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Author(s): Stanley Payne

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Catalan and Basque Nationalism

Stanley Payne

The union of the Hispanic crowns in 1478–9 created a joint Spanish state but not a unified nation. Under the Habsburg imperial system of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the historic constitutional pluralism of the five Hispanic kingdoms, together with the legal and administrative rights of the Basque country and the Balearics, were maintained with little change. Spain as a single united polity did not emerge until after the victory of the new Spanish Bourbon dynasty in the Succession War of the early eighteenth century. By 1716 the new regime had abolished the separate constitutional systems of Aragón, Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearics, leaving only that of the small ‘kingdom’ of Hispanic Navarre (in fact by that time only a semi-autonomous province), and the foral rights (*fueros*) of the Basque country.

The most recalcitrant region had been Catalonia. During the late Middle Ages Catalonia was the axis of the constitutional federation of the Crown of Aragon and developed one of the most advanced – if not the most advanced – constitutional system in fourteenth-century Europe. Catalan commerce, finance, shipping, and manufactures at that point compared favourably with those of Venice and Genoa, surpassing anything to be found in northern Europe. Fifteenth-century Catalonia, however, fell into severe decline, losing population and economic impetus. Its towns were prey to sharp political class conflict, and the countryside was the scene of violent social struggle to throw off the residues of serfdom. This culminated in the Catalan civil war of the 1460s in which, at one point, the principality was about to become a protectorate of the crown of France.

The prostration of Catalonia in the late fifteenth century merely reinforced the hegemony of Castile in the affairs of the newly united Hispanic crown. Royal intervention in the constitutional

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system was necessary at that point to correct abuses, and special attention was needed to restore a measure of prosperity to the Catalan economy. During the apex of Spanish history in the sixteenth century Catalonia played little part, absorbed in its local affairs and the orbit of the west Mediterranean. Catalan economic enterprise was largely excluded from Spanish America (as was that of Scotland from English America before 1707), but conversely Catalans were required to pay almost none of the exorbitant expenses of the imperial Habsburg government. Static rural Catalonia of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries fell victim to widespread banditry and disorder, fomented by the rural gentry and shielded by the Catalan constitutional system that made prosecution of criminals in some cases absolutely impossible. The crisis of Catalan integration within the pluralistic Hispano-Habsburg system came in the revolt of 1640-52, which reproduced key features of the struggle of the 1460s and 70s, including sharp internal conflict and the ever-present threat of falling to the status of a French protectorate. The outcome of that revolt was merely a return to the pluralistic status quo, but Catalan espousal of the Habsburg cause in the Spanish Succession War of 1702-15 finally brought the abrogation of most features of Catalan particularism, the main exception being retention of the regional legal codes in internal jurisprudence.

For the first time in its history Catalonia during the eighteenth century was fully integrated into the broader affairs of Spain. This was a period of notable expansion in Catalan agriculture, manufactures, and above all commerce. Reorganization of Spanish imperial regulations and expansion of the imperial economy offered manifold opportunities that enabled Catalonia to achieve prosperity as the most economically active region of the peninsula during the second half of that century. Catalans revealed themselves to be fully conscious of the advantages offered by the Spanish system and proved completely loyal subjects of the crown. During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars they equalled most other regions in Spanish patriotism and, save for a small collaborationist minority, generally resisted French reformist and separatist blandishments.

More than in any other part of Spain save perhaps the Basque country, the Catalan elite of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries dedicated itself to commerce and industry and

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thus gave rise to the first genuinely bourgeois social stratum of nineteenth-century Spain. However, the period 1806–28 was a time of overall depression that inhibited initiative. Partly as a result, Catalans played almost no part in the genesis of Spanish liberalism between 1809 and 1823, which was particularly the work of the middle-class political intelligentsia of southern and eastern Spain. During the decade of the 1830s the Catalan middle classes began to take their place with the new Spanish liberal elite. The basis of constitutional monarchy in nineteenth-century Spain lay in the agrarian interests of Castile and Andalusia, together with the financial elite of Madrid, but Catalan manufactures and commerce also enjoyed a privileged place in the Spanish system thanks to the comparatively high protective tariff that was maintained.

From 1835 on, Catalonia became the region in which all the major problems were fought out with the greatest intensity. Spanish liberalism was divided by several key issues, one of which was that of political and administrative centralization on the French model, as contrasted with the local provincial administrative autonomy demanded by the Progressive party. Catalan towns, like their counterparts in the south and east, supported the Progressives, but the Catalan upper middle class backed the centralist Moderates for reasons of social and economic interest. By the 1860s the left wing of localist Progressivism, as well as the small Democrat movement, was giving way in southern and eastern Spain to a new movement of Federal Republicanism that stressed political democracy, anti-clericalism, opposition to conscription, and above all decentralization in favour of provincial political and administrative autonomy. Radical lower middle class urban Catalans played a major role in the tragicomic interlude of the Spanish Federal Republic (1873–4); at one point 32 out of 49 provincial governors appointed by the Federal Republican government were Catalans.¹

Under the neo-constitutional monarchy that was established after 1875 a successful effort was made to integrate and foster the economic interests of nearly all parts of Spain. Though at first political affairs in Catalonia were kept under tight central control, the upper middle class Catalan elite was largely integrated into the two rotating Conservative and Liberal parties that governed

¹ C. A. M. Hennessy, *The Federal Republic in Spain* (Oxford 1962), 203.

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Spain in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The years 1878–88 were a period of almost unprecedented prosperity for Catalan industry and commerce, and were known as the era of the *febre d'or* (gold fever).

The expansion of the nineteenth-century Catalan economy was paralleled by a rebirth of Catalan vernacular literature, commonly referred to as the *renaixença* (renaissance). Its roots may be traced to the 1830s and were part of the general awakening of romantic cultural nationalism and regionalism found in widely scattered parts of Europe. After the sixteenth century Castilian had largely displaced Catalan as the language of culture in Catalonia, and in the eighteenth century replaced it as the language of government as well. Though the overwhelming majority of Catalans retained their mother tongue as a domestic language, political and especially cultural or literary use of Castilian had become almost universal. International currents of literary romanticism, expanded cultural and educational opportunities, historiographic rediscovery of the Middle Ages, and the development of new sources of wealth and political self-assertion within Catalonia, were all factors that encouraged a small circle of upper middle class poets and litterateurs to revive vernacular Catalan literature, dormant for nearly 300 years. This was paralleled by efforts to revive Galician and Valencian literature in other parts of the peninsula, and was part of a growing self-consciousness among a new generation of Spanish intellectuals, the first to grow up within the framework of middle-class liberalism.

The *renaixença* was for long almost exclusively esthetic, devoted with few exceptions to poetry. It was restricted to a small elite and was almost completely unknown to Catalan society as a whole. A regular daily newspaper was not published in Catalan until 1880. The renaissance was accompanied by a new current of romantic Catalanist historiography, represented especially by Próspero Bofarull and Victor Balaguer (both of whom wrote in Castilian), which interpreted the historic decline of Catalonia as a sort of Aragonese and Castilian conspiracy, a misconception not rectified by Catalan historians until the mid-twentieth century. The first book about the 'Catalan problem' – the development and representation of Catalan political and economic interests – appeared in 1855 (in Castilian), but was couched in moderate terms, accepting the framework of an essentially integrated Spain.

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The immediate parentage of political Catalanism is to be found among the Federal Republicans of Catalonia, most of whom had little connection with the arcane esthetics of the renaissance. Though the overthrow of the Republic destroyed them as a major political force, the ideology of federalist autonomy put down roots that were never afterwards extirpated. The transition from an ideology of all-Spanish federalism to one of particularist political Catalanism was led by Valentí Almirall, who may be considered the father of Catalan nationalism. A leading Federalist until 1875, he had propounded a specifically regionalist form of federalism, urging the combination of all lands of the former Crown of Aragon into a joint politico-administrative entity. From 1869 to 1873 he published a newspaper entitled *El Estado Catalán* and between 1870 and 1874 directed a cultural association, La Jove Catalunya (Young Catalonia), that attempted to unite the literary renaissance and federalist politics. After the restoration of the monarchy, Almirall gave up federalism as such to devote himself to the cause of Catalan regionalism, which was at that time labelled provincialism. In 1880 he founded *El Diari Català*, the first daily newspaper to be printed in Catalan. It pressed for provincial administrative autonomy and for administrative federation of the four Catalan provinces (which would thus, in Spanish terminology, form an administrative Mancomunidad). Soon afterwards Almirall organized a Catalanist Congress, attended by 1200 sympathizers but attacked by elitist literary leaders of the renaixença. In 1881 he broke completely with federalism as being too *españolista*, was forced to discontinue his shortlived paper, but reached a rapprochement with the more conservative litterateurs. Finally in 1882 the first general organization of Catalanists, the Centre Català, was formed to try to bring together the dozens of small Catalanist cultural associations that had been established throughout the region, together with other groups interested in a political expression of regionalism.

