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Spanish women and the Sección Femenina: rhetoric, imagery, and ideology

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Spanish Women and the Sección Femenina: Rhetoric, Imagery, and Ideology

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Julia Hudson-Richards

Chapter One:

Introduction

> *Women never discover anything; they lack, of course, the creative talent; reserved by God for male intelligence. We can do nothing more but perform for better or worse, the tasks which men give us.*
>
> Pilar Primo de Rivera, 1942.[1]

Though at the time of its founding in 1934 the women's section of the Spanish fascist party may have been insignificant to many, the *Sección Femenina* in a few short years was installed as the premier government agency with regard to the political status of Spain's women. With the consolidation of the Franco regime, the *Sección Femenina* was placed in charge of shaping the moral and political lives of Spain's women and used the educational system, the Catholic Church, and specialized programs to achieve this end. From 1939-1977 the *Sección Femenina* played a crucial role in Spanish government policies relating to women and their families.

Examining the *Sección Femenina* should not simply involve placing it in an ideological category or within a prescribed framework, for the agency was not strictly anti-feminist or pro-feminist in its orientation, nor did it view domesticity as an exclusively private concern. While a great number of women's historians have used the now familiar public/private spheres model, scholars such as Pamela Beth Radcliff and Victoria Lorée Enders contend that it is insufficient for the study of female experience in the past.[2] Any attempt to apply public/private spheres analysis to the *Sección Femenina*

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[1] Luis Otero, *La Sección Femenina* (Madrid, Spain: EDAF, 1999), 15.

[2] Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff, "General Introduction: Contesting Identities/ Contesting Categories," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain* (Albany:

and its programs only serves to highlight the explanatory shortcomings of the model. Though the *Sección Femenina* promoted motherhood and housework as women's most sacred obligations, its rhetoric and propaganda did not present such work as private and separate from the public sphere. Women's history is now moving away from the "separate spheres" model to one that encompasses not only "...the history of exceptional women who contested the traditional gender system and won," but one that also recognizes as "...historical subjects those women who learned to accommodate to the system."[3] Understanding the *Sección Femenina* is best achieved by utilizing a synthesis of both the "great woman" and "average woman" models, and by recognizing the blurred boundaries and considerable overlap between public and private spheres. While it is true that the women at the helm of the agency were individuals who had carved out relatively powerful roles in a patriarchal state and had broken with socially (and politically) constructed norms regarding female positions in society, they also promoted the perpetuation of a system that was inherently antithetical to the elevation of women in society as a whole. The female leaders of the *Sección Femenina* used their public roles to politicize the domestic realm and to emphasize the importance of women's subservience to the needs of the family and the state. Through archival work, oral history interviews, and official agency papers, we can see that the *Sección Femenina* played what Victoria

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State University of New York Press, 1999), 5. The public/private spheres model is one which assumes that the vast majority of women remained in their defined roles--the private--and did not participate in political activity--the public--which was the sole domain of men. The women who have broken out of this role were seen as extraordinary, rather than the norm.

[3] Ibid., 4.

Enders has described as an "ambiguous historical role." Participants in the protective and empowering nature of the agency's mission and the overwhelmingly *Sección Femenina*'s programs often found themselves caught between the official negative connotation given to the agency by late twentieth century historians, as well as opponents of the Franco regime.[4]

Any discussion of the role that the *Sección Femenina* played in the lives of Spain's women must begin with an understanding of the changing nature of the Francoist state. One of the most divisive on-going debates among scholars concerns the specific ideological nature of the Franco regime. The dominant opinions consider not only how long the regime adhered to fascist ideology, but whether it was indeed fascist at all. The first of these is represented most cogently by noted Spanish political scientist Juan J. Linz, whose work effectively broadened ideological concepts to include different variations on what he describes as the "democratic-totalitarian continuum."[5] In doing this, however, Linz has also denied any significant presence of fascism in the Spanish case, because of the absence of several characteristics of fascism, such as a totalitarian dictatorship. Linz prefers the term "authoritarian," which is a system of government which operates "...with limited, not responsible pluralism...,"[6] has no defining ideological movement, and tends to be more bureaucratic rather than totalitarian. Linz

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[4] Victoria Lorée Enders, "Problematic Portraits: The Ambiguous Historical Role of the *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange*," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood*, 375-397.

[5] Juan J. Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," in *Mass Studies in Political Sociology*, ed. Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 253-255.

[6] Ibid., 255.

has downplayed fascist tendencies in Spain by redefining fascism as not only an ideology, but a system of government.

Gino Germani disagrees with Linz, arguing that though Spain did not feature the same political characteristics as fascist Germany or Italy, a number of the conditions that prompt the rise of fascism were met in Spain's case.[7] He also contends that fascism appears in three forms, "classic European," which is totalitarian, "authoritarian fascism," which describes the ideology as well as the system of government, and "military fascism," which is often seen in Latin American states.[8] In Germani's view, the fact that fascist ideology was not heavily stressed after World War II does not diminish the presence of fascist characteristics during much of the time the Franco regime was in power. In short, the lack of a ruthless dictator such as Hitler is not an obstacle to the definition of Francoism as inherently "fascist."[9]

Other scholars do not deny Spain's fascist leanings, but there is considerable disagreement regarding when these leanings were purged from official Spanish politics. For example, Stanley G. Payne argues that following the end of World War II, which of course culminated in the dismantling of the Axis powers, the Franco regime's focus on a purely fascist ideology changed.[10] It was at this time, Payne argues, that the fascist party--known as the *Falange Española y de las Juntas Ofensivas Nacional Sindicalistas*, or

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[7] Gino Germani, "Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Regimes: Italy and Spain," in *Authoritarian Politics and Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, ed. Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 339-340.

[8] Ibid., 341-342.

[9] Ibid., 342.

[10] Stanley G. Payne, *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

FET y de las JONS--became a hollow shell without any real power. Yet historian Richard Kerr disagrees. He places the waning of fascist influence in Franco's Spain at a much later date, sometime in the 1950s.[11] This was a tumultuous decade that saw the expulsion of *Falange* members from Franco's cabinet, a rash of student demonstrations, and a break from traditionally autarchic economic policies as the regime struggled to solve the overwhelming economic problems that were having a detrimental effect on his administration.[12]

For historians such as Sheelagh Ellwood, these arguments remain misleading. Ellwood contends that though the regime had changed its focus in order to concentrate more on economic reform and had removed many of the *Falange* members from the cabinet, the party still maintained "...socio-political control of the mass of the population...."[13] Though by the late 1950s its influence within the Franco regime may have waned, because it was the only legal party, among the people it was as pervasive as it had ever been. While these varying perspectives raise questions about the ideological nature of the *Sección Femenina*, a protracted discussion of the implications of the fluid

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[11] Richard Herr, *An Historical Essay on Modern Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

[12] During the first decade of the regime, Franco and his administration obstinately opposed the introduction of foreign influences on the Spanish economy or military, and were in effect exiled from the rest of Europe as one of the last remaining fascist regimes after the war. They were not eligible for Marshall Plan funds, or (obviously) any corresponding program set up by the Soviet Union. However, as the economic situation began to spiral out of control during the late 1940s and early 1950s, it became clear that the problems would not be solved without outside help. Coincidentally, the cold war was intensifying between the United States and the U.S.S.R and their respective allies. Spain renounced its overtly fascist leanings and received economic assistance in the form of investment from the U.S. and her allies in exchange for the placement of military bases on Spanish soil. Though the plan would come under some attack from those who worried about the effects of foreign military bases on Spanish autonomy, Spain's economy improved dramatically, even while the political situation became more precarious.

[13] Sheelagh Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era: Falange Española de las JONS, 1936-1976* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 119.

nature of the Franco regime regarding women is not possible here. For now, this thesis will rely most heavily on the perspectives of Germani and Herr, and will accept that indeed Spain was fascist, though not totalitarian, even though the direct influence of fascism on the Franco regime had certainly waned by the early 1960s.

While there are relatively few historical studies of women and fascism in Spain, when taken in conjunction with works focusing on women and fascism in other European nations, there is a solid historiographical base for continued research. One of the first such scholars to examine women under fascism was Tim Mason. In his study of Nazi Germany's policies towards working women and their family situations he argues that while many had recognized that National Socialism had some policies that were blatantly misogynistic, in fact the entire party ideology was centered on a strict anti-feminism and revolved around the "natural" occupation of women as housekeepers and mothers to the German race. [14] Mason points out that to assist in achieving this ultimate goal, the Nazis undertook (or introduced) a vast propaganda campaign and offered marriage loans, the repayment of which was contingent upon procreation, in order to keep women focused on the primary objective of motherhood.

Claudia Koonz is another historian who has examined the relationship between fascism and women in Germany.[15] Her study on women under National Socialism first introduced the idea that though women were marginalized from politics, they were slated to play an integral role in the propagation of fascist regimes. Victoria de Grazia reached

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[14] Tim Mason, "Women In Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare, and Work. Part I" *History Workshop* (Summer 1976) : 74-113.

[15] Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

similar conclusions regarding Italian women under Mussolini.[16] In Italy, women were subjected to extensive pronatalist campaigns due to a declining population rate among the more "fit"--i.e. elite--sectors of society and were excluded from Italian politics. At the same time the state nationalized women on an unprecedented level, through defining their roles as "women" in the language of the regime, which also attempted to redefine on a large scale the relationships between men and women.[17] These works not only re-evaluate the traditional image of the marginalized role of women in fascist regimes, and effectively argue against the rigidity of the "separate sphere" model, they also suggest to other researchers the potential value of investigating the general and specific details of fascist doctrine regarding women in other parts of Europe.

Historical interpretations with respect to the condition of women in Spain have varied. Most assuredly, the term "feminist," as it is currently defined, would not have been applied to the *Sección Femenina*, either by its supporters or its detractors. However, many of those who were involved with it appear to have found it to be empowering and inspiring. Historian Victoria Lorée Enders argues that the agency can be evaluated best in light of the opinions of its most active participants.[18] She notes that the women who led the *Sección Femenina* did not see the agency as an instrument of oppression in a sexist regime, but rather as the most effective means to control their destinies while at the same time preserving the special role of women in Spanish society. Enders' perception of the

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[16] Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[17] Ibid., 2.

[18] Victoria Lorée Enders, "Problematic Portraits."

Sección Femenina contrasts sharply with that of María Teresa Gallego Méndez who argues that the organization was so controlling that women had no alternative but to bow to the rigorous demands of its programs.[19] In fact, Gallego Méndez asserts that to view the agency as the protector of women's rights, values, and interests is not only wrong, it is dangerous. To her, the *Sección Femenina* was little more than a smokescreen designed to operate as the "humane wing" of the *Falange* created as a counterweight to the violence of other sectors of the party. The work of these scholars demonstrates the varying opinions regarding the *Sección Femenina* and its role not only in the lives of Spanish women but also within the Franco regime.

The newest treatment of the *Sección Femenina* is by Aurora Morcillo.[20] Her view of the agency is more in line with that of Gallego Méndez, though with some modification. Morcillo portrays the *Sección Femenina* as an instrument of the Franco regime that, in conjunction with the Catholic Church, was used to control women's education, among other matters. She argues that the foremost educational goal of the agency was to emphasize the ideal she calls "true Catholic womanhood," and that formal education was, in fact, a secondary mission. However, Morcillo notes that paradoxically the leaders of the *Sección Femenina* failed to embrace the idea of "true Catholic womanhood."[21] Here again we can clearly see the empowering potential of the agency in that it allowed certain women to break free of social constraints (ones that *they* helped to reinforce) and have political occupations that carried a reasonable degree of power in the

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[19] María Teresa Gallego Méndez, *Mujer, Falange, y Franquismo* (Madrid: Taurus, 1983).

[20] Aurora Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood: Gender Ideology in Franco's Spain* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois Press, 2000).

Franco regime. Clearly, there is still disagreement regarding not only how women's lives were affected but also the true motivations and goals of the *Sección Femenina*; much research remains to be done.

The focus of this thesis is the rhetoric and propaganda of the *Sección Femenina.* Certainly, the political climate of the nation was extremely important in the development of the agency, but it will play a secondary role in the discussion of the agency itself. The first part of this thesis will treat Spanish women's history before the assumption of power by Francisco Franco in 1939. It will cover the Restoration and the Second Republic as two distinct periods and will focus on the paradoxes and diversities in the roles, status, and experiences that defined women's lives in Spain during those years. Following a discussion of the Restoration period, attention will be given to the Second Republic, which came to power in April of 1931 and brought with it significant shifts in policy towards women and families that were involved in the move towards modernization. It was during this time that the *Falange* and the *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange* were formed, so it is important to investigate the rightist response to liberal reforms even before the Civil War erupted, as well as the role played by women, both officially and unofficially, in Spanish life. The first part concludes with the birth of the *Sección Femenina* in 1934, its wartime activities and its installation as the official arbiter of women's roles in Spain following the war.

The second part of this thesis will discuss the tone of the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina* as evidenced through official literature and propaganda. Several themes permeated the publications of the *Sección Femenina* that provide a useful tool for the

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[21] Ibid., 108.

analysis of the roles that women were to play in the new regime. The most predominant of these themes were the nationalization of motherhood, and the politicization of housework. Also prominent in the propaganda is the roles that adherence to Catholic theology and *falangist* doctrine played in the manner in which women were to fulfill their duties. Finally, another theme that is evident in the rhetoric suggests that the *Sección Femenina*'s programming and rhetoric sought as well to use women to mitigate some of Spain's long-standing regional tensions. It is important to note that although the advancements that were made by women during the Republican era were reversed, the Franco regime's policies were not based entirely on a reversion to Restoration attitudes regarding women. They represented instead a distinctly new approach to the treatment of Spanish women. The rhetoric of this literature reflected fascist efforts not only to inspire women to focus primarily on their role in the home, but also to politicize women's lives and to mobilize them as part of a larger attempt to paper over some the divisions that had contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War.

Enders and Radcliff argue that much of the work regarding European women's history does not apply to Spanish women's history, partly because of the communal nature of Spanish women and the way in which they participate in political activity:

> Given the historical importance of communalism among Spanish women—across the political spectrum from Catholic associations, to Anarchist groups to Falangist organizations—the Spanish case provides an excellent testing ground for new approaches to female mobilization.[22]

Both authors seek to re-define the "European model" of women's history, which has focused on the struggle for suffrage and individual rights and also has provided the

[22] Enders and Radcliff, "General Introduction," 5.

framework for much of the recent work by scholars.[23] It is in this context that we can discern the significance of this research. It is not possible to define the *Sección Femenina* as "good" or "bad" for Spanish women by using a teleological perspective, because these definitions are inextricably tied not only to the feminisms of the late twentieth century but also to the experiences of women in Great Britain and the United States. It is more important to examine the *Sección Femenina* on the basis of its capacity for mobilizing the women of Spain and to explore the nature of its propaganda rhetoric.

In short, as Enders and Radcliff argue, the "European model" actually only defines the direction of the women's movement of the early 1900s from the Anglo-American point of view and does not necessarily hold true for other European nations. For example, with respect to suffrage, the women of Great Britain won the right to vote in 1918, and two years later the women of the United States accomplished the same feat.[24] It has been widely speculated that women won the right to vote in those nations as a result of a certain level of emancipation after the conclusion of World War I. However, in France women did not win the vote until 1945, just after the end of the Second World War. Sweden, not involved in the First World War, granted women's suffrage in 1919, but Switzerland, also a European nation, waited until 1971. Thus, using suffrage as a benchmark, we can see the uselessness of the "European model", and understand that women's emancipation, for lack of a better word, has been a much more complicated process than heretofore believed.

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Global* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996), 89; 697.

