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Source: *Discourse*, Fall 2002, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Fall 2002), pp. 67-94

Published by: Wayne State University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/41389656>

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Genealogies for a New State: Painting and Propaganda in Franco's Spain, 1936–1940

Miriam Basilio

In this article I will introduce the primary types of images used by propagandists working during the Civil War and the immediate post-war period in their attempts to legitimize General Francisco Franco's claims to leadership of the July 1936 military uprising against the Spanish Republic and the resultant dictatorial regime (1939–1975).¹ Artists, arts administrators and propagandists drew from a range of national myths, historic events, religious iconography and art history while learning lessons from Spain's brief experience of modern electoral propaganda during the Second Republic of 1931 to 1936, and from the mass propaganda of its allies: Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. Threatened by the chaotic war-time situation and by the conflicting aims of the factions that supported the military uprising, Franco appropriated elements from the visual traditions of each of the groups that supported the uprising—the Military, monarchists, Carlists, conservative Catholics and Falange party members—using them to foster historical parallels between past and present that were favorable to his claims to power.

Art historians writing after Franco's death in 1975 have dismissed as derivative and formally mediocre the majority of the images (posters, photographs and paintings) of the dictator produced during his long regime. However, if we take into account the

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larger system to which they belonged—a larger and self-reinforcing system of reiterated slogans and symbols, circulating in a variety of contexts aimed at diverse audiences: newspapers, magazines, radio, newsreels, novels, history books, school curricula, architectural monuments, religious rituals, advertising, among others—it becomes clear that these images should be studied carefully in order to understand the messages they were intended to convey. In the case of the posters, as we will see, these formed a crucial part of the creation of a climate of fear both in areas held by the rebel forces, and even more so in newly-occupied areas. It should not be forgotten that the threats against those who opposed Franco that were implicit in the posters' slogans and images were carried out during the war and until Franco's death.²

Franco was not the leader of the July 18, 1936 military uprising against the Republican government and was not asked to join the *Junta de Defensa Nacional*, led by General Miguel Cabanellas, until August of 1936. In the first months of the war, the military commanders in the so-called "Nationalist" zone, and the various militias formed by political groups that existed before the war, had their own propaganda organizations. As commander of the war's southern forces, Franco's earliest director of propaganda was his colleague and founder of the Spanish Foreign Legion, José Millán Astray (Preston, *Franco* 170). On August 15, Franco upstaged the other members of the Junta when he made the red and yellow monarchical flag the official emblem of all rebel-held areas (Preston, *Franco* 167). In 1931, following the departure of King Alfonso XIII and declaration of a Republic, a new flag consisting of red, yellow and purple stripes was adopted. Franco's return to the traditional flag was the first indication of his strategy to appropriate symbols of royal power and authority to create an image of cohesion and promote his self-appointed role as savior of Spain from the Popular Front Republican government and its allies. In adopting this flag, he appeased many supporters of the military rising, whose ultimate aim was the restoration of the monarchy.

Photographs were the quickest and most economical means to disseminate images of Franco widely in formats such as postcards and posters. As he faced a constant struggle to maintain control over the competing factions that supported the uprising, a unified propaganda line that appropriated elements from the political and religious programs of the population began to be devised. Franco's propaganda staff faced the challenging task of fashioning for him the image of an imposing and majestic absolute dictator. They had in their favor the fact that he had earned public recognition (including articles in wide-circulation newspapers and illustrated

weeklies) as a skilled military leader during ten years spent fighting to maintain Spain's colonial territories in North Africa. Awarded several military distinctions for his service in the *Regulares Indígenas* (the native police force in Spain's African colonies) and Spain's Foreign Legion, he became the youngest general in Europe in 1926 (Preston, *Franco* 48). In 1934, with a right wing government in power, the Ministry of War chose Franco to coordinate military efforts to suppress a miner's strike and leftist revolutionary uprising in Asturias (101).

When it became evident that the uprising was becoming a protracted military struggle, Franco turned this to his advantage, taking credit for the "liberation" of Toledo's Alcázar on September 27, 1936. The Alcázar, then used as an infantry academy (which Franco attended) was an emblematic site of Spanish military history built as a palace and military fortress during the reigns of Charles V and Philip II. Although the city of Toledo remained in Republican hands after the right-wing uprising, a group of military and civilian supporters of the rebels remained in the Alcázar. There they resisted 68 days of Republican attacks until rebel armies took over the city. Franco was named Head of State on October 1, 1936 and established his first provisional government, the *Junta Técnica de Estado* (Technical State Junta) in Burgos. Millán Astray became director of the State Delegation for Press and Propaganda, which formed part of the General Secretariat of the Head of State. This was an indication of the new government's aim to centrally control propaganda. The nascent dictatorship's slogan became "Una Patria, Un Estado, Un Caudillo" ("One Fatherland, One State, One Leader") (Preston, *Comrades!* 26).

Although the rebels faced a chronic scarcity of paper supplies and the main centers of graphic production were in Republican hands, skilled photographers and artists remained in rebel-held territory to develop Franco's image as a leader. The majority of portraits were in three-quarter or bust formats. In a montage (fig. 1) published in *Estampas de la Guerra*, a commemorative pamphlet issued by Franco's Delegation of Press and Propaganda in 1937 that employed a photograph by Jalón Angel, Franco is shown in a three-quarter pose, clad in his general's uniform, sash and holding a baton. Rendered monumental by the placement of his photograph over the map of Spain, he literally embodies national unity as his figure creates a nexus between the words Fatherland, State and Leader. The society portraitist Jalón Angel had established a studio in Zaragoza in 1926 and was known both for his sophisticated use of artificial lighting and soft focus as well as his knowledge of the latest German and American photographic technology (Romero

