‘Everybody’s Favourite Fascist’: An Examination of the Figure of José Antonio Primo de Rivera within the Historiography of Spanish Fascism

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Abstract

As the founder and leader of the *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx), José Antonio Primo de Rivera has been almost universally held by historians specialising in fascist studies as the only important figure of Spanish fascism. Primo de Rivera's movement, a paramilitary organisation that publicly endorsed the toppling of the democratic Spanish Republic, was noted for its inflammatory rhetoric and violent actions. Yet, Primo de Rivera has recently been described by eminent American historian of fascism Stanley Payne as 'everybody's favourite fascist'.

This thesis argues that historians of twentieth century Spanish politics have overwhelmingly idealised Primo de Rivera in a manner incongruent with the long-standing mainstream academic hostility towards fascism. He has been depoliticised and reified into an upstanding 'gentleman', yet still understood as the only 'important' fascist in Spanish history. His violent rhetoric has been classed as 'poetic', and his violent actions as heroic in spite of their alignment with traditional understandings of fascism. This image has been reinforced by the centrality of Francisco Franco, long-held by most mainstream historians to be non-fascist in character, to acrimonious historical polemic over the nature and legacy of Spanish fascism. This thesis demonstrates that the confused and misleading nature of this historical assessment of Primo de Rivera has not been adequately addressed by historians. With Primo de Rivera upheld as an aberration from 'normal' fascism, deeper critical inquiry into the role fascism played during the Second Spanish Republic, and subsequent Franco dictatorship, has been unnecessarily stymied.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Introduction

As the founder and leader of the *Falange Española* (Spanish Phalanx), José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1903-1936) has been almost universally held by historians specialising in fascist studies as the only important figure of Spanish fascism.[1] Many historians have even seen his personality as inextricable from the very concept of Spanish fascism.[2] Primo de Rivera's movement, a paramilitary organisation that publicly endorsed the toppling of the democratic Spanish Republic, was noted for its inflammatory rhetoric and violent actions. This violence has been understood as an important factor in the political destabilisation which led to the Spanish Civil War and decades of dictatorship under General Francisco Franco (1892-1975). Yet, Primo de Rivera has recently been described by eminent American historian of fascism Stanley Payne (b.1934) as 'everybody's favourite fascist'.[3]

Primo de Rivera's personal charm has been well documented, his rhetoric has been classed as poetic, and his death has been viewed as a needless tragedy. In 1999, prominent British historian Paul Preston (b.1946) claimed that 'the attractions of [Primo de Rivera's] personality have seduced more than one Anglo-Saxon scholar'.[4] The relevance of this seduction, mentioned only in passing by Preston, was demonstrated five years later in *Fascists* (2004) by American sociologist Michael Mann (b.1942). In this highly-acclaimed book, which denounced fascism as a fundamentally evil force, Mann nevertheless outlined an image of Primo de Rivera that fits within Preston's notion of seduction.[5] Mann claimed that Primo de Rivera's 'poetic and sentimental style, squeamishness, and political innocence typified the kind of "moral fascist" who rarely survived at the top of fascist movements'.[6] Mann did not clarify what he meant by squeamishness, political innocence or even 'moral fascist', or offer evidence to support the use of these terms. Instead, he referred to a well-established historical perspective of Primo de Rivera as fundamentally distinct from norms of fascist leadership. This thesis critiques the manner in which historians have consistently portrayed Primo de Rivera in a positive light, through an examination of his personal leadership of the *Falange*, his relationship with violence, and the legacy of Francoism.

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[1] I have supplied the dates of birth and death of relevant figures where possible.
[2] Nathanael Greene, *Fascism* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 247.
[3] Stanley Payne, *Spain: A Unique History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 202.
[4] Paul Preston, *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War* (London: HarperCollins, 1999), 77.
[5] Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4.
[6] Ibid., 334.

Fascism is among the most nebulous of political concepts, with academics unable to define the term without controversy.[7] Fascism is understandably reviled for its association with the material and human destruction of the Second World War, and of the genocidal horrors perpetrated by Nazi Germany in the Holocaust. Fascism as a form of government, therefore, has been thoroughly discredited. Even its nature as an ideology has been contested. Regardless of definitional concerns, the idea of a 'generic fascism' has become widely accepted in English-language historiography. This conceptualisation categorises the myriad of aggressively nationalistic and purportedly totalitarian movements as members of the same general political phenomenon. Even though many of these groups had highly idiosyncratic elements, 'fascism' is thus understood as a 'generic' category, beyond the specific examples of the regimes of Italy and Germany. While the work of influential British historian Roger Griffin (b.1948) has forcefully argued for treating fascism as a genuine ideology, some historians still feel that to acknowledge fascism this way risks rehabilitating its elitist, violent ideals and de-emphasising the practical consequences of fascist rule.[8]

This shift towards an emphasis on ideology has not softened academic denunciation of fascism itself. Griffin demonstrated the mainstream historical perception of fascism when he pleaded his case for the publication of a collected volume of fascist texts in 1995:

> A Reader devoted to fascism might thus be construed as endowing with a bogus aura of serious theoretical content, and even dignity, something which is best regarded as a perversion of human mind and spirit. Yet there is no reason in principle why primary sources relating to negative aspects of the human condition should be any less worthy of scholarly or general interest than positive ones.[9]

He twice emphasised the dangers of fascism. There were 'scores of other fascist movements which fortunately for humanity have withered on the vine before achieving power', and 'fortunately for humanity only two fascist movements have been in a position to attempt to implement their total solutions to society's alleged woes'.[10] Griffin's critique of fascism is representative of the mainstream academic tradition.

This thesis seeks to explore how and why, in a historiography so generally hostile to the ideals and practice of fascism, one fascist leader has been comparatively lionised by

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[7] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of* Fascism (London: Routledge, 1991),1.
[8] Dave Renton, *Fascism: Theory and Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).
[9] Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1.
[10] Ibid., v.; Ibid., 7.

academics. Its research and perspective are thus inspired by a series of questions: Given the near universal academic condemnation of fascism as a political force, what are the reasons for historical idealisation of José Antonio Primo de Rivera as the main embodiment of Spanish fascism? What justifications have historians used to maintain this position? Why has this 'soft' image of Primo de Rivera been so resilient across almost eight decades of scholarship? What can this continued sympathy for him demonstrate about the historiography of fascism more generally? In short: Why has Primo de Rivera been spared the historical denunciation typically seen in the case of fascist leaders? The thesis argues that, while he is almost universally categorised as a genuine fascist leader, he has nevertheless typically been 'depoliticised'. He is routinely upheld as a sympathetic individual, distinct from the typical condemnations associated with fascist leadership.

This thesis is structured around two important criteria from the most influential definition of fascism: the typology outlined by Stanley Payne in *Fascism* (1980).[11] Payne has also been the predominant historian on the topic of Spanish fascism, so his perspective is of immense importance. The first criterion examined is charismatic leadership, and the second is the exaltation of violence. Neither criterion has been effectively applied by historians to Primo de Rivera's leadership. After demonstrating these points, the thesis expands in scope to consider why these idealised visions of Primo de Rivera have persisted. The bitterly contested legacy of the fate of the Spanish Republic and the subsequent Franco regime has insulated Primo de Rivera from the most negative elements of the label of fascism.

To my knowledge, such an inquiry into Primo de Rivera as a fascist leader has not previously been attempted on this scale, or from the perspective of generic fascism. The only significant study of how historians have represented Primo de Rivera came in the final years of the Francoist regime. In 1974, Spanish historian Luis Álvarez Gutiérrez published 'Ensayo Bibliografico sobre José Antonio Primo de Rivera' (Bibliographic Essay about José Antonio Primo de Rivera).[12] Álvarez Gutiérrez focused on Francoist literature, which he lamented was generally propagandistic in nature, written by 'admiring panegyrists'.[13] While he did acknowledge both Payne and American historian Herbert Southworth (1908-1999), Álvarez Gutiérrez did not significantly engage with the Anglophone literature, nor did he use fascism as a framework of critique. The scope of this thesis is thus much wider than that of Álvarez Gutiérrez' and is based more systematically within the framework of generic fascist studies.

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[11] Stanley Payne, *Fascism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).
[12] Luis Álvarez Gutiérrez, "Ensayo Bibliografico sobre José Antonio Primo de Rivera," in *Estudios de Historia Contemporanea*, ed. Vicente Palacio Atard (Madrid: Instituto Jeronimo Zurita del C.S.I.C, 1974).
[13] Ibid., 442.

An important point to address is that Anglophone historiography has almost universally followed the Falangist and Francoist model of addressing Primo de Rivera not by his surname, as is traditional in historical study, but as 'José Antonio'. This nomenclature was first suggested by Primo de Rivera himself, and was widely adopted within his lifetime.[14] He is the only modern Spanish historical figure who is generally known by his first name.[15] While this does serve the convenient purpose of distinguishing him from his father, the military dictator of Spain in the 1920s, in almost all situations context would make it clear which individual was being discussed, thus rendering this form of distinction unnecessary.[16] As much of the idealising force has come from portraying Primo de Rivera as a sympathetic gentleman, I will reject this convention and refer to him by his surname in line with standard historical practice.

Historical Background of the Spanish Republic, Civil War and Franco Regime

To appreciate the significance of the academic response to Primo de Rivera, it is necessary to locate it within the context of Spanish political history. After a period of semi-liberal rule from 1874, the Spanish government was overthrown in a 1923 military coup by General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1870-1930), José Antonio's father. Ruling paternalistically, General Primo de Rivera led Spain until 1930. While historians have been ambivalent towards the political efficacy of his rule, they have generally portrayed him as amongst the most benevolent of all dictators.[17] After losing the support of the Spanish political elite, he fled to France in early 1930 and died a few months later. The resulting power vacuum unsettled the political support of King Alfonso XIII (1886-1941), who fled Spain in 1931 after municipal elections elected pro-Republican candidates on a wave of anti-monarchical sentiment. The Second Spanish Republic was thus proclaimed in April 1931. The new government was idealistic and reformist in character.

While progressive forces hailed the new Republic as the embodiment of humanistic ideals, many conservative Spaniards, especially those allied with the entrenched authority of the Catholic Church, watched with apprehension and dismay. Various Rightist groups coalesced to oppose the principles of liberal democracy. Such groups included the long-feuding monarchists of *Renovación Española* (Spanish Renewal), who were dedicated to the

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[14] Stanley Payne, *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 56.
[15] Stanley Payne, "Fascist Italy and Spain," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 13 (1998): 104.
[16] Some level of confusion has been seen in the indices of some historical works, however. See Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991) for an example of repeated errors of differentiation of the two men.
[17] Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), viii.

return of Alfonso XIII, and the Carlist *Comunión Tradicionalista* (Traditionalist Communion), who fought for a pretender named Alfonso Carlos (1849-1936) with their violent *Requetés* militia. The most important Rightist group was the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autonómas* (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups, *CEDA*), including its youth wing, the *Juventudes de Acción Popular* (Youths of Popular Action, *JAP*). The *CEDA* was an organisation that was superficially tolerant of liberal democratic norms, yet its leader – José María Gil Robles (1898-1980) – publicly explained that this was merely a technique of 'accidentalism'.[18] This position argued that the political structure of the Spanish state was not important, and thus the Republic did not necessarily need to be opposed, as long as the political results were in line with conservative ideals. Accidentalism was contrasted with 'catastrophism', which argued that even if the Republic achieved conservative goals legally, the institution itself was antithetical to Spanish society and thus should be rejected by force.[19] Thus the *Comunión Tradicionalista*, for example, was catastrophist in orientation. The true nature and intentions of Gil Robles and the *CEDA* have been a topic of passionate historical debate, especially due to the *JAP*'s aping of fascistic style with aggressive slogans and mass rallies. Almost all historians agree that amongst this collection of Right-wing organisations, none can be considered 'fully' fascist in nature, as did they did not fulfil enough of the criteria of fascism.[20] One of these criteria was the need for a charismatic leader, with Gil Robles dismissed as unfit for such consideration due, among other things, to his 'podgy' appearance.[21]

Though the *Falange Española* was the only Spanish fascist organisation that achieved any significance, it was not Spain's first such group. While some histories acknowledge that the earliest form of fascism in Spain was espoused by Ernesto Giménez Caballero (1899-1988), an avant-garde poet inspired by Mussolini, most historians have either ignored him or dismissed him as strange and unimportant.[22] The first important fascist organisation is understood to be the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista* (Unions of the National-Syndicalist Offensive, *JONS*), founded in 1931 by Ramiro Ledesma (1905-1936) and Onésimo Redondo (1905-1936), a post-office worker and beet-farmer respectively. These two men have

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[18] Paul Preston, "The 'Moderate' Right and the Undermining of the Second Republic in Spain 1931-1933," *European Studies Review* 3:4 (1973): 370.
[19] Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 42.
[20] Stanley Payne, *Spain's First Democracy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 168.
[21] Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 178.
[22] Douglas Foard, "The Forgotten Falangist: Ernesto Giménez Caballero," *Journal of Contemporary History* 10:1 (1975): 3.

been represented by historians as 'typical' fascists: harsh, uncompromising and violent.[23] The *JONS*, directly inspired by the German Nazi Party, was small and unsuccessful, barely able to undertake basic functions, let alone gain a significant following. Yet, it gained importance in early 1934 through a merger with the *Falange Española* of Primo de Rivera.

Primo de Rivera founded his own fascist movement towards the end of 1933 in an attempt to lead Spain towards its supposed 'universal destiny'.[24] It was originally to be named *Fascismo Español*, which made its political inspirations and intentions clear. However, Primo de Rivera changed his mind after realising that this name, with its foreign origin, would imply a 'non-Spanish' character unsuitable for a Spanish nationalist movement.[25] The new name maintained the initials, however, which spelled the Spanish word for 'faith', '*fe*'. After the *Falange Española* struggled in relative obscurity for a few months, Primo de Rivera and Ledesma arranged the merger for practical reasons. Both their organisations had sought and received funding from catastrophist financiers, especially industrialists and bankers from Bilbao. Yet, this money was insufficient for their goals and, given the similarity in fascist ideals of the two movements, a joint operation was seen as more financially sensible. The new organisation was entitled the *Falange Española de las JONS*, but in practice historians have simply continued to use '*Falange*'. The name of the organisation demonstrates the dominance of Primo de Rivera, rather than of Ledesma or Redondo. While this naming practice has the potential to cause confusion, the period of pre-merger *Falange Española* operation only lasted a few months. As such, a specific focus on differentiating these movements through precise nomenclature has not been a historical priority. Subsequently, in this thesis, '*Falange*' refers to the post-merger organisation in operation between 1934 and 1936, with '*Falange Española*' used specifically to refer to Primo de Rivera's original movement. The *Falange* outlined a platform of its ideas, known as the Twenty-Seven Points. While these will be explored in detail below, it is worth stating that they have been understood as representing a typical form of fascism.

Historians agree that the only legitimately fascist movements in Spain were the *JONS*, *Falange Española* and, subsequently, the *Falange*. Yet, at the time, liberals and Leftists ascribed the label of fascism to large swathes of the Spanish Right. This was primarily because, although the *Falange* was strident in its rhetoric, its membership was tiny compared to other

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[23] Stanley Payne, "*José Antonio Primo de Rivera,*" in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera,* ed. Enrique de Aguinaga et al., trans. by Cristina Pagès Boune (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003), 183.
[24] John Hammerback, "José Antonio's Rhetoric of Fascism," *Southern Communication Journal* 59:3 (1994): 185.
[25] Payne, *Falange*, 36.

political organisations in Spain. Even at its Republican height, the *Falange* never had more than 25,000 members, up to 70% of whom were under the age of 21.[26] This was dwarfed by the *CEDA*, which claimed 700,000 members.[27] In 1933, the *CEDA* won the first national election since the Republic's initial foundation in 1931, but as Gil Robles was an immensely controversial figure, he was not installed as Prime Minister. When he was offered a cabinet position in 1934, the Left was so outraged at this 'fascist' leader being granted power that an anti-fascist uprising was launched across Spain in protest. The uprising immediately failed almost everywhere, except for some peasant mining communities in Asturias, a province in the north of Spain. The army was called in to crush the uprising. Primo de Rivera offered his Falangist militia to assist in the repression but was rebuffed by the government. Nevertheless, Falangists followed their leader's wishes and were involved in violent reprisals in an unofficial capacity.[28]

During the period 1934 to 1936, the *Falange*'s political influence was limited to a violent escalation of attacks and reprisals against Left-wing activists. Socialist and anarchist youths, seeing how fascism was taking hold elsewhere in Europe, sought to prevent the *Falange* accomplishing the same goal in Spain. Thus, they attacked Falangist newspaper-sellers and attendees at public Falangist gatherings. Within a few months of the beginning of these attacks, Primo de Rivera authorised retaliation. This cycle of violence contributed to the increasing political tensions within the Spanish Republic as it approached the elections of 1936. Primo de Rivera had been elected to parliament in 1933, but as an independent running on a platform of being his father's son, rather than as a Falangist. With no significant representation in Spanish parliament, due to the lack of electoral support for the *Falange*, the movement had no major political impact beyond its role in street violence.

In early 1936, in a climate of immense political polarisation, a grand coalition of liberal-Leftists won the national elections and formed government as a Popular Front. This was a significant blow to the accidentalism of the *CEDA*. Public support for catastrophist alternatives escalated dramatically in the face of the threat of the supposed Communism of the newly elected government, even though the Communist Party had little authority within the coalition.[29] Thousands of members of the *JAP* abandoned their movement which, though

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[26] Ibid., 81.

[27] Pamela Radcliff, *Modern Spain: 1808 to the Present* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 162.

[28] Sheelagh Ellwood, "Falange Española, 1933-9: From Fascism to Francoism," in *Spain in Conflict 1931-1939*, ed. Martin Blinkhorn (London: SAGE, 1986), 212.

[29] The issue of the strength and intentions of the Spanish Communist Party remains highly controversial. See Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union and Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) for a recent and polemically anti-Communist take on the topic.

fascist in style, had never systematically engaged in political violence, and went over to the *Falange*. Around this time, Primo de Rivera was arrested and imprisoned on the charge of possessing illegal weapons, and the *Falange* itself was criminalised. This did little to stop its subversive activities, and Primo de Rivera was still able to communicate effectively with his movement from within prison.

The Civil War began in July 1936, after military conspirators led by Franco launched an unsuccessful coup. Though Primo de Rivera was not a major figure in this conspiracy, he was peripherally involved in the planning and offered his militia in support of the effort. As the *Falange* became an auxiliary force in the war, its membership swelled even further. Primo de Rivera was executed by a Republican firing squad in November 1936, four months after the outbreak of the war. Franco was secretly pleased by this news because he viewed Primo de Rivera as a dangerous potential rival.[30] In 1937, Franco forcibly co-opted the *Falange* into a new official state party, formed by a merger with various other Right-wing groups such as the Carlists. This organisation, the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS*, is generally understood to have been swiftly 'de-fascistised' and bureaucratised by Franco. Yet, this new state apparatus, generally known simply as the *Movimiento Nacional*, nominally upheld the fascist values outlined by the *Falange*. It officially adopted twenty-six of the 'Twenty-Seven Points' that articulated the *Falange*'s fascist platform. The missing point – that the *Falange* must always be the dominant partner in any political co-operation – was quietly dropped.

The Spanish Civil War was immediately hailed by liberal observers across Europe as the first anti-fascist war. It thus became a rallying point for those with liberal and Leftist values. Fearful of the threat of Communism, the British government joined a non-intervention pact with France, Italy, Germany and the USSR. This pact has long been denounced by proponents of the Spanish Republic as 'malevolent neutrality', dooming Spanish democracy by refusing to defend it.[31] In practice, Italy and Germany intervened significantly on behalf of Franco, sending money and arms. Italy sent thousands of ground troops and assisted in blockading Republican ports, while the German Condor Legion famously bombed the city of Guernica.[32] The Soviet Union sent advisors and munitions to the Republic, but this assistance was on a far smaller scale than that given by Italy and Germany. By early 1939, Franco's rebels had seized the whole of Spain and declared a new dictatorship.

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[30] Paul Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Fontana Press, 1996), 134.
[31] Douglas Little, *Malevolent Neutrality* (London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 8.
[32] Paul Preston, "Mussolini's Spanish Adventure: From Limited Risk to War," in *The Republic Besieged*, ed. Paul Preston et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 22.

After the death of Primo de Rivera, his image was adopted by Franco as the focus of an intense posthumous personality cult. Even though Primo de Rivera had hated Franco and his staid military values, Franco nevertheless enshrined him as primary martyr of the new regime. The cult of '*El Ausente*' (The Absent One) was pervasive: Primo de Rivera's name was carved into every major church in Spain, arterial roads were renamed in his honour, and the anniversary of his death became a national day of mourning.[33] The cult lasted until Franco's death in 1975.

The legacy of Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy, occurring uneasily from Franco's death through the early 1980s, still casts a long shadow over contemporary Spanish politics and academia. Many academics believe that a '*pacto del olvido*' (pact of forgetting) was deliberately sought by Left and Right alike to ensure a peaceful period of transition.[34] With the fratricidal conflict of the Civil War looming in the general consciousness, it was therefore politically expedient to grant an amnesty for all political crimes of the twentieth century, even though almost all of them were committed in Franco's name. The Francoist political bureaucracy was still in control of Spain upon Franco's death, and this amnesty was instrumental in allowing a democratic system to be established. Since the early 2000s, any semblance of this pact has dissipated.[35] Leftist and anti-Franco political figures have sought to reclaim the 'historical memory' of the hundreds of thousands of Francoist victims, long-ignored by the Spanish authorities. This supposed politicisation of history, with proponents instead prioritising 'memory', has caused a polemical backlash from conservative academics and politicians who dismiss 'memory studies' as antithetical to an ideal of 'objective' history.[36] In this politically charged atmosphere, recent historiography on issues relating to the Republic and Civil War has often been marked by personal hostility.

During the Civil War and ever since, many Anglophone academics and public figures took up the cause of the Spanish Republic as a literal force for 'good' in an apocalyptic struggle against fascistic 'evil'. The fact that 'good' was vanquished by 'evil' has ensured that the Spanish Republic has been mythologised as a heroic lost cause. Almost eighty years after the fall of the Republic, the legacy of the Civil War still dominates the Spanish political landscape. This context makes it only more fascinating that the figure of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, dedicated as he was to the quashing of democratic liberalism, remains so widely idealised.

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[33] John Crow, *Spain: The Root and the Flower* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 344.
[34] Carolyn Boyd, "The Politics of History and Memory in Democratic Spain," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617 (2008): 135.
[35] Madeleine Davis, "Is Spain Recovering its Memory? Breaking the *Pacto del Olvido*," *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (2005): 866.
[36] Helen Graham, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Spain's Memory Wars," *History Today* 54 (2004): 31.

Sources

This thesis is largely historiographical in nature. It examines how historians have approached the topic of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and Spanish fascism. It has encapsulated a very broad field of research, across four main types of sources: works focusing specifically on Spanish fascism, works about Spanish political history, works focusing on other variants of fascism, and works about generic fascism more broadly.

The first set of sources, those directly relating to Primo de Rivera and the *Falange*, are the most obviously relevant to this thesis. In examining these sources, it is possible to understand how historians have most clearly approached Primo de Rivera and Spanish fascism, as this topic was their explicit concern. There are comparatively few such sources, compared to the broader literature around the Spanish Republic, Civil War and Franco regime. As a result, a small number of works have dominated, referenced repeatedly over the decades as established authorities on the topic. Most notable for this thesis is the work of Stanley Payne, as he has been both the leading historian of Spanish fascism and among the most sympathetic historians towards Primo de Rivera.

The second set of sources involves the immense literature on the Spanish Republic, Spanish Civil War and Franco regime. Primo de Rivera and the *Falange* are comparatively incidental in these historical works, but this does not make them less important for this study. In fact, the way academics have addressed Primo de Rivera in an incidental sense is an important representation of general academic perspectives. Because they were not necessarily experts in the intricacies of Spanish fascism, or at least not interested in exploring detailed nuances at that time, their summaries of Primo de Rivera are enlightening. These works are often widely read. Each example presents us with a concise synthesis of the author's understanding of Spanish fascism. In practice, there is significant overlap in authorship with the first set of sources.

This thesis also explores historical perspectives on other variants of fascism to demonstrate the unusual nature of the historical position taken towards Primo de Rivera. The primary point of comparison is with the historiography of Oswald Mosley, leader of the *British Union of Fascists* (*BUF*). This comparison was chosen both for the historical similarities between the two fascist leaders, and the historiographical importance of Mosley to Anglophone literature on fascism. Mosley was the only other fascist leader who had an aristocratic background and a similarly 'refined' public image. Neither Mosley nor Primo de Rivera led their movements to victory, and neither one was thrust into power by Hitler's European conquests. Importantly, in assessing the Anglophone historical response to Primo de

Rivera, the choice of Mosley is informative. As his movement has been a highly popular topic of British historians' study of fascism, their perspectives on him can be readily compared with Anglophone perspectives on Primo de Rivera.[37] The figures of Primo de Rivera and Mosley have been compared before, but only in a historical rather than historiographical manner.[38] The response of Anglophone historians to the figure of Mosley, whose fascist movement directly threatened their own nation, is thus an important gauge of Anglophone historical perspectives on fascism more generally.

Finally, I have undertaken extensive study regarding how historians have conceptualised fascism. The two most influential definitions of fascism, by Payne and Griffin, have been given prominence and will be explored subsequently. Beyond these examples, however, the literature on fascism that has been consulted for this thesis is vast.

Methodology

This thesis involves the critical reading of historical works about Primo de Rivera and Spanish fascism through the lens of generic fascism. I have examined historical works on other national varieties of fascism, as well as works devoted more specifically to fascism as a generic concept. This methodology is inherently comparative, and this thesis involves a form of 'asymmetrical comparison' as outlined by German historian Jürgen Kocka (b.1941). While historiographies of fascists and fascisms elsewhere are invoked to illustrate key points, the main focus of this thesis remains the Spanish case. Some historians have raised concerns with the methodology of asymmetrical comparison, as it potentially runs the risk of overreliance on secondary literature on topics outside the field of expertise of the historian doing the comparison.[39] Another issue highlighted by Kocka is that the choice of comparison can be selective, and thus potentially misleading.[40] Yet, Kocka specifically justifies the value of asymmetrical comparison in postgraduate dissertations. As dissertations are limited in scope and space, asymmetrical comparison is the only plausible mechanism for including any comparative features at all.[41]

Given the vastness of Spanish material on the topic of Primo de Rivera, it is necessary to explain why this thesis focuses primarily on Anglophone literature. I must emphasise that I have examined key Spanish-language sources, including recent academic debates over the

[37] Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 305.
[38] See Stephen Cullen, "Leaders and Martyrs: Codreanu, Mosley, and José Antonio," *History* 71 (1986): 408-430.
[39] Jürgen Kocka, "Comparison and Beyond," *History and Theory* 42 (2003): 41.
[40] Jürgen Kocka, "Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German *Sonderweg*," *History and Theory* 38 (1999): 49.
[41] Ibid.

relevance of fascism in defining Francoism. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of these Spanish sources are my own. There are three major reasons for the predominant emphasis on English-language sources. Firstly, due to Francoist censorship from the mid-1930s through to the early-1970s, Spanish historians were limited in their output.[42] Archives were only accessible to authorised individuals, who were often regime functionaries rather than trained historians.[43] Histories of the *Falange* and Primo de Rivera during this time were hagiographic and devoted to justifying the rule of Franco rather than exploring genuine historical issues. Most of these works had no significant academic impact outside Franco's regime, and hold no historical authority today. The formative years of the field of twentieth-century Spanish history, therefore, were entirely dominated by non-Spanish historians. The concern regarding academic freedom has dissipated since Spain's transition to democracy, and since then Spanish historians have come to the fore. While Payne has been dismissive of the quality of Spanish scholarship, it is nevertheless accepted as genuinely historical in nature, rather than ahistorical propaganda.[44] Thus, the Spanish-language sources that have been utilised in this thesis are generally from the 1990s and later.

Secondly, the absence of academic histories of Spain produced under the Franco regime meant that Anglophone perspectives were considered significant within Spain itself. *Ruedo Iberico*, a post-Civil War publishing house based in Paris and run by Spanish exiles, operated a clandestine operation to translate English-language histories and smuggle them into Spain.[45] These books were highly prized by Spanish intellectuals for their relative objectivity in respect to Francoist material.[46] Even amongst Spanish historians, the foundational texts on Spanish fascism and the Spanish Civil War remain those by the Anglophone authors known as Hispanists.[47] Their works have been immensely influential in Spain.[48]

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[42] Paul Preston, "War of Words: The Spanish Civil War and the Historians," in *Revolution and War in Spain*, 1931-1939, ed. Paul Preston (London: Methuen & Co., 1984), 5.
[43] Michael Richards, "Civil War, Violence and the Construction of Francoism," in *The Republic Besieged*, ed. Paul Preston et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 198.
[44] Stanley Payne, "Recent Historiography on the Spanish Republic and the Civil War," *The Journal of Modern History* 60:3 (1988): 542.
[45] Miguel Cabrera, "Developments in Contemporary Spanish Historiography," *The Journal of Modern History* 77 (2005): 994.
[46] Sebastiaan Faber, *Anglo-American Hispanists and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 79.
[47] Javier Tusell, "El Hispanista Paul Preston," *Revista de Libros de la Fundación Caja Madrid* 71 (2002): 26.
[48] Simon Doubleday, "English Hispanists and the Discourse of Empiricism," *The Journal of the Historical Society* 3:2 (2003): 206.

Finally, the idea of fascism as a generic phenomenon is itself mostly an Anglophone conception. Italian Fascism and German Nazism both have vast historiographies within their respective countries, yet Italian and German historians overwhelmingly focus on own their national histories, eschewing systematic comparison.[49] This is not to say that they necessarily embrace any notion of an uncritical *Sonderweg*, the idea of a purely unique national historical path. Yet, they normally see no real utility in explaining the history of Mussolini or Hitler through reference to failed imitators elsewhere in Europe. Therefore, the fact that both Spanish history and fascist studies have been dominated by Anglophone authors, with significant overlap between these two fields, means that to understand the historiography of Spanish fascism through the lens of generic fascism it is necessary to focus on English-language material.

