.<sup>190</sup> The current parliamentary system was retained, although now the Senate would be voted for by the people through designated electors. Congress, on the other hand, was elected via universal suffrage, albeit men only.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, although the king or queen retained their powers, the ministers that formed the government would ultimately answer to the legislature. Specifically, it recognized the interpellation right of both chambers of the Cortes and the right to censure the government and individual ministers alike.<sup>192</sup>

With the new constitution passed by the legislature, the process began of searching for a new king. Juan Prim assumed a regency position as prime minister until a suitable candidate was found that would abide by the new rule of law in Spain. Several contenders were discussed, such as Espartero, the son of Isabella Alfonso XII, Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, and Prince Leopold of the Hohenzollern dynasty. The last of those aspirants would directly lead to the Franco-Prussian War as France did not want to see a German prince ascend the throne of Spain. In August of 1870, Amadeo of Savoy, the son of King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy, was chosen as the new monarch of Spain. In November of 1870, Amadeo was recognized as Amadeo I of Spain, on the same day that Juan Prim was assassinated when he left the Cortes.

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Spanish Constitution of 1869.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

The new king faced an uphill battle of trying to govern Spain. The Cortes, even though they had selected him, viewed him as a foreigner. Only the progressives supported him in the legislature, but corruption dogged the party as they were relying on election fraud and a parliamentary majority to cycle their leaders through as head of the government. Eventually, even the progressives split into monarchists and constitutionalists that furthered the instability in Spain. To top off his original troubles, Amadeo was facing a renewed Carlist rebellion in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Carlos VII was trying to build support to ascend the throne himself by promising various regions in the north a return to their old autonomy and specific laws and customs.

Following an assassination attempt in August of 1872, Amadeo was also forced to deal with a revolt among the army's artillery corps. The government instructed the king, as commander-in-chief of the Spanish military, to discipline the mutineers. The incident came to be called the Hidalgo Affair and proved to be the final straw for the new king. He issued an order against the artillery corps and then promptly announced to the Cortes his abdication of the throne. In an address to the legislature on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1873, during the same session that Spain was declared a republic, he proclaimed the Spanish people ungovernable and departed for Savoy.

The new republic, henceforth known as the First Spanish Republic, was highly unstable right from the start and was facing major crises across Spain and its colonial holdings. The Carlists were still revolting in the northern regions and were slowly advancing their control southward, several regions had sprung up in rebellion



to try and form individual cantons in a federation, much like Switzerland, Cuban dissidents were fighting for independence for the Caribbean island, and a syndicalist revolution was occurring in Alcoy.<sup>193</sup> Compounding the issues of the First Republic was their inability to pass a constitution and the rapid movement through leaders. In the short lifespan of the First Republic, approximately eleven months, the government would go through four different presidents that did little to stabilize the situation.

The first President of the Executive Power, not of the Republic as the Constitution had not been passed yet, was Estanislao Figueras. Figueras had a daunting task ahead of him if he wanted to stabilize the country and the fledgling government. The economy was in tatters with the government inheriting a massive deficit with hardly any capital on hand to pay on the debt that was due, and coupled with high unemployment and strikes across the country.<sup>194</sup> The rebellions were still flaring up, and the new president had to deal with several coup attempts, two of which were launched by the Speaker of the National Assembly himself.<sup>195</sup> To try and gain some legitimacy for the government, and likely as a way to stop further coup attempts from the National Assembly, Figueras called for elections to a Constituent Cortes. While these elections filled the seats of the parliament with federal republicans, they were woefully lacking in representation of the other political factions at work in the country. The left, coalescing around the growing workers'

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<sup>193</sup> Carr, Location 2476.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 2476.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 2476.

movement, the monarchists, and the unitary republicans all did not participate in the elections for the Cortes.

Figueras opened the first session of the new legislature on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1873, but besides passing a resolution that declared Spain a federal republic, the delegates could not agree on anything, even on how ministers to the government should be appointed. Fed up with the situation, Figueras tendered his resignation and boarded the first train to Paris. His replacement, Francisco Pi y Margall, was unsure how to proceed himself, but decided to focus his efforts on getting the constitution passed and laws that might heal the divisions ripping the country apart.

By June 30<sup>th</sup>, none of his proposals had made it out of committee and the political situation worsened for Margall when cities and regions across southern Spain began to declare themselves individual cantons. Starting with Seville, and then joined by a syndicalist uprising in Alcoy, the movement spread like wildfire. Between the growing cantonal movement in the south and the Carlist rebellion in the north, the First Republic effectively only controlled the area around Madrid and the north-west parts of Spain. Margall was called upon to act as commander-in-chief to put down the cantonal uprisings, but he refused. Margall himself had proposed the idea of a federation of cantons during the formation of the Republic, and he refused to use military force to put down the insurrection that was following his own personal beliefs. After only thirty-seven days in office, Margall was forced to resign and was replaced by Nicolás Salmerón.

Salmerón was an effective orator and had previously served under Figueras as his Minister of Mercy and Justice, creating a policy that eliminated the death penalty and established some independence for the judiciary from the legislature. Unlike his predecessor, Salmerón had no qualms about dispatching military forces into the south to quell the cantonal rebellion. Military forces dispatched to Andalusia and Valencia under the command of Generals Pavia and Martínez-Campos were able to quell the uprising and return the cantons, one by one, to the First Republic. Pavia was eventually recalled to Madrid to take command of the garrison in the city. However, the generals fighting against the Carlists in the north presented Salmerón with a problem. Several soldiers had deserted from the northern front and the generals wanted to make examples of them as a means of reestablishing discipline in the army. Salmerón refused to sign their death sentences, and rather be forced into any political corners by the decision, resigned the presidency.

Emilio Castelar was elected by the Cortes as Salmerón's replacement in September of 1873. With many of the cantons suppressed and reincorporated into the country, the only remaining holdout being the city of Cartagena, Castelar wanted to focus on reorganizing the army to combat the continuing Carlist insurrection in the north. The Cortes agreed to his demands for more troops and supplies, while also granting him emergency powers to deal with the crisis and suspending any further meetings of the legislature until January 1874. For the next few months, Castelar would be allowed to rule through decree, itself a move away from the idea of republicanism and starting the First Republic towards its end.

Castelar called out thousands of conscripts to bolster the weakening Spanish army in their campaign in the north and diverted some of the best generals in Spain at the time to oversee the operation, regardless of their personal politics. He confirmed the death sentences that his predecessor refused to sign, and diligently worked to restore order across the country. Part of his plan to restore order across the country involved reaching out to the Catholic Church, putting an end to the persecution of the church and various religious orders in territory controlled by the First Republic. He was also able to restore some solvency to the Spanish treasury and the administration of the country's finances, although it was mainly to pay for the ongoing conflicts on the Iberian Peninsula and the rebellion in Cuba. However, his work had upset the Cortes' delegates and he was under no illusions that his position was under threat. General Pavia tried to insinuate that if the Cortes moved against him that the garrison in Madrid and the army would support Castelar. Castelar wanted no part in a military overthrow of the legislature and refused Pavia's offer for when the time came for the parliament to reconvene.

