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**CLERICAL OPPOSITION TO THE FRANCO REGIME IN
THE DIOCESES OF BARCELONA, VITORIA AND
BILBAO AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (1939-1975)**

Margaret Woods de Vivero

Submitted to the Department of Modern History

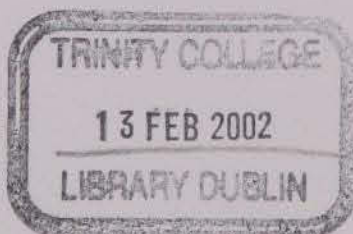
Trinity College Dublin

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2001

CLERICAL OPPOSITION TO THE FRANCO REGIME IN
THE DIOCESES OF BARCELONA, VITORIA AND
BILBAO AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (1939-1975)

Margaret Woods de Vries



THESIS 6531

Submitted to the Department of Modern History

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August 2001

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This thesis is entirely the result of my own research and has not been submitted to any other university.

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Summary

This thesis is a study of the origins, development and nature of clerical dissidence in the Basque Country and Catalonia during the Franco regime. The dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona had the highest incidence of clerical opposition to the regime in the whole country and one of the aims of the thesis is to investigate why this was so.

The Basque clergy had been on the losing side in the Civil War and as a result they, along with thousands of other Basques who had opposed the military uprising of July 1936, suffered terrible repression at the hands of the victorious Francoists in the immediate post-war years. The thesis suggests that the experience and the legacy of the Civil War were crucial factors in conditioning Basque priests' attitudes to the dictatorship. Criticism of the regime and the Church-State alliance by the Basque clergy was constant from the end of the Civil War until the end of the dictatorship. The thesis reveals how the leadership of clerical dissent was assumed by a younger generation of Basque priests in the late fifties and sixties who had no personal memory of the Civil War but who found new reasons for opposing the dictatorship in the social, cultural and political repression of those years.

Clerical opposition to the regime in Catalonia was less directly rooted in the Civil War experience. The thesis examines why and suggests that the war experience actually delayed the emergence of dissent in the Catalan case. Although clerical opposition was much less dramatic in Barcelona than in Bilbao similar actions were organised in the sixties by a sector of the clergy who, like their Basque colleagues, felt compelled to publicly repudiate a regime which was increasingly resorting to strong-arm tactics to crush the Opposition, and to protest at the silence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the face of the regime's violation of human rights normally defended by the Church.

The thesis throws new light on the relationship between religion and regional nationalisms, demonstrates the important contribution of dissident priests to the struggle for the return of democracy and regional autonomy to Spain, and argues that dissenting priests played a significant role in the erosion of the Church-State alliance and in the modernisation of the Spanish Church along the lines of the teachings of John XXIII and Vatican II.

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Abbreviations

AAM	Arxiu de l'Abadia de Montserrat (Barcelona)
ABL	Archivo de los Benedictinos de Lazkano (Guipúzcoa)
ACEP	Arxiu Centre d'Estudis Pastorals (Barcelona)
AGA	Archivo General de la Administración (Alcalá de Henares, Madrid)
AGGCB	Arxiu General del Govern Civil de Barcelona
AHCJC	Arxiu Històric de la Companyia de Jesús de Catalunya (San Cugat, Barcelona)
AHPV	Archivo Histórico Provincial de Vizcaya (Bilbao)
ANC	Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya (Barcelona)
APCC	Arxiu Provincial dels Caputxins de Catalunya (Barcelona)
CEHI	Centre d'Estudis Històrics Internacionals (Barcelona)
EBL	Euskal Biblioteka Labayru (Derio, Bilbao)
IDTP	Instituto Diocesano de Teología y Pastoral (Bilbao)

Acronyms

AC	Acción Católica - Catholic Action: a movement for the Catholic laity officially launched by Cardinal Moreno in 1881.
ACO	Acció Catòlica Obrera - Workers' Catholic Action: founded in Barcelona in 1956 as an alternative to HOAC for former Jocistas; 35 groups in diocese in 1963.
BEOBI	Boletín Eclesiástico del Obispado de Bilbao - Ecclesiastical Bulletin of the Diocese of Bilbao.
BOABA	Boletín Oficial Arzobispado de Barcelona - Official Bulletin of the Archdiocese of Barcelona.
BOOV	Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Vitoria - Ecclesiastical Bulletin of the Diocese of Vitoria
BOPE	Boletín de la Oficina de Prensa de Euskadi (Euzko-Deya) - Bulletin of the Press Office of Euskadi. Published by the PNV in Paris from 1958 to 1975.
CC	Crist i Catalunya - Christ and Catalonia. A pre-political movement founded by young Catholic militants in Barcelona in 1954.

CC de BB	Comunidades de Base – Base Christian Communities. Grass-roots groups associated with Liberation Theology. First appeared in Latin America around 1968. They attempted to get back to the ‘basics’ of Christianity by stripping off the accumulated clutter of centuries and returning to a truly scriptural faith. They were evangelical, liberating and prophetic groups opting preferentially for the poor in society. They operated on the fringes of the institutional Church.
CCMA	Comitè Central de Milícies Antifeixistes – Central Committee of Anti-Facist Militias. Created by the Catalan Government at the end of July 1936.
CCOO	Comisiones Obreras – Workers’ Commissions: set up in 1956-60 in Asturias, Barcelona, Vizcaya and other industrialised regions as <i>ad hoc</i> factory committees; characterized in their early years by a heterogeneity of political beliefs and an unusual cooperation between Catholics and Communists.
CCP	Comunitats Cristianes Populares – Popular Christian Communities. Groups associated with CpS.

CEE	Conferencia Episcopal Española - Spanish Episcopal Conference: organisation of all Spanish bishops founded in 1966 as a result of the Second Vatican Council. It gave the hierarchy a national rather than just diocesan voice.
CICF	Centro de Información Católica Femenino. An educational institute for the training of girls for non-university careers set up in Barcelona in 1951.
CISC	Confederación Internacional de Sindicatos Cristianos – International Federation of Christian Unions. The Spanish JOC was an affiliate.
CNT	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores - National Confederation of Work. Anarchist union federation founded in 1911, inspired ideologically by the FAI.
CpS	Cristianos por el Socialismo – Christians for Socialism. Political movement that originated in Chile in 1970. First groups set up in Barcelona in January 1973.
ETA	Euskadi ta Askatasuna – Basque Homeland and Liberty. A separatist organisation founded in 1959 that embarked on assassination policies in 1968.

FAI	Federación Anarquista Iberica - Iberian Anarchist Federation: ideological guide of the CNT.
FJCC	Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya - Federation of Christian Youth of Catalonia. Founded in 1931 as a youth group dedicated to spiritual devotion, religious proselytizing, and attention to social problems. It had almost 18,000 members in 1936.
FOC	Front Obrer de Catalunya – Workers’ Front of Catalonia. Political party founded in 1961 by young middle class professionals and some JOC militants. On the occasion of the 1962 strikes it was mobilised to provide industrial action with political content.
GCPDDH	Grup Cristià de Promoció y Defensa dels Drets Humans – Christian Group for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights. Informal groups set up in Barcelona in the early 1970s.

HOAC

Hermanidad Obrera Masculina de Acción Católica - Workers' Brotherhood of Catholic Action: specialised part of Catholic Action founded in 1946

ICESB

Institut Catòlic d'Estudis Socials de Barcelona: created by an episcopal decree of 19 January 1951, it carried out a number of studies into the social and religious problems affecting Barcelona's working class. It also organised courses and seminars on Catholic Social Doctrine.

JAC

Joventut Agrícola Católica: the agrarian equivalent of JOC in Catalonia.

JARC

Juventud Agraria Rural Católica: the agrarian equivalent of JOC. It was known as *Herri Gaztedi* in the Basque Country.

JEC

Joventut Estudiantil Catòlic: specialised Catholic Action movement for university students.

JIC

Juventud Independiente Católica: specialised Catholic Action movement for young professionals.

JAL

JOAC	Juventud Obrera de Acción Católica - Young Workers of Catholic Action: specialised branch of Catholic Action founded in 1946. Changed its name to JOC in 1956.
JOC	Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne - Christian Workers' Youth: founded by Fr. Joseph Cardijn in Belgium in 1925.
OSE	Organización Sindical Español- Spanish Syndicate Organisation. Francoist 'Vertical' State Union.
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasca - Basque Nationalist Party. Catholic political party founded in 1891.
POUM	Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista - Workers' Party of Marxist Unification; set up in Barcelona in November 1935.
PSUC	Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña - United Socialist Party of Catalonia: set up on 21 July 1936 as a result of the merger between the Unió Socialista de Catalunya, the Catalan Federation of the PSOE, the Partit Comunista de Catalunya and Partit Català Proletari.
SAL	Secretariat d'Apostolat Laïcal - Secretariat for the Lay Apostolate. Created in March 1966.

SDEUB	Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants de la Universitat de Barcelona – Democratic Students' Union of the University of Barcelona. Illegal student union created in March 1966.
SEU	Sindicato Español de Universitarios - Spanish University Students Union. Membership was compulsory.
SIR	Servicio de Información Religiosa – Service of Religious Information. Clandestine publication produced by reactionary priests in the Diocese of Bilbao from 1973 to 1976.
SOV	Solidaridad de Obreos Vascos - Basque Workers' Solidarity: Basque Catholic Unions founded in 1911, associated with the PNV; also called Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos (STV).
SPI	Servicio Privado de Información – Private Information Service. Bulletin with restricted circulation produced by the Media and Social Communications Office of the diocese of Bilbao from 1974 to 1975.

TOP	Tribunal de Orden Público - Tribunal of Public Order. Special court established in December 1963 composed of civil judges to deal with most categories of nominal political subversion or political crimes. Its work replaced most of what had previously been done by court-martial and the Special Tribunal for Repression of Masonry and Communism that had operated since 1940.
UDC	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya - Democratic Union of Catalonia. Christian-Democrat party founded in November 1931. Attracted sectors of the 'petita burgesia' because it was progressive, but not anti-clerical. Its members often belonged to FJCC. Reorganised clandestinely in 1941.
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores - General Union of Workers: Socialist unions affiliated to the Spanish Socialist Party. Founded in 1882.
USO	Clandestine union started by a group of young workers in Rentería in Guipúzcoa in 1960; many members were former Jocistas and Hoacistas.
VOJ (VVOO)	Vanguardia Obrera Juvenil - Young Worker Vanguard; organisation for young workers organised by the Jesuits in the 1950s.

Introduction

This thesis is a study of clerical opposition to the Franco regime in the dioceses of Vitoria, Bilbao and Barcelona after the Civil War. The initial reason why these dioceses were selected was because most general histories of the Franco regime and of the Spanish Catholic Church in the twentieth century mention that dissident Basque and Catalan clergy were an important source of opposition to the dictatorship. In the case of the Catalan clergy dissidence was centred in the diocese of Barcelona and was a phenomenon mainly of the sixties. However, in the Basque case it was spread over the dioceses of Bilbao and San Sebastián principally, although it was also present, but to a far lesser extent, in the diocese of Vitoria and in the neighbouring diocese of Pamplona in Navarre. Furthermore, opposition by Basque priests to Franco and his 'National Movement' was unbroken since the start of the Civil War in 1936. This thesis therefore focuses on Vitoria up to 1950 and thereafter primarily on the diocese of Bilbao, which along with diocese of San Sebastián was carved out of Vitoria in that year. There were two main reasons why Bilbao seemed more interesting than the others for a comparative study with Barcelona: firstly, the most serious actions of protest took place there in the sixties and secondly, this diocese too is located in a highly industrialised region and the problems of the working class seemed to have been a prime source of clerical opposition here, as in Barcelona. It was clearly no coincidence that clerical opposition occurred in dioceses located in regions which had briefly enjoyed political autonomy during the Second Republic. Rather, it suggested that Basque and Catalan nationalist sentiment among the clergy was likely to have been another major cause of dissidence.

Since work began on this thesis Annabella Barroso's doctoral thesis on oppositional priests in the Basque Country in the period 1960-1975 has been published.¹ Her study differs greatly from this in that it encompasses the three Basque dioceses and the timescale is much shorter. Nevertheless, Chapter III of this thesis has benefited from the fruit of her labour and is acknowledged accordingly in footnotes. This thesis therefore represents the first in-depth study of oppositional priests in

¹Annabella Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo la atenta mirada del régimen franquista* (Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer, 1995).

Barcelona diocese and the first comparative analysis of the origin and development of Catalan and Basque clerical dissidence in the period 1939-1975. It also contributes a considerable amount of new and original information on dissident priests in Bilbao.

The opening chapter of the thesis seeks to show how in the case of the Basque clergy the roots of opposition to the Franco regime lie in the Civil War experience. In the Catalan case the war experience of the Church was very different and it prevented the appearance of clerical dissent for almost two decades. Yet both the dioceses of Vitoria and Barcelona found themselves in the Republican zone after 18 July 1936. In the former the clergy supported the decision of the overwhelming majority of Basques to oppose the military coup and this was the main reason why the Church scarcely suffered attacks by left-wing Republican elements. However, after the Basque Country fell to the Nationalists in June 1937 hundreds of priests were hunted down and severely punished for having refused to join Franco's so called 'Crusade' for God and the Fatherland. In Catalonia the clergy were identified with the forces of conservatism and were widely seen as enemies of the Republic.² As a result they suffered a most horrendous religious persecution at the hands of some of the supporters of the Second Republic. This thesis argues that in both cases the war left a legacy which deeply influenced clerical attitudes to the regime, not just of those priests who had actually experienced the war but of the future generation who had not yet been born or were too young at the time to have any personal recollection of it. Clerical opposition to the regime in the sixties and early seventies cannot be fully explained without reference to the Civil War.

Most Catholics in Spain (with the exception of the majority of the Basques) and abroad viewed the Nationalist cause as a Crusade pure and simple. A sizeable literature developed in this vein during 1937-38, devoted to justifying the initial rebellion, the concept of the just war, and the crusading quality of the Nationalist Movement.³ Bishop Enrique Plá y Deniel of Salamanca, who became Primate of Spain in 1940, was

² Although the Catalan clergy had been deeply involved in the first manifestations of regional sentiment in the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its initial enthusiasm was tempered by the openly secularist orientation of the regional government, the *Generalitat*, established during the Second Republic and by widespread fear of social revolution.

³ See list of selection of articles and books in Feliciano Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos en la España de Franco* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1991), 38.

one of the earliest and most important proponents of the Crusade theory among the hierarchy.⁴ His pastoral letter 'The Two Cities' which was published on 30 September 1936 described the war as a Crusade in which Nationalist troops were fighting to save Christian Spain from the laicising onslaught of the Second Republic:

'Our Christian youth have enlisted as volunteers in the fight for God and for Spain. For God and for Spain they have spilt their blood. The same thing happened in 1808, but afterwards the Cortes of Cadiz to a large extent squandered so much spilt blood. The foreign spirit, which was defeated by arms, infected the Spanish state. God forbid the same should happen again. A secular Spain is no longer Spain.'⁵

The major apologists of the new regime in the 1940s also insistently equated Spanish identity and tradition with Catholicism, thereby creating an ideology that later came to be described by commentators as National Catholicism. One of the principal ideologues of National-Catholicism was Manuel García Morente (1886-1942), who had been a dean at the University of Madrid from 1931 to 1936. In 1937 he converted to Catholicism – a very rare occurrence among the intelligentsia in Spain at that time – and he was ordained a priest in 1940. Between 1938 and his death in 1942 he gave a series of conferences in Argentina and Spain in which he expounded the National-Catholicism philosophy.⁶ In his lectures he declared that:

'Spain is essentially identical with the Christian religion ... Spain is constituted of Christian faith and Iberian blood. Therefore between the Spanish nation and Catholicism there exists a profound and essential identity.'

⁴ He died in 1968.

⁵Quoted in Alfonso Botti, *Cielo y dinero. El nacionalcatolicismo en España. 1881-1975* (Madrid: Alianza, 1992), 92.

⁶Manuel García Morente, *Ideas para una filosofía de la Historia de España* (Madrid: Universidad de Madrid, 1943).

He also argued that the recent 'Crusade' of 1936-1939 against liberals, socialists, communists, and anarchists had emulated the achievements of the earlier Crusades against Moors and Jews, and that 'Spain is again the chosen people of God'. Spain had rediscovered its divine mission in the world, which was 'the defence of the Christian faith'.⁷ Another ideologue, José Pemartín, wrote in 1940 that:

'National Spanish Catholicism ... was formed just as Spain was entering the Sixteenth Century. It is in this historical-political Catholicism that the source and roots of our nationhood are to be found. ... One cannot be a Spanish nationalist if one is not – implicitly or explicitly – a "Sixteenth Century Catholic." Every political movement that believes itself to be nationalistic must be, in Spain, "Sixteenth Century Catholic."'⁸

As William Callahan points out, these and hundreds of similar affirmations of National Catholicism made in the post-war years represented nothing new in the vocabulary of Spanish Catholicism: 'Indeed they had been in circulation for more than a century ... The idea of a Catholic Spain victorious over its enemies and a bastion of Christian civilisation ready to embark on a vast campaign of clerical reconquest in fulfilment of the nation's "universal destiny" reflected the historic preoccupations of Spanish Catholicism honed to sharpness by the conflict. ... Insofar as there was anything novel about the romantic image of a triumphant Catholic Spain and its identification with a regime that apparently embodied its values, it lay in the militancy with which it was projected to the Spanish public and the world.'⁹ In the final section of Chapter I of the thesis we shall examine how the ecclesiastical and civil authorities attempted to use the ideology of National-Catholicism to indoctrinate the inhabitants of Catalonia and the Basque Country with a sense of Spanish patriotism.

⁷ Quotes from García Morente's lectures in Frances Lannon, *Privilege, Persecution, and Prophecy. The Catholic Church in Spain 1875-1975* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 220-1.

⁸ José Pemartín, *¿Qué es lo nuevo?* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1940). Quoted in Rafael Díaz Salazar, *Iglesia, Dictadura y Democracia. Catolicismo y Sociedad en España (1953-1979)* (Madrid: Ediciones HOAC, 1981), 70-1.

Franco had hoped to sign a Concordat with the Holy See soon after the war ended, but the Vatican was wary of a formal relationship with the Spanish regime after its recent experiences with Germany and Italy. The first general agreement between the two, which was worked out in 1941, fell far short of a Concordat. It was mainly concerned with the appointment of bishops and it granted the Head of State the right to make the final nomination after a complicated process of consultation with the Nuncio and the Holy See.¹⁰ It also contained a commitment on the part of the Spanish Government to sign a new Concordat as soon as possible and to observe the first four articles of the Concordat of 1851 in the meantime. Further agreements were signed in 1946 and 1950 on other ecclesiastical appointments, state funding for seminaries and theology faculties and army chaplaincies.¹¹ The Church's support was vital in legitimising the rule of Franco both within Spain and abroad during the period of international ostracism that followed the ending of the Second World War and the defeat of the Axis powers, whom Spain had supported. However, as the Cold War developed America began to view Spain as a potentially important bulwark against the spread of Communism and simultaneously a thaw began in the attitudes of the other western democracies. On 4 November 1950 the United Nations revoked its diplomatic boycott and on 16 November the Truman Administration approved a loan to Spain of \$62.5 million. In 1952 Spain was admitted to UNESCO and on 26 September 1953 the United States signed three executive agreements with the Spanish government that together made up the Pact of Madrid. These agreements provided for mutual defence and military aid to Spain, the construction and use of three airbases and one naval base for a ten-year period, and further economic assistance. While negotiating these agreements with the United States, the regime redoubled its efforts to complete its recognition by the Holy See. The long-awaited new Concordat was finally signed on 27 August 1953, thus virtually coinciding with the signing of the Pact of Madrid. Most of the provisions of the Concordat merely ratified the *status quo* that had been

⁹William J. Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain 1875-1998* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 383.

¹⁰ 'Convenio entre la Santa Sede y el Gobierno Español' (7 junio 1941). Text in Vicente Cárcel Ortí (ed.), *Historia de la Iglesia en España* (Madrid: BAC, 1979), vol. v, 740-1.

¹¹Texts of all these agreements in *ibid.*, 742-54.

established between Church and State since 1939.¹² The signing of the Concordat marked the apogee both of Church-State relations and of National Catholicism. Franco presented the Concordat to the Cortes with a speech in which he reiterated the premises of the National Catholicism ideology:

‘The Catholic religion is the great moral force which has formed the collective soul of our nation, ... throughout the centuries our Catholic faith has been the corner stone of our nationality. ... Heterodoxy has always been an exotic plant among us, cultivated by force but never taking root among the Spaniards, not even in times as propitious as during the Second Republic. ... The Spaniard cannot conceive of a stable national situation, and even less of a prosperous one, if it is not based on a perfect coordination of the respective missions and aims of Church and State. ... It is impossible to divide the two powers of Church and State because both converge in fulfilling the destiny assigned by Providence to our people.’¹³

In spite of Franco’s triumphalist rhetoric the first fissures were already appearing in Church-State relations. In addition, although it seemed at that moment that the Catholic Spain of tradition longed for by the new regime and the bishops was well on its way to being restored, in actual fact the religious revival was strongest in those regions and among those Spaniards who had never been fully secularised in the first place. The poverty stricken rural south and the urban workers remained as estranged from the Church as they had ever been. This led many young priests based in working class neighbourhoods in the industrialised cities of Bilbao and Barcelona to conclude that the Church’s alliance with a regime that was perceived by the workers as oppressing them was the main cause of their persisting irreligiousness.

The second chapter of the thesis investigates the two main issues around which clerical opposition developed in the period up to the early 1960s: the repression of

¹² ‘*Concordato entre la Santa Sede y España*’ (27 agosto 1953). Text in *ibid.*, 755-65.

¹³ Quoted in Díaz Salazar, *Iglesia, Dictadura y Democracia*, 81-2.

Basque and Catalan cultural identity and the situation of the industrial working class. We examine how the National Catholicism project created clerical dissent because of its attempt to repress of all expressions of the unique and distinct cultural identities of the Catalan and Basque Church. Many priests in Vitoria and Bilbao who had been supporters of Basque autonomy before and during the war refused to accept the Church's alliance with a regime which had so severely punished the Basque clergy after the war, prevented the return of the bishop of Vitoria and instead appointed Castilian bishops to the Basque bishoprics. Feelings of oppression led them to sympathise with illegal nationalist groups operating both in the interior and in exile, in the forties and fifties. In the same period in Catalonia many priests resisted the 'Castillianisation' of their Church by setting up lay apostolic groups and associations with patriotic leanings. We then examine how the specialised workers' branches of Catholic Action (AC), which were created at the end of the forties, flourished in Bilbao and Barcelona in the following two decades. In that period the number of industrial workers rose dramatically due to the influx of 1,160,540 migrants to Catalonia and 408,416 into the Basque Country.¹⁴ Because independent trade unions to represent workers were prohibited the apostolic workers movements developed a representational role on their behalf. The close involvement with the workers' struggles turned the chaplains of these movements into the most vocal critics of the regime and of the Church's alliance with it.

The third and fourth chapters of the thesis offer a detailed account of the evolution of clergy opinion and activism in Bilbao and Barcelona respectively in the 1960s, as well as an explanation of why clerical protest intensified in this decade and why it climaxed in both places in 1969.

The fifth chapter offers a comparative analysis of the dissent of the 1960s and also highlights the differences between the two cases. It suggests that dissent, or 'prophetic denunciation' became a moral imperative for many more priests in the late 1950s and the 1960s because of the realisation that the National Catholicism project had failed to bring about the spiritual revival of the entire population originally

¹⁴ Gershon Shafir, *Immigrants and Nationalists. Ethnic conflict and accommodation in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Latvia and Estonia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 42.

envisioned. Furthermore, there was a growing conviction that the Church's links with the regime were inimical to the work of evangelisation. The social teaching of Pope John XXIII (1958–63) in the encyclical letters *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and the decrees of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) had undoubtedly, the greatest impact on dissident priests. As a result, from the early sixties onwards the Spanish bishops found it harder to defend themselves from attacks by oppositional priests over their support for a regime that was violating so much of the Church's teaching, as well as human rights. Vatican II was a shock for the bishops because most of them were convinced that an alliance with temporal power and the 'National-Catholicism' project of a denominational state and an orthodox Catholic society approached the 'Catholic ideal' more closely than the compromises, concessions and tolerance of the progressive European churches towards the modern world. However, the Council proposed a new way of relating the Church to the modern world and it could not be ignored. The most important changes arising from Vatican II had to do with Church-State relations, new approaches to political issues, the role of the laity, reform of the liturgy, and the espousal of ecumenism. The Spanish bishops assembled in Rome for the last session of the Council issued a document to the Spanish people on 8 December 1965 advising on the best approaches to ensuring the correct implementation of the Council's teaching and warning of the likelihood of two extremist tendencies appearing in the Church at a time of profound renovation: a tendency to resist change and cling onto the past, '*el inmovilismo*', and another equally erroneous tendency to seek to introduce change for change's sake, '*el afán de novedades*'.¹⁵ The priests whose activities this thesis examines were among those most receptive to the new airs blowing from Rome and in the late sixties the civil authorities, and on occasion even the bishops, tried to dismiss them as '*extremistas*' or '*progresistas*'.

Chapter six examines the gradual disappearance of radical clerical dissidence in Bilbao and Barcelona in the early 1970s. It identifies the unique circumstances prevailing in each diocese that allowed clerical opposition to diminish and argues that

¹⁵ 'Sobre acción en la etapa posconciliar.' In Jesús Iribarren, (ed.), *Documentos colectivos del episcopado español 1870-1974* (Madrid: BAC, 1974), 359-70. (Henceforth: DCEE I).

the diminution would not, however, have happened had it not been for a major realignment of the official Spanish Church that saw it drawing away from the regime it had once so enthusiastically endorsed and begin instead to side with popular protest throughout Spain.

One of the advantages of writing contemporary history is that many of the people who lived through the events being studied are still alive. Oral accounts of lived experiences offer valuable insights into mentalities and attitudes, as well as frequently contributing additional factual information. Several interviews with Basque and Catalan priests were carried out as part of the research for this thesis, enabling us to relay the subjective experience and personal perspectives of oppositional priests. Similar insights were gleaned through written correspondence in cases where distance impeded a face-to-face interview. Some priests made available private juridical documents, such as notification of fines, books-of-evidence, and so on, that cannot yet be accessed by researchers in the archives of the Ministry of Justice. Contact with one protagonist inevitably led to introductions to others and so on, thus revealing a set of clerical connections whose origins were in the earlier networks of dissident priests.

Another important primary source for this study are the personal papers of oppositional priests, which have just recently been placed in local historical archives. These papers generally consist of letters, copies of fines, copies of joint sermons, press cuttings and cyclostyled documents relating to acts of clerical dissidence. An equally important primary source is provided by the many police reports on the activities of dissident priests which were sent to the Civil Governors of Bilbao and Barcelona and to the Ministry of the Interior during the dictatorship and are now available for consultation in the Archives of the Civil Governments of Barcelona and Vizcaya. Numerous contemporary religious periodical publications - some of which were underground - were consulted, as were some local and national newspapers. The archives of the bishops of Bilbao and Barcelona during the period under study are not open to researchers. However, their pastoral letters can be consulted in the diocesan ecclesiastical bulletins and these are referred to and quoted frequently in the thesis. The collective documents of the ecclesiastical hierarchy have also been published and are used in this study. Neither the Vatican Archives nor the archives of the Spanish

Chapter I

The Experience of Civil War and National-Catholicism in the Dioceses of Barcelona, Vitoria and Bilbao

Clerical dissidence in the dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona during the Franco regime was partly rooted in the Civil War experience. This opening chapter therefore begins by looking at how the Church in Catalonia and the Basque Country fared during the war. It then examines the early years of 'National-Catholicism' in both dioceses and ends with a brief discussion on the significance of the Concordat of 1953, the signing of which marked the apogee of Church-State relations during the Franco regime.

(i) *The anticlerical fury*

It is generally agreed that the anticlerical fury of 1936 resulted in the greatest clerical bloodletting in the history of the Christian Church in modern times. Thirteen bishops, 4,184 members of the secular (diocesan) clergy, 2,365 male religious and 283 nuns were killed throughout Spain, mainly in the opening weeks of the war.¹ Most of them were executed without even the simulacrum of condemnation by 'revolutionary tribunals.'² In addition to these deaths an incalculable number of laypersons were killed because of their religious associations, either as well-known churchgoers, members of fraternal or charitable religious organisations or as the parents, siblings or friends of clerics. Anticlericalism was not limited to killing; thousands of churches, monasteries, and convents were attacked and often completely destroyed, religious objects were profaned, nuns' tombs were opened and the petrified mummies displayed to ridicule. The number of clergy killed in each diocese depended on the success or failure in each city and town of the military uprising that began the war, and also on the movement of military lines in the first six months of the war. The rising failed in 28 of Spain's 60 dioceses. The diocese of

¹ Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa 1936-1939* (Madrid: BAC, 1961), 762. In 1930 there were approximately 33,000 secular clergy and 76,000 male religious and nuns in all of Spain. Manuel Ramírez Jiménez, *Los grupos de presión en la II República* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1969), 197.

² In an attempt to curb the revolutionary terror the government of José Giral passed decrees on 23 and 25 August and 6 October 1936 creating 'Popular Tribunals'. See Glicerio Sánchez Recio, *Justicia y guerra en España. Los tribunales populares (1936-1939)* (Alicante: Instituto de Cultura "Juan Gil-Albert" y Diputación de Alicante, 1991), 55-60.

Barbastro in Aragón suffered the loss of 123 of its 140 priests (88%) and its bishop was executed on 9 August. In addition every single church in the diocese was attacked and eight were totally destroyed. The militias that carried out these anticlerical atrocities were composed mainly of anarchists and communists.³ In the much larger diocese of Badajoz in Extremadura, which was captured by the Nationalists in mid-August, (Badajoz fell to General Yagüe on 14 August) 32 diocesan priests were killed out of a total of 317 (10%). The bishop had to flee to safety in Portugal. Six churches in the diocese were totally destroyed and 125 were partially destroyed, profaned or sacked.⁴ In contrast the diocese of Pamplona in Navarre, where the uprising was a complete success, lost no clergy and the large archdiocese of Seville, which was captured by the Nationalists in the first days of the rising, escaped a potential anarchist fury relatively lightly, losing only 24 of its 657 diocesan priests (3.5%).⁵

In the Basque Country the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa remained loyal to the Republican government, which was about to grant them, along with Álava, a statute of autonomy. The military uprising was successful in Álava, where Carlism and traditionalist parties still continued to command a high degree of loyalty and also in neighbouring Navarre, which had elected to disengage itself from the project of Basque autonomy in June 1932.⁶ The diocese of Vitoria, which extended over the three provinces that would shortly comprise the autonomous Basque region, was thus divided into Nationalist and Republican zones.⁷ When the war started the diocese had 2,075 priests: nearly twice as many as the much larger dioceses of Barcelona and Madrid-Alcalá combined. Forty-three diocesan priests were killed, along with 16 members of the regular clergy during the war.⁸ This is a very low number when compared to clerical fatalities in other dioceses in the Republican zone. Most of the victims were murdered either in the opening weeks of the

³ After the defeat of the military uprising in Barcelona several CNT-FAI militias passed through Barbastro on their way to fight on the Aragón front. They were responsible for many of the anticlerical atrocities. See Burnett Bolleton, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1991), 74 and Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 209-23.

⁴ Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 763. See also Ángel David Martín Rubio, *La Persecución Religiosa en Extremadura Durante la Guerra Civil (1936-1939)* (Badajoz: Fondo de Estudios Sociales, 1997), *passim*.

⁵ Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 764.

⁶ Martin Blinkhorn, "'The Basque Ulster': Navarre and the Basque Autonomy Question under the Spanish Second Republic.' *Historical Journal*, xvii, no. 3, (September, 1974), 595-613.

⁷ The dioceses of Bilbao and San Sebastián were carved out of the huge diocese of Vitoria in 1950.

⁸ J. M. Goñi, *La guerra civil en el País Vasco. Una guerra entre católicos* (Vitoria: Eset, 1989), 227-34.

war or on the nights of the 25 September and 2 October 1936 when two prison ships, the Cabo Quilates and Altuna Mendi, which were moored in the Nervión estuary in Bilbao were attacked and the prisoners massacred in retaliation for earlier Nationalist bombings of the city. On 4 January 1937 ten more priests lost their lives in similar retaliatory attacks on prisons in Bilbao.⁹ There were also comparatively few attacks on Church property: sixteen churches in the diocese were totally destroyed and 67 were partially destroyed or sacked.¹⁰ All the remaining churches stayed open and Mass was said publicly, despite occasional moments of terror. The anticlerical violence ceased totally after the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) took effective political control of Vizcaya on 7 October 1936, following the central government's approval of the autonomy statute.¹¹ Thereafter any cleric who could travel to Vizcaya while the Basque government was in authority was given a safe-conduct to France.¹²

In April 1937 a religious delegation composed of Catholics and Protestants from London visited Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao and Santander in order to observe the religious situation in Republican Spain. The Republican Government, which was anxious to show that reports abroad of religious persecution were grossly exaggerated, had invited them. The report the delegation prepared on their return from Spain described the vibrancy and normality of religious life in Bilbao, in contrast to the situation they found in the other cities they had visited:

‘In the province of Biscaya we found one section of Government territory in which not only is there no sign of an attack on religion, but there is an intense religious life which is part and parcel of the struggle for the defence of the Republic. In this territory all the churches are open and in constant use by all sections of the community, both men and women.’¹³

⁹ Accounts of these attacks in Montero *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 357-62.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 629-30.

¹¹ Guipúzcoa had fallen to the Nationalists in September.

¹² José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 67.

¹³ *Report Of A Recent Religious Delegation To Spain (April 1937)* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), 8.

The delegates' visit to Bilbao coincided with the Nationalist bombings of Durango, thus affording them 'a signal opportunity for discovering the unscrupulous character of the rebel propaganda, which seeks to represent the Spanish Government as violently anti-religious.' Some of the delegates visited the town of Durango the day after it had been bombed and they reported that 'Durango was almost completely destroyed. The churches and the convents in particular were centres of destruction, and it was quite clear, even to an inexperienced eye, that the damage could only have been produced by bombardment from the air. ... When we returned to Bilbao we learned that a rebel broadcast had announced to the world that the reds had blown up churches in Durango and killed nuns. We were glad to be able to broadcast on the spot the truth which we had observed with our own eyes.'

On 11 May a group of 21 Basque priests, comprised of the Vicar General of the Republican zone of the diocese, Ramón de Galbarriatu, and priests from parishes in Bilbao city, as well as from Durango and Gernika, wrote to Pope Pius XI. They began their letter by pointing out that the Basque Government had done all it could to protect the Church and enable it to function as normally as possible:

'Since the Basque government has been in authority in this zone of the diocese the clergy have not only had their rights respected and been able to carry on with their sacerdotal duties, but they have had the support of the government in every way, as can be seen in the organising of the seminary, the exemption of priests from military service and in the guarantees and protection it has given to all forms of religious practice.'¹⁴

They then went on to describe the terrible destruction caused by the Nationalist bombings of Durango on 31 March and of Gernika on 26 April. They explained that their primary motivation in writing the letter was to present the Pope with the true facts, given that false

¹⁴(11 May 1937) Letter in José Maria Alday, *Crónicas. La voz del clero vasco en defensa de su pueblo*. 2 Vols. (Bilbao: Idatz Ekintza, S.A., 1986), vol. i, 22-4.

reports were being made by the Nationalists that it was soldiers belonging to Republican militias who had set alight and destroyed most of the buildings in both towns.¹⁵

While the alliance of the Catholic PNV with socialists, communists, and other republicans greatly helped to limit anticlerical violence, it was not the only reason why the Basque Church escaped the anticlerical fury relatively unscathed.¹⁶ The comparative restraint of left-wing groups probably owed a lot to the fact that the Basque Church and the clergy were much closer to the 'ordinary people' than elsewhere in Spain. The Basque-Navarrese region had the highest number of priests per inhabitant, as well as the highest rate of churchgoers in the whole country.¹⁷ The visions of the Virgin Mary at Ezkioga in Guipúzcoa in July 1931 can be seen as reflecting the religiosity of the Basques, as well as their apprehension and fear over the coming of the Second Republic in April 1931. On 8 July 1931, writing from his home town of Ezkioga, Engracio de Aranzadi described the first visions and suggested what they could mean. Aranzadi was a successor to Sabino Arana as the ideologue of the PNV. His article 'The Apparition in Ezquioga' was published in the newspapers *'El Día'* on 11 July and in *'El Correo Catalán'* a week later. Aranzadi began by stating that the supernatural and the natural orders were particularly close in the Basque Country. For the Basques he said there was 'harmony between spiritual and national activities, between religion and the race.' Aranzadi argued against Basques who favoured an alliance with the Second Republic at the expense of their Catholic identity and he referred to the nationalist cause as a religious crusade beneath the 'two-crossed' Basque flag: 'There is a great battle in preparation. For God and

¹⁵ One hundred and twenty-seven civilians died in the bombardment of Durango by the German Condor Legion on 31 March 1937 and a similar number died later from injuries received. Among the victims were 14 nuns and 2 priests. Gernika was bombed on market day when there were some 10,000 people in the town. It was bombed mid-afternoon and the raid lasted for three hours. It was carried out by the Condor Legion and the *Aviazione Legionaria*. According to figures given by the Government of Euzkadi 1,500 people died and 1,000 were injured. This information on bombings taken from Julián Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2001), 76.

¹⁶ Immediately after the military rebellion the PNV in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa issued statements supporting the Republican government.

¹⁷ In 1965 the first map of religious practice in Spain was produced. The statistics were gathered from disparate studies of dioceses or parishes over a period of more than ten years. Highest attendance figures were registered in the dioceses of Pamplona, covering the province of Navarre, where 90% of the inhabitants attended Sunday Mass in 1960. Next highest rates were registered in the diocese of Vitoria, where 85% of the inhabitants attended Sunday Mass in 1962. Rogelio Duocastella, Jesús Marcos, and José Ma. Díaz-Móaz, *Análisis sociológico del catolicismo español* (Barcelona: ISPA/Editorial Nova Terra, 1967), 44. The rates were certainly as high, most probably higher, in the 1930s.

fatherland on one side, and against God and the fatherland on the other ... And to our aid heaven comes.'¹⁸

Just how important religion was to the Basque people is further illustrated by the visit of a group of PNV politicians to the Vatican in January 1936 in order to ask for a special recognition of the uniqueness of their -soon to be politically autonomous region - by the Holy See. They hoped to present a report on the Church in the Basque Country to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, but instead managed only to meet with Monsignor Pizarro who informed them Pacelli had decided not to meet them because of his disappointment over their refusal to align themselves with the other right-wing groups in the CEDA coalition to fight the next elections.¹⁹ The report, which they had prepared in the summer of 1935, described the vitality of religious life in the Basque Country: levels of religious practice were very high, vocations to the priesthood and religious life were flourishing, fourteen episcopal sees within Spain had Basque incumbents and fourteen bishops, and nearly 5,000 priests and religious were on the foreign missions.²⁰

Not surprisingly, there was no history of anticlericalism in the Basque region and in 1936 the majority of the clergy were known to be sympathetic to Basque nationalism. Once the war started most of the clergy sided with the Republic which had promised the Statute of Autonomy. In fact, almost immediately after the outbreak of war some priests organised a chaplain corps for the *Euzko-Gudaroztea* (Basque militias), which by February 1937 consisted of around 80 chaplains.²¹ Given these facts it is not at all surprising that the region was to be an oasis of religious normality in wartime Republican Spain.

The experience of the Church in Catalonia during the war was very different from that of the Basque Church, especially as regards the intensity and extent of the anticlerical terror during the first months of the conflict. In total 4 bishops, 1,541 secular priests and 896 priests in religious orders were murdered during the Civil War in the eight Catalan

¹⁸ William A. Christian Jr., *Visionaries. The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (USA: University of California Press, 1996). Quotes from pp. 30-1.

¹⁹ Account of the visit Juan de Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco. Los vascos y la Iglesia*. 2 Vols. (San Sebastián: n.e., 1978), vol. ii, 310-2.

²⁰ Summary of the 'exposition' presented to the Vatican in Frances Lannon, 'Modern Spain: the project of a national Catholicism.' In S. Mews (ed.) *Religion and National Identity* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 581-2. The draft documents prepared for presentation to the Vatican are in Idelfonso Moriones, *Euzkadi y el Vaticano 1935-1936* (Rome: n.e., 1976), 29-65, 82-102.

²¹ Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco*, vol. ii, 189.

dioceses that compose the ecclesiastical province of Tarragona.²² Two dioceses, Lérida and Tortosa, lost over 60% of their diocesan clergy.²³ In 1936 Barcelona was the largest diocese in terms of population size. It had 1,400,000 inhabitants, which was double the population of the next largest diocese, Tortosa. In total 922 members of the clergy died violently in Barcelona: 277 diocesan priests (out of a total of 1,251), 50 extra-diocesan priests, 7 seminarians, 425 male religious, 117 extra-diocesan male religious and 46 nuns.²⁴ The slaughter of clerics started on 19 July 1936 and by the end of the month 197 priests had been executed in the capital. By the 18 August that figure had risen to 250, which was almost 25 percent of the total number of ecclesiastic killed in the diocese during the whole war.²⁵ The killing abated in September in the rural areas of the diocese, mainly because it was harder to find victims, but it continued in Barcelona where many priests who had been unable to flee abroad were trying to hide. Following the creation of the 'Popular Tribunals' in the autumn of 1936 the number of priests being executed rapidly declined. Nevertheless, on 1 December 1936 the Bishop of Barcelona, Manuel Irurita, who had been in hiding in a private residence in the city since 21 July, was arrested after a search of the house by a patrol of republican militiamen. He was executed by firing squad at midnight two days later, along with three laymen who had been arrested with him.²⁶

The number and rate of lay people killed in Barcelona because of their religious associations was shockingly high too: 420 were assassinated in July and August, 146 in September, 121 in October, 90 in November and 90 in December. In 1937 there was a total of 52, the following year 5, and in 1939 there were 7 assassinations.²⁷

²²Joan Bada, *Guerra Civil i Església Catalana* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1987), 15.

²³Lérida lost 270 of its 410 priests (65.8%) and Tortosa lost 316 of its 510 (61.9%). Statistics from Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 764.

²⁴José Sanabre Sanromá, *Martirologio de la Iglesia en la diócesis de Barcelona durante la persecución religiosa, 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Librería Religiosa, 1943), 400.

²⁵Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa en España durante la Segunda República 1931-39* (Madrid: RIALP, 1990), 234.

²⁶Description of arrest and execution of Bishop Manuel Irurita Almandoz in Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 416-21. Bishop Irurita was a native of Navarre and had been bishop of Barcelona for six years.

²⁷J. Gassiot Magret, *Apuntes para un estudio de la persecución religiosa en España* (Barcelona, 1961). Quoted in Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa*, 209-10.

E. Allison Peers, Professor of Spanish at Liverpool University, described the wholesale destruction of Church property in the Catalan region as follows:

‘Hardly a church in Catalonia escaped, except a few where defence could be hurriedly improvised. Tarragona Cathedral was among the fortunate exceptions, and it seemed at first as if the ‘new’ cathedral of Lleida, where all the rest of the churches were destroyed, would be spared also. But, when the Durruti column passed through the city on its way to the Aragonese front, the militiamen scoffing at the inhabitants’ lack of revolutionary ardour, set fire to it before proceeding farther. At Vic, one of the most traditionalist of Catalonian cities, no less than forty churches and religious houses were burned, including the cathedral, with Sert’s fine paintings, during the first three days of the revolution. At Manresa, the churches were treated with particular savagery. At Sitges, Sabadell and Puigcerdà, and in scores of smaller towns, the whole of the churches were destroyed. As for the villages, the procedure was almost a matter of routine. Cars or lorries, manned by armed revolutionaries, went from place to place, murdered the parish priest if they could find him, and, in any case, soaked the church with petrol and set light to it, shooting down any one hardy enough to protest.’²⁸

The only church in the whole diocese of Barcelona to escape the arsonist furies was the cathedral, thanks to the protection of the Generalitat (Catalan Government). In total forty churches were completely destroyed. Peers described the attacks on churches in Barcelona city as follows:

‘One of the first victims of this orgy was the old Gothic church of Santa Anna, near the Plaça de Catalunya. In the Carrer de Fiveller, right in the heart of the city, Sant Jaume was burned down, and, a little way off, the fifteenth-century church of Santa Maria del Pi. In the Rambla dels

²⁸ E. Allison Peers, *Catalonia Infelix* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1937), 251-2.

Aucells, the fine baroque church of Betlem was destroyed. The 'old town' lost the church of La Mercè. But why continue this tragic enumeration? By the end of the week, so various eyewitnesses have reported, every church in Barcelona, old or new, with the exception of the cathedral, had been to a greater or lesser degree damaged by fire, to say nothing of monasteries, convents, seminaries, religious schools, traditionalist publishing houses, and headquarters of right-wing parties.²⁹

As regards the identity of the perpetrators of attacks on Church property and personnel in Barcelona, witnesses and historians have tended to blame the atrocities on anarchists – members of the *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (Iberian Anarchist Federation, FAI), the *Confederación de Trabajo* (National Confederation of Labour, CNT) and, to a lesser extent, on members of the Trotskyist *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification, POUM.) As Julio de la Cueva has pointed out recently: 'Anarchist participation in the atrocities is not only substantiated by countless examples, but can also be deduced from the very chronology of the carnage. In Catalonia, according to the study by Sanabre, the terror ceased in May 1937, when the anarchists and the POUM finally lost control of the situation and the Catalan regional government and the communist-led *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, PSUC) took over. However, to attribute all the barbarity to the anarchists would be quite unfair. Firstly, although many anarchists devoted all their efforts to sowing terror in the rearguard, many others were reported to have helped priests and clerics who were in danger. ... It may be that most of the perpetrators of the atrocities against the clergy were anarchists, but they were aided by radical or 'radicalized' people belonging to other organisations.'³⁰

²⁹Ibid., 251.

³⁰Julio de la Cueva, 'Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 33, no. 3 (1998), 357-8.

On the afternoon of 20 July 1936 the President of the Generalitat, Lluís Companys, proposed to the anarchist leaders the formation of what was to be known as the *Comité Central de Milicies Antifeixistes* (CCMA). Although Companys conceived the role of the multi-party CCMA as that of an auxiliary body of the Generalitat, the anarchist dominated committee immediately became the *de facto* executive body in the region and attempted to turn the Generalitat into an instrument for legalising the revolutionary changes already underway. The Church, of course, was a prime target of the revolutionaries. The Anarchist newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera* of 29 July reported that in the province of Tarragona 'the churches in all the villages have been set ablaze. Only those buildings that could be used for the benefit of the people have been kept, but not those that were a serious danger after burning. Many churches have been converted into communal warehouses as well as into garages for the antifascist militia.'³¹ 'Down with the Church!' blazoned the headline in the same paper on 15 August. The article underneath declared: 'The Church must disappear forever. ... In its place a spirit of freedom will be reborn which has nothing in common with the masochism that is nurtured in the naves of the cathedrals. But the Church must be extirpated. To do this we must seize all its property, which by justice belongs to the people. The religious orders must be dissolved, bishops and cardinals shot, and ecclesiastical property must be expropriated.'³² The leader of the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (POUM), Andrés Nin, declared in the Barcelona daily newspaper *La Vanguardia* on 2 August: 'The working class has resolved the problem of the Church by simply not leaving a single one [church] standing.'³³

The Catalan government tried to protect the lives of those in danger from the revolutionaries by granting them passports to leave the country or by putting them in prison. It also attempted to save the artistic heritage in the hands of the Church or private individuals by confiscating it.³⁴ Among the ecclesiastical dignitaries saved were Abbot Marcet of the Benedictine Monastery of Montserrat and the Metropolitan Archbishop of

³¹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 51.

³² Quoted in Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 55-6.

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, 55.

³⁴ The central government issued a ministerial decree on 27 July 1936 that ordered the seizure of schools and Church buildings that had been used directly or indirectly in support of the military uprising. Two

Tarragona, Cardinal Francesc Vidal i Barraquer. The latter, along with his auxiliary bishop and private secretary, had left Tarragona on 21 July 1936 to seek refuge from the anticlerical terror in the Monastery of Poblet in Lérida. No sooner had they reached their destination however than they were arrested by a group of CNT militants and imprisoned. Thanks to the swift intervention of the Minister of Culture, Ventura Gassols and the President of the Generalitat, Lluís Companys, the Archbishop and his secretary were released from prison on 24 July and smuggled out of Spain to Italy on 30 July, along with the bishops of Girona and Tortosa.³⁵ Vidal i Barraquer's auxiliary bishop, Monsignor Manuel Borrás, continued to be held and was executed on 12 August 1936. He was the second of three Catalan bishops killed during the war. The bishop of Lérida, Salvio Huix, had been executed on 6 August.

On 26 September 1936 the anarchists, the PSUC and the POUM entered the government of the Generalitat and the CCMA was disbanded. Under the new government of unity the assassinations of presumed enemies of the Republican cause grew less frequent, but did not cease. George Orwell described how when he arrived in Barcelona in December the anarchists were still in virtual control and the revolution was still in full swing:

‘To anyone who had been there since the beginning it probably seemed even in December or January that the revolutionary period was ending; but when one came straight from England the aspect of Barcelona was something startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the Anarchists; every wall was scrawled with the hammer and the sickle and with the initials of the revolutionary parties; almost every church had

days earlier the Generalitat had passed a decree that allowed Church property of historic, artistic or archaeological value to be seized for protection. Ibid., 66-7.

³⁵Ramón Comas i Maduell, *Vidal i Barraquer. Síntesi Biogràfica* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1977), 95. The bishops of Urgel, Solsona and Vich had managed to reach the safety of France.

been gutted and its images burnt. Churches here and there were being systematically demolished by gangs of workmen.³⁶

After the execution of the Bishop of Barcelona on 3 December 1936 the full weight of responsibility for running the diocese fell to the Vicar General, José María Torrents, who had managed to keep the diocesan curia operating secretly. The offices were located first in a jeweller's and later in a library in the centre of Barcelona. From the end of October 1936 he had also been very active in the organisation of a clandestine Church in Barcelona through the establishment of a network of houses and apartments where priests could celebrate Mass and administer the sacraments.³⁷ The problem of dispensation of the sacraments in an underground Church was addressed in a series of episcopal and pontifical statements.³⁸ For example, on 22 August 1936 the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, wrote to the Superior General of the Claretian Order authorising the use of non-consecrated vessels in the Eucharist.³⁹ Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer in exile in Italy appealed for funds from foreign bishops and the Holy See to aid clandestine priests, especially those who had fled rural parishes to the relative anonymity of Barcelona, and an organisation was established in Barcelona by some of the leaders of the small Christian Democrat party, UDC, to distribute these funds.⁴⁰ According to a report sent to Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer by the secretary of UDC in September 1937 there were at that time approximately 2,500 priests living in Barcelona, 1,100 of whom had fled there from other Catalan dioceses. Every day 2,000 Masses were said in the city and some were starting to be said in other towns outside the capital by priests who travelled out from Barcelona.⁴¹

³⁶ George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938). Quote from page 8 of 1987 Penguin edition.

³⁷ Information on the organisation and functioning of the clandestine church from A. Manent and J. Reventós, *L'Església clandestina a Catalunya durant la guerra civil (1936-39)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1984).

³⁸ Montero, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 99-103.

³⁹ Manent, *L'Església clandestina*, Appendix, Document 1, pp. 243-4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴¹ Ramón Muntanyola, *Vidal i Barraquer, el cardenal de la paz* (Barcelona: Editorial Estela, 1971), 626-7.

Frances Lannon, reflecting on the religious persecution in Catalonia, observed: 'Some of those [priests] who had been pro-republican in 1931, and even through the succeeding couple of years, were convinced by the assassinations of priests and religious that they had been wrong.'⁴² The same historian points to the cases of Fr. Albert Bonet and Fr. Lluís Carreras. The former had been very involved in Catalan youth work and founded the *Federació de Jovens Cristians de Catalunya* (FJCC) in 1931 as a Catalan version of the Belgian *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (JOC) spent most of 1937 on a pro-insurgent campaign in Europe to counter criticism of the Crusade, especially by French liberal Catholics. Fr. Lluís Carreras, a close collaborator of Cardinal Vidal and a supporter of Catalan nationalism was similarly traumatized by the experience of religious persecution and wrote a book in 1938 praising Franco and describing Catholics who remained pro-Republican after the first few months of the war as 'mental deviants' who had 'lost any sense of justice or humanity'.⁴³

Fr. Josep Maria Bardés, who had just completed his university studies in Barcelona in the summer of 1936, recalled in an interview recorded in July 1994 how he and his conservative, right-wing and deeply religious family experienced the war.⁴⁴ From the very start of the conflict he and his father would listen to radio broadcasts by the Nationalists. 'We saw that the speeches they were making were similar to those of Hitler and Mussolini.' The young Bardés used to read a French left-wing daily newspaper that was published in Toulouse. From it he learned that terrible atrocities were being committed on the Nationalist side too. Very soon he began to have misgivings about the Nationalists, but nevertheless he wanted them to win the war as it seemed the only way to bring an end to the atrocities being carried out by anarchosyndicalists and other left-wing Republicans. Fr. Bardés recalled an incident that took place in his home two days after the victorious entry of Franco's troops to Barcelona in February 1939: a Jesuit priest who used to celebrate Mass clandestinely in the Bardés home visited the family and found them celebrating joyously. 'My aunt threw her arms around the priest, saying, "We are free!"' The latter responded "Señora, caution, caution!" The poor woman at first thought he was referring to her having embraced him! The priest then asked her "why all this joy, do you

⁴² Lannon, *Privilege*, 210.

⁴³ Luis Carreras, *Grandeza Cristiana de España* (Toulouse: Les Frères Douladome, 1938), 9.

⁴⁴ Interview with Fr. Josep Maria Bardés Huguet recorded in Barcelona on 25 July 1994.

think we are celebrating the arrival of Franco's troops? - We don't even know who they are! No, Señora, no. We are celebrating the fact that the Reds who carried out such atrocities have been defeated. If after six months there is still cause for enthusiasm you will have good reason to give me a hug.'"

A young doctor and lay leader of the FJCC, Pere Tarrés, wrote in his war diary of the joy he felt when the Nationalists captured Barcelona on 26 January 1939:

'I am convinced that hours of glory and light, of reconciliation and creative force are approaching for Spain. Spring is on its way and with it the longed-for peace and reestablishment of Christ's reign. ... My God, is it possible that the hour of freedom has come and just when everything seemed lost You have been resurrected, full of glory?'⁴⁵

Tarrés and Bardés both entered the seminary of Barcelona in September 1939, aged 34 and 24 respectively, to train for the priesthood.⁴⁶

(ii) The Civil War as a 'Crusade'

The entire Spanish episcopacy, with the exception of the exiled Cardinal Archbishop of Tarragona, were quickly turned into open supporters of the Nationalists by the appalling massacre of religious personnel in the first few weeks of the war. For the very survival of the Church the violence against it had to be controlled and very early on it became clear to the bishops that the surest way of achieving that was victory for the insurgents, or Nationalists, as they came to call themselves. However, as Julio de la Cueva accurately observes: 'Even if the persecution had not definitely pushed the Church to throw its weight behind the rebels, it might equally have been prompted to do so by other factors, namely its traditional view of society, the conflictive record of its relations with the Republic, and finally, the ever-stauncher resolve of the rebels to restore the full confessionality of the State. Furthermore, just as the Church could be said to be

⁴⁵ Pere Tarrés, *El meu diari de guerra* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1987), 316-7.

⁴⁶ Fr. Tarrés died in 1950. Fr. Bardés held several important positions within the diocesan Church over the following forty years and was one of the most vocal critics among the clergy of the Franco regime.

predisposed to associate with the Nationalists, the supporters of the Republic had long ago labelled the Church their enemy.⁴⁷

The very first statements of the rebel generals had not in fact mentioned the Church or religion, but rather stressed disgust at the Republic's decentralizing policies, fear of disintegrating public order and disapproval of 'communist' social reforms.⁴⁸ In his first report to the Vatican on the 'civic-military uprising' the Cardinal Primate, Isidro Gomá y Tomás,⁴⁹ noted the ideological diversity of the generals and the fact that some of them 'would not be displeased with a laicising republic, but with strong public order.' But he also expressed the belief that all the statements made by the insurgent generals reflected a common propensity to create a regime that would defend 'Christian civilisation', since, Gomá observed, in Spain that included the defence 'of national unity against separatist aspirations', 'of material interests threatened by a possible communist regime' and the 'social order'.⁵⁰ In other words, he believed that the counterrevolutionary goals of the revolt made the Church its natural ally. As the initial revolt stalled militarily, then broadened into full-scale civil war, the insurgents rapidly came to see the defence of religion as having a useful unifying function in the absence of any agreed objective among them and their supporters, other than the seizure of power from the Popular Front government. By the end of July General Emilio Mola, the principal organiser of the rebellion, used the phrase 'the true Catholic Spain.' In a radio address of 15 August he hailed 'the Cross that was and remains the symbol of our religion and our faith' and pledged to raise it over the new state. He described the war as a 'Holy Crusade to save the Patria.'⁵¹ Such pronouncements became increasingly frequent from that time onwards as the revolt and the war were transformed into a Crusade.

The Spanish Church first publicly sanctioned the idea of the war as a Crusade in early August in a joint pastoral letter signed by the bishops whose dioceses covered the Basque-Navarrese region, Bishop Mateo Múgica of Vitoria and Bishop Marcelino

⁴⁷ Julio de la Cueva, *op. cit.*, 360

⁴⁸ For the early military statements, see Hilari Raguer, *La espada y la cruz* (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1977), Ch. 2.

⁴⁹ Cardinal Gomá was 67 years old. He was appointed Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of the Spanish Church on 12 April 1933.

⁵⁰ 'Primer Informe del cardenal Gomá al cardenal Pacelli secretario de Estado.' (Pamplona, 13 August 1936). María Luisa Rodríguez Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá y la Guerra de España. Aspectos de la gestión pública del Primado (1936-1939)* (Madrid: CSIC, 1981), 371-8.

Olaechea of Pamplona.⁵² The Cardinal Primate had actually drafted the pastoral letter at their request.⁵³ It stated that Spain was undergoing her worst suffering in centuries and, worse, that Catholics were killing other Catholics even while they both received 'God's Holy Communion.' The bishops wished to speak clearly and authoritatively:

'with all the authority we can command, we say categorically *non licet!* It is not permissible to divide Catholic forces in the face of a common enemy, especially so when the enemy is Marxism or Communism, the seven-headed hydra, synthesis of all heresies, which is diametrically opposed to the political, social, economic, and religious doctrines of Christianity.'

The pastoral instruction went on to condemn the idea that one could do evil to serve a greater good (i.e., support the Republicans to prevent attacks on the Church) and stated that politics could not be put before religion. It was a straightforward condemnation of the Basque nationalists' unwillingness to join the Nationalist cause and a warning against joining the Republican cause. On 23 August the Bishop of Pamplona described the war as a 'Crusade' and called for donations for the Nationalists in a note published in the *Diario de Navarra*.⁵⁴

The Crusade concept was developed in much greater detail by Bishop Enrique Pla y Deniel of Salamanca in a pastoral letter dated 30 September 1936. Entitled 'The Two Cities' it was based on St. Augustine's notion of the cities of God and of the Devil. It declared that 'on the soil of Spain a bloody conflict is being waged between two conceptions of life, two forces preparing for universal conflict in every country of the earth ... Communists and Anarchists are sons of Cain, fratricides, assassins of those who cultivate virtue ... It (the war) takes the external form of a civil war, but in reality it is a

⁵¹ Quotes from José Chao Rego, *La Iglesia en el Franquismo* (Madrid: Ediciones Felmar, 1976), 26.

⁵² Analysis of the pastoral letter in Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, pp. 76-9. *Non licet* was made public on 6 August 1936. Text in *Boletín Oficial del Obispado de Vitoria* (Henceforth: BOOV) (1 September 1936), 143-6. Both signatories were Basque: Mateo Múgica was born in Idiazábal, Guipúzcoa in 1870 and Marcelino Olaechea in Baracaldo, Vizcaya in 1889.

⁵³ Gomá said in his first report to the Holy See (13 August 1936) that the two bishops asked him to write the document for them. Rodríguez Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá*, 374.

Crusade.' He went on to recite the long record of Republican persecution and stressed that the Church could not be criticised because it had 'openly and officially spoken in favour of order against anarchy, in favour of establishing a hierarchical government against dissolvent communism, in favour of the defence of Christian civilisation and its bases, religion, fatherland and family, against those without God and against God, and without Fatherland.'⁵⁵ Just over a week after the publication of the pastoral letter Franco, who had become Head of State on 1 October, established his headquarters in the Episcopal Palace in Salamanca, which had been put at his disposal by the bishop. This most fervent supporter of the Nationalists was elevated to the primacy in 1940, following Cardinal Gomá's death. He would occupy that position for the next 27 years.

In the meantime, however, Gomá's support for the Nationalists increased steadily and was reflected in the reports he sent to the Vatican in the first couple of months of the war. The primatial see of Toledo suffered terribly at the hands of revolutionaries, with 286 priests killed out of a total of 600 and the wholesale destruction of Church property. Cardinal Gomá had actually been away visiting his former diocese of Tarazona in Aragón when the uprising took place.⁵⁶ A few days later he travelled from there to Pamplona where he remained for the following two years. Pamplona was convenient because of its proximity to the Nationalists' headquarters in Burgos and to the frontier with France. In his second report to the Vatican on the 'civic-military Movement', which was dated 4 September, he described how in Nationalist Spain religiosity had intensified since the start of the war. He said that religious ceremonies were multiplying on the front and in the rearguard, that crucifixes had been reinstated in the schools in several provinces as well as in some universities, such as the University of Valladolid where a special ceremony had been organised that was attended by the military, civil and academic authorities. He spoke enthusiastically of the religiosity of the Nationalist soldiers:

'The great majority are fighting first and foremost for God and for their Church. This is demonstrated by the dying words 'Long Live Christ the

⁵⁴ Quoted in Gonzalo Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia en España, 1931-1939*. (Madrid, RIALP, 1993), vol. i, 72.

⁵⁵ 'Las Dos Ciudades' *Boletín Eclesiástico del Obispado de Salamanca* (30 September 1936), 265-314.

⁵⁶ Isidro Gomá y Tomás had become Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain on 12 April 1933.

King!' of those who fall in the battlefield, the fervour with which the injured ask for spiritual assistance, the attendance at field Masses. ... Witnesses return from the front full of admiration for the excellent Christian spirit of the troops. ... All this confirms the judgement I made in an earlier report that in the case of the Nationalists winning, in spite of slight disagreements in concepts of Church-State relations, the Church would enjoy ample freedom and even preferential treatment and protection.'⁵⁷

In his third report to the Vatican at the end of October he was full of praise for Franco, whom he described as 'a life-long practising Catholic' and the newly created *Junta de Defensa Técnica* who 'have all made public demonstration of religiosity, in their speeches and statements and by joining with the public in solemn religious ceremonies.'⁵⁸ In his fourth and final report dated 9 November he wrote about a meeting days earlier with Franco at which he strongly protested at the execution of 10 Basque priests by Nationalists troops. (see page 33) Nevertheless his admiration and enthusiasm for Franco remained undiminished. On 23 November he published the pastoral letter 'The Case of Spain' in which he argued that the war was a confrontation between two civilisations, Catholic Spain on the one hand and foreign, Marxist, anti-Spain on the other.

'This most cruel war is at bottom a war of principles, of doctrines, of one concept of life and social reality against another. It is a war waged by the Christian and the Spanish spirit against another spirit.'⁵⁹

Almost all the newspapers in the Nationalist zone published the full text. It was also translated and published in pamphlet form in Ireland, France, Germany, Belgium, Canada, England and Poland. On 19 December 1936 the Vatican named Gomá 'confidential and semi-official representative' of the Holy See to Franco's government in Burgos.

⁵⁷Quoted in Rodríguez Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá*, 26.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 32.

Despite this appointment the Holy See continued to be careful to avoid making any public statement of support for one side in the war. On 31 July 1936 the Vatican Secretary of State had sent a confidential communication to the Spanish Ambassador, Luis de Zuleta, protesting at the attacks on the Church and the government's suspension of religious practice. Pope Pius XI had spoken publicly on the war for the first time when he addressed five hundred Spanish refugees headed by the bishops of Cartagena, Vich, Tortosa and Seo de Urgel on 14 September 1936 at his summer retreat at Castelgandolfo. A few weeks later the speech was translated and published in pamphlet form in Spain and in many other countries.⁶⁰ In his speech the Pope sympathised with the persecuted clergy, calling their deaths 'martyrdom in the full, sacred, and glorious meaning of the word.' He lamented the outrage and cruelty taking place in Spain and asked, 'What is to be said when we are face to face with the stories of brothers killing brothers, which are being daily told?' He saw the persecution as a 'satanic preparation' similar in kind to those in Russia, China, South America and Mexico (an obvious reference to International Communism). After further analysing the evils afflicting modern society in general, he bestowed his blessing upon 'the defenders of God and religion' but warned that 'it is only too easy for the very ardour and difficulty of defence to go to an excess ... Intentions less pure, selfish interests, and mere party feeling may easily enter into, cloud, and change the morality and responsibility for what is being done.' After this implicit warning against Nationalist attempts to use religion for partisan purposes, he ended his speech with a plea for forgiveness for the persecutors: 'What is to be said of all these others who also are so near and never cease to be Our sons, in spite of the deeds and methods of persecution so odious and cruel against persons and things to Us so dear and sacred? ... We cannot doubt as to what is left for us to do - to love them and to love them with a special love born of mercy and compassion.' The Nationalist press never published the full text of the speech; instead it emphasized those portions referring to martyrdom and international subversion without mentioning the plea for forgiveness.⁶¹

⁵⁹(23 November 1936) 'El Caso de España'. Text of the letter in Isidro Gomá, *Por Dios y Por España* (Barcelona: Casulleras, 1940), 17-39.

⁶⁰Pius XI, 'To the Spanish refugees' (New York: The America Press, June 1937).

⁶¹ Analysis and quotes from Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, 123-4.

(iii) *The rejection of the notion of a 'Crusade' by the Basque clergy*

Very many Basque priests repudiated the idea of the war as a 'Crusade' and Nationalist slogans such as 'For God and For Spain' were meaningless for them. Fr. José María Basabilotxa, a chaplain to one of the Basque militias, believed that to describe the war as a 'Crusade' was 'ludicrous.' 'Who could believe that the generals, whom we knew were not believers when the war started, were now fighting a religious crusade? We tried to raise ourselves above this sort of thing. Our only thought was the hurt being done to the faithful by a war we had neither started nor provoked.'⁶² After the contents of Bishop Múgica and Bishop Olachea's joint pastoral letter of 8 August 1936 were broadcast on radio stations in the provincial capitals of Vitoria and Pamplona, as well as in Burgos the politicians of the PNV consulted a group of pro-Republican Basque priests over whether or not they had a moral duty to obey the letter. They were advised to ignore it since the priests doubted its authenticity and had suspicions that even if it were authentic Bishop Múgica might have been pressurised into signing it.⁶³ In fact the bishop *had* willingly signed the pastoral letter and in a radio allocution broadcast on 8 September he categorically denied the rumours, especially widespread in Bilbao, that it was not authentic. He repeated the message of the instruction in even more authoritative terms, praised the Nationalist army and its auxiliaries, and appealed to the Basques' love of country and support for the Nationalists as the only way to secure peace.⁶⁴ The allocution did not however change the Basques' support for the Republican side. On 21 August Cardinal Gomá wrote to Bishop Múgica suggesting that he order all his priests in the Republican zone of the diocese to read the pastoral letter from the pulpit. Múgica replied to the Primate pointing out the difficulty of getting copies of the pastoral to the priests and expressing his belief that it might be suicidal for them to read it.⁶⁵

Bishop Múgica continued to express his support for the Nationalists: he blessed the African troops who stopped in Vitoria station on their way to the front at Irún; in a circular letter dated 24 August he ordered the '*tempore belli*' to be prayed at all Masses

⁶² Quoted in Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain. The Experience of Civil War 1936-1939* (London: Penguin, 1979), 417.

⁶³ Fernando García de Cortázar, 'Mateo Múgica, la Iglesia y la Guerra en el País Vasco.' *Letras de Deusto*, no. 35 (May-August 1985), 19.

⁶⁴ Text of the allocution in Julen Rentería Uralde, *Pueblo Vasco e Iglesia. Reencuentro o ruptura definitiva*. 2 vols. (Bilbao: Itxaropena/Askatasuna, 1982, 1986), vol. i, 220-3.

and he encouraged his priests and the laity to make financial donations to the Nationalist cause.⁶⁶ In September he wrote the following piece for the diocesan bulletin on the imminent fall of Guipúzcoa:

‘With the province of Guipúzcoa close to being totally liberated from the horrible domination and terror of the reds, we order our beloved parish priests, curates, religious communities, and so forth, to organise, the very moment that the longed-for total liberation is announced, in all churches in our jurisdiction solemn devotions consisting of the praying of the Holy Rosary, processions and prayers to the Blessed Sacrament and hymns in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Later, on the joyful day of the complete triumph of Spain, these solemnities will be repeated, and in addition there will be solemn exequies for those who died offering their blood and lives for Religion and the Fatherland.’⁶⁷

In spite of his obvious support for the Nationalists Bishop Múgica’s position at the head of the diocese soon became untenable; he was suspect to the insurgents because although a conservative monarchist and wary of the political claims of Basque nationalism, he was respectful of nationalist sentiment in his diocese.⁶⁸ In May 1932 he had announced that it was legitimate for Catholics to vote for an autonomy statute and just before the February 1936 elections he stated publicly that Catholics were free to vote for PNV candidates, who, he said, were as Catholic as the other candidates.⁶⁹ At the end of August 1936 the National Defence Council asked Cardinal Gomá to have the bishop removed as

⁶⁵ Raguer, *La espada*, 198.

⁶⁶ ‘Suscripción en favor del Ejército Salvador’ *BOOV*, 1 September 1936. Text in Rentería, *Pueblo Vasco e Iglesia*, vol. i, 223-4.

