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# Latinism and Hispanism in the Hispano-American Right in Interwar Spain and Argentina

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## Abstract

During the first decades of the twentieth century conceptions about Latinism and Hispanism were fundamental to constructing transnational discourses at the service of national causes in Europe and Latin America. In this framework, both in Argentina and Spain the new Right emerged in the heat of the fin-de-siècle carrying new visions on Latinism and Hispanism. During the First World War Latinism and Hispanism were harshly confronted. After the conflict, a process of ‘cross-fertilization’ took place in both countries. In the interwar period, authoritarian movements and right-wing regimes shared a series of political objectives, a common vision, and the feeling of being part of a historical mission against communism in the name of a ‘Catholic civilization’. In the context of the Spanish Civil War a ‘Catholic renaissance’ unfolded: a Hispanism that included a Latinist dimension was projected both in Francisco Franco’s Spain and unstable pre-Perón’s Argentina.

## Keywords

Spain – Argentina – fascism – right-wing movements – Hispanism – Latinism – Catholicism – interwar period

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## Introduction

In recent decades, studies on right-wing movements developed in the interwar period have led intense discussions on the transnational, global and generic character of fascism. Debates on ‘transnational consensus’ have centered many works and have showed a considerable benefit for the history of fascism. Transition from comparativism towards transnational history has stimulated new studies and perspectives. However, it has also showed some problematic and ‘superfluous’ approaches.<sup>1</sup> In this context, relevant scholars have underlined that the assumption that fascism was strictly a ‘European phenomenon’ would no longer resist critical and careful examination.<sup>2</sup> Focusing on the links between the exponents of classical fascism, Italy and Germany, could be problematic because of the risks of leaving aside ‘peripheral’ scenarios, both European and non-European. Some recent research has shown the potential of a different and decentralized approach focused on the relations between America, Europe and Asia.<sup>3</sup> However, debates on the ‘global’ character of fascism are far from being closed.<sup>4</sup>

This article does not ask whether or not fascism became a universal phenomenon, but instead considers that we should talk of a universal *era* of fascism that resulted from the classical phenomenon being reworked and adapted, influenced by both the local and the transnational.<sup>5</sup> It was shaped as a multifaceted interwar universe characterized by a process of hybridization and ‘cross-fertilization’ that included both reactionary nationalists and fascists.<sup>6</sup> As

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- 1 Ángel Alcalde, ‘The Transnational Consensus: Fascism and Nazism in Current Research,’ *Contemporary European History* 29, no. 2 (2020): 243–252.
  - 2 Reto Hofmann and Daniel Hedinger, ‘Editorial—Axis Empires: Towards a Global History of Fascist Imperialism,’ *Journal of Global History* 12, no. 2 (2017): 161–165; Gabriela Da Lima Grecco and Leandro Pereira Gonçalves, eds., *Fascismos iberoamericanos* (Madrid: Alianza, 2022).
  - 3 Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, eds., *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2017); Liam Liburd and Paul Jackson, ‘Debate: Decolonising Fascist Studies,’ *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 10, no. 2 (2021): 323–345, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-bj110039>.
  - 4 Tim Jacoby, ‘Global Fascism: Geography, Timing, Support, and Strategy,’ *Journal of Global History* 11, no. 3 (2016): 451–472.
  - 5 The same perspective is suggested in Bàrbara Molas, ‘The Classocracy League of Canada: A Fascist Form of Canadian Multiculturalism?,’ *Fascism* 11 (2020): 31–58, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-bj110038>.
  - 6 Aristotle Kallis, ‘The “Fascist Effect”: On the Dynamics of Political Hybridization in Inter-War Europe,’ in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, eds. Antonio Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), 13–41.

David Roberts argued, hybridization processes took place in these interactions and shaped a new universe for the right in the interwar period.<sup>7</sup>

In this process, Hispanism and Latinism as ‘macro-national’ horizons were fundamental to understand both the relationships between Argentina and Spain and the development of right-wing nationalist discourses in both countries from the 1920s to the 1940s. The ties between the two countries, of course, were based on the close cultural and political relations forged between the two countries since the nineteenth century and an important demographic presence of European immigrant communities in Argentina, whose population had about 30 percent of immigrants in 1914 (in Buenos Aires it was 49 percent and over 1.5 million Spaniards went to Argentina between 1882 and 1930).<sup>8</sup>

Several works have analysed the topics of this article. However, they have mostly studied Latinism and Hispanism as confronted macro-national projects and did it without considering the Great War as key point for examining the links between the right-wing intellectuals and groups of both countries.<sup>9</sup> Analysing the political and cultural impact of the First World War, provides unprecedented insights into the development of such supra-national visions in the national discourses of both countries. This article proposes a new approach that underlines the hybrid and complementary character of these national and supranational approaches.

### From the Intersecular Crisis to the Great War

During the nineteenth century, the diffusion of French culture was a central element for politics and culture in Spain and Latin America. On the one hand, the idea was widespread that the Enlightenment and the Revolution of 1789 had inspired the Latin American independence movements and became references for Spanish liberals and republicans. On the other hand, their language and cul-

7 David Roberts, *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and Its Era* (New York: Berghahn, 2016).

8 Consuelo Naranjo, ‘Análisis cuantitativo,’ in *Historia general de la emigración española a Iberoamérica*, eds. Pedro Vives, Pepa Vega, and Jesús Oyamburul (Madrid, 1992), 177–200; Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003), 247–249.

9 David Marcihacy, *Raza hispana: Hispanoamericanismo e imaginario nacional en la España de la Restauración* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2010); Laura Fotia, ‘América Latina y la Italia fascista, entre diplomacia cultural y propaganda,’ *Historiografías* 20 (2020): 73–94; Rubén Domínguez Méndez, *Mussolini y la exportación de la cultura italiana a España* (Madrid: Arco, 2021).

ture had a more significant place among the local elites. Finally, it is important to highlight the spread of the myth of the Latin community of nations, which regularly presented France as the leader of this large group of nations in opposition to the materialism represented by the United States.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, among the various meanings of Latinity in both countries the new European right emerged in the heat of the *fin-de-siècle* carrying out a certain appropriation of the concept with the aim of reacting against pan-Germanism, Americanism and socialism. In this sense, Latinity assumed transnational characteristics and was articulated through a process of 'cross-fertilization' under French influence, particularly following the approaches of Charles Maurras and intellectuals linked to the French far-right movement *Action française*. Maurras linked his nationalism with a renewed conception of Europe through his renewed idea of Latinity, which proposed France as heir to the Greco-Roman civilization in contrast to Germany and sympathized with the nations of Catholic tradition and monarchical regime, like Spain, Italy and Portugal.<sup>11</sup> These conceptions confronted the previous link between Latinity and liberalism. Right-wing parties and intellectuals recurrently appealed to Latinity both in Argentina and in Spain.

These Latinist approaches coexisted with the Hispanic projections that had been developed since the end of the nineteenth century in Latin America. In 1898, after Spain's defeat by the United States in the Spanish-America War and the loss of the last Spanish remaining colonies, the Spanish political and cultural elites accepted the fact that they had to reorient their transatlantic projects. Faced with the threat of decadence, Spanish national-Catholicism found in the intellectual and writer Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo one of its most important references. From his point of view, Catholic unity represented the foundational element of nationality and Monarchy constituted the national institution *par excellence*.<sup>12</sup> Despite the heterogeneity of the Spanish Catholic world, his anti-liberal ideology was fundamental in permeating throughout a wide range of groups that assumed that Catholicism was a fundamental component of Spanish national identity and that religion and civilization were identified as irreconcilable elements with liberalism. The idea of a Catholic unity occupied a central place in the articulation of a right-wing pan-

10 Denis Rolland, *La crise du modèle français: Marianne et l'Amérique latine, culture, politique et identité* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Bretagne, 2000).

11 Olivier Dard, 'Charles Maurras, le fascisme, la latinité et la Méditerranée,' *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 95 (2017): 59–70.