As this thesis involves critiquing the general position of Anglophone historiography, it is useful to introduce some of the key figures in this field. As previously mentioned, the most important historian of Spanish fascism is undoubtedly Stanley Payne. His book *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (1961) (subsequently *Falange*) was the foundational bedrock of academic study of Primo de Rivera and his movement. Payne is one of the Anglophone authors specifically accused by Preston of being 'seduced' by Primo de Rivera.[50] Earlier writers were sympathetic towards Primo de Rivera, but Payne's *Falange* was the first dedicated historical study of this topic and has thus been the most influential historical text. It remains to this day the most popular reference point for the history of the *Falange*.[51] *Falange* was an adaptation of Payne's PhD thesis, based on newspaper-focused research and oral interviews with Spanish political figures within Spain during the late 1950s.[52] While Payne claims that he was initially highly sympathetic towards the Spanish Left, as was the norm within liberal Anglophone scholarship, he grew disillusioned by his discussions with Leftist Spanish political figures who rejected responsibility for political violence.[53] In recent years, Payne has distanced himself from the tone of the language surrounding Primo de Rivera in *Falange*, claiming that his own youth and historical inexperience had led him to get carried away with the personal charm of Primo de Rivera.[54] Yet, he has not disavowed the conclusions drawn in that book, only its enthusiastic tone. As he continued to publish prolifically on the topic of Spain's

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[49] Roger Griffin, "Fascism's new faces (and new facelessness) in the 'post-fascist' epoch," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 31.
[50] Preston, *¡Comrades!*, 77.
[51] Hammerback, "Rhetoric of Fascism," 193.
[52] Payne, *A Unique History*, 23.
[53] Ibid., 18.
[54] Ibid., 27.

twentieth-century political history, Payne became increasingly hostile to the Spanish Republic and its ideals, and in recent works has explicitly blamed Leftists for its failure.[55] This perspective has ensured a relatively positive image of Primo de Rivera in Payne's influential texts. Most recently, Payne has endorsed the side of the 'revisionist' Right in Spain's ongoing historical memory conflict. He has denounced the entire university system for oppressing 'objective' historians through a pervasive culture of 'political correctness' and 'cultural Marxism' (a far-Right conspiracy theory detailing the forces of multiculturalism plotting the downfall of Western civilisation).[56] As Payne has been overwhelmingly dominant in the historiography of Spanish fascism, this thesis places great importance on the examination and evolution of his work.

The Hispanist who was most openly sympathetic towards an idealised image of Primo de Rivera was British historian Hugh Thomas (1931-2017). Unsurprisingly, he too was specifically criticised by Preston.[57] Thomas' magnum opus was *The Spanish Civil War* (1961), which remains popular through subsequent revisions and reprinting. In the original edition, written before the release of Payne's *Falange*, Thomas portrayed the figure of Primo de Rivera relatively positively, but there was still some sense of ominousness surrounding his role as the leader of a fascist movement.[58] Yet, with the second edition of 1965, he tweaked much of the prose regarding Primo de Rivera. Payne's *Falange* was now directly attributed as the basis of Thomas' perspective on Primo de Rivera, which had become more overtly positive.[59] Thomas wrote three significant works on the topic of Spanish fascism between 1966 and 1972: a journal article about Primo de Rivera, a journal article about Spanish fascism more broadly, and the first collected English translation of Primo de Rivera's own works. Thomas became increasingly explicit in his depiction of Primo de Rivera as a sympathetic figure, which culminated in a summary of Primo de Rivera as 'an attractive figure' mourned as a tragic Shakespearean hero.[60]

While the perspective of Payne has remained dominant in the historiography of Spanish fascism, there has been an undercurrent of historical opposition to Payne's position. The first, and most outspoken, of these critics was Herbert Southworth (1908-1999).

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[55] Stanley Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 65.
[56] Payne, *A Unique History*, 244.; Jérôme Jamin, "Cultural Marxism and the Radical Right," in *The Post-War Anglo-American Far Right*, ed. Paul Jackson et al. (London: Palgrave Pivot, 2014), 84.
[57] Preston, *¡Comrades!*, 77.
[58] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961).
[59] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965). The tone of the introduction of the *Falange* is a notable example.
[60] Hugh Thomas, *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Selected Writings* (London: The Trinity Press, 1972).

Southworth was a highly controversial figure within academia, as he was dedicated to opposing – in a piercing style – the historical untruths espoused by the official historians of the Franco regime.[61] An avowed Leftist, his mission was to uphold the values of the fallen Spanish Republic.[62] He held a personal vendetta against traditional figures of Anglophone Hispanism like Payne due to their seeming tolerance for Francoist historians. Southworth was particularly incensed by the historical credibility offered by Payne and others to Ricardo de la Cierva (1926-2015), the official Francoist state historian.[63] De la Cierva's job involved the heavy-handed censorship of Spanish historical output to reinforce the legitimacy of Franco's rule, which discredited him as an academic in the eyes of Southworth. In response, conservative historians sought to rebuke Southworth by refusing to acknowledge him as a respectable historian, instead dismissing him as a 'librarian'.[64] While Southworth held a PhD from the Sorbonne, he had never taken up any academic position at a university, and thus was considered an outsider by critics.[65] Though Southworth was more interested in denouncing Franco as dictator than Primo de Rivera and the *Falange*, when his work turned to the topic of Primo de Rivera he was scathing. His position was more in line with typical academic hostility towards fascism than the sympathetic views of his colleagues, yet he was generally criticised for being too polemical in nature, and thus his insights were mostly ignored.[66]

The only major Anglophone historical study undertaken about Primo de Rivera from a critical perspective was by Irish historian Ian Gibson (b.1939) with *En Busca de José Antonio* (In Search of José Antonio) (1980).[67] While more reservedly 'academic' in tone than the blustering Southworth, Gibson nonetheless agreed with Southworth's assessment: that no 'satisfactory' study of Primo de Rivera had ever been undertaken, and that previous Anglophone material was unjustifiably apologetic.[68] While Gibson's research was thorough, he was unable to find a publisher interested in releasing his work in its original English. This reduced the impact of his book on Anglophone historiography.

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[61] See Herbert Southworth, *El Mito de la Cruzada de Franco* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1963).
[62] Herbert Southworth, *Conspiracy and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2002), x.
[63] Faber, *Anglo-American Hispanists*, 91.
[64] Stanley Payne, "Review: Antifalange by Herbert Rutledge Southworth," *The American Historical Review* 73:2 (1967): 504.
[65] Faber, *Anglo-American Hispanists*, 224.
[66] Pierre Vilar, "Preface," in *Guernica! Guernica!*, by Herbert Southworth (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), xvi.
[67] Ian Gibson, *En Busca de José Antonio* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1980).
[68] Ibid., 176.

The last historian of major focus in this thesis is Paul Preston. The doyen of British Hispanism, his perspective is quite distinct from Payne's.[69] While Preston's scathing critique of Franco has been influential, Payne nonetheless remains the authority on the *Falange* of Primo de Rivera. Preston's first foray into examining Spanish fascism was *The Spanish Right Under the Second Republic* (1971).[70] Written and published while Preston was still a graduate student, this short book considered Primo de Rivera both respectable and harmless. It is important as a representative synthesis of historical perspectives on Primo de Rivera at the time. In recent years, however, Preston has explicitly disowned the conclusions made in this text, declaring them 'pretty dreadful'.[71] He has since developed a much more critical perspective on the Spanish Right. While his chapter on Primo de Rivera in 1999 which criticised Anglophone historians for being 'seduced' by the fascist leader remains today the most mainstream criticism of Primo de Rivera, the historiography has not dramatically shifted from the traditional perspective of Primo de Rivera as a comparatively respectable fascist. Intriguingly, even though Preston is the most strident mainstream critic of Primo de Rivera, he admits that Primo de Rivera's opposition to Franco inherently makes him more sympathetic.[72]

Using this methodology, my thesis argues that the figure of José Antonio Primo de Rivera has been treated unusually positively by Anglophone historiography, in a manner incongruent with the overwhelming academic hostility towards the dangers fascism has posed to liberal democratic society. It demonstrates this through two case studies of how historians have addressed certain elements of Payne's 'fascist minimum' in the case of Primo de Rivera. It concludes with an examination of how the legacy of Francoism has shaped historical visions of Primo de Rivera. Chapter One explores the application of the idea of 'charismatic leadership' to Primo de Rivera. This concept, while integral to most understandings of fascism, has not been applied to the case of Primo de Rivera in a critical manner. Chapter Two explores how historians have understood the relationship of Primo de Rivera to fascist violence. Primo de Rivera has frequently been described as opposed to violence. Multiple documented instances of violent acts, as well as his violent rhetoric, have been relativised as coming from traditionally masculine ideals, rather than fascist aggression. The 'poetic' nature of his speeches, rather than their content or practical effect, has been the primary focus of

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[69] For a collected volume dedicated to Preston, see Michael Richards and Chris Ealham, "History, Memory and the Spanish Civil War: Recent Perspectives," in *The Splintering of Spain*, ed. Chris Ealham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xv.
[70] Paul Preston, *The Spanish Right under the Second Republic* (Reading: University of Reading Press, 1971).
[71] Helen Graham, "Interview with Paul Preston," in *Interrogating Francoism,* ed. Helen Graham (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 250.
[72] Paul Preston, email correspondence, 1 September 2016.

historians. Chapter Three examines the legacy of Primo de Rivera in the context of historical perspectives towards Francoism and the Spanish Right in general. The figures of Franco and Gil Robles have acted as a 'lightning-rod' for academic anti-fascism. Compared to the brutal rule of Franco, Primo de Rivera's early death has meant that has been held up as a 'lost alternative' leader of Spain.

Literature Review

To understand the academic context of this thesis, it is necessary to introduce the foundations of two important historical fields: the historiography of generic fascism, as well as of Spanish fascism in particular. This section will introduce the development of the core of both these fields, but each chapter in this thesis will offer more specific historiographical background for its major theme. As such, charismatic leadership and the violence of fascism will be addressed in Chapters One and Two respectively. As Chapter Three involves the impact of how historians have utilised the category of fascism as an explanatory framework, the examination of Spanish fascism will be brief at this stage.

Fascist historiography is an immense topic. Debates about its nature, its causes, its bases of support and its goals have lasted decades, and many remain unresolved. Disputes regarding its very definition are ongoing and are unlikely to be settled anytime soon. For the purposes of this thesis, there are two major conceptualisations of fascism that are important: Payne's typological definition, and Griffin's ideological definition. The name and concept of fascism derive from the movement and regime of Benito Mussolini in Italy. The idea of fascism as a universal phenomenon, rather than one unique to Italy, was first articulated by Marxist critics in the early 1920s, who viewed it as a form of violent and malignant capitalism.[73] The accession of Hitler to power in 1933 strengthened Leftist antipathy to fascism, and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 was heralded as the first battle to save Europe from the spread of the fascist menace.[74] Following the horrific revelations of fascist atrocities after the Second World War, many academics were sympathetic to the position outlined by Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), who defined fascism as a 'moral disease' that needed to be extirpated.[75] During post-war reconstruction, the victorious Allies were keen to reinforce a foundational myth of fascism as an unknowable, malicious force that imposed itself upon Italy and Germany, rather than as a popular revolt against the failings, perceived or

[73] R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1934), 89.
[74] Julio Álvarez del Vayo, *Freedom's Battle,* trans. Eileen E. Brooke (London: William Heinemann, 1940), 1.
[75] Benedetto Croce, "The Fascist Germ Still Lives," *New York Times*, 28 November, 1943.

genuine, of democratic liberalism. While this hostile position was politically expedient, it did not foster critical historical enquiry into the nature of fascism. Instead, it promoted a 'demonological' perspective of fascism as a bestial and unknowable force.[76] Thus, academic perceptions of fascism typically remained simplistic and reductionist until the mid-1960s.

The breakthrough in modern fascist studies emerged around the time of German historian Ernst Nolte's (1923-2016) publication of *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (1963), translated into English as *Three Faces of Fascism* (1965).[77] His attempt at an 'objective' and 'detached' look at fascism as a generic phenomenon has been hailed as a crucial milestone in the historiography of fascism.[78] His lasting impact on the field was the introduction of a 'fascist minimum': a set of criteria that must be fulfilled in order to classify a movement or regime as genuinely fascist rather than simply 'authoritarian'.[79]

This methodology was utilised by Payne in 1980, when he outlined perhaps the single most influential definition of fascism.[80] His definition has been described as effectively codifying what everyone already intuitively 'knew' fascism to be.[81] This typological approach has been criticised for being too reductively descriptive, based essentially on the regimes of Mussolini and Hitler, and thus doing little to explain or understand fascism as a universal phenomenon.[82] Critical historians also accuse it of being cumbersome: a lengthy checklist rather than a concise explanation. Regardless of these criticisms, Payne's definition can be utilised to categorise political groups without recourse to complicated theoretical concepts, and thus it has been readily adopted.

Payne outlined three major categories of 'Fascist Minima' criteria. The first comprised the original elements of Nolte's definition: the three 'fascist negations'. Fascism was defined primarily by what it opposed, rather than what it sought to achieve: it was anti-Marxist, anti-liberal and anti-conservative. [83] Payne added a section to Nolte's Minima entitled 'Ideology and Goals', which included elements such as the creation of a new nationalist state and empire.[84] Finally, and most importantly for this study, Payne outlined a section entitled 'Style

[76] Eugen Weber, "Fascism(s) and Some Harbingers," *The Journal of Modern History* 54:4 (1982): 746.
[77] Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965).
[78] Renzo De Felice, *Interpretations of Fascism,* trans. Brenda Huff Everett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 67.
[79] Payne, *Fascism*, 5.
[80] Ibid., 7.
[81] Roger Eatwell, "On Defining the 'Fascist Minimum': The Centrality of Ideology," *The Journal of Political Ideologies* 1:3 (1996): 309.
[82] Gilbert Allardyce, "What Fascism is Not: Thoughts on the Definition of a Concept," American Historical Review 84:2 (1979): 378.
[83] Payne, *Fascism*, 7.
[84] Ibid.

and Organisation'. Two elements of Payne's typological definition from this section each comprise a chapter of this thesis. The first element is a 'Specific tendency toward an authoritarian, charismatic, personal style of command', typically shortened to 'charismatic leadership'.[85] Personal, domineering leadership was one the major hallmarks of fascism, to the extent that fascist leaders have often been understood as the embodiment of their movement. The second element is the 'Positive evaluation and use of, or willingness to use, violence'.[86] Fascist movements generally adopted the style of a militia, rather than a traditional political party, and engaged in rhetoric glorifying virile, violent activism. Both elements have been readily understood by historians to apply to the *Falange*, but their application to Primo de Rivera has been confused.

After a period of relative academic disinterest through the 1980s, generic fascism as a popular heuristic was almost single-handedly revived by the publication of *The Nature of Fascism* (1991) by Roger Griffin.[87] Dispensing with criteria for a fascist minimum, Griffin instead sought to define fascism through reference to how fascists saw themselves. His short definition was 'Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism'.[88] While this short definition of fascism required an entire book to explain, it will suffice to acknowledge that Griffin maintained an emphasis on both the leadership principle and fascist violence. According to Griffin, fascist ideology should not be dismissed as a mere cynical ploy to gain power, but as a genuine utopian belief in a new world order. This has been a highly controversial perspective, as critics have claimed it inherently downplays the practical issues and consequences involved in the quest for fascist domination.[89]

Griffin's perspective was a strident break from historical tradition, as many historians have maintained that fascism can only be understood through its practical, tragic impact. This position could be seen from the earliest Leftist anti-fascist publications like *The Menace of Fascism* (1934). Its author, British journalist John Strachey (1901-1963), denounced the fact that 'Fascist theory is entirely subordinate to Fascist practice', with its devotion towards killing and torturing any who believe in peace.[90] This idea could also been seen in influential works of mainstream liberal history, such as A.J.P. Taylor's (1906-1990) *The Origins of the Second World*

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[88] Ibid., 26
[89] Mario Sznajder, "Still in Search of the Right Conceptualisation of Generic Fascism," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 390.
[90] John Strachey, *The Menace of Fascism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1934), 81.

War (1961): ‘Everything about Fascism was a fraud. … Fascist rule was corrupt, incompetent, empty’.[91] While only some Leftist academics like British historian Dave Renton (b.1972) maintain a similarly strident perspective today, British historian Roger Eatwell (b.1949) was nonetheless able to claim in 2013 that ‘most historians challenge the validity of ideological approaches, stressing the importance of studying practice’.[92] The controversy has been further inflamed by Griffin’s proclamation in the mid-1990s that his perspective had become the ‘new consensus’ amongst academics, regardless of the fact that many prominent scholars have been uneasy with this shift in the debate.[93] While controversial, Griffin’s influence has been immense.[94]

Over the last three decades, historians have increasingly focussed on issues relating to gender and fascism. According to British historian Kevin Passmore, women were barely mentioned by historians of fascism until 1986.[95] Yet, as explained by Italian historian Luisa Passerini (b.1941), ‘[g]ender is central to the articulation of the fascist discourse. All its interpreters have recognised this’.[96] Fascism made fundamental distinctions in the roles of men and women in its vision for the future: men were to be the foundation of the nation’s workforce and political leadership, while women were generally to be relegated to traditional positions of motherhood and housekeeping. Put simply, fascism was an ‘idealisation of virility as a political imperative’.[97] Through sustained historical investigation, recent scholarship has rejected the long-standing idea that women, both those involved in fascist movements and living under fascist regimes, were essentially passive in nature. Debates over the agency, and also therefore the culpability, of women in Europe through the 1930s and 1940s are now commonplace, bringing attention to a comparatively overlooked element of political history.[98] An example of this in the context of Spanish fascism is the work of British historian Mary Vincent (b.1960). Her chapter ‘Spain’ in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1914-45*

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[91] A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Hamilton, 1961), 56.
[92] Roger Eatwell, “Fascism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, ed. Michael Freeden et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 474.
[93] Roger Eatwell, “The Nature of ‘Generic Fascism’: Complexity and Reflexive Hybridity,” in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 84.
[94] Roger Griffin, “*Da Capo, con Meno Brio*: Towards a More Useful Conceptualisation of Generic Fascism,” in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 245.
[95] Kevin Passmore, "Introduction," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1914-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1.
[96] Luisa Passerini and Ara H. Merjian, “Gender, Historiography and Fascism,” *Qui Parle* 13:1 (2001): 159.
[97] Daniel Woodley, *Fascism and Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 212.
[98] Julie Gottlieb, “‘Broken Friendships and Vanished Loyalties’: Gender, Collective (In)Security and Anti-Fascism in Britain in the 1930s,” *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 13:2 (2012): 199.

(2003) gave a narrative history of the membership of *Sección Feminina* (Women's Section) of the *Falange* and their influence within the Franco regime.[99]

While gender has been a fruitful lens for historians of particular examples of fascism, theorists of generic fascism have been reluctant to acknowledge its usefulness. In 2003, Passmore attributed this to the fact that gender theorists have been receptive to the ideas of poststructuralism, while theorists of generic fascism have, instead, been hostile.[100] As a result, Passmore argued, the field of generic fascism has been shielded from potentially useful theoretical approaches applying the lens of gender. He went even further in 2011, lamenting that '[n]early 40 years after second-wave feminism first challenged academe, theorists of fascism have yet to engage seriously with women's or gender history'.[101] Passmore has suggested that an increased understanding of gender history on the part of historians of generic fascism would lead to significantly more sophisticated arguments.[102]

The way in which historians of Spanish fascism have dealt with gender has been flawed, emphasising an unduly positive vision of Primo de Rivera. He has been framed as having a 'masculine' personality, as heroic, charming and relatable to reader and writer alike. This thesis suggests that such a view is the result of an uncritical acceptance of gender norms by historians. Historians of Spanish fascism have overwhelmingly been male and have thus perhaps inadvertently sympathised with the 'gentlemanly' violence and masculine dominance of Primo de Rivera's personality. Without an explicit attempt at critiquing their own masculine perspective, historians have separated 'real' fascist thuggery from the seemingly harmless violence of Primo de Rivera with an apparent acceptance of the notion that 'boys will be boys'. While this thesis does not explicitly use gender as a specific framework, it recognises that gender is an important and under-examined factor in the historiography of fascism. One of my goals is that by critiquing the dominant models of representing Primo de Rivera, this thesis will act as groundwork for further study in this regard.

Critics and observers of the Spanish Republic and Civil War described many figures of the anti-Republican Spanish Right, and especially Franco himself, as fascist. In the wake of the Second World War, Franco's close relations with the fascist powers meant that he was

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[99] Mary Vincent, "Spain," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1914-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[100] Passmore, "Introduction," 7.

[101] Kevin Passmore, "Theories of Fascism: A Critique from the Perspective of Women's and Gender History," in *Rethinking the Nature of Fascism*, ed. Antonio Costa Pinto (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 119.

[102] Kevin Passmore, "The Gendered Genealogy of Political Religions Theory," *Gender and History* 20:3 (2008): 644.

frequently considered a fascist relic in a post-fascist age.[103] In the early 1960s, however, it became the academic standard to limit the category of 'Spanish fascism' to the *Falange* led by Primo de Rivera.[104] In an immensely influential book chapter published in 1964, Spanish-American sociologist Juan Linz (1926-2013) argued that Franco could not be considered fascist due to the fact that his *Movimiento Nacional* lacked a genuine mass mobilisation of the population.[105] For Linz, Spanish fascism died with Primo de Rivera, the only figure whom he believed capable of leading a truly fascist public mobilisation. Once the *Falange* was tamed by Franco, therefore, Spanish fascism effectively ceased to exist. Linz' conception of the nature of Spanish fascism was immediately popular, and was readily adopted by Franco himself as a reprieve from charges of fascism.[106] By 1974, Payne described this position as the 'classic definition' of Francoism, which demonstrated its popularity.[107] Thus, 'Spanish fascism' was effectively reduced to the person of Primo de Rivera, and 'a curio of history': comparatively irrelevant, quaint and non-threatening.[108]

In recent decades, however, historians have utilised increasingly nuanced applications of the concept of fascism in Spain. Given the importance of Franco's regime, these attempts at reconceptualisation have not been especially interested in the *Falange* of Primo de Rivera. Spanish historian Javier Tusell (1945-2005), for example, successfully argued for a conceptualisation of the 'early period' of Franco's rule (seen by different historians as lasting until some point between 1941 and 1945) as 'semi-fascist' in nature.[109] Tusell's perspective has allowed for a more effective understanding of the influence the *Falange* still had within the *Movimiento Nacional* during the period when fascism seemed likely to dominate Europe. Another example of the partial expansion of the concept of fascism is seen in arguments over the utility of 'fascistisation' as a concept. The idea has been generally accepted in relation to most of the Spanish Right during the Second Republic, meaning that they are understood to have adopted certain elements of fascism but not enough to be properly defined as fascist.[110] There is also the more controversial idea of considering Franco's regime not as 'semi-fascist',

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[103] Hugh Seton-Watson, "Fascism, Right and Left," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1:1 (1966): 183.
[104] Paul Preston, "Spain," in *Fascism in Europe*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Methuen, 1981), 330.
[105] Juan Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," in *Mass Politics*, ed. Erik Allardt et al. (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), 255.
[106] Javier Tusell, *La Dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), 88.
[107] Stanley Payne, "Fascism in Western Europe," in *Fascism*, ed. Walter Laqueur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 308.
[108] Rod Kedward, *Fascism in Western Europe 1900-45* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1969), 99.
[109] Stanley Payne, "The Defascistization of the Franco Regime, 1942-1975," in *Modern Europe After Fascism*, ed. Stein Ugelvik Larsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 1584.
[110] Ismael Saz, "El Franquismo: ¿Regimen Autoritario o Dictadura Fascista?" in *El Régimen de Franco (1936-1975): Política y Relaciones Exteriores*, ed. Javier Tusell et al. (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1993), 192.

but as 'fascistised'. This distinction is made by Spanish historian Ismael Saz (b.1952), who argues for an increased focus on the agency of the *Falange* within the Franco regime.[111] This position has not been popularly accepted. These debates will be explored further in Chapter Three.

Over the last few years, the seemingly unassailable notion that Primo de Rivera's *Falange* was the single embodiment of genuine political fascism in Spain has been challenged. British journalist Sid Lowe (b.1976) published a modified version of his PhD thesis in 2010, which was devoted to reconceptualising the *JAP* as a full-fledged fascist movement.[112] Hitherto, the *JAP* had been dismissed by historians as incompetent imitators of fascism through comical reference to their salute, a version of the Nazi salute with the arm only half extended (and thus supposedly physically representative of a half-hearted fascism).[113] Mann, directly referencing Payne's similar idea, implored the reader of *Fascists* to '[t]ry it – it feels too wimpish to be fascist'.[114] Lowe has convincingly argued for the utility of considering this movement as 'genuinely' fascist: it had an intensely nationalistic programme, held mass rallies and imitated the external trappings of fascist style, and believed that violent action was necessary for Spain's salvation.[115] While Lowe's argument has not yet had a major historiographical impact, it potentially marks the beginning of the end of the long-standing position that Primo de Rivera's *Falange* was the only 'real' fascist movement of the Second Spanish Republic.

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[111] Ismael Saz, "El Primer Franquismo,"*Ayer* 36 (1999): 205.
[112] Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism: The Juventud de Acción Popular in Spain, 1931-1939* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).
[113] Stanley Payne, *Spanish Catholicism: An Historical Overview* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 160.
[114] Mann, *Fascists*, 333.
[115] Lowe, *The Juventud de Acción Popular*, 22.

Chapter One

'Charismatic Leadership' and the Allure of *Señoritismo*

Perhaps more than any other political phenomenon of modern times, the history of fascism has been dominated by the individuals associated with its leadership. The image of demagoguery encapsulated in the 1935 Nazi propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will*, with a commanding leader enrapturing an adoring crowd with impassioned speech, is inextricably linked with the notion of fascism. Fascist leaders are often described as the physical embodiment of their movement, and José Antonio Primo de Rivera is no exception.[1] Historians have long held that charismatic leadership is a fundamental facet of fascism. Yet, the defining feature of Primo de Rivera has been his distinction from the image of typical aggressive invective. Stanley Payne has stated this exact point, claiming that '[t]here is almost universal testimony that José Antonio did not have the personal style, manner or temperament of a typical fascist leader'.[2] Primo de Rivera has been portrayed as predominantly respectable, to the extent that in 1968 Hugh Thomas stated that '[w]ith the distance of time, José Antonio is an appealing figure.'[3]

This difference in personality of Primo de Rivera from the fascist norm has fascinated historians. In 1988 Payne commented that '[i]t may be observed that the personality of José Antonio Primo de Rivera continues to exert fascination'.[4] Ten years later, Paul Preston stated that 'the fascination of [Primo de Rivera's] multi-faceted personality cannot be gainsaid'.[5] The source of this long-standing fascination was neatly summarised by British political scientist Andrew Dobson (b.1957) in 1989: 'José Antonio's *señoritismo* set him apart from the traditional demagogic nature of European fascism'.[6] Roughly translated as 'gentlemanliness', *señoritismo* has been directly invoked as a rebuttal of the idea of Primo de Rivera as a typically charismatic fascist agitator, and has, instead, allowed a focus on his comparatively respectable lifestyle. This chapter argues that the *señoritismo* of Primo de Rivera has been held in direct

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[1] Nathanael Greene, *Fascism* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 247.
[2] Stanley Payne, *Spain: A Unique History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 202.
[3] Hugh Thomas, "Spain," in *European Fascism*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), 289.
[4] Stanley Payne, "Recent Historiography on the Spanish Republic and the Civil War," *The Journal of Modern History* 60:3 (1988): 547.
[5] Paul Preston, *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War* (London: HarperCollins, 1999), 75.
[6] Andrew Dobson, *An Introduction to the Politics and Philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 101.

contrast to typical notions of what charismatic leadership entails. The consequence of this is an idealised image of Primo de Rivera seen as charismatic in a personal sense, but without any critical examination of how charismatic leadership actually affected the function of the *Falange*.

The Life and Career of José Antonio Primo de Rivera

To appreciate the way in which historians have approached the figure of Primo de Rivera, it is necessary to supply some details of his life, career and death. José Antonio Primo de Rivera was born in 1903 in Madrid to an aristocratic family. He was raised in Madrid, though he also spent time on his family estates in Andalusia. He graduated with a degree in law from the University of Madrid in 1923. While he worked as a lawyer through the 1920s, Primo de Rivera gained a reputation as a dilettante due to his love for fancy nightclubs and bars. After the fall of his father from the position of military dictator, Primo de Rivera took up politics, joining a monarchist group in 1930. He soon grew disenchanted with their conservative ethos. He was instead inspired by Mussolini's success, especially in cultivating a mass movement in a manner his own father never accomplished, and he turned towards fascism. In 1933, he founded the *Falange Española* which, as we have seen, swiftly merged with Ramiro Ledesma's *JONS*. Even after this merger, the *Falange* still struggled financially. It was propped up by monthly stipends from Right-wing industrialists from Bilbao who were intent on destabilising the Second Republic, as well as by the Italian Fascist Party through its policy of funding international fascist movements.[7] The height of Primo de Rivera's political success was his election to the Spanish parliament, the Cortes, in 1933 as an independent.

The *Falange* based itself on a foundational document, written by Ledesma and inspired by the Nazis, the Twenty-Seven Points.[8] The doctrine outlined by these points has been described by Payne as typically fascist in nature, though more overtly religious in sentiment.[9] Some of its fundamental tenets were a conception of Spain as an indivisible empire with a sacred destiny, the need for a totalitarian anti-parliamentary dictatorship, freedom as only being possible as expressed through the nation, an opposition to Marxist-style class struggle and capitalist-style economic exploitation, and a personal dedication to a life of action and sacrifice. Economically, the *Falange* stood for a form of state-syndicalism,

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[7] Stanley Payne, "*José Antonio Primo de Rivera*," in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera,* ed. Enrique de Aguinaga et al., trans. Cristina Pagès Boune (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003), 169.