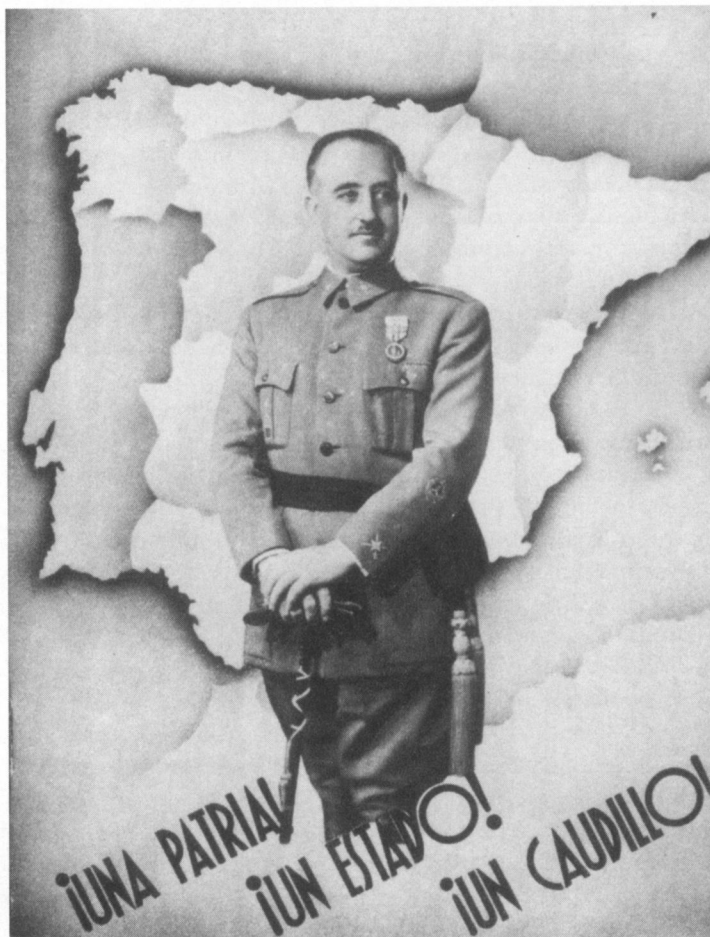


Fig. 1. From *Estampas de la Guerra*, a commemorative pamphlet issued by Franco's Delegation of Press and Propaganda in 1937 that employed a photograph by Jalón Angel.

28–29).³ Particularly during the early years of the regime, he was Franco's preferred photographer, his portraits were reproduced in postcards, posters, books, and periodicals (Romero 34).

Franco's brother-in-law, Ramón Serrano Suñer, who had arrived in Salamanca after escaping Madrid in February of 1937, implemented propaganda initiatives and political strategies that greatly furthered Franco's consolidation of power. The first of these was the Unification Decree of April 19, 1937, which ordered the immediate fusion of all groups supporting the rebellion into a single party—the

Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS—under Franco's military and political leadership (Payne 18). Secret negotiations and political purges did not fully suppress dissent among sectors reluctant to compromise their independence and ideals. This was particularly true of members of the Falange, a fascist party founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1933, and the Carlists. The Carlists resented having to renounce their call for a re-establishment of the monarchy. Both groups posed a threat to Franco's absolute power since they had mobilized thousands of militia members. Unification propaganda incorporated visual traditions and references to fundamental beliefs associated with the factions supporting the rebellion. A new iconography was devised, rewriting history to foster the idea that the rebel factions voluntarily and spontaneously joined together under Franco's providential leadership. An example is the 1937 pamphlet *Unification* (fig. 2), illustrated by Teodoro Delgado, a staff member of the propaganda delegation. The Falange party's original membership was comprised of young university students, while the Carlists had a long military tradition. The Carlists, who had fought in three wars following a dynastic dispute in 1833, sought a return to absolutist monarchy and with it the crowning of their pretender to the throne. The Carlists' ideology, based on notions of royal genealogy, led them to focus on individual families' patrilineal traditions of struggle on behalf of their king (Canal 99–136). Thus, in the pamphlet the Falangist militia member was portrayed as a young, brash idealist, while the Carlist *requeté* fighter was a fatherly figure, the bearer of experience and tradition. A key component of this campaign was the promotion of a new military uniform that incorporated the Carlist red beret and the Falangist indigo shirt. News articles, speeches and images promoted the idea of unity forged in battle, as in the final illustration of this pamphlet, where two soldiers are joined in death. In this image, the yoke and arrows, a symbol of union dating from the reign of Queen Isabelle and King Ferdinand appropriated from the Falange party insignia for the image of the new unified party, becomes a cross framing the dead soldiers. In a 1934 speech, reprinted in the November 20, 1939 issue of the newspaper *ABC* (17), Primo de Rivera explained his party's adoption of this insignia, linking the yoke to King Ferdinand's subjugation of his enemies, and the arrows to Queen Isabelle's expulsion of the Muslims from Spain. Such definitions of the military uprising as a religious battle—maintained long after the war's end in large part due to the support of the Catholic Church hierarchy—conferred the status of martyrdom to the war's victims.

In July of 1937, Toledo's Cardinal Isidro Gomá, who defined the rebellion as “una verdadera cruzada en pro de la religión

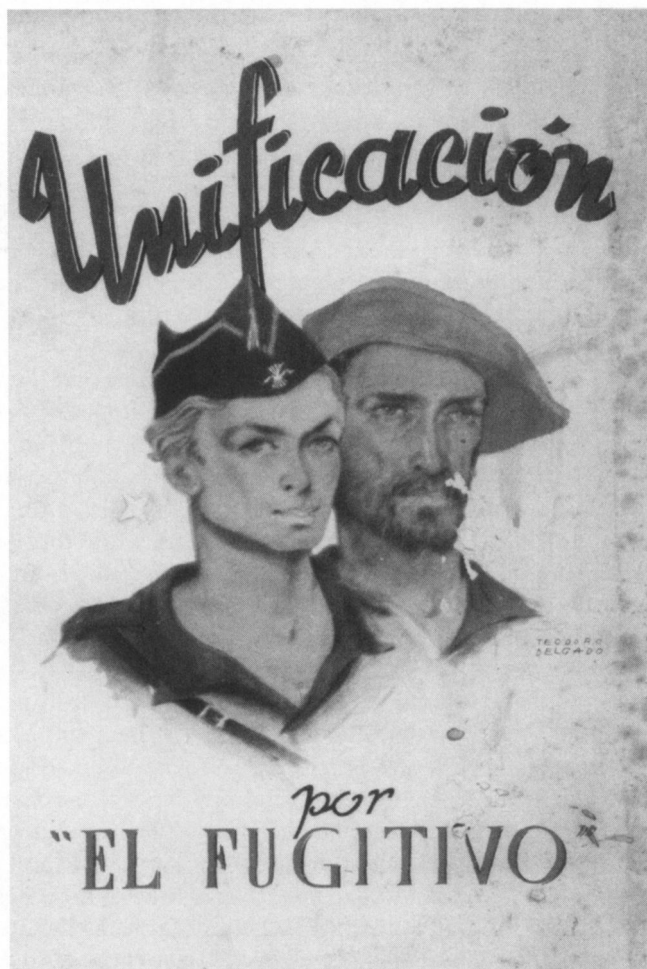


Fig. 2. *Unification* pamphlet (1937), illustrated by Teodoro Delgado.

católica” (“a true crusade in favor of the Catholic religion . . .”) authored a pastoral letter signed by a group of Spanish Church leaders in support of the rebels (Gomá 59). By drawing these historical parallels, Church leaders like Gomá made a crucial contribution to Franco’s propaganda discourse, one that allowed for the appropriation of a number of religious and monarchical visual conventions used to lend legitimacy to Franco’s regime. Church leaders’ characterization of the rebellion as a second Crusade, and as a second *Reconquista*, in which Spain would defeat contemporary ene-

mies of the faith, was a powerful persuasive element for many Catholic Spaniards.