When the Cortes met on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1874, the delegates denounced the actions and policies of Castelar and moved to push him out of office with a vote of censure. Castelar resigned instead to avoid a drawn out political battle, but the damage had been done. General Pavia, incensed by the Cortes, launched a coup with help from the garrison in Madrid that overthrew and dissolved the Cortes. While Spain would remain a republic in name, with a provisional government formed around the venerable Serrano, Pavia's coup essentially placed the country under a

military dictatorship by means of creating a unitary republic. Serrano would keep his focus purely on fighting the Carlists in the north, eventually ceding control of the government to Juan Zavala Puente so he could personally lead the campaign against the northern rebels. Juan Puente remained as head of the government in Serrano's absence until September 3<sup>rd</sup> when he was replaced by Práxedes Sagasta, the man who would be considered the last President of the Executive Power. All of this time, the First Republic had never passed the draft constitution that had started to form the previous year.

The final death knell for the first experiment of democracy in Spain came on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1874 when General Martínez-Campos and other generals pronounced their support for the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy and the ascension of Alfonso XII to the throne of Spain. The government of the First Republic did not oppose the announcement or sent troops to put down the general. Their inaction was an open invitation for the monarchists to move forward with their plans, and Alfonso XII returned to Spain to assume the throne shortly after the announcement. In the end, the First Republic died with a whimper and constitutional monarchy returned to Spain.

## Chapter V

### Rise of Franco

Following the restoration of the monarchy to Spain, the country was able to experience its longest period of stability and prosperity in decades. A new political system was devised by the Cortes and Alfonso XII, centered around a new constitution, that would allow Spain to hopefully move forward into the rapidly approaching twentieth century. The system, known as *el turno pacífico*, would alternate power between the two major parties, both of whom were in agreement with the practice. However, Spain's entry into the twentieth century was plagued by foreign issues and a growing resentment among marginalized political forces that would lead to a return of the political instability and coups of the previous century. A second republic would emerge once the monarchy collapsed again, but the new republic and its policies, along with the growing power of reactionary and conservative forces, would only accelerate the country towards the bloodiest war of the Iberian Peninsula since the Peninsular War. The Spanish Civil War would be the crucible for the nation and for a general named Francisco Franco that would ultimately transform Spain into an authoritarian power similar to Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany.

The restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, in the personage of Alfonso XII, allowed Spain to finally gain some measure of political stability, although the Carlists were still making trouble in the northern portions of the country. Alfonso XII named

an old and highly respected politician named Antonio Cánovas del Castillo to be his new prime minister and tasked him with crafting a new political system to avoid the instability of previous decades.<sup>196</sup> Castillo focused upon two aspects to achieve this goal: a new constitution to legitimize the monarchy and an idea of shared power between the two major parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, in the Cortes. The system that Castillo designed came to be known as the *turno pacífico*, called so because of the rotating nature of which party would control the government.<sup>197</sup> Both parties would uphold the monarchy, and due to the shared nature of power, it made sure that neither section of the ruling classes were excluded from power as previous governments had done. Castillo himself became the leader of the conservatives while Práxedes Sagasta was the leader of the Liberals and would be the man who he would occasionally switch power with.

Castillo also managed his other goal and established a new constitution in 1876. It was a short text, conservative in its inspiration, which returned to the concept of constituent power shared between the monarchy and the country. A declaration of rights was maintained, albeit it was more restricted than in the Constitution of 1869.<sup>198</sup> The Cortes was retained as a bicameral legislature, with the king having the power to appoint senators to the upper house, while the lower house was elected

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<sup>196</sup> Franciso Salvardo, *Spain 1914-1918: Between War and Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-2.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>198</sup> “Spanish Constitution of 1876,” accessed July 23, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041700/http://www.constitucion.es/otras\\_constituciones/espana/1876.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20071029041700/http://www.constitucion.es/otras_constituciones/espana/1876.html).

semi-democratically, but only by those men that held significant wealth or property.<sup>199</sup> The king also had the power to revoke laws if he so desired, and was once again named commander-in-chief of the Spanish military.<sup>200</sup> In many regards, the Constitution of 1876 was a return to that of the one crafted in 1844, placing power in the hands of the elites and leaving the working class frustrated by their lack of representation.

Under Castillo and Alfonso XII, Spain began to see a resurgence in its economy as well. Heavy investment in modernizing the country's infrastructure, both at home and in its remaining colonies in the Americas, pushed a level of economic prosperity that Spain had not seen in decades. Industrial production was increased, although it still remained mostly centered in Catalonia's textiles and the Basque country's steel plants. Agriculture continued to be the main pillar of the Spanish economy due to the influence of the large landholders. Even though agriculture was such a large portion of the economy, Spain's agrarian output was the lowest in Europe for a variety of reasons: refusal to embrace newer technologies, lack of irrigation projects beyond a local scale, and the refusal to abandon the traditional land and financial practices. As a means to prop up the internal economy and increased industrial production, the Spanish government relied heavily on protectionist measures such as tariffs to make local goods cheaper than anything being exported from the rest of Europe or the United States.

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<sup>199</sup> Spanish Constitution of 1876.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.



By the 1880s though, cracks were starting to form in the system established by Castillo. Alfonso XII died in 1885 of tuberculosis, leaving behind a son, the future Alfonso XIII, that was born after his death. Castillo himself had left government in 1881 due to push back on his foreign policy decisions and the growing discontent among the working classes. He would later be assassinated in 1897 by an Italian anarchist.

Many of the urban and factory workers had no say in the governing of the country and they wanted expanded suffrage and an end to the revolving door of the *turno* system. Among these workers, the seeds were being sown once again for republicanism, but also for the newer philosophies of socialism and communism. Particularly in the northern industrial regions, the people were once again embracing nationalist rhetoric and desired a return of the autonomy they had known before. In Spain's remaining colonies, independence movements were met with extremely repressive measures that were garnering international attention. Most significantly, the ongoing military crackdown in Cuba was drawing heightened interest from the United States.

By 1898, the situation for Spain worsened dramatically. Spain had suffered a humiliating defeat in the swift, but decisive, Spanish-American War that had seen much of their military power in the Pacific and Atlantic crushed by a modern American navy. The war had begun when the USS Maine exploded in Havana Harbor in Cuba, with the United States blaming Spanish saboteurs for the destruction of the warship. The three-month war had seen the devastation of the Spanish naval

squadrons in the Caribbean and the Pacific and the complete collapse of their hold in Cuba. In the terms of surrender, Spain ceded control of its remaining overseas colonies of Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to American oversight.<sup>201</sup> The humiliating loss of the European power that once held much of the New World in its empire was a massive blow to the government's credibility and its policies.<sup>202</sup> Further adding to the chaos of 1898, the Conservatives and Liberals in the Cortes were facing increasing internal divisions as new ideologies and factions rose to prominence, especially among the liberals.<sup>203</sup>

Compounding the issues increasingly facing the Spanish government was the disastrous military expedition in Morocco, the only remaining Spanish colonial possession. Spain had controlled much of the northern part of the state, but there were territorial ambitions to further expand their sphere of influence. The problems in Morocco worsened as an army of natives attacked the Spanish army.<sup>204</sup> They achieved surprise and, due to the skill of the Moroccan chieftain, Abd-Al-Krim, virtually annihilated the Spanish army, advancing almost as far as Melilla in the Battle of Annual.<sup>205</sup> This Spanish defeat was due to improper planning and was blamed on the top military officers, causing great discontent among the military. The officers felt misunderstood and wrongfully scapegoated because they had been

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<sup>201</sup> "Treaty of Paris, 1898," The Avalon Project, accessed July 23, 2020, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/sp1898.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/sp1898.asp).