[8] Stanley Payne, *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 69.

[9] Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 57.

aimed at improving the lives of workers without resorting to internationalist socialism.[10] Primo de Rivera's two most famous rhetorical pronouncements were the 'destiny of the universal' and 'the dialectic of fists and pistols'. The former was a 'poetic' vision of a new revitalised, nationalist Spanish empire as a 'universal' force, beyond simply a 'territory': an eternal historical force with a destiny of greatness.[11] The latter was an outline of a belief in the legitimacy of political violence. While much has been made of the fact that Primo de Rivera seemed initially reluctant to embrace terroristic violence, he eventually relented, to the satisfaction of the *Falange*'s catastrophist funders.

In early 1935, Primo de Rivera expelled Ledesma from the *Falange*. Rather than disagreement over ideology or practice, this dispute was rooted in a clash between the two personalities, as Ledesma sought increased authority within the movement. Primo de Rivera was henceforth in undisputed control of the *Falange*. As previously mentioned, by early 1936, Primo de Rivera was in prison, where he maintained ready contact with his newly criminalised movement, which was swelling in numbers. After the failure of Franco's coup, Primo de Rivera is often seen as having experienced something of a political revelation. He offered to attempt to broker a peace deal with Franco through the appointment of a new 'compromise' government, which in practice meant a government comprising political figures the *Falange* found amenable, but he was rebuffed. Historians have debated to what extent this was an earnest conversion towards democratic norms, or simply a cynical ploy to escape prison.[12]

After a court martial trial for crimes against the Republic, Primo de Rivera was condemned to death and executed in November 1936. As we have seen, this news was received with pleasure by Franco, glad to be rid of a potential rival for dominance.[13] Yet, Franco also exhibited ruthless political cunning and refused to acknowledge Primo de Rivera's death, thereby establishing the cult of 'El Ausente', the Absent One. By the time proof of his death was undeniable, Primo de Rivera had become the primary martyr of Francoism. To commemorate his supposed sacrifices for the ideals of Franco's new dictatorship, cries of '¡José Antonio, Presente!' were mandatory at public rallies, meetings and even schools.[14] In this manner, his memory was co-opted by Franco from the moment of his death. After the

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[10] Stanley Payne, "Social Composition and Regional Strength of the Spanish Falange," in *Who Were the Fascists*, ed. Stein Ugelvik Larsen et al. (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 425.
[11] Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 13.
[12] Ibid., 235.
[13] Francisco Romero Salvadó, *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), 267.
[14] Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*, trans. Martin Douch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 200.

conclusion of the Civil War, Primo de Rivera's body was exhumed and transported with great ceremony to the newly constructed Valley of the Fallen, a memorial built by political prisoners to serve as Franco's tomb. The remains of both men reside there to this day, though in mid-2017 a non-binding resolution was passed in the Cortes to disinter Franco, after the ruling conservative *Partido Popular* boycotted the vote.[15] The future of the Valley itself remains a significant political issue, complicated by its consecration as a basilica by the Catholic Church. In summary, Primo de Rivera has been understood as the leader of a typically fascist movement which was co-opted by Franco and reduced to a bureaucratic shadow of its former self.

Charismatic Leadership in Theory and Practice

Charisma as a concept is readily associated with Primo de Rivera. When discussing him, historians frequently use the term 'charismatic'. For example, in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia* (2006), three separate entries by two different historians all describe him as 'charismatic'. In contrast, other historical individuals within these entries are introduced without descriptive adjectives.[16] In 2013, Spanish historian Francisco Romero Salvadó (b.1960) defined Primo de Rivera by his 'dazzling charisma'.[17] This use of the term might seem unsurprising, given that 'charismatic leadership' has been understood an integral element of fascism.[18] Yet, regardless of charisma's universality both in conceptualisations of fascist leadership and with regard to Primo de Rivera himself, in his case historians have not utilised charismatic leadership as a framework of historical understanding. Rather, they have simply used the term as a quick and simple way to describe his personality.

The adjective 'charismatic' has positive connotations in modern society and is frequently ascribed to popular film and sporting stars. While this application of the term may seem standard, social scientists find it inappropriate. Initially an esoteric Biblical term relating to the grace of those touched by the Christian God, the modern conceptualisation of charisma can be traced directly to German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920).[19] In his posthumously

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[15] Sam Jones, "'It's Shameful for Franco's Victims': Spanish MPs Vote to Exhume Dictator," *The Guardian*, 11 May, 2017.

[16] Sid Lowe, "Primo de Rivera, Jose Antonio (1903-1936)," in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Cyprian Blamires (Santa Barbera: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 534.; Sid Lowe, "Spain," in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Cyprian Blamires (Santa Barbera: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 621.; Richard Griffiths, "Francoism," in *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Cyprian Blamires (Santa Barbera: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 250.

[17] Romero Salvadó, *Historical Dictionary*, 267.

[18] Roger Eatwell, "The Rebirth of Right-Wing Charisma? The Cases of Jean-Marie Le Pen and Vladimir Zhirinovsky," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 3:3 (2002): 2.

[19] Kieran Allen, *Max Weber* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 106.

published, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (1922), partially translated into English in 1947 as *Economy and Society*, Weber outlined the idea of 'charismatic authority', one of his three sources of political legitimacy.[20] The religious origin of his concept was deliberate. Weber outlined the notion of 'charismatic leadership' as involving political legitimation being derived from

> supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities [that are] not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as 'leader'.[21]

This conception focuses on charisma as a relationship between a messianic figure and his followers, from the perspective of the foundation of power relationships, authority and control. Roger Eatwell has suggested that the popular usage of the term 'charisma' has moved too far from its Weberian social-scientific roots and thus become 'debased'.[22] As such, the heuristic value of the term for understanding power relationships has been undermined. As American sociologist Joseph Bensman (1922-1986) outlined in 1975, charisma

> by now is not only the name of a perfume and the title of a pop tune, the name of a laundry, and a shirt brand, but also widely applied to virtually every situation in which the popularity of a political or any public personality is involved.[23]

This academic concern has not abated in recent years. For example, in 2005, American sociologist Christopher Adair-Toteff derided the existence of 'charisma training' workshops offered to businessmen to improve their public image, teaching confidence and elocution.[24] Beyond the confines of academia specifically devoted to studies of charismatic leadership, therefore, there is little critical examination of the specific meaning of the term.

With *The Spellbinders* (1984), American sociologist Ann Ruth Willner (b.1924) led a shift away from a focus on the actual characteristics of charismatic leaders themselves. She admitted that Weber's definition seems to justify a focus on the personality of the leader, the

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[20] Max Weber, *Economy and Society,* trans. Ephraim Fischoff et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 215.
[21] Ibid., 241.
[22] Eatwell, "Rebirth of Right-Wing Charisma?," 3.
[23] Joseph Bensman and Michael Givant, "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept," *Social Research* 42:4 (1975): 570.
[24] Christopher Adair-Toteff, "Max Weber's Charisma," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 5:2 (2005): 190.

'magnetic' qualities of the individual.[25] For her, and subsequent academics, the more useful focus for understanding the charismatic bond is on the followers, the 'magnetised' and their 'magnetisability'.[26] Charisma is thus understood as a relationship with a particular kind of power dynamic, rather than a personal characteristic. In academia more generally, however, this level of analytical sophistication regarding the term is absent. While Eatwell does not go so far as to agree with American sociologist William Spinrad, who argued in 1991 that the whole concept of charisma in an academic setting should be abandoned, he acknowledges that the fact that historians almost never seek to define 'charisma' in any way is a concern.[27] For Eatwell, historians have applied the concept of charisma far too liberally, without any attempt at justification or acknowledgement of its sociological connotations. This is evident in the case of Primo de Rivera, as almost all sources which have declared him 'charismatic' have not addressed what, precisely, that means. The term is mostly used freely in the 'popular' (rather than 'academic') sense, as essentially synonymous with 'charming', 'eloquent' or 'confident'.

Despite these fundamental concerns regarding the precise meaning of charisma, 'charismatic leadership' has become an integral element of studies of fascism. This is not to say that it has been utilised effectively, however. The importance of charisma is seen with Payne's typological definition of fascism, and generally being understood as one of the most overt markers of fascism. The idea of charismatic leadership is inextricably linked with the 'fascist type', seen as 'harsh, authoritarian, sectarian, fanatical, and prone to violence'.[28] This imagery originated from the archetypal fascist leaders, Mussolini and Hitler. Thus, many academics associate fascist charismatic leadership with crudity, appealing to the base instincts of their followers. The *Penguin Political Dictionary* (1939), for example, denounced Hitler, representative of fascism broadly, as 'half-educated' and 'a pathological type' dedicated to 'lying unscrupulously'.[29] A 1947 report presented to the US Congress stated that fascist leaders demand 'blind obedience', with the threat of death to any who engaged in the 'slightest

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[25] Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 14.
[26]Ibid., 18.; Roger Eatwell, "Explaining Fascism and Ethnic Cleansing: The Three Dimensions of Charisma and the Four Dark Sides of Nationalism," *Political Studies Review* 4 (2006): 270.
[27] William Spinrad, "Charisma: A Blighted Concept and an Alternative Formula," *Political Science Quarterly* 106:2 (1991): 310.; Roger Eatwell, "The Concept and Theory of Charismatic Leadership," in *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto et al. (London: Routledge, 2007), 3.
[28] Stanley Payne, "Franco, the Spanish Falange and the Institutionalisation of Mission," in *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto et al. (London: Routledge, 2007), 54.
[29] Walter Theimer, *The Penguin Political Dictionary* (London: Penguin, 1939).

wavering'.[30] In 1967, German-British historian Francis Carsten (1911-1998) explained the role of the fascist leader as 'the mouthpiece of popular passions and hatreds'.[31] A common element of fascist leaders was seen to be an irrational fanaticism and belief in their own skills and destiny.[32] Perhaps the most influential construction of fascist leadership was British historian Ian Kershaw's outlining of the 'Hitler myth'. Hitler and his associates within the Ministry of Propaganda manipulatively sought to portray him in a particular manner, with the intention of building a cult of personality.[33] This idea of manipulation of the masses, of deceiving them with fascist smoke and mirrors, remains powerful. Yet, these stereotypes do not neatly fit in the case of Primo de Rivera. The dissonance between these standard images of a typical fascist and the genteel demeanour of Primo de Rivera in his aristocratic lifestyle is a significant factor in Anglophone historical perceptions of the man.

There have been few attempts to evaluate Primo de Rivera critically through an explicit lens of charismatic leadership. British historian Aristotle Kallis (b.1970) argued in 2006 that it has been 'long-held conventional wisdom' to apply 'charismatic' qualities to fascist leaders in order to understand their appeal.[34] Yet, he claimed that no systematic attempt to explore this relationship between leader and follower had been effectively undertaken beyond the confines of Hitler or Mussolini.[35] He believed that ideas of 'charismatic leadership' as a foundational element of fascism were almost entirely derived from the cases of Mussolini and Hitler. While this phenomenon was readily studied in relation to Italy and Germany, lesser-known fascist leaders were not being understood through this framework. To counter this trend, Kallis sought to apply the concept of 'coterie charisma' to a set of marginal fascist leaders, including Oswald Mosley and Primo de Rivera.[36] The concept of 'coterie charisma' was developed by Eatwell in 2002 as a sub-type of charismatic leadership. This phenomenon relates to a devotion towards a specific individual by a close-knit band of dedicated followers, rather than mass appeal.[37] In the case of Primo de Rivera, this coterie is considered to be the loyal core of dedicated Falangists who operated under him while the *Falange* was still a

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[30] US Congress House of Representatives, *Fascism in Action: A Documented Study and Analysis of Fascism in Europe* (80th Congress, 1st Session, 1947), v.
[31] Francis Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1967), 160.
[32] Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), 12.
[33] Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[34] Aristotle Kallis, "Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic Domination' and Interwar European Fascism," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7:1 (2006): 26.
[35] Ibid., 28.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Eatwell, "Concept of Charismatic Leadership," 6.

marginal political entity, the ‘old-shirts’.[38] Kallis stated that the *Falange*’s leader legitimised the movement with a pact with his set of close followers, whose relationship with him was similar to the Weberian ideal type of divine reverence leading to theoretically unconditional faith in the leader.[39] Kallis did not consider Primo de Rivera for specific examination, but simply used him as an example, coming to identical conclusions in the cases of Mosley, Belgian *Rex* leader Léon Degrelle (1906-1994), and Corneliu Codreanu (1899-1938), leader of the Romanian *Iron Guard*. Similarly, when later insisting on the idea of Primo de Rivera having ‘genuine domination of a charismatic community’, Kallis referred to multiple leaders of fascist movements at once, treating them all functionally equivalently.[40] To my knowledge, this is the only systematic and comparative attempt at exploring the nature of charismatic leadership involving the *Falange*.

It was not until 2007 that the first collected historical volume was published on the topic of charisma and fascism.[41] This was almost three decades after Payne’s influential definition involving charismatic leadership was published. Even then, the primary focus on the volume was on ‘charismatised’ dictators, rather than leaders of fascist movements. The chapter on Spain, unsurprisingly, was written by Payne. Importantly for arguments that will be made in Chapter Three, it spent more than twice as much space discussing Franco as Primo de Rivera.[42] Payne acknowledged that the followers of Primo de Rivera ‘did indeed respond to a kind of charisma, but the scope was so limited that he does not bear comparison with major charismatic figures’.[43] This is an interesting statement in its dismissal of the importance of charisma, given the fact that Payne’s own definition of fascism highlights the centrality of charismatic leadership. It also demonstrates the academic interest in ‘major charismatic figures’ of fascism, which in practice are limited to Hitler and Mussolini. Payne’s chapter did not make reference to the earlier work about fascist charisma by Kallis, and came to the opposite conclusion. Payne did not invoke Eatwell’s understanding of coterie charisma, though he did imply that it might be applicable in a limited scope.[44]

Payne’s chapter also demonstrates the academic confusion and ambiguity regarding Primo de Rivera’s personal charisma. He stated that Primo de Rivera had personal charm that won him friends and admirers, as well as ‘a certain winsome – a charisma of at least a sort –

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[38] This name is used to contrast the ideological Falangists of Primo de Rivera’s time with the comparatively apolitical ‘new-shirts’ of Franco’s *Movimiento Nacional*.
[39] Kallis, “Fascism, ‘Charisma’ and ‘Charismatisation’,” 28.
[40] Ibid., 40.
[41] *Charisma and Fascism in Interwar Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto et al. (London: Routledge, 2007).
[42] Payne, “The Institutionalisation of Mission”.
[43] Ibid., 55.
[44] Ibid.

that attracted young followers'.[45] Here, Payne directly conflates charm and charisma. This represents the 'debased' use of the term charismatic when dealing with the Falangist leader, in line with those concerns from scholars of charisma. Instead of characterising the leadership of Primo de Rivera through the sociological lens of charisma, as his own definitional typology should suggest, Payne defines Primo de Rivera's leadership through the lens of personal charm: attracting followers through his 'winsome', a naïve appeal with tones of innocence. This perspective has a long history. When reviewing *Falange*, British historian Alastair Hennessy highlighted the idea that the *Falange* itself was only held together by the 'sheer force and charm of [Primo de Rivera's] personality'.[46] In this construction, personal charm is a direct substitute for charismatic leadership. In the case of Primo de Rivera, therefore, concerns over the misuse of the term charisma seem well-founded. The following examination demonstrates that charisma, often associated with demagoguery and domineering control, relates to the *Jefe* of the *Falange* only as personal charm. As such, he has become personally idealised and depoliticised.

The Construction of Primo de Rivera as a Depoliticised Individual

Early scholarship of fascism placed great importance on the personality traits of its leadership. A respectable personality was seen as incompatible with fascist leadership. Anglophone historiography has often distinguished Primo de Rivera from 'normal' fascist leadership based on this point. An example of this can be seen in *Spain* (1942) by Spanish historian Salvador de Madariaga (1886-1978), a liberal pacifist who fled Spain for England in 1936. At a time when fascist leadership was generally understood by outsiders in terms of aberrant personality traits, Madariaga insisted that because 'brave, intelligent and idealistic' Primo de Rivera had 'an irrepressible sense of humour', he was 'utterly disqualified for [fascist] leadership'.[47]

Historical emphasis on an idealised Primo de Rivera was established by the fact that several influential Anglophone authors knew him personally. These writers openly professed a personal liking for Primo de Rivera, even when they ardently opposed his movement. In this section, three specific case studies will be examined to illustrate this point: the summary of an interview with Primo de Rivera by American journalist Jay Allen (1900-1972), *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (1940) by British journalist Henry Buckley (d.1972) and *My Mission to Spain* (1954) by American diplomat and historian Claude Bowers (1878-1958).

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[45] Ibid., 54.
[46] C.A.M. Hennessy, "S. G. Payne, "Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism" (Book Review)," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 40:2 (1963): 110.
[47] Salvador De Madariaga, *Spain* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1942), 327.

These works, among others, institutionalised a trend of viewing Primo de Rivera primarily as a likeable individual, and only secondarily as a fascist leader.

Jay Allen has been seen by modern historians as among the most intellectual and well-informed journalists covering the Spanish Civil War.[48] In October 1936 Allen interviewed Primo de Rivera in prison, shortly before his execution. The account that Allen wrote of the meeting is highly regarded by academics, due to its proximity to Primo de Rivera's death.[49] Although they were not close enough to be considered friends, Allen and Primo de Rivera had met many times. Primo de Rivera had many friends within the British expatriate and ambassadorial community, so their social circles overlapped. Yet, the political passions of Primo de Rivera and Allen were entirely incompatible. While Primo de Rivera called for the destruction of the Republic, Allen was dedicated to its preservation. When the Civil War broke out, Allen actively lobbied across America for intervention on the side of the Republic, which offended American Catholic groups who tended to support Franco's 'crusade' against the 'atheism' of the Republican government.[50] His reports for the *Chicago Tribune* were eventually considered too sympathetic towards the Republican cause, and he was fired.[51] Allen related years later to his friend Herbert Southworth that he 'liked [Primo de Rivera] though [he] hated his crowd'.[52] Allen also confided in Southworth that he 'had a sneaking sort of affection for José Antonio', evoking a tone of semi-guilty ambivalence, yet also indicating something of a real personal rapport.[53] This curious combination of emotions is evidenced in the interview with Primo de Rivera, published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the *London News Chronicle* in October 1936.

By the time of the interview, Primo de Rivera had been imprisoned by Republican authorities for months, and his execution was only weeks away. Allen introduced Primo de Rivera as speaking English with a 'charming smile', and starved for news about 'his boys'.[54] When the topic of conversation switched to the origin and role of violence in the Second Republic, Allen wrote that he did not feel comfortable pushing the issue with 'this so handsome, so assured young aristocrat' due to the growing anger of his Republican handlers who had strong feelings on this particular issue.[55] When leaving the interview, Allen acknowledged 'the prisoner's magnificent presence', and concluded with the following

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[48] Paul Preston, *We Saw Spain Die* (London: Constable, 2008), 291.
[49] Ibid., 291.
[50] Ibid., 17.
[51] Ibid., 18.
[52] Ibid., 293.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Jay Allen, "'Slain' Spanish Fascist Chief found in Jail," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 October, 1936.
[55] Ibid.

statement: 'There'll be a trial… It will be a trial not only of the man but of Spanish Fascism. I can't for the life of me imagine any circumstances which will save this young man.'[56] It is significant that Allen chose to end on such a melancholy note. He was writing about a social acquaintance, rather than a distant political figure. Allen's political persuasion indicates that 'a trial of Spanish Fascism' could justifiably result in nothing but the strictest punishment, yet he lingers on a tragic image of a doomed 'young man'.

Allen was even more upfront about his feelings in an updated version of the interview published a few weeks after the first. In the *London News Chronicle*, Allen expanded his article and was more candid about his relationship with Primo de Rivera. He wrote that 'I was sorry, because I rather liked José Antonio as a person – however frivolous, wrongheaded and dangerous I thought his politics.'[57] While Allen acknowledged the danger of fascism, he primarily characterised Primo de Rivera's ideals as being 'frivolous', rather than deeply held. Allen supplied a new final sentence: 'His situation is very bad. The least I can do is not to aggravate it.'[58] Primo de Rivera is himself cast as a victim. Thus, Allen's intensely anti-fascist and pro-Republican perspective was muted by his sympathy towards Primo de Rivera as a person.

While Allen was among the earliest Anglophone authors to have their perspective shaped by a personal relationship with Primo de Rivera, he was not the most influential. *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (1940) by Henry Buckley has been hailed as one of the most enduring accounts of the Spanish Republic.[59] In particular, Preston claims that:

> One of the greatest joys of Buckley's prose is to be found in his immensely perceptive portraits of the major political and military figures of the day which have profoundly coloured the later judgements of historians.[60]

This is an apt assessment in the case of José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Buckley admitted in his book that he found it difficult to be critical towards political figures he found personally charming.[61] He introduced Primo de Rivera with reference to British socialite Princess Elizabeth Bibesco's (1897-1945) admiration for him, which Buckley claimed to have fully

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Jay Allen, "Jay Allen Interviews Primo's Son," *London News Chronicle*, 24 October, 1936.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Paul Preston, "The Humane Observer: Henry Buckley," in *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic*, Henry Buckley (London: I. B. Taurus, 2013), 1.
[60] Ibid., 3.
[61] Henry Buckley, *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2013), 337.

shared.[62] Buckley stated that he had always felt Primo de Rivera to be 'both charming and courteous'.[63] He emphasised this point, describing him as '[t]all, thirty, soft-voiced, courteous', and wrote that 'José Antonio was one of the nicest people in Madrid'.[64] Buckley went into great depth about the personality and physique of Primo de Rivera:

> José Antonio was so tall and elegant that he could have had an enormous success in feminine society, but he took life very seriously and I think was so fond of literature, and especially of poetry, that the average society señorita had not a great deal of attraction for him.[65]

Buckley reminisced about how they often 'chatted in the lobbies of Parliament', and that he found Primo de Rivera's accent while speaking English very charming. Buckley sometimes visited Primo de Rivera's office to borrow books.[66]

While waxing lyrical about Primo de Rivera's personal merits, Buckley thoroughly depoliticised him. The only reminder of his political career in violent terrorism can be seen in the aside: '[h]e looked very unreal in his role of a Fascist leader'.[67] For Buckley, it seemed, Primo de Rivera was a friend who could be disassociated from the activities of his followers. Or, at least, that would be the case if not for an almost resigned recognition of the existence of the *Falange*. Buckley admitted:

> It would, of course, be a mistake to let oneself be led away too much by the personal charm of José Antonio and to overlook the fact that apart from the handful of young people of his own class who supported him, his organisation also had a number of paid followers who were not choice in their methods. Not to put too fine a point on it, they were simply hired gunmen.[68]

This admonishment, however, is directed at the Falangist militants rather than the *Jefe* himself. The acknowledgement of the personal charm of Primo de Rivera potentially causing one to overlook his involvement with the negative elements of his movement is perceptive,

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[62] Ibid., 124.
[63] Ibid., 125.
[64] Ibid., 127.
[65] Ibid., 128.
[66] Ibid., 127.
[67] Ibid., 128.
[68] Ibid., 129.

yet Buckley did not seem to have seriously utilised his own advice. In later sections of his book devoted to denouncing Falangist violence, Buckley never directly implicated Primo de Rivera, and thus the lasting image in his book is that of a friendly gentleman.[69]

One final example of the personal relationship with Primo de Rivera affecting the conclusions made by early writers is seen in *My Mission to Spain* (1954) by Claude Bowers. This book is perhaps the most extreme example of the memorialisation of Primo de Rivera from a perspective of friendship. Bowers outlined his political perspective clearly, stating that '[t]hroughout the war in Spain, after the active participation of the Axis became notorious, my sympathies were with the Spanish republicans and their democratic ideology.'[70] A biographical article from 1987 stated that all Bowers' life he was 'a fervent partisan of liberal democracy'.[71] That such a man could nevertheless personally idealise the leader of Spanish fascism is thus significant.

Bowers introduced Primo de Rivera in a chapter with the heading 'Meanderings in a Magic Land', evoking the kind of patronising imagery of Spain as something adrift from reality, a convention that has dogged historical writing on Spain for centuries.[72] This implicitly set his meeting with Primo de Rivera as something alien to the political concerns of 1930s Europe. The image of Spain being separate from Europe, inhabited by a proud and passionate people, has assisted in framing Primo de Rivera as fundamentally different from other fascist leaders. Spanish fascism is therefore understood as 'peripheral' in nature, with the threat of Primo de Rivera's ideology inherently less dangerous to Anglophone liberal democratic ideals.[73]

Bowers wrote of their meeting in July 1933: 'That afternoon, at a tea dance in the villa of a friend, I met an interesting youth destined for a tragic end'.[74] He continued: 'When I met him that day he had begun the organisation of the Fascist party'.[75] Bowers, the man who in the preface of his book outlined that fascism was a 'flood of barbarism' and that the USA 'must be prepared to fight as the gallant loyalists of Spain fought and died', stated here that: 'I shall always remember [Primo de Rivera] as I saw him first, young, boyish, courteous, smiling and dancing that afternoon in the villa in San Sebastián'.[76] Bowers asserted outright that, for

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[69] Ibid., 202.
[70] Claude Bowers, *My Mission to Spain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), vi.
[71] Sabine Jessner and Peter J. Sehlinger, "Claude G. Bowers: A Partisan Hoosier," *Indiana Magazine of History* 83:3 (1987): 217.
[72] Nigel Townson, "Spain: A Land Apart?" in *Is Spain Different?*, ed. Nigel Townson (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2015), 4.
[73] Roger Griffin, "Decentering Comparative Fascist Studies," *Fascism* 4 (2015): 104.
[74] Bowers, *My Mission to Spain*, 28.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., vi.; Ibid., 29.

him, the 'real' José Antonio Primo de Rivera, or at least the one worth remembering for posterity, was a friendly youth dancing gracefully at a garden party.

Primo de Rivera's friendliness was a frequent theme even amongst those who did not know him personally. Hispanists differentiated him from typical fascism with an emphasis that he was on friendly terms with many of his political enemies. This ability to be courteous towards 'enemies' was seen as definitively 'un-fascist'. One of the most important examples of this is seen in *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (1943) by British Hispanist Gerald Brenan (1894-1987). Preston described this book as the first 'truly' historical work on 1930s Spanish politics, remaining 'unequalled for its authenticity and feel'.[77] Brenan only addressed Primo de Rivera in passing, but the image painted is concise and memorable. He claimed that 'José Antonio, as he is always called, was a young Andalusian of charm and imagination.'[78] Brenan based this upon the fact that '[e]ven [Primo de Rivera's] enemies, the Socialists, could not help having a certain liking for him. In café discussions he used to insist that he was closer to them than to the Conservatives'.[79] Payne followed this logic in *Falange*, emphasising that Primo de Rivera was on good terms with rival politicians due to his inherently charming and good-natured personality.[80] Both the Spanish Right-wing press and some of the *Falange* itself criticised Primo de Rivera for his personal relationships with political opponents.[81] Other Spanish fascists, who are seen to have lacked this magnanimous charm, have borne the brunt of historical criticism of Spanish fascism. In *Spain 1808-1939* (1966), British historian Raymond Carr (1919-2015) summarised the prominent members of the Falange as 'a collection of bizarre individuals'.[82] Yet, he introduced Primo de Rivera as a man of 'great personal charm' whose 'main ideas were simple, derivative, and poetic.'[83]

The depoliticisation of Primo de Rivera continued beyond his life to include the manner of his death. In his bibliographical study, published in 1974, Luis Álvarez Gutiérrez summarised the general historical tone taken towards Primo de Rivera. He stated that, apart from the polemics of Southworth, essentially no historians approached Primo de Rivera from a critical perspective.[84] He attributed this to the fact that 'political adversaries are not interested

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[77] Paul Preston, "War of Words: The Spanish Civil War and the Historians," in *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931-1939*, ed. Paul Preston (London: Routledge, 1984), 5.
[78] Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 308.
[79] Ibid., 308.
[80] Payne, *Falange,* 45.
[81] Preston, *¡Comrades!*, 89.
[82] Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 645.
[83] Ibid., 646.
[84] Luis Álvarez Gutiérrez, "Ensayo Bibliografico sobre José Antonio Primo de Rivera," in *Estudios de Historia Contemporanea*, ed. Vicente Palacio Atard (Madrid: Instituto Jeronimo Zurita del C.S.I.C, 1974), 443.

in reviving the memory of a tragically disappeared rival and prefer to maintain a discreet silence'.[85] Álvarez Gutiérrez emphasised that '[a] death like José Antonio Primo de Rivera's, in full youth losing his life for his ideals, produces respect, appeases the polemicists and encourages more even-handed and restrained judgements'.[86] Though Álvarez Gutiérrez was critical of the hagiographic tone of almost all writing on Primo de Rivera, he supported the stance of 'respecting' Primo de Rivera due to the nature of his death. He dismissed Southworth's historical credentials, describing him as a 'known American critic', and followed the conservative Anglophone trend by questioning Southworth's status as a 'real' historian to discredit his work.[87] Álvarez Gutiérrez explicitly contrasted Southworth with the 'impartiality' of Stanley Payne.[88] He equated historical 'objectivity' with respectfulness. The idea that respect is inherently due to someone who died for their beliefs is peculiar, especially in the context of fascism. Yet, this idea was also espoused by Spanish historian Julio Gil Pecharromán (b.1955) in his biography of Primo de Rivera, *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Retrato de un Visionario* (Portrait of a Visionary, 1996). He stated that, although he did not agree with many aspects of Primo de Rivera's ideology, to avoid 'sterile' history, respect must be offered to 'one prepared to die for his ideas'.[89] He did not address the fact that these ideas were violently fascist in nature, and that those executed as fascists elsewhere in Europe were also on trial for the application of these very ideas. Pecharromán poetically concluded his book with the statement that, as Primo de Rivera was young when he met his death, he 'has the right to occupy his place in History'.[90] This is a strange statement, and it ascribes to Primo de Rivera a certain moral authority due to the nature of his early demise. While never so openly acknowledged, this idea has been representative of the position of Anglophone historiography.