During the war, posters came to be viewed as an important component in the ordering of public space following the occupation of towns and cities. Illustrated articles stressed the erasure of the visual evidence of the Republican presence throughout Spain. It was one of the first tasks taken up by occupying forces once order was established. An anonymous article published in the illustrated magazine *Vértice* in 1937, "Estética de las muchedumbres" ("Aesthetic of the Masses"), cited Nazi and Italian mass rituals, English royal protocol and Spanish imperial precedent as inspirations for a new style and aesthetics of the crowd that the Falange party had begun to implement. In contrast to the disorder and individualism that were regarded as the hallmarks of nations undermined by the effects of "Bolshevik propaganda," mass events such as the Nuremberg party rally were proposed as the model for a propaganda in which "actos publicos son un espejo . . . de la realidad del país" ("public events are a mirror . . . of the nation's reality") and in which an "emoción atávica" ("atavistic emotion") is revived: "la de sentirse uno espectáculo . . . la de sentirnos parte pequeña y necesaria de un conjunto brillante" ("that of feeling oneself as spectacle . . . that of feeling oneself as a small and necessary part of a brilliant whole") ("Estética" n.p.). A key component of such rituals that would foster an image of national unity and unanimity under the rule of Franco were the scenarios where such events could take place. In another article of the same title published one year later, the "estética mínima de la calle" ("minimal aesthetic of the street") was described. The city was regarded as a stage and spectacle as the author argued that state control of public space is necessary to safeguard the health of the body politic: "[p]olíticamente, la calle es un barómetro permanente . . . y le interesa esto al gobernante porque su influencia irradia y da estilo a la vida en redondo y con ello perfila el sentido de su política" ("[p]olitically, the street is a permanent barometer . . . and this is of interest to the leader since its influence irradiates and fosters a style for life in general, and through this, establishes the outlines around his policies") ("Romley" 4). Among the elements that foster order are cleanliness, paved streets, well-dressed individuals, modern architecture, landscaping, abundant products in shops and "buenos carteles" ("good posters") (5). The belief that public space forms consciences, and the recognition of posters in creating such an atmosphere, was evident in articles about the process of occupation. During the occupation of towns in Aragon and Catalonia, for instance, among the first organizations to follow troops were the *Auxilio Social* (Social Aid) and staff

members of the press and propaganda delegation. An article by Bobby Deglané illustrated with photographs of the walls of Lérida covered by portraits of Franco, stencils of José Antonio's face and the yoke and arrows, slogans and banners, asserts that propaganda "es el mejor vehículo para llegar al pueblo, es decir, a la 'masa'" (the best vehicle through which to reach the people, that is, the 'masses'). Deglané makes clear that among this group are those he viewed as tainted with leftist ideals who "junto con los pueblos y campos conquistados se van reintegrando a la gran familia española" ("along with conquered towns and fields are being reincorporated into the great Spanish family") (20–21).

In a poster produced by the Press and Propaganda delegation between 1937 and early 1938, the number one, crossed by the word "Crusade" refers to Franco's claim that the war in Spain was the first battle in the struggle to free Europe of communism, materialism and atheism. The number and word's shadow fall on a globe turned to Spain with the legend "España orientadora espiritual del mundo" ("Spain, spiritual guide to the world") below. The Republican government was equated with the implantation of a Soviet-style government in Spain, and the consequent suppression of Catholicism. This view had gained currency following widespread outbreaks of anti-clerical violence in Republican-held territory during the first months of the civil war.

The campaign to ensure Franco's sole control over the military, the unified party and, eventually, the post-war state, was inextricably linked to the use of religious rhetoric and iconography. The struggle against the Republican government and its allies was portrayed as a battle between the Spanish "essence"—defined as a unified Catholic nation under absolute rulers—and foreign "infidels" promoting the dissolution of the country. Parallels between Spain's period of unification under Queen Isabelle and King Ferdinand, references to the *Reconquista*, or Christian conquest of Muslim territories in the Iberian peninsula, the Crusades, and to the Spanish Empire were reiterated in Franco's speeches, written and visual propaganda. In the poster *Spain Was, Is and Will Be Immortal*, issued by the *Delegación del Estado para Prensa y Propaganda* sometime in 1937, Delgado created a montage effect in which a monumental soldier's head in profile is framed by hands giving the Fascist salute, suggesting the need for unity and discipline at the front and the rear guard, while a *Conquistador's* vessel literally occupies his mind. Spain's tradition of empire was to be revived, starting with the battle against Communism at home. The montage effect, the classicizing rendering of the bust-like head of the soldier, the use of the fascist salute, and the reference to a glorious imperial past evidence

the impact of Mussolini's propaganda on Franco's staff. In January of 1937, a delegation from the Mussolini's Press and Propaganda Office was established in Salamanca, coinciding with the arrival of Italian troops. Mussolini's press and propaganda office produced posters, pamphlets and periodicals, collaborating with Franco's delegation (Ropa 260). Between March and September of 1937, 13,600 posters were sent to Spain, among these were 600 images of Mussolini and others bearing anti-Communist messages (260–264). Such posters, produced to foster discipline in areas held by the rebels, or to mobilize troops, presented the alleged dangers posed by the Republican government.

Representative of this type is a poster from between 1937 and 1938 issued by Franco's Press and Propaganda delegation (fig. 3; Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid) depicting a monumental soldier sweeping away words and symbols representing revolutionary disorder as the red and yellow Spanish flag serves as a backdrop. Among that being swept away we find the hammer and sickle representing the Soviet Union—an ally of the Republic, and *Politicastros* (inept politicians) who were blamed for violence and worker's protests during the Second Republic. Masonry was one of Franco's favorite targets, since in his view it introduced secular, revolutionary ideals dating from the French Revolution. Separatism refers to legal reforms enacted during the Second Republic that allowed limited autonomy to the Catalan and Basque regions. The initials F.A.I. stand for the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* and refer to this anarchist's party's call for the abolition of private property. "Social Injustice" is a coded reference to the pre-war Falange party's populist rhetoric, appropriated by Franco, and its claim that a fascist state would eliminate class distinctions. Contemporary fascist propaganda techniques were carefully used by Ramón Serrano Suñer drawing upon his experience as a parliamentary deputy for the CEDA or *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing [parties]) during the Republic. This right-wing coalition had introduced modern propaganda campaigns for the 1933 and 1936 elections that made extensive use of posters, party rallies and mass-media, influenced by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (Preston, *Coming* 69–72). In February 1936, a three-story high illuminated poster mural portraying CEDA party leader José María Gil Robles was erected in Madrid's Puerta del Sol. A slogan calling for voters to give the CEDA an absolute majority implied that Gil Robles would assume dictatorial powers. The party's promotion of a cult of personality portrayed Gil Robles as the leader of a new *Reconquista* against Communism and separatism, a strategy later to be used in promoting Franco's leadership (165–166).