⁶⁷ ‘Sobre la Liberación de Guipúzcoa’ *BOOV*, 26 September 1936. Cited in *ibid.*, 225.

⁶⁸ Bishop Múgica had been actually been expelled from Spain between 1931 and 1933 as he was considered a threat to the Republic. For information on the expulsion of Bishop Múgica in 1931 see V. M. Arbeloa, ‘La expulsión de Mons. Múgica y la captura de documentos al vicario general de Vitoria en 1931.’ *Scriptorium Victoriense* 18 (1971), 155-95; *Idem*, ‘El nuncio pide la repatriación del obispo de Vitoria y nuevas dificultades de su vicario general con el Gobierno Republicano.’ *Ibid.*, 19 (1972), 84-92.; *Idem*, ‘Don Mateo Múgica en el exilio (1931-1933).’ *Ibid.*, 20 (1973), 296-329.

⁶⁹ Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco*, vol i, 191, 202-3.

head of the diocese because they believed he was being too tolerant of nationalist priests and of nationalist activities in the diocesan seminary.⁷⁰ The Primate was reluctant to take that course of action and attempted to defend the bishop. On 4 September he wrote to the Marquis de Magaz, Franco's representative in the Vatican, declaring: 'I am personally in favour of the Prelate remaining in his see. There are already too many vacant dioceses whose pastors have been murdered or are absent.'⁷¹ The National Defence Council however continued to press for the bishop's removal and eventually the Primate yielded and in a report to the Holy See advised the temporary removal of Múgica from Vitoria. In his report Cardinal Gomá, defended the bishop against the charge of *bizkaitarrismo* (Basque separatism), but admitted he had probably shown excessive leniency with his clergy 'many of whom are nationalists' including the Vicar General, some teachers in the seminary, and a few diocesan and regular priests who 'had taken up arms against the Nationalist troops and alongside the Communists.'⁷² The Vatican replied to the Cardinal on 25 September and agreed that it would be better for the bishop to absent himself temporarily from the diocese:

'The Holy Father, well aware of your Excellency's prudence and tact, entrusts you with the delicate task of persuading Monsignor Múgica to leave his diocese. A reasonable motive could be his need to take a period of rest after having suffered so many annoyances and seen so many horrors.'⁷³

Gomá explained the situation to Múgica who reluctantly agreed to leave his diocese temporarily. He left Spain on 14 October 1936, ostensibly to attend a congress in Rome.⁷⁴ Four days before his departure his Vicar General, Jaime Verástegui, was also forced to resign; he alleged health problems as the reason. According to the Basque priest and

⁷⁰Rodríguez Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá*, 43.

⁷¹Quoted in *ibid.*, 45.

⁷²'Informe del cardenal Gomá a la Santa Sede' (Pamplona, 19 September 1936). Quoted in *ibid.*, 48-9.

⁷³'Carta despacho del cardenal Pacelli al cardenal Gomá' (25 September 1936). *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷⁴He returned to the Basque Country on 22 May 1947 and lived in Zarauz without pastoral responsibility until his death on 27 October 1968 at the age of 98.

historian, Juan de Iturralde, Música was forced by Gomá and the military authorities to appoint Antonio María Pérez Ormazábal as the new Vicar General of the diocese.⁷⁵

Pérez Ormazábal's first circular letter addressed to the clergy and laity of the diocese was entitled 'Three Duties of Catholics in the Current Circumstances'. In it he called on them to support the Nationalists in whatever way they could:

'Contribute and encourage others to contribute as many economic resources as possible so as to help in every feasible way towards the triumph of the saviour army of Spain. ... We cannot all take up arms to defend our threatened Faith and our land. Some are prevented from doing so by age or ill health, others by their sex, we by our priestly state. ... But we all can and should wield a powerful weapon which is most efficacious: prayer, ... this should be our great mission in the rearguard: to pray for our heroic crusaders ... that we might be granted the yearned-for triumph.'⁷⁶

As soon as the Nationalists captured Guipúzcoa in September 1936 they began carrying out reprisals against all those who had fought against them or whom they suspected of actively supporting the Republic cause. Political treason was the crime for which 13 Basque priests were shot between 7 October and 7 November. All but one of them spent at least a day in prison and were tried by summary court martial before being shot. The President of the Committee of AC in San Sebastián informed Cardinal Gomá on 28 October that 9 priests had been executed, and that neither the Vicar General of the diocese nor any other ecclesiastical authority had been consulted.⁷⁷ Gomá immediately protested to General Dávila in Burgos and visited Franco in Salamanca. In a report he sent to Rome on 8 November the Primate said that Franco had told him that he knew nothing about the executions, but that he would investigate the matter and he gave

⁷⁵Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco*, vol. ii, 204.

⁷⁶'Tres deberes de los Católicos en las actuales circunstancias.' BOOV, (1-I-37) Quoted in Javier Sánchez Erauskin, *Por Dios hacia el imperio. Nacionalcatolicismo en las vascongadas del primer franquismo 1936-1945* (San Sebastián: R & B Kriselu, 1995), 150-1.

⁷⁷Anastasio Granados, *El cardenal Gomá Primado de España* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1969), 145.

assurances that no more priests would be executed.⁷⁸ In spite of these assurances a Carmelite priest was shot on 16 May 1937 in the small village of Amorebieta as the Nationalists advanced on Vizcaya.

In a radio allocution broadcast on 22 December 1936 the President of the Basque autonomous government, José Antonio Aguirre, referred to the Basque priests who had been executed. He claimed they were murdered 'for the simple reason that they loved their Basque Fatherland,' and he asked why the bishops had remained silent on this matter and on the exiling of Basque clerics from 'invaded Basque territory'. He appealed to the 'Father of Christianity to put an end to this silence.'⁷⁹ Cardinal Gomá replied to Aguirre in an open letter dated 10 January 1937.⁸⁰ He described the war as a religious war. 'It is the love of the God of our fathers that has armed one half of Spain, even if it should be granted that less spiritual motives are operating in this war; it is hatred that has ranged the other half against God.' The Cardinal said he deplored the execution of Basque priests but also 'the aberration of certain priests which brought them in front of a firing party, because a priest should not descend from that level of holiness, both ontological and moral, where he has been placed by his consecration to the sacerdotal ministry.' He assured Aguirre that the hierarchy had protested to Franco and had been assured there would be no more executions. He then asked Aguirre why he had not spoken out over the thousands of executions of priests in Republican Spain. The letter finished with the Primate repeating the Basque bishops' earlier condemnation of the PNV's alliance with 'godless communists.' The 'Open Letter' was published in several diocesan bulletins and newspapers throughout the country, and the Nationalists paid for 20,000 copies of it to be printed and circulated in Navarre, Álava and Guipúzcoa. It was also translated into French, English, German, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch.⁸¹

The new civil and military authorities in Guipúzcoa and Álava pressurised the new Vicar General to take action against Basque nationalist priests. For example, on 23 January 1937 the Civil Governor of Álava wrote Pérez Ormazábal a brief note informing

⁷⁸'Informe del cardenal Gomá a la Santa Sede' (Pamplona 8 November 1936). Quoted in Rodríguez Aisa, *El cardenal Gomá*, 62-3.

⁷⁹José Antonio Aguirre y Lecube, 'Discurso, Radio Euzkadi 22 diciembre 1936'. In *Obras Completas* (Donostia: Sendoa argitaldaria, 1981), vol. i, 609-23.

⁸⁰'Respuesta obligada - Carta abierta al Sr. Aguirre' (Pamplona, 10 January 1937). In Gomá y Tomás, *Por Dios*, 54-69.

him he had read unfavourable reports on two priests who worked in the diocesan curia and advising their transfer out of the diocese.⁸² Later, while General Mola's troops prepared for the 31 March 1937 offensive on the province of Vizcaya, the military authorities presented the Vicar General with a list of names of priests whom they wanted transferred out of the diocese. Pérez Ormazábal wrote a letter to each one including a copy of the text of the communication he had received from the Military Governor of Guipúzcoa, part of which read:

'If they are sincerely repentant for having professed Basque nationalist doctrines, let them demonstrate it by offering to minister in other dioceses devastated by the Marxist barbarism, but if they persist in their error, and I say this with all the respect their sacerdotal status commands in the New Spain, neither here nor anywhere else in this country will there be a place for them.'⁸³

In his first meeting with Gomá in December 1936 (just after he had been appointed semi-official representative of the Vatican in Burgos) Franco asked the Primate to ask the Vatican to excommunicate those Basques who were persisting in their support for the Republican side. The Vatican refused to do so and instead unsuccessfully attempted mediation between the Nationalists and the Basques.⁸⁴ Immediately after the fall of Bilbao on 19 June 1937 Cardinal Pacelli sent a telegram from the Vatican to Cardinal Gomá asking him to intercede with the Nationalists on behalf of the defeated Basques to ensure that as many lives as possible were saved. Gomá accordingly met with Franco in Salamanca on 22 June and was assured that punishment and repression would be as mild as possible, that priests brought to trial would be treated with 'benevolence' and that no sanctions would be imposed without prior agreement with the ecclesiastical authorities.⁸⁵

In mid-July Gomá forwarded to the Vatican two reports that he had received from the Vicar General on the situation in Vizcaya since the fall of Bilbao.⁸⁶ According to the

⁸¹ Ibid., 70-3.

⁸² Iturralde, *La Guerra de Franco*, vol. ii, 485.

⁸³ Quoted in Pedro Baldasuna, *En España sale el sol* (Buenos Aires: Orden Cristiano, 1946), 191-3.

⁸⁴ For account of the Vatican intervention see Goñi, *La guerra civil*, 170-206.

⁸⁵ Quote from Gomá's report of 25 June 1937 to the Holy See in Rodríguez Aisa, *El Cardenal Gomá*, 222.

⁸⁶ Gomá sent the reports on 13 and 16 July 1937. Ibid., 224.

reports there was a great deal of tension in the area caused by the military and others blaming the Basque nationalist clergy for the spread of 'separatism' in Vizcaya and for the decision taken by so many Basques to fight for the Republic. The Vicar General acknowledged in the reports that there was indeed a sector of the clergy 'which has distinguished itself by being openly separatist, aiding, defending and propagating the doctrine of the Basque nationalist party in its most strident forms.'⁸⁷ He said that in spite of this the military authorities had assured him that 'priests would be treated with the greatest respect' and that the approval and support of the ecclesiastical authorities would be sought for all measures taken to deal with 'separatist priests'. He said that these measures mainly involved transferring the priests out of the Basque Country. On 30 July Gomá forwarded to the Vatican a final report on the situation of Basque nationalist priests after the conquest of Vizcaya. It claimed that many of them had gone into exile in the South of France, but that many others still remained and some of them had adopted a defiant attitude towards the new authorities, with the result that the treatment of priests when arrested was becoming harsher and very long sentences were being imposed - in one case the death penalty had been passed, although the Cardinal intervened and it was commuted.⁸⁸

An Apostolic Delegate in the person of Monsignor Hildebrando Antoniutti arrived in Bilbao on 31 July charged with the task of looking after prisoners-of-war and supervising the repatriation of Basque children who had been evacuated out of the country, mainly to Russia and England.⁸⁹ He managed to have some 60 priests and male religious who were in prison accused of separatism transferred to the Carmelite convent in Begoña (Bilbao). He also wrote to bishops in the south of Spain asking them to accept priests into their dioceses whom the civil authorities had requested be expelled from the Basque Country.⁹⁰ Just before the arrival on 14 October of an Apostolic Administrator to the diocese, Antoniutti was made *chargé d'affaires* to the Burgos government. This appointment

⁸⁷ Ibid., 225.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 227-9.

⁸⁹ On the repatriation of Basque children see Dorothy Legarreta, *The Guernica Generation. Basque refugee children of the Civil War* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1984).

⁹⁰ Hilari Ragner, 'El Vaticano y la guerra civil española (1936-39)' *Cristianesimo Nella Storia*, Vol. 3, (April 1982), 177.

represented a further step by the Vatican on the road to establishing full diplomatic relations with Nationalist Spain.⁹¹

Basque nationalist priests continued to be hunted down and punished throughout 1938 and 1939. It is estimated that around 800 priests of the diocese of Vitoria suffered some form of repression, either during the war itself or in the immediate post-war period.⁹² Approximately 250 priests spent time in work camps (in Miranda del Ebro and San Pedro de Cardeña) or prisons (in the Basque Country, Seville, Alicante, Palencia). Others were moved to different parishes within the diocese of Vitoria, or to parishes in other parts of Spain. Many members of the regular clergy were sent overseas to work on their Orders' foreign missions. There were 263 priests missing or absent from the diocese in 1940.⁹³ In 1943 there were still 162 priests living outside the diocese because of their political stance during the war (83 of them in different parts of Spain and the remainder abroad.)⁹⁴ In addition to this persecution several books published between 1938 and 1940 attacked and vilified the Basque clergy for the posture they had adopted during the war. For example, *'El Catolicismo de los Nacionalistas Vascos'* (1939), accused them of being the main promoters of Basque nationalism and of inspiring and supporting the PNV. The Apostolic Administrator of Vitoria wrote in its prologue that the military uprising of 18 July 1936 had saved Spain from becoming a 'Russian canton under the tyrannical power of Godless people'.⁹⁵ Another book, published in 1940, entitled *'El Clero y los Católicos Vasco-Separatistas y el Movimiento Nacional'*, accused the Basque clergy of implicitly supporting Basque separatism through a tactic of silence: 'Not a single word in favour of the Patria. They forgot that although it is forbidden for them to become involved in party politics, it is not forbidden, nor does it go against the Gospel, to call themselves Spaniards, and to preach as Spaniards.'⁹⁶

⁹¹He presented his credentials on 8 October. Full diplomatic recognition of the Nationalist government only came in April 1938.

⁹²Serafin Esnaola, & Emiliano de Iturrarán, *El Clero Vasco en la Clandestinidad (1940-1968)* 2 Vols. (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, 1994), vol. i, 15.

⁹³List of names in Rentería, *Pueblo Vasco e Iglesia*, vol ii, 169-76.

⁹⁴Andres Gallego, *La Iglesia en la España Contemporánea*. 2 vols. (Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 1999), vol ii, 103.

⁹⁵Pedro Altabella García, *El Catolicismo de los Nacionalistas Vascos* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1939).

⁹⁶*El Clero y los Católicos Vasco-Separatistas y el Movimiento Nacional* (Madrid: Centro de Información Católica Internacional, 1940), 33. Other books in a similar vein were: Rafael García de Castro, *La tragedia espiritual de Vizcaya* (Granada: Editorial y Librería Prieto, 1938); Sebastián de Romero, *El*

(iv) Attempts to normalise religious practice in Catalonia

Ironically, while the Nationalists, the supposed defenders of the Catholic Church in Spain, were brutally punishing Basque nationalist priests, the Republicans were attempting to make peace with the Church in Catalonia. In May 1937 Manuel de Irujo of the PNV was appointed Minister for Justice in the Republican government. Since he had first entered government in September 1936 as a minister without portfolio he had several times expressed his concern at the religious persecution in Republican Spain. For example, in January 1937 he presented a report to the government on the religious destruction wrought by the anticlerical fury, which, he said, had shocked the civilised world.⁹⁷ By the beginning of 1937 the anticlerical fury had subsided in Barcelona and after the 'Events of May 1937' ended the predominance of the anarchosyndicalists, hundreds of priests and members of religious orders were released from prison. In his first speech as Minister for Justice Irujo spoke of his wish to see the churches reopened and all priests not guilty of political offences released from prison. He wanted the Church to revert to its pre-war status when it enjoyed freedom of worship as stipulated by the Constitution of 1931. What Irujo was proposing came to be called 'normalisation' and it became a much more urgent issue after the Spanish bishops had published their infamous collective letter addressed to the bishops of the whole world.⁹⁸ Section 6 of this major document dealt with the 'premeditated hecatomb' perpetrated by supporters of the 'Communist Revolution'. It estimated that the number of churches and chapels that had been destroyed or completely sacked was as high as 20,000 and that some 6,000 diocesan priests alone had been killed. These figures were very harmful for the image of the Republican government, who reacted by passing a ministerial decree on 7 August 1937 that authorised private religious services and permitted Masses and other liturgical celebrations in the army and in prisons. Negotiations for the complete normalisation of religious practice began at the end of 1937 in Barcelona, where the Republican

separatismo vasco (n.p.: Sofia Imprenta, n.d); Zacarías de Vizcarra, *Vizcaya españolisima* (San Sebastián: Edit. Española, 1939).

⁹⁷ The report is in A. de Lizarra, [Andrés María de Irujo] *Los vascos y la república española* (Buenos Aires: Vasca Ekin, 1944), 200-4.

⁹⁸ 'Sobre la Guerra de España' (1 July 1937). Text in Iribarren, DCEE I, 219-42. It was released to the Spanish press only on 10 August.

government and Basque government had by then relocated. On 28 November 1937 Irujo met with the Vicar General of Barcelona to discuss the possibility of reopening churches in the diocese. Fr. Torrent informed him that he would have to consult with the Vatican on the matter. He did so in a letter dated 4 December in which he expressed serious reservations about taking such a step: 'The priests themselves and the people do not believe that the Republican government has the moral strength or the means to offer guarantees that would make it possible for public worship to be re-established.' The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, replied to Torrent on 29 December that while it was desirable that normal religious life be resumed as soon as possible, guarantees must be first given that priests and congregations would not be in any danger. Torrent decided that since there were no such guarantees the churches should remain closed.⁹⁹

In February 1938 Irujo wrote to Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer, inviting him to return to his archdiocese with a promise to guarantee his security. Irujo wrote: 'I am happy to make this offer as a minister of the Republic, as a Basque, and as a Catholic, in the hope that it will bring about better days for the Church, the Republic and Catalonia.'¹⁰⁰ Vidal i Barraquer did not reply until the end of April (because the letter did not reach him until then) and his answer dashed Irujo's hopes. The Cardinal said he could not return as long as there were any priests remaining in prison. Further, he said, the government had not made a single effort to apologise or to make any reparation for the damage wrought by the anticlerical fury. Finally, he asked why he had received no response to his proposal, made several times over the past year and a half, to return as a hostage in exchange for the freedom of all the imprisoned clergy.¹⁰¹ Irujo responded by begging Vidal to reconsider and denied any knowledge of his earlier offer.¹⁰² In spite of his refusal the Cardinal instructed his Vicar General, Salvador Rial, to urge the clergy to at least a minimum amount of pastoral activity. He also persuaded the Holy See to name Rial Apostolic Administrator of the suffragan dioceses of Lérida and Tortosa, both of which were still in the Republican zone. Rial reported to Pacelli in August 1938 that the Republican

⁹⁹ Quotes from both letters in Raguer, 'El Vaticano', 195-6.

¹⁰⁰ Letter of 11 February 1938 in Muntanyola, *Vidal i Barraquer*, 244.

¹⁰¹ Letter of April 30, 1938 in *ibid.*, 345-6. References to Vidal's earlier proposals on pages 338ff.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 347-8.

government was sincere about normalising the situation.¹⁰³ Cardinal Vidal himself wrote to Pacelli in November 1938 that the Church should re-establish herself in Catalonia without regard to the political or military situation. But Pacelli did not respond to this, probably because of pressure from Cardinal Gomá and the Nationalists for the Holy See not to reach any agreement with the Republic. Besides, by then the Vatican had given full recognition to the Nationalist government by appointing Cardinal Cicogani as Nuncio in May 1938. It had also accepted an ambassador from the Nationalist government, José María Yanguas y Messía.¹⁰⁴

In spite of the lack of progress in negotiations on 8 December 1938 a Republican government decree went ahead and established a *Comisariado de Cultos*¹⁰⁵ and its head, Jesús María Bellido y Golerichs (Professor of Medicine, a practising Catholic, a committed supporter of the Republic and a member of *Acció Catalana*) invited Rial to open a chapel in the cathedral of Tarragona. Rial agreed, but he had to get Vidal's approval, and by the time Vidal was consulted, Tarragona had fallen to the Nationalist troops.¹⁰⁶ Rial was arrested a few days later and placed under house arrest for eight days. He was interrogated by a military judge from Burgos and forced to leave the diocese for two months. His dealings with the Republican government over the previous months had made him *persona non grata* in the eyes of the civil authorities.¹⁰⁷

(v) *The enforced exile of Bishop Múgica and Cardinal Vidal*

Neither the Bishop of Vitoria nor the Metropolitan Archbishop of Tarragona was allowed to return to Spain when the war ended.¹⁰⁸ Bishop Múgica resigned his see in September 1937 after reading in *L'Osservatore Romano* that an Apostolic Administrator had been appointed to his diocese.¹⁰⁹ He remained in exile in Cambo les Bains in the

¹⁰³ Letter of 14 August 1938 in *ibid.*, 354.

¹⁰⁴ Reports on both appointments in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16-17 May 1938.

¹⁰⁵ The decree was published on the front page of *La Vanguardia* on 9 December 1938. Text of decree in Manent i Segimón, *L'Església clandestina*, Appendix, Doc. 15, pp. 271-2.

¹⁰⁶ Tarragona fell on 15 January 1939.

¹⁰⁷ Hilari Raguer, *Salvador Rial, Vicari del Cardenal de la Pau* (Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1993), *passim*.

¹⁰⁸ Vidal had been Metropolitan Archbishop of Tarragona since 1919. Múgica had been Bishop of Vitoria since 1928.

¹⁰⁹ According to Alberto de Onaindía, *Capítulos de mi vida. Hombre de paz en la Guerra* (Buenos Aires: Ekin, 1973), 316-17.

French Basque Country until 1947 when he returned without pastoral responsibility to the small village of Zarauz in Guipúzcoa.¹¹⁰ Múgica had rapidly grown disillusioned with the Nationalist cause after leaving Spain. Between 21 October 1936 and 16 March 1937 he sent three 'expositions' to the Vatican in which he explained the circumstances surrounding his departure from the diocese, protested at the execution of the 14 priests by the Nationalists and defended his seminary against accusations that it was a seedbed of separatism.¹¹¹ On 29 January 1937 he also wrote to Cardinal Gomá from Rome to object to the section of his 'Open Letter' of December 1936 that criticised the executed Basque priests and claimed they had 'perished for a reason which there is no need to mention in this letter.' Gomá answered Múgica's letter on 30 January 1937 telling him that the 'unmentioned reason' was the abuse of authority by those who ordered the priests killed. 'How could I pick a quarrel with those in a position of power? It would be most imprudent.' After making this confession Gomá asked Múgica to keep it an absolute secret.¹¹² He refused to sign the collective letter of July 1937 on the grounds that he was away from his diocese and unable to exercise full pastoral responsibility. In 1945, while still in exile, Múgica explained his initial disapproval of the decision of Basque leaders to oppose the military rising and the reason why he eventually became disillusioned with the 'Crusade'. The long document, which he entitled 'Imperatives of my Conscience', described his horror at the execution of the 14 Basque priests and his protest at the time to the Holy See.¹¹³ He explained that he did not make his protests public 'because a person I could not ignore begged me not to, and I agreed because I feared that my protests would be used against innocent persons by the Nationalists.'¹¹⁴ He explained that he did not have much information about what was happening in Spain at large or even in the rest of his diocese in the early days of the war- hence he signed the pastoral instruction of 6 August 1936. Then he began to see that among both Republicans and Nationalists there were people guilty of wrongdoing: 'Some did evil to serve the aims of anarchism; others did

¹¹⁰ He died there in October 1968 at the age of 98.

¹¹¹ Expositions published in *El Clero Vasco frente a la cruzada franquista. Documentos* (Toulouse: Egi-Indarra, 1966), 363-80, 389-410, 411-5.

¹¹² Rodríguez Aisa, *El cardenal Gomá*, p. 197, footnote 29.

¹¹³ 'Imperativos de mi conciencia' In José Maria Alday, *Crónicas. La voz del clero vasco en defensa de su pueblo*. 2 vols. (Bilbao: Idatz Ekintza, S.A., 1986), vol. i, 58-79.

the same under the pretext of working in the name of Christ.' He denied the Nationalists' allegations that the Basque nationalists placed their ethnic and cultural interests above those of religion, that the seminary was a hotbed of nationalism, and he said that none of the 2,020 priests in the diocese of Vitoria ever put politics before religion.

'They never fomented any kind of separatism, they never made propaganda against Spain, they never even mentioned the word Euskadi in their ministry. They did certainly use their mother tongue - Basque (vascuence) to teach the Catechism to children and in preaching. But that was not a crime. ... Is it fair therefore to reproach our priests who demonstrated solidarity with good religious people just because those people were Basque nationalists? I do not understand why nor how my argument can fail on this point.'¹¹⁵

'Imperatives of my Conscience' was followed by a letter to President Aguirre on 19 March 1946 in which he retracted the criticisms he had made of the Basque government in his reports to the Vatican during the war.¹¹⁶ He explained that he had done so as a result of being only partially informed of what was happening in the Basque Country. He praised the way the Basque government, 'the legal and legitimate authority', had endeavoured to protect the Church from anticlerical violence. He told Aguirre that he had sent a rectification of his earlier opinions on the Basque Government to the Vatican Secretary of State and, finally, he invited Aguirre to make the contents of this letter known to whomsoever he wished.

When the Civil War ended an intermediary from the Spanish embassy in Rome informed Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer that he would be allowed to return to Spain only if he resigned his see. The reasons he was given were his refusal to sign the collective letter of July 1937, his support of his Vicar General's activities to bring about the normalisation of

¹¹⁴Bishop Múgica did not identify this person. Fr. Alberto de Onaindía says that Múgica told him in 1949 that 'neither Pope Pius XI, Pacelli, nor Pizarro ever told me to keep silent about these matters.' Alberto de Onaindía, *Capítulos de mi vida. Hombre de paz en la Guerra* (Buenos Aires: Ekin, 1973), 335.

¹¹⁵Quoted in Joaquín Perea, *El modelo de Iglesia subyacente en la pastoral del clero vasco. 1918-1936*. 4 Vols. (Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer, 1991), vol. iv, 2144.

religious practice in Catalonia, his 'Catalanism' and his contacts with the Republican Government.¹¹⁷

Vidal had refused to sign the collective letter of July 1937 as he feared not only that a public statement by the hierarchy might provoke reprisals against Catholics in Republican-held Catalonia, but also that the content of the text would compromise the Church politically when the war was over.¹¹⁸ He argued that a political stance of any public support for the Nationalists would simply cause reprisals and even more anticlerical violence. In early September 1936, when the Italian press announced that the Pope was receiving Spanish refugees in a special audience, Vidal wrote to Pacelli that the publicity would have an adverse affect upon Catholics in Republican Spain and might lead to more persecutions.¹¹⁹ Unlike the other Spanish bishops he made no public statements on the war. He maintained this attitude steadfastly throughout the war even though he foresaw a Nationalist victory and probably wanted it as a means of ending the violence.¹²⁰

His support for Catalan nationalism dated back to Primo de Rivera's dictatorship of 1923-1930 when he defended the use of the Catalan language in preaching and teaching when Primo had suppressed use of the language. The dictatorship regarded the use of Catalan in the pulpit as an attack on Spanish national unity. The government tried unsuccessfully to have Vidal moved to the see of Zaragoza or to faraway Granada and they ensured non-Catalans were appointed to Tortosa and Lérida.¹²¹

After the Second Republic was declared in April 1931 Vidal advised the other Spanish bishops to follow the example of the Catalan bishops and organise meetings or 'conferences of bishops' in the ecclesiastical provinces to which they belonged. To many people at the time he seemed to be encouraging the creation of regional Churches. Following the expulsion of the Primate, Cardinal Segura, in September 1931 (over his

¹¹⁶ Cyclostyled copy of the letter in Aguirre Archive in the Benedictine Monastery in Lazkano, Guipúzcoa. (Henceforth: ABL). Document among others not catalogued in 1997.

¹¹⁷ See Antonio Marquina Barrio, *La diplomacia vaticana y la España de Franco (1936-1945)* (Madrid: CSIC, 1982), 132-41.

¹¹⁸ For Cardinal Vidal's explanation's see Muntanyola, *Vidal i Barraquer*, 427-46.

¹¹⁹ Letter of 2 September 1936 in *ibid.*, 308.

¹²⁰ Hilari Ragner emphasizes this point: 'It is clear - Vidal said it unambiguously in more than one letter - that although he had not wanted the war and had tried to avoid it, once it had begun and once he saw what the situation was, he sincerely wanted and foresaw Franco's victory; but he did not believe that a bishop, much less the official Church, should publicly manifest those sympathies.' Ragner, *La Espada*, 111.

¹²¹ Further information on the Catalan Church's problems with the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in Lannon, *Privilege*, 176-7.

diatribe the previous May against the Republic) Vidal became acting head of the Spanish Church and for the next couple of years he followed the line set by the Vatican of showing respect for the new Republican government. He worked patiently, albeit not very successfully, to achieve a satisfactory *modus vivendi* between Church and State. The new Primate of Spain, Cardinal Gomá, who replaced him as President of the Conference of Metropolitan Archbishops in April 1933, had, as we have seen, very different ideas on what constituted ideal Church-State relations.

Cardinal Pacelli, who was elected Pope Pius XII on 2 March 1939, interceded with Franco on at least three occasions to allow Vidal to return to his see. He was met with adamant refusal each time.¹²² All the Catalan bishops, with the Nuncio's approval, unsuccessfully petitioned the government at the end of 1941 to allow Vidal to return to his see.¹²³ The Cardinal died in exile in Switzerland in 1943.

Frances Lannon has observed that Múgica and Vidal's 'common refusal to sign the 1937 letter owed much to their pastoral experience in peripheral areas where the local nationalist aspirations of many Catholics challenged assumptions about the desirability of a centralising, authoritarian Catholic state.'¹²⁴ One of the aims of this thesis is to show that twenty years after the war the majority of Basque and Catalan Catholics rejected just such a State.

(vi) *National-Catholicism: the early years*

On 16 April 1939 - just a fortnight after the Civil War ended - Cardinal Pacelli the newly elected Pope Pius XII broadcast a message to the Spanish people in which he said: 'It is with great pleasure that we address you to express our paternal congratulations for the gift of peace and for the victory with which God has deigned to crown the Christian heroism shown in so many generous sufferings.' He praised the Spanish people who 'rose in defence of the ideals of faith and Christian civilisation' and were able to resist 'the pressure of those who were deceived into believing in a humanitarian ideal that exalted the

¹²² Muntanyola, *Vidal i Barraquer*, 409 recounts the rumour that Pope Pius XI had planned to announce publicly that Vidal was returning to his see and thus present Franco with a *fait accompli*. Marquina Barrio, *La Diplomacia Vaticana*, 138-9, says that while such an action was possible, it was most unlikely that the Vatican's position would have changed so quickly.

¹²³ *Historia de la Iglesia en España*, vol. v, 671.

¹²⁴ Lannon, *Privilege*, 206.

poor, but who were actually fighting to benefit the forces of atheism.' He exhorted the clergy and government officials to show these deceived people that individual and social justice must be based on Christ's gospel and Church doctrine. He said he did not doubt that Franco would do this, having already given proof of his 'Christian sentiments' by protecting religious interests in conformity with the teachings of the papacy. He recalled the sacred memory of the many clergy who gave their lives for the faith and recognised the heroic sacrifices of those who died for God and religion on the field of battle. Before ending with a blessing on the faithful and all those who fought for the faith, he urged Spaniards to follow the principles taught by the Church and 'so nobly proclaimed by the Generalísimo: justice for all criminals and benevolent generosity towards the mistaken.'¹²⁵

There would, however, be very little of either shown to those who had sided with the Republic during the war. The Spanish bishops instead called for collective penance to regenerate the country, and for sacrifice and repentance to purge collective guilt. This happened in the Basque Country even before the war had ended there. For example, the Lenten and Easter pastoral letter prepared by the Vicar General of Vitoria in February 1937 declared:

'We have sinned, we have behaved impiously, we have acted with iniquity (...) the present circumstances are opportune for reminding ourselves of that, and for putting on the yoke of mortification to atone for our sins. Who knows if it is not the reason for the delay of the triumph we are all longing for?'¹²⁶

On 19 March 1937 an impressive *Via Crucis* was held in the Plaza Alameda in San Sebastián. The diocesan bulletin described the scene as follows:

'The people of San Sebastián came like sinners to reconcile themselves with God and as patriots to implore Him to save Spain. (...) In all the Stations sentiments of Christian piety mixed with patriotic love; ... a

¹²⁵Quoted in Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy*, p. 144. The text of the message is published in Montero, *La persecución religiosa*, 744-6.

¹²⁶*BOOV* (1 February 1937), 68. Quoted in Sánchez Erauskin, *Por Dios hacia el imperio*, 40.

demonstration of the Christian piety of the people of San Sebastián which was repressed these past six years by the secular tyranny, decreed in the name of liberty.’¹²⁷

Two months after the fall of Vizcaya a huge number of people participated in the annual novena in Bilbao to Our Lady of Begoña, which took place from 7 to 15 August 1937. It concluded with a Mass in the Basilica of Begoña that was attended by Franco’s wife, Doña Carmen Polo, the Mayor of Bilbao, José María Areilza, and the recently arrived Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Antoniutti. The diocesan bulletin described the novena as a great success:

‘Bilbao has made atonement for her sacrilegious errors. In the presence of God and before Spain she has washed away her shame with nine days of public expiation and prayer. This year sorrowful penitential psalms have set the tone of the novena to Our Lady of Begoña.’¹²⁸

The Auxiliary Bishop of Valencia, Javier Lauzurica, was appointed Apostolic Administrator of Vitoria in October 1937. At the time he was forty-seven years old. He was a native of Durango (Vizcaya) and had been auxiliary bishop of Valencia since 1931. He had actually been on holiday in Durango on 18 July 1936 and was unable to return to his diocese, which was in the Republican zone. He spent the following months between Navarre and the Basque Country and had a lot of contact with Cardinal Gomá, who was very impressed by his enthusiasm for the Nationalists. In all his writings, speeches and sermons as Apostolic Administrator he associated Catholicism with true Spain and true Spain with the Nationalists:

‘We desire your full incorporation into the National Movement as it is the defender of the laws of God, of the Catholic Church and of the

¹²⁷ *BOOV* (15 April 1937), 178. Quoted in *ibid.*, 39.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Rentería, *Pueblo Vasco e Iglesia*, vol. ii, 317.

Patria, which is no other than Our Mother Spain; (...) we implore you to offer up fervent and continuous prayers that religiosity and love for Spain may once again take up the important place that they always occupied in the hearts of our beloved Basque sons and daughters.’¹²⁹

On 14 November 1937 at a ceremony to celebrate the 'restoration' of the Crucifix in the classrooms of the Institute of Primary Education in Bilbao he declared:

‘In the Spanish Church and in the Patria all love should be centred. On saying Spain, I say the Church. Our love for the Patria expresses our great love for the Church. To love Spain is to love what is greatest, most sublime. To disparage Spain is to disparage what is most sacred. He who truly loves Spain and the Church will be rewarded on this earth and in heaven.’¹³⁰

More than 1000 children received their First Holy Communion from the bishop in Doña Casilda Park in central Bilbao on 7 May 1938. The Mayor of Bilbao, the Military Governor of Vizcaya, the vice-Minister for Justice, the Minister for Commerce and the President of the *Diputación de Vizcaya* (Provincial Council), were just some of the civic dignitaries who attended. Bishop Lauzurica told the children:

‘You have to pray, children, in the first place for yourselves that you may be excellent Catholics and patriots, and for Spain which is beginning to arise led by the hand of the unconquered Caudillo and his glorious Army. Long live the Generalísimo! Long live our glorious Army! Long live the New Spain! Arriba España!’¹³¹

¹²⁹Part of his first pastoral greeting to the diocesan faithful. It was read in all churches of the diocese on 10 October. *BOOV*, (1 October 1937), 354. Quoted in Sánchez Erauskin, *Por Dios hacia el imperio*, 167.

¹³⁰*BOOV* (1 December 1937), 454. Quoted in Iturralde, *La guerra de Franco*, vol. ii, 453. Religious symbols, including Crucifixes had been removed from State schools by a government decree of 23 May 1931.

¹³¹Quoted in *ibid.*, 167.

On all these occasions the Apostolic Administrator was employing the rhetoric of National-Catholicism, an ideology that linked Church and State and on which Franco was to stake the long-term future of his dictatorship. He was taking advantage of the Basques' religiosity to promote an ideology that sought to break the link between Catholicism and local culture and indoctrinate a sense of Spanish patriotism.

An effective way of doing this would be to repress the use of Euskera. In a circular letter published in the diocesan bulletin on 1 March 1938 Lauzurica announced that Euskera could be used in preaching when the congregation did not understand Spanish. However, on 17 March the Minister for Public Order, General Martínez Anido, contradicted the bishop instruction by publishing a 'counter-order' in the newspaper '*Norte de Castilla*'.

An important vehicle for promoting the National-Catholicism ideology was Catholic Action (AC). The following is an extract from a report published in the diocesan bulletin on the closing ceremony of a course for the youth section of AC in the Kursaal theatre in San Sebastián on 21 March 1940.

'The back curtain of the stage was adorned with the colours and emblems of AC and pictures of the Pope and the Caudillo. ... Monsignor Lauzurica made a magnificent speech, emphasizing the need to re-Christianise Spain so that the spiritual conquest would parallel the victorious conquest achieved by the Spanish soldiers and militias commanded by the unconquered Generalísimo. ... The celebration ended with the playing of the National Hymn during which all present stood, arms raised.'¹³²

The appointment of a residential bishop for the diocese of Vitoria was announced in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* on 12 June 1943. The new incumbent was Carmelo Ballester, a member of the French Order of Saint Vincent de Paul. He took possession of the diocese on 19 December 1943. On 5 February 1944 he made his first official visit to the province of Vizcaya. At a reception in his honour the President of the Provincial

¹³²*BOOV* (1 May 1940), 272. Quoted in *ibid.*, 98.

Council of Vizcaya, José Luis Goyoaga, made a speech full of the language of National Catholicism:

‘Vizcaya, from remotest times up to the recent Crusade, through a thousand glorious deeds has demonstrated its unity with the Fatherland and served Spain with loyalty and valour, and it will continue to do so always. It also gave to Christ’s Church legions of Vizcayans who went before us in the Faith and were an example to the whole world. ... On behalf of the Honourable Provincial Council of Vizcaya allow me, Your Most Reverend Excellency, to humbly entreat your episcopal blessing that this beautiful province may reach the apogee of its greatness by serving God, Spain and the Caudillo.’¹³³

Bishop Ballester remained in Vitoria until 1950, the year the diocese was dismembered and the two new additional dioceses of Bilbao and San Sebastián were created.

Religious triumphalism and impressive displays of National-Catholicism were also the order of the day following the fall of Barcelona on 26 January 1939. On 29 January the Vicar General, Josep Torrent, officiated at an open-air Mass in the Plaza de Catalunya (soon to be renamed ‘Plaza del Ejército Nacional’) that was attended by Generals Yagüe and Solchaga, along with the victorious troops. It was followed a week later by another massive open-air Mass at the intersection of the Paseo de Gracia and the Gran Vía Diagonal to celebrate the conquest of the city of Gerona by the Moroccan Corps. After the Mass an enormous crowd enthusiastically applauded a parade by the military along the city’s main thoroughfares. One Barcelona newspaper described the scene as follows:

‘The people of Barcelona once more turned out spontaneously and unanimously on this momentous occasion, demonstrating the religious and patriotic fervour of the people of Barcelona that the anti-Spaniards

¹³³*BOOV* (16 February 1944), 86. Quoted in *ibid.*, 183.

tried to suffocate during two years of red terror and persecution, Marxist propaganda and separatism.¹³⁴

Once the conquest of all of Catalonia was completed on 10 February 1939 a series of measures were immediately adopted by the new regime which were aimed at 'de-Catalanizing' the Church. For example, the use of Catalan in the liturgy and in official Church publications was completely prohibited. The Vicar General, Fr. José Torrent, acting on instructions received from the new authorities, published a note in the diocesan bulletin on 15 March 1939 stipulating that all Masses should be celebrated in Spanish.¹³⁵ The *Hoja Diocesana de Barcelona* (Barcelona Diocesan Newsletter) and all parochial leaflets in the post-war period had to be exclusively in Spanish. The first post-war issue of the Diocesan Newsletter declared its adhesion to the 'Glorious National Movement for the Salvation of Spain'.¹³⁶ Some 15 pre-Civil War religious publications in Catalan were forced to disappear (they included the Catholic daily newspaper, *El Matí*, and magazines such as *Paraula Cristiana*, *Catalunya Missionera*, *Catalunya Social* and *El Bon Pastor*).

On 25 March 1939 Miguel de Los Santos Díaz Gómara, Bishop of Cartagena, was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the diocese.¹³⁷ In his pastoral salutation to the clergy and faithful of the diocese he said:

'This city and diocese, like the whole of Catalonia, has just come out of the worst persecution, the cruellest and most merciless war that any creature ever declared on his Supreme Maker. ... Open your eyes wide and be convinced of the disastrous mistake of those who, seduced by the

¹³⁴*Hoja Oficial del Lunes* (Barcelona) 6 February 1939. Quoted in Josep Benet, *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra Catalunya* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1995), 450.

¹³⁵ *BOOBA* (15 March 1939) 'Nota de la Vicaría General de la Diòcesis de Barcelona a los Rectores de las Iglesias a fin de que no se use en los actos de Culto otra lengua vernácula que la Española.' In Benet, *L'intent Franquista de genocidi*, 454.

¹³⁶*Hoja Diocesana de Barcelona*, no.1 (April, 1939), 28. Cited in Benet, *L'intent franquista de genocidi*, 456.

¹³⁷ Miguel de Los Santos Díaz Gómara, Bishop of Cartagena, was Navarrese. He had fled his diocese in Alicante immediately after the war started; disguised as a sailor he got a job on a German ship and was thus able to reach Italy. In 1937 he represented Franco's Spain at the Eucharistic Congress of Paraguay. He then travelled on to Uruguay and Argentina giving conferences on the Civil War. On his return to Spain General Quiapo de Llano met him in the port of Seville. He spent the remainder of the war travelling around Nationalist Spain praising Franco and the National Movement.

lure of secessionism, aligned themselves consciously or unconsciously, with such treacherous enemies of the most holy and sacred. ... Fortunately for us our unconquered Caudillo, Generalísimo Franco, rebelled against the red tyranny and his Forces have recovered for God and for Spain this blessed land, this beloved Catalonia.’¹³⁸

Shortly after his arrival the Apostolic Administrator replaced Fr. José María Torrent with a new Vicar General. Hilari Raguer, historian and Benedictine monk of Montserrat, who hopes to publish the archive of Fr. Torrent very soon, is of the opinion that Torrent was replaced because his relations with the Generalitat government during the war were reasonably good and so too, to a certain extent, were his dealings with Irujo and other members of the Republican government throughout the negotiations that took place in the second half of 1937 and in 1938. The new authorities probably wanted to remove a Vicar General who might at some stage in the future contradict the image they wished to propagate of the Catalan Church having suffered an unrelenting persecution at the hands of all those who supported the Republic right throughout the war.¹³⁹

Like his opposite number in Vitoria the Apostolic Administrator of Barcelona constantly used the language of National-Catholicism in his writings, speeches and sermons. For example, on 30 September 1939 he presided over the inauguration ceremony of the new academic year in the Seminary of Barcelona. In total there were 110 new seminarians in the diocese in 1939-1940.¹⁴⁰ In his speech to the students and teachers he exhorted them to ‘love Spain, our Patria, not as an imposition, but rather out of conviction.’¹⁴¹ He went on to stipulate that Spanish should be used as the language of instruction in the seminary and at all official ceremonies. In a pastoral letter of 1940 dealing with the seminary he described priests who had been killed during the Civil War as ‘martyrs who were slaughtered by satanic hate’ because ‘Satan detests priests and

¹³⁸ BOOBA, no. 2 (April 1939), 38-49. The contents of the pastoral letter were also published in the Barcelona daily, *La Vanguardia Española* (25 March 1939).

¹³⁹ Information from paper entitled ‘La oposición cristiana en Cataluña: Los “bonzos incordiantes” given by Hilari Raguer at ‘Los cristianos en la lucha por la democracia’ Conference held in Seville from 2-5 March 1999.

¹⁴⁰ BOOBA, no. 2 (3 February 1940), 45.

¹⁴¹ Reported in *El Correo Catalán* (Barcelona), 1 October 1939. Cited in Benet, *L'intent franquista de genocidi*, 460.

therefore he seeks to eliminate them.¹⁴² He refused permission for the reorganisation of a youth association which had been launched just a few days before the declaration of the Second Republic in April 1931: the *Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya* (FJCC).¹⁴³ This organisation was thriving by 1936: in 1934 it had 10,463 members throughout Catalonia, and by the time the Civil War started almost 18,000. By then it was regarded with suspicion by AC outside of Catalonia because of its perceived Catalanism and its promotion of Christian Democrat values.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless 300 *Fejocistes* were murdered by the Republicans during the war and its central offices in Barcelona were seized for use by the Communist Party.¹⁴⁵ The Apostolic Administrator told its founder, Fr. Bonet, that the new civil authorities had ordered the dissolution of all nationalist type organisations - which, he said, the FJCC was generally considered to be. Instead he encouraged the youth of the diocese to join the youth branch of AC. The fact that Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer had been very supportive of the FJCC during the five years of its existence would not, presumably, have helped its chances of survival after the war.¹⁴⁶

In 1942 Gregorio Modrego Casaus, a native of Aragón, was appointed residential bishop of Barcelona. In the early years of his incumbency he published several pastoral letters on the 'Crusade'. He also organised for his predecessor's remains to be interred in the cathedral on 10 December 1943, after they had been received with full military honours in the Plaza del Generalísimo.¹⁴⁷

As in Bilbao and elsewhere in Spain, the civil and military authorities in Barcelona participated in pilgrimages, missions, enthronements, coronations, open-air Masses, the re-

¹⁴² *BOOBA* no. 2 (February 1940), 33. Quoted in Bada, *Guerra Civil i Església Catalana*, 38.

¹⁴³ Pere Codinachs i Verdaguer, *La Federació de joves cristians de Catalunya (1931-1936)* (Barcelona: Editorial Claret, 1990), 135-6.

¹⁴⁴ Many of FJCC's members were simultaneously members of the small Christian Democrat party, UDC, which was also created in 1931. Information on UDC from Hilari Ragué, *La Unió Democràtica de Catalunya i el seu temps (1931-1939)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1976), *passim*.

¹⁴⁵ Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa en España durante la Segunda República 1931-39* (Madrid: RIALP, 1990), 211.

¹⁴⁶ Pilar García Jordan, *Els catòlics catalans i la Segona República. (1931-36)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1986), 39.

¹⁴⁷ The previous day a statue of his predecessor, Bishop Irurita, was placed in a niche of the episcopal palace facing the street leading to the Cathedral. Bada, *Guerra Civil i Església Catalana*, 60.

opening of churches damaged in the war¹⁴⁸, and the like, in the period up to 1953. For example, the first Congress of Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, which was held in Barcelona in May 1941, was presided over by Cardinal Pedro Segura y Sáenz, Archbishop of Seville, along with the Captain General of Barcelona, Luis Orgaz y Yoldi and the Civil Governor, Correa Veglison. The Minister for Justice, Esteban Bilbao, ceremoniously concluded it.¹⁴⁹ At the end of May 1952 the Thirty-Fifth International Eucharistic Congress was held in Barcelona amid great religious and patriotic fervour. Over half a million Spaniards attended, together with 30,000 foreigners, including 4,000 Americans led by Cardinal Spellman. Franco and his complete government attended all the official acts. The Caudillo himself addressed the Congress, recalling 'the countless legions of martyrs and soldiers fallen for the faith in the recent Crusade', and he pronounced the public dedication of Spain to the Holy Sacrament. The Canadian Monsignor Vachon reminded his hearers that fifteen years earlier Barcelona had been the centre of 'the most bloody religious persecution.'¹⁵⁰ Thirteen months later the Vatican and the Spanish government signed the long-awaited Concordat. It reaffirmed the confessionality of the Spanish State, and confirmed the existing right of presentation of bishops by the Head of State – a privilege which was to prove to be, as we shall see, a double-edged sword. It guaranteed the juridical personality of the Church, the full authority of canonical marriage and completed the restoration of the legal privileges of the clergy that had been partially abolished in the mid-nineteenth century. The Church would be exempt from all censorship in publications dealing with religious affairs and AC groups would be allowed 'freely to carry out their apostolate'.¹⁵¹

In spite of the attempts just described to bring about a massive religious revival surveys on religious practice carried out in the newly created diocese of Bilbao and in Barcelona in the early 1950s showed that Mass attendance, particularly by workers remained worryingly low: during the month of May in 1951 and 1952 surveys of religious practice, based on Mass attendance on Sundays and on the Feasts of the Ascension and

¹⁴⁸ A decree law was passed on 10 March 1941 committing the State to financing the rebuilding of parish churches.

¹⁴⁹ Reported in *Ecclesia* 10, (15 May 1941), 34.

¹⁵⁰ 'El año del Congreso Eucarístico de Barcelona.' Article in *La Actualidad Española* (7 November 1974).

¹⁵¹ Text of Concordat in HIE, vol. V, pp. 755-65.

Corpus Christi, were carried out in the newly created diocese of Bilbao. The results, which were published in the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Bulletin in November 1952, showed that 50.23% (284,634) of the inhabitants of the diocese usually attended Mass every Sunday and also observed Holy Days. In 25 industrial parishes however the average rate of religious practice was only 43.82% and in 12 parishes located in the mining zone rates were considerably lower, ranging from 20-30% (in one parish it was as low as 18.04% and in another it was unusually high at 55.88%.) In the 98 rural, 9 coastal and 15 mixed parishes the rates were higher than the diocesan average at 60.65%, 50.30% and 52.73% respectively.¹⁵² In Barcelona diocese there were much bleaker findings from a survey carried out in the coastal town of Mataró one Sunday in October 1955. It revealed that just under 30% of the population (35,000) was present at Sunday Mass, including children. Fishermen were the least observant, closely followed by unskilled industrial workers and rural labourers (3.5%, 3.7% and 4.6% respectively.) Ten percent of skilled workers attended and between 45% and 50% of those in liberal professions, white-collar workers and industrial managers.¹⁵³ Another study carried out in 1956 on religious practice in the suburbs of Barcelona found that the rate of practice varied from 2.5% to 25%.¹⁵⁴

Also by the mid 1950s it was evident that a considerable number of Basque priests still continued to oppose the Franco regime. Over the following years they found additional reasons for doing so. In the following chapter we shall examine the reasons why clerical opposition continued and how it was expressed through clandestine collective letters and publications. We shall see that while there was comparatively much less opposition to the regime by the Catalan clergy, there were increasing signs of resentment over the authorities' repression of Catalan culture, the imposition of Castilian bishops on Catalan sees and the attempts to completely eradicate the use of the Catalan language in the Church. Also, we shall see how in both dioceses the chaplains to the apostolic

¹⁵² *BEOBI*, no. 52 (December, 1952), 476-89.

¹⁵³ Rogelio Duocastella, *Estudio de sociología religiosa de una ciudad industrial: Mataró 1955* (Barcelona: ISPA, 1960).

¹⁵⁴ Study carried out by the Instituto de Sociología y Pastoral Aplicada (Barcelona). Quoted in Rogelio Duocastella, Jesús Marcos & José Ma. Díaz-Mózar, *Análisis sociológico del catolicismo español* (Barcelona: ISPA/Editorial Nova Terra, 1967), pp. 50-1.

Chapter II

Class, Nation and Clergy

After the war the words '*El Clero Vasco*' (The Basque Clergy) were imbued with new historical significance by priests opposing the victorious regime:

'The words "*Clero Vasco*" refer to those members of the clergy who did not adhere to totalitarian movements, to priests who openly declared their opposition to the Spanish insurgent movement of 18 July 1936. It does not refer to all the clergy in the Basque Country since there were some priests who supported the Francoist insurrection.'¹

(i) *The persistence of clerical opposition in the Basque Country*

From 1941 a small group of priests who had opposed the Nationalists in the Civil War started to meet informally on Sunday afternoons in a parish in Rentería (Guipúzcoa) to discuss socio-political issues and news received from exiled priests living in the French Basque Country. After 1946 the group grew to include priests from Vizcaya and Álava, some of whom had recently returned from exile or been released from prison.² According to Fr. Serafin Esnaola, who recently published a study of the Basque Clergy in the period 1940-1968, there was a consensus among them that they should do something to express publicly their abhorrence at the regime's violation of human and ethnic rights and their anger at what they saw as the Church's complicity.³ In 1948 they contacted the former seminary teacher and renowned Basque anthropologist, Fr. José Miguel Barandiarán, who had remained in exile in the French Basque Country after the war ended. They asked him to draft an open letter to Pope Pius XII which they planned to

¹Xabier de Iramuno, *El Clero Vasco. Perseguido, Difamado, Calumniado* (Bayonne: Société d'Édition d'Imprimerie du Sud-Ouest, 1946), 1.

² The priests were released from prison thanks to an amnesty for civil war crimes which was passed on 20 October 1946.

³ Serafin Esnaola & Emiliano de Iturrarán, *El Clero Vasco en la Clandestinidad (1940-1968)* 2 vols. (Bilbao, Donostia, Gasteiz, Iruña, 1994), 26. Already in November 1944 a group of Basque priests had written to Pope Pius XII complaining about the situation of the Church in the Basque Country following the victory of the Nationalists. They described how Basque priests were still being punished and they lamented that: 'Against the persecution of which we were and still are the object – judged without having been heard and condemned without trial – not a single voice of authority has been raised.' (23 November 1944) 'Carta dirigida por los sacerdotes vascos al Santo Padre, Pío XII' Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, pp. 36-57.

have signed by as many priests as possible from the four Basque dioceses and later distributed throughout the Basque Country, Spain and abroad. Barandiarán prepared the letter, but due to the absence of an adequate organisational structure that would have facilitated the collection of signatures the operation collapsed.⁴ Two years later another collective letter was prepared, but this time the project was restricted to the newly created diocese of San Sebastián.

Pius XII had signed a bull in Castelgandolfo on 2 November 1949 that led to the dismemberment on 1 July 1950 of the diocese of Vitoria and the creation of two additional dioceses, San Sebastián and Bilbao. Many Basque priests and members of the laity saw the division of the diocese as a move by the ecclesiastical authorities, in conjunction with the civil authorities, to weaken the unity of the Basque Church and 'Castilianize' it. The Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican had pressed for the division arguing that it was 'absolutely necessary' from a purely spiritual point of view.⁵ A small number of Basque priests living in Rome expressed concern to the Vatican over possible 'political implications' and they suggested that Vitoria be elevated to an Archdiocese with Bilbao and San Sebastián as suffragan sees, thereby giving the Basque Country ecclesiastical unity.⁶ After the diocese had been dismembered the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Martín Artajo, wrote jubilantly to Franco:

'We have won the dispute over Vitoria. The Holy See has agreed to split the diocese and not create a new archdiocese; the two new dioceses will form part of the ecclesiastical province of Burgos.'⁷

It was undeniable that the size of the diocese was creating grave pastoral and administrative problems. Since its creation 80 years earlier it had experienced huge demographic change and Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya in particular had become important industrial centres attracting waves of migrants. However it was easy to believe that political pressure had ensured that the three Basque dioceses would remain part of the

⁴ The letter is in the Esnaola Archive, ABL.

⁵ Javier Tusell, *La Oposición Democrática al Franquismo 1939-1962* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977), 235.

⁶ Ignacio Villota Elejalde, *La Iglesia en la sociedad española y vasca contemporánea* (Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer, 1985), 470.

⁷ Quoted in Luis Suárez Fernández, *Francisco Franco y su tiempo*, 8 Vols. (Madrid: Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, 1984), vol. iv, 276.

ecclesiastical province of Burgos. A strategy of 'divide and conquer' appeared to be continuing in 1956 when the diocese of Pamplona was elevated to the status of Archdiocese and San Sebastián became one of its suffragan sees, while Bilbao and Vitoria remained in the Archdiocese of Burgos.

In May 1950 newspapers reported the appointment of three new bishops for the Basque dioceses: Bishop Bueno Monreal for Vitoria, Bishop Font Andreu for San Sebastián and Bishop Morcillo González for Bilbao. Not one of them was Basque.⁸ The news of the appointments prompted the Basque Clergy to initially consider writing a collective letter to the three new bishops, but later they decided it would be more feasible to write only to Bishop Font Andreu, who was due to arrive in San Sebastián on 3 September.⁹ The work of drafting the letter and collecting signatures was started in June. Several hundred cyclostyled copies of the letter were distributed to *enlaces*, (links) who in turn approached priests whom they felt would be willing to sign it. In total 130 signatures were collected. The letter contained a long list of complaints arising out of the war and the new regime, such as Bishop Múgica's prolonged exile, the silence of the Church authorities regarding the Basque priests who had been executed during the war and the Church's reluctance to speak out for human rights. It also contained demands for Basque-speaking bishops and for Euskera to be used in the seminaries and in preaching. It described a laity who felt betrayed and alienated from the hierarchy:

'The Basque is still a believer, but a strong anticlericalism has impacted on his faith: he does not have the same respect and consideration for ecclesiastical authority as before, he no longer hesitates in externalising his protests.'¹⁰

The signatories were kept informed of the letter's progress via a clandestine cyclostyled newsletter, *Gure Artean*, which was distributed by the *enlaces*.¹¹ After the letter had been delivered 10,000 copies of it were printed in a small print-works owned by Hipólito Etxeberria in Pasajes (Guipúzcoa) and distributed throughout the Basque region.¹²

⁸ They were from Aragón, Catalonia and Madrid respectively.

⁹ Bishop Font Andreu was a Catalan. He was ordained bishop of Zamora in 1944.

¹⁰ Text of letter dated 10 August 1950 in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 53-9.

¹¹ *Gure Artean* was published entirely in Euskera.

¹² Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 71.

By the time of the division of the diocese and the appointment of the three new bishops the Basque Clergy were producing a clandestine monthly publication entitled *Egiz* (With the Truth). Fr. Fermín Goti and Fr. José María Zamora were responsible for distributing it in Vizcaya.¹³ The first issue, which came out in March 1950, had six pages and described itself as a publication:

‘... that seeks to echo sentiments and aspirations that cannot be freely expressed under General Franco’s regime. Its pages will be a voice that interprets the enforced silence and makes heard what is morally correct and Christian. ... Its editors are Basque priests. ... In Spain today no voice is tolerated, however dignified or holy, that plainly condemns the injustices, the lies and the abuses of the regime. ... We will be declared illegal because dictatorships do not respect morals or principles. They condemn everything and everyone that criticises them or disagrees with official thought.’¹⁴

Initially about 1,000 copies of *Egiz* were printed but this figure grew to 4,000 in 1952.¹⁵ In total 18 issues came out between March 1950 and August 1952. The publication criticised injustices being perpetrated by the regime, protested at the violation of the ‘rights of the Basque people’ and defended the idea of an ‘authentic Basque Church’ dissociated from the Spanish Church. The bishops of the Basque dioceses and the civil authorities disapproved of *Egiz*. Two episcopal decrees were issued ordering it to cease publication. The second decree, which threatened suspension *a divinis* of priests who persisted in collaborating with *Egiz*, forced it to cease publication.¹⁶ A new clandestine publication, *Egi-Billa - Publicación de Católicos Vascos* (In Search of the Truth), appeared in December 1954 and aimed at filling the void left by the disappearance of *Egiz*. Because lay Catholics claimed responsibility for producing it ecclesiastical censorship was avoided. In reality though it was an initiative taken

¹³Fermín Goti Basterra: born 14 September 1906 in Ceberio (Vizcaya), ordained 22 January 1932. José María Zamora Ituarte: born 15 October 1915 in Lequeitio (Vizcaya), ordained 7 July 1940.

¹⁴*Egiz*, no. 1 (1950). Entire collection in ABL.

¹⁵Information from *Egiz*, no. 18 (1952).

¹⁶The decrees were issued on 20 August 1951 and 20 March 1952.

principally by the same priests who had been involved in *Egiz*, although lay people also collaborated. In total 64 issues came out before it disappeared in March 1961.¹⁷ *Egi-Billa* criticised the cultural and linguistic repression, the violation of human rights, socio-political developments such as the strikes of 1956 or the Stabilisation Plan of 1959, as well as on matters pertaining to the Church and clergy in the Basque Country. It was followed in June 1961 by *Sine Nomine*, a news-sheet produced by basically the same group of priests who had been responsible for *Egiz* and *Egi Billa*. It was printed in Laurgáin (Guipúzcoa) on flimsy coloured paper acquired in France. A lot of the information it contained came from the *Boletín de la Oficina de Prensa de Euskadi* (BOPE). In total 40 issues came out before it disappeared in 1968. The date of each issue was given in code, e.g., IA1 (June 1961), IA12 (May 1962), IG1 (June 1962), IK1 (June 1963).¹⁸

(ii) *The Catalan clergy's resistance to cultural repression*

In the diocese of Barcelona there was much less clerical opposition to the new regime in the period up to the early sixties. Priests there tended to oppose aspects of the regime, rather than the regime *per se*. Undoubtedly the most unpalatable aspect for many of them was the severe repression of all expressions of Catalan identity. From the early 1940s religious groups and lay associations with patriotic leanings began appearing in the diocese of Barcelona that encouraged their members to resist the repression of the Catalan language and culture. They played an important role in preserving an identity that the regime was bent on destroying and in the process they forged many of the future leaders of the clandestine political struggle of the sixties and seventies.¹⁹ The omnipresence of the Church made it a powerful medium for the diffusion of Catalan sentiments and up to the mid-sixties Catalanism was mainly centred on issues of language and cultural identity. Religious organisations such as the *Lliga Espiritual de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat* and others that we shall look at in a moment necessarily played an important part in the re-emergence of a Catalan nationalism that had a very

¹⁷ Entire collection in Aguirre Archive, ABL.

¹⁸ Entire collection in Aguirre Archive, ABL.

¹⁹ Costa i Riera, *Dels moviments d'Església: a la militància política* (Barcelona: Editorial Mediterrània, 1997), *passim*.

strong cultural character. The Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat became the centre and symbol of cultural resistance. On 27 April 1947 it celebrated the enthronement of the Virgin of Montserrat (three years before the abbey had launched an appeal to raise money for the construction of a throne for the icon of the Virgin.) About 100,000 people converged on Montserrat. It was the first mass event of Catalanist affirmation since the Civil War ended. The prohibited Catalan flag flew from one of the high mountain peaks that surround the monastery. Since these peaks are inaccessible to all but an experienced climber the Civil Guard were unable to take it down. Although the government forbade the use of Catalan in the actual religious celebrations it had given the organisers permission to print some of the publicity in Catalan.²⁰ The success of the unique event in Montserrat proved two things: the persisting strength of Catalanist sentiment among the faithful and the ideal position of the Church to act as ark and sanctuary of Catalan culture.

The *Lliga Espiritual de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat* (The Spiritual League of the Virgin of Montserrat) was a devotional association founded in 1899 by the Bishop of Vich, Josep Torras i Bages.²¹ It disappeared after the Civil War and was only reorganised in Barcelona at the end of 1944. Although the *Lliga's* activities were mainly spiritual and religious, the Catalanism that had characterised it in the first three decades of the twentieth century never entirely disappeared and was reflected, for example, in the trips it regularly organized to places of cultural and historical interest in Catalonia. Fr. Josep Bardés was the diocesan chaplain of the *Lliga* from 1958 to 1968. During his time as chaplain the *Lliga's* activities broadened and it became concerned with awakening in its members a sense of social and civic responsibility. In 1959 he founded a *Secció d'Estudis*, which in 1960 changed its name to *Centre d'Estudis Francesc Eiximenis*. Between 1958 and 1970 the *Lliga* organised a wide variety of conferences and short courses on sociology, theology, spirituality, liturgical reform, the Catalan language and the history of the Catalan Church. Fr. Bardés estimated that in total approximately 1,080

²⁰ Information from Albert Manent, 'La Comissió Abat Oliba, un inici de redreçament, el 1947'. *Serra d'Or* (15 October 1971), 34-8.

²¹ The birth of the regionalist movement at the end of the nineteenth century brought support for Catalanism from important members of the Catalan clergy - most notably the Bishop of Vich, Torras i Bagès (1846-1916). He participated in the elaboration of the Bases of Manresa of 1882. The publication of his *La Tradició Catalana* in 1892 provided a corpus of doctrine for a Catholic regionalist traditionalism that considered that Catalanism must be Catholic and that Catholicism had to be regionalist.

people (800 of whom were youths) participated in these.²² Members of the *Lliga* also took a keen interest in Vatican II and between November 1962 and October 1966 they produced a series of 12 supplements to their circular newsletter, which were entitled *Concili, Avui*. The *Lliga* also participated in the preparations for the Second Liturgical Congress, which was held in the Monastery of Montserrat from 5-10 July 1965. Members of the *Lliga* had also played a major role in the First Liturgical Congress, which too was held in Montserrat in 1915.²³ One of the main subjects at the Second Congress, as at the First, was the use of Catalan in the liturgy.

In 1944 the sixty-year-old Fr. Lluís Carreras set up the *Grup Torras i Bages* for university students within the *Lliga*. Dr. Carreras had been very active in the Catalan Church before the Civil War. He was the main promoter of the liturgical movement and the organiser of the Liturgical Congress in Montserrat in 1915. During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the Second Republic he had acted as Cardinal Vidal's right-hand man. He had urged acceptance of the Republic and encouraged the Catalans to vote for an autonomy statute.²⁴ He fled to France in 1936 to escape the religious persecution and in 1938 he published a book in which he eulogised Franco and argued that no sane Catholic could support the Republican side after the events of the summer and autumn of 1936.²⁵ Just before this book was published the Nationalist government in Salamanca sent an official note to the Vatican's representative, Monsignor Antoniutti, complaining about Carreras' activities in France. Antoniutti forwarded the complaint to the Vatican Secretary of State, who in turn sent it to Cardinal Vidal in Switzerland on 26 March. The note claimed that:

'... several Spanish priests resident in France, among them a well-known Catalan separatist named Carreras, and another of the same ideology named Trens, are conspiring with the Archbishop of

²²Bardés i Huguet, Joseph, 'La Lliga Espiritual de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat des de 1939 fins avui.' In *L'Església a la Catalunya Contemporànea* (Montserrat: Qüestions de Vida Cristiana [75-76], 1975), 116.

²³Josep Massot i Muntaner, *L'Església Catalana al Segle XX* (Barcelona: Curial, 1975), 141.

²⁴For example in the articles: 'Déu guardi la República' *Cultura Cristiana*, vol. viii, (1931), pp. 61-2 and 'Voteu l'Estatut' *Cultura Cristiana*, vol. viii, (1931), pp. 77-8.

²⁵Luis Carreras, *Grandeza Cristiana de España* (Toulouse: Les Frères Douladome, 1938).

Tarragona, preparing something that will cause harm to Nationalist Spain and consequently be inimical to Religion and the Church.’

Cardinal Vidal replied to Pacelli on 31 March that the accusations made about both priests were unfair and unfounded. He said that Dr. Carreras was favourable to Franco and was actually preparing a book that would demonstrate this.²⁶

The members of the student group Dr. Carreras founded in 1944 quickly established contacts with French and Italian Christian-Democrat groups. (some of the first members had founded a clandestine student organisation, the *Front Universitari de Catalunya* in 1943, which was linked to UCD.) They circulated amongst themselves works by novelists such as Mauriac, Bernanos, Claudel and by existentialist philosophers like Sartre and Camus, as well as *Esprit*, *La Quinzaine* and other progressive French Catholic journals, which were brought into the country clandestinely. Like the *Lliga* its *point d'appui* was the Monastery of Montserrat and its meetings were also held in the *Casal de Montserrat* in Barcelona. Dr. Carreras taught these young people about the ideas of Bishop Torras i Bages and the history of the Catalan Church, particularly in the early twentieth century when its vitality was reflected in a number of flourishing biblical, liturgical and catechetical movements. Following the death of Fr. Carreras in 1955 the group began to disintegrate and shortly afterwards it disappeared.²⁷

A similar student group was the *Cofradia de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat de Virtèlia* (Confraternity of Our Lady of Montserrat) which was set up in the private Virtèlia school also in 1944 by a former FJCC chaplain, Fr. Pere Llumà i Valadrich. A few years later it acquired its own premises, first in Carrer Olibana, then in Via Augusta and finally in Maria Cubí. Its members were secondary and university students and young professionals. Its spirit and activities were close to those of the specialised movements of AC in other Europe countries at the time and its meetings, prayer groups, conferences, and so on, were all conducted in Catalan. Members often did charity work such as visiting hospitals or poor neighbourhoods. From 1945 it published a monthly magazine ‘*Forja*’ (Forge) which, with the exception of a small Catalan section for poetry,

²⁶ This correspondence is in Muntanyola, *Vidal i Barraquer*, 494-6.

²⁷ Information on *Grup Torras i Bages* from Josep Maria Piñol, *El nacionalcatolicisme a Catalunya i la resistència (1926-1966)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1993), 129.

short stories and novels, was written entirely in Spanish.²⁸ Nevertheless, an anonymous cyclostyled report from January 1959 on several Catalanist Catholic groups in Barcelona described *Virtèlia*, its chaplain and 'Forja' as 'one hundred percent separatist, under the cover of piety'.²⁹

In 1951 the *Centro de Información Católica Femenino* (CICF), an educational institute for the training of girls for non-university careers, was set up in Barcelona. From 1953 it offered Catalan language classes to its students and the public. Fr. Joan Alemany, who became a chaplain to the CICF in 1951, set up a school of journalism within the Institute in 1964, which was affiliated to the School of Journalism of the Catholic Church in Madrid and he remained its director until it closed in 1974.³⁰ The civil authorities considered the CICF dangerously progressive on religious issues and its chaplains to be 'Catalanists'.³¹ Its premises were attacked by a group of ultra-conservatives on the occasion of a conference by the liberal Belgian priest, Fr. Maria Evely, on 28 October 1965.