In 1886 Almirall published *Lo Catalanisme*, the first categorical expression of political Catalanism. In it he denounced the doctrinaire abstractions and impracticalities of federalism, contrasting French concepts of abstract liberty with the concrete liberties developed by Anglo-American governments. Catalan regionalism would provide the framework for concrete development and for the expression of specific liberties by those who had become

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qualified to use them. Even so, Almirall remained almost as vague as most of the federalists; he did not develop either a clear-cut ideology or a specific political programme.

The 1880s and 90s were the period of gestation for political Catalanism. Four major influences were at work: the expansion of the *renaixença*, which now had followers in nearly all parts of Catalonia; concern for fostering and protecting Catalan industry, particularly after the temporary industrial decline that set in from 1886; the influence of federalism among the middle classes; and the residues of Catalan Carlism. During the two main Carlist civil wars (1833-40 and 1869/73-76), Catalonia had been second only to the Basque country and Navarre in the degree of support given to the traditionalist cause. Though overt support for Carlism declined steeply after 1876, former Carlists showed increasing interest in the pro-traditionalist, anti-centralist aspects of Catalan regionalism.

A full two decades were required to develop a viable Catalanist political party. Within four years the Centre Català began to stagnate, while Almirall's health also started to fail after an attack of apoplexy. In 1887 the conservative litterateur element, led by the outstanding playwright Angel Guimerà, broke away to set up a *Lliga de Catalunya* to 'promote . . . the moral, political, and economic interests of Catalonia'.²

The political elite of the Catalan upper middle classes continued to work with the established two-party Spanish system, but Barcelona's leading newspaper, the *Diario de Barcelona*, was strongly provincialist. Its director, Juan Mañé y Flaquer, the most widely read Catalan journalist of the period, opposed universal suffrage and full religious liberty, while insisting that Catalans must strive to achieve special protection and development for regional interests. The promulgation of a new code of civil law for Spain in 1888 touched off a storm of protest in Catalonia because it threatened to sweep away the elements of judicial particularism that still remained in the region; in the process the code was modified slightly for more flexible application in Catalonia. Since the 1870s opposition had been mounting in other parts of Spain to the

² Maximiano García Venero, *Historia del nacionalismo catalán* (Madrid 1967), I, 414. This hostile two-volume narrative stands as the principal history of Catalan nationalism to date.

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strong Catalan pressure for higher tariffs and economic and juridical privileges for industry. The new protective tariff of 1891 largely satisfied Catalan demands, however, and the expansion of trade with Cuba during the final quarter of the century provided a closed and protected market that absorbed the bulk of Catalan exports outside the peninsula. Hence, despite growing demands by cultural particularists, political reformers, and regional traditionalists, the main economic interests of Catalonia were largely satisfied with the functioning of the established political system until the disaster of 1898. This basic fact, combined with the weakness of middle-class radicalism during the same period, made it impossible for Catalanists to launch a serious regionalist political movement of either a moderate or radical nature until after the end of the century.

The Lliga de Catalunya fused with a conservative Catalanist cultural group in 1891 to form a new *Unió Catalanista*, but this lacked the strength to launch itself on the political scene. However, its first congress in 1892 was attended by delegates from 100 Catalan towns. These delegates were mostly intellectuals and professional men, not representatives of economic interests; they drew up 'Bases for a regional Catalan constitution', stipulating complete internal administrative autonomy. During its congresses in the 1890s the term 'nationalist' was first used with frequency to denote autonomist Catalan regionalism.

The *Unió Catalanista* produced the first specific ideologue of Catalanism in one of its most active young middle-class leaders, Enric Prat de la Riba.³ In 1894 he published a *Compendi Nacionalista* of which 100,000 copies were printed and distributed. This was the precursor of his major work, *La Nacionalitat catalana* (1906). Prat was a clear and forthright nationalist ideologist, influenced particularly by French conservative and historicist-nationalist thought (as distinct from doctrinaire French liberalism), and by the historical school of law as practised in Catalonia (following Savigny). The distinction between the practical and historical-particular, as in the English model, and the doctrinaire, abstract-rational and centralist French orientation, had earlier

³ Jordi Solé Tura, *Catalanisme i revolució burgesa* (Barcelona 1967), gives a clear analysis of Prat's doctrines and their background. Rafael Olfvar Bertrand, *Prat de la Riba* (Barcelona 1966), is a descriptive biography.

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been emphasized by Almirall and always remained prominent in middle-class Catalanism.

Prat defined Spain as the political state and Catalonia as the true fatherland of Catalans, who were said to constitute a distinct and fully developed nationality; hence their state must be altered to conform to their nationality. Catalan nationalism was not separatist but demanded a regional parliament and government and a fully autonomous regional administrative system, which would develop the economy, society, and culture of Catalonia, while preserving its traditions. Catalanism was to be the vehicle of middle-class modernization, promoting social harmony and well-being. To this end it would rely not on inorganic democratic suffrage, as in the Spanish parliamentary elections, but would also employ a measure of corporate representation in regional elections. Catalan society was being corrupted by shortsighted utilitarianism, divisive individualism and decadent Spanish cultural and moral 'gypsyism' (*flamenguismo*). Catalan nationalism would redeem Catalan cultural and social values, while modernizing the framework of Catalan life.

Catalan regionalism was encouraged by the spreading protest in half a dozen different parts of Spain against administrative centralization and local government corruption. These protests became especially frequent after 1892 and ended in the split of the Spanish Conservative party itself. They were directed in large part against the failure of local and provincial agencies to provide the wide range of services and incentives needed to promote more rapid modernization, and mobilized a degree of otherwise apolitical middle-class opinion that was more easily aroused by practical than by moralistic or ideological issues.

The demand for more positive regional leadership was also to some extent encouraged by the outburst of anarchist terrorism in Barcelona between 1893 and 1896. During most of the nineteenth century Barcelona province had had the only real proletariat in Spain. Its workers had revealed a considerable talent for trade-union organization, and through the middle decades of the century had shown impressive moderation and concern for social co-operation. The growth of Barcelona anarchism was not exactly a proletarian phenomenon, for it was fomented by the radical intelligentsia and was due at least as much to the moral and spiritual crisis of the Spanish fin-de-siècle as to objective social and

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economic conditions. However, anarcho-syndicalism began to spread among Barcelona workers after the turn of the century and increased the sense of urgency among middle-class Catalanists concerning the need for drastic reform in government.

It has sometimes been suggested that fullblown regional nationalism was the result of the disaster that befell Spain as a national and international entity after the Spanish-American war of 1898. In one sense that is correct, but it overlooks the steadily rising tide of Catalan particularism that had been building up since at least 1869. Catalan economic interests had denounced concessions to the Cubans, but in 1898 Catalan spokesmen were the only significant group in Spain that opposed the war with the United States, deeming it impractical and completely hopeless. The disillusion that attended Spanish affairs in the aftermath of the loss of the last remnants of the historic empire gave rise to numerous calls for 'Regeneration', ranging from the radical republicans to the Carlists. In Catalonia, Regenerationism gave a major impetus to Catalanism. In 1899, for the first time, Catalanism – or at least the demand for greater regional autonomy and direction of administrative and economic interests – began to draw support from Catalan economic leaders.

The problem of the relationship of modern Catalan industry to the Spanish political and economic system as a whole is exceedingly complex and cannot be fully treated here. On the one hand, Catalan industry has always been sheltered by a high Spanish protective tariff. It has never developed any major export capacity and has relied primarily upon the Spanish domestic market, without which it would have been ruined. On the other hand, Spanish politics and economics during the nineteenth century were controlled largely by the representatives of agrarian interests. Not until the late nineteenth century did Spanish legislation take active steps to encourage joint-stock enterprises and pooling of industrial capital; this was not in itself surprising, for it was rare to see such initiatives in a country in which few of the prerequisites for capitalist industry were developed. The basis of Catalan industry has been textiles, in large part because of the low capitalization initially required. Only in certain sectors of textiles did major enterprises finally develop in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Even when legislation began to encourage it, Catalan industry was slow to mobilize capital and develop large-scale

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enterprise, and even now most of its output comes from comparatively small-scale concerns. In general, it has manifested the characteristics of intense individualism, family-scale undertakings (as in nineteenth-century France), reluctance to invest in or develop new forms of entrepreneurship.⁴ Banking and financial activities have always been notoriously weak in Catalonia – the region where most money was produced in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Spain. The Spanish government never developed a programme to encourage national industry even to the extent that turn-of-the-century Italy did, while Catalan economic leaders never showed much interest in proposals for the industrial development of Spain as distinct from Catalonia.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century Catalonia occupied the forefront of Spanish politics. From a low of only four percent of the total Spanish population during its decline in the fifteenth century, its numbers had increased to twice that proportion, and were still rising with immigration from south-eastern Spain. Barcelona, with a population of 533,000 in 1901, approximately equalled Madrid in size. The region dominated Spain's domestic and international trade and was the main focus of industrial development, in this respect being rivalled only by the growth of heavy industry in the Basque country and Asturias. To these were