Fig. 3. Poster (circa 1937) issued by Franco's Press and Propaganda delegation Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

The importance awarded to portraits of the new leader is demonstrated by the careful control of Franco's images, and their subject to strict censorship during and after the war. In July 1937, two letters requesting permission from military commanders for photographer Jalón Angel to visit the fronts were sent by the propaganda delegation (AGA/Cultura, Caja 1359). They argued that new portraits were needed to replace those that undermined Franco's prestige. In June 27, 1937 the Seville edition of the daily *ABC* published a decree calling for the removal of all images of Franco, which henceforth were to be submitted for approval to the provincial press and propaganda delegation.

A number of the official portraits of Franco and his military colleagues taken during Angel's 1937 visits to the fronts were reproduced in postcard format and sold in series that included generals renowned for their service during the war, and other supporters. The postcard series *Forjadores de Imperio* (*Forgers of Empire*) was first advertised in 1938, while a limited-edition book was published in 1939. Angel referred to his subjects as outstanding figures. "Son figuras destacadas de jefes de la Nueva España que colaboran con el Caudillo en la Segunda Reconquista de la Patria. . . ." ("They are outstanding figures of the New Spain who collaborate with our Leader in the Second Reconquest of the Fatherland. . . ."). This edition included a poem by José María Pemán, "¡Vamos a ver al General!" ("Let's Go See the General!") in which parallels were drawn between Spanish Baroque religious sculpture, Counter Reformation devotional practices and photographic images' claim to reality: "Hermanos todos, españoles, los de gran curiosidad, los de los 'pasos' y los Cristos y las Marías 'de verdad.' . . . ¡Estos son hombres de verdad!" ("Brothers all are we, Spaniards, known for our deep curiosity, our religious processions, our real-life Christs and Marys. . . . These are real men!") (np). An essay by Federico García Sanchíz contrasts the distance between the painted portrait and its subject to the immediacy of photography while suggesting that the photographs should be used as devotional aids when he says, "[n]inguna de las figuras del album que hojeas, lector, con devoción, deja de poseer una perspectiva ennoblecida por sus hechos. . . ." ("[n]one of the figures in this album, which you, the reader, gazes upon with devotion, fails to possess a perspective ennobled by their deeds . . ."). Both essays employ religious rhetoric of the type found in devotional texts calling on believers to meditate on the exemplary deeds of Catholic saints and martyrs. This is consistent with the "Crusade" status given to the war effort by Franco's supporters.

An article published on August 8, 1937 in the Salamanca daily *La Gaceta Regional*, describes the proliferation of portraits of the dictator. "Su retrato inunda hoy los escaparates de las librerías, los mostradores de los comercios, las fachadas de las casas. Está en todas partes. . . ." ("Today, his portrait appears in shop windows, facades of homes. He is everywhere . . ."). At the same time, his elusiveness is remarked upon: "La gente le mira y contempla; pero sólo en las fotografías. Es un hombre que no se exhibe en paradas. . . . Se le siente, pero no se le ve. . . . De esas horas de hermélica soledad y de . . . labor surgen milagros" ("People gaze upon him . . . but only in photographs. He is a man who doesn't appear in parades. . . . He is felt, but not seen. . . . Miracles evolve from his



Fig. 4. Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

hours of hermetic solitude . . . and labor). The dictator's elusive presence is consistent with the careful manipulation of his public image. This is consistent with John Elliot's insight regarding the Habsburgs' habit of scarce public appearances, which were used "to preserve the sacred character of kingship through the maintenance of distance" (Elliot 143). The attempt to sacralize Franco's image is also evident in a poster, using a cropped and retouched version of a photograph, issued by the Delegation between 1937 and early 1938 (fig. 4; Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid). A red and yellow "halo" frames Franco in the colors of the monar-



Fig. 5. Montage. *Vértice* (December 1937)

chist flag. The title *Generalissimo* is followed by the Latin inscription *Victor miles Hispaniae gloriosae*, which alludes to his military triumphs. The cropping lends monumentality to the general's slight build, while focusing the viewer's gaze on his pensive expression. Also contributing to this is the scale, as the dimensions (18 x 24 inches) render Franco's head slightly over life-size.

A montage (fig. 5) published in the December 1937 issue of *Vértice* magazine, recalls similar images in which Mussolini is represented as the head of the body politic, a leader towering over the subservient masses. The slogan "Una, Grande y Libre" (One, Great and Free) was

the summation of the rebels' ideals: Spain's national unity, its imperial tradition, and its freedom from foreign ideologies. In late January of 1938, the centralization and control of the propaganda apparatus increased with the formation of Franco's first official government, based in Burgos. The National Propaganda Office was now dependent upon the Ministry of the Interior, led by Serrano Suñer. Franco appeased the original Falange party sector, whose membership had grown dramatically with the onset of the uprising, by awarding it the control of state propaganda (Payne 181). Dionisio Ridruejo, a young poet affiliated with the original Falange party since its inception, was head of the propaganda department, which included publications, *Plástica* (visual arts), cinema, and music. This demonstrates the ambitious scope envisioned for state propaganda and suggests the influence of Hitler's propaganda chief Josef Goebbels, who was the subject of news articles and interviews praising his initiatives. In fact, Ridruejo himself visited Germany in September 1937 and Italy in October 1938 (Rubio and Solana 306–308). Practical problems such as limited paper supplies curbed the department's initiatives. Nonetheless, the propaganda offices' administrative documents indicate the large quantities of posters produced. In April of 1937, Delgado requested 40,000 copies each of two posters from a lithographer in Sevilla. Later, Ridruejo ordered a total of 200,000 posters to be used in the 1939 occupation campaigns in Madrid and southern Spain (AGA/Cultura, Caja 1358, 1346). The majority of these posters were three or four-color offset lithographs. They were photomechanically reproduced from originals that were drawn and painted using tempera or watercolor. The sizes of most posters ranged from 120 x 90 centimeters to 100 x 70 centimeters.

The head of the Visual Arts Department was the Basque painter Juan Cabanas, who had studied at Madrid's San Fernando Academy, and traveled to Paris and Italy between 1926 and 1929. Like Ridruejo, he had been a member of the Falange party before the war (Moya 79, 86–88). In an interview published in the San Sebastián newspaper *Unidad* in December 14 of 1936, Cabanas stated that Italy was key to his development, since he saw there a means to join his interest in modernism with fascist and nationalist ideals (Moya 92–93). In his poster *18 Julio—España Libre* (*July 18—Spain is Free*) commemorating the date of the military uprising, Cabanas adopted an allegorical tone frequent in illustrations for books and magazines from this period. A schematic allegory of Victory flies over a photograph of soldiers, bearing a garland at whose center is the Falange Party's yoke and arrows and a sword, as doves of peace fly below. The adoption of Classical allegorical figures is also found in Italian fascist propaganda.

