

Real Madrid and FC Barcelona: A new narrative of
football rivalry in 1930s Spain

by

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Introduction

It was a frigid Wednesday evening in Madrid– 30 January 2013 to be precise– and it marked the 194th meeting between the two biggest football clubs in all of Spain: Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. I had seen this historic rivalry played out from the comfort of my living room sofa on countless occasions, but for the first time in my life– after hours of waiting with great anticipation in a line that extended well beyond the perimeter of the *Estadio Santiago Bernabéu*– I was about to step foot into the mystifying, iconic Madrid stadium with 80,000 other football fans from around the world to watch the two bitter rivals battle it out before my very eyes.

In comparison with other sports rivalries, *El Clásico* (as games between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona are often referred to) has gained a special importance, and that special something can be felt permeating the air and intensifying the atmosphere by anyone fortunate enough to witness a live match between the two sides. It has the feel of a derby, but unlike other derbies, the two clubs are separated by almost 400 miles, with Real Madrid hailing from the country's capital and FC Barcelona from its namesake city in the region of Catalunya. I was quick to realize the unique character of this football enmity upon taking my seat an hour and fifteen minutes before kickoff; no sooner had I sat down than I started to hear deafening whistles from visiting fans ringing out from all corners of the stadium.

The energy was exhilarating– unlike anything I had ever experienced at any other live sporting event– and as a neutral football fan carrying preconceived notions of what the two teams represented on the political spectrum, I felt inclined to join the ranks and boo the hometown heroes warming up on the pitch below me. Of course,

Real Madrid was the team commonly associated with the late dictator, General Francisco Franco, and FC Barcelona was the team of the left... Right? How could I— a passionate, diehard football fan and undergraduate History and Hispanic Literatures and Cultures double major focusing on modern Spanish history— *possibly* align myself with a team that seemed so firmly placed on the wrong side of history from its very inception in the early twentieth century? Little did I know at the time, “the story of Real Madrid [as with the story of FC Barcelona] is a rich one, and it would be unfair to dismiss it merely as one of fascism and favouritism— a line pushed by so many authors too easily besotted by the romance of Spain’s regional struggles”.¹

That first-leg *Copa del Rey* Clásico ended 1-1, but my interest in exploring the history of this celebrated rivalry did not terminate with the full-time whistle; I was entranced by it, fascinated by its complexity and by the paradoxically simplistic narrative of football opposition shared between the two sides. I realized that it is a sporting rivalry rooted not only in two opposing football identities, but also in historical tensions between Castilla and Catalunya, Spanishness and Catalanism, and central nationalism and peripheral autonomy. Above all, I realized that it is a rivalry that has been simplified and ultimately reduced to two antithetical political identifications. Popular perceptions of the war over the course of the twentieth century have led to an image of Barcelona as the “home of the revolution and resistance to fascism” and the assumed “battlefield of the civil war, the scene of suffering and tragedy”, while Madrid is assumed to be the “home of the Franco

¹ Phil Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*(London: WSC Books, 2001). p. 133

government”.² These political assumptions alone neglect the fact that Madrid was actually a republican city at the time, under constant siege, and instead surmise that Barcelona was the victim of Madrid’s aggression.

The roles that Real Madrid and FC Barcelona have been given over time and their identities in regional, political and purely footballing terms are far more paradoxical and complex than one would initially imagine based on these generalized notions of what the two teams represent. But despite the paradoxical nature of their identities, as Hunter Shobe states in his “Place, identity and football: Catalonia, *Catalanisme* and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975”, seldom are “instances of bias interpreted so explicitly along political lines as they have been time and time again in the case of FC Barcelona and Real Madrid”.³ It seems that *madridistas* and *azulgranas*, as well as the cities and regions that they represent, have been inclined to hide or obscure certain aspects of their incredibly complex histories for the benefit of an overarching narrative of (often political) opposition.⁴ But, analyzing the events that took place primarily during the tumultuous 1930s– with the inclusion of earlier developments that helped to transform the footballing world in Spain– suggests that these two teams serve as both politically and regionally charged bodies that reflect extremely complicated relations rather than two irreconcilable political identifications.

² Sid Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid* ([S.l.]: Nation Books, 2014). p. 47

³ Hunter Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, *Catalanisme* and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975," *National Identities* 10, no. 3 (2008). p. 339

⁴ The term “*madridistas*” refers to fans, players and associates of Real Madrid CF, while “*azulgranas*” refers to similar affiliates of FC Barcelona.

A number of scholars have written extensively on the implications of this exalted football rivalry over the course of modern Spanish history, being rooted as it is in such a wide variety of historical tensions, but the 1930s– where many of the mythological elements of subsequent years of heightened politicization between the two clubs seem to have originated– are often misconceived, overlooked or paralyzed in time in narratives of the two teams. Jimmy Burns describes the history and identity of FC Barcelona in particular as being “forged by persecution, its competitive edge by the obsession of proving itself better than Madrid on its playing fields, whether by winning or simply by stopping Madrid from winning”.⁵ He further states that “the history of Barça has its sharpest edges, its lowest and highest points on the grid of human conflict, whenever it and Real Madrid have played. It is a history reinvented again and again to the level of mythology, demigods fuelled by exaggeration and by propaganda, played out by symbols, heroes and villains, demigods and devils”.⁶

Although Burns’s statement might be an exaggeration in and of itself, what becomes glaringly evident over the course of an analysis of this rivalry is that, as Sid Lowe alludes to time and time again in his work, “symbolism is central, the construction of a narrative plays a key role and myths matter, but there are caveats everywhere, important flaws in the popularly held identities of the two clubs”.⁷ Real Madrid is effectively converted into a symbol of dictatorship and centralism in these carefully constructed narratives, while FC Barcelona is transformed into a team that represents *més que un club*, more than a club. Central nationalism against peripheral

⁵ Jimmy Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*(London: Bloomsbury, 1999). p. 10

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 13

autonomy; right against left; Castilla against Catalunya; Spanishness against Catalanism. But as Shobe notes, “sport is mobilised to reproduce dominant identities associated with places, and to contest dominant meanings and identities associated with places. More than being merely reflective of nationalism or place-based identities, sports and stadiums are themselves drawn upon to construct ideas about place and nation”.⁸ Robert Lypsite adds in his introduction to C.L.R. James’s *Beyond a Boundary* that “lurking beyond the boundaries of every game are the controlling interests, the forces of oppression; the economics of the owners, the politics of the government, even the passions of the fans... sport is no sanctuary from the real world because sport is part of the real world, and the liberation and the oppression are inextricably bound”.⁹ This capacity for creation and strong connection to the “real world” is evident in narratives that are chary of simplicity and instead attempt to analyze and incorporate the complex and simplistic occurrences that affect the histories of both clubs.

Using football as a driving force for historical analysis can illuminate tensions and constructions of place, nation and identity of this nature in ways that are often novel and perhaps altogether unfamiliar. In Spain, football’s capacity to shine light on multi-layered antagonisms in this way is particularly discernible, and many scholars have analyzed its importance in depth; Fernando León Solís states in his *Negotiating*

⁸ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 329

⁹ C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*(New York: Pantheon Books, 1983). p. xii. In James’s work, West Indian cricket is the focus, and he states that “social and political passions, denied normal outlets, expressed themselves so fiercely in cricket (and other games) precisely because they were games”. p. 66; He further states that “the Cricket field was a stage on which selected individuals played representative roles which were charged with social significance”. p. 66

Spain and Catalonia: Competing Narratives of National Identity, that “the division between center and periphery in Spain is particularly obvious in football”, and Liz Crolley adds to this by explaining that Spanish football has very generally been pulled in two different directions, “to encourage pride in the notion of a single Spanish national identity and as a vehicle for nationalist expression by the *nacionalidades históricas*”.¹⁰ Jim O’Brien builds on these ideas, advancing the theory that “football was quickly embedded as a metaphor for the complexities surrounding the developing constructions of ethnicity, with distinctive traditions emerging in Barcelona itself to establish FC Barcelona as Pro-Catalan, Anti-Centrist”.¹¹ He believes that “the introduction and development of football at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries served as a fulcrum for existing Centre-Region tensions between Barcelona and Madrid, Catalonia and Spain”.¹² Ramon Llopis Goig goes even further, describing the originally regional nature of football and how it “became the expression of what we know today as autonomous identities”.¹³ Thinking about football as both a fulcrum for center-region tensions and a metaphor for complexities with regards to the construction of ethnicities further accentuates León Solís’s emphasis on the ways in which center-periphery divides are particularly evident in Spanish football.

¹⁰Fernando León Solís, *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia: Competing Narratives of National Identity*(Intellect, 2003). p. 43; Liz Crolley, "Real Madrid V Barcelona: The State against a Nation? The Changing Role of Football in Spain," *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 10, no. 1 (1997). p. 34

¹¹ Jim O'Brien, "'El Clasico' and the Demise of Tradition in Spanish Club Football: Perspectives on Shifting Patterns of Cultural Identity," *Soccer & Society* 14, no. 3 (2013). p. 319

¹² Ibid. p. 316

¹³ Ramón Llopis Goig, "Identity, Nation-State and Football in Spain. The Evolution of Nationalist Feelings in Spanish Football," *ibid.* 9, no. 1 (2008). p. 56

Building on the scholarship that has come before me, I believe that my approach might differ from those of previous historians in that while many have analyzed “the role of sport in Francoism, national and regional identities, gender roles, and the media”, it seems that few have attempted to fully dissect the 1930s in all of its complexity using football as a driving force for historical analysis.¹⁴ Thus, it is my goal to create a more complex narrative of this fabled football rivalry during this time, refuting its mythological elements in an effort to reveal the intricacies of what appears to be a simple oppositional narrative. As Ángel Bahamonde describes in his *El Real Madrid en la historia de España*, football– in its broadest terms– is a sport based on “*una dialéctica en la que el triunfo deportivo depende de los fracasos del contrario*”– a dialectic in which one side’s triumph depends on the failure of its opposition.¹⁵ With this in mind, it becomes clear that what appears to be a very simplistic narrative of sporting opposition has taken such a form and undergone such reductions often due to the inherent need for a rival of this nature.¹⁶

In order to fulfill my stated purpose and create a more complex narrative of this rivalry during the 1930s, I utilize primary sources that demonstrate a wide variety of perspectives from both the capital city of Madrid and Barcelona (with the addition

¹⁴ Andrew McFarland, "Spanish Sport and the Challenges of Its Recent Historiography," *Journal of Sport History* 38, no. 2 (2011). p. 210

¹⁵ Angel Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*(Madrid: Taurus, 2002). p. 129

¹⁶ Sid Lowe includes a significant quote from Real Madrid president Florentino Pérez in this paragraph of his text: “If the rivalry is partly explained by their success, their success is partly explained by the rivalry. *Anything you can do I can do better*. The relationship is symbiotic: They are necessary enemies, feeding off each other, trying to outdo each other. ‘Like cathedrals in the Middle Ages,’ as Valdano puts it. ‘If Barcelona didn’t exist, we’d have to invent them,’ Madrid president Florentino Pérez once claimed.” Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 16

of a few other influential regions as well). These sources include online *hemerotecas* for newspapers based in Madrid (*ABC*, *Gran Vida*, *Heraldo Deportivo*, *El Imparcial*, *El Sol*) and Barcelona (*La Vanguardia*, *Mundo Deportivo*). The sports weekly *Marca* also provides great insight upon its creation in December of 1938. I secured a copy of Rafael Sánchez Guerra's *Mis prisiones* as well, and given the fact that Sánchez Guerra played a hugely important role within the governing bodies of Real Madrid and the officially constituted Second Republic, it imparts very useful first-hand perspective from a largely forgotten figure in the history of the *equipo madrileño*.¹⁷ Historians like Ángel Bahamonde— who placed Real Madrid in its historical context over the course of the twentieth century in his work— and Hunter Shobe provide excerpts from declarations put forth by club *socio* assemblies that are also significant.¹⁸

Chapter One of my work provides an introduction to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century developments taking place in the country as a whole before embarking on an account of FC Barcelona's newfound sense of ethnic identity at the turn of the century. This account in turn develops into a discussion of Barça's immediate identification with the city of Barcelona, and subsequent identification with the region of Catalunya and Catalan nationalism (referred to throughout as *Catalanism*). It imparts details on the oppression and persecution that the club faced during the Miguel Primo de Rivera dictatorship in the 1920s, and provides some odd paradoxes in the club's inception and the composition of its emerging ethnic identity as well. Following this introduction to the origins of the Catalan club amidst political

¹⁷ "*Equipo madrileño*" refers to the "team from Madrid".

¹⁸ "*Socios*" are club members.

factionalism and issues regarding failures of the Spanish central government comes an analysis of events taking place in Madrid at the time, with football and regenerationist thought surfacing as key aspects of modernity in the capital and elsewhere.¹⁹ Madrid is founded three years after its counterpart in Catalunya, and the growth of football from middle-class amusement to massive popular activity in the modernizing Spanish nation results in its capacity to express autonomous identities in opposition to the faltering central government (this coupled with the fact that football organizations were originally regional in nature).

The narrative then continues on into Chapter Two, where the reorientation of Spanish football leagues into a single national league, *La Liga*, in 1928 facilitates discussions which in turn lead to the polarization and heightened politicization of the sport during the Second Republic. Madrid CF (rid of its noble title at the time), gains popularity and in due course— after sporting successes in the mid-1930s— comes to be associated with the city of Madrid. Meanwhile, FC Barcelona persists in intensifying its identification with Catalanism. Key to the evolution of my narrative at this point is the influence of two great political figures, both at the helm for either club: Rafael Sánchez Guerra at Madrid CF and Josep Sunyol at FC Barcelona. Both republican representatives within the official Spanish government, their treatment in other narratives developed over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has differed drastically, with the former’s influence largely forgotten over time and the latter hailed as a martyr upon his assassination at the beginning of the war.

¹⁹ “Regeneration” refers to the belief that the Spanish people (and subsequently the country as a whole) could be physically regenerated through sport and athletics, able to compete once again as equals with their powerful European counterparts in light of turn-of-the-century setbacks.

Finally, Chapter Three enters into the Civil War period after having explored key factors with regards to the originally regional nature of football, the establishment of strong city-club, region-club identifications, the reorientation of the league and ensuing hostilities, and the introduction of great political personalities as presidents of both clubs. The onset of the war brought with it, unsurprisingly, the breakdown of previous structures of organized Spanish football, and was accompanied by internal repercussions to club organizations as well. Madrid CF underwent a definitive process of democratization and fragmentation based largely on political affiliations, with old elites displaced in favor of new left-wing socios, and both clubs completed processes of self-confiscation in light of threats from workers' organizations. In a last ditch effort to save Madrid CF, club officials asked to enter Barcelona's regional competition, the *Campeonato de Catalunya*, a petition to which they received a resounding "no" in response. Numerous other historical footnotes are introduced along the way and serve to further complicate the image of Real Madrid as the team of Francisco Franco in opposition to FC Barcelona on the polar opposite side of the political spectrum.

Phil Ball writes that football has become "so politicized in Spain that it is virtually impossible to answer such questions [regarding whether any concrete favors were handed to Real Madrid] from a local perspective".²⁰ He explains how "Franco certainly benefited from Real Madrid, but the club only got a few tidbits in return" over the course of the dictatorship.²¹ While many perceive the history of twentieth-century Spain as the "martyrdom of a football club", with specific emphasis on the

²⁰ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 141

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 138

assassination of FC Barcelona president Josep Sunyol (“the most irrefutable evidence that football and politics are darkly intertwined in Spain”), I hope to use my work to problematize the concept of Real Madrid as the team of Francisco Franco and FC Barcelona as the team of the left by placing both teams in a less-analyzed historical context and using football to illuminate the true complexities in the relations between the two clubs and cities.²²

²² Ibid. pp. 116-117

Chapter 1. Spanish football in the opening decades of the twentieth century: Developing constructions of ethnicity, regenerationism, and football as an expression of autonomous identities.