Another religious association that had strong patriotic leanings was *Franciscàlia*, which was set up in March 1949 by the Capuchin priest, Fr. Basili de Rubí. This group attracted youths in their early twenties. It was one of the first religious entities to allow its premises to be used for meetings of clandestine political and student groups from 1950 on.³² In fact two of its first members, Antón Cañellas and Josep Piñol, had already set up an illegal student political group, *Juventut Catalana Democràtica* in the Spring of 1945 after they held a secret meeting held in the Convent of the Capuchin Fathers in Pompeia, Barcelona. In total *Franciscàlia* organized 329 conferences and round-table discussions

²⁸ Collection of *Forja* (1945-1966) in the library of the Seminary of Barcelona.

²⁹ 'Informe sobre algunas actuaciones de sacerdotes y seglares católicos' (January 1959). Arxiu Abadía de Montserrat (Henceforth: AAM).

³⁰ Joan Alemany, *Periodisme en temps difícils, L'Escola del CIC (1964-1974)* (Barcelona: Diputació Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya D.L., 1989). Fr. Alemany had been very influenced by the Belgian JOC with which he had come into contact while he was studying in Louvaine in the late 1940s.

³¹ In the Archive of the Civil Governor of Barcelona (Henceforth: AGGCB) there are several police reports on conferences and other activities organized by the CICF in the 1960s, such as the one-day '*Congrés de Cultura Catalana*' that took place in 1965.

³² Its statutes were approved by the Provincial Father of the Capuchin Order on 2 July 1951. Bishop Modrego granted it canonical statute on 9 April 1952. Information from Josep Maria Piñol, 'Franciscàlia: original experiència de compromís franciscano-laical.' In *Paraula i Història Miscel·lània P. Basili de Rubí* (Barcelona: 1986), 87-137.

on religious, social and cultural issues between 1949 and 1958.³³ Members of the association established contacts in 1950 with the French Catholic group, *Economie et Humanisme*, which was based in La Tourette (Lyon) and occasionally travelled to France to attend its conferences. In 1951 its founder, Fr. Lebreton, visited Barcelona. *Franciscàlia* also established contact with progressive liberal French Catholic magazines such as *La Croix*, *Esprit*, *La Vie Intellectuelle*, *Témoignage Chrétien*, and *Informations Catholiques Internationales*.

In 1954 a pre-political movement called *Crist i Catalunya* (CC) was founded in Barcelona by a small group of youths all of whom were already members of various lay religious associations in Barcelona. It aimed to promote Catalanist and Christian ideas among the youth of Catalonia by spreading knowledge about the historical, geographical, social and spiritual realities of the Catalan-speaking regions and to work to achieve political unity for Catalonia once more. Branches were set up throughout Catalonia and there were approximately 125 militants in 1957. Its president from 1955 to 1957 was Frederic Roda and from 1957 to 1962 Xavier Muñoz Pujol.³⁴ CC had close contacts with the Monastery of Montserrat: its meetings were held in the *Casal de Montserrat* and the chaplain of the *Lliga de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, Fr. Josep Bardés, celebrated Mass with the group on the 10th of every month in the church of Sant Felip Neri. The group was influenced ideologically by French writers such as Henri Bergson, Charles Péguy, Antoine de Saint Exupéry and Albert Camus.³⁵ In 1959 the most militant members of the group, headed by Jordi Pujol, organised a campaign against Luís Martínez de Galinsoga, the Francoist editor of the Barcelona daily newspaper, *La Vanguardia*. In October of that year at a Mass in the parish of San Idelfons the parish priest, Narcís Saguier Vilar,³⁶ gave the homily in Catalan and Galinsoga protested at the use of the language by standing up and shouting '*Todos los catalanes son una mierda.*' The ensuing campaign to boycott the paper cost it many subscriptions and much advertising revenue. Galinsoga was finally dismissed on 5 February 1960. A few

³³Piñol, *El nacionalcatolicisme a Catalunya*, 139.

³⁴Xavier Muñoz Pujol has written the history of the group in: 'CC. Història d'un moviment polític.' *Serra d'Or*, no. 237 (June 1979), 23-6 and *De dreta a esquerra. Memòries polítiques (1936-1965)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1990).

³⁵Daniel Díaz Esculies, *L'Oposició Catalanista al Franquisme (1939-1960)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de L'Abadia de Montserrat, 1996), 111.

³⁶Fr. Narcís Saguier Vilar was born in 1892. He was a chaplain to the CICF.

months later the same group of activists sabotaged one of the regime's most ambitious schemes to improve its image and ingratiate itself with the Catalans. This consisted of granting a 'municipal charter' to Barcelona (described by Albert Balcells as 'a substitute for true municipal authority')³⁷, handing over the ancient fortress of Montjuïc to the city authorities, compiling Catalan civil law, and holding official celebrations to mark the centenary of the Catalan poet Joan Maragall, all of which took place during an official visit to Barcelona by Franco. At a concert attended by Franco and his ministers in the *Palau de la Música Catalana* the singing of *El Cant de la Senyera* (The Song of the Catalan Flag), which was traditionally used by the *Orfeó Català* choir to round off its concerts, was prohibited by the civil authorities. The audience, however, began to sing the song and as a result twenty people were arrested, including the CC members Jordi Pujol and Francesc Pizón whom police identified as the main organisers. They were tried by court-martial and sentenced to seven and three years' respectively for their part in the events as well as the diffusion during Franco's visit of a pamphlet entitled *Us Presentum el General Franco* (Let us introduce General Franco to you).³⁸ Despite police beatings Pujol denied having taken part in the events at the *Palau*, although he confessed to being the person mainly responsible for the *La Vanguardia* boycott. Nevertheless CC was the chief organiser of the *Palau* act of civil disobedience. Pujol spent two and a half years in prison.³⁹ After his imprisonment in 1960, CC split into two groups: in the spring of 1962 one of them became a political party, called *Comunitat Catalana* (Catalan Community). In 1964 it changed its name to the 'Federal Socialist Force of Catalonia.' It disappeared at the end of the 1960s. The other smaller group made up of Jordi Pujol's followers gave up underground political action to pursue the slogan '*fer país*' (making a country) and from then on they devoted their efforts to building a cultural infrastructure to prevent the 'de-nationalisation' of Catalonia.⁴⁰

³⁷ Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 140.

³⁸ The pamphlet declared that Franco and his Regime represented the denial of every kind of freedom in society: political, cultural, intellectual and religious. On the denial of religious liberty it declared: 'It is not possible to put the social teaching of the Church into practice.' Text in Luis Ramírez, *Nuestros primeros 25 años* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1964), 221-3.

³⁹ Joan Crexell, *Els fets del Palau i el Consell de Guerra a Jordi Pujol* (Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1982).

⁴⁰ Jaume Fabre & Joseph M. Huertas, 'Els orígenes del President Jordi Pujol. CC, el moviment que va 'morir' dos cops (1954-62).' *L'Avenç*, no. 42 (October, 1981), pp. 54-61.

We shall come back to some of these Catholic groups in Chapter IV where we see them playing a supporting role to dissenting priests in the mid-sixties.

(iii) *The creation of apostolic workers' associations*

In the period 1947-67 a major source of clerical dissidence in both dioceses was the situation of the working class. Those priests most sensitive to the difficulties facing workers were generally young chaplains to the apostolic workers' movements which had begun to reappear in the late 1940s. The Burgos Government had abolished all workers' unions, including apostolic workers' organisations and confessional unions, in April 1938. When the war finally ended vertical state unions on a Fascist model were created in their place. The ecclesiastical hierarchy did not protest, as they were quite happy with the idea of vertical unions which they believed would create the class harmony and co-operation so tirelessly preached in Catholic rhetoric at that time.⁴¹ New statutes for AC promulgated by the Conference of Metropolitan Archbishops in November 1939 stipulated that the movement's activities should be strictly of an apostolic and religious nature.⁴² This was spelt out in the first issue of AC's official organ *Ecclesia* in January 1941, which described AC as a movement that would abstain from all political activity. Neither would it create professional and workers' unions as this was deemed to be the responsibility of the new state. A mere five years later however the ecclesiastical hierarchy, concerned at the continuing estrangement of the industrial working class from the Church, recognised that there was a need for some worker specialisation within AC and in May 1946 *Ecclesia* published, '*ad experimentum*', the 'General Rules for Worker Specialisation in AC.' This led to the creation of the following workers' groups in each of the four branches of AC: *Hermanidad Obrera Masculina de Acción Católica* (HOAC); *Hermanidad Obrera Femenina de Acción Católica* (HOFAC); *Juventud Obrera Masculina de Acción Católica* (JOAC); *Juventud Obrera Femenina de Acción Católica* (JOFAC).⁴³

⁴¹ For example, Pope Pius XI's teaching on corporatist organizations in the encyclical letter *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). The Spanish bishops overlooked the Pope's warnings in the same document about the possible abuse of state power when he criticised the Fascist-Corporatist Italian State.

⁴² 'Bases para la Acción Católica.' *Ecclesia*, no. 1 (January, 1941). AC had four branches: Mujeres de AC; Hombres de AC; Juventud Masculina de AC; Juventud Femenina de AC.

⁴³ The definitive 'Normas Generales para la Especialización de la AC' were published in December 1947. *Ecclesia*, no. 336 (1947), 652-3.

Fr. Alberto Bonet, General Secretary of the Central Committee of AC from 1945 to 1963, was the principal promoter of specialisation.⁴⁴ He believed that the formation of workers to be apostles to their fellow workers was the best way to avoid the "blacklegging" that undermines any attempt at proselytism among the workers"⁴⁵ Fr. Bonet had launched a new religious organisation for young people in Catalonia, the *Federació de Joves Cristians de Catalunya* (FJCC), just a few days after the declaration of the Second Republic in April 1931.⁴⁶ Before doing so he had made a tour of Belgium, Italy, Germany, France and Holland between 19 October and 6 November 1930 to observe Catholic youth organisations in those countries at first hand. He had been particularly impressed by the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (JOC) founded in Belgium in 1925 by Fr. Joseph Cardijn and he modelled his new organisation on it. The FJCC eschewed the confessional title of 'Catholic' in favour of the more open 'Christian' and it stressed the importance of attendance at group meetings and discussions. The FJCC was divided into five 'Professional sub-Federations' that grouped members according to trade or profession. (these were the forerunners of the 'specialized' lay groupings set up by Bonet within the four main branches of AC in 1946.) The first JOC groups within the FJCC were founded in 1932. By the time of the start of the Civil War there were forty groups in the main Catalan cities and towns comprising just over 800 members. As we have seen, after the war the Apostolic Administrator of Barcelona refused Fr. Bonet permission to reorganise the FJCC on the grounds that it was tainted by its 'Catalanism'.

The first HOAC groups were organised in the summer of 1946 and the 'First National Week of the HOAC' was held in Madrid in October 1946. Many of the 200 or so workers who attended belonged to HOAC groups that had emerged from previously separate associations of railway workers, mechanics, electricians, office workers and the like, formed mainly in Madrid between 1941 and 1945. The HOAC's fortnightly newspaper *¡Tú!* was launched a few weeks later and its monthly *Boletín para Militantes*

⁴⁴ Alberto Bonet, 'En torno a la AC Obrera. El secreto de la AC especializada.' *Ecclesia*, no. 255 (1946), 13.

⁴⁵ Basilisa López García, *Aproximación a la Historia de la HOAC 1946-1981* (Madrid: Ediciones HOAC, 1995), 32.

⁴⁶ All the information that follows is from P. Codinachs i Verdaguer, *La Federació de joves cristians de Catalunya (1931-1936)* (Barcelona: Ed. Claret, 1990).

was started in December 1947.⁴⁷ By 1949 there were HOAC groups in 38 dioceses, with a total of 814 militants and 4,305 affiliated members.⁴⁸ In 1955 there were 135 HOAC militants and 100 affiliates in the diocese of Bilbao.⁴⁹ In Barcelona in the mid-1960s there were still only about 20 HOAC groups because most former members of JOC (*Jocistas*) preferred to join *Acció Catòlica Obrera* (ACO), which was created in the diocese in 1956 as an alternative to HOAC.⁵⁰

The first JOAC groups were set up in El Ferrol and Murcia in 1947.⁵¹ Already however a few JOC groups, modelled on the Belgian JOC, had been established independently in Barcelona in 1946 and Bilbao in 1947. Similar groups were formed in Madrid in 1948 and in San Sebastián in 1950. Although many of these spontaneous grassroots groups wished to remain independent of JOAC they came under pressure from the ecclesiastical hierarchy to incorporate themselves into the official organisation and eventually most of them did, albeit reluctantly. There were around 12 JOC groups in Barcelona by 1951. They had their own monthly bulletin for militants and chaplains entitled *Responsables*, which contained study themes and guidance for discussions at meetings. It was produced in cyclostyled form by the JOC groups of the parishes of Maria dels Dolors and Sant Francesc de Paula from 1948 to 1950. From 1950 to 1956 it was produced in the Seminary of Barcelona and had a print-run of around 350 copies per month. When the monthly newspaper, *Juventud Obrera*, was launched in January 1957 *Responsables* disappeared and the new nationwide publication was used instead of it.⁵² In Bilbao Fr. Anastasio Olabarriá set up the first post-war JOC group in the industrialised suburb of Sestao in 1947.⁵³ More groups soon sprang up in other working class suburbs

⁴⁷ López García, *Aproximación a la Historia de la HOAC*, 69. In 1953 the *Boletín para Militantes* changed its name to *Boletín de la HOAC*.

⁴⁸ 'Más de 5,000 Hoacistas.' *Ecclesia*, no. 422 (August, 1949), 14.

⁴⁹ Figures from 'Report of the Bilbao Diocesan Commission of JOAC, 29 September 1955.' Cited in Pedro Ibarra, 'Bases y desarrollo del nuevo movimiento obrero en Vizcaya (1951-1967)' *La Oposición al Régimen de Franco*, 2 Tomes, (Madrid: UNED, 1988), tome 1, vol. ii, 45.

⁵⁰ Information from Josep Castaño i Colomer, *Memòries sobre la JOC a Catalunya 1932-1970* (Barcelona: ICESB, 1974), 184. At its peak in the early 1960s HOAC had about 12,000 active members and about 20,000 sympathisers in all of Spain. In 1964 there was a total of 22,774 subscribers to the *Boletín de la HOAC*, of whom 3,262 were from the diocese of Bilbao and 1,471 from the diocese of Barcelona. Statistics from Hermet, *Los Católicos*, vol. i, 238-41.

⁵¹ José Castaño i Colomer, *La JOC en España 1946-1970* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1977), 24.

⁵² Information from Castaño i Colomer, *Memòries*, 91.

⁵³ Tape 0020. Interview with Fr. Anastasio Olabarriá (Recorded 14 April 1983). In Instituto Diocesano de Teología y Pastoral. (Henceforth: IDTP).

like Basauri and Baracaldo, as well as in some of the outlying industrialised towns such as Durango.

In March 1956 JOAC's National President, Eugenio Royo, and its National Chaplain, Fr. Mauro Rubio, wrote to the General Secretary of AC asking for permission to change the organisation's name to JOC:

'The feeling of all the diocesan and local leaders of the JOAC is that if our organisation were called JOC, it would acquire greater power to penetrate the working class, since they [the working class] reject unanimously Catholic Action which they perceive - and we convey strictly their opinion - as a 'collaborationist' movement. ... We repeat that all we seek is a change of name, the existing structure will remain unchanged, in keeping with the current Rules for Specialisation.'⁵⁴

The following June the Conference of Metropolitan Archbishops authorised the change of name.

A major factor in the evolution of both HOAC and JOC was contact with Christian workers' movements in other countries. In 1950 the President of the National Commission of HOAC, Manuel Castaño, and the director of *¡Tú!*, Esteban Busquets, were invited to attend the Second Congress of the *Associazioni Cristiane dei Lavoratori Italiani* in Rome. In an article published in *¡Tú!* Busquets described the vitality and prestige of the Catholic workers' movements in Italy, the organizational and financial support they received from the Italian Church and the supportive attitude of De Gasperi's Christian-Democrat government, which sent along representatives to the Congress. His Italian experience made him aware of deficiencies in the Spanish HOAC in all these areas.⁵⁵ In 1953 another small group from the National Commission travelled to Munich to participate in the creation of the International Federation of Catholic Workers' Movements. As a result HOAC became the Spanish representative in the Federation and from then on was responsible for publishing *Tour d'horizon* in Spanish. In 1958 Manuel

⁵⁴ Quoted in Castaño, *La JOC*, 47-8.

⁵⁵ Esteban Busquets Molas, 'Roma a vista de HOAC. Un vuelo al nido de las ACLI.' *¡Tú!*, (18 November 1950).

Castañón was elected to the executive committee of the Federation.⁵⁶ From 1955 JOAC was affiliated to the International JOC and thereafter Spanish representatives attended all meetings and conferences organised by it. In May of that year the national president, chaplain and secretary of the National Commission of JOAC, and the president of JOAC in Guipúzcoa, attended the Second Assembly of the European JOC, which was held in the small coastal commune of Guéthary.⁵⁷ In December 1960 the International Federation of Free Worker Syndicates and the International Federation of Christian Unions (CISC), to which the International JOC was affiliated, issued a joint declaration condemning the Spanish vertical unions.⁵⁸

The important role played by the apostolic workers' movements in giving workers a voice when they had none, as well as their significance in terms of a renewal of the Church at the base has now been recognised by historians. For example Frances Lannon states that 'the legal umbrella that HOAC and JOC (and later ACO and VV.OO) provided for many workers whose primary interest was in labour relations or even politics contributed to their development; in a dictatorial state with no political party except the official one, and no labour organisations except the vertical state unions they were the only safe channel for discussing labour and political issues. They were authentic grass-roots groups, profoundly involved in working-class concerns like wages and working conditions, and convinced that these matters were as central to Christianity as saying prayers and attending Mass.'⁵⁹ JOC and HOAC's demands for reform grew steadily. As early as May 1949 HOAC's *¡Tú!* ran into trouble with the civil authorities when the Director General of the Press wrote to the National Chaplain of AC, Monsignor Vizcarra, accusing *¡Tú!* of 'regularly discussing socio-political problems in a way that gives the impression that the current Spanish regime is hostile to the Church and Catholic ideology, which is totally inaccurate.' He warned that 'by following a path of violence - physical or verbal - Catholics will always lose out to the Communists, especially if, like

⁵⁶ López García, *Aproximación a la Historia de la HOAC*, 72-3.

⁵⁷ Castaño, *La JOC*, 47-8.

⁵⁸ 'Declaración conjunta sobre España de la CIOSL y CISC.' (December 1960). In JOC Archive, Madrid. Cited in Florentino Sanz Fernández, 'Algunos conflictos significativos de la Juventud Obrera Cristiana con el régimen de Franco (1947-66).' In *La Oposición al Régimen Franquista*. 2 Tomes (Madrid: UNED, 1988), tome ii, pp. 167-8.

⁵⁹ Lannon, *Privilege*, 232-3.

¡Tú! their tone is systematically negative.’⁶⁰ By then *¡Tú!* was published weekly and had a print-run of 30,000.

Hoacistas and *Jocistas* were involved in the first strikes in Bilbao and Barcelona in the late forties and early fifties. They also played an important role in the reactivation of the labour movement in Spain from the late fifties on and their culture had a profound influence on the character of the new labour movement that emerged in the early sixties. In fact many Catholic militants set up their own clandestine unions at this time: *Solidaridad de Obreros Cristianos Catalanes* (SOCC) was founded in Barcelona in 1958 by members of ACO, JOC and HOAC. Originally confessional and affiliated to the CISC, it later dropped ‘*Cristianos*’ from its title. The *Federación Sindical de Trabajadores* (FST) was founded in Madrid in 1958 by Catholic militants and it too was affiliated to CISC. Branches were subsequently set up in other parts of the country, although primarily in Asturias and the Levante. *Unión Sindical Obrera* (USO) was founded in Rentería (Guipúzcoa) in 1960 by a group of workers who included some *Jocistas*. Soon afterwards USO spread to other parts of Guipúzcoa and then to Vizcaya, Madrid and Seville.⁶¹ In an interview in 1986 Valeriano Gómez Lavín, a HOAC militant and one of the founders of USO, explained what motivated these Catholic activists:

‘We were a group of youths sick to death of so much misery, so much hunger, so much suffering and we believed that something had to be done. We were living in shared bedrooms or in shacks, working twelve or thirteen hours a day, and many of us had tuberculosis. ... We were not sanctimonious goody-goodies, we showed up the Church hierarchy. For us man is above everything else. The fight for justice was what brought people to USO.’⁶²

⁶⁰ Javier Tusell, *Franco y los Católicos* (Madrid: Editorial Alianza Universidad, 1984), 202.

⁶¹ Information mainly from Guy Hermet, *Los Católicos en la España Franquista*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1985, 1986). Vol i, 298-302.

⁶² Antonio Martín Artiles, ‘Del blindaje de la sotana al sindicalismo aconfesional. (Breve introducción a la historia de la Unión Sindical Obrera, 1960-1975). Origen de la USO.’ In *Oposición al Régimen Franquista*, tome 1, vol. ii, pp. 166-7.

A priest's first introduction to the apostolic workers' movements usually occurred while he was still a seminarian, often through the *Grupos de Jesús Obrero*, which were started in the Seminary of Vitoria in 1946 by students who were interested in pastoral work among the working class.⁶³ At the start of 1947 the *Grupos* launched a monthly publication which was entitled *Yunque* (Yoke). Only ten copies were made of the first issue, corresponding to the number of subscribers at that time, and it consisted of eight pages. There were 2,000 subscribers throughout Spain in 1950 and it was produced on a linotype. Production was switched to the new Seminary of Derio in Bilbao from 1956 to 1962. It had a monthly print-run in that period of approximately 2,500-3,000 copies. After that it disappeared for two years, but was restarted in the Seminary of Salamanca in 1964.⁶⁴ From 1951 the *Grupos* organised summer camps for seminarians in working class parishes where they often became acquainted for the first time with JOC and HOAC groups and could observe the new pastoral style being tried out by their chaplains. Others worked in factories during their summer holidays. Afterwards they wrote about their experiences in the pages of *Yunque*.⁶⁵ In the fifties the *Grupos* held annual National Meetings in different parts of Spain.⁶⁶ The contact chaplains and seminarians had with workers made them conscious of the many political, economic and social injustices affecting the working class and they soon began to criticise government policy on labour issues, mainly through the pages of the various publications of HOAC and JOC and in *Yunque*. They also more and more frequently criticised the ecclesiastical hierarchy for not more forthrightly defending workers' rights. Chaplains had a chance to debate issues and exchange ideas at annual national conferences, as well as in regular meetings organised at diocesan and parochial levels.⁶⁷

⁶³ Castaño, *La JOC*, 29.

⁶⁴ Information from *Yunque*, no. 100 (May-June 1966) and Carmelo Marón Castillo, 'Evangelio, Iglesia y Pueblo Vasco. Análisis teológico de las actitudes y comportamientos políticos-sociales de la Iglesia en Vizcaya 1960-1979' (Tesina de Licenciatura, Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao, 1980).

⁶⁵ Grupos de Jesús Obrero, Comillas, 'Experiencia de trabajo de este verano.' *Yunque*, (May-August, 1965), 94-5 and Centro HOAC, Santiago, Bilbao, 'Experiencia de grupo entre unos seminaristas y unos militantes obreros.' *Ibid.*, 33-5.

⁶⁶ For example, the Fourth National Meeting of the *Grupos* was held in Salamanca from 18-25 July 1954. Eighty seminarians from 17 dioceses participated. Tomás Malagón, the National Chaplain of HOAC gave several conferences. The seminarians also met chaplains and militants of other apostolic workers' movements such as the VVOO, JOC and JOAC. Information from Castaño, *La JOC*, 31 & 45.

⁶⁷ For example, the 'First National Meeting of Chaplains of JOAC' was held in Carabanchel in Madrid from 5-10 September 1955.

But the specialised worker movements of AC were not the only direct contact the Spanish Church had with workers. In 1945 the Government asked the Spanish Church to appoint religious advisors (*asesores*) to the *Organización Sindical Español* (OSE). The Primate and the Nuncio consulted with the Vatican. A reply from The Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs to the Nuncio on 25 April 1945 expressed no objection to the creation of an *Asesoría*, providing its activity remained above party politics, but left the final decision to the Spanish hierarchy.⁶⁸ Soon afterwards the *Asesoría Eclesiástica Nacional de Sindicatos* and *Asesorías Provinciales* were created. The *Asesoría* helped to legitimise the OSE and priests at its highest level expounded and propagated a theological justification for vertical state unions. Over the next ten years the *Asesoría* organised hundreds of missions and spiritual exercises in factories all over Spain.⁶⁹ Towards the end of 1953 it carried out a survey on the religiosity of workers. The report on its findings was not heartening:

“In general, the vast majority of Spanish workers have not evolved, as was hoped, towards a more Christian consciousness of life. Our workers are in a state of profound religious ignorance and few show any interest in doing anything about it. ... The workers consider the Church and the priests more disposed to the wealthy than the humble.”⁷⁰

The report said that this situation was caused by a combination of factors that included: 'The Marxist virus that still corrodes their souls'; infrequent contact with priests; severe economic difficulties that kept workers totally preoccupied with material matters (the report later talked of almost unanimous agreement among workers that basic salaries were inadequate and needed to be increased by 40 to 75 per cent.); insufficient religious instruction and evangelisation in working-class neighbourhoods and in the workplace itself; a quite widespread perception of the Church as a merely temporal institution and of priests as men earning their livelihood by following religious rites and administering sacraments. The report also revealed that a number of *asesores provinciales* had reported attempts by

⁶⁸*Iglesia y Estado en España 1939-1975* (Madrid: Popular, 1977), 219-22.

⁶⁹Information from Rafael Gómez Pérez, *El Franquismo y la Iglesia* (Madrid: RIALP, 1986), 229.

⁷⁰'Situación del obrero español' in *Ecclesia* no. 14 (1954), 99.

Socialists and members of the CNT to infiltrate the OSE and even some Catholic workers' associations.

Fr. José Ricart was ecclesiastical advisor to the provincial branch of the OSE in Barcelona from 1947 to 1950. He considered his most important role as *asesor* to be the formation of a group of Catholic workers who would participate in the running of the vertical union:

“... Through the 'Asesoría' 155 shop-stewards are controlled whose mission is to ensure social justice through their labours in defence of the collective and individual interests of those who have elected them.”⁷¹

According to a police report of October 1951 Fr. Ricart, who had by then become diocesan chaplain of the HOAC, was the principal enlister of militants for the HOAC and JOAC and the main coordinator of their activities in Barcelona.⁷²

(iv) Hoacistas, Jocistas and the first strikes in Bilbao and Barcelona

In 1947 the Council of Basque Resistance which represented both the PNV and the Basque Government in Exile, as well as the persecuted remnants of the pre-Civil War unions (SOV, CNT, and UGT) called a general strike for 1 May in the Basque Country.⁷³ Participation was highest by far in Vizcaya where practically all the factories in Bilbao's industrial belt, as well as many small and medium sized businesses in the capital, went on strike. The mining zone of the province was also seriously affected. In Guipúzcoa the strikes took place mainly in the industrialised towns of Eibar, Elgóibar and Pasajes. Between the two provinces 396 factories and businesses were hit and the number of workers on strike reached 20,540.⁷⁴ The strike, in demand of higher salaries and better

⁷¹Josep Ricart, 'Balance apostólico sindical.' in *Revista Sindical de la Territorial de Barcelona*, nos. 63-64, November-December (1948), 10. Quoted in Gemma Ramos Ramos 'Tranvías y conflictividad social en Barcelona (marzo de 1951): actitudes políticas y sociales de una huelga mítica' *Historia Contemporánea*, no. 5 (1991), 210.

⁷²Ibid., 210.

⁷³This was part of a vigorous resistance campaign conducted by the PNV and the Basque Government in Exile from 1945 to 1947. Inside Spain the Resistance Council was urged to take a very active role in organising strikes and in building and maintaining an underground organisation that could be responsive to the political strategies crafted in France.

⁷⁴Information on strike from José María Garmendia, 'El movimiento obrero en el País Vasco bajo la dictadura franquista.' *Congreso de Historia de Euskal Herria* (San Sebastián: Txertoa, 1988), vol. vi, 81-91.

working conditions, lasted until 9 May and was the first major labour conflict in the country since the end of the Civil War. There was fierce repression both during and after the strike in the form of arrests, dismissals and imprisonments.

The Bishop of Vitoria, Carmelo Ballester Nieto, received a detailed report on the strike from some priests based in Sestao, an industrial suburb of Bilbao. One of the priests, Fr. Anastasio Olabarria, had just started a JOC group. The priests explained that the strike was primarily in protest at harsh economic conditions but was also an expression of the workers' repudiation of the regime:

'The great majority of the workers are against the regime. (...) After ten years the workers' opposition to the regime is as irreducible, if not more so, than the first day. Furthermore, along with the regime they reject the Church. Leaving aside the minority of workers who support the regime, all the rest, including Catholics with Basque nationalist tendencies, criticise the regime, and along with it the Church and its hierarchy. It is difficult, extremely difficult, to convince the workers that the Church is independent of the political system.'⁷⁵

However the Bishop was inclined to blame the alienation of the workers on apostasy and the influence of Communism. Just a few weeks before the strike began he had published a pastoral exhortation to the clergy on AC that stressed the need to preserve and re-establish Christian customs in society in general. Referring specifically to the workers he wrote:

'The number of irreligious workers is quite high. The antireligious are few, about 5%. (...) A very small percentage has an acute crisis of faith, partly caused by the '*cabecillas*', the leaders of the old workers' organisations. The rest are 'indifferent', but have basic sound faith and their attitude can be changed with some good spiritual exercises. (...)

⁷⁵Quoted in Villota Elejalde, *La Iglesia en la sociedad española*, 469.

The workers of our times are threatened by the great danger of Communism.⁷⁶

Bishop Ballester's exhortation went on to attach what seems to us today excessive importance to the need for a sound sacerdotal training to enable priests to combat Communist ideas among the workers, but it must be remembered that at this time the Church, led by Pope Pius XII, was obsessed with the Communist peril and on 1 July 1949 the Vatican would publish a document opposing the collaboration of Catholics and Communists.⁷⁷ In the late forties and early fifties the official organ of AC, *Ecclesia*, reflected this obsession by frequently publishing reports on the persecution of the Church in those Eastern European countries that were under Communist rule.⁷⁸ Bishop Ballester was not of course indifferent to the economic difficulties afflicting the workers, but he felt that the best way to help them was by first dealing with the broader 'Social Question': in 1943 he had founded the *Obra Diocesana de Orientación Social* (Diocesan Foundation for Social Orientation) for the laity and organised a *Semana de Estudios Sociales* (Week of Social Studies) for the clergy. A few months after the 1947 strike he set up an *Escuela de Estudios Sociales para Sacerdotes* (School of Social Studies for Priests).

On 23 and 24 April 1951 there was a 48-hour general strike in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa that affected 90% of the workforce.⁷⁹ Once more it was called by the Council of Basque Resistance who saw it as a way of harnessing the discontent of the workers in order to strike a blow at the regime. Therefore although it was primarily a generalised protest against the intolerable conditions of the 'years of hunger' it was to a certain extent also a 'political' strike. The day after the strike started the Falangist newspaper *Arriba* published an editorial blaming the strike on: 'socialists, communists, separatists and a few pseudo-Catholics....'⁸⁰ A few days later the Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See,

⁷⁶'Exhortación sacerdotal sobre la ACE.' Quoted in *ibid.*, 468.

⁷⁷Information from Owen Chadwick, *The Christian Church in the Cold War* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 15-7.

⁷⁸E.g., Editorial on the situation of Catholics in Yugoslavia and Hungary and the show trial of the Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac in *Ecclesia*, no. 311 (28 June 1947), 673.

⁷⁹Rentería Uralde, *Pueblo Vasco*, vol ii, 145. The general strike affected Álava on 4 and 5 of May and Navarre a few days later. *The Daily Telegraph* reported on 25 April 1951 that 80,000 workers had been on strike for two days in the Basque Country.

⁸⁰'Llevarán su merecido.' *Arriba* (24 April 1951). Quoted in Feliciano Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos en la España de Franco* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1991), 128.

Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alberto Martín Artajo, complaining about the participation of Catholic militants in the strikes:

‘Protected by the freedom of action which the affiliated organisations of Catholic Action enjoy, and taking advantage of the exclusion of their publications from censorship, elements of revolutionary origin: trade unionists, communists (who are ‘religious converts’ of sorts), and former members of SOV, (that is separatists), have in the last ten or twelve months reached influential positions in these organisations and begun to impose an orientation which has nothing to do with the apostolate of Catholic Action. First it was the clamorous propaganda in demagogic tones of ¡Tú! ... but most serious of all has been the discovery of the involvement of these organisations, or at the very least their leaders, in the preparation of the recent strikes in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa.’⁸¹

A few days after the general strike began the Basque Clergy’s clandestine publication, *Egiz*, published a ‘Declaration by Basque Priests’ which defended the workers’ right to strike and condemned the civil authorities’ harsh repression of the strikers:

‘We, the priests who are in close contact with the people can verify that they live in misery. People have a right to aspire to a decent life and to attain it they can employ any means as long as it is not contrary to their Christian conscience and integrity as citizens. An action, such as the one taken these days, absolutely correct, serene and without violence, which we would have condemned had it occurred, is a gesture, a stance, that when judged by the norms of Christian morality is completely licit. It is our obligation to defend justice and support the weakest with charity. We proclaim publicly our disapproval of all

⁸¹Letter dated 1 May 1951. Quoted in Tusell, *Franco y los Católicos*, 216-7.

types of reprisals against the strikers and the continuing detention of those who have been arrested because of the strike.⁸²

Copies of the Declaration were distributed throughout the Basque Country and read at some Sunday Masses on 29 April. This was not the first time the Basque priests who produced *Egiz* had voiced support for workers. An article published just a few months earlier argued that workers were alienated from religion because of the Church's failure to concern itself with man's temporal welfare:

'One cannot go and preach the Gospel message of justice and charity to people whose stomachs are empty and whose lives are oppressed by the injustice and selfishness of others. ... But nowadays we need to consider another very important factor in order to understand the desertion by great masses, and their indifference to and mistrust of religion: we are referring to the political factor.'⁸³

Later issues of *Egiz* argued that the Church's attempts to get close to the working class were futile because of its support for a 'totalitarian' regime that was crushing the workers:

'The official Church is trying to win back the working class, but it cannot do so because it does not want to take up a position against the "Oppressor State".'⁸⁴

In the wake of the general strike the JOC chaplain, Fr. Anastasio Olabarria wrote to Bishop Casimiro Morcillo González, the first incumbent of the recently created diocese of Bilbao, defending the right to strike and the participation of *Jocistas* in a strike in the Euskalduna shipyard in Bilbao. Bishop Morcillo's response suggests that, like Bishop Ballester in 1947, he too had an overriding fear of Communism:

⁸²Quoted in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 87-8.

⁸³'La dura realidad.' *Egiz*, nos. 9-10 (1950). Quoted in Paulo Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno contestario del clero vasco 1940-1975* (San Sebastián: Elkar, 1981), 133.

⁸⁴*Egiz*, no. 14 (1951). Quoted in *ibid.*, 133.

‘You know that I have frequently intervened with the authorities, who in fairness, I must say, have listened to me to the extent they could without endangering the peace and without disobeying their duties (...) If up to now I have not done it (write on the strike) it is for reasons that are very easy to understand. I suspected and I still suspect that others whose aims are not as justifiable and pacific as those of the strikers may have instigated the strike. It was, and still is, to be feared that if not in Bilbao, then in other cities the strike might take on a violent and subversive character. Because of these contingencies a bishop cannot supply any combustible pretexts.’⁸⁵

Bishop Morcillo organised a week-long public mission in Bilbao in October 1953 that was aimed especially at drawing the working class closer to the Church.⁸⁶ A ‘Social Post Mission’ directed at civil authorities, businessmen, factory owners and workers was organised by Bishop Morcillo with the assistance of the Instituto León XIII, founded in Madrid in 1952 to heighten awareness of papal social teaching. Announcing it in the diocesan bulletin Bishop Morcillo said:

‘One of the greatest afflictions of our society is the lack of moral formation, professional training and social justice which manifests itself mainly in insufficient salaries and the minimal consideration given to workers in the factories.’⁸⁷

Some of the speakers at the post mission questioned the legitimacy of the regime’s monopoly of labour organisation and defended the right to strike on theoretical grounds derived from papal social teaching. A fortnight after the Social Post Mission workers in the huge Euskalduna shipyard in Bilbao went on strike because a promised Christmas

⁸⁵Quoted in Villota Elejalde, *La Iglesia en la sociedad*, 475. Casimiro Morcillo González had been ordained auxiliary bishop of Madrid in 1943 and from there had been sent to Bilbao. He was born in Chozas de la Sierra, Madrid in 1904.

⁸⁶It was announced at the end of September in a pastoral letter entitled ‘Hacia un mundo mejor: La Santa Misión del Nervión.’ *Boletín Eclesiástico del Obispado de Bilbao*, no. 4 (1953), 418-29. (Henceforth: *BEOBI*).

⁸⁷*BEOBI*, no. 4 (1953), 571.

bonus was not to be paid. The authorities immediately established a connection between the strike and the Social Post Mission and the Government contacted the bishop to remind him that ultimate responsibility for social affairs lay with the State, which based social legislation on Catholic doctrine.⁸⁸ Although Bishop Morcillo continued to voice his concern for social problems in a number of pastoral letters published in 1954 and 1955 he never again talked specifically of the labour situation in Spain or Vizcaya.⁸⁹

In December 1955 it was announced that 59-year-old Bishop Pablo Gúrpide, a native of neighbouring Navarre, had been appointed to the See of Bilbao. At the time he was the incumbent of Spain's smallest diocese, Sigüenza. He arrived in the diocese in February 1956 and just a few weeks later the first large-scale labour stoppages in the Basque Country in five years took place. They began in Álava at the beginning of April and by the end of the month had spread to Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya. Some estimates put the number of workers on strike in Guipúzcoa at 30,000 and in Vizcaya at 40,000.⁹⁰ The civil authorities in Vizcaya attempted to place some of the blame for the strikes in the General Electric and Babcock-Wilcox factories situated on the left bank of the Nervión on the priests of Sestao and in particular on the JOC chaplain, Fr. Anastasio Olabarria. On 1 May Fr. Olabarria wrote to Bishop Gúrpide defending the work being done by the *Jocistas* and *Hoacistas* of Sestao 'beside whom we priests often feel like pygmies and in whose hands alone the Church has a presence in the enormous world of labour'. He described to the bishop the extent to which workers were alienated from the Church:

'Do not forget that the percentage of the working class that participated in the Nervión Mission (1951) did not reach as high as 15%, according to the calculations of the JOAC chaplain, Don Miguel Heredia, and that there are parts of the mining district where the percentage of practising adult workers is no higher than 7% or 8%, and in other places it is even lower.'⁹¹

⁸⁸Letter from the Government to the bishops of Málaga and Bilbao. (3 January 1954). In José Sánchez Jiménez, *El Cardenal Herrera Oria: Pensamiento y acción social* (Madrid: Encuentro 1986), 315-20.

⁸⁹For example, 'Teología del Trabajo.', *BEOBI*, no. 5 (1954), 45-60, 'Teología de la Empresa.', *BEOBI*, no. 5 (1954), 465-89 and 'Deontología del Empresario.', *BEOBI*, no. 6 (1955), 354-77.

⁹⁰For example, Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 179.

⁹¹Letter from Fr. Olabarria to Bishop Pablo Gúrpide (1 May 1956). Ubieta Archive, IDTP.

Fr. Olabarria recalled a retreat which he had given in the Babcock Wilcox factory in 1949: 'that atmosphere and that crowd of workers who listened avidly to the Word of God; it could not be repeated today. The estrangement is abysmal.' In the final part of the letter he told the bishop that following the arrest of one of the *Jocistas* of Sestao at 3.30 a.m. that morning the feeling among the other militants was one of abandonment by the hierarchy: 'They are tired of waiting to be understood, encouraged and defended and they believe that with some of their best members in prison they have a right to be very close to the heart of the Church and to the Bishop.' Eight days later Fr. Olabarria wrote to Fr. Mauro Rubio, National Chaplain of the JOAC, informing him that the civil authorities were attempting to place most of the blame for the recent strikes in Sestao on the priests of the parish of El Sagrado Corazón (on him in particular), and on the apostolic workers' organisations:

'The strikes, dear Don Mauro, as you well know, do not need us in order to occur. Unfortunately, the Church and its organisations in the midst of the mass of workers still have very little weight, they have only a slight influence and are totally incapable of provoking, not only a movement on the scale we have seen on this occasion, but even much smaller things.'⁹²

He went on to praise the Catholic militants for not acting as strike-breakers and said that the priests from Sestao and the rest of the industrialised zones had advised workers to act according to their consciences. He said that the workers of Sestao were allowed to hold as many meetings as they wished in the parochial buildings in order 'to study and judge' the labour conflicts and to keep the priests informed of developments. At one of these meetings, presided over by Eugenio Royo, National President of the JOAC, it was decided to prepare a cyclostyled note giving information on the basic minimum salary and the actual salary workers were being paid. This note was later handed out among the workers. Fr. Olabarria explained that the authorities were accusing him furthermore of having spoken in 'Marxist terms' from the pulpit when all that he had done was protest at the arrest of workers during the strikes (who included more than a half dozen members of

⁹²Letter from Fr. Olabarria to Fr. Mauro Rubio, National Chaplain of JOAC (9 May 1956). Ubieta Archive, IDTP.

AC, mainly members of HOAC and JOC) and pray for the prompt return of prisoners and deportees to their homes.⁹³ The letter concluded with Fr. Olabarria asking Fr. Rubio to relay the facts to the Primate, the Nuncio and the National Chaplain of HOAC, Fr. Tomás Malagón.

At the end of 1956, Bishop Gúrpide set up the *Secretariado Diocesano de Cuestiones Sociales* (Diocesan Secretariat for Social Questions) within the diocesan curia.⁹⁴ One of its functions was to assist the bishop in preparing pastoral letters on social questions. According to Ignacio Villota there was an abysmal difference between documents written entirely by Bishop Gúrpide himself and those prepared for him by the priests of the Secretariat, some of who were chaplains to HOAC and JOC.⁹⁵ The pastoral letter, 'The Social Problems of our Diocese', which was published in the press on 29 March 1959, was one such document. It was concerned with the negative effects that the continuing rapid industrialisation of Vizcaya was having on society and regular religious practice. It placed great emphasis on the apostolic endeavours of the specialised movements of AC among the workers:

'The HOAC and JOC in their two branches, masculine and feminine, are essential in parishes with an important percentage of workers. ... And of course I am not referring to a nominal or routine existence merely for archival records, rather to a real existence which priests should channel all their energies into achieving. Do not become discouraged in a meeting of ten militants on thinking of the perhaps 10,000 souls you have in the parish: if they are truly militant and have an influence on their companions and on institutions, continue on, do not forget that minorities rule the world; remember Pius XII's words to the *Jocistas*: wherever the JOC has worked for a long time, it has formed Christian worker leaders, who as such, are a hope for the future

⁹³ Around 600 workers were exiled from the Basque Country because of the strikes which lasted two months. Op. Cit. David Ruiz, *Historia de Comisiones Obreras 1964-1988* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1993), 114.

⁹⁴ In 1958 its name was changed to *Secretariado Social Diocesano* (Diocesan Social Secretariat.) *BEOBI*, (February, 1958). Later that year he created the *Escuela Social* (Social School) where diocesan priests could pursue social studies.

⁹⁵ Villota Elejalde, *La Iglesia en la sociedad*, 485.

of society. ... Work with consistency soon you will soon see the fruit of your Christian influence....⁹⁶

In January 1961 the Secretariat prepared a note to be read at Sunday Masses in parishes affected by a strike in the enormous *Laminación de Bandas de Echevarría* factory. It clearly outlined Catholic Social Doctrine on the right of workers to a basic salary that would enable them to support their families with dignity:

'The legal salary, that is the salary fixed by law or the Regulatory Salary, is not the same thing as a just salary. The employer cannot ease his conscience by taking refuge in the fact that he is paying the salary set by the law if this is below the minimum survival rate. ... It is not licit to deprive the workers, using the pretext of safeguarding the public order, of truly efficacious means for defending their rights. There is no real public order, even if an apparent peace may be observed, where justice and truth are missing and the rights of the weakest are violated.'⁹⁷

The Minister for Justice, Antonio Iturmendi, wrote to Bishop Gúrpide complaining about the note and warning about unacceptable intrusions into social affairs by the Church.⁹⁸ However the influence of the HOAC and JOC chaplains on the Secretariat could be seen again a couple of months later in a pastoral letter that welcomed the Annual Conference of the National Council of the JOC to Bilbao in July 1961. This pastoral condemned the attitude of employers who contented themselves with paying workers the minimum legal salary, called for fairer salaries for all, described emigration as a problem created by structural injustices, emphasised the Church's commitment to the defence of human rights and defended the spiritual and temporal activities of the JOC:

⁹⁶ Quoted in Castaño, *Historia de la JOC*, 68.

⁹⁷ 'Nota sobre los recientes conflictos laborales.' (28 January 1961). Copy in Manterola Archive, Euskal Biblioteka Labayru (Henceforth: EBL), P.12.3.

⁹⁸ Marón, 'Evangelio, Iglesia, 213. There is probably no documentary evidence of the Minister's intervention and the author of the dissertation may have got the information orally.

'It has been the JOC, through its active education, through its healthy and profound realism, through its evaluation of every aspect and perspective of concrete life, that has brought a breath of fresh, renovating air to the apostolate in our country.'⁹⁹

The Secretariat was also responsible for preparing a Plan of Sermons on various aspects of the encyclical letter, *Mater et Magistra* (May 1961). It appeared in the diocesan bulletin as an appendix to Bishop's Gúrpide's pastoral letter introducing the encyclical.¹⁰⁰ The Plan proposed sermons on sixteen themes to be given over the course of the year. Everything went according to schedule until the one dealing with the Church's teaching on workers' organisations was about to be preached; the Civil Governor contacted the bishop and ordered him to suspend the homilies.¹⁰¹

The Allied victory in 1945 brought the first wave of worker protest in Barcelona. The transport and metal workers, for instance, celebrated Nazi Germany's capitulation in May by laying down their tools. Strikes were declared again in August to mark the end of the war in Asia. There was a general strike in the factories of the industrial area of Manresa in January 1946 in protest at the docking of a day's pay for a compulsory holiday to mark the fall of the town to Franco's troops in 1939. The workers, mainly women, succeeded in their initial objective and also managed to get a pay rise from employers.¹⁰² The first serious strike in Barcelona in the post-war years was sparked off by the 'Tram Boycott' of 1 March 1951 to protest against a fare increase. Within a fortnight the boycott had mushroomed into a mass industrial strike when several hundred thousand workers walked off the job. The strike brought to light the discontent of the Catalan working class after years of electricity restrictions, high prices, housing shortages, rations and black-market racketeering. It also showed that workers opposed to the regime had infiltrated the base of the vertical union since the call for a general strike

⁹⁹ 'La JOC ante nuestra juventud trabajadora.' (20 July 1961). *BEOBI*, no. 12 (1961), 481-90. Quoted in Castaño, *La JOC*, 88.

¹⁰⁰ 'Temario de predicación de la Encíclica Mater et Magistra.' *BEOBI*, no. 13 (January 1962).

¹⁰¹ Angel Unzueta, *Vaticano II e Iglesia Local* (Bilbao: Desclée De Brouwer, 1994), 47.

¹⁰² Carme Molinero & Pére Ysàs, *Patria, Justicia y Pan. Nivell de vida i condicions de treball a Catalunya 1939-1951* (Barcelona: La Magrana, 1985), 225-6.

came from an assembly of 2,000 official union delegates on 6 March.¹⁰³ The tram boycott forced a return to the previous fare scale and caused the fall of the Mayor and Civil Governor.

The involvement of HOAC militants in organising the boycott is almost certain; one clandestine leaflet circulating throughout the city encouraging participation in the strikes urged people to 'spread the word' in a way that resembled the chain method used for circulating prayers and holy pictures.¹⁰⁴ Also, throughout 1950 there had been constant articles and references in *¡Tú!* to economic hardship and the unsatisfactory tram service.¹⁰⁵ In political circles these articles seemed dangerously subversive. The disappearance of *¡Tú!* shortly after the strikes that followed in April in the Basque Country and Navarre was due to the growing annoyance of the Government who pressurised the hierarchy to suspend the publication. This was a blow to HOAC as at that time *¡Tú!* was selling almost 45,000 copies a week.¹⁰⁶ On 16 May police in Barcelona announced that 15 members of the CNT and a member of AC had been arrested, accused of being the instigators of the general strike of March. They were all tried before a military tribunal.¹⁰⁷ The militants of the historic unions and the militants of the Catholic workers' associations, although they took part, were not responsible for what was essentially a spontaneous general strike. Catholic militants also took part in the cost-of-living strikes in the spring of 1956, in the two-week boycott of public transport in January 1957, and the strikes of March 1958 that involved around 60,000 workers who were demanding salary increases to offset the rampant inflation affecting Spain's economy in the late fifties.¹⁰⁸

The Metropolitan Archbishops issued three documents during this period dealing with the economic difficulties affecting the country. The first of these was issued just a couple of months after the wave of strikes of the spring of 1951. It was entitled

¹⁰³Information from Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 135 and Sebastian Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers and the City. Labour in Greater Barcelona since 1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 40-7.

¹⁰⁴Gemma Ramos Ramos, 'Tranvías y conflictividad social en Barcelona (marzo de 1951): actitudes políticas y sociales de una huelga mítica.' *Historia Contemporánea*, no. 5 (1991), pp. 203-17.

¹⁰⁵'Los transportes urbanos de Barcelona están perjudicando a los obreros.' Article in *¡Tú!*, 10 March 1951. Cited in López García, *Aproximación a la Historia de la HOAC*, 55.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁰⁷José Costa Font & José L. T., 'El Movimiento Obrero Español durante la dictadura franquista (1939-1962)' *La Oposición al Régimen de Franco*, tome ii, 673.

¹⁰⁸Brief description of economic conditions and these strikes in Castaño, *Memòries sobre la JOC*, 109-10.

'Instruction on Duties of Justice and Charity'¹⁰⁹ The bishops presented this document as a reminder to all Spaniards of their duties at a time when many were experiencing serious economic difficulties. It also offered directions for how there might be a fairer sharing of the economic burden. It called for austerity by all Spaniards so that the poorest in society would not be frustrated by the contrast between their own situation and the luxury and extravagance of the wealthy. The document was closely based on the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI and contained very many textual references. In essence the document was a compendium of moral principles. For example, it declared that in the special circumstances that arise in a post-war period vigilance was needed to ensure justice for all. While it condemned the most flagrant economic injustices in Spain at the time, it did not question the economic structures *per se* of the regime. The document concluded with the following words: 'After the salvation of souls there is nothing we so ardently desire than social peace in our Beloved Spain, but peace is the fruit of social justice.'

After the cost-of-living strikes of 1956 the Metropolitans issued 'On the Social Situation in Spain.'¹¹⁰ It had three main themes: the obligation of employers to pay a minimum family wage, the rights of workers to share in the profits of a company, the equal and fair distribution of national income. On the last point the bishops said that any country failing to ensure that workers were given their fair share of economic wealth was not operating in a Christian fashion.

In 1957 a new government was formed and the economic ministries were taken by 'Technocrats': Alberto Ullastres in Commerce and Mariano Navarro Rubio in Finance. Laureano López Rodó was given the portfolio of *Secretaria Técnica de la Presidencia del Gobierno*. Immediately this new government introduced 'pre-stabilisation measures' (including wage freeze) designed to ease the rampant inflation. In July 1959 a major Stabilisation Plan was launched and it was in response to this that the Metropolitans issued 'Declaration on the Christian Attitude to the Problems of Stabilisation and Economic Development.'¹¹¹ This document called for a Christian response from all Spaniards to the sacrifices that were needed for the implementation of the Stabilisation

¹⁰⁹ (3 June 1951) 'Instrucción Colectiva Sobre Deberes de Justicia y Caridad.' DCEE I, 257-67.

¹¹⁰ (15 August 1956) 'Sobre la situación social en España.' Ibid., 291-302.

¹¹¹ (15 January 1960) 'Declaración sobre actitud cristiana ante los problemas morales de la estabilización y del desarrollo económico.' Ibid., 330-9.

Plan. This would, they said, involve 'self-denial and austerity' for all. The document praised the government's intentions of dealing with the economic crisis through the Stabilisation Plan as 'laudable', but reminded them too of their moral responsibility to ensure that workers were not being asked to carry too much of the burden of sacrifice. It repeated many of the same exhortations contained in the documents of 1951 and 1956 on the need for a fairer distribution of the national income. Surprisingly for the times it made the following veiled defence of strikers:

'Nobody can accuse the workers of having started a crazy rise in prices and salaries, by making their demands with the backing of their organised strength. They might be accused of other defects ... that often can be explained, although perhaps not justified, by the excessive sacrifices they have had to make in areas such as wage levels, length of working day and poor equipment at work.'

This last paragraph was used many times over the following years by the specialised worker movements to support striking workers. However, most of the chaplains and lay militants were impatient with these three documents. They felt the hierarchy was avoiding taking the regime to task for its neglect of social justice, except in very veiled terms and they would have liked to have seen direct calls made for fundamental social or economic reform of the regime.

The bursts of strike activity in the forties and fifties in the Basque Country and Catalonia, as elsewhere in Spain, were generally isolated and poorly organised. The strikes of the spring of 1962 were different and marked the emergence of a new workers' movement. Two modifications to the industrial relations system between 1953 and 1958 contributed to the birth of the new movement: the creation of *jurados de empresa* (committees of workers) and a system of *convenios colectivos* (collective bargaining). Both innovations were closely linked: the new system of collective bargaining introduced substantial change in the former regulation procedures with regard to conditions of work, wages, productivity and industrial relations; unrepresentative delegates would hinder the compliance with and effectiveness of any agreement, and the

growth of productivity would be hampered. The committees of workers introduced some democratisation into the official trade unions; although the OS was still to remain 'vertical' and 'mixed' there was a new form of democratic representation and a new autonomy at the shop floor level. The militants of the apostolic workers' organisations took advantage of these changes. In 1955 *Hoacistas* from several different dioceses prepared reports for the National Commission of the HOAC on various aspects of their activities, including militants' participation in the *jurados de empresa*. The report from Bilbao commented that: 'the workers have good regard for the *Hoacistas* on the workers' committees, both as persons as well as for their ideas.'¹¹² In October 1957 the National Commission of JOC issued a declaration on the election of several *Jocistas* as workers' representatives in the union elections, which had been held a short time earlier. It clarified that these militants were acting freely and independently of the JOC, as they had every right to do, 'as long as they act within the limits of Christian morality.'¹¹³

The context of the strikes of 1962 was the negotiation or renewal of factory and industry-wide agreements. It was the first time that the new system of wage bargaining between workers and employers began to take effect because the government had just lifted a wage freeze imposed at the end of 1959. The first strikes in Vizcaya began on 30 April in the Naval shipyard in Bilbao when management refused to meet workers' demands for an increase in the daily wage to between 130 and 140 pesetas. On 3 May the strike spread to General Eléctrica Española, Babcock Wilcox, Echevarría and to some other large factories in Bilbao. By the middle of the month the whole province was paralysed by strikes. Between 40,000 and 60,000 workers (out of a total workforce of 234,004) went on strike.¹¹⁴ The salary increases were granted and from 25 May workers gradually began to return to work and the strikes, which in some factories had lasted almost a month, ended. Of the 187 workers arrested in Vizcaya, 30 were deported and the remainder imprisoned for varying lengths of time. They were all gradually released

¹¹²'Informes de las Comisiones Diocesanas al Pleno de Comisión Nacional, celebrado los días 18 y 19 de febrero de 1956.' Actas de 1956-57 en el Archivo de la HOAC, Madrid. Cited in López García, *Aproximación a la Historia de la HOAC*, 79.

¹¹³Castañó, *La JOC*, 61.

¹¹⁴Information from Pedro Ibarra, 'Bases y desarrollo del nuevo movimiento obrero en Vizcaya (1951-1967). In *La Oposición al Régimen de Franco*. 2 Tomes (Madrid: UNED, 1988), tome 1, vol. ii, 47. A state of emergency was declared in Asturias and the Basque provinces on 5 May.

before the 18 July. Ninety percent of the detainees had no political or union affiliation and the remainder were members of STV, UGT, Communists, *Hoacistas* or *Jocistas*.¹¹⁵

The *Boletín de la Oficina de Prensa de Euskadi* (BOPE) carried various reports on the strikes that emphasised the participation of Catholic militants and the support shown to strikers by priests.¹¹⁶ The annual report of the National Delegation of Syndicates of Vizcaya for 1962 referring to the strikes of the first half of that year noted, 'lamentably', that the workers had been 'supported economically and morally by declarations from many pulpits at Sunday Masses'.¹¹⁷ Complaints from the civil authorities presumably reached the bishop since most of the priests who were transferred later that year had been based in working-class parishes.¹¹⁸ From 1962 a *Fondo Común Provincial* (General Provincial Fund) operated in Vizcaya, providing financial assistance to workers who had been on strike for more than 15 days. The origin of the fund dated back to the strikes of 1956 when some HOAC and JOC militants had set one up. From 1962 a mixed commission of labour militants, which included *Hoacistas*, administered the fund. The money for the fund was collected primarily in factories and churches.¹¹⁹

Most of the big factories in Barcelona were affected by strikes in May 1962.¹²⁰ Workers, who included *Jocistas*, from the Siemens factory in Cornellà met in the church of the parish of San Miguel in Cornellà to plan their strike. Afterwards the police beat up the parish priest for allowing the workers to use the church.¹²¹ On 22 May the police attempted to enter the central offices of AC in search of pamphlets in support of the strikes. When they were prevented they contacted Bishop Modrego who refused permission to allow the search to go ahead.¹²²

¹¹⁵Ibid., 47-8.

¹¹⁶BOPE, 15 May, 1 & 6 June 1962.

¹¹⁷Quoted in Anabella Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo la atenta mirada del régimen franquista* (Bilbao: Desclee De Brouwer, 1995), 117.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 145.

¹¹⁹Pedro Ibarra Güell, *El movimiento obrero en Vizcaya 1967-1977* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1987), 258-9.

¹²⁰La Maquinista Terrestre y Marítima, E.N.A.S.A., Hispano Suiza, Fabra y Coats, Seda de Barcelona and Hispano Olivetti. Several factories in Sabadell and Terrassa were also affected, as were the mines in Sallent de Balsereny, Figols and Poble de Lillet. There were around 50,000 workers on strike. Information from Carme Molinero & Pére Ysàs, *Catalunya durant el Franquisme* (Barcelona: Empuries, 2000), 110.

¹²¹Ignasi Riera & José Botella, *El Baix Llobregat. (15 años de lucha obrera)* (Barcelona: Blume, 1976), 77.

¹²²Incident mentioned in 'L'Església a la Catalunya Contemporànea' *Qüestions de Vida Cristiana*, Vols. 75-6. (Montserrat: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1975), 26.

Just a few weeks after the strike wave started the Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to the Bishop of Vitoria asking if he had given his priests instructions to take the side of strikers, as had been widely reported in the foreign press. The same letter, accompanied by the bishop's reply and a number of press cuttings was later sent to the bishops of all the Catalan dioceses affected by strikes. Bishop Modrego of Barcelona replied:

'The only case reported to me was one involving a young priest who over-stepped the limits in a sermon, referring in inappropriate terms to the labour conflicts. I had him summoned before me and he was severely reprimanded. ... I received a representation of strikers after I had first consulted with the Civil Governor and then with the Chief of Police. ... My approach has been one of pacification and warning to the workers of the dangers of possible complications, and an attempt to convince them to return to work.'¹²³

In the final part of his letter he expressed the opinion that it had been a malicious campaign:

'Orchestrated by the foreign press and radio stations in their satanic designs to implicate the Church and dishonour the Patria.'¹²⁴

On 8 May the National Commissions of HOAC\F and JOC\F issued a declaration '*con censura eclesiástica*' on the labour conflicts affecting the country.¹²⁵ Twenty thousand copies of the declaration were printed. The National Chaplain of JOC, Monsignor Ramón Torrella, granted the imprimatur. In an interview in 1983 he recalled how the police intercepted some of the leaflets:

'We had arranged to distribute it in all the dioceses affected by the strikes after the Sunday Masses ... but they intercepted some that were

¹²³Quote from Castaño, *La JOC*, 52.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 52.

¹²⁵ (8 May 1962) 'Ante los conflictos laborales' Copy in AMM.

being carried in a suitcase by train from Bilbao to San Sebastián, and as a result of the discovery two police officers went to the offices of Catholic Action to interrogate us. At ten o'clock in the morning of the same Sunday that the circular was to be distributed they took us to police-headquarters. At three in the afternoon they allowed us have lunch and at five they interrogated us once more ... what they wanted were the names and addresses of those to whom the document had been sent for distribution. None of us gave that information on the grounds that it was a matter related to a Church organisation and unless the hierarchy ordered us to do so, we were not obliged to reveal the addresses of leaders and members of JOC and HOAC.¹²⁶

The authorities imposed a fine of 50,000 pesetas on the National President and Vice-President of JOC and the President of HOAC. Monsignor Torrella was suspended *a divinis* from his ministerial licences. Shortly afterwards the National President of JOC, José Antonio Alzola, wrote to the International Secretariat of JOC about the participation of *Hoacistas* and *Jocistas* in the strikes of 1962:

'Our militants have fought for several weeks. With great satisfaction we can inform you that the JOC militants, alongside those of HOAC, have played a leadership role in the conflicts in much of the country, taking this responsibility on themselves as members of temporal society. This has resulted in an atrocious persecution of our militants by the government, with several cases of militants arrested, deported, and interrogated by the police. Even more serious reprisals have been taken against several chaplains. None of this frightens us, rather we consider it necessary for the Church, for the JOC and for the advancement of the worker movement.'¹²⁷

¹²⁶ *Historia del Franquismo* (Madrid: Diario 16, 1985), 649-50.

¹²⁷ Cited in Sanz Fernández, Florentino, 'Algunos conflictos significativos de la Juventud Obrera Cristiana con el Régimen de Franco (1947-66).' *La Oposición al Régimen Franquista* (Madrid: UNED, 1988). Tome ii, pp. 168-9.

The official organ of AC, *Ecclesia*, and the Primate both gave backing to the activities of the apostolic workers' movements over the following few weeks. On 15 May *Ecclesia* published an editorial on the strikes entitled 'The Way Things Are' which defended the right to strike. The Movement's newspaper, *Arriba*, reacted with fury and published an editorial on 18 May 'To Cesar The Things That Are Cesar's' which was fiercely critical of *Ecclesia* and accused it of joining forces with the enemies of the regime.¹²⁸

Just over a week later Franco himself alluded to Communist infiltrations into the Church in his speech to the Brotherhood of Provisional Sergeants (Civil War veterans' organization) on 27 May 1962 in West Madrid (Garabitas ridge in the Casa del Campo) in which he affirmed that the social unrest of the preceding months reflected no more than the growing pains of progress 'a natural consequence of our growth and vitality'. 'The excesses of the occasional separatist Basque cleric', he continued or the clerical [sic] errors of some other excitable priest ... represent nothing in the great spiritual resurgence of our Fatherland' even though 'external propaganda' and foreigners might attempt to take advantage of labour unrest in the north of the country and use such excesses 'against our regime'. 'Our prosperity and peace is painful and irritating to them (Liberalism and Communism) and therefore they attempt to infiltrate every single national organisation, even those as opposed to them ideologically as the lay organisations of our Church, many of which are infected by their parasitical agents.'¹²⁹

On 19 May the Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to the Primate complaining about reports published in the foreign press which amounted to an attack on the regime. According to these reports the Church was promoting the recent strikes. He included two clippings: one from *La Croix* and the other from *Corriere della Sera* in both of which it was reported that the cardinal had approved a manifesto of support for the strikes dated 8 May. The Minister asked the Cardinal for clarification and any further information he might be able to offer.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ See quotes from *Arriba*'s article in Feliciano Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos en la España de Franco* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1991), 144. Letters

¹²⁹ Text in Francisco Franco, *Mensajes y discursos del Jefe del Estado, 1960-63* (Madrid: Dirección General de Información, Publicaciones Españolas, 1964).

¹³⁰ (19 May 1962) 'Carta del Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores, Fernando Ma. Castiella, al Cardenal Primado Pla i Daniel.' Text of the letter in Cárcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, 867-8.

The Cardinal replied to the letter two days later. He began by reaffirming his loyalty to the regime:

‘...whose establishment I contributed to during the difficult times of the war through my writings in which I defended it as a Crusade. And I continue to defend it as such, inside and outside Spain.’

He went on to deny the apostolic workers’ movements were the promoters of the strikes. He also protested at the article that had appeared in *Arriba* on 18 May, describing it as an attack on the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He defended the document of 8 May 1962 by pointing out that it was based on the teaching of the encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra* and contained nothing contrary to Catholic social doctrine. He warned the Minister to be careful to respect the Church’s independence and reminded him that the confessional State ought to adapt its laws to respect the teaching of *Mater et Magistra*.¹³¹

(v) Radicalisation of HOAC and JOC

Evidence of the development of a group consciousness among chaplains to the apostolic workers’ associations in Barcelona was the appearance in December 1963 of a monthly publication entitled *Correspondència Parròquies Populars, Conciliaris d’Acció Catòlica Obrera*¹³². Although the group who launched it were all JOC chaplains it described itself as a publication through which the ideas and experiences of *all* priests in working-class parishes in Barcelona could be channelled.¹³³ It had a very simple format and, interestingly, almost all the articles were in Catalan. In 1965 chaplains of HOAC and ACO joined the team and from this time on priests from other Catalan dioceses were encouraged to contribute articles. In November 1964 the first police report on *Correspondència*, along with the August-September issue (plus a translation of it into Spanish) was sent to the Civil Governor of Barcelona. It incorrectly informed him that

¹³¹ (20 May 1962) ‘*Respuesta del Pla i Deniel a Castiella*.’ Text of the letter in Cárceles Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, 868-9.

¹³² Between 1955 and 1958 a cyclostyled bulletin entitled ‘*Carta dels Consiliaris*’ had been prepared on an irregular basis by a group of JOC chaplains. In total 9 issues came out. Castaño, *Memòries sobre la JOC*, 101.

¹³³ The team who set up the publication were Jaume Cuspinera, Joan Carrera, Jordi Bertrán, Lluçia Garreta, Jordi García-Clavel, Martí Canal, Oleguer Bellavista and Abelard Sayrach. (six of these priests are now married, Joan Carrera is an auxiliary bishop of Barcelona and one is deceased.)

the cyclostyled publication was prepared by the HOAC and distributed only among militants.¹³⁴ A more accurate description was given in the next report, dated 15 December 1964, which informed that an investigation had been carried out into the 'clandestine' publication, which ascertained that those responsible were a group of priests headed by the diocesan chaplain of JOC/F, Fr. Jorge Bertrán.¹³⁵ The police had met with the Archbishop to discuss the publication, which in their view had a decidedly anti-regime slant, and it was expected that 'the necessary steps will soon be taken in relation to the publication.' Vigilance of *Correspondència* remained constant in subsequent years and this is reflected in the copious reports in the archives of the Civil Government. Several issues were not permitted to be published because they contained 'subversive articles' and fines were imposed on the editor.¹³⁶

By 1964 there existed some 200 small branches of the JOC in the diocese of Barcelona and around 150 chaplains.¹³⁷ *Juventud Obrera* sold about 12,000 copies each month in Catalonia. Throughout 1963 the publication had provoked the civil authorities' anger. In August of that year it published a photo of a group of *Jocistas* with Monsignor Cardijn at the Sixteenth National Conference of the JOC held in Oviedo the previous month. One individual in the group could clearly be seen with his arm outstretched like a Communist. It caused a furore in government circles and provoked a series of attacks on JOC in the government-controlled press.¹³⁸ The following month the publication was suspended for three months because of its reports on labour conflicts in Asturias. The Barcelona police reported that *Hoacistas* and *Jocistas* were distributing cyclostyled sheets in several factories explaining that the publication would not be appearing due to its having been suspended by the government.¹³⁹ The following year the secret police reported that 'The paper of the JOC ... is being handed out in some profusion in the most

¹³⁴ 'Nota Informativa' AGGCB, Caja 61.

¹³⁵ From 1960 to 1967 Fr. Bertrán was diocesan chaplain of JOC/F. He resigned from this position and dedicated himself full time to starting a new parish in the working class neighbourhood of Besòs Poble Nou. In 1971 at the age of 43 he left the priesthood in order to marry.

¹³⁶ Fr. Oleguer Bellavista, editor of *Correspondència* from 1963 to 1980, told me in an interview in Barcelona on 25 July 1994 that he was also frequently reprimanded by the Archbishop over several of the articles.

¹³⁷ Castaño, *Memòries sobre la JOC*, 133.

¹³⁸ E.g., '¿Tenemos necesidad de importar patetismo social?' *Tarrasa Informació* (3 August 1963).