Late in 1938, planning began for the propaganda campaign to be implemented during occupation of the remainder of Spain. In a document dated February 15, 1939, Ridruejo gave orders for this campaign in Madrid, Levante and southern regions (AGA/Cultura, Caja 1346). In Madrid, the first public event following the troops' entry would be an outdoor military mass, as had occurred in Barcelona that January. Bands and trucks carrying loudspeakers were intended to orchestrate staged public celebrations. In the first day following the occupation, posters were to be pasted around the city, and pamphlets and fliers familiarizing the city's inhabitants with the new regime's leaders, slogans, decrees and party organization distributed. During the second day, a provisional monument honoring deceased soldiers who fought with the rebels was to be installed in a central location, and inaugurated with a mass. By the eighth day, this plan for the symbolic occupation of public spaces was to incorporate all means of communication including radio and cinema.

Josep Morell, an academic painter and graphic designer from Barcelona who had created electoral propaganda for Catalan regionalist parties during the Republic, was employed by Ridruejo in the design of posters for the final occupation campaign, such as *Ha Llegado España* (*Spain has Arrived*) (fig. 6; Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid) printed in Barcelona in 1939. Morell created a montage effect, punctuated by a series of overlapping diagonals, to synthesize the message of military occupation. The regime's red and yellow flag incorporates the imperial coat of arms with the Habsburg *Plus Ultra* emblem and the yoke and arrows. It is crossed at the upper right by stylized white birds of peace, possibly also a reference to the aerial bombardments that preceded the occupation of Barcelona. A promise of peace and bounty was represented by the female figure bearing a basket of fruits. This appropriation of classical allegories of abundance was reinforced in practice with the arrival of female social service workers that distributed bread in newly-occupied areas. At the center of the composition, a youthful male party member gives the fascist salute, as a smiling helmeted soldier approaches. As with the birds, the images of the soldiers embody the ambivalence between threats of violence and promises of order and stability that characterized the new regime's occupation propaganda. A slogan that equates the victory of the self-proclaimed Nationalists with the true Spain is overlaid on the figure of a lion, a symbol of Spain since the reign of Ferdinand and Isabelle.

Morell's work is an example of how a stylized version of Mediterranean classicism employed by conservative groups to promote right-wing Catalan nationalism before the war was appropriated by the new state to announce a centralizing nationalist agenda during



Fig. 6. “Ha llegado España.” Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

the occupation of Catalonia, where regional autonomy and aspects of Catalan culture were suppressed. In a 1933 electoral poster for a right-wing Catalan regionalist party, whose slogan was *Salveu—La: Voteu Lliga Catalana* (*Save Her: Vote for the Catalan League*), Morell employed an elegant art-deco inspired style to render an allegorical figure of Catalonia as a vulnerable *mater dolorosa* pierced by the red arrow representing the *Lliga*’s leftist opponents. The Catalan regional flag and the cross of Saint Jordi, a medieval Catalan emblem

associated with the Crusades, form the front of the figure's dress. As in the occupation poster, Morell employs diagonals and a mask-like rendering of the figures' faces.

By the end of the war, the formulas for rendering Franco in various media were well-established, and Jalón Angel's repertoire of official photographs appeared in public and private venues throughout Spain. It is difficult to know the exact number of painted portraits of Franco, and more difficult still to locate them today. The majority of the painted portraits of Franco that I have seen follow traditional royal and military pictorial conventions, and some appear to have been based on photographs. The latter, cheaply mass-produced and requiring less time to pose, were widely distributed and seem to have replaced paintings in the majority of public spaces where a portrait would have been displayed. A poster reproducing a photograph by Jalón Angel from around 1939 is representative of this type, in which Franco appears in three-quarter format with the captain-general's sash and baton (fig. 7). More common, however, were black and white photographs (also reproduced in postcard format) of Franco posed in a three-quarter or half-length format in his general's uniform.

Following the war's end, Fernando Álvarez de Sotomayor and Ignacio Zuloaga completed two very different painted portraits of Franco, in which aspects of his self-fashioning were incorporated to create imposing images of power that rendered him as the embodiment of Spain's unity. Franco posed for one of Spain's great portrait painters, Zuloaga, sometime in 1939 or 1940 (fig. 8).⁴ Zuloaga had remained at his home in the Basque town of Zumaya during the war (Lafuente Ferrari 87). His statement of support for Franco's forces, "Un Aviso al Mundo" ("A Warning to the World"), was published in *Noticias de España* in September 1937.⁵ In it he cited evidence of anti-clerical vandalism in Republican-held territory to present the military uprising as the only guarantor of order and safeguard of Spain's traditional values. Zuloaga chose to portray Franco clad in the state party uniform. In doing so, he drew upon Spain's tradition of royal portraiture and his own work, as he incorporated elements from the discourse devised by Franco's propagandists to justify his take over of power.

The placement of Franco in space and the low horizon, both of which lend the figure monumentality, recall the austerity of Velázquez's portraits, such as *Philip IV as a Hunter* (1635–36) (Madrid, Museo del Prado) in which hunting attire was a metaphor for military prowess. According to Jonathan Brown, Velázquez "se niega a insistir en la majestad de su real personaje" ("refuses to insist on the majesty of his royal sitter") (Velázquez, Rubens y Van



Fig. 7. "El Generalísimo Franco," by Jalón Angel.

Dyck 43). This austerity has been linked to the House of Austria's long dynastic history in Spain, which precluded the need for a "defensa de la monarquía" ("defense of the monarchy") (Brown, Velázquez, Rubens y Van Dyck 43). Zuloaga had developed this type of relationship between the figure and ground in earlier portraits, such as Juan Sebastián El Cano (1921), in which the landscape functioned as an attribute of the subject. The Basque coastal town of Guetaria serves as a backdrop for El Cano who with