Football was introduced in Spain at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, and it has been argued that its introduction and development “served as a fulcrum for existing Centre-Region tensions between Barcelona and Madrid, Catalonia and Spain”.²³ The turn of the twentieth century was a time of great change for the country as a whole, as it underwent a series of very important social and economic changes, most notably industrialization and in turn urbanization. This process was led by the northernmost regions of Spain, particularly Catalunya and Las Vascongadas, with Barcelona and Bilbao surfacing as the heart and core of the process. In Catalunya, Catalan merchants, manufacturers and bankers began to harbor a sense of their own “apartness” and distance from Madrid as early as the 1840s, based on the fact that “their hopes lay with technological growth, whose models were outside Spain”.²⁴ By the mid-1850s, the region was already producing more than a quarter of Spain’s industrial gross national product, and was the world’s fourth largest producer of cotton goods.²⁵ On top of this, the steam engines of the booming Catalan textile industry accounted for a massive 35 percent of Spain’s total steam power capacity in 1862.²⁶

After 1865 the growth of the Catalan wine market served as the driving force for the continued development and success of the region’s industrial economy. In the

²³ O'Brien, "'El Clasico' and the Demise of Tradition in Spanish Club Football: Perspectives on Shifting Patterns of Cultural Identity." p. 316

²⁴ Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (New York: Knopf, 1992). p. 254

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 254, 256

²⁶ Ibid. p. 257

wake of the recession of the mid-1860s, the cotton industry flourished and the region experienced wide-ranging infrastructural transformations. Robert Hughes writes that “the wine market meant more business for coopers and transport workers; more railroads, trucks, locomotives; more work on the carriage roads”.²⁷ Foreign investors were also more inclined to involve themselves in wine speculation at this time, viewing the Bourbon Restoration in a favorable light in comparison to the liberal First Republic of 1873, and thus establishing the last of the “dominoes for Barcelona’s stock-market and real-estate boom”.²⁸ An “unrestrained credit binge”, referred to as the *febre d’or* or Barcelona’s “gold fever”, was set in motion as a result of these positive circumstances, with sixteen new banks originating in the city of Barcelona alone from 1881 to 1882.²⁹ Established banks experienced formidable growth in their holdings as well; “between 1875 and 1881 the capital of the Credito Mercantil went from 2.5 to 15 million pesetas, that of the Banco de Barcelona from 7.5 to 12.8 million”.³⁰ *Indianos*, or Catalan businessmen who had “reinvented themselves as merchant princes” in the remaining Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico, were at the forefront of this process, and through their economic endeavors the region experienced major transformations of “both the society and the physical appearance of Barcelona”.³¹

In the city of Barcelona and the region of Catalunya more generally, industry and manufacturing of this nature enabled huge population growth by confusing the

²⁷ Ibid. p. 325

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 326

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

borders between urban and rural areas; “financed by industrial capital, urban expansion linked the medieval core of Barcelona to what had previously been neighboring villages”.³² This confusion of borders is evident in a comparison of population growth rates for both the city of Barcelona and the region of Catalunya. Hughes provides significant statistics to this respect: “in 1834, when the population of Catalunya passed a million, Barcelona had 135,500 people, still fewer than one in eight; by 1877 it had risen to one in almost seven, 272,500 people out of 1,843,000. But thereafter, the proportion zoomed. Thirteen years later, in 1900, more than half a million of Catalunya’s 1,942,000 citizens lived and worked in Barcelona— one person in four”.³³ Hunter Shobe argues that “this breakdown between urban and rural areas facilitated Catalanist political movements and efforts to construct a Catalan identity”.³⁴

Before analyzing the precise components of this emerging Catalan identity, it is important to note that industrialization in Catalunya was accompanied by two other critical developments: the growth of social unrest in the region and acute antagonism towards Madrid in the aftermath of the disaster of 1898, “particularly among the industrialists who blamed the central government for losing their profitable colonial markets”.³⁵ After recovering from an economic depression that occurred in the late-1880s, Barcelona “was a bourgeois paradise” in the last decade of the nineteenth

³² Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 334

³³ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 337

³⁴ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 334

³⁵ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. pp. 99-100

century.³⁶ But, for the Spanish middle classes this paradise was incomplete. The 1890s therefore resulted in increased social unrest and anarchist activity in Catalunya, as “the resentments of the have-nots were fed by the exuberance of the haves, and the Catalan rich were sluggish and myopic in responding to the long-stored anger of the poor”.³⁷ The region’s workers toiled away in miserable conditions, and thus were sown the seeds of a “very different ideology”, born out of the “blood and tears of the Spanish working class... bitterly anticlerical, yet possessing in its puritanism and millenarianism hope some of the authentic attributes of religion”: anarchism.³⁸ Anarchism, which argued that the state and the Church were the roots of all evil and should consequently be abolished, became a “mass creed” in Spain, the only country outside of Russia in which the “primitive masses” of Mikhail Bakunin’s dreams were to be found.³⁹

Gissepe Fannelli, an Italian anarchist and student of Bakunin, arrived in Spain in 1869, “at a moment of change that, for the Spanish working masses, changed nothing at all”.⁴⁰ In the past, Spanish peasants had found a natural ally in the Catholic Church, which owned a large quantity of land and was therefore in regular contact with the laboring masses, but by the end of the nineteenth century no workingman in Barcelona “could look at the city’s humid embrace of capital and piety without loathing a sense of betrayal”.⁴¹ Anticlerical fantasies ran deep among these “intensely

³⁶ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 374

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 416

³⁹ Ibid. pp. 416-17

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 418

⁴¹ Ibid.

clannish people” as a result.⁴² In fact, the deeply religious nature of the people of Catalunya is what allowed anarchism to really take hold of the region as an “extreme form of irrational hope” with religious connotations that would prove itself to be a perfect last resort for the struggling proletariat masses.⁴³ Consequently, Barcelona became the “world capital of anarchism” through the 1890s and into the twentieth century, and was afflicted by an eruption of calamitous violence and bombings that eventually culminated in the *Semana trágica* of 1909.⁴⁴

To provide a brief overview of the *Semana trágica* (The Tragic Week, 25 July-2 August 1909), it is critical to note the significance and gravity of the events taking place in Morocco at this time, particularly in the coastal towns of Ceuta and Melilla. The 6,000 Spanish troops occupying the region were proving to be insufficient in light of Spain’s renewed military-colonial activity in the northern African country, and so Prime Minister Antonio Maura initiated a “partial call-up of reservists... the units selected for mobilization being in large part recruited from Catalonia”.⁴⁵ The resulting conflagration transpired as a consequence of a culmination of rising anarchist, socialist, left-wing Catalanist, and *lerrouxista* tension, with a small group of anarchists deciding to organize a general strike on 25 July 1909. Despite effecting few clergy deaths, at least fifty religious buildings were ravaged and set ablaze over the course of the conflict, and escalating violence soon moved beyond the city of Barcelona and into neighboring towns and regions. Unfortunately for the striking

⁴² Ibid. p. 417

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 418

⁴⁵ Charles J. Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age: From Constitution to Civil War, 1808-1939*(Malden, Mass; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). p. 216

masses, the military was able to amass a large enough force in time to embark on a counter-attack that resulted in the death of 150 civilians by 31 July and the arrest of over 2,500 in the days that followed.⁴⁶ Social conflicts of this nature became a defining factor for the region of Catalunya, and will prove to be the basis of important differences in the Catalan experience of the Spanish Civil War in subsequent chapters.

The second vital turn-of-the-century development to note is the disaster of 1898, which would result in “the worst humiliation Spain had ever endured”.⁴⁷ Starting in 1895, Cuban separatists began to revolt against a colonial government “riddled by corruption”, provoking a wave of panic in the colony’s sugar planters.⁴⁸ 200,000 Spanish soldiers were sent to Cuba in light of this insurrection in order to support a “hopelessly inefficient” army staff residing in the colony.⁴⁹ Three years later, in 1898, “after lodging a protest against the ‘uncivilized and inhumane’ way in which the Spanish army was trying to crush the rebellion, President McKinley presented an ultimatum”: the United States would pay Spain \$300 million for Cuba, or there would be war.⁵⁰ The U.S. battleship *Maine* was sunk soon after on 15 February 1898– the exact cause a mystery to this day– an occurrence which in turn allowed McKinley to accuse the Spanish government and proceed to demolish the Spanish navy. In May of 1898, Admiral Dewey sank the entire Spanish Pacific fleet at Manila Bay, and in July of the same year Admiral Cervera destroyed the entire

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 217

⁴⁷ Hughes, *Barcelona*. pp. 422, 424

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 423

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Atlantic fleet at Santiago de Cuba in a mere four hours. Together, these events resulted in Spain's inevitable surrender and "the most one-sided naval disaster in modern history".⁵¹ Spain's industry was necessarily rid of its colonial markets in the aftermath, which effectively converted Catalan businessmen into "victims of Madrid's incompetence".⁵² The Spanish people had been left to ruins by their central government, and "thus the fallout from 1898 made big Barcelonese money somewhat less monarchist, tipping it more to the conservative Catalanist cause that, in the form of the Lliga Regionalista, was to triumph at Barcelona's polls in 1901".⁵³

In light of these decisive developments and the apparent backwardness of the Spanish central government, industrialists and upper middle class Catalans turned to regional nationalism and the Catalanist cause as an "alternative".⁵⁴ Modern Catalan nationalism, henceforth referred to as *Catalanism*, was first manifest in the Barcelonese politician, editor and lawyer Valentí Almirall's *Lo Catalanisme* in 1886. Hughes writes that "in the broadest sense, late-nineteenth-century Catalanism can be defined as a political doctrine that sought to affirm the personality of Catalunya— in language, law, history, and culture— and to distinguish it from the rest of Spain".⁵⁵ Shobe quotes Stanley Payne in his work, explaining that the term "suggested that every issue in public life had a specifically Catalan dimension, with the implication

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 423-24

⁵² Ibid. p. 424

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ O'Brien, "'El Clasico' and the Demise of Tradition in Spanish Club Football: Perspectives on Shifting Patterns of Cultural Identity." p. 319

⁵⁵ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 311

that no solution would be acceptable if it did not recognize that dimension”.⁵⁶ Catalanism tacitly implies that Catalunya is a separate and distinct place in relation to the country of Spain, “with its own people, language, and institutions”.⁵⁷ Andrew McFarland adds that as a result of these implications “Catalan language and traditions were reinvented and reapplied to build a modern and pro-European regional identity in opposition to the centralizing Madrid government”.⁵⁸

Hughes signals four distinct Catalanist doctrines emerging in the first ten years of the Bourbon Restoration (1875-84): the first, “summed up in the literary culture of the *Renaixença*... provided many of the emblems, catch phrases, and crystallized sentiments for Catalanism”, but failed to have any real political effect or reach beyond a small elite.⁵⁹ The second, essentially a Catalan version of Carlism— which had gained popularity among conservative, rural Catalans frustrated by the First Republic—, was “really populist” and “was seen by Barcelonans as a bogey of reaction”, with its only true following coming from “deep Catalunya”.⁶⁰ At the opposite end of the spectrum, Hughes describes the third doctrine as “republican or federalist Catalanism”; this extreme view— supported by the likes of Valentí Almirall— contended that “Catalunya should be a self-governing republic, a state within a state”.⁶¹ The fourth and final doctrine was that of the city’s industrial upper classes: regional conservatism. This was the “Catalanism of the bosses... obsessively

⁵⁶ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 334

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Andrew McFarland, "Ricardo Zamora: The First Spanish Football Idol," *Soccer and Society* 7, no. 1 (2006). p. 3

⁵⁹ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 311

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 312

⁶¹ Ibid.

concerned with state protectionism for Catalan products, and hence chary of alienating or even irritating Madrid”.⁶²

It was not until two decades later in 1901 that Catalanism and Catalanist doctrines like the ones described above would acquire importance on a national level.⁶³ 1901 denotes the creation of the preeminent conservative Catalan nationalist party, the Lliga Regionalista, under the leadership of Enric Prat de la Riba, and the party’s first foray into national politics: winning four of Barcelona’s seven seats in the national election.⁶⁴ Predating these events was the charter of conservative Catalanism drawn up by delegates from the Unió Catalanista in the spring of 1892, which would go on to become the basis of the party’s political platform. The document, a “regional Catalan constitution” titled *Bases de Manresa*, laid out a number of crucial formulations: Catalunya would “manage its internal government as a state”; it would attend to its own “organic laws”, civil, penal and mercantile (Article 6A); Catalan public careers would only be available to Catalans (Article 4A); and “all ‘conservation of public order and internal security’ would be in the hands of a force responsible only to the Catalan regional government” (Article 13A).⁶⁵ Thus, as this new turn-of-the-century Catalan identity and sense of exceptionality solidified itself through the formation of official Catalanist political parties like the Lliga Regionalista (and eventually transplanted itself onto FC Barcelona upon its

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 334

⁶⁴ Ibid.; Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 100

⁶⁵ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 376

formation), it became clear that it was very much based on hopes and dreams of Catalan self-governance and autonomy.

.....

FC Barcelona emerged onto the scene in 1899, “within this volatile milieu of political factionalism and cultural divergence”, led by the Swiss textile émigré Joan Gampert.⁶⁶ It is worth noting that only ten days before the official formation of the club, the mayor of the city of Barcelona resigned in protest of what Phil Ball describes as “spiraling new taxes imposed by central government in Madrid, a tax particularly resented in light of the fact that Barcelona’s burgeoning economy was beginning to prop up the country”.⁶⁷ But perhaps somewhat surprisingly, politics and issues of this nature were of little importance to the club in its first decade of existence, and Barça “identified above all with the city of Barcelona”.⁶⁸ This is evident in the club’s original crest, which was the same as that of the city itself.⁶⁹ Along with this more visible clue, international affiliates were conscious of the intense factionalism pervading the politics of the region, and were— based on their respective positions— inclined to refrain from getting involved in issues of central nationalism and peripheral autonomy.

But in spite of this initial hesitance to engage sport and politics in the creation of a cultural entity, FC Barcelona was relatively quick to manifest itself as a symbol

⁶⁶ O'Brien, "'El Clasico' and the Demise of Tradition in Spanish Club Football: Perspectives on Shifting Patterns of Cultural Identity." p. 319

⁶⁷ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 103

⁶⁸ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 335

⁶⁹ Hunter W. Shobe, "Place, Identity and Futbol Club Barcelona: A Critical Geography of Sport" (ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2005). p. 115

of Catalanism (after its original identification with the city of Barcelona) in opposition to its biggest rival at the time, the RCD Espanyol, the other team from Barcelona that Barça supporters regarded as “centralist”.⁷⁰ As Barcelona and the region of Catalunya continued to modernize, football– and specifically FC Barcelona– “became an increasingly important part of the Catalan experience of modernity”.⁷¹ Barça’s crest was redesigned in 1910 to include the Catalan flag and the cross of St. Jordi, the patron saint of Catalunya, and the club “developed into a major force in suggesting ‘that politics and sport could be a part of the same cultural identity’”.⁷² In relation to the region’s emphasis on industrialization and modernity– elements that came hand in hand with Catalunya’s novel sense of ethnic identity– FC Barcelona proved to be an “ideal space for the expression of the collective identities of local, regional or national antagonisms”.⁷³ This capacity of sport to provide a place for the expression of collective identities explains the ways in which fans “identify intensely with teams from their town, region, or country, because they regard them as symbols of a specific type of collective existence”.⁷⁴

An interesting element that very much serves to complicate the identity creation taking place at FC Barcelona in the opening decades of the twentieth century is the fact that a lack of funding led Joan Gampert to promote Barça as a “Catalan’

⁷⁰ Goig, "Identity, Nation-State and Football in Spain. The Evolution of Nationalist Feelings in Spanish Football." p. 59

⁷¹ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 335

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ramón Llopis Goig, "National Orientation, Universal Outlook–the Symbolic Capital of Fc Barcelona in the Global Era," *European Journal for Sport and Society* 5, no. 1 (2008). p. 63

⁷⁴ Ibid.

club, gaining the sympathy and support of Barcelona's professional bourgeoisie" and thus giving the club a much-overlooked conservative, upper middle-class support base.⁷⁵ He established a relationship with Francesc Cambó i Batlle— a city councilor and leader of the Lliga Regionalista— as early as 1908, and the successful creation of the Mancomunitat de Catalunya in 1914 brought an even stronger affiliation with the Catalan autonomy movement and other members of the Lliga.⁷⁶ In this second decade of existence the links between FC Barcelona and the city of Barcelona, Catalunya and Catalanism were made even stronger; the club established Catalan as its official language for the "production of administrative and publically disseminated documents" in 1917, and "publically supported la Lliga Regionalista's campaign in favor of an autonomous Catalonia" the following year.⁷⁷ It is clear that even in some of the earliest years of the club's existence, Barça supporters felt themselves to be expressing a "form of Catalan patriotism" by being avid followers of the team.⁷⁸ Shobe provides an excerpt from a declaration from an assembly of *socios* in 1920 in his work that very emphatically displays this sentiment: "We are for F.C. Barcelona, because we are from Catalonia. We support sport because we are patriotic".⁷⁹ Madrid CF would not gain the same affiliation and identification with the city of Madrid until the following decade, when— through its successful sporting endeavors— it began to

⁷⁵ Andrew McFarland, "Building a Mass Activity: Fandom, Class and Business in Early Spanish Football," *Soccer & Society* 8, no. 2-3 (2007). p. 217

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Futbol Club Barcelona: A Critical Geography of Sport." p. 120

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

gain importance as a political image and a weapon for political propaganda, an occurrence that will be made evident later in this work.