¹³⁹ Nota Informativa: 'Nota del JOC diocesano de Barcelona sobre el suceso de *Juventud Obrera*, no. 77, September 1963' AGGCB, Caja 21.

important workplaces' and 'there is a noticeable rise in the demand for this paper among groups of workers and it is being read more and more.'¹⁴⁰

Growing tension between the JOC, the civil authorities, and the Church hierarchy in Barcelona came to a head in May 1964. The occasion was a successful campaign organised jointly by members of JOC and the Workers' Front of Catalonia (FOC) to boycott the buses in Sabadell on 2 May in protest at the poor service offered.¹⁴¹ Sabadell, one of the towns in Barcelona's hinterland, experienced unprecedented demographic growth during the Franco Regime. Its population grew from almost 48,000 in 1940 to around 60,000 in 1950; ten years later there were 105,000 inhabitants and by 1970 the population had reached 160,000. The labour movement in the town had a tradition of moderation and during the first two decades of the dictatorship there were few reports of labour unrest. No evidence exists of any significant support for the most widespread action of the fifties in the province, the General Strike of 1951. The climate of consensus that seemed to characterise industrial relations in Sabadell began to disperse in the mid-sixties. This was in no small part the result of the crisis that hit the Sabadell textile industry from the early years of the decade. The crisis eroded traditional relations of production in the town and the paternalistic sense of community that surrounded the small textile factories began to give way to starker class divisions.¹⁴²

Between 29 April and 2 May 1964 seventeen people were arrested in Sabadell accused of organising the bus boycott. They included six *Jocistas* from the parish of San Vicente. On 30 April the police called to the rectory where they interrogated the JOC chaplain, Fr. Antonio Totosaus Raventós, but did not arrest him.¹⁴³ The following Sunday at Masses in Sabadell (in all but two parishes) the celebrants read a list of 8 points prepared by a group of priests from the town which referred to the confusion and consternation caused by the incidents of the previous week, called for calm, and for prayers that the truth would be made known. The following day the Mayor of Sabadell sent the Civil Governor of Barcelona a short disapproving report on the collective sermon, and a copy of the 8 points.¹⁴⁴ The police in Sabadell drew up a longer report for

¹⁴⁰Police reports of 23 April and 9 May 1964. Cited in Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers*, 75.

¹⁴¹For an account of the boycott see Andreu Castells, 'El FOC i la vaga d'autobusos de Sabadell.' *Debat*, (4 July 1978), 102-7.

¹⁴²Information on labour movement in Sabadell from Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers*, 70-1.

¹⁴³Antonio Totosaus is now secularised.

¹⁴⁴Report in AGGCB, Caja 111.

the Civil Governor on 11 May in which they named some of the priests who had read the 8 points.¹⁴⁵ Fr. Totosaus wrote a letter to the judge appointed to the trial of the seventeen detainees in which he expressed his anger at the rumours and untruths being propagated by the police, which not only implicated him in the organization of the boycott but also accused him of being unconcerned about the predicament of the detainees. He also denied that he had produced two pamphlets encouraging participation in the boycott as one of those arrested had told the police:

‘He may have done so as a direct or indirect result of the circumstances in which he found himself when he was making his declaration or because of physical or moral coercion which he may have suffered during his arrest.’¹⁴⁶

He stated that he had never encouraged strikes, allowed clandestine political meetings to take place in the parochial offices or preached subversive sermons. He sent a copy of this letter to the Archbishop and distributed cyclostyled copies among priests and lay activists in the diocese. On 14 May the diocesan commission of the JOC sent a letter to all the *Jocistas* of the diocese that defended militants’ participation in the boycott in Sabadell.¹⁴⁷ The Archbishop of Barcelona, under the pressure of events, made a veiled defence of the campaign; in a letter to JOC branches he suggested that such a boycott might be justified where ‘the laws and the doctrine of the Church are in open contradiction.’¹⁴⁸

One of the JOC groups in Barcelona that particularly worried the authorities was attached to a night school for apprentices run by the Jesuits in the Barcelona district of Clot. Here, according to a secret police report:

‘The boys are being openly indoctrinated with an anti-Regime ideology. The Regime is described as reactionary, conservative, and capitalist, and contrary to the social doctrine of the Church, which recognises the right

¹⁴⁵ ‘Nota Informativa: Comentaríos hechos durante la homilía en las misas en algunas iglesias en Sabadell.’ In AGGCB, Caja 111.

¹⁴⁶ (11 de mayo 196) ‘Carta del Padre Antonio Totosaus, Parroquia de San Vicente al Juez de Orden Público Madrid.’ AAM.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Carta a todos los Jocistas de la archidiócesis de Barcelona.’ AAM.

¹⁴⁸ Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers*, 76.

to freedom of association, a right, they are taught, that does not exist in Spain'. One of the aims of this association (the JOC) ... is the constitution of a union outside the existing unions...' ¹⁴⁹

In an attempt to curtail the growing independence and temporalism of the workers' movements, a trend that had become particularly apparent at the time of the strikes of May 1962, Bishop Gúrpide of Bilbao promulgated new diocesan rules for AC in October of that year. Three months later a completely new statute for AC was published in the diocesan bulletin and an Episcopal Delegate was appointed with responsibility for ensuring its implementation.¹⁵⁰ One of the new statute's stipulations was that all publications must be approved by the diocesan commission of AC and be granted an *imprimatur*. This was an attempt to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence of a conflict like that of the previous May when there was disagreement between some lay leaders and chaplains over the issuing of a public statement on the labour conflicts. The statute also stipulated that prior approval had to be granted by the Episcopal Delegate for all future events organised by the specialised movements which had a public dimension or were likely to be attended by a crowd. In previous years public meetings organised by the apostolic worker associations on 1 May had resulted in participants being sanctioned by the civil authorities, or had provoked the intervention of the police. For example, in 1959 the HOAC and the JOC groups of the diocese organised a conference in the Arriaga Theatre in the centre of Bilbao that was presided over by Bishop Gúrpide. The two main speakers were Víctor Martínez Conde, diocesan president of HOAC, and José Antonio Alzola, national president of JOC. A few days later Martínez Conde was fined 10,000 pesetas and Alzola, 25,000 pesetas for their speeches, which the authorities deemed a threat to public order. Bishop Gúrpide wrote to the Civil Governor appealing for the fines to be lifted, but his intervention was to no avail.¹⁵¹ In 1964 the chaplains and lay leaders of HOAC and JOC cancelled the annual May Day conference rather than comply with the Episcopal Delegate's request that all speeches be sent to him for prior approval.

¹⁴⁹Jefatura Superior de Policía de Barcelona. Nota Informativa, 26 May 1964. AGGCB, Caja 21.

¹⁵⁰'Normas para la Acción Católica.' *BEOBI*, no. 13 (1962), 696-710 & 'Reglamentación diocesana de la Acción Católica.' *BEOBI*, no. 14 (1963), 274-91.

¹⁵¹Castañó, *La JOC*, 68-9.

The following year the Episcopal Delegate himself unilaterally cancelled the conference because he feared there would be trouble with the police. Nevertheless after Mass on 1 May in the church of Santiago Apóstol in the centre of Bilbao several Catholic militants, who were distributing sheets explaining why the conference had been cancelled, were arrested - they included the diocesan presidents of JOC and HOAC. On 16 June 1965 Bishop Gúrpide sent a report to the Nuncio on these events and on other 'problems' with the diocesan AC.¹⁵² The report illustrates that the crisis in relations between the specialised associations of AC and the ecclesiastical hierarchy that was to occur nationally in the period 1968-1969 was prefigured in the diocese of Bilbao in 1965. The specialised movements of AC in Bilbao refused to be completely silenced however: to mark 1 May 1966 the diocesan commissions of HOAC, JOC, Herri Gaztedi, and JEC sent their militants a cyclostyled sheet which was very critical of the social, political, economic and cultural situation.¹⁵³ The following November the same diocesan commissions circulated a document opposing the Organic Law of State, which was due to be voted on in a referendum on 15 December.¹⁵⁴ It claimed that the proposed law did not give sufficient recognition to the rights of freedom of expression, assembly and association, as defended by the Church in the Conciliar constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and it encouraged a No-vote or abstention.¹⁵⁵ In January 1967 the leaders of HOAC, JEC, JARC and JOC in Bilbao were dismissed by the bishop for producing and circulating this document.

(vi) Catholics and Communists in CCOO

Further evidence of the radicalisation of the apostolic workers' movements was their support for the Workers' Commissions (CCOO). Set up as *ad hoc* factory committees at the end of the fifties CCOO played an extremely important role in the Spanish labour movement from the early sixties up until the end of the dictatorship.

¹⁵² Part of the report reproduced in José Guerra Campos, *Crisis y conflicto en la ACE y otros órganos nacionales de apostolado seglar desde 1964. Documentos* (Madrid: Ediciones ADUE, 1989), 111-8.

¹⁵³ 'Revision 'Para Militantes. Víspera del 1 de Mayo.' Goicuría Archive, IDTP.

¹⁵⁴ The Organic Law of State was intended to complete the process of institutionalization of the regime and give full, mature definition to 'organic democracy'. The Organic Law reconciled various inconsistencies among the six Fundamental Laws (the *Fuero de Trabajo*, the Law on the Cortes, the *Fuero de los Españoles*, the Law on the Referendum, the Law of Succession, and the Fundamental Principles of the National Movement) and eliminated or altered certain lingering vestiges of fascist terminology. It separated the functions of the president of government (prime minister) from those of the chief of state, and modified secondary details of the Law of Succession.

¹⁵⁵ 'Ante el referéndum.' Manterola Archive, EBL.R. 12, 4.

They were characterized in their early years by heterogeneity of political beliefs and unprecedented cooperation between Catholics and Communists. The first fully developed commission was formed in an Asturian mine during the long Camocha strike of 1958 and thereafter they progressively spread throughout the country. These shop-floor committees were a major innovation in industrial relations in Spain and were soon seen by workers as a possible embryo new trade union movement, going beyond the traditional forms of trade-union organization represented by UGT and CNT. *Comisiones Obreras* (CCOO) was first a movement and later became an organization that followed a strategic policy of infiltration and occupation of the official workers' committees. This was one of the major differences between it and the historic unions like UGT, which defended a strategy of boycott. CCOO first became organised at a provincial level in Vizcaya in 1962 to fight for the re-admission of 52 workers who had been sacked for involvement in the strikes of the spring of that year. The Provincial Workers' Commission was founded in the offices of the HOAC in Bilbao. Five of the twelve-man committee elected at the meeting to negotiate with the management of the factories were *Hoacistas*¹⁵⁶

The creation of the first coordinating committee of CCOO in Barcelona can be traced back to 2 October 1964 when three workers from the motor-cycle firm Montesa, located in the industrialised Baix Llobregat suburbs, tried to convene a meeting of delegates from engineering factories to discuss the forthcoming negotiations for the 1964 provincial engineering agreement. They managed to bring together only thirteen people in the OSE headquarters, where to make matters worse, they were refused permission to hold a meeting.¹⁵⁷

'We then decided, with some Communists, to create a common platform [for the negotiations] ... and to do this we had the idea of forming a Worker Commission in Barcelona. We got in touch with Catholics of the JOC and HOAC, and a meeting was organised by word of mouth in a parish church in Cornellá.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Ruiz, *Historia de Comisiones Obreras*, p.116.

¹⁵⁷ Information from Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers*, 70-1.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with one of the Montesa workers. *Ibid.*, 71.

The clandestine meeting was held in the parish of Sant Miquel in Cornellà in late October and was attended by 40 workers from different industries. A coordinating committee was elected consisting of 5 Communists, 2 Catholics and one independent who immediately set about preparing a secret congress to launch the new organisation.¹⁵⁹ This historic event took place on 20 November in the church of the parish of San Medir in the industrialised Sants/Zona Franca district of Barcelona.¹⁶⁰ The 200 or so workers who attended were Communist, Christian, and Socialist labour leaders. Some were elected delegates and members of works councils in the OS, while others held no official post. They were employed in engineering factories such as SEAT and Hispano Olivetti, in the textile, construction, chemical, print and wood industries, as well as in banks. A programme of political and economic demands was approved that included a minimum wage of 200 pesetas for an 8-hour day, recognition of the right to strike and form unions, and the recognition of CCOO. In January 1965 the coordinating committee met again in the parochial hall of Sant Medir to organise a demonstration for 23 February. Pamphlets notifying the public of the demonstration were printed in the parish of Sant Miquel in Cornellà. Four labour activists (two of whom were former *Jocistas*) recalled in 1982 how Fr. Joan Capell, the parish priest and a JOC chaplain, hid the pamphlets in the mattress of his bed and subsequently organised for them to be smuggled out by persons unlikely to be suspected by the police.¹⁶¹ There was an informer on the central committee however and just seventy-two hours before the planned demonstration was due to take place the police struck, arresting the whole of the executive committee. Nevertheless several thousand people gathered in the Plaza Antonio López in front of the main post office on the 23 February.¹⁶² From there they attempted to make their way to the OS headquarters in the Vía Layetana to present the programme of demands of the CCOO to OS officials. The police, however, broke up the march and many of the participants were arrested.¹⁶³ A total of 19 workers, six of whom were *Jocistas*, were imprisoned in the Modelo Prison in Barcelona. A police report dated 23 February noted the involvement of Catholic militants and priests in the preparation of the demonstration:

¹⁵⁹Jaume Fabre & Josep M. Huertas, 'La fundació de CCOO a Barcelona.' *L'Avenç*, no. 52 (1982), 576-9.

¹⁶⁰Josep Bigordà, *Sant Medir des de la crònica i des del demà. 1948-1988* (Barcelona: Biblària, 1998), 143.

¹⁶¹Fabre, 'La fundació de CCOO, 577. Fr. Capell was born in 1918. (Retired).

¹⁶²Some estimates put the number of demonstrators as high as 20,000. E.g., Ignasi Riera, *Opressió i Resistència* (Barcelona: Barcanova, 1991), 59.

¹⁶³Report in *Le Monde* (25 February 1965).

'It should be pointed out that when Alcázar and Elías Martín were arrested, both members of the ACO and JOC, the well-known priest, José Bertrán, appeared in the Department of the IV Regional Brigade of Social Investigation and inquired about the detainees. Seeing they were not there, he left immediately. This priest lives in Calle Mallorca 464, 1, 1 with three other priests and the prominent member of ACO, JOC and the Workers' Commissions, Pedro A. Verdú. ... It can be clearly seen from this exposition of the facts, and from the statements made by the detainees, that the involvement of a number of parishes, by allowing buildings to be used by members of the Commissions, has been of great help to the latter, allowing them to act with impunity and hindering the police from carrying out their course of duty. ... This obstruction has prevented the capture of an important member of the Communist Party...' ¹⁶⁴

On 5 March 1965 the Diocesan Committee of JOC in Barcelona prepared a supplement to the national *Boletín de Militantes de JOC* entitled 'Private Information for Militants'. It expressed solidarity with the situation of the working class, support for the CCOO and their programme of demands and criticised the vertical unions for being unrepresentative. It urged Catholic militants to continue the fight for justice, for recognition of basic human rights, and for the promotion of the working class through their involvement in whatever worker organisation their Christian conscience considered appropriate. ¹⁶⁵

The dissolution of the first coordinating committee by the police left the new movement without leadership. Individual commissions existed in a number of factories and in dozens of plants militants formed *ad hoc* committees to draw up demands for the forthcoming round of wage bargaining, but none of their activities was coordinated. It was only in the summer of 1966 that a new occasion arose to rebuild the organisation with the convening of union elections for the works councils and the local and provincial

¹⁶⁴'Nota Informativa' (23 February 1965) AGGCB, Caja 112.

¹⁶⁵Published in appendix of José Antonio Díaz, *Luchas internas en Comisiones Obreras. Barcelona 1964-1970* (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1977), 279-3. Also in AGGCB, Caja 61.

committees of the OSE.¹⁶⁶ For the duration of the electoral campaign and the campaign for the December referendum on the Organic Law of State the authorities slackened their harassment of the labour opposition. In the towns of the industrial belt, the union elections provided the rallying-point for the setting up of local CCOO. The genesis of each branch varied according to the configuration of forces in the labour opposition. The commonest pattern was the united front between Communists and Catholics that had lain at the root of the first commissions.¹⁶⁷ In this period many Church premises were used for weekly meetings. For example, in August 300 workers gathered in the Church of Sant Raimon de Penyafort in the Besós district. Several meetings were also held in the parish of Sant Jaume in the neighbourhood of Almeda de Cornellà in the Baix Llobregat.¹⁶⁸ The police reported to the Civil Governor of Barcelona on 10 November that sources close to the clergy had informed them that the diocesan chaplain of JOC, Jorge Bertrán, had sent a clandestine document to 'other priests of the same ideology' encouraging them to allow workers of whatever political colour to use parochial buildings for meetings.¹⁶⁹

The elections were a great success for the CCOO. However in March 1967 the Supreme Tribunal ruled that CCOO were not only illegal, but also subversive. Sebastián Balfour in his study of the Barcelona labour movement during the dictatorship gives the following figures taken from police and Civil Guard reports during 1967 to illustrate the extent of the ensuing crack-down; 35 militants arrested in Sabadell in March, 40 in Cornellà in April (including 9 women), a further 11 in Sabadell in May, 8 in Santa Coloma in September, 37 in Terrassa in October, 10 in Mataró and 8 in Terrassa in November.¹⁷⁰

Shortly after CCOO was declared illegal Archbishop González Martín asked priests who allowed church premises to be used for clandestine worker and student meetings to explain their motives. In April 1967 the responses of twenty-five priests were sent to the Archbishop along with a collective reflection on their action.¹⁷¹ Before beginning his

¹⁶⁶ In early August 1966 the government announced that union elections would be held in mid-September.

¹⁶⁷ Angel Alcázar, "Los cristianos en la creación de Comisiones Obreras." *XX Siglos* (1994), pp. 118-22. Also see Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers*, 84-5.

¹⁶⁸ Oleguer Bellavista, *Evolució d'un barri obrer* (Barcelona: Editorial Claret, 1977), 50.

¹⁶⁹ Nota Informativa: 'Sospechosas Reuniones Obrero-Sacerdotes' (10 November 1966). AGGCB, Caja 7.

¹⁷⁰ Balfour, *Dictatorship, Workers*, 92-3.

¹⁷¹ Document reproduced in Javier Domínguez, *Organizaciones Obreras Cristianas en la Oposición al Franquismo (1951-1975)* (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1985), 167-211.

explanation, Fr. José María Vidal, who was parish priest of San Medir, thanked the Archbishop for creating the opportunity for dialogue thereby marking a new and positive direction in relations between him and the priests. (since his controversial appointment as Coadjutor Archbishop in February 1966 relations had been strained - see Chapter IV.) He went on to explain that the basic reason why he and the other priests in the parish allowed church buildings to be used for meetings of the CCOO was because they saw it as a natural part of their attempt to get closer to the residents of their neighbourhood with whom they lived (in his case for the past ten years) and whose sufferings they wanted to share: 'factory closures', 'dismissals', 'inhumane treatment', 'shortage of housing and schools', and so on. He said he was motivated by love for the Church 'from which they are so estranged and which they regard with such suspicion because they perceive it as aligned with an oppressive power and a social class which exploits them.' He said he felt he could not stand passively by when basic human rights such as the right of assembly and association were being violated. He himself had never attended a meeting of the CCOO in his parish as he felt this would exceed his legitimate role as a priest. Fr. Jaime Cuspinera, another JOC chaplain, wrote from the parish of Sant Pedro Armengol:

'The personal and pastoral motives that I have for opening the parish buildings to those who came asking in the name of the Workers' Commissions, include my recognition of the right to free assembly and association in order to deal with matters which in turn are related to other basic human rights (adequate salary, genuinely representative unions, and so on.) I saw an opportunity to present a Church open to human problems, concerned and interested in the attainment of justice and a defender of their rights, in contrast to a Church officially protected by the State and reciprocating that protection...'¹⁷²

Fr. Joaquin Lluverol Roca, a HOAC chaplain in the Parish of San Antonio de Padua, explained that he allowed the CCOO to meet in the parochial buildings because according to Catholic social doctrine man defends the right of assembly and association.

¹⁷²Ibid., 171.

Since workers were not permitted by the civil authorities to meet elsewhere he felt he was obliged by his conscience to allow them to use the church buildings.

What this collective document clearly revealed was that the signatories had a new and very different understanding of the priestly role than that of the Archbishop: for example, they believed that collaboration between Communists and Catholics in CCOO was a positive development and good for the image of the Church among workers. They also appeared far more committed than the Archbishop to applying the new teaching of the Church as outlined in *Mater et Magistra* and *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church's duty to concern itself with man's temporal welfare.

As the Barcelona priests were preparing this report the longest strike during the Franco dictatorship was taking place in Bilbao in the enormous *Laminaciones Bandas de Echevarría* factory. The strike lasted from 30 November 1966 to 15 May 1967. When it finally ended 40 of the 564 workers had been permanently dismissed from the factory.¹⁷³ The diocesan president of HOAC, José Antonio Osaba, who was forced into exile in France because of his involvement in the strike, wrote a book on it entitled *Nuestra Huelga*, which was brought into Spain clandestinely and distributed by the apostolic workers' movements and bought by hundreds of workers.¹⁷⁴ At the height of the strike in 1967 the Social Secretariat advised Bishop Gúrpide to publish a statement on the strike. The bishop agreed - but only for those parishes directly affected by the strike.¹⁷⁵

On 3 March 1967 the apostolic workers' movements of Bilbao prepared a report for their militants on the arrest of a HOAC militant and a worker-priest at the end of February in Baracaldo, where the *Bandas* factory was situated. It described how Angel García Salazar and Fr. David Armentia S.J. were tortured during 18 hours of questioning by the police, and claimed that worker activists of other ideologies and students were also subjected to the same treatment while in police custody. It pointed out that the behaviour of the police, implicitly condoned by the *Dirección General de Seguridad* (General Police Headquarters) and the Ministry of the Interior, was explicitly condemned in the

¹⁷³ Ibarra Güell, *El movimiento obrero*, 63.

¹⁷⁴ *Nuestra Huelga*. (30 noviembre de 1966 - 15 mayo de 1967) 163 días de lucha obrera contra el capitalismo facista del estado español (Paris: Editado por los trabajadores de Laminaciones Bandas de Echevarría, 1968).

¹⁷⁵ Published in *ibid.*, 45.

fifth article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Conciliar decree, *Gaudium et Spes*:

‘All violations of the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture, undue psychological pressure, all offences against human dignity such as ... arbitrary imprisonment ... all these and the like are criminal...’¹⁷⁶

The report described the effects on the *Hoacistas* of the hierarchy’s failure to condemn the situation:

‘The saddest thing for our militants is having to face up to the fact that these acts of oppression are carried out by people or institutions who profess to be Catholic. ... They commit these acts of repression against people who are trying to bring the Church to the working class through their endeavours to bear witness to the Faith at work, and in their struggles to follow the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.’¹⁷⁷

But the repression continued: on the evening of 3 April there was a huge demonstration of workers in the centre of Bilbao in support of the striking workers of *Bandas*. The police arrested dozens of the demonstrators, who included 4 *Jocistas*. The four were imprisoned on 7 April, but all the other detainees were released.¹⁷⁸ Five days later 77 priests gathered in a Jesuit residence in the centre of Bilbao where they prayed together and signed a bilingual letter addressed to the ‘ecclesiastical and civil authorities and the “People” that condemned the increasing ‘oppression’ of the Basque people through police repression of strikers and members of illegal worker and political organisations. It deplored the violent breaking up of peaceful demonstrations, arbitrary

¹⁷⁶*Gaudium et Spes*, ch. 2, parag. 27. Austin Flannery, (ed.) *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and post-Conciliar Documents* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975), 928.

¹⁷⁷(3 March 1967) ‘Revisión de vida tenida en común por consiliarios y militantes de los movimientos apostólicos de Bilbao sobre los últimos acontecimientos.’ In Domínguez, *Organizaciones Obreras Cristianas*, 109-15.

¹⁷⁸(8 April 1967) Comisión Diocesana J.O.C.: ‘Información privada para militantes sobre la acción obrera de la 1 semana de abril en Vizcaya.’ Manterola Archive, EBL, P.10, 3.

arrests and the torture of detainees by subjecting them to mental and physical abuse during long interrogation sessions.

‘As priests of a Church that has the duty to inform and proclaim the sacred dignity of every human being, we are expressing through this peaceful demonstration our public condemnation of the repressive measures employed by the police and the authorities who direct them. We do so in response to our human and sacerdotal conscience which feels a personal responsibility for the situation our people are suffering.’¹⁷⁹

The group of priests then marched slowly and in silence up the Gran Vía to the headquarters of the civil government in Plaza Moyua. They were followed by several members of the public, curious to know the reason for the strange march of cassocked priests. The pavements surrounding the plaza were soon lined with astonished onlookers. Two of the priests approached the entrance to the building and requested to see the Civil Governor in order to personally hand him the letter. After the priests had been waiting for almost twenty minutes the Governor’s secretary appeared in the doorway and informed them that the Governor would not accept the letter until the group had dispersed. On hearing this the priests turned and marched slowly back down the Gran Vía in the direction of the Episcopal Palace in Alameda Mazarredo, where they delivered a copy of the letter to the bishop. This march marked the start of a series of collective acts of protests by dissident priests in Bilbao and we will discuss its significance further in the following chapter.

(vii) The crisis of the apostolic workers' associations

As we have just seen, involvement in labour conflicts had a radicalising effect on the apostolic workers’ movements and their chaplains. Many bishops feared that these organisations were escaping from episcopal control in the name of political and social causes unrelated to CA’s ostensibly religious purpose. They blamed an excessive

¹⁷⁹(12 April 1967) ‘Manifiesto de Setenta y Siete Sacerdotes de la Diócesis de Bilbao al Pueblo y Autoridades Religiosas y Civiles.’ Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 14, 5.

'temporalism' that was invading almost all of the specialised branches of AC. The CEE, through its Committee of the Social Apostolate, announced a reorganisation of CA in late 1966 in a centralised direction that would reassert complete episcopal control over every aspect of the movement's activities. This provoked a storm of bitter protests from clerical and lay leaders, some of whom resigned voluntarily and some of whom were sacked from their posts as national lay leaders and chaplains.¹⁸⁰ The HOAC told the bishops in April 1967 that if they went ahead and brought in the new statutes it 'will confirm even more the conviction of the working class that the Spanish Church does not have a pastoral strategy ... of service towards the world of the poor. They said the bishops' action would be interpreted as an 'expression of the alliance with established economic and political power.' They also warned that in the event of the statutes being introduced 'We will be obliged ... to seek other channels of apostolate ... for the better service of the poor.'¹⁸¹ In spite of this and ignoring several similar protests in November 1967 the sixth plenary assembly of the CEE approved the controversial new statutes for CA, with only thirteen dissenting votes.¹⁸²

The feelings of frustration of many chaplains at the time was described by Fr. Jaume Cuspinera in 1968:

'Eighteen or 19 years ago a very small group of lay people and an even smaller group of us priests believed in the authenticity of the Young Worker's Movement as the Church's answer to the working class. Believing in it meant implementing it and implementing it meant fighting. We had the feeling we were clandestine snipers, opposed to the official ecclesiastical structure. Always in the midst of tension over what we felt it was necessary to do and the voice 'from above' which had us blacklisted and considered us individualistic 'who went our own way' and 'who were not facilitating union with others'. 'Followers of foreign methods' (French, to be precise). This situation revealed clearly

¹⁸⁰ Information on sackings and dismissals in Feliciano Montero García, *La Acción Católica y el Franquismo. Auge y Crisis de la Acción Católica Especializada* (Madrid: UNED Ediciones, 2000), 238-9.

¹⁸¹ (April 22-23, 1967) 'La HOAC se dirige a la Conferencia Episcopal'. Quoted in Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, 522.

¹⁸² A wealth of additional documentation on the crisis of AC published in Guerra Campos, *Crisis y conflicto en la ACE*, passim.

the distance of the Church from the world of the working class. The Church remained outside, uncontaminated by the splashes of human misery. Only a few 'adventurers' submerged ourselves, taking all the risks, in the world of injustice....' ¹⁸³

The destruction of the specialised movements of AC by the ecclesiastical hierarchy lefty the way clear for clandestine groups without religious affiliation to supersede the apostolic workers' associations in their unofficial but real political and labour functions. ¹⁸⁴

Partly as a result of the crisis and subsequent rapid decline of the specialised movements that followed the introduction of the new statutes many chaplains began to look around for alternative ways of engaging with the working class and some of them became involved in the extra-parochial grass-roots groups such as Base Christian Communities or Popular Christian Communities which began to appear in the second half of 1969 and are discussed in Chapter VI.

¹⁸³ Jorge Bertrán, *Los difíciles caminos de la misión obrera* (Barcelona: Nova Terra, 1968), 9-10. Fr. Cuspinera, who wrote the prologue to this book, was born in 1923. He became a JOC chaplain along with the newly ordained Fr. Bertrán in Barcelona in 1954. Both of them left the priesthood in the early seventies.

¹⁸⁴ See account of political trajectories of many former Catholic militants in Costa i Riera, *Dels moviments d'Església*, 203-34.

Chapter III

Clerical Dissidence in Bilbao, 1960-1969

At the start of the previous chapter we saw that a group of Basque priests never accepted the Franco regime. They referred to themselves and to others who shared their position as 'The Basque Clergy.' In 1960 the existence of this group of priests became very widely known thanks to a collective letter signed by 339 priests which caused quite a stir, not just in Spain, but also internationally. It was just the first of many other public statements and acts of political and ecclesiastical dissent that characterised the history of the diocese of Bilbao during this decade.

(i) *The collective letter of 1960*

The collective letter of 30 May 1960 represented the first major public act of dissidence by the Basque clergy during the dictatorship. It was addressed to the bishops of the four Basque dioceses, but copies of it were also sent to all the other Spanish bishops, the Nuncio and the Vatican Secretary of State. A Basque priest in exile in France sent a copy to the news agency *France Presse*, who released it on 8 June. Immediately afterwards other international news agencies requested a copy of it. Over the following days reports on the letter appeared in such newspapers as *The Times*, *The Tablet*, *New York Times*, *Herald Tribune*, *Tribune de Nations*, *Le Peuple*, *Le Monde*, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. It was also reported on BBC radio, Radio Luxemburg and on some French radio stations.¹

The letter condemned the regime's violation of a series of human rights normally defended by the Church, such as the right to personal liberty, freedom of conscience and political liberty. It attacked the systematic use of torture by the police, the servile judicial system, the lack of free unions for workers and the manipulation of public opinion by a

¹ Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 273.

government-controlled media. The final section of the letter, which was entitled 'Defence of the Rights of the Basque People', declared 'before the Spanish people and the whole world that the politics governing Spain today is one of omission, forgetfulness, when not ruthless persecution of the ethnic, linguistic and social characteristics which God gave us Basques.' The letter described this as 'cultural genocide' and underscored that the Basque language was 'a necessary instrument for the evangelisation of the Basque Country' and that it had 'a right to life and to be cultivated.' In relation to this section of the letter it must be remembered that the leader of the Basque Government in exile, José Aguirre, had died on 20 March and hundreds of Masses had been celebrated for him throughout the Basque Country, much to the annoyance of the civil authorities.² His death marked the closing of an era and reawakened nationalistic sentiments among the Basques. In the conclusion to the letter the priests summed up their arguments in the letter by declaring that: the fundamental cause the chasm that was opening wider day-by-day between them and 'the souls entrusted to our care' was the contradiction existing between Catholic doctrine and the disregard shown for it by a regime which officially calls itself Catholic and to which the hierarchy was lending its resolute support.³

Fifty-two percent of the 339 signatories were from the diocese of San Sebastián, 38% were from Bilbao, 6% were from Vitoria and 4% from Pamplona. It is clear from these percentages that the great majority of Basque priests who were critical of the regime were based in Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, the 'traitor provinces', as the victors in the Civil War had labelled them. One hundred and seventy-six of San Sebastián's 764 diocesan priests signed the letter and 128 of Bilbao's 811 diocesan priests. Not surprisingly, given that the overwhelming majority of the clergy of Álava and Navarre had sided with the Nationalists during the Civil War, only 21 of the signatories came from the diocese of Vitoria and just 14 from Pamplona, which had 505 and 1,051 diocesan priests respectively. What is very interesting is the age-profile of the signatories: 35% had been ordained between 1951 and 1959; 16.5% between 1941 and 1951; 26.5% between 1931 and 1941 and the remaining 22% had been ordained between 1900 and

² For example in the suburb of Sestao dozens of police surrounded the church where a Mass was scheduled for the repose of the soul of Aguirre on 8 April in an attempt to intimidate people on their way to the church. Information from '*Informe del clero de Sestao sobre los incidentes en torno a la misa funeral de D. José Antonio Aguirre.*' ADTP, Archivo Ubieta.

³ (30 May 1960) 'El documento de los 339 sacerdotes.' Text in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 243-58.

1930.⁴ The fact that the majority of the signatories were young priests shows that in spite of having been trained for the priesthood in the 'sanitised' post-war seminaries and exposed to the full splendours of National-Catholicism there was deep interest in the Basque culture and language and a critical attitude to the Franco regime among a new generation of the clergy.

On 7 July the four Basque bishops sent a note to the media in which they expressed their total disapproval of the letter:

'Because of the reasons just given, because of the obvious untruths, and because of its political nature, we cannot accept such a document. We cannot understand how political passion could have blinded some priests - even if they are only a tiny minority, much fewer than reports abroad suggest - and led them to collaborate in a huge propaganda scandal of shady origins and even shadier aims, with serious repercussions for the Church.'⁵

This note was also published in *L'Osservatore Romano*. Although the Vatican made no official statement on the collective letter, the Nuncio, Antoni Antoniutti, expressed his disapproval of it several times in 1960.⁶ The first occasion was in a speech he made at the Fifth World Conference of the Catholic Press, which was held in the Pontifical University of Comillas in Santander from 6-10 July. He spoke to the assembled delegates about the recent history of the Spanish Church and made an oblique reference to the collective letter, which had been reported in so much of the international Catholic press:

... 12 bishops and more than 7,000 members of the clergy were barbarously murdered, without any kind of trial, simply out of hate for religion. ... It is my duty to point out that, unfortunately, there are still

⁴Barroso, *Sacerdotes Bajo*, 64-6.

⁵'Nota Conjunta del Arzobispo de Pamplona y de los Obispos de Bilbao, San Sebastián y Vitoria.' *BEOBI*, no. 11 (1960), 539-40.

⁶ Antoniutti was not unfamiliar with the problematic Basque Church, as he had been sent to Bilbao as an Apostolic Delegate at the end of July 1936. From October 1936 to June 1938 he was the Vatican's *chargé d'affaires* to the Burgos Government.

people who talk of this Church as though it were the cause of those terrible events that turned everything upside down and destroyed Spain during that bloody period, which was provoked by its enemies who sought its total destruction. ... In some groups today we even find people desirous to point out the difficulties facing the Church in Spain, people who give greater publicity to the attacks made on the Church by some of its children who have gone astray, than they do to making known its initiatives, its efforts, its progress, its conquests, its victories and its triumphs....'⁷

On 30 October 1960 Antoniutti made another thinly veiled attack on the collective letter in his speech at the inauguration of the huge new diocesan seminary in Derio, Bilbao.

'The army of Christ the King is a hierarchical army, commanded by the bishops, in unity with the Supreme Pontiff ... priests ought to submit to their authority ... in order to be a member of the Army of Christ the King it is necessary to be faithful and loyal, as well as obedient. A priest who has promised obedience and reverence to his bishop breaks that promise when he conspires clandestinely with others from outside his diocese ... A soldier, or a small group of soldiers, cannot pretentiously assume the right to lead the Heads of the Army.'⁸

On 2 October Bishop Gúrpide of Bilbao published a pastoral letter, which he instructed to be read in all the churches in the diocese. In it he refuted the accusations made in the collective letter and he said that the Church in Spain was independent of the State.

⁷ Quoted in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 282-3.

⁸ 'Intervención del Nuncio en la inauguración del Seminario de Bilbao.' *BEOBI*, no. 11 (1960), 870-5.

‘It is a grave insult to declare that the Church in Spain is subordinate to the State. ... Collaboration with the State is not the same thing as being subordinate to it.’⁹

The bishop may have produced this pastoral letter partly in response to a letter signed by ‘18,000 Basque Catholics’ that was circulating in the diocese calling on him to publish the text of the collective letter and to point out and explain exactly what ‘untruths’ it contained.¹⁰ The PNV in Vizcaya was responsible for the letter. In November the PNV in Guipúzcoa began to collect signatures for an identical letter addressed to Bishop Font. When the latter discovered that a similar letter was being prepared he published a note in the papers on 30 November instructing the laity not to sign it:

‘It is a strict obligation of all who consider themselves true Catholics to respect with sincere humility the hierarchy’s decisions, rather than asking for explanations – which is what this document seeks. Therefore, we believe it our duty to admonish those responsible for this latest intrigue, and all those members of the laity and clergy who back it by adding their signature to the document.’¹¹

In Vizcaya there was an unsuccessful attempt made at the end of the year by the cathedral chapter (*Cabildo de la Catedral*) to organise a ‘counter-letter’ of support for the bishop. According to Fr. Angel Ubieta, a member of the council and teacher in the seminary at the time, the idea for a counter-letter actually came from Bishop Gúrpide himself. Ubieta was personally opposed to the proposed counter-letter, as were his fellow teachers in the seminary. They considered the idea imprudent and likely only to create further tension and divisions among the clergy.¹²

The ecclesiastical and civil authorities had already imposed sanctions on all those who had signed the letter. For example, the 128 signatories from the diocese of Bilbao were summoned before a special ecclesiastical tribunal in the episcopal offices in August

⁹ Pastoral Exhortation. *BEOBI* no. 11 (1960), 699-709.

¹⁰ Copy of letter dated October 1960 in Manent Archive, ANC.

¹¹ Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 318-9.

¹² Interview with Fr. Angel Ubieta in Bilbao on 17 June 1993.

1960. They appeared individually before the tribunal and were asked the following questions: firstly, if they had actually seen the letter before signing; secondly, if they had freely signed; thirdly, the name of the person who had invited them to sign; fourthly, if they regretted having signed.¹³ All of the priests declared that they had signed the letter of their own free will and that they remained unrepentant for doing so. Between August and October nine of the signatories were transferred from their parishes. One of them was the 35-year-old Basque scholar and curate of San Agustín in Elorrio, Fr. Jaime de Kerexeta, who had actually delivered the letter to Bishop Gúrpide on 30 May. He was transferred in mid-September from his home village of Elorrio to the village of Yurreta.¹⁴ In October the Secretary of the Chancellery of the diocese of San Sebastián wrote to all the priests from Guipúzcoa who had signed the collective letter informing them that Bishop Gúrpide had decreed their ministerial licences suspended in the diocese of Bilbao.¹⁵ In December the Vizcayan signatories were likewise informed that Bishop Font had decreed the same suspension for them. This measure was designed to reduce contact between oppositional priests from both dioceses and lessen the likelihood of similar joint actions being organised in the future. The civil authorities punished the signatories by withdrawing their passports - in some cases for as long as ten years.¹⁶

Throughout 1961 and 1962 Bishop Gúrpide continued to transfer priests who had signed the collective letter. Also several priests who had spoken out in support of striking workers and organised church collections in May 1962 were moved. At the end of February 1963 a clandestine document entitled 'Policy of spiritual terror in Bilbao' was circulating among priests protesting at the news that 70 more appointments were about to be made in the diocese and that the bishop had refused to discuss any of the appointments with the priests affected:

'How can the action taken against some of his best priests be explained? ... It is well known that the immense majority [of transfers]

¹³Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 303-4.

¹⁴Fr. Jaime Ignacio de Kerexeta Gallatztegui: born in Elorrio (Vizcaya) 2 July 1921.

¹⁵Copy of letter dated 21 October 1960 in Aguirre Archive, ABL.

¹⁶Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 306.

made last summer were to placate the local and provincial authorities and the state ministries.¹⁷

In November 1963 the Basque Clergy's clandestine newsletter, *Sine Nomine*, commented:

'Behind the transfers it is not difficult to see an arbitrary whim or resentment on the part of the bishop, not forgetting the denunciations of the civil governors or mayors, with whom those affected have had clashes.'¹⁸

(ii) *The collective letter of 1963*

In early November 1963 another collective letter, this time signed by 500 priests, was delivered to the Secretary of the Second Vatican Council and to the Vatican Secretary of State by the Basque missionary bishop, Ignacio Larrañaga.¹⁹ The idea for the letter originated at a gathering of approximately thirty priests in a restaurant in the centre of Altsasu (Navarre) on 30 May 1963. They had come together to commemorate the third anniversary of the collective letter of 1960.²⁰ This second letter was printed on the machine that produced *Sine Nomine* and then copies of it were then distributed by *enlaces* (links) to hundreds of priests. In mid-September, when the collection of signatures was well underway, the four bishops instructed their priests not to sign it. Nevertheless the letter was signed by 500 priests from the four Basque dioceses. A Latin translation of it was circulated to many of the bishops attending the Council. Echoing the words of the 1960 letter it described the Church in the Basque Country as being separated from the 'People' by an abyss, which had been opening for the previous 27 years.

¹⁷'Política de terror espiritual en Bilbao.' (26 February 1963). Clandestine document circulating in the diocese of Bilbao. Manterola Archive, EBL, R.14, 6.

¹⁸*Sine Nomine*, Ik6.

¹⁹ Text of the letter and signatures in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. ii, 589-604. In 1951 Ignacio Larrañaga was ordained bishop of Pingliang (China). Shortly after his ordination he was expelled from China and he returned to the Basque Country. In April 1961 he was appointed advisor to the Vatican Council's preparatory Commission on the Church's missionary activity. Text of the letter and signatures in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. ii, 589-604.

²⁰Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 551.

‘One of the principal causes, though not the only one, of the abyss that separates the Church and the People is the fact that the Church in Spain appears excessively linked with the political regime which makes the Church responsible for the conduct of the State. This union, in return for certain privileges, limits, in the opinion of the people, the hierarchy's freedom as they are forced to remain silent in the face of an evident and systematic violation of the Natural Law so solemnly proclaimed in *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*’.²¹

The letter called for an end to the Church's association with political power and for Heads of State to renounce the privilege of presentation of bishops.

Both the civil authorities and the signatories kept quiet about the existence of the letter. The former because they wanted to avoid creating the same type of publicity their attacks on the 1960 letter had created, and the latter because they saw it as an internal Church matter. Consequently the letter was not mentioned in the Spanish media and the civil authorities took no steps to punish the signatories directly.²² Behind the scenes, however, it is likely that the civil authorities put pressure on the ecclesiastical hierarchy to sanction those who had signed the letter. In October the Spanish ambassador to the Holy See had written to the Minister for Foreign Affairs describing a meeting he had with the Vatican Secretary of State during which he asked for an envoy to be sent to the Basque dioceses with special powers to impose sanctions on nationalist priests:

‘His task above all else will be to dismantle the network of separatist priests who for years have been promoting their own type and attempting to have *españolista* priests relegated. The seminaries of the three Basque Provinces must be cleaned out, as they are all more or less infected. The authority of the bishops must be fully restored. The special envoy should proceed very prudently and moderately,

²¹ Text of the letter in *ibid.*, vol ii, 589-604.

²² However, the PNV in exile published the full letter in its bulletin. ‘Mensaje de los sacerdotes vascos al Concilio.’ *BOPE*, nos. 18-19 (December 1963). Just a few days earlier *Informations Catholiques Internationales* also carried a short report on the letter.

punishing only the most serious cases. ... In the opinion of the bishops in question a very few cases would suffice to restore order and prevent it from happening again in the future. In effect the envoy should be armed with the only thing that really frightens the Basque separatists, given that this is a purely sentimental, not logical movement. That weapon is the power to send them out of the Basque Country to a distant diocese, something that only the Holy See or one of its envoys can do.'²³

The ambassador's request apparently fell on deaf ears, as the Vatican did not send an envoy.

(iii) Grass-roots clerical dissidence

Over the next few years there was a proliferation of political dissidence by individual Basque priests. In the archive of the Civil Government of Vizcaya there are 367 reports from the years 1965-1967, relating to 196 priests from the diocese of Bilbao.²⁴ Most of the reports were prepared by the police and the remainder mainly by mayors and other municipal authorities. Approximately a quarter deal with 'subversive' homilies and the rest are reports on incidents such as the refusal of priests to allow the civil authorities carrying the Spanish flag into churches, or the participation of priests in illegal worker demonstrations. There are several reports on the march by 77 priests through the centre of Bilbao on 12 April 1967 and on another collective letter signed by 105 Vizcayan priests and sent to Franco in June 1967.

It was mainly in small rural or coastal towns like Lezama, Bakio, Meñaca, Múgica, Fika and Ondárroa that priests refused to allow the Spanish flag to be taken inside churches, objected to the attendance of civil authorities at Masses, prohibited the playing of the National Anthem during the Consecration and omitted to mention Franco and the Army in the *et famulos* liturgical prayer. For example, on 2 September 1964 the

²³ Doussinague a Castiella, 3 October 1963. AGA, R/7190, no.2. Quoted in Raguier, Hilari, 'L'Espanya de Franco i el Concili Vaticà II. Miscel·lània d'Homenatge a Josep Benet' (Barcelona: Publicacions de L'Abadia de Montserrat, 1991), 630-50.

²⁴ Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 217. This figure represents 24.5% of the total number of diocesan priests.

coadjutor parish priest of the small rural village of Gámiz, Fr. Francisco Bilbao, refused to allow the local civil authorities carrying the Spanish flag into the church for a Mass to celebrate the Feast of San Antolín, patron saint of the village. He declared from the pulpit:

‘Flags of whatever colour do not belong inside the Church. The Church should be a centre of unity for the faithful and for the religious community. Therefore there is no place for any signs of division, such as flags inside the Church.’²⁵

A few days later Fr. Bilbao was summoned before Bishop Gúrpide and suspended from preaching for a month.²⁶ In spite of the sanction he did not change his attitude: in 1968 the civil authorities fined him for public disrespect for ‘a symbol of national unity.’ That same year he and seven other priests signed and circulated a clandestine document arguing that the presence of Francoist symbols in the Church converted Mass into something ‘official’ that most people attended mainly because they felt obliged to. They said the Spanish flag had been used to perpetuate divisions in society ever since the Civil War ended.²⁷ Around the same time *Sine Nomine* warned that the laity ‘are no longer resigned to belonging to a Church allied with the civil authorities and are prepared to violently eradicate the signs that reflect that alliance.’²⁸ In June 1968, however, another group of priests wrote to Bishop Gúrpide defending flags in the church:

‘We disapprove of the conduct of some of our brethren who prohibit Spanish flags in the churches most certainly in order to defend the political ideas of those for whom this province is not Spain. ... And it also disturbs us that these priests seek to present themselves as representatives of the full range of opinion among the Basque

²⁵Quoted in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. ii, 747. Fr. Francisco Bilbao Archicallende: born 1935, ordained 1959.

²⁶Information from Unzueta, *Vaticano II*, 56.

²⁷The priests who signed this letter were Fr. Javier María Ocerin Jáuregui (b. 1929), Fr. Valentín Zabalo (b. 1933), Fr. Martín Olázar Uribe (b. 1927), Fr. Juan María Markaida (b. 1923), Fr. José María Madariaga (b. 1937), Fr. José Luis Jáuregui (b. 1933), Fr. Jesús Zalvidea (b. 1939), Fr. Francisco Bilbao (b. 1935). Most of them had signed the collective letters of 1960 and 1963. Copy of letter in Aguirre Archive, ABL.

²⁸*Sine Nomine*, 1B1, page 2.

people because we are just as Basque as they are, in spite of the fact that we do not seek to separate ourselves from the Fatherland, in which the Basques are rooted.²⁹

Bishop Gúrpide himself had already made clear his view: 'flags and civil authorities should be in the temple, to seek the contrary would mean distorting the natural spontaneity of social life, be against traditional behaviour in our country, and against a universal custom.'³⁰

The first sermon fined by the civil authorities in Vizcaya was given on 1 November 1964 in the small village of Ajurias.³¹ The sermon was based on the writings of Pius XII and John XXIII concerning the basic right to self-expression and access to true information. Having established this solid doctrinal base Fr. Alberto Gabikagogeaskoa went on to apply it to an incident that had happened a few weeks earlier in a school in the neighbouring village of Areatza. Basque nationalist slogans and the acronyms of a nationalist organisation had been painted all over the walls of a school, a photo of Franco had disappeared and the Spanish flag had been replaced by the *Ikurriña* (Basque flag). The authorities believed that those responsible had conceived the idea for the action at one of the meetings regularly organised by Fr. Alberto Gabikagogeaskoa with some youths from the town.³² Seven of those same young people, who were also members of the youth branch of the PNV, were arrested days later. In his sermon Fr. Gabikagogeaskoa denied any responsibility for the incident and said that the real cause was the denial of the right of freedom of expression in Spain:

'If we judge these incidents while ignoring the circumstances that caused them, they deserve our strongest condemnation. ... But let us delve a little deeper. Why did they act this way? The perpetrators of this deed have definite opinions on patriotism and politics. On these issues they differ in their way of thinking from the Spanish authorities. Those who are currently in power can express freely

²⁹'Expedientes Informativos 1960-1968' Archivo Histórico Provincial de Vizcaya (Henceforth: AHPV).

³⁰*BEOBI*, no. 182, (octubre 1965), 543-6.

³¹Text of sermon in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 116-7.

³²Fr. Alberto Gabikagogeaskoa. (Born 1936, ordained 1960). He was a chaplain to the rural youth branch of AC in the Basque Country, *Herri Gaztedi*. (It was known as JARC elsewhere in Spain).

their opinions on the radio, in the press, on television, etc. That seems to us perfectly acceptable. But those responsible for the graffiti find the doors to these mediums closed to them when they too should to be able to use them.³³

He also condemned the torture of two of the seven youths (all aged between 16 and 17) who had been arrested and he said that the use of torture in police stations was becoming more frequent. He called on the Church to free itself from association with the state so as to be able to carry out the mission that Christ had given her. A few days later he and some of the priests who produced *Sine Nomine* translated the sermon into Spanish and cyclostyled copies of it were distributed throughout the four Basque dioceses. An article in *Sine Nomine* described the sermon as:

‘One of the most serious moral judgements and one of the strongest statements against the current situation that has been made since the Regime began. It has, besides, the great advantage of not being anonymous. It displays a signature. This has been an act of courage, bordering on heroism in its valour. Don Alberto has our admiration, our complete approval and we intend to support him in the difficult times that are approaching.’³⁴

A couple of weeks later Fr. Gabikagogeaskoa was summoned before the bishop who informed him that he had given permission to the civil authorities to prosecute him for the sermon. There were demonstrations of solidarity when he was brought to trial for the sermon, first in Gernika and then in Madrid in May 1965. On the day he was first due to be tried 300 Basque priests travelled to Madrid and when the trial was postponed (because the judge was ill) 40 of them went to the Nunciature to hand in a letter explaining the reason for their presence in Madrid.³⁵ On the day he was finally tried

³³‘Un sermon digno de leerse.’ Spanish translation of the sermon which was prepared and circulated by EGI (Youth branch of PNV). Copy in Iñaki Echeandía Archive, Caja 1, IDTP.

³⁴*Sine Nomine*, 1k9. ABL. Quoted in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 162.

³⁵‘Nuestra acción en la Nunciatura.’ (Madrid, 13 May 1965). Aguirre Archive, ABL. This letter was mentioned in a report on the demonstration in *Le Monde* on 31 May 1965. Another document dated 6 May 1965 (Bilbao), which was circulated clandestinely, explained why priests from different parts of Spain had

approximately 200 priests travelled once more to the capital, while in Bilbao several priests assembled outside the Palace of Justice to demonstrate their solidarity with him. In the weeks leading up to the trial a number of cyclostyled notes had been circulated urging priests to show their support for Fr. Gabikagogeaskoa by travelling to Madrid.

‘Every good priest who wishes to wear the cassock with dignity ought to go to Madrid in order to defend their colleague. This is not about politics, but rather about defending Christ, the Faith and the Gospel. Religion is not something to be imposed, but proposed and all Catholics have rights and duties, including the bishops, even if the Bishop of Bilbao believes the contrary.’³⁶

The trial and the various demonstrations of support for the accused by priests from the Basque Country and other parts of Spain were censored in the press.

From 1965 on more and more priests began to judge temporal issues in the light of the Church's teaching and as a result the number of fines incurred for ‘seditious’ sermons rose. Most of the priests were simply following the teaching of the Conciliar decree *Presbyterium Ordinis* of 7 December 1965 which advised priests to expound the Word of God not merely in a general and abstract way but by an application of the eternal truth of the Gospel to the concrete circumstances of life.³⁷ In December 1966 many priests expressed opposition to the proposed Organic Law of State due to be voted on in a referendum later that month.³⁸ In the archive of the Civil Government of Vizcaya there are reports on 27 parishes where priests spoke from the pulpit against the proposed law.³⁹

travelled to Madrid to attend the trial: to express their solidarity with Gabikagogeascoa; because they fully agreed with what he had said in the sermon; to call for freedom for the Church in the exercise of its sacred mission; to condemn the government's denial of the fundamental human rights of assembly, association and expression, etc. Document in Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 14, 6.

³⁶Clandestine Sheet entitled ‘Interesante para sacerdotes y seglares.’ AHPV, ‘Expedientes Informativos 1960-1968’.

³⁷*Presbyterium Ordinis* in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, 863-902.

³⁸(7/12/66) ‘El Clero Vasco decide no votar’ (14/12/66) ‘Declaración del Clero Vasco ante el Referéndum’ (5 folios) Aguirre Archive, ABL, Eliza I.

³⁹Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 227.

Several cyclostyled sheets urging a 'No' vote or abstention in the referendum were also circulated.⁴⁰ A police report on the campaign went as follows:

'This discordant and antipatriotic chord being struck by the Basque clergy is another stage in the evolutionary process of those who are converting the pulpits and the churches into a tribune of constant attacks on our political and social organisation, and everything represented by the regime born in 1936. The parochial religious associations, the Catholic workers' organisations, the seminaries and the folk groups, created under the protection of the Church in this province are almost always the ferment of political activity and they give instructions which have nothing to do with their true apostolic mission.'⁴¹

Fr. Pedro Berrio-ategortua gave a sermon in the small village of Amorebieta on 18 December 1966 in which he criticised the Referendum and the lack of political freedom in Spain. He said that the teaching of *Pacem in Terris* was not being respected in Spain. The 72 year-old parish priest, Sebastián Larragán, went to the pulpit before the Mass ended to protest at what had been said by his younger colleague. It was not the first time the 38-year-old curate had expressed his opposition to the regime: he had signed the collective letters of 1960 and 1963 and in June 1965 he and three other priests were each fined 25,000 pesetas for organizing a 'fiesta' in the village of Ajurias for militants of the rural youth branch of JAC (*Herri Gaztedi*) which the authorities deemed a disturbance of the public order.⁴²

The behaviour of these dissident priests was unacceptable to the civil authorities. A police report sent to the civil governor of Vizcaya on 7 May 1965 passed on information received from 'a reliable and confidential source' that the Nuncio, Monsignor Riberi,

⁴⁰'El clero vasco decide no votar.', 'Criterios morales ante el deber de votar.', 'Doctrina de la Iglesia respecto a una consulta electoral.' Manterola Archive, EBL.

⁴¹'Nota Informativa sobre actividades de personal religioso. El clero vasco ante el Referéndum.' Quoted in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 229.

⁴² Fr. Berrio-Artégortua was born in the village of Apartamonasterio in 1928. He was ordained in 1954. He was a chaplain to the rural youth branch of AC in Amorebieta, where he still lives. Outside the official Church now, but not secularised.

during his visit to Bilbao the previous April had discussed with the bishop the possibility of transferring 81 priests out of the diocese as a disciplinary measure for their political and social activities.⁴³

Also in 1965 the Ministry of the Interior anonymously compiled a long report entitled 'Special Report on the Basque Clergy' which was multicopied and sent in booklet form to several public representatives of the regime in the Basque Country. It claimed that the majority of young Basque priests were active in the vanguard of social protest and explained that 'this is a logical consequence of their social extraction: almost all of the them come from families with a low level of education and many of them are from very humble origins. They identify with and support the demands of their own for social change. It might well be said that they chose the priesthood to escape from their social background. Their vocation is social revolution based on their own particular interpretation of the Papal encyclicals' The report contained an annex that listed some of the anti-regime and nationalistic activities of Basque priests.⁴⁴

The worst of clerical protest was yet to come, however. On 12 April 1967 a peaceful and silent march by seventy-seven priests through the centre of Bilbao took place.⁴⁵ The participants explained that their action was as a continuation of the collective public protest initiated by the Basque Clergy in their collective letter of May 1960:

'In view of the silence of the civil and religious authorities the consciences of this group of priests obliges them to once again condemn the violations of human rights.'⁴⁶

However the march also marked a new departure because at that moment the leadership of dissent was assumed by a younger, more radical generation of priests. Over half the

⁴³ 7 May 1965 SERVICIO DE INFORMACION (S.I.G.C.) Nota Informativa: Actividades de jerarquías y personal religioso. AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos 1960-1968' The Civil Governor, in turn, passed on the information to the Ministry of the Interior.

⁴⁴ *Informe Fraga Sobre El Clero Vasco* (1965) Summary in Esnaola & Iturrarán, vol. ii. p. 625.

⁴⁵ We have already discussed the significance of this march in the context of the strikes of the sixties. See Chapter II, pages 106-7.

⁴⁶ Quote from a cyclostyled report prepared by the participants explaining the reasons for the march. Copy in ANC, Manent papers.

77 priests had been ordained in the sixties - 12 as recently as 1965 and 1966 and almost two-thirds were from rural parishes.⁴⁷ Just over a week after the march the government declared a state of emergency for three months in the province of Vizcaya in reaction to a series of solidarity strikes that had broken out in support of the workers of *Laminaciones Bandas de Echevarría*, who had by then been on strike for six months. Within a few days 300 workers had been arrested, 47 of whom were imprisoned and 33 of whom were deported to different parts of Spain.⁴⁸ In June 107 priests from Vizcaya responded to this situation by signing an open letter to Franco in which they expressed their opposition to the state of emergency and detailed the harsh effects the suspension of articles 14, 15 and 18 of the *Fuero de los Españoles* was having on the Vizcayans.⁴⁹ They described the government's repression of the Basques as a 'veritable genocide' and they explained that they believed they had a duty as priests to condemn the situation they had outlined in the letter. Almost all the signatories of this letter had taken part in the march on 12 April.

(iv) *The birth of ETA and the radicalisation of clerical protest*

We saw in Chapter II how, for a short time after World War II, the PNV had renewed its activities mainly by organising strikes in the Basque Country. However, after the collapse of the 1951 strike it seemed unable to respond to the challenge of offering opposition internally. Furthermore the US-Spanish defence agreements of 1953 undercut the hopes it had entertained about the possibility of Franco being ousted and Spain's democratisation. The first sign of dissatisfaction with the leadership offered by the PNV came in 1952 with the creation of the group and journal *Ekin* and culminated in 1959 with the formation of ETA.⁵⁰ The founders of *Ekin* were a group of students at the University of Deusto in Bilbao who were tired of the PNV's forced idleness and frustrated by what they considered its 'obsolete' ideology. They started to hold weekly meetings to study and discuss Basque history and culture. In the beginning, in 1952, there were only 6 or 7 of them, all in their early twenties and they all came from nationalist families. Between 1956 and 1959 they merged with EGI (*Euzko Gastedi del*

⁴⁷ Statistics from Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 259.

⁴⁸ Figures from Ibarra, *El movimiento obrero*, 62-3.

⁴⁹ (25 June 1967) 'Carta Abierta al Excmo. Sr. Francisco Franco Bahamonde y al Actual Gobierno del Estado Español.' Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 156-61.

⁵⁰ The best recent history of ETA in English is John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism: The Fight for Euskadi, 1890-1986* (London: Routledge, 1988).

Interior), the youth wing of the PNV. However the excessively zealous control exercised by the PNV became a hindrance to *Ekin's* own evolution. Also, although the young people of *Ekin* were primarily concerned with rediscovering Basque culture, language and literature after a generation of suppression, they were in addition convinced that there was a need to take *action* to preserve all that was Basque in defiance of the Francoist state. They quickly became frustrated with a party that saw Basque festivals and cultural events as, in themselves, directly political activities. It was mainly this concern with activism that caused *Ekin*/EGI members to break away from the PNV and form ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna* – Basque Homeland and Liberty) on St. Ignatius Loyola Day, 31 July 1959. ETA began to recruit members from the mountaineering groups that were a popular feature of Basque life. Cultural and social activities linked to the Church also provided a useful milieu, as did the movement to revive the Basque language, *Euskera*.⁵¹

Very many of the first members of ETA were ex-militants of *Herri Gaztedi*. This organisation, originally known as *Baserri Gaztedi* (Baserri Youth), was the Basque version of JARC and it was started in Guipúzcoa in 1953 and in Vizcaya in 1961. By 1963 there were around 32 groups in Vizcaya.⁵² Between 1953 and 1964 the organisation concentrated on the religious and personal formation of its members. The key pedagogical idea was one of individual growth for the realisation of one's own personality. In 1964 the organisation's name was changed to *Herri* (town, country, people) and is indicative of a change of orientation. (*Baserri* is the name for the traditional Basque farmstead.) From that time on the organisation evolved rapidly into a platform from which each individual received the necessary social and political instruction to enable them to act in the wider community. Joseba Zulaika's anthropological study of the village of Itziar (Guipúzcoa) in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s describes the important role played by *Herri Gaztedi* in political consciousness-raising among the youth of the village. As one ETA militant and former member of *Herri Gaztedi* explained in this book:

‘What Don Antonio (the chaplain) did was to say that politics was not a sin, that getting into politics was nothing more than any person's

51 The creation of Basque language schools which had begun early in the 1950s owed a lot to the clergy and the movement that supported them was eventually to involve thousands of people.

⁵²Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 272.

right. Moreover not getting into politics was itself politics. That is, being uncritical of the status quo imposed by Franco was in itself an act of political compliance.⁵³

In other words, the religious offer that the chaplains to *Herri Gaztedi* made to the young militants was one that combined a genuinely religious lifestyle with a commitment to the struggle for justice and freedom. Luis María Bereciartua, a chaplain to a *Herri Gaztedi* group in the tiny village of Bériz in the late sixties, confirmed to me in written correspondence in July 2001 that the youngsters in his group were 'committed to the struggle against Francoist repression, and the defence of the language, culture and rights of the Basques. Some of them shared ETA's ideology, although in Bériz nobody joined the organisation. However, it is true that many of those who joined ETA had belonged to youth organisations like *Herri Gaztedi*.'⁵⁴

For the first few months after its foundation ETA's members' activity was limited to continuing the labour of study and reflection that they had already done in *Ekin*. A few graffiti on walls and the hanging of *Ikurriñas* was the sum of their external activities. In fact there was little apart from activism to differentiate ETA from the PNV during the first two years of its existence as its journal *Zutik* proposed nothing more radical than Christian democratic measures such as minimum wages and family allowances. The first act of political violence occurred on 18 July 1961 when ETA attempted to derail a train carrying Civil War veterans to a rally in San Sebastián celebrating the 25th anniversary of Franco's rising. A wave of arrests followed: 110 ETA members were imprisoned and many of them were first tortured. Another 100 or more were forced into exile.⁵⁵ The repression that followed the attempted derailment forced a rethinking that was to change ETA's political ideas. In May 1962 it held its First Assembly in a Benedictine Abbey in

⁵³ Joseba Zulaika, *Basque Violence: Metaphor and Sacrament* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1988), 42-3.

⁵⁴ Luis María Bereciartúa Irastorza was born in the rural village of Izurza 1941 and was ordained in 1966. He took part in the priests' march in April 1967. In July 1969 he was tried for military rebellion. His crime was the possession of a large bundle of leaflets denouncing the torture and imprisonment of Basque priests in the jail at Zamora. The military tribunal at Burgos delivered a sentence of eight years and he was imprisoned in Zamora. Information on his trial from photocopy of the 'sentencia' sent to me by Bereciartua. He is now secularised, married and estranged from the Catholic Church.

⁵⁵ These numbers testify to the impressive growth of the organisation. In 1953 *Ekin* had 10 militants between Bilbao and San Sebastián. By 1960 more than 300 militants had passed through its training courses. Information from Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 91.

the French Basque Country. The main achievement of this Assembly was to adopt a 'Statement of Principles' and to create a more organised structure than that which had existed until then. The 'Statement of Principles' was a two-page document demanding independence and unification of the French and Spanish Basque Country in a democratic state that would guarantee freedom for all religions.⁵⁶ However ETA soon discovered that the ideas taken from the PNV and *Ekin* on which the 'Statement of Principles' were based, were a poor guide to developing a strategy in an industrialised society in the 1960s. The first full ideological formulation and political programme to be adopted by ETA appeared in a book by Federico Krutwig, entitled *Vasconia* that was published in 1963.⁵⁷ It maintained that the only way to liberate Euskadi was through guerrilla war. In this choice Krutwig was directly inspired by the Algerian and Cuban experiences. At its Third Assembly in 1964 ETA wholeheartedly adopted Krutwig's approach, defining ETA as an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist organisation for the liberation of Euskadi and the emancipation of the working class. In other words, the class struggle and national liberation became for ETA two faces of the same coin. After the Fifth Assembly, which was held in March 1967, the concept of PTV (*Pueblo Trabajador Vasco* – Basque Working People) was elaborated to reinforce the notion that class struggle and nationalism were in pursuit of common interests. The PTV was declared to be both the victim of Spanish oppression and the force that would create an independent, socialist Euskadi. At the same time ETA embarked on a terrorist campaign against representatives of the Spanish State. This violent path was inspired by Third World urban guerrilla movements, especially the Algerian and the Vietnamese ones that, according to ETA ideology, struggled against similar colonial and capitalist opponents.

In the first half of 1968 ETA was very active. A document prepared by oppositional priests in October 1968 entitled 'The Church and repression in the Basque region' listed the violent actions of the organisation up to June: the planting of 3 plastic explosives in newspaper buildings and a telephone exchange and 1 bank robbery. These were described in the document as minor crimes. In March police arrested around 20 youths in Vitoria. They were tortured and during their interrogations they revealed that

⁵⁶ Immediately on its formation ETA had rejected two of the basic tenets of the PNV's ideology – race and religion. Instead ETA argued that Basque people were 'chosen' by their history, mores and language, not by their religion or descent.

⁵⁷ Federico Krutwig, *Vasconia. Estudio dialéctico de una nacionalidad* (Buenos Aires: Narbait, 1963). (It was published under the pseudonym of Sarrailh de Ihartza).

they were receiving help and support from some Jesuits and the Benedictines in the region. (the Abbot of Lazkano and the bishop of Píngliang, Ignacio Larrañaga wrote to the Civil Governor and head of the Civil Guard in San Sebastián in April condemning torture of detainees in police custody.)⁵⁸

The action which produced ETA's first 'martyr' and started the process which was to make the organisation the key force in Basque politics from then on occurred on 7 June 1968 when the leader of ETA, Txabi Echebarrieta, and another member, Iñaki Sarasqueta, drove through a police roadblock near Tolosa in Guipúzcoa. In an exchange of gunfire one of the policemen, José Pardines, was fatally injured. Shortly afterwards the police caught up with the fugitives and Echebarrieta was shot dead, but Sarasqueta managed to scramble from the car and escape. He was captured the following day and tried on 15 June before a military court in San Sebastián that sentenced him to 58 years imprisonment. The sentence was considered too lenient by the military authorities and therefore he was re-tried on 28 June and sentenced to death. The harshness of the sentence provoked such a wave of protest at all levels of Basque society - even the *Diputación* in Guipúzcoa and the Town Council in San Sebastián called for clemency - that Franco commuted the death penalty. The agitation against Sarasqueta's sentence, and the demonstrations of grief at Echebarrieta's killing helped to bring knowledge of ETA's activities beyond the fairly narrow circle of its sympathisers up till then. Hundreds of Masses were celebrated for Echebarrieta throughout the Basque Country in the two months following his death. In some places the police cordoned off churches to prevent people attending, and in Vizcaya the civil authorities actually prohibited these Masses altogether. Several priests who ignored the prohibition were fined.⁵⁹ Fr. Juan María Arregui Azpeitia, who was less than two years ordained, was fined for denouncing the prohibition from the pulpit. The following is an extract from his sermon:

'Who has given the Governor authority to prohibit the people from attending Mass for a deceased person, or to fine a priest for refusing

⁵⁸ (1 de octubre 1968) La Iglesia en el País Vasco frente a la represión. (AMM).

⁵⁹For example, the parish priest of San Antón in Bilbao. Information from Francisco Latamendía Belzunce, *Euzkadi, Pueblo y Nación*. 6 Vols. (San Sebastián: Kriselu, 1990), vol. iii, 134.

to celebrate Mass without the attendance of the people? Who is he to judge certain religious acts?'⁶⁰

Attitudes like Fr. Arregui's convinced the civil authorities that a sector of the Basque clergy were an important source of support and legitimisation for separatist nationalism as represented by ETA. In a report to the Ministry of the Interior the Civil Governor of Vizcaya expressed the belief that:

'The Government's measures to cut this type of separatist subversion at the root ought also extend to priests of this ideology since their activities could become highly dangerous if a stop is not put to their excesses and propaganda.'⁶¹

A fortnight after the deaths of the policeman and Echebarrieta a group of 26 diocesan priests occupied the episcopal offices in Bilbao from where they sent a letter to Bishop Gúrpide through the Vicar General of the diocese, Teodoro Jiménez Urresti. The letter called on the bishop to condemn arbitrary arrests and the torture of detainees in police custody and to explain why he granted the civil authorities permission to fine, arrest and prosecute priests. The bishop replied to the priests *via* the Vicar General. He agreed that the situation that had arisen as a result of recent events needed to be studied and he promised to respond to the questions raised in the letter. He called on the priests to leave the offices immediately. When they refused he gave the police permission to eject them. The occupation lasted nine and a half hours.⁶²

On 30 July between 6.00 a.m. and 8.00 a.m. six diocesan priests were arrested in their homes and taken to Police Headquarters in Bilbao.⁶³ Later that same morning

⁶⁰Copy of sermon preached on 3 and 4 August 1968 in Ortuella entitled 'Ante la situación de violencia que vivimos en Vizcaya' for which Fr. Arregui was fined 25,000 ptas. In Goicuría Archive, Caja 4/153, IDTP. Copy of fine dated 12 August in Manterola Archive, EBL, R.14-5. Fr. Arregui was born in Bilbao in 1941 and ordained in 1966. His first parish was in the rural village of Ortuella. No longer a priest, although not actually secularised.

⁶¹'Expedientes Informativos 1960-1968' AHPV.

⁶²Short account of the sit-in of 24 June and resumé of the letter in *Crónicas*, vol i., 193-5.