The importance of Primo de Rivera's appealing charm in framing him as distinct from typical fascist leadership is demonstrated in *The Spanish Right Under the Second Republic* (1971) by Preston. He highlighted how Primo de Rivera 'lacked the crudity of most charismatic leaders, the lunacy of Hitler or the buffoonery of Mussolini', and was instead 'cultivated and cosmopolitan, an eloquent and poetic character'.[91] Preston's outline of Primo de Rivera is

[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 445.
[89] Julio Gil Pecharromán, *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Retrato de un Visionario* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1996), 15.
[90] Ibid., 528.
[91] Paul Preston, *The Spanish Right under the Second Republic* (Reading: University of Reading Press, 1971), 26.

contrasted with the 'rather deranged Ernesto Giménez Caballero'.[92] The most telling statement of all comes with Preston's conclusion regarding Spanish fascism in general, stating that 'The Falange provided a taste of the irrationalism of fascism. But José Antonio was personally too normal to make a successful fascist leader.'[93] This is statement underlines the common belief at the time that, for a fascist leader to be successful, they had to be fundamentally aberrant in personality.

When personal charm is used as the primary means of judging a fascist leader, rather than an examination of their ideology or practice, ideas of an abberant personality as a fascist trait can reach absurd heights. This problem was demonstrated by Payne in 2006. Payne endorsed an extended quotation from a 2002 biography of Ledesma by Italian historian Luciano Casali (b.1946), in which the figures of Primo de Rivera and Ledesma were directly contrasted:

> In so far as José Antonio Primo de Rivera was to be a normal human in the structure of his personality (although with certain unusual talents), the combination of iron will, austerity, extreme intensity and cerebral fanaticism, [Ledesma] seemed more Russian than Spanish, a personality taken from a novel of Dostoyevsky, a starving student who becomes a revolutionary characteristic of the times of nihilist Russians.[94]

While Primo de Rivera is a 'normal', if unusually talented, human, Ledesma is literally dehumanised, turned into a fictional character from a Dostoyevsky novel. For Casali, endorsed by Payne, without the 'charm or personal charisma that was needed to be a great leader', Ledesma was thus merely 'a scathing radical theorist'.[95] In this statement, 'personal charisma' is expressly outlined as a character trait. Payne expounded the full implications of this lack of 'personal charisma': 'any study of Ledesma should not be of his life (very short, ascetic and largely without incident) but of his politics and his ideas'.[96] The historical judgement of a fascist ideologue based upon their political ideals seems appropriate. It is striking, therefore, that this fate is explicitly invoked only for Ledesma, and not the 'normal human' Primo de Rivera.

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[92] Ibid., 6.
[93] Ibid., 33.
[94] Stanley Payne, "¿Fascismo en España?" *Revista de Libros de la Fundación Caja Madrid* 120 (2006): 24.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

The Allure of *Señoritismo*

As Primo de Rivera has been depoliticised due to his 'non-fascist' personality, historians have emphasised the 'positive' elements of his personality through a focus on his status as a *señorito*. This category incorporates three major elements that have been understood as positive: youth, physical attractiveness and an upper-class background. As such, this section will examine how historians have applied each of these elements, after first offering a brief explanation of the background of the concept of *señoritismo* itself.

The term '*señoritismo*' derives from the Spanish word '*señorito*', which is the diminutive form of '*señor*', meaning 'lord'. It was translated succinctly by British historian Ronald Fraser (1930-2012) as 'young gentleman', though this does not quite incorporate the levels of ironic scorn the term evoked.[97] The term was used by the Spanish public in a dismissive manner to castigate the perceived wastefulness of the lives of young aristocratic men who flaunted their inherited wealth with lives of public excess.[98] The emblematic badge of *señoritismo* was a jacket and tie, worn about town at expensive bars and clubs. An alternative translation of the term *señorito* by American historian John Crow (1906-2001) was 'playboy', which perhaps better reflects the ambiguously critical nature of the word.[99] An emphasis on Primo de Rivera as a playboy *señorito* is the most obvious example of the gendered perspective of many historians. By emphasising 'playboy' traits, historians – overwhelmingly male, as mentioned in the Introduction – have trivialised the machismo and violence of Primo de Rivera, inferring that it was harmless or insignificant.

For mainstream politicians like José María Gil Robles, leader of the *CEDA*, the term *señorito* was a way to exclude men like Primo de Rivera from serious politics.[100] This was a contemporary form of depoliticisation. As summarised by Southworth, the Spanish Right 'looked with indulgent indifference on the strange behaviour of this young aristocrat', refusing to take him seriously.[101] Spanish Leftists similarly outlined *señoritismo* in condescending terms, with leading socialist Luis Araquistáin (1886-1959) claiming that 'a boy raised with pampering and comforts' could never be an effective fascist leader, as 'demagogic language is not possible to learn in books'.[102]

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[97] Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain* (London: Penguin, 1979), 13.
[98] Américo Castro, *The Spaniards*, trans. Willard F. King et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 484.
[99] John Crow, *Spain: The Root and the Flower* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 343.
[100] Ibid., 344.
[101] Herbert Southworth, "The Falange: An Analysis of Spain's Fascist Heritage," in *Spain in Crisis*, ed. Paul Preston (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1976), 8.
[102] Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, "La Trayectoria de un Recién Llegado. El Fracaso del Fascismo Español," in *Palabras Como Puños*, ed. Fernando del Rey (Madrid: Tecnos, 2011), 500.

Primo de Rivera was aware of his negative image as a *señorito*, and acknowledged it in his speech given at the launch of the *Falange Española* in 1934. He attempted to downplay the impact of his aristocratic background on his political worldview:

> I should like to have this microphone before me carry the voice into every last working-class home to say: Yes, we wear a tie; yes, you may say of us that we are *señoritos*. But we urge a spirit of struggle for things that cannot concern us as *señoritos*; we come to fight so that hard and just sacrifices may be imposed on many of our own class.[103]

Regardless of his attempts to distance himself from this idea of upper-class gentlemanliness, Primo de Rivera was never successful in this respect. This is important, given that shortly after the foundation of his movement, Primo de Rivera abandoned the public presentation of himself in a suit, instead favouring the *Falange*'s Fascism-inspired uniform of a blue shirt. In a study of Falangist self-representation in 2002, Mary Vincent made an insightful comment that this change in public image 'goes almost unmentioned in historical studies'.[104] The image of Primo de Rivera in a London-tailored suit has been more striking, and thus memorable, than that of him in a 'traditional' fascist-style coloured-shirt.

In historical summaries of Primo de Rivera, one of the most emphasised elements has been his youth. Youthfulness has implications of naivety, but also of idealism, passion and genuine conviction, with misguided goals potentially excusable due to a lack of life experience. Primo de Rivera's supposed youthfulness is directly linked to these moral positions, rather than simply being a value-free temporal observation. This can be seen by the fact that 'youth' has been academically defined as encompassing the ages between 16 and 25.[105] Born in 1903, Primo de Rivera was 30 years old upon the foundation of the Falange in 1933, and 33 when he died in 1936. Though perhaps young by the standards of politics, and certainly young at the time of his death, this seems slightly too old for such a universal emphasis on youthfulness. Youth has also been sociologically defined as a period of transition, between parental dependence and adult independence, which is not applicable to this period of Primo de Rivera's life. It is true that the *Falange* was a youthful movement, with the majority of its pre-

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[103] Payne, *Falange*, 38.
[104] Mary Vincent, "*Camisas Nuevas*: Style and Uniformity in the Falange Española 1933-1943," in *Fashioning the Body Politic*, ed. Wendy Parkins (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 168.
[105] Peter Hopkins, *Young People, Place and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2010), 2.

Civil War membership below the age of 21.[106] However, Primo de Rivera was more than ten years older than most of his followers, and yet regarded similarly as a youth himself. Historians have rarely emphasised this age discrepancy when discussing Primo de Rivera's youth.

One of the fundamental paradoxes encountered by scholars within the field of 'youth studies' is that while 'youth' is an important social construction with real world impact, it evokes contradictory emotional responses from observers. It can be upheld as a moral virtue, as a time of idealism and vigour. But it is also a dismissive slur, for example in the context of 'youths' as synonymous with young male delinquents.[107] British sociologist Gill Jones (b.1942) summarised this impulse:

> 'Youthfulness' thus conveys qualities, such as strength, beauty, idealism and energy, which are seen as desirable and coveted by older age groups, but on the other hand is also associated with 'inferior' characteristics of inexperience, lack of wisdom, hot-headedness, experimentation, naivety, greenness, and lack of maturity and sense.[108]

With recurring emphasis on the supposed youth of Primo de Rivera, whether intentionally or not, historians evoke these sorts of sentiments. Primo de Rivera benefits from both the 'positive' and 'negative' qualities outlined above. The positive qualities are imbued in his character and idealism, while the negative ones used to excuse his adoption of fascist values. Sympathetic portrayals of Primo de Rivera frequently describe him as too 'naïve' to understand the full implications of fascism, and thus too confused to truly understand what he was doing.[109] The moral idealisation of youth was famously outlined by US Senator Robert F Kennedy (1925-1968) in a speech to an anti-Apartheid gathering at Cape Town University in 1966. In this speech, Kennedy highlighted that the fundamental values of humanity could be found in youth:

> Our answer is the world's hope; it is to rely on youth… This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease.[110]

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[106] Payne, *Falange*, 82.
[107] Gill Jones, *Youth* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 2.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Payne, "Institutionalisation of Mission," 54.
[110] Robert F. Kennedy, "Day of Affirmation Address," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum*, Cape Town, June 6, 1966.

Kennedy was arguing that the bastion of fundamental human rights, and of liberal democracy, was found in the ideals of young people. In this construction, youthfulness is an inherent good, an agent of progress towards a better world. These qualities of youth are thus highly idealised. It is in this context that French Marxist historian Pierre Broué (1926-2005) could write in 1970 that: 'The founder and leader of the Falange, José Antonio, as he was known, was a young Andalusian of great charm, with all the qualities of youth in his favour, undeniably elegant in appearance.'[111] Even an ardent ideological opponent of fascism could introduce Primo de Rivera as positively embodying 'all the qualities of youth'.

Anglophone commentary on the youth of Primo de Rivera was apparent from the outset of his political career. Youth was inseparable from the person of Primo de Rivera in newspaper reports, though specific reference to his precise age was not made. While he was not a major figure of Spanish politics, Primo de Rivera was mentioned in several articles. Shortly after the launch of the *Falange*, *The Times* ran an article entitled 'Choice before Spain'. While warning of the risk posed by the fascism of the *Falange*, the article nonetheless described Primo de Rivera as 'a promising young lawyer'. [112] Once they established Primo de Rivera as a relevant figure in Spanish politics, Anglophone newspapers almost exclusively referred to him as 'young'. In a 1934 article in *The New York Times*, Primo de Rivera was mentioned by name three separate times, and in all instances his name was preceded by the word 'young'.[113] He was also occasionally described as 'youthful'.[114] By the conclusion of the Spanish Civil War, this idea was so entrenched that the title of a *New York Times* article referred to him simply as 'Young Primo'.[115]

Emphasis on Primo de Rivera as young extended through to academic historians and remains a common descriptor. In *Falange*, Payne summarised the character of Primo de Rivera as that of 'basically a serious young man'.[116] In 'Spain', a chapter from *European Fascism* (1968), Hugh Thomas invoked Primo de Rivera's youth to distinguish him from the plethora of established politicians: 'Since almost everyone had betrayed his father by the end, young Primo de Rivera found himself up against the entire established range of political parties'.[117]

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[111] Pierre Broué and Emile Témime, *The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain*, trans. Tony White (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 45.
[112]"Choice Before Spain," *The Times*, 18 November, 1933.
[113] "Spanish Fascists Arrested in Raid," *New York Times*, 11 July, 1934.
[114] "Land of the Grandees," *The Times*, 24 August, 1935.
[115] "Find Young Primo's Body," *New York Times*, 5 April, 1939.
[116] Payne, *Falange*, 25.
[117] Thomas, 'Spain', 290.

More recently, Michael Mann described Primo de Rivera in 2004 as an 'unusual and charismatic young leader'.[118]

The way in which a focus on 'youth' can have an overtly idealising effect is seen in the work of American historian Gabriel Jackson. In his highly popular *The Spanish Republic and Civil War, 1931-1939* (1965), he introduced the founder of the *Falange* as '[t]ypical of the ideals and confusions of a whole generation of youth.'[119] He subsequently concluded his assessment of Primo de Rivera with the following: 'There were several José Antonios – all dramatic, personally attractive, and naively egotistical… In all these qualities he was typical of his generation in Spain'.[120] Jackson posited that Primo de Rivera was a 'typical' example of how Spaniards of his generation were engaged with politics. Rather than the singular leader traditionally associated with fascism, using charismatic authority to argue for a fascist future, Jackson described Primo de Rivera as simply a product of his time. Casting him as representative of a 'whole generation' is also problematic in the sense that it drastically overvalues his importance and influence over his peers (as well as overlooking the age discrepancy between himself and his young followers). It implies that he addressed concerns widely felt and was at least somewhat popular as a result. While the *Falange* was overwhelmingly populated by young men, it did not ever achieve any significant mainstream appeal, at least while Primo de Rivera was alive.

Historians have also emphasised the physical appearance of Primo de Rivera in a manner which has reinforced a sympathetic perspective. Social psychologists have noted that people have a fundamental bias towards associating physical attractiveness with positive personality traits and moral character, including trustworthiness.[121] This association of physical attractiveness with a morally upstanding nature has been noted to be so significant that jurors are less likely to convict attractive defendants, believing them less likely to be criminal in nature.[122]

As with the emphasis on youth, an emphasis on the physical attractiveness of Primo de Rivera in Anglophone literature began during his lifetime. In *The New York Times*, articles relating to Primo de Rivera would sometimes feature a portrait of him, posing gracefully in his London-tailored suit.[123] In one case, the newspaper article was predominantly about Prime

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[118] Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 334.
[119] Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 178.
[120] Ibid., 180.
[121] Alice Eagly et al., "What is Beautiful is Good But…," *Psychological Bulletin* 110:1 (1991): 109.
[122] Karen Dion, Ellen Berscheid and Elaine Walster, "What is Beautiful is Good," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 24:3 (1972): 290.
[123] "Primo de Rivera Sentenced to Die," *New York Times*, 19 November, 1936.

Minister Manuel Azaña (1880-1940) and his opposition to anti-democratic extremism, yet it was a large photographic portrait of Primo de Rivera that graced the page.[124] Spanish aristocrat and eventual refugee, Constancia de la Mora (1906-1950), wrote in her 1940 English-language autobiography about 'young Primo de Rivera, the handsome, heart-breaking leader of the Falange'.[125]

Historians continued to emphasise his good looks. Bowers wrote that:

> José Primo de Rivera [sic], eldest son of the Dictator, was young and darkly handsome. His coal-black hair shone glossily. His eyes were dark and keenly intelligent. His face was slender and of Andalusian hue. His manner was courtly, modest, deferential.[126]

Later historians have been more succinct, simply introducing Primo de Rivera as 'handsome'. Hugh Thomas wrote in *The Spanish Civil War* (1961) that 'José Antonio was a tall, handsome lawyer'.[127] In *Mediterranean Fascism* (1971), American historian Charles Delzell described Primo de Rivera as 'the handsome, eldest son of the late General Miguel Primo de Rivera'.[128]

Apart from youth, the fundamental requirement to be a *señorito* was to come from upper-class family. As a practising lawyer, Primo de Rivera did not quite fit the definition of *señorito* as idle, but his lifestyle and social background nevertheless ensured the public's perception of him as one. For historians, the aristocratic heritage of Primo de Rivera has been a significant distinction from typical fascist leaders. Ideas of nobility in both heritage and temperament, sometimes expressly linked, have meant that he has been disassociated from his followers.

The class composition of the *Falange* has been a point of historical debate. In the 1960s, when academic conceptualisations started moving away from denouncing fascism as too barbaric and pathological to be properly understood, the dominant view was that the social base of fascism was the lower-middle class, the petite-bourgeoisie.[129] Thus, in the important early volume on generic fascism, *European Fascism* (1968) edited by British historian Stuart Woolf (1931-), both British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (1914-2003) and American historian Norman Kogan (1919-2011) framed fascism as primarily the preserve of

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[124] William Carney, "Spanish Premier Fights Extremists," *New York Times*, 22 March, 1936.
[125] Constancia de la Mora, *In Place of Splendour* (London: Michael Joseph, 1940), 211.
[126] Bowers, *My Mission to Spain*, 28.
[127] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 70.
[128] Charles Delzell, *Mediterranean Fascism, 1919-1945* (New York: Walker, 1971), 258.
[129] Roger Griffin, "Exploding the Continuum of History," in *A Fascist Century*, ed. Roger Griffin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 49.

the lower-middle class.[130] Delzell asserted the importance of class analyses of fascism, and the unusual class-position of Primo de Rivera:

> In differentiating fascistic regimes from backward-looking authoritarian systems it is important to keep in mind that demagogic leaders like Hitler and Mussolini did not emerge from the traditional ruling classes. Instead they usually rose from a different and humbler social stratum (though there were some exceptions, such as the aristocratic José Antonio Primo de Rivera in Spain and Sir Oswald Mosley in Britain).[131]

The dominance of the lower-middle-class thesis was criticised by Israeli historian Zeev Sternhell (b.1935) in 1976.[132] By 1980, the thesis was generally acknowledged as outdated and simplistic.[133] Support for fascism has increasingly been understood to have come in various ways from across all classes. In the case of the *Falange*, however, the idea of the lower-middle class as the bastion of fascism has still had a considerable influence. As the *Falange* never achieved electoral success, receiving only 0.7% of the 1936 vote, the focus on class and fascism in Spain has thus been more interested in the composition of the movement itself. Generally understood, Primo de Rivera and his *Falange Española* were a group of upper-middle class students with an aristocratic core, while Ledesma and the *JONS* were in line with the stereotypical conception of fascism as a movement of the petite-bourgeoisie. In this manner, especially in earlier historical writing, the negative elements of Falangism were attributed to those who originated from the *JONS* and were from a lower-class background, while the respectable elements of Falangism originated from the aristocratic sensibilities of Primo de Rivera and his 'court of litterateurs'.[134] Some historians have deliberately invoked this class division within the *Falange* to denounce Ledesma and the more activist members of the *Falange*, portraying them as comparatively 'plebeian' in nature.[135]

An emphasis on Primo de Rivera's noble heritage in Anglophone literature can once again be traced back to journalism of the 1930s. The same article in *The Times* that first

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[130] Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Phenomenon of Fascism," in *European Fascism*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 33.; Norman Kogan, "Fascism as a Political System," in *The Nature of Fascism*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: The Graduate School of Contemporary European Studies, University of Reading, 1968), 13.
[131] Delzell, *Mediterranean Fascism*, xvi.
[132] Zeev Sternhell, "Fascist Ideology," in *Fascism: A Reader's Guide*, ed. Walter Laqueur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 315.
[133] Bernt Hagtvet and Reinhard Kühnl, "Contemporary Approaches to Fascism: A Survey of Paradigms," in *Who Were the Fascists?*, edited by Stein Ugelvik Larsen et al. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 29.
[134] Payne, *Falange*, 49.
[135] Broué, *Revolution and Civil War*, 52.

described Primo de Rivera as a 'promising young lawyer' also noted that he was the 'Marques de Estella'.[136] In the tiers of Spanish nobility, José Antonio Primo de Rivera ranked among the highest. The 'marquesado' (marquessate) of Estella was granted by Spanish King Alfonso XII in 1877 to José Antonio Primo de Rivera's great-uncle. The title was inherited by Primo de Rivera's father, and was amplified in scope by King Alfonso XIII in 1923 as a reward for seizing control of the state in a military dictatorship, with the granting of the position of grandee. This 'grandeza de España' was the second-highest position within the Spanish aristocracy, just below the royal family, and was granted at the discretion of the monarch. Upon the death of his father in 1930, José Antonio Primo de Rivera inherited this title.

By April 1934, the characterisation of Primo de Rivera as the 'young Marques Primo de Rivera' became standard in Anglophone journalism.[137] The repeated emphasis on his noble heritage would have evoked sympathy in the readership, at least in the case of Britain, where issues of social class and respectability have been linked for centuries.[138] With higher positions within the social strata granting increased levels of social prestige, the rank of 'gentleman' was reserved for highly educated men of at least middle-class background.[139] Thus, by ensuring Primo de Rivera's aristocratic titles were obvious, his level of respectability was set forth. In articles relating to his imprisonment and execution, *The Times* used the same stock phrase of 'Don José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Marques de Estella, son of the former dictator'.[140] Given the political context of Britain at the time, with conservative newspapers supporting the British government's policy of non-intervention, the indignity of a respectable nobleman being tried and executed by a supposedly 'Communist' Spanish Republic could be seen as tragic. This is evident in how Primo de Rivera's social standing was repeatedly invoked in *The Times*' article of 20 November 1936, 'Trial of Spanish Fascist'. Subtitled 'A Vigorous Defence', the article states that 'Don José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Marques de Estella, son of the former dictator… was condemned to death at Alicante last night.'[141] The author returns to the notion of aristocracy when highlighting the familial values of the defendant: 'Don José, who vigorously and dramatically defended himself, his brother and his brother's wife… made a

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[136] "Choice Before Spain," *The Times*, 18 November, 1933.
[137] "Hard Reality in Spain," *The Times*, 3 April, 1934.
[138] James Thompson, "After the Fall: Class and Political Language in Britain, 1780-1900," *The Historical Journal* 39:3 (1996): 785.
[139] Richard Trainor, "The Middle Class," in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. Martin Daunton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 674.; William Rubinstein, "Britain's Elites in the Interwar Period, 1918-1939," *British Scholar* 3:1 (2010): 7.
[140] "Spanish Fascist Leader Executed," *The Times*, 21 November, 1936.; "The Nationalists in Spain," *The Times*, 2 March, 1937.; "Fate of Spanish Fascist Leader," *The Times*, 15 July, 1938.
[141] "Trial of Spanish Fascist," *The Times*, 20 November, 1936.

warm defence of his father, who, he said, died deserted by his friends.'[142] The combination of the familiarity of a first name, and emphatic deference to title seen in the phrase 'Don José', offered a sympathetic perspective. Even if it was simply standard editorial practice to use full titles of figures, without explicit intention to engender reader sympathy, the image of inherent respectability remains.

This emphasis on the positive characteristics of Primo de Rivera's aristocratic upbringing continued from journalism to historical writing. A significant example can be seen in *The Martyrdom of Spain* (1938) by Spanish writer and law professor Alfred Mendizabal.[143] This book was readily embraced by Left-leaning academics writing in Britain at the time, and was thus influential in that sphere. *The Martyrdom of Spain* was among the first book to adopt the idea of distinguishing Primo de Rivera from the 'moral crimes' of his followers based on his class background. Mendizabal clearly outlined his distaste for fascism, which he categorised as 'harmful and dangerous to the mental health of its partisans and to the orthodoxy of many simple Catholics'.[144] While he expressed liberal-minded hostility towards the *Falange* in general, he did not extend this to its leader:

> A mass of wildly heroic literature continued to feed the inflamed Phalangists, of whom the only truly brave man was their leader, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, too noble, too fine a character for his following of wild men, who often reproached him for his breadth of view and his understanding of others.[145]

Bravery is a trait Mendizabal attributed only to those of refined upper-class origin.

An extreme example of the admirable nobility often seen as inherent in Primo de Rivera's social background is the work of American journalist Charles Foltz (1910-2005). In *The Masquerade in Spain* (1948), Foltz denounced an array of Spanish fascists based on physical appearance and personality traits. He claimed that 'Giménez Caballero [was] a bad poet and parlor intellectual' as well as 'temperamental', that 'Juan Aparicio [a co-founder of the JONS] was an egg-headed little man, who acquired ludicrous Napoleonic airs', that 'Antonio Bermudez Cañete [a journalist involved with the JONS] was a hack writer', and rejoiced that 'Ramón Iglesias Parra [a member of the *Falang*e's organisational committee] was finally put

[142] Ibid.
[143] Jacques Maritain, "A Frenchman's Thoughts on Affairs in Spain (Introduction)," in Alfred Mendizabal, *The Martyrdom of Spain* (Edinburgh: J. and J. Gray, 1938), 2.
[144] Alfred Mendizabal, *The Martyrdom of Spain* (Edinburgh: J. and J. Gray, 1938), 186.
[145] Ibid., 178.

away safely in an asylum for lunatics'.[146] When denouncing these fascist figures, Foltz based his criticism on personality and physique, rather than an attempt to engage with their beliefs or actions. This is brought into stark relief when he introduced Primo de Rivera as 'an aristocrat, the cultured, well-travelled, and carefully educated son of General Miguel Primo de Rivera'.[147] Rather than flippant criticism, Primo de Rivera's social background is highlighted in an expressly adulatory manner. 'Young Primo de Rivera', Foltz waxed lyrically, was 'not just another Spanish Fascist. He sincerely believed in social revolution.'[148] In this construction, 'sincerity' seems inextricably tied to social class. An examination of issues surrounding Primo de Rivera as a genuine revolutionary will be addressed in Chapter Three.

Sometimes historians have simplistically asserted that the aristocratic nature of Primo de Rivera inherently elevated him morally above other fascist leaders. In *The Rise of Fascism*, Carsten asserted without evidence that '[i]t seems unlikely that either Hitler or Mussolini would have impressed this born aristocrat [Primo de Rivera]'.[149] This is a strange conclusion, given Primo de Rivera's well-known respect for Mussolini.[150] Carsten simply assumed that a 'born aristocrat' would be too sophisticated to indulge in such traditional fascist charismatic leadership. As disapproval of Hitler and Mussolini is understandably viewed by historians as a positive character trait, Carsten's aside casts Primo de Rivera in a positive light for no reason beyond his class background.

An even stronger example of aristocratic roots being understood as intrinsically positive can be seen in Preston's *The Spanish Right Under the Second Republic* (1971). He wrote that a defining characteristic of Primo de Rivera was 'an element of idealistic "noblesse oblige" reminiscent of Young England'.[151] The reference to noblesse oblige invokes imagery of a well-intentioned, if paternalistic and condescending, desire to assist the lower classes. The image of a kind-hearted aristocrat offering goodwill from above, even at the expense of the material comforts of his own class, is much less threatening to the social order than the usual images of a fascist leader as an upstart lower-class rabble-rouser. This idea of gentleman as less threatening to established interests had a practical effect on Spanish politics, as the Spanish catastrophist financiers of fascism were considerably more enthused by Primo de

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[146] Charles Foltz Jr, *The Masquerade in Spain* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1948), 63.
[147] Ibid., 67,
[148] Ibid.
[149] Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*, 200.
[150] While Primo de Rivera is generally held to have been unenthused by Hitler, his relationship with Mussolini was considerably more complicated, especially as he wrote a glowing introduction to the Spanish translation of Mussolini's '*La Dottrina del Fascismo*' (1932) and had a framed portrait of him above his desk.
[151] Preston, *The Spanish Right*, 29.

Rivera's respectable background than by Ledesma, and thus more willing to fund the merged *Falange*'s activities.[152] Primo de Rivera's comparatively respectable social position meant that he was able to appear less threatening to established conservative interests, perceived as less devoted to radical social and economic reform. Preston goes further than the idea of noblesse oblige, though, by directly invoking Young England. This was a Victorian era political movement in Britain, based around romantic, paternalistic conservatism of Tory aristocrats from the sports fields of Eton, Cambridge, and Oxford. Their leader, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), has been lauded as among the country's best. Thus, to invoke this patriotic liberal democratic heritage when discussing the nature of Spanish fascism is to sentimentalise it, at least in the eyes of British readership.

The most explicit example of the moral authority granted to those of an aristocratic background was seen in *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right Since 1890* (1990) by British historian Philip Rees (b.1941). He asserted that Primo de Rivera 'was devoid of the acid of resentment which seethed in petit-bourgeois fascists like Ledesma'.[153] Instead of 'seething' with acidic resentment, something reserved for those of lower social background, the aristocratic nature of Primo de Rivera has ensured that his ideals have been associated with romanticism.

The idea of Anglophone historians being inherently more positive towards upper-class political leaders has been directly raised in the context of Sir Oswald Mosley and his *British Union of Fascists*. Mosley was the only other fascist leader of the period from an aristocratic background, and has been a very controversial figure in British historiography. While generally denounced by historians, the few attempts at rehabilitation have been based on his aristocratic heritage. The inherent 'romance' of aristocratic life has recently come to the fore in the public's perception of Mosley. A prominent television series produced by Channel 4 in 1998 dramatised the life of Mosley, focusing on issues of love and passion within his aristocratic social circle.[154] British political commentator Nick Cohen (b.1961) has argued that English culture has internalised the idea that high society is inherently admirable, and that Mosley's position as 'a toff' has resulted in an unjustified sympathetic academic treatment.[155] This argument could be equally applied to British historians of Primo de Rivera and his

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[152] Payne, *Spain's First Democracy*, 175.

[153] Philip Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right Since 1890* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 305.

[154] Tony Kushner, "'Long May Its Memory Live!': Writing and Rewriting 'the Battle of Cable Street'," in *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society*, ed. Tony Kushner et al. (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2000), 168.

[155] Nick Cohen, "Sympathy for Sir Oswald?," *The Jewish Quarterly* 43:3 (1996): 28.

señoritismo. There is even a very similar parallel in a public presentation of Primo de Rivera from an aristocratic, romantic perspective which downplayed his fascist career. In 2015, a musical production opened in Madrid entitled *Mi Princesa Roja* (My Red Princess). This musical focussed on the life of Primo de Rivera as a heroic and dashing figure, with the central plot a politically-sanitised love affair with Elizabeth Bibesco (which has been rumoured since the 1930s but never proven).[156] English-language journalistic commentary was interested in the relevance of this to the British aristocracy, framing the Bibesco as the 'daughter of Lord Asquith'.[157] Left-leaning Spanish literary responses were critical. They argued that the desire of the director to 'reclaim' the noble hero of Primo de Rivera was historically unconvincing.[158] Yet, the fact that such a play had its primary focus on 'a story of impossible love' amongst the gentry demonstrates the allure of the intrigues of aristocratic life.[159] This fascinating glamour of high society is absent in narratives of 'typical' fascist leaders, who are unable to benefit from this humanising perspective.