<sup>202</sup> Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (New York: HarperCollins: 2006), 24.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>204</sup> David Woolman, *Rebels in the Rif* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1968), 97.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

directed to advance into the interior without adequate resources to occupy the difficult territory.<sup>206</sup>

The failed attempts to conquer Morocco caused great discontent at home and ended in a revolt in Barcelona, known as the *Semana Tragica*, in which the lower classes of Barcelona, backed by the anarchists, communists, and republicans, revolted against conscription and the general treatment of the citizenry as nothing more than bodies to replenish the military.<sup>207</sup> The government declared a state of war and sent the army to crush the revolt, causing over a hundred deaths and the execution of Francisco Ferrer. The socialist *Unión General de Trabajadores* (hereafter referred to as the UGT) and the anarchist *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (hereafter referred to as the CNT) decided to initiate a general strike across the country, but it failed because the unions could only mobilize urban workers.<sup>208</sup>

As the Great War erupted in 1914, Alfonso XIII and Spain had to make a critical decision: would they back one of the belligerent alliances or declare neutrality? Neutrality was determined to be the course of action as it would allow Spain to conduct business with both the Central Powers and the Entente. However, the policy of neutrality rankled the military as the generals and admirals recognized that Spain was losing any influence it may have held in European affairs.<sup>209</sup> When the war ended, while Spain had been spared the destruction that other countries like

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>207</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), 15.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>209</sup> Preston, 30.

France had suffered, and indeed its industries had prospered, the Spanish had gained nothing and were further weakened by the pandemic that came to be known as the Spanish Flu.

The military discontent, the fear of anarchist terrorism or a proletarian revolution, and the rise of nationalist movements ultimately caused great agitation amongst the civilians and the military. On September 13, 1923, Miguel Primo de Rivera, Captain General of Catalonia, orchestrated a coup after issuing a manifesto blaming the problems of Spain on the parliamentary system that constricted the monarchy and military.<sup>210</sup> Alfonso XIII backed the General and named him Prime Minister. Primo de Rivera proceeded to suspend the Constitution and assume absolute powers as a dictator, ruling through decree in the name of the king.<sup>211</sup> He created the *Unión Patriótica Española*, which was meant to be the sole legal party, abolishing all other parties.<sup>212</sup> During this time, he greatly increased government spending on business and public services, however he did not foresee the need to establish new revenue sources and his government was forced to go bankrupt. The bungled spending programs, included with his poor health, only resulted in the military and Alfonso losing faith in his abilities to lead the country and he was forced to resign in 1930.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Thomas, 16.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>213</sup> Preston, 34-36.

Alfonso XIII, in an attempt to return gradually to the previous system and restore his damaged prestige, called on General Dámaso Berenguer to form a government.<sup>214</sup> This failed utterly as the King was considered a supporter of the dictatorship by the citizenry, and more and more political forces called for the establishment of a republic. Berenguer resigned and the King gave the prime ministership to Admiral Juan Bautista Aznar-Cabañas.<sup>215</sup> Aznar-Cabañas called for local elections on April 12, 1931 in order to satisfy the democrats and republicans, to replace the dictatorship's local governments and to gradually re-introduce the restoration.<sup>216</sup>

Although the monarchists had not lost all their support, the republican and socialist parties won significant victories in major cities. Street riots ensued, calling for the removal of the monarchy. The army declared that they would not defend the King and on April 14 he fled Spain. The Second Spanish Republic was immediately established under a provisional government led by Niceto Alcalá-Zamora. In June 1931, a Constituent Cortes was elected to draft a new constitution, which came into force in December of that year.<sup>217</sup>

The new constitution of the Second Spanish Republic would be a major pillar of legitimacy for the new regime, earning widespread support among the political left, but this new constitution would also be a major contributor of tensions that would

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>216</sup> Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006), 20.

<sup>217</sup> Preston, 53.

contribute to the slowly approaching Spanish Civil War. The constitution established an Electoral College made of members of the legislature and elected citizens that would choose a new President of the Republic to act as head of state while a prime minister appointed by the president would lead the executive branch of government.<sup>218</sup> The constitution also outlined the legislative branch and its elections, redistricting Spain into new provinces and including a clause that similar cultural regions could gain some autonomy like the Basque region or Catalonia.<sup>219</sup> It also established a new Court of Constitutional Guarantees to safeguard the constitutionality of the legislature and end disputes between the provinces.<sup>220</sup>

The new basis of law within Spain afforded the population far more civil liberties than it ever had prior to its creation. The female portions of the population gained the right to vote in elections,<sup>221</sup> while also establishing civil marriages and divorces to the outcry of the Catholic Church and its conservative supporters.<sup>222</sup> The constitution also established free and obligatory secular education, much like the Third French Republic before World War I. However, it would be the clauses specifically on religion, besides the establishment of freedom of worship, and property that made the new rule of law divisive.

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<sup>218</sup> “Spanish Constitution of 1931,” accessed July 23, 2020, [https://web.archive.org/web/20071011021416/http://www.constitucion.es/otras\\_constituciones/espana/1931.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20071011021416/http://www.constitucion.es/otras_constituciones/espana/1931.html).

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

Included in the constitution were several laws that targeted the Roman Catholic Church in a bid to reduce the power the church had in politics and Spanish society while increasing that of the new government. Some of the more significant measures taken against the Catholic Church in the constitution were the nationalization of church property and the forcing of the church to pay rent to the government for lands and locations they previously owned. This was particularly troublesome to the church as the constitution also outlined how property was subject to the public good and could be nationalized and seized by the government as needed as long as just compensation was given. The government forbade any public manifestations of Catholicism such as parades and banned Catholic education by prohibiting nuns or priests from living in religious communities or teaching in private schools.<sup>223</sup>

The Republican Constitution also changed the country's national symbols. The *Himno de Riego* was established as the national anthem, and the Tricolor, with three horizontal red-yellow-purple fields, became the new flag of Spain.<sup>224</sup> Under the new Constitution, all of Spain's regions had the right to autonomy. Catalonia (1932), the Basque Country (1936) and Galicia (although the Galician Statute of Autonomy couldn't come into effect due to the war) exercised this right, with Aragon, Andalusia and Valencia, engaged in negotiations with the government before the outbreak of the Civil War.<sup>225</sup> The Constitution guaranteed a wide range of civil liberties, but it

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<sup>223</sup> Spanish Constitution of 1931.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

opposed key beliefs of the conservative right, which was very rooted in rural areas, and desires of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, which was stripped of schools and public subsidies.<sup>226</sup>

Azaña declared that Spain had "ceased to be Catholic"; although to an extent his statement was accurate, it was a politically unwise thing to say. An assault of a taxi driver supposedly due to his left-wing views sparked a wave of anti-clerical violence throughout south west urban Spain beginning on May 11, 1931; the government's reluctance to declare martial law in response and a comment attributed to Azaña that he would "rather all the churches in Spain be burnt than a single Republican harmed" prompted many Catholics to believe that the Republic was trying to prosecute Christianity.<sup>227</sup> Restrictions on Christian symbols in schools and hospitals and the ringing of bells came into force in January 1932. State control of cemeteries was also imposed. Many ordinary Catholics began to see the government as an enemy because of the educational and religious reforms. Government actions were denounced as barbaric, unjust, and corrupt by the press.<sup>228</sup>

In August 1932, there was an unsuccessful uprising by General José Sanjurjo, who had been particularly appalled by events in Castilblanco. The aims of the insurrection were vague, and it quickly turned into a fiasco and was put down by the Spanish Republic.<sup>229</sup> Among the generals tried and sent to Spanish colonies and

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Thomas, 47.