On 25 November 1918, Luís Durán's *catalanista* newspaper, *La Veu de Catalunya*, declared that “*d'un club de Catalunya ha passat, el FC Barcelona, a ésser el club de Catalunya*”, affirming that Barça had virtually become *the* club of Catalunya.⁸⁰ But it was not until the 1920s, when Catalanism shifted towards a more popular base, that FC Barcelona was able to truly reach beyond its upper and middle class support base in order to develop a more “popular and working-class identity” and affirm its importance as the team of all of Catalunya.⁸¹ This transformation led to substantial tangible oppression during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.

A distinguished *africanista* known for his controversial opinion on the Moroccan war (believing it to be “unnecessary and unwinnable”), Miguel Primo de Rivera was appointed Captain General of Barcelona in March of 1922, a position which in turn led to his forming a special and distinct relationship with the city of Barcelona and the region of Catalunya more generally.⁸² Charles Esdaile notes that there was perhaps “no worse a position” that could have been chosen for the military officer, for Primo's already strong antiparliamentarian beliefs intensified during his time in Barcelona.⁸³ He “despised Catalanism as the irrelevant hobby of Barcelonese

⁸⁰ McFarland, "Ricardo Zamora: The First Spanish Football Idol." p. 5

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age: From Constitution to Civil War, 1808-1939*. p. 260

⁸³ Ibid.

professors”, and felt that it simply did not have a place in a united Spain, a conviction that came out with great force over the course of his dictatorship.⁸⁴

Seizing power in a military coup in September of 1923, Miguel Primo de Rivera effectively abolished the governing authority of Catalunya and suppressed a number of Catalan institutions in an attempt to centralize the country. A wide variety of restrictions were imposed on the FC Barcelona organization itself, including but not limited to banning “the use of the Catalan flag in the stadium, the registration with the police of all membership files, and the obligatory use of the Spanish language in the club’s announcements”.⁸⁵ Primo had no special interest in architecture or architectural style, but the buildings of the World’s Fair held on his orders in Barcelona in 1929 plainly exhibited his opposition to Catalan nationalism and to any regional autonomy movements for that matter; “led off by the enormous neobaroque Palau Nacional on the heights of Montjuic,” all of these buildings were created in “heavy, pan-Hispanic manner with scarcely any Catalan reference at all”.⁸⁶ Hughes describes the “epitome” of this as being the Poble Espanyol, also on Montjuic, “an ‘ideal village’ designed with great skill, to incorporate all the styles of Spanish architecture”.⁸⁷ Not only was the Spanish dictator repressing Catalan regional institutions and organizations, he was making a concerted effort to transplant

⁸⁴ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 536

⁸⁵ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Futbol Club Barcelona: A Critical Geography of Sport." p. 121

⁸⁶ Hughes, *Barcelona*. p. 536

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

“Spainland” and the influence of central Spanish nationalism onto the troublesome region.⁸⁸

Animosity between central nationalism and peripheral autonomy was therefore greatly augmented at this time, and the benefit match that took place at Les Corts in aid of the *Orfeó Català*⁸⁹ on 14 June 1925 is the most telling football-related occurrence to this respect. At half time of the contest, a band of the English Royal Marines– “showing a fine disregard for the bewildering intricacies of foreign politics”– began to play the Spanish national anthem.⁹⁰ The song was immediately met with disdainful whistling from the crowd. Viewed as an act of resistance by the Spanish central government, a military edict fined the directors of FC Barcelona for permitting the “anti-Spanish farce” to take place, and banned the team from competing at Les Corts for six months following the incident.⁹¹ Such tangible oppression would have long-lasting effects on the football club of all of Catalunya.

Yearly socio statistics support the theory that the repression that FC Barcelona faced during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship “served to strengthen the Catalanist movement and increase the importance of the Catalan language and flag as ‘collective

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “...a choral society that had played a significant role in the Catalanist cultural revival since the late 19th century”. Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 108

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 109; The importance of whistling of this nature cannot be understated, as it continues to be a prevalent issue in Spanish football to this day. Spanish football officials are currently debating the issue of where to hold the 2015 Copa del Rey final, with FC Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao petitioning the use of Madrid’s Estadio Santiago Bernabéu. Club affiliates in Madrid are weary of allowing the two regional clubs to compete at their home stadium out of fear of what will take place during the playing of the Spanish national anthem.

symbols”⁹² The club’s socio numbers rose at a staggering rate over the course of the 1920s: in 1920, FC Barcelona had 3,217 registered socios, and in 1924– a mere four years later– 12,207 registered socios were reported.⁹³ This development has led some to “argue that the club’s role as a vehicle for the expression of Catalanism became more important precisely because of the political situation”.⁹⁴ Jimmy Burns writes in his *Barça: A People’s Passion* that “Barça’s identity was forged by persecution, its competitive edge by the obsession of proving itself better than Madrid on all its playing fields”.⁹⁵ The exact nature of this overarching narrative of opposition and persecution will be analyzed more definitively towards the end of this work, but for now it suffices to say that times of repression and hardship– especially in opposition to the city of Madrid and associated institutions and organizations of centralized power– gave Barça a boost in its capacity for fostering collective identity.

Before analyzing football as a key aspect of modernity in Madrid and other regions outside of Catalunya, it is important to mention two other noteworthy factors that serve to further complicate the identity creation taking place at FC Barcelona. One striking paradox in the original composition of the club is that Barça was heavily reliant on players (and officials) from outside of Spain, despite the fact that the club’s first logo was the same as that of the city, and despite the organization’s strong identification with the emerging Catalan ethnic identity being constructed at the

⁹² Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 336

⁹³ Ramon Barnils, *Historia Crítica Del Futbol Club Barcelona: 1899-1999*(Barcelona: Editorial Empíries, 1999). Socio Statistics Appendix

⁹⁴ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 336

⁹⁵ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 10

time.⁹⁶ International and conservative in origin, FC Barcelona was traditionally “a sports entity in which there have simultaneously co-existed feelings of national identification with orientations of integration and global openness”.⁹⁷ Llopis Goig describes this paradox as a formative element in viewing Barça as a “glocalized” rarity, the term “glocalized” making it possible to explain the social construction of the “local” in connection to globalizing processes.⁹⁸ It is particularly significant that this powerful international presence was mixing and in turn helping to construct FC Barcelona’s collective Catalan ethnic identity from the very beginning of the club’s history.

.....

As the stronghold of the Spanish central government, Madrid was greatly afflicted by the reign of Isabel II (1833-1868) in ways both positive and negative. This was by no means a period of calm for the Spanish capital, but it did result in the advent of the railway and other industrializing developments which in turn led to its transformation from “comfortable isolation in the middle of the Castilian plateau, ‘a predator of its own environment, inexplicably the court of an imperial monarchy’, to a capital accessible from every city of the Spanish periphery”.⁹⁹ The railway occasioned the creation of new banks in order to manage the investments of the growing mercantile class, and new insurance companies provided many with the opportunity to participate in Juan Álvarez Mendizábal’s *Desamortización*, which

⁹⁶ Crolley, "Real Madrid V Barcelona: The State against a Nation? The Changing Role of Football in Spain." p. 35

⁹⁷ Goig, "National Orientation, Universal Outlook—the Symbolic Capital of Fc Barcelona in the Global Era." p. 69

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Jules Stewart, *Madrid: The History*(New York; London: I.B. Tauris, 2012). p. 123

effectively expropriated church land and buildings in order to pay off government debts. As the railway continued to expand and grow, the capital not only “reaped the commercial benefits of faster access to Bilbao, Barcelona, Valencia, and other key industrial and manufacturing centres and ports”, it also saw a proliferation of laborers able to travel from greater distances to work within city limits.¹⁰⁰

Isabel II’s lack of “political acumen” and oscillation between liberal and conservative factions over the course of her reign culminated in *La Gloriosa*, the Glorious Revolution of September 1868.¹⁰¹ A *pronunciamiento* by a civil-military coalition of republicans, moderates and liberals who felt excluded by Isabel’s “exclusivist reaction” resulted in her deposition from power.¹⁰² But, unfortunately for them, the monarchical system of government was still enshrined in the Spanish constitution. Lacking any cogent direction, *La Gloriosa* eventually gave rise to the proclamation of the First Republic by the Cortes on 11 February 1873, “based on a decentralized state, justice for one and all, free education for the masses and religious freedom”.¹⁰³ However, *La Gloriosa* was not as glorious as the coalition would have hoped, for Carlist uprisings and other opposition quickly led to the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy under Alfonso XII in 1874.

The reign of Alfonso XII was in turn marked by the promulgation of the Constitution of 1876, which recognized “shared sovereignty between the monarch and the Cortes” and called for constitutional monarchy.¹⁰⁴ Upon Alfonso’s death in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 124

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 127

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 133

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 137

November of 1885, after an eleven-year rule, María Cristina initiated her seventeen-year regency, under which the city of Madrid greatly benefitted. A profusion of modernizing technological innovations took place at this time, with electric trams introduced in 1899, followed by other developments like the hydraulic lift, the telephone, the clock tower in the Puerta del Sol, the Banco de España and the Real Academia Española.¹⁰⁵ Madrid's population trebled to 540,000 from 1870 to 1900, and the modernization and urbanization projects of the time proved to be extremely advantageous to the city.

.....

Just as football had functioned as a crucial element of the Catalan modernizing experience, it served a similar purpose in Madrid and in the country of Spain as a whole. McFarland notes that “athletics and football had been introduced to Spain specifically with the goal of physically regenerating the race”, providing Spaniards with an outlet that would allow them to “believe that their nation was recovering, could be great again, and could compete with their neighbours as an equal” in the aftermath of such calamitous events as the disaster of 1898.¹⁰⁶ A brief overview of Madrid CF's inception amidst these regenerationist sentiments, followed by a look at the growth of football from a middle-class amusement to a massive popular activity in the modernizing Spanish nation, and the originally regional nature of football organizations, will set the scene for the introduction of “seeds of political

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 139

¹⁰⁶ McFarland, "Ricardo Zamora: The First Spanish Football Idol." p. 7

rivalry” and “perceptions of favouritism towards Real Madrid” that started to emerge in these earliest decades of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷

Madrid CF was founded in March of 1902, and it will perhaps shock many to hear that Carlos Padrós, the club’s founder and the man described as the “patriarch of football *madrileño*”, was actually a Catalan.¹⁰⁸ The team emerged as a “continuation of the curiously named club Football Sky, founded in 1895 as a sporting pastime for students at the Institución Libre de Enseñanza”, which played a huge role in promoting sport’s capacity for regeneration.¹⁰⁹ Padrós was well aware of the intricacies of popular regenerationist discourse, and in a sort of manifesto directed towards Spanish youth (the likes of whom would have been enrolled at the influential Institución), he establishes the reasoning behind the legal construction of Madrid CF and the ensuing institutionalization of the earliest frameworks for local and national football federations and regulated competitions.¹¹⁰ In his text, which he originally considered publishing in the Madrid-based magazine *Gran Vida*, Padrós highlights the influence of modern and educated foreigners in inculcating a sense of fondness for sport and physical activity in Spain, where “*desgraciadamente se trabaja tan poco, pues la mitad de los días del año los hacemos festivos*”.¹¹¹ Football, in Padrós’s opinion, had the potential to revitalize a Spanish youth and people characterized by their laziness and backwardness by way of stimulating motivation and regeneration through physical activity.

¹⁰⁷ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 339

¹⁰⁸ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 23

¹⁰⁹ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 136

¹¹⁰ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. pp. 17, 22

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 18

Phil Ball argues that Madrid CF's origins as the progeny of Football Sky were "far from humble", but it is important to note that conditions in Madrid at the turn of the twentieth century were markedly different from those of Barcelona and Catalunya.¹¹² Ángel Bahamonde describes Madrid as a society "*demasiado polarizada*" (very polarized) in its distribution of income, a circumstance that he contends served to rid football madrileño of the aristocratic elements that it had inherited from its progenitor and from recreational sports being played in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.¹¹³ Bahamonde goes on to state that the presence of members of the nobility at the club was "insignificant", for many upper-class madrileños considered football to be a "*deporte plebeyo*", or commoners' sport.¹¹⁴ Despite declaring Madrid CF to be an aristocratic organization from its very inception (most likely a widely-held opinion to this day) it is significant that Ball also hints at two other contradictory facts: by 1912 the club had only 450 members, and "curiously for a club always associated with royalty and aristocracy, it took until 1924 before they got themselves a decent ground, the legendary Chamartín stadium".¹¹⁵ These facts suggest that FC Barcelona was perhaps the more aristocratic and conservative of the two clubs in origin.

Conditions in Madrid at the turn of the century failed to facilitate and cultivate a sense of madrileño collective identity similar to that of FC Barcelona. In these earliest years of the club's existence, there was a definite lack of "*espíritu del barrio*"

¹¹² Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 136

¹¹³ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 23

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 21

¹¹⁵ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 137

(neighborhood spirit) in Madrid.¹¹⁶ And yet, this dearth of spirit changed quite drastically when Madrid CF went up against foreign opposition. Mechanisms for communal identification began to take shape in relation to the “spirit of confrontation” that accompanied these distinct encounters, and madrileños came to view their city’s club as a projection of not only themselves as individuals, but also of their communal lives in Madrid at these times.¹¹⁷ This was supplemented by the fact that Madrid CF had a distinct advantage over its crosstown rivals: it was the only team to bear the name of the city of Madrid within its own title.

.....

It was not until the mid-1920s that football would complete its transformation from middle-class amusement to massive popular activity as a result of substantial economic development and Spanish workers’ first noteworthy expendable incomes. The career of legendary goalkeeper Ricardo Zamora, who spent time at Espanyol (1916-19; 1922-30), FC Barcelona (1919-22), and Real Madrid (1930-36), is particularly relevant to this respect, as it coincides with some of the key moments in the sport’s process of maturation. Rising to national prominence in 1920 after already having been identified as a child prodigy in his teenage years, Zamora– along with the rest of the Spanish national team– was provided with a unique opportunity to prove himself on an international stage at the 1920 Antwerp Olympics. Through its successful exploits in Antwerp, the silver medalist Spanish national team founded *La furia roja* (the Spanish fury), an essential descriptor that has endured as a salient feature of Spanish football to this day. By the mid-1920s, the team’s success allowed

¹¹⁶ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 28

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 29

for the transformation of Spanish football players into “mass celebrities”, a change pioneered by the fabled Zamora.¹¹⁸

McFarland writes in his “Building a Mass Activity: Fandom, Class and Business in Early Spanish Football” that “football became a regular part of Spanish culture” in the mid-1920s, stating that this change was made possible due in large part to the expansion of the nation’s urban population and the development of workers’ “first significant disposable incomes”.¹¹⁹ As Spanish football clubs improved their own fiscal situations within the broader context of a positive economic climate for the country as a whole, membership numbers and income based on paying spectators per match increased. Athletic Bilbao, the most prominent club in the modernizing Las Vascongadas region, was bringing in 30,661 pesetas from monthly socio fees and 20,303 pesetas from matches as early as 1915-16.¹²⁰ FC Barcelona experienced a similar surge in its membership numbers, with registered socios increasing by more than 100 per year throughout the 1910s, resulting in a “massive 3,574 socios paying membership dues by 1920”.¹²¹ Madrid CF displayed comparable growth as well, with average attendance soaring from 252 paying spectators per match in 1912-13 to 1,389 seven years later. Madrid’s total income also climbed significantly, with total ticket sale earnings reaching 21,303.26 pesetas by 1920.¹²² Statistics of this nature suggest that Spanish football did in fact experience considerable growth over the course of the

¹¹⁸ McFarland, "Ricardo Zamora: The First Spanish Football Idol." p. 9

¹¹⁹ "Building a Mass Activity: Fandom, Class and Business in Early Spanish Football." p. 206

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

1910s and into the 1920s, leading to its transformation from middle-class amusement to massive popular activity.