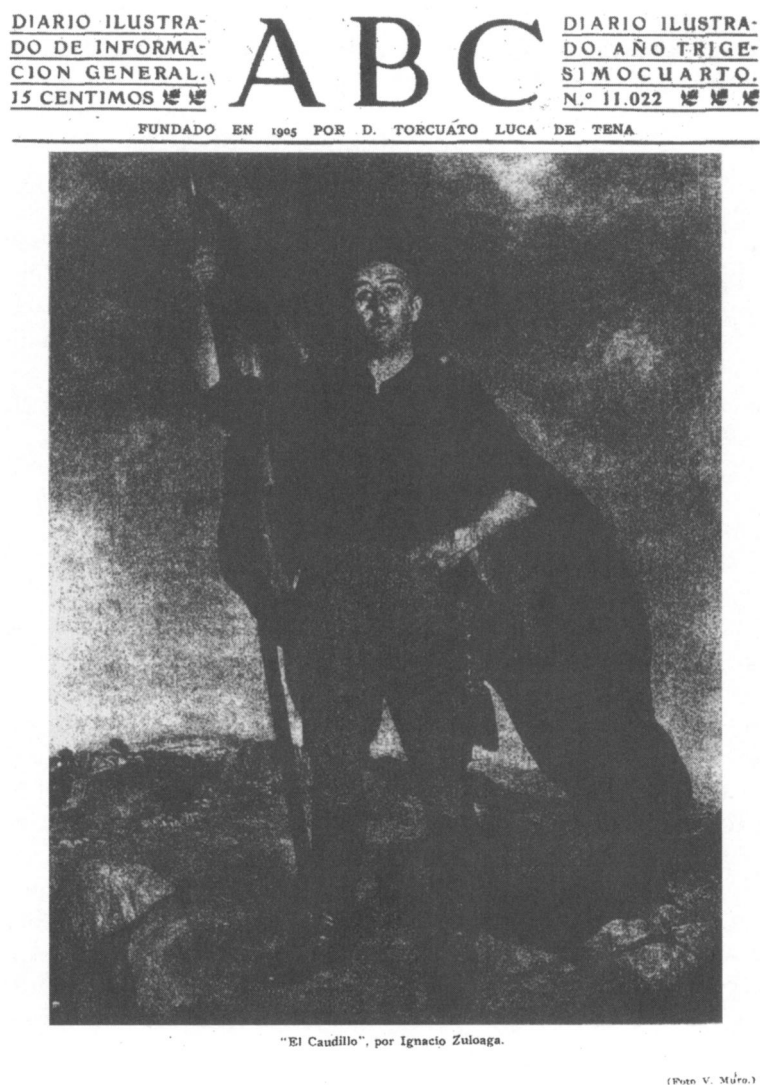


Fig. 8. "El Caudillo." Ignacio Zuolaga.

Ferdinand Magellan was the first to circle the globe between 1519 and 1522, sponsored by Charles V (Lafuente Ferrari 238).

In Franco's portrait, the barren landscape is easily identifiable with Castille, something consistent with the regime's centralizing aims and its recurrent invocations of Castille as the soul and essence of Spain. El Cano is shown with his explorer's attribute: a map and

rendered in a similar pose to Franco, who is draped with a flag that serves as the symbol of his conquered domains. These formal parallels are in keeping with Franco's own assertions that he, like the Catholic monarchs and Charles V, would again make Spain an imperial power. In the portrait of Franco, the harsh terrain and dark cloudy sky were reminders of the recently overcome dangers and destruction caused by the war. This is further suggested through comparison with Zuloaga's 1938 *El Alcázar en Llamas* (*The Alcázar in Flames*, private collection), in which the painter rendered the siege of the Alcázar with a similarly painted sky, in this case blackened by the flames caused by Republican artillery attacks and bombs. In the same year, Zuloaga painted another landscape of Toledo during the siege, as well as one depicting Segovia (San Sebastián, Museo San Telmo). Both included menacing, cloudy skies.

In creating an image of victory for the new leader, Zuloaga drew upon his earlier portrayal of the persistence of the Carlist forces. In *El Mas Viejo Requeté* (*The Oldest Carlist Fighter*, 1938) the sitter wears a field cape and the red beret that identified the Carlist or *requeté* militias. The longevity of their cause was most often represented through images of elderly veterans that had fought in nineteenth-century Carlist wars and now volunteered to fight in Franco's armies. The Carlist soldier and Franco are both posed frontally behind a low landscape and cloudy sky and both don a red beret. As we saw above, a key element in the suppression of dissent and creation of a fictive image of unity under Franco was the creation of the unified state party. Its uniform was mandated in a January 1939 decree, publicized in the press, and promoted in propaganda pamphlets (see fig. 2 above). In Zuloaga's painting, Franco is shown clad in the dark indigo denim shirt of the original Falange party that became part of the new uniform—it bore a yoke and arrows embroidered in red. He dons the Carlist red beret, also incorporated into this uniform. Khaki military pants foster a link to the armed forces as a whole, and perhaps specifically to Spain's Foreign Legion, with whom Franco had been associated early in his military career. The red general's sash adds a touch of flamboyance to the otherwise Spartan uniform while drawing attention to the red and yellow flag, and the red beret. There are also similarities between the portrayal of Franco and the lone soldier/sentinel standing against the sky that appears in a 1936 Carlist militia recruitment poster.⁶ The soldier is shown wearing a khaki uniform, and a hint of tall boots is visible while the neutral color of his clothing and the reddish color of the sky draw attention to the group's red beret.

During the war, illustrated books, calendars and photographs often portrayed soldiers going into battle with their flags. Carlos

Saénz de Tejada, an accomplished commercial illustrator and painter, created such an image in *Canción de la Falange* (*Song of the Falange*), a history of the composition of the Falange party song “Cara al Sol,” later appropriated as the state party anthem. A Falangist militiaman is shown carrying a rifle while his party’s red and black flag while a yoke and arrows serve as a backdrop. The similarities between Saénz de Tejada’s still partisan rendering of the soldier and Zuloaga’s portrait of Franco are evident. However, Zuloaga suppresses any evidence of internal struggle among the rebel forces, focusing our gaze instead on the confident gaze of the dictator, standing firm in victory, draped in the Spanish flag. Franco’s state party uniform and the Spanish flag act to create an image of cohesion, represented by the figure of the leader, guarantor of the nation’s unity.

In a 1940 equestrian portrait of Franco by Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor (fig. 9; Madrid, Museo del Ejercito), he is clad in an army uniform with the red sash and baton that were attributes of generals. Beneath his khaki jacket he wears the state party uniform’s blue shirt. He is shown astride a white horse, in the ruins of the patio of the Alcázar of Toledo. The portrait was commissioned for the grand staircase of Franco’s country estate in La Coruña, Galicia, the Pazo de Meirás, and later given to the museum.⁷ Franco was wise to choose a painter who was a renowned academician and a portraitist to the aristocracy. In keeping with his aspirations to assume the trappings of majesty, the fact that Sotomayor had painted seven portraits of King Alfonso XIII may have influenced the selection. Sotomayor was named assistant director of the Prado in 1918, and director in 1922. He was reinstated in this position after the war.

Titian’s *Charles V at Muhlberg* (1548; Madrid, Museo del Prado) painted to commemorate a victory against the king’s Protestant enemies was clearly a precedent for Sotomayor’s painting as the formal similarities attest to. Among the similarities are the position of the sitters, the horses’ stance, and the placement of both in relation to the picture plane. Moreover, when Sotomayor was appointed by Franco’s Ministry of Education to curate an exhibition of masterpieces from the Prado shown in Geneva in the summer of 1939, he selected Titian’s painting as the centerpiece of what he called the “Imperial Room” (Collorado Castellary 275–277). Following the return of the collections to Spain, an article in the February 8, 1940 edition of the newspaper *ABC* noted that during a visit to the museum, Franco paid special attention to the Titian portrait, which he admired.