12 Alfonso Botti, *Cielo y dinero: El nacionalcatolicismo en España (1881–1975)* (Madrid: Alianza, 2008), 69–80.

Hispanic project that competed with another liberal and 'regenerationist' one, which promoted the strengthening of the cultural and commercial connection with America.<sup>13</sup>

Argentine society was gradually shaped by a cosmopolitan cultural profile that questioned the projects of national homogenization developed by the liberal elites. In this context, European influences played a central role and the debate was between 'nationalists'—supposedly reluctant to foreign influences in the building of the national identity—and the more open 'cosmopolitans'.<sup>14</sup> On the centenary (1910) of Argentine independence, the approaches to the idea of Argentina as a nation and the projects that derived from it became one of the axes around which the political debate was articulated.<sup>15</sup>

In the middle of the debate on how to build and 'regenerate' the discourses of both nations, the First World War broke out. Despite their neutrality, in Spain and Argentina the disputes that were expressed during the conflict were articulated transnationally and led to discussions about the supranational models that should be imposed. Latinist and Hispanicist proposals were especially confronted. Both countries were divided into two sectors, Aliadophiles and Germanophiles, which projected Latinist and Hispanicist proposals for their countries, respectively. As the Argentine intellectual Ernesto Palacio affirmed, Latinity reached its moment of glory with the war.<sup>16</sup> Italian *interventismo* [interventionism] and French propaganda used it as a geopolitical projection in the struggle for political and cultural control of the Mediterranean.<sup>17</sup>

During the war, the appeal to Latinity was intense in various aspects of the broad Argentine and Spanish Allied sectors. This was observed in Spain among the left-wing and also among conservative intellectuals who, like Álvaro Alcalá Galiano, claimed the aristocratic bases of the 'Latin genius', which had already had two capitals, Rome and Paris.<sup>18</sup> In Argentina, Leopoldo Lugones, editor of

13 Isidro Sepúlveda, *El sueño de la Madre Patria: Hispanoamericanismo y nacionalismo* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005), 112–113.

14 Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas: La construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a finales del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001).

15 Fernando Devoto, *Nacionalismo, fascismo y tradicionalismo en la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006), 47–119.

16 Quoted in Federica Bertagna, 'La idea de la latinidad en la política cultural del fascismo en América Latina: El caso de Argentina,' in *La patria hispana, la raza latina: Política y cultura entre España, Italia y Argentina (1914–1945)*, eds. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera and Patrizia Dogliani (Granada: Comares, 2021), 96.

17 Daniel Grange, 'La France et l'Italie au début du XXe siècle : Rivalités méditerranéennes et fraternité latine,' in *La cultura francese in Italia all'inizio del XX secolo: L'Istituto francese di Firenze*, ed. M. Bossi (Florence: Olschki, 2010), 3–12.

18 Álvaro Alcalá Galiano, *España ante el conflicto europeo, 1914–1915* (Madrid, 1916), 156; Maxi-

the *Revue sudamericaine* published in Paris and first president of the Argentine branch of the France-Amerique Committee, also fervently expressed this vision.<sup>19</sup>

Neutralism, Germanophilia and changing appeals to Hispanism provided the sectors that sympathized with the central powers in Spain and Argentina with a coherence that was central to articulate their positions regarding the war and its local and transnational impact. This was clearly expressed in the Spanish right, from Carlism to Maurism, and in intellectuals such as Eloy Luis André and Vicente Gay. The Carlist leader Juan Vázquez de Mella synthesized these ideas by stating that Spanish neutrality and the German cause were connected. The Argentinian Germanophile sector presented many elements in common with its Spanish counterpart. Its most relevant intellectuals include, the jurists Ernesto Quesada, Juan Pedro Ramos, and the then General José Félix Uriburu, who led the coup of 1930. Two journals with the same name—*Germania*—had the financial support of Berlin and illustrated the existence of a shared transnational space marked by neutralism, conservative Hispanism and the struggle against French and revolutionary Latinism. ‘To follow the current of Latin traditions is to walk towards death’, was stated in the first issue of the Spanish journal.<sup>20</sup>

Most of the nuclei of the right-wing neutralists and Germanophiles drew a sharp division between Latinism and Hispanism. This was expressed in establishing the ‘Día de la Raza’ [Day of the Race] as a national holiday in Argentina on 12 October 1917. Hipólito Yrigoyen, the president of Argentina since October 1916, had just completed his first year as president that day and the decree establishing this new holiday stated that it was held in ‘tribute to Spain, progenitor of nations’.<sup>21</sup> A year later, in 1918, the Spanish president Antonio Maura also established 12 October as a national holiday with the same ‘Día de la Raza’.<sup>22</sup>

During the events organized to celebrate the end of the war, the appeals to Latinity grew. The Argentine government decreed 4 and 14 July as national holidays in 1919. In Spain, the Allied Spanish sectors also organized numerous

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miliano Fuentes Codera, *España en la Primera Guerra Mundial: Una movilización cultural* (Madrid: Akal, 2014), 80–89.

19 Hernán Otero, *La guerra en la sangre: Los franco-argentinos ante la Primera Guerra Mundial* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2009), 71; Leopoldo Lugones, *Mi beligerancia* (Buenos Aires: Otero y García editores, 1917), 143–151.

20 Luis Almerich, ‘Por qué vence Alemania,’ *Germania* (Barcelona), March 1, 1915; Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, *Spain and Argentina in the First World War: Transnational Neutralities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 73–75.

21 Quoted in Sepúlveda, *El sueño*, 207.

22 Marcihacy, *Raza hispana*, 516–519.

events and reclaimed the Latin tradition through tributes to France. However, within a few months, the hope placed in the American president Woodrow Wilson became a disappointment for the Allied political groups that had harshly questioned the neutrality of the Argentine and Spanish governments.<sup>23</sup> Before long, Wilson and Versailles had become symbols of great failure. As stated by the Argentine magazine, *Nosotros*, the 'idol' Wilson had ceased to exist; there had been 'the defeat of an immense collective illusion'.<sup>24</sup>

Various transnational projects fought in the open field of forces with the end of the war. As José Ingenieros and Manuel Ugarte showed in Argentina, a renewed continental vision was configured in a broader framework of a growing rejection of Europe as a space of spreading civilization.<sup>25</sup> However, the debate on European inheritances continued to be fundamental and was expressed through the dispute over the denominations 'Latin America' and 'Hispanic America'.<sup>26</sup> For Hispanism, it was a question of putting Spain back into a position of international leadership and projecting the myth of the 'Hispanic race'. This vision was expressed in the weekly *América Hispana*, directed by Julián de Charras in Buenos Aires, that was founded in July 1920 with the goal of developing a 'Hispanic America' against the attempts to build a 'Latin America'.<sup>27</sup> A similar perspective was proposed by the Argentine J. Francisco V. Silva, who affirmed that Hispanism was 'a free Argentine creation'.<sup>28</sup> Many of these ideas would be fundamental to shaping the discourses of the Right in the subsequent decades.

### After the War: Towards a Synthesis of Latinism and Hispanism

The end of the war represented a turning point. Neutrality and the sharp confrontation between Latinist Aliadophiles and Hispanicist-Germanophiles

23 Stefan Rinke, *Latin America in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 189–191; Fuentes Codera, *Spain and Argentina*, 173–178.

24 José Torralvo, 'La vida fugaz de los ídolos: Wilson,' *Nosotros* (Buenos Aires), August 1919, 450–454.

25 Olivier Compagnon, *América Latina y la Gran Guerra: El adiós a Europa (Argentina y Brasil, 1914–1939)* (Buenos Aires: Crítica, 2014), 322–324.

26 David Marciilhacy, "¡Nada de latinismos!": Amérique "latine" ou Amérique "hispanique" *Cahiers d'études romanes* 30 (2015): 199–222.

27 'En voz alta,' *América Hispana* (Buenos Aires), July 1920; Miguel de Zárraga, '¡Hispanos, no latinos!' *América Hispana* (Buenos Aires), July 1920.

28 Juan Francisco Silva, *Reparto de América española y pan-hispanismo* (Madrid: Francisco Beltrán, 1918).

ceased to be a fault line. The division then passed through the defence or questioning of the heritage of the war, interpreted through the failure of the Wilsonian project and the League of Nations. Although it continued to exist for some liberal and republican sectors, the identification between Allied supporters and democratization ceased to exist in Spain and Argentina. In the following years, the Spanish and Argentine right would move from the confrontation between Hispanism and Latinism to a synthesis.