⁶³Fr. Ignacio Aurteneche (P.P. in Sodupe), Fr. Domingo Arteche (P.P. in Ibarri), Fr. Pedro Solabarria (worker-priest in Baracaldo, Bilbao), Fr. Pedro Berrioategortua (curate in Amorebieta), Fr. Imanol Oruemazaga (worker priest in Ondárroa), Fr. José María Madariaga (curate in Baquio). The youngest was 31 and the oldest only 43. All of them, except one, had signed the collective letter by 500 Basque priests to

several priests went along to the episcopal offices to ask the Vicar General for information on the arrests. At first he declined to give them any information at all, but when the priests made it clear that they intended to remain there until they were given at least a list of the names of those arrested he changed his mind and named the priests whom he said would very shortly be transferred from Police Headquarters to Basuari Prison (Bilbao) and thence to Zamora Prison.⁶⁴ He explained that they had been detained for non-payment of fines imposed by the civil authorities and that the Bishop had consented to their arrest, and had also approved a further number of detention orders affecting other priests.

Mounting tension between sectors of the clergy and Bishop Gúrpide was matched in civil society by an intensification of ETA violence. The leaders of ETA's horror at Echebarrieta's death impelled them to launch a reprisal that was to bring down a ferocious repression on their organisation. It was decided that the retaliation should take the form of killing the notorious police chief in San Sebastián, Melitón Manzanás. On 2 August Manzanás was shot dead in the doorway of his house in the border town of Irún, by a gunman who then escaped. The next day a state of emergency was declared for three months in the province of Guipúzcoa, which allowed the police a free hand in their treatment of suspects. The police investigations were brutal and arbitrary and hundreds of innocent people were arrested and physically assaulted. The introduction of the Law for the Repression of Banditry and Terrorism on 16 August broadened the jurisdiction of military courts over political offences, which had been reduced five years earlier.⁶⁵ In response to this worsening situation of repression Bishop Lorenzo Bereciartúa of San Sebastián published a pastoral letter on 22 August that criticised the State's recourse to military justice and violence, defended priests who preached social justice and implicitly blamed violence on the absence of dialogue in Spanish society 'in our days dialogue is an essential means of good government'. He called on the government to respect the articles of the Concordat, which guaranteed the inviolability of priests and Church premises, and

the Second Vatican Council in September 1963 and taken part in the priests' march of April 1967. Three of them had signed the 1960 collective letter.

⁶⁴A special wing for clergy had been inaugurated in Zamora prison earlier that month when Fr. Alberto Gabikagogeascoa from the diocese of Bilbao and two Franciscan priests from Eibar in Guipúzcoa were transferred there from the prison of Basauri in Bilbao.

⁶⁵Originally introduced on 17 April 1947 it stipulated that military courts should try cases of political dissidence. From 1963 on these types of cases were tried by the Tribunal of Public Order (TOP).

he protested at certain inaccurate reports on priests that had recently appeared in the press. This pastoral letter was the first in which a bishop had so forthrightly criticised the government and both his successor and the soon to be appointed Apostolic Administrator of Bilbao, Monsignor Cirarda, would follow his example.⁶⁶

In a context of mounting socio-political tension caused by the government crackdown on ETA, the assassination of Melitón Manzanas and the continuing state of emergency in Guipúzcoa, a group of approximately 45 priests once again occupied the episcopal offices in Bilbao on Friday 16 August.⁶⁷ They addressed a letter to Bishop Gúrpide on the worsening situation of repression in the province of Vizcaya. It described the ecclesiastical hierarchy as puppets of the government and demanded that the Bishop publicly condemn the Civil Governor's prohibition of Masses for Echebarrieta, as well as the torture and abuse of detainees in police stations.⁶⁸ It also called on him to explain why he had given permission for the arrest and imprisonment of some of his priests and it urged him to intervene with the authorities to have the priests transferred from the prison of Zamora to Basauri prison in Bilbao. (the interned priests had decided to renounce all the privileges of the Concordat, including that of the right to be held in a special detention centre.) The letter concluded with a call for the Vicar General to be substituted, as dialogue with him was impossible. Bishop Gúrpide was away from the diocese on holiday in Pamplona and therefore four priests from the group were nominated to travel there the next day to deliver the letter to him personally.⁶⁹ The Bishop received the priests and promised them that he would reply to the letter after he had given it due consideration. The dilatory approach of Gúrpide made the occupiers decide to continue with the sit-in and to add to their list of demands the appointment by Bishop Gúrpide of an Episcopal Delegate with whom immediate dialogue could begin and who would have

⁶⁶'A Nuestros Amadísimos Diocesanos' (22 August 1968). Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, i, 175-81. Bishop Bereciartúa died on 23 October 1968 at the age of seventy-three. He had only been Bishop of San Sebastián since 1963.

⁶⁷The majority of the priests who occupied the episcopal offices in June and August were young: one was ordained in the 1930s, three in the 1940s and the remainder in the 1950s and 1960s. Ten of them had been ordained as recently as 1966. Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 275.

⁶⁸After the declaration of a state of emergency in Guipúzcoa Province on 3 August hundreds of people were arrested, including several priests. Although Vizcaya was no longer under a state of emergency there was a very noticeable increase in repression at the same time. By the end of September 500 people had been detained in Guipúzcoa, 15 of them were priests. In Vizcaya 61 people, including 2 priests had been detained. Information from an anonymous cyclostyled sheet dated 1 October 1968 entitled: 'La Iglesia en el País Vasco Frente a la Represión', in AAM.

⁶⁹Fr. Emilio Azarola Sangróniz (b. 1929), Fr. Francisco Bilbao Archicallende (b. 1935), Fr. Gotzon Garitaonandia (b. 1937) Fr. Imanol Olabarria (b. 1937).

some decision-making power in relation to their demands. On 18 August 70 other diocesan priests who had assembled in a retreat centre to reflect on the situation in the episcopal offices drew up a letter of solidarity with the demands of their colleagues. Two days later the Bishop, under mounting pressure, appointed Fr. José Angel Ubieta 'Episcopal Delegate *ad tempus*' for all socio-pastoral matters relating to the clergy and entrusted him with the formation of an advisory commission representing all shades of opinion among the diocesan clergy.⁷⁰ On 23 August Fr. Ubieta announced the appointment of 12 priests to a new 'Commission for Socio-Pastoral Affairs'. The members included representatives of the priests occupying the episcopal offices and of the 70 priests who had written the letter on the 18 August.⁷¹ The following day the priests ended their sit in, satisfied that one of their main demands had been met and hopeful that some progress could now be made towards solving the serious problems affecting the diocese.

One of the most immediate problems concerned the civil authorities' request for permission to prosecute 66 priests who had signed a bilingual letter in March 1968 in support of two of their colleagues, Fr. Francisco Bilbao and Fr. José Manuel Olabarria, who were due to be prosecuted later that year. (both of them participated in the sit-ins in the episcopal offices and were part of the group of priests who delivered the letter to Bishop Gúrpide in Pamplona). Fr. Bilbao's clashes with the civil authorities had begun in 1964 when he refused to allow the Spanish flag into his church in the small rural village of Meñaca. His latest run-in with the authorities had occurred on 3 December 1967 when he had marked the beginning of Advent by distributing to his parishioners a signed protest at the recent arrest of a priest from a neighbouring village in the street after Mass on a feast day. Part of the document prepared by Fr. Bilbao declared:

'Arbitrary arrests, the imposition of exorbitant fines, proven cases of torture, etc., the sad and lamentable news of every day. ... Neither

⁷⁰José Angel Ubieta López: born 1926, ordained 1950. At the time he was a teacher of Holy Scripture in the Seminary of Derio.

⁷¹Fr. Rafael Belda (b. 1924), Fr. Juan Angel Belda (b. 1926), Fr. Antonio Arza S.J., Fr. Andrés Mañaricua (b. 1911), Fr. Tomás Elexpuru (b. 1909), Fr. Luis Emiliano Pinedo (b. 1893), Fr. Juan María Arrinda (b. 1916), Fr. Anastasio Olabarria (b. 1916), Fr. Lorenzo Salaberria (b. 1916), Fr. Ramón Anchía (b. 1925), Fr. Ismael Díaz (b. 1932), Fr. Julián Calzada (b. 1935).

excessive force nor lies can lead to the construction of a healthy and Christian society.'⁷²

On 28 January 1968 in Barakaldo, Bilbao, Fr. José Manuel Olabarria had preached on the theme of the liberating work of God as revealed in the Old Testament, drawing a parallel between the Jews oppressed in Egypt and the Basques. He was accused of having attacked the regime and its institutions - namely the OS and the police, whom he had accused of torture and other abuses.⁷³ In their letter of March 1968 the 66 priests backed up their two colleagues and criticised the failure of the bishops of the Basque dioceses to do the same.⁷⁴ They evaluated positively Bishop Gúrpide's decision not to avail of the Concordat privilege that allowed priests be tried in camera because a public trial would demonstrate that the clergy were not enjoying any preferential treatment at a time when the Basque people were suffering violent oppression and so many upright citizens were being imprisoned and tortured. *Sine Nomine* also expressed its support for priests who were fined:

'Today it is an honour for the 'Basque Clergy' to be in disgrace, to be fined, to be prosecuted, to be brought before the courts, living under the threat of being transferred. ... Being a member of the 'Basque Clergy' is an option. ... Those who have not chosen to be 'Basque Clergy' have eliminated themselves from the catalogue of honour because they have chosen to be something different, or they have opted not to be part of our people even when they eat, live and work here among us. ... They are not part of the 'Basque Clergy' of yesterday or today.'⁷⁵

⁷²Copy of document in EBL, R.14.6. Fr. Francisco Bilbao Atxikallende: born 1935, ordained 1959.

⁷³Copy of sermon 'Christianity and the Oppressed' in Goicuría Archive, Caja 2, IDTP. Fr. José Manuel Olabarria: born 1937, ordained 11 September 1966. He is now secularised.

⁷⁴Cyclostyled copy of letter in Manterola Archive, EBL, R.14, 6. Twenty-nine of the signatories took part in the priests' march of April 1967.

⁷⁵*Sine Nomine* 1B4, 1-2.

On 31 August Fr. Ubieta and the Commission for Socio-Pastoral Affairs published a bilingual information sheet as an annex to the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Bulletin.⁷⁶ It contained the following information: the Commission had refused the TOP permission to prosecute the 66 priests who had written the open letter of support for Fr. Francisco Bilbao and Fr. José Manuel Olabarriá; on 29 August two members of the Commission had travelled to Zamora Prison to meet four priests who were being released that day; while there they requested permission from the Prison Director to visit the four remaining priests, but it was not granted;⁷⁷ the Episcopal Delegate had written to the Minister for Justice supporting the request of the priests interned in Zamora Prison to be transferred to Basauri Prison in Bilbao; and finally, that a series of meetings had taken place between the Episcopal Delegate and the archpriests of the various pastoral zones into which the diocese was divided. The bulletin announced that the Commission planned to organise a series of meetings with all the priests of the diocese, whatever their area of pastoral work, as soon as possible, as part of the preparation of a study of the structure and functions that a future Council of Priests should have.⁷⁸ It also was preparing a note in response to one that the Civil Governor had published in the local press a few days earlier which slightly modified the original prohibition of Masses for Javier Echebarrieta by allowing memorial Masses to be celebrated on Sundays and feast days.

A few days after the information sheet was published Bishop Gúrpide, probably acting under pressure from the civil authorities as well as the more conservative elements of the clergy, sent a letter to the press agency *Europa Press* which described the Commission for Socio-Pastoral Affairs as an 'interim creation' that 'has a purely advisory function. It has neither executive, governmental or mandatory powers.' On 5 September, the Episcopal Delegate and his Commission wrote to Bishop Gúrpide informing him that they had decided to resign over his declarations *vis-à-vis* the Commission because he had effectively vitiated its powers and modified substantially the original mission he had entrusted it with.⁷⁹

⁷⁶*Hoja informativa - Barriak*. Manterola Archive, EBL, R .5, 1.

⁷⁷These priests were Fr. Ignacio Aurteneche, Fr. Domingo Arteche, Fr. Imanol Oruemazaga, Fr. José María Madariaga who had been arrested along with two more priests on the 30 July.

⁷⁸The setting up of Councils of Priests in all dioceses was recommended by the Conciliar decree, *Christus Dominus* and again in Pope Paul VI's *motu proprio Ecclesiae sanctae* of 6 August 1966.

⁷⁹Copy of letter in Goicuria Archive, Caja 1, IDTP.

(v) '*Operación 4-4*' – *The Occupation of the Seminary of Derio*

The resignation of Fr. Angel Ubieta and his Commission for Socio-Pastoral Affairs greatly intensified the frustration felt by dissident priests - particularly those who had organised the occupations of the episcopal offices in June and August (Operation Mazarredo) and who, after the second occupation, formed a radical group called *Gogor* (*Gogorkeriaren aurka gogortasuna* - Against repressive violence, tenacious resistance). Their frustration led them to organise a sit-in in the diocesan seminary in Derio that lasted twenty-five days. It began at 4.00 p.m. on Monday 4 November and involved 60 priests. The seminary superiors had not been informed that an occupation was planned and it was only many hours after the sit-in had begun that the priests explained to them that the reason for their presence in the seminary was lend weight to a bilingual letter that the group had earlier sent to Pope Paul VI. In this letter the priests analysed the socio-political situation in the Basque Country, called for a 'poor, independent, dynamic and indigenous' Basque Church, and for the immediate appointment of an Apostolic Administrator who would be entrusted with the task of organising the election, with the participation of *all* the Basque people, of a new bishop for the diocese of Bilbao.⁸⁰ The following day two representatives of the priests travelled to Madrid and personally presented the Nuncio with a copy of the letter.⁸¹ In a statement published in the local papers on Tuesday morning Bishop Gúrpide condemned the priests' action and called on them to end the sit-in. Already a total of 115 policemen who had arrived in 7 patrol cars, 3 jeeps and 3 buses were surrounding the seminary building.⁸² At midday the seminary teachers wrote a letter to Bishop Gúrpide threatening to resign if he allowed the police to enter the building and forcibly remove the occupiers. In the evening the rector of the seminary set off for Madrid to discuss the situation with the Nuncio. Later that night the police ended their siege of the building and Bishop Gúrpide informed the occupiers that he was allowing them 12 hours to end the occupation or else they would incur suspension *a divinis*.⁸³

The following day the seminary teachers prepared a document entitled *Revision of a Fact of Life* which evaluated the occupiers' action using the see-judge-act methodology

⁸⁰Text in Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 420-33.

⁸¹Information from '3a Hoja Informativa' in Goicuria Archive, Caja 1, IDTP.

⁸²Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 153.

⁸³Information from fragment of a letter written during the early days of the occupation by one of the seminary teachers to an American friend. In Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 9, 1.

devised by Monsignor Cardijn for JOC sessions and adopted by the specialised urban and rural movements of AC in the forties and fifties.⁸⁴ The first part of the document described the occupation of the seminary as a continuation and intensification of the 'Mazarredo' protest of the summer. It said that the priests' aim was to draw the public's attention to the existence of protest within the Church at abuses being perpetrated by those who controlled political and economic power and that they intended remaining in the seminary until they received a reply to a letter to Pope Paul VI in which they outlined the 'New Church' they wanted. The second part of the *Revision*, the longest and most detailed, began with the seminary teachers judging the priests' action to be positive in so far as it demonstrated a willingness and courage on the part of the clergy to tackle the very serious problems that had been affecting the diocese for some time, was a manifestation of their steadfast interest and concern for the well-being of the Basque people and reflected a process of democratisation of the Catholic Church, noticeable particularly at its base that had been encouraged by the Second Vatican Council. However they judged as negative and inappropriate the form chosen by the priests to express their protest and said it was an unacceptable procedure for bringing about internal reform in the Church. They disapproved of the use of the diocesan seminary to stage the protest because of the possible harmful effects on the students who could be confused by the priests' action and whose classes might have to be interrupted. In the final part of the document the seminary teachers identified what they felt were the immediate and long-term causes of the discontent affecting the clergy in Bilbao. The immediate causes were: the failure of the Bishop to deal with the problem of priests being fined and detained, a defamatory press campaign against the Basque clergy and, finally, the resignation of the Episcopal Delegate and the Commission for Socio-Pastoral Affairs in September. The long-term causes were: the lack of ecclesiastical structures and institutions capable of responding to the pastoral needs of the 'Basque People', a generational clash between the Bishop and the younger priests and, finally, the long-standing alliance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the civil authorities. The seminary teachers concluded that the priests were justified in seeking reform in the Church, but occupying the seminary was not the correct way of going about it. They therefore called on the priests to end the sit-in and announced that in the event of this not happening they would be forced to

⁸⁴'Revisión de un hecho de vida.' Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol.i, 228-35.

consider closing the seminary temporarily. They also said they intended to distribute copies of the document to the occupiers, the seminarians, other priests in the diocese and to the 'Basque People'.

In a document entitled 'Reply of the priests shut-in' the occupiers responded to the *Revision*, section-by-section, point-by-point.⁸⁵ They began by pointing out that their action was not a continuation of the Mazarredo action because the priests' objectives were now fundamentally different. In August the objectives were socio-pastoral but now the aims were much broader:

'We insist that it is not about pastoral problems, but rather a confrontation over the type of Church we want - one truly embodied in the Basque people. More than a healthy democratisation of the Church, we are seeking a Church more faithful to the Gospel, poor, free, dynamic, indigenous (of the 'People' and for the 'People').'

The priests declared that they wished to inform the laity of their action and especially of the motivation behind it. Consequently this document and a summary of the letter they had earlier sent to Pope Paul VI were to be copied and circulated throughout the Basque Country.⁸⁶

The occupation of the seminary attracted a great deal of attention. There were reports on the occupation not only in the local and national papers but also in the foreign press.⁸⁷ A group of Catalan priests announced their solidarity with the priests and their call for a purer Church.⁸⁸ The PNV praised the priests for 'Exposing before the eyes of the world the situation of anguish of the Basque People, for alleviating and giving hope to the poor, persecuted and oppressed, for renewing and increasing the people's consciousness of this situation.'⁸⁹ Clandestine sheets prepared by ETA also expressed

⁸⁵ (9 November 1968) 'Respuesta de los sacerdotes encerrados'. Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 235-44.

⁸⁶ 'Resumen oficial del documento presentado al Papa Pablo VI por los sesenta sacerdotes que esperan respuesta en el seminario.' (11 November 1968). Text in Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 373-6.

⁸⁷ *Le Monde* (8 November 1968), *The Times* (7 November 1968), *Sud-Ouest* (8 November 1968).

⁸⁸ 'A propòsit dels capellans de Bilbao tancats al Seminari de Derio. Firmado por representantes de diversos sectores pastorales de la diócesis de Barcelona y grupos de sacerdotes de Vic, Tarragona y Tortosa.' (November 1968). Aguirre Archive, ABL.

⁸⁹ Comunicado del Bizkaiko Buru Batza del PNV/Euzko Alderdi jeltzailia'ren B.B.B. 'K egindakoa. Archive Goicuria Caja 4/128, IDTP.

support for the priests' demands.⁹⁰ However on 12 November the Permanent Commission of the CEE published a note which publicly disapproved of the behaviour of the sixty priests 'not only because of what is inappropriate and unfair about it, but because of the spiritual damage that actions like this cause among vast sectors of the Christian population, not excluding the Basque Catholics themselves.'⁹¹

It is very significant that almost all of the 60 priests were from rural parishes, where the traditional way of life was rapidly changing in the 1960s and secularisation was making inroads among young people.⁹² Half of the occupiers had been ordained in the sixties and a third in 1957, 1958 and 1959. Two-thirds of them had taken part in Operation Mazarredo the previous summer. Only 2 of them had signed the collective letter of 1960.⁹³ Therefore generationally these men were close to the politically conscious young people who were joining ETA and often abandoning their allegiance to the Church because they saw it as an ally of the oppressive Franco regime.

During the occupation 516 priests from the diocese of Bilbao wrote to the Nuncio calling for direct intervention by the Holy See to solve 'the extremely serious and multiple problems affecting the diocese, long-standing problems that have become intensified over time.'⁹⁴ Although Bishop Gúrpide had been ill with cancer for a number of years his death on 18 November was quite sudden. His expiry was timely in so far as it provided a way out of the crisis by allowing the Vatican to appoint an Apostolic Administrator within hours in the person of Monsignor José María Cirarda, Bishop of Santander.⁹⁵ The sixty priests remained in the seminary in spite of the death of their bishop. In a statement they issued they explained they were continuing their action to demonstrate that their call for a profound 'conversion' was not directed at Bishop Gúrpide personally, but rather at the official Church and the highest ecclesiastical authorities.⁹⁶ The sit-in continued until 28th November and ended only when the Apostolic Administrator gave assurances that there would be dialogue along the lines

⁹⁰ 'No a la Iglesia opresora/Eliza zapaltzaileari ezetza.' *Gora*, Núm 1, Noviembre de 1968. Quoted in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 290.

⁹¹ Text in *Ecclesia* (16 November 1968), 37.

⁹² Fact noted in Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 169-70.

⁹³ Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 283.

⁹⁴ Letter dated 12 November 1968. Quoted in *Diagnóstico sociológico de los conflictos sacerdotales en la Diócesis de Bilbao* (Bilbao: Departamento de Investigaciones Sociales del Obispado, 1971), 23.

⁹⁵ Bishop Cirarda was 51 years old. He was a Vizcayan, from the small coastal town of Baquio. He studied and taught at the Seminary of Vitoria. Before being appointed Bishop of Santander in July 1968 he had been Auxiliary Bishop of Seville for eight years.

⁹⁶ Copy of statement 'Ante la muerte de nuestro Sr. Obispo' in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, pp. 245-6.

proposed by the occupiers. As a first step in that direction Monsignor Cirarda immediately restructured the diocesan Curia and appointed 'liberal' priests to posts of key responsibility. He also created an Advisory Commission to assist him in the running of the diocese and he placed Fr. Angel Ubieta at its head. The composition of this commission was similar to that of the short-lived Commission for Socio-Pastoral Affairs of August-September.⁹⁷

(vi) 1969: *climax of tensions*

At the start of 1969 Bishop Cirarda published a pastoral exhortation for World Peace Day entitled 'The promotion of the rights of man, the road to peace' in which he said that to achieve peace there must be greater social, economic and cultural justice for the people of Vizcaya and Spain. He encouraged the government to introduce institutional reforms that would lead to the creation of a workers' union and a political system in which all citizens could freely participate.⁹⁸ There was nothing very daring in Cirarda's pastoral since the government was already preparing a new union law and had just announced its intention of making the single state party, the National Movement, more representational *via* the introduction of a Statute of Political Associations.

When the government declared a nationwide state of emergency on 24 January in response to student disturbances in the universities and unrest in the Basque provinces Bishop Cirarda responded with a pastoral letter dated 7 February. It was entitled 'The current social situation in Vizcaya' which dealt with the labour conflicts affecting the province of Vizcaya, as well as the latest state of emergency.⁹⁹ The Permanent Commission of the CEE had issued a Note the previous day which urged the restoration of civil guarantees as soon as possible, but also practically justified the step taken by the

⁹⁷ Information on the creation of a Provisional Advisory Council in 'Resumen informativo de las 4 reuniones del Consejo Asesor. (Días 2, 11, 19 y 30 de diciembre de 1968).' Manterola Archive, EBL, R.14, 4.

⁹⁸ 'La promoción de los derechos del hombre, camino hacia la paz.' *BOOBI*, no. 20 (1969), 5-10. Extracts in José Antonio Pagola, *Una ética para la paz. Los obispos del País Vasco 1968-1992* (San Sebastián: Instituto de Teología y Pastoral, 1992), 359-60. (Pope Paul VI proposed at the end of 1967 that the Church celebrate World Peace Day on 1 January each year. Nineteen sixty-nine was the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and consequently the Apostolic Administrator's pastoral exhortation focused on human rights.)

⁹⁹ A strike began on 24 January in the gigantic iron and steel factory of Altos Hornos de Vizcaya (AHV) in Bilbao and over the following weeks some of the biggest factories in the city and province were hit by strikes too.

government by quoting paragraph 75 of the Conciliar decree *Gaudium et Spes* which justifies the temporary suspension of civil rights in certain circumstances:

'The growing complexity of modern situations makes it necessary for the public authorities to intervene more often in social, cultural and economic matters in order to bring about more favourable conditions to enable citizens and groups to pursue freely and effectively the achievement of man's well-being in its totality. ... If restrictions are imposed temporarily on the exercise of human rights for the common good, these restrictions are to be lifted as soon as possible after the situation has changed.'¹⁰⁰

The Apostolic Administrator also quoted paragraph 73 of *Gaudium et Spes* in his pastoral letter when he called for the state of emergency to be ended as soon as possible, but he went further than the Permanent Commission and quoted the lines that warn civil authorities not to fall into totalitarian or dictatorial ways which violate human or group rights. He urged reflection on the 'root causes' of the recent conflicts in order to advance towards a new social and economic order.¹⁰¹ Bishop Cirarda instructed his priests to read the pastoral letter at all Masses the following Sunday. However in some parishes that were particularly badly affected by the strikes priests voiced their own personal opinion on the state of emergency.¹⁰²

A few days after Bishop Cirarda had published this pastoral letter the Archbishop of Pamplona and the Bishop of San Sebastián also published pastoral letters that expressed quite serious reservations about the state of emergency and called for the speedy restoration of full civil rights.¹⁰³ There was also a lot of grass-roots clerical protest at the state of emergency. For example, from 22 to 23 February around a hundred people

¹⁰⁰ Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, 983.

¹⁰¹ 'Exhortación Pastoral Ante El Momento Social De Vizcaya.' (7 February 1969) *BEOBI*, no. 20 (1969), 107-10.

¹⁰² E.g., 'Homilía para el domingo de Sexagésima.' (9 February 1969) *AHPV*, Expedientes Informativos 1960-1968'.

¹⁰³ 'Circular sobre la Nota de la Comisión Permanente del Episcopado acerca del 'estado de excepción' (10 February 1969). 'Llamada a la conversión' (Ash Wednesday, 1969) Extracts in Pagola, *Una ética para la paz*, 361-3. No doubt the Archbishop of Pamplona had been partly prompted into writing the pastoral letter by an open letter dated 29 January that was signed by 250 of his priests and called on him to make a statement on the state of emergency.

carried out a 24-hour hunger strike in the church of Santa Teresa in the working class suburb of Baracaldo in protest at the state of emergency and the situation of the workers on strike - but above all at the posture of the ecclesiastical hierarchy on both these issues. Police in jeeps surrounded the church until the 'illegal assembly' ended. An 'Information Sheet' prepared by those taking part in the 'occupation' described the state of emergency as the culmination of 30 years of political, economic and cultural oppression and curtailment of basic human rights, such as freedom of expression, association and active participation in the social and political life of the country. It claimed that the Basque Country had suffered particularly from this oppression:

'A special objective of this dictatorial regime has been the crushing of the Basque County, as illustrated by the state of emergency which has existed for several months now in Guipúzcoa.'¹⁰⁴

It described the Permanent Commission's Note of 6 February as 'scandalous' and said it had been used by the government to legitimise the state of emergency. It complained that the Apostolic Administrator's pastoral letter had endorsed the Note while failing to satisfactorily analyse the underlying causes of the socio-political situation and the labour conflicts. The document ended with the occupiers expressing their solidarity with the 300 priests who had assembled in the Archbishop's Palace in Barcelona the previous day (21 February) to protest at the state of emergency and with 'all those who seek Freedom and Justice in the Church and in the Spanish State.' (more on the Catalan priests' protest in Chapter IV)

It was also to protest at the state of emergency and the systematic repression of Basque cultural and political identity that 500 Basque priests wrote a long letter to the Nuncio and the CEE on 17 March.¹⁰⁵ This was the first collective letter prepared by priests from all four Basque dioceses since 1963, when more than 500 of them had written to the Second Vatican Council. Three hundred of the signatories were from the

¹⁰⁴(23 February 1969) 'Hoja Informativa Desde La Iglesia De Santa Teresa De Baracaldo.' (it was also translated into Euskera). Manterola Archive, EBL, R. .5, 1. Constitutional guarantees had been suspended in the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa a number of times since 1962. The only other region to be castigated in this way was Asturias.

¹⁰⁵(17 March 1969) Letter to the CEE signed by 300 Guipuzcoan priests and more than 200 Vizcayan, Navarrese and Alavese priests. Text in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. ii, 883-95. (the signatures are in Esnaola Archive, ABL.) The letter was delivered personally to the Nuncio by two of the signatories.

diocese of San Sebastián whose geographical boundaries correspond with the province of Guipúzcoa. Since the declaration of a state of emergency in Guipúzcoa on 5 August 1968 hundreds of suspected ETA sympathisers had been arrested, beaten and intimidated. During the first ten days alone more than 600 arrests had been made.¹⁰⁶ In the first part of the letter, which described the oppression of the Basques since 1936, the priests revealed their own nationalist sympathies by declaring their opposition to being part of the national ecclesiastical structure:

‘The fact that we are addressing this letter to the National Commission of Spanish Bishops does not imply that we accept the current ecclesiastical structures, indeed we declare our disconformity with it.’

The second part of the letter, which described the effect of the state of emergency on the Basque provinces, revealed that searches of churches, parochial buildings and convents were being carried out by the police, and that several priests had been detained in both Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya. In the third and final part of the letter, which had the heading ‘The silence of the hierarchy’, the priests accused the CEE of abandoning the former bishop of San Sebastián after he had published an extremely outspoken pastoral letter on 22 August 1968 criticising the state’s recourse to military justice and violence in Guipúzcoa. They rejected the Permanent Commission’s Note of 7 February and called once more on the Spanish bishops to end their ‘silence’:

‘The Spanish Church seems to be afraid of annoying the Regime by denouncing situations whose morality it has a duty to judge. It only speaks out when it considers a situation to be a threat to its own freedom, and even then it acts timidly as though fearful of being reminded of favours received and which, it appears, are being paid back by silence, even when it is clear that fundamental human rights are being violated.’

¹⁰⁶Statistics from Mercè Ibarz, *Breu Història d'ETA 1959-1979* (Barcelona: Edicions de la Magrana, 1981), 85.

The letter concluded with three petitions: a forthright condemnation by the CEE of the state of emergency, particularly its effects in the Basque Country; the creation of new religious structures reflecting the natural structure of the Basque Country (they were probably thinking of a new ecclesiastical province consisting of the four Basque dioceses, or more likely, a separate Basque Episcopal Conference); and finally, separation of Church and State.

Barely three weeks after the state of emergency was ended (22 March) there occurred a crisis in the diocese of Bilbao that created even more tension between the civil authorities and the clergy than did the month-long occupation of the diocesan seminary the previous November. It was sparked off on Wednesday 9 April 1969 when the police achieved their greatest success yet in their fight against ETA by capturing a group of ETA members in their Bilbao hiding place. Those arrested belonged to ETA's military leadership and had been based in a flat in Artecalle Street in the old part of Bilbao city, where police had been observing their movements for some time. One of them, Mikel Echevarría, was able to escape in a taxi, although he had been wounded in a shoot-out when the police attacked. A few hours later the driver of the taxi was found shot dead near the town of Orozco (Vizcaya). He was the first civilian to be killed by ETA. Echevarría was given medical assistance and shelter by a number of people in the area and a few days later was helped to escape to France. Two Sacramentine priests from Areatza-Villaro near Orozco visited the Vicar General, Fr. José Angel Ubieta, in his home in Bilbao on the evening of Thursday 10 April to inform him that the police had carried out an unauthorised search of their convent in Villaro in search of the fugitive. The following day Fr. Ubieta summoned the newly ordained curate of Orozco, Fr. José María Ortúzar, to his office in Bilbao, ostensibly to discuss some issues related to the parish.¹⁰⁷ In this meeting, which took place on 12 April, Fr. Ubieta first discussed normal parish business with Fr. Ortúzar and then asked him if he knew anything about the fugitive. Fr. Ortúzar informed the Vicar General that Echevarría had been given shelter and medical assistance in Orozco and that several people, including a number of priests, had helped him to escape. Over the next few days the police carried out searches in several presbyteries and churches in the Orozco district and a number of priests suspected

¹⁰⁷ José María Ortúzar: born in Bilbao in 1942, ordained 15 September 1968, took part in occupation of Derio Seminary. Secularised.

of aiding the fugitive were arrested. One of those detained was Fr. Ortúzar. While being questioned by the police he remarked under duress that helping an *Etarra* to escape could not be so bad if the Vicar General approved. The police proceeded to arrest Fr. Ubieta on 23 April. On the day following his arrest the Diocesan Press Office issued a note calling for prayers that:

‘light will be shed where it is needed and that all those who are innocent of any offence will recover their freedom, especially the aforementioned Vicar General, Don José Angel Ubieta.’¹⁰⁸

A cyclostyled document entitled ‘Violence in Vizcaya’, which was circulated among the clergy and laity of the diocese just a few days after the incidents in Artecalle street, called on the Apostolic Administrator to speak out and condemn the numerous arrests, the torture of detainees, the arrests of priests without episcopal permission and the behaviour of the Press, which it described as:

‘that great loudspeaker at the service of the personal interests of the great Fascist-Capitalists which has taken advantage of this incident to continue with its pernicious task of confusing and deceiving the people with the aim of getting them on their side.’¹⁰⁹

On 24 April representatives of priests from 9 pastoral zones held an urgent meeting to discuss the crisis caused by the arrest of the Vicar General and other priests. They compiled a series of points that they felt the Apostolic Administrator should be asked to publicly clarify. Copies of the points were then sent to all diocesan priests who were requested to respond before 27 April indicating their support for or opposition to the initiative.¹¹⁰ A document was subsequently prepared that had the support of a large number of priests. It called on Bishop Cirarda to make a public statement on the death of

¹⁰⁸*BEOBI*, no. 20 (junio 1969). Quoted in Villota, *La Iglesia en la sociedad*, 497.

¹⁰⁹(April 1969) ‘Violencias en Vizcaya’ Partly written in Euskera. It was probably prepared by the *Gogor* group of priests. In Goicuría Archive, Caja 5, IDTP.

¹¹⁰(24 April 1969) ‘Resumen De La Reunión De Los Representantes De Las Sigüientes Zonas Pastorales: Begaña, Deusto, Sur e Indauchu de Bilbao, Baracaldo, Sestao, Portugalete, Erandio-Algorta, Cadagua, Seminario.’ ‘Expedientes Informativos sobre el Clero (1969-1978)’, AHPV.

the taxi-driver, the arrests of ETA activists and the accusations being made against several priests that they were protecting or aiding members of ETA. It argued that such a statement would illuminate a situation in which moral, human and Christian values that the Church had a duty to protect were being threatened and would end the prevailing confusion and uncertainty over what the Church's legitimate pastoral role was.¹¹¹

On Sunday 27 April Bishop Cirarda gave a homily in the Basilica of Begoña in Bilbao in which he spoke of Fr. Ubieta's release the previous day and criticised the false information that had been published in some newspapers:

‘Be very careful, Brethren, of reports that are published inconsiderately, in this case and in every other.’¹¹²

He said the civil authorities had violated the Concordat since he had not given permission for the arrest of Fr. Ubieta, nor indeed of any other of the priests. In words that were a thinly veiled defence of his Vicar General he said:

‘The act of confiding in a priest, even when it is not in sacramental confession, has the guarantee of secrecy always and in all circumstances, even before the courts of justice, as the Concordat itself states.’¹¹³

In a pastoral letter, which was read at all Masses in Vizcaya on 4 May, Bishop Cirarda again criticised the violation of the Concordat and the reports in the media on the arrests of priests. He praised highly the clergy of Vizcaya in general, but also admitted that some of his priests might be guilty of offences: ‘However at the moment I cannot be certain, nor can I ascertain if this is so.’ He also condemned all types of violence:

‘A categorical "no" to the murder of the taxi driver; another emphatic "no" to the use of violence as a procedure by individuals,

¹¹¹‘Líneas de reflexión ante el momento actual’ (n.d.) Goicuría Archive, Caja 1, IDTP.

¹¹²Text in *BEOBI*, no. 20 (1969), 288-90.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 280.

groups or the authorities themselves, unless it is in a case of legitimate defence.'¹¹⁴

He ended the letter promising to prepare another pastoral letter dealing with the problems affecting the diocese when the situation had become less tense.

Bishop Cirarda's homily and pastoral letter provoked an angry note from the Board of Representatives of the Press in Bilbao:

'In three weeks, from 27 April to 18 May the Board has read, as have all the diocesan faithful and many other people throughout Spain, three documents written by the bishop containing what are for them unacceptable remarks about the Press.'¹¹⁵

There were numerous virulent attacks on the Basque clergy in the local and national newspapers in the following days. One article described the taxi driver as:

'An innocent victim of the violence, attacks and crimes that have shocked the public and that, on occasions, have found refuge and protection behind the walls of convents.'¹¹⁶

The monarchist daily *ABC* described Fr. Ubieta's refusal to answer certain questions put to him during his arrest (on the basis that his conversation with Fr. Ortúzar had been part of his sacerdotal ministry and therefore he was bound to confidentiality) as:

'Scandalous in the eyes of people of good faith who gaze with genuine disconcertion at the resistance shown to the judges by those who could contribute to the clarification of acts which are punishable ... These are sad times for the Basque clergy due to the conduct of some of their members'¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ 'Exhortación Pastoral'. Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 282-7.

¹¹⁵ 'Nota de la Junta Directiva de la Prensa de Bilbao' Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 288-90.

¹¹⁶ Hierro (29 April 1969). Quoted in Elejalde, *La Iglesia en la sociedad*, 499.

¹¹⁷ *ABC* (3 May 1969). Quoted in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 331.

The arrests of priests in connection with the escape of Echevarría continued right up until the end of May and a number of priests went into hiding or left the country altogether to avoid arrest.¹¹⁸ On 26 May Bishop Cirarda, accompanied by his legal advisor in the Curia, Fr. Juan Angel Belda and the Provincial of the Jesuits visited the 11 priests who were at that moment in the prison of Zamora.¹¹⁹ Four of them would be tried at the end of October for their part in the escape of Echevarría. One of the priests wanted by the police was 28-year-old Fr. Juan Maria Arregui who had participated in Operation Mazarredo, as well as in Operation 4-4. He had played a major role in the escape of Etxebarrieta and actually accompanied him as far as Perpignan in France. Arregui asked for political asylum in France and was granted it. He stayed there for the next three years, as he knew he would be immediately arrested if he re-entered Spain.¹²⁰

Cirarda's neutral and diplomatic approach to the tense situation affecting the diocese, as reflected in his homily of the 27 April and the pastoral letter of 4 May, did not satisfy the more radical priests. They wanted a much more outspoken criticism from him of the socio-political situation and the way priests were being treated by the civil authorities. Five priests belonging to *Gogor* who were impatient at Bishop Cirarda's delay in publishing his promised pastoral letter began a hunger strike in the episcopal offices on the afternoon of Friday 30 May.¹²¹ The date chosen coincided with the ninth anniversary of the collective letter of 1960. They sent a letter to the Minister for Justice, the UNO, the International Red Cross and Bishop Cirarda which explained that their action was meant to be a cry of protest as well as a sign of support for the oppressed members of their 'People', the Basques, who were living under a 'reign of terror'.¹²² It called on the Minister for Justice to derogate the Law for the Repression of Banditry and Terrorism, the Red Cross to open an investigation into torture, the UNO to condemn the violation of human rights, and on the Apostolic Administrator of the diocese to condemn

¹¹⁸The exiled priests included Fr. Juan María Arregui, Fr. Tomás Gaztelurrutia, Fr. Lucio Aurrecoschea, Fr. Amadeo Rementeria, Fr. Julio Araluce S.J., Fr. Fermín Gongueta, Fr. José Manuel Olabarría. Information from cyclostyled sheet 'Información' (3-11 June approx). Archive Goicuría, Caja 5, IDTP.

¹¹⁹The eleven priests in Zamora prison were: Fr. Martín Orbe, Fr. Joseba Acha, Fr. Pedro Ojanguren, Fr. José María Ortúzar, Fr. José María Madariaga, Fr. Pedro Solaberriá, 3 Jesuits, 1 Passionist, and the Guipúzcoan priest Jon Echave.

¹²⁰Information from letter written to me by Juanmari Arregui on 2 June 1999. Arregui is still a priest, but outside the official Church.

¹²¹The priests were Fr. Jesús Naverán, Fr. Javier Amuriza, Fr. Julián Calzada, Fr. Nicolás Tellería, and Fr. Alberto Gabikagojeaskoa.

¹²²Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol i, 293-5.

unequivocally the violence, oppression and torture of people in police custody. About 100 copies of the letter were sent to other priests in the diocese by the five priests *before* the hunger strike began. Two hundred and fifty-four Vizcayan priests, religious and seminarians signed a statement of solidarity with the five priests and their demands.¹²³ On Monday 2 June the police, 'carrying out the orders of a special military judge', removed the five priests from the episcopal offices.¹²⁴ (A note from the Diocesan Press Office clarified that the Apostolic Administrator's permission had been sought and when he refused it the police went ahead on the grounds that the urgency of the situation justified it.¹²⁵) Earlier that day Bishop Cirarda held an urgent meeting with his Provisional Advisory Commission, who urged him to publish without further delay the pastoral letter he had promised. The Bishop told them he would not be pressurised into publishing the pastoral letter, especially not by an action such as the one taking place in the episcopal offices.¹²⁶ The five priests were tried before a military court in Burgos on 11 June and sentenced to terms of ten and twelve years.¹²⁷ They were sent to Zamora prison where they remained until the end of the dictatorship.

On 9 June the Civil Governor of Bilbao sent reports to the Interior Minister, Camilo Alonso Vega and to the Minister for Justice, Antonio María de Oriol y Urquijo, on subversive activities by elements of the diocesan clergy. Both reports blamed the behaviour of the clergy on the Apostolic Administrator and advised the appointment of a residential bishop as soon as possible.¹²⁸ The report to D. Camilo Alonso Vega also suggested the following ways of ending the 'sedition': the closure of the diocesan seminary until all traces of separatism were 'extirpated', the dismissal of the entire seminary teaching staff and the introduction by the ecclesiastical authorities of measures to eradicate 'political' sermons and end the attacks being made on the regime by certain religious associations.

The hunger-strike had certainly attracted a lot of attention. Many priests referred to it in sermons and in some churches in Vizcaya they actually read the hunger-strikers'

¹²³'Sacerdotes Vascos en Huelga de Hambre' Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 5, 1.

¹²⁴*Gaceta del Norte* (3 June 1969). Quoted in Villota, *La Iglesia en la sociedad*, 500.

¹²⁵In Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 301.

¹²⁶Information on this meeting from an anonymous cyclostyled document entitled 'Información' (n.d.) Archive Goicuria, Caja 5, IDTP.

¹²⁷'Sentencia del Consejo de Guerra 31-69.' In Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 302-11.

¹²⁸(9 June 1969) 'Informe sobre actividades del clero de la diócesis de Bilbao del Gobierno Civil de Vizcaya al Ministro de la Gobernación, D. Camilo Alonso Vega y al Ministro de Justicia, D. Antonio María de Oriol y Urquijo.' 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el Clero (1969-1978)', AHPV.

letter from the pulpit. An article published in the BOPE entitled 'Not Even the Right to Protest' condemned the ecclesiastical hierarchy's silence and called on them to make a statement.¹²⁹ A group of lay people from the diocese sent a letter to Bishop Cirarda on 4 June calling for him to make a public statement on the five hunger-strikers, 'who through the more or less justifiable stance they have taken, are denouncing a situation that corresponds to you in the first place to denounce.'¹³⁰ Support also came from outside the diocese: a group of Catalan priests signed an open letter of support for the five priests and began a hunger-strike in Barcelona Seminary on 6 June.¹³¹ (see more in Chapter IV) On 28 June the national commissions of several apostolic workers' movements issued a joint open letter that criticised the justice system in Spain and declared that the situation the five priests were protesting at in the Basque Country also existed in several other parts of Spain.¹³²

There was also international reaction. The association of intellectuals of *Paulus-Gesellschaft* wrote to the European Conference of Bishops assembled in Coire in Switzerland on 7 July to protest at the way the five priests had been treated.¹³³ A group of 60 priests from Bayonne wrote an open letter to the bishops of Bayonne, San Sebastián, Bilbao, Pamplona and Vitoria on 27 August expressing their support for all Basque priests who were suffering because they were struggling in the name of the Gospel to help their 'People'.¹³⁴ A group of French priests who were members of '*Echanges et Dialogues*' wrote to the French bishops asking them to intervene with the Vatican and the CEE in defence of the five priests.¹³⁵

Because numerous sermons were being preached in support of the five hunger strikers and because some priests had stopped celebrating the Eucharist altogether as a sign of solidarity, the Apostolic Administrator wrote his priests a letter on 18 June warning them against 'temporalism'. He referred to the pastoral letter that he had promised at the beginning of May:

¹²⁹ '*Ni Derecho a Protestar*' Ibid., 318-22.

¹³⁰ Letter dated 4 June 1969. Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 14, 5.

¹³¹ '*Sentido de un gesto*' in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 296-8.

¹³² (28 June 1969) '*En protesta por la condena de los curas vascos.*' In Domínguez, *Organizaciones obreras cristianas*, 441-2.

¹³³ Letter in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 314-8 and in Goicuría Archive Caja 1, IDTP.

¹³⁴ '*Declaración de un grupo de sacerdotes de la diócesis de Bayona.*' Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, 313-4.

¹³⁵ Mentioned in *ibid.*, 296.

‘Many of you have been asking me to prepare a pastoral letter dealing with the most serious problems affecting our diocese at the present moment. I hope, with the help of your prayers and reflections, to be able to do so without much delay.’¹³⁶

However many months were to pass before the letter was issued. Four diocesan priests were tried in Burgos before a military court on 21 and 23 October. The same court also tried by default a further three priests whose whereabouts were not known.¹³⁷ All of the priests were accused of being involved in helping the *Etarra* Mikel Echevarría to escape at the end of April. They were sentenced to terms of between six and twelve years. The *Capitanía General de Burgos* published a note on 23 October saying the trial had been held in camera in keeping with the stipulations of the Concordat and in compliance with the wishes of the Apostolic Administrator and that the trial had proven that priests frequently intervened in the activities of ETA.¹³⁸ The Diocesan Press Office published a note the same day saying that Bishop Cirarda had *not* asked for the trial to be held in camera and that he would have preferred a public trial. In addition it said that the bishop believed that Article 16 of the Concordat, which dealt with trials of priests and religious, was in need of revision. The note condemned all types of violence and admonished priests who directly or indirectly participated in violent acts. However, it said the military judges’ note was insulting and inaccurate in declaring that members of the clergy were ‘frequently involved in ETA’s activities.’¹³⁹

Just days after the trial ended the bishops of Bilbao and San Sebastián published a joint pastoral letter in which they analysed the situation in their dioceses and identified three common problems: firstly, a lack of respect for pluralism, which they said was leading to social divisions; secondly, violence; and thirdly, the manipulation of the Church’s teaching for temporal ends. They described a vicious circle of violence affecting both provinces and warned of the danger of institutional violence arising where

¹³⁶(18 June 1969) ‘Carta reservada de José María Cirarda a sus sacerdotes.’ Quote in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 335.

¹³⁷On trial: Fr. José María Ojanguren (10 yrs), Fr. Joseba Acha (8 yrs), Fr. Martín Orbe (6 yrs), Fr. José María Ortúzar (2 yrs). Tried by default: Fr. Amadeo Rementería, Fr. Juan María Arregui, Fr. Tomás Gastelurrutia.

¹³⁸‘Nota de la Capitanía General de Burgos sobre el Consejo de Guerra 30/69.’ Published in *Gaceta del Norte*, 23 October 1969, p.1.

¹³⁹(23 October 1969) ‘Nota del Obispado de Bilbao. Sobre Consejo de Guerra 30/69.’ *BEOBI*, no. 20 (1969), 543-5.

political, economic and social power impeded the exercise of certain fundamental human rights. They alluded to torture in police stations by expressing concern about '*malos tratos*' (ill-treatment') of people in police custody. In an interview in September 1990 Bishop Cirarda said that it was cowardice that prevented the bishops from using the word 'torture' in the letter.¹⁴⁰ This was just the first of several similar joint communications issued by the Basque bishops on the problems affecting their dioceses over the following years, which, as we shall see, were especially welcomed by the oppositional clergy, but infuriated the government.

¹⁴⁰Unzueta, *Vaticano II*, 74. The Pastoral Letter was entitled 'Nuestro momento diocesano: dificultades y motivos de esperanza.' *BEOBI*, no. 20 (1969), 581-602.

Chapter IV

Clerical Dissidence in Barcelona, 1960-1969

Until the sixties there was much less clerical opposition to the regime in the diocese of Barcelona than there was in Bilbao. This was probably because the majority of the clergy still regarded the Caudillo first and foremost as the Church's saviour. The Church in Catalonia had suffered a ferocious persecution during the three years of Civil War and memories of it were bound to endure and dominate in the minds of the clergy for many, many years. The post-war reconstruction of the destroyed and damaged churches and the restoration and enhancement of the Church's power and influence in all areas of society also played a major part in ensuring that the predominant feeling among the clergy remained one of gratitude to Franco and his regime until at least 1960. Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter II, certain aspects of the socio-political situation had been criticised, most notably by some of the chaplains to the apostolic workers' movements. In the fifties and early sixties they had several times called on the government to concede wage increases to help ameliorate the economic situation of the working class and they were becoming more and more outspoken in their criticism of the regime's repression of the labour movement. The regime's endeavours to erase all signs of Catalan identity and culture had also caused resentment, especially among chaplains to religious groups with cultural and patriotic leanings.

An anonymous, report from January 1959 warned that a nucleus of clerical and lay activists in Barcelona was encouraging 'Catalanism' and propagating a left wing political ideology that constituted an attack on the regime and the Crusade of 1936-1939.¹ It described as 'particularly dangerous' a number of 'Catalanist' teachers who had 'infiltrated' the diocesan seminary, such as Dr. Juan Ventosa, Professor of Ethics and director of the Catholic Institute for Social Studies (ICESB), whom it described as a 'rabid democrat' who used his lectures to politically indoctrinate his students.² Another seminary teacher, Dr. Juan Batlles Alerm, was accused of hating the regime with all his

¹ (January 1959) 'Informe sobre algunas actuaciones de sacerdotes y seglares católicos', in AAM. The report was probably prepared by conservative priests and laymen and copies were sent to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Barcelona.

² Fr. Juan Ventosa i Aguilar was born in 1921.

heart and of having completely 'politicised' the JAC, of which he was diocesan chaplain.³ Among other 'subversives' the report mentioned were Fr Casimiro Martí, 'Vice-diocesan chaplain of HOAC, chaplain to the Catholic separatist group in the university known as CC and mentor of Christian-Democrats' and Dr. Manuel Bonet Muixí, 'a self-confessed enemy of the regime who never misses an opportunity to discredit the political system in Spain.' It claimed Dr. Francesc Vergés, a member of the diocesan curia, kept Dr. Bonet informed of happenings in the diocese.⁴ Dr. Bonet was a key figure among a group of diocesan priests who were critical of the regime. At the time this report was prepared he was living in Rome, as he was a member of the Rota. In 1947 he and three other young priests who had been ordained just after the Civil War set up a secret association of priests called *Unió Sacerdotal*. Membership grew from 10 in 1950 to 64 in 1959. Although primarily concerned with purely spiritual matters, its members all rejected the National-Catholic triumphalism that characterised the post-war Church and they had a very high regard for the pre-war Catalan Church.⁵ Many of them held influential positions in the government of the diocese, were diocesan chaplains to the specialised movements of AC, or seminary teachers. In fact almost all the priests named in the 1959 report were members.

One instance of the laity expressing annoyance at the Church's close ties with the regime and its participation in the repression of the Catalan language and culture was an open letter addressed to Archbishop Arriba y Castro of Tarragona, Bishop del Pino of Lérida and Bishop Moll of Tortosa that was prepared in early 1959 and signed 'Catholics from the 8 Catalan dioceses.' The letter criticised the three prelates for constantly praising Franco and the regime in their pastoral letters and public speeches. It accused them of adopting a political stance which was at odds with their role and obligations as bishop and it pointed out that if a German or Italian bishop spoke in similar terms about Adenauer and Gronchi, two 'genuinely democratic and Catholic politicians', it would provoke a national

³ Joan Batlles i Alerm was born in 1917.

⁴ Fr. Casimir Martí Martí was born in 1926, Manuel Bonet Muixí in 1914 and Fr. Francesc Vergés Vives in 1919.

⁵ Since the transition to democracy some members of the *Unió Sacerdotal* have spoken and written of the association's concern to preserve the cultural identity of the Catalan Church and its admiration for its vibrancy and vitality before the Civil War, under the leadership of Cardinal Vidal i Barraquer. For example, the interview with Fr. Joan Batlles i Alerm in: J. Bigordà, A. Manent, and R. Bofill, *Església i País. Tres Testimonis* (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1995), 96-135.

and international scandal. It accused the three prelates of being 'anti-Catalan' because of their almost total prohibition of the use of the Catalan language in Masses in their dioceses. It pointed out that in the city of Tarragona the preaching of sermons in Catalan was forbidden in all churches and that there were only a half dozen or so churches in the whole diocese of Tortosa where Catalan was ever used. In Lérida and Tortosa the Catechism was taught almost exclusively through Spanish and in Tarragona the Archbishop only begrudgingly tolerated it being taught in Catalan.⁶

(i) Dom Escarré and the first significant clerical protests

In November 1963, while the second session of the Vatican Council was taking place, the Abbot of Montserrat, Dom Aureli Escarré, gave an explosive interview to *Le Monde* in which he spelled out what was probably the toughest condemnation of the regime ever uttered from the interior.⁷ He accused the regime of violating fundamental Christian principles behind a façade of defending Christianity:

'The real subversion existing in Spain is that of the government ... What we have behind us is not twenty-five years of peace, but only twenty-five years of victory. The conquerors, including the Church, which was obliged to fight on their side, have done nothing to close the gap between victors and vanquished.'⁸

This burning indictment of the regime made a huge impact on the clergy in Barcelona, as well as causing an international uproar.⁹ On 9 March 1964 the secret police sent the Civil Governor of Barcelona a translation of an article published in *Informations Catholiques Internationales* on 1 March 1964, according to which 407 Catalan priests had written to

⁶ A printed copy of the letter entitled 'Paraules a tres prelats de Catalunya' (n.d.) in Manent Archive, ANC.

⁷ Dom Escarré was born in Penedès (Barcelona Province) in 1908. He joined the Benedictines of Montserrat when he was 15. Like his fellow monks he spent the Civil War in exile, first in Italy and then in Navarre in Nationalist Spain. He became Coadjutor Abbot in 1941 and Abbot in 1946.

⁸ 'Le régime espagnol se dit chrétien mais n'obéit pas aux principes de base du christianisme.' *Le Monde* (14 November 1963), 1.

⁹ Albert Manent, 'Las declaraciones de l'Abat Escarré a *Le Monde*. Crónica d'un testimoni.' *Serra d'Or*, no. 231, (15 December 1978), 71-4.

Dom Escarré expressing their total agreement with his declarations.¹⁰ A month later the Civil Governor received from the same source a copy of another letter, signed by almost 500 hundred priests, which had recently been sent to the bishops of the eight Catalan dioceses. This long letter identified a crisis of faith among workers and cultural minorities and called for appropriate pastoral strategies to be put in place. It called for the rapid implementation of Conciliar teaching and for the Church to distance itself from the regime. It declared that the partisan position adopted by the Church during the Civil War and its failure to act as an agent of reconciliation since the war ended made the work of evangelisation extremely difficult among those who had been on the losing side:

‘The attitude adopted almost unanimously by the official Church, which did not remain true to its promises and declarations when it aligned itself with one of the belligerents, and continues to support the political regime of the victors, has prevented the reconciliation called for by Pius XII at the end of a war that Pius XI deplored and John XXIII described as lamentable and sorrowful.’¹¹

None of the bishops replied to the letter, even though it was copied and circulated clandestinely among the general public under the heading *‘L'Església del poble’*.

Two years after Escarré’s declarations and just a year after the letter of the 500 Catalan priests a group of 14 chaplains and 46 lay leaders of various religious groups and associations in Barcelona sent a ‘message’ to the Pope, bishops and theologians assembled in Rome for the final session of the Vatican Council. The document, dated 28 October 1965, described the religious situation in Spain and Catalonia as being characterised by increasing secularisation, especially among intellectuals, workers and young people. It claimed that there were three main causes of this process of secularisation: the Church-

¹⁰ (9 March 1964) Nota Informativa: *‘Informations Catholiques Internationales’*, in Arxiu General del Govern Civil de Barcelona (AGGCB), Caja 111. A copy of the letter entitled *‘Al costat de l’Abat Escarré’* is in Archivo Vila Abadal, ANC.

¹¹ Copy of letter sent to Civil Governor by the ‘Capitán General de Cataluña’ on 22 April 1964, in AGGCB, Caja 61. Does not include the signatures.

State union in Spain; the fact that the Church was not tackling the real pastoral needs of the people, and the violation of fundamental Catholic principles related to politics, society and basic human rights by a regime that described itself as Catholic.¹² Outside purely Catholic circles few people in Barcelona and Spain knew about the message, as news about it was kept out of the press by the strict censorship.

Both letters failed to elicit a response from the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the radicalisation of clerical protest over the following years owes much to their frustration over the silence of the hierarchy in the face of the obvious failure of the National-Catholicism project to realise its objectives of re-Christianising the religiously alienated.

(ii) 1966: an explosion of clerical dissent

During the first half of 1966 three events, which were to varying degrees interconnected, drew public attention to intra-ecclesial and extra-ecclesial tensions in the diocese of Barcelona: firstly, the *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign in February, which was sparked off by the appointment of a non-Catalan as Coadjutor Archbishop of Barcelona with the right of succession; secondly, the two-day siege of the Capuchin convent in Sarrià (Barcelona) in mid-March, where an illegal assembly was taking place to elect a democratic student union outside the SEU; and thirdly, the march by 130 priests from the cathedral to Police Headquarters in Via Layetana on 11 May to deliver a letter to the Chief of Police that protested at the torture of detainees in police custody. These events attracted a lot of media attention and revealed that many members of the clergy and laity of Barcelona were vehemently opposed to the regime's policy of de-Catalanization of their Church and also deplored the continuing violation of basic human rights in Spain.

Radio Vatican announced on 22 February 1966 that the Bishop of Astorga, Marcelo González Martín, had been appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Barcelona with the right of succession.¹³ This was the first appointment to any of the Catalan dioceses since the ending of the Second Vatican Council. It quickly became clear that the choice of a Castilian rather than a Catalan incumbent was a huge disappointment to very many of the clergy and the laity of the diocese. The same day that the news of the appointment was

¹² (28 October 1965) 'Missatge dels Catòlics de Barcelona als Pares Conciliars'. Copy of Catalan version in AMM.

¹³ Bishop González Martín was born in Valladolid in 1918 and had been Bishop of Astorga since 1961.

made public González Martín began receiving dozens of letters, telegrams and phone calls asking him to refuse the appointment. A few days later the famous *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign against the nomination and in favour of Catalan bishops began.¹⁴ Josep Benet, a young lawyer, historian and Catholic activist, was one of its organisers.¹⁵ An article on the campaign in *Le Monde* on 4 March quoted him as saying that the appointment of a Castilian had 'destroyed the great hopes the Catalans had put in the Council' and asking 'Why deny the Catalans what is their right, the same right that is recognised for the African and Asian Churches?'¹⁶ As part of the campaign the slogan *Volem Bisbes Catalans* was painted on walls and buildings in Barcelona city and in the main towns of the hinterland, such as L'Hospitalet and Sabadell.¹⁷ On Saturday 5 March thousands of leaflets with the words '*Volem Bisbes Catalans*' were scattered in the most central streets of Barcelona and the following day at the end of Sunday Masses thousands more of the same leaflets were handed out outside many churches in the city and in the suburbs.¹⁸ Over the following weeks dozens of letters from individuals or groups representing the laity and the clergy were sent to the Pope, the Nuncio, Archbishop Modrego and the Bishop of Astorga calling for the appointment to be reversed. The basic argument was the same in all the letters: that the appointment of a non-Catalan was inappropriate for the archdiocese¹⁹ and out of line with Vatican II teaching on the desirability of autochthonous bishops. For example, 23 Catalan Catholic intellectuals wrote an open letter to Bishop Marcelo González on 27 February in which they declared that:

‘The appointment of a prelate who knows nothing of the complexity of the archdiocese, nor anything of the particular language, history

¹⁴ The account of the *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign that follows is based mainly on information and documents contained in *Le Vatican et la Catalogne. Une affaire de l'après Concile. Le problème de la nomination des évêques dans l'Église d'aujourd'hui*, which was first published anonymously in Geneva in 1967. The references and quotes used are from the second edition: *Le Vatican et la Catalogne. Une affaire de l'après Concile. La nomination de Mgr. González Martín à l'archevêché de Barcelone* (Deuxième édition bilingue catalane-française mise à jour. Paris: Éditions Catalanes de Paris, 1971).

¹⁵ Josep Benet had been a member of the Torras i Bages student group.

¹⁶ Quoted in Hilari Raguier, Miquel Estradé & Josep Massot, *La Integració de les religioses a Catalunya* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1977), 131.

¹⁷ On 11 March it even appeared on the walls of the Nunciature in Madrid.

¹⁸ 'Per què volem bisbe català a Barcelona.' (full volant s/f) ANC, Manent Archive, Documento 90.

¹⁹ Barcelona became an archdiocese in 1964.

and culture of this region, has disappointed all those Catholics who had placed their hope in the doctrine of *Pacem in Terris* relating to cultural minorities.²⁰

On 8 March Fr. Josep Maria Bardés and Antoni Badia, diocesan chaplain and president respectively of the *Lliga Espiritual de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, wrote to the Bishop of Astorga explaining that they were profoundly saddened by his appointment *purely* because he was not a Catalan. They said that the majority of Catalans, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, believed that his appointment was the result of government pressure on the Vatican, otherwise papal and conciliar teaching on the rights of ethnic and national minorities would have been respected. They expressed the belief that even if he were to learn the Catalan language it would not be enough to enable him to ever fully understand the region and its people. They went on to give a description of the uniqueness of Catalan culture, the widespread use of Catalan, in spite of the imposition of Castilian as the official language, and the important role historically played by the Church in the preservation and promotion of the Catalan language and culture.²¹

Within a few weeks the campaign had spread to the archdiocese of Tarragona: on 15 April 109 priests from that diocese wrote to the Nuncio, Monsignor Riberi, asking for the appointment of a Catalan auxiliary archbishop with the right of succession.²² The letter was criticised in several articles that appeared in the government-controlled press in subsequent days.²³ In January 1967 almost 80% of the clergy of the diocese of Menorca wrote to the Nuncio asking for the appointment of a bishop from a Catalan-speaking region to the see, which had just become vacant. They also requested that he be nominated in the way recommended by Vatican II.²⁴ In April 1967 a group of chaplains and presidents of various apostolic movements from the diocese of Lérida wrote to the

²⁰Letter published in *Le Monde* on 4 March. Quoted in Raguier, *La Integració de les religioses a Catalunya*, 131.

²¹Copy of letter dated 8 March 1966 in AAM.

²²Copy of the letter dated 15 April 1966 and signatures in *Le Vatican et la Catalogne*, 233-4. *Le Monde* published a short report on the letter on 28 April.

²³For example, 'Discriminación Religiosa' *Madrid* (29 April 1966) & 'El Imperativo Categórico y un Temor.' *Arriba* (1 May 1966). Newspaper clippings in Manent Archive, ANC.

²⁴The Conciliar decree *Christus Dominus* of 28 October 1965 called on civil authorities to waive any rights and privileges that they enjoyed in regard to the election, nomination or presentation to bishoprics. Since 1941 Franco nominated all Spanish bishops.

Nuncio outlining the qualities they would like the next Archbishop of Tarragona to have, which included knowledge of the Catalan language and familiarity with all the problems affecting the Catalan region.²⁵ Demands for autochthonous bishops soon yielded results: On 6 June 1967 Carles Cardó was appointed Bishop of Tortosa, on 24 July 1968 Ramón Malla was appointed to the See of Lérida and on 26 November 1970 Josep Pont i Gol became Archbishop of Tarragona.

Just a couple of weeks after the *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign began public attention became even more focused on the Church in Barcelona as a result of a two-day siege of a Capuchin convent that ended with the forced-entry of the police into the building and the arrest of several people.²⁶ Over 500 people had gathered in the convent of the Capuchin Fathers in the Sarrià district of Barcelona on the afternoon of 9 March to participate in the constituent assembly of the *Sindicat Democràtic d'Estudiants de la Universitat de Barcelona* (SDEUB).²⁷ They comprised some 450 students; 14 intellectuals, writers, and other personalities associated with the arts and culture; 21 university teachers; 7 journalists; a delegate from the International Conference of Students, and another from the United States National Student Association; and two priests, Fr. Jordi Llimona OFM and Fr. Ricard Pedrals, diocesan chaplain to the scout movement. The police surrounded the convent that evening and a two-day siege began which ended in a raid that was subsequently nicknamed *La Caputxinada*. All the students had their national identity cards taken from them by the police before leaving the convent. The other participants were taken to police headquarters, where they were held for 72 hours. On 4 April they received fines of between 25,000 and 200,000 pesetas for having participated in the assembly. Furthermore, 18 of the university teachers were temporarily suspended from their posts. On 30 May the students who had organised the student assembly were tried by TOP and all, but 3 of them, were sentenced to three months in prison.

²⁵ Copy of the letter dated 15 April in Manent Archive, ANC

²⁶ Most of the information that follows on the seige is taken from Joan Crexell, *La Caputxinada* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1987).

²⁷ One of the student organisers, Joaquim Vilaplana, arranged the venue. He was a member of *Franciscàlia*, a religious association set up in 1949 by Fr. Basili de Rubí OFM. (see Chapter II)

The day the siege ended the Provincial Superior of the Capuchins, Fr. Salvador de Borges, wrote to the Civil Governor of Barcelona to protest at the entry of police into the convent. He pointed out that they had forced the doors and entered the convent without seeking his consent, or that of any other ecclesiastical authority in the diocese, and apparently also without a judicial order. He said that the assembly had ended some 42 hours earlier, following the instructions given by the police when they arrived to the convent, and that therefore the subsequent police action was completely unjustified. He finished by saying he would be sending a detailed report on the events that had occurred to the 'relevant ecclesiastical authority'.²⁸ The following day the Civil Governor published an official note on the siege in the Barcelona press which described the assembly as a 'subversive meeting' of an obvious political nature, owing to the participation of several people who had no connection at all with the university, and also from the propaganda relating to the assembly that had been circulating in previous days. The note explained that by remaining in the convent for two days the participants constituted a threat to public order, hence the necessity to forcibly remove them.²⁹

The *Caputxinada* sparked off an unprecedented movement of solidarity, not just in academic circles and in the local Church, but in all sectors of Catalan society and it was a key event in the formation and consolidation of the opposition in the region.³⁰ On Thursday 17 March, between 8.00pm and 10.00pm, there was a demonstration by somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 people in central Barcelona in support of the participants in the assembly. One of the many clandestine documents that had been circulating a few days earlier calling on people to take part in the march appears to have been prepared by members of one of the more 'Catalanist' religious associations. It urged people to participate in the demonstration because the *Caputxinada* was just the latest in a series of attacks on Church premises that had begun more than three years earlier. It listed the attacks as follows: an arson attack on the Casal de Montserrat in Carrer Arcs (22 December 1963); an attack on Casal de Montserrat in Carrer València and assault on

²⁸ Copy of letter in Crexell, *La Caputxinada*, 84-5.

²⁹ Ibid., 101-2.

³⁰ For example one of upshots of the Capuxinada was the creation of a coordinating body, the *Taula Redonda* (Round Table), under the initiative of the PSUC that joined a vast array of opposition groups - Communists, Socialists, Catalan Nationalists, Christian-Democrats and various independent figures in a

Antoni Bascompt, who was giving a talk there (7 April 1965); attacks on the Forùm Vergés and CICF where the Belgian priest Fr. Luis Evely had been invited to give talks (28 October 1965). The document pointed out that each time the police had failed to find those responsible for the attacks, but that in the wake of the *Caputxinada* it had become clear that the 'civil authorities' were also to blame for those earlier attacks.³¹

Just four days after the *Caputxinada* the superiors of eight religious orders in Catalonia wrote a letter to Fr. Salvador de Borges expressing their support for the friars for allowing the student assembly to be held in the convent.³² They criticised the press, radio and TV reports of the previous days for being offensive to the community of Capuchins in Sarrià and for being one-sided, as well as lacking in veracity and objectivity. They said the laity and the public in general were confused and scandalised by the media reports and they urged the Capuchin Fathers to make their own public statement on the incidents that had taken place in the convent. Some weeks after receiving this letter Fr. Salvador de Borges invited the signatories to a meeting with him. This took place on 21 May 1966 and was attended by the abbots of the Benedictine Monastery of Montserrat and the Cistercian Monastery of Poblet and the provincial superiors of the Jesuits and Escolapians. It was decided at the meeting to set up an 'Assembly of Abbots and Provincials of Catalonia' (RAP) to promote dialogue and collaboration between the principal male religious orders in Catalonia. The creation of RAP at this time is probably indicative of a growth in Catalanist sentiments among the regular clergy, as there already existed a national conference of abbots and superiors (Confer).

Another of the upshots of the *Caputxinada* was the creation on 12 March of the *Secretariat d'Apostolat Laïcal* (SAL), a coordinating body for joint actions by religious groups and lay associations in the diocese.³³ It was created when the leaders of 16 religious associations and apostolic movements met in the AC offices in Calle Llúria to

loose front. See Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilisation* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 132.

³¹ 'Davant el silenci i la mentira oficials sobre els fets que indignen els Barcelonins, aquesta es la veritat' (n.d.), in AMM. The attacks referred to were carried out by reactionary Catholic groups from Barcelona who believed that the groups who met in the above mentioned premises were dangerous religious 'progresistas', 'Catalanistas' and 'politizados'.

³² Letter dated 15 March 1966 in Crexell, *La Caputxinada*, 132-3.