⁴ The best recent study of industrial entrepreneurship in Catalonia judges that 'Catalan entrepreneurs have periodically received special "remunerations" from outside Catalonia that have helped them to overcome temporary crises without requiring transformation of conditions of production. They have enjoyed a series of "historic favours" that brought them monetary income and lengthened the life of an anachronistic system of production. The Catalan entrepreneur has rarely been faced with the fatal dilemma of transformation or going under. Among these external factors are the following: 1) immigration of workers [from other parts of Spain] in sufficient numbers to maintain low wage levels; 2) low volume of capital required for entrepreneurial activities because of the extensive use of female labour, a conditioning factor of the local labour market; 3) expansion of demand due to successive wars (supply of the liberal army during the Carlist wars; resolution of the crisis of 1854—a crisis attended by genuinely Luddite incidents—thanks to the French textile demand created by the Crimean War; another favourable situation that developed after France lost the Alsatian textile industry in 1871; provision of the Spanish army during the final colonial war; great profits during World War I; resolution of the 1922 crisis due to the Moroccan war and to state protection; another favourable [monopolist] situation in Spain during World War II); 4) the inflationary policy of the Spanish state [under Franco]; 5) the general policy of excluding imports'. E. Pinilla de las Heras, *L'Empresari català* (Barcelona 1967), 124–25.

added cultural glories achieved by the mature phase of the *renaixença*. During the late nineteenth century the three leading Spanish poets wrote in Catalan, in the lyric (Joan Maragall), epic (Jacint Verdaguer) and dramatic (Àngel Guimerà) genres.

Most Regenerationist spokesmen at the turn of the century were agreed that Spanish government must incorporate new elements of popular support – essentially middle class – and devote more attention to local needs. Thus Catalanists enjoyed friendly relations with the first post-catastrophe cabinet, the Conservative government of Francisco Silvela. Silvela was the first prime minister to include a Catalanist cabinet member, appointing to the ministry of justice Manuel Duran i Bas, professor of jurisprudence at the University of Barcelona and head of the ‘Catalan school’ of historical law. Yet the first political attempt to form an alliance with middle-class Catalanism foundered on the divisions among the forces composing the Silvela government itself and also on the hostility of Catalan economic interests to paying higher taxes in order to meet post-war government debts. This resistance led to a brief but intense *tancament de caixes* (taxpayers’ strike) in Barcelona that ended with the temporary imposition of martial law.

After the failure of the conservative reformism of the first Silvela government, Catalanism assumed more organized political form. Prat de la Riba and the hard core Catalanists left the amorphous *Unió Catalana* to form a poorly financed *Centre Nacional Català*. Wealthy business interests newly attracted to regionalist politics backed a separate *Unió Regionalista*. These two groups joined hands to present the first regular Catalanist ticket in the national parliamentary elections of 1901. In Barcelona the virtual monopoly enjoyed by the two traditional Spanish parties was finally broken by the anti-Catalanist lower middle class Radical Republicans and by the Catalanists. The latter won 4 of the 47 Catalan seats in the Cortes, emerging as a political force for the first time.

After the elections the two Catalanist groups combined to organize a regular political party, the *Lliga Regionalista*, that dominated regular politics in Catalonia for most of the period 1901–23. The *Lliga* became in some ways the most modern – indeed, along with the minuscule socialist movement the only modern – political party in Spain. It developed a strong, regular organization with party dues, contributions, and political mobilization records. It was directed by an officially constituted small board

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of directors who were able to take decisions and had the standing and authority among the rank and file to have them carried out. Electoral campaigns and other activities were carefully planned, with organized publicity and systematic mobilization of the vote.

The rise of the Lliga was nonetheless comparatively slow. Its main rival at first was the demagogic, anti-clerical Radical Republican party, which was stronger in Barcelona than anywhere else in Spain. The peak of Radical strength in Barcelona occurred between 1902 and 1905, though notable victories were won in later years. The Lliga, by contrast, was thoroughly defeated in 1903. In 1904 it swung further to the right in opposition to Radicals and anarchists, and left Catalanists then set up their own Centre Nacionalista Republicà that absorbed liberal remnants of the old Unió Catalanista. This split between 'bourgeois' and 'radical' Catalanism (the latter not to be confused with non-Catalanist Radical Republicans) persisted down to the Civil War and beyond, with grave consequences for the regionalist movement.

The Lliga came to prominence only after the formation of the broad electoral alliance of Catalan Solidarity in 1906. This was prompted by a riot of Barcelona garrison officers the previous year against a Catalan satirical journal, *Cu-cut*, which had insulted the army, and the subsequent passage by the Spanish parliament of a Law of Jurisdictions giving authority over prosecution of public slanders against the army to military courts. Catalan Solidarity included all the Catalanist groups, part of the non-Catalanist Republicans in the region, and Catalan Carlists. It swept the 1907 elections, winning 41 of the 44 parliamentary seats.

The new reformist Conservative government of Antonio Maura made provincial decentralization one of its major goals, and devoted a large share of its energy to trying to push a local government reform bill through the Cortes in 1908-9 against the opposition of the Liberal party, which remained centralist. At that point the left Catalanist factions abandoned the Solidarity movement and walked out of the Spanish parliament because the reform bill included provisions for corporate suffrage on the local level, and because the Maura government refused to revoke immediately the Law of Jurisdictions.⁵ Maura – the principal Spanish reform leader of the early twentieth century – was forced from office in

⁵ In 1909 the Catalanist left went through one of its periodic and customarily futile regroupings, emerging as the Partit d'Unió Federal, paralleled in 1910 by

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October 1909 by the newly-formed Left Bloc and the protests following the repression of bloody anti-clerical riots in Barcelona in the summer of that year.

The breakup of the Solidarity movement greatly weakened the Lliga, which was temporarily left with no other allies than the Catalan Carlists. Completely defeated in the national elections of 1910, the Lliga retreated into provincial politics, where it was stronger. The Liberal government of José Canalejas in 1912 succeeded in reversing the earlier Liberal policy and prepared legislation to establish the right of Mancomunitat, or unification of existing functions of provincial administration under regional federations. Despite the murder of Canalejas by an anarchist, the establishment of a Catalan Mancomunitat was approved in 1913, and a Mancomunitat government composed of the four Catalan provincial governments took office in April 1914, with Prat de la Riba as president. Thanks to support from Carlists and the moderate faction of the Catalanist left, the Lliga gained control of the Mancomunitat administration. Its powers, however, were restricted, and failed to meet the demand for full regional autonomy.⁶ Even so, the passage of the Mancomunitat legislation split the Spanish Liberal party, which was never again effectively reunited. This was but one example of the way the Catalan issue contributed to the decomposition of the Spanish polity in the decade 1913-23.

Catalonia was more affected by the first world war than was any other part of Spain. By 1915 war orders, mainly from France, gave a powerful impetus to commerce and industry. Production, profits, employment and worker immigration increased enormously during the next three years. The Lliga and Catalan economic interests, however, took the position that insufficient assistance was given by the government, which refused to grant Barcelona unique status as the only free port in Spain, and in 1916 Liberal reformists in Madrid pressed for a special tax on war-related profits. By this time the Lliga was the most cohesively organized political party in the country. With strong financial backing, it

a separate *Unió Federal Nacionalista Republicà* (UFNR). On lower middle class radicalism in Catalonia during these years, see Emilio Navarro, *Historia crítica de los hombres del republicanismo en la última década (1905-1914)* (Barcelona 1915).

⁶ The Mancomunitat devoted itself especially to cultural (though not so much to educational) activity. There is a brief summary in J. de Camps i Arboix, *La Mancomunitat de Catalunya* (Barcelona 1968).

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won a majority of seats in the 1916 parliamentary elections in Catalonia and for the first time became an important force in the Cortes, where it led the opposition to proposed financial reforms that would have increased taxes on Catalan interests. Without a working majority, the Cortes, which had remained closed during much of 1914-15, was shut down once more early in 1917.

The key political leader of the Lliga was Francesc Cambó, one of the major figures of the final decade of the parliamentary monarchy. Cambó had a considerable talent for manoeuvre and superior intellectual gifts. Like nearly all Catalanists before 1923, he was not a separatist, but merely sought a role of autonomy (and pre-eminence) for Catalonia within Spain. Finding the parliamentary channel temporarily blocked in 1917, he and other Lliga leaders sought to go outside by calling a separate 'Assembly of Parliamentarians', consisting of Catalanist and Spanish Republican deputies, in Barcelona in July 1917, to press for constitutional reform, even a constituent assembly, that would introduce decentralization, democratic Senate elections, and virtually eliminate the royal power over parliament. This move was easily suppressed by the authorities. The abortive and pacific middle-class revolt against the political system was, however, followed by a socialist and republican-sponsored attempt at a revolutionary general strike the following month.