The links that can be drawn between intellectuals such as conservative Spanish intellectual Ramiro de Maeztu and the Argentinean writer Leopoldo Lugones, must be interpreted. Their evolutions show many points in common, their criticism of democracy and liberalism and their claims of leading minorities. The renewed right of the interwar period allowed for a meeting point between the Allied-Latinists and German-Hispanicists. This is shown, in the Argentine case, by the close relationship of Lugones, Manuel Carlés and Juan Carulla with José Félix Uriburu and Juan P. Ramos, who in 1932 created the *Acción Nacionalista Argentina*. The same is also observed in Spain with the support for Primo de Rivera's dictatorship by Allied supporters like Maeztu, Germanophiles like Vicente Gay and José María Salaverría and neutralists like Eugenio d'Ors.

For European Latinists, the fascination for the French and Italian democratic and irredentist field ended in general discontent over the Treaty of Versailles and the failure of Wilson's proposals. After that, the leadership of Latinity passed to the right, and from conservative and nationalist groups to the fascist movement, as the interwar Milanese newspaper *Idea Latina* showed.<sup>29</sup> Latinism was an essential piece in the wide transnational space of the right-wing that included from authoritarian conservatism to fascism.

After the war, a wave of Latinist publications that proposed the creation of a Catholic and Latin front against liberalism and communism was observed among the European right. These ideas, which were later developed in the *Association de la Presse Latine* directed by the Portuguese politician and journalist Augusto De Castro, had considerable success in Spain and Argentina thanks to the dissemination of the ideas of Charles Maurras and the Portuguese intellectual António Sardinha. Maurras and Action française were condemned by Pius XI in December 1926 because of his agnosticism, utilitarian view of religion and his growing influence among catholic European circles. Despite the fact that the condemnation limited his influence in France, outside his

29 Wolf Lepenies, *Le pouvoir en Méditerranée: Un rêve français pour une autre Europe* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2020), 210–213.



country, Maurras continued to be a very relevant thinker. Maurras and Maurrasianism were central in the development of a Catholic renaissance that was particularly intense in Spain and Argentina (as well as in Brazil and Portugal).<sup>30</sup> It coincided (and confronted) with symbolic and mythical references to ancient Rome, and therefore to Latinity understood as its cultural and imperialist expression, developed by Italian Fascism. These references were central not only inside Italy, insomuch as they allowed to inscribe Mussolini's regime in the history of Italy, but also as the ideological base of its imperialist foreign policy.<sup>31</sup>

In Spain, Antonio Goicoechea, one of the most relevant intellectuals linked to the dictatorship of Antonio Primo de Rivera (1923–1930), pointed in *La crisis de constitucionalismo moderno* [The crisis of modern constitutionalism] (1925), to the presence of the synthesized new European right that surpassed the visions of traditionalism and conservatism.<sup>32</sup> The politician and intellectual José Félix de Lequerica and *La Acción*, the main Maurist newspaper, expressed that the ideas of Mussolini merged with calls to give rise to a 'new system'.<sup>33</sup> In Spain, the influence of Maurras was important in shaping conservative Catalan nationalism, articulated around the *Lliga Regionalista* and Eugenio d'Ors, as well as other conservative thinkers such as Azorín and Antonio Goicoechea. In Argentina, his influence would come after the outbreak of the Great War, with the subsequent political radicalization.<sup>34</sup>

30 Annarita Gori, 'The "Association de la Presse Latine": Efforts and Failure of a Right-Wing Transnational Pan-Latinist Project,' in *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism: Crossing Borders*, eds. Valeria Galimi and Annarita Gori (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 109–131; Valeria Galimi, '“Les amis étrangères”: Maurrasian Circles and a French Perspective on the Latin Space During the Thirties,' in *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism: Crossing Borders*, eds. Valeria Galimi and Annarita Gori (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 132–151.

31 Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Rome: Laterza, 2007).

32 Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, *Acción Española: Teología política y nacionalismo autoritario en España (1913–1936)* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1998), 63.

33 Julio Gil Pecharrómán, *Conservadores subversivos: La derecha autoritaria alfonsina (1913–1936)* (Madrid: Eudema, 1994), 31–33; Manuel Peloille, *Positionnement politique en temps de crise: Sur la réception du fascisme italien en Espagne 1922–1929* (Uzès: Inclinaison, 2015).

34 Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, 'Charles Maurras et l'Espagne,' in *Charles Maurras et l'étranger—L'étranger et Charles Maurras : L'Action française—culture, politique, société II*, ed. Olivier Dard and Michel Grunewald (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 193–263; Olivier Compagnon, 'Le maurrasisme en Amérique Latine: Etude comparée des cas argentin et brésilien,' in *Charles Maurras et l'étranger—L'étranger et Charles Maurras : L'Action française—culture, politique, société II*, ed. Olivier Dard and Michel Grunewald (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 283–305.

In Argentina, it became clear that conservatism had emphasized its most reactionary position through the revision of its reactionary theories and by challenging the order inaugurated with the presidency of Hipólito Yrigoyen.<sup>35</sup> The 'red scare' expressed during the Tragic Week of January 1919 (a series of riots and clashes between anarchists and the paramilitary) was fundamental in the birth of paramilitary organizations such as the *Liga Patriótica Argentina* led by Manuel Carlés.<sup>36</sup> These developments, Mussolini's coming to power and the growing influence of Maurras came together to shape a new right that shared a common vision formed by the rejection of democracy, positivism and liberalism and was identified as *nacionalista*.

The boundaries between *nacionalistas* and other political positions were blurred among Argentine rights. Among the intellectuals who stood out, emerged Leopoldo Lugones, who made evident his commitment to the establishment of a military regime.<sup>37</sup> His conception of a new corporate state founded on the pre-eminence of the army as an agent of national unification coincided with a growing interest in the Italian Fascist experience, which he was attracted to, because of its Latinist component among other elements.<sup>38</sup> Among all the projects of this new right, the publication that reached the most relevance was *La Nueva República*. Published between 1927 and 1931, its most prominent figures include the brothers Rodolfo and Julio Irazusta, who visited Spain, Italy and France between 1923 and 1927 and founded the magazine; Ernesto Palacio, a lawyer from Buenos Aires converted to Catholicism after an anarchist youth; Juan Carulla, doctor and volunteer in the Foreign Legion during the Great War; Julio Meinvielle; César Pico; and Tomás Casares. As Julio Irazusta recalled in his *Memorias*, traditionalist, Maurrasian and conservative Catholics coexisted in *La Nueva República*.<sup>39</sup> Despite the differences between them, the journal shared Catholicism, ties with Spain and a radical denunciation of liberal democracy in general. Rodolfo Irazusta maintained in 1928 that 'the Argentine state is Catholic in its origin and its constitution. Democracy

35 Olga Echeverría, *Las voces del miedo: Los intelectuales autoritarios argentinos en las primeras décadas del siglo XX* (Rosario: Prohistoria, 2009); Daniel Lvovich, *Nacionalismo y antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Vergara Editor, 2003).

36 Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900–1932: The Argentine Patriotic League* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

37 Leopoldo Lugones, *La patria fuerte* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar-Taller Gráfico de Luis Bernard, 1930).

38 Alberto Spektorowski, *The origins of Argentina's Revolution of the Right* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2003), 67–77.

39 Julio Irazusta, *Memorias: Historia de un historiador a la fuerza* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1975), 176.

is by nature anti-Catholic. Democracy is incompatible with Argentine institutions.<sup>40</sup> The criticism of the lack of 'national' values among the leading politicians was spread, especially by the Irazsuta brothers, who in 1934 published the book *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico* [Argentina and the British imperialism].<sup>41</sup>

Defined as an 'organ of Argentine nationalism', *La Nueva República* had two main references during its initial years: the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, which was perceived as an authoritarian regime with characteristics much less popular than Italian Fascism, and Maurras' Action française. Critical of democracy and immigration, the myth of the Catholic nation and Hispanism was based on a Maurrasian invocation of the Greco-Latin past. This idealized past was contrasted with a modernity understood as 'decadent'.<sup>42</sup>

In the framework of a 'golden age' of Maurrasianism in Latin America, the influence of Action française was evident in *La Nueva República*.<sup>43</sup> However, the Catholic integralist influence of Tomás Casares and César Pico came into tension with the Maurrasians led by Rodolfo Irazusta,<sup>44</sup> who considered religion from a utilitarian point of view, fundamental as a key element to maintain the hierarchical and authoritarian social order.<sup>45</sup> Unlike Lugones, for whom the myth of 'the strong homeland' represented the stimulus for the homogenization of society and was closer to Italian Fascism, Ernesto Palacio and Rodolfo Irazusta thought that the nation's past was a value in itself, a way to project and politically overcome popular patriotism.<sup>46</sup>

Along with *La Nueva República*, the journal *Criterio*, founded in 1928 by a group of intellectuals attending the *Cursos de Cultura Católica*<sup>47</sup> [CCC; Catholic

40 Rodolfo Irazusta, 'El aniversario de la Constitución,' *La Nueva República* (Buenos Aires), 5 May 1928; quoted in Federico Finchelstein, *Orígenes ideológicos de la 'guerra sucia': Fascismo, populismo y dictadura en la Argentina del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2016), 55.