Historiographic considerations aside, this research is also important within the context of Spanish history itself. While Spain has long been portrayed by historians as backward, and characterized as such because of her "...failure to follow the 'normal' European path to modernity...,"[25] this interpretation has recently been discredited by such historians as David Ringrose.[26] In order to better understand the trajectory of Spanish modernization, it is crucial to examine the role that women played, both officially and unofficially, in social and political life. By reconstructing the diversity of women's roles in the twentieth century, and by examining how the state used the *Sección Femenina* to mobilize women on behalf of *falangist* goals, we can have a fuller sense of Spain's path to modernity.

[25] Enders and Radcliff, "General Introduction," 4.

[26] David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe, and the "Spanish Miracle," 1700-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3-28.

Chapter Two:

The Diversity and Paradox of Spanish Women's Experiences, 1876-1939

During the Restoration period that extended from 1876 to 1931, Spanish women's political and legal rights were limited. The Civil Law Code of 1889 re-affirmed women's social subordination to men within families and limited married women's independent economic activity. Still, women's active participation in the economy increased through the period. After the declaration of the Second Republic, the inferior legal position of women was redressed through constitutional and electoral reforms, and Spanish women became active not only in international movements, but national politics as well. Still, the main elements of the 1889 Civil Code remained in place. In short, the experiences of women during the Restoration and Republican periods were characterized by a great deal of change, but also by continuity. Spanish women's lives featured a tremendous amount of diversity that stemmed from varying regional and socio-economic circumstances, as well as from varying legal restrictions, work identities, and political ideologies. When the *Sección Femenina* was founded in 1934, its programs and policies emerged as a reaction to the changing, diverse, and sometimes paradoxical roles that Spanish women had come to occupy by the 1930s.

The Spanish Restoration was initially constructed as a constitutional monarchy similar to Great Britain's. Its architect, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, designed it to accommodate a balance of power between conservative, moderate, and liberal forces and

to provide for universal manhood suffrage.[1] But with the development of *caciquismo*, which was not unlike the "boss" system that existed in the United States during the same period, electoral politics became a farce, and political disillusionment spread through much of the newly enfranchised population. The state of political limbo in which men remained as a result of *caciquismo* extended to women as well. This limbo was not only a secondary consequence of a corrupt and ineffectual political system, but also a result of the sexist presumptions underlying the political system itself. It was assumed that because women were (ideally) under the protection of men, they did not need the vote because fathers and husbands would represent them. Many also argued that women did not have the intellectual capability to make logical and informed political decisions.[2]

Aside from these constitutional limitations and ideological assumptions about women's political abilities, it was married women who bore the brunt of the legal restrictions in the Spanish Civil Code of 1889. Though Lucy Sponsler has argued that because the legal and economic restrictions outlined in the code were aimed at married women, the code was not inherently sexist, but it must be taken into consideration that women were expected, either by society or because of family interests, to marry.[3] Since nearly ninety per cent of Spanish women married in this period, one can argue that the vast majority of Spanish women were affected by some portion of the code, and were

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[1] Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge, Great Britain: University Press, 1943; reprint, New York: Cambridge University Press, Canto Series, 1990), 3 (page citations are from the reprint edition).

[2] Mary Nash, *Mujer, Familia, y Trabajo en España (1875-1936)* (Barcelona: Anthropos, Editorial del Hombre, 1983), 13.

[3] Lucy Sponsler, "The Status of Married Women Under the Legal System of Spain," *Journal of Legal History* 3 (1982), 130.

forced to, upon marriage, surrender a series of individual rights that they held while single.[4] There were several articles in the Civil Code of 1889 that ensured married women's subordination to their husbands. Married women were to obey their spouses, and men had sole authority within marriage in matters relating to children. Other stipulations left husbands in control of all property, even that which wives had brought into marriage, and also permitted men to dispense with the property as they saw fit, without wive's permission.[5] The code further prevented women from entering into contracts or conducting business without husbands' permission.[6] Divorce was also almost completely out of the question. This was the case for both men and women, though there were a few loopholes that permitted men to divorce more easily than women. For a woman to file for divorce on the grounds of adultery, for example, the adultery had to be so flagrant that it caused a public scandal. Any adultery by wives, on the other hand, was grounds for husbands to petition for divorce.[7] The legal position of women during the Restoration, as set forth in the Civil Code of 1889, can be described as one of subordination.

Assessing the legal position of women under the Restoration is complicated by the fact that the Civil Code of 1889 did not apply uniformly throughout all of Spain's regions. Long-standing regional identities, as well as a variety of traditions handed down

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[4] Nash, *Mujer*, 19.

[5] Ibid., 20; Sponsler, "The Status of Married Women," 136.

[6] Nash, *Mujer*, 21.

[7] Sponsler, "The Status of Married Women," 140. Other grounds for divorce were violence, prostitution (or attempted prostitution of the wife or children), or if one partner had received a life sentence for a crime.

from the Romans, Visigoths, and Moors, led to the development of different legal traditions in areas of Spain known as foral regions. In Galicia, Vizcaya, Navarre, Aragón, Catalonia, and the Balearic Islands the 1889 *Código Civil* was secondary to the region's own legal code and resulted in some differences in the legal status of women. Though in many areas of Spain women often participated in the administration of family business, under the 1889 code, they could not enter into independent business contracts. In Catalonia, however, women were permitted to enter into contracts, and among the lower-middle classes many owned and operated market stalls as independent vendors and were able to contribute heavily to the family economy.[8] Thus, the legal position of women in Spain during the Restoration varied depending on the dominant legal tradition under which they lived.

Despite varying restrictions on the legal rights of women during the Restoration, active female participation in the economy remained tremendously important. In the countryside, where women had long constituted an irreplaceable workforce, scholars have until recently minimized the amount of labor women performed. Timothy Rees contends that this is another area where the public/private spheres model is inadequate for the study of women's daily work realities.[9] The roles that women played in the agricultural sector of the economy differed, of course, according to region. In the south of Spain, where the *latifundio* system predominated, male and female work was more rigidly separated, and

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[8] Montserrat Martí Miller, "Market Vendors of Barcelona: Community, Class, and Family in a Twentieth-Century Southern European City," (Ph.D. diss., Carnegie-Mellon University, 1996), 210.

[9] Timothy Rees, "Women on the Land: Household and Work in the Southern Countryside, 1875-1939," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood*, 174.

women spent most of their time in either domestic or "extra-domestic" duties.[10] In the northwest, however, the land was divided into smaller holdings called *minifundios*, and the evidence suggests that women participated more fully in agricultural production because the land was privately held rather than owned by a large landowner and worked by a number of families. In other areas, though gender divisions of labor existed, there was more overlap in men's and women's participation and production. Women's participation in the industrial sector grew throughout the years of the Restoration period. This was due in part to the fact that rural women participated heavily in the increased urban migration of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, during which time many found work as domestic servants. During the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of the female workforce was comprised of single women working to earn money that would allow them to marry and begin a household, and it was expected that married women would remain in the home. According to Enriqueta Camps-Cura, the average age of the working women in the mid-nineteenth century was under thirty.[11] As urban migration and industrialization increased toward the end of the century, women moved into the industrial sector in greater numbers. Married women began to join the ranks of the industrial proletariat as mandatory schooling and child labor restrictions postponed the entry of children into the workforce.[12] By the beginning of the twentieth century,

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[10] Ibid., 175.

[11] Enriqueta Camps-Cura, "Transitions in Women's and Children's Work Patterns and Implications for the Study of Family Income and Household Structure: A Case Study from the Catalan Textile Sector," *History of the Family* 3, no. 2, 1998, 137-154, available from Academic Search Elite [database on-line]; http://www.elpnet.com/ehost/login/html (Boston: EBSCO publishing, accessed 3 July 2000).

[12] Ibid.

women comprised roughly sixteen percent of industrial workers.[13] By 1914, that percentage had nearly doubled, though most women worked in areas that were culturally considered to be compatible with their natural feminine attributes, such as spinning, weaving, and cigarette making.[14]

Indeed, there were many opportunities during the Restoration for Spanish women who wanted (or needed) to work outside their homes. Historically, women had participated in the economy more often than not from their homes, combining these duties with their normal domestic responsibilities.[15] As industrialization intensified, some of the tasks that had traditionally been confined to the home, such as sewing, were increasingly moved into the factories, and women followed. In Barcelona, for example, women made up a vast majority of the unskilled--and cheap--labor in the textile industry.[16] Overall, their salaries were much lower than those of their male counterparts, and in the early years of the twentieth century, their wages largely remained stagnant. As married women began to enter the workforce in greater numbers to replace their children, their jobs and wages in the factories began to change. Camps-Cura shows that in the first decades of the twentieth century women began to earn promotions and higher salaries.

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[13] Nash, *Mujer*, 51.

[14] Ibid. Cigarette and cigar making was more often than not female labor primarily because women had smaller and more nimble hands and fingers.

[15] Rosa María Capel Martínez, "Life and Work in the Tobacco Factories: Female Industrial Workers in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, ed. Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 131.

[16] Camps-Cura, "Transitions in Women's and Children's Work Patterns."

Towards the end of the Restoration, Spanish women increasingly consolidated their positions as industrial wage workers.

Rosa María Capel Martínez finds that these trends were particularly evident in the tobacco industry. Unlike the textile industry, where women only occupied the lower-paying and lower-skilled jobs, in the tobacco industry Capel Martínez asserts that "...women workers...achieved a virtual monopoly of jobs...[and] cigarette and cigar making constituted the first all-female industry in Spain."[17] This placed women in an unusually powerful position within this sector, and recreated types of hierarchies similar to those which existed in the textile factories, with the distinction, of course, that women held almost all the jobs. Because of their privileged position, and in contrast to other female workers in Spain, women in the tobacco industry were able to secure benefits such as sick leave and free on-site medical care.[18]

Spanish women also became increasingly active in the tertiary sector during the years of the Restoration. Some middle class women became nurses or teachers, occupations that required special educational training and which were in high demand. Yet the majority of women who entered this white-collar petite bourgeoisie hailed from the working class. Oftentimes they found secretarial work and jobs as shop clerks preferable to domestic or factory work, both of which paid less and often required a great deal of physical labor.[19]

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[17] Capel Martínez, "Life and Work in the Tobacco Factories," 132.

[18] Ibid., 145.

[19] Peter Stearns and Herrick Chapman, *European Society in Upheaval: Social History Since 1750*, 3rd ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 267-268. Stearns and Chapman also note that white-collar work was often chosen by men, though these men were more often than not from the middle and lower middle classes. This was also an urban phenomenon, and very few rural migrants opted for these positions.

It is evident, therefore, that Spanish women's work outside the home was extensive and varied during the Restoration, and that there were a great many changes that accompanied industrialization and urbanization. By 1930 there were over one million women active in the economy in some way.[20] Still, women's work was not held in the same high regard within Spanish culture as that of men. As Mary Nash suggests, women's work was seen as "...a secondary job, transitory, until a man, be it the father, brother, or husband, was able to maintain the woman."[21] The predominant opinion among many on the ideological right acknowledged only that women might need to work in cases of necessity and dismissed as selfishness the suggestion that personal aspiration should lead to work outside the home.[22] Many of those on the left took the opposite position. As early as 1872, anarchists in Spain had recognized that women might indeed want to work, and that economic necessity need not be the sole reason.[23] Still, positions on the question of women's work varied widely across the liberal political spectrum.

Indeed, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, women's work, women's abilities, and women's social rights and responsibilities were much-debated topics among intellectuals in Spain and in other parts of the western world. Though women all over Europe and the United States were becoming more politically, socially, and economically active, doctors, psychologists, sociologists and others were finding new

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[20] Nash. *Mujer*, 49.

[21] Ibid., 46.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 47.

reasons to consider them unfit for a range of public activities.[24] Factors such as emotion and inadequate skills of reason and judgement, and physical conditions such as menstruation and pregnancy all provided the necessary justification to argue that women should be confined to domestic roles. Political parties and politically active institutions also had their own opinions regarding women's activity. Those on the political and ideological right, including the Catholic Church, argued that women's domestic work was the basis of society. The Church maintained that it was contrary to nature to give women political rights or to allow them to divorce, because divorce would result in the destruction of the family and in turn the destruction of society. The Church, like others on the right, also held that women did not have the same intellectual capacity as men, and would therefore not be able to make the informed and intelligent decisions in the political and economic arenas that men made.[25] On the left, however, many recognized the need for women's emancipation. The anarchists, for example, in 1872 "...committed itself to equality for women as part of its vision of an anarchist society...,"[26] and a similar attitude existed among Communists and Socialists as well. Still, leftist unions and political parties usually viewed women's subservient position as a secondary result of the capitalist system and held that women's status would improve and become equal to men's only after the completion of whichever revolution they were fighting to bring about.[27] Many

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[24] Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 216-222.

[25] Nash, *Mujer*, 13.

[26] Martha A. Ackelsberg, "Models of Revolution: Rural Women and Anarchist Collectivisation in Civil War Spain," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 20, no. 3. (April 1993), 369.

[27] Ibid.

men (as well as women) within various leftist movements also questioned the efficacy of women's suffrage because they believed that in most cases if women were given the vote, they would choose the more conservative and religious candidates. Gerard Alexander sums up this presumption by noting that many on the left believed that women's political "...preferences were largely manipulated by other people (i.e., men), and especially by churchmen and charismatic rightist political leaders."[28] Even women who were deeply entrenched in leftist movements did not define themselves in terms of the struggle for women's emancipation. As Mary Nash writes:

> [W]oman activists in the unions and the anarchist movement did not tend to use the term [feminist] nor did they overtly identify with a feminist cause, although feminist consciousness permeated some of their social mobilization and collective action.[29]

It is clear, then, that women who were active on the left did not see themselves as fighting for women as women but rather for women as members of a movement that would shape society and, therefore, improve the position of their sex.

In fact, scholars using the traditional "European model" of feminist movements often present Spain as an anachronism. Unlike Great Britain and the United States during this period, there were no suffrage marches, nor were there any women's movements that demanded specific "individual rights," and consequently, this model is not effective in the case of Spain. Nash asserts that:

> [T]he liberal identification of feminism with the struggle for female enfranchisement, together with the restriction of feminist claims to individual

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[28] Gerard Alexander, "Women and Men at the Ballot Box: Voting in Spain's Two Democracies," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, 351.

[29] Nash, "Political Culture, Catalan Nationalism, and the Women's Movement in Early Twentieth-Century Spain," *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, nos. 1-2 (1996), 48.

rights constitute an insufficient framework for the study of historical feminism in Spain.[30]

Victoria Enders and Pamela Radcliff also weigh in on this question by arguing that the usual "European" model of feminist movements only appropriately defines the "Anglo-American" experience.[31] There was no long-standing Spanish electoral tradition in which women could actively participate, nor was the vote regarded by women as the pinnacle of women's emancipation. This is largely due to the existence of *caciquismo*, which effectively made the vote a non-issue for men during the Restoration as well.[32] Individual rights also meant little to Spanish women because of the historical pervasiveness of communalist social values.[33]

It appears that the Spanish women's movements that did form in this period were as diverse as the nation itself. During the 1920s the *Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Españolas* emphasized the importance of Castillian patriotism and violently opposed any threats to national unity.[34] On the other hand, smaller regional women's movements, such as the one that emerged from Catalan nationalism, emphasized adherence to socially defined gender norms that tended to be more specifically regional in nature.[35] The Catalan women's movement evolved in the early years of the century within the context of a larger, male-dominated nationalist movement. Rather than focusing on political

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[30] Nash, "Political Culture," 46.

[31] Enders and Radcliff, "General Introduction," 4.

[32] Nash, "Political Culture," 46.

[33] Enders and Radcliff, "General Introduction," 5.

[34] Nash, "Political Culture," 47.