³³ Throughout the nine years of its existence the executive committee of SAL held weekly meetings and a general meeting of all the representatives was held once a month. Over the years 25 groups affiliated to SAL.

prepare a public declaration of solidarity with the students and the Capuchin friars. This was not the first joint statement of its kind: on 11 February 1965 the presidents, secretaries and other leaders of 33 religious groups and associations sent an open letter to the Archbishop and clergy of Barcelona complaining that of the 786 Masses celebrated in the city each Sunday only 291 (37%) of them were said in Catalan.³⁴ Many of the same groups were also responsible for the 'Message from Catholics of Barcelona to the Council Fathers' of 28 October 1965.³⁵ The declaration concerning the *Caputxinada*, dated 13 March, pointed out that the civil authorities' treatment of the participants in the assembly violated Article 3 of the International Declaration of Human Rights, as well as several articles of the Conciliar decree *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and the encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* (1963). It was very critical of media reports on the assembly, describing them as biased, calumnious and at the service of the powers-that-be.³⁶ On 17 March the newly created SAL held its first meeting at which a letter to the Archbishop of Barcelona, the Nuncio and the President of the CEE was prepared. Like the earlier declaration, it too condemned the regime's violation of the right to assembly and other rights normally defended by the Church, and it called on the ecclesiastical authorities to speak out, warning that if they did not the Church would be badly discredited in the eyes of very many people.³⁷ SAL also became involved in the on-going *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign. On 31 March a group of representatives from almost all of its affiliated associations assembled in the patio of the episcopal palace. Some of them were carrying placards displaying slogans such as 'Fidelity to the Council' and 'Catalonia wants Catalan bishops'. They presented Archbishop Modrego with an open letter addressed to Bishop González Martín that deplored the latter's refusal to meet representatives of 15 religious associations, as well as a number of Catholic personalities from Barcelona. On behalf of the laity of the diocese the signatories of the letter 'once more' called on González Martín to refuse the appointment.³⁸ The leaders of several of the specialised movements of AC

³⁴ (11 February 1965) 'Al Senyor i Clergat De L'Arxidiocesi De Barcelona', in AMM.

³⁵ See page 141.

³⁶ (13 March 1966) 'Declaración a la Opinión Pública' Goicuría Archive, Caja 2, IDTP.

³⁷ Text of letter dated 17 March 1966 in Crexell, *La Caputxinada*, 96-8.

³⁸ Report on assembly in *La Tribune de Genève* (16 May 1966). Cited in *Le Vatican et la Catalogne*, 40-1.

boycotted the ceremony of consecration of the new Coadjutor Archbishop that took place in the cathedral of Barcelona on 19 May.³⁹

The *Caputxinada* also provoked collective protest by the clergy of the diocese. More than 100 priests visited the episcopal palace on 16 March to present a letter to Archbishop Modrego that said that the recent events that had occurred in the Capuchin convent had caused sorrow and 'perplexity' among priests and many members of the laity:

'The principal reasons for this perplexity are we believe three: firstly, the failure of the hierarchy to adopt a clear stance vis-à-vis the violation by the forces of public order of the right to immunity of religious premises; secondly, their incomprehensible silence in the face of reports in the papers and on radio and television that are calumnious of the Capuchins of Sarrià and of those who took part in the assembly; thirdly, the confusion created by their failure to reaffirm the fundamental human rights of association, assembly, and free expression, when these have been breached.'⁴⁰

There were reports on the priests' assembly in *Le Monde*, *Midi Libre* and *L'Indépendant* on 18 March.⁴¹

Less than two months later a street demonstration took place involving 130 priests who were protesting at the torture of the student leader, Joaquim Boix.⁴² He was one of eight members of the SDEUB committee arrested on 6 May, accused of being the instigators of a student demonstration in the University of Barcelona on 26 April. Two days after the arrests of the students Fr. Josep Dalmau, Fr. Antoni Totosaus, Fr. Ricard Pedrals, and Fr. Jordi Llimona (the last two had participated in the constituent assembly of the SDEUB) met at a celebration for the scouts of the *Agrupament Mare de Déu de Montserrat*. They discussed the torture of Boix and decided to organise a demonstration by priests in protest. Over the following four days they contacted as many priests as

³⁹ Ibid., 73-4.

⁴⁰ Text of letter dated 16 March in Crexell, *La Caputxinada*, 94-5.

⁴¹ Crexell, *La Caputxinada*, 95.

possible, by telephone and through word of mouth, to invite them to participate in a peaceful and silent march on 11 May. On the day scheduled for the march the first priests began to gather in the patio of the Archbishop's Palace at around midday and then moved into the cloisters of the cathedral where they signed two letters protesting at police use of torture - one addressed to the Chief of Police in Barcelona, Inspector Juan Creix, and another to Archbishop Modrego.⁴³ They then went into the cathedral to pray and listen to one of the priests read a passage from St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians (1: 2-10) after which Fr. Ricard Pedrals addressed the group explaining that the aim of the action was pastoral - to demonstrate solidarity with all people who were suffering and to show that the priests were truly committed to defending the Church's teaching on respect for the human person.⁴⁴ At this point in time there were several plainclothes policemen at the back of the cathedral and jeeps full of uniformed police were parked at all the entrances. Before the group of 130 priests left the cathedral to begin the march a smaller group of priests led by Fr. Vidal Aunós (parish priest of Sant Medir, where CCOO of Barcelona were officially founded in 1964) went into the episcopal palace adjacent to the cathedral to hand in the letter to the Archbishop. Dr. Modrego was actually away on a pastoral visit and therefore the Vicar General, Dr. Joan Serra i Puig, accepted the letter on his behalf. When the group rejoined the others the march began. As the priests approached Police-Headquarters, which was only a couple of hundred yards from the cathedral, policemen swinging truncheons dispersed the cassock-clad demonstrators and the scene caused such an impression that it went down in collective memory as one of the foremost events of the opposition to Franco.

The Civil Governor of Barcelona visited Archbishop Modrego the following day to complain about the march and to urge him to sanction the organisers, who he said, were only interested in political subversion and should be transferred out of the diocese. He also advised the Archbishop to impose a sermon for all Masses the following Sunday so as

⁴²Most of the information on the 'Peaceful and Silent March' of 11 May 1966 is taken from Joan Crexell, *La Manifestació de capellans de 1966* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1992).

⁴³ Cyclostyled copies of both letters in AAM.

⁴⁴Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 49-50.

to prevent priests from referring to the demonstration during the homily.⁴⁵ Although the Archbishop *did* impose a homily for all Sunday Masses on 15 May this did not deter priests in dozens of parishes from making commentaries on the march and the brutality with which the police had attacked the participants.⁴⁶ Furthermore on 14 May around 250 priests from the dioceses of Barcelona, Tarragona, Mallorca, Vic and Seu d'Urgell gathered in the patio of the episcopal palace in solidarity with the priests who had taken part in the march. The Archbishop met a small group representing the assembled priests who read him a note that called for those who had assaulted the priests to be excommunicated.⁴⁷

A few days after the priests' march SAL made hundreds of cyclostyled copies of a report that had been prepared by some of the participants explaining the reasons for the march.⁴⁸ (in the days and weeks that followed the priests' march *only* condemnatory reports and articles were allowed to be printed in the newspapers.⁴⁹) At the end of May the monks of Montserrat printed a further 60,000 copies of it in Catalan and 5,000 in Spanish that were secretly delivered to the offices of AC in Calle Llúria.⁵⁰ In August the police sent the Civil Governor a list of the names of the diocesan chaplains and presidents of all the organisations that had signed and helped distribute the clandestine report.⁵¹

On 18 May the Executive Commission of the CEE issued a statement that disapproved of the priests' march. It also contained some mild criticism of the media reports:

⁴⁵ Information on the meeting taken from a cyclostyled document entitled 'Conversación del Gobernador Civil de Barcelona con el Señor Arzobispo, hoy, jueves, día 12 de mayo.' In AMM. A copy of the report was probably sent to the monastery by the Civil Governor himself.

⁴⁶ Text of the obligatory homily in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 253-4. See police report 'Homilies del dia 15.' AGGCB, Caja 63.

⁴⁷ Reproduced in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 59-60.

⁴⁸ (15 May 1966) 'Informació Privada als Militants: La Marxa Pacífica i Silenciosa de 130 Sacerdots de Barcelona.' It was signed by 20 lay groups and associations: JOC, JIC, JAC, JOC, JAC/F, JEC/F, JOC/F, Delegación Diocesana de Escultismo de Barcelona, M.S.C. "Minyons Escoltes", Guies de San Jordi, Pax Christi (grupo regional Catalan), Franciscàlia, ACI, ACO, Graduados, Movimiento Rural de AC, Centro Ecuménico, Lliga Espiritual de la M.D. de Montserrat, Cofradía de la M.D. de Virtéla, Acción Católica Patronal. Copy in Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 2, 2.

⁴⁹ For a selection of these see Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 77-117.

⁵⁰ Information from *ibid.*, 159-60.

⁵¹ (11 August 1966) - 'Nota Informativa: Asociaciones o entidades católicas que suscribieron un escrito confeccionado con motivo de la manifestación de sacerdotes de 11 de mayo último.' AGGCB, Caja 63.

‘... leaving aside in our judgement the motives behind the priests’ action – it is to be supposed that they were motivated by pastoral concern - we consider it lamentable. In no way can we approve of the way they acted, which was out of union with their bishop and without showing the proper respect for the instructions of those responsible for public order... We call on commentators in the media to refrain from making generalisations or suppositions which are as offensive for the reverend clergy as for other bodies, equally worthy of our esteem’.⁵²

The note also congratulated Archbishop Modrego for the ‘evangelical and ecclesial spirit’ of the homily he had ordered to be read in all churches in the diocese on 15 May. A few days after the note was issued a group of ‘Catalan priests’ wrote to the CEE complaining that the Executive’s note had been issued without first communicating with the priests involved and pointing out that the Executive’s information was based on newspaper, radio and television reports ‘which have frequently used dishonest means to report incidents, by silencing and twisting facts’. The priests said they hoped the declaration would not be accepted by the plenary CEE and warned that if it were they would appeal to Rome for ‘understanding and paternal help’.⁵³

A little over a week after the priests’ march and the day before Marcelo González Martín’s official arrival in the diocese there was a public demonstration in central Barcelona to protest at abuses being perpetrated by the regime. The police detained eight of the demonstrators.⁵⁴ The following day, during the ceremony of consecration of the new Coadjutor Archbishop a group of people, who were almost certainly involved in the *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign, attempted to sing a hymn in Catalan, which resulted in their being removed from the cathedral by police and taken to police-headquarters. A

⁵² (18 May 1966) ‘Comunicado del Comité Ejecutivo del Episcopado Español’ in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 264-5. The note was published in all the Spanish newspapers the following day.

⁵³ The letter without a date or signatures is reproduced in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 68-9. Cyclostyled copies of the letter in AMM and the Arxiu Centre d’Estudis Pastoral (ACEP).

⁵⁴ *Le Vatican et la Catalogne*, 72. I have no more information on the demonstration, except for a reference in Crexell’s book to a clandestine flyer prepared by the SDEUB that called on people to participate in order to protest at the regime’s violent repression of students, priests, workers and intellectuals.

number of foreign newspapers reported the incident with headlines such as: '*Des bagarres éclatent dans la cathédrale de Barcelone*' or '*Breve tumulto a Barcellona per l'investitura del vescovo*'⁵⁵

In spite of the fact that Bishop González Martín declared on his arrival in the diocese that he intended to learn Catalan an 'Open Letter to Dr. Marcelo González' signed by 'Priests from Barcelona' was circulating in the diocese a few weeks later that accused the Coadjutor Archbishop of adopting a patronising attitude towards the Catalan language and of being naturally negative towards anything associated with 'Catalanism'. It provided evidence of his anti-Catalanism by quoting from a biography of the nineteenth century catechist and founder of the Teresian Order, Enrique de Ossó y Cervelló, which he had written some years earlier:

'Faithful until the end to his energetic and obvious patriotism he was never tempted, like others who succumbed at that time, to favour even in mind, any kind of Catalanism - of right or left - that threatened to pull asunder the political unity of Spain.'⁵⁶

The priests responsible for the letter described themselves as 'Catalanists' and they said the appointment of Archbishop González Martín was another step taken by the Vatican and the Spanish government in a process of 'colonisation'. Such protests at the appointment of González Martín, abated over the following months, but did not end until a Catalan Archbishop, Narcís Jubany, was appointed at the end of 1971. For example, in November 1966 one thousand one hundred 'Catalans from Barcelona' wrote to the Archbishop asking him to step down for three reasons: firstly, because his appointment had been made *via* the ancient Right of Presentation, which Vatican II had declared an anachronistic privilege and called on Heads of State to renounce; secondly, because he was not a Catalan and thirdly, because nobody in the diocese had been consulted before the appointment was made, not even Archbishop Modrego.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Le Monde* (21 May 1966) & *Corriere della Sera* (20 May 1966). Cited in *Le Vatican et la Catalogne*, 84.

⁵⁶ (June 1966) 'Carta Abierta al Dr. Marcelo', in AAM.

⁵⁷ *Le Vatican i Catalunya*, 90. (Reports on the letter in *Le Monde* 20, 21 November 1966.)

The events of the spring and summer of 1966 marked the start of serious clerical opposition to the regime in Barcelona. The activities of suspected oppositional priests were from then on more closely watched by the police and civil authorities. For example, the police reported to the Civil Governor on 4 June 1966 that a meeting of 11 priests had taken place the previous day in the parish of San Ignacio de Loyola to prepare a sermon for the following Sunday. It gave the name, date of birth, and parish of the priests, along with a brief description of the 'subversive', 'Catalanist' and 'anti-regime activities' of each one.⁵⁸ Another incident representative of this kind of vigilance happened on 11 September 1966 when police stopped Frs. Josep M. Totosaus, Josep Gonzalbo, Lluís Saumell and Raimón Izard who were returning from a celebration in honour of the Catalan composer Pau Casals, which had been held in the Monastery of Sant Miquel de Cuixà and attended by approximately 2,000 people. The police confiscated a record they had with them entitled '*L'Abat us parla*', which had been produced in France and contained recordings of eleven homilies of the former Abbot of Montserrat, Dom Escarré.⁵⁹

The activities of the Capuchins of Sarrià and the Benedictines of Montserrat were also more closely watched from this time on. Over the previous year or two the secret police had begun to suspect the Capuchins of anti-regime activities: a report sent to the Civil Governor by the secret police in January 1964 claimed that they were responsible for passing on negative reports and information related to the Spanish Church to the German magazine, *Herder Correspondenze*.⁶⁰ The following year a police report on the Superior of the convent, Fr. Basilio de Rubí, described him as a 'Catalanist' who regularly held meetings with people who were well known to oppose the regime, many of whom were members of the 'clandestine political organisation - *Unión Democrática de Cataluña* (UDC) - to which, we suspect, he too may belong.'⁶¹

⁵⁸ (4 June 1966) 'Nota Informativa: Sobre reunión de sacerdotes en la Parroquia de San Ignacio de Loyola a las 12,30 horas del día 3 para estudiar y redactar la homilía del próximo domingo.' AGGCB, Caja 62.

⁵⁹ Escarré had been removed as Abbot in March 1965 and sent to another monastery in Switzerland. At the time many people believed his exile was a result of political pressure, but the historian and monk of Montserrat Hilari Raguier has clarified that he was removed as a result of internal tensions in the monastery. H. Raguier 'L' Abat Escarré, entre la història i el mite.' *La Vanguardia* (22 November 1983.) Escarré became a hero for Catalanists and anti-Francoists in the sixties and seventies.

⁶⁰ (3 January 1964) 'Nota Informativa: Los Capuchinos de Sarrià son los informadores de la revista alemana *Herder Correspondenze*', in AGGCB, Caja 61, (1963/64).

⁶¹ (4 November 1965) 'Nota Informativa: Informe del P. Basilio de Rubí'', in AGGCB, Caja, 111.

Before the end of this eventful year 83 priests from Barcelona signed and circulated a 'public declaration' that was very critical of the referendum campaign for the Organic Law of State, which was due to be voted on in a referendum on 14 December. Most of the signatories were young priests based in working class parishes and 24 of them had taken part in the priests' march of 11 May.⁶² On 12 December eleven religious associations affiliated to SAL sent a note to the Archbishop that contrasted Conciliar teaching with several points of the proposed Organic Law.⁶³ At the end of the Third Plenary Assembly of the CEE the bishops issued a very brief statement on 6 December on the forthcoming referendum, urging all Spaniards to reflect on the proposed law and then exercise their right to vote freely so that there would be an improvement in the common good.⁶⁴

(iii) Growth of clerical dissidence (1967-1968)

During the first months of 1967 unidentified reactionary groups attacked a number of premises used by religious groups and associations.⁶⁵ One hundred and seven priests from Barcelona wrote to the Civil Governor in April listing these attacks and asking why the police had not apprehended the culprits.⁶⁶ The priests were angry that those responsible for the attacks were allowed to go unpunished while Fr. Josep Dalmau, Fr. Ricard Pedrals, Fr. Antonio Totosaus and Fr. Jordi Llimona had recently been informed that they were to face trial by the TOP for organising the priests' march of 11 May 1966.⁶⁷ Clerical tension continued to rise when six priests from the town of Sabadell were arrested on 1 May for having taken part in a workers' demonstration earlier that day in the neighbourhood of Torre Baró and for having given workers shelter in a church building

⁶² (5 December 1966) 'Declaració d'un grup de sacerdots i religiosos a l'opinió pública.' Archive of Jesuits of San Cugat, Barcelona (AHCJC).

⁶³ (12 December 1966) 'Una nota sobre questions actuals enviada a l'Arquebisbe de Barcelona per les associacions que subscriuen.' Text in Piñol, *El Nacionalcatolicisme*, 295-8.

⁶⁴ (6 de diciembre de 1966) *Comunicado de la Asamblea Plenaria del Episcopado Español sobre el Referéndum*. DCEE. 1, p 403.

⁶⁵ There already had been a spate of these attacks over the previous two years. For example, in November 1965 the premises of the CICF were attacked in protest at a conference being given there by the controversial Belgian priest, Luis María Evelyn. The damage caused was estimated to be worth in the region of half a million pesetas. On 18 February 1967 there was an attack on the *Casal de Montserrat* where a talk on Biblical Catechesis was being given.

⁶⁶ Copy of letter (n.d.) and list of signatories in AGGCB, Caja 69.

⁶⁷ 'Auto de Processament' (18 January 1967) in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 286-7.

afterwards. The priests were Fr. Joan Moran, Fr. Eduardo Fornés, Fr. Josep M. Garrido, Fr. Josep M. Palom, Fr. Alfons Formariz, and Fr. Andrés Vilà SJ. They had been among 67 priests who just days earlier had signed a declaration of solidarity with the workers' movement to mark the 1 May.⁶⁸ Two days after the arrests of the six priests, 105 priests from Barcelona wrote to González Martín, titular Archbishop since January, expressing their outrage at his having given the police permission to enter Church premises and make the arrests.⁶⁹ The bishop responded with a pastoral letter on 4 May, which was published in the local papers on 5 and 6 May, warning priests not to exceed their legitimate sphere by making public statements, taking part in demonstrations, and generally becoming excessively involved in temporal affairs.⁷⁰ Once again SAL backed up the protests of the clergy: on 18 May 1967 it organised a demonstration of Catholic militants outside the Archbishop's residence to protest at the news that the four priests accused of being the ringleaders of the priests' march of 1966 were to be prosecuted, at police torture of the six priests who had been arrested on 1 May and at the many attacks on religious premises.⁷¹

Just three months earlier Archbishop González Martín had announced to his priests in a pastoral letter entitled 'Pastors of the People of God' that he wanted them to reflect on their life and ministry as a prelude to setting up a 'Diocesan Delegation for the Life and Ministry of Priests.' As a result group study sessions for diocesan priests had been taking place. The pastoral letter of 4 May recalling priests to order put an end to collaboration between the Archbishop and the clergy of the diocese. More than 200 of the latter withdrew from the study sessions.⁷² In an attempt to placate his outraged priests the Archbishop sent them a Circular Letter in early June in which he proposed setting up an interim 'Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs' that would operate until a Council of

⁶⁸ (1 May 1967) 'Carta abierta al mundo del trabajo y a sus fuerzas'. In Domínguez, *Organizaciones Obreras Cristianas*, appendix, document 9, pp. 298-9.

⁶⁹ Copy of the letter dated 3 May 1967 in AAM. (the signatures are missing.)

⁷⁰ (5 May 1967) "Exhortación Pastoral: la acción pastoral del sacerdote en Barcelona." *BOABA* (May 1967).

⁷¹ Cyclostyled document encouraging people to participate in the demonstration. 'El porque de una concentración religiosa. Los hechos', in Manterola Archive, Derio, Rel-12-2. On 2 March 11 religious groups belonging to SAL wrote to the Archbishop protesting at the news that the four priests were to be tried before TOP. See Piñol 299-301.

⁷² Information on these sessions from Fr. Joan Batlles, in J. Bigordà, A. Manent, and R. Bofill, *Església i País. Tres Testimonis* (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 1995), 150-1.

Priests and Pastoral Council recommended by Vatican II were organised.⁷³ The proposed commission would consist of 12 members, 8 to be elected by the diocesan clergy and 4 to be appointed directly by the Archbishop. Its function would be to assist and advise the Archbishop for a period of no more than a year. The reaction of the priests to the proposal was positive: a total of 881 letters were sent out and 710 replies were received; of these 531 were in favour of the proposal, and only 145 against.⁷⁴ The commission was created on 24 July as the first step in a gradual process of democratisation of diocesan government. The idea for this interim body had actually come, not from the Archbishop, but from some of his priests. It therefore represented a real concession to clerical participation in diocesan power on the part of the Archbishop.

‘He accepted with resignation the proposal to create a Provisional Advisory Commission, and once it was constituted he regarded it as a provisional Council of Priests, but he could not conceal, at meetings or in speeches and allocutions to the clergy, his mistrust and suspicion. We, the members of the Provisional Advisory Commission, could give a long list of his anxieties and lamentations. ... His eventual disillusionment with many of us proves that while on the one hand we collaborated with him on the other we did not understand or share his fears and suspicions, nor did we always agree with his interpretation of events. His basic mistrust remained always.’⁷⁵

On 2 October 1967 the Archbishop appointed seven episcopal vicars for a period of three years. There had been no consultation with the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs since the Conciliar decree, *Christus Dominus*, which established the office of episcopal vicar, states that the bishop is free to choose one or more, in accordance with

⁷³ See Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, pp. 591-600.

⁷⁴ *BOABA*, no. 7 (15 July 1967), 391-3.

⁷⁵ Quote from interview with one of its members, Fr. Joan Batlles. In J. Bigordà, et al, *Església i País*, 155-6.

the particular needs of the diocese.⁷⁶ Nevertheless the appointments were a positive development as they indicated that the governmental powers hitherto exercised by the bishops were becoming a thing of the past. The episcopal vicars were: Fr. José Capmany Casamitjana, Episcopal Vicar for the Doctrine of the Faith and Catholic Education; Fr. Joan Batlles i Alerm, Episcopal Vicar for the Life and Ministry of Priests; Fr. Francisco Muñoz Alarcón, Episcopal Vicar for Religious Orders, Religious Congregations and Secular Institutes; Fr. Joan Carrera i Planas, Episcopal Vicar for the Working Class Zones; Fr. Malaquias Zayas Cuerpo, Episcopal Vicar for the Administration of Ecclesiastical Property; Fr. Francisco de P. Sala Arnó and Fr. Lluís Serrallach García, Episcopal Vicars for the Lay Apostolate and Lay Associations. Two of the new episcopal vicars, Fr. Joan Batlles i Alerm and Fr. José Capmany Casamitjana, were also members of the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs.⁷⁷

(iv) The Council of Priests and the auxiliary bishops

The process of democratisation of diocesan structures and government was continued the following year: on 5 June a draft document for the creation of a Council of Priests, which had been prepared by the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs, was sent to all the diocesan priests. Archbishop González Martín, in a letter that accompanied the document, urged all priests to study it carefully during June and to respond to it before the end of the month so that the commission could proceed to produce a final draft leading to the creation of the Council by the autumn;⁷⁸ in October twenty-two new 'arciprestazgos' were created. Up to then the diocese had been divided into 20. A police report interpreted the territorial restructuring as a scheme invented by the Episcopal Vicar for the Life and Ministry of Priests, Fr. Joan Batlles, to spread subversion among the clergy:

⁷⁶ Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church: *Christus Dominus* (28 October 1965). Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, 564-90.

⁷⁷ The names of the members of the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs and the names of the seven episcopal vicars in *Guía de la Diócesis de Barcelona* (1968, 1969).

⁷⁸ Copy of the letter in AAM. The Council of Priests was not in fact created until February 1970, after some territorial changes had first been made to the diocese.

'This at first glance seems a purely administrative measure, but in reality it signifies a technocratic control over all the priests, killing all individual initiative by parish priests and converting them into pawns manipulated by the arch-priests that will now be appointed, all of whom will be under the control of the Episcopal Vicar, Reverend Juan Batlles Alern, signatory of the 'Message to the Council Fathers' of 28 October 1965, which was highly injurious to the Church and the State. He is full of resentment and hate for the Spanish Regime.'⁷⁹

At the end of the same month it was announced that four auxiliary bishops had been appointed to the archdiocese. A few days later 187 diocesan priests, 101 male religious, 8 deacons and 5 seminarians wrote to the Nuncio expressing their 'stupefaction' and 'concern' at the news:

'The procedure followed [for the appointment of bishops] is one that is certainly still valid in ecclesiastical administration, but it is outdated and at variance with the image of the Church given us by Vatican II ... and with the new pastoral style we are adopting in our daily work.'⁸⁰

The priests argued that ideally everyone in the diocese should have been consulted on the timeliness and appropriateness of appointing auxiliaries, as well as on the candidates, but that such a consultation would have been impossible given the fact that the laity in general, as well as a considerable number of priests and religious, were not sufficiently informed of the post-Vatican II debate on episcopal appointments, nor were there adequate structures in place in the diocese to represent them. However they said that existing bodies and structures, such as the Curia, the Seminary, the College of Parish Priests, the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs, as well as the episcopal vicars and abbots and provincial superiors, should have been consulted:

⁷⁹(October 1968) 'Nota Informativa', in AGGCB, Caja 120.

⁸⁰(30 October 1968) '300 sacerdots escriuen al nunci amb motiu del nomenent dels 4 bisbes auxiliars de D. Marcelo González Martín'. Copy in AMM.

‘Consultation is all the more necessary in the current socio-political context, where every person who is appointed without the genuine participation of the community is, to a greater or lesser extent, suspected of connivance with the existing socio-political structures.’⁸¹

The civil authorities did not welcome the news of the appointment of the four auxiliary bishops either. A report from December 1968 on ‘progressive elements’ in the clergy was very critical of the four new bishops: it described José María Guix Ferreres, who was Vicar General at the time of his appointment, as a ‘progressive’ and a ‘Christian Democrat’. Ramón Torrella Cascante, who was a member of the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs and rector of the diocesan seminary was described as: ‘Belonging to the progressive group or organisation that is headed by Dr. Manuel Bonet Muixi.’⁸² He is a close friend of Frs. José Bigordà and Casimiro Martí, and identifies totally with them. They, of course, will have a decisive influence on his future behaviour. He is a notorious and dangerous enemy of the regime and his political tendencies are “*frentepopulistas*”.⁸³ José Capmany Casamitjana, who was a member of the Advisory Commission for Pastoral Affairs and Episcopal Vicar for the Doctrine of the Faith and Catholic Education, was also identified as a member of Dr. Manuel Bonet Muixi’s ‘sect’ and as a close friend of the former Abbot of Montserrat, Dom Aurelio María Escarré. Finally Ramón Daumal Serra was described as a ‘key member of Dr. Manuel Bonet Muixi’s sect and an ‘Ultra Catalanist ... difficult to classify his political ideology, but close to that of *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*’.⁸⁴ It divided the clergy of the archdiocese into four main groups: priests based in working class parishes who were organised in ‘*Sectors Obreros*’ or ‘*Cursos*’⁸⁵ and whose publication was *Correspondència*: ‘The most extremist,

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Reference to the *Unió Sacerdotal*.

⁸³ Reference to the Popular Front of the 1930s.

⁸⁴ Left-wing political party formed in March 1931. Became the dominant party in Catalonia for the following five years.

⁸⁵ ‘*Cursos*’ was an informal group of priests composed of representatives of every cohort of priests ordained in Barcelona between 1949 and 1964. It was set up in 1964 by Fr. Abelard Sayrach and he was the secretary of the group until 1967. In 1964 *Cursos* carried out a survey on what priests hopes *vis à vis* the Council and another survey on the issue of celibacy in 1970. In one of their meetings with the Archbishop in 1965 he jokingly referred to *Cursos* as a ‘*Sindicato de Vicarios*.’ In 1966 it held their first

impulsive and daring ones, who in reality are victims of the priests described in Part Two of this section'; priests belonging to the '*Pia Union*' founded by Dr. Manuel Bonet Muixí, 'who for years during the pontificate of Dr. Modrego manipulated with total impunity, thanks to their important positions in the government of the dioceses, the Curia, the Seminary, Catholic Action and the Catholic social organisations. Most responsibility for the disaster in Barcelona lies with them'; the third group the report identified were conservative priests belonging to the *Asociación de Sacerdotes y Religiosos de San Antonio María Claret*, while the fourth group were the 'great mass of priests and religious'.⁸⁶

Following the appointment of the four auxiliary bishops the diocese was divided into 4 episcopal demarcations at the end of 1968. At the end of 1970 further territorial changes were made when the 'arciprestazgos' were grouped into five episcopal demarcations headed by three auxiliary bishops and two episcopal vicars. This situation changed again in 1973 when the diocese was divided into 14 'pastoral zones' and the number of episcopal demarcations was reduced to three. The 14 pastoral zones were each headed by an episcopal vicar. No further restructuring took place until 1976.

(v) 1969 climax of tensions

When the nationwide state of emergency was declared on 25 January 1969 the clergy in Barcelona, just like their counterparts in Bilbao, mobilised to protest at government repression of students, workers, members of illegal political parties and priests. On Wednesday 14 February an assembly of approximately 115 priests took place in the diocesan seminary in the centre of Barcelona to consider possible ways of expressing support for Fr. Josep Dalmau, Fr. Antoni Totosaus, Fr. Ricard Pedrals, and Fr. Jordi Llimona who were due to be tried by the TOP in Madrid on 23 February accused of being the ringleaders of the priests' march of 11 May 1966. It was organised by a

Assembly with 250 priests attending. *Fulls Informatius* were prepared from time to time for all those involved in *Cursos*. For example, the October 1967 *Full* on 'sacerdotal appointments', which was produced after a meeting attended by 60 priests, which had considered the issue. The group existed from 1964 to 1970. Most of the documents prepared by *Cursos* were printed and distributed as a supplement to *Correspondència*. Most of the topics that they discussed were 'progressive' leading to proposals such as suppression of payments for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

commission that had originally been formed in 1966 to organise support for the four priests.⁸⁷ A document was distributed to all present at the assembly (it was by that time also being distributed in the other Catalan dioceses) that encouraged priests to travel to Madrid on the day of the trial (23 February) to express their solidarity with the four priests.⁸⁸ The Episcopal Vicar for the Life and Ministry of the Clergy, Fr. Joan Batlles, who attended the assembly suggested preparing a letter to the CEE to protest at the way the priests of Barcelona had been calumniated and insulted in the press and on radio and television in the days and weeks after the march, and especially at the harm that had been done to their reputation by the note issued by the Executive Committee of the CEE on 18 May 1966. The assembly accepted this proposal. The overwhelming majority of the priests then voted in favour of organising some public act to protest at the imminent trial of their four colleagues.⁸⁹ A new commission was elected and it was decided to hold a second assembly in the seminary the following Wednesday to decide what form the protest should take. The number of priests who attended the second assembly was higher than at the first and included two of the four recently appointed auxiliary bishops: José María Guix Ferreres and Ramón Torrella Cascante (the latter informed the assembly that the Archbishop had agreed to write a private letter to the TOP stating the full facts surrounding the priests' march in May 1966). In a vote taken at this second meeting 136 priests voted 'yes' and 10 voted 'no' to a proposal to hold a silent assembly of priests in the patio of the Episcopal Palace on the eve of the start of the trial and to present a note to the Archbishop explaining the reasons for their action. One hundred and forty of the priests present then signed a letter to the CEE.⁹⁰ A second letter entitled 'Another voice of the Church. An open letter to all the people of God' was also signed by almost all those present.⁹¹ It began with the words:

⁸⁶ 'Situacion esquematizada de progresismo en la Archidiócesis Barcelonesa' (December 1968). AGGCB, Caja 120. This report may have been prepared and sent to the Civil Governor by conservative elements in the Church.

⁸⁷ Information on this commission and all the incidents related to the trial from Josep Dalmau, *Catalunya i Església en el banquet dels acusats. El TOP a porta tancada* (Barcelona: Editorial Pòrtic, 1979) and Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 228-48.

⁸⁸ 'Acte d'afirmació de l'Església davant els poders polítics. Criada a la solidaritat sacerdotal'. Copy in AMM.

⁸⁹ Account of the proceedings of the assembly in Dalmau, *Catalunya i Església*, 90-6.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 230.

⁹¹ 'Una altra veu d'Església. Carta Oberta a tot el poble de Déu'. Letter in Dalmau, *Catalunya i Església*, 103-6. Both letters also reproduced in a cyclostyled clandestine bulletin entitled *Butlletí*, two issues of

‘The signatories of this letter, priests of Barcelona, feel obliged by their consciences to make this declaration. It is addressed to all God’s people: to our bishops, to other priests and religious, to lay Christians and to all those citizens who are concerned at the current situation in the country and in the local Church.’

It went on to explain that over a number of years a series of disturbing events and situations had arisen in the diocese which were fundamentally a result of the union between the Church and the regime and that in spite of several collective letters of protest from priests to the ecclesiastical hierarchy no satisfactory or valid reply had ever been received, nor had there been any noticeable change in the bishops’ stance on Church-State relations. The situation had now become critical and therefore the signatories had decided to adopt a much more committed and public stance on numerous issues that were troubling their consciences. The letter listed 10 issues of particular concern to the priests: 1. The brutal repression of workers. 2. The repression of the student movement in the university. 3. Discrimination against the Catalan language and culture. 4. Government restriction of basic civil liberties. 5. The manipulation of information in the press and on radio and television. 6. The persecution of the most dynamic and progressive elements in the local Church. 7. The continuing state of emergency. 8. The participation of ecclesiastical authorities in acts or ceremonies that were essentially of a political nature. 9. The trial of four priests for having made a collective visit to the Chief of Police in Barcelona on 11 May 1966. 10. The note published by the Permanent Commission of the CEE on 7 February on the state of emergency. The letter concluded with the signatories committing themselves to working for a Church that was:

‘identified with the real concerns of the people, genuinely modelled on the Gospels, independent of political power and that allowed greater

which were prepared by those responsible for organising these two assemblies and the *Fòrum* in March. Both issues in the Centre d’Estudis Històrics Internacionals (CEHI).

participation by all the people of God, both clergy and laity, in its life and especially in its decision making processes.⁹²

The second assembly ended with those present agreeing to organise a '*Fòrum*' as soon as possible to debate further the issues that had been raised at the two assemblies and in the letter. It was also decided that all the bishops, priests and clergy of Barcelona should be invited to attend it.

In the meantime an assembly of approximately 300 priests took place in the patio of the episcopal palace on Friday 22 February. The assembly was reported in several foreign newspapers. The following short report appeared in the *Western Catholic Reporter* on 9 March 1969:

'Two hundred and eighty priests here defied government restrictions and met for several hours in the courtyard of the archbishop's residence to protest Church support of the government's "state of exception" or "quasi-martial law". In a statement of dissent that they signed the priests expressed solidarity with four priests now on trial before a court of public order (for political crimes) in Madrid. The four are charged with participating in a demonstration before police headquarters in Barcelona on 11 May 1966 to protest at ill treatment of civilians jailed for political activities. The protest was also an answer to a campaign of verbal attacks by pro-government papers against the clergy in Spain's Catalonia region.'⁹³

Franco is said to have commented on hearing about the priests' assembly:

'Such behaviour by people who wear the clerical habit saddens me. They are setting a very bad example and they cause grief to us

⁹² Ibid., 105.

⁹³ Clipping in AAM. There was also a report in *Le Monde*.

Catholics. When I hear about their conduct I think of those Brothers of St. John of God from the village of Calafell who singing holy hymns walked resignedly towards the beach where the Reds executed them. What a difference in conduct!'⁹⁴

On Saturday 23 February, the day of the trial of the four priests, 120 priests (mainly from Catalonia) and about 30 lay people gathered outside the Palace of Justice in Madrid to express their support for the accused. Among the crowd there were also some secret policemen, armed police and foreign journalists. Owing to the state of emergency there was tight censorship and no mention of the trial was allowed in the media. On 26 February the TOP imposed a sentence of 1 year in prison and a collective fine of 10,000 pesetas on all four priests.⁹⁵

The *Fòrum* took place in Barcelona from 5 to 6 March and was attended by approximately 400 priests. According to a preparatory document its purpose was to discuss the official Church's attitude to the socio-political situation in the country and the effects of the current state of emergency:

'During the last thirty years the constant public attitude of almost the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy has been silence in the face of injustices, or what is even worse, they have lined up alongside the men of power and money. A few isolated, rather timid interventions over the past few months, - by Cardinal Pla i Deniel, Monsignor Añoveros, Bishop Pont i Gol, or by some of the bishops of the Basque Country - have been exceptions.'⁹⁶

⁹⁴Quote from Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1979), 541.

⁹⁵The priests unsuccessfully appealed the sentence in the Supreme Court on 22 January 1970. However, they were unexpectedly pardoned in March of that same year. Account of the trial in Dalmau, *Catalunya i l'Església*, 113-64.

⁹⁶'Document preparatori del Fòrum' in AAM, Església XV.

At the end of the *Fòrum* an open letter was prepared which was addressed to 'All International Organisations, the Pope, the Spanish Bishops and all men of goodwill'. It denounced the torture of detainees while in police custody and the systematic elimination of any group or organisation that criticised the regime. It called on the United Nations Commission for Human Rights to send delegates to Spain to investigate the truth of the facts presented in the letter.⁹⁷ A *Comissió del Fòrum* was also elected before the meeting ended. Over the next couple of months the members of this commission forged strong links with members of the extra parochial 'Base Christian Communities' that were just starting to appear in the diocese around that time. The result was that a *Comissió (Mixta) del Fòrum* consisting of priests and laity was set up around September. By then, however, many of the priests who had attended the meeting in May began to disassociate themselves from the *Fòrum*, mainly because they were uncomfortable with the direction it was taking, but also because in September the long awaited elections for the formation of a Council of Priests were announced and it seemed to many that this ought to supersede the *Fòrum*.

The ideas and actions of those priests who were most enthusiastic about the *Comissió (Mixta) del Fòrum* can be compared to those of the radical *Gogor* group of priests founded during *Operación Mazarredo* in Bilbao in August 1968. On 6 June 1969 six of them began a hunger strike in the diocesan seminary in solidarity with the five Basque priests who had been on hunger strike in the episcopal offices in Bilbao from 30 May until 2 June. They issued a document expressing their solidarity with their Basque colleagues 'who through their action are denouncing the established injustice,' and they echoed their call for international bodies to investigate the situation in Spain and for the ecclesiastical hierarchy to denounce unequivocally the government's violations of the Church's teaching in the Conciliar decree, *Gaudium et Spes*.⁹⁸ On the morning of 9 June 350 priests, religious and lay people gathered in the patio of the episcopal palace in solidarity with the six priests. In the evening there was a debate on the hunger strike in the Basilica of Sant Josep Oriol in the centre of Barcelona. Two days later about 1,000

⁹⁷ 'Carta Oberta d'un Sector del Clergat de Barcelona' (6 March 1969) in Ricart Oller, *Egara: una parroquia obrera*, 330.

⁹⁸ 'Sentido de un gesto.' (6 June 1969). AAM. They also protested at the Archbishop's attendance at the 'Desfile de la Victoria' on 1 June 1969.

people gathered in the same church for prayers and a Mass for the six priests.⁹⁹ That same day the priests ended their hunger-strike and in a note that they prepared before leaving the seminary they again explained the reasons for their action and expressed their disappointment over an official note issued by the Archbishop which had publicly censured their behaviour.¹⁰⁰ Shortly afterwards the Archbishop wrote to all his priests appealing to them to remain united with him and to refrain from reading notes or documents or making remarks from the pulpit that could further heighten tensions in the diocese:

‘Do not break the communion with your bishop. It is the Church that may be harmed. As for me, in union with my brothers in the episcopacy and assisted by the reflections of all the priests of the diocese, I am and always shall be, disposed to examine the problems and fulfil my pastoral duties. ... I share the sufferings of all, especially of those priests who have to do pastoral work in difficult conditions. But I insist that the gravity of the situation in our diocese demands at this moment in time silence, examination of conscience and humble prayer. May nobody dare to cause irreparable harm to Christ’s Church’¹⁰¹

Acts of clerical opposition such as those described in this chapter and the previous one greatly annoyed the central government, who angrily protested to the CEE about clerical interference in politics in a long document dated 9 April 1969.¹⁰² It began by thanking the Executive Committee of the CEE for its visit to the Minister for Justice on 28 February 1969 to reiterate verbally the contents of the Note published by the Permanent Commission of the CEE earlier that month, which had urged the government to end the state of emergency as soon as possible. The visit was described as having been conducted ‘along the lines of a healthy and efficient cooperation, which should always characterise

⁹⁹ Information from Joan Casañas, *El Progressime Catòlic a Catalunya (1940-80)* (Barcelona: La Llar del Llibre, Barcelona, 1989), 313-4.

¹⁰⁰ ‘El final de nuestro gesto’ in Alday, *Crónicas*, i, 297.

¹⁰¹ (14 June 1969) ‘Comunicación a los sacerdotes’ *BOABA*, no. 7 (15 July 1969), 389-90.

¹⁰² (9 April 1969) ‘Comunicación del Gobierno a la CEE en 1969 sobre relaciones Iglesia-Estado’ Text in Cárcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, documento 59, pp. 959-62.

Church-State relations.' In contrast, the criticism of the state of emergency made by many priests had caused great annoyance to the government and was symptomatic of a growing tendency among some sectors of the clergy to try to involve the Church in temporal affairs that were beyond its legitimate sphere of activity. The document contained a section entitled 'Disturbing Conduct of Some Members of the Clergy' that complained about the behaviour of oppositional priests in Vizcaya and, less directly, about the behaviour of certain sectors of the clergy in Barcelona. It accused these priests of constantly making political statements and negative judgements on the political situation in Spain. It expressed strong disapproval of the way they frequently occupied Church buildings, such as seminaries and episcopal offices, and annoyance at the vagueness of the Concordat's definition of the right to asylum in Church buildings, which it claimed, prevented the forces of Public Order from taking action to end these occupations. It complained that enemies of the regime were being permitted to use parochial buildings to prepare clandestine 'Communist and separatist propaganda' and that priests had caused scandal to the faithful by participating in demonstrations, refusing to celebrate Mass, preach sermons, and so on, usually in protest at measures which were strictly political, such as the declaration of states of emergency. Such priests frequently found themselves in a situation of impunity owing to their bishops' refusal to grant the authorities permission to prosecute them. The communication contained an annex with information on a number of priests from the diocese of Bilbao who had been involved in acts of terrorism, either as accomplices or direct participants. It also complained about a recent interview given by the Abbot of Montserrat to German television. 'He has joined in the campaign of defamation organised abroad against the Spanish State by disseminating false information and ideas for which he may be prosecutable.'¹⁰³ The communication ended by urging the bishops to exercise their magisterium collectively and with greater clarity in the future, thereby avoiding the danger of ambiguity and discrepancies in episcopal teaching that might cause confusion and disorientation.

¹⁰³ (April 1969) *El Socialista*. Front page article: "El Abad de Montserrat denuncia el estado de excepción, las torturas 'La tragedia de la Iglesia española', la violación de los derechos humanos y el Gobierno totalitario." According to this article the interview was given to someone from German Television and broadcast on 3 March.

In its reply to the government of 4 July 1969 the CEE quoted Article 76 of *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church and Politics: 'The Church should have true freedom to preach the faith, to proclaim its teaching about society, to carry out its task among men without hindrance, and to pass moral judgement even in matters relating to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it.' As regards unity in episcopal magisterium, the CEE pointed out that 'each bishop has inalienable powers of magisterium, which can only be restricted by the Pope or a Council of the Church.' It said that even when the CEE issued collective documents that spoke for the official Church to the Spanish state and society it could not prevent individual bishops from making statements or giving their own personal view on any given matter in their own diocese. The document lamented and condemned the violent acts and abuses perpetrated by some priests, but pointed out that the number involved represented only a very tiny percentage of the clergy. It said the remainder deserved approval and even admiration in their role as priests and lawful citizens. It urged the government to insure that the clergy were treated with respect in the press, asserted the right of bishops to refuse permission for priests to be prosecuted, stressed that only a bishop had the right to judge the content of a sermon and defended their right to refuse the authorities permission to prosecute priests.¹⁰⁴ This written exchange between the government and the CEE provides evidence of the impact that events in the dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona had on Church-State relations and is helpful to our understanding of subsequent developments, both at a diocesan and national level.

¹⁰⁴ (4 July 1969) 'Respuesta de la CEE al Gobierno', in Cárcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, documento 60, pp. 963-7.

Chapter V

Analysis of Catalan and Basque Clerical Dissidence in the 1960s

This chapter compares the motivations of Catalan and Basque priests who participated in the collective acts of opposition described in the preceding chapters and it analyses the type of socio-political and religious changes they were demanding. In Vizcaya and Barcelona opposition to the regime by workers, students, nationalist groups and clandestine political parties took off in the 1960s. As we have seen, the response of the government was mainly one of repression, and it was particularly severe in the Basque Country.¹ This chapter explores the extent to which contacts with the various opposition groups were sources of clerical radicalisation in both dioceses. It also assesses the degree to which internal ecclesiastical tensions helped radicalise younger priests, whose theology, political preferences, and understanding of their sacerdotal role were often at odds with those of the more conservative ecclesiastical hierarchy. It begins though with a discussion of how the Civil War legacy was an important factor in the clerical dissent of the sixties.

(i) The legacy of the Civil War

Memories of the Civil War, particularly in the Basque diocese, were crucial in maintaining and creating clerical attitudes of opposition to the Franco Regime. This was especially the case among the clergy who had experienced the war as priests or seminarians. For instance, Fr. Lorenzo Salaberria was a student in Vitoria Seminary when the war started and he was called up to fight on the Republican side.² He did not have to carry arms however and was instead allowed to work in hospitals that treated the wounded. Following the fall of the Basque Country in June 1937 he was imprisoned first in Santona, then in Santander and finally in Burgos. He was taken out of prison in 1938 and sent back to the front, this time to fight for the Nationalists. After the war he returned to the seminary to continue his studies and was finally ordained in 1943. When I interviewed him in 1993 he spoke about how the war experience had marked him

¹ States of emergency were declared in Vizcaya in 1967, in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa in 1968 and in all of Spain for three months in 1969.

profoundly and made him unable to ever accept the Franco regime. He therefore participated in most of the collective acts of opposition by the 'Basque Clergy' throughout the 40 years of dictatorship. For example, he was involved in the preparation of the 1960 collective letter to the bishops of the Basque dioceses and the 1963 collective letter to the Second Vatican Council. He also often acted alone in expressing his opposition to the regime. In 1973, for instance, he served a three month sentence in the Jesuit convent in Portugalete (Bilbao) for the non-payment of a fine of 100,000 pesetas fine which had been imposed in September 1972 after he had ordered that Spanish flags that had been hung in the church grounds for the '*fiestas*' of Erandio be taken down.

Fr. Pedro Berrio-Ategortua was just seven years old when the war started, but despite his young age he was left with indelible memories of the horror and anguish of those years. He remembers crying as he watched aircraft flying over his village of Amorebieta on their way to bomb Durango and Guernica. Three of his older brothers fought for the Republic and after the fall of the Basque Country they were forced to go and fight for the Nationalists. The eldest was seriously wounded on the Ebro front and as a result was a cripple for the rest of his life.³

Fr. Berrio-Ategortua was just one of a large number of the Basque seminarians of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s related to people who had been punished either during or after the Civil War for siding with the Republic. For example, Fr. Ander Manterola, who was ordained in 1957, was deeply affected by the fact that an uncle of his who was a priest was forced into exile in England in 1938. He remained there until 1945 and then returned to Spain, but was assigned to a diocese outside the Basque region.⁴ Or, Fr. Julian Calzada, who was ordained in 1958, and whose father was executed by the Nationalists in the cemetery of Derio just outside Bilbao following the fall of Vizcaya in June 1937.⁵ Following their ordination both these priests expressed opposition to the regime: Fr. Manterola through his activities as diocesan chaplain to *Herri Gaztedi* and Fr. Calzada through his support for ETA, for which he was tried in the famous Burgos Trials in

² Interview with Fr. Lorenzo Salaberría in Durango on 28 June 1993. Fr. Solabarría was born in Ermua (Vizcaya) in 1916 and entered the junior seminary in Vizcaya at the age of 12.

³ Information from letter received from Fr. Berrio-Ategortua in July 2001. See more biographical information in Chapter III, footnote 42.

⁴ Information from a conversation with Fr. Manterola in Bilbao in June 1992.

December 1970 and sentenced to 12 years in prison. For both priests the repression their families had suffered at the hands of the victorious Nationalists contributed to their early rejection of the Franco regime. The family of Fr. Francisco Bilbao Archicallende suffered greatly too during the war. His parents were supporters of the PNV and the Second Republic and because of that they were evicted from their rented house in the country by the owners. The family had to leave most of their possessions behind them. Fr. Bilbao still keeps a list written by his father of the items they had to abandon. Fr. Bilbao was only a year old at the time and he had four young brothers and sisters. The Civil War suffering of his family was, he admitted, a major cause of his opposition to the regime following his ordination in 1959.⁶

Besides personal memories the Basque clergy shared a collective memory of the war. The great majority believed that the military uprising of July 1936 against the Second Republic had been unjustified and that the Basques had been right to fight to save both the democratically elected national government and their own hard-won Statute of Autonomy. Many also felt that the Basque clergy and Bishop Múgica had been treated abominably by the Nationalists both during and after the war.

In Catalonia the roots of clerical opposition to the Franco regime are not to be found in the Civil War experience. Indeed, as we pointed out in Chapter I, during the war the persecuted clergy in Barcelona were quite literally praying for a Nationalist victory and they initially considered the Francoists their saviours. With the passing of the years however many Catalan priests began to question the legitimacy of the military uprising of July 1936 and the Nationalists' refusal to allow Cardinal Vidal to return to Spain after the war. They also pondered the reasons why the Church in Catalonia had been so cruelly persecuted and some began to apportion some of the blame to the Church itself. In this sense it was a re-assessment of the Civil War experience which contributed to the appearance of opposition to the regime. For example, the 500 priests who wrote to the Catalan bishops in May 1964 pointed out that the constant evocation of the Civil War as a 'Crusade' by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities was impeding reconciliation in society, was unfair to those who had been defeated and only added to the many pastoral problems

⁵ Information from a letter received from Julian Calzada in September 1999. See more biographical information in Chapter III.

⁶ Information from a letter received from Francisco Bilbao in October 1999.

facing the clergy.⁷ Similarly, the report on pastoral problems which was prepared by a large group of priests in July 1967 and presented to Archbishop González Martín to mark his first year in the diocese also claimed that constant reminders of the war were hampering the work of evangelisation among those who had fought on the side of the Second Republic.⁸

(ii) Repression of Euskera and Catalan in the Church

In the post war period the majority of Basque seminarians continued to come from rural areas where people often only spoke Euskera. They all had experienced the regime's repression of the Basque language in the small schools they had attended. The authorities ensured that no Euskera would be spoken by transferring all teachers suspected of supporting Basque nationalism out of the region. When these young boys entered the diocesan seminaries of Vitoria or Derio they found the language banned there too. In fact, up until the mid-sixties not a word of Basque was spoken in class and all studies of Basque culture were eliminated from the three Basque seminaries.

When Fr. Berrio-Ategortua started in the small school in Amorebieta just after the war he did not know a word of Spanish. When he left he could speak and write Spanish, but was illiterate in Euskera. Shortly before his ordination he was nominated by a group of fellow seminarians to ask Bishop Morcillo for permission to study the language during recreation time in order that they might better carry out their future work in the Euskera speaking parts of the diocese.

In 1955 Fr. Jesús Gaztañaga, who was also a student in the seminary of Vitoria, wrote a long letter to the rector pleading uselessly for the incorporation of classes of Basque grammar and classes of preparation for preaching in Euskera into the seminary study plan.⁹ In 1962 two students were expelled from Derio Seminary and three others were suspended after one of the seminary teachers discovered 'nationalist propaganda' in

⁷ (22 April 1964) 'L'Església del poble', in AGGCB, Caja 61.

⁸ (21 July 1967) 'La Situación Pastoral Del Obispado De Barcelona'. A copy of the report was also delivered personally to the Vatican Secretary of State. It was later printed and distributed clandestinely. Copy in AAM.

⁹ Document in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 171-7. Fr. Gaztañaga became a key figure in the clerical opposition movement in Guipúzcoa over the following twenty years.

some of the dormitories.¹⁰ However this type of control was rare and by and large there was no serious attempt to completely eliminate Basque sympathies and students were permitted to speak to each other in Euskera during recreation. Furthermore, many of the seminary teachers were privately in favour of the promotion of the language, as they recognised that it was a necessary tool for pastoral work in the Basque speaking regions of the diocese. During the academic year 1956-7 an optional course of Euskera was available in the seminary entitled '*Lingua Vasconum*'. It consisted of only two hours per week of classes. From 1960 senior seminarians who were native speakers were offered a course on Basque language and literature by the current auxiliary bishop of Bilbao, Carmelo Etxenagusia. In the junior seminary language classes only began in 1965. It was not however until 1974 that Euskera became an integral part of studies that was officially examined.¹¹

Fr. Juan María Arregui described to me how he personally experienced the repression of Euskera in his own family and in the seminary of Derio:

'My brothers and sisters and I were victims of Francoism, which prevented the learning of Euskera and succeeded in terrifying many families. My parents were fined for trying to give my sister, who was four years older than me, a Basque name. In the schools they only taught Castilian. That's the way things were – families like mine were afraid and nobody taught us the language my parents spoke. At that time the teaching of Euskera was practically clandestine. Towards the end of my time in the seminary, around 1963, a voluntary course of Euskera was started which only a few of us attended. Shortly before being ordained I spent a summer in a priest's house in the country where I could practice what I'd learned.'¹²

¹⁰ Detailed report on the whole episode prepared by one of the expelled seminarians in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. ii, 519-25.

¹¹ Information on teaching of Euskera in the Seminary of Bilbao kindly provided by Fr. Ander Manterola.

¹² Information from letter received from Juan María in June 1999. Fr. Arregui was born in Bilbao on 29 May 1941. He was ordained on 11 September 1966.

A similar situation existed in the Catalan seminaries and was described by Fr. Oleguer Bellavista in his recently published memoirs:

[In the junior seminary] we did everything in Castilian: the classes, our prayers, our singing and the spiritual exercises. The majority of the students were Catalans, but we were only permitted to speak Catalan during recreation and during meals on days of religious festivities, because on all other days we had to listen to lectionary readings. ... [In the senior seminary] all our classes were in Castilian except for philosophy, which was taught through Latin and Latin class itself. The teachers were all Catalans and all were diocesan priests from Barcelona. However, when we had individual meetings with the teachers we usually spoke to them in Catalan.¹³

The Church in the Basque Country and Catalonia, in spite of the combined attempts of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities at cultural repression, nevertheless remained a refuge for the local language and culture.¹⁴ For centuries, clerics had been the only writers of Euskera, and during the 1950s, while the language was becoming increasingly rare, more than 80% of the clergy in Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa were Basque speakers. The novitiates of various religious orders (Franciscans, Benedictines, Jesuits, Carmelites, etc.) helped a cultured language to survive and develop through the production of magazines in Euskera, such as *Jankin*, which was started by the Franciscans of Aránzazu (Guipúzcoa) in 1956.¹⁵ In Catalonia, likewise, religious orders such as the Benedictines and Capuchins produced several publications in Catalan. The former began to publish a monthly magazine called *Serra d'Or* in 1959. Although primarily a religious magazine the number of pages it devoted to social and political issues increased over the years. With 12,000

¹³ Oleguer Bellavista i Bou, *El ble que fumeja* (Barcelona: Editorial Claret, 1998), pp. 18, 21.

¹⁴ Interesting observations on the contribution of the Basque Church to the study of the Basque language and regional culture in the first three decades of the twentieth century in Frances Lannon, 'A Basque challenge to the pre-Civil War Spanish Church' *European Studies Review*, Vol. 9 (January 1979), 29-48.

¹⁵ Between 1958 and 1960 the following magazines in Euskera were started in seminaries and convents: *Arnas* (Padres Sacramentinos, Villaro, Vizcaya), *Erein* (Padres Agustinos, Oñate, Guipúzcoa), *Laiaketan* (Padres Pasionistas, Villarreal de Urretxua, Guipúzcoa), *Jaunaren Deia* (Padres Benedictinos, Lazcano, Guipúzcoa) and *Hezi-bide* (Seminario de San Sebastián).

subscribers in 1964 it represented a significant achievement given the times and its religious character. Also in 1959 the Capuchins started to produce a series of occasional single-volume philosophy studies in Catalan entitled '*Critèrion*.' This was the title of a monthly magazine that had been published by the Catalan Capuchins from 1925 to 1939. Like so many Catalan religious publications it had been prohibited after the Civil War. Several issues of the new *Critèrion* were seized by the Ministry for Information and Tourism who did not approve of the socio-religious and philosophical views they expressed. In 1968 the government ordered the indefinite suspension of the series and in 1969 it was forced to disappear altogether.¹⁶

The issue of local language and culture was present in almost all the collective documents prepared by Basque and Catalan oppositional priests in the 1960s. For example, the final section of the 1960 collective letter, which was entitled 'Defence of the Rights of the Basque People', accused the regime of attempting to destroy the ethnic, linguistic and social characteristics of the Basques.' It described this as 'cultural genocide' and - in upper-case letters - it declared that the Basque language was 'a necessary instrument for the evangelisation of the Basque Country' and that it had 'a right to life and to be cultivated.'¹⁷

The collective letter sent by around 500 priests to the bishops of the Catalan dioceses in 1964 on the situation of the Church in Catalonia included criticism of the fact that the rights of ethnic minorities in Spain were not respected by the government. It had the following to say about the repression of the Catalan language:

'The right to receive religious education and to pray in one's own language is not respected, for instance, in some schools run by religious orders, or even in some seminaries....

This is a problem which it is hoped will be adequately and courageously solved in the reform of the liturgy, while respecting, naturally, the rights of those who do not speak Catalan.'¹⁸

¹⁶ Àlvar Maduell, 'Critèrion, rèquiem bis.' *Serra d'Or*, octubre de 1978, pp. 50-52.

¹⁷ (30 May 1960) 'El documento de los 339 sacerdotes.' Text in Esnaola, *El Clero Vasco*, vol. i, 243-58.

¹⁸ Copy of letter entitled '*L'Església del poble*' in AGGCB, Caja 61.

The decrees of Vatican II on the use of local languages did indeed force the reintroduction of Euskera and Catalan into the liturgy and general life of the Church. From January 1965 missals in Catalan and Euskera were available. From 1967 weekly Mass leaflets were printed in Euskera. In Barcelona the *Centre de Pastoral Litúrgica de Barcelona*, which had been publishing *Boletín de Pastoral Litúrgica* in Spanish from 1961, began to publish it in Catalan too from 1964, and from 1968 it published a weekly bilingual leaflet entitled *Missa Dominical*.

The more energetic promotion of the use of Euskera by Bishop Cirada, following his appointment as Apostolic Administrator in November 1968, was most likely a response to the repeated demands that had been made by the oppositional priests - especially by those who had occupied the seminary of Derio in November 1968. In their letter to Pope Paul VI they condemned the repression of Basque culture and the subordination of Euskera to Spanish. Bishop Cirada's homily at the funeral of Bishop Gúrpide was bilingual and his first pastoral letter was published in both languages. From that moment on all official texts were published in the diocesan bulletin in both languages.

Despite the advances in the reintroduction of Catalan and Basque in the second half of the 1960s the oppositional clergy in both dioceses felt it necessary to pressurise the hierarchy further on this issue in the early seventies, as we shall see in Chapter VI.

(iii) The chaplains and the working class

One of the main sources of clerical opposition to the regime, as we saw in Chapter II, was the experience of chaplains of JOC, HOAC and ACO who were immersed in the 'world of labour' and actively involved in the workers' struggles for better wages, working conditions, independent trade unions and the right to strike.

From the mid-fifties pastoral innovation and new concepts of religion and the Church were mainly associated with the priests involved in the apostolic workers' movements and specialised youth branches of AC. Fr. Joan Batlles was primarily responsible for the creation of various new specialised groups, such as JAC (agricultural), JEC (university) JIC (independents), following his appointment as diocesan chaplain to the main youth branch of AC in Barcelona in 1953. He encouraged chaplains to break with the pastoral methods of the past and adopt new pastoral approaches copied from the

European specialised youth movements, especially those of the French JOC.¹⁹ Most of the books used by chaplains of the JOC, HOAC and ACO in Barcelona, Bilbao and elsewhere in Spain at this time were imported French works.²⁰ Fr. Batlles was also greatly influenced by the writings of progressive French theologians such as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain on the role of the laity.

The new direction taken by the youth branch of CA in Barcelona undoubtedly impressed the National Council of AC and this was reflected in new statutes approved in 1959 that promoted specialisation.²¹ The social encyclicals of Pope John XXIII and the documents of Vatican II in the early sixties further encouraged the new trends - in particular the Conciliar constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which orientated the Church towards service in the contemporary world in a democratic framework and stressed the importance of the role of the laity:

‘One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives. As far back as the Old Testament the prophets vehemently denounced this scandal, and in the New Testament Christ himself with greater force threatened it with severe punishment. ... The Christian who shirks his temporal duties shirks his duties towards his neighbour, neglects God himself, and endangers his eternal salvation. Let Christians follow the example of Christ who worked as a craftsman. Let them be proud of the opportunity to carry out their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprise with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are ordered to the glory of God.’²²

¹⁹ Fr. Batlles became involved with the youth branch of AC following his ordination in 1943 and was greatly influenced by the work being done there by Fr. Pere Tarres and Fr. Amadeu Oller, who had both belonged to the pre-war FJC and had set up the first JOC groups of the post-war period.

²⁰ For example, among the books recommended by the *Boletín de Consiliarios de la JOC-JOCF* (Núm. 9 mayo-junio 1960, P.6) were: Louis Joseph Lebreton, *De l'efficacité politique du chrétien*, Henri de Lubac, *Meditación sobre la Iglesia*, Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard, *Trois Pastorales*, Paul Barrau, *Quand les ouvriers prient* and Thomas Suavet, *L'engagement temporel*.

²¹ ‘Estatuto de la Acción Católica Española’ *Ecclesia*, no. 19 (1960), 5 de diciembre de 1959, pp. 13-20.

The language of *Gaudium et Spes* reflected a new understanding of the institutional Church and its role in society. Overall the Conciliar teachings encouraged younger clergy, particular those who were critical of the status quo of the Spanish Church within the Spanish State, to call for a less 'clerical' Church and for greater temporal commitment by priests and lay people alike.²³

However the 'temporal activities' of the chaplains and militants of the specialised youth branches of AC in Bilbao and Barcelona were being criticised by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities years before Vatican II. As early as 1960 some JOC groups in Bilbao were criticised for being excessively preoccupied with social problems. For example, a secret police report sent to the Civil Governor on 29 March reported that at the end of Mass the previous Sunday, in the church of San Pedro in Deusto, *Joacistas* handed out leaflets to the congregation as they left the church that announced the holding of a parochial assembly of the JOC the following day and listed the issues to be discussed. These were: insufficient salaries, housing shortages, lack of job security, the need for training for young people seeking work and marriage preparation. The police report mentioned that posters advertising the assembly had been posted up around the neighbourhood, as well as a much bigger one at the entrance to the church.²⁴

In Barcelona a report prepared by the secret police at the beginning of May 1964 warned the Civil Governor of Barcelona of 'dangerous' and 'progressive' elements within the youth branch of AC in the persons of the diocesan chaplains Juan Batlles Alerm (JAC), Casimiro Martí Martí (JEC) and Jorge Bertrán (JOC). It described them as 'enemies of the regime' who were trying to attain positions of authority in the male adult branch of AC so as to politicise it, as they had already done with the youth branches.²⁵

The chaplains of JOC, ACO and HOAC were indeed particularly fierce critics of the socio-political situation, and especially of the plight of the working class. We have already seen how many of them allowed workers to hold clandestine meetings in parish buildings,

²² *Gaudium et Spes*, parag., 43.

²³ See, for example, Fr. Josep M. Totosa's book, *Cap a on va l'AC? Notes sobre el laicat, les organitzacions seglars i l'Acció Catòlica a la llum del Concili* (ICESB-Edicions Rurals, Barcelona, 1967). The author was a chaplain to JIC.

²⁴ Dirección General de Seguridad. Nota Informativa. 29 March 1960. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Vizcaya.

²⁵ (8 May 1964) Nota Informativa: 'Supuesta grave crisis interna en Acción Católica de Barcelona', in AGGCB, Caja 111.

marched alongside them in May Day demonstrations, took up collections to assist the families of strikers, and so on. On account of these activities many were fined. A few others were arrested, prosecuted and in some cases even imprisoned. These civil penalties created an uncomfortable situation for the bishops who tended to disapprove of the actions of many of the priests - believing they were exceeding their legitimate sphere of activity - but who were at the same time opposed to the way the civil authorities were dealing with the priests. The priests themselves argued that they would not have to resort to such actions if the hierarchy clearly and publicly defended workers' rights. Such priests had come to see the workers as the image of the poor in the Gospels, who if they had persecuted the Church during the Civil War had perhaps done so partly through the fault of the Church itself in not knowing how to approach them and partly because the Church had become a party to injustice.

Due to massive migration, mainly from Andalusia, Murcia and Galicia the population of Barcelona city increased from 1.081.175 in 1940 to 1.696.008 in 1964. Growth was particularly spectacular in some of the industrial towns on the city's periphery such as Hospitalet in the Baix Llobregat where the population increased from 51.249 in 1940 to 175.482 in 1964, or Santa Coloma de Gramanet where the population rose from 8,318 in 1940 to 50,855 in 1964.²⁶ To cope with this huge population increase forty new parishes were created in the diocese between 1960 and 1970.²⁷ Most of these new parishes were located in the neighbourhoods full of migrant workers and the young priests sent to man them usually created JOC and JOC/F groups. Their experience with these groups marked them profoundly. Fr. Jaume Sayrach recalled in 1973 how it had shaped his life and understanding of what his role as a priest should be:

'In our time as curates the job of chaplain was the best part of our sacerdotal activity. We often did it in our free time. The meetings with other chaplains, the JOC method, the militants themselves ... all effected in us an authentic interior revolution. JOC meant for us the discovery of the person: to evangelise no longer meant preaching strange truths from a

²⁶ Statistics from 'La població de Catalunya' *Presbyterium. Pastoral de Quaresma* no. 1 (March 1966), 40.

²⁷ Statistics from *Guía de la Iglesia en España* (1961, 1973).

store of knowledge we had acquired in the seminary, but rather to discover in each young man and woman and in the milieu in which we moved the truths of God.'²⁸

He was sent to Santa Coloma in 1965 to set up a new parish. One of the first things he did on arriving was to abolish payment for all services provided by the Church. He and other like-minded young priests of Santa Coloma had discovered on their arrival an abyss between the parish and the workers. They were two totally separate worlds. Fr. Sayrach recalled how disheartened they were to discover that most of the people in the town who came looking for the sacraments of Baptism, Marriage, and so on, had little or no appreciation of the religious value of these sacraments. The priests saw an urgent need for a new and different approach to the working class. For this reason they gave priority to promoting the JOC in Santa Coloma and, as a result, they attracted young people to the Church. Young people seemed to respond better to an offer of a faith that had relevance for their daily lives. The thousands of migrants in Santa Coloma were dislocated people who often felt isolated; the JOC groups helped young people to get to know one another.

In their concern to get as close as possible to the daily lives of young workers the chaplains of the specialised worker's movements consciously relegated the traditional preoccupation with catechesis and liturgy to second place. Following HOAC's 'revision of life' methodology in their own meetings the chaplains became convinced that the dreadful conditions in which people lived and worked in Santa Coloma were caused by unjust social and political structures. They felt impelled to fight to change those structures and since the clandestine unions were engaged in just such a struggle the frequent decision to join forces with them was a natural one.

Fr. Sayrach and several other young chaplains in similar working class parishes also decided to give up their state salaries. They believed that the salary compromised them in the eyes of the workers and poor of their parishes whom they were attempting to evangelise. In addition many felt very drawn to the idea of becoming worker-priests and several actually took up part-time jobs in small workshops or factories. They believed that their new lifestyle, apart from reflecting a genuine commitment to the working class,

²⁸ J. Sayrach, 'Les reformes y la pastoral a Santa Coloma.' *Correspondència* (May 1973), 3-14.

would help them reach a better understanding of the difficulties and problems faced by workers and consequently to plan adequate pastoral strategies for winning workers to the Church.

Even though it was the mid-sixties before the first Spanish priests took up part-time and full-time jobs they were influenced by the experience of the *Mission de France*, which had been launched in 1941, and the *Mission de Paris*, started in January 1944.²⁹ Cardinal Suhard's writings were also very influential and they were published in Spanish and in Catalan in the sixties.³⁰ In 1953 Gilbert Cesbron's inspiring novel, *Les saints vont en enfer*, was published in Spanish.³¹ Works by other French Catholics who promoted the idea of worker-priests, such as the Jesuit theologian, De Lubac, and the Dominican theologian, Chenu, were also translated.