41 Rodolfo and Julio Irazusta, *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico: Los eslabones de una cadena, 1806–1833* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, 1934).

42 As example: Juan Carulla, 'Democracia y pornografía,' *La Nueva República* (Buenos Aires), December 15, 1927.

43 Denis Rolland, 'L'Action française et l'Amérique latine: Une rencontre,' in *L'Action française et l'étranger: Usages, réseaux et représentations de la droite nationaliste française*, eds. Catherine Pomeyrols and Claude Hauser (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 95–112.

44 Catholic Integralism was a political philosophy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which was rooted in ultraconservative Catholic groups. Its vision discarded religious tolerance and embraced a state constructed along strictly Catholic lines.

45 Echeverría, *Las voces*, 129–145.

46 Devoto, *Nacionalismo, fascismo y tradicionalismo*, 213–214.

47 The CCC was later called the Catholic Institute of Culture of Buenos Aires. The courses served as predecessors for the foundation of the Universidad Católica Argentina.

culture course] founded and directed by Casares and Pico, was fundamental. Directed by Atilio Dell'Oro Mariani in its first months and from 1929 onwards by Enrique Osés, *Criterio* assumed a role centred on the 'invention' of a 'Catholic' nation.<sup>48</sup> From the perspective of the Episcopate, which financed the initiative, in Argentina's national origin Catholicism was confused with Hispanism. In addition to intellectuals such as Jorge Luis Borges and Manuel Gálvez, its collaborators included some of the figures from *La Nueva República*, such as Pico, Palacio and Casares. *Criterio* shared with them an invariably anti-liberal and conservative nationalism and became the ideological laboratory of the Catholic right.<sup>49</sup> The harmony with the Spanish right was evident, as shown by the collaborations of Eugenio d'Ors, who defended postulates very close to those of the journal.<sup>50</sup> In September 1930, the journal gave its support to the coup led by Uriburu. Two years later, after a series of conflicts between the secular sectors that had founded it, the intellectuals linked to *La Nueva República* and the ecclesiastical censor Zacarías de Vizcarra, the direction of the journal remained in the hands of the nationalist priest Gustavo Franceschi, thus showing the displacement of the Maurrasian components by the Catholics. The relations of the *nacionalistas* groups with General Uriburu were fluid in the months prior to the coup of September 1930. Rodolfo Irazusta, Roberto de Laferrère and Carlos and Federico Ibaguren were important in founding the paramilitary group *Liga Republicana*—emulating the *Camelots du Roi*, the youth, royalist, integralist and paramilitary organization of Action française—which organized street disorders prior to the coup d'état.<sup>51</sup> However, its influence on the future regime led by Uriburu would be insignificant.

This process was strongly linked to what was happening in Spain. With the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the proposals of Maurras coexisted with an early reception of the Fascist experience in Italy. The new regime carried out a process of mass nationalization based on Hispanidad that had the approval of the Catholic hierarchy. Hispanism and Latinism were a relevant part of a global national discourse developed in popular culture and cinema.<sup>52</sup> Popular celebrations such as October 12 also played a fundamental role in spreading new (and old) conceptions of Hispanism, closely linked to Catholicism.<sup>53</sup>

48 Loris Zanatta, *Del estado liberal a la nación católica* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1996).

49 Echeverría, *Las voces*, 235–263.

50 Eugenio d'Ors, 'Las naciones y la catolicidad,' *Criterio* (Buenos Aires), January 9, 1930.

51 McGee Deutsch, *Counterrevolution in Argentina*, 193–247.

52 Marta García Carrión, *Por un cine patrio: Cultura cinematográfica y nacionalismo español (1926–1936)* (Valencia: Publicacions de l'Universitat de València, 2013).

53 Marcilhacy, *Raza hispana*, 402–418 and 452–455.

Based on the ideology of Menéndez y Pelayo, the dictatorship affirmed that Spain had to become the defender of traditional values and the spirit of the West in order to face the threat of communism.<sup>54</sup> For the *Unión Patriótica*, the party of the regime, the nation encompassed the social group conceived as an order of associations, classes and unions, which was understood from a general organicistic perspective. The rejection of the liberal tradition was a relevant aspect in José María Pemán and José Pemartín, who identified Carlism as the authentic representative of the national tradition.<sup>55</sup>

The dictatorship promoted the revitalization of Hispano-Americanism in a traditionalist interpretation which emphasized the links among anti-liberalism, Catholicism and Spanish nationalism. This had been expressed before in the journal *Raza Española*, directed by Spanish writer Blanca de los Ríos, in which Antonio Sardinha, and other representatives of Spanish conservatism collaborated.<sup>56</sup> Strongly influenced by the French intellectual Fustel de Coulanges and Maurras, Sardinha was one of the most important traditionalist intellectuals in southern Europe.<sup>57</sup> From his point of view, Hispanism and Catholicism constitute the bases of Latinity, whose centre was not in France, as Maurras claimed, but in the Iberian Peninsula. Latinity was a component of an Hispanism based on a historical unity between Castile and Portugal and constituted as a paradigm of Western civilization against the attacks of liberalism. This is how he explained it in *A Aliança Peninsular* (1924), his last work published in his lifetime, where he claimed an idea of Iberian unity to confront the hegemony of France and England over Europe.<sup>58</sup>

During Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, Sardinha's proposals became hegemonic. In 1930, a Spanish edition of *A Aliança Peninsular* was published, it was translated by the Count of Santibáñez and prefaced by Ramiro de Maeztu. In the prologue, Maeztu argued that Sardinha understood that the main mission

54 Alejandro Quiroga, *Making Spaniards: Primo de Rivera and the Nationalization of the Masses, 1923–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).

55 Giorgia Priorelli and Alejandro Quiroga, 'Consecrating the Fatherland: Catholicism, Nationalism and Fascism in Spain (1919–1939),' in *Conservatives and Right Radicals in Inter-war Europe*, ed. Marco Bresciani (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 257–276.

56 Sepúlveda, *El sueño*, 99–102; David Marciilhacy, 'Las figuras de la "raza": De la España mayor ala comunidad iberoamericana: Perspectivas (post)imperiales en el imaginario español,' *Historia y Política* 35 (2016): 145–174.

57 Ana Isabel Sardinha Desvignes, 'L'Action française au Portugal (1910–1918): Quelques repères pour l'histoire d'une réception,' in *Charles Maurras et l'étranger—L'étranger et Charles Maurras: L'Action française—culture, politique, société II*, eds. Olivier Dard and Michel Grunewald (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 265–282.

58 Ana Isabel Sardinha Desvignes, *António Sardinha (1887–1925): Um intelectual no século* (Lisboa, 2006), 238–241.

of the Hispanic peoples was to ‘watch over their common patriotism, which is its value in the face of universal history.’<sup>59</sup> Ramiro de Maeztu was the one who shared the most similar approaches to Catholicism and Hispanism after meeting Sardinha in Madrid during his exile after the Great War.<sup>60</sup> In February 1927, his adherence to the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera was expressed when he joined *La Nación*, the official voice for Unión Patriótica. There he displayed the influences of Sardinha, Enrico Corradini, Charles Maurras, Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, among others. In December 1927, Maeztu was appointed ambassador to Argentina in Spain. *La Nueva República* affirmed that his arrival symbolized a rapprochement between Argentina and Spain, seeking to return to act as the ‘mother’ of her former colonies, formed ‘by her blood and her spirit’.<sup>61</sup> He was welcomed as a collaborator in *Criterio* and had close relationships with *La Nueva República*. However, Maeztu’s most relevant spokesperson was the Basque priest Zacarías de Vizcarra, resident in Argentina since 1912 and collaborator of the Cursos de Cultura Católica and *Criterio*. The mutual understanding between the two gave rise in an attempt to change the name of the 12 October holiday—‘Día de la Raza’—to ‘Día de la Hispanidad’. Maeztu would end up adopting the term and would make it one of the central mottos of the journal *Acción Española*.