[35] Ibid.

rights, the Catalan women's movement sought to improve women's role in society. In defense of this goal, Dolors Monserdà defined women's role as the protector of Catalan (and Catholic) cultural values; she did not focus on ideas of equality but rather on the differences that defined men and women.[36] She and other members of the movement, such as Emilia Pardo Bazán, demanded recognition of the social importance of women's paid labor in the domestic industry, among others. They also opened schools to provide lower class women with a bourgeois education and advocated the goal of improving women's general position in society.[37] These two brief examples are indicative of Spanish women's tendency not to advocate some vague idea of individual rights. Instead, they attempted to work within their own sphere to advance the social position of their own gendered community.

This tendency to act in defense of community rather than in defense of individual rights characterized much of women's political activity in pre-Franco Spain. Because women rarely addressed such issues as electoral politics, political parties and the like, historians have assumed that Spanish women operated outside the political sphere. Paula Baker has contended that a narrow conceptualization of politics diminishes the role that women have historically played. She argues instead that politics encompasses "...any action, formal or informal, taken to affect the course of behavior of the government or

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[36] Ibid., 48.

[37] Ibid., 49. Monserdà and others focused on traditional institutions, such as the Catholic Church, and their important role in the development and perpetuation of Catalan culture, as well as the roles that women played in those processes. In this respect, the movement has been defined as reasonably conservative, though Nash notes its beginnings as a "female initiative" and contends that it represents an instance in which women fought for the civil rights of other women, while not petitioning men to do the same, 50-51.

community."[38] According to Baker's definition, many women's activities in Restoration Spain can be seen as intensely political. Without widespread development of "feminist consciousness," or recognition that the male social hierarchy and women's place in it might be fundamentally wrong, Spanish women did often recognize that the system in which they lived had placed them collectively in an unjust position.[39] As Temma Kaplan has asserted, much of women's political activity during this period stemmed from "female consciousness," which emerged from shared "...recognition of what a particular class, culture, and historical period expect from women."[40] Kaplan also says that female consciousness has resulted in collective action on many occasions. Typically, episodes of collective action resulting from female consciousness occurred when women believed that in some way the government or society was threatening their abilities to perform the services for their families that they expected to be able to perform.[41] A great number of these instances of female protest were related to consumer frustration, as the purchase of food and fuel was more often than not a woman's duty, especially among working- and lower-middle class groups. It is important to note that unlike other, more traditional forms of political action, women's food riots and consumer protests were often unplanned

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[38] Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women in American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (June 1984), 622.

[39] Maggie Humm, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), 35.

[40] Temma Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7, no. 3 (1982), 545.

[41] Kaplan's construction of "female consciousness" and its consequential "collective action" have been used in many instances to explain women's actions. It is especially useful in discussions of consumer riots, which have historically been almost totally dominated by women, to protest rising costs of basic consumer goods.

and in most cases dominated by female participants.[42] One such episode broke out in Barcelona in 1913 and was centered on the textile industry. When a strike ensued to demand a wage-hike, it was not in protest against women's "unequal" pay. It resulted from the fact that women's wages had ceased to allow them to adequately provide for their families.[43] The 1913 strike spread to other industries, and tens of thousands of protestors marched over the course of roughly a month.[44] The vast majority of the strikers and protesters were women, and the discourse of the strike was centered on the preservation of family life and human decency rather than on feminist issues of equal pay for equal work.[45]

Another large-scale instance of female collective action occurred in 1918 and was again centered in Barcelona, though it spread quickly to other areas in Spain.[46] Spain's neutrality during World War I had created a climate of unprecedented economic prosperity, and real wages and the standard of living had risen for many in the middle classes.[47] By January of 1918, however, prices and inflation were out of control, a

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[42] Pamela Beth Radcliff, "Women's Politics: Consumer Riots in Twentieth-Century Spain," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, 309. Radcliff notes that the predominantly female nature of the spontaneous activity can oftentimes be connected with an organized trade union movement. Women more often than not shied away from unions, because the government was generally more receptive to their demands since these demands did not correspond with any political agenda, 305.

[43] Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action," 555.

[44] Ibid., 559.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Lester Golden, "The Women in Command: The Barcelona Women's Consumer War of 1918," *UCLA Hisorical Journal* 6 (1985), 12.

[47] It is important to note that while industrial production and wages were up to an average of ten pesetas per day, in the agricultural regions, especially the *latifundio*-dominated south, wages remained at less than half of that figure on average. Edward Malefakis, *Agrarian Revolt and Peasant Revolution: Origins of the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 102-103.

situation that was exacerbated by the wartime ban on cotton instituted in 1917, which proved to be disastrous for Barcelona's textile industry and affected countless numbers of women workers. The 1918 demonstrations were initially well-organized, peaceful marches under the control of Radical Republicans.[48] But because of the government's inablility to reverse the inflated of food and fuel prices in a timely fashion, the demonstrations soon turned into rioting. The female protestors made it known that they were prepared to react to the situation with force and issued the following manifesto to the city:

> If in the space of 24 hours the prices of all foodstuffs are not fixed at their levels of January 1913 in the warehouses of the big speculators (*acaparadors*, literally, "hoarders"), the women's demonstration of Barcelona will take charge of selling them at the prices it judges most suitable.
>
> ----By agreement of female public opinion,
> 13.1.18[49]

Other parties, especially the CNT,[50] became involved in this 1918 uprising of women, which intensified the class element of the demonstrations. Yet women's prominent role in the demonstrations placed them at odds with some of the men in the party who believed that women were largely ineffectual in revolutionary situations.[51] The powerful networks that the women of Barcelona had developed had caused the central government

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[48] Golden, "The Women in Command," 14.

[49] Ibid., 15. This declaration, known as the "Women's Manifesto," was posted throughout the city in January of 1918.

[50] CNT is the abbreviataion for the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, or the National Confederation of Work, the Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalist Association.

[51] Ibid., 18-21. Golden attributes the men's negative opinion of the women in part to the fact that they were not pemitted to participate in the majority of the women's demonstrations. He also notes that, on the other hand, many men were amazed and inspired by the women's actions and felt that they should be imitating the women, not the other way around.

in Madrid to rethink its wartime economic policies, and to adopt programs that would reduce inflation. Lester Golden also notes that this eruption, resulting from female consciousness, helped to plant the seed of feminist consciousness in many anarchist women, who soon began to criticize the male revolutionaries' dedication and tactics as inferior to their own.[52] Spanish women could and did act collectively in the political sphere during the Restoration without embracing Anglo-American feminist ideals.

Still, female consciousness did not always result in collective action. In fact, more often than not, female consciousness appears to have triggered acts of what Michael Seidman has called "subversive individualism."[53] The sense that women frequently had that they were being exploited by the dominant socio-political and economic order led them, as Seidman says, to resist workplace discipline and engage in acts of opportunism and petty fraud. Working women often felt alienated by the focus of unions and political groups on the larger society, which tended to marginalize their specific needs and demands.[54] Women's apolitical action in the form of "subversive individualism" tended to undermine the political goals of the community at large. So here, too, we find diversity in the forms of protest resulting from female consciousness.

By the beginning of the 1920s, the monarchy had fallen into disrepute as a result of several factors including unsuccessful colonial wars in Cuba and Morocco.[55] In

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[52] Ibid., 18.

[53] Michael Seidman, "Women's Subversive Individualism in Barcelona During the 1930s," *International Review of Social History* 37 (1992), 161.

[54] Ibid., 172.

[55] Though the 1898 conflict in Cuba caused much speculation regarding Spain's perceived decline, this loss did not cause the rancor that the Moroccan conflict did. Its prolonged failures sparked such events as the "Tragic Week" in 1909. Ostensibly to protest mandatory conscription, the protests became an

addition, working-class movements such as anarcho-syndicalism, communism, and socialism were revitalized in Spain after a period of relative stagnation during the early years of the century. In 1923 a coup, encouraged covertly by King Alfonso XIII, placed General Miguel Primo de Rivera in charge of a military dictatorship.[56] Though promises of reform made him very popular among many on both the political left and the right, cultural and political repression eventually led to a great deal of opposition as the regime continued.[57] The Primo de Rivera regime did achieve a modicum of reform, and even extended suffrage to women in municipal elections. However, many of his nationalization and improvement plans had the opposite effect and emptied the government's coffers.[58] After administrative changes in 1929, the king attempted to work with the regime, but his return did not reduce the growing opposition and proved to be little more than a last gasp at preserving the traditional order. The first elections since the inception of the dictatorship were called in 1931, and the sweeping victory of Republican parties signified the death of the old Spain.[59]

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outpouring of anti-clerical sentiment, especially in Barcelona, because of Church support for continued action in Morocco. Joan Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study of Anti-Clericalism in Spain, 1875-1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 135.

[56] Danièle Bussy Genevois, "The Women of Spain from the Republic to Franco," in *A History of Women in the West, Vol. V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Françoise Thébaud (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press at Harvard University Press, 1994), 177.

[57] Javier Tusell and Genoveva Queipo de Llano, "The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, 1923-1931," in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. José Alvarez Junco and Adrian Schubert (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 215-216.

[58] Brenan, 81-82; Enders and Radcliff, "Introduction to Part III," in *Consulting Spanish Womanhood*, 231n. Though Primo de Rivera had extended suffrage in local elections, none were actually held during his tenure.

[59] Tusell and Queipo de Llano, "The Primo de Rivera Dictatorship," 219.

The years of the Second Republic were ones of tremendous change for Spanish women. With its declaration on 14 April 1931, the victorious Republican-Socialist coalition adopted a broad program of social and economic reform.[60] Initially, women were allowed to run for office, and the government also gave them maternity insurance.[61] In October of 1931, after a long debate in the *Cortes*, women were finally granted suffrage through the ratification of Article 36 of the new constitution.[62] Other reforms dealt more generally with family life. To the horror of the Church (as well as others on the right), divorce was legalized in Spain, though, as Danièle Bussy Genevois argues, statistics show that the new law had much more impact on how divorce was viewed rather than on the number of divorces themselves.[63] Civil marriage was also made legal, allowing people to marry without the constraints of Church law. Illegitimate children, of which there were many, were finally granted the same rights as legitimate ones, and paternalistic language was removed from family law in general. For example, acknowledgement was given to mothers within the family structure, and their authority over their children was made equal to that of the father's.[64] These reforms constituted the

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[60] Genevois, "The Women of Spain," 180. Many of these reforms were aimed a finding a tenable solution to the "agrarian problem," but the government also granted regional autonomy, separated church and state, and embarked on a campaign to restructure the military.

[61] Ibid., 180.

[62] Judith Keene, "'Into the Clear Air of the Plaza': Spanish Women Achieve the Vote in 1931," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, 325.

[63] Genevois, "The Women of Spain," 182. Genevois shows that in the city of Madrid the proportion of divorces was eight in one thousand. However, this does not mean to say that people did not have strong feelings about divorce one way or the other, and this, along with other reforms, served to divide the population.

[64] Ibid., 181.

only respite in the normally subjugating social, political, and legal situation in which women found themselves during the twentieth century before Franco's death.[65]

Scholars have debated the effects of women's suffrage in Spain extensively. After the first two years of the coalition government, new elections were held, and the results were astoundingly different from 1931. The local elections of April 1933 were the first in which Spanish women participated, and the victors were the right center parties such as the Catholic coalition CEDA.[66] As a result, many on the left accused women of being primarily responsible for the shift away from reform.[67] While the vast majority of historians of the Second Republic have argued that women voters turned the government over to more conservative forces, Gerard Alexander questions this interpretation.[68] Alexander argues that no effective analysis of women's voting patterns in 1933 is possible, because of a lack of statistical data.[69] Furthermore, he contends that the government of Manuel Azaña lost, not because women voted, but because the administration had been extremely ineffectual in solving many of Spain's most divisive problems, an opinion which is supported by the fact that nearly every party that stood in

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[65] Sponsler, "The Status of Married Women," 125. Though some measures during the Franco regime aimed at improving the conditions of working women and the family, overall, the status of Spain's women remained secondary to that of men until the 1970s.

[66] *Confederación Española de Derechas Autonomas*, or Confederation of Autonomous Right Wing Groups, which formed during the first years of the Republic to oppose the more liberal Republican-Socialist coalition.

[67] Alexander, "Women and Men at the Ballot Box," 355.

[68] Ibid., 349. Alexander argues that this interpretation places the blame on women for the increasingly divided population during the so-called "black biennium," and places a considerable amount of responsibility on women for the Civil War that would erupt in 1936.

[69] Ibid., 351.

opposition to the government (which the Socialists had deserted) made significant gains in comparison to their 1931 numbers.[70]

What is clear is that women on both the left and right used their new political rights after 1931 to advance their beliefs in the public sphere. It is significant to note, though, that they utilized this freedom in different ways. As Genevois has pointed out, women on the left "...eschewed day to day politics in favor of long-range goals: health, education, international peace...," and were "...the first to denounce the Nazis and their concentration camps."[71] Women on the right, on the other hand, focused their efforts on reforming the Republic itself. Initially, rightist women's efforts were directed by male-dominated right-wing groups, which believed women were more conservative than men and hoped that they could be manipulated as a social force.[72] Soon, women began acting on their own initiative rather than responding to orders from a male-dominated hierarchy. Women organized associations as they saw fit, especially in response to the secularization of society.[73] The increased "public" activity by women on both the left and the right shows a dramatic shift from the Restoration period. Their interest in issues that moved away from the idea of protecting women's unique position in society to issues that were

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[70] Ibid., 358. These parties included the Radicals, as well as the Communists and Socialists, and occured after the granting of women's suffrage had doubled the electorate, suggesting that they voted for all parties in substantial numbers. The Azaña government had failed to react effectively to poor economic conditions, general social unrest, and a rise in the crime rate, and had been virtually deserted by the majority of the parties on the left and right by the time of the 1933 local elections.

[71] Genevois, "The Women of Spain," 185.

[72] Ibid., 183.

[73] Ibid., 184.

more strictly political demonstrates the effect of the Republic on women in particular, and more generally attests to the polarization of Spanish society during the 1930s.

The *Sección Femenina* is one of the best examples of a right-wing women's organization that emerged or transformed its goals in reaction to the changes in women's roles during the Restoration and Republic.[74] Its roots lie in the early years of the Spanish fascist party, which was formed in Madrid in 1933 by Ledesma Ramos, Ruiz de Alda, and the deposed dictator's son José Antonio Primo de Rivera.[75] The Spanish fascist party became known officially as the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S.--*Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas Ofensivas Nacional Sindicalistas*.[76] Its platform emphasized its anti-communist position and promoted a traditional nationalism that harkened back to Spain's "great" imperial past. At the core of the party's ideology were: "...anti-separatism, imperialism, and Catholicism."[77] The *Sección Femenina* was born simultaneously in 1934 with the *Falange*'s university student organization, the *Sindicato Español Universitario*, or SEU.[78] One of the women involved in the SEU was Pilar Primo de Rivera, the party founder's sister. She, along with some interested female family members and friends, wanted to form their own branch within the party, but her

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[74] Genevois notes that several groups formed spontaneously. There were also groups who already existed, such as *Acción Católica* (Catholic Action), who adopted a more political stance with the reforms of the new Republic, "The Women of Spain," 184.

[75] Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era*, 15.

[76] The F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. was the final incarnation of the fascist party. After several failed attempts at self-support and coalition, and much internal strife among the original founders, the name was adopted in 1937; Ibid., 42.

[77] Ibid., 13.