<sup>228</sup> Preston, 61.

<sup>229</sup> Beevor, 26.



frontier postings were four men who would go on to distinguish themselves fighting against the Republic in the civil war: Francisco de Borbón y de la Torre, Martin Alonso, Ricardo Serrador Santés, and Heli Rolando de Tella y Cantos.<sup>230</sup>

The political left gradually became fractured between the different agendas of the socialists, anarchists, and republicans, while the political right gravitated together as a reaction to what they viewed as the destruction of Spanish heritage.<sup>231</sup> The Socialist Party continued to support Azaña, but headed further to the political left. Gil Robles set up a new party, the Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right (hereafter referred to as CEDA) to contest the 1933 election, and tacitly embraced fascism as a model for governance and ideology.<sup>232</sup> The right won an overwhelming victory, with the CEDA and the Radicals together winning 219 seats.<sup>233</sup> The Socialists, on the other hand, were forced to work on their own and were vastly outspent by the right in the campaign. The Communist Party in Spain was not strong enough or widespread enough at roughly 3,000 members to affect much change in the elections.<sup>234</sup>

Following the elections of November 1933, Spain entered a period called the "two black years" or the *bienio negro*. While CEDA had won a plurality of seats, they had not gained an outright majority to form a government. President Niceto Alcalá-Zamora declined to invite the leader of the CEDA, Gil Robles, to form a government,

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<sup>230</sup> Thomas, 63.

<sup>231</sup> Preston, 61.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>234</sup> Thomas, 71.

and instead invited the Radical Republican Party's Alejandro Lerroux to do so.<sup>235</sup> Immediately after the election, accusations of voter fraud were leveled by the socialists against CEDA and their Radical allies. They alleged that they needed twice as many votes as their opponents to gain a seat within the legislature.<sup>236</sup> This, along with the identification of lack of unity on their part, led the Socialists to start embracing a more revolutionary ideal than they had before. To counter this growing revolutionary zeal, the Radicals became more aggressive and conservatives turned to paramilitary and vigilante actions. More strikes were called and socialists targeted over a hundred religious institutions and buildings, typically through arson. The Radical Republicans, with the backing of CEDA, set about removing price controls, selling state favors and monopolies, and removing the land reforms established in 1931 to the landowners' considerable advantage.<sup>237</sup> This created a growing food shortage in the south of Spain. The agrarian reforms, while still on the books, went mostly unenforced.<sup>238</sup>

The first proletariat protest erupted on December 8, 1933 and was easily crushed by force in most of Spain.<sup>239</sup> The protestors in Zaragoza held out for four days before the army, employing tanks, stopped the uprising. The Socialists stepped up their rhetoric in the aftermath, hoping to force Zamora to call new

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>237</sup> Preston, 67-68.

<sup>238</sup> Thomas, 75.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 68.

elections.<sup>240</sup> Carlists and Alfonsist monarchists continued to prepare, with Carlists undergoing military drills in Navarre. The Carlists also enjoyed the support of Benito Mussolini. Gil Robles struggled to control the RRP's youth wing, which copied Germany and Italy's youth movements. Monarchists turned to the *Falange Española*, under José Antonio Primo de Rivera, as a way to achieve their aims.<sup>241</sup> Open violence on the streets of Spain continued to increase in both frequency and severity.

Lerroux resigned in April 1934, after President Zamora hesitated to sign an Amnesty Bill which let off the arrested members of the 1932 plot.<sup>242</sup> He was replaced by Ricardo Samper. The Socialist Party ruptured over the question of whether or not to move towards Bolshevism. The youth wing, the Federation of Young Socialists were particularly militant, admiring the revolution that occurred in Russia in 1917.<sup>243</sup> The anarchists called a four-week strike in Zaragoza once again. Gil Robles' CEDA continued to mimic the German Nazi Party, staging a rally in March 1934, to shouts of "Jefe," Spanish for chief, in emulation of Mussolini's title as *Il Duce*.<sup>244</sup> Gil Robles, sensing an opportunity to fracture the left's political strength, used an anti-strike law to successfully provoke and dismantle unions one at a time. Simultaneously, he attempted to undermine the local government in Catalonia, who were attempting to continue the republic's reforms.<sup>245</sup> Efforts to remove local councils

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>242</sup> Thomas, 76.

<sup>243</sup> Preston, 71.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

from socialist control were also launched by the RRP and prompted a general strike, which was brutally put down by Interior Minister Salazar Alonso. Four deputies in the legislature were arrested and numerous breaches occurred of the sections of the constitution that granted a degree of autonomy to local governments.<sup>246</sup> The Socialist Landworkers' Federation, a trade union founded in 1930, was effectively prevented from operating until 1936.<sup>247</sup>

On September 26, the CEDA announced it would no longer support the RRP's minority government.<sup>248</sup> It was replaced by a mostly RRP cabinet, again led by Lerroux, that included three members of CEDA. In response to the new cabinet, the UGT attempted a country wide general strike, but was unsuccessful in most regions.<sup>249</sup> Lluís Companys, leader of the Republican Left of Catalonia and the President of the local assembly in Catalonia, saw an opportunity in the general strike and declared Catalonia an independent state inside the federal republic of Spain. However, armed support for independence did not materialize. Lluís Companys was arrested and Catalan autonomy was suspended in response to the attempted revolt.<sup>250</sup> This turn of events aggrieved General Francisco Franco, who was directing the military from Madrid. Franco was put in informal command of the military effort against the UGT revolt in Asturias, the only place where it had

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>248</sup> Thomas, 78.

<sup>249</sup> Beevor, 33.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 33.

succeeded.<sup>251</sup> Around 30,000 workers were called to arms in ten days to meet the Spanish army. Franco's men, some brought in from Spain's veteran Army of Africa, killed men, women, and children and carried out summary executions after the main cities of Asturias were retaken.<sup>252</sup> The rebels lost four times as many men as the army and their defeat signaled the first death knell for the Second Republic. The two generals in charge of the campaign, Franco and Manuel Godeu Llopis, were seen as heroes by the right and conservatives among the population. Azaña was unsuccessfully made out to be a revolutionary criminal by his right-wing opponents while even the moderates were increasingly sidelined by the more extreme wing.<sup>253</sup> Gil Robles once again orchestrated a cabinet collapse, and five positions in Lerroux's new government were granted to CEDA, including one to Gil Robles himself.<sup>254</sup> Farm workers' wages were halved, severely rolling back the agrarian reforms championed by the Socialists. The military was purged of republican members and reformed around a core of conservative officers. Those loyal to Robles were promoted, and Franco was made Chief of Staff.<sup>255</sup>

In 1935, seeing their hard work being wiped out by Lerroux and Robles, Azaña and Indalecio Prieto started to unify the left, pacifying its extreme elements.<sup>256</sup> They staged large, popular rallies of what would become the Popular Front. Lerroux's

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<sup>251</sup> Thomas, 80.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>255</sup> Preston., 81.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 81.

Radical government collapsed after two major political scandals, but Zamora refused to allow CEDA to form a government and called for another round of elections.

The elections of 1936 were won by the Popular Front, utilizing vastly smaller resources than the Nazi influenced propaganda machine of the right. Following the electoral defeat, the right began plotting how to best bring down the Second Republic, no longer content with working within the system that had pivoted so widely in the last two years.

