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THE CHURCH AND RELIGION IN
CONTEMPORARY SPAIN

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1. Introductory remarks: the changing faces of the church, its religious offers and its strategic dilemmas

In the 1930s the Catholic Church was persecuted in one half of Spain and exalted in the other, men killing and being killed for reasons which were to a significant extent religious. Ten years later, the clock having been turned back three centuries, a new alliance seemed solidly established between the throne and the altar, while the almost unanimous religious feeling of the people seemed to correspond with the harmony existing between the institutions of the church and the state. And yet the following twenty years, between the mid 1950s and mid 1970s were to witness a new avatar (cfr. infra section 8) or transformation of the Spanish Church: this time distancing itself from its historic allies and drawing closer to a liberal democratic regime which it would have condemned in earlier times, and accepting a situation of religious pluralism. This drama of the church's persecution, exaltation, estrangement and accommodation with a changing temporal order, (or in other words, this sequence of metamorphosis in the church) can only be understood by looking into the relationships between the church and that temporal order, mainly the state and society, within the larger institutional and cultural framework that shaped those relations. This is the topic for this essay the core of which is to explore a new understanding of the emergence and (above all) the erosion of the alliance between the Catholic Church and the Francoist state, and of the religious forms and experiences associated with that alliance (sections 4 to 6).

This is certainly not a tale of decay nor collapse of the Catholic Church or Catholic religious experience when confronted with the modern world (as many people have argued in reference to similar developments: Berger, 1984). In fact our drama ends with an accommodation that implies intense soulsearching, risktaking and innovation, all of which testifies for the adaptive capacity and resilience of the church, and for the depth of people's religious commitments.

The key for that accommodation lies in the symbolic and institutional negotiations that took place during the fifties and sixties between the church, the state and civil society. The issue for those negotiations were the new religious demands that arose out of strategically located social groups. These demands arose in connection with new problem situations, and in connection with a search for new solutions to these problems. People who transmitted those demands challenged the structure of plausibility of the church's religious offer, and therefore pressed for a reformulation of this offer, and the corresponding institutional and organizational changes. My account tries to show the links between

the new emerging religious culture and institutions by looking into the mechanisms that made those negotiations (and in the end that accommodation) possible.

At no time, however, may the fit between the religious offer(s) of the church and the various religious demands of state and society be, even under the best circumstances, more than a limited one. Religion may have an effect of “consecration” of the existing political and economic arrangements (Bourdieu, 1971b: p. 310); but it may also have the contrary effect of “prophetic denunciation” of those arrangements; and even most often it may have both effects (for different audiences and at different times).

Regarding this “limited fit,” three comments may be in order. First, this limited fit is not bound to be a handicap for the survival of church institutions and religious experiences; rather on the contrary, it can provide an opportunity for experimenting with new institutions and with moral and cognitive innovations that may prove successful (and compatible with the original tradition), thereby enhancing the adaptive capacities for survival of church and religion. Second, this limited fit asks for accommodations that work in both directions. Church and religion are susceptible to the pressures arising from modernity, but modernity itself (for instance, a liberal-democratic regime or a full fledged market economy) may be shaped by the influence of the church and people’s religious experiences. Finally, the difficulties for such a fit between the church and a (national) temporal order are compounded by the fact that the former’s relationship is played out in a larger international context that has some influence on the opportunities and constraints national states and national societies have for defining their religious demands.

For the purpose of my discussion I will define religion as a set of cultural orientations (beliefs and morals more or less codified in credal form) linked to actual behaviour embedded in institutions and rituals that are (basically) consistent with those orientations, characterized by the fact that they rest on careful consideration (hence the term “religio” from “relegere”: see Jung, 1967) of supernatural or sacred entities held to be autonomous or independent of the believer’s will. At least in the Western tradition (Berger, 1973) such supernatural or sacred entities held to be autonomous have evolved into gods or other spritual agents with whom religious believers engage in different forms of interaction. Within such a tradition an experience is usually considered to be religious only if and when such interactions (or the expectation of such interactions) take place, and not simply when individuals experience a sense of awe before an unknown indeterminate force (an ‘oceanic feeling’ in Freud’s, and Rolland’s words, and/or face up to basic existential questions) (Freud, 1962; Bell, 1980).

These interactions may be mediated by specific sets of actors and institutions such as churches, that would partake in the sacred character of those supernatural entities. Instead of following

Durkheim's line of defining the church as the whole of the (moral) community of both the mediating actors and institutions, and the mass of religious believers, I will take Max Weber's distinction between the church as a producer (or coproducer) of religious offer and the mass of religious believers as the bearers of religious demands (Weber, 1978; Bourdieu, 1971a). Within the Catholic Church, therefore, I will distinguish two sectors: (a) the church proper composed by its leadership and administrative apparatus (papacy, episcopate, secular clergy and religious orders that may be referred to by "the hierarchy," "ecclesiastical class or body," "priesthood," etc); and (b) the laity, or the church's social basis ("God's people," "mass or community of believers," "the faithful," etc.). The community of both sectors makes up the Catholic Church in its widest sense (and perhaps from the church's viewpoint the most theologically correct one); but, in my judgement, there can be no satisfactory explanation of the transformations or the whole, without analyzing each part individually, and without distinguishing between the strategies of the ecclesiastical body (which produces the "religious offer") and the attitudes, mentalities or behaviour of the faithful (who sustain the "religious demand"). Such being the case, in this paper I shall use the term "church" to refer only to the ecclesiastical body.

Typically a church offers a religious message to its present or potential followers which combines three elements: (a) a message of "meaning," (b) a message of "salvation," and (c) a message of "moral community," all of which (at least in the case of the Western tradition of monotheistic or polytheistic religions) take as reference gods or supernatural figures (versus the theory of religion in Geertz, 1973; Bellah, 1969; or Bell, 1980) (1), whom the church represents, from whom it receives its spiritual resources, and with whom it mediates. Thus within these three messages is included the implicit message of the church about itself, as the source of meaning, salvation and community.

First, the message of "meaning" refers to the point that religion offers (or claims to offer) a schema, a mental order, an explanation of causes and purposes in marked contrast to the apparent chaos of reality, the incoherent fragmentation of daily life, natural and historical cataclysms, the mysteries of death and the future, and ignorance of the past (Geertz, 1973; Berger, 1973). The creation of the world, original sin, redemption through the incarnation and sacrifice of God, the spiritual community among generations, alive or dead, hope of an afterlife, the task of rebuilding the Kingdom of God on earth, etc.: all these are the elements of a vision which seeks to encompass the totality of human experience in a coherent way. Second, the message of "salvation" is to be understood in its widest sense. Because it is not only a question of setting the mind at ease by creating order. It is also, and more especially, a case of satisfying human affections and emotions. This message refers to salvation from danger and suffering which can be of a very diverse nature: it may be famine, illness or drought; or feelings of guilt or

impurity, loneliness, the anguish of death, tedium, daily routine, feelings of uncertainty or the transience of time.

Third, the message of a spiritual or religious “moral community” is implicit in and forms part of the message of salvation. The communication of the religious message already implies such a community, and the supernatural referent, the mediator and the receiver of the message form part of it. It may be a community with gods, virgins, saints, angels and the dead; and of course with bishops, clerics and the faithful - as in the case of the Catholic Church. A community both visible and invisible; both in this life and in life hereafter. A community which is already part of the message of salvation, because it advises, consoles and resolves frustrations and grief.

In the case of the Catholic Church the messenger is also a prominent part of the message itself. This emphasis is one of its defining characteristics with respect to other Christian Churches, in particular most Protestant ones. What this means is, first of all, that the religious message of meaning is accompanied by a heavy emphasis on the teaching of the Church when the time comes to determine that meaning. It is not for each individual to question the Divine Word in the sincerity of his heart and the light of his reason: it is for him to fundamentally accept the interpretation proposed by the church (that is, the spiritual leadership at the head of the organization, popes and Councils, together with professional theologians and other clerics): a church which is infallible in matters of faith and morality. It is not for the people to decide on their course of action: it is for them to adjust such a course to the prescriptions, the advice and the spiritual direction of “wise and saintly” priests. Naturally, there are margins of choice in which to make personal decisions, but the criteria are already laid down.

Secondly, the religious message of salvation is accompanied by a similar emphasis on the sacramental intervention of the church. Salvation is, in the final analysis, participation in the state of grace: that state which makes us safe, and saintly, both in this life and the next. Grace is not the outward sign but the reality of communion with God. Therefore, since the Catholic Church dispenses the sacraments, it must hold, in the strictest sense, the key to the communication of supernatural grace or divine life which flows between God and mankind. In this way the church not only consoles and uplifts morally, or intercedes with rogations and other similar acts before supernatural figures, it administers the greatest of all religious or supernatural gifts as well.

And finally, from this we can see the centrality of the Catholic Church in the moral or spiritual communion of Catholics with God and supernatural figures. In fact, in everyday preaching, the coprotagonism of “Christ and his Church” is emphasized and reinforced by images of loving identity between the two. This centrality appears as much in ordinary teaching as in the sacraments and it is summed up in that mixture of sermon and ritual sacrament which is the

Mass, an example of Catholic ceremony par excellence. The Mass “deconstructs” the temporal community and reconstructs it again on its own terms, in a sacred place at a sacred time, centered around the priest and his acts, both rational and magical.

This is the religious offer (credal as well as ritual and institutional) made by the Catholic Church to meet the demands for meaning, salvation and spiritual community by the masses of its actual or potential followers. These demands are, as they have always been, most diverse in content as well as in intellectual articulation, emotional depth and scope. Depending on people’s location on the economic, social, political or cultural system, they may formulate religious demands for the justification (or legitimation) of their privileged position, or demands for compensating their underprivileged situation (Weber, 1978). These demands may be more or less explicit and fully articulated (even systematized) (for instance, by traditional peasants and by urban intellectuals). They may diverge in their intensity or their extension (Grothuysen, 1927): they may be backed by deeper or more superficial emotional and moral commitments to act them out; and they may be applied to a more or less extended area of beliefs, morals and actual behaviour.

The church may try different strategies for meeting those demands. Ultimately it is faced with a strategic dilemma between adapting its offer to the demands made upon it by different groups, or instead articulating and shaping these very demands (so that it is these demands which adapt, for better or worse, to its offer). And as it happens with so many organizations facing a market for their products, the church may very well go for a situation of monopoly thereby increasing its chances to shape the population’s religious demands. Hence the crucial problem of the church’s relation to the state which alone can guarantee that monopoly position, putting at the church’s disposal the state’s own monopoly of legitimate violence.

From the start, the contrast between a monopolistic religious market and a competitive one (or a situation of religious pluralism: Berger, 1973) could not be greater. By definition, in the case of a monopoly of the religious offer, the Catholic Church has no rivals. It has no other cultural elites, protestant clerics, Jewish rabbis, Muslim mullahs or ulemas, free-thinking intellectuals, perhaps atheists, with whom to dispute its souls. These souls are reduced to being consumers of religious products (creeds, rites, institutions), the production of which is none of their concern. Strictly speaking, the church is not “offering” but “imposing upon” their beliefs and religious practices: its religious power implies in fact the use of temporal power to sanction heterodox beliefs and practices, either directly or through an intermediary (usually the state). It offers these believers “submission” or “humility” as a value in itself (appealing to the servile or submissive instinct in people) as part of its messages of meaning, salvation and community which are encoded in the church’s teaching, its sacramental potency and its central location within

the community of saints. The margin for individual freedom is reduced to the acceptance of the religious product with a greater or lesser degree of fervor: the choice is whether to be an enthusiastic or a lukewarm Catholic, a man of the world or perhaps one who, in his heart of hearts, is indifferent. But it is not open to them to reject the product, nor to substitute it for another, unless they are prepared to receive the corresponding sanctions, including temporal ones. This drastic reduction of individual freedom is justified because there can be no room for error or for sin; and because, mankind being weak and sinful, the roots of his freedom are already corrupt.

This has been the “ideal” situation enjoyed, or searched for, by the Catholic Church throughout quite significant periods of history: almost all of the time during which it has relied on (or hoped to rely on) an available or kindred temporal power. An ideal which is clearly illustrated in the famous speech by the Grand Inquisitor in the parable by Dostoevsky, with a singular justification: if Jesus Christ had come to give or restore freedom among men, giving them the opportunity to choose his person and his message, the church, more realistically, would have understood that freedom was an excessive burden which many men do not want and it would have offered them a pact whereby in return for their submission, they would feel secure, well governed, and would have their needs satisfied (Dostoevski, 1964, pp.204 ff.). The Christian community is now a flock, led by its shepherds, through our earthly valley, towards the kingdom of heaven, protected from false shepherds and evil beasts.

However, the model does have two drawbacks as it leaves the church open to pressure coming from the temporal ruler itself, and from the political opposition to that ruler. In the first place, even if the Church remains immune, to a certain extent, from the demands of many of its followers, it cannot claim the same immunity to pressure from the temporal power itself, on whose goodwill it depends - once the supreme ideal of a theocracy or hierocracy is demonstrated, for one reason or another, to be impractical. If it is not possible to consider the state as an instrument subordinate to the church and if the relative autonomy of the two spheres is consolidated, it is essential to come to agreements, negotiating and renegotiating them with the temporal power, do ut des, for the purpose of receiving state support in exchange for services rendered; a contribution to the legitimacy of the state and its rulers and the habituation of its subjects to obedience; administrative services, policing and control of social customs; exhortations for the defense of the nation, or for the conquest of other nations; tolerance towards the morals of the court; resignation towards temporal interference in religious affairs and (increasingly) the exercise of moral exemplary functions by the state in accordance with the interests and motives of its rulers - all of which necessarily convert the church's monopoly on spiritual power into an imperfect monopoly.

In the second place, the situation creates a bond between religious and temporal power which, in the long run, may be counterproductive, since the groups which oppose the incumbents of temporal power, given the support which the latter receive from the church, come to be defined (and define themselves) as enemies of the church as well - so that the ground which is gained today may be lost tomorrow. And the greater the instability of a political regime, or its political base, the greater the risk.

This situation of religious monopoly supported by temporal power contrasts with that in which the church cannot or has no wish to shun the presence of other cultural elites in a more or less open competitive market (of offers of meaning, salvation and moral community, with or without religious referents in the strict sense). At times when the church could not rely on a well-disposed temporal power (and a few times even when it could) strategies leading to the installment of a neutral temporal power, non-confessional, or even of a different confession, have been undertaken in order to keep the religious market open at least enough for the Catholic Church to continue competing (proselytizing, educating, etc.) with other confessions. This situation differs drastically from the earlier one in so far as, in this case, the religious product cannot be offered independently of religious demand - and as a limiting case we could find a situation of "consumer supremacy" in which consumers were free to choose between alternative religions (and other cultural offers) and thus to condition, by means of their preferences, the form and content of religious messages in the short or longer term.

At the same time, in any situation either of monopoly or of religious pluralism, the church must decide how to design its institutional structure to allow for more or less participation of the laymen in the government of the church, and in the process of formation of the religious offer: in theological and moral argument, participation in rituals, codirection of confessional associations, etc. Obviously, the greater this participation is, the fainter the line becomes between ecclesiastics and laymen - and, since this line seems to be a distinctive feature of the Catholic Church, it is therefore to be expected that the participation of the faithful will not rise above a certain limit. Ideally, in the aforementioned model of the shepherd and his flock, the only participation required of the flock would be to bleat their acquiescence to the decisions of the shepherd and frolic in the meadows. But this relative passivity can be a motive for preoccupation in times of danger, for example when the wolves attack. Then it would be preferable for some of the sheep to know how to defend themselves and, incidentally, their shepherd. In other words, there are circumstances which demand a response from believers, which should move them to action - against adverse temporal powers or competitive cultural elites. Their passivity, their inertia, or their lack of willpower then become a risk; and could even be interpreted as acts of resistance to clerical influence, like a kind of deliberate indifference, a rejection of the religious commitment, or a silent challenge to the moral authority of the church. It may then seem less

dangerous to admit the right to a voice in ecclesiastical organization (although rebels may come forward who, in time, must be brought to heel or are coopted) than to suppress all such mechanisms and then be faced by an obstinate wall of silent dissent, of followers who have lost their sensibility and interest in religion and turn a deaf ear to the anguished cries of then-shepherds in danger.

Whether the situation is one of monopoly or one of religious pluralism, and whether more or less participation by the laymen is allowed for by the church's institutional structure, still the church must also opt for either extending or reducing the area of beliefs, morals and behaviour affected by its religious messages, and submitted to the church authority. This may be anything from a maximalist position in which one's whole life would be subjected to religion (combining a maximum of intensity with a maximum of extension of religious experience) to a minimalist position in which religion would be reduced to regulating, for example, specific acts of external piety. As a matter of fact, and for a very long time, the Catholic Church opted for a dual strategy according to which: (a) a minority of ecclesiastics and selected laymen received the vocation of a (full) religious life, while (b) the majority of the faithful was meant to carry out the duties of their temporal state, with the addition of pious and ceremonial activities, under the supervision of that ecclesiastical minority - although in times of religious fervour the church tended to extend its area of influence over the laity, wrestling with the resistance of artisans, farmers, intellectuals, etc.

In summary, the great strategic dilemmas of the Catholic Church which I have discussed here refer to: (a) a situation of religious monopoly or religious pluralism for any religious offer, thus leading to religious power sustained either by both religious and temporal sanctions, or one sustained by religious sanctions alone; (b) the internal structure of the process of producing the religious offer, and thus the greater or lesser degree of participation by believers in the decision making processes of the church; and (c) the delimitation of the area, be it large or small, of the beliefs and behaviour of believers to which the offer applies - and thus the area of religious influence.

If we were operating in a vacuum, an ideal space, and we imagined a strategy to maximize returns on the resources and powers of the church, while minimizing the risks, we could assume that: (a) the church would tend towards achieving a monopoly situation and therefore the power to recur to temporal sanctions, claiming to have at least indirect potestas on the state - without forgetting that this has the disadvantages of the cost of interference by the temporal powers in religious affairs and of the risk of a hostile reaction towards the church on the part of those in the opposition who may one day take over, (b) The church would tend to reduce to a minimum its followers' participation in its decision making processes, although this may be limited by the

possible lack of interest and apathy among these followers who may not gather to the defense of their shepherds and their faith at the right moment. And (c) the church would tend to extend the area of beliefs and behaviour of the faithful to be affected by religion to a maximum -although this is limited by the interest of the church in preserving the duality between church and followers, whose differentiation is partly justified by the different extension of the area of religious life influenced by religious considerations; or, on the contrary, in not exacerbating the resistance of the laity to the expansion of the church's influence.