Cambó and his colleagues quickly realized that they had gone too far; they had toyed with revolution without being revolutionaries. The general strike was a failure, but it raised the spectre of social revolution. Reversing their tack, Lliga spokesmen quickly rallied to the regime and a return to normal parliamentary activity. Two Catalans entered a new 'government of concentration', and when a 'national union' ministry of all the major groups was formed under Maura in 1918, Cambó assumed the portfolio of minister of development. In his brief eight months in office he acquired a formidable record for the most impressive set of reforms and new projects made by any minister in a single term in office. What he accomplished, incomplete though it was, enlarged his reputation as the outstanding figure of Catalanism and one of the half-dozen major figures of Spanish politics. It also restored the credit of the Lliga and of moderate Catalanism as a constructive force in the country's affairs.

After the Maura government broke up from internal discord,

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for which Catalanism was not responsible, the king, Alfonso XIII, decided to use his constitutional prerogative to appoint a minority reformist Liberal government under the Conde de Romanones, whose main task would be to put through a workable Catalan autonomy statute, with the aim of satisfying the moderate and functional elements of the Catalanist movement and so rechannel Catalanism within the mainstream of the Spanish system, using it as a force for integration rather than disintegration. Within a few weeks of its formation, the Romanones government of December 1918 appointed an extra-parliamentary commission to draw up a draft proposal. Since 19 of its 33 members had already publicly expressed support for some form of Catalan autonomy, a favourable proposal seemed a foregone conclusion.

However, this coincided with the general crisis attending the end of the war, which affected Spain almost as much as many other European countries. The revolutionary movements increased their activity, and left Catalanists sent a delegation to Paris to seek international support for their demands. Spanish republicans and socialists saw the moment as propitious to press for the overthrow of the monarchy. The establishment of Catalan autonomy would resolve one of the country's main political disputes and so strengthen the constitutional monarchy of Alfonso XIII. Hence they urged left Catalanists to refuse to co-operate with the commission and to reject any solution from 'Madrid'. Most of the left Catalanist factions, believing that the general Catalan movement was about to obtain enough leverage both at home and abroad to impose a solution of its own, rejected the commission's proposal for a system of regional political and administrative autonomy for Catalonia, on the ground that autonomy must be established exclusively on the terms of Catalans and not of 'Spaniards'. Cambó personally opposed this, but with great bitterness agreed to support the left Catalanist veto in a desperate effort to maintain the recently established unity of all factions of Catalanism before they split asunder once more. The whole episode was a classic example of the famed Catalan *totorresisme* (all-or-nothingism). An excellent opportunity to obtain genuine Catalan regional autonomy was rejected by the Catalans themselves, owing to the determination of leftists from all parts of Spain not to see constitutional monarchy strengthened by the passage of major reforms within the system.

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The calculations of both moderate and radical Catalanists were almost immediately proved totally erroneous. Within three weeks of the Catalan veto an enormous strike wave spread in Barcelona, soon degenerating into a terrorist class struggle that lasted for four years and cut the ground from under the feet of Catalanism in Catalonia itself. The reasons underlying the rise of anarcho-syndicalism in Catalonia lie beyond the range of this article. The phenomenon cannot be accounted for by simplistic notions of 'primitive rebels' or innate Catalan individualism, but some characteristics of the early twentieth-century Catalan proletariat should be kept in mind. Compared with more advanced industrial systems, wages were low, and so was the cultural level of the new generation of industrial workers after 1900. Despite all the harping on their cultural superiority, the Catalan provinces had rather poor records in the field of public education, even by general Spanish standards. According to the 1900 census, the overall literacy rate in Catalonia was only slightly higher than the average for all Spain.⁷ In schools per capita, among the 52 provinces of Spain, the poor mountainous Aragonese province of Teruel came first, and Barcelona, at the beginning of the century, ranked a dismal forty-third. In general, the highest literacy rates were found not in the urban areas, but in the balanced, smallholder rural provinces of the north (Santander, Burgos, Teruel, the Basque country). The years of the first world war marked the first major influx of immigrant workers into Barcelona province from beyond Catalonia and Aragon. They were largely illiterate and at first adapted poorly to industrial conditions.

The opportunity for mass anarcho-syndicalist trade unionism under the Spanish General Confederation of Labour (CNT) was provided by the prosperity of 1915-18. The first strike wave of 1919 brought decisive gains to labour, but from that point the CNT fell increasingly under the control of anarcho-syndicalist revolutionaries who squandered them in pseudo-revolutionary confrontations and terrorism. Catalan employers adopted a hard

⁷ In 1900, when general illiteracy was still slightly higher than 50 per cent, the Census gave the following percentage figures for illiteracy by province: Alava 19.79, Madrid 22.25, and the four Catalan provinces, Barcelona 39.68, Lérida 50.19, Tarragona 52.14, Gerona 44.61. The heaviest polemical use of these statistics has been made by the leading Castilian anti-Catalanist politician and lawyer, Antonio Royo Villanova, in his *Treinta años de política antiespañola* (Valladolid 1940).

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line, indiscriminately employing the lockout and refusing to negotiate. The result was an almost permanent state of martial law and increasing reliance by Catalan economic interests on the police authority of the Spanish state. The Lliga was thrown into the arms of 'Madrid'.

During the last five years of the parliamentary system (1918-23), the Lliga co-operated with the central government and with the all-Spanish party system, and Cambó became one of the three or four most trusted and respected public figures in Spain. The political chiefs of the Lliga and the representatives of Catalan interests in general became increasingly concerned about the disruption of the Spanish system by class struggle and internal division. Though they did not in any way relinquish the goal of Catalan autonomy, they refrained from emphasizing the problem.

The crisis in the Spanish parliamentary system in 1922-3 arose from the conflict over military operations in the Moroccan Protectorate, internal divisions, class struggle, and terrorism. The more militant spirits of the Lliga, including its youth organization, split off in 1922 to form a new left Catalanist group, *Acció Catalana*. Heretofore the Lliga had largely retained its predominance in national parliamentary elections in Catalonia, but in 1923 it lost the local and provincial elections to left Catalanist and republican groups. Pessimistic over the prospects for constructive action in this atmosphere, Cambó announced his retirement from politics in June 1923 (though he returned to the scene in 1931).

Three months later General Miguel Primo de Rivera overthrew the parliamentary regime and set up a military dictatorship. At the time he was military commander of Catalonia and was at first supported by middle and upper class Catalanists who regarded him as a bastion of social order and took at face value his protestations of sympathy for Catalanism and his vague hints at reform. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the dictatorship was a product of the febrile, extremist climate of Barcelona. But once in power Primo de Rivera came to embody a centralist reaction against Catalanism. The *Mancomunitat* was dissolved in 1924, and the first generation of political Catalanism ended in failure and in authoritarian rule.

Basque nationalism developed more slowly and weakly than the Catalan movement and was partly derived from its example. The

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three Basque provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava had been formally incorporated into the kingdom of Castile during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the basis of regional *fueros* (rights or laws) that provided for separate legal and financial administration under the regional aristocratic oligarchy. Many areas of Castile had originally enjoyed *fueros* of varying latitude, but only the Basque country retained its separate constitutional identity into the modern period.

The origins of the Basques remain shrouded in mystery. They are evidently descendants of one of the primal population groups of the peninsula that largely resisted Romanization.⁸ The Basque language is not an Indo-European tongue and no relation has ever been directly established between it and any other known language. Its practitioners originally inhabited a broad area extending north and south of the western Pyrenees. The first Basque state was the principality (later kingdom) of Pamplona or Navarre that emerged in the ninth century and was later flanked to the west by the three semi-autonomous districts that eventually formed the main part of the 'Basque country'. The cis-Pyrenean portions of the kingdom of Navarre were incorporated under the Spanish crown in 1512, but the tiny kingdom retained its autonomous constitutional status, as did the Basque provinces, even under the centralizing Bourbon monarchy of the eighteenth century.⁹

Basque, which is essentially a primitive tongue, was ill suited to culture, administration, and diplomacy, so that vernacular Castilian (Spanish) or a variant thereof has been the official language of Basque territories south of the Pyrenees ever since the ninth or tenth century. The Basques, in fact, played a major role in the development of Castilian Spanish, and in all the enterprises of Castile from the ninth through the eighteenth century. Though the Basque language remained the domestic tongue of the region, its usage slowly declined.

⁸ Basque anti-Romanism has sometimes been considerably exaggerated. The use of this idea in Basque pre-nationalist consciousness is illustrated by the title of Ramón Ortiz de Zárate's *Jamás los romanos conquistaron completamente a los vascongados y nunca estos belicosos pueblos formaron parte integrante del imperio de los Césares* (Vitoria 1866).