The new government was still weak, and the influence of the revolutionary Largo Caballero prevented socialists from being part of the cabinet, leaving the republicans to govern alone under Azaña.<sup>257</sup> Pacification and reconciliation with the conservatives, Radicals, monarchists would have been a huge task for the republicans even if they had gained the support of the Socialists. Unfortunately, Largo Caballero accepted support from the Communist Party, now boasting a membership of some 10,000 members and refused to work with the government. By early 1936, Azaña discovered that the left was using its influence at the local constituency level to circumvent the Second Republic and the constitution.<sup>258</sup> They wanted to force through even more radical changes than even those outlined in the Constitution of 1931 as a way to stop their enemies from rolling back policies once they regained power. Parliament decided, by using a constitutional technicality, to remove Zamora from his post and replace him with Azaña. Although

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>258</sup> Payne, 643.

the right also voted for Zamora's removal, this was a watershed event which inspired conservatives to give up on parliamentary politics. Leon Trotsky wrote that Zamora had been Spain's "stable pole", and his removal was another step towards revolution.<sup>259</sup> Azaña and Prieto hoped that by holding the positions of Prime Minister and President, they could push through enough reforms to pacify the left and deal with right-wing militancy in a last ditch effort to stabilize the politics of the country.<sup>260</sup> However, Azaña was increasingly isolated from everyday politics; his replacement, Casares Quiroga, was weak and could not control the legislature enough to push through policies. Largo Caballero held out for a collapse of the republican government, to be replaced with a socialist one as in France.

CEDA, deciding to fully commit to an overthrow of the Republic, turned its campaign war chest over to army plotter General Emilio Mola. Monarchist José Calvo Sotelo replaced CEDA's Gil Robles as the right's leading spokesman in parliament, using increasingly confrontational rhetoric.<sup>261</sup> The Falange began to expand rapidly, and many members of the Juventudes de Acción Popular joined the fascist organization.<sup>262</sup> They successfully created a sense of militancy on the streets to try to justify an authoritarian regime, taking lessons from the brownshirts of Germany and blackshirts of Italy. Prieto did his best to avoid revolution by promoting a series of public works and civil order reforms, including of parts of the military and civil

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<sup>259</sup> Trotsky, 125-126.

<sup>260</sup> Preston (2006), 85.

<sup>261</sup> Thomas, 100.

<sup>262</sup> Preston (2006), 88-89.

guard to little avail.<sup>263</sup> Largo Caballero took a different attitude, continuing to preach of an inevitable overthrow of society by the workers, fully embracing the Communist rhetoric offered by their support. Largo Caballero also disagreed with Prieto's idea of a new Republican–Socialist coalition. With Largo Caballero's acquiescence, communists alarmed the middle classes by quickly taking over the ranks of socialist organizations. The division of the Popular Front prevented the government from using its power to prevent right-wing militancy.<sup>264</sup> The CEDA came under attack from the Falange as too moderate, and Prieto's attempts at modest reforms were attacked by the Socialist Youth. Sotelo continued to do his best to make conciliation impossible.<sup>265</sup>

On June 23, Franco wrote a letter to Casares explaining that unless he was placed in charge of the military, its disloyalty would boil over and a major crisis would erupt.<sup>266</sup> Casares did nothing in response to the letter from Francisco Franco and he ultimately decided to join with his fellow generals in the conspiracy. His decision greatly enhanced the prestige of the conspiracy as Franco was well regarded by the troops in Spanish Morocco and was about to be placed in command of them.<sup>267</sup> Mola, Sanjurjo, and Yague set a final date for the uprising, planning to begin on July 17<sup>th</sup> in Morocco and expand to the rest of the country the following day in a swift

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>266</sup> “Letter from Francisco Franco to Prime Minister Casares Quiroga,” quoted in Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2006).

<sup>267</sup> Beevor, 56.



blitz to seize Spain.<sup>268</sup> On July 17, 1936, the uprising was launched, the nineteenth coup or war Spain had seen since 1815, thus beginning the bloody Spanish Civil War.

The rising was intended to be swift, but the government retained control of most of the country including Málaga, Jaén and Almería.<sup>269</sup> Cadiz was taken for the rebels, and General Queipo de Llano managed to secure Seville. In Madrid, the rebels were hemmed into the Montaña barracks, which fell with much bloodshed. On July 19, the cabinet headed by the newly appointed prime minister José Giral ordered the distribution of weapons to the unions, helping to defeat the rebels in Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia, which led to anarchists taking control of large parts of Aragon and Catalonia in a loose alliance with republican government. Rebel General Goded surrendered in Barcelona and was later condemned to death. The government retained less than half the supply of rifles, heavy and light machine guns and artillery pieces. Both sides had few tanks and outdated aircraft, and naval capacity was reasonably even. Officers' defections weakened Republican units of all types.

The Nationalist area of control contained roughly 11 million of Spain's population of 25 million. The rebels also had secured the support of around half of Spain's territorial army, some 60,000 men including the vast majority of the Army of Africa.<sup>270</sup> In Republican units, however, as much as 90% of officers either rebelled,

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 55-56.

<sup>269</sup> Preston, 102.

<sup>270</sup> Ian Westwell, *Condor Legion: The Wehrmacht's Training Ground* (Hersham, Surrey, United Kingdom: Ian Allen Publishing, 2004), 9.

defected or merely disappeared and their loyalty to the republic was put in doubt. Thereafter, some would later turn up in Nationalist ranks.<sup>271</sup> This considerably reduced the units' effectiveness as a new command structure had to be fashioned. No such problem occurred in Nationalist units as they enjoyed the support of the officer corps and were led by many former generals of the Republic. The rebels were also joined by 30,000 members of Spain's militarized police forces, the Assault Guards, the Civil Guards, and the Carabineers.<sup>272</sup> 50,000 members of the latter stayed loyal to the government. Of 500,000 rifles in the national stockpile and armory, around 200,000 were retained by the government. 65,000 were issued to the Madrid populace in the days following the uprising; of these, only 7,000 were ultimately usable as their maintenance had been neglected. 70,000 rifles or so were lost following early Nationalist advances in the war.<sup>273</sup> Republicans controlled about a third of both heavy and light machine guns; of 1,007 artillery pieces, 387 were in Republican hands. The Spanish Army had, before the coup, just 18 tanks of sufficiently modern design, and the Republicans retained 10. In terms of numbers, the Nationalists had seized control of 17 warships, leaving the Republicans with 27. However, the two most modern, both cruisers of the *Canarias* class, were in Nationalist hands. Although not ready for service when the war broke out, the ships compensated for the lack in numbers. The Spanish Republican Navy suffered from the same problems as the army: many officers had defected or had been killed after trying to do so. Due to the concerns of a

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>272</sup> Gerald Howson, *Arms for Spain* (London: John Murray, 1998), 21.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 28.

Republican officer that such a coup was imminent, two-thirds of air capability were retained by the government. However, the whole of the air service was very outdated and vulnerable both during flight and to mechanical problems.

The Nationalists advanced from their strongholds in the south and west, capturing most of Spain's northern coastline in 1937. They also besieged Madrid and the area to its south and west for much of the war. After much of Catalonia was captured in 1938 and 1939, and Madrid cut off from Barcelona, the Republican military position became hopeless. Following the fall without resistance of Barcelona in January 1939, the recognition of the Francoist regime by France and the United Kingdom in February 1939, and internal conflict between Republican factions in Madrid in March 1939, Franco entered the capital and declared victory on 1 April 1939. Hundreds of thousands of Spaniards fled to refugee camps in southern France. Those associated with the losing Republicans who stayed were persecuted by the victorious Nationalists. With the establishment of a dictatorship led by General Franco in the aftermath of the war, all right-wing parties were fused into the structure of the Franco regime.