However, given the caution which I have introduced into the modulation of the strategy of maximization of returns and minimization of risks, it may be imagined that the church's decisions concerning these strategic dilemmas depend on the specific historical space in which the maximization strategy is to be carried out, and the likelihood and strength of the resistances that are rooted in the religious demands of the various social groups.

2. The logic of the relation between the Catholic Church and temporal order, and the church's opposition to modernity: the case of Spain

Given the premises stated above, the initial feelings of intense opposition of the Catholic Church towards the modern world are easily explained, together with the ambivalence which it has continued to feel right up to the present day, because the modern world signifies an end to the position of almost total cultural monopoly held by the church, and the introduction of considerable competition in the field of religion.

The Catholic Church of medieval times was a long way from being a monolithic block and was differentiated by a multitude of schools, interests and currents of opinion. But all these differences implied a fundamental credal unity, and over all of them hovered the shadow of ecclesiastical authority (and, in principle, the ultimate threat of inquisitorial proceedings, or their equivalent, against consistent and recalcitrant believers in heterodoxy). Where earlier this church had been unique, modern times saw the introduction of a multitude of Protestant confessions and humanistic, scientific, philosophic and literary circles, thereby eroding de jure or de facto ecclesiastical authority and the power of its threats: particularly since they were now under the protection of temporal powers persuaded of the new ideas and hostile to the power of the church or avid for its wealth. In these conditions, after a running battle lasting one or two centuries, often between opposing fanaticisms, tolerant regimes were established almost all over Europe: and this meant a relatively open market for beliefs.

At the same time, the message of those new and very different ideologies generally coincided in proposing a radical devaluation of the importance of the church. The Protestant confessions tended to displace the church from the center of the arena of religious life to its outer edge. The importance of its teaching was weakened in favor of the value accorded to a personal interpretation of God's Word: which, moreover, could be read directly by the believer in his own home. The power of the church to tie or untie, to administer Divine Grace, was denied or substantially curtailed. The center of the spiritual community shifted to the personal drama of a direct relation with Jesus Christ.

Similarly, the message of scientists and humanists or men of letters, and of secular humanism in general consisted of a widespread relative devaluation of the religious message since they reconstructed the messages of meaning, salvation and moral community without, or with a weak connection to their religious referents. Natural science could account for the world with a God who was either absent or reduced to his minimum expression. The emerging social sciences (of economics or politics) could account for their spheres of knowledge with only marginal reference to the Revelation or even morality: neither Adam Smith nor Machiavelli needed a church or divine message of any kind in order to explain to us their respective worlds. Furthermore, the hope of salvation or liberation from a large number of human frustrations and suffering became increasingly bound to the expectation of material and moral progress resulting from the growth of knowledge of nature and society, and from individual or collective human action. This progress meant the certain though problematical advance towards achieving a community which would be prosperous, free, integrated and just, of which the historical models, to the extent that they existed, were not the Christian societies of the past (with their traditional monarchies and economies which were either agrarian or dominated, to some extent, by the guilds), but, at least for some people and in some crucial aspects, resembled rather the pre-Christian classical societies (with their idealized models of the Greek city and the Roman republic).

This does not mean that in the genesis of the construction of economics and politics as autonomous spheres of human life we cannot trace religious motives. Weber indicated the Calvinistic religious impulse which was to be found in the origins of some specific economic experiences (Weber, 1958); and much could be said about the importance of the congregations of "saints" for an understanding of the appearance of modern representative institutions (Walzer, 1970), or the religious leagues for an understanding of the rise of political parties (Koenigsberger, 1955). But the issue is that once these institutions were established, the logic of development of their development institutions (enterprises, public assemblies or parties) came to systematically minimize the initial religious referent. In other words, the experience of how these institutions functioned and what their places were in a wider context led people to substitute them for their

initial motivations and the sense which these had given to their actions. This is what has been called the process of “secularization” in the largest sense, implying both institutional and cultural changes that take people and organisations away from the institutional authority of the church, and weaken their religious referents.

Religious truth, interpreted by the church, was no longer the governing principle which gave meaning to the totality of experience; on the contrary, modernity meant a fragmentation of this experience into autonomous spheres, each of which had its own principles: in political life these were “reasons of state” or, later, the “general will”; in economic life, the logic of market and business profit; in intellectual life, the search for truth based on natural reason and observation. This vindication of autonomy did not remain long in the “terrain of principles” but was institutionalized, so that, little by little, the church began to lose its political power, its properties and its control of education and the diffusion of ideas.

The final implication of this “market situation” where the church had to compete with Protestant confessions and secularized currents of thought and practices, was the recognition of the individual conscience as the final judge of one belief over another. Thus what may be called the recognition of “consumer supremacy” arose in relation to the products on the market, whether symbolic, intellectual or religious. That this recognition was not formal and explicit from the start of the process does not mean that it was not implicit, nor that it was not visible enough to the church, which possessed the lucidity born of a state of perpetual alertness common to institutions which are hypersensitive to their enemies.

We may come to the conclusion that, given the premises set forth (in the first section) relative to the strategic orientation of the Catholic Church, and given the characteristics of modernity just outlined, it is understandable that the Catholic Church could be but profoundly opposed to that kind of modernity. Modernity threatened its strategy: it substantially reduced its resources and increased those of its opponents, and in this way minimized the probabilities of the success of its strategy and multiplied its costs and risks. The market situation of religious pluralism, with the competition of so many and such powerful rivals, the tendency to reduce religion to a limited area of existence, the dwindling importance of the ecclesiastical body and the principle of freedom of conscience, all condemned the church to revising its historical trajectory. It could either revert to a model of evangelical simplicity, universal love and ill-defined institutions, adopting what some considered to be its original message; or it could be consistent with its structure and historical trajectory and in this case accept the challenge of modernity by opposing it, in an attempt to mark out territory in which to maintain its ideal of a Christian society under the moral authority of the church (while at the same time learning from modernity about the best ways for implementing its defensive strategy and attaining its goals). This second

option was the one to be put into practice, constituting that immense historical operation known as the “Counter-Reformation.”

The Counter-Reformation was an extraordinary, dogmatic and moral rationalization of what was, in fact, an almost instinctive reaction on the part of the church to safeguard some territories over which an agreement with the temporal powers could be reached in order to ensure the monopoly of its religious and cultural offer, to maximize its sphere of influence and to reinforce the subordination of believers. It achieved this to a considerable extent in its own Pontifical States, in the Kingdom of Castile and other territories belonging to the King of Spain, in the territories of the House of Austria in general (including large segments of Italy), and with great difficulty in France (where it had to brave the consequences of a civil war and cede before the demands of royal power), for almost three centuries.

Even so, this was not merely the perpetuation of bygone times. The Counter-Reformation meant an expansion of the religious area and an increase in its intensity. This trend towards expansion and intensification meant a growing presence of religion in the public and private spaces of existence. The eucharistic play, the auto-da-fé, church imagery, baroque sculpture and painting, the missions and popular preaching launched religion into public space. But, at the same time, the new religious orders, with the Jesuits at the fore, transmitted a kind of intimate, ordered, methodical religiosity which required discipline and the animation of the spirit, a reorientation of its energies and a rationalization of religious experience, above all among the noble estates and the middle classes of the population. To this was added the institution of seminaries, the insistence on teaching and control of social customs by the clerics and the reorganization of the ecclesiastical structure, placing more emphasis on the parishes as basic organizational units, on the presence of resident parish priests and on the task of these priests in controlling their parishioners.

That extraordinary effort to articulate traditional religious values, beliefs and institutions in a new environment, converged with an attempt to differentiate the religious offer to meet the demands of diverse audiences. On the one hand, the church had to deal with a nobility and middle classes who had developed an interest in the new economic, political, artistic and intellectual ways associated with modernity. Some degree of accommodation with these new ways had to be achieved if religion was to look plausible for that new breed of gentilhommes and bourgeois. The new Jesuit order was intent on exploring to its limits that strategy of accommodation all over Europe (as it did following the same logic with regard to non-Western cultures). On the other hand, the church did try to keep most ordinary people's customs and beliefs under tight control.

A study of some regions of Castile, the Tierras de Curiel y de Peñafiel, between the XVI and XVIII centuries illustrates what this systematic effort by the ecclesiastical institution could come to mean in the daily lives of peasants and rural dwellers (García Sanz, 1989; see also Domínguez Ortiz, 1973). It shows how the church absorbed a substantial portion of the agricultural production of the zone (through tithes and other incomes); it was present in local politics; it filled the changing seasons with significance; it sanctified the rites of birth, marriage and death and exorcised evil spirits; it dominated public life. It had the means to sanction blasphemies, work on Sundays and holidays, extra-marital sexual relations, the consumption of meat during Lent, the retention of tithes (most of one third of the otherwise heavy fiscal pressure peasants had to bear), the songs and dancing of the young people, and the unobservance of the precepts of annual confession and communion (to be marked in the appropriate Registry books).

Nevertheless, this strategy of control met with some resistance. Nobles and councillors resisted any loss of control over local affairs. Peasants acquiesced but kept many of their own customs. Moreover, the ecclesiastical institution itself did not function properly. The bishops were continually admonishing priests not to carry arms, gamble, sing, dance, or attend bullfights; not to dress up or have commercial dealings, not to enter taverns or brothels nor to live in public concubinage; admonitions, these, whose emphasis and reiteration suggest a priesthood whose flesh was weak and whose moral authority only modest. However, the program of reform (or “Counter-Reform”) was in no way invalidated as a result. Quite the opposite. Everything, it was thought, would resolve itself in time: by improving the ecclesiastical organization, with more visits by bishops and archdeacons, better seminaries, more theological and moral formation, more popular missions, greater vigilance of social customs, and more catechism.

Naturally the Catholic Church could not easily renounce this state of affairs and its program for the betterment of the world. And thus, in those countries which remained Catholic after the religious wars of the XVI and XVII centuries, the struggle of the Catholic Church against modernity continued: against capitalism, the modern state and later, against liberal democracy and secular culture; because all these institutions implied curtailing the power of the church, a reduction of its influence and competition for its souls.

This long struggle between church and modernity has meant a slow though dramatic process of apprenticeship and adaptation on the part of the church. Slow, because it has only been in the last fifty years that the church has made its peace with that world, and only in the II Vatican Council has it officially recognized this. Dramatic, because it has caused extraordinary tensions resulting in periodic explosions of antireligiosity, anticatholicism and anticlericalism—even if these explosions have become less violent over time pari passu with the reduction of the church’s hostility to the modern world (and viceversa, but this is another story), in such a way

that, to some extent, it is now possible to talk not just about a mere adaptation of the church to the modern world but rather a reciprocal adaptation.

From the point of view of analyzing the adaptative mechanisms of Catholicism and the modern world, the case of Spain in the last fifty years constitutes a piece of historical evidence of singular interest. This is because the Nationalist victory in the civil war led to a systematic attempt to realize the ideals of the Counter-Reformation at the height of the XXth century, including the confessionality of the state and the total conversion of society to Catholicism; meanwhile, in only two generations we have witnessed the failure of this historic project, the conversion of this country into a “modern” nation and a church reconciled to its new circumstances. During this time the mutation of the Spanish Catholic Church has been extraordinary. It is as though we had been watching a play of several acts, complete with changes of scenery, of the plot and of the personality of the characters, and even of the emotional tone; furious in the thirties, exalted in the forties and fifties, troubled and inquiring in the sixties, moderately euphoric throughout the seventies, and discrete, with a sense of both satisfaction and disillusion, in the eighties.

(1) In the thirties the church was part of a civil war. It saw itself as martyr and militant; as the protagonist of the crusade of one half of Spain against the other: in which the middle classes were divided, the peasants were divided and the workers were apparently “dechristianized” (although perhaps the belligerence of the leaders and officials of political and labor union organizations should be understood in the context of the indifference to, or respect for, religion, if not the church, felt by a large part of their rank and file).

(2) In the forties and fifties, the church was the “Church triumphant.” Its alliance with the temporal powers appeared stable. By delegation it wielded state authority in matters of education, the regulation and supervision of morals - by undertaking the adaptation of legislation to ecclesiastical doctrines, preferential treatment for educational institutions belonging to the church, institutionalized mechanisms for the exercise of power and influence on the part of the church in public affairs and ecclesiastical censorship of entertainment. In other words, a species of moral and cultural mesogovernment (Pérez-Díaz, 1987) had been created whereby the church was empowered with state authority on educational and other matters. To this was added its extraordinary influence and control over the public and private spaces of society.

(3) From the mid fifties and throughout the sixties we witness an erosion of the earlier equilibrium and of the confidence of the church in itself. It cannot withstand the problems it has with intellectuals, workers, capitalism, regionalism, political power and mass morality. These are the years when a countercurrent emerges within the Spanish Church which questions the solutions

of the church triumphant and which receives a decisive impetus from the II Vatican Council. They are critical years: full of doubts, internal divisions and conflicting hopes.

(4) Throughout the seventies the internal conflict draws to a close and the consequent change of alliances takes place; the distance from authoritarian power increases and an understanding with a new political class, a liberal democratic regime and a non-confessional state grows. They are years of moderate euphoria because this extremely delicate operation is successful and because the church relives an experience of coprotagonism that of the events of the transition.

(5) The eighties find the church taking stock of its situation. It has been converted into just another pressure group; obliged to come to terms with laws of which it only half approves or of which it completely disapproves; with limited influence over the political classes; and, what is even more surprising, with an unequal influence, tending towards the precarious, over civil society. Now is the moment in which it becomes aware of a phenomenon which has been gathering pace over a twenty year period the daily life of the masses has slowly been slipping away, out of its sphere of influence.

3. The civil war, its religious dimension and its historical background

The one hundred long years which stretch from the end of the Napoleonic wars to the 1930s can be understood as a long drawn-out struggle between the Catholic Church and the liberal regime, in search of a modus vivendi. The point of departure was one of profound reciprocal ambivalence. The Spanish ecclesiastical body did not openly oppose the fall of the ancient regime; in this they were indecisive and prudent as was frequent among the enlightened European clergy of the XVIII century. But the experience of the Revolution and the Napoleonic era convinced the church of the convenience of an alliance between the throne and the altar which would hold in check the tide of liberalism which seemed bent on the creation of a non-confessional state with religious freedom and a considerable reduction in the wealth and power of the church (Artola, 1959). Later it became clear that Legitimists, Carlists and Miguelists had no historical future. Their influence would reach no further than the precarious control of marginal areas of European society - such as the Basque Country between 1833 and 1840, and between 1872 and 1876. Thus the church was obliged to come to an understanding with "lesser evils": doctrinaire liberalism, "moderantism," the Second Empire or the Cánovas restoration.

The objective of these tactical understandings, from the point of view of the church, always centered around placing limits on the degree of freedom and market competitiveness of other beliefs, and obtaining from the state a commitment of support or preferential treatment for the church: subsidies, tax exemptions, support of church education, laws compatible with ecclesiastical doctrine on questions of morals and social customs, etc. In exchange, the church renounced any active or consistent support for enemies of the regime and lent it an air of legitimacy, or concurred in habituating the masses to acquiescence under the established order. Naturally this understanding was only achieved after numerous confrontations, including the expropriation of ecclesiastical lands and possessions, the expulsion of religious orders, disputes between science and religion, school wars, occupation of the Pontifical States and anticlerical campaigns; accompanied in places like Spain by the burning of convents, the murder of priests and other atrocities and sacrilegious acts.

Tactical understandings and a gradual approximation to a modus vivendi continued to take place between bourgeois society and the Catholic Church, in spite of anticlerical offensives and hardline Catholicism. They were fostered by the positions taken by Popes such as Leo XIII on political ralliement and social affairs, which led to the two currents of liberal Catholicism and social Catholicism, both of which were important in various parts of Europe, though not so in Spain until much later (Laboa, 1985; Payne, 1984).

The cataclysms in Europe resulting from the Great War and the period of revolution and counter-revolution in the twenties and early thirties were additional cause for a profound disturbance in the already unstable relations between the church and the modern world. The rivalry of the church with the liberal order seemed to pale before the onslaught of the socialist and extreme nationalist movements, which surfaced as the protagonists of the new situation, and from which little mercy could apparently be expected. The church, in the thirties and forties, found itself in the middle of a triangle of adversaries, between liberals, fascists, and anarchists, socialists and communists (to the extent that we can put those three branches of the original tree of the Socialist International together), and it had to choose one of them on which to depend, trusting that its adversaries detested each other more than they detested the church. The situation was not uniform throughout Europe and, of course, it was very different in France and Italy, on the one hand, in Spain, on the other.

In France and Italy a large part of the church had seen the emergence of an authoritarian corporative regime and the marginalization of liberals and socialists or anarchists with a spirit of sympathy and understanding. But the fortunes of World War II, the ultimate national defeats and the German occupation which both countries experienced in very different ways, meant, at a given moment, the crucial experience of involvement of a substantial part of the church and many

Catholics in movements of “resistance.” These experiences legitimized their ulterior intervention as coprotagonists in the liberal democracies which were set up in these countries at the end of the war. The shared experience of risks and sacrifices in the name of national independence and the creation of a liberal democracy (with the addition, or otherwise, of social and economic reforms of a populist nature) was to cement together the moral community of socialists, liberals and Catholics in these countries, the results of which were to underlie (and limit) their partisan tensions in the postwar period. This, in turn, would make possible the strategic alliance of social democrats and Christian democrats on the subject of national reconstruction, the welfare state and the construction of a united Europe.

However, if the experience of resisting German invasion or German occupation was crucial to the churches of Italy and France in the thirties, the crucial experience of the Spanish Church was very different. The latter found itself in the middle of a civil war, confronted by a republican-socialist coalition in Parliament, and socialist and anarchist masses in the streets and so made common cause with the military, conservatives and fascists, united in the political project of an authoritarian corporative regime.

The “religious problem” in Spain in the thirties was highly charged due to two circumstances: firstly, the dramatic attitude taken by the people of that period towards the problem, in part the inheritance of a tradition of conflict; and secondly, the combination of this with other extremely serious political, social and economic problems which occurred at the same time, and in such a way that the Church and religion were to be found at the center of intense argument over the consolidation of the political regime and social reform. Both factors, the dramatic tone and the combination of conflicts, changed a difficult religious problem into an insoluble one, except by tearing apart the social fabric.