⁹ There is a lengthy bibliography on Basque foralism. Among the most useful works are Aristides de Artíñano y Zuricalday, *El señorío de Bizcaya histórico y foral* (Barcelona 1885), and two recent books by the traditionalist historian Francisco Elías de Tejada, *El Señorío de Vizcaya (hasta 1812)* (Madrid 1963), and *La Provincia de Guipúzcoa* (Madrid 1965).

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The unity of Basque and Castilian interests was such that there were never any Basque revolts against the Spanish crown under the old regime. Though the Basque country did not experience so impressive a phase of development during the second half of the eighteenth century as did Catalonia, there was a growth of agriculture, of iron production and of commerce, led by one of the most cultured gentry classes in the peninsula. It was the 'enlightened' clergy and gentry of Guipuzcoa province who formed the Sociedad Vascongada de Amigos del País in 1769, the first of the notable economic and educational reformist societies of late eighteenth-century Spain.

It has been estimated that there was a higher literacy rate, or at least more serious reading, in the two key Basque provinces of Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa than anywhere else in the peninsula, and more receptiveness to French and English enlightenment ideas there than in Catalonia. Only in this region was there notable protest against the military draft for the French Revolutionary wars (though due rather to localist foral objections than to sympathy for the revolution), and only in Guipuzcoa – which briefly became a sort of French protectorate – any rallying to subversive ideas in the 1790s. In general, however, the strongly Catholic Basque country was second to no region in patriotic struggle against the invader during the War of Independence of 1808–13.¹⁰

During the first phase of Spanish liberalism, there was more overt support for central constitutionalism among the intelligentsia of the Basque towns of Bilbao, San Sebastián, and Irún than among similar elements in Barcelona. The Basque elite was more willing to think in broader Spanish terms and to exchange foral privileges for broader opportunities. Nevertheless, the Basque country and Navarre, together with rural Catalonia, became the stronghold of Carlism in the struggle against Spanish liberalism in the 1830s and again in the 1870s. The real issues at stake here were not the male succession or even legalistic issues of constitutionalism so much as division over the religious issue and general peasant resentment of the towns and the urban economy. No Basque or Navarrese city of any size ever embraced Carlism. Fueros were abolished by the Progressivist constitution of 1837, but to rally the Basque and Navarrese population, basic foral rights

¹⁰ There is a nationalist treatment of this period by José de Aralar, *Los adversarios de la libertad vasca 1794–1829* (Buenos Aires 1944).

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in administration and taxation were restored in 1839, and this was ratified by a decree of 1844. The democratic constitution of 1869 eliminated Basque fueros but promised a degree of provincial autonomy for all Spain. After the last Carlist war, the constitution of the restored monarchy (1876) eliminated the fueros once and for all,¹¹ but replaced them with a special regime of autonomous taxation – the *concierto económico* – for Navarre and the three Basque provinces.

The final abolition of the fueros was met by the hostility of nearly all politically conscious elements in the Basque country and Navarre. During the early years of the restored monarchy a Foralist party was organized but attracted only limited support. The late nineteenth century was the time in which the modern heavy industry and mining of the Basque country began to develop. Protected by the Spanish tariff and regional tax privileges, the Basque elite had no major quarrels with the Spanish system. In Vizcaya, centre of the nascent steel industry, no direct taxes were collected until the first modest measures imposed by the city of Bilbao in 1903. Under the *concierto*, excises were maintained at a higher level than in the rest of Spain. This provided fiscal advantages for industry and commerce, while expanding employment and higher wage levels made the excises somewhat more bearable for the urban lower classes. In 1893 the Spanish government first tried to raise Basque and Navarrese tax quotas, which were still set at the very modest levels of 1841. This led to violent public demonstrations; the quotas were finally raised, but still remained proportionately well below the taxes paid in the rest of Spain.

It was at this time that the first nucleus of Basque nationalism took form. The founder was a young upper middle class Vizcayan intellectual, Sabino de Arana y Goiri.¹² His family were industrial entrepreneurs and Carlist in political background, and he himself lived the life of a rentier. As has not infrequently been the case with the origins of modern nationalist movements, the Basque 'idea' came to him not at home in Bilbao, but while living in

¹¹ See Fermín de Lasala y Collado, *Ultima etapa de la unidad nacional. Los Fueros vascongados en 1876* (Madrid 1924).

¹² The only history of Basque nationalism is García Venero's *Historia del nacionalismo vasco* (Madrid 1868). The official biography of the movement's founder is Ceferino de Jemein, *Biografía de Arana Goiri'tar e Historia gráfica del Nacionalismo* (Bilbao 1935).

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Catalonia as an 18-year-old student at the University of Barcelona in 1883. Fixation on the concept of Basque nationalism was the product of an identity crisis of a young intellectual of ultra-Catholic background, taught to distrust the Spanish state and its political system, exposed for the first time to the centrifugal (though in their own way integrative) ideas of Catalan regionalism and proto-nationalism. He quickly concluded that cultural identity, material development, and moral and religious salvation could be achieved only through the realization of exclusivist Basque nationalism for the native population of his home region. As he later confessed, when he first conceived the abstract Basque idea he was ignorant of both the Basque language (the Aranas, like nearly all middle and upper-class Basque families, spoke only Castilian) and Basque history; so, free from financial cares, he set out to learn them. The next eight years were devoted to this task during which time Arana made such rapid progress that in 1888 he published in Barcelona a *Gramática elemental del Euzkera bizkaitno* (Basic grammar of Vizcayan Basque), and, after a seven-year absence, returned to Vizcaya. The first formal credo of Basque nationalism was a 138-page booklet that he brought out in 1890 entitled *Bizkaya por su independencia*. At first he attracted only a mere handful of associates, and their labours were concentrated almost exclusively in the Bilbao region of the province of Vizcaya. Arana stressed the independence of each Basque province and his programme, lacking notable support in other parts of the Basque country, was long known simply as *Bizkaitarrismo* (Vizcayanism).

The first nationalist organization was a small 'Centro Vasco' set up in Bilbao in 1893, whence later issued the formal Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV). Unlike the Catalanist parties, composed of fractions and subfractions, always splitting, disappearing, re-appearing, or subdividing against each other with kaleidoscopic rapidity, Basque nationalism has been primarily represented by one fairly continuous organization from 1893 down to the present. Its supporters attribute this to their own sense of unity, responsibility, and loyalty; a more plausible explanation might point to the practical, co-operative, non-individualist spirit of the Basques, which in many ways contrasts with the hyper-individualist, sometimes quasi-anarchist, adversary-oriented features of much of Catalan society. Whatever the reasons, it stands in marked contrast to political Catalanism.

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The founding principles of the Centro Vasco called for an independent republican confederation of the seven Basque provinces, four of them (including Navarre) on the Spanish and three on the French side of the Pyrenees. Each would remain completely autonomous internally. 'Unity of race' was to be maintained as much as possible by restricting Spanish immigration and influences. All the traditional *fueros* would be re-established, but the real moral standard would be provided by total submission to Catholicism, at least for Vizcaya, which was to be 'established on a complete and unconditional subordination of the political to the religious, of the state to the Church'.¹³ Thus Basque nationalism traces a direct line of descent from the *apostólicos* of early nineteenth-century Spain, in contrast to the secularism of most of the Catalanist movement. At the same time, however, Arana rejected political Carlism completely, describing it as the worst enemy of Basque nationalism for having sacrificed Basque interests, as he saw them, to dynastic politics.¹⁴

The Basque nationalist movement first entered electoral politics in 1898 – the year of Spain's defeat – electing Arana Goiri to the provincial assembly of Vizcaya. Beyond that point, however, little progress was made for 20 years.¹⁵ The political elite of the region had a satisfactory relationship with the main Spanish parties; the devoutly Catholic supported variants of Carlism and Integrism; the growing industrial proletariat was slowly being attracted by the Socialist party. A youth group, the Basque Youth of Vizcaya, was formed in 1904 but gained only modest support. In 1910 a small liberal element broke away in protest against the *jelkide* (ultra-clerical) character of the PNV to set up a transient Republican Basque Nationalist Centre. In the following year, the PNV organized a nationalist labour group, the Basque Workers Solidarity (STV), along the lines of nascent Catholic trade unions in other parts of Spain, but at first it was virtually frozen out by the socialists and won the following mainly of a small number of white-collar employees. This paralleled the situation in Catalonia, where regional nationalism never gained a major foothold among the urban workers. There too the only trade union following was

¹³ García Venero, *Nacionalismo vasco*, 282.

¹⁴ Arana y Goiri, *El partido carlista y los Fueros vasco-navarros* (Bilbao 1897; Buenos Aires 1912).

¹⁵ Arana y Goiri died of Addison's disease in 1903 at the age of 38. Curiously, Prat de la Riba also died prematurely of the same malady in 1917.

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among a white-collar union, CADCI, that supported left Catalanism.