The war became notable for the passion and political division it inspired and for the many atrocities that occurred, on both sides. Organized purges occurred in territory captured by Franco's forces so they could consolidate their future regime. A smaller but significant number of killings also took place in areas controlled by the Republicans, with the participation of local authorities varying from location to location.

## Chapter VI

### Comparing Spain with Italy and Germany

The victory of Franco and the Nationalists resulted in a third authoritarian or fascist government coming to power within Europe, but only after significant destruction and death had been visited on the Iberian Peninsula. The question that still remains that needs answered is why did Spain go through such a destructive civil war while the Nazis and Italian Fascists rose to power through their legal systems. With the three regimes' ascensions explained in the previous chapters, it becomes a relatively simple task of comparing and contrasting the various aspects that surrounded the rise of each regime to discover the answer.

In terms of ideology, and utilizing the definition for fascism created at the beginning of this paper of an authoritarian party or government with a central powerful leader that embraces a militant nationalism in their mission to eliminate their perceived enemies, and espouses their philosophies through the use of propaganda against a nebulous "Other," each government falls into this definition in similar, but also different ways. A fierce nationalism was established at the core of each fascist movement. Each of the regimes, the Falangists, the Nazis, and the Italian Fascists, believed deeply in the power of their nations and the past glory they felt that had faded away or been broken down by outside influences. The Falange in Spain believed that the traditional Catholic values and agrarian power base that were at the

heart of what made Spain great was being eradicated by the extreme policies of the Second Republic. Every anti-clerical measure passed by the republicans or every, what the Falange deemed socialist, law that changed the power dynamics in Spain was an affront to the nation's history. It would require the strength of arms and conviction, the Falange and the conservatives believed, to save Spain from utter ruin. The Nazis thought that the Weimar Republic had been too acquiescent to foreign powers, particularly the French and British through the Treaty of Versailles, and only they could uplift the country from the shame of defeat and the horrors of the Great Depression. Only through the embrace of German nationalism and the values enshrined by the Nazis, such as the traditional role of women and the superiority of the German race, could Germany take its rightful place as the leading European power. The Italian Fascists claimed they were the heir to the ancient Roman Empire, and that the unification of Italian lands was still incomplete. Italian Fascists believed that only by embracing their history and the values enshrined in the Roman tradition would they be able to forge a powerful Italian Empire as a third Rome, the first being the ancient Republic and Empire and the second being the Italy of the Renaissance.

Militarism was also present within the three authoritarian governments as each held, to some degree, territorial ambitions and a staunch belief in the power of force of arms. For the Germans, as previously mentioned, this was originally a desire to see all German-speaking peoples brought into one nation that eventually became the idea of *Lebensraum* as evidenced by Hitler's desires to conquer territory in Eastern Europe. Mussolini and the Italians envisioned a renewed Roman Empire by retaking

lands they believed were rightly Italian such as the Dalmatia region in the Balkans. They further wanted to conquer territory in Africa to expand their colonial holdings, such as in the Ethiopia campaign, or take away their rivals' possessions such as French Algeria or British-held Egypt. Both Hitler and Mussolini, during World War II, were briefly able to achieve these aims. Franco, on the other hand, was warier about aggressive expansion even though he had come to power through the use of force. Members of his party wished to seize Gibraltar, Portugal, or some of southern France around the Pyrenees, but Franco recognized that the Spanish army and the country itself were exhausted after the three-year long war and rebuilding was more important than conquests. A treaty known as the Iberian Pact was made with Portugal declaring non-aggression and friendship in 1938 with the Nationalists,<sup>274</sup> and after the war, Portugal was an important diplomatic partner with Francoist Spain with the other European nations.

Another similar trait found within each ideology of the three governments are their views on gender and the role of women within society. All three nations held extremely conservative views on the role of women, centralized upon the belief she must be a supportive wife and produce children. Italy and Germany in particular created financial subsidies and incentives for families in an effort to increase birthrates, while also trying to push women out of the workplace to create more jobs

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<sup>274</sup> "Iberian Pact, 1939," accessed August 13, 2020, <http://www.cepc.gob.es/Controls/Mav/getData.ashx?MAVqs=-aWQ9MTA3NDYmaWRIPTEwMzcm dXJsPTEzJm5hbWU9UIBJXzAwMV8yMTIucGRmJmZpbGU9UIBJXzAwMV8yMTIucGRmJnRhY mxhPUFydGljdWxvJmNvbnRlbnQ9YXBwbGljYXRpb24vcGRm.>

for men. Spain under Franco and the Falangists centered their stance on women as both a counter to the suffrage and rights established by the Second Republic and the traditionalist roles they held in the Catholic faith.

In keeping with the definition, it is important to briefly touch upon the control each leader, Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco, held over the country. Of the three men, Hitler by far held the most power over his country due to his ability to combine the role of Chancellor and President of Germany and placing the Reichstag into a mere rubber stamp role for his policies. Hitler had also purged the Nazi party of members that may challenge his hold on power during the Night of Long Knives, replacing them with party members such as Himmler and Goering that were utterly loyal to the Führer. Franco, in slight contrast, was only able to gain control over the Nationalists after the leading generals of the coup, Mola and Sanjurjo, were killed in the opening weeks of the civil war. During the course of the civil war, Franco was able to bring together the various parties that consisted of the Nationalist side of the war into a semi-cohesive political party under the Falange, with himself as their head. On paper, Franco held more power than any individual had in Spain since the absolutist kings and queens, ruling through decree without a parliament for the first four years of his reign. While a parliament was eventually created in 1942, it had no power over government ministers or spending, leaving the power of the purse and governing with Franco in practice. Mussolini, on the other hand, was always at the mercy of King Victor Emmanuel III as Italy was still nominally a kingdom and he merely served as prime minister. Mussolini may have held great power, but he needed his policies to be

successful to retain the faith of the king in his ability to lead the country. During the mid-20s and through the 1930s, Mussolini was successful in this endeavor as Italy saw an economic resurgence and gained the ability to influence international politics again. However, the Second World War ultimately showed Mussolini's limits on power and when Italy was under threat of invasion by the Allies, he was dismissed by the king.

A key difference between the three, once again referring to the definition created for this paper, is the nebulous "Other" that each regime was purportedly supposed to be fighting through propaganda and violence. Nazism was enraptured by the idea of Aryan purity and believed that Bolshevism and Jewry were the major enemies that had to be fought. In the minds of Nazis, and through the nefarious but masterful propaganda machine developed by Goebbels, the eastern parts of Europe were something that had to be purged for the expansion of the German people and other lesser cousins of the Aryan culture. Italian fascism, much like Nazism, had designated their "Other" as Bolshevism and Jewry, but perhaps not with the zeal of the Nazis. In many ways, Italians agreed with Nazis about the superiority of the Aryan race as Italian fascists considered themselves the Mediterranean branch of the race. However, unlike the Nazis that believed that lesser races needed to be purged to make space for their own people, the Italians' viewed the world through a more traditional viewpoint of economics and imperialism. Communism was to be crushed as an economic policy while other imperial powers such as Britain and France became the target of their propaganda.