A “natural corollary” to football’s rise to prominence was the need for larger stadiums for clubs to house their growing fan bases.¹²³ McFarland notes that stadium building “was not particularly novel in a country where every significant city already had a permanent bullring”.¹²⁴ Therefore, football was quick to follow in the footsteps of its antecedents. Stadiums not only provided closed-off areas that by their very nature facilitated feasible crowd control, they also allowed for systems of “differentiated prices” that marked “the varied elite, middle-class, and working-class social levels attending matches”.¹²⁵ Athletic Bilbao was once again at the forefront of this modern stadium-building process with its San Mamés, but FC Barcelona and Madrid CF were quick to follow suit. With the support and approval of Francesc Cambó i Batlle, the powerful leader of the Lliga Regionalista mentioned earlier, a group named “Stadium Club” was established in 1919 with the goal of building an “Olympic-level stadium” for Barça and the greater region of Catalunya.¹²⁶ Continuing its campaign through the 1920s, the group “eventually succeeded in building one of the first world-class stadiums in Spain on the slopes of Montjuic”.¹²⁷ In Madrid, the Campo de O’Donnell, located in a middle-class neighborhood east of Retiro and home to Madrid CF from 1910 to 1923, was modified to accommodate the club’s growing support base in 1912, 1914, 1916, and again in the early 1920s, by which

¹²³ Ibid. p. 209

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid. pp. 209-10

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 211

¹²⁷ Ibid.

point it had reached a capacity of 3,500.¹²⁸ But despite these additions, Bahamonde argues that O'Donnell's new capacity failed to result in any direct increase in spectator numbers as one might assume. Rather, the rising "*mercado virtual o indirecto*", the virtual or indirect market— which included general interest and opinion with respect to football in Spain— was much more indicative of the sport's potential and preconfigures the transformations that took place in the mid-1920s.¹²⁹

A final factor to take into account in relation to football's growing influence at this time is the creation of a sports journalism community in Spain. This development is especially relevant in light of the aims of this work, as I draw from a number of sports publications based in Barcelona and Madrid, as well as fixed general news outlets like *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona) and the *ABC* (Madrid), each of which has served to build up the overarching narrative of opposition between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid over the course of the twentieth century. In Barcelona, a dynamic community of journalists began to develop with the inception of *El Mundo Deportivo* in 1906, an occurrence that was quickly followed up by the introduction of other sports papers like *Sports* in 1906 and *Stadium* in 1910.¹³⁰ Conventional newspapers began to pay special attention to sports as well, with regular football coverage appearing in Catalan-language news outlets like *La Veu de Catalunya*, *La Publicidad* and *Diario de Barcelona*, and in Castilian-language *La Vanguardia*, *Las Noticias* and *El Diluvio*.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 212

¹²⁹ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 51

¹³⁰ McFarland, "Building a Mass Activity: Fandom, Class and Business in Early Spanish Football." pp. 213-14

¹³¹ Ibid.

In Madrid, *Gran Vida* and *España Sportiva* were two of the first sports-based publications to obtain fixed roles in the capital's journalist community, with the former gaining heightened importance as it "openly embraced the older, middle-class tradition that emphasized the pedagogical benefits of physical education as a way to physically regenerate the country".¹³² It is significant that the publication's directors formed a close relationship with Carlos Padrós, and thus became "the first voice of Madrid's football community".¹³³ *Heraldo Deportivo* surfaced as the next superior sports paper in 1920, after originally emerging onto the scene in 1915, led by "the most influential sportswriter prior to 1936 and also the first president of the reunited Federación Española de Fútbol", Ricardo Ruiz Ferry.¹³⁴ Lastly, *Heraldo de Madrid*, *El Sol* and *El Imparcial* provide similar examples of mainstream news sources that began to include regular match reports in their publications. The extent of this football-related coverage in both Madrid and Barcelona helps to illuminate the magnitude of the diverse audiences that these publications were attempting to reach. And in light of these developments, it is clear that football had solidified itself as a vital feature of the Spanish experience of modernization at this time.

.....

Throughout the first third of the twentieth century, the most essential quality with respect to the organization of Spanish football was that it was above all regional in nature, which directly connects to the idea that its introduction "served as a fulcrum for existing Centre-Region tensions between Barcelona and Madrid,

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Catalonia and Spain”.¹³⁵ Lacking any sort of central regulatory framework, Spanish clubs were inherently volatile and unstable, enveloped in an atmosphere of instability that would persist until the creation of the first Federación Española de Fútbol in 1909. The first centralizing structure of its kind, the Federación attempted to assert its legitimacy amidst powerful “*fuerzas centrífugas*”, or centrifugal forces, coming from aspiring autonomous regions like Catalunya and Las Vascongadas.¹³⁶

An additional four years elapsed before Spanish football entered into a more serious and profound process of standardization, owing in large part to the leadership of the patriarch of football madrileño, Carlos Padrós. Padrós, who helped to jumpstart the creation of the *Federación Madrileña de Clubes* in 1902 in order to standardize local competition in Madrid, simply refused to believe that Spanish football clubs were unstable by definition, and thus set out to establish a “*marco común de intercambio*”, or common framework of exchange, that would allow for a sustainable future for the sport and its many participants. In fact, it was Padrós’s ambition that led to the inception of the *Campeonato de España*, which succeeded in uniting different regional champions in an annual competition based in Madrid. Padrós even managed to garner the support of the King of Spain, Alfonso XIII, and thus was born the Campeonato de España (also referred to as the Copa del Rey/Copa de España) in 1902 (predating the first Federación Española).¹³⁷ The competition is exceptional in

¹³⁵ Jim O'Brien, "'El Clasico' and the Demise of Tradition in Spanish Club Football: Perspectives on Shifting Patterns of Cultural Identity," *ibid.* 14, no. 3 (2013). p. 316

¹³⁶ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 32

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 33

that up until 1928– the year of the founding of *La Liga*¹³⁸– it served as Spain’s exclusive national football championship.

By 1924, there were a staggering fourteen active regional football federations in Spain. Football had thus become “an expression of what we know today as autonomous identities” in the modernizing Spanish nation.¹³⁹ McFarland points to the fact that there were two divisions of clubs in Catalunya alone, “including FC Barcelona, Español, Jupiter, Sans, Badalona, Athletic de Sabadell, Sabadell FC, Club Gimnàstica de Tarragona, Català l’Avenç, Gimnàstica A.E.P., Palamós, Catalònia, Europa Esportiu, Manresa, Mataró, Vilassar, Catalunya, Sarrià, T.B.H., and Esparta and many more teams in lesser divisions”.¹⁴⁰ By 1926, the numbers were even more astonishing: Spanish football was comprised of 14,000 players, 705 teams, and fifteen regional federations.¹⁴¹

Originally conceived as a superstructure that would help to coordinate the separate and diverse regional federations that it was composed of, La Liga was established as a national league that would work independently of each regional championship.¹⁴² It is important to highlight the stability of this national structure, which has more or less maintained its position of preeminence since its very inception. The original organization (and subsequent attempts at reorganization) of the national league is also significant; debates between the Federación Española de Fútbol, regional federations, and individual clubs during the Second Republic– amidst

¹³⁸ “*La Liga*” is the national Spanish football league.

¹³⁹ Goig, "Identity, Nation-State and Football in Spain. The Evolution of Nationalist Feelings in Spanish Football." p. 56

¹⁴⁰ McFarland, "Ricardo Zamora: The First Spanish Football Idol." p. 8

¹⁴¹ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 79

¹⁴² *Ibid.* p. 86

the heightened political affiliations and polarizations of the times— were heated and intense, and the question of the orientation of the league was of the utmost importance for regions like Catalunya and Las Vascongadas (a topic to be discussed in Chapter Two).

The regional nature of Spanish football helps to illuminate the push and pull between central and centrifugal forces taking place in the world of football in the opening decades of the twentieth century. FC Barcelona, with its intense affiliation with Catalanism and peripheral autonomy, equated Madrid CF with the city of Madrid, and with the centralizing efforts they saw as attempting to impede them of their self-rule and sovereignty from the very beginning. And so were planted “the seeds of political rivalry between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid and the perceptions of favouritism towards Real Madrid on the part of many Catalans”.¹⁴³

Such perceptions of favoritism actually predate the Spanish Civil War, with the 1916 Copa de España semifinal between Madrid CF and FC Barcelona serving as a perfect example to this respect. In this 1916 Clásico, FC Barcelona abandoned the pitch in protest of what they felt to be biased officiating in a 4-2 loss to Madrid.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 339

¹⁴⁴ Madrid-based sports journalist (and current director of sports newspaper *AS*) Alfredo Relaño includes a number of different narrations of this match in his text, *Nacidos para incordiar: un siglo de agravios entre el Madrid y el Barça*. For example, he includes a section of Alberto Maluquer's *Historia del Club de Fútbol Barcelona* in which he composes the following short but significant narration: “*Parece ser que en este encuentro se vieron cosas muy raras que motivaron la desconfianza de los socios y jugadores hacia determinados componentes del equipo. El día 15 se jugó el partido definitivo, que no terminó, por retirarse el Barcelona cuando los madrileños tenían 4 tantos en su favor y 2 los catalanes. Santiago Massana, que actuaba de capitán del once, ordenó la retirada de este antes de terminar el tiempo reglamentario, alegando manifiesta parcialidad del árbitro,*

Shobe notes that in most sports there are accusations of referee favoritism of this nature, “yet seldom are those instances of bias interpreted so explicitly along political lines as they have been time and time again in the case of FC Barcelona”.¹⁴⁵ The April-May edition of the Madrid-based *Gran Vida* is filled with illusions and references to the “*parcialidad del árbitro*”, or bias of the referee during a previous match, who allowed Barça to score from offside and win “*no ganada en buena lid, pero victoria al fin*”.¹⁴⁶ The extent of this emphasis on refereeing is truly shocking, even for the modern football fan; the paper very bluntly and openly questions how the Catalans could believe that *el Señor Berraondo* was a *madridista* rather than simply an impartial referee.

An interesting element to the Catalan-based coverage of the event is that *Mundo Deportivo* reports on 17 April 1916 that the madrileño public had received FC Barcelona with warm applause, demonstrating “*que aquí hay sensatez y buena*

Berraondo”. He also includes a fragment from Joan Artells’s text, *Barça, Barça, Barça*, which states that “*al cuarto partido y en la prórroga— el tiempo reglamentario había terminado 2-2—, el Madrid consigue la victoria, y el Barcelona, alegando parcialidad del árbitro, se retira antes del tiempo reglamentario del partido. El regreso de los jugadores es triste, pero el recibimiento es cordial y son muchos los aficionados que los vitorean como si fuesen vencedores*”. Finally, Relaño incorporates the account of the match given in Real Madrid’s official *Libro de Oro*, which states the following: “*Y aquí viene lo insólito. Massana, el defensa, capitán del equipo catalán, ordena la retirada de este porque... Sotero estaba en posición de fuera de juego, lo que era incierto. No hubo medio de convencer a los jugadores y delegados barceloneses, y Berraondo dio por finalizado el partido*”. Alfredo Relaño, *Nacidos Para Incordiar : Un Siglo De Agravios Entre El Madrid Y El Barça*(Madrid: Ediciones Martínez Roca, 2012). pp. 35-37. For further reference, see: Alberto Maluquer Maluquer, *Historia Del Club De Futbol, Barcelona*(Barcelona: M. Arimany, 1949).; Joan J. Artells, *Barça, Barça, Barça; F. C. Barcelona, Esport I Ciutadania*(Barcelona: Laia, 1972).; *Libro De Oro Del Real Madrid C. De F. : 1902-1952*, (Madrid: Ares, 1952).

¹⁴⁵ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Football: Catalonia, Catalanisme and Football Club Barcelona, 1899-1975." p. 339

¹⁴⁶ *Gran Vida*, April-May 1916

educación, cosa puesta en duda por algún exaltado regionalista”, which is to say that in Madrid the people were wise and well-educated, something doubted by the exalted Catalan regionalist.¹⁴⁷ Despite taking note of offside goals scored by Madrid in their controversial 4-2 victory over the *azulgranas*, the paper exalts the madrileño public as “*tan buenos como los catalanes*”, and attempts to rectify the Barça protest by stating that they have “*fe absoluta en Berraondo, por considerarlo perfecto caballero y entendísimo en la materia*”.¹⁴⁸ The journalistic coverage of the event could be analyzed and developed quite extensively, but the aim at this moment is to emphasize the antithetical political identifications that began to emerge as early as the 1910s and 20s, well before the heightened polarization and politicization that would become commonplace during the Spanish Second Republic and Civil War periods.

¹⁴⁷ *Mundo Deportivo* 17/4/1916

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2. The Spanish Second Republic: Polarization and heightened political affiliations in Spanish football

The fall of the Miguel Primo de Rivera dictatorship and the subsequent *dictablanda* of General Dámaso Berenguer in 1930 “effectively caused a sudden process of politicization and a surge in republicanism” in Spain.¹⁴⁹ This excitement in republican fervor in turn led to the creation of an exhaustive republican coalition, which came into existence on 17 August 1930 in San Sebastián, Las Vascongadas. At this meeting on 17 August, led by Niceto Alcalá-Zamora and Miguel Maura and later referred to as the *Pacto de San Sebastián*, representatives from all waves of Spanish republicanism— despite “noticeable differences in ideology and principles”— came together to form a revolutionary committee dedicated to channeling Catalan demands for autonomy, constructing an uprising against the Monarchy and eventually proclaiming a Republic.¹⁵⁰

As described by Helen Graham in her *The Spanish Republic at War 1936-1939*, “both agrarian and industrial elites held fast to the naïve belief that there could be a return in some shape or form to the safely ‘traditional’— i.e. demobilized and exclusivist— order of the Restoration monarchy” in light of the faltering Berenguer *dictablanda*.¹⁵¹ But, “existing levels of popular mobilization” made returning to a monarchical system of government unfeasible, and the municipal elections held on 12 April 1931 displayed the strength of anti-monarchist sentiment in the country— and

¹⁴⁹ Julián Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*(Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). p. 12

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*(Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). p. 19

particularly in urban areas– at this time.¹⁵² The elections– to the surprise of the monarchists who felt “confident of their ability to manipulate the mechanism of government”– led to republican victories in forty-one of Spain’s fifty provincial capitals.¹⁵³ Graham notes that “the scenes of jubilant Republican crowds in April 1931 appeared to suggest the realization of the historic dream of Spanish republicanism– the unity of the awakened ‘people’ (pueblo) carrying all before it”.¹⁵⁴ These victories resulted in the declaration of the Second Republic and the emergence of a center-left republican coalition (allied with the Spanish Socialist Party, or PSOE) upon King Alfonso XIII fleeing the country on 14 April 1931.

Within seven months of the fall of the monarchy, the Spanish government was transformed into a parliamentary constitutional Republic, with Niceto Alcalá-Zamora as President and Manuel Azaña as Prime Minister. The new Spanish Constitution of 1931, proclaimed on 9 December, described the country as ““a democratic Republic of workers of all types, structured around freedom and justice. All its authority comes from the people. The Republic constitutes an integrated State, compatible with the autonomy of its Municipalities and Regions””.¹⁵⁵ As Julián Casanova notes, this landmark document designates the introduction of the term ‘integral State’, which is extremely important in relation to the Catalan jurisdictional dispute to be discussed as part of an introduction to Azaña’s contentious, highly ideologically-motivated and alienating legislation.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 18

¹⁵⁴ Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 21

¹⁵⁵ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 32

The essence of the center-left coalition was to “modernize Spain economically, to initiate democratizing reforms and to Europeanize the country socially and culturally”, and it was Azaña’s hope that these objectives be obtained by a series of legislative measures covering agrarian, labor and social reforms.¹⁵⁶ Azaña’s legislature included land reform (in order for smallholding peasants to acquire land and form part of the Republic’s support base) and military reform aimed at reducing the officer corps and bringing the institution under civilian constitutional authority. But, this legislation was implemented amidst a worldwide economic crisis, and Graham argues that “Republican commitment to laissez-faire economics in conditions of depression made it impossible for the republican-socialist coalition to implement the kind of welfarist social and economic reform that could have integrated urban and rural labor in the Republic”, thus leading poor and unskilled laborers towards more radical movements.¹⁵⁷

Azaña’s highly controversial legislation was also intensely anti-clerical, which brought the Republic into direct conflict with another powerful bureaucratic institution that exercised supreme influence over Spanish society: the Catholic Church. Secularizing laws and decrees were severe, and “Republicans proved entirely unable to distinguish between state secularization measures– such as separation of Church and state, the provision of civil alternatives to Catholic marriage and burial, or the provision of non-religious state education– and measures which infringed the democratic rights and sense of identity of ordinary Catholics”.¹⁵⁸ These reforms

¹⁵⁶ Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 23

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 77

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 29

facilitated unity on the political right, which in conjunction with internal tensions on the left would prove to be disastrous for the Alcalá-Zamora–Azaña government.