The first major opportunity occurred in the crisis year of 1917. Amid growing fiscal and political pressures, the provincial assemblies of the three main provinces petitioned the government for full restoration of foral rights. The Lliga strengthened contacts with the PNV and encouraged it to make a major electoral effort for the first time. During the elections of 1918 100 regionalist candidates stood in various parts of Spain, and the PNV elected 7 parliamentary deputies to Madrid. Yet predominant sentiment in the Basque country and Navarre remained not merely Catholic but also politically conservative, particularly amid the terrorism and proto-revolutionary disturbances of 1919–23. The monarchist forces were reorganized and collaborated with each other to control the remaining elections under the monarchy.¹⁶ In the last regular elections of 1923 the PNV failed to elect a single deputy to the Cortes.

The weakness of the PNV compared with the Catalanist parties was due to several factors, among them the narrowness of the language base of Basque culture and feeling, the greater religiosity and conservatism of the people, the history of successful Basque co-operation with Castile, and the more imaginative and resourceful leadership of the new Basque economic elite. Basque industry adapted itself much more successfully to concentration of capital and joint-stock financing. Its leaders had close connections with Madrid, both political and economic, and thought much more in terms of broader Spanish economics than did Catalan industrial leaders. This was also reflected in the greater willingness shown by upper middle class Basques to be co-opted into the all-Spanish elite by the acceptance of aristocratic titles from the crown.

The Basque claim to uniqueness was founded on language,¹⁷ but in fact the language issue was itself a stumbling block to the movement. Save among sectors of the peasantry, Castilian not Basque was the main language, and the attempted linguistic nationalization movement was received with hostility by important

¹⁶ The major polemicist against nationalism among local politicians was the Vizcayan Liberal Gregorio de Balparda. His three major anti-nationalist publications were *Errores del nacionalismo vasco* (Madrid 1919); *?Federalismo ? !Feudalismo!* (Bilbao 1931); and *La crisis de la nacionalidad y la tradición vacsongada* (Bilbao 1932).

¹⁷ P. Evangelista de Ibero, *Ami vasco* (Bilbao 1906; Buenos Aires 1957).

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elements. Basque literature was a frail growth, represented mainly by a certain amount of poetry and essays;¹⁸ it altogether lacked the abundance, variety, and distinction of neo-Catalan literature, nor would the primitive vocabulary and structure of the tongue have easily permitted more. The two leading prose writers of twentieth-century Spain – Miguel de Unamuno and Pio Baroja – were both bilingual Basques, but both wrote in Castilian and repudiated the Basque nationalist movement.

Support for political Catalanism both expanded and shifted leftward as a result of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship of 1923–30. Though the Basque and Navarrese provincial governments were spared because of their conservatism, the leaders of all other provincial governments were dismissed in 1924 and replaced by state appointees, and the Mancomunidad was dismantled. This intensified middle-class hostility to the Spanish state in Catalonia, while, under the paradoxical policies of the dictatorship, Catalanist cultural activities were allowed to expand more widely than ever before.

The new leader of radical Catalanism was a tall, lean, white-haired sexagenarian, Francesc Macià. Of gentry origin (coming from one of the few truly latifundist families in Catalonia) and a former officer in the army engineer corps, Macià had resigned his commission in middle age to devote himself to Catalanism. His social ideas were vague, his economic knowledge nil, and his political ideology simplistic but extreme. In 1919 he had founded a small Democratic Nationalist Federation of left Catalanists that was, after the start of the dictatorship, transformed into a party called *Estat Català* (Catalan State). Its terrorist section, the Black Flag, planned attempts on the life of Alfonso XIII. Macià himself journeyed to Moscow for Soviet support, attempted an abortive ‘invasion’ of the Pyrenean border in 1926, then in 1927–8 toured Catalan groups in Spanish America, unfurling a self-proclaimed ‘Catalan Constitution’ at an assembly in Havana.

The Primo de Rivera dictatorship destroyed the old Spanish parliamentary system and undermined the moderating power of the monarchy. Division, lack of leadership, and general hostility to the existing state precluded any return to normality under a constitutional monarchy. In August 1930 left Catalanists and

¹⁸ Luis de Michelena, *Historia de la literatura vasca* (Madrid 1960).

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Republican leaders met in San Sebastián and agreed upon a pact whereby a new republican regime would submit the issue of Catalan autonomy to parliamentary decision as soon as feasible.

The monarchy collapsed on 14 April 1931. That same day left Catalanist and left Republican leaders seized control of local government in Catalonia by a bloodless coup and Macià proclaimed the inauguration of the 'Republic of Catalonia within the Democratic Federal Republic of Spain'. An agreement was quickly worked out whereby Catalanists were put in charge of local government in the region by the new Republican authorities in Madrid. Macià was appointed provisional president of a shadow Generalitat (regional government, the term for the executive arm of the traditional Catalan parliament that had earlier been revived by Antonio Maura). A plebiscite on the issue of autonomy was held in August 1931; 80 per cent of the Catalan electorate voted, returning an almost unanimous decision in favour of autonomy. The resultant Statute of Catalan autonomy was, however, pushed through the Spanish Republican parliament only in September 1932, after an abortive right-wing revolt strengthened the hand of the moderate left. The Statute provided for a fully autonomous regional government with an executive, parliament, and police powers of its own, exercising administrative sovereignty over nearly all internal affairs. The elderly Macià was elected president of the Generalitat and during 1933-4 various functions of internal government and administration were progressively transferred from Madrid to Barcelona.

Macià constructed a rather broad left Catalanist coalition known as the Esquerra (left) that swept the first national elections in Catalonia in 1931, routing the Lliga. However, left Catalanism was a form of lower middle class radicalism that had to rely on lower-class votes to defeat the main middle-class Catalanist party, the Lliga. In 1931 the anarcho-syndicalist CNT expanded into a mass revolutionary movement once more and erupted in a series of revolutionary strikes and petty insurrections, both in Catalonia and in other parts of Spain. It viewed Catalanism as selfish middle-class reaction, and the social divisions of 1917-23 quickly reasserted themselves. Conflicts over policy divided the left Catalanists, and in the second national elections (1933) the more moderate Acció Catalana group and several splinter forces ran a ticket separate from the Esquerra, enabling the Lliga to make a comeback,

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winning a majority of the Catalan seats in the Madrid parliament. Shortly after this Macià died, and leadership of the Esquerra passed to the Catalan republican Luis Companys, known for his friendship with the extreme left. In the Catalan local elections of January 1934 the Esquerra, which still controlled the regional government, used fraud and intimidation against Lliga voters, resulting in the withdrawal of Lliga deputies from the 1934 session of the Catalan parliament.

Defeat of the Spanish left in the previous general elections had given control of Spanish affairs to the centre and moderate conservative groups. The Spanish Socialist party, alarmed by what it deemed to be analogies with affairs in central Europe, made plans for insurrection. Meanwhile the Catalan government passed a moderate agrarian reform bill that allowed long-term tenant farmers and sharecroppers to purchase the land they worked. Under the Republican constitution and the autonomy statute, however, such measures were reserved to the central government, while conflicts between the two executives were to be resolved by the Spanish Supreme Court. In June 1934 the court declared the Catalan legislation unconstitutional, but later a compromise was reached and the Lliga, to encourage a climate of coexistence, announced its return to the Catalan parliament at the end of September.

However, radical Catalanists were determined to use the anger aroused by these events, to force the Spanish government to grant Catalonia absolute sovereignty over all its affairs without exception. Preparations were made for a revolt, to coincide with the Socialist insurrection planned for 6 October 1934. Though the latter gained a temporary success in the mining region of Asturias in north-western Spain, the Catalan revolt in Barcelona collapsed in ludicrous farce, the rebels surrendering after a few hours resistance to a single battalion of Spanish troops. The Catalan 'defence minister', Dencàs,¹⁹ made an ignominious exit through an underground tunnel leading from the defence ministry basement into an outlet

¹⁹ Dencàs was the leader of a brand of Catalan fascism based on the Estat Català—Macià's former party—that had become a kind of Catalanist youth movement forming part of the broader Esquerra federation. Dencàs and his Estat Català colleagues had no original ideas, but thought in terms of a single-party totalitarian system for Catalonia based on a sort of Catalan national syndicalism. They planned a war to the death against the CNT but Dencàs was thoroughly disgraced by the 1934 fiasco and later drummed out of the party; in 1936 Estat Català made an effort to move farther to the left.

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of the sewer system. There were numerous unfriendly jokes about the appropriateness of such a *dénouement*. The executive powers of the Generalitat were then suspended by the Republican government and Catalonia was once more placed under central administration. The second phase of political Catalanism had ended in absurd and gratuitous failure.

The establishment of the Republic and the early success of left Catalanism stimulated regionalist or autonomist movements in three other areas: the Basque country, Galicia, and Valencia. Regionalist proclamations were made in Andalusia and Castile as well, but there the movement quickly petered out. A variety of cultural nationalism had developed in Galicia in the nineteenth century, based primarily on the reality of a distinct regional language, Galician, the mother of Portuguese.²⁰ Unlike Catalonia or the Basque country, however, Galicia was a backward agrarian region without industry or general education or selfconsciousness. Galicianism was a rather vague doctrine espoused by a small middle and upper class elite. It never emerged as a political force until the formation of a left Republican Galicianist party (ORGA) in 1930 that became part of the victorious Republican coalition in 1931. It was, however, almost annihilated in the short run by the defeat of the left in the general elections of 1933.