It is not probable that in the thirties Spanish civil society had ceased to be Catholic, in spite of Azañas rather confused declarations on the subject. The truth is that there continued to be few Spaniards who were not baptized, and, during the Republic, there were few civil marriages, few divorces and few burials of a civil nature. Probably the majority of Spaniards felt vaguely Catholic sentiments, although their attitude towards the church and priesthood was, in many cases, indifferent or ambivalent. But although the majority might have been Catholic, within the limitations mentioned, the fact is that the Republic placed a liberal political sector and some intensely anticlerical socialist and anarchist organizations right in the center of the political stage (Ramírez, 1969). This anticlericalism was partly the legacy of a long history of more than one hundred years of political tensions: (a) the anticlericalism of the liberals and progressives from the previous century, which resented the “moderate compromise” between church and the state; (b) the reactions by many intellectuals and some segments of the middle classes against the

Church's agreements with the Cánovas regime, and against the Catholic revival at the end of the century, which was a consequence of the flow of French religious orders to Spain following French anticlerical legislation, and of the dynamism of organizations like the Jesuits during the period (which was, in fact, to be only a pause between their fourth and fifth expulsions from the country); and (c) the annoyance and distrust aroused among many politicians by the collaboration of Catholic institutions with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Furthermore, the anticlericalism of the thirties inherited (d) a tradition of popular anticlericalism with a bloody history dating from years such as 1834/35 and the semana trágica ("the tragic week") of 1909 (Payne, 1984; Ullmann, 1968).

The anticlerical offensive of the Republic left the Church and Catholic believers disconcerted, as they had adopted a reticent, wait-and-see attitude towards the new regime. They soon felt obliged to defend their institutions and their beliefs. Constitutional compromise was not possible (Gunther; Blough, 1981). The expulsion of the Jesuits and the limits imposed on other religious orders, on public manifestations of the cult and Catholic teaching, displayed an unequivocally hostile attitude; the burning of convents almost within a month of the Republic being declared, were an indication of the intention of some not merely to limit the church but to destroy it, relying on the governments deliberate passivity (as was demonstrated by the negative attitude of Azaña and the Socialist ministers to Miguel Maura's demands to use the forces of law and order; Maura, 1966: pp.249 ff).

The church reacted to all this by mobilizing the peasant masses and the middle classes, and channelling them into professional and political right-wing organizations (prepared for by decades of careful organizational work; Castillo, 1979; Montero, 1986). The extreme right soon took upon itself the task of conspiring to overthrow the regime. The moderate right refused to state its unambiguous loyalty to the new institutions and openly flirted with authoritarianism. Meanwhile, faced with the relative success of the moderate right in the elections and the eventuality of their achieving power, part of the left wing reacted with a social revolution in 1934, which, although it failed in only a few weeks, was not without its share of blood-letting (and accompanying burning of churches and other rituals of desecration of religious symbols).

This history of quarrels, radicalism and violence erupted, as we know, into a three year long civil war. The war involved all sectors of the population. At rural level the peasants with small holdings or medium-sized farms from the northern meseta faced up the anarchist and socialist masses of peasant smallholders and landless laborers from southern Spain. The middle classes of liberal or anticlerical sentiments were opposed by other sectors of the same classes with moderate or conservative leanings, who, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, made the cause of the defense of religion their own. As for the leaders and officials of the workers' organizations,

the majority were antireligious and anticlerical (although it is doubtful that those feelings were shared by the mass of workers). Once the war had begun, a leader like Andrés Nin boasted of having resolved the problem of the Church “by getting to the roots (:) we have suppressed its priests, the churches and the Cult”; and Solidaridad Obrera (an Anarchist newspaper) could also exhort for “the Church to be torn out by the roots (;) for that we must seize all their possessions... (;) the religious orders must be dissolved (;) the bishops and cardinals must be shot” (Ruiz Rico, 1977: pp.22-23), El Socialista had already declared that “progressive man, more than anticlerical, has to be antireligious... (and that) socialism is incompatible with Catholicism or any other religion” (Gunther, Blough, 1981).

Unequivocal testimony of the extension and intensity of anticlerical (and antireligious) feeling in a large part of the country was the murder of almost seven thousand priests and members of religious orders during the first months of the war in the Republican zone: 4,185 members of the secular clergy (almost one priest out of every seven) and 2,648 in orders. In some zones the majority of the diocesan clergy was executed, as in Barbastro (88%), Lérida (66%) and the city of Tortosa (62%); or almost the majority, as in the provinces of Ciudad Real (40%) and Toledo (48%) (Payne, 1984: p.214). All of which occurred with no other justification, or excuse, than that of a collective act of cowardice and barbarity, as, in their time, were the murders of the clergy in the uprisings of the XIXth century, precipitated by rumors of the poisoning of public wells. To this corresponded, on the other side, the bloody reprisals and systematic repression carried out behind the lines, while invoking motives of spiritual reconquest and identifying Spain, Catholicism, military revolt and authoritarianism as one and the same.

This crucial experience of being part and victim of a massive blood bath was decisive in shaping the mentality of those who lived through those years, especially that of adolescents and young adults who were later to attain positions of authority within the church, and the state, in the decades that followed. For the church in the Republican zone, the experience had been one of unremitting persecution: brutal from the first endless moment; and then, when tempers had cooled, a persecution toned down by the Republican government's need to improve its image before world opinion (Payne, 1984: p.215; Ruiz Rico, 1977: pp.59-62). The experience on the Nationalist side was totally different. It was the apotheosis of the crusading spirit, to some extent deliberately encouraged by the leaders of the insurrection, but also an expression of genuine feeling among wide sections of the population: many young people from the peasant or middle classes were infected with a patriotic, religious fervor which either concealed, or gave meaning, according to the individual, to the dangers of battle. With some odd exception the position of the bishops was unequivocal. Although their famous collective letter of 1937 made no actual mention of the word “crusade,” there can be no doubt about what they felt their position to be. The church gave its wholehearted support to the military revolt, morally, and except for some initial caution,

diplomatically. Time and again it referred to the revolt in terms of a religious war and to a defense of the Catholic religion (Ruiz Rico, 1977: pp.45-59). And what the high clergy stated, at times permitting themselves the luxury of some mental reservation for the benefit of future historians, the lower orders shouted loudly and clearly. As a result, the two of them activated powerful memories of the clergy's intervention feats of arms throughout Spanish history: the Reconquest, the religious wars in Europe, the fight against the infidel and the violent repression of internal heterodoxy; and more recently, the familiar figure of the guerrilla priest against Napoleon, the priests of the apostolic factions in the 1820s, and the Carlist factions of the 1830s and 1870s.

4. The Catholic Church triumphant

The designation "Church triumphant" can be applied to the church during the period of its alliance with the power of General Franco, when the ideals of state confessionality and the total conversion of society to Catholicism were flourishing. The church was not to renounce to these ideals until it had assimilated the lessons of the II Vatican Council during the second half of the nineteen sixties. This period therefore originates from the beginning of the war in the Nationalist zone, and in all of Spain from the time it ended, spanning, in the broadest sense, almost thirty years. However, two phases must be distinguished: (a) the first, in which there was almost complete unanimity within the church on the strategy of alliance with the powers that were, which continued until the middle fifties (to be discussed in this section); and (b) the second, in which discrepancies occurring with the appearance of counter currents of thought were to prepare the way for a profound alteration in the relations between the church and temporal power (a phase which I shall cover in a later section).

I must insist that only by understanding the tragedy of the Civil War and the contrast between the experiences of the church in the Republican and Nationalist zones is it possible to understand the following decades. The church, martyr and militant, persecuted to death and fighting to the death, was now the church triumphant. The feelings, shameful but genuine, of fear and hate, terror and indignation which had metamorphosed into the fighting spirit of crusade during the war, could afterwards convert themselves into expressions of pride and remain associated with the definitive triumph of the Cross. In order for this metamorphosis of feeling to be possible, it was necessary that the memories of martyrdom and crusade be perpetuated, protected and exalted in collective memory. With this object in mind, thousands of monuments evocative of a cult of "the dead for God and for Spain" were built all over the country anywhere near, or forming part of, church buildings, thus associating suffering and torment with triumph, and religion with nation, in much the same way that, after the First World War, the squares of

French and German villages became reminders of that struggle and of nationalistic sentiment. Together with the monuments came the rituals and then the succession of myths and legends. Parades, processions, panoplied entrances, dedications to the Sacred Heart and to the Virgin, protestations of Catholic faith and obedience to the Pope were the occasions for thousands of ceremonies associating the church with the state, united, directly or indirectly by the bloody experiences of the war.

The church at that time was deeply united (with the noted exception of a sector of the Basque clergy). United in the saintly spirit of what we might call “Christian vengeance”: a vengeance which consisted of piously converting those condemned to death on the way to their execution, comforting those in prison and dedicating its energies to eradicating the seeds of the diabolic enemy from both the State and society (2). United not only in its feelings, but also in its plan of action that Cardinal Goma summarized in these words: “Leaders! Unfurl the sails of Catholicism...! Let there be no law, no chair, no institution, no newspaper beyond or against God and His Church in Spain!” (Laboa, 1985, p.144). Because, from the Civil War and the historical events leading up to that war, the Spanish Church had learnt a number of lessons: some relating to the state and others relating to civil society.

With respect to the state, the lesson seemed clear. In the long term, tactical understanding with the liberal state had brought catastrophic consequences. The intransigent distrust and reticence of the Spanish Catholic Church towards liberalism had been confirmed and aggravated by the Republican experience. A “lesser evil” was not good enough. The church’s political goal had to be full realization of “the ideal”: a confessional state fully consistent with the church in its structure, its legislation and its civil servants, subordinate to it in at least some areas, and which provided the resources for the church to carry out its objectives.

The new Spanish state was confessional almost from the first moment (after some initial indecision), and it remained so, it could be said, ad nauseam. Its basic laws and ordinary legislation were overflowing with declarations to this effect. The speeches and the signs of identity of its leaders, the public rituals, the affirmations of ecclesiastics and their presence in state offices emphasized *it*: from modest chaplains in the Fascist unions or the Frente de Juventudes (Youth Front) to members of the Councils of the Realm, of the Regency, of the State, of the Falange, and of Parliament. This state repressed, harassed, ostracized, excluded from teaching posts or censored, depending on individual cases or situations, Protestants, freemasons, freethinkers, “acatholics,” marxists and anarchists, etc.: which is to say, practically all the imaginable rivals of the clergy. The new state promised that its legislation would correspond to Catholic norms, and not only did it keep its promise, it also ceded jurisdiction over the question of the matrimonial separation of persons and possessions between Catholics to the ecclesiastical tribunals.

Furthermore, it decided that the church could exercise control and surveillance of moral and religious teaching in all types of educational establishments, state or otherwise, as well as appoint the teachers of these subjects in state schools, and run their own teaching establishments (almost half of all the secondary education centers in the country). Likewise, the state considered that the church could censor artistic and literary works - as well as have its own newspaper network (almost one fifth of the circulation in 1956) and other publications (nearly 70% of all publications in the country around 1957) (Hermet, 1985: p.195 ff.). What this meant was the creation of a moral and cultural mesogovernment in the hand of the church, which could share in the decision-making and execution of policies on moral education and the control of social customs, backed up by an explicit legal framework and relying, in the last instance, on its endorsement by the authority of the state.

Finally, the state also contributed all sorts of material resources to the church, and with great generosity. This was a subject of vital importance since the brief experience of the Republic had taught the ecclesiastical dignitaries a lesson in the unpredictability of relying on civil society for taking care of the church's finances (Payne, 1984: pp.201-2). The subsidies from the Francoist state were substantial (in the early seventies they were calculated as being in the order of five thousand million pesetas a year: the equivalent of a medium-sized ministerial budget) (Hermet, 1985: p.26). But the state did not limit itself only to subsidies (through endowments to the clergy for the normal functioning and personal expenses of the secular clergy; wages and salaries of ecclesiastical personnel employed in the public administration; or subsidies to church-run education): it also added tax exemptions and direct investment or investment aid in the construction or reconstruction of religious buildings.

Naturally, although approaching the ideal, the Spanish state was not "perfect": perfection would perhaps have required the state's total subordination to the church. The result was that causes for discontent remained, some of them far from negligible, and they were to flourish in the future.

The church, for example, had to come to an understanding, at times difficult and inconvenient, with one of the key elements of the regime, the Falangist party, which had grown from 36,000 members to 362,000 members between 1936 and 1938, stabilizing at a little less than one million affiliates around 1942 (Hermet, 1985: p.273). The Falange played a very important political role in the first years of the regime and pressed for the creation of a strong and relatively secularized state. The church had to accept the absorption of the Catholic agricultural unions, the Catholic student federations and other Catholic unions in general, into the Falangist apparatus; just as it had previously had to accept the disappearance of its own Catholic political parties. At times it was necessary for the church to fight against state censorship; and it had to

make a big effort, when the time came, to protect the specialized branches of Catholic Action. It was never satisfied with the regulation of university education, nor the de facto limitations on the aid to and development of universities belonging to the church. In general, it always viewed with misgivings the totalitarian dimensions of Falangism which rang in its ears like the weak but recognizable echo of German Nazism.

The tensions between the church and the Falange, although contained within limits and compensated by numerous points of agreement, were never superficial. In fact, tensions between the Falangist and Catholic youth movements were endemic throughout the Francoist period; and it is worthwhile considering as variations of the same, the tensions existing between Falangists and the Opus Dei in the sixties and seventies, which resulted in the split of the Francoist political class in the final stage. This tension even came to decisively affect the structuring capacity of center-right parties during the transition and the consolidation of democracy, it being possible to find traces of the old enmities in the mutual distrust existing between azules (“blues” - the Falangist blueshirts) and Christian Democrats of the defunct UCD (Union for a Democratic Center). What is clear is that throughout the exchanges of those years between church and state these tensions counted for relatively little. Distinguished prelates, though overly anxious to emphasize today the distance from a regime which has retrospectively been converted into non sancto, have tried to minimize the contribution of the state in the fulfillment of the church’s desires (3), but the fact is that for decades, and thanks to the Francoist state, the church enjoyed the full benefits of privileges which, in the context of the age, were exorbitant.

However, it was not enough for the church that the state should be confessional. The confessionality of the state had to mean the total conversion to Catholicism of its leaders as well as the historic project of a total conversion of society in all its aspects. For this it was desirable that its political leaders be close to the church, either formed or influenced by it, and that they contribute programs designed by it. The fact is that the church provided a fund of “political families” to the regime, with their corresponding political projects. Between the mid forties and mid fifties the members of the Asociación Católica de Propagandistas (Catholic Association of Propagandists) controlled key sectors of the government; and from the mid fifties members of the Opus Dei took over. Even so, this was only the most visible area of a wide and varied network of associations for the formation of political or social leaders, and of forums for debate.

Because of this, the church also tried to widen its influence in the economic sphere, although here it had to limit itself to little more than rhetorical declarations. In reality, economic space was dominated by the logic of the market and state intervention, both of which operated according to their own principles. In general terms, all this was recognized as compatible with the doctrine of the church, although its ideals would have been orientated towards some form of social corporatism, apparently not very feasible. What is certain is that the church had little to

say about the economy, if some mental reservations and highflown but rather vacuous statements about the redistribution of wealth, the relief of poverty and the vague advocacy of minor reforms are disregarded. Nevertheless, this did not mean that Catholics as such could not set about the task of promoting economic growth and incidentally acquiring wealth for themselves (or viceversa). The fact is that the sanctification of these enrichment operations was to be one of the distinctive characteristics, at the beginning, of one of the most important Catholic associations of that time, the Opus Dei.

Occupying cultural or intellectual space sensu latu meant excluding all the cultural rivals of earlier times. As we have seen, this was the purpose of the church's cultural mesogovernment; although it did have its limits. Beyond these limits were to be found technical and professional knowledge, and the sphere of university education, over which the control and surveillance of the church was usually reduced, intermittent and, even then, relatively lax (on this more later).

To all this was added the occupation of the people's interior or inner space: that of private conduct and conscience. In this respect, what characterized the church at that time was its "totalizing" impulse; it wanted to embrace all aspects of life, body and soul, for which purposive coercion was not sufficient: it required persuasion as well. But this was applied in different ways to different parts of civil society. Simplifying that society, we can distinguish two worlds: that of the middle classes, source of the "select minorities," and that of the subordinate classes, or those normally destined to occupy subordinate positions in political, economic or cultural organizations of all kinds. Initially the church preferred to address itself to the middle classes.

The efforts of the church to catholicise the Spanish middle classes had begun long before. Throughout the XIXth century it had let rather large segments of them slip through its grasp. Curiously enough, even if Spanish liberal Catholicism had lost its doctrinal battle to the hardliners or traditionalists (Laboa, 1985), to a large extent, it won it in daily life. Spanish Catholics could be Catholic in church and perhaps in the home, but they did not feel subordinated to the will of the church in the public space, that is in most political, economic, social or cultural matters. They applied the liberal principle of the relative autonomy of different spheres of life. They thought the reduction of the church's influence to questions of faith, cult and social customs to be for the best. The clergy always responded with pain and indignation to this systematic strategy of Spanish Catholics, which it branded as inconsistent, unenthusiastic and full of concessions to the modern world; and, in compensation, it tried to recover its losses through its influence on women and young people, whom it wished to turn into fervent Catholics.

From this arose the educational and organizational efforts, as well as the effort to control the media, of the Jesuits and other orders between 1880 and 1930. But they always thought that they had begun late, and that their adversaries, the "Institución Libre de Enseñanza," the

Generation of 98, Ortega, Unamuno, other maîtres à penser and other institutions had achieved a cultural influence which outstripped their own.

After victory in the war, the ecclesiastics thought the moment had come in which to intensify their attempts to control these middle classes, with the help of the new state, through control of secondary education and the creation of a network of parallel or complementary organizations for the formation of adolescents and young people.

Organizations like the Jesuits or the Opus, each one with its own style, responded to this need for the total conversion of “select minorities” originating in the middle classes, in whom they saw the leaders of the next generation. They tried to reach young people who combined intense religious experience with the aim of carrying out God’s Will on Earth and rebuilding the world according to the criteria of the Catholic Faith and morality. They did not want indifferent, lukewarm Catholics. They wanted those who would totally commit themselves and their lives to the ideal of Catholicism, whose morality would be that of surrendering themselves to a vocation of combat and whose attitude towards the world would be that of men in a permanent struggle against it. But if the world was there to be conquered, they had to live in a state of constant vigilance because the war had to be won again and again. Their mould must be heroic; their rhetoric, of conquest; their style, almost military. Self-control, discipline, heroism and asceticism: such were to be the moral and emotional keys to their behavior.