The decision by priests in Barcelona and Bilbao to take up manual labour was never a result of encouragement from the bishops. The latter were inclined to believe that it was inappropriate and dangerous for priests to juggle full-time work with their normal parochial duties. The Spanish bishops were undoubtedly influenced by the vicissitudes of the worker-priest movement in France: the condemnation by Pius XII in 1953 of the worker-priest experiment, which was a consequence of the Roman Catholic Church's commitment to the Cold War,³² and then the French bishops' communication of 23 October 1965 that once again allowed French priests to take up full-time jobs as manual labourers.³³

It is difficult to get accurate figures for priests engaged in full-time or part-time work, but easy enough to estimate that there were never any more than twenty in any one year in Barcelona nor more than six or seven in Bilbao. Fr. Josep Sánchez was one of the first in Barcelona to take up full-time work in May 1966 as an assistant in a hardware shop.³⁴ He was one of three curates in the Parish of Sant Ignasi in the centre of Barcelona. The other two priests looked after the usual pastoral tasks involved in the

²⁹Information on the *Mission* in Iztueta, *Sociologia del fenómeno*, 113-20.

³⁰For example, Cardenal Suhard, *Progrés o Decadència de l'Església* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1966.)

³¹Gilbert Cesbron, *Los santos van al Infierno* (Barcelona: Destino, 1953).

³²In the period 1945-50 worker-priests and lay militants had found themselves inseparably bound together with members of the Communist Party, which played so central a role in the lives of the French workers.

³³Their decision reflected the new mood in Rome as the Church reassessed its role in the modern world.

³⁴'Una experiència de sacerdoci en mitg del món obrer.' *Correspondència*, no. 40 (15 May 1967), 2-5. He was 35 years old when he became a worker-priest. (R.I.P. 1993).

running of a parish. He was from a working class family and had entered the seminary at eighteen. His first appointment was to a parish in the working class Verdún district and then, after three years, he was transferred to Sant Ignasi. In an interview he gave in 1967 he said:

‘At the beginning it was very hard. ... I felt a kind of ineptitude to fit in and collaborate with my new companions. Everyone regarded me suspiciously; they changed the topic of conversation when I approached, laughed behind my back. The truth is that I often did appear ridiculous. I was not strong enough to lift the boxes, I couldn't converse naturally ... I felt like an outsider. ... Little by little things improved. I found myself more centred, more of a man, more fulfilled. Manual labour opened new horizons to me and at the same time to my new companions and the parochial community. ...

Through my work I have come to a deeper understanding of the real problems affecting the working class: the injustice, the exploitation, and the lack of any kind of proper structures to protect them....’³⁵

However Fr. Sánchez also admitted in the interview that he was experiencing serious difficulties and tensions juggling his job with his parochial duties.

Fr. Pedro Solabarriá from the diocese of Bilbao was the first worker-priest in Spain.³⁶ He was born into a working class family in the industrial suburb of Barakaldo in Bilbao. His father was originally from Gallarta in the mining zone of Vizcaya and his paternal grandparents were Basque speakers from the small village of Azcoitia in Guipúzcoa. His mother was a Basque speaker from the small coastal village of Bakio in Vizcaya. Thanks to this background he had a love for the Basque language and culture and a great interest in the working class. He studied in the seminary of Vitoria where he was one of the founders of *Grupos de Jesús Obrero* and its monthly magazine *Yunque*.

³⁵Ibid., 5.

³⁶Pedro Solabarriá was born in Portugalete (Bilbao) on 27 January 1930. He was ordained on 27 June 1954.

During his summer holidays in Portugalete he befriended communists, socialists, anarchists and members of the clandestine UGT and STV. While still a student he acquired a number of books on socio-religious issues published by the French Franciscans in the *Frères du Monde* series which impressed him greatly and deepened his interest in the world of labour. His first parish was one of the poorest in Gallarta, the mining zone where his father had grown up. The population was mainly composed of migrants from Andalusia and Extremadura and they lived in appalling conditions:

‘The neighbourhoods of Trino and Las Calizas had no water in the homes, no toilets, no showers. In Triano there wasn’t even electricity. We had to use carbide lamps. And I realised that my first priority was to help these people who had a right to at least basic dignity and to be treated as ‘persons’. Those people lived in the most abject poverty. I started to give classes to the children and to seek solutions to the lack of electricity and water. I also tried to awaken awareness among them of the class struggle. I preached that their situation was the result of injustice: the exploitation of the Capitalist system. Because of all the misery and exploitation I saw in the mines I decided to work as a labourer myself when I was sent in 1962 to my next parish in Barakaldo (Bilbao).³⁷

Bishop Gurrpide gave him permission to work part-time, but almost from the beginning Solaberriá worked full time. He worked in Baracaldo for the next 35 years as a labourer in a construction company. Solaberriá was chaplain to a JOC and HOAC group in his parish. He lived in a flat, which he shared with two other workers who were *Jocistas*. He was arrested on 30 July 1968 for the non-payment of three fines, which had been imposed for ‘subversive homilies’, and he was sentenced to three months in Zamora prison. In 1969 he was arrested again, accused of illegal association and of producing leaflets calling on workers to participate in the strikes of January and February of that year. In the early 1970s he began to distance himself from the Church and in 1978 he left the priesthood.³⁸

³⁷ Information from a letter received from Pedro Solabarriá in August 2000.

³⁸ During the Transition to democracy he joined *Euskadiko Ezkerra*, a left-wing Basque political party.

Fr. Imanol Olabarria's trajectory as a seminarian and priest was remarkably similar to Fr. Solaberria's.³⁹ He was a member of the *Grupos* in the Seminary of Derio and following his ordination in 1966 he too was sent to La Arboleda and Triano in the mining zone of Vizcaya where he was chaplain to a JOC group. He and two other priests were arrested on 27 October 1967 in Bilbao where they were taking part in a workers' demonstration.⁴⁰ In 1968 he began working full-time in Barakaldo, first in a chemical factory and later in the metallurgical sector. In 1969 he went into exile to avoid arrest for his involvement in a strike. Fr. Olabarria had taken part in the priests' march in April 1967, the occupations of the Episcopal Offices in June and August 1968 and the occupation of the Seminary of Derio in November 1968. He was a member of *Gogor*. Following his return to Spain in 1970 he distanced himself from the Church and continued to work full time. In 1975 he was secularised and he got married that same year. Fr. Olabarria's concern for the plight of the working class was the primary reason why he joined the clerical oppositional movement.⁴¹

In Barcelona Fr. Oleguer Bellavista had also belonged to a *Grupo de Jesús Obrero* while a seminarian. As a newly ordained priest he did a course on the HOAC in 1954. He was very impressed with what he learned and he made a long-lasting friendship with the great lay promoter of the HOAC, Guillermo Roviroso. Fr. Bellavista first became a JOC and ACO chaplain while in the Parish of Sant Pius X from 1956 to 1959. This parish was based in a working class district of Barcelona city.

'My association with JOC and ACO changed my way of being a priest. I do not know how to explain it, but from then on I felt more united to the problems of the militants, and by extension, to the problems of the working class. I made an option, I do not know if explicitly or implicitly, to devote myself as much as I could to the working class and the worker militants. I began to get to know worker militants, Catholics and non-

³⁹ Born in Ochandiano (Vizcaya) in 1937. He was ordained in 1966.

⁴⁰ Information from Information from: 'Comisión diocesana JOC Bilbao. Hoja Informativa para militantes' (1 de diciembre 1967) IDTP, Goicuria Archive, Caja 2.

⁴¹ Information from letter received from Imanol Olabarria dated 21 July 2000.

believers, who were fighting for their class: union activists, socialists, labour lawyers, communists, etc.⁴²

He was sent to Cornellà in the Baix Llobregat in 1961 to set up the new parish of Sant Jaume in the neighbourhood of Almeda and he remained there for the next eleven years.⁴³ The town of Cornellà grew from a population of 11,000 in 1950 to 76,389 in 1970. In the process the original town was swallowed up and became part of the continuous urban development that spread out of the city centre. There was ferocious urban deprivation and deep social unrest in the area, which made it fertile ground for the growth of revolutionary marxist politics and socialism. In the winter of 1962 Fr. Bellavista organised a series of conferences on the history of the workers' movement that attracted a small number of people from his own parish and the neighbouring parishes of Cornellà and Hospitalet. He also began groups of JOC/F and HOAC in the new parish and shortly afterwards he became federal chaplain of ACO in the Baix Llobregat area.

'I think that we, the chaplains of JOC and ACO, never felt we were better than other priests, with whom we had very friendly relations; but the fact of being chaplains undoubtedly influenced strongly the type of priests we were. We understood and lived close to the struggles and difficulties affecting the working class families in our parishes. ... In time we also learned that the poor and the workers were evangelising us, they taught us many things, values we had never learned, neither in the seminary nor in our lives in the parish.'⁴⁴

His commitment to helping the workers in their struggle for better wages, working conditions, free trade unions, the right to strike, and so on, led him to allow parish buildings to be used for meetings of workers - in fact the very first meetings of the CCOO in the Baix Llobregat were held in his small church in Almeda. Some years later he also

⁴² Bellavista, *El ble*, 16.

⁴³ See history of the parish in Oleguer Bellavista i Bou, *Evolució d'un barri obrer* (Barcelona: Editorial Claret, 1977).

⁴⁴ Bellavista, *El ble*, 16-7.

allowed members of illegal political parties such as PSUC and *Bandera Roja* to hold meetings in the parish buildings. From 1965 to 1972 Fr. Bellavista was the editor of the fortnightly *Correspondència* and he was also a regular contributor to the *Boletín de Consiliarios de JOC/F*.⁴⁵ He also participated in '*Sectors pastorals obrers*' which was a kind of forum for discussion and the exchange of ideas between priests based in working class parishes. These priests had spontaneously grouped in geographical 'sectors' to plan pastoral strategies in their immediate neighbourhood, district or town. (i.e. 'sectors' such as Trinitat-Verdún-Sant Andreu, Besós, Santa Coloma, Terrassa, Sabadell.)⁴⁶ They were attempting to adopt a pastoral approach that involved an authentic engagement with the problems and difficulties faced by workers in the 'real world' and they also wanted to see a poorer, freer, more evangelical, and more honest Church. We saw in the previous chapter how a report sent to the Civil Governor in December 1968 on dangerous elements among the diocesan clergy described the priests belonging to *Sectors* as being 'extremists' and the most 'daring' of all in expressing opposition to the regime.⁴⁷ The priests of *Sectors* met frequently and they produced several information sheets, which were published as a supplement to *Correspondència*. They also collected hundreds of signatures for a joint letter renouncing state pay, which was sent to the CEE on 1 January 1969. Hundreds of copies of the letter were circulated clandestinely throughout the Archdiocese and elsewhere in Spain.⁴⁸ Fr. Jaume Sayrach was the main promoter of *Sectors* and he remained its secretary until the end of 1971.⁴⁹ He was also a member of the editorial team of *Correspondència*.

After the CEE forced new statutes on AC during 1967-1968 in an attempt to curb the temporalism of the specialised movements, militants abandoned the HOAC, JOC and ACO in their droves. As a result many disillusioned chaplains in Barcelona and Bilbao began to look for new ways of winning workers to the Church. Some became involved in

⁴⁵ See pages 85-6.

⁴⁶ See for example the report on a meeting to plan pastoral action that was attended by 40 priests from 15 parishes in Badalona, Sant Adrià and Santa Coloma in October 1966. 'Zona Marge Esquerra del Besós. II Jornades de Pastoral.' *Correspondència* 1 May 1967.

⁴⁷ See page 163.

⁴⁸ 'Reflexiones en torno a la retribución del clero' (1 January 1969). Copy in AAM. It was signed by 143 priests from Barcelona (43 of whom had already stopped drawing their salary) and 557 from other Spanish dioceses.

⁴⁹ Jaume P. Sayrach, 'Aquests deu anys, des d'un barri obrer.' *Correspondència*, no. 100 (December 1971), 23-28.

the social issues that mobilised working class neighbourhoods and the suburbs in the early 1970s (*Associacions de Veïns*, *Assemblea de Catalunya* and *Congres de Cultura Catalana*.) and others formed Base Christian Communities (CC de BB) or joined political groups like 'Christians for Socialism' (CpS) in the early 1970s.⁵⁰ With hindsight we see that it was a natural progression for most of them because of their experience with the poor, the workers and those at the base of the Church. They also began to embrace a new theology, which at the time was being defined by Latin America theologians: Liberation Theology.

Many of the collective acts of clerical dissidence were carried out partly in protest at the repression of industrial workers. The Basque clergy's letters of 1960 and 1963 both referred to the difficult economic and social situation affecting workers and expressed anger at the hierarchy's failure to protest at the injustices that gave rise to it. The 1960 letter described the state vertical union as 'neither a true union nor Christian' and said it was in effect a useless instrument for the defence of workers' rights. In an allusion to the Metropolitan Archbishops' Declaration of 15 January 1960 on moral problems arising from the Stabilisation Plan and economic development, the priests said that it was unfair to call for austerity and belt-tightening on the part of workers when they were denied truly representative unions. The 1963 letter to the Second Vatican Council listed a number of areas where the human rights outlined in *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris* were being violated in Spain, and about which the Spanish bishops had so far not protested. One of these areas related to the situation of workers. The letter said there existed a 'totalitarian system of labour' in Spain and that every kind of worker group outside the single state union was prohibited. The latter was described as operating in the service of the State, and of being under the direction of government representatives.

The 77 priests who marched through central Bilbao in April 1967 were primarily motivated by the brutal repression of workers during the *Laminaciones Bandas de Echevarría* strike, which by then had been going on for six months. In the letter they sent to the Civil Governor of Vizcaya and Bishop Gúrpide they denounced:

⁵⁰ There is further discussion of CC de BB and CpS in the following chapter.

‘The violent repression of the workers’ demonstration of 27 February, the arbitrary arrests of 140 workers from the so-called ‘*Mina del Alemán*’ on 12 March, the violent attack on the demonstration in solidarity with the workers of *Laminaciones de Bandas* on 4 April, the constant arrests, torture and arbitrary fining of labour leaders, and the recent unfair expulsion of one of them from Spain.’⁵¹

The priests occupying first the episcopal offices and then the Seminary of Derio in the summer and autumn of 1968 were responding to the extremely tense situation that had arisen in Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya partly as a result of the first deaths in ETA’s campaign against the regime and partly because of the continuing repression of striking workers. One of the demands of the priests occupying the seminary was the creation of a ‘New Church’ truly engaged with the needs of the *Pueblo Trabajador Vasco* – Basque Working People (PTV).⁵² Finally, the collective letter of 1969 signed by 500 priests from the four Basque dioceses was provoked by the government’s declaration of a state of emergency to repress the latest labour and student disturbances. In all these letters the priests declared that they felt obliged by their consciences and duty bound to proclaim the teaching of the Church on the right of workers to representative unions, the right to strike, and so on. They denounced the failure of the bishops to do so and called on them to end the Church’s close ties to a regime that described itself as Catholic, but which was violating those basic human rights.

Clearly anger at the situation of the working class was a prime source of collective clerical dissidence in Barcelona too. Both the collective letter of 1964 to the Catalan bishops and the 1967 report on pastoral problems affecting the diocese complained that the Church’s alliance with the regime was alienating the working class from the Church. The report on pastoral problems contained an analysis of the difficulties and challenges facing priests based in working class parishes. It stated that the impact of HOAC/F,

⁵¹ (12 April 1967) ‘Manifiesto de Setenta y Siete Sacerdotes de la Diócesis de Bilbao al Pueblo y Autoridades Religiosas y Civiles.’ Manterola Archive, EBL, R. 14, 5. See more on march in Ch. II, pp 106-7.

⁵² As we saw in Chapter III, ETA had adopted the PTV concept the previous year at its Fifth Assembly in an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between the struggle against national and social oppression. Its use by the priests in Derio not only reflects the sympathies that many of the participants had with ETA but also their socialist tendencies.

JOC/F and ACO on the workers over the previous twenty years or so had been only very slight, since the workers still viewed the ecclesiastical hierarchy as the principal representatives of the Church and they perceived them as being hand in glove with the oppressor regime. It maintained that the permission given by the Archbishop to police to arrest workers who had taken refuge in a church in Sabadell after a demonstration on 1 May 1967 had undermined much of what had been achieved by priests in drawing workers closer to the Church.

The condition of the working class and the repression of the labour movement were among the main issues debated in the *Fòrum* of priests, which took place in Barcelona in March 1969 during the nationwide state of emergency. According to one of the priests belonging to *Sectors de Pastoral Obrero*, one of the principal aims the *Fòrum* was to debate how the Church could be renewed to make it more faithful to the Gospel:

‘Since the objectives proposed were those which we were defending in the midst of the working class, we all went along. Manuel spoke of the arrest of the workers in Can Oriach in Sabadell on 1 May 1967: ‘With great pain - he said - I have to publicly declare that the Archbishop is an accomplice in the repression that the working class are suffering.’⁵³

By the end of 1969, however, the Catalan bishops had switched to supporting the issue of workers’ rights. In October of that year they issued a joint declaration rejecting the proposed new union law as not being sufficiently democratic. As we shall see in the final chapter of the thesis, from 1970 on the bishops and higher echelons of the clergy in Barcelona and Bilbao became the loudest clerical protestors at the continuing repression of the workers.

⁵³José Ricart Oller, *Egara, una parroquia obrera bajo el Franquismo. 1963-1977* (Terrassa: Editora Pedagògica del Vallès, 1979), 101.

(iv) Religion and nationalism

We have discussed earlier in this chapter the important role played by the Basque and Catalan clergy in the preservation of regional language and culture. We will now consider how that related to clerical support for political nationalism.

Just as culture distinctiveness had supplied the raw material for the first nationalist formulations in both regions at the end of the nineteenth century, so too a resurgence of cultural nationalism during the Franco regime led to the rebirth of political nationalism. In Catalonia the language and culture had survived the harsh repressive measures very well and by the end of the sixties a rich cultural life conveyed veiled messages of self-determination and confident hopes for the beginning of a new broad nationalist movement. In the Basque Country, however, the use of Euskera declined steeply in the same period. For ETA members in particular this was a potentially disastrous trend as they considered Euskera to represent the essence of Euskadi. Furthermore the thousands of migrants that arrived to Vizcaya in the fifties and sixties did not assimilate as successfully as migrants did in Barcelona. This fomented a sense of despair, since many Basques perceived themselves as a people on the verge of extinction. A '*sentimiento agónico*' became widespread, radicalising cultural nationalists and leading the youngest of them to create ETA in 1959.⁵⁴ These frustrated young people's reaction to the annihilation of Basque culture was to forge an uncompromising nationalist movement stressing separation from Spain. Claims that a 'cultural genocide' was being carried out by the State served to justify their recourse to armed struggle.

In Barcelona the numerous religious-cultural groups already discussed in Chapter II helped bring about a 'national reawakening' among many of their young members. The *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign of 1966 had a similar effect. Indeed Franco himself wrote to Pope Paul VI, following the consecration of Archbishop González Martín, complaining about clerical support for regional nationalism:

⁵⁴ Gurutz Jáuregui, *Ideología y estrategia política de ETA. Análisis de su evolución entre 1969 y 1968* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1981) uses the powerful expression '*sentimiento agónico*' to describe a feeling of anguish and despair, of impending collective threat, of living on the threshold of oblivion.

'It is a widely known and notorious fact that in Catalonia and the Basque Country the origins of separatism are to be found among a minority of the clergy and in certain religious orders, who are encouraging separatist activities in our Patria, to the disgust and scandal of the whole nation.'⁵⁵

In Catalonia, however, no political movement even remotely similar to ETA emerged in the sixties. In fact political nationalism really only re-emerged in Catalonia in November 1971 after the setting up of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* - a broad coalition of opposition parties, groups and individuals sharing four basic demands that would act as a common denominator in their struggle against the regime. One of these demands was the provisional re-establishment of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy of 1932 as a step towards the full exercise of the right to self-determination. We shall discuss the involvement of oppositional priests in Barcelona in the *Assemblea* in the final chapter of the thesis.

In the Basque Country the chaplains of *Herri Gaztedi*, the specialised youth rural branch of AC, did play an important part in political consciousness-raising among the youth. According to Fr Bereciártua, chaplain to a *Herri Gaztedi* group in the tiny rural village of Bériz in the late sixties, all the members of his group were committed to the struggle against Francoist repression and the defence of the language, culture and rights of the Basques. However while none of the young people in the Bériz group actually joined ETA they all agreed with its ideology.⁵⁶

The roots of ETA were, of course, deep in the countryside of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa and its creation in 1959 was partly a reaction to the second industrial revolution of the 1950s and 1960s which was seen as threatening the culture and traditional way of life in the Basque Country. Many priests feared that industrialisation and migration would bring new ideas and a new morality that might lead to the secularisation of the still relatively devout Basques.

⁵⁵ 16 June 1966) '*Carta de Franco a Pablo VI*'. In Cárcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, 850-2.

⁵⁶ Information from letter written to author by Fr. Bereciártua in July 2001. Fr. Bereciártua was born in Izurza, Vizcaya in 1941 and ordained in 1966. He is secularised, married and in his own words: 'estranged from the institutional Church.'

Some priest feared, in addition that the young people joining ETA would abandon the Church because they saw it as pro-Franco and this was another reason why some Basque priests encouraged and actively assisted young militants in their nationalist political activities in ETA.

In the Basque Country the oppositional clergy's defence of ETA is not surprising and was part of a long tradition of clerical support for political nationalism dating back to the Carlist Wars of the nineteenth century. As we saw in Chapter I the majority of the clergy of the diocese of Vitoria sided with the PNV and supported the Second Republic during the Civil War. In the 1950s many young Basque priests shared the exasperation of their contemporaries who were joining ETA because of the failure of the PNV to do anything to halt the annihilation of Basque identity. In the 1960 collective letter the priests spoke of the 'genocide' of the Basques. In the two collective letters of the spring of 1967 they talked about the repression of the Basque 'People.'⁵⁷ The document prepared by the radical *Gogor* priests explaining to Pope Paul VI the reasons for the occupation of the seminary of Derio in November 1968 called for the formation of a new ecclesiastical province incorporating all the Basque dioceses. It was clear from this document that the occupiers considered the Basque dioceses as a natural unit in the same way as ETA considered the Basque Country a region historically and culturally distinct from Spain. It could also be seen that they shared ETA's aim of connecting national liberation with social revolution through the creation of an independent state for the Basques.

As we shall see in the final chapter of the thesis in the early seventies many Basque priests combined support for nationalism with support for the labour movement. Indeed their language often reflected the revolutionary Marxist phraseology used by ETA during the same period.

(v) Understandings of 'faith' and 'prophecy'

The leftist ideology that many dissenting priests in Bilbao and Barcelona began to espouse in the late sixties must have seemed to many Catholic traditionalists and conservatives to have arisen from the importation of ideas outside the Church - alien ideas

⁵⁷ In Spanish there are two words for 'people' - 'gente' and 'pueblo'. The former means 'people' in a diverse and loose sense and the latter refers to 'a people' more as a cultural unity.

that tended to politicise Catholicism, such as Socialism and Marxism. Others probably attributed the growth of dissent among the clergy to an overly radical interpretation of the Second Vatican Council's teaching, which had turned them away from true Catholicism in favour of secular ideas. However, dissident priests did not become politicised by simply absorbing non-Catholic ideologies (i.e. 'ideologies' as belief systems with implications for social interaction). Rather there was a multiplicity of causes. One of the main causes was their wish for a prophetic type Church, modelled on the Old Testament and another was the impact that the teaching of Vatican II had on them.

From the mid-fifties bishops all over Spain began to send seminarians and young priests to study in Europe theological colleges where they came in contact with progressive theological currents which helped broaden their intellectual horizons. As a result very often these young priests became critical of Spanish Catholicism, and wished to see the Church in Spain adapt to the times. They were, of course, among those most receptive to the reforming currents of the Second Vatican Council in the early sixties.

As William Callahan points out: 'The effects of the Council on the Spanish Church proved complicated and traumatic not only because conciliar decisions affected civil-ecclesiastical relations. They also challenged long-held assumptions about how the Church should convey its religious message within a pluralistic, secular society. The Council's call for liturgical reform, new pastoral methods adapted to contemporary culture and social conditions, and a greater role for the laity and the lower clergy as members of a community of believers provided general direction rather than a detailed master plan capable of being uniformly applied throughout the Catholic world. ... The Council initially produced euphoria among clergy and laity ready to embark on pastoral innovation based on 'true pluralism' within the Church. [However] Differing interpretations of the application of conciliar principles inevitably produced conflict. Following the Council, the Spanish Church entered a period of turmoil marked by debate about how it could best fulfil its religious mission.'

The Second Vatican Council urged the Church to leave its powerful protectors (social elites and governments) and to champion pluralism and the rights of the oppressed. By teaching that Catholicism was concerned not only with spirituality the Church of Pope John XXIII and Vatican II was attempting to leave behind a century of withdrawal from

the world that had been partly forced by liberal states and partly as a result of Rome's increasing emphasis on Catholic faith and morals, in opposition to secular influences. The very title of the most significant document the Council produced 'The Pastoral Council on the Church in the Modern World' (*Gaudium et Spes*) indicates the importance that reconciliation with the modern world had for the Council.⁵⁸ Its famous opening words tied the Church intimately into the struggles of the world and stressed the solidarity of Catholics with the whole human community, particularly the poor and afflicted: 'The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.' It took up the themes of social justice and political participation already treated in *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and dealt a huge blow to the confessional state in Spain by declaring that the Church 'is not identified with any political community, nor bound by ties to any political system.' Conciliar teaching was like music to the ears of oppositional priests in the dioceses of Barcelona and Bilbao who years before the Council had been critical of the Church-State alliance in Spain and had called for new pastoral approaches to the poorest and most oppressed.

However, the Council did not explain how the Church could assert that its realm of authority was different from the State's and at the same time assert that it should be actively involved in temporal issues. This ambiguity in Conciliar doctrine caused tensions in Spain between a predominately conservative and traditionalist hierarchy, who still believed the strength of the Church in Spain was founded on its historical alliance with the State and who were less receptive to the Vatican II themes that emphasised social and political reforms, and the younger clergy who wanted to break the alliance with the regime and end the Church's association with the State. In the aftermath of Vatican II expectations of change on the part of the more progressive, younger priests (the new prophets) often rose higher and quicker than the hierarchy's capacity for response and this

⁵⁸ The term 'constitution' usually applies to a document defining or declaring dogma, not one relating to pastoral concerns. Thus the Council was underscoring the importance of the Church's relation to the modern world by using a title normally applied just to fundamental dogma.

explains why clerical dissent intensified in Bilbao and Barcelona in the years immediately following the Council.⁵⁹

Following the Council an unprecedented wave of theological discussion and religious experimentation swept through the Spanish Church. Not surprisingly many of the dissenting priests in Bilbao and Barcelona were to be attracted to Liberation theology in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This new theology emanating from the Church in Latin America drew on a long biblical tradition in which salvation by God included not only deliverance from evil spirits, guilt, sin, sickness and eternal damnation, but also liberation from the power of the enemy, bondage, political domination, or social oppression. The Bible recounts many instances of such 'liberations': the exodus from Egypt, the return from the exile in Babylon, etc. For many oppositional priests these became symbols of their own struggles for the 'liberation' of the working class or the freeing of their 'Peoples' from the 'colonial power' of Spanish domination. Another attraction of Liberation theology, especially for the chaplains of the apostolic workers' movements, is that it is 'contextual' in that it consciously and explicitly addresses a particular historical and social situation, it is 'inductive' in method, beginning with the concrete facts of the condition of oppression and then 'theorising' from those facts and it is 'militant' insofar as the practitioners of Liberation Theology are actively engaged in the quest for liberation. Liberation theology may have seemed to many a more elaborate formulation of the basic 'see, judge, act' methodology they had used in the specialised movements of AC in the sixties. The Base Christian Communities and Christians for Socialism groups that appeared in the seventies in Barcelona and Bilbao were, as we shall see, engendered to a large extent by this new theology with its critique of capitalist excess, the selfishness of the bourgeoisie, and the Church's historic support for a class-based society.⁶⁰

⁵⁹It was apparent, for example, in the hierarchy's confrontation with the specialised branches of AC in 1967-69.

⁶⁰Information on Liberation theology from *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (1993-1998) and from Margaret Hebblethwaite, *Base Communities. An Introduction* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993).

Chapter VI

Evolution of clerical protest in the period 1970-1975

During the last five years of the Franco regime there were much fewer clashes between dissident priests and the bishops in the dioceses of Barcelona and Bilbao, mainly because the latter gradually came to sympathise with the protests of priests. As a result they offered much more support and protection to priests who incurred governmental fines and prison sentences for preaching 'prophetic' sermons, allowing presbyteries to be used for clandestine meetings of opposition groups, and so on. These changes in episcopal attitudes were a consequence of the adoption by them of a more democratic style of diocesan government, as had been recommended by Vatican II, of the bishops finally finding the courage to stand up to the civil authorities in defence of the Church's teaching, and of a wider process of 'disengagement' of the whole Spanish Church from the regime which was officially marked by Conference of Bishops publishing 'The Church and the Political Community' in January 1973.¹

(i) Bishop Cirarda and the irreconcilables of 'Gogor'

In spite of the Apostolic Administrator's efforts since taking over at the helm of the diocese in November 1968 to defuse tensions and unite the clergy the atmosphere in the diocese, although it would never again be as bad as in 1969, continued to be quite tense and the most radical priests continued to clash with the bishop and the civil authorities. For example, in February 1970 Bishop Cirarda forbade Fr. Pedro Berrioategortua, who was a member of *Gogor*, to preach in his parish in the small rural village of Amorebieta.² The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft von priestergruppen in der BRD*, which represented some 1,500 priests from almost all the German dioceses, wrote to Bishop Cirarda on 2 March 1970 in defence of Fr. Berrioategortua. They warned the bishop not to let what happened in Hitler's Germany happen in Spain and called on him to lift the suspension and to support Fr. Berrioategortua morally.

'It is with shame that we remember today in Germany the times of Hitler, when the bishops kept quiet while innocent Jews and Christians

¹ 'Sobre la Iglesia y la comunidad política.' Iribarren, DCEE.I, 520-54.

were tortured and murdered, when the bishops watched passively as priests like Fr. Alfred Delp S.I. were 'condemned'.³

Presumably the letter had little effect since a month later another priest, Fr. Imanol Oruemázaga, was suspended from his sacerdotal faculties by the Apostolic Administrator for his political and religious dissidence. He had set up a type of Base Christian Community in the small coastal town of Ondárroa that was operating in a religiously unorthodox fashion.⁴ In response to this suspension 68 of the most radical Vizcayan priests wrote a letter to Bishop Cirarda and various representative bodies of the diocesan Church on 30 May expressing their solidarity with Fr. Oruemázaga and accusing the Spanish Church in general, and the diocesan Church in particular, of cowardice for not speaking out against injustices and oppression. They accused the Church of being aligned with economic and political power and of ignoring the situation of the poor. The letter accused Bishop Cirarda of failing to give any serious consideration to the natural rights of the Basques as a 'People' and of the necessity to adapt the structures of the Church to suit the needs of the 'People'. In an annex thirty-one of the signatories announced they were going to become involved in alternative Christian communities like the one in Ondárroa and adopt a new pastoral approach, independent of the official diocesan Church.⁵

Tension among the clergy continued to rise when 9 diocesan priests were arrested on Monday 1 June 1970 and taken to Zamora prison (bringing the total number of priests there from the diocese of Bilbao to twelve.) The motive for their arrest was the non-payment of fines imposed for having read the statement of the five priests on hunger-strike in May 1969 from the pulpit. Bishop Cirarda and the Council of Priests prepared an unprecedented joint pastoral letter that was read out at all Masses in the diocese on 6 and 7

²Fr. Pedro Berrioategortua Murgotio was a chaplain to the rural youth movement *Herri Gaztedi*. He had already been sanctioned several times by the civil authorities for 'seditious' sermons.

³'Carta de la Hermandad de trabajo de los grupos sacerdotales de la República Federal Alemana (Arbeitsgemeinschaft von priestergruppen in der BRD) dirigida al obispo de Bilbao, Mgr. Cirarda, en solidaridad con Pedro Berrioategortua.' (2 March 1970). Text in Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 410-13.

⁴'Carta de Mons. Cirarda a Imanol Oruemázaga' (24-4-1970). Text in Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno contestatario*, 414-6. Fr. Imanol Manuel Oruemázaga was born in 1931 and ordained in 1955. He too was a member of *Gogor*. He abandoned his ministry a few months later, later he became secularised and finally he abandoned his Catholic faith altogether.

⁵(30 May 1970) 'Documento suscrito por 68 sacerdotes vascos, dirigido al Sr. Obispo Administrador Apóstolico de Bilbao, Monseñor Cirarda y organismos oficiales de la Iglesia Diocesana.' Text in *ibid.*, 417-9.

June.⁶ It stated that the Apostolic Administrator's permission for the prosecution and imprisonment of the 9 priests had not been sought and that therefore the civil authorities had once more contravened Article 16 of the Concordat. It pointed out that the ecclesiastical hierarchy was the only authority competent to judge the contents of a sermon and impose a suitable sanction. Therefore by fining priests for sermons the civil authorities were intruding into the ecclesiastical sphere and attempting to limit the Church's rights and freedom:

‘For us, the limitation of the Church's freedom, which we have spoken about in relation to this matter that concerns us, is part of a more general problem that arises from an absence of laws and institutions that recognise and allow, not just in theory but also in practice, citizens' rights and legitimate freedom. Pope Paul VI has exhorted us in this respect to promote courageously and intelligently social justice, the principles of which have so often been clearly outlined by the Church.’

In the concluding part of the pastoral letter, however, Bishop Cirarda and the Council of Priests were critical too of the actions of the more radical priests:

‘We regret and disapprove of the excessive reactions of some people who have employed unjust methods in the search for legitimate liberty, especially if this has been the case of some priests.’

In a letter sent to Fr. Anastasio Olabarria, one of the nine priests detained, the Apostolic Administrator informed the priests of the publication of this pastoral letter, which he had discussed with them during his visit to Zamora Prison on 6 June. He told them that on Sunday 7 June he had celebrated Mass in substitution of Fr. Olabarria in Sestao and on Sunday 14 June he celebrated Mass for another of the priests in the village of Larrabezua, where he had preached in Euskera and Castilian. The Vicar of Pastoral

⁶‘Del Obispo y su Consejo Presbiterio a los sacerdotes, religiosos y fieles seculares de Vizcaya: Paz en el Señor’ (6 Junio 1970). *BEOBI* 21 (1970) 297-301. Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. ii, 17-22.

Affairs, Fr. Angel Ubieta, had substituted another priest at a Mass on the same day in the village of Burceña.⁷

A report prepared by the police on 15 June informed the Civil Governor of these Masses and of three others celebrated in various churches of Sestao. It said the celebrants there had asked for prayers for the priests in Zamora, 'with whom they clearly sympathise', and had expressed regret at the fact that there were persons among the congregation whose only reason for being there was to be able to inform the police afterwards of what had been said in the homily.⁸

After the nine priests were released Bishop Cirarda wrote a pastoral letter to the clergy of the diocese that contained harsh words for priests who were adopting a posture similar to that of the 68 radicals who had written to him on 30 May. The bishop reminded them that:

'Christ made the Church hierarchical. The Church is not democratic, nor oligarchic, nor monarchic, but rather - in a single word- Christocratic. ... Remember that it is not evangelical to introduce methods derived from revolutionary dialectics into the Church.'⁹

Bishop Cirarda's two pastoral letters of June and the visits he made to the Nunciature and the Ministry of Justice to plead for the arrested priests won him more support among the clergy. However, the radical priests of *Gogor* remained dissatisfied with the level of backing he was giving to priests in trouble with the civil authorities. The more conservative sectors of the clergy and the civil authorities on the other hand were irritated and vexed by his style of government.¹⁰

Later that year, however, Bishop Cirarda made a very public demonstration of support for priests who were being prosecuted by the State at the time of the famous Burgos Trial in December 1970. The 16 defendants, who included two priests, were between them charged with a number of terrorist offences, including the murder of the

⁷Letter from Bishop Cirarda to Anastasio Olabarria (14 June 1970). Archive Goicurúa, IDTP.

⁸ (15 June 1970) 'Nota Informativa: Manifestaciones de personal religioso.' Copies of this Nota to Ministro de Justicia, Director General de Política Interior y Asistencia Social, Madrid. AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978'.

⁹24 June 1970 'A los sacerdotes de la diócesis, diocesanos y religiosos, paz en el Señor.' *BEOBI* (julio, 1970).

¹⁰ They were especially annoyed by his decision to absent himself from the *Te Deum* Mass celebrated annually in the Basilica of Begoña on 18 June, the eve of the Anniversary of the Day of the Liberation.

police chief Melitón Manzanás in San Sebastián in August 1968. Aside from the two priests, none of the accused was older than thirty. All except two were from small industrial towns of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya. Fr. Jon Etxabe from the diocese of San Sebastián and Fr. Julián Calzada from Bilbao both wrote to the military prosecutors and to the government requesting that the trial be held in public. The Nuncio and the bishops of Bilbao and Sebastián also called on the government and the Vatican to make an exception in this case and forego the Concordat stipulation that priests be tried in *camara* and instead allow the priests and the fourteen other accused to be tried in public.¹¹ The weeks leading up to the trial were extremely tense with protests and condemnations coming from all quarters over the proposed proceedings of the trial and the severity of the sentences that had been called for.¹² In this charged atmosphere a joint pastoral letter was read out at all Masses in the dioceses of Bilbao and San Sebastián on Sunday 22 November which condemned the proposed procedures for the trial and revealed that the bishops had requested that the hearing be before a civil rather than a military court, lamented the recent reintroduction of the Law on Banditry and Terrorism and demanded pardons for anyone sentenced to death.¹³ The government controlled press published angry commentaries on the pastoral, especially infuriating for them were the bishops' condemnation of all violence regardless of its perpetrators and their appeals for a personal conversion from all Spaniards, including those holding political power, so that true justice and a lasting peace could be achieved for all.¹⁴ For the radical priests of *Gogor*, however, the bishops did not go far enough. On the Sunday that the joint pastoral was due to be read at Masses some of them read a specially prepared homily in which they declared that:

'... the systematic and habitual way of writing and preaching of the bishops and priests ... scandalises those who are conscious of being oppressed and engenders atheism in the Basque patriots who are fighting for the Workers of the Basque Country ... silence is less offensive than playing with half truths.'¹⁵

¹¹ Federico de Arteaga, *ETA y el Proceso de Burgos* (Madrid: Editorial E. Aguado, 1971), 301-5.

¹² On 18 August the military prosecutor had called for six death sentences and over 700 years in prison.

¹³ Carta Conjunta del Obispo de San Sebastián y del Administrador Apostólico de Bilbao. *BEOBI* (1970), 500-3.

¹⁴ For example, articles in *ABC* (22, 26 November 1970).

¹⁵ Quoted in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 360.

The difficult circumstances being experienced by the two Basque bishops prompted the CEE assembled in the XIII Plenary Assembly to issue two brief statements. One expressing support for their Basque colleagues and pointing out that they were simply applying Catholic doctrine to a delicate situation that existed at that time and that the faithful must try to comprehend and to accept that fact. The other statement called for 'maximum clemency for the accused'.¹⁶

When the trial opened on 3 December it was against a background of street demonstrations organised by ETA and other opposition groups. A section of ETA had kidnapped the West German Honorary Consul, Eugen Beihl in San Sebastián on 1 December. It was announced that his fate would depend on whether death sentences were passed. In response to the kidnapping guarantees were once more suspended for three months in Guipúzcoa, and then more briefly for all of Spain.¹⁷ In the minds of many people this measure linked the trial with a wider persecution of the Basques. In the diocese of Bilbao there were sit-ins in churches in Galdakao, Ondárroa and Amorebieta in protest at the trial.¹⁸ Ten priests from the diocese were reported to the Civil Governor who requested permission from the bishop to prosecute them. The latter refused.¹⁹

The show trial at Burgos, which the regime hoped would turn the public against ETA and teach other challengers a lesson too, resulted instead in a flood of favourable publicity for ETA, while the political system of the regime was seen to be repressive and still reliant on the military. After the trial ended on December 28 the commitment of some Basque priests to ETA's struggle was an incontrovertible fact: during the trial, Fr. Jon Etxabe claimed that fidelity to the Gospels led him to side with the oppressed, while Fr. Julián Calzada said that priests had a duty to be politically committed and that he had carried arms in order to protect his people against the police and would do so again.²⁰

In spite of Bishop Cirarda's support for dissident priests throughout 1970, and especially at the time of the Burgos Trial, the complaints from the *Gogor* group continued.

¹⁶'Confianza en los obispos de San Sebastián y Bilbao: se han tergiversado documentos episcopales' and 'La Asamblea Plenaria pide la máxima clemencia para los justiciados en Burgos'. (1-12-1970). Texts in Iribarren, DCEE I, 465.

¹⁷ Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-975* (U.S.A. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 559.

¹⁸Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 357.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 357.

²⁰Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 112. Fr. Jon Echave Garitacelaya (Diocese of Guipúzcoa) was born in 1933 and ordained in 1958. Fr. Julián Calzada Ugalde (Diocese of Bilbao) was born in 1935 and ordained in 1958. He was one of the founders of *Gogor*. Echave was sentenced to six years and fined 10,000 pesetas for 'assisting a crime and banditry' (*'auxilio y bandidaje'*). Calzada got 70 years for 'banditry, terrorism and storage of arms'. (*'bandidaje, terrorismo y depósito de armas'*).

In June 1971, for example, they produced and circulated a clandestine document that protested at the presence of civil authorities at religious ceremonies. It expressed approval of the fact that no *Te Deum* prayer had been said at the end of the open air Mass on the anniversary of the 'Liberation of Bilbao' that year, but objected to the continuing tradition of celebrating a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Basilica of Begoña on the eve of the anniversary.²¹ It suggested that priests should boycott Mass on the 15 August, the Feast of the 'Amatxo', if the civil authorities planned on being present. It finished by declaring that: 'The commitment to serve the interests of the "Basque People" demands that we take a courageous stand.'²² Overall however there was much less activity by *Gogor* in 1971 than there had been during the previous two years. A police report sent to the Civil Governor expressed the view that the group was weakening due to the ideological evolution of many of its members towards a left-centre position. It explained that this was partly due to the Vicar of Pastoral having successfully involved many of them in developing new pastoral initiatives and activities and partly a result of secularisations, exile and imprisonment.²³

The formation of a Council of Priests and other steps taken by the Apostolic Administrator in the second half of 1969 and in 1970 had resulted in greater involvement of the clergy in the running of the diocese and helped greatly to ease the ecclesiastical tension that had built up under his predecessor. Bishop Cirarda published a decree in May 1969 announcing that a Council of Priests was soon to be formed.²⁴ However, it was not actually formed until 3 February 1970²⁵ - coincidentally at almost exactly the same time as the Council of Priests in the diocese of Barcelona. In the intervening period a major territorial reorganisation of the diocese was carried out leading to its division into 17 Pastoral Zones on 22 October 1969. Each zone consisted of a number of pastoral sectors, of which there were 45 in total. Archpriest-vicars (*arciprestes vicarios*) were elected by the priests of each of the 17 zones and then appointed by the bishop for three years.²⁶ The archpriest-vicars were responsible for convening meetings of the priests in their zones and for representing them on the Council of Priests. They also informed the bishop of any

²¹ The fact that the Apostolic Administrator had absented himself for the second year had not mollified the priests.

²² Document without date or title in Manterola Archive, EBL. R.14.5. A short note at the end of the document informed that a version had also been prepared in Euskera.

²³ Police report 'Actividades del Clero' (1971). Quote from it in Barroso, *Sacerdotes bajo*, 368-9.

²⁴ 'Decreto sobre la constitución del Consejo Presbiteral.' *BEOBI*, no. 20 (1969), 307-11.

²⁵ Names of the 36 members in *Guía de la Iglesia Diocesana de Bilbao* (1971), 23.

²⁶ 'Decreto de Creación de Zonas Pastorales e Institución de los Arciprestes Vicarios de Zona' (22 October 1969) *BEOBI*, no. 20 (1969).

problems in their zones and advised him on matters such as sacerdotal appointments. Although the Apostolic Administrator stated in the decree of erection of the Council of Priests that he intended to work very closely with it always and that its views and recommendations would normally be determining, it was nonetheless a consultative body as stipulated in Pope Paul VI's motu proprio, *Ecclesiae Sanctae* on the formation of Councils of Priests and Pastoral Councils.²⁷ The Council of Priests advised bishop Cirarda on social and religious issues, pastoral matters, the handling of conflicts between members of the clergy and the civil authorities, and so on and this resulted in far greater participation by the clergy in the running of the diocese than had been allowed under Bishop Gúrpide. For example, on 4 March it drew up an extensive pastoral plan for the diocese for the following three years that was approved by Bishop Cirarda.²⁸ As we have just seen, after the arrests of nine diocesan priests in June the Council of Priests and the Apostolic Administrator published a joint pastoral letter that was very critical of the civil authorities' action.

An in depth survey of the situation of diocesan priests was commissioned by the Apostolic Administrator in March 1969 and the results were presented to the bishop and Council of Priests in May 1970.²⁹ The results of the survey showed that there were deep divisions among the clergy on a whole range of issues, especially on what the role of the clergy should be vis à vis the socio-political situation in the Basque Country. Fifty-two percent saw serious and worsening divisions within the diocesan Church. As regards pastoral work 42% of priests declared themselves to be happy and sure of themselves in this area, but 28% admitted to being unsure and doubtful of what pastoral strategies to follow. Fifty-one percent of priests approved of priests doing civil work, but 43% totally disapproved. Forty-five percent of priests wanted the bishop to give greater support to priests in trouble with the civil authorities, whereas only 28% felt he was already doing all he could. The majority of priests – 55% – felt priests ought to judge the 'concrete realities' of the times in the light of the Church's social teaching. As regards the attitude of priests to the so-called 'Basque problem' the results showed that only 3% considered it a duty to

²⁷ Pablo VI, *Ecclesiae Sanctae* I, 15 § 3. (6 August 1966) in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, 600-2.

²⁸ 'Acta de la reunión del Consejo del Presbiterio el 4 de marzo de 1970.' Manterola Archive, EBL, R.14.3.

²⁹ *Diagnóstico Sociológico de los Conflictos sacerdotales en la Diócesis de Bilbao: Ambiente, Organización, Carisma* (Bilbao: Diócesis de Bilbao, Departamento de Investigaciones Sociales, 1971). A questionnaire was sent to all 701 diocesan priests and 669 of them filled it in and returned it. However 44 were spoiled through being incorrectly completed and could not be used, while a further 19 arrived too late. The findings therefore reflected the views of 86.4% of the diocesan clergy.

inculcate loyalty to Spain, less than 1% (five priests) thought it right to resort to violence in the Basque cause, while 57% believed they should expound the political teaching of the Church and thereby clarify 'the legitimate claims of our Basque people.'

(ii) *A new bishop for the diocese of Bilbao (December 1971)*

At the end of 1971 the Council of Priests held an emergency meeting to discuss rumours that the appointment of a residential bishop was imminent.³⁰ At this meeting on 2 December the Council of Priests prepared a letter to the Nuncio, Luigi Dadaglio, in which they expressed their opposition to the Head of State appointing a new bishop and demanded that the diocesan clergy be consulted about a suitable candidate.³¹ In spite of the Council of Priests' intervention the Nuncio went ahead and announced the appointment of Bishop Antonio Añoveros as residential bishop of Bilbao on 4 December.³²

In subsequent days three members of the Council of Priests met separately with the Nuncio, Bishop Añoveros and Bishop Cirarda to discuss the appointment. They reported to the Plenary Assembly of the Council of Priests on 7 December that Bishop Cirarda had told them that he had earlier made it clear to the Nuncio that he felt unable to continue to govern two dioceses and that he would not accept the nomination of residential bishop of Bilbao *via* the system of presentation by the Head of State. The Nuncio had informed them that the normal procedure of presenting the Government with the names of three candidates had not been followed in this instance and that Bishop Añoveros had been the single candidate proposed. In view of this the Council of Priests reluctantly agreed to accept the nomination, but in a letter to the Pope expressed their desire to see the creation of a Basque Episcopal Conference and the election by as many members of the diocesan Church as possible of two or more auxiliary bishops for the diocese. They also expressed their disappointment that the new incumbent did not know the Basque language.³³

A week later 196 diocesan priests who had gathered in Derio Seminary for a series of meetings organized by *Gogor* to study the situation in the diocese signed an open letter

³⁰ 'Reflexiones del Consejo del Presbiterio de la Diócesis de Bilbao con motivo del nombramiento de un nuevo obispo residencial.' Prepared by Jose Luis Achotegui. Instituto Labayru, Manterola Archive, Caja 1 Carp. 2.

³¹ Letter in Alday, *Crónicas*, ii, 93-5. The members of the Permanent Commission of the CP were Fr. José Luis Achotegui Iraolagoitia, Fr. Antonio Arza, S.J., Fr. Andrés Manterola Aldecoa, Fr. Lorenzo Salaberria Suinaga, Fr. José Luis Urrutia Yurrebaso.

³² Bishop Añoveros at the time of his appointment was 62 years of age and Bishop of Cádiz-Ceuta. He was born in 1909 in Pamplona. After taking a law degree he began to study for the priesthood. He had been a military chaplain on the Nationalist side during the Civil War. Information from Villota, *La Iglesia en la sociedad*, 508

to the 'Basque People' in which they made clear their opposition to the appointment of Añoveros on the grounds that he did not know Euskera, was not familiar with the problems affecting the area, and because of the way he had been nominated. It pointed out that in the 1969 survey of the diocesan clergy 83% of priests wanted to see a bishop appointed to the diocese who knew Euskera, 77% wanted him to be a Basque and only 1% favoured the designation of a bishop by the Head of State, as stipulated by the Concordat. Seventy-seven of the signatories accepted the new bishop 'passively' and 'resignedly', 84 accepted him 'passively', 'resignedly' and 'conditionally' and 35 rejected him 'publicly and permanently'.³⁴

Days earlier *Gogor* had produced and circulated a clandestine manifesto addressed to 'The Clergy of Euskadi' and signed by the '*Iglesia Comunitaria de Euzkadi*' which proposed that a new, democratic Church be created in 'Euskadi' whose representatives would be elected in the same way as those of the Base Christian Communities. A police report on the document sent to the civil authorities described its language as 'Marxist' and said that they supposed it came from the 'sacerdotal resistance movement which calls itself "*Gogortasuna*."'³⁵

Bishop Añoveros' incumbency in Bilbao began with a Mass in the Cathedral in on 4 January 1972. In his homily the new bishop said that he considered himself 'as a Christian wholeheartedly committed to the Gospel demands of justice, liberty, truth and love.' He talked of the great respect he had for the Basque language and culture and of the distinctive character of the Basque people. He said he wished to be bishop of all the people in the diocese. 'In my heart there is no room for the labels of victor and vanquished.' He stressed his independence of 'all party politics' and of all power or pressure groups. He had a special word for the many priests of the diocese still in prison or exile. 'At this time I am very mindful of the situation of my dear brethren in the priesthood who find themselves in the painful situation of captivity or exile. You are in my thoughts and prayers.'³⁶

A few weeks after Bishop Añoveros' arrival the Council of Priests prepared a report on the state of the diocesan Church which suggested that a series of documents be prepared that would examine the socio-political problems affecting the diocese in the light

³³ Alday, *Crónicas*, vol ii., 108-10.

³⁴ 'Carta al pueblo ante el nombramiento del nuevo obispo.' (15 December 1971). Text in *ibid.*, 111-5.

³⁵ (16 December 1971). 'Nota Informativa: Manifiesto clandestino titulado 'Al Clero de Euskadi' firmado por la denominada 'Iglesia Comunitaria de Euzkadi.' In AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978'.

of the teaching of the Conciliar decrees *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. In addition the report called for more active promotion by the Church of human rights and the rights of the Basque people, greater austerity in the lifestyles of the bishops and the priests, abstention by the clergy from political ceremonies that could cause divisions among the faithful, the suppression of symbols of disunity within churches and a reorganisation of diocesan structures.³⁷

The bishop took up many of these points in his first pastoral letter published in March 1972. He said that the Church should be independent of the state and economic power; that it was often difficult to excuse the Church's wealth when one considered the Gospel message of poverty; that there should be no positions of honour reserved for the clergy at civil ceremonies, and likewise the civil authorities should not expect to have places of honour at religious ceremonies.

'We should be willing to renounce positions of pre-eminence at official ceremonies (...) These postures of serene and reasonable independence and at the same time of healthy co-operation should be interpreted as reflecting our awareness that we are pastors of all God's people. (...) May it not cause incomprehension, displeasure or severe recriminations when we decline certain invitations that might be interpreted as a sign of approval of situations that are unjust or less than correct.'³⁸

Bishop Añoveros' words were welcomed by the overwhelming majority of dissident priests who had been calling for a firm stance from the hierarchy for years. Indeed a change in episcopal attitudes to the regime at national level had been evident even before Añoveros published his first pastoral, as we shall shortly see.

(iii) *The Evolution of Gorgortasuna during the Añoveros years*

We have just seen how at the end of December 1971 *Gogor* produced a document protesting at the appointment of Bishop Añoveros which they signed '*Iglesia Comunitaria*

³⁶ 'Homilía de Entrada.' Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. ii., 121-6.

³⁷ 'Información de la reunión del Consejo del Presbiterio.' *BEOBI* 23 (1972) 210-14.

³⁸ 'Algo extraordinario está sucediendo en la vida de la Iglesia'. *Ibid.*, 105-9.

de Euzkadi'³⁹ Henceforth its clandestine documents criticising the bishop and condemning the regime were almost always signed '*Iglesia Comunitaria de Euzkadi*', reflecting the evolution of the group towards the leftist ideology then being promoted by ETA and its attraction for a new type of Church embodied in Base Christian Communities and inspired by Liberation Theology.⁴⁰

For example, for Lent 1972 *Gogor* prepared five sermons to be delivered in the period leading up to Easter.⁴¹ The themes of the sermons were: 1. Sin, Conversion, Liberation, 2. Economic liberation, 3. Political liberation, 4. Cultural liberation, 5. Religious liberation. Together these sermons described the economic, political, cultural and social oppression being suffered by the Basque people as a sin of the Franco regime against God's Plan for the salvation and liberation of all mankind. The priests who prepared the sermons were clearly trying to raise their congregations' awareness of their legitimate rights as a unique 'People' with a unique culture.

'The only way the Basque people will be happy and achieve the goal assigned to them by history is by being true to themselves, by defending their rights and fulfilling their historical obligations. ... What can we do? Perhaps it is not a lot, but let us begin with something – economic help for the Ikastolas or for political prisoners, participation in Basque festivals and support for everything that offers a way of liberating us as individuals and a people.'⁴²

Not surprisingly in 1972 ten priests from the diocese of Bilbao were fined by the civil governor of Vizcaya, mainly for 'seditious sermons.'⁴³ A police report of 14 April described one of them, Fr. Luis (Koldo) Ibarlucea Madariaga, as 'a member of *Gogor*', a 'progressive' and a 'separatist' whose sermons were usually 'seditious.' It said he had

³⁹ (16 December 1971). 'Nota Informativa: Manifiesto clandestino titulado 'Al Clero de Euzkadi' firmado por la denominada 'Iglesia Comunitaria de Euzkadi.' In AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978'.

⁴⁰ This evolution was apparent, for example, in their document 'Estructura eclesiástica diocesano y opresión del pueblo.' (1974) Cited in Marón, 'Evangelio, Iglesia y Pueblo Vasco', 150.

⁴¹ 'Guiones para la Cuaresma de 1972.' AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978'. The police sent copies of the sermons to the Minister for Justice, and the Interior Minister.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Statistics from Carcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, 673.

gone into hiding to avoid arrest, as he knew the police were about to investigate his links with ETA.⁴⁴

In May Fr. Martín Olázar Uribe, parish priest of Santa María in Ceánuri (one of the eight priests who had signed a clandestine document in 1968 opposing Francoist symbols in churches) was fined 150,000 pesetas for destroying the church's commemorative plaque to the Nationalists killed in the Civil War. Because he could not pay the fine he was confined for a month to the Franciscan convent in Olite, Navarre. The fine outraged the radical sector of the clergy who challenged Añoveros to stand up to the authorities.⁴⁵

Bishop Añoveros attempted to win over the most radical priests by demonstrating his determination to put the words of his pastoral into action and thereby end the Church's close association with the regime: he did not attend the open air Mass on 19 June 1972 to celebrate the Liberation of Bilbao and he maintained his predecessor's suspension of the *Te Deum* prayer. Furthermore for the first year ever the civil authorities were not invited to attend the Mass in the cathedral on the feast of Saint Ignatius of Loyola on 31 July. Nevertheless *Gogor* continued to attack him: in September the group produced two more documents signed *Iglesia Comunitaria de Euskadi* and addressed '*Al Pueblo de Euzkadi, al Clero de Euzkadi.*' The first of these attacked the bishop, describing him as an enemy of the Basque People, a traitor to the Basque working class and the Church in Euskadi. The second one welcomed the appointment of José María Setién Alberro as auxiliary bishop of Donostia. (San Sebastián) and claimed he was one of their own, a member of the '*Comité de Base (provisional) de la Iglesia Comunitaria de Euzkadi*'⁴⁶

During 1972 ETA violence worsened; there were two kidnappings of Basque industrialists, a wave of robberies and several bomb attacks on government buildings.⁴⁷ On 8 October 1972 Bishop Añoveros published a 'Pastoral Exhortation on Violence' in which he blamed the violence affecting the Basque Country on dogmatic and intolerant attitudes and a widespread climate of confrontation.⁴⁸ He declared that peace could not be achieved

⁴⁴ (14 April 1972) Nota Informativa : Don Luis (Koldo) Ibarlucea Madariaga. AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978'. Fr. Ibarlucea was born in 1941 and ordained in 1968. He has been secularised since 1978.

⁴⁵ Anonymous cyclostyled document in support of the parish priest of Ceánuri. AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978.'

⁴⁶ Both documents in AHPV, 'Expedientes Informativos sobre el clero 1968-1978'. Bishop Setién was never a member of *Gogor*, but his public support for the Basque nationalist struggle during the Transition and for many years afterwards frequently enraged the Madrid government. (R.I.P. 2000).

⁴⁷ Description in Antonio Elorza (ed.), *La Historia de ETA* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2000), 166-7.

⁴⁸ 'Exhortación pastoral sobre la violencia.' *BOOBI* 23 (1972) 533-6. Also in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol ii, 147-51.

through violence and that it could only be achieved through justice and the removal of inequalities and divisions between individuals and groups. He called for a spirit of forgiveness and the elimination of desires for revenge and feeling of hatred. From this moment on the bishop was always very concerned with preaching peace and reconciliation. However, the *Gogor* group was disappointed with the bishop's pastoral letter and they criticised it in a clandestine document, which was circulated in November 1972. They pointed out that the encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), defends the use of violence in extreme situations.⁴⁹

On 18 December 1972 the bishop of Bilbao published another pastoral letter, this time reflecting on his first year in the dioceses.⁵⁰ A section of the letter was headed 'Some Difficulties.' In it Añoveros referred to a minority of the clergy and laity who were acting at the margins of the official Church and often against the ecclesiastical hierarchy. He also expressed his great sorrow for priests and members of the laity in prison or in exile. He said he was disappointed that his requests on their behalf had achieved so little. He called on the civil authorities to try to understand that the Church after Vatican II had to assert its independence of the political system. (there had been complaints about his refusal to attend the celebrations on the anniversary of the Liberation of Bilbao, etc.)

On 25 March 1973 March Bishop Añoveros published a pastoral letter on sermons.⁵¹ In it he defended the right of priests to expound the social teaching of the Church and to point out abuses or deficiencies where they existed in society or in political situations. He also asserted that bishops alone had the right to judge the contents of a sermon. However, he warned priests to take care to avoid personal bias by expressing their own political preferences in homilies. He finished the letter by condemning the increasing practice of policemen attending Masses with tape recorders to record the sermon, without the permission of the parish priest.

On 26 May 1973 almost 100 people occupy the church of San Pedro in Basuri in protest at the harsh conditions in the prison of Basauri. Mgr. Añoveros forbade the police to enter the church. The occupation started at 8.00 p.m. and finished voluntarily the next morning. Shortly afterwards Añoveros visited the prison to see first hand what conditions

⁴⁹ (November 1972) HOJA INFORMATIVA: Iglesia en Vizcaya. Manterola Archive, EBL.R.5.1.

⁵⁰ (18 December 1973) 'Puntos de vista en el curso de un año.' Text in *Antonio Añoveros. Agur Jauna* (Bilbao: Opispado de Bilbao, 1988), 45-52.

⁵¹ (25 March 1973) Exhortación Pastoral 'Algunas orientaciones para sacerdotes y fieles sobre la predicación.' *BOOBI*, (1973), 243-7. Also in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. ii, 202-7

were like. Shortly afterwards a number of Basque priests wrote to various figures in the hierarchy in Basque Country, Rome and France protesting at conditions in Spanish prisons.

One of *Gogor*'s main protests in this period concerned the continuing incarceration of Basque priests in a special wing of the provincial prison in Zamora. In early 1970 the 13 priests then in custody had written to the Minister for Justice, the Nuncio and other civil and religious authorities rejecting a possible amnesty that would only apply to priests.⁵² In July 1970 *Gogor* produced a document to mark the second anniversary of the opening of the prison that gave a history of the 'Concordat Prison' and described the conditions in which the priests were being held and their demands to be moved to religious houses or a regular prison to serve their sentences. The document was cyclostyled and circulated clandestinely.⁵³ The following August the Basque priests in Zamora wrote to the 'Assembly of Solidary Priests', which was due to take place in Amsterdam from 29 September to 4 October.⁵⁴ The letter stated that there were a total of 18 priests being held as political prisoners in Spain – three of whom were in convents and the remaining 15 in Zamora Prison. The priests explained that their motive in writing to the Assembly was not to draw attention to the injustice of their own particular situation, but rather to the fact that there were thousands of Basques like them who were suffering imprisonment and exile for fighting for the liberation of the Basque Country and the recognition of fundamental human rights. They were very critical of their bishops, whom they accused of being more concerned with keeping the authorities happy than defending their own priests. They also declared that they had decided to reject the ecclesiastical structures in Spain and they outlined the type of Church that they wanted to see: 'an independent, dynamic, and indigenous Basque Church.' The Assembly replied to the priests on 4 October expressing their solidarity and informing them they had decided to send a written protest to the Spanish government over its repression of the Basques and its denial of fundamental human rights.⁵⁵

In early November 1972 the priests interred sent a report to the CEE on conditions in the prison. On 20 November the CEE at the request of the bishops of Bilbao and San Sebastián nominated a special commission made up of Cardinal Bueno y Monreal, the bishops of San Sebastián and Bilbao and the bishop of Zamora to deal with the government over the problem of the prison. Shortly afterwards they visited the Minister for Justice and

⁵² Text of letter in *Alday Crónicas*, vol. ii, 23-5.

⁵³ 'Información Sobre Una Petición De Los Sacerdotes Presos En Zamora.' Manent Archive, ANC. The names of the 16 priests in the prison at the time are listed at the end of the document.

⁵⁴ (September 1970) 'Los sacerdotes de Zamora a la Asamblea de 'Sacerdotes Solidarios.' Text in Iztueta, *Sociología del fenómeno*, 386-93.

the Director General of Religious Affairs and made four requests: firstly, closure of the priests' prison in Zamora.; secondly, that priests instead be allowed to serve sentences with lay prisoners; thirdly, that the Government observe Article XVI of the Concordat that allowed priests choose whether to serve their sentence in a convent or in a prison; fourthly, some act of amnesty for all political prisoners. Shortly afterwards the Minister wrote to the commission that the Government was most interested in the continuing existence of the prison and reminding the bishops that the Concordat stipulated that priests had to be kept separate from other inmates.⁵⁶

A year later nothing had changed and the priests in Zamora decided to organise a protest within the prison. On 6 November 1973 six of the priests in Zamora Prison started a fire in their wing of the prison. They set alight blankets, mattresses, pillows and books, but the prison guards quickly quenched the fire. They also began a hunger-strike. Four of the priests had been sent to prison for the occupation of the episcopal offices in Bilbao in May 1969: Fr. Juan Cruz Amurizar, Fr. Julian Calzada (he was also tried and sentenced in the Burgos Trial of December 1970), Fr. Alberto Gabicacogeoascoa Menchaca, and Fr. Jesús Naverán. The other two priests were Fr. Juan Echave Garitacelaya from the diocese of San Sebastián, who had been tried and sentenced along with Fr. Calzada in Burgos in 1970 for membership of ETA, and Fr. Pedro García Salve, a worker priest from Madrid. The priests of *Gogor* supported the six priests' protest by informing the press a few days before the incident took place so that photographers were at the scene and captured photos of the smoke coming from the building.⁵⁷ They also circulated a clandestine communication that the priests had prepared prior to beginning their action.⁵⁸ After 13 days on hunger strike the priests were transferred to a prison hospital in Carabanchel in Madrid. They were put in individual rooms and all visitors except their lawyers were forbidden. After seven days they were returned to Zamora where they restarted their hunger strike, which only ended on 11 December when they were forced to accept injections of glucose.

⁵⁵ (4 October) 'A los sacerdotes vascos en prisión.' Ibid., 394-5.

⁵⁶ Information from a report prepared by the bishops of Bilbao and San Sebastián entitled '*Gestiones*' on 8 November 1973. Excerpts in Pagola, *Una ética para la paz*, 380.

⁵⁷ As we shall see further on, the protest and hunger strike took place at a very delicate moment for the Spanish Church. The priests had deliberately planned their action to coincide as closely as possible with the visit of Monsignor Casaroli, Vatican Secretary for Extraordinary Affairs, to Madrid from 1 to 3 November for talks with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on progress in the negotiations for a new Concordat.

⁵⁸ (6 November 1973) '*Comunicación*.' Text in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol ii, 269-72.

Immediately after the priests had begun their hunger strike groups of priests, lay people, students and workers publicly expressed their solidarity and support for the priests.⁵⁹ For example, 51 priests organised a sit-in in the episcopal offices in Bilbao and they prepared several cyclostyled documents informing the public of the dreadful conditions in which the priests were being held in Zamora, their demands to be transferred to a normal prison or to a convent and the failure of the bishops to stand up to the civil authorities who were contravening Article 16 of the Concordat by refusing to allow them to serve their sentences in religious houses.⁶⁰ In the diocese of San Sebastián 115 priests spent a full day in the diocesan seminary fasting, praying and reflecting on the action of the hunger-stikers. Afterwards they issued a statement of support for the six priests. Groups of priests and lay persons also occupied the Nunciatures in Madrid, Paris and Bonn in protest at the imprisonment of the priests and the wider situation of repression in both the Basque Country and Spain.

Bishop Añoberos ordered that an *Exhortacion Pastoral* be read in all churches in the diocese on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 November 1973.⁶¹ This pastoral had actually been ready since the beginning of September, but the bishop explained that he had delayed publication as he hoped the problems arising from the existence of the Concordat Prison might be sorted out first. In the Exhortation the Bishop expressed regret over violent physical attacks on two priests earlier in the year in the suburb of Portugalete. He described the treatment of prisoners in police custody as often amounting to 'torture'. He protested at the growing tendency of different groups to attempt to manipulate the Church's teaching for political ends. He condemned the circulation of anonymous documents attacking the ecclesiastical authorities. In the final part of the letter he referred to the incidents in Zamora and appealed for understanding for the imprisoned priests who, he said, were suffering greatly and whose sentences were felt by many jurists to be far too severe.

The 51 priests who occupied the episcopal offices in solidarity with the hunger-strikers in Zamora were fined on 21 December. Most of them served a one-month sentence in a religious house. However, three refused to go anywhere but to a normal prison and therefore they were sent to Basauri for 30 days.

⁵⁹ Survey of these acts of solidarity in Alday, *Crónicas*, vol ii, 274-87.

⁶⁰ Some of these documents are in Manterola Archive, EBL, Rel. 1.1.

⁶¹ (11 November 1973) 'Situaciones intraeclesiales y extraeclesiales: reflexión y soluciones.' *BOOBI*, (1973), 691-8. Text in Andoni Ugarana Larrun, *La Lucha del Pueblo Vasco. (Los Siete de Zamora)*

To mark the start of 1974 the bishops of Bilbao and San Sebastián published a joint pastoral at the end of December calling for new efforts to achieve peace in their dioceses and in society at large. It insisted that everyone was responsible for constructing peace and also for disturbances in the public order. It reminded the faithful that peace could only be achieved through justice and it called for the creation of 'new channels of socio-political participation'. It ended with a call for reconciliation and forgiveness during the year about to start, which the Pope had designated a Holy Year of Reconciliation.⁶²

That same month a group of conservative priests in Bilbao started to produce a clandestine monthly publication entitled *Servicio de Información Religiosa* (SIR) which criticised dissident priests, the *Iglesia Comunitaria de Euskadi* and also Bishop Añoveros. The more liberal and progressive priests of the diocese responded with a publication entitled *Servicio Privado de Información* (SPI), which appeared in early 1974. It was produced by the Media and Social Communications Office of the diocese, and was succeeded by *Iglesia en Vizcaya/ Boletín Informativa* in December 1975.⁶³

The second issue of SIR, which came out in January 1974 criticised Añoveros' Pastoral Exhortation, '*Situaciones intraeclesiales y extraeclesiales: reflexión y soluciones*' and also expressed disapproval of the bishop's instruction to priests to suppress the Creed and the Second Reading so that the reading of the pastoral would not make the Sunday Mass excessively long. The second issue also attacked the *Iglesia Comunitaria de Euskadi*, which had recently produced another clandestine document addressed to the 'People and Clergy of Euskadi' that called for the creation of a revolutionary Basque Church.⁶⁴

In October 1973 the bishop had approved a quite radical Diocesan Pastoral Plan which had been prepared by the CP.⁶⁵ The Plan had three basic objectives: to launch a new campaign of evangelisation, to promote unity in Basque society and in the Basque Church and to design and implement new pastoral structures. It was in relation to the first of these objectives that Bishop Añoveros gave his authorisation for three homilies on

(Bayona: Editions. Hordago/Ed. <Verdad y Libertad>, 1973), 53-9. There is also a valuable analysis of the exhortation from the viewpoint of the *Gogor* group on page 60-1.