[78] Rosario Sánchez López, *Mujer Española, Una Sombra de Destino en lo Universal: Trayectoria histórica de Sección Femenina de Falange 1934-1977)* (Murcia, Spain: Universidad de Murcia, 1990), 19.

brother initially rejected at the suggestion that women needed a separate fascist arm. José Antonio Primo de Rivera initially balked at the idea because he believed that women should remain subordinate to men.[79] He eventually granted his sister's request, but stipulated that the women who joined the *Sección Femenina* would not be accorded full party membership. The *Sección Femenina* was initially charged with such obligations as women's propaganda, visiting the relatives of fallen *Falange* comrades, and other duties pertaining specifically to feminine roles, while the overtly political activity was to remain the province of men.[80] It appeared as if the *Sección Femenina* would revert back to Restoration ideals of women's political participation when women were expected to focus on issues that concerned the traditional domestic ambit. Upon closer examination, one can see that this was not entirely the case.

The *Sección Femenina* involved a new type of political mobilization, and the beginning of another shift in the already complex pattern of Spanish women's political participation. While it is true that overt political action by women was discouraged by the male heads of the party, and also by the female leaders of the *Sección Femenina* itself, this did not mean that women were entirely marginalized from the Spanish state during the early years of the fascist movement. During the Restoration, there were virtually no instances of women being explicitly mobilized as part of new political movements. Yet, in the ideological view of the *Falange* and of the *Sección Femenina*, women came to be understood as a great resource for the state because of their dual roles as wives and

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Luis Suárez Fernández, *Crónica de la Sección Femenina y su tiempo*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Asociación Nueva Andadura, 1993), 28.

mothers. The duties that Spanish fascists envisioned for women in the new state were not unlike Republican Motherhood, which was a crucial facet of Enlightenment and nineteenth-century American thought.[81] According to such constructs, women's contribution to national greatness stemmed from their roles as mothers and educators of the young. In the case of the Spanish *Sección Femenina*, women were urged to raise their children to love Spain, to be good Catholics, and to revere party ideology. The fact that they were to play such a crucial role in bringing about the resurgence of traditional values demonstrates the enormous change that Spanish women experienced during the Franco regime.

Through the 1934-1936 "black biennium," the center right parties remained in control of the Spanish government. During this period, the *Falange* suffered, because the left was not in power, and the party's natural constituency had less to fear. In 1936, however, the left was able to regroup, win the national elections, and form a Popular Front government that included Communists and Socialists. It was similar to the French Popular Front government that also came to power in 1936.[82] Though at the time, this seemed a bad omen for the *Falange*, Sheelagh Ellwood has noted that:

> The victory of the Popular Front was readily capable of translation into victory also for a Falange struggling to save itself from extinction, for it supported the Falangist contention that the parliamentary democratic system was incapable of resisting the imminent 'invasion of the barbarians.'[83]

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[81] Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment, An American Perspective," in *History of Women in the United States: Historical Articles on Women's Lives and Activities*, vol. 18, *Women and Politics*, pt I, ed. Nancy F. Cott (New Providence: Saur. 1994), 3-21.

[82] Anderson, "Women and Men at the Ballot Box," 359. The Popular Front victory also lends weight to Anderson's interpretation of female voting behavior, and claims that "...the 1936 results are better explained by the notion that the preferences of Spanish voters, male and female, were guided by the performance of the governing parties, weighed against political alternatives."

[83] Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era*, 29.

In short, membership and interest in the *Falange* had been dwindling since 1934, but the victory of the Popular Front enabled them to feed on the fear that accompanied a threat of communism and focus their efforts on winning converts to their movement. Indeed, the election of the Popular Front intensified ideological polarization in Spain. The July uprising against the Popular Front government of the Republic led to the three years of conflict that would result in the victory of the Nationalist forces, place General Francisco Franco at the head of the new government, and install the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. as the only legal party in Spain.[84]

The outbreak of the Civil War profoundly affected women's lives. Oftentimes, the "front" was literally next door or down the street, as each side struggled to capture territory, and neighbors and even family members turned against one another in an internecine class and ideological war. There was a profound change in what was expected from women as a consequence. Mary Nash describes this shift as follows:

> ...[A]ll political parties and unions launched a general appeal for female mobilization. Women were no longer told to remain in their homes, but rather urged to get involved in the multiple activities the war effort required in the political arena. Female virtues of deference and self-effacement were to fall into the background, and women's social involvement was openly demanded for the war effort.[85]

Women were asked, regardless of the political ideology with which they most sympathized, to abandon the purely domestic roles that society had assigned them. To combat fascism, the left used the figure of the "*miliciana*" to mobilize other women. This

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[84] Ibid., 223.

[85] Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Arden Press, Inc., Women and Modern Revolution Series, 1995), 49.

figure was the representative of women in combat against the Nationalist forces, and she grew to legendary proportions. Frances Lannon notes that during the early stages of the war *milicianas* fought and died at the front side by side with their male counterparts, but, as the conflict escalated, leftist women increasingly moved away from the front. Their participation continued in other ways, however.[86] Many helped with reconnaissance and assisted family members in their attempts to escape from the rebel-held territories, and tens of thousands went to prison during and immediately after the war.[87] Leftist women helped in more traditional ways, as well. They served as nurses and as cooks and also assumed the tremendous responsibilities of running family farms and businesses while fathers and husbands were absent. In whatever capacity, women were tremendously active in the war effort, and their experiences show, again, significant variation and a broad scope of female activity outside the home.

The *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange* also sprang into action during the war. With the outbreak of the war, their membership had grown, and the focus of their activities broadened. They went to the front not to fight but to take care of the soldiers by sewing and washing uniforms and by opening hospitals throughout the Nationalist zones to care for the wounded.[88] One of the most lasting wartime efforts of the *Sección Femenina* was the program called *Auxilio Invierno*, which was modeled after the German

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[86] Frances Lannon, "Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991), 217-219.

[87] Shirley Mangini, *Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 100-101. In 1939, there were 23,232 Spanish women in prison, and Mangini claims that since prior to the war the crime rate among women had been unusually low, the majority of these women were political prisoners.

[88] Carmen Werner, "Tres Años de Lucha," *Medina* 31 October 1943. Luis Otero, *La Sección Femenina* (Madrid: Editorial EDAF, 1999), 22-23.

program "Winter Help." *Sección Femenina* activist Mercedes Sanz Bachiller established this program in October of 1936 in Valladolid, and its success led to an expansion throughout the Nationalist zone, as well as its extension nation-wide following Franco's victory.[89] The activities of the *Auxilio Invierno* included the establishment and operation of soup kitchens, orphanages, and hospitals to help the victims of the war. Though many of their activities can be characterized as more "feminine" in nature, the danger that these women on the political right faced was considerable, and many were killed during the conflict.[90]

By the end of the war, the *Sección Femenina* was a recognizable force on the Spanish right. Not only were they an adjunct to the *Falange*, which emerged victorious and immensely powerful at the end of the war, but their activities had earned them a reputation in their own right. The post-war incarnation of the *Sección Femenina* was organized as bureaucratically as any government. The *Delegación Nacional* was the top branch of the *Sección Femenina*, and beneath it were the National Secretariat, Provincial Delegates and Secretaries, and finally Local Delegates and Secretaries. Various offices within this structure dealt with cultural issues, propaganda, and educational duties, and even offered training classes in order to help women prepare for a life of leadership within the agency.[91] Pilar Primo de Rivera had achieved national status not only as the

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[89] "Editorial Aguado, *Enciclopedia escolar en dibujos*, grado superior, 1943. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 125.

[90] Sección Femenina, "Camaradas caídas en acto de servicio," *Anuario de 1944*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 20.

[91] Pla Dalmau, *Enciclopedia Estudio, libro verde*, 1958. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 213. "Sección Femenina de la Falange: Escuela Nacional de Jerarquías," *Fotos*, 11 May 1940. Classes for these women included Gymnastics, Culture, Home Economics (domestic economy), Religion and Morality, and Political Ideology of the *Falange*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 35.

sister of the fallen José Antonio Primo de Rivera (whom the Republican forces executed in 1936), but as a consequence of her leadership of the *Sección Femenina*. In fact, her renown spread to international circles. In 1938, she traveled to Germany to meet with Adolf Hitler and Gertrude Scholtz-Klink, who was her German counterpart, and their meeting was hailed by the *Sección Femenina* publication *Y* as "...an important expression of Hispanic-German *amistad*."[92] In December of 1939, the *Sección Femenina* was recognized by the party as a separate arm of the *Falange*.[93]

The duties of the *Sección Femenina* in the new regime would soon encompass not only propaganda, but also the administration of women's education (in conjunction with the Catholic Church), and certain welfare services through the *Servicio Social*, which had been decreed a national duty for all unmarried women in 1937. The *Sección Femenina*'s creed embodied the message they intended to convey to Spain's women. It read as follows:

1. At dawn raise your heart to God and think of a new day for the fatherland.
2. Be disciplined, disciplined, disciplined.
3. Do not comment on any order; obey without hesitation.
4. Never, under any circumstance, excuse yourself from an act of service.
5. Action is not yours; encourage others to act.
6. Let the man in your life be your patriot.
7. Do not forget that your mission is to educate your children for the good of the nation.
8. Compensate for the anguish of your woman's heart with the serenity that you

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[92] "Pilar Primo de Rivera en Alemania," *Y*, May 1939. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 28. Primo de Rivera focused also on international women's issues. She attended the European Youth Conference in Vienna in 1942, and also organized conferences in Spain.

[93] Aurora Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 102.

are helping to save Spain.

9. Work with joy and without hesitation.
10. Obey, and by your example teach others to obey.
11. Try always to be the wheel in the car and let the one guiding it be in control.
12. Do not stand out; help someone else to excel.
13. Love Spain over everything else, so as to be able to inculcate in others your love.
14. Do not expect any reward for your efforts except your own satisfaction.
15. Let the Falangist bundle of sticks be rooted in a common individual yearning.
16. Whatever you do, improve yourself doing it.
17. Your strength will encourage the victory.
18. There is no glory comparable to the glory of having given everything for the fatherland.[94]

This creed set the tone for the *Sección Femenina*'s work throughout the Franco regime. The messages of service and abnegation were prominent in the literature and placed women in a secondary, yet crucial, position in the new regime.

The reconstruction of Spanish women's experiences during the decades preceding Franco's rise to power is a complex and difficult task. The 1889 Civil Code placed women in an inferior position, but regional variation allowed some women much more latitude than others, especially in economic activities. Regional variation in landholding patterns also translated into tremendous diversity in the labor and work identities of women in the agricultural sector. In the industrial sector women's work experiences depended on factors such as experience and marital status, as well as the particular type of production in which they were employed, as exemplified by the distinctions between the

textile and tobacco sectors. Even among the new, white-collar workers, class differences and levels of education and urbanization helped to determine the availability of different employment opportunities for Spanish women. It is clear that, despite societal expectations, women in Restoration Spain had not been strictly confined to the domestic sphere

Spanish women's socio-political and economic roles during the Restoration and Republican periods also represent a series of paradoxes. There was little in the way of development of feminisms that corresponded to the "Anglo-American" model, and the evidence suggests that the majority of women were unconcerned with questions of individual rights. Nevertheless, there were widespread episodes of collective action that dealt explicitly with issues of concern to women. The juxtaposition between the official legal place for women in society as set out by the Civil Code, irrespective of the regional variations, and the rapidly expanding role that women were playing in the economy reveal sharp contrasts between social mores regarding women and women's daily realities. The Second Republic ushered in a new period of emancipation for women with a dramatic expansion of legal and political rights, yet in reaction to this, a rightist movement emerged, represented by the *Sección Femenina*, in which women utilized their newfound political and legal rights in an attempt to reverse the legal and political changes that had provided those rights.

Understanding the level of diversity among Spanish women during this period is extremely useful in helping to understand the path of the *Sección Femenina*. The agency developed in part as a reaction to the socio-political conditions in Spain in general, but

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[94] *Ideal* 21 December 1936. Reprinted in Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 25-26.

also as a response to the changing socio-economic and political conditions of women in particular.

Chapter Three:

The Propaganda and Rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina*

As the Franco regime consolidated its power, the *Falange* found itself in a privileged position. In 1937 Franco had integrated all the parties on the Nationalist side during the war, creating the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., or what came to be known as the *Movimiento*.[1] Also in 1937, the party recognized the *Sección Femenina* as a separate branch within the party structure, and the new government gave it complete control over women's lives. This facilitated the emergence of a distinctly female angle to the party ideology. This female angle came to encompass nearly every aspect of women's lives, though membership or participation was not forced on every level of the organization.[2] Women were categorized by the *Sección Femenina* into specific groups according to their dominant social function--mother, daughter, single woman, student, *campesina*, teacher, worker--and there was a branch of the agency to oversee each category.[3] Irrespective of what "category" or categories a woman identified (or did not identify) with, there were a series of themes that permeated the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina*. These themes reflected fascist efforts not only to inspire women to focus primarily on their roles in the

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[1] The *Falange* that came into power through the Franco regime was much different than the original party created by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933, though the basic ideological components were the same. With Franco in power, the *Falange* clammored for government appointments, and associated themselves with the symbols of power, including the military and Franco, and "...permeated every level of day-to-day existence...." Ellwood, *Spanish Fascism in the Franco Era*, 75-77.

[2] This is to say that the *Sección Femenina* had certain levels within its hierarchy where participation was mandatory, such as *Las Juventudes*. Others were mandatory in order to receive certain opportunities, such as the *Servicio Social*, which was required for any profession or university admission.

[3] "Gráfico de Formación," *La Sección Femenina, historia y misión*, 1944. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 34. The translation for *Campesina* is "farmer," or "peasant," but for the *Sección Femenina*'s purposes, it seems to have referred to rural women in general, regardless of their economic function.

home, but also to politicize women's lives on many levels and to mobilize women as part of a larger attempt to paper over the divisions that plagued Spanish society and that had contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War.

From the outset, the Franco regime revoked many of the political rights that women had enjoyed during the brief tenure of the Second Republic and sought to politicize women's lives in other ways. The literature of the *Sección Femenina* demonstrates that women's lives were the focus of an intense propaganda campaign that redefined their more traditional, feminine roles by application of patriotic rhetoric. Several themes run through the propaganda of the *Sección Femenina.* The most prominent of these were the nationalization of motherhood and the politicization of housework, both of which emphasized the importance of women's work to the survival of the central state. In addition, the *Sección Femenina* also focused on the spiritual and ideological well-being of its affiliates by emphasizing the importance of Catholic and *falangist* doctrine for girls and women. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, another theme in the rhetoric suggests that the *Sección Femenina*'s propaganda and programs sought as well to use women to mitigate some of Spain's long-standing regional tensions. The efforts to nationalize women's lives make the study of the Franco regime's policies a much more complex undertaking than it previously had appeared to be. It has often been assumed that because the regime revoked women's rights after the war that it sought to bring about a reversion to Restoration ideals regarding the separation of women's and men's spheres and duties, but this was not in fact the case. Rather, the regime's policies

represented the beginning of a distinctly new period for Spanish women; one in which they were paradoxically marginalized from the traditional mechanisms of state politics, while at the same time they were mobilized to strengthen the *Movimiento* through the more efficient execution of their traditional duties.

During the past three decades scholars have focused much attention on the anti-feminism of fascist governments. The focus has been mainly on pronatalist policies and the dimunition of women's political rights.[4] Scholars have established, also, that the views of fascist governments were directly influenced by the movements towards women's emancipation that had begun during the first decades of the twentieth century.[5] Most scholars who study these questions generally agree that in fascist nations women were mobilized to a greater or lesser extent in order to more fully implement the policies and ideological constructs of the particular regime.[6] Fascism in general tended, under the guise of a return to traditional values, to place women in subordinate roles within both the family and the state. But as Marcia Bedard has argued, this subordination also served to affect the conformity of the family "...to an inhumane social order."[7] Indeed, fascist regimes often offered women incentives to stay at home. In Germany, though anti-

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[4] This is part of the core argument of historians Claudia Koonz, Tim Mason, and Victoria de Grazia, who believe that pronatalist campaigns reflected the inherently misogynistic attitudes held by the governments of Germany and Italy, respectively.