From this stems the importance which sexual morality was to have in the formation of such people. The ethos of self-control was inseparable from the effort of systematic rationalization of religious conduct. However the motivational structure of the clergy’s insistence on sexual themes, with the consequent appearance of an obsessive sexual climate around the Sixth Commandment, was somewhat more complex. This is because to the motive of systematic rationalization of conduct were added three other rather different ones which were not wholly consistent with it. (a) The first motive was to follow a code of decorum in conduct fitting for those who aspired (or should aspire) to be a leader, each according to his ability, among professionals, bureaucrats and businessmen, which is to say, according to each prevailing code of ethics, (b) The second motive was to follow the generic norms of protecting the kind of family to be based on a monogamous, heterosexual relation; which, however, had always been compatible with wide margins of permissiveness for men in Catholic societies. Above all, (c) the third motive was an interest in building a psychological structure which would combine these young people’s hostility against the world with their subordination to men of the Church. Because if the young people in question repressed their sexual impulses, they did so by nourishing a quantum of aggression against the flesh, temptation, permissiveness, worldly ways and the world itself. In this way, if they overcame temptation, they became Soldiers of the Faith; but if, being weak, they succumbed, they were

therefore guilty and in a position of psychological dependence, needing the absolution which only an ecclesiastic could give them. The repressive treatment of sexuality thus caused a substantial number of these apparently privileged and high powered middle classes to live psychologically and morally in alternating states of grace and sin, of ecstasy and depression, thus demanding the delicate intervention of the Catholic priest, who, with his experience of confession and spiritual direction, could soften the transitions between one state and another, admonish and console, reduce the feelings of incoherence and control the bearings of each individual soul.

As for the subordinate classes, the church had to differentiate between the peasants, who had supported the Nationalist movement, and the urban working classes (and farm laborers of the south) which had opposed it. The church could capitalize on its long dedication to the large numbers of peasant farmers and smallholders in the northern half of the country and use them as a breeding ground for religious vocations. On the other hand, the task of reconverting the working classes to Christianity promised to be rather more difficult. The first thing, in any case, was to prevent the presence of organizations which could claim the moral leadership of these classes: to exclude anarchists, socialists and communists. The only remaining competition came from the Falangist party. Incapable of preventing the formation of vertical unions controlled by the Falange and the absorption into them of its Catholic unions, the church tried to establish at least some safeguards and guarantees for Catholic workers organizations, particularly the specialized branches of Catholic Action (whose development belongs to the next phase: see infra).

But, in the final analysis, it was impossible to win over the souls of the people, if the church's messages of meaning of an intellectual nature were not accompanied by moral and emotional messages of salvation and community attuned to the experiences of the people at that moment.

The Spain of that period was a country destroyed and impoverished by war, marked by scarcity and even hunger, trying to find its bearings in the middle of autarky, arbitrary and not very competent dirigisme, and the black market: with the bleakest of economic prospects. There was no economic development or mass consumption as there was to be later. It was a country of "limited goods" (Foster, 1967), which is to say, of reduced aspirations and expectations. In a world of backward villages and provincial capitals, including of course Madrid, where struggling to survive imposed an oppressive, somewhat vulgar or coarse lifestyle of limited scope, it could be expected that many people would try to make sense of their lives by upholding values of self-sacrifice, renunciation, austerity and respect for hierarchies and patron-client networks such as those proposed by the ecclesiastics.

In addition to that, the church also offered some messages of community which were quite appropriate for the situation. Spain in the forties and fifties still felt the proximity of a civil war which had caused almost half a million dead and at least as many exiles. It had been an immense moral and emotional trauma for the country. Spain, a nation of survivors, surrounded by memories of the dead, was at the time, to a certain extent, a nation of “fratricides.” Consciously or not, the country was having to live with the feelings of horror and guilt - which help to explain the peace of the following years, including the peacefulness of the transition to democracy forty years later.

The church could offer some consolation for this experience and these feelings of guilt, partially because suffering was inevitable, since the Earth was, after all, a valley of tears, but also partly because it could compensate, to some extent, for the memory of the community destroyed, with the hope of creating a new moral community here on Earth. As the counterpart to the broken society of the thirties, the church proposed a community reconciled. On the one hand it offered the defeated a way out from feeling humiliated and resentful; and on the other it offered the victors, stained with blood, the opportunity of redeeming themselves by adopting the historic project of a new national moral community: a hierarchical community, in which the select minorities and wholly Catholic middle classes would exercise a leadership of responsibility and concern for the moral and material wellbeing of the subordinate classes.

In fact, the efforts of the church, through its institutions, its practices and messages were quite well, though, as we shall see further on, not totally, rewarded by their success. The presence of the church and religion in the public and private spaces of the nation was overwhelming. It was a presence to be found in buildings, the professions, large public meetings, flowers, music, and banners: all that was missing were the autos-da-fe and an ethnic expulsion to repeat, with all the resources of the XXth century, the spectacle of the baroque Catholicism from of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries. The performance of the seasonal sacraments became universal and attendance at Sunday Mass increased enormously - only showing a decline once more towards the beginning of the sixties (Hermet, 1985: pp.68 ff.). The conversion to Catholicism of the masses, and equally, of all the social classes in the country, was carried out during those years and not only in its external aspects. The fact is, at least ten or fifteen years ago, since the spread of opinion surveys, it seems that all the social strata of this country declared themselves to be Catholics in an immense majority (including urban workers), the differences in percentages of practicing Catholics of the different classes being relatively small, and the declarations of orthodoxy being equally large (until more recent times) and fairly uniform (Fundación Foessa, 1981: p.435). This means that if it was now no longer possible to talk about a “Catholic middle class” and the “de-Christianized working masses” (as could be done with some reason in the thirties) this was due to a process of conversion to Catholicism during this and the following period – which would be

in keeping not only with the pressure from the temporal powers and the social climate, but also with the massive efforts to catechize which took place at that time in a context in which there would be no competition with other religious creeds or ideologies.

5. Problems and hypothesis

The problem now consists of explaining how and why such a state of affairs could become transformed in the years following and especially how and why one sector of the church played a decisive part in this transformation; one which would break up the monopoly of the church and result in a considerable reduction of its sphere of influence. This explanation must contain, in essence, an understanding of the motives and mechanisms by which members of the church themselves drew away from the ideal of a confessional state and the historic project of a Catholic conversion of the whole of Spain, which they were later to refer to disparagingly as “National-Catholicism” (in an oblique attempt to degrade and taint the phenomenon by association with the terms “National-Syndicalism” and “National-Socialism”) (4).

In order to understand the process of transformation of the fifties and sixties it is first necessary to understand the conditions permitting the perpetuation of this state of religious-ecclesiastical affairs in the forties and early fifties: in other words, to understand the structure of plausibility (Berger, 1973) of that National Catholicism, and thereby the conditions of its relative success.

The gravity of the attack suffered by the church in the thirties allows us to understand the general direction of its response and the intensity of the feelings associated with it. Even so, neither the direction nor the intensity can explain its specific content. For this we have to look into the cultural premises that shaped that response. These premises refer to an earlier historic project or societal project which was an expression of the ideals which a majority of the Spanish Church had aspired to for at least the forty or fifty years preceding the war. These consisted of the creation of a confessional state and the dream of a total conversion of society to Catholicism. These ideals were brought up and reproduced again and again in the seminaries, in Catholic circles and Catholic publications by the bishops, preachers and the most influential religious orders, with the Jesuits at their head; conservative, traditionalist and absolutist ideals which were stimulated by the difficulties and frustrations of any tactical understandings between the church and the liberal regime, and by the recurring waves of anticlerical propaganda. This mentality dominated the Spanish ecclesiastical milieu to the extent that, as I mentioned earlier, the

modernist commotion at the turn of the century which swept Europe, passed by unnoticed in Spain (Laboa, 1985: pp.95 ff.; Payne, 1984: p. 160; González de Cardenal, 1985: p.243).

In spite of this, neither the general direction and the intensity, nor the content of the response explain how this response could actually be carried out and how the church could maintain such a course over a long period of time. For this to be possible, it was necessary for an environment to exist in which external pressures were extremely weak, almost a historical vacuum, so as to allow the church to give free rein to its plans of spiritual conquest. This, in turn, required the simultaneous concurrence of three factors; (a) a relative isolation of the Spanish Church with respect to the universal church (which because of its global responsibilities could exercise a restraining influence on the Spanish ecclesiastics); (b) a state which needed the church at least as much, if no more, than the church needed the state; and (c) a civil society without the strength for resisting the combined efforts of church and state.

The presence of the universal church in the domestic arena was weak because at that time it was trying to survive a world war, searching for a balance between the sides and waiting to see what would happen next; and each one of its national churches had very serious problems of its own to solve. In these circumstances, the case of Spain could be considered by the Vatican as isolated from what was happening in the rest of Europe. With the outbreak of civil war, the Vatican never concealed its preferences and its support. However, almost immediately afterwards, taking Europe as a whole and considering the panorama resulting from that world war, the church began a positive reconsideration of the liberal democracies, which had to, sooner or later, bring it to a critical reconsideration of the Spanish regime itself. At that moment though, such a conflict was still a long way off, and likely to remain so while the historical process of the cold war reinforced the preoccupations of the church as regards the containment of the Soviet block; this seemed to counsel some bridge-building between the liberal democracies and the Franco regime; and all the more so when, in their vehement and anachronistic way, the Spanish seemed to be updating the almost forgotten nostalgia of the universal church to becoming the moral center of the world, with the state included (5).

As for the state, it lacked the means and the motivation to confront the church. The state needed the church for two reasons: firstly because it needed an apparatus of legitimation and daily, routinized, civic socialization, of both the elites and the masses, which was relatively coherent and which was distinct from, though complementary to, the Falange, and such was the apparatus of the church. Also, this need was tied to Franco's crucial decision to opt for being the head of a personal and authoritarian government, but not to be, in the strictest sense, the leader of a regime and totalitarian party - a decision which he took, almost from the outset with the

support of the army, business sectors, the monarchic circles, professional bodies and the church itself.

The second reason was that once the Axis powers had lost the war, the regime's survival in the new international context depended to a large extent on the good offices of the Catholic Church. In conclusion, for one reason or the other, it could not oppose itself to the church; but even had it been able to, it would not have wished to do so because the leaders and officials of the new regime were infused with a genuine respect for the symbols and institutions of religion, and this even applied to a large part of the Falange itself.

Finally, Spanish civil society emerged from the war with a very low level of internal structure and power grouping around voluntary associations. Contemporary Spain had been characterized by the weakness of its voluntary associations (Linz, 1981) and, anyway, the new regime had prohibited the organizations of the losing side (parties, unions and cultural associations connected to them) and enforced the integration into state or semiofficial hierarchical schemes of many of the associations of the winning side as well. The church had little to fear in the way of resistance from a society which was deliberately kept at a minimum level of self-organization and when, save for some exceptions in the areas of business enterprise and cultural life, it was almost only the church who could develop its own associations. On the other hand, if civil society had no means of resistance, neither was it morally nor psychologically prepared to attempt it. The losers of the civil war entered the new situation subdued and faced by the prospect of continuous repression and systematic exclusion, which perhaps the church could relieve; the winners were, at the very least, predisposed to respect the church. And so, together, they all formed a society suspicious of itself and in a state of tension and exhaustion which made it receptive to ecclesiastical messages.

As a result, the Spanish Church could devote itself to the task of catholicizing the state and society in the ways which we have seen; because (and to the extent that) it found itself in a historical space which gave it an extraordinary margin of freedom. That is to say, the Spanish Church found itself with (a) a universal church (and the Vatican in particular) which was sympathetic to its aims, but also occupied in getting over a highly traumatic world war experience and surviving through the unstable circumstances of the postwar period; (b) a state of a like mind which was furthermore incapable of exerting real pressure upon it; and (c) a prostrate civil society with neither the will nor the capacity to resist it. While these conditions remained, the Spanish Church could, with the collaboration of the state, devote itself to the wonderful game of historical anachronisms, recreating the Spain of the ancient regime in the middle of the XXth century.

Unfortunately, of all these conditions only that of the state's relative weakness was to remain comparatively stable. It was obvious that under the conditions of postwar Europe the Francoist state could increase neither its willpower nor its capacity to oppose the church. It could not dispense with its support, except at the cost and risk of a seemingly suicidal fuite en avant, a fleeing towards a kind of populist, secular fascism which would play on anticlerical sentiment, the dream of autarkic industrial growth and social demagoguery, as Perón tried to do in the Argentina of the forties, with unfortunate consequences for himself. In fact, the Francoist state did just the opposite of Perón. The result of which was that the regime, to survive, and the church, (partly) to help the regime, committed themselves to a long-term strategy which aimed at (a) placing Spain within the network of Western diplomatic and defensive alliances, which meant, in consequence, leaving her in an irremediably anomalous position with regard to the group of liberal democracies; and (b) directing the Spanish economy towards integration with the world capitalist economy. These decisions, both of them crucial, were taken in the fifties and both were prepared, argued over and carried out by Francoist ministers belonging to Catholic groups: the Propagandistas in one case, and the Opus in the other.

The result of this was to substantially increase the system's vulnerability to outside pressure and to open a Pandora's box of hopes and ambitions within the country. In the first place, what sprang from this box were the resources and the motivations, the institutions and the cultural orientations which civil society needed for resistance to spread. Secondly there appeared the resources and the motivations, the institutions and the cultural orientations to strengthen the bonds between the Spanish and European churches which meant, over time, the growing receptivity of the national church to the winds of change blowing in from the universal church. And thirdly there appeared the resources and motives, the institutions and culture whereby, as a consequence of everything else, the internal unity of the Spanish Church was to be split. In this way, the scene was set for the second act of this drama.

6. The edifice crumbles: changes in society, politics and the church

The fifties marked the peak and the turning point of the alliance between the Francoist state and the Spanish Church. Catholic ministers played the main part in crucial decisions on foreign and economic policy, and diplomatic isolation came to an end, placing the country clearly within the Western orbit. The economy was set on a course designed to bring it into line with that of other capitalist countries and in this way the foundations were laid for negotiations with (and petition for entry into) the European Community. These decisions have determined the course of the state and Spanish society right up to the present day. Meanwhile, the church was

flourishing in all its manifestations. The Concordat with the Holy See was signed in 1953, confirming the public status of the church, and a combination of associations, religious practices and manifestations of the cult occupied the public and private spaces of the nation. Public space was full of Eucharistic congresses, catechismal gatherings, meetings of secular associations, processions and popular missions. The private space was full of spiritual exercises (ejercicios espirituales), exercises for improving the world (ejercitaciones para un mundo mejor), short courses on Christianity (cursillos de Cristiandad), retreats, days of meditation and devout evenings. As a result, the number of those taking orders rose and the size of the ecclesiastical body increased. (Hermet, 1985: pp.28 ff.).

However, the same years were to see the beginning of a countercurrent of thought concerning a separation of the church from its alliance with the temporal powers. Just at the moment in which the last bricks were being cemented into place, the foundations of the edifice had begun to crumble. We must now analyse the causes and mechanisms of this collapse.

My central argument follows on from the propositions stated above: that the less resistance the church encountered from civil society, the state and other international agents, the more freely it could carry out its historic or societal project (of “National Catholicism”). As resistance increased, it would place constraints on the activities of the church and raise the cost and risks of its strategy. Beyond a certain limit the rising costs and risks would result in the need for the church to revise its strategy by means of altering its hierarchy of values and turning to a reinterpretation of its doctrinal repertoire in order to do so.

As we shall see, this is exactly what happened throughout the fifties and sixties: (a) the resistance of civil society began to increase, challenging the church and religion with new demands and new problems; (b) the structure of political space began to change, with the slow emergence of a new political class which was no longer descended, in the strict sense, from the political class to win or have been defeated in the war, and which was to offer the ecclesiastics an understanding on very different terms to that of the past; (c) the international context was changing in the sense that the pressure of the universal church on the Spanish Church increased substantially; (d) this external ecclesiastical pressure implied a reinterpretation of the doctrines of the church, a new religious offer and a new strategy with regard to temporal power; (e) such pressures (societal resistance, alterations in the political arena and the message of the universal Church) were internalized by some parts of the ecclesiastical body, producing conflict within the Spanish Church between the “conservative” and the “progressive” elements.

Naturally, this interpretation constitutes a simplified, analytical reconstruction of the sum of events, the real development of which were considerably more complex: the different factors

appeared with varying degrees of intensity at different times in the chronological sequence, and the degree of interdependence between these factors also varied over time.

6.1. The new demands of civil society, and the new problems challenging the church and religion

The Spanish Church of the forties and fifties wanted to conquer the world; but this also meant conquering souls. Force was not sufficient, it was also necessary to persuade. This required “negotiating” with the various social groups, adapting the religious offer to their demands for meaning, salvation and community. The body of ecclesiastics which occupies the center of the ecclesiastical organization can, perhaps, formulate its religious offer independently of demand (as suggested by Bourdieu and Saint Martin, 1984), but this is not possible for those on the periphery of the organization and in direct contact with their followers, and even less so if they are working in a territory which they themselves define as “missionary” or to be “saved,” and “problematic” or one whose problems are to be “solved” in a religious manner.

Seen from the church's viewpoint its central task was that of overcoming societal resistance to religious and ecclesiastical persuasion concerning the best way in which people's most salient problems should be formulated and solved. During the fifties the church had to face up to several critical problems that became more acute and hard to deal with as time went on. In the following pages of this section I will identify and discuss three of these problems: the “intellectual,” “social” and “moral” ones (to which another “regional” problem could be added referring to the reemergence of strong assertions of regional identities to which the regional and local churches tended to be most receptive, particularly in the Basque country (see note 6).

(1) Firstly, there was the intellectual problem, that is the problem of the challenge that many intellectuals and the university milieu raised to the church's (and the state's) attempt for hegemonic control of cultural life. The majority of the better known intellectuals of the thirties had scant sympathy for the victorious political regime and the church triumphant without this implying any special enthusiasm for the losing side either. They belonged to a cultural world alien to that of the church, and the latter had not exactly opposed or mourned their exile or proscription after the war. Nevertheless, one sector of Catholic intellectuals soon came to adopt a rather different attitude. For various reasons, they identified themselves primarily as truth-seekers, not as defenders of the orthodoxy. Therefore these intellectuals were sensitive to both the values intrinsic to their sphere of action, such as values of truth and intellectual creativity, and to the necessary condition of their realization, which is freedom of thought. For this reason, they respected the frequently acatholic or heterodox liberal intellectuals of earlier generations who had been intellectually honest (i.e, honest with themselves in their search for the truth) and

creative; and, for the same reason, they considered that they themselves formed part of an intellectual community wider than that of Catholic intellectuals. This made them “go-betweens” with the exiles of that time and with the principal figures of contemporary thought.