In his own portrait, Sotomayor placed Franco against the backdrop of the ruined courtyard of Toledo’s Alcázar, a symbolic site

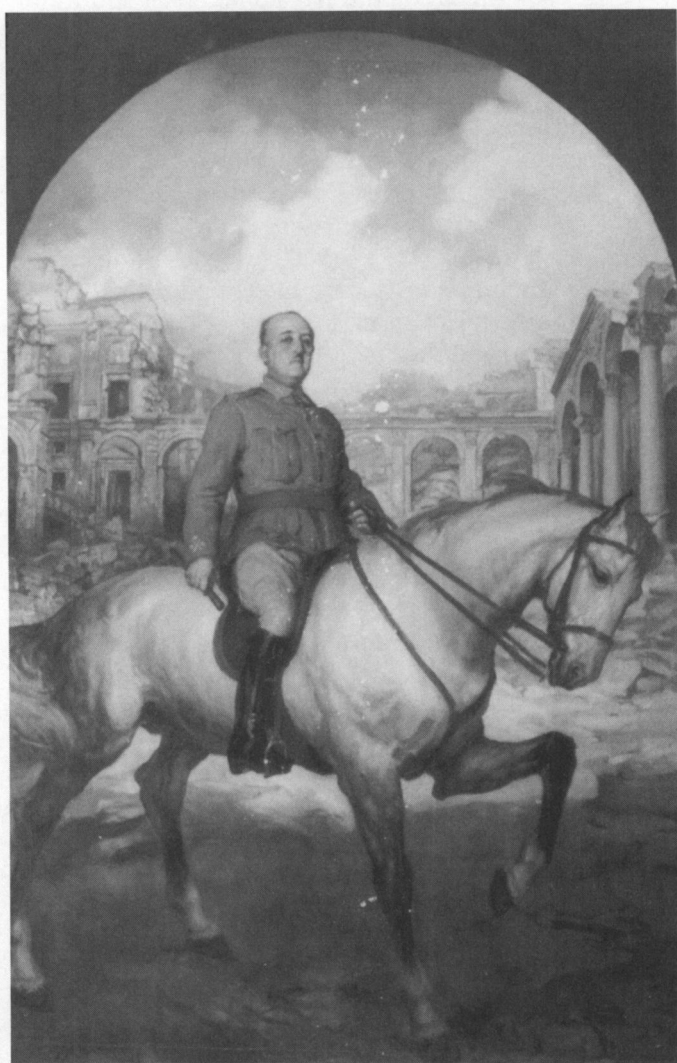


Fig. 9. Equestrian Portrait of Franco by Fernando Alvarez de Montemayor.

crucial in the rebels' recreation of Franco as savior of the nation. The Alcázar, site of a royal residence since the reign of Alfonso VI who conquered Toledo from the Muslims, was rebuilt by Charles V and linked to military struggles key to the formation of Spanish national identity. Soldiers representative of Franco's diverse supporters held their ground during the 68-day siege, while the troops

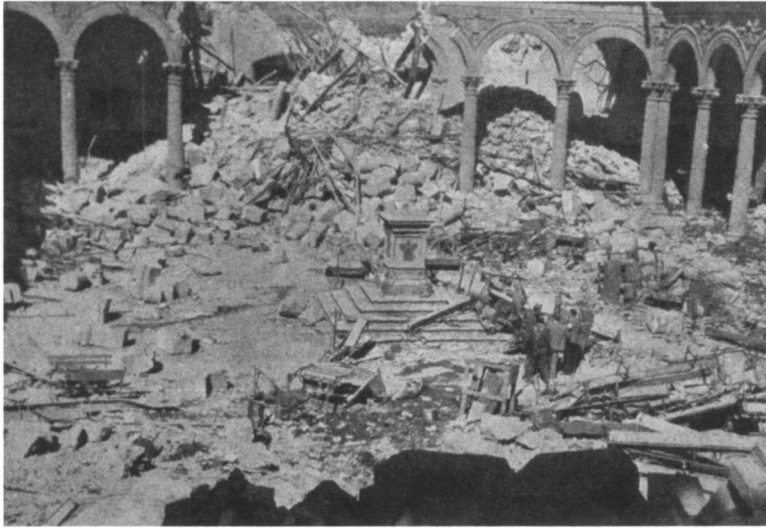


Fig. 10. Postcard from Series *Gloriosas Ruinas de Alcázar*. Private Collection. New York.

sent in to liberate the grounds were carefully chosen to reinforce this image of a shared triumph. During the war, and following its conclusion, a propaganda campaign was launched promoting the ruins as a site of memory, a location central to the new regime's mythic re-telling of history. Sets of postcards were published, the majority featured before and after photographs that heightened the drama of the building's ruined appearance. Group visits to the ruins were organized and the site itself was declared a national monument on February 19th, 1937; a museum of the siege was established soon after. The patio's southern section appears in a postcard from the series *Gloriosas Ruinas del Alcázar* (*Glorious Ruins of the Alcázar*, private collection, New York) published between 1936 and 1939 (fig. 10). Sotomayor rendered its northern section because its starker outlines were less likely to draw attention away from his sitter.

Sometime after the occupation of Toledo, and before the war's end, a sculptural bust of Franco was placed at the center of one of the colonnades facing the patio, forming an axis that connected it spatially and by association with the pedestal at the middle of the patio where a statue of Charles V had been located. This statue, a copy of Leone Leoni's *Charles V and the Fury* (1551–1553, Madrid, Museo del Prado) is pictured in another postcard from the *Gloriosas Ruinas del Alcázar* (Glorious Ruins of the Alcázar) series. On the

pedestal is a phrase attributed to Charles V: “Si en la pelea veis caer mi caballo y mi estandarte, levantad primero éste que a mí” (“If my horse and standard should fall in battle, raise these before tending to me”) (Arrarás and Jordana de Pozas 16). Photographs of the sculpture, upright but removed from its pedestal amid the rubble at the center of the patio, were reproduced in postcard series, newspapers, and book covers, and articles glorifying the site stressed that, despite attacks, Spain’s traditions prevailed, just as the statue survived the siege unharmed. Sotomayor drew upon these parallels as he reinstated the dictator on horseback at the central position of the Alcázar’s patio once occupied by the portrait of Charles V.