[5] Paul Weindling, "Fascism and Population in Comparative European Perspective," *Population and Development Review* 14 (1988) : 102-121. Weindling argues that fascist governments emerged between the wars in direct response to changing economic and social conditions, and one of these was in fact the emancipation of women, which, combined with declining birth rates, led to the establishment of pronatalist policies.

[6] Mary Nash, "Race, Fascism, Feminism, and Nation," *History of European Ideas* 16, nos. 4-6 (1993), 995.

[7] Marcia Bedard, "Profamilism and the New Right: A Feminist Analysis of Fascist Family Ideology," *The Psychohistory Review* 15, no. 2 (1987), 78

feminism was as important as racism in Nazi philosophy, the state offered husbands wage increases as well as loans to make it easier to have the prestigious stay-at-home wife.[8] The Italian pronatalist policies also involved a number of prizes and awards for women with large numbers of children (a woman had to have at least twelve living children to be eligible).[9] These types of programs were ostensibly aimed at increasing the population, which had suffered during the years of depression following World War I, and which many more conservative pundits had attributed directly to the increasingly emancipated position of women all over Europe.[10] They also reflected fascist attention to the new science of demography and the belief that national strength depended on vibrant population growth.

The Franco regime in Spain also introduced a series of pronatalist initiatives. They provided loans for families who were practicing Catholics. The repayment of these depended upon the number of children couples had, and the loans were waived entirely after the birth of the fourth child. The state also offered prizes, as well as wage increases and family allowances for families with children.[11] The official discourse surrounding this campaign initially centered on the effects of the Civil War, which had caused the

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[8] Tim Mason, "Women in Germany," 87.

[9] Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 92.

[10] It is important to note that the institution of pronatalist policies was not limited only to fascist states. Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, among others, also introduced policies and awards in order to encourage women to bear more children.

[11] Montserrat Miller, "Women and Family Under the Franco Regime: Policy, Rhetoric, and Ideology," *Journal of the West Virginia Historical Association* 16 (Spring 1996), 45.

population of Spain to drop from 28 to 26 million.[12] In 1940, the *Falange* publication *Auxilio Social* emphasized the importance of pronatalist policies:

> Spain needs...to rapidly elevate her population. It [Spain] needs to replace with vigorous and useful generations the terrible hole that has been left open by the fallen generations on the fields of battle.[13]

As in Fascist Germany and Italy, the reproductive power of women was held to be a central component of national strength under fascist rule.

Pronatalist policies in Spain were accompanied by strong ideological messages, and the *Sección Femenina* bore the responsibility for the propaganda that underpinned this initiative. Long after the war's end, the *Sección Femenina*'s propaganda continued to emphasize that a woman's position in her family was of crucial importance:

> Within the family, the woman is the queen that deserves all the tributes, beginning with the love of the man. But, why does she merit this love? Only because of her beauty? Only because of her delicacy? Much more than all this, love is deserved because of her selfless maternal mission. For the enormous service that is fulfilling, educating, and governing the home; the hearth where the family coexists.[14]

By using this type of language, the *Sección Femenina* told women that motherhood offered them the opportunity to earn the utmost adulation and respect from those whom they served.

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[12] The effectiveness of pronatalist policies has been long-debated, primarily because despite the varying legal restrictions on birth control and abortion they have not historically prevented women from finding some means to control their reproductive habits. Evidence suggests, however, that they may have been reasonably successful in Franco's Spain. By 1970, the population was over 32 million, and five years later was over 35 million.

[13] Falange Española, *Auxilio Social*, 1940. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 38. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by author.

[14] *Formación*, 1962. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 108.

This message of service and abnegation was an integral part of the *Sección Femenina*'s nationalization of motherhood. The *Sección Femenina* promoted this mission as involving three different responsibilities: service to the family, service to the state, and service to God. Because the Franco government was a blend of National Syndicalism and National Catholicism, the family was seen as a miniature version of the state, and one of the "natural" parts of an "organic" society. The state itself was seen as an agent of God, so service to the family was portrayed as service to the *Patria* and to God. Procreation was, of course, the first step in fulfilling the mission of service, and, as the agency declared in 1942, "[t]he true mission of the woman is to give children to the *Patria*."[15] Women were also expected to serve in a behind-the-scenes manner. Pilar Primo de Rivera's article in a December, 1945 issue of the *Sección Femenina* magazine *Medina* described the way in which women were to fulfill their duties. Women, especially mothers, were to serve in silence, reveling in the moral superiority of their sacrifices, and to work to bring out the best in their children and husbands.[16] This message was a continuous theme through the first decades of the regime. As late as 1962 one of the textbooks used while completing the *Bachillerato* stressed women's naturally subordinate role:

> Throughout her entire life, the mission of the woman is to serve. When God made the first man, he thought 'It's not good for man to be alone.' And He made woman, for help, and company, and to serve as mother. God's first idea was "the man." He thought of the woman after, as a necessary complement, as something useful.[17]

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[15] "No hay nada más bello que servir," *Medina* 12 July 1942. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 31.

[16] Pilar Primo de Rivera, "Consignas de Pilar: Manera de Servir," *Medina* 16 December 1945. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 38.

[17] *Formación Político-Social*, primer curso de Bachillerato, 1962. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 17.

For the *Sección Femenina*, as well as the regime, the natural Christian order was a justification for women's subordinate place in their families and in society.

This subordinate place of mothers extended to the role that they were slated to play in the practice of *Falange* duties and the perpetuation of *falangist* ideals. Women were, again, expected to serve the *Falange* from the background, and specific examples of female heroism were treated as exceptional rather than normal female behavior.[18] In 1957 the *Enciclopedia Elemental* stressed the role that women played in the future of the *Patria*: men were the ones who were brave; who created empires and the laws that determined the future path of the nation. Women, on the other hand, were the foundation of families, and they were responsible for determining the destiny of the fatherland by providing new generations for the *Patria*.[19] These new generations were to be educated by their mothers with proper adherence to *falangist* ideology, as well:

> You, as good Christian and Spanish mothers, have the obligation to teach your children in the first months of life to make the sign of the cross and give them their first idea of God, and, at the same time...to teach them...to salute, arm raised high, and say *Arriba España*! and give them the first notions of the doctrine of the *Falange*.[20]

Mothers were therefore expected to know and practice *falangist* doctrine in large part because they needed to indoctrinate their children, who were crucial to Spain's regeneration, with the same ideals.[21]

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[18] In the propaganda, there were many examples of women who had broken the norms of female behavior, and that had been on the front lines in the war, but these instances were treated as extraordinary. Pla Dalmau, *Enciclopedia Estudio, libro amarillo*, 1958. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 20.

[19] Sección Femenina, *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1957. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 34.

[20] Mercedes Suárez-Valdés, *Infancia de hoy, juventud de mañana*, "guía de la madre nacionalsindicalista," 1940. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 55.

This duty to indoctrinate one's children had specific consequences. Because women were expected to be the primary educator within the family, the *Sección Femenina* believed that women needed a proper education. This represents a great change from the Restoration period, during which the need for women's education was a much-debated topic and when many questioned the content of women's education because the majority of their lives were (ideally) spent in the home.[22] During the Franco regime, despite the fact that "...the official National-Catholic discourse defined studying as inimical to femininity...,"[23] the *Sección Femenina* encouraged Spanish women to attend university, and former members of the *Sección Femenina* have since evinced great pride in their educational achievements.[24] Women students were in fact glorified in the agency's rhetoric. An article in the 7 June 1942 issue of *Medina* even went so far as to dismiss the idea that it was absurd for women to study. It quoted one student as saying, "I believe we have to try to strengthen the rights already obtained and improve the situation of the woman in general."[25] Young women were encouraged to study for many reasons--to prepare for their futures, or even simply because it made them happy, which, of course,

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[21] Sección Femenina, *Anuario de 1940*. Otero, 103.

[22] Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 13-21. The debate over women's education during the Restoration was fierce, and divided between several camps who had different ideas of the focus and direction of women's schooling. Many did agree that the level of women's education was too low, especially with regards to illiteracy rates, and their ability to attend university.

[23] Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 96-97.

[24] Enders, "Problematic Portraits," 384.

[25] Sylvia, "Muchachas en la Universidad," *Medina* 7 June 1942. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 96-97.

was contrary to their selfless mission of service to the home and family.[26] Still, the *Sección Femenina* held that the main reason women were to study was so that they could be more fully prepared for service to home and family. A 1941 article from the publication *Haz* insisted that:

> The woman has an eternal mission in the home. Undoubtedly. But she also has the need for sufficient intellectual preparation in order to educate her children and be a companion to her husband; and, if it becomes necessary, to sustain him economically when he is unable or to perform service for the *Patria*.[27]

There does appear to have been a specific utilitarian purpose to the *Sección Femenina*'s focus on education. The agency did not deny women's capacity to learn, nor did they begrudge them the opportunity. Still, many historians have dismissed the agency's efforts, because they were not advocating education for education's sake, but rather to perpetuate women's inferior position.[28] Yet, it cannot be denied that during the Franco regime, women began attending university in greater number than ever before.[29] It is, therefore, very difficult, and perhaps even impossible in some instances, to assess whether the *Sección Femenina*'s propaganda and programs had the effect of subjugating women in society or empowering them to achieve new goals and to assume new roles.

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[26] Carmen Werner, "Diario de una estudiante," *Medina* 1 November 1942. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 98-99.

[27] "La mujer y la preparación intelectual," *Haz* January 1941.

[28] Enders, "Problematic Portraits," 378-382. Enders argues that many "leftist" historians have dismissed the efforts of the *Sección Femenina* to advance women in education and work, primarily because they focused on women's secondary roles in these areas. This is especially true in the case of working women, because the legislation that they lobbied to ratify--the Law of Political, Professional, and Labor Rights for Women--did little more than officially recognize that women were active in the workforce, which had been true throughout the regime. Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 67.

[29] Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 96. In 1950, there were 7,667 women enrolled in Spanish universities. By 1961, that number had risen to 15, 338.

The nationalization of motherhood had numerous other aspects, some of which must be viewed as practical and positive. One of these was the intensive campaign to reduce infant mortality, which was introduced following the war. The campaign to reduce infant mortality featured a heavy ideological and nationalistic component, for, as Pilar Primo de Rivera asserted, the health of Spain's children was directly connected to the health of the party and the *Patria*.[30] The *Sección Femenina*'s printed materials in this campaign focused on immunization and breast-feeding and the dangers that would ensue if women failed to carry out these duties. In the rhetoric of the campaign, therefore, the future success of the *Patria* and the *Falange* was placed directly on women's shoulders. One piece of propaganda featured a woman feeding her child, with a caption that read "Young Girls of the *Falange*, Mothers of Tomorrow," and effectively tied together the future of Spain with the perpetuation of *falangist* ideals.[31] (Figure 1).[32] Other propaganda pieces featured a photo of a woman breast-feeding her child, along with the assertion that "Holding your child at your breast you fulfill your sacred duty and evade great dangers."[33] (Fig. 2). As late as 1954 women were not only encouraged but implored to breast feed. In *Nociones de Puericultura postnatal*, the *Sección Femenina* informed women that not breast feeding one's child was inexcusable, unless there were some serious reason that

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[30] Discurso de Pilar Primo de Rivera, May 1939. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 104.

[31] Tarjeta postal de la Sección Femenina, n.d. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 105.

[32] Please see Appendix I for corresponding photographs.

[33] "Campaña contra la mortalidad infantil," *Medina* 5 October 1941. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 105.

made it impossible.[34] The *Sección Femenina* also employed a large network of doctors and nurses to travel throughout the countryside in order to educate women about the proper ways to feed, bathe, and immunize their children. These efforts appear to have expanded far beyond the boundaries of the *Falange* and *Sección Femenina* affiliates and had a profound impact on many in poverty-stricken regions that did not have adequate medical facilities. In addition, as Victoria Enders notes, when the *Sección Femenina* traveled to the villages they used the opportunity to identify motivated women from those villages and to train them so that they might play an integral role in the local hierarchy of the *Sección Femenina*'s organization. The *Sección Femenina*'s propaganda and programming clearly were central elements in the nationalization of motherhood in Franco's Spain. The regime's mobilization of women to participate in pronatalism, its insistence that mothers were essential to the ideological indoctrination of children, and its efforts to reduce infant mortality through the modification of female behavior were all part of larger effort to harness the power of women to shape family life on behalf of the party and the state. This, however, is not particularly surprising, given that very similar initiatives were undertaken under fascist rule in Italy and Germany, as well.

A second important and related theme in the discourse of the *Sección Femenina* centered on the politicization of housework. Because the family was considered by the party to be a miniature version of the state, propaganda urged that households be run by women in an orderly and efficient manner. The *Sección Femenina*'s educational message in this regard began in secondary school, where home economics became a required

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[34] Sección Femenina, *Nociones de la puericultura postnatal*, 1954. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 105.

course in 1943. As part of the *Bachillerato* curriculum, women were instructed by the *Sección Femenina* to make their homes happy, economical, orderly, and beautiful, because "...this service to the family [is] how the woman serves her *Patria*, [and] history."[35] The *Sección Femenina* insisted that this service was in line with women's "natural" inclinations and that as long as they adhered to their instincts, they could be assured of family harmony.[36] The agency's educational materials on housework included calendars, such as the "Schedule for the Lady of the House with Husband and One Child," which appeared in the *Enciclopedia Elemental* in 1957.[37] This guide told women what the optimal times were to bathe their children, begin meals, and the best times to perform weekly and even seasonal chores. Much older educational texts, such as Juan Luis Vives' sixteenth-century treatise *Instruction of the Christian Woman*, were also used by the *Sección Femenina* to help reinforce the importance of women's education in the art and science of housework.[38]

Several articles were published in various *Sección Femenina* magazines that focused on housework. Many of these provided explicit instructions on needlework,[39]

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[35] Sección Femenina, *Formación Político-Social*, primer curso de Bachillerato, 1962. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 182.

[36] Sección Femenina, *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1957. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 191.

[37] "Horario para el ama de casa con marido y un hijo," *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1957. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 188.

[38] Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 37-40. The work of Juan Luis Vives, and Fray Luis de León's *La Perfecta Casada* (*The Perfect Married Lady*) were both extremely popular in Franco's Spain, and were even given as wedding gifts.

[39] "Sabes zurcir y echar piezas?" *Medina*, 3 January 1943. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 178.

recipes for winter cooking,[40] and even advice on how to "economize soap."[41] One particular article provided instructions on how to decorate kitchens in order to make them efficient, as well as aesthetically pleasing.[42] A 1955 article from the *falangist* women's magazine *Teresa* instructed women on how to properly clean and lift heavy furniture without causing injury.[43] The *Sección Femenina*'s propaganda sometimes presented housework not only as a duty but also as a sport. In 1942 the *Sección Femenina*'s magazine *Medina* offered an article entitled "Sport in the Home," which described in detail the "sport" of homemaking, complete with a list of necessary "equipment" such as a broom, mop, and a dust cloth, thereby portraying this duty not only as work but as enjoyable and healthful.[44] Such magazines also printed patterns for clothes so that women could more easily make and wear the latest fashions.[45] Much of this propaganda not only offered practical advice, but also helped to reinforce the *falangist* construction of woman's sphere as primarily domestic but nonetheless of central importance to the state. This represented a sharp departure from the Restoration era's understanding of women's place in society.

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[40] "El hogar y la concina de invierno," *Medina* 2 January 1944. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 186-187.

[41] "Una idea para...economizar jabón," *Medina* 3 May 1941. Otero. *La Sección Femenina*, 179.

[42] "Decoración: El mayor encanto de una buena ama de casa," *Medina* 5 December 1943. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 180-81.