The young Argentine *nacionalistas* and Maeztu established a mutual interaction marked by a criticism of democracy, the value of Catholicism as the axis of national identity, and the desire to revive the Hispanic cultural tradition. This was stated by Rodolfo Irazusta in an article entitled ‘El Día de la Raza’ published on 12 October 1931 in *La Nueva República*: ‘For the Latin, and therefore Spanish, criterion, racial affinity does not derive from blood . . . what unites the Spaniards and the Americans more than blood is religion.’<sup>62</sup>

### Catholicism and *Hispanidad* in the 1930s

In Spain, after the fall of Primo de Rivera, an important mobilization of the right took place that gave rise to the formation of platforms as the *Unión Monárquica*

59 Quoted in González Cuevas, *Acción Española*, 95.

60 Pablo Sánchez Garrido, ‘Maeztu y Portugal: Análisis político e intelectual sobre la Primera República (1910–1926),’ *Hispania*, 254 (2016): 721–749.

61 Quoted in Alfonso Botti and Daniel Lvovich, ‘Ramiro de Maeztu between Spanish and Argentinian nationalism,’ in *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism: Crossing Borders*, eds. Valeria Galimi and Annarita Gori (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 39.

62 Quoted in Botti and Lvovich, ‘Ramiro de Maeztu,’ 46.

*Nacional* and the *Partido Nacionalista Español*, which erratically embodied features of fascism such as militia practices and the cult of violence.<sup>63</sup> The proclamation of the Republic in April 1931 acted as a founding event that gave birth to one of the central political cultures of Francoism, the reactionary nationalist, which coexisted and was related in multiple ways with another anti-liberal political culture, the fascist-Falangist, and also with anti-liberal expressions of political Catholicism.<sup>64</sup> Both political cultures assumed Hispanidad as a key concept.<sup>65</sup>

For Falangism, a Spanish political movement directly inspired by Mussolini's Fascist regime, Hispanidad represented an imperialist project that had to regenerate the nation from an Iberian and Americanist perspective. Since the creation of *Falange Española* (FE) in October 1933, they assumed an imperial ambition, whose material realization was limited to the colonization of Africa. However, they also conceived the American continent as an area of influence. This had been previously expressed by Ernesto Giménez Caballero, one of most relevant fascist intellectuals in Spain and member of the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* which merged with FE in 1934. In *Genio de España* (1932) he had proposed a national resurrection that would carry out a universal and Catholic crusade. This was also what José Antonio Primo de Rivera, FE leader, put forward through his idea of Spain as a 'unidad de destino en lo universal' [unity of destiny in the universal], which included America in a supranational and 'spiritual' project. It was about transforming nostalgia for the imperial past into a future imperialist will. This imperial resurrection had Latin roots. However, they were not in the Italy of Mussolini and Italo Balbo, but in classical Rome and the Catholic monarchs: Spain had been an imperial nation long before Fascist Italy. This was the proposal of Rafael Sánchez Mazas, one of the most relevant intellectuals of Spanish Falangism, who emphasized that Catholicity had to be the starting point of Spanish imperial greatness. In this framework, the Falangists claimed an imperial connotation for the celebration of 'Día de la Raza' and the motto 'Hispanic for Hispanic' against 'Yankee dominatio' in Latin America.<sup>66</sup>

63 Eduardo González Calleja, *Contrarrevolucionarios: Radicalización violenta de las derechas durante la Segunda República, 1931–1936* (Madrid: Alianza, 2011), 131–138.

64 Ismael Saz, *España contra España: Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003).

65 David Marilhacy, 'La Hispanidad bajo el franquismo: El americanismo al servicio de un proyecto nacionalista,' in *Imaginarios y representaciones de España durante el franquismo*, eds. Stéphanne Michonneau and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas (Madrid: Casa Velázquez, 2014), 77–78.

66 Gorgia Priorelli, *Italian Fascism and Spanish Falangism in Comparison: Constructing the Nation* (Cham: Palgrave, 2020), 88–89 and 97–101.

The reactionary nationalist political culture was led by the ideologists of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and monarchists linked in previous years to the Maurista right, such as Antonio Goicoechea, and was articulated through the journal *Acción Española*, founded on 16 December 1931. *Acción Española* conceived itself as part of a shared space with Action française, the Portuguese political movement *Integralismo Lusitano*, and the Nazi and fascist projects.<sup>67</sup> Maurras appeared with Sardinha to represent 'the pure doctrine of monarchism and the exaltation of hierarchies . . . with classicism as a concept'.<sup>68</sup> However, Maurrasian secularism received intense criticism, particularly from Ramiro de Maeztu.<sup>69</sup> *Acción Española* constituted an ultra-conservative Catholic newspaper. Sympathetic to fascism, it was officially defined by the principles of 'Religion, Family, Property, Order and Work'. For years, the paper was characterized by an integralist view inspired by Carlist traditionalism, counterrevolutionary positivism, and corporatism.<sup>70</sup> With these assumptions as a framework, the journal put forth a notable influence on the Spanish right during the years of the Second Republic, especially in *Renovación Española*, directed by Antonio Goicoechea, and the *Bloque Nacional*, led by José Calvo Sotelo. Its strategy was always focused on achieving the establishment of a traditional monarchy by recurring to the military coup.

In Spanish right-wing movements, the connections with Argentina were evident. Despite the fact that it had already circulated in Spanish-American newspapers since at least 1909, Ramiro de Maeztu attributed the paternity of the concept 'Hispanidad' to Zacarías de Vizcarra in the first issue of *Acción Española*.<sup>71</sup> The journal published excerpts from Vizcarra's text that appeared in Buenos Aires in 1926 under the title 'Hispanidad y su verbo' [Hispanidad and its verb] and had served Maeztu to articulate his ideas about Hispanidad.<sup>72</sup> Finally, these ideas were condensed in *Defensa de la Hispanidad* (1934) by Maeztu, which collected his articles published in *Acción Española*. There he maintained that Hispanidad was born on 12 October 1492 and developed as a concept in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. With its Catholic component, it rep-

67 El Conde de Santibáñez del Río, 'El integralismo lusitano,' *Acción Española* (Madrid), 1 July 1932, 145.

68 C.G.-R., 'Charles Maurras y su Diccionario Político y Crítico, por Pierre Chardon,' *Acción Española* (Madrid), December 1, 1932, 666.

69 Ramiro de Maeztu, 'El ser de la hispanidad,' *Acción Española* (Madrid), April 16, 1933, 233–239.

70 'A los dos años,' *Acción Española* (Madrid), December 16, 1933, 627.