The importance of the Alcázar as a mythic site for the Spanish army and the new regime took on yet more meanings for contemporaries who stressed the Alcázar’s links to the *Reconquista* and to subsequent military history (Arrarás and Jordana de Pozas 12–16). The staging of official events to portray Franco as a holy warrior is evident in Preston’s account of a Thanksgiving mass held at Madrid’s Santa Barbara Church on the day after the May 19, 1939 victory parade. Preston remarks that “[t]he choir from the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos greeted him with a 10th century Mozarabic chant written for the reception of princes. Surrounded by the glorious military relics of Spain’s crusading past, including the battle flag of Las Navas de Tolosa, the great victory over the moors in 1212, [and] the standard used . . . at the Battle of Lepanto. . . . Franco presented his “sword of victory” to Cardinal Gomá. . . . [it] was then laid on the high altar before the great crucifix of the Christ of Lepanto” (*Franco* 330).

Another feature of Franco’s self-presentation is his adoption of the military escort known as the *Guardia Mora* (Moorish Guard). As discussed above, his early military career as a colonial officer in Spain’s African territories was frequently referred to in press accounts and histories prior to and during the Civil War. Post-war accounts drew parallels between Spain’s *Reconquista* and Franco’s African victories, which were said to foreshadow his victory over the Republic. One crucial example is the symbolic identification of the General with *Santiago Matamoros* (*Saint James the Moor Slayer*), Spain’s patron saint, traditionally portrayed as a warrior astride a white horse (Pierce 42–44). During Franco’s service in Africa, the young officer was known for riding a white horse, a detail often remarked upon in articles and popularized thanks to photographs and postcard series such as *Galería de Personajes: Seis Postales Patrióticas* (Gallery of Personalities: Six Patriotic Postcards, circa 1937–38; private collection, New York), which reproduce photographs by Jalón Angel (fig. 11). Sotomayor then linked quite astutely Franco’s per-

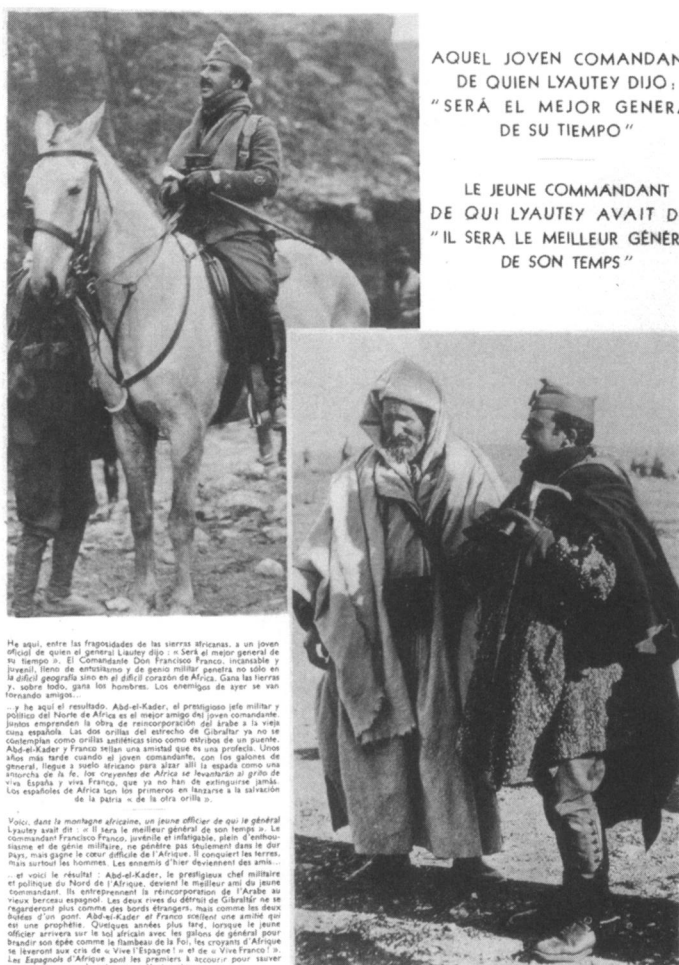


Fig. 11. Galería de Personajes: Seis Postales Patrióticas, circa 1937–1938. Private Collection. New York.

sonal iconography to that of Spain's patron saint. In portraying Franco—on a white horse, occupying the spot once held by Charles V, holding his ground following his victory in battle—Sotomayor creates an updated interpretation of the tradition of royal equestrian portraits. Just as court painters before him had drawn from art historical precedents in creating state portraits destined for royal palaces, Sotomayor placed Franco within a lineage of great monarchs who were victors in battles against the enemies of Catholicism and the Spanish nation in this portrait that was intended for Franco's own residence.

Franco's biographers and historians of his regime agree that he was skilled in balancing the demands of the competing factions that lent him their support, as he won the war, and after the battles when he faced international isolation and economic collapse. As we have seen, during the war, posters, photographs, and pamphlets, along with book and press illustrations, contributed to the reiteration of at times contradictory definitions of the new regime's values and aims as well as to the creation of a climate of fear presided over by the image of the dictator. These images, often overlooked by historians who have focused on written propaganda and dismissed by art historians for their lack of originality or formal achievement, played a crucial role due to their wide circulation in various media and their display in countless public spaces. The conventions devised by Franco's portraitists, like those of court painters before them, become clearer in light of the broader propaganda aims of his regime, the rituals and traditions he appropriated, and his ambitions as a leader. Following the war's end art would continue to play a key strategic role for the new state in the creation of exhibitions and sites of memory commemorating the victors' version of the war.

Notes

¹ Sections of this article are based on the lecture, "Creating Genealogies for the New State: Painting and Propaganda in Franco's Spain," for the Colloquium on Spanish and Latin American Art and Culture held at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University and on chapters of my doctoral dissertation, "Re-inventing Spain: Images of the Nation in Painting and Propaganda, 1936–1943," Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, 2002.

² A recent study of this repression, edited by Santos Juliá (1999), estimates that at least 81,000 people were executed between 1935 and 1975 and at least 380,000 served time in jail between 1939 and 1975. Additionally, the 1939 *Ley de Responsabilidades Políticas* (Law of Political Responsibilities) and the 1940 *Ley para la Represión de la Masonería y el Comunismo* (Law for the Repression of Masonry and Communism) imposed lengthy jail terms, time in forced labor camps, banishment from cities of origin, fines, and loss of employment upon thousands of citizens who had supported the Republic.

³ It should be noted that photographers of the Royal Family had already adapted conventions for painted royal portraits to their medium. See Margarita González Cristóbal, María Leticia Ruiz Gómez and Marie-Loup Sougez. *La Fotografía en las Colecciones Reales* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, Fundación "la Caixa," 1999).

⁴ Enrique Lafuente Ferrari gives this painting, in a private collection, the latter date. Jonathan Brown (1994) has discussed this portrait in relation to the development of state portraiture in Spain.

⁵ It was reprinted in *Orientación Española* (October 1937) and *Spain* (October 12, 1937).

⁶ Such partisan propaganda was prohibited by the 1937 unification decree.

⁷ According to the Museo del Ejército (Madrid) archive. I am grateful to Karina Marotta for allowing me access to this document.

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