British historians of Oswald Mosley have addressed the issue of depoliticising a fascist leader since the 1970s. In striking contrast to the continued adulation for Primo de Rivera's *señoritismo*, academics have criticised authors sympathetic to Mosley for focusing on his personality over his political impact. British historian John Vincent (b.1937) succinctly stated in 1975 that 'concentration on "Mosley the man" makes his political significance harder to assess, not easier'.[160] He concluded that 'separating Mosley from his [political] context' had unfortunate 'apologetic significance'.[161] This criticism, subsequently well-acknowledged by the British historians, has had little impact on the historiography of Primo de Rivera.

Conclusion

The concept of charismatic leadership has not been utilised effectively by historians of Spanish fascism. This is despite the fact that it nominally constitutes one of the two most important criteria of most definitions of fascism. While it has become a well-established truism that fascist leadership was inherently charismatic in nature, serious attempts at applying the term to Primo de Rivera have been almost non-existent. While historians frequently assert the charisma of Primo de Rivera, this understanding of 'charisma' is essentially indistinguishable

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[156] "Un Musical Reinvindica la Figura de José Antonio Primo de Rivera." *El País*, 1 October 2015..
[157] James Badcock, "Musical Links Fascist Chief with Daughter of Lord Asquith," *The Telegraph*, 2 October 2015.
[158] "El Fascismo Estrena su Musical: Mi Princesa Roja." *Diagonal*, 1 October 2015.
[159] "Mi Princesa Roja: Un Musical Sobre José Antonio Primo de Rivera." *ABC*, 2 October 2015.
[160] John Vincent, "The Case for Mosley," *Times Literary Supplement* April 4, 1975, 350.
[161] Ibid.

from 'charm'. The perspective of Primo de Rivera as a 'debonair' gentleman is thus distinct from the traditional perspective of fascist leaders as morally reprehensible and responsible for the crimes of the adherents of their movements.[162] The unusual nature of this kind of personalisation and depoliticisation of a historical political figure has been addressed by Preston recently, albeit in the context of Franco rather than Primo de Rivera. He expressed incredulity over a recent biography on Franco written by Payne and Spanish journalist (and former neo-Nazi) Jesús Palacios.[163] Preston stated that '[o]ne of the things that I find extraordinary … is that there are references to how handsome Franco was, how muscular, how gallant – and stuff that's really obsequious.'[164] Preston argued that deference to positive personal traits of historical figures has no place in academic history. Yet, in the case of Primo de Rivera, this 'obsequiousness' has been prominent. With charismatic leadership thus demonstrated to have been of little use in historical understanding of Primo de Rivera, it is important to assess historical approaches to the other prime element of fascism: political violence.

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[162] Paul Preston, "Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977," *The American Historical Review* 106:2 (2001): 651.
[163] Angel Viñas, "On the 80th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52:1 (2017): 124.
[164] Stanley Payne and Jesús Palacios, *Franco* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014).; Helen Graham, "Interview with Paul Preston," in *Interrogating Francoism,* ed. Helen Graham (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 258.

Chapter Two

Primo de Rivera as the Non-Violent *Jefe* of a Violent Terroristic Movement

Historians have frequently excused José Antonio Primo de Rivera of responsibility for the violence of his movement, despite considerable evidence linking him both to its justification and its practice. The *Falange* has been understood as typically violent for a fascist movement. They held weekly drills of their party militia, the leadership spouted rhetoric endorsing violence, and they operated a death squad, the *Falange de la Sangre* (Blood Phalanx). Nevertheless, historians have frequently upheld Primo de Rivera as 'non-violent', expressly distancing him from his own public rhetoric. A recent example of this is seen in Michael Mann's description of Primo de Rivera as 'squeamish'.[1] In this construction, blame for the *Falange*'s violence is shifted to subordinate officials and restless young activists.

This chapter argues that Primo de Rivera's relationship with violence has been generally misrepresented by Anglophone historiography, with the result that he has consistently been portrayed as violence-averse. This approach has reinforced the mythologised perspective of Primo de Rivera as a heroic, dashing figure. To contextualise historians' reluctance to associate Primo de Rivera with violence, it is necessary to outline how the issue of violence has been understood in relation to fascism. Therefore, the first section of this chapter explores the role of violence in the realm of fascist studies, the violence of the *Falange*, and how historians have approached the political violence of the Second Republic more generally. With this academic context established, the second section of this chapter argues that historians have often claimed Primo de Rivera was personally opposed to violence, which was not the case. Examples of direct violence by Primo de Rivera are represented as commendably masculine and heroic. The third section of this chapter argues that the fact that Primo de Rivera's overtly violent rhetoric has often been framed as essentially poetic in character has had the effect of minimising the consequences of his statements in historical narratives. By dismissing the distasteful violent element from Primo de Rivera's typical fascist ideas, many historians have managed to thereby portray these ideas as commendable, without reconciling their otherwise standard academic opposition to fascism. This has the result of framing his rhetoric as comparatively harmless, regardless of the political violence it

[1] Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 334.

directly inspired. I will critique this position through the lens of Roger Griffin's focus on taking fascist rhetoric 'seriously'.[2] Utilising Griffin's framework and understanding Primo de Rivera's violent rhetoric as a genuine statement of fascist values avoids artificially distancing him from the violent outcomes he publicly endorsed.

Violence in the Histories of Generic Fascism and Modern Spain

Political violence has been an integral element of the history of fascism and the Spanish Second Republic. Violence has been one of the most significant components of definitions of fascism, as fascists luxuriated in violent rhetoric and action. As the *Falange* has been widely viewed as the standard example of Spanish fascism, it too has readily been denounced as a violent, terroristic movement. Primo de Rivera's repeated public endorsement of violence in defence of fascist ideals readily aligns with the actions of the *Falange* in the streets. This section argues that politicisation of historical debate over the moral culpability of violence in the Second Republic has had a major impact on historical perspectives on Primo de Rivera. The effect of this has been a relativisation of Primo de Rivera into a 'lesser evil' by those on the conservative side of a major polemical schism regarding 'blame' for the fall of the Second Republic. With Republican violence an immensely passionate topic of contemporary academic debate, historians like Stanley Payne have reified Primo de Rivera into a victim, rather than an agent, of violence.

Violence has been central to historical understandings of fascism. The typical conception of fascism was neatly summarised by American historian Allen Douglas in 1984:

> Fascism, violence and storm troopers: in the popular mind the three are inseparable. The same could be said, on a more sophisticated plane, of the scholarly discourse on fascism. In an area in which so little consensus reigns, this seems to be one of the few points of near-universal agreement.[3]

He continued:

> Most catalogues of 'fascist minima' have, for example, included paramilitary formations; and fascism has been seen to have a predilection for violence both on the level of ideology and that of tactics.[4]

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[2] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 13.
[3] Allen Douglas, "Violence and Fascism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 19:4 (1984): 689.
[4] Ibid.

Payne's typology contains two separate criteria to this effect: (1) 'Attempted mass mobilisation with militarisation of political relationships and style with the goal of a mass party militia' and (2) 'Positive evaluation and use of, or willingness to use, violence'.[5] While Payne admitted that the full extent of his typology will not apply to all fascist movements, the existence of two separate definitional criteria of violence and militarism demonstrate how important they were considered to be. Payne maintained this version of the 'fascist minimum' in *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (1995), thereby demonstrating the continued relevance of this perspective.[6] In fact, in 2006 Payne went further, stating that 'special valorisation of war and violence' was an essential 'key value and goal' of fascism.[7] Debates over the nature of fascism in that same year involved claims that violence is fascism's defining characteristic.[8]

Fascist violence has often been understood as even less legitimate than other forms of political violence. This position has been influenced by the academic focus on the horrors of Nazism. Ernst Nolte was unequivocal on this point in his seminal *The Three Faces of Fascism* (1965):

> Sociological or psychological explanations do not exhaust the nature of fascist violence. It contains something of original evil, of cynical contempt for human beings, and diabolical delight in the humiliation of another human being, a dark love of force for its own sake.[9]

This kind of language no longer commonly features in academic discourse. For many historians, the 'demonological' approach offers no critical insight into fascism's function and appeal.[10] Fascist violence has still nevertheless been understood as distinct from other forms of political violence. This is due to fascism's rhetorical embrace of violence itself as a force for good, rather than simply a practical means to an end.[11] British political scientist Daniel Woodley recently demonstrated the continuing academic hostility towards fascist violence, concluding that it needed to be distinguished from other forms of mostly-Leftist violence,

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[5] Stanley Payne, *Fascism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 7.
[6] Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 7.
[7] Stanley Payne, "Commentary on Roger Griffin's "Fascism's New Faces"," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 178.
[8] Mario Sznajder, "Still in Search of the Right Conceptualisation of Generic Fascism," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 390.
[9] Quoted in Daniel Woodley, *Fascism and Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 202.
[10] Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, "On the Irrelevance of Fascism in Spain," in *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, ed. Manuel Álvarez Tardío et al. (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), 239.
[11] Ian Kershaw, "War and Political Violence in Twentieth Century Europe," *Contemporary European History* 14:1 (2005): 111.

based on their differing goals.[12] As the goals of fascism were diametrically opposed to 'emancipatory violence', it cannot be morally equated with violence that sought to grant freedoms to oppressed and marginalised groups.[13]

Due to the *Falange'*s prominent involvement in political violence during the Spanish Republic, historians have understandably denounced it as a violent, militaristic movement. In *The Spanish Civil War* (1961), Hugh Thomas highlighted its 'provocatory power', and narrated tales of Falangists 'riding around in motor cars armed with machine guns, [doing] everything they could to increase disorder'.[14] He later referred to Falangists as 'busy with their assassinations and street fighting', which were understood as the *Falange*'s main political functions.[15] In 1968, Payne outlined violence as a fundamental practice of the *Falange*, though he did not implicate Primo de Rivera by name.[16] In 1996, British historian Michael Richards claimed that a mission of the *Falange* 'was to bring about a revaluation of violence' by overtly supporting it, and Paul Preston stated that it 'continued to work hard to create an atmosphere of disorder' designed to 'ensure the escalation of a spiral of mindless violence'.[17] In 2000, British historian Nigel Townson (b.1959) defined the Falange as 'miniscule but highly militant', emphasizing that violent action was a fundamental feature of the movement which self-identified as a militia.[18] Thus, when Primo de Rivera is not personally mentioned, the *Falange* has been understood through the lens outlined by Roger Griffin, who claimed that 'the extolling of militaristic values… is a central theme of the rhetoric, ritual and style of all inter-war fascisms'.[19]

In his 1933 speech proclaiming the foundation of the *Falange Española*, Primo de Rivera drew on violent imagery and expressly endorsed political violence. For Payne in 1961, and for many subsequent historians, this speech was euphemistically considered 'tensely poetic'.[20] The academic focus on the 'poetic' qualities of Primo de Rivera's rhetoric will be explored below. The overt recourse to violent activism is prominent in the speech:

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[12] Woodley, *Fascism and Political Theory*, 121.
[13] Ibid., 125.
[14] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961), 98.
[15] Ibid., 106.
[16] Stanley Payne, *Franco's Spain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 21.
[17] Michael Richards, "Civil War, Violence and the Construction of Francoism," in *The Republic Besieged*, ed. Paul Preston et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 199.; Paul Preston, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Fontana Press, 1996), 64.
[18] Nigel Townson, "The Second Republic, 1931-1936," in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. José Alvarez Junco et al. (London: Arnold, 2000), 235.
[19] Roger Griffin, "Shattering Crystals: The Role of 'Dream Time' in Extreme Right-Wing Political Violence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15:1 (2003): 76.
[20] Stanley Payne, *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 38.

> Finally, we desire that if on some occasion [a system of authority, of hierarchy, and of order] must be achieved by violence, there be no shrinking from violence. Because who has said – while speaking of 'everything save violence' – that the supreme value in the hierarchy of values is amiability? Who has said that when our sentiments are insulted we are obliged to be accommodating instead of reacting like men? It is very correct indeed that dialectic is the first instrument of communication. But no other dialectic is admissible save the dialectic of fists and pistols when justice or the *Patria* is offended.[21]

This 'dialectic of fists and pistols', framed by Primo de Rivera as the obvious response required when 'reacting like men', has been understood as a summation of the role of violence in fascist ideology. Primo de Rivera's rhetoric of violence was reiterated in a 1934 speech in Valladolid, in which he announced the fusion of the *Falange Española* and the *JONS*. After denouncing the evils of liberalism and socialism, he concluded his address:

> We will not satisfy our aspirations by rearranging the state in some way. What we want is to give back Spain optimism, self-confidence, a clear and forceful life-style. That is why our group is not a party: it is a militia. That is why we are not here in order to become deputies, under-secretaries or ministers, but in order to fulfil, each in his place, whatever mission we are commanded to undertake… We have no personal ambitions, except, perhaps, the ambition to be in the forefront of danger.[22]

As early as 1968, historians have understood that fascist justifications for violence involved high-minded claims of the righteous nature of their actions.[23] Yet, as will be demonstrated, many Hispanist historians have refused to take Primo de Rivera's statements as a serious statement of genuinely held ideology.

Primo de Rivera's justifications for violence were also demonstrated through his private correspondence, which demonstrates that his public violent rhetoric was not detached from his own views. In 1933, he sent a letter to his friend Julián Pemartín (1901-1966), in which he sought to address criticisms against fascism. In this letter, Primo de Rivera affirmed

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[21] Ibid., 40.
[22] José Antonio Primo de Rivera, "Proclamation of the Spanish Falange of the JONS, Speech made at the Teatro Calderón, Valladolid, March 4th 1934" in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Collected Works*, ed. Hugh Thomas (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 96.
[23] Zeev Barbu, "Rumania," in *European Fascism*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), 160.

that 'violence is not systematically reprehensible, but only when it is contrary to justice', and continued: 'Why, therefore, should violence used against a victorious sect which spreads discord, disavows national continuity and obeys instructions from abroad… disqualify the system which such violence implants?'[24] A year later, in a secret letter to Franco in support of a military coup, Primo de Rivera asserted that his 'resolve to go out into the street with a gun in defence of Spain' was unwavering.[25]

While Primo de Rivera spoke openly about the moral validity of violence, the *Falange Española* did not immediately engage in practical violence upon its foundation in 1933. This initial hesitation has been instrumental in those historical attempts to cast him as non-violent. After Leftist attacks on Falangist street-vendors selling the movement's magazine did not instantly inspire retaliatory violence, Primo de Rivera was denounced in the Right-wing press. He was accused of being the leader of 'Franciscanism' (a pacifist Catholic mendicant order) rather than fascism.[26] While Primo de Rivera initially responded with a public pledge that the *Falange* was unwilling to stoop to 'criminal' retaliatory violence, by mid-1934 he had authorised the creation of Falangist death-squads and abandoned the principle of non-response to violent provocation.[27] With Spanish Leftists cognisant of the failures of socialists to halt the rise of fascism in Italy, Germany and most recently Austria, they became increasingly determined to deny the *Falange* space in the Spanish political sphere. In this climate, retaliatory violence continued, mostly in the form of street battles between rival groups, but also in the form of political assassinations.

When discussing Primo de Rivera directly, historians have been reluctant to associate him with the violence of his movement. As seen in Chapter One, early writers on Spanish fascism embraced the vision of Primo de Rivera as too gentlemanly to be involved in violence. Subsequent historians have often been even more overtly defensive. In 1972, Thomas asserted that '[Primo de Rivera] himself was not really a man of violence, though his speeches provoked unrest and terror'.[28] The apparent contradiction inherent in this statement is not addressed. Similarly, British historian Jack Gibbs claimed in 1973 that 'the pacific José Antonio… found that his followers took too literally some of his more picturesque oratory'.[29] Spanish historian Vicente Sánchez-Biosca claimed in 2009 that the words of Primo de Rivera

[24] José Antonio Primo de Rivera, "Violence and Justice," in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Collected Works*, ed. Hugh Thomas (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 46.
[25] José Antonio Primo de Rivera, "Letter to General Franco," in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Collected Works*, ed. Hugh Thomas (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 125.
[26] Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 263.
[27] Nigel Townson, *The Crisis of Democracy in Spain* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2000), 262.
[28] Hugh Thomas, *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Collected Works*, (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 12.
[29] Jack Gibbs, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Ernest Benn, 1973), 32.

have been retrospectively understood as 'allegories, parables or predictions of a visionary, rather than as the prescriptive ideology of a political leader', in spite of how he was understood by his followers at the time and how historians have damned the ideals of other fascist leaders.[30]

While most historians have not adopted as extreme a view as Thomas, a mainstream perspective on the issue revolves around 'ambiguity'. First outlined in *Falange* by Payne, this perspective was itself initially adopted by Thomas, who claimed that Primo de Rivera 'was himself still ambiguous on the subject of violence'.[31] The peculiarity of this perspective can be seen in a quote by Francisco Romero Salvadó, who stated in 2016 without clarification that '[a]lthough ambiguous on the subject of violence, [Primo de Rivera] advocated the so-called dialectic of fists and guns'.[32] No reason explaining any 'ambiguity' was supplied.

Apart from concerns regarding the *Falange* specifically, the issue of political violence has been integral to historical studies of the Spanish Republic. A 2017 issue of *The Journal of Contemporary History* dedicated a special section to the topic of violence and the Spanish Civil War, in which British historian Richard Evans (b.1947) claimed that this issue is maybe the most controversial topic in any field of contemporary history.[33] Apportionment of blame for this violence has been a concern for historians on both sides of the Left-Right political divide. The Spanish Republic is often understood through the lens of an inevitable cycle of escalating violence between Leftist and Rightist militants, described by Spanish historian Manuel Álvarez Tardío (b.1972) as 'permanent mid-level violence which resulted in an unstoppable trickle of deaths'.[34] Conservative historians have been accused of understanding the Republic primarily through hindsight, assuming that it was doomed to fail.[35] From this somewhat teleological position, the argument that the failure of the Republic was inevitable leads to the conclusion that the military insurrection was justifiable. Other works have sought to counter the idea of the inevitability of the failure of Republic. They have demonstrated that, while serious, political violence in 1936 before the military coup was not uncontrollable. Progressive historians maintain that a teleological understanding of the Republic as doomed to fail has had

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[30] Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, "The Cinematic Image of José Antonio Primo de Rivera," *Screen* 50:3 (2009): 331.
[31] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Touchstone, 1986), 162.
[32] Francisco Romero Salvadó, *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), 266.
[33] Richard Evans, "Public Memory, Political Violence and the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52:1 (2017): 118.
[34] Manuel Álvarez Tardío, "The Impact of Political Violence during the Spanish General Election of 1936," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48:3 (2013): 469.
[35] Angel Viñas, "On the 80th Anniversary of the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52:1 (2017): 124.

the effect of reinforcing Francoist claims of historical legitimacy.[36] Left-leaning Spanish historian Eduardo González Calleja (b.1962), for example, argues that Rightist anti-Republican media at the time was invested in portraying a sense of catastrophe, and that the actual situation was far less cataclysmic than often assumed.[37]

In a systematic attempt to determine which groups were the most implicated in violence, Álvarez Tardío stated in 2013 that, even with special scrutiny of primary evidence, it was often impossible to determine which parties had instigated violent street battles.[38] He lamented that it is therefore difficult to address conclusively the 'particularly pertinent' question of responsibility for initiating violence.[39] Another complication is that the number of casualties is not necessarily aligned with which party instigated the violence. In his analysis of political violence in the specific context of the national election in 1936, Álvarez Tardío concluded that, by far, the two most violent political groups were the *Falange* and the Socialists, with the Socialists initiating more conflict and causing more deaths than the *Falange*.[40] The idea of Primo de Rivera as reluctantly forced into violence against his will has been helped by the fact that Leftists were apparently the more violent force in practice.

When conservative historians such as Payne ascribe culpability for the breakdown of democracy to the Spanish Left, the issue of Falangist violence is necessarily relativised. González Calleja outlined that any study of political violence in the Spanish Republic necessarily involves elements of polemic, as to ascribe blame to one party is to exonerate their opponents.[41] In 2016, British historian Helen Graham (b.1959) denounced the tendency of seeking to blame Leftist activism as the predominant source of political violence as a neo-Francoist Manichaean worldview, explicitly seeking to cast Rightist violence as genuinely defensive in nature.[42] These 'revisionist' historians derided by Graham understand the *Falange*'s violent nature almost in line with its own propagandistic view of itself, as defensive in nature. In this view, Primo de Rivera was a victim of Leftism, rather than an agent of violence himself. By contrast, progressive historians such as Preston attribute culpability for

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[36] Julián Casanova and Carlos Gil Andrés, *Twentieth-Century Spain*, trans. Martin Douch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149.
[37] Eduardo González Calleja, "The Symbolism of Violence during the Second Republic in Spain, 1931-1936," in *The Splintering of Spain*, ed. Chris Ealham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25.
[38] Álvarez Tardío, "The Impact of Political Violence", 472.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 484.
[41] Eduardo González Calleja, "La Historiografía sobre la Violencia Política en la Segunda República Española," *Hispania Nova* 11 (2013): 3.
[42] Helen Graham, "Reform as Promise and Threat," in *Interrogating Francoism,* ed. Helen Graham (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 85.

the Civil War to those on the Right who launched the rebellion. From this perspective, Falangist violence was an obvious precursor, and Primo de Rivera is therefore much less likely to be distanced from the actions of his followers.

Stanley Payne is the most influential proponent of assessing Primo de Rivera as a 'lesser evil' than the Leftists. As he has been the dominant voice of Anglophone literature on Spanish fascism, his perspective has been of immense importance in shaping the general historical narrative. In *Spain: A Unique History* (2011), Payne detailed that he has felt an antipathy towards 'the Spanish left' for most of his academic career, which has had a strong impact on the tone of his work.[43] In *The Spanish Revolution* (1970), Payne sought to oppose the traditional sympathy for the Spanish Republic, and thus blamed its failure on the actions of Spanish Leftists.[44] Payne's desire to reframe the narrative was so strongly expressed that the leader of Francoist regime history, Ricardo de la Cierva, openly thanked Payne in 1972 for leading an Anglophone vanguard towards rejecting liberal 'myths' about the Spanish Right being at fault for the Civil War.[45] Blaming the Spanish Left necessitated framing Falangist violence as less important than Leftist violence. For example, Payne emphasised a sense of unfairness with the way that the *Falange* was shut down by the government for terrorism, when on that basis

> the Socialist party, the Communist party, POUM [a Marxist party], and CNT [an anarchosyndicalist party] ought also to have been closed down. In addition to engaging in intermittent terrorism, they had attempted armed rebellion against the constitutional Republic, something that the *Falange* had not yet done.[46]

In 1971, American historian Richard Robinson (1940-2013) argued a similar point, that 'Primo de Rivera's Falange and its youthful gunmen began a campaign of counter-terrorism against the extreme left'.[47] The implication is that Falangist violence was indeed, as they themselves portrayed it, 'defensive' in nature. In 2008, Aristotle Kallis argued forcefully against taking the conceptualisation of fascism as defensive in nature seriously. He demonstrated that fascist leaders across Europe universally sought to project a defensive image. According to Kallis,

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[43] Stanley Payne, *Spain: A Unique History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 18. Payne accuses them of 'extraordinary imperviousness' to historical evidence.
[44] Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 190.
[45] Paul Preston, "War of Words: The Spanish Civil War and the Historians," in *Revolution and War in Spain, 1931-1939*, ed. Paul Preston (London: Routledge, 1984), 7.
[46] Payne, *The Spanish Revolution*, 189.
[47] Richard Robinson, "The Parties of the Right and the Republic," in *The Republic and Civil War in Spain*, ed. Raymond Carr (London: Macmillan, 1971), 68.

even Hitler claimed a fundamental aversion for violence, supposedly only resorting to it only when 'necessary' for his country.[48] To grant credence, even implicitly, to the idea of Spanish fascism as 'defensive', therefore, is antithetical to the study of generic fascism.

The evolution of Payne's perspective on violence in the Spanish Republic demonstrates the way an anti-Leftist position can relativise Falangist violence into something comparatively acceptable. In 1973, Payne simply stated that terrorism was 'initiated by the victorious revolutionary [leftist] groups'. However, by 1987, his tone had changed: Falangist rhetoric, which was 'romantic in the extreme', did not initially embrace violence, 'which was well taken care of by leftist antifascists'.[49] Payne stated that the period of Falangist non-violence lasted until June 1934, which was less than a year after its foundation as the *Falange Española* and four months after the merger with the *JONS*.[50] This is not a particularly long time, especially given the fact that mid-1934 was more than two years before the beginning of the Civil War. By 2003, Payne described this apparent commitment to non-violence as explicitly commendable: 'Without doubt, one has to recognise the moral merit in that the Falange waited so long to respond to the numerous deaths committed by the left'.[51] By 2006, Payne openly described Falangist violence as the fault of the Spanish Left: 'leftist concern about fascist violence had become a self-fulfilling prophecy… The Socialists sowed the whirlwind and reaped the consequences.'[52] He argued that it was the conscious and deliberate policy of the Left-wing government, led by Prime Minister Manuel Azaña, to allow Leftist violence while oppressing the *Falange*. He stated:

> The official arrest report on José Antonio simply read 'Arrested as a fascist', though no legislation existed which made it illegal to be a 'fascist' any more than to be a Communist or anarchist. Three days later a Madrid court ruled the entire party an illicit organisation for illegal possession of arms and violent activities. In this manner 'fascism' would simply be abolished in Spain by decree. The whole affair was an example of the extreme politicisation of justice under the leftist regime, for there was a long list of leftist organisations that had engaged in much more illicit possession of

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[48] Aristotle Kallis, "Fascism, Violence and Terror," in *Terror: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism*, ed. Brett Bowden et al. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2008), 193.
[49] Stanley Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 642.; Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 62.
[50] Payne, *The Franco Regime,* 62.
[51] Stanley Payne, *"José Antonio Primo de Rivera,"* in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera,* ed. Enrique de Aguinaga et al, trans. Cristina Pagès Boune (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003), 199.
[52] Stanley Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 65.

> arms and violent activities than had the Falange, though none of them was outlawed.[53]

The democratic republic is in this construction a 'Leftist regime' that unjustly and illegally oppressed the *Falange*. From Payne's perspective, Primo de Rivera is disassociated from the primary source of violence. Payne takes this anti-Leftist position even further, claiming that Primo de Rivera only truly embraced violence at this turning point, as he 'had given up hope of normal political relations or due process of law under the left Republican regime'.[54] In this narrative, Falangist involvement in an insurrectionary conspiracy, after advocating violent anti-democratic ideals for years, only occurred because of the unfair treatment Primo de Rivera received from a capricious Left-leaning Prime Minister.

The strident position taken by Payne is further demonstrated in *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited* (2013). The explicit purpose of this edited volume was to counteract the politicisation of Spanish history and return to a more 'objective' perspective.[55] In practice, this meant an affirmation of Rightist perspectives as 'empirical' and thus historical in nature, and Leftist perspectives as rooted in myth and flawed methodology.[56] This Rightist pretence as a self-proclaimed bastion of historical objectivity has been notably criticised by British historian Chris Ealham (b.1965), whose work has sparked significant and hostile polemic amongst Spanish historians.[57] In his contribution to the volume, Payne denounced the 'radical subjectivism' of twenty-first-century humanities, which 'is strongly influenced by the ideological emphases of Political Correctness, the post-Marxist ideology of the Western left [and] the dominant ideology of the Western world'.[58] He argued that the major goal of the historiography of Spain should be to combat the idea that the Spanish Republic was a legitimately democratic entity worthy of historical sympathy.[59] He asserted that the Republic fundamentally denied political rights to conservatives, and was thus 'a not very democratic

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[53] Ibid., 193.
[54] Ibid., 241.
[55] Nigel Townson, "General Series Editor's Preface," in *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, ed. Manuel Álvarez Tardío et al. (Eastbourne, Sussex University Press, 2012), viii.
[56] Manuel Álvarez Tardío and Fernando del Rey Reguillo, "Introduction," in *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, ed. Manuel Álvarez Tardío et al. (Eastbourne, Sussex University Press, 2012), 5.
[57] Chris Ealham, "The Emperor's New Clothes: 'Objectivity' and Revisionism in Spanish History," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48 (2013): 193.
[58] Stanley Payne, "A Critical Overview of the Second Spanish Republic," in *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited*, ed. Nigel Townson (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), 14.
[59] Ibid., 18.

Republic'.[60] Thus, the political passions of historians' views on the morality and culpability of political groups during the Second Republic has greatly influenced their historical analysis.

In accusing the Spanish Left of 'causing' violence and casting the *Falange* as primarily the victim of violence, Payne and other anti-Leftist historians have abstracted the situation in Spain away from its European context. British historian Vernon Bogdanor (b.1943) argues that political violence in Europe in the interwar period cannot be extricated from an understanding of the rising threat of fascist domination across the continent.[61] In the case of Spain, Leftist organisations expressly invoked the spectre of Germany and Austria, where socialists had failed to combat the threat of fascism until it was too late. While the *Falange* itself may not have cast the first stone in Spain, fascism had violently usurped liberal democracies in three major European countries, after the fall of the Republic of Austria in May 1934. The *Falange* was the embodiment of that same malignant force attempting to establish itself in Spain.

Historians in non-Spanish areas of fascist studies have criticised the positive relativisation of fascist violence through comparative and condemnatory reference to the violence of Leftist activists. In relation to Italian fascism, for example, British historian George Talbot critiqued historians who have constructed fascists as victims of violence, which he felt unjustly shifts moral culpability.[62] With victims highlighted on both sides, fascists and anti-fascists alike can be denounced as morally responsible for a generalised sense of violent disorder. Talbot argued that this is a simplistic and false equivalence, given that '[t]o be a victim… is not necessarily to be in the right'. [63] Thus, for Talbot, the violence of anti-fascists has no bearing on the moral respectability of fascist violence. His criticism aptly applies to Payne's works.