This being the case, the foundations for a conflict with the church triumphant were laid from the very beginning. Furthermore, this group of Catholic intellectuals of a liberal persuasion looked sympathetically on the work, and at times the person, of writers like Unamuno, Baroja or Ortega, who had been and often still were denigrated by the majority of ecclesiastics of the period (Sopeña, 1970). In reply to such attacks, these liberal Catholics (men like José Luis Aranguren, Pedro Laín or Julián Marías) vindicated their respect towards their predecessors as masters of their forms of thought and of moral and aesthetic sensitivity; and if such masters had accepted the influence of Dilthey, Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, this new generation, a hybrid of Catholicism and liberalism, was prepared to incorporate Heidegger, Barth, Jaspers or Sartre - as it would later incorporate fragments of Hegel, Marx and the analytical philosophers. As a result, they took two fundamental decisions: one of affirming the principle of the autonomy of intellectual activity, without subordination, in the last instance, to ecclesiastical authority, and the other, of considering in a positive way the main trends of non-Catholic contemporary thought.

In the fifties the liberal Catholic intellectuals were already a force of the first order on the Spanish cultural horizon, and started to build up an institutional and organizational niche for themselves. They had a network of personal relations, more or less formalized intellectual collaboration and periodic meetings or gatherings (like those of Gredos), a collection of works published or in the process of being published and influence in university circles (a lectureship or academic post, as in the case of Laín or Tovar, who were presidents of two public universities at the time of the Ruiz Giménez ministry); and around them formed a second concentric circle of young clerics and secular university students. All this was in opposition to a similar community (with an even more important institutional network) which had formed around the hardline, conservative intellectuals, one of whose sectors, that of the Opus Dei, had developed the strategy of occupying posts in the state universities, the creation of a private university (in Navarra) and the formation of wide “old-boy” networks of increasing importance in the business community and in the state administration.

In this way, the “intellectual problem,” which had initially been posed as a “conquest” of the intellectuals for Catholicism, became a problem of the conflict between opposing strands of Catholic intellectual thought - in which liberal Catholics criticized what they judged to be the intolerant Catholicism of the Church triumphant and its non sancta alliance with authority. The outbreak of the conflict took place within the bounds of the university with the student disturbances of February, 1956 at the Complutense University of Madrid. They were a milestone

in the cultural and political history of Francoism and from then on a process began in which, even if the intellectual Catholics lost their academic posts (as did Laín and Tovar in 1956) or their lectureships (as did Aranguren in 1965), their opponents lost their influence, and the Opus offensive to occupy more space came to a halt.

The attempts of the academic powers to control university life could not impede the diffusion of liberal and radical ideas among young lecturers and students. This diffusion took place as the result of journeys abroad, books brought in from outside, a network of bookshops, publishers, university magazines, informal gatherings, experimental theater, filmclubs, student unions and political organizations; so that, in spite of a political regime and official culture so diverse from those of the rest of Europe, from the sixties onwards the content of debates among a wide minority in Spanish university circles became increasingly homogeneous with that of European universities, and its evolution continued on par with them. Thus, from the end of the fifties and the early sixties, it was obvious to many of the priests close to the intellectual and university milieu that the only way in which to exert any moral or religious influence over them was to respect and, to some degree follow, the course of events.

(2) Something similar occurred with the social problem or some would call it at the time the problema obrero (the “worker problem”). Among the social problems of the nation in the early fifties, the agricultural problem was equally as serious as the workers’ problem, but it soon became clear that the latter was becoming more pressing year by year, even if this was only due to rural migration and the conversion of peasants into urban workers. Moreover, this problem caused a syndrome of violently contradictory feelings among the clerical estate. The working classes seemed to be returning once again to the center of the stage, like a great red belt of poverty and resentment encircling Madrid and other large cities; there, yet again, to be reconverted to Christianity. Around this time, as well, the church was feeling the necessity of making its peace with the working classes and with its own conscience, after the terrible memories of the Civil War and the aftermath of repression. These workers were the image not only of its persecutors but of the poor in the Gospels, who, if they had persecuted the church, had perhaps done so partly through the fault of the church itself in not knowing how to approach them - and had done so with good reason, because it had become party to injustice.

What we definitely find during the fifties is a growing number of priests undergoing a spectacular change in their attitudes towards what they increasingly called the “working class” (instead of “the poor classes”). The feeling began to spread amongst them that it was necessary to change the terms of the debate on the social question and thus the norms of resulting behavior. There had to be less talk of “charity” and more of “justice,” implying by this that justice was on the side of the workers and that it was time for a reinterpretation of Catholic social

doctrine and time to direct the action of the Church towards less exhortation and more support of social claims.

A number of Jesuits played a crucial part in this, some of them from the Catholic workers' organizations. The HOAC (Hermandades Obreras de Acción Católica), the JOC (Juventudes Obreras Católicas) and Vanguardia Obrera had been forming and consolidating themselves throughout the forties and fifties, and after a number of years they began to take the "workers front" line, drawing away from the moderate tradition of Catholic trade unionism (Hermet, 1985: pp.232 ff.). In their day (the early and middle sixties) they were of decisive importance for the reactivation of the worker movement and the formation of trade unions like USO (Unión Sindical Obrera) and Comisiones Obreras (as an example: of the seven leaders to be accused in the first trial against Comisiones Obreras in Vizcaya, six belonged to the HOAC) (Hermet, 1985: p.235). In the mid fifties, another Jesuit, Padre Llanos, previously renowned for his support of the Falangist movement, began his version of an experiment by French worker priests, going to live in a slum suburb of rural immigrants in Madrid, and arranging meetings between workers and university students. At the same time, other Jesuits, like Díez Alegría, undertook the task of reinterpreting the church's social doctrine, accepting some of the basic characterizations made by Marxism of capitalism, with the help of the concepts of alienation, exploitation, profit and class struggle. Such practical and theoretical impetus had a profound influence on young Jesuits, priests and university students (and enjoyed the sympathy of the liberal Catholic intellectuals already mentioned). This current of "advanced" or "progressive" social Catholicism felt its position justified by the economic and social events of the sixties when, as a consequence of the combination of economic growth and a more permissive legal framework (which made collective bargaining, trade union representatives and trade union elections all possible) a workers' movement emerged and developed whose leaders originated in part from the rank and file of the Catholic organizations themselves.

But this trend had to coexist with others. On the one hand was the main trend of "social corporatism" of the Papal Encyclicals, from Leo XIII to Pius XII, with which the Church was attempting to find an equilibrium between the two evils of socialism and capitalism, and at the same time, live discreetly with the latter. On the other, was the secondary trend of frank acceptance of the market system and capitalist enterprise with all its consequences (compatible with a degree of public intervention and the redistribution of wealth) in the way that it was accepted by, for example, the Opus Dei Catholics. For them, making capitalism function was also a way of making the country prosper and carrying out the Will of God. They also felt that their vision of Catholicism and history was corroborated by Spain's economic growth (and the success of their own strategy of occupying political power) in the sixties.

In short, the development of these social and intellectual problems ended in a rupture of the unanimity of the church's message and in the gradual emergence of two opposing subcommunities (with a fairly broad and indecisive segment in the center).

(3) To this situation was finally added the moral problem. In effect, the Catholic Church, in its determination to catholicize the nation, had decided to control the private space of the Spanish people. This meant the suppression of divorce, jurisdictional control over proceedings for separation and common property settlement of Catholic spouses, censorship of public entertainment and literary works, including the press, the suppression of brothels, and control over morality at dances, in the streets, and on beaches, that is to say, control over public space -indefatigably battling against immodesty of dress, indecency of gesture, obscenity of speech and various other manifestations of what, for the church, represented lewdness or shamelessness. In positive contrast to all this, the church actively promoted the values of chastity and sexual abstinence, reinforcing it with a powerful cult to the Virgin, insistence on the sacraments which demanded or conferred ritual purity, like communion and confession, and the exaltation of the family (organized on the basis of an indissoluble marriage between, and subject to the authority of, parents, especially that of the father).

The realization of this project to organize Spanish people's private space had never been an easy task. Not even in the most promising areas, as, for example, the villages of Old Castile (an area with a high density of priests, firm religious beliefs and their frequent practice) was real church control of the peasants private space very high, at least during the last one and a half centuries (if ever). In any case, the probability of such a project's success was steadily reduced throughout the fifties and sixties as a result of the combination of economic growth, demographic changes and the spread of a mass consumer culture.

Economic growth provided the means to satisfy growing aspirations of material wellbeing; while rural depopulation reduced the weight of local opinion, and, in particular, that of rural priests in village life. The spread of mass consumer culture changed lifestyles and models of reference. This diffusion however was not the automatic result of economic growth, urban attraction, the tourist invasion, emigration to Europe and the development of the mass media. The new mass consumer culture already had some roots in traditional culture (more in actual moral experiences than in any articulated moral theory -- for the distinction between "moral experience" and "moral teaching" see Aranguren, 1958). First, because a component of moral hedonism was part of peasant class moral traditions as much as those of the urban lower or middle classes; second, because attached to it there was also a component of "social obligation" (Douglas, 1982) peasants and workers had vis-a-vis their own families and their own status in their neighbourhoods and other communities.

This “consumerism” was condemned by the ecclesiastical hierarchy and Catholic intellectuals of all shades, whether hardline, liberal or social, who understood little of those local moral traditions. Nothing could be more logical, of course, than this misunderstanding since nothing seems more typical of cultural elites than their lack of appreciation or even contempt for popular culture. This meant that mass consumer culture was accused of “vulgar materialism” by some, and of “alienation” by others; as it was thus condemned by both conservative and progressive ecclesiastics. What is certain is that, in its way, this hedonistic or consumer culture, which the masses developed more or less spontaneously the moment they had the opportunity of doing so (together with some models of reference which made the specification of objectives, the search for means, and the distribution of information easier), was a “revolutionary” act of rejecting the moral culture of asceticism and limited aspirations proposed by the church in the previous decade. Over time, this rejection came to develop two basic components: the creation of a permissive culture as regards sex, and a culture of moderation in relations of authority, beginning with those of the family.

Those regions of the country where economic prosperity was the greatest, the tourist invasion most widespread and the hedonistic culture most deeply rooted, which is to say, the Mediterranean coasts of the Levant, were those in which change was the fastest and most visible, especially among young people, although sooner or later, the spread of this mass consumer culture and hedonism became generalized throughout the country.

This silent revolution of social customs, begun at the end of the fifties and which neither priests nor intellectuals understood at the time, continued to grow throughout the sixties and seventies. The rules of love and sexual courtship in public were changing, in the streets and discoteques, on the beaches and in the women’s magazines. Together with them, the rules governing the exercise of paternal or maternal authority in the case of families, the control of timetables, comings and goings, advice and admonition were also changing. Little by little, the situation went from one in which parents made the law and the children submitted to it, to one where parents made speeches and their children assented gravely, in relative silence, with the mental reservation of trying to get even behind their backs afterwards; then to one in which parents ended up witnessing, first in amazement and later with resignation, the sight of their offspring doing whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted to do it sons and daughters in whom, for lack of better advice, parents tried to instill a minimum sense of self-preservation which would alert them to the dangers of premature pregnancy and drug addiction.

As a result, the priests themselves began to abandon their role as jealous guardians of popular sexual morality, relaxing or minimizing the importance of personal confession and even beginning to question the grounds for their own celibacy. In the long term, all this caused a

generalized devaluation of authority, not only in the bosom of the family and ecclesiastical institutions, but everywhere, in schools and university classrooms, factories and the workplace.

6.2. Changes in the political sphere and the emergence of a new political class

From about halfway through the fifties the political scene was modified, gradually at first and then increasingly faster and more profoundly. The interaction between these political changes and the strategic modifications of the Catholic Church was complex.

What had seemed to be a strong state in the forties and fifties, with a resolute political class, a generalized acquiescence of the population to this class, external support and the absence of viable alternatives, and which therefore seemed to be an authoritarian political regime with a future, began to look less and less strong as time went on. The decision of the regime's leadership slowly began to falter, although this only became visible in the seventies, in Franco's old age. But the internal divisions of the Francoist political class had been worsening since the middle sixties, the signs of social agitation and restlessness increasing and the distance from the outside world, the reticence of the Vatican and the European Community, remaining constant or widening. This was happening in spite of the fact (and partly because of it) that the Francoist state looked sometimes as if it had committed itself to a halfhearted semi-reformist strategy, on a road towards moderation. In the long term this strategy was demonstrated to be erratic and unsuccessful, and what emerged, in contrast, was an alternative political class which (a) went from strength to strength in such a way that, given the turn of events, seemed increasingly likely to have a chance of success; and which (contrary to what had happened in the 1930s) (b) did not seem hostile to the church. Its continuity, in that sense, with the political classes either having won or having been defeated in the Civil War was broken.

That the Francoist state with a brilliant future in the forties and fifties should become a state with a doubtful future in the sixties and early seventies was an extraordinarily important change in the definition of the situation for an institution like the Catholic Church, which, for reasons of organizational structure, past recollections and almost its very nature, tended towards the almost continuous reformulation of its long term strategies. However, all this took place over a relatively long period of time and across a conflict of perceptions and evaluations of the situation occurring within the church. The majority of the ecclesiastical body, and of course the hierarchy, was not convinced of the absence of a future for the regime until the beginning of the seventies. Until then, this moderate or conservative nucleus within the church maintained as its "main strategy" the basic idea of an alliance with the state which was fitting for the church triumphant. The demonstrations of support for the political regime on the part of the hierarchy

were therefore continual; and because of that, the teachings of the II Vatican Council on religious freedom were received with great care being taken to avoid the negative implications which they could have for the basic understanding between the Spanish church and the Francoist state. The hierarchy was sympathetic to that semi-reformist strategy, and prominent Catholic groups (both within the church and in public life) led or took an active part in the formulation and execution of that strategy.

The last fifteen or twenty years of Francoism are sometimes portrayed as years of “contradiction” between a socio-economic structure which was changing and a political structure which was resisting change, of which the final result was the political transition that re-established an equilibrium between society and the economy on the one hand, and the political system on the other. This approach minimizes the effect of cultural factors and simplifies the interplay between politics and socio-economic factors. One of its weak points consists precisely in not taking sufficiently into account the changes in the Francoist state’s political strategy during its last fifteen or twenty years: what I have called its half-hearted semi-reformist strategy or its tentative move towards moderation.

Evidence of this strategy is, however, abundant. The regime’s repressive policy was modified throughout the sixties. Repression there certainly was, but to a much lesser degree, and thus of a different quality, than that of the forties and early fifties. Repression continued to weigh heavily on the communists and later on the Basque separatists, but it was light on the liberal, social democratic and socialist opposition. Not only was there a reduction in the degree of political repression; throughout the fifties and sixties the Franco regime formulated, with relative clarity, a political project for a new version of an authoritarian regime with four main characteristics: (a) economic development based on a mixed economy, with growing market influence, increasing internationalization of the Spanish economy, and state intervention in planning similar to that of France; all of which was implemented through economic policy in a systematic and continuous way from 1959, with the stabilization plan for that year, and successive development plans; an economic policy, incidentally, which had considerable success; (b) the development of a welfare state, with an expanding social security system and the resulting network of hospitals and general medical care, as well as the generalization of primary and secondary education; all of which took place during the sixties and seventies; (c) the extension of the area of freedom of expression and the right to association of civil society, which was, to some extent, the result of the Press Law of 1966 and the acceptance, de jure or de facto of an area in which social pressure could be brought to bear on labor issues by means of the institution of collective agreements and labour tribunals, trade union elections and the legalizing of strikes connected to labor issues; and (d) the hesitant and finally aborted attempt to create a limited field of political representation.

This project of reforms from within Francoism was welcomed by the church and carried out by catholics connected with, above all, the Opus Dei (whose political weight was becoming increasingly decisive), but also by the ACNDP (Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas) and traditionalist circles. This naturally gave rise to the corresponding internal struggles to change the balance of forces within the regime's different political families, with the accompanying build-up of ambitions, alliances and enmities which were to form the substratum of political experience of the section of the Francoist political class which was to protagonize the transition to democracy fifteen or twenty years later.

This could be characterized as a Bismarck-like project (as is suggested by Hermet, 1985: pp.114 ff.) were it not for the fact that it fails the crucial test, which in its own way the II German Reich was able to overcome for a period of time: that of limited political representation. This is because, following the crisis of the antisocialist laws, the regime of Bismarck and William II accepted a large range of political parties, free elections and free trade unions. Francoism never got this far, which is why its strategy can only be described as semi-reformist.

Thus the regime, having been capable of bridging the gap in its second phase from so to speak the XVIth to the XIXth century, ran out of steam at about a point when it came close to the stage of political development already existing in Spain by the 1870s, reducing its historical anachronism to only one century. This may have been very praiseworthy, and even have raised the hopes of Francoists with greater reformist impulses and a broader sense of history who, like Fraga, saw themselves in the mould of a Cánovas del Castillo (a self-perception which was to have interesting repercussions in the seventies), but it was an experiment which, taken as a whole, was not successful. Firstly because the crucial limitation on political parties and trade unions denied the *raison d'être* of the new, emerging political class. Secondly because, at the same time, a cultural mutation was taking place in the country, as a consequence of which the combination of socio-economic changes and semi-reformist policies only managed to nourish a Tocquevillian process of growing expectations and aspirations of freedom.

Now it can be said that a sector of the church played a decisive role in the creation of this new political class and this change of mentality; because, in reality, during these years the church was not playing one game, but two. The hierarchy and the majority of ecclesiastics continued playing the main game of an alliance with the regime while the other game, that of the dissidents, was played by young priests and Catholic activists.

We should remember that in the early fifties the regime was feeling sure of itself, and of having overcome the international diplomatic blockade, having signed agreements with the Holy See and the United States and sent ambassadors all over the world; and its triumph seemed

assured by the vicissitudes of the Cold War. The opposition was defeated and disconcerted. However, in the course of very few years, commencing with the events of 1956 in the universities, a breach was to open into which a new generation would irrupt; a generation which had not fought the war and which refused to continue the work of its predecessors, setting themselves up in opposition to them.

This generation (and the content of its major decisions) cannot be understood as a product of the historical situation, nor as the effect of a combination of the change and perpetuation of diverse structures: neither economic development nor political difficulties can explain it. These structural factors only explain the framework of objective opportunities which were available to that generation in order to pursue its objectives. The content of its strategy was rather a result of the process of its own formation, in which the dominant role was played by cultural symbols and activities and moral guidance, influences and motives, which it obeyed to a large extent encouraged by a crucial segment of young priests and Catholic activists. This religious and ecclesiastic intervention was decisive for breaking the continuity of political opposition to the regime, thereby substantially increasing the chances of success. The history of the political classes in the transition to democracy, although incorporating family and ideological traditions is, nevertheless and above all, a history of discontinuity, the key to which lies in the intervention of this Catholic segment.