The final jurisdictional dispute to note before embarking on an analysis of the reorientation of Spanish football leagues and the ensuing popularity, polarization and politicization of Madrid CF and FC Barcelona is the debate that took place regarding Catalunya, the restoration of the Generalitat and the Catalan Autonomy Statute. “In spite of the fact that 1930s Catalanism was clearly on the left and substantively in agreement with the qualitative nature of republican reform, religious, social and agrarian,” disputes developed between Catalan nationalists and the central, Madrid-based Republican government.¹⁵⁹ Catalan nationalists had fully supported and endorsed the Pacto de San Sebastián, and when a republican-left coalition was formed in Catalunya in the spring of 1931 it appeared to constitute “the ideal interlocutor for the liberal reformers of Madrid”.¹⁶⁰ But, relations between the republican-socialist central government and the Esquerra were mired by Catalan Autonomy Statute terms that never materialized in the eyes of the latter.

The Statute of Núria was approved by a vote of 314 to 24 on 9 September 1932. It proclaimed Catalunya to be an “‘autonomous region within the Spanish state’, gave the Catalan government major powers with regard to public order, social services, the economy and culture, and established Catalan and Castilian Spanish as joint official languages within its territory”.¹⁶¹ But despite agreeing to such generous terms on paper, and “even though the Madrid republicans recognized the Catalans’

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 33

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 42

claims as licit in principle, in the end their ingrained centralism was stronger”, particularly in the opinion of the Catalan nationalists.¹⁶² This belief, along with the Catalan government’s general dissatisfaction with Madrid, was exacerbated by the worldwide economic crisis of the time, which served to further augment center-periphery tensions. On a whole, it appeared as though the government of the Second Republic was operating under almost impossible conditions, and in the same way that “the existence of strong regional nationalisms problematized the emergence of an overarching republican nationalism after 1931”, the reorientation of the league and relations between Madrid CF and FC Barcelona faced analogous contention and polarization.

.....

As was stated in the previous chapter, the organization of Spanish football was principally regional in nature throughout the first third of the twentieth century. Football “became an expression of what we know today as autonomous identities”.¹⁶³ It was not until 1927-28 that Spanish football gained a truly national character. With the onset of professionalization and standardization, the necessity for reform of league structures presented itself without hopes of continuity. Bahamonde notes that significant increases in club expenses across the peninsula necessitated like increases in official matches played, and although the amplification of regional championships was theoretically possible, in many cases (especially that of the Federación Central

¹⁶² Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 33

¹⁶³ Goig, "Identity, Nation-State and Football in Spain. The Evolution of Nationalist Feelings in Spanish Football." p. 56

and Madrid CF), second division teams were not of a high enough quality or caliber to transform this dream into a reality.¹⁶⁴

The years 1927 and 1928 were decisive for the future of Spanish football, and it was at this time that the organizational structure of the national football league, La Liga, was solidified and secured to such an extent that it has remained largely stable to this day. As mentioned earlier, originally conceived as a superstructure that would help to coordinate the different regional federations that it was composed of, La Liga was established as a national league that would work independently of each regional championship.¹⁶⁵ The debates that took place regarding the constitution of this national league were “arduous and raised endless controversy”, and the issue became so regionally and thematically charged that it effectively served as “*propaganda a fútbol espectáculo*”.¹⁶⁶ The contention was argued primarily between three groups—the Federación Española de Fútbol, powerful regional federations, and individual football clubs— and FC Barcelona in particular faced the unique problem of making the league compatible with its already thriving Catalan regional championship. Regardless of Catalan apprehensions, the national league was put into place on 10 February 1929, symbolizing a transition in Spanish football towards a heightened sense of modernization and professionalization.

Between the years of 1931 and 1936, shortly following the inauguration of La Liga, the assemblies of the Federación Española de Fútbol continued to debate the possibility of league reorientation and the future of Spain’s regional championships. It

¹⁶⁴ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 85

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 86

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

was at this time— after a couple of years of experimentation with the national league— that many pondered the possibility of league reorganization in favor of smaller interregional championships; certain clubs were “distrustful of the feasibility of the League Championship and demanded its re-organization into regional championships”.¹⁶⁷ Historically a suspicious defender of the Catalan regional competition— especially in opposition to centralizing forces and Madrid CF— FC Barcelona maintained its favorable opinion with regards to a powerful regional competition that would hypothetically include teams from Valencia, Baleares and Rosellón, or the “*paissos Catalans*”.¹⁶⁸ Bahamonde significantly raises the point that this state of opinion “reflects the political transformations of Catalan nationalism in the early days of the Republic”.¹⁶⁹

On the opposite side of this regionally charged debate, Madrid CF was “one of the most passionate defenders of a National League”.¹⁷⁰ Primarily due to the city’s central geographic location and the structure of the Spanish rail transportation networks— along with previously mentioned issues regarding Madrid CF’s own central regional competition— the equipo madrileño was very much in favor of the continuation of La Liga.¹⁷¹ Supporting these desires was the fact that despite seeing limited success in its first year, “a second and third division were added [to La Liga]

¹⁶⁷ Goig, "Identity, Nation-State and Football in Spain. The Evolution of Nationalist Feelings in Spanish Football." p. 58

¹⁶⁸ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. pp. 138-139

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Goig, "Identity, Nation-State and Football in Spain. The Evolution of Nationalist Feelings in Spanish Football." p. 58

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

within three years and with them the sport of football became entrenched in Spain”.¹⁷² Thus, Madrid’s centrally oriented inclinations were reinforced by the fact that the national league had found great success and amplification within its first few years of existence.

FC Barcelona, along with various other teams from Catalunya and Las Vascongadas, continued to feel in contrast that it was the victim of repressive and centralizing government forces at this time. The azulgranas increasingly identified the madrileños with government centralism while adamantly demanding for the continuation of the *campeonatos regionales*.¹⁷³ This center-periphery debate was a fixed and central component in the world of Spanish football during the early 1930s, and persisted until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936. It represented “an ongoing confrontation between centralizing and centrifugal tendencies”, the latter of whom “aspired to achieve a higher level of autonomy for regional federations”.¹⁷⁴

.....

Debates regarding league reorientation were accompanied by Madrid CF’s heightened popularity and subsequent association with the city of Madrid, as well as by an intensification of FC Barcelona’s identification with Catalanism, both of which served to increase polarization between the two clubs. The city-club identification established in Barcelona in the opening decades of the twentieth century was not reproduced in a similar fashion in Madrid until 1934, when the club genuinely started

¹⁷² McFarland, "Ricardo Zamora: The First Spanish Football Idol." p. 11

¹⁷³ Bález José María and Tudela Pérez de, "El Real Madrid Y El Origen Del Fútbol Como Espectáculo De Masas, 1923-1936," *Historia y Comunicación Social* 17 (2012). p. 7

¹⁷⁴ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 46

to gain regional and eventually political relevance (primarily) through its sporting successes.¹⁷⁵ The 1932-33 season marked Madrid CF's second consecutive league title and a trip to the final of the Copa de España, and these and other hugely important results and accomplishments augmented the number of madridistas in the city. The final of the Copa was played in Montjuic against Athletic Bilbao, and over two thousand fans traveled all the way from Madrid, using any and all means necessary to have the opportunity to watch their team compete.¹⁷⁶ Despite the support of their fans, Madrid CF lost the final 1-2, but the moment was indicative of a great change in the club's identity and in its association with the city: one of every ten people living in the urban city area had already attended a game at the Estadio Chamartín.¹⁷⁷ The 1933-34 season only served to further accentuate this change, as thousands of fans witnessed Madrid's victory over Valencia in the final of the Copa de España on 6 May 1934.¹⁷⁸

Accompanying sporting successes of this nature was the fact that Madrid CF constituted the first multi-sport club in Madrid, which further added to the integration and identification that took place between club and city. But what is particularly interesting and significant in relation to Madrid CF's identification with the city of Madrid is that the image evoked by the club and ensuing city-club identifications took shape in regions outside of the capital long before they acquired similar significance in Madrid. For the modernizing industrial regions of Catalunya and Las Vascongadas,

¹⁷⁵ José María and Pérez de, "El Real Madrid Y El Origen Del Fútbol Como Espectáculo De Masas, 1923-1936." p. 8

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Madrid became what Bahamonde describes as “the paradigm of the parasitic city”, absorbing other regions’ resources in unequal exchanges (undesired political services in exchange for wealth), and Madrid CF took on similarly negative connotations as a result of these sentiments.¹⁷⁹

This information enforces the idea that the overarching narrative of FC Barcelona’s persecution over history has almost always been based on the Catalan club’s relation to the team of the center, and further demonstrates that the dialectic of sporting rivalry— in which one side’s triumph is dependent upon its opposition’s failure— is not necessarily produced at the same time for opposing regions or teams. For Barça, the formative process of creating this dialectic of sporting rivalry began much earlier than it did for Madrid CF. The Catalans believed that “only the centralist plot explained the existence of such an artificial city”.¹⁸⁰ They felt that the equipo madrileño had no “*alma propia*”, or soul of its own, and believed that it was as artificial as the city it represented (and eventually came to identify with).¹⁸¹ From the perspective of industrially prosperous autonomous regions looking towards the center, Madrid CF’s sporting successes transformed the club into “*el equipo del millón*”, the club of financial capitalism, power and government support.¹⁸² Madrid CF became the prototype enemy in an increasingly polarized and politicized narrative of football opposition.

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¹⁷⁹ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. pp. 154-155

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 155

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

While Madrid CF was solidifying its city-club identification, gaining political relevance and effectively being converted into the prototype enemy for regions desirous of self-government and regional autonomy, FC Barcelona was rooting itself even deeper into fiercely debated political issues. Just a few years earlier, in 1931 at the start of the Second Republic, Barça expressed its public support for the Catalan Autonomy Statute campaign described in detail earlier in this chapter.¹⁸³ With the approval of the statute in 1932, Catalunya regained many of its previously lost rights and institutions, both political and cultural in nature. The success of the Autonomy Statue (or lack thereof, as mentioned in relation to the opinion of the left-wing Catalan nationalist political party Esquerra) and all that had been regained by the region because of it were components of what would prove to be a very short-lived dream for the Catalans, for General Francisco Franco's rise to power would lead to their suffering various forms of severe suppression and censorship. But, the club's public support demonstrates a heightened sense of political identity and responsibility at a time in which the country of Spain was undergoing great change and eventually terrible hardship.

Burns notes that "politics and football during this period mirrored each other in terms of division and instability so that neither Catalonia nor Barça really gained much".¹⁸⁴ While Madrid was gaining support and popularity within the capital in the early 1930s, Catalans were getting caught up in an increasingly polarized political climate that "daily grew more complex and frenzied, as the left wing won one

¹⁸³ Shobe, "Place, Identity and Futbol Club Barcelona: A Critical Geography of Sport." p. 124

¹⁸⁴ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 99

election and then another, deepening divisions with conservative nationalists and moderate Republicans who feared the country was lurching inexorably towards revolution of one kind or another”.¹⁸⁵ This political situation coincided with a drop in socio numbers for FC Barcelona, as the people of Catalunya found themselves too caught up in political infighting to take on active roles as football supporters. The Esquerra claimed to be “the true voice of Catalonia” as the largest party in Catalan parliament at the time, but even Barça’s own executive board was split between those who considered themselves to be moderate or conservative Catalan nationalists in opposition to the political leanings of club president Josep Sunyol– himself a left-wing Catalan (to be analyzed in depth in the following section)–and those on the left of the political spectrum.¹⁸⁶

Burns further notes that “the battle between the left and right for the soul of Barça continued throughout the early 1930s, against the background of deepening political agitation throughout Spain”.¹⁸⁷ Political clashes of this nature took place both within club organizations and around the country as a whole, and were crucial in shaping the Madrid CF – FC Barcelona narrative that was continuing to emerge, grow and become more politicized and polarized at this time. As impossible as the conditions under which the Alcalá-Zamora–Azaña government attempted to implement reforms appeared to be, Spanish football clubs faced their fair share of difficulties as well. It seems as though no aspect of Spanish life could remain unaffected by political polarization and related issues, and football was certainly no

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 100

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

exception to this trend; political matters were vital in relation to developments taking place in the world of football during the Second Republic, and they began to play extremely complex and influential roles in the organizations of both Madrid CF and FC Barcelona. This was so much the case that both clubs even had great political powers as presidents during the 1930s, each of whom played a hugely important part for his respective team.

.....

The historiographies of both Madrid CF and FC Barcelona have been written and rewritten over time in such a way that the roles of certain influential individuals have either been downplayed or lauded as heroic for the benefit of the overarching narrative of opposition shared between the two. The positions that these powerful individuals have taken up within official versions of their respective club narratives are consequential in that they serve not only to show how these histories have been shaped over time, but also to confuse the picture of Madrid as the team of Franco and authoritarian centralism in opposition to Barça on the left. In addition, they demonstrate the extreme levels of polarization and politicization that the Spanish sporting world experienced at this time amidst heightened hostilities during the Second Republic and subsequent civil strife.

Starting during the Second Republic and entering into the opening stages of the Civil War, both Madrid CF and FC Barcelona were led by distinguished political personalities as their club presidents, each of whom faced tremendous hardship and terrible suffering. Most important of these figures were Rafael Sánchez Guerra and Josep Sunyol, the former at the head of Madrid and the latter the leader of Barcelona.

Both were recognized at the time for their activities outside of Spanish sport, and analyzing their leadership roles within the two clubs and their political positions within the Spanish government will assist me in my efforts to create a more complex and convoluted narrative of this celebrated football rivalry.

Born in Madrid on 28 October 1897, Rafael Sánchez Guerra was a prominent republican figure and secretary general to Republic President Niceto Alcalá-Zamora. Despite playing a very influential role in the evolution of Madrid CF over the course of the 1930s, the protagonist's impact has been largely overlooked in official club histories. The son of well-known monarchist José Sánchez Guerra, Sánchez Guerra studied at Pilar's school and played for Madrid's youth squads over the years. He was an exceptionally complex and multifaceted individual— a lawyer, practicing Catholic, military man with Franco in Morocco and columnist for the monarchist conservative newspaper *ABC*— and his political leanings were equally difficult to discern. His originally conservative views underwent a massive transformation upon returning from war at the age of twenty-six, at which point he became a steadfast supporter of the republican cause. Sánchez Guerra founded the Republican Liberal Right, and proceeded to dedicate his life (and his articles in the *ABC* and other publications) to the Republic. In personal accounts, he describes himself as “firmly placed at the heart of both ends [of the political spectrum]” in a sort of “syncretic ideology”.¹⁸⁸ Sánchez Guerra's autobiographical work, *Mis prisiones*, published in 1946, offers great insight into his own ruminations and reflections on his actions and reactions during the 1930s and 40s: despite defining himself as centrist, he writes of feeling everyday closer to

¹⁸⁸ Rafael Sánchez Guerra, *Mis Prisiones*(Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1946). p. 30

“*los humildes... los oprimidos... los que sufren... los que tienen hambre y sed de justicia*” and farther from right-wing extremists.¹⁸⁹ Unlike his father, Sánchez Guerra was a democrat and a liberal with an unwavering dedication to fostering republicanism in Spain.

Sánchez Guerra was also the man pictured proudly displaying the Republican flag from the balcony of the Ayuntamiento de Madrid on 14 April 1931, just two days after the municipal elections that eventually led to the proclamation of the Second Republic. Zamora’s right-hand man, he was on the “victorious Republican-Socialist slate at the municipal elections in 1931 that forced Alfonso XIII into exile and ushered in the Republic”, and Sid Lowe notes that “like Sunyol, he [Sánchez Guerra] received the most votes”.¹⁹⁰ Undersecretary of the provisional government, he went on to become secretary general to Zamora and took charge of the Republic’s military affairs as well.