The Valencia region, whose vernacular tongue is a variant of Catalan, underwent a minor Valencian cultural renaissance of its own in the late nineteenth century. Valencian society, despite the language difference, was culturally even more Castilianized than that of Catalonia, the region was smaller and weaker and far less industrialized, though its agriculture – particularly its citrus exports – was the most flourishing in Spain, indeed, in almost any area of the Mediterranean littoral. Autonomist sentiment in Valencia was not intense, but found somewhat muted expression in two groups, the local Valencian autonomist section of the Radical Republicans (who in the 1930s were even less radical than the French Radical Socialists), and the Valencian Regional Right (DRV), the local section of Spain's major party of moderate Catholic conservatism, the CEDA, itself organized on a confederal

²⁰ See José Luis Varela, *Poesía y restauración cultural de Galicia en el siglo XIX* (Madrid 1958).

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basis. There was never any serious effort to organize support for a regional autonomy statute for Valencia.

Basque nationalism, however, became stronger and much more radical under the Republic. The forces of the PNV, which had split in 1921, were reunified in 1930, and formed an electoral alliance with the strong clerical and traditional forces of the Basque country and Navarre that won a majority of the seats in that region in the first Republican elections (1931). Of the resulting 'Vasconavarro' bloc of 15 deputies, 6 were Basque nationalists. In the 1931 climate of anticlerical republicanism, Basque regionalism seemed to promise defence of Catholicism and maintenance of the social order. For that reason the governing left Republican coalition looked askance at the Basques, while favouring Catalanism. Though all the 'Vasconavarro' group withdrew after passage of the anticlerical constitution in October 1931, the PNV, now led by the energetic José Antonio de Aguirre (among other things a popular former soccer star), decided that co-operation with the Republican regime, anti-clerical or not, was the surest means of gaining autonomy. This led to a split between the PNV and the clerical right in 1932. When a Basque autonomy statute that would include Navarre was submitted to the vote of an assembly of Basque municipal governments in June 1932, the Navarrese representatives rejected it. Navarre was the most rural and traditionalist of all the Basque regions; from that time its politics were dominated by the Carlists, who became increasingly opposed to the PNV because of its 'opportunism', later termed treachery. In the following year a second autonomy project for the provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, and Alava was submitted to a popular referendum. The percentage of votes in favour was 90 in Guipuzcoa, 88 in Vizcaya, but only 46 in Alava. This reflected not so much opposition to autonomy as such in largely rural Alava, but fear of domination by wealthier, industrial, urban, and increasingly more assertive Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa.

This frustration of Basque nationalism coincided with the defeat of the left in the 1933 Spanish elections and the growing polarization of the political system. The Socialists, preparing their own insurrection, for the first time encouraged and supported the still Catholic and relatively conservative PNV. The Basque nationalist trade union movement, STV, was expanding and began to show a new militancy. In turn the PNV supported the intransigent stand

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of the Catalan Generalitat on the Catalan agrarian reform law, and Basque municipal representatives tried to hold an illegal assembly in September 1934 to reassert the fiscal independence originally provided by the *conciertos económicos*. The STV supported the general strike called by the socialist trade unions, the UGT, in support of the October insurrection; it lasted longer in the Basque country than in Catalonia.

With left Catalanism defeated and partially proscribed, the moderate Lliga resumed its original role of principal representative of Catalanist interests. Though the regional government remained suspended until 1936, the transfer of powers originally stipulated by the autonomy statute was continued, several more services formally passing under regional control in 1935. This brief period of supposed reaction was in fact so liberal with regard to Catalan interests that opponents of the continued transfer of powers resigned from the cabinet and broke up the only strong government of the year (the Lerroux-Gil Robles ministry of mid-1935) in a vain effort to stop it. For the Basques, 1935 was a time of increased alienation and even of radicalization, as the majority of Basque nationalists adopted a position of sympathy for the defeated revolutionaries and showed renewed determination to break with the existing structure of Republican politics.

The final Spanish elections of February 1936 were conducted under conditions of extreme polarization. The Catalanist left (Esquerra and kindred groups) and the Galician ORGA formed part of the Popular Front, while the DRV and the Lliga were important elements in the opposing National Front, known in its Catalan variant as the Catalan Front of Order. Only the PNV stood apart. Its extreme position on regional nationalism precluded it from joining the right bloc, while its strong Catholicism and fairly conservative social policies prevented it from joining the anti-Catholic, proto-revolutionary Popular Front. Some pressure was exerted by the Vatican in favour of the former,²¹ but the PNV stood fast. The Popular Front swept the elections in all four Catalan provinces and in three of the four Galician provinces. The Basque nationalists got little better than a third of the vote in the three main Basque provinces, but the division of left and right

²¹ Cf. Juan de Iturralde (pseud.), *En Catolicismo y la cruzada de Franco* (Vienne 1955), I.

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in the key districts of Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa enabled the PNV to win a majority of the parliamentary seats in those two provinces.

The five months from the elections to the outbreak of the Civil War in July 1936 were a period of increasing turmoil and ultimately irreconcilable dissensions. Since the initiative at this time lay mainly with the Socialists, there was relatively less disorder in Catalonia, where the working classes were in their majority anarcho-syndicalist, than elsewhere, though many observers were convinced that this was merely a lull before the storm. The Basque country and Galicia were also somewhat less disturbed, the main foci of agitation being Madrid and the central and southern parts of Spain. The last prime minister before the deluge was a leader of the Galician ORGA, the provocative, inept, tubercular Casares Quiroga. His disastrous leadership (if indeed the word can be used at all in this context) guaranteed the breakdown of the Spanish system. He did encourage the drawing up of a Galician autonomy statute that was approved by a large majority of Galician voters less than two weeks before the storm broke.

The course of events in Catalonia and the Basque country during the Civil War has been traced in earlier accounts²² and need not be repeated here. The Spanish state system collapsed almost completely in the face of the dual onslaught of the insurgent military and the revolutionary left. The western half of Spain, including Galicia, quickly fell into the hands of the rebel Spanish Nationalists. In most of the nominally Republican zone, power was seized by the strongest local leftwing groups. From 19 July 1936 until early May 1937, Catalonia exercised virtual de facto independence. But the situation was anomalous, for the strongest force was not the Generalitat, directed by the left Catalanists, but the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. To try to channel and legalize the social and economic revolution and cope with the Civil War, the CNT was persuaded to enter a coalition Catalan government in September 1936. A new structure of industrial collectivization was then worked out to achieve a partly collective, partly private economy. The Lliga, as a conservative group, was completely destroyed, but even the radical-posturing Esquerra, with its lower middle class clientele and its concern for Catalanist sovereignty, found it impossible

²² See for example, Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London 1961); Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War* (Princeton 1964); and the present writer's *The Spanish Revolution* (New York 1970).

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to maintain collaboration with the revolutionary, anti-Catalan-nationalist CNT. In the resulting struggle, the Esquerra found an ally in the rapidly expanding Catalan Communist party (PSUC).²³ When it came to a showdown in May 1937, however, the CNT could be controlled only with the assistance of the re-organized Spanish Republican state. During the first year of the Civil War populous, industrial Catalonia, preoccupied by its own internal turmoil, had contributed very little to the leftist military effort. During the second half of 1937, the focus of the war shifted to the north-east and the Republican capital was moved to Barcelona. Central government control steadily increased, to the intense annoyance of Catalanists. The last phase of the Civil War was a period of deepening disillusion and bitterness, as extremist Catalan politics – for the third time in a single generation – succumbed to its apparently inherent tendency to self-destruction.

The Basque experience was somewhat different. The conservative provinces of Navarre and Alava quickly became Nationalist bulwarks. In Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa, strongholds of the PNV, provincial governing juntas were set up jointly by the PNV and the leftist parties. The first months of the Civil War were a time of inaction as Basque nationalists contributed little or nothing to the war effort but jockeyed for concessions from Madrid. A Basque autonomy statute, promulgated in October 1936, created the autonomous government of Euzkadi (the Basque region) under the leadership of the 32-year old chief of the PNV, Aguirre, who presided over a government that included five Basque nationalists²⁴ and five representatives of the leftist parties in the Basque country.

²³ In 1932 the Comintern had organized a tiny Communist party of Catalonia. In mid-1936 this was merged into an expanded Unified Socialist party of Catalonia (PSUC), absorbing the Catalan Socialist group and several splinter parties and becoming the first successful example of the 'unified socialist party' under communist hegemony that had long been preached by the Comintern. During the Civil War the PSUC increased enormously in size and influence. The indigenous Communist party of Catalonia, as distinct from the Russian Communist apparatus in Catalonia, was the independent Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM), formed by Catalan Trotskyists and independent revolutionary Catalan Marxists in 1935, and suppressed by the Spanish Republican government in 1937.