Primo de Rivera's 'Non-Violence' as a Personal Characteristic

Primo de Rivera's *señoritismo* has set him apart from other fascist leaders who have been seen as embodying personal traits associated with fascist violence. Payne himself admitted in his semi-autobiographical *Spain: A Unique History* (2011) that, although he had no sympathy for the fascist aims and practice of the *Falange*, he 'made some allowance for the charismatic qualities and intentions of José Antonio Primo de Rivera'.[64] Payne attributed this making allowances for Primo de Rivera to the fact that he himself had embraced a 'youthful

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[60] Ibid., 11.
[61] Vernon Bogdanor, "A Deeply Flawed Hero," *Encounter* 44:6 (1975): 69.
[62] George Talbot, *Censorship in Fascist Italy, 1922-43* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Payne, "A Unique History," 27.

romanticism' in his writing, which conveyed a sense of 'the human drama of the Spanish disaster of those years'.[65] As a result, Payne was able to portray Primo de Rivera as innately averse to violence, in a manner which is hard to reconcile with evidence of Primo de Rivera's involvement in violent activity. There are many examples of Primo de Rivera engaging in violence, but only a few standard examples are typically mentioned in historical works. In these few cases, historians have glamorised the violence as an expression of gallant and offended masculine dignity. Rather than being violence-averse, there is ample evidence to suggest that Primo de Rivera was in fact violence-prone. This is an important conclusion, given the extent to which the personality of Primo de Rivera has been fused with the ideology of the *Falange* in mainstream histories of Spanish fascism.

Historical understanding of the violence of Primo de Rivera has been negatively impacted by historians' lack of a critical perspective on the issue of masculinity and gender. While historians acknowledge that fascism involves the exaltation of 'virility', a violent form of hypermasculinity, they have nonetheless distanced Primo de Rivera from the practical implications of this. As addressed in the previous chapter, the violence of Primo de Rivera is not seen as 'thuggish' in 'typical' fascist style, but as apolitically 'masculine'. Traditional masculinity, seen in the praise of strength and forcefulness, has thus been far more palatable to the generally-male historians of Spanish fascism. Yet, this perspective adopts uncritically the *Falange*'s own self-conceptualisation as a masculine movement and is akin to the sympathy for fascism that has been so opposed by historians of fascism. Pilar Primo de Rivera, the sister of José Antonio and dedicated leader of the *Sección Feminina*, held as a point of pride that 'the men of the Falange were too much men to involve us [women] in those duties [street-fighting]', and Falangist hagiographies emphasised that 'our women have never worn trousers'.[66] Liberal historical emphasis on manliness as a virtue in the context of Primo de Rivera as a fascist leader has thus not received sufficient critical examination.

The major incident of personal violence perpetrated by Primo de Rivera occurred in 1930, when he assaulted General Gonzalo Queipo de Llano (1875-1951) in a Madrid café for insulting the memory of his father. In 1961, Thomas stated that 'José Antonio was always ready to fight anyone who ventured to criticise his father, and indeed his career was in some ways simply an attempt to vindicate the old dictator.'[67] Given that one of the most enduring historical images of General Primo de Rivera was Henry Buckley's description of him as a

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Mary Vincent, "Spain," in *Women, Gender and Fascism in Europe, 1914-45*, ed. Kevin Passmore (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003), 209-210.

[67] Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (1961), 70.

'national Father Christmas', this motivation of defending his father has been used to excuse and justify Primo de Rivera's violent acts.[68] His violence is thus represented as respectably masculine in nature: he was protecting the honour of his late father. After Queipo de Llano publicly denounced General Miguel Primo de Rivera shortly after his death, Primo de Rivera sought revenge for this slight against his family and went to Queipo de Llano's home to seek redress. He was refused entry. That night he went with his brother Miguel to a café frequented by the General. Upon confirming his identity, Primo de Rivera punched Queipo de Llano in the face, dropping him to the floor.[69] The General swiftly returned to his feet, and returned a punch, after which a brawl ensued. The police were called, and Primo de Rivera was dishonourably discharged from the military reserve.[70]

Historical reception to Primo de Rivera's actions in this instance has been remarkably positive. Journalist Jay Allen, who conducted the interview with the imprisoned Primo de Rivera, recounted to his friend Herbert Southworth some years after the incident: 'As I think you know, I had a sneaking sort of affection for José Antonio. I had been present when he and Miguel took on Queipo de Llano in a café on the Alcalá – lovely fight they had!'[71] Primo de Rivera's violence is thus understood as something akin to a youthful romp. The idea of understanding this incident primarily as an act of familial duty extends to the current day. In 2015, Preston engaged in a critique of General Queipo de Llano, who he derided as a 'psychopath' and an 'assassin'. With Queipo de Llano as the villain of the piece, Primo de Rivera's attack was framed within the context of duty-bound honour: 'Since José Primo de Rivera [General Primo de Rivera's brother] was an old sick man with no sons, the dictator's eldest son, José Antonio, took it on himself to defend the honour of his family.'[72] No indication is given by Preston that this 'defence' is condemnable.

When Primo de Rivera was involved in Falangist violence, he has been praised for his heroic bravery. While out patrolling in his car in 1934, a bomb was thrown onto his windshield. It failed to detonate and Primo de Rivera leapt out in chase, firing the gun he was carrying in an attempt to kill his attackers.[73] For this action, Claude Bowers hailed Primo de Rivera as 'of the breed of Dumas' Musketeers', and portrayed his violence as noble and respectable, an embodiment of masculine virtue.[74] In 1994, American communications scholar John

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[68] Henry Buckley, *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2013), 19.
[69] Payne, "José Antonio Primo de Rivera," 187.
[70] Paul Preston, "The Psychopathology of an Assassin: General Gonzalo Queipo de Llano," in *Mass Killings and Violence in Spain, 1936-1952*, ed. Peter Anderson et al. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 29.
[71] Paul Preston, *We Saw Spain Die* (London: Constable, 2008), 293.
[72] Preston, "The Psychopathology of an Assassin," 29.
[73] Payne, *Falange*, 57.
[74] Claude Bowers, *My Mission to Spain* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 29.

Hammerback (1938-2012) summarised the historical consensus by commenting on Primo de Rivera's 'remarkable courage and daring'. [75] The violence of these two incidents is thus understood uncritically through an ideal of traditional masculinity. Historians, overwhelmingly men themselves, have framed his actions as 'manly', and therefore understandable or even laudable. When they describe Primo de Rivera's supposed aversion to violence, therefore, they distinguish his apparently heroic, virile masculinity from typical fascist thuggery. This is despite the fact that heroic masculinity was the proclaimed framework for understanding fascism's 'new man'. A striking example of this can be seen in the work of Payne. In *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977* (1999), he provided a quotation from Spanish author Heleno Saña, which he insisted represents 'a balanced commentary':

> José Antonio wanted to convince, not to impose, as did many of his supporters and followers. At the bottom he was a seducer, not a dictator. He believed in the dialectic of fists and pistols as a last resort, but such bravado must be understood as a concession to the times, not as an essential expression of his way of being. Violence and pistolerismo were a common instrument in his time, employed by all the radical parties, not just the Falange.[76]

While there is a begrudging acknowledgement that Primo de Rivera did embrace violence, his endorsement of violent struggle against a democratic regime is cast euphemistically as 'bravado'. It also does not acknowledge that 'as a last resort' was the inevitable position that would be taken by the *Falange* were it dedicated to success, given its repeated electoral failure. It implores the reader to realise that the violence endorsed by Primo de Rivera was not representative of 'an essential expression of his way of being'.

There has, however, been an undercurrent of historical scholarship that has rejected the glamorisation of Primo de Rivera's violent tendencies. This scholarship presents Primo de Rivera's personal characteristics as closer in line to the standard image of the fascist leader. As a result of Preston's efforts, this perspective has recently become more mainstream. Herbert Southworth was the first to argue strongly for an assessment of Primo de Rivera's personality in typically fascist terms. In 1967, he asserted in passing that, below the thin veneer of aristocratic respectability, Primo de Rivera had the temperament of a 'pimp': violent and

[75] John Hammerback, "José Antonio's Rhetoric of Fascism," *Southern Communication Journal* 59:3 (1994): 188.

[76] Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 114.

controlling.[77] He thus explicitly rejected the dominant perspective on this topic, instead framing Primo de Rivera's violent tendencies as harmful rather than as respectable manliness. The first systematic historical challenge to the traditional image of Primo de Rivera was Ian Gibson's *En Busca de José Antonio* in 1980. As previously mentioned, Gibson's book was only ever published in Spanish, which limited its international impact. Even when directly addressed by Anglophone scholarship, Gibson's work has typically been categorised as polemically hostile in nature. For example, in *Fascism and Pre-Fascism in Europe, 1890-1945* (1984) by Philip Rees, five out of the ten recommended works on Spanish fascism were written by Payne, while Gibson's book was listed separately as 'Anti-José Antonio polemic in the Southworth tradition'.[78]

Gibson believed that to understand the nature of the Falange, one needed to understand the nature of Primo de Rivera. Given the historical emphasis on the personalities of other fascist leaders, and the supposed synthesis between Primo de Rivera and the *Falange*, this claim is reasonable. Gibson sought to go beyond the Francoist mythologisation and what he regarded as the insufficiently critical examination by Anglophone authors. He stated that '[w]e still do not have a satisfactory study that shows the authentic José Antonio'.[79] For Gibson, an 'authentic' picture of Primo de Rivera necessarily had to grapple more effectively with the topic of violence. As such, he outlined a detailed examination of individual acts of violence undertaken by Primo de Rivera. Gibson pointed out that Primo de Rivera's career in fisticuffs began during his days at university, when he was renowned for his propensity to engage in physical confrontations with 'energetic participation'.[80] Gibson rightly categorised the incident with Queipo de Llano as an assault, and highlighted that this incident is always excluded from Francoist hagiographies, as it does not fit in with the preferred image of 'el Ausente' as a tragic martyr for the nationalist cause.[81] Gibson noted that there were 'many more episodes in which the irrepressible violence of José Antonio surfaced'.[82] He referred to a newspaper interview with a Falangist secretary regarding the manner in which Primo de Rivera reacted to news about the *Falange* being prosecuted with illegal weapons charges. The secretary claimed that Primo de Rivera behaved in a very threatening manner, before suddenly grabbing an inkpot from his desk and hurling it at their head, causing an injury that

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[77] Herbert Southworth, *Antifalange*, trans. José Martinez (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1967), 4.
[78] Philip Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right Since 1890* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 110.
[79] Ian Gibson, *En Busca de José Antonio* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1980), 179.
[80] Ibid..
[81] Ibid., 184.
[82] Ibid., 185.

took over two weeks to heal.[83] Gibson took perhaps the most strident position regarding the personal violence of Primo de Rivera, and his responsibility for the violence of the Falange:

> There is no doubt that José Antonio became, literally, 'uncontrollable', prey to a violence, a biblical wrath, capable of frightening his own collaborators and which led to outrages of the worst kind.[84]

This version of Primo de Rivera is much more in line with traditional visions of fascist leaders.

Gibson also highlighted that early Francoist hagiographies of Primo de Rivera, written by those who knew him well, made frequent references to examples of personal violence by their leader. For example, Francisco Bravo (1901-1968), in his hagiography *José Antonio: El Hombre, El Jefe, El Camarada* (1939) recalled that Primo de Rivera regularly threatened to force anyone who missed Sunday militia training to drink castor oil.[85] This is a horrific infliction of an oral laxative, made famous by Mussolini's Blackshirts. Gibson claimed that *José Antonio: Biografía Apasionada* (1941) by Felipe Ximenez de Sandoval (1903-1978), another hagiographer of Primo de Rivera, contains no fewer than fifteen separate references to 'the use of the disgusting and humiliating "laxative sanctions"'.[86] Gibson was aware that his perspective on Primo de Rivera did not fit the established norm. However, he insisted his version of Primo de Rivera fit much better 'with what we have seen of his violent actions in cafes, the Cortes and other locations'.[87]

The only subsequent historian who has taken a similarly sustained critical view of Primo de Rivera was Preston in *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War* (1999). This book has gone a long way to rehabilitate Gibson's pioneering text. Preston argued that Primo de Rivera did not reject violence at a fundamental level as previous Anglophone historians had claimed: 'behind Primo de Rivera's polished exterior there lurked a violence which occasionally turned him into a cheap brawler and even found its way into his theoretical statements'.[88] Referring to incidents ignored by traditional accounts of the political life of Primo de Rivera, Preston supplied numerous examples that debunk the idea of a 'non-violent' Primo de Rivera. Preston outlined examples of Primo de Rivera demanding duels with those who insulted his father and threatening to shoot anyone who called him 'Pepe', a usual diminutive associated

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 190.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 191.
[88] Paul Preston, *¡Comrades! Portraits from the Spanish Civil War* (London: HarperCollins, 1999), 78.

with his name.[89] Preston also recounted a separate instance of violent aggression by Primo de Rivera within the confines of parliament. This incident involved Primo de Rivera knocking down a Leftist deputy while 'sneer[ing] "Thank me because I've helped you get to the front bench for once in your life, albeit rolling on the floor"'.[90] On another occasion Primo de Rivera threatened to assault a Catalan student leader for dining in the same expensive restaurant as him.[91] Furthermore, Preston maintained that Primo de Rivera spoke of the 'joyful irresponsibility' inherent in attacking socialist newspaper kiosks, as well as the fact that he enjoyed personally administering 'laxative sanctions'.[92] Preston noted that Primo de Rivera's violence was not impulsive or blindly aggressive, but that it was instead a coldly calculated judgement.[93] This implies deliberate, reasoned intent: violence expressly used to further the goals of the Falange.

Preston's critique of Primo de Rivera's supposed non-violence is beginning to attract mainstream support.[94] By 2003, Stanley Payne accepted that 'some form of [personal] violence was not unknown to [Primo de Rivera]'.[95] Payne recounted that Francoist biographies of Primo de Rivera took pride in 'the resounding slaps with which José Antonio ended many discussions', and he categorised the assault on Queipo de Llano as a 'treacherous act'.[96] Yet, Payne still attempted to maintain Primo de Rivera's non-violence at a political level. He stated that, while Primo de Rivera may have had 'a certain disposition towards violence' at a personal level, this incident demonstrated the dominance of 'the fists' over 'the pistols' in his famed dialectic.[97] Payne reassured the reader that there is no evidence that Primo de Rivera ever used a gun, though he does not address the traditional narrative of Primo de Rivera's armed response to an attack on his life in the streets of Madrid, or the many accounts of him keeping a loaded pistol for protection.[98] Thus, while the tradition of Primo de Rivera as personally gallant was losing its credibility, Payne retreated back to the staple image of Primo de Rivera as politically opposed to fascist violence. The resilience of Payne's perception of Primo de Rivera as fundamentally non-violent on some level is of great importance to the general

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 79.
[92] Ibid., 78.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Chris Bannister, "José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Catholic Fascism," in *Right-Wing Spain in the Civil War Era*, ed. Alejandro Quiroga et al. (London: Continuum, 2012), 92.
[95] Payne, *"José Antonio Primo de Rivera,"* 186.
[96] Ibid., 186.
[97] Ibid., 188.
[98] Ibid.; Luis Bolin, *Spain: The Vital Years* (London: Cassel, 1967), 140.

historical understanding of Spanish fascism, given how monumentally influential his works continue to be.

Primo de Rivera's Violent Rhetoric as 'Poetic' rather than Practical

Historians have disassociated the violent rhetoric of Primo de Rivera from the violent practice of the *Falange*. While Primo de Rivera was frequently overt in his appeal to the morality of force in the quest for a fascist Spain, his rhetoric has been primarily understood through its poetic quality. According to Preston, 'no politician incorporated the rhetoric of violence so lyrically into his oratorical repertoire'.[99] Primo de Rivera himself defined the *Falange* as a 'poetic movement'.[100] While historians have understood that Primo de Rivera's violent rhetoric directly inspired violence, they have nonetheless insisted that the metaphorical and literary nature of his oratory meant it was distinct from typical fascist demagoguery. The poetic qualities of Primo de Rivera have cast him as an 'ambiguous' supporter of violence, despite a literal interpretation of his words. 'Poetry' has been understood by academics as an inherently positive force, and thus its invocation has spared Primo de Rivera from the historical denunciation that other fascist leaders have received. Anglophone historians, most evidently Hugh Thomas, have therefore approached the fascist rhetoric of Primo de Rivera as inherently more respectable, based not on practical content or goals, but on rhetorical lyricism. This framework of analysis trivialises the threat fascism posed to liberal democracy. Following Griffin's insistence on taking fascist rhetoric seriously, the violence of Primo de Rivera can be effectively understood within the context of generic fascism in a manner that does not idealise him.

Primo de Rivera's distinction from 'harsh' fascist demagogues has become his primary characteristic. For many academics, poetry is upheld as something intrinsically positive, as an indication of 'civilisation' and a respected field of academic study. A strong association between poetry and liberal idealism can be seen in a quote by English literature scholar Matthew Burushko, who asserted that 'poetry is numbered among freedom's lamps'.[101] British historian Robert Payne (1911-1983) stated in *The Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (1963) that 'ideally all history should be written by poets'.[102] The practical effect of this perspective is that 'poetic' figures, including fascists, are granted a certain indulgence denied to others. Their

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[99] Preston, *¡Comrades!*, 85.
[100] Payne, *Falange*, 40.
[101] Matthew Borushko, "Violence and Nonviolence in Shelley's "Mask of Anarchy," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 59 (2010): 112.
[102] Robert Payne, *The Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963), 17.

poetry is understood as their defining characteristic, with fascist ideals framed as an unfortunate aside. In *The Appeal of Fascism* (1970), by English historian Alistair Hamilton (b.1941), a foreword is offered by famed British anti-fascist poet Sir Stephen Spender (1909-1995). Spender commended Hamilton for understanding that, while prominent British poets W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) and Ezra Pound (1885-1972) had sympathies towards fascism, their high standard of poetic work made them merely 'tragically mistaken', rather than actively pernicious. In contrast, Spender was impressed that various 'inferior' artists, unable to be idealised for their poetry, were instead 'judged severely' by Hamilton.[103]

'Poetry' has been seen as an innate character trait of Primo de Rivera. While a small number of Primo de Rivera's poems have survived, historians have not shown much interest in them. In the few times they have been mentioned, they have been criticised for lacking quality – even an early Francoist hagiographer admitted that 'José Antonio was not a very good poet'![104] Instead, his poetic image is derived from his public statements made as the leader of the *Falange*, which are understood as being beautifully crafted prose. The reification of Primo de Rivera as a poetic figure was codified by Payne in 1961. This was because his monograph was the first systematic history of the *Falange*, and Primo de Rivera himself repeatedly emphasised that he viewed the Falange as an inherently poetic organisation. In the *Falange*'s foundational speech in 1933, Primo de Rivera made this point clear:

> The peoples have never been moved by anyone save the poets, and woe to him who, before the poetry which destroys, does not know how to raise the poetry which promises!... In a poetic movement we shall raise this fervent feeling for Spain; we shall sacrifice ourselves.[105]

Payne claimed that the *Falange* 'was a peculiarly Spanish phenomenon' in the sense that it was primarily 'emotional' rather than 'ideological', and that this was seen in 'the temper of [the] political spirit [of] the Falange's founder, José Antonio Primo de Rivera'.[106] Payne endorsed the perspective of Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena (1897-1975), editor of the monarchist newspaper *ABC*, who told Primo de Rivera in 1933 that 'I suspect that your fascism has sprung from your great heart rather than from your brilliant intelligence'.[107] Poetry is thus cast not as

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[103] Stephen Spender, "Introduction," in *The Appeal of Fascism*, by Alistair Hamilton (London: Anthony Blond, 1970), xiii.
[104] Richard Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1970), 347.
[105] Payne, *Falange*, 40
[106] Ibid., vii.
[107] Ibid., 32.

a stylistic choice of rhetoric, but as something fundamental to his very being. The importance of this can be seen in by Payne's titling of a chapter 'Poetry and Terrorism'. In this section, we learn that Primo de Rivera embodied 'poetry', while his followers embodied 'terrorism'.[108]

The extent to which Payne, in 1961, was dedicated to the idea of an intrinsically poetic Primo de Rivera can be seen in his conclusion to his book. Payne described Primo de Rivera's rhetoric as 'frequently wholesome and sometimes even sublime'.[109] Payne embraced the rhetoric primarily for its beautiful prose. The final paragraph of his book ensures that the emotional, poetic nature of Primo de Rivera is the lasting image in the mind of the reader:

> It was the emotional quality of their dialectic that led the Falangists to their doom… Perhaps nowhere more than in Spain, the decade ending in 1945 brought on a cataclysmic disillusion. There remained only a nostalgic and ambiguous afterglow of the passions that once burned so fiercely.[110]

Subsequent historians overwhelmingly endorsed the poetic character of Primo de Rivera. Summarising Primo de Rivera's 'main ideas', Raymond Carr in *Spain 1808-1939* called them 'simple, derivative, and poetic'.[111] The 'romantic and rhetorical violence' was understood as 'wild poetry', rather than a genuine call to arms. British historian Rod Kedward's (b.1937) *Fascism in Western Europe* (1969) defined Primo de Rivera's ideals as simply a 'poetic romanticism of young literary men'.[112] When addressing the increasing violence of the movement, Kedward stated that '[Primo de Rivera's] ideology, poetry and ideals had only superficial effects on [the Falangist militia's] activism'.[113] Kedward constructed the poetic nature of the leader as antithetical to fascist violence. The explicitly idealising effect of poetry is directly addressed in *Fascism* (1968) by American historian Nathanael Greene. Greene highlighted Primo de Rivera's 'idealistic, poetic style of nationalism', and continued: 'A gentle, benign leader, and a 'poetic' fascism? Perhaps'.[114] A particularly striking example came from Salvador de Madariaga in 1976, when he boldly asserted that '[d]espite his speeches and statements, José Antonio was a poet who saw Spain in a dream as beautiful and unreal and who impatiently wished to make it an immediate reality'.[115]

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[108] Ibid., 49.
[109] Ibid., 266.
[110] Ibid., 267.
[111] Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 646.
[112] Rod Kedward, *Fascism in Western Europe 1900-45* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1969), 103.
[113] Ibid., 104.
[114] Nathanael Greene, *Fascism* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 248.
[115] Quoted in Herbert Southworth, *Conspiracy and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2002), 82.

In *The Spanish Right Under the Second Republic* (1971), Preston summarised the contemporary historical perspective. He claimed that because the 'elegant and poetic' Primo de Rivera was leader of the *Falange Española*, the movement 'was as innocuous as a political movement could be'.[116] The violence of the rhetoric of his foundational speech was not mentioned. He continued: '[The *Falange Española*] came into contact with harsh reality in February 1934, when there was a merger with the *JONS*'.[117] Preston did not give agency to Primo de Rivera in this clash with 'harsh reality'. He instead cast the experience as passive, with a merger with the *JONS* simply occurring. Yet, this merger was deliberately sought by Primo de Rivera.[118] The 'harshness' brought by the JONS was depicted as separate and incompatible, with the inherent poetry of the pre-merger *Falange Española*. Preston then asserted that, after the merger, the 'pseudo-Nazi' practical elements of the new movement were developed by Ramiro Ledesma, while Primo de Rivera simply provided the 'emotional tone'.[119]

Hugh Thomas was amongst the most vocal proponents of understanding Primo de Rivera through the lens of poetry. He repeatedly referred to Primo de Rivera's fondness for *If*, the most famous poem by British poet Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936).[120] Thomas sought to associate Primo de Rivera's poetic nature with a deep-seated feeling of Anglophilia. This poetic Anglophilia was used by Thomas in *The Spanish Civil War* to portray Primo de Rivera as 'genuine', as opposed to traditional ideas of fascists as duplicitous.[121] Later, Thomas represented Primo de Rivera's political outlook as having 'allowed an echo of Shelley into his thoughts'.[122] Unlike the example of Kipling, which had roots in Primo de Rivera's own interest in poetry, this reference was envisioned solely by Thomas himself. It is a striking comment, likely the strongest demonstration by any historian of the idealisation inherent in embracing poetry as a primary defining characteristic. The work of British romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) has long been associated with nonviolence or 'one of its approximate cognates, "passive resistance" or "civil disobedience"'.[123] His work has been cited as influential on the actions of Mohandas Gandhi and the student protesters in Tiananmen Square in

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[116] Preston, *The Spanish Right*, 30.
[117] Ibid., 30.
[118] Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 63.
[119] Preston, *The Spanish Right*, 30.
[120] Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 70.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Hugh Thomas, "Spain," in *European Fascism*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 291
[123] Borushko, "Violence and Nonviolence," 96.

1989.[124] To invoke Shelley as a metaphor for the thoughts of Primo de Rivera is to associate the leader of a fascist movement which engaged in violent street conflict with the very concept of nonviolent resistance. Thomas immediately followed this notion of Shelley with Primo de Rivera's statement relating to people only being moved by the poets, to which Thomas concluded: 'Such was José Antonio Primo de Rivera'.[125]

The incongruity of Thomas' exaltation of poetry with general academic understanding of fascism is demonstrated in his collected volume of *Primo de Rivera: Selected Writings* (1972). This book was released as part of a collection of texts edited by French-American historian George Steiner (b.1929) called *Roots of the Right: Readings in Fascist, Racist and Elitist Ideology*. In the General Editor's preface, Steiner wrote that the purpose of the edited collection was to examine the 'often lunatic and nakedly barbaric' visions of fascism that '[have] come so near to destroying our civilisation and [are] so still alive'.[126] He claimed that these 'black books' containing 'elitist, racist and fascist theory' were important, as they brought together, for the first time in English, evidence to consider 'the intractable puzzle of the co-existence in the same mind of profound inhumanity and obvious philosophic and literary importance'.[127] While this description would perhaps be criticised today for too readily invoking fascism as a 'demonology', it nevertheless demonstrates the discord between Thomas' views and the more traditional perspective. The purpose of this collection, therefore, was to understand an 'enemy', in order better to protect the democratic way of life. Yet, Thomas' introduction to the works of Primo de Rivera bore no resemblance to this mission. After dismissing Primo de Rivera's role in violence, Thomas once more utilised the framework of poetry. He declared Primo de Rivera 'more that of a Hamlet than that of the man of destiny which fascist propaganda so imperiously demanded'.[128] This portrays Primo de Rivera as a tragic hero doomed by unfortunate circumstance, echoing the *Falange*'s own self-image as heroic.

The long-standing historical reception of Primo de Rivera as poetic in character can be critiqued using the generic fascist framework of Roger Griffin. Griffin has championed the cause of taking fascists at their word. This is not to sympathise with their aims, but to understand better what they sought to accomplish. Griffin's goal was to counter the general perception of fascism as a 'fraudulent' movement, with all its stated goals a smokescreen that

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[124] Ibid.
[125] Thomas, "Spain," 292.
[126] George Steiner, "General Editor's Preface," in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Selected Writings*, by Hugh Thomas (London: The Trinity Press, 1972), 7.
[127] Ibid., 8.
[128] Thomas, *José Antonio Primo de Rivera*, 17.

clears once it is in power. This perspective is still controversial, as some critics maintain that taking fascist leaders' ideology seriously necessarily rehabilitates them, but it is increasingly popular amongst academics interested in fascism.[129] With poetic style taking precedence over a literal reading of Primo de Rivera's violent rhetoric, historical perspectives on his ideology have implicitly downplayed his stated position in favour of the 'emotional' tone outlined by Payne. Using Griffin's framework in the case of Primo de Rivera has the exact opposite effect that his detractors have feared: taken 'seriously', Primo de Rivera's rhetoric is understood as genuinely violent in nature. Rather than rehabilitate him, therefore, the methodology of Griffin's 'new consensus' re-aligns the historical perspective towards the undercurrent of historiography that has sought to link Primo de Rivera's violent rhetoric to the violence of his movement.

Hammerback explicitly invoked Griffin's approach in his 1994 study of 'José Antonio's Rhetoric of Fascism'.[130] Hammerback was directly inspired by Griffin's desire to understand fascist rhetoric and used Primo de Rivera as a case study to examine fascist ideology.[131] He referred to the fact that historians have seen the ideas of Primo de Rivera as essentially synonymous with his movement. This 'melding of man and movement', therefore, means that an examination of Primo de Rivera's rhetoric can allow a fundamental understanding of the 'perplexing dynamics' of the *Falange* itself.[132] Hammerback readily acknowledged the poetic nature of Primo de Rivera's rhetoric. Yet, rather than exalting it as an admirable, innate personal characteristic, he critically explored how it was used to outline the ideals of the *Falange*. He demonstrated that the poetic quality of Primo de Rivera's rhetoric 'dangerously accentuated his audience's faith in his sermonizing while de-emphasizing its capacity for independent judgment'.[133] As a result, these followers 'would enthusiastically—and at times at risk to their lives—carry out some of humankind's most cruel, catastrophic and horrifying acts'.[134] Thus, in Hammerback's construction, Primo de Rivera was responsible for the violence of the *Falange*: 'José Antonio's rendition of fascist discourse' led to the violent actions of his followers.[135] Hammerback asserted that Primo de Rivera's explicit recourse to a poetic style

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[129] Griffin accuses Dave Renton of refusing to accept this idea for Marxist ideological purposes. See Roger Griffin, "Studying Fascism in a Postfascist Age: From New Consensus to New Wave?" *Fascism* 1 (2012): 7.
[130] Hammerback, "Rhetoric of Fascism," 181-195.
[131] Ibid., 183.
[132] Ibid., 181.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid., 184.

demonstrated his skill in inspiring young men 'to sacrifice all for the truth'.[136] Most importantly, he took Primo de Rivera's legitimation of violence as an earnest statement of ideology rather than a metaphorical flourish, given its direct and significant impact on the actions of the *Falange*'s membership.[137] Following from the truism that has generally held since 1961 that José Antonio was synonymous with the *Falange*, there is thus no reason to distinguish the poetic elements from the violent elements of his speeches.[138]

Hammberback's position, inspired by Griffin's revitalisation of fascist studies, strongly aligns with the Left-wing historical approaches to Primo de Rivera since the pioneering works of Southworth. One of the explicit goals of Gibson's *En Busca de José Antonio* was to relate the violence of the *Falange* to the violent rhetoric of its leader, rather than continue the tradition of dismissing the issue as ambiguous. He claimed that: 'gleaning through the writings and speeches of the jefe of the Falange, it is easy to collect a small anthology of juicy observations about the theme of violence and its legitimacy as a political instrument'.[139] Along with the previously introduced examples of his 'dialectic of fists and pistols' and his letter to Julian Pemartín, Gibson highlighted a revealing speech of 1935 in which Primo de Rivera commemorated the fusion of *Falange Española* and the *JONS* on its first anniversary: 'This was the first act of its propaganda, and with the spirit of all vigorous things, it ended in gunfire. Almost always, to begin by shooting is the best manner to understand each other'.[140] While this is obviously exaggerated bluster, its justification and exaltation of practical violence is indisputable. Gibson quoted Primo de Rivera expressing violent dissatisfaction with the status quo on another occasion in 1935: 'We will not conform with a lack of shooting in the streets because they say that things are going well. If necessary, we will launch into the street to make sure things do not stay as they are'.[141] In the context of the contemporaneous fatal street warfare, this legitimation of violence seems entirely congruent with 'the dialectic of fists and pistols' being more than simple metaphor. Gibson concludes that the primary theme of Primo de Rivera's public speeches related to violence and virility, with the only truly manly response to the supposed threats to Spain being active martial participation within the *Falange*.[142]

While Gibson's work has been underappreciated, British historian Sheelagh Ellwood (b.1949) has been more successful in seeking to link Falangist rhetoric to Falangist practice. In

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[136] Ibid., 186.
[137] Ibid., 187.
[138] Sid Lowe, *Catholicism, War and the Foundation of Francoism: The Juventud de Acción Popular in Spain, 1931-1939* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 233.
[139] Gibson, *En Busca*, 191.
[140] Ibid., 192.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 193.