In 1933– after already having secured a position of preeminence within Zamora’s formally established republican government– Sánchez Guerra first attempted to be elected president of Madrid CF with the support of the club’s republican socios. With the more conservative elements of *madridismo* in forceful opposition to his candidacy, Luis Usera Bugallal was reelected to a second term. But, a second attempt at election in 1935 reversed his luck, and with 442 votes Sánchez Guerra was proclaimed club president, a position he would hold until 4 August 1936. Other members of his *junta directiva*, or board of directors, included Valero Ribera Ridaura and Gonzalo Aguirre Martos– both assassinated during the war– Luis

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 39

Gerlach and Laureano Ortiz de Zárate.¹⁹¹ As the madridista president, Sánchez Guerra had the incredible fortune (after the signings of Lecue, Kellemen and Alberty, and before the outbreak of war) of witnessing Madrid's 2-1 victory over Barcelona at La Mestalla in the Copa de España on 21 June 1936, a moment that has forever been immortalized in the hearts and minds of fans from both clubs.

In his role as secretary general, Sánchez Guerra lived through some even more interesting, memorable and vitally important moments in the history of the Republic as a political figure. Most notably, he was visited in the *Presidencia del Gobierno* before the 1936 Copa de España victory over Barça by General Francisco Franco, who attempted to assure him that “he had no intention of rising against the democratic regime”.¹⁹² In *Mis Prisiones*, Sánchez Guerra writes of Franco presenting himself in full infantry uniform in his office one morning in 1935. Having met the general fourteen years earlier— in 1921, when Franco held the position of Legion Commander and Sánchez Guerra Lieutenant of the *Fuerzas Regulares Indígenas*— the two greeted each other cordially and began to chat. Sánchez Guerra notes that at a certain point in the conversation Franco appeared more hesitant, contemplating his words with great nervousness while playing around with the uniform cap he grasped firmly in his

¹⁹¹ Julián García Candau, "El Deporte En La Guerra Civil," *El cultural*, 12/06/2007 2007.

¹⁹² Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 39. Multiple sources have mentioned this occurrence taking place, but it is worth noting that Stanley Payne includes the following statement in his new Franco biography: “Portela Vallardes later wrote that he was sufficiently alarmed by these rumors that he sent the director general of security, Spain’s national police chief, to seek assurances from Franco, who guaranteed that he would not be involved in any plot, pledging his ‘word of honor’ so long as there was no ‘danger of Communism in Spain’ and stressing that he was confident the present government would maintain Spain’s security”. Stanley G. Payne and Jesús Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*(Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2014). p. 101

clutches. But before long, the general continued talking: “...*el general Franco es un militar disciplinado, que acató en su día el régimen constituido, que es un hombre leal y que no ha pensado en sublevarse nunca*”.¹⁹³ General Franco is a disciplined man. He is a loyal man. And he has never once thought of rising against the legally constituted Republican regime. Despite writing his account of this meeting ten years after the fact, Sánchez Guerra includes a footnote at the bottom of the page that confidently and forcefully assures his readers of his verbatim memory of this statement ever since its uttering.

As secretary general, Sánchez Guerra also received word of the vote by the Cortes to depose of Niceto Alcalá-Zamora from his position as President of the Republic, among other important occurrences.¹⁹⁴ Being such a prominent political figure, his role and involvement in the direct management of Madrid CF during the latter stages of the Second Republic and the Civil War was unsubstantial, and non-official presidents Juan José Vallejo and Antonio Ortega Gutiérrez (the latter of whom will be discussed in the section on the Civil War) led the club in his place. But, he did help in the democratization of the club and in various other changes that will be analyzed in the following chapter.

At the onset of the Civil War, Sánchez Guerra made the difficult decision to stay in Madrid, where he became secretary to Colonel Segismundo Casado in charge of the Defense Council of the Republican Army of the Center, a position he would hold for two years. When Casado overthrew Juan Negrín in the spring of 1939 and began negotiations to surrender to the rebel forces, it was Sánchez Guerra who

¹⁹³ Sánchez Guerra, *Mis Prisiones*. p. 40

¹⁹⁴ Candau, "El Deporte En La Guerra Civil."

approached the *Generalísimo* (whose regime had actually been formally recognized by FIFA in 1938).¹⁹⁵ The general refused his truce offer. After the rebel victory, Sánchez Guerra was arrested and handed life imprisonment during the *Causa General*, or General Trial, of the Franco regime. In 1944, he was conditionally released, re-arrested, and eventually escaped to France in the summer of 1946, where he became a minister in the Republican government in exile. With all of this in mind, it becomes clear that Madrid CF's last democratically elected president was actually a "Republican denounced as a 'red' and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Franco regime".¹⁹⁶ Despite his lack of presence in the everyday management of Madrid CF, Sánchez Guerra was nonetheless the figurehead of the club and remained firm in his opposition to Franco throughout the war.

.....

To switch over to the opposition, one must speak primarily of Josep Sunyol i Garriga, perhaps the most important figure in the entire history of FC Barcelona. Born on 21 July 1898 in Barcelona, Sunyol was also a complex man of many talents—a Catalan lawyer, journalist and founder of the left-wing newspaper *La Rambla*, delegate in the Cortes of 1931 and 1933, and prominent member of the political groups Acció Catalana and Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya. Burns writes that Sunyol's involvement in politics began with his introduction as a member of FC Barcelona in 1925, "in the midst of a sustained campaign against Catalanism" in Spain; "to be twenty-seven and choose to join the club in these circumstances, as Sunyol did, was a youthful way of buying a ticket well into Catalan roots, as a mark

¹⁹⁵ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 40

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

of identification with the struggle against Madrid-inspired authoritarianism”.¹⁹⁷ Over the course of the 1920s Sunyol continued to progress within the club’s ranks, becoming a member of Barça’s governing board in 1928 at the age of thirty, while also maintaining his position as president of the Federation of Associated Catalan Football Clubs.

On 27 July 1935, Sunyol reached the pinnacle and was elected president of FC Barcelona. In his acceptance speech, he “declared that he would endeavor not to let politics get in the way of his work for the club”, but “for all his love of sport, Sunyol was primarily a politician and regarded Barça as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself”.¹⁹⁸ Re-elected to the Cortes in November of 1933 on a strongly anti-conservative Catalanist platform, Sunyol distanced himself from club matters in the years proceeding his election due in large part to his duties as a member of parliament. And despite the fact that he had always been an advocate for “his vision of a politico-sporting utopia”, the myriad of conflicting left-wing political factions and ideologies running rampant through the streets of Barcelona at this time hindered the realization of his dreams.¹⁹⁹ On 16 February 1936– during the elections that marked the victory of the Popular Front electoral coalition between some of these left-wing factions– Sunyol was elected to a third term in parliament as one of thirty-six Esquerra Republicana delegates. But, in a matter of months, the outbreak of war would lead to his tragic death.

¹⁹⁷ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 97

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 101

¹⁹⁹ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 118

By far the most important occurrence to note with respect to Josep Sunyol is his terrible assassination, which took place on 6 August 1936. “The assassination of FC Barcelona Club President Josep Sunyol on the outskirts of Madrid in August 1936 gave the club a martyr for the cause, to become an enduring symbol and legacy of identity, destiny, and oppression for future generations, a testimony to the barbarism at the core of Falangism, at the heart of Madridista”.²⁰⁰ The murder has truly become “one of the defining motifs of Catalanism” and a central point of focus in official histories of FC Barcelona.²⁰¹ Its circumstances are somewhat confusing, and people in Madrid have often been accused of covering it up. The *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*— the main newspapers in Madrid and Barcelona respectively— reported on 5 August 1936 that the Catalan deputy had arrived in Valencia with journalist Ventura Virgili in order to establish contact with the *junta* there before continuing on to Madrid.²⁰² On 11 August, six days later, the Catalan newspaper reported that the radio had given a notice asking for any information on Sunyol’s whereabouts, for he had gone missing after leaving for the Sierra de Guadarrama on his way to Madrid on 6 August in a new Ford vehicle, accompanied by a militia lieutenant and their chauffeur, “señor Quintanilla”.²⁰³ The newspaper lamented his disappearance in the days that followed, and finally, on 16 August, reported that his body— along with those of his companions— had been found at kilometer 50 on the highway of Segovia.²⁰⁴ In their details of the assassination, the Catalan newspaper described the manner in which

²⁰⁰ O'Brien, "'El Clasico' and the Demise of Tradition in Spanish Club Football: Perspectives on Shifting Patterns of Cultural Identity." pp. 320-321

²⁰¹ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 103

²⁰² *ABC* 05/08/1936; *La Vanguardia*, 05/08/1936

²⁰³ *La Vanguardia*, 11/08/1936

²⁰⁴ *La Vanguardia* 16/08/1936

Sunyor's car sped through an area under Loyalist control, passing militia outposts without hearing the warning shots fired by one of the men stationed there who attempted to alert them of the dangers of continuing their ascent up the mountain.²⁰⁵ Shortly afterwards, the men found themselves in rebel territory, where they were swiftly captured and executed.

What is particularly interesting about this strange and awful assassination is that on 28 October 1936, just a couple of months later, *La Vanguardia* reported that Sunyor had not been shot, and was instead being held as a prisoner in Burgos.²⁰⁶ The newspaper expressed its profound grief at the awful situation, saying that it had delayed writing his obituary in the hopes that his mysterious disappearance would someday be cleared up (while the highway area remained under rebel control, no one had had the opportunity to retrieve the bodies).²⁰⁷ Their initial reservations with respect to the news of his assassination were seemingly confirmed by news brought to them by their colleague, Julio Casas, who reported that although it may not be certain that Sunyor was alive, there was reason to believe that he had not been killed right then and there, and that he had instead been considered a “*buena presa*”, or a good catch, who the rebels had chosen to hold as a prisoner.²⁰⁸ But finally, in May of 1937, the *ABC* confirmed original stories of Josep Sunyor's assassination by rebel forces, adding in (most likely exaggerated) details like Sunyor hugging Virgili and screaming “¡*Viva la República!*” and “¡*Viva Cataluña libre!*”.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ *La Vanguardia*, 16/08/1936; *ABC*, 18/08/1936

²⁰⁶ *La Vanguardia*, 28/10/1936

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *ABC*, 15/05/1937

In order to honor the memory of the Catalan club president, the Sunyol Sporting Battalion was created in Madrid with the goal of fighting against Fascism.²¹⁰ Included in the battalion were Madrid CF's Felix Queseda, José Luis Espinosa and Simón Lecue, each of whom participated in a game played against Atlético de Madrid that same month, "the proceeds of which were handed to anti-fascist militias raised in the working-class neighborhood of Vallecas".²¹¹ Sunyol was being promoted as a symbol of republicanism and anti-fascism by madrileños, while the people of Catalunya themselves did very little to honor and remember their leader in the direct aftermath of his death. This interesting fact shows Madrid– and certain members of Madrid CF– as an active fighter and advocate for the republican cause, even going so far as to use its rival's leader as a symbol to honor and promote.

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On 21 June 1936, Real Madrid defeated Barcelona 2-1 at *Estadio de Mestalla* in Valencia in what would prove to be the final Clásico before the outbreak of war the following month. The madridistas eliminated Hércules by scores of 7-1 and 1-2 in the semifinal legs of the Copa de España (the last edition of the *Copa del Presidente de la República*– as it was called during the Second Republic) in order to reach the final against their bitter rivals, and the azulgranas took down Osasuna 7-1 at their home stadium of Les Corts before falling 4-2 in Pamplona, enough to see them advance as well.²¹² Eugenio and Lecue netted the two goals that saw Madrid leave the pitch

²¹⁰ *La Vanguardia*, 25/08/1936; *La Vanguardia*, 08/09/1936; *La Vanguardia* 28/10/1936

²¹¹ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 29

²¹² Carlos Fernández Santander, *El Fútbol Durante La Guerra Civil Y El Franquismo*(Madrid: Ed. San Martin, 1990). pp. 17-18

victorious, but the heroics of goalkeeper Ricardo Zamora– who completed an almost impossible diving save against Escolá in the closing seconds of the match to secure a trophy for the capital– are what have really been immortalized in the hearts and minds of fans of both teams ever since. Interestingly, and perhaps foreshadowing troubles to come, the *Anuario* of the Federación Española de Fútbol from 1950 includes this surprising commentary with respect to the game: “*por la tarde, los comunistas acudieron en masa al Estadio para descargar su odio revolucionario contra el Real Madrid, a quien estimaban símbolo de la tendencia combatida. Sobre Ricardo Zamora se centraron todos los ataques. Hasta una botella se le arrojó*”.²¹³ Madrid was once again being portrayed as the prototype enemy aligned with the opposition in the eyes of communists and others who were inclined to direct their revolutionary loathing towards the equipo madrileño on the football pitch. But, the events that took place during the Civil War will reveal that in reality this was certainly not the case.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 18

Chapter 3. The Spanish Civil War: Democratization, self-confiscation, and Madrid CF's exclusion from the *Campeonato de Catalunya*

On 17 July 1936 General Francisco Franco proclaimed “*Españoles: ¡Viva España! ¡Viva el honrado pueblo Español!*”, thus initiating the brutal Spanish Civil War and the eventual establishment of his thirty-six-year dictatorship.²¹⁴ For three long years— until the Nationalist faction prevailed on 1 April 1939— Spain was rife with unimaginable atrocities and violence, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 500,000 people and the subsequent imposition of Franco’s heavy authoritarian hand by way of often incredibly skillful political maneuverings in the Iberian country. Contrary to popular belief, the July 1936 coup d’état that launched the civil conflict was not the army en masse rising up against the republican government, but rather the work of four men, each in command of an extremely important military unit: Miguel Cabanellas, Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, Manuel Goded Llopis and Francisco Franco.²¹⁵ Under their direction, corps of field officers took on the most active roles in the insurrection, with over half of the 15,301 officers in all branches in strong support

²¹⁴ Jaime Álvarez Sánchez, "Manifiesto Del General Franco Al Iniciarse El Movimiento Militar," <http://ficus.pntic.mec.es/jals0026/documentos/ejcotex.pdf>.

²¹⁵ Payne notes that Franco was actually “the last major commander to join the conspiracy, but, once he did, he acted with complete resolution and self-confidence. His declaration of martial law in Las Palmas at dawn on July 18 proclaimed that the Republican constitution had suffered a ‘total eclipse,’ as demonstrated by the massive abuses occurring, including ‘attacks on provincial government and electoral records to falsify votes,’ and that this devolution justified military intervention to restore order and legality”. He subsequently notes that Franco “acted as a major leader of the new ‘National movement’” from the very beginning of his involvement. Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. pp. 129-30

of the rebellion.²¹⁶ Thus, “it was above all a rebellion of middle- and junior-rank officers”.²¹⁷

The coup d'état and the civil strife that ensued in its aftermath were catastrophic for the Second Republic. The rebellion effectively “deprived the liberal republican government of the coercive force it needed to exercise centralised control of resistance measures”, and “without unified, coherent security forces– which in the 1930s remained the defining institution of the central state in Spain– the government’s authority collapsed”.²¹⁸ Searching for a way to combat this dearth of cohesive security units, republican figures– under the weak leadership of Prime Minister Santiago Casares Quiroga– “were horrified by the thought that in order to defend liberal Republican legality they might have to arm the very proletarian cadres whose political agenda they feared and whose mobilisation they had, consequently, resisted since February 1936”.²¹⁹ For this reason, and in an effort to quell revolutionary fervor, Casares refused to arm workers’ organizations.²²⁰ But, José Giral– Casares’s successor and Prime Minister as of 19 July 1936– overturned his decision and decided to arm the most politically committed elements of these

²¹⁶ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 157

²¹⁷ Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. p. 128

²¹⁸ Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 79

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Payne notes that Casares Quiroga had been aware of conspiracy among some sectors of the army, “but, like President Azaña, he was playing a complicated double game, for the left was internally divided. Should either the anarchists or the *caballerista* Socialists rebel against the government, the army would be needed to put them down, which helps to explain the government’s torturous and indecisive policy”. Furthermore, Payne and a number of other historians believe that the Second Republic was in fact subverted from within by leftist forces, and that these forces– including Largo Caballero’s PSOE– may well have wanted to provoke a military uprising so as to crush it powerfully and move toward some sort of revolutionary change. Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. p. 124.

organizations upon his arrival to an official seat of power. Not only this, Giral also succeeded (despite the fact that his makeshift government lasted for less than two months) in initiating the use of the Banco de España's gold reserves to finance republican war efforts.²²¹

July, August and September of 1936 proved to be the bloodiest months of the three-year conflict. By the end of July, rebel forces had taken control of the majority of northern and northwest Spain, including Galicia, León, Old Castilla, Oviedo, Álava, Navarre, the Canary and Balearic Isles (excluding Menorca), and large areas of Andalucía and Extremadura. Their acquisitions in turn occasioned the inception of a brutal sequence of martial law, systematic torture and hot-blooded terror, and it is during this time that one can find the "highest number of killings in almost every region under rebel control".²²² Casanova reports that "between 50 and 70 percent of the total number of victims of this repression during the civil war and afterwards were concentrated in this short period of time", and the "call to violence", "extermination of the adversary" mindset that transpired as a result became an essential quality of all war efforts.²²³ When the coup transformed into a full-fledged civil conflict, the destruction of the enemy at any and all costs became priority number one for both warring factions.²²⁴

²²¹ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 174

²²² Ibid. p. 164

²²³ Ibid. pp. 164, 178. Additionally, new Spanish historians have moved towards much more nuanced interpretations of the origins of the war, including Fernando del Rey Reguillo, Manuel Álvarez Tardío, and Nick Rider, *The Spanish Second Republic Revisited: From Democratic Hopes to the Civil War (1931-1936)*(Brighton; Portland, Or: Sussex Academic Press, 2012).