71 Ramiro de Maeztu, 'La Hispanidad,' *Acción Española* (Madrid), December 15, 1931, 8–16.

72 Zacarías de Vizcarra, 'El apóstol Santiago y el mundo hispánico,' *Acción Española* (Madrid), August 1, 1932, 385–400.



resented a supra-regional ideal that used religion to promote the cohesion of Spain. Hispanidad was a permanent community based on Catholic principles and made up of those people who gave their culture to Spain and Portugal and included a mission policy: to carry out the Christian idea of humanity. The main idea of the *Defensa de la Hispanidad* exerted a notable influence in Latin America. The favorable reception of the book in Argentina was evident in the reviews by Julio Irazusta and Ernesto Palacio. Irazusta compared it to the program of the *Enquête sur la Monarchie* (1909) by Charles Maurras and concluded that the difference was that Maeztu's proposal did not subordinate his nationalizing project to the establishment of a monarchy, something highly improbable in Argentina, but to a proposal of universal 'evangelization'. Palacio argued that, thanks to two differential elements, language and religion, Argentines were 'Spanish, or rather . . . the extension of Spain in the Río de la Plata'.<sup>73</sup>

The brief experience of the authoritarian and corporatist government led by Uriburu in Argentina promoted a new wave of influence of Italian and Nazi fascism and the European reactionary right. Uriburu was a reader of *Criterio* and *La Nueva República*, an admirer of Italian Fascism, and a personal friend of Leopoldo Lugones and Juan Carulla. In the context of the failed radical military rebellion of 1931 and with no support from the military coup leaders, he adopted intermediary positions between fascism and conservative authoritarianism.<sup>74</sup> After his fall in 1932, nationalist groups and their means of expression multiplied. The authoritarian right began reaching larger audiences and increased their mobilizing power and their calls to put an end to the Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracies and the democratic order. However, the Argentine nacionalistas failed to create a unified party. Disputes between its main leaders—Uriburu; Manuel Fresco, who would become governor of Buenos Aires between 1936 and 1940; Enrique Osés, director of the nationalist newspaper *Crisol*; Juan P. Ramos; Leopoldo Lugones and Juan Queraltó—prevented

73 Julio Irazusta, 'Un acontecimiento de la literatura política española: *Defensa de la Hispanidad* de Ramiro de Maeztu,' *La Gaceta de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires), July 20, 1934, quoted in Eduardo González Calleja, 'El hispanismo autoritario español y el movimiento nacionalista argentino: Balance de medio siglo de relaciones políticas e intelectuales (1898–1946),' *Hispania*, no. 226 (2007), 620; Ernesto Palacio, 'Defensa de la Hispanidad, de Ramiro de Maeztu,' *El Hogar* (Buenos Aires), September 21, 1934, quoted in Noriko Mutsumi, *Julio Irazusta: Treinta años de nacionalismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2004), 112.

74 Olga Echeverría, 'La derecha nacionalista: Decepciones políticas e influjos culturales,' in *Política y vida pública: Argentina (1930–1943)*, ed. Leandro Losada (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2017), 53–68.

it.<sup>75</sup> The most relevant group were influenced by Charles Maurras, Ramiro de Maeztu and Oswald Spengler, but also by Mussolini, Hitler, José Antonio Primo de Rivera and Oswald Mosley. The right-wing movements *Acción Nacionalista Argentina* and *Afirmación de una Nueva Argentina* expressed a strong fascist influence and acknowledged the Uriburu dictatorship as an expression of Argentine fascism.<sup>76</sup> In this context, some nacionalistas ended up defining their ideology as a Catholic fascism.<sup>77</sup>

With the participation of the priest Julio Meinvielle, the *Acción Católica Argentina* was created in 1931 in light of the Italian model of hierarchical organization of the laity and three years later the *Congreso Eucarístico Nacional* was organized—the first in South America. The Congress coincided with the holiday ‘Día de la Raza’ on October 12. The presence of the Archbishop of Toledo, Isidro Gomá y Tomás, and the Vatican Secretary of State and future Pope Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli, reinforced the links between Hispanism, Argentine nacionalistas and Catholicism.<sup>78</sup> In Buenos Aires, Gomá gave an important speech entitled ‘Apología de la Hispanidad’, in which he argued that America was Spain, Spain was equivalent to Catholicity and Hispanidad was synonymous with Catholicism. This identification between the West, Spain and Catholicity postulated that Spain had a relevant civilizing mission. In this framework, the question of how the American countries should be called re-emerged. He found the answer in *Defensa de la Hispanidad*: America was the work of Spain.<sup>79</sup> Within this framework, various Argentine priests, intellectuals, and politicians visited Italy, Germany and Spain, among them Miguel de Andrea, Leonardo Castellani, Juan Carlos Goyeneche and Gustavo Franceschi.<sup>80</sup>

Italian Fascism and the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) were fundamental in this process. By the mid-1930s, Fascist Italy had reached an ideological dead

75 Spektorowski, *The Origins*, 87–94.

76 Lvovich, *Nacionalismo y antisemitismo*, 296.

77 Federico Finchelstein, *Fascismo, liturgia e imaginario: El mito del General Uriburu y la Argentina nacionalista* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2002), 113–130.

78 Loris Zanatta, ‘De faro de la Hispanidad a centinela de Occidente: la España de Franco en América Latina entre la Segunda Guerra Mundial y la Guerra Fría,’ *Anuario IEHS*, no. 23 (2008): 47–73.

79 Isidro Gomá Tomás, ‘Apología de la Hispanidad,’ *Acción Española* (Madrid), November 1, 1934, 193–230; Ángeles Egidio León, ‘La Hispanidad en el pensamiento reaccionario español de los años treinta,’ *Hispania*, 184 (1993): 668.

80 Ernesto Boholavsky and Magdalena Broquetas, ‘Local and Global Connections of Argentinian, Uruguayan and Chilean Fascists in the Thirties and Early Forties,’ in *Intellectuals in the Latin Space during the Era of Fascism: Crossing Borders*, eds. Valeria Galimi and Annarita Gori (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 176.

end. The corporate regime had achieved the limits of the ineffectiveness of its propaganda and Nazi Germany had emerged as a great competitor.<sup>81</sup> However, its influence in Spain and Argentina had been very relevant since Mussolini came to power.<sup>82</sup> The Roman 'civilizing' past, bearer of Latinity and Christianity, could re-emerge thanks to the universality of Fascist Rome, the leader of the Latin peoples. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War fueled the hope of building a new Italian hegemony in Spain. Fascist Italy exported ideas, men, and economic resources to promote a cultural relationship with nationalist Spain based on a project of 'pan-Latin fascism' with the ambition of achieving hegemony. After the Nazi coup d'état in Austria and the failure of the corporatist dictatorship of Dollfuss in 1934, Spain could become the first European country under the influence of Italian Fascism and benefit from its experience and ideology to build a corporate state and a clerical and 'Latin' society.<sup>83</sup>

Although the ambition of Fascist Italy was clear, taking the place that Spain had been in the past and strengthening ties with Latin-America by relying on Italian emigrant communities was a very difficult project. Cultural propaganda was the privileged field of action of the Fascist regime and Argentina was the country where the activity assumed the greatest scope. Art exhibitions, intellectual exchanges, financing of cultural institutions, newspapers, magazines, and schools were some of the principles of this cultural diplomacy. The most ambitious mission was the publication of the newspaper *Il Mattino d'Italia*, founded in May 1930. Its director, Mario Appellius, sought to make Argentina the benchmark for Latinity in Latin America and simultaneously link it with the three benchmarks European Latin nations, Italy, France, and Spain. The newspaper grew in its diffusion and in May 1936, as a result of the conquest of Addis Ababa and the proclamation of the empire, reached 250.000 copies.<sup>84</sup>

81 Alexander De Grand, 'Italian Fascism and its Imperial and Racist Phase, 1935–1940,' *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (2004): 136.

82 Victoriano Peña Sánchez, *Intelectuales y fascismo: La cultura italiana del 'ventennio fascista' y su repercusión en España* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1995); Federico Finchelstein, *Fascismo transatlántico: Ideología, violencia y sacralidad en Argentina y en Italia, 1919–1945* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010).

83 Patrizia Dogliani, 'La intervención cultural de la Italia fascista en el mundo hispánico (1938–1942),' in *La patria hispana, la raza latina: Política y cultura entre España, Italia y Argentina (1914–1945)*, eds. Maximiliano Fuentes and Patrizia Dogliani (Granada: Comares, 2021), 111–134.

84 Vanni Blengino, 'La marcia su Buenos Aires (*Il Mattino d'Italia*),' in *Fascisti in Sud America*, ed. Eugenia Scarzanella (Florence: Le Lettere, 2005), 205–233.

Many nationalists openly expressed their sympathy for Mussolini as a transatlantic leader. This was done by the nacionalista intellectual Felipe Yofre, who thought that Argentina should be identified with Lugones and the ideas of the dictator José Félix. For Yofre, as for the *Partido Fascista Argentina* founded in 1933, fascism was a global ideology that was expressed through national peculiarities. In this framework, fascism—and along with it Catholic and imperial Latinism—and Hispanism could merge in Argentina.<sup>85</sup> However, after receiving Italian military and diplomatic support to win the Civil War, Nationalist Spain followed an alternative path from that expected by the fascist regime. Hispanidad became a central element in his supranational projection.