1988, she insisted strongly that '[o]n one point, however, the Falange was not ambiguous and that was the legitimacy of the use of violence for the achievement of political ends'.[143] The invocation of the word 'ambiguous', that has defined Primo de Rivera's relationship with violence amongst mainstream historiography, expressly to deny its relevance was likely a deliberate decision. In *The Spanish Holocaust* (2012), Preston mused that Ledesma was 'probably reassured by the fact that, when recruiting started for the Falange, new militants had been required to fill in a form which asked if they had a bicycle – a euphemism for pistol – and were then issued with a truncheon'.[144] He subsequently directly attributed the violent exhortations to action in Primo de Rivera's speech at the merging of the *Falange Española* and the *JONS*. In a more violent recount of this event than has been traditional, Preston pointed out that it was 'the provocative speech' of Primo de Rivera that 'fired up the audience to rush out and fight the workers in the streets'.[145] Thus, Primo de Rivera is not shielded from the results: 'Shots were fired and, at the end of the day, with many broken heads on both sides, there was one Falangist dead. Those leftists involved who could be identified would be shot by the rebels during the Civil War'.[146]

The unusual way Primo de Rivera has been distanced from the violence of the *Falange* can be seen in the contrast with the historiography of Oswald Mosley and British fascism. As with the *Falange*, the *BUF* has been inextricably linked with violence for decades.[147] Street fights involving British fascists were common, and the party is remembered for its 1934 rally at the Olympia Exhibition Hall in London where anti-fascist protesters were beaten en masse.[148] The violence of the *BUF* was not as extreme as the *Falange*, as it did not engage in political assassination, yet Mosley's image was nonetheless irreparably tarred with the political fallout from this incident.[149] Unlike with Primo de Rivera, there has been little attempt to assert Mosley's 'ambiguity' towards violence at a personal level, apart from the publications of his son Nicholas who claimed his father was 'unique amongst fascist leaders in that… [he was] against his followers being responsible for violence'.[150] The closest academia has come

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[143] Sheelagh Ellwood, "Not So Much a Programme More a Way of Life: Oral History and Spanish Fascism," *Oral History* 16:2 (1988): 60.
[144] Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, 62.
[145] Ibid., 63.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Stephen Cullen, "Political Violence: The Case of the British Union of Fascists," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (1993): 246.
[148] Jon Lawrence, "Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: The Olympia Debate Revisited," *Historical Research* 76:192 (2003): 239.
[149] Daniel Tilles, "Bullies or Victims? A Study of British Union of Fascists Violence," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7:3 (2006): 332.
[150] Nicholas Mosley, *Beyond the Pale* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1983), 5.

towards rehabilitation of Mosley's relationship with political violence was *Oswald Mosley* (1975), a biography of the British fascist leader by British historian Robert Skidelsky (b.1939). Skidelsky interviewed Mosley extensively, and admitted his fondness for the man.[151] This openly apologetic take on the history of the *BUF* was intensely controversial.[152] While even Skidelsky accepted that Mosley embraced violence as a political tool, he nonetheless sought to emphasise that in the context of violence the *BUF* 'was sinned against [more] than sinning' and that a generalised sense of political tension made violence inevitable even beyond Mosley's intent.[153] In response to this biography, Vernon Bogdanor argued that any attempt to disassociate a fascist leader from the actions of his followers was inherently apologetic in nature, and thus morally unacceptable.[154] British historian Richard Thurlow agreed, stating that 'Fascism was a leadership movement', and regardless of any influence of its membership it was fundamentally the leader who was the responsible party.[155] Thurlow emphasised this point by concluding his review of *Oswald Mosley* with a quotation from *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, a collection of eleventh-century Persian poetry:

> The moving finger writes and having writ
> Moves on: nor all thy piety or wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line
> Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it[156]

Thurlow therefore concludes that a fascist leader must be judged by their words and deeds, and not excused from the ramifications that follow. The mainstream and widespread criticism directed by these British historians towards apologists of Mosley has no significant equivalent in Anglophone history of Spanish fascism and Primo de Rivera.

Conclusion

The way historians have grappled with the issues of Primo de Rivera's relationship with violence has been simplistic and misleading. Given the extent to which a propensity for

[151] Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 11.
[152] Robert Skidelsky, "Reflections on Mosley and British Fascism," in *British Fascism*, ed. Kenneth Lunn et al. (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 78. Skidelsky's book sparked an entire collected volume of responses, including this defence of his original work.
[153] Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, 19.
[154] Vernon Bogdanor, "A Deeply Flawed Hero," *Encounter* 44:6 (1975): 70.
[155] Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 147.
[156] Richard Thurlow, "The Black Knight," *Patterns of Prejudice* 9:3 (1975): 19.

violence has dominated discourse of generic fascism, it is striking how easily Primo de Rivera has been excused from violence simply due to his 'masculine' charm. His personal taste for violence has been well-established, but remains underemphasised in historical portraits of him. His violent rhetoric has long been lauded for its lyrical quality. When examined through the lens of Griffin's ideological perspective, this apparent schism between the 'violent' Primo de Rivera and the 'poetic' Primo de Rivera can be effectively bridged. As a result, Primo de Rivera can be examined through the lens of generic fascism without undue recourse to his supposed exceptional, non-violent nature.

Having thus demonstrated the sympathetic perspective from two distinct angles in Chapters One and Two, the final chapter of this thesis will examine the place of Primo de Rivera in liberal Anglophone scholarship through a broader lens. It will explore the complicated impact of the legacy of Francoism on historical scholarship of Spanish politics, which has relativised the figure of Primo de Rivera into a comparatively harmless, 'revolutionary' alternative to the tragedies of Franco's regime.

Chapter Three

The Impact of the Franco Regime on the Legacy of Primo de Rivera

The legacy of José Antonio Primo de Rivera is unique amongst fascist leaders. No others died in their prime, only to be memorialised by a long-lasting regime which was nominally inspired by their values.[1] While academics involved in fascist studies have almost universally defined the *Falange* under Primo de Rivera as genuinely fascist, the debate over the nature of the subsequent *Movimiento Nacional* and Francoism itself has been far more controversial. As explained by Spanish historian Joan María Thomàs (b.1953), '[o]ne of the most fundamental "knots" of Spanish history is whether Franco's regime can be considered fascist or not'.[2] This 'knot' remains highly politicised: in 1981 Preston lamented the fact that 'an eagerness to exonerate the Franco regime from the taint of fascism' was the goal of mainstream conservative historians.[3] In contrast, in 2000 Juan Linz bemoaned that the obsession with denouncing Franco as 'fascist' had taken precedence over historical understanding.[4] These two competing narratives have shaped the historical image of Primo de Rivera, ensuring that he has always been seen as a comparatively lesser evil than Franco.

This chapter argues that the early death of Primo de Rivera and co-option of his *Falange* by Franco ensured his relatively positive reception by historians. It does so through an examination of two separate, but interrelated, historiographical quirks regarding Spanish fascism. Firstly, this chapter demonstrates that even though a strict definitional approach has limited 'real' fascism in Spain to the *Falange*, this is not how anti-fascist contemporaries and subsequent anti-fascist historians have understood the situation. As Primo de Rivera died before the Nationalist victory in the Civil War and thus played no direct role in the 'atrocity phase' of Francoism, he has not been a target of particular hostility in critiques of Spanish fascism.[5] This chapter then argues that historians have upheld the ideology of Primo de Rivera as a revolutionary alternative to the bureaucratic oppression of the Franco regime. Payne's

[1] While a short-lived Legionary government existed in Romania following the death of leader Corneliu Codreanu, it lasted less than two years and had no significant impact, as Romania was thereafter occupied by Nazi Germany.

[2] Joan Maria Thomàs, *La Falange de Franco: Fascismo y Fascistización en el Régimen Franquista (1937-1945)* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2001), 15.

[3] Paul Preston, "Spain," in *Fascism in Europe*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Methuen, 1981), 331.

[4] Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 3.

[5] Paul Preston, email correspondence, 1 September 2016.

Falange was influenced significantly by the perspective of old-shirt Falangists like Dionisio Ridruejo (1912-1975), who believed that the ideals of Primo de Rivera bore no resemblance to Francoist reality. Following from this, the general Anglophone perspective has approached the fascist ideology of Primo de Rivera as being a lost alternative to Francoism. Franco has thus been the emblematic 'villain' of academic discussion of Spanish fascism, while Primo de Rivera has been comparatively unscathed by academic hostility. Historians' passions over competing narratives, both anti-fascist and anti-Republican, have thus reinforced and even utilised standard tropes of an idealised Primo de Rivera.

'Fascism' as a Denunciation Aimed Beyond Primo de Rivera

While since the mid-1960s mainstream academics have believed that authentic fascism in Spain was limited to the *Falange* under Primo de Rivera, during the Spanish Republic anti-fascists used the term much more loosely. They saw the Spanish Right in general as a fascist threat. After the outbreak of the Civil War, Franco was understood as the embodiment of Spanish fascism. While Primo de Rivera was subsequently categorised as the only 'real' Spanish fascist politician by historical consensus, he was dead shortly after the war began and thus had no direct involvement with the following regime. As a result, historians grappling with the issue of whether fascism existed in Spain have focused on the dictatorship led by a contemporary and sometime-ally of Hitler and Mussolini. Historians have therefore used the label of fascism as a weapon of moral denunciation against Franco, not Primo de Rivera. The obvious target has always been the man with actual practical power, rather than the martyred figurehead.

The fate of the Spanish Republic has been a *cause célèbre* for intellectuals since the 1930s. After the outbreak of war, many Anglophone writers immediately hailed the conflict as a struggle between democracy and fascism. The primary villain in these passionate historical approaches was Franco. Having seen Germany succumb to Nazism only three years earlier, prominent liberal Anglophone writers and academics embraced the war in Spain as the beginning of a counter-offensive against fascism. In their eyes, a Francoist victory would allow fascism to spread across Europe.[6] The passionate fear of the fall of the Spanish Republic can be seen in *Spain in Revolt* (1936) by American Communist writer Harry Gannes (1900-1941): 'Spain is becoming a pivot on which the world may turn either its fascist or democratic side to the rising sun of the future'.[7] The fate of Spain was thus seen as inextricably linked with the

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[6] Katharine Stuart-Murray, Duchess of Atholl, *Searchlight on Spain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1938), 318.

[7] Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, *Spain in Revolt* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1936), 15.

future of European democracy. Fascism's attempts at 'groping towards a world system' needed to be halted.[8]

The widespread and passionate association of Franco with the evils of fascism can be seen in *Authors Take Sides in the Spanish Civil War* (1937). This pamphlet collated reflections of prominent British intellectuals on the conflict. It claimed that, in such a monumental conflict between democracy and fascism, public figures were morally bound to take a side.[9] As this pamphlet was published by the Left Review, and was thus supportive of the Republican cause, the question it asked was inherently loaded: 'Are you for, or against, the legal Government and the People of Republican Spain? Are you for, or against, Franco and Fascism?'[10] The respondents overwhelmingly condemned 'Franco and Fascism'.

With Franco's overt adoption of the language and style of the *Falange*, and his association with the two extant fascist leaders in Europe, the description of Franco as a fascist leader was plausible. The fact that his *Movimiento Nacional* comprised a forced merging of a variety of Right-wing organisations also confirmed many Left-wing academics' fears about a generally fascist Spanish Right. Thus, Katherine Stewart-Murray, the Duchess of Atholl (1874-1960), could write in 1938 that '[i]f the Spanish Republicans are crushed, it means the end of liberty, justice and culture, and the merciless extermination of all suspected of caring for these things'.[11] Encapsulating the drive of anti-fascism amongst British intellectuals at the time, Atholl proclaimed that saving the Spanish Republic was the best way to save Europe from fascism.[12] In British Communist Arthur Koestler's (1905-1983) *Spanish Testament* (1937), the denunciation of the *Falange* as being functionally identical to Italian and German fascist parties did not mention Primo de Rivera by name, but it denounced Gil Robles.[13] American Communist author Frank Jellinek's (1908-1975) *The Civil War in Spain* (1938) dismissed Primo de Rivera and insisted that: '[t]he real Fascism in Spain was never young Primo de Rivera's pistol-dramatism but the insidious Catholic propaganda for the brotherhood of master and man'.[14] The violent actions of the *Falange* were thus downplayed as trivial in comparison to the much larger threat posed by Franco, Gil Robles and the reactionary Catholic Church.

Mainstream academia agreed upon the fascism of Franco for decades. American journalist Herbert Matthews (1900-1977) argued in 1957 that the fight against fascism would

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[8] George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Left Book Club: 1937), 200.
[9] *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War* (London: Left Review, 1937), 4.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Atholl, *Searchlight on Spain*, 316.
[12] Ibid., 329.
[13] Arthur Koestler, *Spanish Testament* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), 52.
[14] Frank Jellinek, *The Civil War in Spain* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), 53.

not be won until Franco's defeat. According to Matthews, the Nationalist army, rather than Primo de Rivera, was the true font of Spanish fascism.[15] In his highly influential book *Spain: The Root and the Flower* (1963), a mainstay of American undergraduate reading lists for decades, John Crow stated that:

> The most tragic thing of all is that today, with Italian fascism long since dead, and Hitler long since gone to his just reward, General Franco still survives as the head of his own Spanish fascist state. His survival is a gross reminder that we did not completely win the war against fascism.[16]

The nature of Franco's regime as fascist was initially understood as a political fact. In 1945, international interest in promoting co-operation and peace between countries led to the establishment of the United Nations. The inclusion of Spain in this organisation was vetoed by the UK, the USA and the USSR due to its relationship with the Axis powers.[17] The Security Council was so troubled by the perceived threat posed by Spain that it appointed a special committee to examine how best to address these concerns. The committee was damning, stating that: 'In origin, nature, structure and general conduct, the Franco regime is a fascist regime patterned on, and established largely as a result of aid received from, Hitler's Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Fascist Italy.'[18] As a result, the General Assembly voted to exclude Spain from the United Nations, as a fascist government could not be welcomed into the international community.[19] The political hostility exhibited towards Spanish fascism was both overt and practical. The pariah status of Franco's Spain was short-lived, however, as the burgeoning Cold War ensured that the American government lobbied for Spain to be included in the Marshall Plan as early as 1948, though this was prevented due to European opposition.[20] By 1955, geopolitical concerns meant that Spain was admitted to the UN with little political controversy, becoming a bulwark of anti-Communism and a staunch US ally.[21]

The academic assumption of Franco's regime as fascist in nature was significantly undermined through the late 1960s, after the increasing popularity of Linz' conceptualisation

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[15] Herbert Matthews, *The Yoke and the Arrows* (New York: George Braziller, 1957), 6.
[16] John Crow, *Spain: The Root and the Flower* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 318.
[17] UN General Assembly Resolution 32 (1) *Relations of Members of the United Nations with Spain* 9 February 1946.
[18] UN General Assembly Resolution 39(1), *Relations of Members of the United Nations with Spain* 12 December 1946.
[19] Ibid.
[20] John Houston, "The United Nations and Spain," *The Journal of Politics* 14 (1952): 696.
[21] UN Security Council Resolution 109, *Resolution of 14 December 1955* 14 December 1955.

of Franco's regime as 'authoritarian' rather than fascist. As previously mentioned, Linz argued that Francoist Spain lacked genuine mobilisation of mass support, something which he considered fundamental to a definition of a fascist regime.[22] He claimed that any chance at a genuine fascist Spain died with Primo de Rivera. Contemporaneous historians of generic fascism were initially reluctant to dismiss Franco as fascist. In 1966, British historian Hugh Seton-Watson claimed that Spain was 'plausibly still fascist' without further explanation.[23] In 1968, Stuart Woolf mentioned the 'anachronistic survival of [a] fascist regime in Spain'.[24] Yet, as mentioned in the introduction, by 1974 Linz' perspective of Franco as fundamentally non-fascist had become dominant.

Although Linz' argument was highly influential, many historians have refused to drop accusations of fascism against Franco's regime. With emphasis on the violence and repression of the dictatorship, these historians have viewed the designation of authoritarianism as trivialising the horrors involved in the destruction of the Spanish Republic and subsequent brutal rule.[25] The widespread adoption of the term authoritarianism was especially galling given the fact that Franco himself used it to describe the Spanish regime.[26] As such, detractors of Francoism have insisted upon the designation of his regime as 'fascist'.[27] The importance of denunciation of Franco's regime for many academics can be seen in the words of British historian Michael Richards. In 1996, he defined Franco's victory as 'an actual loss of the future itself, a loss of hope, as millions of Spaniards were robbed of a sense of identity and dignity'.[28] In this context, a desire for historians to define Franco's regime in the harshest possible terms is understandable, and 'fascist' remains perhaps the strongest charge possible against a government. This can be seen, for example, in the prose of American writer Arthur Landis' *Spain: The Unfinished Revolution* (1975), which denounced the 'betrayal' of the Spanish Republic's resistance to 'this first onslaught of World Fascism'.[29] Herbert Southworth, in an entry on 'Fascism, Spanish' in *The Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War* (1982), stated bluntly that:

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[22] Juan Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," in Mass Politics, ed. Erik Allardt et al. (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), 273.
[23] Hugh Seton-Watson, "Fascism, Right and Left," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1:1 (1966): 183.
[24] Stuart Woolf, "Introduction," in *The Nature of Fascism*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: The Graduate School of Contemporary European Studies, University of Reading, 1968), 4.
[25] Javier Rodrigo, "Fascism and Violence in Spain: A Comparative Update," *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 25:3 (2012): 192.
[26] Ismael Saz, "Was There Francoism in Spain?" *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 28:3 (2005): 286.
[27] Manuel Perez Ledesma, "Una Dictadura "Por la Gracia de Díos,"" *Historia Social* 20 (1994): 174.
[28] Michael Richards, "Civil War, Violence and the Construction of Francoism," in *The Republic Besieged*, ed. Paul Preston et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 200.
[29] Arthur Landis, *Spain: The Unfinished Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), xi.

> The danger to Spanish democracy in 1936 came not from the second-rate intellectuals of the Phalanx, not from Primo de Rivera, a would-be general without foot-soldiers, but from Franco, Mola, and the other military conspirators and their moneyed and monarchist backers.[30]

Recent academic debate regarding the role of fascism in Spain has focused on Francoism in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The current historical consensus is that, while Franco himself may not have been a true fascist, his regime went through an early phase of 'semi-fascism'. Javier Tusell defined semi-fascism as a 'temptation' towards fascism that Franco never truly yielded to.[31] Critics have suggested that this distinction between periods of semi-fascism and subsequent authoritarianism, with a definable transition point, is too simplistic and does not fully appreciate the lasting influence of the *Falange* as part of the Francoist regime's government. The downplaying of residual fascist influence is considered to be too exculpatory in nature.[32] The sheer violence involved in the early years of Franco's rule, with up to 50,000 Republicans executed in the decade following the end of the Civil War, has meant that 'the question regarding the nature of the Franco regime can never claim to be definitively closed'. [33] Spanish historian Javier Rodrigo, for example, has recently argued that Franco's regime should be considered fascist due to its policy of concentration camps.[34] For Rodrigo, it is 'incomprehensible and disconcerting to hear the insistence on distinguishing Spain from the rest of the fascist family', asking rhetorically whether 'if Franco's regime had fallen in 1945 (instead of decomposing in 1975–78), would the consensus around its definition as fascist not be broadly accepted?'[35]

The other major analytical framework used to examine the Spanish Right during the Second Republic is the idea of the 'fascistisation'.[36] 'Fascistisation' posits that other Spanish political figures and organisations should be seen as having certain elements of fascist style or

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[30] Herbert Southworth, "Fascism, Spanish," in *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, ed. James Cortada (London: Greenwood, 1982), 198.
[31] Javier Tusell, *La Dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), 251.
[32] Ismael Saz, "El Primer Franquismo,"*Ayer* 36 (1999): 205.
[33] Miguel Jerez Mir and Javier Luque, "State and Regime in Early Francoism, 1936-45: Power Structures, Main Actors and Repression Policy," in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 192.
[34] Javier Rodrigo, "Exploitation, Fascist Violence and Social Cleansing," *European Review of History* 19:4 (2012): 563.
[35] Rodrigo, "Fascism and Violence in Spain," 192.
[36] Mary Vincent, "Spain," in *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism*, ed. R.J.B. Bosworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 365.

ideology without fully adopting fascism. The labelling of the *Falange* as the only 'real' form of fascism in Spain has had the effect of setting it apart as fundamentally distinct from other 'non-fascist' Right-wing groups.[37] 'Fascistisation' as a concept, therefore, allows an exploration of Spanish politics without strict recourse to artificially constructed academic boundaries. This allows for a more nuanced construction of an interrelation between Rightist groups.[38] It also has the indirect effect of spreading moral 'culpability' for fascism across many individuals. Elements of fascist thought and practice can thus be more effectively identified in figures such as Gil Robles and José Calvo Sotelo (1893-1936), the leader of the *Renovación Española*. As a result, in recent historiographic trends regarding Spanish fascism, Primo de Rivera has not been a figure of particular interest.

The idea of 'fascistisation' aligns with the manner in which contemporary anti-fascists understood fascism. Henry Buckley, for instance, outlined the view in 1940 that the true fascist threat was not Primo de Rivera: 'Gil Robles and Calvo Sotelo had all the Fascist tricks; they would sit glaring at their political opponents always ready to jump up and launch into a furious and bellicose tirade against Bolshevism in general.'[39] Preston emphasised that the neat separation of other Spanish Rightist groups from fascist influence has been an artificial and unhelpful process. In forcing this artificial separation, Preston argued, a fruitful comparison with the experiences of fascism in other countries is sidelined.[40] Therefore:

> If Spanish fascism can be reduced to the squalid hybrid founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera then other groups of the authoritarian right, like the CEDA or Renovación Española, can simply be excluded from a discussion of the subject.[41]

Preston continued:

> Accordingly, the narrow definition of Spanish fascism with Falange Española obviates the need for examination of the fascist features of other rightist groups and of the

[37] Paul Preston, *The Politics of Revenge: Fascism and the Military in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 8.
[38] Ismael Saz, "El Franquismo. ¿Regimen Autoritario o Dictadura Fascista?" in *El Régimen de Franco (1936-1975): Política y Relaciones Exteriores*, ed. Javier Tusell et al. (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1993), 197.
[39] Henry Buckley, *The Life and Death of the Spanish Republic* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2013), 129.
[40] Paul Preston, "Spain," in *Fascism in Europe*, ed. Stuart Woolf (London: Methuen, 1981), 331.
[41] Preston, *The Politics of Revenge*, 8.

> Franco regime itself.[42]

For him, the reification of Primo de Rivera as the sole example of a Spanish fascist leader superficially and 'neatly sidesteps a number of thorny interpretative and ideological problems' regarding the impact of fascism in Spain.[43] By 1987, British historian Martin Blinkhorn (b.1941) argued that:

> Those on the Spanish left in the 1930s who viewed Carlism, Alfonsism, CEDA accidentalism and Falangism as the four horsemen of a single 'fascist' apocalypse grasped an essential truth.[44]

For Blinkhorn, there was enough ideological overlap and practical cooperation that to categorise only the *Falange* as fascist was artificial and unhelpful. Long-understood as the standard figure of Spanish fascism, Primo de Rivera is not generally involved in current historiographical trends and controversies in the study of Spanish fascism. As a result, his reified image as a depoliticised gentleman persists, adrift from the vigorous polemic regarding the moral implications of Francoism as fascism.[45]

In recent years, the debate over Franco's relationship with fascism has become increasingly acrimonious. The flashpoint for this outburst was the publication of Preston's *The Spanish Holocaust* (2012). Preston acknowledged the significance of the term he used in his title, given its association with the extermination of up to six million Jews and millions of other victims by the Nazi regime and its allies. He nevertheless asserted that, in the context of the systematic killings undertaken by Franco, the term is useful.[46] His explicit purpose was to counter the fact that '[t]o this day, General Franco and his regime enjoy a relatively good press', which he ascribes to historians maintaining Francoist myths of economic progress.[47] Preston's monograph demonstrates the degree to which Left-leaning historians have also failed to identify Primo de Rivera as one of the primary 'villains' of Spanish history in the early

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Martin Blinkhorn, "The Iberian States," in *The Social Bases of European Fascist Movements*, ed. Detlef Mühlberger (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 344.
[45] George Blum, *The Rise of Fascism in Europe* (London: Greenwood Press, 1998), 89. The comparative irrelevance of Primo de Rivera to general discourse on fascism is seen by the fact that a section entitled 'Biographies: The Personalities Behind Fascism in Europe' contains an entry on Franco, but not Primo de Rivera.
[46] Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), xi.
[47] Ibid., xii.

1930s. In the section entitled 'The Origins of Violence and Hatred', Primo de Rivera was barely mentioned. Instead, Preston discussed in depth the ideals of the *CEDA*.[48] When Preston did mention the *Falange*, his scorn was reserved for Onésimo Redondo, the co-founder of the *JONS*, who has always been a very marginal figure in histories of Spanish fascism.[49]

Preston's book, with its inflammatory title, spurred a series of hostile academic exchanges.[50] Chris Ealham sparked the ire of many conservative historians when he accused them of hiding behind a smokescreen of 'objectivity' while defending Francoist myths.[51] He specifically criticised the idea that apologist historians have deliberately avoided criticising Franco's regime to the full extent that it deserves: 'There is a real determination to distance Franco from European fascism by defining him as anything but fascist'.[52] He thus aligned himself with Left-leaning Spanish historians such as Julián Casanova (b.1956) and Ángel Viñas (b.1941), who both argue forcefully that Francoism was fundamentally a form of fascism.[53] In response, conservative historians such as Manuel Álvarez Tardío have hit back, claiming that Leftist historians intent on denouncing Franco as fascist are themselves captive to historical myths.[54] Spanish historian Fernando del Rey argued that political violence itself has become a politicised weapon of a Spanish historiography dominated by 'memory wars'.[55] Conservative historians, often denounced as neo-Francoist revisionists, have responded to Ealham's claims by intensifying their criticisms of the Second Republic, implicitly framing the *Falange* as less responsible for the collapse of Spanish democracy. The result has been further entrenchment of two incompatible understandings of Francoism.[56] In this climate, academic research has been overshadowed by the personally hostile attitude taken by the protagonists in these

[48] Ibid., 14.
[49] Ibid., 42.
[50] Gerald Blaney, "Violence, Continuity and the Spanish State: Some Considerations," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:2 (2016): 413.
[51] Chris Ealham, "The Emperor's New Clothes: 'Objectivity' and Revisionism in Spanish History," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48 (2013): 191. He specifically denounces Manuel Álvarez Tardío and Stanley Payne.
[52] Ibid., 198.
[53] Julián Casanova, "Disremembering Francoism: What is at Stake in Spain's Memory Wars?" in *Interrogating Francoism,* ed. Helen Graham, trans. Linda Palfreeman (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 206; Angel Viñas, "Natural Alliances: The Impact of Nazism and Fascism on Franco's Domestic Policies," in *Interrogating Francoism,* ed. Helen Graham (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 148.
[54] Manuel Álvarez Tardío, "When Ideology Takes Precedence over Historical Understanding: The Role of the 'Right' in the Spanish Interwar Crisis," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:2 (2016): 429.
[55] Fernando Del Rey, "The Spanish Second Republic and Political Violence," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:2 (2016): 431.
[56] Roberto Villa García, "The Second Republic: Myths and Realities," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:2 (2016): 421.

disputes, often resorting to petty insults.[57] With the primary point of contention being the validity or otherwise of ascribing the label of fascism to Franco and Francoism, and the moral consequences of doing so, there has been little historical interest in the figure of Primo de Rivera. Instead, Franco has borne the brunt of academic scorn.