⁶²(27 December 1973) 'Pastoral Colectiva de los Obispos de San Sebastián y Bilbao Sobre la Jornada Mundial de la Paz.' *BOOBI* (1974), 96-9.

⁶³ Collections of the three publications in Aguirre Archive, ABL.

⁶⁴ 'Al Pueblo de Euskadi - Al Clero de Euskadi.' Accuses the hierarchy, including the auxiliary bishop of San Sebastián, Bishop Setién, of being traitors of the Basque people. Its language is revolutionary. It is signed: 'Comité de Base Provisional de la Iglesia Comunitaria de Euskadi.' Manterola Archive, EBL.R.14.5.

⁶⁵ (October 1973) 'Plan Diocesano de Pastoral' *BOOBI* 24 (1973), 530-74.

soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) to be read at Sunday Masses on 3, 17 and 24 of February. The Council of Priests had been proposing since Bishop Cirarda's time as Apostolic Administrator of the diocese the preparation of a pastoral that would examine social and political issues - particularly those related to Basque identity - in the light of Conciliar teaching.⁶⁶ The three homilies, which were prepared by a commission of experts, covered those issues. The first homily sketched out the meaning of Christian salvation, and the second studied the Church as a sign and sacrament of salvation. It was the third homily, read on 24 February, that angered the government because of its examination at a practical level of how the Church could bear a message of salvation 'to the peoples', its defence of the language, customs, and political rights of ethnic minorities and its appeal for the Basque people and other national minorities in Spain to be allowed to preserve their separate identities 'within a socio-political structure which would recognise their right to do so'.⁶⁷ The government reacted with fury to this homily which seemed to it to be giving backing to the demands of Basque nationalists, especially coming as it did only two months after ETA had assassinated the Prime Minister, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco. Years later the then Vicar General - and Bishop Añoveros' right-hand man - Fr. Angel Ubieta said that what most enraged the government was the actual recognition given in the homily of the existence of a 'Basque problem'.⁶⁸

Bishop Añoveros and Angel Ubieta were placed under house arrest on 27 February and then on 4 March the government ordered them out of the country. The bishop refused to go unless ordered to do so by the Holy See. Behind the scenes the Nuncio and Tarancón were trying to calm down a crisis that was escalating dangerously - the likes of which had not been seen in Spain since the days of the laic Second Republic which had expelled the Primate, Cardinal Segura in 1931 and also the Bishop of Vitoria, Mateo Múgica. Although both the Primate and the Nuncio had advised Añoveros against going ahead with the homily they and the other highest ecclesiastical representatives rallied behind their colleague when the crisis occurred.⁶⁹ In a public statement the Permanent Commission declared that every bishop possessed the right 'to the free and full exercise of his spiritual power and jurisdiction, as well as to project the light of Christian principles on

⁶⁶ (Octubre 1970) 'Nota de la Secretaría del Consejo del Presbiterio.' Manterola Archive, EBL.R.14.3.

⁶⁷ Analysis of the homily in Lannon, *Privilege*, p. 254. The text of the homily 'El Cristianismo, Mensaje de Salvación para los Pueblos' (24 February 1974) in Antonio Añoveros. *Agur Jauna* (Bilbao: Obispado de Bilbao, 1988), 163-8.

⁶⁸ Transcript of a radio interview with Don Angel Ubieta in Antonio Añoveros. *Agur Jauna* (Bilbao: Obispado de Bilbao, 1988), pp. 145-8.

⁶⁹ Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, *Confesiones* (Madrid: PPC, 1996), 630.

concrete problems affecting the Catholics of his diocese.⁷⁰ The government wanted the bishop of Bilbao to issue an apology for the homily's attack on 'national unity' and when this was not forthcoming they insisted with their demands that he leave the country. Cardinal Tarancón managed to break the impasse only by drafting a document excommunicating anyone involved in removing the bishop. The government was forced to back down, thereby defusing the explosive situation that threatened a complete breakdown in Church-State relations.

SIR vehemently attacked Bishop Añoberos' homily of 27 April 1974 and described the new practice of the bishops of the Basque dioceses of issuing joint pastorals as a 'Trojan Horse' to weaken the unity of the Spanish Church.⁷¹

Throughout 1974 individual priests continued to have run-ins with the police. For example on 22 December 1974 Fr. Jesús Sánchez Sierra asked the police who were in his church at the start of Mass to leave.⁷² On Christmas Eve 1974 Fr. Beraza Garay also asked policemen to leave his Church.⁷³ Collective protest by dissident priests, on the other hand, seemed to have become a thing of the past. However, in April 1975 yet another state of emergency was declared in Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya for three months and in response a collective sermon was prepared by priests from the four Basque dioceses and read out in many churches. It condemned the repression being suffered by the Basque people.⁷⁴ It mentioned in particular Fr. Anastasio Erkizia from the diocese of Bilbao who had been arrested and tortured so badly he had to be hospitalised.

Fr. Erkizia was just one of several priest arrested during the state of emergency: Fr. Imanol Oruemázaga was also detained just a few days after the state of emergency was declared. On 21 May his house was completely destroyed and on 8 June his church in Camiñaspi was attacked and burnt.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ (March 1974) 'Comunicado sobre "el caso Añoberos"' DCEE II, p. 289. Quoted in Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, p. 545.

⁷¹ SIR, no 4 (March 1974), pp. 9-10, 14-5.

⁷² Fr. Jesús Sierra was born in Santander in 1937 and ordained in 1966. He had been fined several times for 'subversive sermons'. He was imprisoned in Basauri and Zamora. Secularised since the early 1970s.

⁷³ Fr. Alfonso Bereza Garay was born in Baracaldo in 1932 and ordained in 1957. He signed the collective letter of 1963 and took part in the priests' march of April 1967. In September 1975 he was imprisoned for protesting at the imminent execution of two members of ETA. Secularised since 1978.

⁷⁴ (June 1975) 'Homilía dirigida a nuestro pueblo por un grupo de curas de las cuatro diócesis vascas sobre el estado de excepción.' Copy in Manterola Archive, EBL. R.8.2. SIR attacked the priests who read the collective letter of June-July 1975.

⁷⁵ He had been arrested on 12 December 1973 accused of being involved in smuggling arms for ETA. Information from SIR, núm 2, pg. 14 (1974). Fr. Oruemázaga was no longer exercising his sacerdotal ministry after his clash with Bishop Cirarda at the start of 1970. See page 201.

The collective letter of April 1975 was the final collective protest by dissident priests in Bilbao during the regime. By that stage the Spanish Church had effectively disengaged from the regime and the days of National-Catholicism were well and truly a thing of the past. In June 1976 while the transition to democracy was just getting underway, the priests of *Gogor* set up a new organisation of the Basque Clergy, outside the official church, called the '*Coordinación de la Acción Pastoral de sacerdotes de las Diócesis Vascas: Iglesia al lado de los oprimidos, vasca y popular.*' The number of priests involved represented only a tiny percentage of the total number of priests in each of the four dioceses however. In 1977 the *Coordinación* was forced to seriously question its *raison d'être* when the bishops of the four Basque dioceses created an Interdiocesan Secretariat to promote collaboration and joint pastoral initiatives.⁷⁶

(iv) Clerical dissidence in Barcelona in the 1970s

In comparison to the situation in Bilbao there were far fewer collective acts of protest by the clergy in Barcelona in this period. Priests did, however, continue to express their opposition to the socio-political situation, but not usually as a purely clerical group; instead they became involved in various new opposition groups and movements that began appearing at this time, particularly confessional ones, like the Base Christian Communities (CC de BB) the first groups of which began to be formed in 1969, the 'Christian Group for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights' (GCPDDH), founded in 1971, 'Christians for Socialism' (CpS), which was set up in 1973 and the Popular Christian Communities (CCP), which began to appear in 1974. Also, priests in working class parishes continued to become involved in labour conflicts, the number of which multiplied in the early seventies.

The years from 1967 to 1971 had been years of crisis and fragmentation for the political opposition in Catalonia. Repression was increasingly severe and it had proved impossible to force the regime to undertake political and institutional liberalisation. In these circumstances a trend developed in Catalonia of joint action by opposition forces. Its beginning can be traced back to just after the *Caputxinada* of March 1966 when a *Taula Rodonda* (Round Table) of political parties was set up to undertake joint actions based on solidarity. This body was the forerunner of the *Coordinadora de Forces Politiques de Catalunya*, which was created in December 1969 and was comprised of the *Partit*

⁷⁶El Secretario Permanente Interdiocesano, un paso importante hacia una colaboración más estrecha de

Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC), *Moviment Socialista de Catalunya* (MSC), *Unió Democràtic de Catalunya* (UDC), *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) and *Front Nacional de Catalunya* (FNC). Their political colouring ranged from Trotskyism to Christian Democracy. It was the *Coordinadora* together with the *Assemblea Permanent d'Intel.lectuals Catalans*, which had been founded after a sit-in by three-hundred Catalan artists, writers and intellectuals in the Abbey of Montserrat on 13 December 1970 in solidarity with the Basque people (the Burgos Trial was taking place at the time), who were initially behind the setting up of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* on 7 November 1971 in the parish church of Sant Agustí in central Barcelona. This unprecedentedly broad coalition of opposition parties, groups and individuals agreed upon four basic demands that would act as a common denominator in their struggle against the regime: amnesty for political prisoners and political exiles, basic liberties fundamental to democracy, the coordination of all the peoples of the peninsula in favour of democracy and the provisional re-establishment of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy of 1932 as a step towards the full exercise of the right to self determination. Branches of the *Assemblea* soon spread beyond the city of Barcelona and eventually delegations existed in forty Catalan localities.⁷⁷ Eventually around twenty political parties and more than 80 groups joined the *Assemblea*. Arrests at the end of 1973 and again in 1974 slowed down the activity of the *Assemblea* but did not halt it. This was due to the participation of very large numbers of ordinary citizens, drawn by the simple programme proposed by the *Assemblea* and the objectives it pursued. After the death of Franco the initiative shifted away from the *Assemblea* and towards the established political parties, although in 1976 the *Assemblea* was still organising some of the largest demonstrations in its history, as labour disputes reached even higher levels than they had in 1974 and 1975.

The oppositional clergy in Barcelona supported the *Assemblea* and a handful even became directly involved. For instance, several of the preparatory meetings of the *Assemblea* were held in churches or parish buildings: these included the church of Crist Rei in Barcelona where the parish priest was Fr. Joan Carrera (episcopal vicar for working class parishes and the main promoter of GCPDDH); the parish of Sant Medir, where the coordinating committee of CCOO of Barcelona had been elected in November 1964 and the church of Sant Agustí, where 300 people gathered for the constituent assembly.

las 4 diócesis vascas.' *Iglesia en Vizcaya*, Núm 33, 2a quincena de abril 1977, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Information on the *Assemblea de Catalunya* from A. Batista & J. Playà Maset, *La Gran Conspiració* (Barcelona: Editorial Empúries, 1991).

Church buildings continued to be used for meetings over the following years: in November 1973 one hundred and thirteen members of the *Assemblea*'s standing committee were arrested in the church of Maria Medianera in central Barcelona and in September 1974 sixty-seven members were arrested at a meeting held in a school belonging to the Escoles Pies Order in the town of Sabadell.

Members of the coordinating committee (*Comissió de Serveis*) of the CC de BB in Barcelona attended several of the smaller meetings that took place both before and after the celebration of the constituent assembly. The acronym 'CC de BB' appeared in the list of groups and individuals that signed the constitutional document of the *Assemblea de Catalunya*. In subsequent documents however the CC de BB signed as '*Grup dels no alineats*', a name that reflected their desire to be portrayed as a strictly non-political group. In March 1972 the *Grups de no alineats* explained their relationship with the *Assemblea de Catalunya* in a printed leaflet that was circulated throughout Barcelona.⁷⁸ Three members of the *Comissió de Serveis* were among the 113 participants arrested in November 1973.⁷⁹

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the first Base Christian Communities (CC de BB) in Barcelona were formed in early 1969. In February of that year thirty of these groups and communities in Barcelona protested at the state of emergency in an 'Open Letter to Our Bishops'. The letter was read in some churches or actually distributed to the congregations after Masses.⁸⁰ It called for social peace based on justice, freedom, truth and fraternal love. It stated that the conditions necessary for justice did not exist in Spain and therefore there could not be a real peace. It declared that problems could not be solved by simply ignoring them. In Spain's case the principal problem that needed to be tackled was the 'State of Force' that had arisen from the Civil War, and which used the Church and capitalism to ensure its continued existence. It accused the Church of, consciously or unconsciously, backing a policy of political oppression. It expressed solidarity with the people at the base of society, i.e., the working class and the poor and called on the bishops and all the Catholic faithful to give witness to Jesus and to the Gospel message by demonstrating their love and concern for the weak and oppressed in society.

The Barcelona police reported in June and again in July 1969 that attempts were being made to coordinate the CC de BB. The report of July informed the Civil Governor

⁷⁸ '*Grups de no alineats de l'Assemblea de Catalunya*.' Copy in AHCJC.

⁷⁹ Ricardo Lobo Gil (Benedictine), Agustí de Semir Rovira and Fr. Luis Xirinacs. The first two avoided arrest after the meeting in Sabadell in September 1974 by hiding in the cloisters of the convent.

that on the 1 and 3 of July a meeting of diocesan priests, regular clergy and members of the laity took place in the Convent of the Capuchins of Sarrià to draw up a definitive outline of the so-called '*Comunidades Cristianas o Grupos Proféticos*'.⁸¹

The idea of forming a coordinating committee for the various CC de BB came from four priests; Frs. Josep Dalmau, Fr. Luis Xirinachs, Fr. Josep Rivera and Fr. Jaume Rodri and two laymen; Vicens Ligüerre, and Joana Villemur. They wanted the various groups to define the elements they had in common and to describe the experience and mission of the CC de BB.⁸² As a result on 23 March 1970 a meeting of representatives of 19 CC de BB was held in the parish of Sant Ignasi in central Barcelona and a *Comissió de Serveis* was elected. Henceforth this coordinating committee met monthly with representatives of an ever-growing number of CC de BB groups.

The first general assembly of CC de BB was held on 10 June 1971. It was attended by 260 people who represented 42 communities. Before it ended these representatives signed a letter to the Catalan bishops complaining about the effects of the suspension of Article 18 on Spaniards since 14 December 1970 - as a result of the unrest over the Burgos Trial - and warning that the proposed Law of Public Order, due to be introduced in August, would in effect introduce a permanent state of emergency to the country.⁸³ The second general assembly was held in June 1972 and at that time there was a total of 65 communities. Most of these were based in Barcelona city or the outlying towns. In October of that year another general assembly was held. Afterwards a document was prepared that set out the broad objectives of the groups.⁸⁴ In January 1973 they produced a '*Manifest de les Comunitats Cristianes de Barcelona*', which was clandestinely circulated among the public.⁸⁵ It protested at the repression of the diocesan branch of 'Justice and Peace',⁸⁶ which had published a hard-hitting report in June 1972 about the

⁸⁰ 'Carta Oberta als nostres Bisbes.' Extracts in Crexell, *La Manifestació*, 222-3.

⁸¹ (21 July 1969) 'RELIGIOSOS: Supuesto cisma de la Iglesia Catalana que se orienta hacia el 'progresismo' extremista.' AGGCB, Caja 32.

⁸² Information from Josep Dalmau, 'La comissió de serveis i les comunitats de base de Barcelona.' *Qüestions de Vida Cristiana*, LXXXIII (1976), pp. 104-21.

⁸³ (1 June 1971) 'Carta de un grupo de Comunidades Cristianas a la Conferencia Episcopal de Catalunya.' AHCJC. (Includes list of groups that signed.)

⁸⁴ Published in *Correspondència* (November-December) 1972.

⁸⁵ (13 February 1973) Nota Informativa: Hojas Clandestinas en Sabadell. AGGCB, Caja 146. The clandestine sheets referred to were copies of the '*Manifest de les Comunitats Cristianes de Barcelona*'.

⁸⁶ This international Catholic organisation was under the control of the CEE. Throughout the early 1970s the Spanish branch organised several campaigns for amnesty for political prisoners. Another international Catholic organisation that played an important role in the fight for democracy during these years was *Pax Christi* (PC). This organisation of lay persons and religious was primarily concerned about world peace and a just world order and was founded in Lourdes in 1948. The first group in Spain was set up in 1954.

repression of workers in Granada, Erandio, and other parts of Spain, and it reproduced a note that Archbishop Jubany had published in the newspapers on 18 November 1972 in which he had said that the document in question was firmly based on the Church's teaching.⁸⁷ On 31 May 1973 an assembly of 68 groups of CC de BB studied a recent joint pastoral letter of the Catalan bishops entitled '*El Plurisme en la Comunió Eclesial*' which had hinted at acceptance by the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the CC de BB. Over the following weeks the *Comissió de Serveis* prepared a document of reply to the bishops' pastoral that welcomed the fact that Church was at last embracing pluralism, but called on the bishops to go further than expressing mere tolerance for the CC de BB by engaging in direct and real dialogue with them.⁸⁸

There was only one assembly of CC de BB in 1974. It was held in November and attended by representatives of only 30 communities. There were no assemblies in 1975 or 1976 because the CC de BB had by then rapidly declined in membership. This was primarily a consequence of former members joining alternative groups that were seeking political and social change, as well as the result of a growth in secularism in the early seventies.

A group that was similar to the CC de BB in that it too was heavily influenced by developments in the Church in Latin America was *Cristianos por el Socialismo* (CpS).⁸⁹ Its main promoters were Fr. Josep Ribera, Fr. Joan García Nieto SJ and the lay Catholic activist, Alfonso Comín. In January 1973 approximately 200 people from all over Spain, but mainly from Catalonia, gathered in Calafell (Tarragona) to draw up the foundational document of the Spanish CpS. To throw the police off the trail it was entitled 'Document of Ávila'. There was a predominance of middle-class people at the meeting, which explains why the tone of the document is quite intellectually elevated. Some of them were involved with the CC de BB and others were workers who came from HOAC. What united them above different union affiliations and political tendencies was an anti-dictatorial, anti-capitalist position and a common interest in living out their faith through a

In 1971 the National Assembly of the Spanish PC declared that the teaching of *Pacem in Terris*, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Populorum Progressio* was not being followed in Spain.

⁸⁷(23 January 1973) 'Sobre la Iglesia y la comunidad política.' Iribarren, DCEE.I, 520-54. See more on this document below.

⁸⁸(June 1973) 'Carta oberta de les comunitats representades per la Comissió de Serveis al Conferència Episcopal Catalana.' Copy in AAM. Also published in *Correspondència* Núm 117 (October, 1973.)

⁸⁹'*Cristianos por el Socialismo*' had originated in Chile in 1971 just after Perón's electoral victory. The founding group of 80 priests issued a statement in April of that year in support of the 'accession of the People's Government to power' and declared themselves in favour of 'socialism.' Information from *Cristianos por el Socialismo. Historia y Documentos* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1976).

commitment to Socialism.⁹⁰ CpS was a civil entity and not affiliated to or approved of by the official Church. Although it disappeared shortly after the transition to democracy it had proved that one could be a practising Catholic and also a member of an extreme left-wing political party.

In July 1974 Popular Christian Communities (CCP) began to appear in Barcelona. They were more worker-orientated and leftward leaning than the CC de BB. They read a message of liberation in the Gospels, which they felt the 'bourgeois' Spanish Church was ignoring. The founders of the earliest of these groups in Barcelona were Fr. Juan García Nieto SJ and the layman Alfonso Comín, who were also the founders of CpS.⁹¹ Although not affiliated to any political group members of CCP frequently belonged to Marxist groups and parties, such as *Bandera Roja* or the PSUC. The CCP tended to be set up in the industrialised outlying towns like Cornellà de Llobregat, Sabadell and l'Hospitalet, where there were continuous labour conflicts in the early 1970s. After 1976 the CCP went into a sharp decline, probably as a consequence of the legalisation of all left wing political parties and the rapid secularisation that was spreading, particularly among the younger sectors of Spanish society.⁹²

In April 1970 a pro-amnesty meeting was held in the parish of San Isidoro in Barcelona city centre and attended by a small number of priests and laymen. One of the organisers was the episcopal vicar for working class parishes, Fr. Joan Carrera.⁹³ Out of this meeting the *Grup Cristià de Promoció y Defensa dels Drets Humans* (GCPDDH) developed over the following months. During the next five years about 25 groups were formed in different parishes in Barcelona city and in the larger towns. The GCPDDH campaigned for on issues such as amnesty for political prisoners, justice for striking workers and the abolishment of the death penalty. For example, in October 1971 they wrote to the Archbishops of Barcelona and Tarragona complaining about the fierce

⁹⁰ Information from Joan Casañas, *El Progressisme Catòlic a Catalunya (1940-80)* (Barcelona: La Llar del Llibre, Barcelona, 1989), 361-71.

⁹¹ They both lived and worked in Cornellà de Llobregat. They were from upper middle-class families but they chose to live and work among the working class and they both came to believe that Christianity was compatible with Socialism and Marxism. Both of them supported the Communist dominated CCOO and they were also active in the PSUC. Fr. García Nieto was born in 1929 and Alfonso Comín in 1933. (The former was a sociologist and the latter a civil engineer.) They were arrested in February 1969 during the state of emergency for 'illegal assembly' in Comín's house where about 25 people were gathered to spend an evening with Emmanuel Mounier's widow. Both García Nieto and Comín were tried and briefly imprisoned as a result.

⁹² Information on CCP and CpS from *Alguns trets del Cristianisme actual a Catalunya* (Barcelona: Fundació CIDOB, 1990.)

repression of workers involved in the SEAT strike that had begun on 18 October.⁹⁴ In June 1973 they protested at the conditions in which prisoners were held in Soria prison.⁹⁵ In the days and weeks following the arrests of 113 people from the *Assemblea de Catalunya* in the church of Maria Medianera clandestine sheets signed by the GCPDDH were found in churches all over the city.⁹⁶ The police reported that at a meeting of the group which had taken place in the parish of Nuestra Señora de Montserrat in Barcelona on 8 November 1973 the parish priest, Fr. Mateo Terrats Oliver, '*conceptuado politicamente catalano-separatista moderado*' criticised the arrests, as did the episcopal vicar for working class parishes Fr. Juan Carrera Planas, '*progresista y catalano-separatista, ya conocido en ese servicio*'.⁹⁷ Following the executions on 2 March 1974 of the Anarchist, Salvador Puig Antich and the Pole, Heinz Chez, conferences were organised by the GCPDDH against the death penalty in several parishes. For example, in the parish of Sant Andreu de Palomar the supplement to the Sunday newsletter of 9 June announced the holding of a Christian Assembly to reflect on the death penalty on Saturday 15 June at 7pm to which all the parishioners were invited.⁹⁸ In January 1975 the GCPDDH signed a statement of support for Fr. Lluís Xirinachs as he embarked on his fifth hunger-strike.⁹⁹ Throughout the years of its existence the GCPDDH published 25 issues of a clandestine information sheet entitled *Informació Quinzanal* and several dossiers on human rights issues.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ (4 April 1970) Nota Informativa: 'Parroquia de San Isidoro. (Copia al Ministerio de la Gobernación) Reunión pro-amnistía celebrada en el centro pedagógico de la Parroquia de San Isidoro in Calle Urgel, 176.' AGGCB

⁹⁴ (October 1971) 'Carta a los Señores Arzobispos de Barcelona y Tarragona' Signed 'Cristianos en Defensa de los Derechos Humanos.' AAM.

⁹⁵ (22 de junio 1973) Nota Informativa: 'Hojas clandestinas en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora del Port. "Penal De Soria: Una Situación Represiva Más." Firmadas por "Un Grupo De Cristianos En Lucha Por Los Derechos Humanos."' AGGCB, Caja 94.

⁹⁶ (1 November 1973) 'Nota Informativa: Propaganda subversiva en interior de la iglesia San Juan de Gracia (Plaza Virreina) 150 ejemplares. 'El dret de reunió conculcat.' Firmadas por 'Cristians en lluita pels drets humans.' AGGCB, 94.

⁹⁷ (13 November 1973) 'Nota Informativa: - Reunión en local anejo a Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat de Barcelona el 8 de noviembre de 1973 para tratar sobre la supuesta falta de garantía en España para el ejercicio de los derechos humanos.' AGGCB, Caja 146.

⁹⁸ (Sunday, 9 June 1974) Parroquia de Sant Andreu de Palomar. Suplement del Full Dominical. Copy in AHGCB, Caja 241.

⁹⁹ 'Mossén Xirinachs ha iniciado su 5a Huelga de Hambre' Signed by Justicia y Paz, Grupo Cristiano de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Pax Christi, Objetores de Conciencia and Comunidades de Base. Copy in AAM. Fr. Xirinachs was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975. His first hunger-strike was in July 1969 to protest at the national state of emergency.

¹⁰⁰ Detailed information on the work of the GCPDDH in Oleguer Bellavista i Bou, *Senderons vers la utopia* (Barcelona: Editorial Claret, 1999), 98-125.

Nowhere else in Spain was the workers' movement more central to the opposition than in Catalonia. Labour conflicts provided the motor of political change, mobilising opposition to Francoism and destabilising the regime during these years. In the early 1970s strikes created a similar dynamic of repression-solidarity to that created by ETA in the Basque Country. Throughout the period 1970 to 1975 many priests in Barcelona protested both individually and collectively at the continuing repression of the labour movement. They also helped striking workers by continuing to allow them to meet in churches and on occasions even organised special collections for them at Masses. In this period, however, it was not just the lower clergy who were outspoken in their criticism of the repression of workers; the episcopal vicar for working class parishes and the Archbishop also forthrightly defended workers' several times.

In 1969 there were 491 strikes in Spain – the greatest number of them occurred in Guipúzcoa (133), Vizcaya (113) and Oviedo (102). Barcelona was in fourth place with 36 strikes. Over the following five years the number of labour conflicts throughout the country multiplied and from 1971 to 1975 the greatest number took place in Barcelona - 2,627 strikes occurred there, compared to 1,205 in both Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, which dropped to joint second place.¹⁰¹ These strikes were usually over low wages, bad working conditions and bad management, but an increasing number were solidarity strikes. Strikes inevitably became political, simply because strikes in themselves were illegal and so were the unions that organised most of them.

In 1970 there were 155 strikes in Barcelona.¹⁰² One of the most important took place in AEG-Telefunken in the town of Terrassa. It lasted two months and ended with the dismissal of 71 workers, 14 of whom were under arrest. Several meetings of striking workers took place in the church of the parish of Can Anglada and on many occasions the police arrested the participants as they were leaving the church, thus avoiding violating the Concordat. On 18 April sixteen people from the two parishes most affected by the strike, Sant Llorenç and Can Anglada, occupied the cathedral to draw attention to the repression of the workers. They were ejected from the cathedral by the police at 2 am on 19 April after permission had been granted by the Archbishop. The CC de BB and priests of the two parishes prepared a cyclostyled document which analysed the causes of the strike and was bitterly critical of the Archbishop for not speaking out in defence of the workers's

¹⁰¹ Statistics on strikes from Luis Enrique and Carlos Palomeque, *Introducción a la economía del trabajo* (Madrid: Editorial Debate, 1982), pp. 314 and 316.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 314.

right to assembly and truly representative unions. The document was entitled 'Go a step further' and it called on the Archbishop to go beyond the general defence of these rights already present in the Council documents, the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, the CEE's 1968 document 'Christian Principles Related to Workers' Unions' and the Catalan bishops' joint declaration of November 1969 that rejected the proposed new Union Law on the grounds it was not reflecting Catholic social doctrine.¹⁰³ When the Archbishop failed to issue a public statement condemning the arrests of workers and apologising for having given the police permission to eject the occupiers from the cathedral the priests of Sant Llorenç and Can Anglada decided to stop celebrating Mass. In a cyclostyled public statement they explained that the action was a sign of solidarity with the workers and asked why should people be permitted to gather to celebrate Mass when the same right of assembly was denied to the workers.¹⁰⁴

Behind the scenes, so to speak, the Archbishop did however defend the priests of these troubled parishes before the civil authorities. For example, on 24 March Fr. Santiago Marcet SJ was brought to police headquarters in Barcelona over a sermon he had given the previous day in the church of Sagrado Corazón of Sant Llorenç. (He and some other young Jesuit priests from nearby San Cugat regularly helped out in the new parishes of Terrassa.) Fr. Marcet refused to answer any questions while in detention, on the grounds that it was up to the ecclesiastical authorities to judge a sermon. A few days later the Archbishop wrote to the authorities pointing out that the detention of Fr. Marcet constituted a breach of the Concordat and refusing permission for a prosecution to proceed.¹⁰⁵

The new Union Law (*Ley Sindical*) finally introduced in February 1971 introduced some autonomy with regard to the representation of workers at the lower levels and a greater independence of workers and managers within the vertical trade union, but the OSE remained nevertheless an 'instrument of state', both vertical and compulsory. The clandestine unions, the opposition political parties, and the overwhelming majority of the workers rejected the new law. The bishops' suggestions for modifications had been ignored by the government and from this moment on the ecclesiastical hierarchy in

¹⁰³ 'Hay que dar un paso más.' Document published in Joseph Ricart Oller, *Egara, una parroquia obrera bajo el Franquismo. 1963-1977* (Terrassa: Editora Pedagògica del Vallès, 1979), pp. 331-2. The joint declaration of the Catalan bishops was published in *Ecclesia* on 8 November 1969.

¹⁰⁴ (26 de abril de 1970) 'No podemos celebrar la Eucaristía' *Ibid.*, pp. 340-1.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-5.

Barcelona, in Bilbao and elsewhere in Spain, began to show greater support for strikers and they forthrightly criticised the lack of truly democratic and representative unions. For example, when a striking worker was shot and killed by police in the industrial suburb of San Adrián de Besós on 3 April 1973 and another worker died on 8 April from injuries he had received the same day the Apostolic Workers' Movements in Madrid issued a public statement condemning the shooting and repression.¹⁰⁶ Cardinal Jubany also issued a note, which was published in the daily newspapers on 7 April, condemning the killing.¹⁰⁷

At the end of May 1973 a strike began in the Elsa glass factory in Cornellà de Llobregat. The workers staged a sit-in the church of Santa Maria de Cornellà to draw attention to their demands. Exactly a year later another strike started in the same factory and once again the workers occupied the church. The local branch of GCPDDH, *Cristianos de Cornellà para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos*, expressed support for the 900 workers on strike and called for free unions and the right to strike to be recognised.¹⁰⁸ Fr. Joan Carrera, the episcopal vicar for working-class parishes and founder of GCPDDH, made an unprecedented statement in July 1974 on the rash of strikes then affecting Barcelona. He quoted from the Catalan bishops' joint pastoral letter '*Misterio Pascual y Acción Liberadora*' of 15 May 1974, which had attacked the structural violence of the prevailing unjust socio-economic system, condemned the use of violence in the exercise of power and called for the recognition of the rights of reunion, association and expression and for the rights of ethnic minorities to be respected in Spain.¹⁰⁹

During the final two years of the dictatorship Spanish bishops everywhere spoke out increasingly in defence of striking workers. For example, on 2 June 1974 the Archbishop of Pamplona defended the right of striking workers to shelter in church buildings after the police had entered the Cathedral on 31 May and ejected a group of workers who were holding a meeting. He clarified that his permission had not been sought and that Article XXII of the Concordat had been violated.¹¹⁰ On 5 October 1974 two hundred people were arrested in the parish of Dulce Nombre de María in Madrid. On 12 October the Madrid

¹⁰⁶ (Abril de 1973) 'Sobre los acontecimientos de San Adrián del Besós.' Signed: Comité Coordinador de los Movimientos Obreros Apostólicos de Madrid. Domínguez, *Organizaciones Obreras*, Document 11, pp. 399-404.

¹⁰⁷ (4 May 1973) 'Nota del Cardenal de Barcelona sobre los sucesos acaecidos en San Adrián del Besós.' AMM, Església XV.

¹⁰⁸ (8 June 1974) 'Elsa. 15 días de huelga, la lucha continua.' (13 June 1974) 'Carta Abierta, El Conflicto Elsa Cornellà' Both documents in Fondo GN, Fundación Utopía, Cornellà de Llobregat.

¹⁰⁹ (6 July 1974) 'Comunicado de la Vicaria Episcopal de la Zona Sur de Barcelona (Sants, Can Tunis, Collblanc, L'Hopitalet i Cornellà) sobre los conflictos laborales.' AMM.

¹¹⁰ Cárcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, 942.

Diocesan Press Office published a note protesting at the behaviour of the police. This note quoted the CEAS' document of 19 September and repeated what it had said about the need for the government to create democratic structures in the area of labour relations and politics.¹¹¹ Archbishop Jubany publicly defended the occupation of the church of Santa Engracia on 24 February 1975 by the wives of a group of workers dismissed from the SEAT factory.¹¹² On 25 April 1975 he issued an official note defending meetings of workers in parish buildings. The evolution of Jubany and the other bishops from being timid critics of the regime's treatment of workers to outspoken defenders of their rights was just one aspect of a process of disengagement of the official Church from the regime that was taking place in the early seventies.

The collective actions that had characterised clerical dissent in Barcelona from 1964 to 1969 made something of come back at the end of 1973 when a group of 310 priests held a meeting on 8 November to prepare a public declaration of protest at the arrests of 113 people on 28 October in the church of Maria Medianera, where they had been attending a meeting of the *Assemblea de Catalunya*¹¹³. A few months later the same group of priests issued another declaration, this time in support of the Bishop of Bilbao, who was under house-arrest.¹¹⁴ In September 1974 they issued a statement of protest at the arrest of 67 people at another meeting of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* in the Escoles Pies in Sabadell.¹¹⁵ In December 1975 the group changed its name to the *Associació Catalana d'Eclesiàstics* and it claimed to have 130 members composed of priests from the various Catalan dioceses and religious orders in Catalonia. In a declaration it issued later that month it called for a general amnesty for political prisoners.¹¹⁶ On 11 May 1976 the *Associació Catalana d'Eclesiàstics* held a general assembly that was attended by approximately 100 priests and religious from the various Catalan dioceses. The date was chosen especially to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the priests' march in Barcelona in 1966. In a statement released to the press afterwards the *Associació* described itself as a

¹¹¹ Information from *ibid.*, 676 & 689-90.

¹¹² (25 February 1975) 'Ante la entrada de la fuerza publica en la Parroquia de Santa Engracia.' AMM.

¹¹³ Copy of letter signed by 144 priests to Archbishop Jubany in ANC, Remei Ramírez papers, Caja 3, Hoja 13.

¹¹⁴ (9 de marzo 1974) 'Declaració de L' Assemblea D' Eclesiàstics de Catalunya.' (Segueixen les firmes dels 178 eclesiàstics presents a L'Assemblea.) AHCJC.

¹¹⁵ (19 de septiembre de 1974) 'Nota de protesta de la Asamblea d'Eclesiàstics Catalans contra la detención de participantes de la Asamblea de Cataluña en las Escolapias de Sabadell.' *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ (10 December 1975) 'Declaración de la Asociación Catalana d'Eclesiàstics.' Published in *Correspondència* (December 1975), pp. 16-7.

body which was seeking to ensure the cohesion and continuity of the sacerdotal movement which had been in existence for many years and which had acted publicly on a number of occasions, the most important of which were the priests' march of 11 May 1966, the *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign that same year, the creation of the *Fòrum* of priests during the national state of emergency in 1969 and various acts of protest that followed the arrest of 113 people after a meeting of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* in 1973. The *Associació* declared that its basic aims were: to promote interdiocesan collaboration between priests, to work for a truly Catalan Church with renovated structures, and to support the aspirations and struggles of the Catalan people. Its members had already written to all the Catalan bishops asking them to officially recognise the *Associació*. It announced that Fr. Josep Camps had been elected President, Fr. Josep Bigordà and Fr. Jaume Botey (Escalopian), Vice-presidents and Fr. Jaume Patrici Sayrach, Secretary. All four were from the diocese of Barcelona and had a long history of opposition to the Franco regime. A further eight delegates representing each of the Catalan dioceses were elected to the committee.¹¹⁷

(v) 'Disengagement' of Church and State

On 29 April 1968 Pope Paul VI wrote to Franco inviting him to relinquish the Right of Presentation of Bishops in accordance with Article 20 of the Conciliar decree *Christus Dominus*.¹¹⁸ In a letter dated 12 June 1968 Franco declined the Pope's invitation to withdraw from the presentation of bishoprics and proposed instead wider bi-lateral negotiations about strained Church-State relations.¹¹⁹ In mid-summer 1969 Spanish newspapers reported that negotiations had begun between the Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican, Antonio Garrigues, and the Secretary of the Council for the Church's Public Affairs, Monsignor Casaroli, with a view to revising the 1953 Concordat so as to bring it into line with new Conciliar teaching. These negotiations were the first stage in a protracted, and ultimately unsuccessful attempt, to bring about an *aggiornamento* of Church-State relations in Spain through a revision of the Concordat of 1953. In early September 1970 newspapers reported that a draft Concordat was ready and that the

¹¹⁷ The *Associació* ceased to exist a few months later when it became clear that the Catalan bishops and the rest of the clergy shared their aims for the future of the Church in Catalonia.

¹¹⁸ *Christus Dominus* (28 October 1965) urged with all delicacy that civil authorities 'honour themselves by voluntarily renouncing rights or privileges of election, nomination, presentation or designation to the episcopal ministry.'

¹¹⁹ The contents of the letters exchanged by Paul VI and Franco in 1968 were only made public in January 1971 in *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, no. 377.

Council of Ministers was due to study it at the end of the month. The reaction of the Spanish bishops, whose opinion on any proposed changes to the existing Concordat had not been sought, was disbelief and shock; the Vice-President and acting head of the CEE, Cardinal Tarancón, Archbishop of Toledo, wrote to the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot, to find out if there was any truth in the rumours and to express the bishops' alarm at the fact that they had neither been consulted nor informed. In his letter of reply Cardinal Villot described the draft Concordat as *ad referendum*, a type of working document for future negotiations and he assured Cardinal Tarancón that no agreement would be signed without first consulting fully with the CEE.¹²⁰

Earlier that same year the first major sign of a change in the attitude of the Spanish episcopacy towards the regime had come in the statement issued to the press by the CEE on 11 July 1970 at the end of its Twelfth Plenary Assembly. This Assembly examined the problem of poverty in Spain in its cultural, material, social and civic manifestations and in their statement the bishops concluded that the two principal causes of social and civic poverty were 'inadequate participation by the Spanish people in the political decision-making process and a deficient formation that prevented them from doing so.' Referring to paragraph 27 of the 1963 encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris*, they adverted to the fundamental human rights of association, assembly, freedom of expression as well as the right to a legal system that ensured full protection of these rights. They also called on the government to be generous in exercising its powers of pardoning prisoners, whatever their age or condition. 'The Church and the Poor' represented a significant advance when compared with earlier social pronouncements by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, although the bishops still affirmed a commitment to maintaining 'respect and loyal collaboration' with the authorities.¹²¹ Later, in mid-November, the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs issued a statement to the press rejecting the government's proposed new Union Law because it was insufficiently respectful of workers' rights to freedom and representation.¹²² As we have seen, the following month Church-State relations reached an all time low over the Burgos Trial of 16 members of ETA. For weeks the international media focused on the trial and all over Europe mass demonstrations and solidarity committees sprang up in support of the condemned. European ambassadors were recalled for consultation and the

¹²⁰Vicente Enrique y Tarancón, *Confesiones* (Madrid: PPC, 1996), 292.

¹²¹'Comunicado al término de la XII Asamblea Plenaria sobre La Iglesia y Los Pobres.' In Iribarren, DCEE.I, 455-63.

¹²²Blázquez, *La traición de los clérigos*, 194.

Vatican pleaded for clemency.¹²³ When the sentences were announced on 28 December six of the accused were condemned to death. The effect of this was to increase the campaign of protest, which ended when Franco signed the reprieves of all the death sentences on 30 December. The position adopted by the Vatican, the CEE and the bishops of the Basque dioceses during the Burgos Trial did not augur well for the draft Concordat. A copy of the text had been distributed to all the bishops at the Thirteenth Plenary Assembly and it was due to be debated by them at the Fourteenth Plenary Assembly in February 1971.

Just three days before the start of the Plenary Assembly the President of the CEE, Archbishop Casimiro Morcillo of Madrid-Alcalá, (who was unable to attend the Assembly due to ill health) phoned Cardinal Tarancón, the Vice President, to read him a letter that he had just received from the Minister for Justice, Antonio María de Oriol, which was a copy of one the Minister had earlier sent to the Vatican Secretary of State. Cardinal Tarancón was astonished at what he heard: that the government was not prepared to continue the negotiations for a revision of the Concordat until the Vatican agreed to have auxiliary bishops appointed in Spain in the same manner as residential bishops.¹²⁴ Two days after the Assembly started the Nuncio, Luigi Dadaglio, personally delivered to Cardinal Tarancón a copy of a letter of reply from Cardinal Villot to Antonio María de Oriol in which the former unequivocally stated that there could be no change in the procedure for appointing auxiliary bishops and that the Vatican was prepared to suspend the negotiations until the government's demands on this point were dropped. Cardinal Tarancón decided, with the approval of the Nuncio and Cardinal Morcillo, not to inform the bishops of the letters until after the ballot on the draft Concordat.¹²⁵ In the event the bishops rejected the draft and instead voted 60 votes for and 6 against a system of partial agreements.¹²⁶ Cardinal Tarancón presented a report on the debate that had taken place at the Assembly to Cardinal Villot and Pope Paul VI the following April during a trip to the Vatican to attend one of the meetings of the Permanent Commission of the Synod of Bishops. He informed them that the Spanish bishops felt that the Vatican should seek to continue the negotiations with the Spanish government, not for a complete revision of the existing Concordat, but rather for a series of Agreements on the most urgent issues,

¹²³*Osservatore Romano*, (25 December 1970).

¹²⁴Tarancón, *Confesiones*, 296. When Franco refused to relinquish the Right of Presentation of Bishops in 1968 the Vatican had outmanoeuvred him by devising ways of appointing bishops without state vetting by first naming them auxiliary bishops or apostolic administrators, posts not covered by the 1953 Concordat.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 297.

similar to those that had been signed in 1941, 1946 and 1950 and later ratified in the Concordat of 1953.¹²⁷ However the letters that had been exchanged between Antonio María de Oriol and Cardinal Villot, coupled with the rejection of the proposed Concordat by the CEE, resulted in a suspension *sine die* of the negotiations.

In the 25 July 1971 edition of *ABC*, Spain's principal daily newspaper, the Minister for Justice publicly protested at the 'Marxistization' of the Church echoing the language of a report presented to the National Council of the Movement by the Minister of the Interior, Tomás Garicano, six months earlier on the penetration of the Church achieved by subversive groups and ideas.¹²⁸ The Minister was probably nervous over the impending Joint Assembly of Bishops and Priests scheduled to start in Madrid on 13 September. A national survey of the clergy had been carried out in 59 of the 64 dioceses between December 1969 and June 1970 as part of the preparations for it.¹²⁹ Cardinal Tarancón, President of the Episcopal Commission for the Clergy, its Secretary, Fr. Luis Hernández and the sociologist Fr. Ramón Echarren had presented the findings of the survey to the press on 22 October 1970. In total 15, 449 priests answered out of a total of 20,114 priests then in Spain.¹³⁰ The responses to the questions relating to the Church's relations with civil society revealed that almost 32 percent of priests considered the existing ties of the Church with the regime as damaging to its religious mission; 13.7 percent saw them as an evil difficult to avoid; 19.5 percent believed them positive; and 21 percent maintained that although far from ideal, the current situation was preferable to outright separation. A clear majority of the priests believed that the clergy had a prophetic mission – 64 percent of the total and 84 percent of younger priests – and they declared 'the Church in Spain cannot evangelise de-Christianised sectors [of the population] without involving itself in social or political judgements.'¹³¹ Throughout the first half of 1971 assemblies of bishops

¹²⁶ Hermet, vol. ii., 446-7.

¹²⁷ 'Convenio entre la Santa Sede y el Gobierno Español sobre el Nombramiento de Obispos Residenciales.' (7 June 1941), 'Convenio entre la Santa Sede y el Gobierno Español para la Provisión de Beneficios no Consistoriales.' (16 July 1946) 'Convenio entre la Santa Sede y el Gobierno Español sobre Seminarios y Universidades de Estudios Eclesiásticos.' (8 December 1946) 'Convenio entre la Santa Sede y el Gobierno Español sobre la Jurisdicción Castrense y Asistencia Religiosa de las Fuerzas Armadas.' (5 August 1950). Texts in *Historia de la Iglesia en España*. 5 Vols. (Madrid: BAC, 1979), vol. v., 740-65.

¹²⁸ *Historia de la Iglesia en España*, vol. v., p. 698.

¹²⁹ The dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona carried out their own surveys. We have already discussed the survey carried out in Bilbao in 1969 in Chapter III. The Barcelona survey was carried out in mid 1970 by the *Institut Catòlic d'Estudis Socials de Barcelona*. The questions were almost identical to those of the national survey. Findings in: 'Enquesta-Consulta als Sacerdots de la Diòcesi de Barcelona.' (maig-juny 1970) Copy in library of Seminario Conciliar de Barcelona.

¹³⁰ Cárcel Ortí, *Pablo VI y España*, p. 563.

¹³¹ Callahan, *The Catholic Church in Spain*, p. 528-9. Summary of the results of this section of survey in *Asamblea Conjunta Obispos-Sacerdotes* (Madrid: BAC, 1971), 663-4.

and priests were held at a diocesan level to study the results of the survey and prepare for the national Joint Assembly. The unease and suspicion with which the civil authorities viewed these preparations in Barcelona is reflected in a police report dated 4 September that informed the Civil Governor of Barcelona that three of the four priests elected by the Council of Priests to represent the clergy of the diocese were 'Catalanists', 'progressives' and 'enemies of the Regime.'¹³²

One of the main subjects of discussion at the Joint Assembly, which took place from 13 to 17 September, was the view of the clergy on Church-State relations. The Assembly put forward a proposal that the Church should be far more independent of the State (215 votes for and 26 against), that the Concordat should be abolished (212 votes for 30 against) and that it should be replaced with a series of separate agreements (155 votes for 52 against). The carrying of this proposal can be seen as marking the start of the official disengagement of the Spanish Church from the Francoist regime. It led to the CEE issuing their major statement on future Church-State relations in Spain 'The Church and the Political Community', which was published in 1973.¹³³

The Falangist press bitterly attacked the Assembly, as did *Iglesia-Mundo*, the organ of the right wing of the hierarchy. However AC's *Ecclesia* and the liberal *Vida Nueva* supported it.

When the Spanish bishops gathered for the Fifteenth Plenary Assembly of the CEE just a fortnight after the Joint Assembly ended a small number of them expressed their fundamental opposition to the conclusions of the Joint Assembly. Three or four bishops had actually prepared a letter which was read to the Assembly by its Secretary, Bishop Guerra Campos, a determined Francoist and arch-conservative. However a majority of the bishops approved a public statement that described the Joint Assembly as 'a positive and dynamic event' and announced their intention of acting on many of its conclusions.¹³⁴ It was decided at this Assembly to modify the CEE's statutes so that retired bishops would no longer be eligible to vote while auxiliary bishops would, thereby virtually guaranteeing that henceforth the more liberal members of the hierarchy would be in a majority.¹³⁵ Also,

¹³²Nota Informativa: 'Religiosos: Asamblea Nacional Conjunta de Obispos y Sacerdotes' (4 September 1971) AGGCB, Caja, 241. The three priests were Juan Alemany Esteve, Juan Noguera Vila and José María Vidal Aunós.

¹³³More on this document below.

¹³⁴'Comunicado sobre las conclusiones de la Asamblea Conjunta de obispos y sacerdotes.' Text in Jesús Iribarren, (ed.), *Documentos colectivos del Episcopado español: 1965-1983* (Madrid: BAC, 1984), 214-215. (Henceforth: DCEE.II)

¹³⁵These changes to the statute were approved by the Holy See in February 1972.

in the first week of December the Vatican announced seven new episcopal appointments which included that of the Secretary of the CEE, Cardinal Tarancón, as Archbishop of Madrid-Alcalá (he had been acting as Apostolic Administrator of the diocese since the death of Cardinal Morcillo in May), Antonio Añoveros for Bilbao and the Catalan Cardinal Narcís Jubany for Barcelona. The Vatican had not followed the normal procedure in making these appointments and had simply presented the government with one name for each see.

A bizarre episode at the end of February 1972 represented an attempt (most likely orchestrated by some conservative, high-ranking bishop) to discredit the Joint Assembly and put a brake on the liberal direction the CEE seemed to be taking.¹³⁶ On 22 February the main Spanish newspapers carried a report (from Europa Press Agency which was controlled by Opus Dei) that the Holy See *via* the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy had sent the Spanish bishops a document expressing its reservations over the conclusions of the Joint Assembly. In response the Secretariat of the National Commission for the Clergy in Madrid sent a note the same afternoon to the press stating that neither the President of the CEE nor the Episcopal Commission for the Clergy had received such a document from the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, nor had they been notified of its existence. In fact the document *did* exist and within a few days copies of it had been delivered to Cardinal Tarancón and to the Nuncio. Tarancón was outraged that the document had been sent to the press and he immediately wrote to Cardinal Villot expressing his disgust over this, as well as his fear of the harm that the document might cause if there were not an immediate rectification from Rome. A few days later Cardinal Tarancón travelled to the Vatican, where he was due to attend a meeting of the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops on 29 February. During his brief visit he had meetings with Cardinal Villot and the Pope and learnt from them that the Secretariat of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, without the knowledge or approval of either the Secretary of State or the Pope, had prepared the document. It was hinted by Monsignor Benelli, sub-Secretary of State, that the person mainly responsible for the document was Monsignor Palazzini, secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy, who was a member of Opus Dei and who had probably been pressurised into preparing it by Spanish members of Opus Dei living in Rome. Before he left the Vatican Cardinal Tarancón was given a letter that was signed by the Secretary of State, clarifying the origin of the document and reaffirming the Pope and

¹³⁶The account that follows is from Tarancón, *Confesiones*, 489-509.

Cardinal Villot's full support for the work of the CEE. He read the letter to the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops' Conference, which began just a week later, on 6 March.

Although Church-State relations at the highest level remained stable throughout the remainder of 1972 the continuing conflicts and tensions between the lower clergy and the civil authorities, particularly in the dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona was exasperating the government. On 7 December the vice-president of the Government, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, complained of the ingratitude of the Church in a speech to the Council of Ministers congratulating Franco on his eightieth birthday.¹³⁷ On 29 December 1972 Franco himself wrote a letter to Pope Paul VI on the religious situation in Spain that was delivered personally by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gregorio López Bravo, who had an hour-long audience with the Pope on 12 January 1973. In the letter Franco accused sectors of the clergy and certain apostolic organisations of attempting to turn the Church into an instrument for political action by participating in subversive actions and by taking the side of those who 'violate the law and are a threat to society and the state.' He had harsh words too for the ecclesiastical hierarchy whom he accused of inadequate cooperation with the government. They had, he said, in the previous five years refused the government permission to prosecute 165 priests, often for quite serious offences such as 'membership of separatist organisations'. The CEE were guilty, he claimed, of frequent '*extralimitaciones*' and 'some of its members feel today an irrepressible temptation to direct their activities to matters outside their province of which they normally have only a superficial knowledge.' He stressed the importance the government attached to the Right of Presentation of Bishops and argued it was beneficial to the Holy See to be aware of any reservations the Head of State might have about a particular candidate.¹³⁸

On 20 January 1973, just a fortnight after López Bravo's meeting with the Pope, the CEE in its Seventeenth Plenary Assembly produced a major statement on the Church and politics that reflected the conclusions of the Joint Assembly of September 1971 as well as the views of its own, by now liberal majority. In 'The Church and the Political Community' the bishops declared that the Church had to be independent of the State and that it favoured no one particular political system, but rather respected political pluralism. However, they also affirmed the Church's right to engage in the 'prophetic denunciation' of abuses, especially in the realm of human rights and social justice. The bishops

¹³⁷ *ABC* (8 December 1972). Quoted in Gómez Pérez, *El Franquismo*, 170-1.

¹³⁸ Document published in Laureano López Rodó, *Testimonio de una política de Estado* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1987), 218-20.

recognised that the 1953 Concordat was in urgent need of revision, as it no longer corresponded to 'the true necessities of the moment or to the doctrine established by the Second Vatican Council.' They also asked the Spanish State to reconsider its position on the nomination of bishops. The bishops declared their own intention of renouncing any privileges granted by the state to ecclesiastical personnel, such as ecclesiastical representation on official bodies or the special juridical rights enjoyed by the clergy. They claimed, however, that state funding of the clergy, church buildings and Catholic education were not so called 'privileges' at all, but rather deserved payment for important services provided for the citizens in order to develop their 'religious dimension'.¹³⁹ The document was not approved unanimously: of a total of 83 votes cast 59 bishops voted in favour, twenty against and 4 abstained. The number of 'Yes' votes, however, easily passed the requisite two-thirds majority of 53 for formal acceptance. The number of 'No' votes was high, considering that the document was simply an exposition of the current Catholic doctrine on the role of the Church in the temporal world, and probably reflected the continued presence of a small group of bishops whose frame of mind had not changed at all since the zenith of National-Catholicism had been reached in 1953.

At the start of June 1973 a new government was formed and Franco stepped down as Head of Government and appointed the man who had been vice-President since 1967, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, as Prime Minister. In his inaugural speech to the Cortes on the 14 June Carrero Blanco spoke of his hopes for more cordial Church-State relations in the future.¹⁴⁰ It looked as though those hopes might be realised when the new Foreign Minister, Laureano López Rodó, met with Cardinal Casaroli, Secretary of the Council for the Church's Public Affairs, in the Spanish Embassy in Helsinki on 5 July. Both men were in Finland for the Conference on Cooperation and Security in Europe. Rodó gave Casaroli a letter, dated 2 July, for Cardinal Villot that contained a formal request from the Spanish Government to the Vatican to re-start negotiations for a revision of the 1953 Concordat.¹⁴¹

During the months of August and September 1973 work began in the Spanish Embassy in the Vatican and in the Council for the Church's Public Affairs on a revision of the Concordat. On 1 November Monsignor Casaroli arrived in Madrid for a three-day

¹³⁹Text in Iribarren, DCEE.I, 520-54.

¹⁴⁰Cited in López Rodó, *Testimonio*, 48.

¹⁴¹Letter in *ibid*, 220-1.

meeting with López Rodó. In a press statement released by both men before Monsignor Casaroli left the country they announced that the preparatory phase for a revision was well advanced.¹⁴² Just three days after Monsignor Casaroli departed from Madrid the Basque priests interned in the Prison of Zamora set fire to their wing of the prison and began a hunger strike. As we saw, the priests' action sparked off a series of solidarity actions in the Basque Country, Spain and even abroad. Tension intensified even more on 10 November when a group of 111 people who were all members of various groups of Base Christian Communities in Madrid began a twenty-four hour occupation of the Nunciature. They sent a statement to the press explaining that their action was to protest at firstly, the false image of Church-State relations that had been created by Monsignor Casaroli's visit to Madrid; secondly, the exclusion of the CEE and the clergy from the negotiations for a new Concordat; thirdly the existence of the special prison for priests in Zamora; fourthly the imminent trial by the TOP of several members of CCOO who had been arrested on 24 June 1972 in a church in Madrid (among them was a worker-priest, Fr. Francisco García Salve); and finally, the recent detention of a group of Christians in a church in Barcelona without the permission of the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁴³ A week later the government expressed its annoyance to the Vatican over the occupation, especially the Nuncio's failure to eject the occupiers when the police had requested that he do so. On November a group of around a hundred priests and religious occupied the Diocesan Seminary in Madrid and demanded that the president of the CEE, Cardinal Tarancón and a number of other bishops present themselves in the seminary to dialogue with the priests on the current situation of the Spanish Church. The priests planned their action to coincide with the plenary assembly of the CEE that was then taking place in Chamartín, Madrid. Cardinal Tarancón in his memoirs described the occupiers as 'a tiny group of extremists priests' who were unconcerned about the scandal they might cause by their public act of defiance. The bishops refused to give into the priests' demand and called on them to end the occupation. Cardinal Tarancón tried to persuade the police to withdraw from surrounding the seminary, but they latter decided nevertheless to enter the building and remove the occupiers. Twelve priests were taken to police headquarters, but released a few hours later.¹⁴⁴ The spate of occupations was not over yet though: on 7 December a group of Spanish emigrants occupied the Nunciature in Paris, in protest primarily at the

¹⁴² ABC, (6 November 1973).

¹⁴³ 'Nota de Prensa' Cyclostyled account of the occupation in AAM.

¹⁴⁴ Account of the occupation in Tarancón, *Confesiones*, pp.563-6.

situation of the priests in Zamora prison, but also at that of all political prisoners in Spain. They were fiercely critical of the Spanish bishops, whom they accused of lacking courage by not condemning the government's repression of *all* opposition to the regime.¹⁴⁵

The assassination by ETA terrorists on 20 December of the Prime Minister, Admiral Carrero Blanco, by detonating an explosion under his car that sent it flying over the Jesuit residence adjacent to the church where he daily attended morning Mass created a real atmosphere of crisis in Spain. At the funeral ultra rightists heckled Cardinal Tarancón with cries of '*Tarancón al paredón*' (Tarancón to the firing squad) and '*Obispos rojos no*' (No to red bishops). From Carrero's murder until the death of Franco himself two years later the government was in a state of permanent crisis as it tried to deal with a wave of strikes, increasing terrorism, and the activities of an opposition that knew that the regime was dying. The new Prime Minister, Carlos Arias Navarro, who was appointed on 29 December, was given an impossible brief: to maintain public order, to take control of the political situation and to seize the initiative from the opposition. On 12 February he presented his political programme to the *Cortes* in which he promised a political 'opening' of the regime. Referring to Church-State relations he spoke of the 'undeniable conflict of recent years' but said he hoped for a 'new understanding' in the future.¹⁴⁶

On 15 March 1974 Monsignor Casaroli was once again in Madrid for discussions with the new Foreign Minister, Pedro Cortina Mauri. Before returning to Rome he commented to the press that 'The latest occurrences have once again demonstrated that the existing legislation governing Church-State relations is not capable of dealing adequately with current problems and urgently needs to be revised.'¹⁴⁷ (He was alluding to the 'Añoveros Affair') Then, from 11 to 17 July, Pedro Cortina visited the Vatican and had meetings with Cardinal Villot and with Monsignor Benelli, as well as an audience with the Pope. No progress was made in the negotiations, not even on the question of filling the vacant bishoprics, and deadlock ensued.¹⁴⁸ Cardinal Tarancón in his memoirs seems to suggest that the Vatican's efforts to reach an agreement with the Spanish government on a new Concordat were half-hearted at this stage. Certainly the future of the regime was by then looking decidedly bleak and opposition to plans for its continuation after Franco's death was coming not only from political groups and organisations *outside* the Movement, but even from *within*. Furthermore the Spanish bishops, although technically excluded

¹⁴⁵Copy of Statement (7 December 1973) in Manterola Archive, EBL, R.1.1.

¹⁴⁶*ABC* (13 February 1974).

¹⁴⁷Pérez Gómez, *El Franquismo*, 180.

from the negotiations, had made their opposition to a new Concordat clear to the Vatican in 1971 and were continuing to do so.

The liberal hierarchy became more vocal in the second half of 1974 after the uneasy truce that had followed the death of Carrero Blanco: on 16 November the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs issued a statement criticising various aspects of government economic policy, including the lack of freedom of association, unequal distribution of wealth, the poor social security system and the run-down state of Spanish agriculture.¹⁴⁹ This was followed by the Twenty-First Assembly of the CEE's communiqué of 30 November, which combined demands for civil rights and institutional reform with condemnation of violence as the means to political change. It also asked for a gesture of clemency towards political prisoners.¹⁵⁰

The new government of Arias Navarro had pinned its strategy of limited liberalisation to the promotion of 'political associations'. The idea of political associations had been under discussion within the government and the National Council of the Movement since the end of the 1960s and several draft statutes for 'political associations' had been prepared but none had ever been approved. On 10 September Arias Navarro announced that he was determined to carry out his 12 February programme and introduce political associations before January 1975.¹⁵¹ The Statute of Associations finally adopted by a decree law on 16 December 1974 legalised associations and envisaged their participation in future elections, but also granted the Movement's National Council full veto powers. This rendered it unacceptable to not only the anti-Francoist opposition but also to many within the regime who wished to begin to move towards a Western-style democracy. Meanwhile the opposition continued to seize the political initiative. After years of bitter fighting among themselves, the opposition parties began to coordinate their efforts. In July 1974, the *Junta Democrática* was formed, which included Communists, the small Popular Socialist party of Tierno Galván, and a mixed group of independent groups. A year later the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and others formed the *Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática*. As we have seen, the creation of a united opposition had already advanced much further in Catalonia

¹⁴⁸ *Historia de la Iglesia en España*, vol. v, 704.

¹⁴⁹ 'Actitudes cristianas ante la actual situación económica.' Published in *Ecclesia*, (December 1974).

¹⁵⁰ (30 November 1974) 'Comunicado final: la violencia, la tutela de los derechos humanos,' DCEE II, p. 341.

¹⁵¹ Paul Preston, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain* (London: Methuen, 1986), 65.

with the creation of the *Assemblea de Catalunya* in 1971 in which many Catholic activists played an important role.

As opposition to the regime continued to mount steadily in the early months of 1975 the government resorted to ever increasing repression. As we have seen, yet another state of emergency was declared for three months in the provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa on 25 April. Barely a month after it had come to an end on 26 July a new state of emergency was extended to all of Spain by means of a draconian anti-terrorist law. Introduced in August it restored court-martial proceedings and mandatory death penalties for the killing of security officers. Suspected terrorists would be tried in military courts and police were given unrestricted powers to search homes and hold people for five days without charging them.¹⁵² The new law was applied retroactively to the cases of eleven members of ETA and FRAP who were convicted of responsibility for the deaths of three policemen.¹⁵³ Pope Paul VI twice urged commutation of the death sentences. The pleas for clemency and the international outcry were deafening. Nevertheless two members of ETA and three members of FRAP were executed on 27 September.¹⁵⁴ Less than two months later Franco was dead and within months his political system was being dismantled through the democratisation of the structures he had built up over the previous forty years.

¹⁵²The law was condemned by the Permanent Commission of the CEE: 'La dolorosa situación que vive estos días la comunidad nacional.' *Ecclesia*, (1975), 1.236-7.

¹⁵³Stanley. G. Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975* (USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 614.

¹⁵⁴“Purtroppo non siamo stati ascoltati”: Vibrante condanna di Paolo VI per le esecuzioni in Spagna' *Osservatore Romano* (28 September 1975), 1.

Conclusion

The history of the dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona in the sixties was characterised by radical clerical opposition to the regime. This thesis maintains that the experience of the Basque Church during the Civil War of 1936-1939 profoundly shaped the mentality of the clergy who lived through the conflict and created in them negative attitudes towards the Franco regime. The war's legacy to the clergy of the Basque region was a feeling of deep bitterness over the Nationalists' execution of 14 Basque priests, the imprisonment or exile of hundreds of others and the cruel treatment of the elderly bishop of Vitoria. This was compounded by the new regime's harsh repression of the 'traitor provinces' of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa, which involved the execution, imprisonment or exiling of thousands of Basques following the fall of Bilbao right up to the mid-forties. The war experience remained a key causal factor of clerical dissent right throughout the Francoist period, even though many of the dissident priests of the sixties had no personal recollection of the war. In the Catalan case, on the other hand, it was chronological distance from the Civil War that enabled younger priests to reassess the war experience and question the Church's alliance with the Francoist victors, and this explains why political dissent by priests appeared at a much later date there. It is highly likely that the representatives of the Catalan clergy at the Joint Assembly of September 1971 were among those who voted in favour of the statement:

'We humbly recognise and ask pardon that we did not know how, when it was necessary, to be true "ministers of reconciliation" in the midst of our people torn by a fratricidal war.'¹

The Spanish Church's symbiotic relationship with the new regime - later labelled by historians as 'National-Catholicism' - which culminated in the signing of a new Concordat in 1953, was another major factor in creating clerical dissent in the diocese of Bilbao and Barcelona. Firstly, because the civil and ecclesiastical authorities' attempts to 'Castillianise' the Basque and Catalan Churches were tenaciously resisted by the lower

¹The majority of votes were in favor, but not enough to reach the requisite two-thirds majority necessary for formal acceptance of the statement.

clergy and secondly, because of resentment among some of the clergy that the Church had agreed to pay for its privileges by becoming, as one historian put it, a 'mortgaged Church.'² Although for more than two decades the official Church willingly accepted the terms of its mortgage with the regime (it was denied the right to organise labour unions, agricultural syndicates, and student associations, while the Catholic press was subjected to strict censorship until 1966) from the beginning a strong undercurrent of frustration at the restrictions imposed on what was called the 'liberty of the Church' was present among elements of the Basque and Catalan clergy. In the diocese of Vitoria a group of Basque priests called for the Church to be independent of the regime as early as 1944 in a collective letter addressed to Pius XII.³ However, in both Bilbao and Barcelona dioceses it was the chaplains to the lay movements of AC and other religious associations in the fifties who first struggled to break through the restrictions imposed by the regime.

Government policies on labour issues in the fifties and sixties were criticised in the publications of the apostolic workers movements and as a result they were frequently seized or suspended by the authorities. This repressive action was, of course, felt in the numerous JOC and HOAC groups functioning in the dioceses of Bilbao and Barcelona in this period and it was just one of several causes of the radicalisation of their chaplains. Immersed as they were in the world of labour, they felt they could not remain silent in the face of the Spanish confessional state's violation of the Church's teaching on workers' rights. Their outspokenness was to bring them into conflict not only with the civil authorities, but also with the Church hierarchy who refused to support them by pointing out to the government that its policies were at odds with Catholic social doctrine.

As opposition to the regime in civil society grew from the mid-sixties, dissenting priests' criticism of the regime broadened and became much more forthright. Oppositional priests in Barcelona spoke out and organised public acts of protest in defence of the students who wanted to set up a democratic student union, in condemnation of the arrests of members of illegal political groups and of strikers and members of illegal workers' unions. In Bilbao the intensification of the workers' struggles, especially around the time of the historic *Bandas* strike, and the first deaths in 1968 arising from ETA's decision to embark on a strategy of revolutionary violence

² Raguer, *La espada y la cruz*, 245.

³ 'Carta dirigida por los sacerdotes vascos al Santo Padre, Pío XII' Alday, *Crónicas*, vol. i, pp. 36-57.

provoked ferocious repression by the regime in the form of repeated states of emergency. The thesis argues that clerical dissent was directly related to socio-political developments in both dioceses.

The eruption of clerical dissidence in Barcelona and Bilbao in the mid-sixties cannot be fully explained as a reaction to socio-political circumstances, this thesis maintains that it also arose from the profound changes that were taking place in the Catholic Church worldwide and especially in Spain in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. The Council proposed a new way of relating the Church to the modern world which made a new strategy with respect to temporal power necessary for the Spanish Church. Also, in Bilbao and Barcelona, as elsewhere in Spain and throughout the Catholic world new ideas about the role of the priest began to burgeon in the burst of creativity that followed the Council. Many dissident priests reached the conclusion that the emphasis should be placed on witness and on the prophetic character of Christian life.

In the diocese of Bilbao clerical frustration with a bishop who seemed reluctant to implement Conciliar teaching, in particular that which related to the democratisation of diocesan structures, relations with the civil authorities and the defence of the rights of the Basque people, pushed 60 dissenting priests to occupy the diocesan seminary for almost a month in November 1968. This in turn led 516 priests (out of a total of 701) from the diocese of Bilbao to write to the Nuncio calling for direct intervention by the Holy See to solve 'the extremely serious and multiple problems affecting the diocese, long-standing problems that have become intensified over time.' The appointment first of an Apostolic Administrator in November 1968 and then a resident bishop in 1971 who were both fully committed to implementing Conciliar teaching went a long way to resolving the situation of crisis affecting the diocesan clergy.

In Barcelona clerical dissent crystallised in 1966 over the appointment of a non-Catalan as Co-adjutor bishop with the right of succession. The *Volem Bisbes Catalans* campaign demonstrated that the clergy of the diocese were no longer prepared to allow Franco's government to manipulate the Church in pursuit of its political aims. The campaign brought to light the existence of the secret *Unió Sacerdotal* association most of whose members held posts of influence in the diocesan curia and who were committed to preserving the cultural identity of the Catalan Church and to restoring the vibrancy and vitality that had characterised it before the Civil War.

The transformations of Spanish society, the pressure for change coming from the base of the Church, the intervention of the Vatican to change the composition of the episcopacy eventually all brought about a new attitude in the episcopal hierarchy. After 1971 a new 'style' became apparent in episcopal documents. The bishops were no longer the firm ideological supporters of the regime they had been. This thesis argues that the bishops' emerging commitment to change arose in part from a reaction to the long series of confrontations between the clergy of Bilbao and Barcelona and the regime that saw civil-ecclesiastical relations reach a level of tension in 1969-1970 unprecedented in the dictatorship's history.

While many of the dissident priests of the sixties had by 1975 been absorbed into a changed Church, whose orientation now rendered their own radicalism less relevant, many, many others abandoned the priesthood and the Church. There is no single reason why so many of the young radical priests, especially in Bilbao diocese, left the priesthood in the early seventies. Indeed, as the national survey of priests of 1971 revealed, the clergy everywhere in Spain was suffering from a complex identity crisis in the late sixties. However, this thesis holds that the dissenting priests' bitter confrontations with the ecclesiastical hierarchy on the one hand, and the confessional Spanish State on the other, was the major reason why so many of them ended up totally disillusioned with the priesthood and the Church.

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