²²⁴ It is important to emphasize the fact that brutal repression was taking place on both sides of the war from the very beginning. Payne writes that "from the first day,

Despite having taken control of the regions listed above, rebel forces were defeated in the majority of Spain's largest and most influential cities. Most importantly, Graham notes that "the immediate key to Republican survival" laid in the maintenance of control over Barcelona and Madrid, both of whom had succeeded in defeating the initial rebel onslaught.²²⁵ In fact, Payne states that the failure to take Madrid in the autumn of 1936 was Franco's "only significant failure in the Civil War".²²⁶ Barcelona and Madrid were specific in terms of their "sheer scale of proletarian organisation", and "the militia's resolve [in these cities] was reinforced by support from professional army officers loyal to the Republic and— most importantly of all— by the regular police forces (Assault Guards, Civil Guards, and (in Barcelona)

both sides carried out brutal repression of the opposition in their respective zones. The steady buildup of calls to revolutionary violence by the left, in progress for several years, and the determination of the insurgents to act similarly, led to massive political executions. Such atrocities were typical of all the revolutionary/counterrevolutionary civil wars of twentieth-century Europe, without the slightest exception, for such conflicts, much more than international wars, emphasized the dehumanization of an internal enemy, who was not merely to be defeated militarily but who had to be exterminated because it represented a kind of metaphysical evil. In the case of the revolutionary left, this would produce about fifty-five thousand executions, among which numbered nearly seven thousand clergy. The repression by the military was somewhat more extensive and, like almost everything else in the Nationalist zone, better organized". Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. pp. 132-33

²²⁵ Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 92

²²⁶ Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. p. 172; He goes on to note that "the defense of Madrid was the first, and virtually the only, triumph of the People's Army, and it meant that the Civil War would become a longer conflict of attrition". From his point of view, the Republic was successful due to five defining factors: "(1) the organization of the first units of the new army, which was superior to that of the militia; (2) the advantage of fighting on the defensive from partially fortified positions; (3) the arrival of significant amounts of Soviet arms, giving the defenders temporary superiority in firepower...; (4) determined leadership...; and (5) the limited size of Franco's forces and his initial reliance on frontal assaults". Ibid. p. 175

the Catalan government's own police, the Mozos de Escuadra)".²²⁷ Proletariat organizations in both cities were keenly aware of the fact that they had the most to lose in civil strife, and accordingly initiated successful combined resistance with these loyal security forces. Barcelona and Madrid experienced this process quite differently— with strikes and early stages of mobilization occurring under the leadership of the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT, the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist labor union confederation associated with the International Workers Association) in the former and the PSOE/ *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT, the trade union associated with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) in the latter— and it is therefore vital to examine both situations before embarking on a discussion of Madrid CF and FC Barcelona at this time.

In Barcelona, the nationalist uprising was met with swift failure, as CNT worker mobilization (with the support of the Assault and Civil Guards) thwarted any rebel hopes for a successful takeover. After gaining access to multiple arsenals, the CNT began picking off rebel columns one by one, and the subsequent storming of two major army barracks ensured a nationalist defeat in Barcelona. Graham notes that the Catalan republican left had truly “reaped the dividend for having vetted the police service after its electoral victory in February 1936 to ensure that only those loyal to the Generalitat remained in positions of power” at this time; even the Catalan municipal police forces were loyal to the Republic under the leadership of Colonel Frederic Escofet.²²⁸ But despite this loyalty, the CNT victory marked the “beginning of a long and intense struggle for political power between radical libertarians and the

²²⁷ Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 94

²²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 92

affluent urban and rural middle classes” in the most radical and industrialized region of Spain.²²⁹

Barcelona’s experience of the war was unique in that from the collapse of the central government and the distribution of arms there “emerged a wave of militant egalitarianism, millenniumism, a ‘spontaneous revolution’, which, in the view of many witnesses, would collectivise factories and land, with wages suppressed and with the establishment of the earthly paradise that the people had been dreaming of for so long”.²³⁰ George Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia* is often cited as the definitive literary work to this respect, having forever imprinted in the minds of its readers the image of Barcelona as the earthly paradise and home of the revolution during the Civil War (an image which has undoubtedly affected the footballing rivalry between Barça and Madrid as well). In order to make this revolutionary dream a reality, anarcho-sindicalist leaders and militants felt it necessary to rid the region of its so-called “social ill” by eliminating symbols of power and overthrowing the existing order, thus giving repression a distinctly class-based character in Barcelona.²³¹ Aside from eliminating the bourgeoisie and people in positions of administrative and political power, the “purifying fire” of CNT militias “hit the clergy with particular brutality”; religious images and artifacts were burned publicly, churches were used as CNT strongholds and storage units, and church bells were melted for ammunition.²³² The results of these “purifying” endeavors were devastating: 6,400 people were killed in five months, a number which accounts for a staggering 80 percent of the 8,352

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 180

²³¹ Ibid. p. 181

²³² Ibid. p. 195

killed in the entire three years of the war.²³³ It seems that Casanova was correct in saying that “this was revolutionary retribution of the highest order”.²³⁴

In an overarching narrative of rivalry between Madrid CF and FC Barcelona, the fact that Madrid was a city under siege throughout the Civil War is often overlooked in relation to widely held utopic visions of Barcelona as the home of the revolution. Madrid is instead viewed as the home of the central government, the eventual home of the Generalísimo. Despite these erroneous images (which are largely based on the fact that Franco positioned his central government in Madrid *after* the war), “the image of Madrid that was forever engraved on the collective memory of the republicans and the International Brigade volunteers was its heroic resistance displayed in November 1936”.²³⁵ After successfully defeating General Joaquín Eanjul and his forces at the La Montaña barracks in Madrid (a massacre which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of soldiers and Falangists after surrender), cooperatives under the direction of workers’ organizations formed in a manner similar to that of Barcelona— but on a significantly smaller scale— in the capital. Aside from the contrast in relative size of these collectives, the second difference to note is that Madrid-based cooperatives were driven “more by practical imperatives than by popular ideological and cultural preferences”, especially given the fact that the capital had yet to transform itself into an industrial center.²³⁶ Madrid had a mere 40,000 building workers and 25,000 metalworkers in comparison to Catalunya’s 200,000 textile workers, 70,000 metalworkers and 70,000 building workers, and the regions’

²³³ Ibid. p. 196

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid. pp. 196-97

²³⁶ Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939*. p. 96

distinct scales also represented a “step change in the range of potentialities of labour culture” at this time.²³⁷

A city besieged for the entirety of the Civil War, republican forces in Madrid were obliged to concentrate the majority of their attention on guaranteeing essential supply and transportation services for emergency defense initiatives. This difference is critical in a comparison of the capital’s experience of the war to that of Barcelona. Graham crucially notes that for this reason, “an estimated 30 per cent of Madrid’s productive industry was brought relatively rapidly under military or government control– with union cadres serving as the instruments of the process”.²³⁸ In fact, even the traditionally reluctant Madrid-based CNT accepted the need for government control given the circumstances. Madrid was a city encircled by rebel forces, comprised of armed militia patrols systematically killing their opposition within city limits in a manner similar to that of other nationalist-controlled regions of the country. The situation was dire.

Unfortunately for the left, the rebel uprising changed many things, but it failed to erase pre-war dynamics of “intra-left relations with all their tensions, hostilities and contradictions”.²³⁹ Fragmentation of state and union power eventually became so acute and powerful that direct violence ensued (most notably in Barcelona). In the same way that Barcelona symbolized the “‘popular’ and ‘spontaneous’ justice of the anarchists”, Madrid came to symbolize organized terror on the part of the socialists

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid. p. 91

and Communists who took leading roles in *checas* and mass *sacas*.²⁴⁰ And while the fury was directed towards the clergy and bourgeoisie in Barcelona, military personnel and politicians saw the worst of it in the capital. Spain was a country split between Nationalist and Republican factions, facing threats of social revolution at precisely the same time that it had become engulfed in a prolonged civil war.

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It will surprise no one to hear that the onset of the Civil War brought with it the breakdown of preexisting structures of organized Spanish football. The national football market was completely destroyed, and the division of Spain into two conflicting political zones made the continuation of the *campeonatos* that had been set to start in September of 1936 virtually impossible. Of the twelve teams that had participated in La Liga during the 1935-36 season, eight were located within republican zones following the outbreak of war, with only two— Athletic Bilbao (Liga Champions with 31 points, followed closely by Madrid CF in second place) and Racing de Santander— completely isolated and surrounded by rebel forces in the northernmost regions of the country. Curiously, the last official match played in Spain before the Civil War took place in La Coruña on 19 July 1936, days after the commencement of rebel uprisings in other Spanish regions. Deportivo de la Coruña defeated Celta 2-1 on this day, and prior to the match local newspaper *La Voz de Galicia* commented that “*en estos tiempos en que las emociones nos vienen por diferentes conductos, bienvenido sea un partido de fútbol que, aunque parezca*

²⁴⁰ Casanova, *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. p. 199

paradoja, puede servir de sedante para nuestros alterados nervios".²⁴¹ Football was a welcome escape from the horrors of what was to come for the divided country, a sedative for the jangled nerves of the Spanish people.

The division of Spain into two conflicting warzones prompted a situation in which football could only be practiced in relative tranquility in three regions: Levante, Galicia and Catalunya. In Catalunya, 4 October 1936 marked the beginning of a relatively stable regional tournament, the *Campeonato de Catalunya*, which included the likes of FC Barcelona, Espanyol, Gerona, Júpiter, Badalona, and Sabadell.²⁴² But despite this apparent repose— as Carlos Fernández eludes to in his *El Futbol Durante la Guerra Civil y El Franquismo*— tranquility in relation to far-off dangers of enemy attacks did not necessarily correlate with internal security for some professional footballers. For example, *Marca* told the story (years after the fact) of former Barcelona forward Paulino Alcántara, a man “of Falangist ideas”, who barely escaped from Barcelona to France on 19 July 1936 before relocating to rebel-controlled Spanish territory.²⁴³ In Madrid, it was the fabled Ricardo Zamora who experienced his fair share of immense difficulties; the *ABC* even went so far as to announce his false assassination by militant workers in the earliest stages of the conflict (when in reality, his only crime had been being pictured on the front of a right-wing newspaper in 1935). Zamora had received a medal of the Order of the Republic by Alcalá-Zamora back in 1934— which would have made his death at the hands of rebel forces a much more plausible and almost likely occurrence— but the

²⁴¹ Fernández Santander, *El Futbol Durante La Guerra Civil Y El Franquismo*. p. 18

²⁴² *Ibid.* p. 23

²⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 19

right-wing *ABC* “and several radio broadcasters whose colours were being hastily nailed to the masts preferred to broadcast the news that Zamora was another heroic victim of the ‘Reds’”.²⁴⁴ While memorial services were taking place in his honor across the country, Zamora was arrested by frustrated militiamen– fed up by the back and forth regarding his assassination– and taken to Modelo prison, “a dangerous place for anyone who had made a virtue out of playing for Español”.²⁴⁵

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The breakdown, divisions and dangers of Spanish football were accompanied by changes to the internal organization of each club, with Madrid CF in particular demonstrating that it was above all a democratic institution and not the conservative, militaristic brainchild of Franco. The organization of the equipo madrileño underwent severe fragmentation at this time, and saw the displacement of its old elite socios due in large part to the democratization of the club that took place under Rafael Sánchez Guerra. Bahamonde describes this division as a confrontation between “*el Real Madrid y el Madrid a secas*”, between the old conservative elites that had maintained positions of preeminence in the club from years past, and the new socios from popular classes that had been incorporated since the opening of the Estadio Chamartín in 1924.²⁴⁶ These tensions very much reflected those of the city of Madrid itself: Madrid CF as an organization had 6,000 socios and a stadium that seated 22,000 spectators, and the conservative elites who saw themselves outnumbered in this

²⁴⁴ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. pp. 112-113

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 113

²⁴⁶ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 173

situation were fearful that the club's identification with the republican city of Madrid was a danger to the image they wished to uphold.

Bahamonde signals three militant positions among the socios of Madrid CF at this time: traditional elites from the political right– professional middle class and mercantile bourgeoisie in support of the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), the *Renovación Española*, or the *Falange*– whose status as socios dated back to the years of O'Donnell when members of the popular classes were only occasionally present in the world of football; a minority of old socios from the club's amateur period who were more open than the elites from the political right; and “*socios de izquierdas*”, fans from the political left, who were considered supernumerary if they had not yet been affiliated with the club for four consecutive years (this in comparison to the old socios extremely stable positions within the club).²⁴⁷ Democratization was giving this last group of socios much more importance within the club's organization.

Despite undergoing this process of democratization, and despite the true displacement of old right-wing socios, workers' organizations in Madrid looked upon the club as a highly suspicious institution, equating it more often with its old elites than with the majority of its fans and new socios from the left. In order to save the club from these threats (and in light of a probable takeover of the Chamartín facilities by workers' organizations), Pablo Hernández Coronado, the club's secretary and former goalkeeper, brought together a group of employees who proceeded to carry out a “self-confiscation”, reflecting Madrid's status as a “democratic club with a roll-

²⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 174

call of socios who are clearly Republicans and left-wingers” and whose duty was “to fight against fascism”.²⁴⁸ Club workers completed this self-confiscation with the assistance of socios and various Popular Front organizations. Bahamonde indicates the fact that FC Barcelona underwent a curiously similar process when their stadium, Les Corts, was under threat of confiscation from the CNT.²⁴⁹ The like process in Barcelona, which involved sixteen employees forming a workers’ committee in affiliation with the UGT, culminated in a public announcement of “the confiscation of the club by the UGT– i.e., themselves– thus effectively short-circuiting the CNT-FAI”.²⁵⁰ What is clear through these actions is that both organizations were in peril during the Civil War, with Madrid CF looked upon as a team affiliated with the political right despite recent democratizing efforts, and with FC Barcelona threatened by anarchists. Both situations very much reflect the realities of the cities at this time as well, with Madrid– and consequently Madrid CF– retaining its post as a republican stronghold despite being viewed from the outside as centralist, and with Barcelona experiencing the possibility of a social revolution.

The democratization of Madrid CF and subsequent changes to the club’s internal organization were accompanied by an even more striking occurrence shortly after the outbreak of the war: the authorization of the use of all club facilities– excluding the stadium– to all socios of Madrid who could prove themselves to be affiliated with republican organizations. In other words, “*poner a disposición del*

²⁴⁸ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 45

²⁴⁹ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 177

²⁵⁰ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 32

Gobierno el Club,” making the club available to the republican government.²⁵¹ Along with this dramatic move towards official and open support for the republican faction, the club intended to organize international games to fundraise with the ultimate goal of helping victims of Fascism.²⁵² These occurrences seem strange for a team that many assume aligned itself with Franco from the very beginning of the conflict.

With these facts established— each of which serves to convolute the preconceived and generalized notions of Madrid CF’s identity at this time— it is now clear that during the Civil War the directors (and socios) of the equipo madrileño were for the most part in strong opposition to Franco and the Nationalist uprising. Perhaps associated more often with socios from the political right in its first decades of existence, the club had since undergone a definitive process of democratization, which in turn precipitated the marginalization of its old right-wing socios and, consequently, their unwillingness to pay to support a Madrid “*de tono frentepopulista*”.²⁵³ The new republican socios of the left— due in large part to the hardships of the war and their lack of similar monetary means— were unable to support their beloved club by themselves. This left Madrid CF in a very difficult position.

.....