In both countries there was a conflation between the most openly disruptive ideological components with those of a conservative and traditionalist nature. This process, in which Latinism and Hispanism both confronted and converged, was similar to the one that took place in Portugal, where Mussolini and the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera came to be claimed by *A Monarquía* newspaper as ‘the magnificent triumph of the truths and methods’ of Integralismo Lusitano, the Portuguese traditionalist, Catholic and monarchic movement inspired by Action française.<sup>86</sup>

### The Spanish Civil War and the Franco Regime: An International Crusade

In Spain, the outbreak of the Civil War in July 1936 led to the unification of all right-wing movements and parties into one single party, *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (FET-JONS), founded in April 1937. Although the tensions between the two political cultures never disappeared, the compulsory unification promoted a certain convergence in their approaches.<sup>87</sup> This convergence was exposed during the war by Eugenio Montes in his ‘Discurso a la catolicidad española’, where he stated that, in recognizing the king as a symbol of national unity, Mussolini had made a ‘homage to the eternal’ and had showed that violence was articulated with

85 F. Yofre, *El fascismo y nosotros* (Buenos Aires: Liga Republicana, 1933).

86 António Costa Pinto, *The Blue Shirts: Portuguese Fascists and the New State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 12.

87 On the debate on political cultures in Francoism, see Miguel Alonso Ibarra, ‘Los límites del fascismo en España: Un recorrido crítico por conceptos, interpretaciones y debates de la historiografía reciente sobre el franquismo,’ *Studia Historica: Historia Contemporánea* 35 (2017): 135–170.

the Catholic values and the Spanish imperial past.<sup>88</sup> The spirit of the crusade and the appeal to resuming the projection of Hispanidad became a central propagandistic element. Cardinal Gomá and the Spanish bishops were part of the rebel side as the defender of national essences. Hispanidad thus became an instrument of combat. The appeal to Santiago as the defender of Christendom in the twelfth century re-emerged as the saint of Spain in the fight against the new anti-Spanish heretics.<sup>89</sup>

In a programmatic text collected in an anthology from 1937, José Pemartín, one of the main intellectuals of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera as well as member of Renovación Española and contributor to *Acción Española*, affirmed the need to adopt ‘the world rhythm, the fascist tone or form’. According to him, the solution to the Spanish problem seemed to be envisaged: ‘we can be more fascists than fascism itself . . . Fascism will be, then, the religion of religion’. From his point of view Spain had been fascist ‘with a lead of four-centuries on them [Italy and Germany]. When it was one, great, free and true Spain . . . the *alma mater* of Christian and Western civilization’. Hence, Spain constituted as the fusion of the national—the religious and monarchical substance of traditionalism—and the state, that is, the legal totalitarianism of fascism. Fascism in Spain was to be, ‘the technique of Traditionalism; the translation of Traditionalism with today’s words.’<sup>90</sup>

Similar ideas were observed in Argentina, where the Spanish Civil War, had a fundamental impact while a ‘Catholic renaissance’ unfolded. If Italian Fascism was central among Argentine nacionalistas until 1936, the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain was fundamental for Hispanism to become the axis of their supra-national approaches. The Spanish civil conflict was, in many senses, a prelude of the Second World War that confronted, among many other ideas, fascism and anti-fascism, dictatorship and democracy, and also counterrevolution and revolution, Catholicism and Laicism. From this perspective, it had a deep global impact and divided societies in Europe and Latin America. In Argentina, it helped to resolve the conflict between political fascism and Catholic spiritualism. ‘This is the fascism that was underway in Spain, with the blood of the martyrs’, stated *Crisol* two months after the outbreak of the conflict. In this

88 Eugenio Montes, ‘Discurso a la catolicidad española,’ *Acción Española* (Madrid), March 1, 1937, 203.

89 Eduardo González Calleja and Fredes Limón Nevado, *La Hispanidad como instrumento de combate: Raza e Imperio en la prensa franquista durante la Guerra Civil Española* (Madrid: CSIC, 1988).

90 José Pemartín, ‘España como pensamiento,’ *Acción Española* (Madrid), March 1, 1937, 395 and 399–402.

respect, the Spanish Civil War contributed to the consolidation of the nationalists toward their own Catholic interpretation of fascism.<sup>91</sup>

The civil war was understood by the priest Julio Meinvielle—who frequently published his texts in *Criterio* and *Sol y Luna*—as a ‘holy war’, a ‘theological fight’, a fight ‘for Christ or for the Antichrist’. The ‘crusade’ assumed a universal dimension that included religious and cultural elements shared between Spain and Argentina. The danger of communism and social uprising in Argentina brought both countries together. Not coincidentally, in May 1937 Gustavo Franceschi moved to Spain at the request of Cardinal Santiago Copello.<sup>92</sup> As expressed by *Crisol*—a nationalist newspaper founded in 1932 in which Maeztu published relevant articles—, the future of his transnational project was at stake in Spain.<sup>93</sup> This idea was reaffirmed in a letter published by the Spanish general and founder of the Legión Jose Millán Astray in the Argentinian *La Razón* where he affirmed that Latin America would experience a crisis similar to the Spanish one and that the Francoist solution could be an Argentine solution.<sup>94</sup>

*Crisol* clearly showed the multiple links between fascism and Hispanidad. It was, like *Acción Española*, a meeting place for various groups and tendencies of the Argentine extreme right. Founded by priest Albert Molas Terán and directed by Enrique Osés—who had been director of *Criterio* between 1929 and 1932—it assumed a strident tone, appealed to broad public and published its own collection of books, among which texts by César Pico and Julio Irazusta and books such as *El fascismo*, a selection of texts by Benito Mussolini published in 1933 in Spanish, and *Mi lucha* (1935), an abbreviated version of Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.<sup>95</sup> Faced with the imminent triumph of the nationalist side in the war, the newspaper showed the deep ties between Hispanidad, Francoism and antisemitism that a part of the Argentine extreme right shared.<sup>96</sup> Other publications such as *Clarínada*, *El Pueblo*, *Bandera Argentina* and *Criterio* also showed their alignment with the Francoist side in the war. However, the newspaper that expressed Argentine ties with Hispanism most intensely

91 Spektorowski, *The Origins*, 116.

92 Sebastián Pattin, ‘Guerra española, guerra santa: Apuntes a partir de una controversia conceptual en Argentina (1936–1937)’, *Historia Contemporánea* 60 (2019), 619–646.

93 ‘¿Qué hace América ante la tragedia de España?’ *Crisol* (Buenos Aires), October 13, 1936.

94 Benjamín Villafaña, *Chusmocracia: Continuación de Hora oscura y La ley suicida* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta Mercatali, 1937), 43; quoted in Finchelstein, ‘Fascismos que circulan’, 149.

95 ‘Bibliografía,’ *Crisol* (Buenos Aires), July 18, 1937; ‘Para nuestros amigos,’ *Crisol* (Buenos Aires), September 18, 1937.

96 ‘También nosotros gritamos con toda la voz que tenemos: “¡Arriba España!”’, *Crisol* (Buenos Aires), February 28, 1939.

was *Sol y Luna*, which was published in Buenos Aires between November 1938 and May 1943. It was directed by Mario Amadeo, Juan Carlos Goyeneche and José María de Estrada, and some of its members included former collaborators of *La Nueva República* and *Criterio*, like César Pico and Nimio de Anquím. Its symbols, the cross and the sword, referred directly to the ideas and aesthetics of *Acción Española*.