[43] "Trabaje sin fatigua: el sí y el no de los movimientos," *Teresa*, December 1955. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 189.

[44] "El deporte en la casa," *Medina* 29 November 1942. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 151.

[45] "Labores," *Medina* 29 May 1941; 5 July 1941. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 176.

The *Sección Femenina*'s politicization of housework was multi-faceted. One important element was its *Servicio Social* program. Most women had to serve in the *Servicio Social*, which had been established during the war and was mandatory for women who wanted to obtain a passport, a driver's license, enter into a government job or any of the professions, or study at the university level.[46] Though the *Servicio Social* had many functions, the program was portrayed in the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina* as an inestimable service that women provided for the state:

> Young women do not give to Spain military service, but like good daughters of the mother *Patria*, they have to do, at eighteen years old, a series of free jobs for the *Patria*. These jobs receive the name *Servicio Social*. The daughter of the *Caudillo* [Franco] did it, too.[47]

The above passage is laden with images. First, it provides women with an almost "separate but equal" status with young men (who were required to perform military service). In addition, it also equates motherhood with the fatherland, thereby tinting this duty with a political color. Finally, there is an attempt to break down the barriers separating the political elite from the average Spanish woman with the emphasis on young Carmencita Franco and her participation in the *Servicio Social*. Moreover, it helped to reinforce Franco's desire to construct a "Spain without exceptions," a Spain whose class divisions had been healed by the *Movimiento*.[48] During their tenure in the *Servicio Social*, women performed a series of social services by working at day care

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[46] Rosa María Martí, interview with author, 23 October 1999. Another requirement for women who wanted to study at the university was membership in the *falangist* student union, the *Sindicato Español Universitario*, or SEU.

[47] Boris Bureba, *Enciclopedia Escolar*, n.d. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

[48] Sancho González, *Francisco Franco, artifice de la Victoria y la Paz*, 1962. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 171.

centers and *comedores* (soup kitchens). They were also instructed in such elements of housework as sewing, cooking, and childcare.[49] Photos of the *Servicio Social* portray women as a tight and dedicated community, serving food in one of the *comedores*,[50] and in classes,[51] or sometimes with an instructor teaching them how to care for a child.[52] (Figures 3-5). The agency proclaimed in 1954 that:

> [F]or Spain you must complete with joy the *Servicio Social*. It is a lesson for you, education for tomorrow, and help for those who need your patriotic and social labor.[53]

Women in the *Servicio Social* were also lectured on *Falange* doctrine. The agency, therefore, expected them, as loyal *falangistas*, to serve not only with abnegation, but also joyfully and with the knowledge that they were serving themselves and the future of the *Patria*. Thus, the *Servicio Social* was an important tool in the *Sección Femenina*'s efforts to politicize women's domestic duties.

In addition to the *Servicio Social*, the *Sección Femenina* insisted that women who wanted to be *truly* prepared to properly carry out their household duties should attend classes at one of the agency's *Escuelas del Hogar*.[54] These were schools that were

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[49] Rosa María Martí, interview with author, 23 October 1999.

[50] "Servicio Social en Comedores," Tarjeta Postal de la Sección Femenina, n.d. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

[51] "Servicio Social (Clase de Puericultura)," Tarjeta Postal de la Sección Femenina, n.d. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

[52] "Una clase de puericultura," *La Sección Femenina, historia y misión*, 1944. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

[53] Sección Femenina, *Anuario de 1954*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

[54] Housewives were also a focus of the state in Italy, though not to the same extent as they were in Spain. Victoria de Grazia has shown that new ideas to improve the efficiency of housework failed to take hold in Mussolini's Italy because of severe economic crisis and tended more often than not to accentuate the gap between rich and poor. de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 99-105.

established early by the *Sección Femenina* in order to more fully prepare women to be housewives. The purpose of the classes was explained in an article in *Medina* that appeared in 1943. The article asserted that:

> A good housewife is not improvised, just like a good governess or good nurse are not improvised. Every office, every profession, requires a period of apprenticeship; that of the housewife is the same...Many people scorn this labor. How many men have we heard say "My woman, oh! she does not do anything; she is interested only in the home. Without doubt, these jobs the woman does in the house are innumeral: Cook, maid, seamstress, embroideress, mender, ironer, nurse, accountant, economist, teacher, hygienist! It is true that she has a natural disposition in this genre of work, but she must prepare for and perfect it.[55]

Here, the *Sección Femenina* portrayed housework as a full-time occupation, and though derided by some, the agency recognized not only its importance, but also the tremendous amount of labor involved for women who took the job seriously. The party maintained that it was imperative, however, that women rely on more than natural instinct in carrying out this responsibility. According to an article in the agency's 1943 annual report, the *Sección Femenina* sought to educate women in the science of housework so that women would be able to "...fulfill her mission not by instinct, but rather because she knows how to fulfill it."[56]

The propaganda for the *Escuelas del Hogar* also implied that what a woman learned while in "training" would ultimately improve the quality of her married life. A recent Catalan school text on women's history quoted Pilar Primo de Rivera as saying:

> ...Because, at times, women marry without having the least notion of how a home is governed or how children are reared. Many times the distancing of husbands

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[55] *Medina*, 31 January 1943. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 163.

[56] Sección Femenina, *Anuario de 1943*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 166.

> from the family ambit is provoked by causes as small as making coffee poorly or not having comfortable and clean furniture where couples can sit tranquilly after dinner.[57]

The *Sección Femenina*'s discourse on housework thus placed a great amount of responsibility for holding marriages together on wives. Because the proper execution of household duties was the glue that held families together, and the state depended on strong families, the *Sección Femenina*'s discourse elevated women's domestic duties to a place of political importance.[58]

The *Sección Femenina*'s construction of a discourse that treated housework as skilled labor of central importance to both family life and national strength had the effect of politicizing women's domestic responsibilities. This is significant in several ways. First, it raises comparative questions about important twentieth century shifts in the nature and cultural meaning of housework that have been described by U.S. historians such as Ruth Schwartz Cowan.[59] The science of home economics was embraced in the educational institutions of numerous western nations in the twentieth century. When Spain did so, it was the *falangist Sección Femenina* that controlled the curriculum and added a nationalized and politicized spin to the rhetoric. The *Sección Femenina*'s focus on housework as a political issue is also significant in that it further illustrates that the Franco regime's vision of women differs in some fundamental way from the cultural constructs that linked females to the state in the Restoration period.

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[57] Cristina Gatell, *Dones d'ahir, dones d'avui* (Barcelona: Editorial Barcanova, 1993), 76.

[58] *Consigna*, December 1940. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 164.

[59] Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Mircrowave* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

Much of the *Sección Femenina*'s discourse on women was infused with Catholic imagery and values. Indeed, the role that the Catholic Church played in the Franco regime's ideology more generally cannot be overstated. National-Catholicism stemmed from Franco's attempt to restore Spain to its historical greatness after the secularization of the Second Republic, and the redefinition of gender roles was integral to this restoration. According to Aurora Morcillo, the powerful connection between the Church and the state in the Franco regime helped to provide the ideological basis of True Catholic Womanhood, which stressed abnegation, service, and strict adherence to Catholic doctrine.[60] Morcillo argues that the *Sección Femenina* played an important role in the perpetuation of True Catholic Womanhood, and certainly much of the propaganda supports this. In fact the *Sección Femenina*'s discourse sought to link Catholic gender constructs and the new role that women were to play in the Franco regime. One of the ways in which it created this connection was through a focus on the figure of Santa Teresa de Jesús, the sixteenth-century Catholic reformer, mystic, and nun. Santa Teresa was made the Patron Saint of the agency because, as a *Medina* article stated, she would:

> [P]rotect us with her strength and because she, with her wisdom, is one of the most glorious women that has been given to Spain. And we chose her also because you, *camaradas* of the *Sección Femenina*, have, like her, a founding mission. You have to teach for all the lands of Spain the longing of our Revolution.[61]

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[60] Morcillo, *True Catholic* Womanhood, 3-7.

[61] "Santa Teresa: La Delegada Nacional Dice," *Medina* 15 October 1944. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 48. The original circular that was reprinted in *Medina* was printed in October of 1938, to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the declaration. Morcillo notes that this "manipulation" of ancient Catholic figures was not unique to the Franco regime, or even to conservative forces. During the Civil War, both sides used Catholic figures in order to mobilize the populous. Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 37.

Thus the *Sección Femenina* infused the traditional Catholic figure of Santa Teresa with nationalistic qualities. The agency also glorified the Catholic Queen Isabel I, who was seen as the epitome of patriotic service and a woman who was able to balance family with religious and patriotic duty. The agency described Isabel I as a woman "...who obtained for Spain the most glorious days of her history."[62] Reviving adulation of Isabel I also helped to establish the legitimacy of the Franco regime and, by extension the *Falange*, by associating their mission with the service and sacrifice of the queen that helped to drive out the Moors, unify Spain, and begin the glorious Spanish empire. The *Sección Femenina* combined the figures of Santa Teresa de Jesús and Isabel I into a powerful image and told women that they should emulate them, because they were the perfect "...reflection of...Christian and Spanish values."[63]

The *Sección Femenina* sought to educate women in the proper Catholic values and used such imagery within its propaganda and publications with great frequency. One photo from the agency's 1941 annual report featured an innocent child, accompanied by a caption that read, "Your Son: The boy will tomorrow be a strong man if you, mother, teach him to love God."[64] (Figure 6) Another photo from the publication *Auxilio Social* in 1940 featured disturbing images of two children side by side. (Figure 7). The photo on the left showed a small girl, alone outside amid the rubble, her posture defensive and her face snarling. The caption underneath the photo read "The sad gesture of the child who has been taught to hate..." Next to it, on the right, was a picture that showed a small

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[62] Sección Femenina, *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1957. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 47.

[63] "No hay nada más bello que servir," *Medina* 12 July 1943. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 31.

[64] "Tu Hijo," *Anuario de 1941*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 47.

child with a nurse, who was teaching her how to make the sign of the cross, with the caption "...is changed to one of love and peace."[65] The two photos equate Catholicism with peace and recovery, and by association, therefore, with the *Falange*, the party which had restored traditional Catholic values and brought peace and the hope of prosperity back to Spain.

Nonetheless, the leadership of the *Sección Femenina* occasionally clashed with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. According to Victoria Enders, some of the members of the *Sección Femenina* leadership tended to view themselves as more liberal than other women's organizations on the right during the Civil War and believed that the agency should be less religious than other associations, and less traditional.[66] In fact, sometimes the Church found the *Sección Femenina* more progressive--and dangerous--than was desirable. In the *Sección Femenina*'s gymnastics programs, for example, young girls were required to wear shorts ("bloomers"), and this aroused the ire of some of the more devout Catholics. One of the *Sección Femenina*'s former leaders recounted the following to Enders:

> There were bishops who did not look at us with a kind eye; they would even say that we were perverting the youth....Even I had to experience on one occasion that a priest, who had confessed me, said that if I did not leave the *Sección Femenina*, that my soul was in danger....Certainly, I didn't ever return to confess with that man.[67]

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[65] Falange Española, *Auxilio Social*, 1940. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 46.

[66] Enders, "Problematic Portraits," 384.

[67] Ibid.

A circular written by Doctor Ramiro López Gallego in 1942, on behalf of the Religion and Morality Administration, supports this perception. This letter lambasted "mixed dancing," presumably between boys and girls at festivals sponsored by the *Sección Femenina*, and described them as inappropriate spectacles, primarily because of their coeducational nature.[68] The fact that Church authorities occasionally objected to the physical fitness programs of the *Sección Femenina* serves as an example of the differences that fascists could, and did, intermittently have with Catholicism in Spain. These types of tensions also illustrate once again the degree to which the *Sección Femenina* was departing from older Catholic views on the place of women in Spanish culture and society. The larger goals of pronatalism quite logically involved attention to female physical fitness, the pursuit of which was apparently viewed as inappropriately immodest by traditionalists within the Church hierarchy.

Indeed, it would be misleading to characterize the *Sección Femenina* as simply a mouthpiece for the Church or even for the regime. In some ways, the agency adhered more stringently to *Falange* ideology than the regime itself. During the 1950s the influence that *Falange* members had on Franco's administration was beginning to wane. Franco eliminated many *Falange* members from cabinet posts and began relying more on staunch Catholics, even going so far as to appoint members of the lay Catholic organization Opus Dei to influential positions in the government.[69] Meanwhile, the

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[68] Dr. Ramiro López Gallego, "Nota de la Asesoría de Religión y Moral sobre Los Grupos Mixtos de Baile," Madrid, 15 June 1942. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 220.

[69] Morcillo, *True Catholic Womanhood*, 51.

Sección Femenina, while expressing support and understanding for Franco's decision,[70] remained extremely loyal to the ghost of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and to the ideology of the *Falange*. Though ideology does play an important role in the early propaganda of the *Sección Femenina*, it seems to have been even more heavily emphasized in the later years of the regime. In its educational materials the *Sección Femenina* is rarely if ever referred to as a "government agency." This is not to say that they refrained from offering support for the *Patria* or the Church, but it appears that they had more autonomy than has heretofore been acknowledged by historians. For example, in the *Enciclopedia Elemental* (1957) the *Sección Femenina* offered a detailed explanation of how to construct a *falangist* state despite the fact that Franco had moved away from *Falange* ideology.[71] In the same publication a series of questions and answers reflects the *Sección Femenina*'s view of itself:

> --What is the *Sección Femenina*?
> --An organism that the *Falange* has in order to educate all women who voluntarily want to be *falangistas* (emphasis added).[72]

In the "Yellow Book" of the *Enciclopedia Estudio* in 1958 the entry, "What it Means to be Falangist," emphasized the commitment and sacrifice necessary to be a *falangista* and cited specific examples of heroic *falangist* women.[73] Likewise, in 1958's "Green Book"

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[70] Ibid., 105. Pilar Primo de Rivera declared on 8 March 1957 that she was in full support of due to the *Falange*'s stained reputation.

[71] "Concepto falangista del estado," *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1957. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 42.

[72] *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1957. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 16.

[73] Pla Dalmau, "Lo que impone ser falangista," *Enciclopedia Estudio, libro amarillo*, 1958. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 20. Pla Dalmau also penned "La Sección Femenina," for the same text, and it, too, emphasized the role that the agency played within the party.

of the *Enciclopedia Estudio* there is yet another reference to the agency's political ideology:

> The *Sección Femenina* is an integral organism of the *Falange*; their mission is "to create a *falangist* feeling in all of the affiliates and, in general, all of Spanish women"...All of the *camaradas* must identify themselves with the ideals of the *Falange* (emphasis added) and long to serve with abnegation the destinies of Spain.[74]

Examples of this sort are abundant throughout the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina* in the 1950s.

Though the *Sección Femenina* was an important component within the Franco administration, their propaganda specifically refers to the agency as an integral part of the *Falange* rather than the government itself. This reflects Pilar Primo de Rivera's view of the *Sección Femenina* as the promulgator of "...[a]n ideology, yes, always the ideology, always, always...[b]ecause life itself is moved by ideology."[75] Such an understanding underlines the importance of examining the agency's discourse as reflected in propaganda publications.

Indeed, the discourse of the *Sección Femenina* was complex and nuanced. For example, one of the less prominent but interesting themes that runs through the propaganda rhetoric treated regionalism and its place within the new *falangist* national body. The historical roots of the "regional problem" in Spain run very deep. The War of Spanish Succession at the beginning of the eighteenth century deposed the Hapsburg dynasty and ushered in the reign of the Bourbon kings. With the change of rulers came a

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[74] Dalmau, "La Sección Femenina," *Enciclopedia Estudio, libro verde*, 1958. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 213.