The dissent of the generation posterior to that which had fought (and won) the war posed two problems: (a) firstly, why instead of lacking a feeling of commitment to the historical situation in which it found itself, a significant segment of this generation felt responsible and concerned about that situation, took for granted that it had a mission to fulfill and was determined to take action?; and (b) secondly, why in the process of so doing, instead of continuing the work of its parents, it worked in contradiction to them? Its dissent was an “oedipal revolution” aimed at the “death of the parents”: the destruction of their work and their expulsion from positions of power. It was also a remarkable success, at least in the political sphere, since the new generation managed to change the political regime, and to a large degree it also managed to exclude its parents from political power (as much on the left wing as on the right).

But let us consider, within this generation, the group of young Catholics. It is obvious that part of the political generation of the seventies originated from the activism of Acción Católica, the Congregaciones Marianas, the Círculos Católicos, the Hogares del Empleado y del Obrero, the Vanguardia Obrera, the Hermandades Obreras and the Juventud Obrera Católica of the fifties and sixties. This activism went well beyond its initial objectives and soon took up the fight against the SEU (Sindicato Español Universitario), setting up new organizations such as the local chapters of the SEU itself (since the mid 1950s), the SUT (Servicio Universitario del Trabajo),

the activities related to the Pozo del Tío Raimundo (the neighbourhood where Padre Llanos used to live), the semi-clandestine trade unions of USO and CC.OO. (Comisiones Obreras), the publishing activities of Cuadernos para el Diálogo or ZYZ publishers, and the political organizations of the FLP (Frente de Liberación Popular) or the ORT (Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores). These organizations and activities were sources of apprenticeship and training for political action, for the formation of militants, the accumulation of organizational resources, the drawing up of programmes and the making of alliances. With all this, the church began to implement, on the left, the para-political function which it had traditionally implemented on the right (with the ACNDP or the Opus Dei), but through different ecclesiastics and with a different religious offer. The religious offer which the priests made to the “generation of dissent” was an offer which combined the religiousness of religious authenticity with a commitment to the struggle for justice and freedom.

If one analyzes the content of the messages of priests and Catholic intellectuals in the early fifties, (such as Llanos, Díez Alegría, Sopena, Alberdi, Aguirre, and González Ruiz, and Aranguren, Laín and many others), directed towards young Catholics, militants or activists of secular organizations, or simply those with religious problems, what most attracts attention is the emphasis on religiousness or a morality of “authenticity.” In opposition to the positive, external religiosity of solemn ceremonies, attendance at Mass, the reception of the seasonal sacraments and external professions of faith, and in opposition to the supposedly superficial religiosity of both bourgeois and popular culture, a call was made to the authenticity of these youngsters’ convictions and religious feelings, and to the intensity of their faith. It was an appeal to the inner workings of self-discipline and the systematization of everyday conduct according to religious ideals. To some extent such appeal prolonged Jesuit education as it was taught in the colleges at that time.

But here the call to a rationalization of religious life was carried to its ultimate consequences, probably partly due to its being influenced by moral and theological reflections of a Christian-existentialist nature (it was the time when intellectuals like Aranguren analyzed the Protestant Faith and offered a sympathetic and intimate reading of the religiousness of Unamuno, and writings such as those of Karl Rahner were widely read). In consequence, the religious believer was carried one step beyond the stage of rationalizing the religious life of secular people in the Jesuit way; that is, beyond the space of subordination to a spiritual director. The religiousness of authenticity displaced the locus of the decision of whether or not to accept a doctrine, to the sphere of the believer’s internal convictions, and converted teaching into an exercise of persuasion between equals, instead of an act of imposition by a moral authority.

This “quasi-Protestant reform” thus created an atmosphere of inner freedom and availability for facing up to new tasks. But for this availability to be translated in actual

behaviour, the formal religiousness of authenticity had to be combined with a religious commitment to temporal action, and the content of such commitment had to be defined as the struggle against the established order.

The religious commitment to temporal activities continued and did not contradict the existing religiousness. It was one more example of the worldly orientation typical of Spanish Catholicism, of its propensity to intervene in worldly affairs, including political and socio-economic structures, in pursuit of the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth. From such a viewpoint the world of the thirties had been dominated by “anticatholicism,” and had to be changed; that of the fifties and sixties seemed to be dominated by “pseudo-catholics” and also had to be changed. The categorical moral imperative was the same, the only difference was the content of this world. The continuity of this fundamental impulse facilitates understanding of how and why priests, who participated with enthusiasm in the project for the total conversion of society to Catholicism in the forties, like Llanos, then turned away, disillusioned, towards the “prophetic denunciation” of what they had helped to create.

The doctrine of the necessity to fight for justice and freedom meant a radical devaluation of the world created by the Church triumphant and Francoism. Having widened their horizons of reference to the universal Church and the European nations, both priests and laymen engaged in this operation considered that the church and the Francoist regime were isolated and anachronistic redoubts of those societies. The Civil War was morally and religiously devalued to the rank of “a class struggle”; the Francoist state to a personal or fascist dictatorship; the religion of the Church triumphant, National-catholicism, in the best of cases, to a religion insensitive to the suffering and needs of a large part of the population, and, in the worst of them, to a religion which was the “opiate of the people.”

But it was not sufficient to detract from the adversary. It was also necessary to articulate a religious offer with a historic project for the future. Priests and Catholic intellectuals understood that they had been presented with a unique opportunity. The history of Spain was moving in the direction of modern Europe, and also, or so it seemed to many of them, in the direction of an era of great social changes, all of which placed the working classes at the center stage of history. At the same time, the political situation of Francoist Spain made any action on the part of the (non-Catholic) organisations linked to prewar parties or trade unions, exceedingly difficult. These conditions provided dissenting priests and Catholic activists with a unique opportunity to become the leaders of the masses, to develop a “representational function” on behalf of labor unions and working-class parties, by a sort of implicit or tacit delegation entrusted to them. That seemed all the more plausible as the ranks of Catholic workers’ organizations were growing to reach a

membership of some one hundred thousand affiliates by the early 1970s (HOAC had about 30,000 and JOC about 60,000: Hermet, 1985: p.237).

This religious offer, and the historic project implicit in it, was accepted by many young Catholics. This was probably because it responded to a diffuse and little articulated demand or disposition on the part of these young people. Recognition of the inner freedom of the laity seemed in keeping with the attitudes of a generation with ambitions and a desire to succeed in circumstances of tension and difficulty. They had been educated in the idea that they had a mission or task to fulfill, and at the same time they felt freer and more capable than the previous generation: they had greater cultural resources, a more solid school education, a wider horizon and even a richer religious experience than their parents.

Furthermore, this generation, in spite of its ascetic education, was less willing to suffer for its sins and had fewer feelings of guilt. They had neither hated nor killed their fellow countrymen in a civil war; they had not stripped them of their possessions, they had not enriched themselves on the black market nor by the manipulation of the state apparatus; neither had they degraded themselves by pretending to believe in extravagant doctrines, nor by accepting the ostentatious judgement of people lacking in culture, of rigid and simplistic ideas. This is to say that they had the sensation of having killed less, robbed less, and lied and humiliated less than the previous generation. Therefore, not only was it logical that they should feel less guilt but also that they should be predisposed to feeling moral indignation towards a generation which, being inferior in moral and cultural terms, was superior in the control of political, economic and social resources.

In this way, the doctrine of the struggle for social justice and a free political regime (with at least the freedom necessary to fight for that justice) provided the reasons which justified these young people's feelings of indignation and gave meaning to their activities of the moment. This does not mean that it is necessary to reduce these justifications to mere rationalizations of behaviour. But it should be pointed out that, independent of the fact that these justifications may have an objective foundation, we can only understand their appropriation as subjective truths by these people if we take into account the emotional element attached to these justifications, and if we consider those people's calculations of the cost and probabilities of success associated with their carrying out a course of conduct consistent with such justifications. Without including this, these justifications would have remained as abstract recognitions of a truth, but not as commitments to effective action. In my opinion, that emotional element and those calculations referred to a generational impulse, a subjective experience of moral superiority and a relatively plausible historic project - in the articulation of which the church and the clergy played a decisive role.

In this way, this dissident “critical” or “leftwing” subculture developed and provoked the division of the church, the bewilderment of the hierarchy and the irritation of the state, gaining momentum as the consequences of the II Vatican Council started to unfold since the mid sixties.

6.3. The church in the sixties and the II Vatican Council

As we have seen, the fundamental changes in the Spanish Catholic Church began in the fifties and early sixties. Various segments of the church then started to modify their strategies with relation to intellectual, social and moral (see section 6.1.) as well as political (see section 6.2.) problems, taking into account the corresponding social groups. In part, that change reflected its adaptation to the demands of these groups (and in that sense we may label its conduct as “mimetic”), but it also reflected a change, prior to these demands, in the mentality of the clergy, as a result of which the latter were able to influence the articulation and the content of those demands (and in that sense we may label its conduct as “prophetic”).

This prior change in mentality was the consequence of a number of factors, and among them, particularly, the exposure of young priests to the influence of the European churches from the start of the fifties. During those years, priests or would-be priests began to leave Spain to study in the theological centres of Innsbruck, Munich, Paris and other major cities (González de Cardenal, 1985: p. 163). They found themselves in a situation in which they were forced to compare the intellectual poverty and isolation of Spanish neoscholasticism and the forms of traditional piety with the dynamism of the new theological trends and a process of liturgical renovation. They were forced to compare: on one side, the stagnation of the Spanish church; on the other, the spirit of theological and liturgical renewal which inspired the European churches.

Behind that religious experience there was also an experience of organization, lifestyle, tolerance and compromise and a mentality which had incorporated modernity, which was compatible with religion and a vigorous church; as was, for example, the case for the German Catholic Church, which discreetly made use of a nonconfessional state (embedded in a renovated tradition of cooperation with the churches), and coexisted peacefully with Protestantism and a secular humanist culture. The historical background to this was a process of national reconciliation kindled either by the fight against Nazism and Fascism, and by the memories of horror and historical failure associated with the Nazi and Fascist experiences; to which was added the very experience of European reconstruction, growth and political stability based on an understanding between Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, or even the experience of class conflicts within this European order which suggested compromises between, and joint ventures of, Left Catholics and Communists.

These experiences were approached and lived by these young priests in places beyond the control of their superiors, and in an attitude of intellectual inquiry, personal freedom and moral and emotional empathy to them. In due course, many of them managed to establish special relations with their superiors back home; or else they found that these superiors lacked the theological formation and information required in order to be able to control their meditations; or else they sheltered themselves behind the conflicts of competence between the bishops and the religious orders they could belong to. In these ways, on their return to Spain and at least initially, these young priests managed to construct niches of tolerance for their activities. Their example bore fruit among their colleagues, all the more so as the translation of foreign works of a religious nature rose substantially during those years (by 1965 such translations made up 83% of dogmatic literature published in Spain: Payne, 1984: p.246).

It was only natural that these priests, and those people within their circle of influence, were drawn into the very same milieu of liberal and dissident Catholics who encouraged the aforementioned processes of intellectual, social and political change (see supra sections 6.1. and 6.2.). There was an obvious elective affinity between the two groups; and so, in time, they all came to form a religious subcommunity within the Spanish church. In this regard, what the Vatican Council of 1962/65 did was to lend its support to these processes of change which were already underway, accelerate them, precipitate the crisis, reinforce the position of dissident priests and Catholics, and ensure an outcome to the conflict in their favor.

If, at the beginning of the sixties, there had been a nucleus of the church made up of the hierarchy and the majority of the ecclesiastical body, with a periphery of critical priests and militants, what the Council did was to displace the centre of gravity of Spanish Catholicism from the nucleus to the periphery. From that moment on, independent of the position of power which they occupied within the structure of the Spanish church, the bishops found themselves on the defensive, with their influence slowly decreasing, while the marginal clergy and militants found themselves moving along with events. Although it could have prepared itself for these events, in view of the style and orientation of the pontificate of John XXIII, the Spanish hierarchy did not expect the Council's shock. It had convinced itself of the idea that its alliance with temporal power and its historic project (of a confessional State and an orthodox Catholic society) approached the "Catholic ideal" more closely than the compromise, concessions and tolerance of the European churches to the modern world. To be rudely awakened from that dream and renounce that image of itself was very difficult. The hierarchy could not recover from seeing itself as a marginal and anachronistic element within the universal Church. Its delusions of grandeur collapsed in the face of the document on religious freedom accepted by the Council. From then on, change within the Spanish church became inevitable, because isolation was no longer possible

and a schism was inconceivable; all that remained was to determine the rhythm, the form and the costs of the transformation.

The Vatican Council proposed (recovering to a large extent the spirit of that modernism which had been condemned at the turn of the century) a new way of relating the church to the modern world. In the political sphere the church no longer aspired to the support of temporal power and it accepted that it must operate in a “market of religious beliefs,” that is, in a situation of religious pluralism. Without defining the perfect political regime, the church excluded totalitarianism, disparaged authoritarianism and implicitly legitimized liberal democracy. In the economic sphere, its messages maintained the traditional ambiguity of those who accept capitalism and the reform of capitalism, seeming to settle for the kinds of mixed economies (with state intervention and free trade unions) which were prevalent in Western societies. In the cultural sphere, the church accepted much of the criticism of the Enlightenment, recognising the centrality of the values of freedom and reason, and making its own the heritage of humanism, modern science and a large part of contemporary philosophy. As a result, it implicitly reduced the significance of ecclesiastical teaching, proclaimed its respect towards freedom and natural reason, and, explicitly or implicitly, declared its intention to renounce the use of sanctions against heterodox beliefs or practices (whatever the temporal situation in which they were to be found).

In this way, its message of meaning left a wide margin for explanations and justifications of a natural character; its message of salvation duly recognized the intrinsic value of programs and policies for the reduction of hunger and ignorance, economic growth and the redistribution of wealth, etc.; and its messages of community directed Catholics not towards the creation of “Catholic cultures,” encapsulated or isolated with respect to the surrounding community (as had been established, or there had been attempts to establish, since the middle of the XIXth century, as the defensive answer to secular society); but towards the creation of nonconfessional communities, made up of people with diverse beliefs but united by a common morality, for the realisation of a project which offered the hope of salvation from moral and material misery and ensured areas of solidarity and affection on Earth. All this meant a revaluation of spiritual tasks and an emphasis on themes of social morality and, as such, sensu contrario, it implied relegating the problem of the final stages of human life and sexual morality, those topics which had dominated the imagination and sensibility of Catholics for decades, into second place.

All of this, which meant changes, and sometimes important ones, for the whole church, was like a Copernican turnaround for the Spanish church. From this arose resistance on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other; and thus the division of the Spanish church into two blocs, with a bewildered majority initially caught in between. In opposition to the dissident clergy was the traditional clergy grouped around the Hermandades Sacerdotales and other conservative

circles; and the tension between them only increased with time. Along with this tension was a growing sense of uncertainty and mixed feelings on the part of the majority. In a survey carried out among the Spanish clergy in 1970, a clear division of opinion was observed on the political problems of the nation. The division was most marked between the various generations: the older generations in favor of the status quo, and the younger ones against it (Martín Patino, 1984: pp.160 ff.; Payne, 1984: p.254). This division took on even more importance due to the singular age grouping of the Spanish clergy as a result of the Civil War: it was divided into two large groups of less than forty years of age or more than sixty, with a relatively small group in between the two (Hermet, 1985: pp.31 fi).

As well as highlighting this division, the survey of 1970 reflected an extraordinary doctrinal insecurity among the majority of ecclesiastics. Already in the fifties, some priests had been disturbed by the “vacuum of official Catholicism” and the evidence that the project of converting Spain to Catholicism was not succeeding. But what was the unease of the clergy in the fifties, faced with the failure of a project, became, at the end of the sixties, the feeling that there was no project at all. The clergy felt uncertain of their theological knowledge (39%) and their moral understanding (51%) and with neither the preparation nor the capacity to direct the faithful on social matters (73%) or political matters (75%). Consequently, they turned their eyes towards their process of formation and expressed their profound discontent with the education which they had received in the seminaries (51%) (Martín Patino, 1984, p. 161).

The bewilderment was profound and permanent. As a result, it is not surprising that, combined with a spectacular increase in all kinds of opportunities in civilian life, for economic improvement, intellectual development, political action and emotional relationships, there was a crisis of religious vocation (although the process was not exclusive to the Spanish church, and was also to be observed in other European churches such as the French one: Bourdieu, Saint Martin, 1984). There was a generalized move to secularization by the regular and secular clergy (some four hundred each year between 1966 and 1971); the number of seminarists went down from some 8,000 in the fifties to about 1,800 in 1972/73; and approximately one third of Spanish Jesuits abandoned the order between 1966 and 1975 (Payne, 1984: pp.225 fi).

The bishops only half-understood this state of affairs and adopted a defensive tentative strategy. Upon hearing the results of the Council, Archbishop Cantero did not hesitate to talk of (the need for) “maintaining and strengthening the Catholic unity of Spain... whose civil expression... is (should be) the confessionality of the state...in accordance with the Council” (Ruiz Rico, 1977: p.197). In fact the hierarchy was not willingly prepared to alter the understanding which it had with the Spanish state. Its application of the principle, of putting some distance between the Church and political power consisted of trying to prevent criticisms being aimed at

the Francoist regime by Catholic associations. By insisting on this, they brought the final consequences upon themselves. When in 1966/67 the leaders of Acción Católica tried to lead the way by making criticisms of the authoritarian regime, Archbishop Morcillo reminded them unequivocally that “no branch (of Acción Católica), no organization could make declarations (of that kind) without authority; and that authority had never been given (by the church), or if it had, it had been revoked” (Ruiz Rico, 1977: p. 198). Subsequently, after some further skirmishes, Acción Católica was deprived of its leaders, followed by the immediate collapse of the organization: it went from being a dynamic organization of one and a half million members in the early sixties to a stagnating one of a hundred thousand by 1972 (Payne, 1984: p.250).

However, this same incident proved that an attitude of intransigence could bring with it catastrophic consequences, by means of both: activation of dissenting “voice” within, and massive “exit” from the church apparatus (Hirschman, 1970); so that church division could be exacerbated and organizations dissolved. Neither did it seem very sensible to gamble unreservedly on a regime with a doubtful future. So, finally, the bishops began to persuade themselves that the times required adaptations and reforms.