Primo de Rivera as a Revolutionary Alternative to Francoism

Dissident Falangist and liberal Anglophone historiographies of Primo de Rivera have aligned in the portrayal of him as a 'revolutionary' alternative to the 'blandness' of Franco's conservatism. This is, unsurprisingly, the view of dedicated fascists dissatisfied with the staid reality of Franco's regime. However, it is puzzling that liberal Anglophone historians should share such a view of Primo de Rivera. This section argues that the Anglophone historiography of Primo de Rivera has frequently considered him something of a 'lost alternative' to Franco whose personal brand of fascism would have at least been properly 'revolutionary' in a socioeconomic sense. Firstly, this section demonstrates that Anglophone historians, through their reliance on the works of Payne, have been considerably influenced by the positions of dedicated Falangists. The perspectives of dissident old-shirt Falangists José Luis de Arrese (1905-1986) and Dionisio Ridruejo were granted great authority in Payne's *Falange*. Secondly, this section argues that as a result, since the 1960s Anglophone historians have seen Primo de Rivera as 'genuine' in his devotion to revolution. Especially in these early decades of scholarship on fascism, 'revolution' was understood as something inherently progressive. Spared from the negative associations of fascist rule, his ideology has been upheld as comparatively commendable due to the spectre of Franco and his conservative militarism. As a result, he has been seen as a 'lost leader' of Spain. Finally, a case study demonstrating the unusual nature of historians' embrace of Primo de Rivera as a lost alternative leader is demonstrated through reference to the historiography of Oswald Mosley. In stark contrast to Anglophone historians' sympathy towards Primo de Rivera, their harsh criticism of those few who have sought to rehabilitate the image of Mosley as a 'lost alternative' is much closer to the mainstream historical understanding of fascism.

In developing his historical image of Primo de Rivera in *Falange*, Payne drew inspiration from the anti-Franco perspective of dissident old-shirt Falangists. These men admired Primo de Rivera and believed that the conservative Francoist state had betrayed the *Falange*'s fascist idealism. While the Franco regime adopted the style and trappings of the

[57] Jim Bjork and Kristina Spohr, "Paul Preston's *The Spanish Holocaust* and Recent Historiography on the Spanish Second Republic," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:2 (2016): 412.

Falange, the relationship between the bureaucratic elements and the passionate visionaries of the 'original' Falange was often complicated. After an initial conflict over the leadership of the movement, the old-shirts soon accepted their position in the hybridised governmental structure.[58] By the late 1950s and early 1960s, during the time of Payne's research in Spain, several outspoken old-shirts were openly criticising Franco. In doing so, they invoked the image of a lost opportunity seen in the passionate ideals of Primo de Rivera. On the anniversary of Primo de Rivera's death in 1958, dissatisfied Falangist Luis de Arrese gave a speech over the National Radio. At the time of his speech, Arrese's political career had been stymied by his continued devotion to old-shirt ideals. His bureaucratic career progression had stalled since 1945, since he had been vocally supportive of Nazism and Franco sought to distance his regime from Hitler towards the end of the Second World War.[59] At the time of his speech, he had the essentially honorary position of leader of the paramilitary wing of the *Movimiento Nacional*. In response to Arrese's speech, Franco demoted him to Minister for Housing.[60] The anti-Francoist ideals espoused by Arrese had a significant impact on Payne, which is evident from the way the speech is quoted and framed in the conclusion of his book. Payne wrote that 'twenty years of Francoism had brought nothing of the "new Spain" that José Antonio had once dreamed of', and supplied the full text of Arrese's speech to demonstrate this point:

> José Antonio: … Are you satisfied with us?
> I do not think so.
> And I think not because you struggled against materialism and egotism, while today men have forgotten the grandeur of your words only to run like thirsty madmen down the path of materialism and egotism.
> Because you wanted a Fatherland of poets and of dreamers eager for a difficult glory, while men seek only a catering, round-bellied Fatherland, full of starch, though it possesses neither beauty nor gallantry.[61]

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[58] Juan Linz, "From Falange to Movimiento-Organización: The Spanish Single Party and the Franco Regime, 1936-1968," in *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society*, ed. Samuel Huntington et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 129.
[59] Stanley Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936-1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 314.
[60] Ibid., 452.
[61] Payne, *Falange*, 259.

The idealism inherent in the rhetoric of Primo de Rivera was thus directly contrasted with the typical, conservative nature of Franco's Spain. Satisfaction with material comfort, at least for the wealthy classes, was derided. Arrese continued:

> Because you preached sacrifice, while men look from one side to the other in order to hide themselves.
> Because you despised money, while men lust for money, and business is superimposed upon duty, and brother sells brother, profiteering with the humble and the trials of the Fatherland.[62]

In contrast to the idealised image of the Spanish economy reformed entirely into the revolutionary syndicalism of the *Falange*'s Twenty-Seven Points, Arrese denounced the entrenched capitalism of Franco's Spain for betraying the brotherhood of Spain.

> Because men confound your slogan of being better with getting along better.
> Because spirit becomes carnal, sacrifice becomes gluttony, and brotherhood becomes a vice.
> Because you called a cortege of thousands of martyrs that they might serve us as standard and guide, and yet men have not seen in the blood of your followers and example, and they find its memory uncomfortable, and they are annoyed when we repeat in their ears, closed to all generosity, our monotonous insistence on the example of our martyrs, to the extent that some exploit the fallen as a platform on which to climb or a springboard for business and self-indulgence.[63]

Arrese insisted upon the fascist ideal of virile activism, while regime functionaries had long since come to dominate the *Movimiento Nacional*. He poignantly concluded that:

> José Antonio, you are not satisfied with us. You who watch from your place, from your twentieth of November, with a profound sense of melancholy and scorn. You cannot be satisfied with this mediocre, sensual life.[64]

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 260.
[64] Ibid.

The degree to which Payne sympathised with this view is demonstrated by the fact that following this extended quote, he concluded that '[Arrese's] exposition of the dismal situation then prevailing … carried with it little hope for the future'.[65] Shortly afterwards, Payne stated that: 'Amid the unpleasant realities of Franquismo, it seemed almost unreal to recall the political career of José Antonio Primo de Rivera. That the regime invoked his memory on every occasion appeared a trifle incongruous.'[66] He confirmed an idealistic image of Primo de Rivera when he claimed that '[Primo de Rivera's] political career was inherently tragic'.[67] Thus, Payne condemned the rule of Franco and gave credence to Arrese's vision of Primo de Rivera as an inspirational figure.

While Arrese's speech was an effective summation of old-shirt disillusionment, the most influential Joseantonian anti-Franco perspective was that of Dionisio Ridruejo. Ridruejo was, like Arrese, dedicated to fascism and supported Nazi Germany during the Second World War. He was the Minister for Propaganda from the Civil War until 1941, when he was dismissed for criticising the dominance of conservative military values over Falangist goals. By 1955 he was secretly dedicated to anti-Francoism, and by the early 1960s he converted to a more democratic idealism.[68] In many narratives, Ridruejo has enjoyed very similar adulation from historians as was granted his 'intimate friend', Primo de Rivera: he has been described as a young and talented intellectual.[69] Historians have highlighted his role as 'the poet of party', as he wrote the words to the *Falange*'s marching hymn, *Cara al Sol* (Facing the Sun) in 1935.[70] When asked whether the label of 'moral fascist', as per the claims of Michael Mann, should apply to Primo de Rivera, Preston instead suggested that the term was more appropriate for Ridruejo.[71] British historian Rob Stradling commented in 2013 that the 'essential paradox' of Ridruejo as 'a convinced fascist who was not only a brave soldier and an accomplished poet but also a genuinely nice guy' has meant that historians have treated him in an overly positive manner.[72] He expressed surprise that:

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 266.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, 521.
[69] Arthur Whitaker, *Spain and Defense of the West* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 151.
[70] Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain* (London: Penguin, 1979), 313.
[71] Paul Preston, email correspondence, 1 September 2016.
[72] Rob Stradling, "Inspired Neglect? Three Fascist Artists of the Spanish Civil War," in *The Spanish Civil War: Exhuming a Buried Past*, ed. Anindya Raychaudhuri (Cardiff: The University of Wales Press, 2013), 194.

> Even Paul Preston, a scholar not given to overlooking the vices of Francoism, cannot find a word to say against Ridruejo and even makes a bemused attempt to excuse his fascist enthusiasm – this about a man who in his autobiography confessed to having been an outright admirer of the Nazi New Order.[73]

Stradling made an interesting point when he claimed that 'commentary on Ridruejo has been written from the moral perspective of his remorse'.[74] While Ridruejo maintained an idealisation of Primo de Rivera and his values, Stradling implied that historians have been too keen to sympathise with Ridruejo because of his shift towards democratic anti-Francoism late in his life. This idea of redemption from a fascist youth is fascinating and could be examined in the case of Primo de Rivera in future studies. Some Anglophone literature has sought to portray Primo de Rivera as undergoing a fundamental political shift towards liberal democracy in his final weeks. This notion fits within the scope of undue idealisation of Primo de Rivera and warrants closer analysis, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

When researching his PhD, Payne spoke with Ridruejo extensively. Later in life, Payne acknowledged that his thesis would not have been possible without the insight and assistance offered by Ridruejo.[75] Ridruejo claimed that the time for inspirational leaders had passed, and had thus aligned himself with an anti-Franco, liberal movement calling for legitimate democratic suffrage.[76] Payne recounted in 2011 being inspired by '[h]is generosity and his effort to be honest, objective and self-critical', as well as his 'deep moral concern not to repeat the errors of his youth but to make amends for them'.[77] Yet, while Ridruejo admitted later in life that 'many of [Primo de Rivera's] ideas now seem[ed] to [him] immature and others contradictory and mistaken', Payne still empathised with Ridruejo's unyielding devotion to Primo de Rivera as a man.[78] In 1987, Payne asserted that '[p]erhaps the best brief portrait of José Antonio was written by one of his most sensitive and able young supporters, Dionisio Ridruejo'.[79] Payne extensively quoted Ridruejo's glowing endorsement of Primo de Rivera:

> In 1935, outside of Falangist circles, I personally became acquainted with José Antonio Primo de Rivera, an appealing and intelligent man of great gallantry and dialectical

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Stanley Payne, *Spain: A Unique History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 23.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 24.
[78] Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 61.
[79] Ibid.

> elegance, possessed of sure personal honour, who added to these qualities a note of delicacy and timidity that was enormously attractive… He impressed me as has no other man since… I never have, and never shall, cease to feel for the figure of Jose Antonio the great respect and vivid affection that he inspired in me then.[80]

The authority Payne granted to these dissident Falangist perspectives meant that Primo de Rivera was upheld by Anglophone, ostensibly anti-fascist, historians as a 'genuine' revolutionary figure. No other fascist leader has been so readily accepted in this manner. To understand the significance of the early designation of Primo de Rivera as a 'revolutionary' fascist, it is important to understand how contested and controversial the term has been in relation to fascism. While certain historians, most prominently George Mosse (1918-1999), readily characterised fascism as a revolutionary phenomenon, this view was not widely held.[81] Opponents of such an understanding have argued that categorising fascism alongside established ideologies such as liberalism or socialism inherently legitimises it, in a form of unjust historical rehabilitation.[82] More popular, especially amongst the early fascist studies scholarship of the 1960s, was the understanding of fascism as 'reactionary': of 'reacting' to threats of liberal/leftist progress and retreating to visions of the past. Historians thus saw fascism as a rejection of 'modernity'.[83] Romanian-American historian Eugen Weber (1925-2007) critiqued this position in 1974, exploring the ideas of 'revolution' and 'counter-revolution' (essentially a synonym for reaction). He stated that the application of these terms has inherent symbolic meaning, 'with an ethical burden that even the mass media perceive'.[84] Weber argued that for many academics, 'revolution' was a normative term that held inherent value as a 'progressive', 'Leftist' phenomenon. 'Revolution' was thus a force for good, an 'authorised version' of political progress. Weber stated that '[s]ince revolution = good, counterrevolution = bad. Hence the importance of dubbing what we consider bad counter-revolutionary.'[85] As a result, many historians felt that fascism could not be categorised as 'revolutionary'. The potentially scandalous nature of this position was understood by Weber,

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[80] Ibid.
[81] George Mosse, "The Genesis of Fascism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1:1 (1966): 22.
[82] Dave Renton, "Was Fascism an Ideology? British Fascism Reconsidered," *Race and Class* 41:3 (2000): 73.
[83] Hugh Seton-Watson, "Fascism, Right and Left," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1:1 (1966): 184. Issues of fascism and modernity have been similarly passionate and controversial, with increasing academic consensus that it represented an 'alternative modernity', rather than an 'alternative to modernity'
[84] Eugen Weber, "Revolution? Counter-Revolution? What Revolution?" *Journal of Contemporary History* 9:2 (1974): 3.
[85] Ibid., 22.

who stated that 'At any rate, whether we like it or not, whether we trust or not, the revolutionary project [of fascism] is clear enough… Sacrilege? It may seem so to us, scarcely to participants.'[86] In a manner that would not become mainstream until Griffin's *The Nature of Fascism* in 1991, Weber argued for the consideration of the views of fascists themselves.

Weber's insight into the nature of fascism has remained controversial, and the Leftist understanding of revolution still holds considerable sway. Marxist historians, unsurprisingly, have maintained the view of revolution being an inherently 'good' thing. British Marxist historian David Renton (b.1972), for example, holds that considering fascism 'revolutionary' removes any academic utility of the term.[87] Some prominent liberal historians oppose treating fascism as revolutionary in nature due to the practical effects of fascist rule. American historian Robert Paxton (b.1932) denies the revolutionary character of fascism. He stated in 1998 that 'rather than making the social structure or the economic system more just or free', as their rhetoric claims, 'their revolution consists of hardening the character… of the community'.[88] Blinkhorn questions the heuristic value of conceptualising fascism as revolutionary, claiming it raises more questions than it answers.[89] Thus, as mentioned earlier, Eatwell can claim that 'most historians challenge the validity of ideological approaches, stressing the importance of studying practice'.[90]

Regardless of the academic controversy over the nature of fascism, historians have readily understood Primo de Rivera as a genuinely revolutionary figure. At the time of *Falange*'s publication in 1961, 'revolution' was still understood as fundamentally Leftist, in the manner that Mosse sought to debunk. This can be seen in the academic reviews of Payne's *Falange*. Lee Wearing in *The Historian*, for example, marvelled at the examination of 'the real founder of Falange Española':

> José Antonio favoured a national totalitarian state which would work for the benefit of all classes and respect the dignity of man, individual cooperation and sacrifice for the common good, control of the national economy through workers' syndicates, land reform, nationalisation of credit, and the achievement of these aims through violence if necessary.[91]

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[86] Ibid., 33.
[87] Dave Renton, *Fascism: Theory and Practice* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 24.
[88] Robert Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," *The Journal of Modern History* 70:1 (1998): 7.
[89] Martin Blinkhorn, *Fascism and the Right in Europe, 1919-1945* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), 103.
[90] Roger Eatwell, "Fascism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, ed. Michael Freeden et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 474.
[91] Lee Wearing, "Payne, Stanley G., "Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism" (Book Review)," *The Historian* 24:3 (1962): 367.

Characterising these goals in something of a positive manner, he concluded: 'So Spanish fascism instead of being reactionary, as is sometimes thought, was really revolutionary.'[92] Similarly, American historian Rhea Marsh Smith (1907-1991) wrote about the 'intricate problem' that 'the Falange was a movement, fascist in organization but revolutionary in concept'.[93] This was seen as unusual and confusing, with fascism and revolution typically understood as two distinct phenomena. As such, Primo de Rivera did not fit neatly into traditional understandings of fascist leadership. In his review of Payne's *Falange*, American Hispanist Peter Earle (b.1937) concluded that:

> We need not forget that the miserable history of Spain since 1936 is more than anything else the work of a self-seeking clique of unimaginative men, and that their Machiavellian clutch has kept Spain in a position of political and economic degradation which in Western Europe is comparable only to that of Portugal.[94]

American political scientist Ben Burnett insisted in 1962 that Primo de Rivera was 'the hero, the martyr, the troubadour, the transcendent reference, the perfect symbol – in short, everything that the leaders of the "New Spain" were not'.[95] In 1967, Gerald Brenan decried the execution of Primo de Rivera a tragedy, as the *Movimiento Nacional* 'threw up no men of ability' to replace him and oppose conservative Francoism.[96]

The influence of the image of Primo de Rivera as a lost leader of Europe extended widely. British historian David Lewis made a stunning aside in *Illusions of Grandeur* (1987), a book about the *BUF*:

> Had [Primo de Rivera's] premature death not robbed Europe of one of fascism's most able leaders it would have been fascinating to have observed how he might have dealt with the reactionary conservatism represented by Franco and the army rebellion.[97]

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Rhea Marsh Smith, "Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism. (Book Review)," *The American Historical Review* 67:3 (1962): 710.
[94] Peter Earle, ""Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism". By Stanley G. Payne (Book Review)," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 42 (3): 1962: 418.
[95] Ben Burnett, "Book Reviews: Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism." By Stanley G. Payne," *Political Research Quarterly* 15:2 (1962): 389.
[96] Gerald Brenan, "Caudillo Country," *New York Review of Books*, 28 September, 1967.
[97] David Lewis, *Illusions of Grandeur* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 223.

As a non-specialist in the case of Spanish fascism, Lewis represents the large number of historians who have significantly relied upon the specialist work of Payne. Such a glowing statement would be unthinkable in the case of other fascist leaders. It is also interesting to note that idealisation of Primo de Rivera has extended to his actual proficiency. When considering the abject political failure of the *Falange* prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, describing Primo de Rivera as 'one of fascism's most able leaders' appears incongruous at the very least.

To understand the significance of Anglophone historians embracing Primo de Rivera as a lost hero, it is useful to contrast Anglophone outrage over attempts to rehabilitate Oswald Mosley in a similar manner. In *Oswald Mosley*, Skidelsky framed Mosley explicitly as a lost leader of Britain, in contrast to what he understood as the weak and ineffectual leadership of the Labour Party.[98] There was significant academic backlash to this idea. Without the context of idealistic martyrdom dominating the narrative (Mosley lived until 1980 and continued to espouse similar political views until his death), mainstream historians have understood that idealising the leadership of a fascist leader as a lost cause has potentially dangerous consequences. Vernon Bogdanor insisted that the terrible political realities of the twentieth century impose 'peculiar and severe obligations' on historians of fascist movements.[99] In his view, as previously mentioned, any attempt at rehabilitating Mosley was fundamentally immoral. British historian John Vincent (b.1937) echoed this view, dismissing the work as 'not a book about Mosley but a book about Mr Skidelsky's interpretation of Mosley'.[100] He lamented that because Skidelsky believed in the historiographical tradition involving exaltation of 'brilliant men' who attempt to solve the world's problems are stifled by 'untalented hacks', Mosley is portrayed as a hero.[101]

In the decades since these criticisms of *Oswald Mosley* were published, the historiography has supported their perspective. Skidelsky's claims that Mosley could have been a great leader of Britain, with sweeping and positive economic reforms, have been expressly linked to his own personal admiration for the man, rather than historical reality.[102] His perspective has been debunked and dismissed. The contrast between the Anglophone historiography's response to sympathetic visions of Oswald Mosley and José Antonio Primo de Rivera is indicative of the unusual position taken in the treatment of Spanish fascism.

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[98] Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (London: Macmillan, 1975), 15.
[99] Vernon Bogdanor, "A Deeply Flawed Hero," *Encounter* 44:6 (1975): 69.
[100] John Vincent, "The Case for Mosley," *Times Literary Supplement* 4 April, 1975, 350.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Jakub Drabik, "British Union of Fascists," *Contemporary British History* 30:1 (2016): 5.

Historians of fascism have long outlined the dangers that the radical Right has posed, and still does pose, to European liberal democratic traditions. In the case of Mosley, mainstream historiography has expressly rejected a perspective of idealisation as inappropriate.

An important point regarding the revolutionary fascist nature of Primo de Rivera's ideology was mentioned briefly by Payne in *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977* in 1999. Payne acknowledged that 'if [Primo de Rivera] had survived he would ultimately have been discredited by the practical results of another disastrous fascist regime'.[103] This is a very significant statement to make, as it completely undermines the narrative of a lost leader. It is an open acknowledgement that the idealistic rhetoric of Primo de Rivera was not somehow special amongst fascist leadership. This is a very important shift in perspective, moving the understanding of Primo de Rivera much more in line with the condemnation of other fascist leaders. The fact that it took until 1999 to be articulated in such a clear manner demonstrates the extent to which the idealised image of Primo de Rivera has taken hold. Yet, Payne did not elaborate on the implications of this statement, nor draw any particular attention to the manner in which this conclusion differs from what has been argued in the previous decades.

Conclusion

Political passions surrounding the Second Republic continue to influence historical opinion on Primo de Rivera. The legacy of Francoism dominates historical and political debates over the nature of Spanish fascism. Academics who are hostile to Francoism will continue to insist upon categorising Franco as a fascist, while others will maintain their insistence on his non-fascist character. This debate, including all its complicated and interwoven threads, has sidelined and reified the standard image of Primo de Rivera as a comparatively marginal figure. He has been invoked by conservative historians in a comparatively positive manner to bolster, whether consciously or not, their side of an intractable polemical divide. Academic hostility towards Francoist atrocities and banalities alike has ensured that Primo de Rivera has been remembered as more of a fallen hero than fascist agitator.

[103] Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 236.

Conclusion

The Need to Reconsider the Figure of Primo de Rivera within the Historiography of Spanish Fascism

In 1999, Paul Preston claimed that many important Anglophone historians of Spain had been ‘seduced’ by the allure of José Antonio Primo de Rivera. This thesis has demonstrated this charge. Academic views on fascism have been overwhelmingly hostile, to the point that in 1981 British historian Tim Mason (1940-1990) suggested that ‘furnishing an apologia’ for fascism ‘is perhaps the most serious charge which can be made against serious historians’.[1] Yet, mainstream academic descriptions of Primo de Rivera have generally concurred with the views of unrepentant *Falangists*. In 1989, American historian Victoria Enders conducted an interview with Consuelo Muñóz Monasterio (1900-1993), a member of the *Sección Feminina* from 1937 to 1984, about her life in the *Falange*. Throughout this interview, Muñóz Monasterio emphasised that Primo de Rivera was charming and handsome, stating that ‘José Antonio was marvellous. … Physically he was very handsome, very attractive’.[2] She lauded his aristocratic bearings and dignity.[3] She dismissed any suggestion that Primo de Rivera supported violence, claiming that anyone who criticised his ‘dialectic of fists and pistols’ was being ‘malicious’, as he ‘said books, books and books of wonderful things, all positive’.[4] Instead, she emphasised that his doctrine was poetic in nature.[5] She was dedicated to the idea that Primo de Rivera was socially progressive and a genuine revolutionary.[6] These ideas, held by academic historians, have been critiqued through this thesis.

Guided by the foundational question of why Primo de Rivera has been spared the historical denunciation typically seen in the case of fascist leaders, this thesis has focused on three issues. In Chapter One, I argued that, although the idea of charismatic leadership has been integral to definitions of generic fascism, it has not been effectively applied to the case of Spanish fascism. Instead, Primo de Rivera has been understood through the alternative lens of

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[1] Tim Mason, “Intention and Explanation: A Current Controversy about the Interpretation of National Socialism,” in *The “Führer State”: Myth and Reality*, ed. Gerhard Hirschfeld et al. (London: Historical Institute, 1981), 23.
[2] Victoria Enders, “Chelo’s War: Late Memories of a Falangist Woman,” in *Memory and Cultural History of the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Aurora Morcillo (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 444.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 445.
[5] Ibid., 444.
[6] Ibid.

señoritismo, of gentlemanliness. Historians have approached fascism as a movement dominated by its leaders, and thus the apparently personable demeanour of Primo de Rivera has been given prominence in historical works. Contrasted with stereotypes of fascists as vicious and aggressive, he has been depoliticised and portrayed as a charming, friendly personality, in spite of his position as a paramilitary leader.

In Chapter Two, I argued that historians have not properly grappled with Primo de Rivera's relationship with violence. Instead they have frequently, without sufficient justification, distanced him from the impact of his violent rhetoric and downplayed his own propensity towards violent action. Primo de Rivera has been abstracted from the consequences of violence, with blame attributed to his followers without sufficient examination of his direct involvement. A fascination with the nature of his fascist oratory, seen as comparatively 'poetic' in contrast to fascist stereotypes, has reinforced this idea of 'ambiguity' towards violence. Historians have insisted that poetry was somehow antithetical to violence, which has been repeatedly used to excuse Primo de Rivera from the charge of being violent.

In Chapter Three, I expanded the scope of the thesis to argue that the practical, political, ideological and emotional legacy of the Spanish Republic, the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime have dominated the historiography of Spanish fascism. These complex interactions have coalesced in a manner that has made Primo de Rivera relatively incidental in academic debates over the nature of Spanish fascism. He has nonetheless remained the standard example of Spanish fascism, irrespective of his relatively marginal role in the political upheavals of the 1930s. Instead, argument over the nature of Francoism, and to what extent it can or should be 'tarnished' by being labelled fascist, remains the main source of impassioned polemic. As a result of the contrast between the Falangist ideals of Primo de Rivera that Franco claimed to uphold on the one hand, and the politically repressive reality of Francoist dictatorship on the other, historians were ready to describe Primo de Rivera as 'genuinely' revolutionary, at a time when other fascist leaders were pointedly denied such a classification. As 'revolution' as a concept was for many decades understood as inherently loaded with Leftist and progressive values, this label made Primo de Rivera comparatively palatable to liberal Anglophone historians. Anti-Franco ideals have even enshrined Primo de Rivera as a morally superior lost alternative to Franco, in a strange alignment of liberal Anglophone and dissident Falangist perspectives. Historians' embrace of the supposed idealism of Primo de Rivera, highlighted in contrast to the pragmatic calculations of Franco, has not appropriately addressed the fact that his ideals were fundamentally fascist in character.

Historical dispute over the nature and importance of Spanish fascism shows no signs of abating. While the place of José Antonio Primo de Rivera within that historiography has been stable, Sid Lowe's recent work on the *JAP*'s relationship to 'genuine' fascism shows that even the most fundamental assumptions about the nature of Spanish fascism can be effectively challenged. *Given that '*political violence [is] the most pressing topic within the current historiography of twentieth-century Spain', historians should reconsider Primo de Rivera's role in this area in line with the criticisms I have highlighted.[7] Thus, my analysis of gaps and inconsistencies in the academic literature on the *Falange* has the potential to spur a critical reengagement with the standard historical tropes related to the figure of Primo de Rivera. By highlighting past and ongoing concerns within the field, this thesis suggests that an increased acknowledgement of the problems it addresses would result in a more insightful perspective towards Spanish fascism.

The conclusions of this thesis also serve as a useful consideration for the field of fascist studies in general. One key point that my research demonstrates is that an overreliance on a single historians' perspective has the potential to reify a misleading historical narrative. While this occurrence is hardly a risk in the dynamic historiographies of Italian Fascism and Nazism, English-language historiographies of the 'peripheral' fascisms are less robust. Stanley Payne has been the main authority on the topic of Spanish fascism, with his 1961 book *Falange* still frequently referenced as the main or even only source utilised by other historians. This dominance demonstrates the allure historians have felt to simply refer to an established expert in lieu of further historical examination.

Likely the most important contribution of this thesis to the wider field of fascism studies is the idea that greater care needs to be taken with the focus on the individual figures of fascist leadership. As fascism is seen as probably the most leader-centric modern political force, it is understandable that historians have focused on fascist leaders. Yet, the way Primo de Rivera has been interpreted shows how the centrality of Italy and Germany to studies of fascism has negatively impacted historical perspectives on smaller fascist movements. Stereotypes of fascist personality based on Mussolini and Hitler are well-ingrained, as demonstrated by the way that Rob Stradling portrayed the idea of Dionisio Ridruejo being 'a

[7] Peter Anderson, "Knowing and Acknowledging Spain's Dark Civil War Past," *Journal of Contemporary History* 52:1 (2017): 130.

nice guy' as strange and potentially confronting.[8] Historical figures with such genteel or 'poetic' exteriors have thus not been integrated effectively into studies of fascist leadership.

Finally, there is the simple concern that contemporary liberal democratic norms remain under threat from a resurgent form of aggressive, exclusionary nationalism. In recent years, there have been attempts to reconcile the highly divergent fields of the studies of generic fascism and 'neo-fascism'.[9] Scholars of neo-fascism, alongside some historians of generic fascism including Griffin, argue that fascism still poses a direct threat today.[10] This idea has been resisted by more conservative historians such as Payne, who instead insist that fascism as a historical concept has no value being applied beyond the 1940s.[11] Even those historians who agree that 'fascism' is not a useful approach to understanding modern aggressive Right-wing movements still readily accept that democratic norms are under increasing threat. British historian Philip Morgan (b.1949) claimed in 2006 that although he struggled to categorise modern forms of far-Right movements as truly fascist, he felt obvious sympathy for Griffin's perspective. He concluded that '[s]ince eternal vigilance is what is, even now, required, then Griffin's analysis might at least enable us to identify and relocate the enemy'.[12] Ten years later Richard Evans reiterated the point that 'we are living in difficult times and we need to be vigilant' against anti-democratic Right-wing threats.[13] In this political context it should be the duty of historians to critically, and effectively, examine past figures who espoused fascist values and anti-democratic violence. Regardless of his personal quirks, his rhetorical prowess, or his distaste for Franco, José Antonio Primo de Rivera's relevance to history is his position as a fascist leader. The fact that mainstream Anglophone historiography has been comparatively positive should be reason for greater reflection on the part of historians of fascism. Through a more nuanced understanding of how and why Primo de Rivera has been treated so differently from other fascist leaders, historians will be able to achieve a greater understanding of their own conceptualisations of fascism as a political phenomenon.

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[8] Rob Stradling, "Inspired Neglect? Three Fascist Artists of the Spanish Civil War," in *The Spanish Civil War: Exhuming a Buried Past*, ed. Anindya Raychaudhuri (Cardiff: The University of Wales Press, 2013), 194.
[9] Roger Griffin, "Fascism's new faces (and new facelessness) in the 'post-fascist' epoch," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 67.
[10] Nigel Copsey, "'Fascism… but with an Open Mind.' Reflections on the Contemporary Far Right in (Western) Europe," *Fascism* 2 (2013): 11.
[11] Stanley Payne, "Commentary on Roger Griffin's "Fascism's New Faces"," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 178.
[12] Philip Morgan, "Recognising the Enemy," in *Fascism Past and Present, West and East*, ed. Roger Griffin et al. (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006), 160.
[13] Keri Phillips, "Interview with Stanley Payne, Richard Evans and Robert Paxton," *ABC Radio National: Rear Vision*, Radio podcast, 5 March 2017, accessed 10 July 2017.
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