[75] Enders, "Problematic Portraits," 383.

change in national policy. Regions such as Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, and the Basque Country lost their historic autonomy as the state attempted to integrate all of Spain under a more centralized system such as existed in France.[76] These regions saw this trend as a denial of their unique heritages that were separate from Castilian Spain, and national integration was never fully accomplished. Luis Moreno has argued that "[t]he individual elements of space and ethnicity are, together with class, responsible for most of the division and cohesion in the contemporary world,"[77] and this has proved to be true in the case of Spain, as was evidenced by instances such as the Tragic Week and later the Civil War. The doctrine of the *Falange*, as established by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, disdained any display of regional sympathy,[78] and Franco considered regionalism contradictory to the ultimate goal of Spanish unity. To this end, the regime outlawed the use of regional languages such as Catalan in any official capacity, including in government offices and public schools.[79]

Pilar Primo de Rivera, in her position as National Secretary of the *Sección Femenina*, appears to have approached the "regional problem" more pragmatically. Whether the agency consciously recognized the impossibility of eliminating regional cultures is impossible to determine, but regardless, it attempted to redefine regional

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[76] Luis Moreno, "Multiple Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in Spain," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 12.

[77] Ibid., 11.

[78] José Antonio Primo de Rivera, "Arenga a Cataluña" y "Euskadi Libre?" *Servicio y Sacrificio*, 20 November 1936, 41-42; 47-48.

[79] Moreno, "Multiple Ethnoterritorial Concurrence in "Spain," 13-15. Moreno also contends that the efforts made by the Franco regime to wipe out any regional sentiment actually reinforced regional feeling, and "...turned out to be the best incentive for peripheral nationalism and regionalism in Spain."

cultures in a more innocuous and less divisive manner. Much of the propaganda of the agency focused on women's roles in the development and preservation of cultures, and the agency chose to emphasize folklore and customs in much the same was as the liberal *Institucion Libre de Enseñanza* (Free Institute of Learning) had done years before. Moreover, the *Sección Femenina*'s attention to folklore also coincided with a much broader movement begun in the previous century that sought to rediscover the authentic folk traditions of European nations.

In the view of the *Sección Femenina*, Spanish unity was best served by allowing women of every region to become more familiar with the different cultural traditions in Spain. To this end, the *Sección Femenina* began several initiatives that were intended to highlight the positive aspects of regional culture, and they were heavily publicized by both the agency and the party. For example, in 1942 the *Sección Femenina* held the first National Conference of Folklore, which included traditional folk costumes, songs, and dances from many of Spain's distinctive regions. While there is no evidence that the women from Barcelona were allowed to perform the then-outlawed *Sardana*--a dance laden with Catalan nationalist meaning--they did perform *L'Hereu Riera* and the *Danza de Castelltersol*, while women from Bilbao performed the traditional songs *Afto goizean* and *Marichu Katalín*. Other areas of Spain were represented as well, and the program included performances of dances and songs from Sevilla, Segovia, Málaga, and Gerona, among others.[80] There were also *falangist* choruses, through which women came together to learn and perform regional and national songs, in order that they may, as one

[80] "Primer Concurso Nacional de Folklore," *Medina* 12 July 1942. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 140-141. Another festival was held the following year that focused primarily on the distinctive cultures that surrounded Madrid, and tried to unite the urban center with its outlying, more rural regions.

piece of party propaganda which discussed the choruses put it, "...form a love of the Spanish, and of the regional."[81] In the *Sección Femenina*'s 1944 *Anuario*, a photo of women in different traditional costumes was accompanied by a passage that emphasized the important role that regional culture played in reinforcing national pride and unity.[82] (Figure 8). Events such as these brought together women from different regional cultures and were publicized and applauded heavily not only by the *Sección Femenina*, but by the party as well, thus contributing to the spread of a different and a less divisive perception of regional identity.

In the literature of the *Sección Femenina* there was not only an effort to promote national recognition of regional cultures, but also an emphasis on the need to revitalize certain folkloric aspects of those cultures as well. Throughout many parts of Spain, the agency founded programs to recover music, dance, and regional arts. It would appear, then, that through its propaganda, programming, and rhetoric, the *Sección Femenina* was attempting to redefine regional culture within a specialized and nationalistic framework. Because the propaganda emphasizes the role that women could play in the preservation of culture and customs, both regional and national, and the influence that they had on their husbands and children, their role in the revitalization of that culture was especially crucial.[83] Much research remains to be done on this aspect of the *Sección Femenina*'s

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[81] Juan de Alcaraz, "El arte musical en la nueva España: La Falange quiere que se cante bien," *Fotos*, semenario nacaionalsindicalista, 27 January 1940. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 214-215.

[82] Sección Femenina, *Anuario de 1944*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 213.

[83] *Medina*, December 1943. Otero, 114. This was a common perception in fascist societies. Claudia Koonz has shown that women in Germany believed that they shaped their husbands' political and social values, and thought themselves to be the female guardians of German manhood. Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 121.

discourse on women's lives and the roles that they played in the perpetuation of folkloric culture. In fact, some evidence suggests that this new definition of regional culture within a centralized framework was not well-accepted by proponents of regional autonomy or separatism.

One of the ways in which the *Sección Femenina* disseminated this new understanding of the innocuousness of regional differences was through the *Hermandad de la Ciudad y el Campo* (Sisterhood of the City and Country). Through this program, urban women were able to experience first hand the differences in regional cultures that were evident across rural Spain. According to the *Enciclopedia Elemental*, the purpose of the *Hermandad de la Ciudad y el Campo* was to foment a greater recognition that "...in the countryside is the true richness of Spain."[84] In addition to playing a role in the vast educational campaigns against infant mortality, through the *Hermandad* the *Sección Femenina* also disseminated educational and cultural materials. The *Bibliotecas Viajeras*, or traveling libraries, enabled the *Sección Femenina* to bring fascist literature to the countryside, alongside classic Spanish works such as Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, which was one of the most popular requests.[85]

The rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina* as evinced through its propaganda and educational materials embodies a series of messages that women were receiving during the first decades of the Franco regime. Though the regime itself promoted the ideology of

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[84] Sección Femenina, *Enciclopedia Elemental*, 1958. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 193.

[85] Juan de Alcaraz, "Las Bibliotecas Viajeras," *Medina* 17 April 1941. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 214.

True Catholic Womanhood based on traditional domestic roles, the agency offered women a means by which to politicize their lives within a *falangist* framework. The nationalization of motherhood made women's most important duty a national focus, thereby offering women who were so inclined the opportunity to play a crucial, if subordinate, role in the regeneration of Spain. The *Sección Femenina* then took this a step further by politicizing housework and painting women's domestic duties with an ideological brush. The agency also offered women a positive role in Spain's unification through their emphasis on national and regional folkloric cultural traditions. The role played by the *Sección Femenina* was governed by ideology, however, rather than any deep-seated anti-feminist feeling, and they were able to expand women's opportunities within that ideological structure.

Chapter Four: General Conclusions

As we have seen, twentieth-century Spanish women's history is tremendously complex. Though the F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S. emerged during the 1930s as a reaction to the general political and social liberalization in Spain, the *Sección Femenina* evolved as a response not only to the political situation, but also as a direct consequence of the changing economic, political, and social positions of Spanish women. In a very real way, the *Sección Femenina* owed its existence to the sweeping changes that were instituted by the Second Republic. An examination of the *Sección Femenina*'s rhetoric as evinced through their propaganda and educational materials offers a unique opportunity to study both the ideals that the agency was trying to impart to Spanish women and the changes and continuities in that rhetoric over its thirty-eight year tenure. From a social history perspective, this is tremendously important.

For several decades now, scholars have debated the agency's motives and efficacy, with the majority coming to the conclusion that the *Sección Femenina*'s overwhelming anti-feminism robbed it of any true claim to achievement.[1] The work of Victoria Enders has recently begun to challenge this perception.[2] Though most scholars agree that the agency was indeed anti-feminist, Enders points out that this does not necessarily mean that it was anti-woman. The preceding study has demonstrated that the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina* was diverse, and that it is difficult to put a definitively

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[1] Enders, "Problematic Portraits," 381.

[2] Ibid. Enders argues that the self-perception of the leadership of the agency is a crucial tool in the historical recovery of the role that they played. The women, such as Pilar Primo de Rivera, who were instrumental in the *Sección Femenina* oftentimes feel as though the vilification of their work is misplaced.

misogynistic label on the agency's discourse. Rather, their rhetoric demonstrates, as Enders has asserted, that the role of the *Sección Femenina* was indeed ambiguous.

Recent approaches in women's history have begun to acknowledge the significance of the work of women who were not trying to alter established gender roles. Many scholars now claim that one sweeping definition of "feminism" is inadequate for the study of twentieth-century women's history. This is especially true in the case of the *Sección Femenina*. The *Sección Femenina* certainly operated within a framework that attempted to manipulate gender roles in order to make them fit more properly in the new political framework of Spain under Franco, but they also pushed for legislation favorable to women and instituted various programs that were inherently pro-woman, such as the campaign to reduce infant mortality.[3] One could even say that the *Sección Femenina*'s brand of "feminism" was simply different from the Anglo-American model of feminism. Victoria Enders notes the following:

> Giuliana Di Febo has posited the existence of an alternative "Christian feminism" based on two ideological foundations: firstly, the "redemption" of woman herself by Christianity, shielding her "from the liberal or Marxist threat;" and secondly, the "regenerating" and "reChristianizing" mission confined to the feminine masses in the reconstruction of the arm of values dislodged by the Republic and the Civil War and recuperated by the "New State."[4]

They accuse those on the left of ignoring their position primarily out of adherence to the prevailing political ideology and denying them claim to historical agency.

[3] The Law of Political, Professional and Labor Rights for Women, passed in 1961, was lobbied for by the leadership of the *Sección Femenina*. Though ideally, women should remain in the home, the agency realized that this was not always practical. Women often had to work because of a deceased or disabled spouse, if she for whatever reason was not married, or any number of reasons. They did not acknowledge that women were equal with men, on the contrary, they held firm in their belief that women should remain subordinate. However, they did feel that it was necessary to allow women to work in decent conditions; Enders, "Nationalism and Feminism," 675.

[4] Enders, "Nationalism and Feminism: The *Sección Femenina* of the *Falange*," *History of European Ideas* 15, nos. 4-6 (1992), 678.

In other words, a re-examination of what historians and social scientists define as "feminist" is necessary in order to take into account movements or organizations that worked for women and achieved what might be considered some positive advancements for women, even if such organizations did so from within an anti-liberal ideological structure. The *Sección Femenina* represents a unique dichotomy within the strict conservatism of the Franco regime, and it is possible that the agency's female leadership used its position as the arbiter of women's roles to advance those roles in some ways while holding them back in others. The evidence suggests, for example, that the immunization campaigns, educational and sometimes even employment opportunities provided by the work of the *Sección Femenina* had a positive impact on many of Spain's women.

How the *Sección Femenina*'s propaganda was received by Spanish women through the years of its existence is most certainly open to interpretation, though not explored in this thesis. Still, a few considerations are worth noting. Various factors--such as religious and/or political ideology, identification with certain modes of regionalistic expression, even generation--all probably influenced the way in which women responded to the *Sección Femenina*. For example, in the view of María Teresa Miller, it was the (futile) attempts made by the agency during her term in the *Servicio Social* in 1951 to indoctrinate her with *falangist* ideals that aroused her ire.[5] Her sister Rosa María Martí, who also fulfilled her *Servicio Social* obligation in 1951, recounted with disgust the suppression of regional languages (in her case, Catalan) by the regime,

[5] María Teresa Miller, interview with author, 23 October 1999.

and associated the work of the agency with such efforts.[6] Both of these women spoke passionately regarding the antagonistic role that the *Sección Femenina* played in their lives. On the other hand, Merce Ramón Ramón, who served in the *Servicio Social* in 1976 spoke of her experiences merely as a distraction, or even a joke, and a obstacle that she had to overcome to obtain a passport.[7] The generational difference here is marked. Two women--who had lived through the war--were adversely affected by their experiences, and another woman, who grew up after the return of prosperity, was more indifferent. Yet another position comes from *Sección Femenina* activist Ana Genoves, who described her work in the agency as empowering, not only to herself, but to countless other women.[8] It is also probable that many women may have looked at the *Sección Femenina* from the point of view of what it was actually offering them as individuals and judged the agency accordingly, in line with Michael Seidman's definition of "subversive individualism."[9]

The significance of this research is multi-faceted. First, unlike other fascist regimes that were constructed during the inter-war period, the Franco regime remained in tact during the post-war period, and used the *Sección Femenina* to simultaneously integrate women's roles into the structure of the state while still preserving the unique, subordinate position that they had long held in society. As paradoxical as this may seem, this goal is evident throughout the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina*. Its focus on the

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[6] Rosa María Martí, interview with author, 23 October 1999.

[7] Merce Ramón Ramón, interview with author, 21 January 1999.

[8] Ana Genoves, interview by Montserrat Miller Chambers, 26 June 1990.

[9] Seidman, "Subversive Individualism," 162.

nationalization of motherhood corresponds with the policies toward women adopted in other fascist nations and featured a variety of pronatalist policies. Marcia Bedard suggests that the pronatalist policies that were instituted in many European nations have formed the basis of much of the family ideology of the "New Right," both in Europe and North America, and that the institution and promotion of pronatalist policies is inherently anti-feminist.[10] Still, not all scholars agree, and much work remains to be done regarding the more subtle (and less institutionalized) ways that this goal of nationalization was carried out in Spain, as well as the possible effects that such policies have had in other areas in the late twentieth-century.

The second way in which this thesis is significant is in its attention to the *Sección Femenina*'s rhetoric regarding housework. Little work has been done by scholars on the politicization of women's duties in the home, and most studies, like Victoria de Grazia's discussion of housework in Fascist Italy, simply speak of attempts at modernization. De Grazia suggests that rather than promoting women's work as a national function, attempts were made that promoted new, more modern equipment for housekeeping that, rather than assisting women in their work, marginalized women in the lower classes.[11] The majority of the propaganda in the Spanish case, however, focuses more on techniques and purpose than on newer equipment, possibly diminishing class conflict, at least in this particular area. This was surely in large part because so few new consumer goods were available there until later.

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[10] Marcia Bedard, "Profamilism and the New Right," 77-79.

[11] de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, 99-105.

A third way in which this thesis is significant is in its suggestion that the *Sección Femenina* manipulated folklore in an attempt to paper over regional tensions in Spain. Though other researchers, such as Claudia Koonz, have stressed women's roles in the perpetuation of culture,[12] it appears that there has been no discussion of the Franco regime's attempt to use women to alleviate either class or regional conflict, or how successful these attempts may have been. The focus on this theme in the rhetoric of the *Sección Femenina* raises more questions than it answers and suggests that further research is definitely warranted.

Despite whatever judgments one can reach about the effectiveness of the *Sección Femenina*'s rhetorical strategies, the fact remains that many Spanish women opposed both the regime and its policies toward women. Beginning in the 1960s, various isolated groups of women came together to discuss their social subordination in Spain.[13] Monica Threlfall notes that Spain's distinctive political climate made the organization of a Spanish women's movement difficult, and in some cases even dangerous.[14] With the end of the regime, the clandestine women's movement that existed in Franco's Spain moved above ground, and even held its first national conference a mere two weeks after the *Caudillo*'s death.[15] However, as in the Restoration, the Spanish women's movement of

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[12] Claudia Koonz, *Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics*, 121.

[13] Monica Threlfall, "The Women's Movement in Spain," *New Left Review* no. 151 (1985), 45.

[14] Ibid. Threlfall notes that no one in Spain had the right to organize meetings and organizations outside of the legally-sanctioned (and therefore less-threatening and ineffective) associations that already existed. The early years of the women's movement were characterized by fear, repression, and the constant threat of discovery by the authorities. It is also important to note that, similar to the early years of the decade, radical members of the outlawed Communist party, both male and female, believed "...that food prices, the need for a pedestrian crossing, or solidarity with their persecuted menfolk, were the only issues on which housewives could become mobilized."