To this process of self-persuasion was added continuous and energetic external pressure from the Vatican which was exercised by means of some institutional mechanisms. The Holy See decided to accelerate the extremely slow progress of episcopal reflection and reduce the resistance of the bishops, modifying their organizational structure and composition. At that time there was an episcopate led by a small Conferencia de Metropolitanos and it was decided to give preeminence to the Conferencia Episcopal of all the bishops. It was found that, on the whole, that Conferencia Episcopal was composed of bishops who were relatively old and had been named jointly by the church and the state (which exercised a traditional “privilege of presentation”), and it was decided to drastically alter this composition. For that: (a) bishops were to be retired after a certain age, remaining as members with the right to speak, but with no vote in the Conferencia Episcopal; (b) younger auxiliary bishops were named with the right to speak and vote in the Conference, but in whose appointment the state could not intervene; (c) pressure was put on the Spanish government to name the Vatican’s candidates as bishops (by the simple ploy of reducing to one the trio of candidates which the Vatican could put forward) (Payne, 1984: p.261); and all this, as well as (d) exhorting the government publically, time after time, to renounce the privilege of presentation. Through its Apostolic Nuncios, the Vatican worked with prudence, care and decision, and its strategy was successful in very few years. In 1966, 65% of the bishops were more than 60 years old, and the number of auxiliary bishops (named only by the Church) was only five out of a total of 77. By 1973, the bishops of more than 60 made up only 40%, and the number of auxiliaries had risen to 17 (Ruiz Rico, 1977: pp.189, 213). By 1971 the relative strengths in the Conferencia Episcopal were already such that an Archbishop loyal to the

Vatican line, Tarancón, was elected president of the Conference. This nomination marked the end of one phase and the beginning of another in the relations between church and state, and in the relations within the church itself. What had, until then, been a confused and divided church, became, in the seventies, one determined to carry out a new historic and societal project and with it, a strategy of detachment and even estrangement from the Francoist regime.

7. Conflict in the seventies and up to the present

7.1. The success of the political reconversion of the church

At the beginning of this discussion (see supra section 1) I pointed out that the Catholic Church's strategy, in its attempt to achieve a monopoly of the religious offer, with the consequent alliance with temporal power, took a chance on the political opposition of that moment becoming a hostile power in the future. This risk increased considerably in Spain throughout the period under consideration, due to the factors already analyzed: the resistance of society, the changes in public space and the pressure of the universal church. As a result, in due time, the Spanish church opted for revising its strategy and accepting a situation of religious pluralism.

This occurred gradually over a period of time, but one key date can be singled out, that of 1971. In that year, the balance of power within the episcopacy swung decisively in favour of those who supported a revision of the church's strategy, with the nomination of Enrique y Tarancón as President of the Episcopal Conference (Martín Patino, 1984: pp.163 ff.) -- Tarancón belonged to the moderate sector of the Spanish episcopacy and had been elected by the Holy See as Primate of Toledo in 1968 (in an operation similar in nature to that which was to take place some years later with the nomination of Suárez as Prime Minister in June 1977 in order to engineer the political transition). In the same year a Joint Assembly of bishops and priests was held which had an enormous impact on Catholic public opinion and whose conclusions were orientated in the same direction.

Once decided upon, the strategy of estrangement from the Francoist regime was carried out in a deliberate and systematic way, in spite of a rearguard battle engaged in by the conservative sectors of the church which was to continue right up to the last moments of Francoism (one good example of which was the criticism by conservative priests of the Joint Assembly's conclusions: González de Cardenal, 1985: p.167). The declarations of that assembly, the collective documents of the episcopacy from then onwards (particularly that of February, 1973 regarding the relationship between the church and the political community) and the declarations of Tarancón himself (which culminated in the homily to the King in November, 1975 on the occasion of his coronation) left no room for doubt about the reorientations of the church's temporal commitment. Church allusions, through careful use of language, about the desirability of a democratic regime were continuous. Its key words were those of harmony, dialogue and public liberties, including the freedom of election of political representatives. It reiterated a positive evaluation of the "demands for freedom and justice," which was a scarcely veiled allusion to the demands of opposition parties and trade unions. It made reference time and again to the need

for a national reconciliation, and, finally, to the need for a “monarchy of all the Spanish people,” as Tarancón conscientiously pointed out in the homily referred to above (and which echoed a similar line of thought on the part of key members of the king’s family). This moral-political discourse rested on a dramatic reconsideration of the most crucial event in the life of the church in the previous fifty years: the Civil War. The ecclesiastics gathered together in the Joint Assembly of 1971 went as far as recognizing that: “we have sinned... and we ask for pardon... since at that time we did not know how to be true ministers of reconciliation in the bosom of our nation, divided by a war between brothers.” This text was passed by 137 votes for, 78 against (Ruiz Rico, 1977: p.236).

For the Francoist state, which had based a substantial part of its legitimacy on its Catholic qualities and on the support of the church, all this was a catastrophe, an aberration and, to some extent, a betrayal. After all the state had done for the church, the latter, at the critical moment, was washing its hands of its future. The reminders of services rendered, the warnings and complaints of Ministers, such as those of Justice or Foreign Affairs, fell on deaf ears (Payne, 1984: p.265). The hierarchy responded with a new demand: by appealing to the Catholic convictions of its rulers to renounce the privilege of the presentation of bishops, which was one of the few mechanisms left to the state for exerting pressure on the church. Many clerics responded by an intensifying their support for the political and trade union opposition, trying to have recourse to ecclesiastical canon law in order to do so (although this was in fact no more than taking advantage of a political privilege which had been granted by Francoism itself). In consequence, the ecclesiastical prison in Zamora began to fill up with priests (who reached the point of rioting in 1973) (Payne, 1984: p.228); and the bishops themselves began to feel the effects of the state’s irritation. On the occasion of Admiral Carrero Blanco’s funeral (1973) the notorious cries of “¡Tarancón. al paredón!” (“Tarancón, to the execution wall!” or “to the firing squad!”) were to be heard; and in 1974 the government was on the point of expelling a Basque bishop from the country (the Añoveros affair). However, by these outbursts the state was only betraying its weakness, and it only managed to reinforce the determination of the church, and even offering it the opportunity of figuring on the honor list of those persecuted under Francoism.

Nevertheless, the estrangement of the church from the Francoist state was not just a simple inversion of alliances; it was part of a new understanding, and a more complex one, the church reached trying to place itself in a position equidistant between the democratic opposition and the reformist sectors of Francoism. Among the latest was the sector organized around the Tácito group: a group of Catholic civil servants and professionals, the majority of whom came from the Francoist political class, finally becoming a quarry of leaders and a laboratory of political formulas for the democratic transition (Rodríguez Buznego, 1986).

At the same time, the church increased its exchanges with the democratic opposition. This was made easier by three factors, (a) Firstly, the traditional leaders of the opposition parties had abandoned their antireligious and anticlerical attitudes of the civil war (see supra), (b) Secondly, the new political class had, to some extent, been formed by the church. Not only because the church had directly provided leaders, outlines for programs, significant organisational resources and ideological as well institutional cover and protection from repression; but also, and above all, because the church had contributed to shaping the overall experiences of many young people who had begun the process of their political formation in opposition to Francoism in the fifties and sixties. During those crucial years, quite a number of these young people maintained their religious motivation and their ties with the priesthood and, as a result, the feeling of being “part of a family,” as reflected by a certain language, certain ways of thinking and certain values. Perhaps they began in organizations like the FLP, Cuadernos para el Diálogo or the JOC, ending up in the PSOE, the communist party, Izquierda Democrática, Convergencia i Unió or UCD. These first experiences were very intense with frequent interaction between these young Catholics and other noncatholic young people, with the shared sensations of risk and a common adversary, and feelings of belonging to the same generational community. Out of such experiences came patterns of dialogue and communication within the political opposition (as well as within civil society) which were later to become generalized during the years of the transition, thus anticipating the characteristics of a community in which the winners and losers of the civil war were reconciled. From these experiences were born memories of recognition and respect, and even of gratitude and feelings of debt towards some sectors of the ecclesiastical establishment, which were to ensure some crucial moral and political credit for the church at the time of the transition.

(c) Thirdly, the fact that (in what was a very deliberate act on the part of the hierarchy) a Christian Democrat party was not created contributed to the good relations between the new political class and the church, since the former ceased to fear any competition from the church on its own territory. This fact (or, in some ways, this non-fact) was the result of a decision the church made mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because the church lacked the capacity to do so: it had practically destroyed its own organizations in the second half of the sixties (remember the crisis of Catholic Action) and its militants had been committing themselves to other organisations. Secondly, because it lacked the overriding motive for the creation of a Christian Democrat party: the sense of a sufficiently serious threat to its core values and even bare existence. Communism and Fascism, or their equivalents, were the historical motives for which Catholics had overcome their internal differences and created a relatively homogeneous party in such places as Italy, for example, after the war. But Spanish Fascism in the seventies lacked importance (as was to be proved with the first elections); and the moderate attitude of the communist party and the

continual experiences of dialogue or agreements between Christians and Marxists in opposition to Francoism, made the flag of anticommunism equally unviable.

The consequence of all this was that the church found itself playing a very important part in the years of the political transition, between 1975 and 1978, though without a party over which it could claim control or even influence. On the one hand, it was capable of understanding and giving support to both the reformist sector of Francoism and the democratic opposition. On the other, it made a decisive contribution towards easing the hostility of the conservative right to the new democratic regime: it impeded a revival of the crusade spirit; it minimized the dangers originating from extremism; and, in general, it eroded or weakened the ideological foundations of any strategy of harassment of democracy by the hardliners of the state apparatus, and more particularly in the army. Its direct and explicit support of the political transition was demonstrated by the positions it took, resulting in the acceptance of the Law of Political Reform in 1976, and the Constitution in 1978, which was accepted by the immense majority of Spanish bishops (in spite of not inconsiderable reservations on some matters).

With the Constitution, the church accepted the principles of a nonconfessional state and religious freedom (article 16), being satisfied with a recognition of what has been called the “sociological fact” of the Catholic Church (in other words, a recognition of the Catholic Church being a “fact of life” in Spanish society that the state was bound to respect), together with a declaration of the desirability of cooperation between the church (and other confessions) and the state. Recognition of the church in the constitutional text was important also because it implied substantial freedom of movement for the church, whose structure and whose acts the state was committed to respecting. This was all the more important for the church inasmuch as: (a) Catholic doctrine (including that of the II Vatican Council: Portier, 1986) has always placed as the limits to the legitimacy of prevailing legislation (including the legality of a liberal democracy) that of a “natural order” or a “natural morality,” whose content was to be interpreted chiefly by the church; and (b) the church foresaw problems to arise in the field of education, as well as the legislation on divorce and abortion.

From that moment onwards the church had to face up to a pluralistic situation not only with regard to religious beliefs and institutions, but also in the political sphere. The church had not been able to control any of the new parties, neither did it seem to have very much influence over the Catholic vote. In fact, the Catholic electorate, following a tendency observable in other countries (for example, France: Berger, 1985) dispersed its political preferences. This worked particularly in favour of the Socialist party, which has received a substantial part of the Catholic vote throughout these years, including an important part of the vote from practising Catholics (who made up 24-25% of the Socialist electorate in 1979/1982: Montero, 1986: p.157) (7).

7.2. The other side of political success: setbacks (and uncertainties) in civil society

In this situation of religious and political pluralism, the Spanish Church has apparently been reduced to just one more “pressure group,” which, in order to achieve its aims, has to depend on the goodwill of its allies and the support of its rank and file members, which is to say, on laymen. Alliances and support of this nature can be problematical because the attitude of laymen to the typical pretensions of the church (of amplifying its influence in their lives and reducing them to mere subordinates of the ecclesiastical organization), can be an attitude of resistance. In view of that, as I suggested earlier (see supra section 1), if the church loses or renounces its monopoly on the religious offer, it may find that this is only the beginning of a series of compromises and concessions to the laity still to come.

In the Spain of these years the church, which no longer had the almost total monopoly on the religious and even cultural offer which it had come to have in the past, also had to confront laymen who were more accustomed to exercising their freedom and had greater confidence in their own judgement: judgement which had increasingly diverged from ecclesiastical teaching, as was evident on the subjects of divorce and abortion. Because, while the church had used up its energies in the sixties and seventies in absorbing its internal conflicts, putting its house in order, and in the effort of ensuring for itself a dignified way out of Francoism and in the political transition, coming to an agreement with the corresponding political class; at the very same time the evolution of civil society, its beliefs, feelings and everyday practices had been taking its own course. The final consequence of this dual evolution, of the church and of society, has been a remoteness between them and a growing lack of relevance of the Catholic Church’s messages of meaning, salvation and community in the eyes and everyday life of a considerable part of civil society.

Ecclesiastical teaching has been relatively devalued on questions of public and private morality. On public morality, because the spectacular change of heart of the church with regard to Francoism can be interpreted as an attempt to draw closer to the dominant trends in secular thinking and to an accommodation with modern secular institutions. However praiseworthy this change may have been, it has not shown “moral authority” but rather “capacity for adaptation.”

The general perception of the increasing irrelevance of the church's teachings in matters even of private morality is the result of several factors. It may be partly attributed to the processes of the establishment and extension of intra-worldly values, of searching for success or happiness on earth by achieving power, wealth, status, knowledge, affection or sensual gratification according to one's preferences, but with only marginal reference to religious life, that

have continued throughout all these years. Added to this is the fact that in late years, the church itself (in both its conservative and its progressive wings) has gradually devalued the laity's expectations and aspirations in achieving its salvation through sacramental practices, placing more emphasis on their participation in temporal activities. Finally, it must be taken into account that religious motivations of the search for a moral community are no longer played out against the background of a divided community of Spaniards, burdened by the recent memories of a civil war, as it happened during the forties (see *supra* section 4). This is no longer the case (or not in the same way) in the fairly well reconciled community of Spanish people in the seventies. In opposition to the "theatre of self-destruction" of the civil war, the years of transition and democratic consolidation have witnessed the performance of a "theatre of self-reconciliation," displayed in repeated ceremonies of consensus and rituals of understanding and the signing of agreements of all kinds (political and social pacts, regional statutes or understandings with the army and the church). As a result, the call of the church for social peace, however proper it may be, only constitutes one more voice in the poliphony of concord.

It is probable that as a consequence of all this, civil society has been reducing the intensity of its religious beliefs and the frequency of its practices; and that in this way, to some extent, it has been slipping away from the sphere of influence of the church. The immense majority of Spanish people today (86%) according to the 1984 CIS survey (CIS, 1984) continues to consider itself catholic. However, it seems that the proportion of "good" or practising catholics has gone down from about 56% to 31% according to some surveys carried out between 1976 and 1983 (Orizo, 1983: p. 177). There are also clear signs of a marked reduction in the degree to which Spanish catholics adopt the professions of faith and moral teachings of the church. Their orthodoxy thus seems limited. At the end of the sixties (1969) the percentages of Spanish people who confessed to believing in the infallibility of the Pope (76%), the existence of hell (80%), the dogma of the Trinity (93%) and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (86%) were extremely high (Hermet, 1985: p.72). But in the CIS survey of 1984, those percentages had gone down considerably. The immense majority continued believing in the existence of God (87%), but, on the other hand, those who believed, without doubt, in a God who created the universe (59%), the divine nature of Jesus Christ (56%) and the existence of Heaven (50%) were now scarcely a majority. In the same way, those who believed in the existence of the immortal soul (46%), the resurrection of the dead (41%) and the existence of hell (40%) were now a minority. It is true the percentages are higher in the subgroup of practising catholics; but even then it should be emphasized that only two thirds of them accepted, without doubt, the infallibility of the Pope (61%), the resurrection of the dead (76%), the existence of hell (63%) and the existence of the immortal soul (68%). The proportion is reduced to between a fifth and a third in the subgroup of nonpractising catholics (21% of whom believed without doubt in the infallibility of the Pope; 26% in the resurrection of the dead; 25% in the existence of hell; and

33% in the existence of the immortal soul) (CIS, 1984; Laboa, 1985, p.90; cf. also Orizo, 1983, p.173).

We also find that there are substantial numbers of Spaniards who consider themselves to be catholics, but nevertheless reject the teachings of the church on questions of sexual morality. This is not, of course, exclusive to Spaniards. It has been observed how, in the United States, a majority of catholics rejects the teachings of the church on the question of contraceptives (88%), the ordination of women (52%), the marriage of priests (63%), the second marriage of divorcees (73%) and even abortion in the case of rape or incest (55%) (Source: International Herald Tribune, 25th November, 1985). Something similar can be observed in Spain. A majority of Spaniards accept the use of contraceptives (65%), the marriage of priests (54%), the dissolution of a catholic marriage (47% vs. 40%) and premarital sexual relations (45% vs. 41%) (CIS, 1984).

Furthermore, we have already seen how the recent influence of the church in political life is limited: for example, at the moment of deciding the distribution of votes among the parties, it only moderately reduces the probability that the vote of practising catholics will be given to socialism (cf. supra). We also know that, in general terms, Spaniards think that the church should not have any influence in government (43% vs. 32%) (CIS, 1985).

It is more difficult to measure the real weight and evolution of the church's influence on the social morality of the Spanish people, on their attitudes towards the basic values of social coexistence, towards life and society, and their respect of other people and their property. The proportion of Spaniards who accept the Ten Commandments lies between 56% for the eighth Commandment ("Thou shall not lie") and 81% for the fifth Commandment ("Thou shall not kill"), with varying figures in between for the fourth, the seventh and the tenth Commandments (referring to honouring one's parents and respecting the property of others), and with the percentages being between seven and twelve points higher in the case of practising catholics (Orizo, 1983: p. 190; and comparisons with other European countries in Stoetzel, 1982, p.339 and 340). This suggests a relatively high degree of influence of the church's moral teachings, at least regarding general declarations of principle. However, 61% of these same people manifested their belief that "there could never be absolutely clearcut lines drawn between good and evil. What is good or evil depends on the circumstances at the time" (Orizo, 1983: p.64), and this poses questions about what this influence would be when the time came to make a real decision, and particularly more so, since a relative majority believes that the church does not have the adequate solutions to the moral problems (and needs) of individuals (43% vs. 39% who think it has), or the problems of family life (49% vs. 34%) (Orizo, 1983: p.190), or else thinks that the church pretends to a moral authority which is not based on knowledge of reality (41% vs. 27%) (CIS, 1984).

Finally, I must refer to what, for some sociologists of religion, has traditionally been the fundamental indicator of religiousness, the rate of attendance at Sunday Mass. This is situated, according to various estimates, between 34% and 42% of the nation (Laboa, 1986): a relatively high figure, which is lower than that of Ireland, but similar to that of Italy and much higher than that of France (see also Martín Patino, 1984: p. 196). It seems probable that there has been a decrease in this practice over this period and particularly in the last ten years (Montero, 1986: p. 137). In the case of young people, we know that the frequency of their attendance at Sunday Mass has decreased substantially from 62% to 35% between 1975 and 1982 (Toharia, 1985).