²⁴ Of these, four were representatives of the PNV and one of the left Basque *Acción Nacionalista Vasca*, a weak outgrowth of the schism of 1910 that enjoyed little support in the Basque country.

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Since most of Guipuzcoa was being lost to the Nationalists, autonomous nationalism in power soon found itself reduced to the condition of *bizkaitarrismo* in which it had begun.

Vizcaya was the only region of Republican Spain in which social and economic conditions underwent no revolutionary change. The Basque government did 'control' or 'register' (*incautar*) Vizcayan industry, but no attempt was made at nationalization or collectivization. Vizcaya was able to provide a certain amount of economic assistance during 1936-7 to the revolutionary juntas controlling Santander and Asturias to the west, whose anarchist and socialist leaders still looked on Basque nationalists as reactionaries. Only in Vizcaya did the communists escape central Comintern control. The autonomous Communist party of Euzkadi was led by native Basques who co-operated fully with Aguirre's government, thereby incurring censure from the central communist leadership.²⁵

Completely isolated geographically from the main Republican zone, the Basque regime set to work to build its own armed forces. In this it was greatly handicapped by lack of trained military personnel and shortage of equipment. However, Aguirre refused to place the Vizcayan front under central Republican control. When finally the Nationalist army launched a major offensive against the northern Republican zone, the autonomous sectors went down to defeat one by one. The Basques resisted gallantly but were overwhelmed by superior skill and equipment. Equally important, they were overwhelmed by fellow Basques. The principal shock units of the Nationalist army that overcame Vizcaya were the proto-Carlist Navarrese brigades, fired with holy zeal against the 'enemies of God' and Basque 'traitors'. The Spanish Civil War was also a civil war among the Basques, of whom as many supported Franco's Spanish Nationalists as Basque nationalism.²⁶

After Bilbao fell on 19 June 1937, the remainder of the Basque forces were driven westward into Santander province. There remained only two chances of regaining Basque autonomy: the

²⁵ Cf. the denunciation by Dolores Ibarruri, a leading Spanish communist (and a Navarrese Basque who grew up in Bilbao), in her *They Shall Not Pass* (New York 1966), 275 ff.

²⁶ It must be said of Aguirre, to his credit, that he was fairly candid about this. In a conversation with the author in Paris in October 1958 he estimated that in the Basque country 'one-third of the population supported us, one-third opposed us, and one-third were neutral'.

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military victory of the Spanish left or a separate peace with Franco under Italian protection. Early in the Civil War Mussolini's representatives had begun to bargain with elements of the *Estat Català* sector of Catalanism about the splitting off of an 'independent' Catalonia under Italian protection. These manoeuvres were exposed and came to naught. A similar effort was made in the spring and summer of 1937 vis-à-vis the Basques, with greater hope of success, given the Basques' religiosity and relative conservatism. The first meeting between a representative of Aguirre and an Italian consul was held at St Jean de Luz on 11 May 1937. However, the Basque government made little effort to negotiate more seriously until after the fall of Bilbao. A representative was sent to Rome early in July, but even then Aguirre's principal aim seems to have been to play for time in which to withdraw the remainder of Basque forces from the steadily shrinking northern Republican zone. Notes were exchanged and conversations continued through July and August while the position of the remaining Republican forces in Santander grew desperate and their morale sagged. The dénouement of this affair remains obscure. There is some evidence that the leaders of the PNV would have preferred a deal with Mussolini, for they were never fully at ease in their alliance with the anti-Catholic revolutionary Spanish left. Aguirre, however, as leader of all the coalition forces, avoided any such overall agreement. Finally, the Basque forces refused orders by the Republican military command to retreat farther westward into the final Republican northern enclave of Asturias, and surrendered in Santander at the close of August. An agreement was made with the local commander of the Italian troops who played a significant role in the Spanish Nationalist offensive, but since the Basque regime had failed to negotiate a political arrangement with Mussolini, the latter felt himself in no position to intervene with Franco, and Spanish Nationalist authorities immediately stepped in to take charge of the Basque prisoners.²⁷

The Civil War thus brought the complete defeat of all the Spanish regional nationalist movements. The only part of Spain to enjoy

²⁷ This whole sequence of negotiations remains murky in the extreme. My capsule account is based on notes from the unpublished memoirs of a leading figure in Basque nationalism whom I am not at liberty to identify.

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distinct status under the Franco regime has been the province of Navarre, whose traditionalist Catholic population, hostile to Basque nationalism, constituted the most stalwart bastion of the Spanish Nationalist movement; since 1939 it has been granted special tax and tariff privileges. Though the Franco regime has always pledged itself to develop and unify Spanish society, regional differences during the past 30 years have only been reduced, not eliminated. Major steps were taken during the 1960s to begin industrialization of some of the largely rural provinces, and Madrid has become a major industrial centre for the first time in its history. In general, however, the focus of Spanish industry still remains in the Basque country, Catalonia, and Asturias. The south and west still remain essentially agrarian and backward. During the 1960s Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa have enjoyed annual per capita incomes at approximately the French level, or nearly twice that of the rest of Spain. Thus the economic gap between the Basque country and the rest of Spain is possibly greater now than it was in 1936, while the use of the Basque language itself continues to decline.

Catalonia suffered severe cultural repression during the 1940s, as nearly all public, cultural, and educational outlets for the Catalan language were prohibited and big placards in the larger cities exhorted the populace to 'Speak the language of the Empire!' As Catalan industry began to expand once more in the 1950s, large-scale immigration from other parts of the country was resumed, shrinking the proportionate Catalan-speaking population base. Moreover, the traditional structural deficiencies of Catalan industry have persisted, with the prevalence of small-scale production units that compete less effectively in a modernizing Spanish economy than does, for example, larger scale, more enterprising Basque industry. Catalan finance has still remained surprisingly weak, its resources not proportionate to the total weight of the Catalan economy in that of Spain as a whole, while Basque finance is the most active and influential in all of Spain.

However, with the relaxation of government restrictions during the 1950s, there began to occur in Catalonia what might be termed a second renaissance. Catalan cultural activity blossomed once more, and, since the majority of the inhabitants of the region still used the language as their daily household tongue, soon reached an impressive volume. Eventually one hour of daily school instruction in Catalan was authorized, and there was a great increase in

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regional cultural activity and self-consciousness in Galicia and Valencia as well.

Regional nationalist movements remained active in the political opposition both at home and in the emigration. They have given rise to an almost bewildering variety of offshoots, splits, fusions, reorganizations and splinter parties. It was typical that at one point in the 1940s a self-styled National Council of Catalonia maintained its own 'diplomatic headquarters' in Mexico City, entirely apart from the Generalitat's 'Government-in-exile' in France. The Basque government-in-exile has maintained residence in Paris for the past 25 years, apart from the official Spanish Republican Government-in-exile in Mexico City. Separate regionalist socialist parties, entirely distinct from the regional sections of the Spanish Communist and Socialist parties, have been organized in Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque country. The main Galicianist organization maintains headquarters in Mexico City. Of all these groups, the one that has gained most notoriety in recent years is the small Basque revolutionary terrorist band, ETA (Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna – Basque Land and Liberty), formed in 1953. ETA was organized originally because its youthful founders deemed the PNV too conservative and the Basque section of the Spanish Socialist and Communist parties insufficiently Basque. As a self-styled Basque nationalist revolutionary Marxist organization, it broke off contact with the PNV in 1959 and carried most of the clandestine PNV youth movement with it. During the late 1960s ETA carried out a series of bombings and bank robberies, climaxed by the murder of the chief of police of San Sebastian. This resulted in the arrest of many in the organization. Regional nationalism remains deeply rooted in Catalonia, but it is more shrill and fanatical in the Basque country, in part precisely because of its minority position there.

In the first generation following the second world war, with the apparent decline of nationalism in Europe, it might have been thought that the Franco regime's policy of ignoring and simply repressing regional nationalism would succeed in the long run because it was being reinforced by other less artificial influences in contemporary European life inimical to the nationalist ethos. Events of recent years in other west European countries challenge any such interpretation. Just as the nationalist movements of small peoples elsewhere originally encouraged regional nationalism in

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early twentieth-century Spain, so the recrudescence of Flemish, Breton, and Scottish nationalism in the Europe of the 1960s has further encouraged regionalist feeling in Spain. Economic development alone does not necessarily blunt nationalist sentiment. As Francesc Cambó emphasized in 1934 in one of his last major parliamentary speeches, Catalanism has never been primarily a matter of 'interests', economic or other, but of feelings and sentiment. The cultural and social changes of the second half of the twentieth century have not buried the nationalist impulse but have sharpened identity crises and aggravated moral and spiritual problems. The issue of regional nationalism remains very much alive in the public affairs of Spain, present and future.