[15] Ibid.

the late twentieth-century has had to contend with the lack of a truly democratic tradition, the absence of a strong tradition of feminist organization, and the historical lack of equal rights. Some Spanish feminists have more recently called for "...a second revolution in women's rights to consolidate progress made since the death of Franco...,"[16] which suggests that perhaps a more distinct effort is being made to address the problems facing the current strain of Spanish "feminisms."

The Spanish women's movement of the late twentieth century is nonetheless demonstrating the same type of diversity that has characterized Spanish women's experiences throughout the century. Regional impulses are still defining organizational activity, as well. One more recent movement, for example, has been centered in northwestern Galicia, which, like Catalonia and the Basque Country, has a distinct language and cultural heritage. Like the Catalan National Women's Movement in the early years of the century, the feminism of the Galician National Feminist Movement is centered in the recovery of Galician tradition, language, and culture, coupled with a movement to eradicate social and institutional sexism both regionally and nationally.[17] Though a wide variety of feminist groups have organized in Spain in the last twenty-five years, they remain very goal-oriented and issue specific.[18] There are no wide-spread

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[16] "Spain: Feminists Fight for More Equality," *Women's International Network News* 20, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 63, available from Academic Search Elite [database on-line]; http://www.epnet.com/ehost/login.html (Boston, MA: EBSCO Publishing, accessed 11 April 2001).

[17] Sharon K. Roseman, "Celebrating Silenced Words: The 'Reimagining' of a Feminist Nation in Late-Twentieth Century Galicia," *Feminist Studies* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1997), 43-72, available from Academic Search Elite [database on-line]; http://www.epnet.com/ehost/login.html (Boston, MA: EBSCO Publishing, accessed 11 April 2001).

[18] Threlfall, 53. These groups include lesbian organizations, "cultural associations," socialist groups, and communist groups, just to name a few. In addition, the government has also instituted the

national organizations such as those that exist in the United States or Great Britain, and national cohesion seems almost impossible.[19]

The impact that the *Sección Femenina* has had on the development of a widespread women's movement in Spain is difficult to discern. Certainly, the agency's policies and programs are antithetical to the Anglo-American models of both feminism and the women's movement. Enders has shown that some of the former *Sección Femenina* members do not support, even now, the goals of the "modern" Spanish women's movements, and consider what they did for women as more important than abortion or divorce rights. Some former members of the *Sección Femenina* point specifically to the passing of the Law of Political, Professional, and Labor Rights for Women in 1961.[20] One of the former leaders described this success as follows:

> Now that they are talking so much about the rights of women--they have not made any law that has superceded this one. They speak so much now...because women...women today, are supported by this law. After this one, the only law that they have proposed--which according to them favors women, but to me appears a stupidity--is the abortion law, and divorce law...But as for professional rights and labor rights and all this, they have not come out with a law that has greater amplitude than this law.[21]

This highlights the difference between the ideals of the former *Sección Femenina* and much of the current women's movement. While former *Sección Femenina* leaders see their work with the agency as more legitimately pro-woman than the modern feminist

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Instituto de la Mujer, or Institute of Women's Rights, that has a large budget, and is the representative for women's rights within the state bureaucracy.

[19] Ibid., 52. This is not unusual, as there are a multitude of organizations within many of the western nations that are more goal-oriented than the one national organization.

[20] Enders, "Problematic Portraits," 385.

[20] Ibid.

movements, as Threlfall argues, the programs of the *Sección Femenina*, their blind acceptance of being an inferior gender, and their intense support for Franco "...had done much to fuel a sexist image of women's organizations."[22]

And so we can see, much remains to be done regarding the legacy of the *Sección Femenina*. It is not yet clear how women reacted to the ideals that were passed down through society by the agency, or what the legacy of the *Sección Femenina*'s policies and programs will be to the women of Spain in the twenty-first century.

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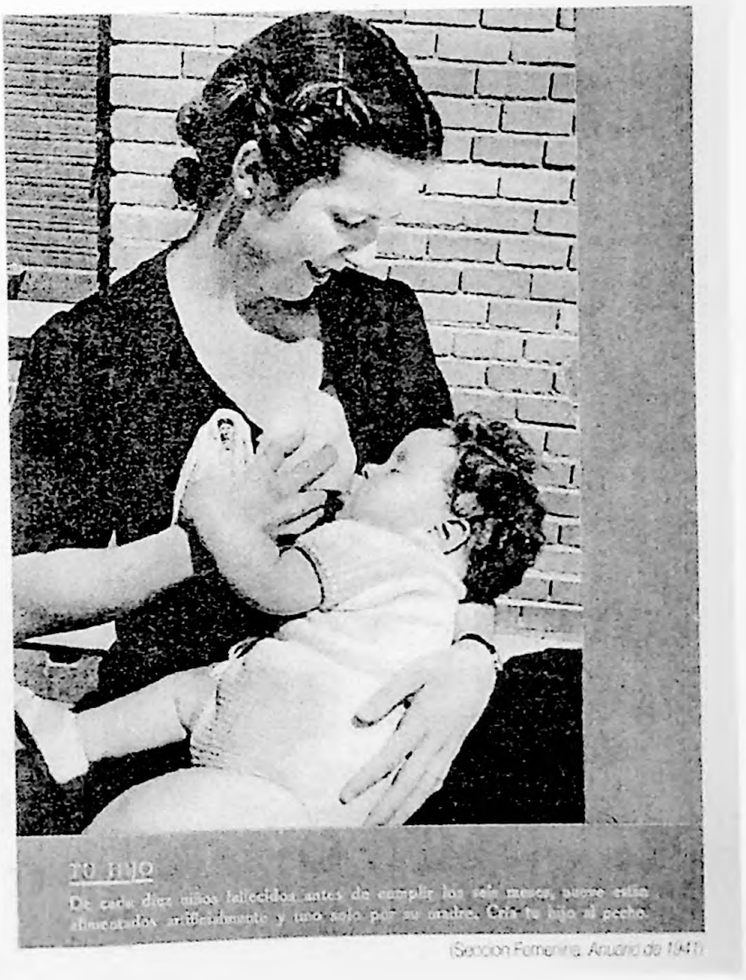
[22] Threlfall, 47.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. This demonstrates the connection that the *Sección Femenina* attempted to make between the future of Spain and the future of the *Falange*. Source: *Tarjeta Postal de la Sección Femenina*, n.d. Luis Otero, *La Sección Femenina* (Madrid: Editorial EDAF, 1999), 105.

Figure 2. This is an example of the type of propaganda used by the *Sección Femenina* to encourage women to breast-feed their children, and discusses the dangers that will ensue if women fail to carry out this particular duty. Source: *Sección Femenina, Anuario de 1941*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 104.



Figures 3-4. These photographs are examples of the propaganda used to promote the activities of the *Servicio Social*.

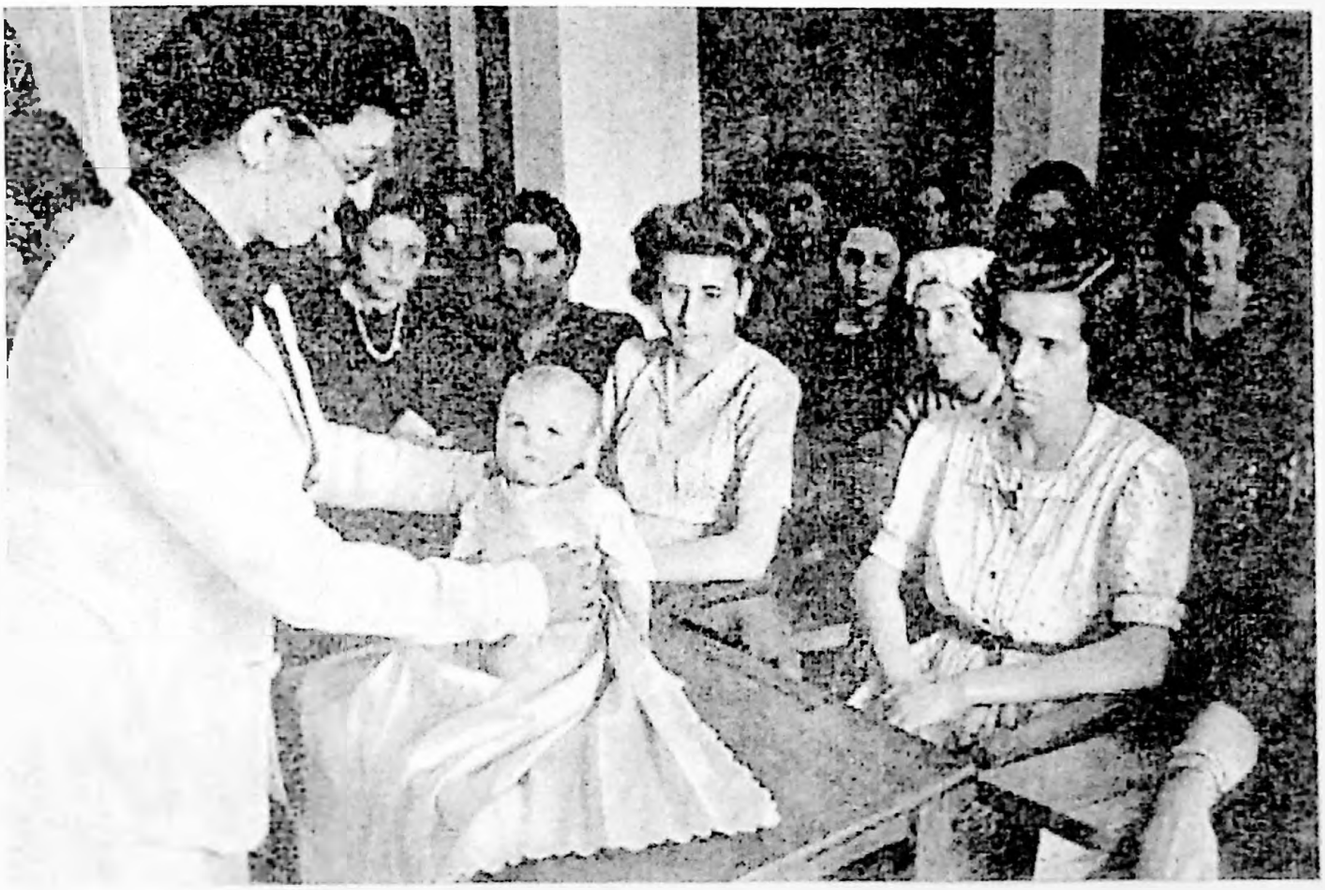
Servicio Social en Comedores

Source: *Tarjeta Postal de la Sección Femenina*, n.d. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

Una clase de Puericultura

Source: *Tarjeta Postal de la Sección Femenina*, n.d. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

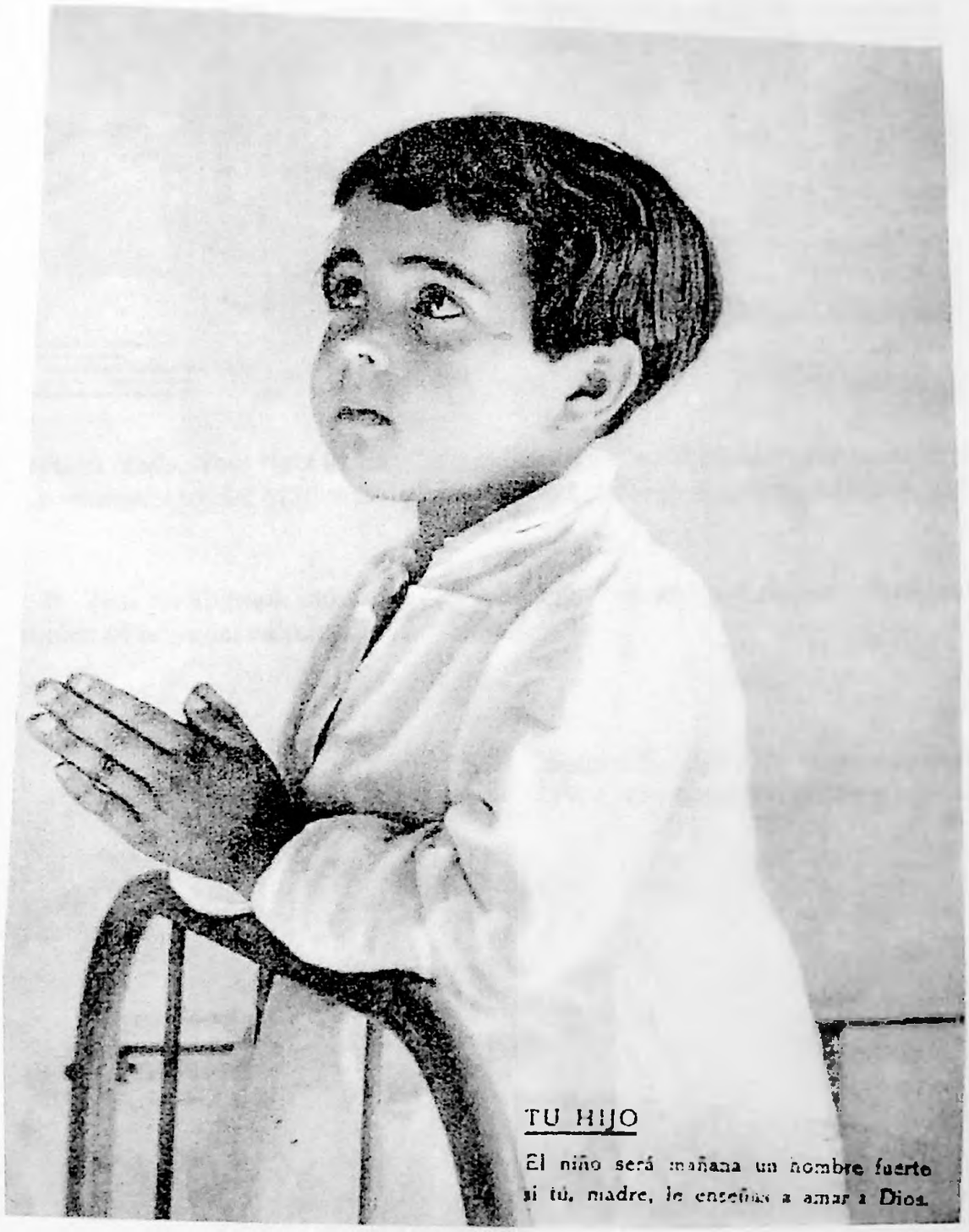
Fig. 5. This photograph depicts women in another "puericulture" class that apparently dealt with the proper ways to care for a child.



Servicio Social. (Clase de Puericultura)

Source: "Una clase de puericultura," *La Sección Femenina, historia y misión*, 1944. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 170.

Fig. 6. This photograph represents the importance of children and Catholicism to the health of the *Falange* and of Spain. The caption reads: "Your Son: The boy will tomorrow be a strong man if you, mother, teach him to love God."



Source: "Tu Hijo," *Sección Femenina, Anuario de 1941.* Otero, *La Sección Femenina,* 47.

Figure 7. This photograph, from 1940, represents the hope that the *Falange*, in association with the Catholic Church, planned to bring back to Spain following the horrors of the war.

The caption reads, from right to left: "The sad gesture of a child who has been taught to hate...is changed to one of love and peace." Source: Falange Española, *Auxilio Social*, 1941.

Figure 8. This photograph shows women in different regional costumes, emphasizing the importance of regional cultures.

Source: *Sección Femenina, Anuario de 1944*. Otero, *La Sección Femenina*, 213.

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