What is suggested by these data is certainly not the panorama of a thoroughly catholic society, nor one in the process of becoming so. However, this diagnosis must be tempered by three considerations, (a) First, it must be remembered that, in relative terms, the importance of the Spanish catholic world remains considerable. Between 30% and 40% of Spaniards can be considered practising catholics. This may seem few in relation to the ideal of the Church triumphant, which was a total conversion to Catholicism of the whole country, but the percentage is very high if it is compared to that of any other ideological group in society, as defined by other beliefs or moral attitudes. For example, the total of “practising left-wingers” in the country (who consider themselves to be socialists, communists or of the extreme left, and who militate in parties of trade unions) probably does not reach even 5% of the population, (b) Second, a distinction must be made between the ecclesiastical dimension of the above referred process (that of slipping away from submission to the institutional authority of the church) and its religious dimension (that of a weakening of religious beliefs and morals). And it must be pointed out that the latter is a very complex phenomenon indeed, about which we have only scarce and unreliable information (this including the rather enigmatic responses to survey questions just mentioned).

(c) Third, the recent signs of dynamism in the Catholic Church must not be overlooked. The decrease in religious vocations is now past its nadir, and the slight increase in the numbers of seminarists seems to gain momentum during the second half of the eighties. New forms of organization have emerged such as the “Christian communities” (above all, neoecumenical, but also popular and charismatic, or of a charismatic renovation) which seem to be prospering (Martín Patino, 1984: p. 192). Religion no longer polarizes Spanish people, either politically or socially: in the final years of the seventies it is estimated that about 44-45% of people (who thought they were) in the middle or upper middle classes were practising catholics; so were 38% of the lower middle classes and 34% of the working classes (Martín Patino, 1984: pp.202 ff.). Yet, during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Spain in 1982 (immediately after the socialist victory in the elections of that year), and when catholic organisations protested against the socialist legislation on education, mass demonstrations of an extraordinary size were to be witnessed, showing the notable capacity and disposition of the catholic masses to mobilization.

Finally, a positive sign of the dynamism and potential of catholic culture in Spain may be offered by the fact that, even if practising catholics are less numerous among the younger generations than the older ones, there are also details relative to the mood and the nature of these younger catholics which suggest that they are more at ease in their environment and happier and more optimistic than young noncatholics (or less practising catholics). They feel more united with their families (58% vs. 47% among the the rest) and more in tune with their parents in their attitudes towards religion (68% vs. 25%), morality (66% vs. 36%) and politics (41% vs. 23%); they feel happier (only 9% of these catholics felt unhappy or not very happy vs. 22% of the rest) and more optimistic about life (58% vs. 47%) (Toharia, 1985). So that it seems as if, once again, in the middle of rather troubled situations for the church and Spanish Catholicism, it is possible to detect new and ambiguous signs for hope.

8. Final comments

This study belongs to a genre of interpretative essays of a general nature, in which an analytical discussion is tied to a series of empirical observations about religion and the church in Spain over the last fifty years. Religion and religious experiences are central to this study, inasmuch as it is about the content of the church's offer and the demands of its followers, and insofar as it is a complex phenomenon with dimensions relating to culture, beliefs, experience, morality and organization (Glock, 1971), to all of which I have referred. The slant of my argument, however, has been on explaining the causes and mechanisms of the transformations in the church, in response to its own conflicts and the pressures of the environment in which it moved, chiefly the state and civil society, during the crucial step from the Francoism of the forties to the liberal democracy of the seventies and eighties, and on doing so in the general terms necessary to cover such a wide and dramatic period, while clearly maintaining the main outlines of an inevitably complex argument.

I have preferred to talk not so much about a process of secularization of Spanish life during this period, but rather about a process of transformations, metamorphoses or, could we say, "avatars." I speak of "avatar" by analogy with the original use of the term in Hinduism, in which it means the incarnation of the deity (usually Vishnu) in human (or non-human) forms in times of crisis or tribulation, when the dharma, universal order or law, is in danger, for the purpose of counteracting evil and reestablishing the balance. The doctrine supposes that these incarnations are various and (in late Hinduism) thus explain the existence of "holy men." Obviously, Christianity, with its doctrine of the unique incarnation of the deity in Jesus Christ, is incompatible with Hinduism; but this theological incompatibility is irrelevant for the purposes of using the term as an

analogy (and one which is close, by the way, to theatrical experience) in the field of sociology of the church and religion. The changes in the historic project of the Spanish church (initially referred to by the name of “national Catholicism”), in the religious offer or message of the church to its followers, in the structure of relations between the church and the state and society throughout these years have been so profound that there is licence to talk about the successive incarnations of different “characters” in a historical drama. In each new “personification” or “incarnation” there is a response from the religious institution to a situation of disorder: a response directed towards a restoration of the balance which has been lost, or the establishment of a new one.

As for the theory of secularization, it is now some time since it was shown to be ambiguous, at least in the most general terms (for example, Luckmann, 1969), so that it would have to be broken down into more specific propositions. The very term of secularization lends itself to ambiguity, because it has a different content according to whether it refers to the reduction of the religious or the ecclesiastical area: religious or ecclesiastical secularization. In no way can these be considered identical. The religious area is (a) the area of the explanations, justifications and propositions of meaning which are applied to reality, inasmuch as they refer to divine or supernatural figures; (b) the area of human experience impregnated by, or related to, the performance of these divine figures, from whom it is hoped will come salvation from suffering (which is to say, from the negative human experiences), and the blessing of good fortune (which is to say, the corroboration of the positive experiences); and (c) the area of interaction with, or by reference to, these divine figures, which marks out the limits and contains the internal structure of the community in which these figures are present. The ecclesiastical area refers to those more specific spaces within the previously mentioned areas in which a body of intermediaries plays an important part in interpreting meaning, administering the gifts of salvation (such as grace) and mediating in the interaction between men and the divine or supernatural figures, in such a way that those intermediary agents or institutions may exercise authority over these men.

So we have three dimensions of meaning, salvation, and community that apply to both a religious and an ecclesiastical area of human experience. This conceptual scheme implies the possibility of formulating hypotheses relative to the expansion or reduction of such areas along all these dimensions, taking into account that the reductions in some areas and along some dimensions, may or may not be compensated for by reductions in others. Finally, it is not sufficient to consider only the “extension” of the areas in question; it is also important to consider their “intensity” (or “depth”). This is because a reduction in the extension of an area may be compensated for by an increase in its intensity: which is to say, in the importance or value assigned to the corresponding religious or ecclesiastical area.

Since the object of this study has not been any formal and systematic discussion of the secularization thesis, the reader will allow me to leave the application of the scheme just outlined in the Spanish case for another occasion. Suffice it to say that the evolution of the last one hundred years is a long way from demonstrating a general tendency which embraces all the areas that we have been considering. The reduction of the ecclesiastical area, and perhaps of the religious one, seems evident at least between the beginning and the last third of the XIXth century; but not from that time on. The church seems to recover lost ground from the 1880s onwards, taking advantage of operations which had been set in motion decades earlier: as much as in its understandings with the state as in its penetration of civil society. However, the events of the 1930s highlight the inadequacy of anything it had imagined. The outcome of the civil war, and even the experience of the war itself, meant an enormous expansion in both the religious and ecclesiastical areas, and above all in the latter. In any case, religion and church acquired extraordinary prominence in the forties, fifties and a large part of the sixties, in spite of the aforementioned tensions. A confessional state and a total conversion of society to Catholicism appeared go to hand in hand for part of this period. What happens from then onwards indicates a reduction of the ecclesiastical area, but not necessarily a weakening, at least in relation to its public powers, especially if its situation during these years is compared to the political relation of the church with the state and the new political class emergent between 1965 and 1975. As for the signs of a reduction in the area of religiousness, these are incomplete and at times ambiguous.

If within the dramatic and eventful evolution of more than a century, we were to look for a pattern, I would propose the hypothesis of a spiral evolution, of “claroscuro,” or, if one prefers (and nothing could be more appropriate to the subject), a hypothesis of “divine irony” with the Spanish Catholic Church.

Irony, as a play of contrasts permitting, or making, reality to follow in such a way that in the moments of triumph there appeared the seeds of disaster, and in the moments of crisis, the seeds of hope, and in such a strangely systematic way. Because, in effect, each crucial situation in Spanish life during these years has been for the church an “ironic situation” (Fussel, 1981): better and worse than it expected. When the Spanish Church was on the point of securing an understanding with the Establishment of the Restoration, crowning the efforts of forty years which had alternated and combined tactical ralliement with hardline Catholicism, and even succumbed to the temptation of doing with the support of the dictatorship (of Primo de Rivera), it was to find itself besieged by the profoundly anticlerical offensive of the Second Republic and the anarchist masses, whose strength and enthusiasm for the task at hand the church had not been able to foresee; all of which brought it to the verge of a terrible defeat. But from this arose the possibility of a triumph such as the catholic hierarchy had scarcely dreamed of, even in its wildest moments: the historic, almost miraculous, possibility of repeating the XVIth century, four hundred years later; the triumph and exaltation of the church. Then, all of sudden,

from out of nowhere, here were some of the clerics themselves, troubled or disillusioned, recollecting that the church had forgotten the workers, the peripheral nationalities and the nation's youth with ambitions for social and political leadership: and the church discovered that a part of itself was questioning its own triumph and eroding the political-religious edifice of the nationalist victory. Then, from the era of crisis, from a church disconcerted and divided against itself, it reemerged with new vitality and a new capacity to carry out an extraordinary political reconversion. It had become the church of a liberal democracy; so much so that even an important part of the success of the new political regime could be attributed to it, thus winning the respect of the new political class and public opinion. But it also happened that, just at the same time, the church found itself with the results of a process of secularization (certainly ecclesiastical and possibly, to a large extent, religious) which had been taking place for over twenty or almost thirty years: the slipping away, little by little, of civil society from outside its sphere of influence.

In each one of these historical moments, a triumph; in each triumph, forgetfulness; and in consequence, the need to pay a price for that forgetfulness, to be found in a crisis situation; and in each crisis situation, finally, signs of hope for the institution. The irony of history or the irony of Providence.

With relation to the more specific evolution in the ecclesiastical area during the last twenty or thirty years, which is to say, since the crisis of the political-religious edifice of the Church triumphant, it can be said that: (a) there has been a tendency towards the reduction of this area, and (b) that within this area there has been an increase in the weight of the voice of the laity and the lower orders of ecclesiastics: a modest but visible "democratization." The parallel with what has happened to the state over the same period seems obvious. Here there has also been a retreat of the authoritarian state in the last years of Francoism, to the advantage of society, stimulated by social movements and organizations which wanted freedom of movement (even if afterwards, once the new state was firmly established, the new political class normally proceeded to expand the volume of resources under its control), and, of course, the new state brought democracy with it.

Even so, it cannot be deduced from a tendency to reduce the area of the church's influence, that there is a process of religious secularization, either due to a reduction of the religious area (and) or due to a decrease in the intensity of religious experience. It is true that many aspects of the modern experience, such as the development of science and school education, involvement in economic markets and modern political institutions such as state bureaucracies, and in general in organizations of all kinds, seem to have broadened the area of human experiences where non-religious explanations look increasingly plausible (and religious ones rather redundant),

in Spain like in so many other countries. As it is also true that the expectation of liberation from many types of suffering, and certainly from scarcity, and the subsequent gratification of a rather wide range of desires and needs have considerably increased as a result of technical and economic growth, the development of liberal democratic states and more liberal and permissive social mores, all this without, or with a very weak, religious reference. But it is no less evident that not only some versions of modernity have been quite oppressive, but also that even at its best modernity cannot eradicate the roots of human ignorance and suffering. In their search for knowledge and happiness people confront limits that they may displace but cannot eliminate; because the more they know, the more they become conscious of what they do not know, and a similar dialectic can be applied to other dimensions of their experience. So that even under the best circumstances a space can always be reserved for demands for explanation, salvation and community of an ultimate nature which, in principle, can take many different forms and be met by very diverse religious offers, these including a great variety of institutional arrangements.

Modern conditions may enhance, for instance, the likelihood of a church which would be based on largely autonomous local churches and congregations, and which could be compatible with an intensely personal religious feeling as well as with very different attitudes towards the temporal order. This church would be able to formulate its religious message: (a) in terms of the “legitimation” of that order; (b) in terms of a “prophetic denunciation” of it; or it could even (c) “dispense with” such a temporal order, recognizing that whatever the human value action in this world may have, it is impossible to interpret the specific religious content of that action, in the way that it could be defined by God himself (or the corresponding divine figure), since God being inscrutable means that any pretension to interpret him, including that of the church, would be a vain one (although that may imply entering into a Barthian reasoning, probably incompatible with the fundamentals of a church like the Catholic Church). By testing all these messages under different local conditions and for different audiences, and more particularly by testing all the possible mixtures or combinations of them, that church would possibly be able to recuperate, or even extend, its influence in the world.

An example of this capacity is offered by the resurgence of protestant fundamentalism in the United States (Roof, 1984; Hunter, 1985; Cox, 1984). Bound up within it are an intense and emotional religiosity, the prominence of local churches, styles and forms of authority which at times are “democratic” and at others are “authoritarian,” and very specific messages about the content of temporal activities. The limited size, the activism of the shepherd, the creation of a vigilant collective opinion and the very literalness of interpretation of the Word, combine to ensure, in these communities of “spiritual kinship,” stability in the definition of the group situation and consistency of meaning of the behaviour of its members (Ault, 1984; Bittner, 1963). But a catholic fundamentalism can also be

observed which, paradoxically accepts an important dose of “lay priesthood,” the importance of the local church, an emphasis on the message and the Word, and even an attitude of “prophetic denunciation of power” (which Tillich considers the “Protestant principle” par excellence: Tillich, 1951), or at least the power of totalitarian regimes; and which, nevertheless, makes all this compatible with the Pope, the sacraments, tradition and respect towards fragments of a popular magical religion, with an otherwise very catholic eclecticism, successfully practiced many times throughout the history of the church: as is exemplified by the work of John Paul II. Of course, this Catholic fundamentalism coexists, in the church, with liberal theology - which had its best moments with the council, with the curious situation of the masses of believers who have come to the conclusion that they can be catholics, and good catholics, without accepting substantial proportions of church teaching, neither in questions of faith nor social mores, whether these be of a public or private nature. What we observe under these conditions is a far more complex and colorful catholic pluralism than that of the schism which occurred between liberals and hardliners in the XIXth and part of the XXth century, or between progressives and conservatives at a later more recent date.

There was a time when observers of religious phenomena thought there was a clear process of secularization which affected the religious as much as the ecclesiastical sphere, and they forecast a reduction of the importance of religion and the churches, pushing to its limits Weber’s ideas on the disenchantment of the world. They even thought that, in a situation of religious pluralism, there was a tendency for the religious offer, being flexible and sensitive to demand, to become homogeneous under the pressure of homogeneous demand, in the belief that a corroboration of this hypothesis was to be seen in the convergence of the protestant denominations, liberal Judaism, Catholicism and secular humanism in the United States (Berger, 1973). Now we see, on the contrary, the persistence of the religious phenomenon and an increase in the differentiation of religious demand as much as of religious offer; and as a result, a growing pluralism in the world of Christian belief, catholic or otherwise, and in nonchristian ones as well (as is seen in the ferment of the Muslim world).

NOTES

1. Geertz, Bellah and Bell consider religion as the combination of an explanation of the world (which manages to give an answer on the “ultimate questions” of existence) and of a coherent social ethos or morality. Geertz and Bellah also stress the integrative function of religion. I see religion as views of the world and morals constructed by reference to “supernatural” forces (in the Western tradition: gods and other divine or demonic agents) and focusing on the interaction between humans and those supernatural forces. And I do not think that the integrative role that religion may play in some societies for some periods of time allows us to take it as a defining characteristic of religion as such (see my discussion of the “limited fit” between religion and society in the text).
2. The “diabolic enemy” whose work Cardenal Goma explained as follows: “Jews and masons poisoned the national spirit with evil tales (which were) converted into social and political systems in the nations of darkness manipulated by Semitic internationalism” (Laboa, 1985: pp. 142-3). From which one can deduce, logically, the moral advice of this same prelate to the leaders of the military uprising when they came to govern: “Do not make a pact with the devil, even in the face of demands for social freedoms; conceding rights to the citizens... is to bring about the ruin, in the longer term, of the nation which you govern.”
3. Thus for example, in an interview granted by Cardenal Tarrancón to the magazine Cambio 16, published on 10th December, 1984, the following exchange took place: Cambio 16 “During the civil war, the Spanish Church and the Vatican openly supported the Nationalists; however, at the end of the dictatorship, relations between the Church and the State were not always cordial. What happened?” V.E. y Tarrancón “During a large part of the period in which the civil war was taking place, the Vatican did not pronounce in favour of either side until, at a given moment (and they should know why), the Vatican sent a Nuncio to visit the National zone, something which everyone understood as official backing of the Movement’s cause. However, the Vatican always has its differences with the Francoist regime. On the one hand, Francoism looked for support from the church, but on the other, the church did not always approve of all that Francoism did. For example, no sooner had the war ended, than a pastoral by Cardenal Goma was published in which he said that we were to search for reconciliation and forget any kind of revenge, something which the Francoist authorities did not like at all, to the extent that the pastoral was prohibited.”
4. Although, as Álvarez Bolado pointed out, this was used earlier as a term of praise by the defenders of the Francoist regime (Álvarez Bolado: 1981, p.231).

5. See the reference to the position of Cardinal Ottaviani: González de Cardenal, 1985, p. 164, note 11.

6. Such was the general history of the Spanish church during this period, but it does not include the Basque church. To the main trend of the alliance with the state, and the secondary one of dissidence (in connection with the handling of the intellectual, social and moral problems I refer to in the text), a third trend of dissent by the Basque church (and in a much more mitigated way by the Catalan church) should be added, which was the result of a marked historical singularity of the church and Catholicism in that region. This singularity can be deduced not only from what happened in 1830, the Civil War and the first stage of Francoism, but also from what occurred in the second stage, as the moderation of the state in the rest of Spain from the sixties onwards was in sharp contrast to the increasing repression in the Basque territories. The political and moral evolution of the Vascongadas provinces also diverged from the rest of Spain during the transition and consolidation of democracy: in the rest of Spain this evolution led to a moral pacification of the country, whereas in the Basque Country it led towards the routinization of violence. The political and moral problems related to the moral tolerance of violent terrorism, and the so-called right to self-determination of nations, are problems which have been posed in different ways and with differing intensity in the Basque church and the rest of the Spanish church. But it is too immense a problem to be discussed in the short space of this footnote.

7. Although in general terms inclination towards voting socialist goes down in relation to the intensity of religious practice, the French example shows the complexity of the vote of practising Catholics. In a survey in the region of Grenoble, in 1982, this vote was broken up into: a vote for socialist leaders which did not correspond with leftwing sympathies (9%); a vote for leaders of the centre, compatible with left-wing sympathies (10%); and a vote for leaders of the centre with no left-wing sympathies whatsoever (45%) (Brechon, Denni, 1983).

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