The closeness to the regime led by Francisco Franco in the early 1940s was no wonder. *Sol y Luna* joined the Hispanic campaign, highlighting the virtues of Spain and its evangelical task. César Pico, one of the most influential intellectuals in the Cursos de Cultura Católica that started in 1922 in Buenos Aires with the aim of ‘reconquering’ culturally and spiritually the Argentinian society, echoed Maeztu’s proposals and affirmed that Hispanidad should not represent a return to the old dependence with Spain, but rather that it should be understood as a regeneration factor in accordance with Argentine characteristics. It was a message that was addressed simultaneously to Argentina and Spain. From his perspective, transnational fascism, and the regime led by Francisco Franco after the Civil War within it, was a modernization factor. For Pico, nationalism and fascism represented a step towards Hispanism. In this sense, Argentine nationalism was nothing more than the representation of a transnational process that in Italy was expressed as Fascism. As he argued in the *Carta a Jacques Maritain sobre la colaboración de los católicos con los movimientos de tipo fascista* (1937) [Letter to Jacques Maritain on the collaboration of Catholics with fascist-type movements], Argentine nationalism had to be ‘Christianized fascism’.<sup>97</sup> Thus, Catholicism provided fascism with a doctrine while fascism provided Catholicism with a modern spirit of action. José María Estrada raised similar arguments, for whom Franco’s victory in Spain united Catholicism with fascism.<sup>98</sup> Faced with the difficulties to incorporate the elements projected by the fascist propaganda in Argentina, the nacionalistas assumed Latinism through the Catholic matrix. This was expressed by Gustavo Franceschi, director of *Criterio* and contributor to the newspaper *Il Mattino d’Italia*. In his view, Fascism—and its Latinist-Romanist perspective—and Hispanidad merged through Catholicism. The thread between Argentina and Rome had to pass through Madrid. Argentina was something quite different from the ‘colony of Liguères’ that Mussolini had imagined.<sup>99</sup> This was exactly the same idea that Rafael Duyos, regional leader of Falange in Argentina, expressed in a letter to Rafael Sánchez Mazas signed in May 1939 in which he recognized

97 Quoted in Finchelstein, ‘Fascismos que circulan,’ 142.

98 Spektorowski, *The Origins*, 117–123.

99 Leticia Prislei, *Los orígenes del fascismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2008).

the influence of Ramiro de Maeztu, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Eugenio d'Ors, Onésimo Redondo and the leadership of Francisco Franco. Above all of them was, of course, Jesus Christ.<sup>100</sup>

The proposals of Eugenio Montes, José Pemartín and José María Pemán showed a line of continuity with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Their ideas for Spain coincided with the ones of *Soly Luna*. In fact, Pemán affirmed in *Soly Luna* that Hispanidad represented the best way to link Fascism and the Catholic Church and called it 'Christian totalitarianism'. His objective was turning Nazism into Christianity.<sup>101</sup> Similar ideas were presented by César Pico.<sup>102</sup> However, the Argentine nationalists, rather than accepting this 'transoceanic Hispanidad', appropriated their proposal and created an 'Argentinocentric' notion of Hispanidad. Within this framework, various authors, from Leopoldo Lugones to Rodolfo Irazusta, came to support a proposal for an 'Argentine empire' with Latin American projections. Argentina, heir to the Spanish empire, would simultaneously articulate a Latin American imperialism and a British and American anti-imperialism. This 'European Argentina' would simultaneously defend the Catholic Latin values and Hispanidad.<sup>103</sup>

The integration of America into the national Spanish narrative through the myth of Hispanidad was used by the Franco dictatorship for both internal and external purposes. On the one hand, the regime turned to Hispanidad as a platform for penetration into the American subcontinent. On the other hand, it continued to exploit the nationalist potential that Hispanidad contained as a vector of internal propaganda. The first aspect was developed in the assumption in the immediate postwar period of a combative Hispanidad based on the affirmation of the will of empire and a militant Catholicism. The regime revived the dissemination of Ramiro de Maeztu's ideas, which associated America with Spanish genius, the religious values of Catholicism, and nostalgia for the Hispanic Empire. To the official Francoist discourse, the nuclear idea of empire and even more so the doctrine of Hispanidad offered a possible way of overcoming the old nationalism centered on an exclusive affirmation of the Spanish homeland. To endow its foreign action with a project capable of linking Ibero-America and Franco's Spain, the regime created the *Consejo de la Hispanidad* [Counsel of Hispanidad] in November 1940. From mid-1941 to early 1942, this

100 Letter from Rafael Duyos to Rafael Sánchez Mazas, Buenos, 14 June 1939, Box 51/20923, IDD (09)017.012, Delegación Nacional del Servicio Exterior, Archivo General de la Administración (Madrid).

101 José María Pemán y Pemartín, 'Pasemos a la escucha,' *Soly Luna* (Buenos Aires), May 1940.

102 César Pico, 'Totalitarismo,' *Soly Luna* (Buenos Aires), October 1939.

103 Finchelstein, *Fascismo transatlántico*, 273–277.



institution tried to invite a series of members from the ultra-conservative Latin American intelligentsia—among them the Argentines César E. Pico, Leopoldo Marechal, Juan Carlos Goyeneche and José María Estrada—to ‘study the fundamental points on which the way of presenting the doctrine of Hispanidad to the world must be based’. However, the developments in the Second World War led to a progressive marginalization of the Council and to a reorientation of Franco’s foreign policy, corroborated by the Allies’ victory in 1945. To ensure its survival in the postwar international order, the regime gradually abandoned its initial belligerent Americanist policy and adopted a new strategy based on the defense of Christian values and the fight against communism. Leaving aside the imperial references, it turned to the universal and Catholic Hispanidad to underline the specificity of the Spanish case. The imperial Falangist ambition to create with America a pan-Hispanic confederation headed by Spain was already an utopia and the Francoist authorities focused on a program more adapted to the country’s possibilities in a world where fascism was no longer an acceptable political project.<sup>104</sup>

### Conclusions

Despite the propaganda exerted by Mussolini’s Italy as well as Nazi Germany, in Europe and America the reactionary right and ‘peripheral’ fascisms tried to be perceived as original and not as mere copies of Rome and Berlin. Simultaneously, they tried to make visible that they were part of a transnational struggle against communism in the name of Western civilization. In Argentina, the different nacionalistas organizations showed a process of hybridization of the two supranationalist visions, Hispanidad and Latinity. They included elements of both to build their own discourse. Even though they constantly appealed to a national specificity, to a unique and different character from Italian Fascism, Nazism or Francoist Hispanism—as for example Federico Ibarguren<sup>105</sup> argued—, their visions were articulated transnationally. In this context, their conservative, reactionary, counter-revolutionary and Catholic approaches mixed traditional and modern elements. In this process, the contributions made by the European fascist experiments—the appeal to violence, the regenerative character of ultra-nationalism, among others—were very present.

104 González Calleja, ‘El hispanismo autoritario español,’ 629–633.

105 Federico Ibarguren, *Orígenes del nacionalismo argentino, 1927–1937* (Buenos Aires: Celcius, 1969), 12.

Argentina's Hispanism and Latinism were far from being conceived as tools for an impossible colonial expansion in Spain. However, they were central elements in the configuration of a universal projection with transnational values that were adapted to local aspirations. It was a community that widely surpassed the limits of each of the countries and that at the same time allowed them to be united in a higher entity without losing their particular characteristics.

During the interwar period, authoritarian movements and right-wing authoritarian regimes—both the 'old' reactionary conservatism and the 'new' radical fascist variants—thought of themselves simultaneously from national and transnational perspectives.<sup>106</sup> They were part of a new political and intellectual wave that shared a series of objectives, a common vision and the feeling of being part of a historical mission. In this framework, intellectuals assumed a leading role as transnational agents and mediators. Their global visions, their participation in international networks and their trips between Paris, Lisbon, Rome, Madrid and Buenos Aires, were central.

The frictions between the national and supranational frameworks were intense in the development of the main nuclei of the renewed authoritarian and fascist right in Spain and Argentina. However, the influences of the Latinist approaches coming from the French integral nationalism and Italian Fascism ended up being absorbed by Hispanidad in the heat of the Spanish Civil War. Far from being exclusive, the 'Latino space' and the 'Hispanic space' were complementary and were locally reinterpreted in accordance with the political conditions of each country and with the search for a national identity. In this process, the role played by Catholicism was fundamental to link both supra-national projections. In this regard, hybridization of political cultures and supra-national visions were a key aspect in the building of both Argentinian and Spanish right-wing discourses and projects. The promiscuous nature of the fascist ideology, as well as its pragmatic character, made transnational exchanges and the use and adaptation of other national and supra-national models possible.

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106 Ismael Saz, Zira Box, Toni Morant, and Julián Sanz, eds., *Reactionary Nationalists, Fascists and Dictatorships in the Twentieth Century* (Cham: Palgrave, 2019); Marco Bresciani, ed., *Conservatives and Right Radicals in Interwar Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).