Spain, out of the three, did not have a nebulous “Other” they were fighting based upon race or imperialism. The Nationalists were actively engaged in battle with the Republicans as the civil war essentially boiled down to a war between liberal and conservative ideals. Communism and socialism were the major threats, the Falange believed, that needed to be stopped to preserve the traditional Spanish culture. It was imperative to defeat these ideologies on the Iberian Peninsula, not because of race, but because the Spanish populace needed a spiritual regeneration. Jews and race were fringe issues for Franco’s regime, and while they made noise about eugenics and connecting Spain with the Aryan ideas of its erstwhile allies, they were never core platform positions for Franco’s government and the party he forged.

Informing the development of the ideologies of the Nazis, Italian Fascists, and Falangists was the political stability of each country in the period as they rose to power. For Italy, and Germany, during the nineteenth century, reunification of the various Italian and German lands into a cohesive whole was a paramount concern. Both countries were able to fully unify by the mid-1870s, Italy under the Piedmont-Sardinia monarchy and Germany under the Prussians and were able to establish stable nation-states. Spain had already been a unified country for centuries by the time Italy and Germany were formed, although parts of Spain retained some autonomy at the local level from the monarchy, which would play a role in the massive instability Spain suffered later.

Italy, once unified, became a liberal parliamentary monarchy that became associated as one of the great European powers. The Italians based their political

system on that of the British model, allowing it to have a greater flexibility in accommodating different political parties and ideologies. Where some instability existed, prior to World War I, was the split between northern and southern Italy and the class struggle prevalent in most countries at the time. World War I would be a major source of the political instability that allowed Mussolini's fascists to gain influence as the war heavily split Italian society between those that wanted to fight and those that were content to remain out of the conflict. When the question of joining the war became moot, the debate evolved into which side should Italy join and what they might gain territorially. By joining the Entente, Italy was promised lands within Austria-Hungary that were predominantly Italian, but when the war ended, the Italians did not receive everything they were promised. This, plus the heavy strain the war brought on the economy, allowed the fascists to appeal to the disaffected veterans and country that they could solve the problems facing the kingdom that the socialists and liberals could not fix.

Germany, once it had been unified after the victory in the Franco-Prussian War, went about creating one of the most powerful empires on continental Europe, taking a central role in international affairs. Otto von Bismarck, as Chancellor of the new empire, was focused on national unity and maintaining the balance of power in Europe. As previously stated in the chapter on Germany, Bismarck created a great many reforms to modernize and unify Germans and created a parliamentary system that would complement the power of the Kaiser. However, the problems for Germany began when Bismarck was dismissed by Wilhelm II and the succeeding chancellors

were weak willed and deferred to the whims of the Kaiser. The Kaiser and his government were oppressive to those they viewed as Marxists such as the SPD, and they were mainly kept in check until the First World War started to turn against the Germans and their allies. Much like with Italy, the conclusion of the First World War was a major contributor to the political environment that allowed the Nazis to slowly start gaining power. The Weimar Republic that replaced the imperial government was unstable and cycled through leaders and political parties that had to manage domestic affairs and the humiliation of being one of the defeated Central Powers.

Hyperinflation in the economy due to the reparations drove many Germans to support the far right and left groups forming in the country, creating an environment ripe for political violence. Coups, like Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch, were not uncommon, but all were put down by the Weimar government. The government responded quickly to any sort of paramilitary threat to its survival, ensuring the country could not unravel into a civil war, and eventually it appeared that the republic was gaining some stability. The Great Depression destroyed whatever gains the Weimar Republic had built in stabilizing the country, and the German people turned to the party and man promising a return to glory for the German people.

As evidenced in the two previous chapters, and unlike Germany and Italy, Spain suffered from horrible political instability for the vast majority of the nineteenth and through the early part of the twentieth centuries. Just between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the creation of the First Spanish Republic, Spain went through twelve successful coups and fought several wars against Carlist rebels

wanting to install their chosen candidate as monarch. On top of this, the absolutist and traditionalist system in place for the Spanish monarchy had left little room for political reform except through coups and political dissidence. The short lived First Spanish Republic was unstable from the start, going through four leaders in its lifespan, none of which could figure out a way to reconcile the liberal and socialist policies they wanted to pursue with the conservatives and reactionaries striving to undermine them. The monarchy was restored, and conservative ideals once again dominated the political landscape for Spain while the liberals and socialists were ostracized from power. Anarchism became a way for the disaffected to express their displeasure in the system, and Spain suffered more anarchism than any other nation in Europe. The humiliation of losing their last colonial holdings, besides Morocco, to the Americans severely damaged Spain's prestige internationally and the monarchy's influence domestically. The twentieth century only brought more problems to Spain as, while they remained neutral in the First World War, the political situation was only growing more divided. The monarchy was acting through military dictatorships and were refusing political reforms being demanded by the left in light of the growing labor movement.

By the time the Second Spanish Republic came to power in 1931, the political situation in Spain was dire. The government was flip flopping between the conservatives and socialists, with the socialists enacting many policies that angered Catholics, the military, and conservatives. Chaos was the order of the day in Spain, only exacerbated by the Great Depression ravaging the world, and the government

was consumed by political violence between the socialists and conservatives. There was no dialogue occurring between the various political parties, independence movements in the Basque country and Catalonia were agitating for more autonomy, and the military was concerned they were witnessing the collapse of the Spanish state.

Between the three fascist movements under comparison, religion was another key area where they differed on approaches. The relationship between Italy and organized religion, particularly with the Catholic Church, had become complicated as the Italian Peninsula unified under the Kingdom of Italy. During the period of unification, the Catholic Church controlled the city of Rome and a large part of central Italy, both of which were desired by King Victor Emmanuel II and the other secular proponents of unification. However, due to a French garrison in the city, the Italians could not take the city, or the territory controlled by the Papacy until Napoleon III was defeated by the Prussians. Once news of the French's defeat became widespread, the Italian army was deployed to take Rome and the Papal States, securing both by September of 1870 and formally annexing them by October. The conquest of Rome damaged relations immensely between the Catholic Church and the Italian government as the Pope, and future Popes, refused to accept the legitimacy of the annexation. The Italian government passed the Law of Papal Guarantees that would afford the Pope similar rights and privileges to the King of Italy, but the Pope refused to accept that overture as it was believed accepting that protection would grant legitimacy to the Italian government's supremacy over his former lands. With the Pope refusing to bow to the Kingdom of Italy, many Catholics

refrained from serving in the new government, which resulted in widespread secularization.

Catholics would eventually form political parties in the beginning of the twentieth century, but they did not have a great deal of influence. It would not be until Benito Mussolini and his Fascists rose to power that the Church and the Italian government came to an agreement in the Lateran Treaty. As previously discussed, the Lateran Treaty created the microstate of Vatican City that the Pope ruled and offered compensation for the lands taken during the unification. The treaty also reinforced the Catholic Church's status as the state religion of Italy, considering much of the population was Roman Catholic even if the majority were not actively practicing.

Germany as the birthplace of Protestantism was less attached to religion than the other two countries in question. Only about a third of the country was Catholic when the country was unified into the German Empire, and the government under Otto von Bismarck marginalized them. Bismarck was loathed to allow any power outside of Germany, the Pope in this case, a say in German affairs and began a systemic purge of the Catholics and restrictive laws such as the Pulpit Law. This crackdown on Catholics, known as the *Kulturkampf*, continued for several years, but eventually abated once Bismarck and the Pope came to an understanding. Under the Weimar Republic, the Constitution of 1919 had established freedom of religion and allowed the free flow of ideas. They also refused to name a state church or religion as the official one of Germany, understanding that Protestants and Catholics should be equal under the law.

The Nazis initially attempted relations with the Catholic Church in Germany, while also establishing state control over all churches in the country. The idea was to reconcile Christian religious ideals with the tenets of National Socialism, and while this was somewhat successful until 1936, ultimately the Nazis and the churches suffered a breakdown in relations. An unofficial policy of the Nazis involved party members leaving their churches, but it was never forced on party members. According to Ian Kershaw as stated previously, in order to achieve the eventual de-Christianization of Germany and creation of national community, “the Nazis believed they would have to replace class, religious and regional allegiances by a massively enhanced national self-awareness to mobilize the German people psychologically for the coming struggle and to boost their morale during the inevitable war.” The main religious policies of the Nazis revolved around the suppression of Jews that would lead into the Holocaust, but overall, the churches held little influence over political or economic affairs.

Unlike Germany, and a lesser extent Italy, Spain’s society was heavily molded by their religious affiliation with Catholicism that was based in the Reconquista of Spain during the Middle Ages. Since that campaign, the Spanish had considered themselves a bulwark of Catholic purity with the vast majority of the population being practicing Catholics, although the religion itself would not become the official religion of Spain until 1851. As time went on, the progressives and republicans desired a more secular nation, advocating the seizure of Church property and anti-clerical sentiment. The conservatives were firmly against any actions that threatened

the role of the Catholic Church in Spain, one of the key underlying reasons why they found the Second Spanish Republic abhorrent. The Second Spanish Republic rushed towards creating a secular system and passed many measures against the Church as an attempt to shatter the Catholic hegemony in Spain. These actions directly led to the Church supporting the rising reactionary forces against the republicans and subsequently meant they endorsed the Nationalists during the Civil War.

Under Franco, Catholicism was the only religion to have legal status. Other religions could advertise worship or publish material or own property. The government not only continued the policy of paying salaries to the clergy and to subsidizing the Church, it also assisted in the rebuilding damaged property following the war. Laws were passed abolishing divorce and civil marriages as well as banning abortion and the sale of contraceptives. Homosexuality and all other forms of sexual permissiveness were also banned. Catholic religious instruction was mandatory, even in public schools. Franco secured in return the right to name Roman Catholic bishops in Spain, as well as veto power over appointments of clergy down to the parish priest level.

A final key area that should be examined between the three fascist governments is their economic policies and ideologies. All three were vehemently against communism, but beyond that, each had a different set of goals they hoped to achieve in remaking their countries' economies. Initially for the Italians, they made use of more liberal policies such as abolishing certain taxes and implementing other pro-business policies. Mussolini had also ordered the state financing of the banks and



the larger engineering companies as a means to prop them up. Mussolini and his Fascists also viewed agriculture as vitally important as it consisted of a sizable portion of the economy prior to the Depression so they created new protectionist policies to strengthen grain production domestically. Unfortunately, only the larger land holders and farms enjoyed any benefits from these measures and they were mostly seen as a failure. The Fascists also structured business and labor into twelve separate associations, much like in national syndicalism, that would negotiate labor contracts with the state serving as an arbitrator in any disputes. Generally, the government would favor big industry over smaller companies and enterprises across the economy, and they made sure that pricing and production quotas were handled by employer associations and not individual firms. As a means of countering the Great Depression, massive public works programs were created, and the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction was created to subsidize failing companies. The IRI allowed the government to gain control or influence over important sectors of the economy directly through companies aligned with the state to the point where Mussolini could boast that three-fourths of the economy was in the hands of the state.

Germany, from the start of the Industrial Revolution, had fully embraced the ideas of industrialization. Under the Nazis and during the Great Depression, this was only accelerated as massive public works programs were demanded by Hitler as well as the mass expansion of the German rearmament program. Military expenditures quickly became the cornerstone of the Nazi's economy, with the Nazis entering into partnerships with many of the larger businesses in Germany by allowing the

corporations to regulate their work forces and wages themselves and eliminated collective bargaining. Private property was conditional as the Nazis had sought to influence the economy through regulations and incentive programs, with many public properties and services being privatized, usually with a party member in charge. Social welfare, while originally anathema to the Nazis as they viewed it as one reason the Weimar Republic had been so weak, became an instrument of their racial policies as only pure Germans could have access to programs to help with unemployment and other social welfare nets. Additionally, the Nazis in their *Lebensraum* policy put a large emphasis on agrarian reforms by keeping farm ownership private, but not allowing farms to be sold. Monopolies and quotas were instigated, and a national program dictated what would be produced, what fertilizers would be used, and so on.

The Spanish economic policies historically had favored agriculture as the major cornerstone of the country. The influence of the powerful and wealthy landholders and aristocracy had insured that many of the laws passed by the Cortes during the monarchy benefited the landed elite, and this did not truly change under the Falange and Franco as he needed their support during the civil war. The Falange in their “Twenty-Seven Points” plan advocated a national syndicalism that would both protect the Spanish agrarian economy and organize the other sectors of the Spanish economy into employee and employer syndicates. These syndicates would control and organize the economic activity, reforms, and expansion of their respective economic sectors while the state itself would have control over the credit facilities as a means of providing capital. Autarky and protectionism were the main goals for

Franco, and while it did insulate the Spanish economy, it also isolated them from other markets once the civil war and the Second World War were over.

In many regards, the Spanish Civil War was an inevitable occurrence, a continuation of the political instability and violence that had plagued Spain for over a century. When shown in context with the rise of the far right in Italy and Germany, it only creates a more regrettable reflection of the inability of Spanish politics to adapt. Fascism and Nazism were seen as the answers to political and economic woes within Italy and Germany, and their respective movements were able to use traditional avenues to power as a means of seizing control of their countries. For the Spanish, the entrenchment of conservative ideals, compounded by the influence and power of the Catholic Church, meant any rapid changes to the social or political dynamic would elicit a reactionary response, unlike in Italy or Germany where secularism had a stronger hold over policy. By making an enemy of the Catholic Church and rushing their reforms through, as had occurred during the First Spanish Republic, the Second Spanish Republic only galvanized right-wing forces to challenge them violently as shown during the black two years preceding the civil war itself. Perhaps the Second Republic could have stopped the civil war from erupting, or if not stop it better fought it, if they had managed the factionalism within their left-wing movement better. However, the communists, the socialists, and the anarchists that created the movement behind the Second Republic only bickered and fought with each other while Franco consolidated the reactionary forces that consisted of the Nationalists

into a far more cohesive movement, even though they consisted of the fascists, monarchists, and conservatives.

In the end, it came down to a belief by the military leaders, such as Franco, that if something was not done, the country as a whole would collapse. Even though the Weimar Republic and the governments in Italy faced heavy political pressure, they were never in danger of such a catastrophic fragmentation of the country. It had been a generational goal to unify their countries and no one wanted to break them apart once Italy and Germany had been formed, even though the Germans lost traditional lands after World War I. Spain, on the other hand, still faced pressure from autonomy movements in the northern parts of the country. These movements in the Basque country and Catalonia only further served as fuel for the Spanish Civil War as the Republicans supported greater autonomy for these regions while Nationalists were against such local independence. As an answer to the question posed by this paper, the Spanish Civil War erupted because of the powerful underlying conservative ideologies based on the Catholic faith and their reaction to the perceived attacks on these ideals by a socialist government that wanted to modernize the Iberian Peninsula socially, economically, and politically. Italy and Germany, while experiencing some upheaval and violence in the streets due to political infighting, did not have sufficiently powerful counter cultures, either left or right, that could stop the rise of the fascists through legitimate avenues of power.

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