The logical result of this lack of financial support would have been the disappearance of football from the everyday lives of madridistas living in war-torn Madrid, but Hernández Coronado made one last attempt at preventing this from

²⁵¹ *El Sol*, 06/8/1936

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 181

happening: he ventured to incorporate Madrid CF into FC Barcelona's *Campeonato de Catalunya*.²⁵⁴ Anti-Franco forces had taken control of both Madrid CF and Atlético de Madrid by this time, and Burns notes that such a "redrawing of the political map led to extraordinary reversals in club policy in the early stages of the war, such as the two Madrid teams applying to play along with Barcelona in the Catalan League on the basis that both towns had initially managed to fight off Franco".²⁵⁵ The first steps in this process, taken in October of 1936, were met with great success thanks in large part to the numerous credentials that made Paco Bru, Madrid CF's coach at the time, the perfect ambassador for the equipo madrileño in Barcelona. Not only was Bru a Catalan man himself, he had been a chronicler for *Mundo Deportivo* and was even a former FC Barcelona player. His argument was that of unity in the face of Fascism, and he insisted that the inclusion of Madrid in the campeonato would help to insure the survival of the team that represented the city whose seizure the rebel forces saw as their main objective.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ Relaño states that this is "*una de las historietas menos conocidas de las que han enfrentado al Madrid y al Barça, quizá porque no fue una escaramuza sobre el campo, sino un conflicto de importancia en los despachos. Y porque ocurrió en un tiempo en el que había otras cosas de que ocuparse: los años de la Guerra Civil. Pero fue importante*". Relaño, *Nacidos Para Incordiar: Un Siglo De Agravios Entre El Madrid Y El Barça*. p. 60

²⁵⁵ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 116

²⁵⁶ Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid En La Historia De España*. p. 181. Over the course of these discussions, Bru even went so far as to suggest that— in the case of Madrid CF winning the regional competition— the madrileños would not proclaim themselves to be champions. Instead, they would consider themselves outsiders to the competition in order to give the title to the Catalan club with the highest point total. They wanted nothing more than to "*mantenerse en actividad y poder pagar a sus jugadores mientras se resolviera en el sentido que fuere el cerco de la capital*". Relaño, *Nacidos Para Incordiar: Un Siglo De Agravios Entre El Madrid Y El Barça*. p. 63

Barcelona's position was unclear in the initial stages of the discussions, but it eventually became evident that they felt that Madrid's inclusion in the Campeonato de Catalunya would alter the essence of the regional competition, and were therefore against taking such action. The *ABC* reported on 17 October 1936 that just when it seemed as though the participation of Madrid CF had been resolved, difficulties had arisen that would prove to be too challenging to overcome, for the clubs that comprised the campeonato— with FC Barcelona leading the way— felt that Madrid's inclusion would in fact alter the essence of the regional competition.²⁵⁷ This in turn led the madrileño newspaper to report on 28 October that the council of the *Federación Catalana de Fútbol*— with little regard for the sympathy that Madrid CF deserved given the circumstances and given their support for the Catalans upon the death of Josep Sunyol— had decided that the madridistas should not be included in the regional competition.²⁵⁸ *La Vanguardia* included the entirety of the official statement in its 28 October edition, concluding by stating that the agreement did not preclude the Catalan's willingness to help find future solutions to Madrid's problems.²⁵⁹ In response to this decision, the players' union composed an official response of their

²⁵⁷ *ABC*, 17/10/1936

²⁵⁸ “Se ha facilitado una nota por la Federación Catalana de Fútbol, en la que se dice que el Consejo directivo, sin perjuicio de la simpatía que le merece el Madrid F.C., y todos sus jugadores, ha creído pertinente acordar que no es procedente la inclusión de dicho Club en el campeonato de Cataluña.” *ABC*, 28/10/1936

²⁵⁹ “Este acuerdo del Consejo Directivo de la Federación Catalana de Fútbol no excluye, sin embargo, la buena disposición de dicha entidad y de todos los organismos directamente vinculados a ella para estudiar y emprender cualquiera solución que pueda aportar resultados provechosos para el Madrid F.C. y para todos los demás clubs españoles que se encuentran en circunstancias semejantes a las de dicho Club, y está seguro de poder conseguir fórmulas que permitan una eficaz ayuda, especialmente a sus jugadores, así como a los mismos clubs ...” *La Vanguardia*, 28/10/1936

own, in which they fervently argued for the inclusion of the *deportistas madrileños*, who they felt should receive like generosity after commemorating the death of Josep Sunyol by forming the battalion mentioned earlier.²⁶⁰ Burns speculates as to what “Sunyol, had he survived, would have thought of such a display of Republican solidarity” (or lack thereof) on the part of these FC Barcelona officials.²⁶¹

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Madrid CF’s subsequent links with Franco (which, it should be noted, came largely as a result of the club’s international sporting success after winning five consecutive European Cups in the latter half of the 1950s) have led the club to revise and effectively paralyze its Civil War history. In fact, official club records often fail to so much as allude to figures like former club president and communist colonel Antonio Ortega Gutiérrez. With respect to the evolution of the club from 1936-39, Madrid’s official *Libro de Oro* includes the all-telling phrase “*en su campo de juego se celebran partidos de fútbol y festivales gimnásticos, casi a diario*”.²⁶² But, despite this reference to the continuation of a wide variety of sporting competitions over the

²⁶⁰ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid en la historia de España*. p. 181. The following are segments from the official response of the *Sindicato de Profesionales de Fútbol*: “*El Sindicato de Profesionales de Fútbol de Cataluña es el principal interesado en que las esencias del fútbol catalán no sean alteradas por nada ni por nadie, pero la anormalidad trágica en que vivimos está muy por encima de nuestros deseos y de nuestros sentimientos. La inclusión del Madrid F.C. en nuestro Campeonato de Cataluña, no representa en las actuales circunstancias una mistificación, sino muy por el contrario una purificación surgida del crisol de la generosidad y el compañerismo... No podemos olvidar los deportistas catalanes y mucho menos los profesionales que bajo la honrosa bandera de las cuatro barras catalanas y con el nombre del malogrado José Suñol, un batallón de deportistas madrileños ha demostrado sobradamente su compenetración y cariño a nuestra querida Cataluña*”. Relaño, *Nacidos Para Incordiar: Un Siglo De Agravios Entre El Madrid Y El Barça*. pp. 63-64

²⁶¹ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 116

²⁶² *AS*, 5/3/2002

course of the war, there is absolutely no mention of the people who made it all possible. Ortega, similarly to Sánchez Guerra, was one of these people.

Born in Burgos on 17 January 1888, Antonio Ortega Gutiérrez joined the army at the ripe age of eighteen on 22 February 1906. The exact details of his life are difficult to come by, but *AS* writes in a special 5 March 2002 report that by 1936 Ortega held the position of deputy police in Spain.²⁶³ Upon the outbreak of war, he was too quick to form a militia column from this post. Ortega then proceeded to take control of Irún, a town in the northern province of Guipúzcoa, on behalf of the republican government on 20 July. Hailed as “*el defensor de la población fronteriza*”, his cumulative merits led to his being named Civil Governor of Guipúzcoa shortly afterwards on 5 August 1936.²⁶⁴ Three months later, he was commissioned by Colonel Adolfo Prada to defend the *Ciudad Universitaria* sector of Madrid, after which point he became renowned as a true hero in the fight against Fascism. In 1937, he officially joined the *Partido Comunista de España* (Communist Party of Spain, PCE), and during the war’s final offensive he held the position of Commander of the III Army Corps.

Propelled by Madrid CF’s *auto-incautación* (self-confiscation), Ortega emerged onto the footballing scene with the support of the Communist Party through the *Federación Deportiva Obrera*.²⁶⁵ A communist political commissar by this point in 1937, “involved in the falsification of documents and the creation of a trumped-up charge to justify the pursuit, torture, and assassination of the “Trotskyite” leader

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 46

Andreu Nin,” Ortega’s story gives Madrid a “left-wing narrative largely absent from its history”.²⁶⁶ The absence of this left-wing narrative is all too real for the equipo madrileño, as Lowe notes, “not least because Ortega has never been recognized by the club, even though the newspaper Blanco y Negro carries a wartime interview with him as president in which he defends Madrid’s right to construct the best stadium in Spain, not least because the city was home of the workers’ resistance”.²⁶⁷ It would be remiss to neglect Ortega’s importance to the history of Madrid CF, for his wartime interview alone reflects his honest and sincere passion and dedication to the club. He writes that Madrid “*debe conseguir el mejor campo deportivo de España, el más importante estadio. Madrid... debe tener todo aquello que poseen otras ciudades que han sido más frívolas con relación a la guerra. Todos, entonces, debemos ayudar al gran club, sin olvidarnos de otros de la misma región... colaborando todos para la gran obra del mejor terreno deportivo de España, habremos hecho desaparecer antagonismos viejos*”.²⁶⁸ Not only did he feel that everyone should assist Madrid CF in their pursuit of securing the greatest stadium in all of Spain (especially those who had played more frivolous roles in the fight against Fascism), he also felt that such collaborative efforts would assist in ridding post-war Spanish society of its old antagonisms. Out of context, the modern-day reader might rightfully assume that these words came from the club’s subsequent figurehead (and current namesake of Real Madrid’s stadium), Santiago Bernabéu, rather than from a neglected and often

²⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 47

²⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 47

²⁶⁸ *Blanco y Negro*, 15/11/1938

forgotten communist colonel. His passion for the club was just as palpable as Bernabéu's.

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While many of Madrid CF's players were off fighting for left-wing forces or staying within the confines of their war-torn native country, FC Barcelona decided to travel to Mexico— one of only two countries in open support of the legally constituted Second Republic— to play a series of exhibition matches after the conclusion of the 1936-37 Campeonato de Catalunya.²⁶⁹ Burns highlights the fact that Barcelona's survival as an organization was increasingly in jeopardy at this time, due in large part to political developments taking place beyond the stadium; "by the middle of 1937, the spontaneous revolution so loved by the anarchists was being crushed by Stalinist Communists who feared that the war effort would disintegrate without discipline and central control".²⁷⁰ Thus, the offer represented a sort of "lifeline" for Barcelona club officials and players, who "felt an increasing sense of being besieged by the political situation" afflicting Barcelona and the greater region of Catalunya.²⁷¹ "After the traumas of the Civil War, the Mexican trip was like an extended holiday".²⁷² The proposal put forth by Mexican businessman Manuel Mas Soriano included a payment of \$15,000 and coverage of all travel expenses, and proved to be just enough to

²⁶⁹ "En el Campeonato de Cataluña 1936-37 participaron seis equipos: Español, Barcelona, Sabadell, Badalona, Gerona y Granollers. Se celebró a doble vuelta y resultó ganador el Español. Asimismo se celebró la Liga Mediterránea, en la que intervinieron Valencia, Castellón, Levante, Gimnástico de Valencia, Español, Granollers, Barcelona y Gerona. Resultó campeón el Barcelona y también se jugó a doble vuelta." Fernández Santander, *El Fútbol Durante La Guerra Civil Y El Franquismo*. p. 25

²⁷⁰ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 117

²⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 118-20

²⁷² Ibid.

convince the Catalans; they accepted his offer and agreed to travel to the Central American country as representatives of the Second Republic.²⁷³

The azulgranas were greeted by a warm reception from both Mexican authorities and the local press, who most likely saw parallels between their own experience of state formation and revolution and that of the Spaniards. In support of this postulate of Mexican sympathy is the fact that many scholars have commented on the wide variety of links that have served to unite Mexico and Spain over the course of hundreds of years of shared history; T.G. Powell, for example, writes of the “parallelism of problems, and of means taken to solve them” in Mexico and Spain, noting that both the problems and the solutions “strengthened the bonds” between the two countries.²⁷⁴ Mario Ojeda Revah adds that the Spanish Civil War served as an “*espejo*”, or mirror, in which Mexico saw itself reflected.²⁷⁵ Significantly, Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 did not necessarily imply the elimination of Spanish institutions and influence in the former colony. Rather, great continuity was evident amid post-independence change in the continued dominance of “the Catholic Church, conservative patriarchal family structures, a European class structure”, and “a legal system built around the European concepts of the individual, private property, and capitalism,” each of which served as a “conceptual pillar” of the

²⁷³ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 35

²⁷⁴ T. G. Powell, *Mexico and the Spanish Civil War*(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981). p. 37

²⁷⁵ Mario Ojeda Revah, "La Guerra Civil Española En México." (Madrid: Turner, 2005). p. 123

emerging Mexican state.²⁷⁶ With all of these elements in mind, it is evident that this tour had a definitive “political edge to it: Barça represented Catalonia, but also *Republican* Catalonia, although the essential meaning of that word was becoming daily more confused back at home”.²⁷⁷

Barcelona traveled to Mexico with most of its best players, including Argemí, Babot, Balmanya, Bardina, Escolá, García, Gual, Taché, Iborra, Munlloch, Pagés, Pedrol, Rafa, Urquiaga, Ventolrá, and Zabalo, with Patrick O’Connell at the helm as coach.²⁷⁸ The Catalans lost their first match of the tour to América on 20 June 1937 by a score of 2-0, but went on to defeat Atlante 2-1 seven days later, and España 5-4 on 4 July. The team then proceeded to take down Mexican domestic league champs Necaxa in two matches on 11 and 18 July by scores of 4-2 and 2-1 respectively, and ended the month with a 5-1 *goleada* over Asturias.²⁷⁹ Barcelona’s journeys proved to be extremely positive for both the club and their hosts, so much so that the Catalans’ saw their trip extended for three more games. After defeating the Mexican National Team 5-2 and 3-2, Mexican newspaper *El Universal* went so far as to say: “*no podemos afirmar que el Barcelona es el mejor equipo de España... pero si podemos decir con toda seguridad que de los equipos españoles que han competido en México, es el que ha dejado mejor sabor de boca. Una gran parte de la alta estima conquistada... se debe a la caballerosidad y conducta de cada jugador y al buen*

²⁷⁶ Friedrich Engelbert Schuler, *Mexico between Hitler and Roosevelt: Mexican Foreign Relations in the Age of Lázaro Cárdenas, 1934-1940*(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998). p. 55

²⁷⁷ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 119

²⁷⁸ Fernández Santander, *El Fútbol Durante La Guerra Civil Y El Franquismo*. p. 25

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

*comportamiento del conjunto.*²⁸⁰ As a result of this (and other) wildly favorable international exposure, the Catalans were able to extend their trip for a second time, this time advancing into US territory. All in all, the so-called “representatives” of the Second Republic competed in fourteen games over the course of their travels, winning ten and losing four while scoring an impressive forty goals and conceding thirty-two.²⁸¹

Back home in Spain, in May of that same year (1937), a bomb dropped by one of Benito Mussolini’s pilots in support of the rebels hit the FC Barcelona club offices on Consell de Cent, destroying many of the team’s trophies and making fundraising of this nature necessary in order to save the club from total decimation.²⁸² Burns significantly points to the fact that “if there was any symbolism to be drawn from those ashes, and the partial nature of the destruction, it was that the bomb foretold a future where Barça could gather strength from adversity”.²⁸³ In light of this direct blow by rebel forces to the team of all of Catalunya– and despite the fact that the Mexico trip had been completed under the guise of raising funds for the Republican cause– the funds raised by FC Barcelona abroad served to clear club debts and save the organization from complete annihilation. The Catalans made just under \$13,000 over the course of their travels, and in order to ensure the safety of their earnings (from threats of confiscation by Nationalists), they deposited the money into a French bank account.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid. p. 26

²⁸² Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 33

²⁸³ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 122

²⁸⁴ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 35

When faced with the uncertainty of what to do upon the completion of their trip, only seven endeavored to make the return trip to Catalunya, including coach O’Connell, two other members of the Barcelona staff, and players Argemí, Babot, Rafa and Pagés.²⁸⁵ Many other players, staff members, and club affiliates chose to remain in exile in Mexico or France. This is an interesting factor to take into account in an analysis of the narrative of this rivalry over the 1930s, for while many of Madrid CF’s players remained in war-ravaged Spain for the duration of the conflict, FC Barcelona explored safer regions of the map while playing exhibition matches in order to obtain the necessary funding for the future continuation of their club. They went on to win the *Campeonato catalán* in 1938.²⁸⁶

As demonstrated above, the experience of the Civil War for both Madrid CF and FC Barcelona was far more complex than many assume based on preconceived notions of what the two clubs represented at the time. The destruction of the national football market upon the outbreak of war was accompanied by changes to the internal organization of each club, with both undergoing processes of auto-incautación, or self-confiscation, and with Madrid CF in particular experiencing a profound process of democratization and the displacement of its old right-wing socios under the

²⁸⁵ Fernández Santander, *El Fútbol Durante La Guerra Civil Y El Franquismo*. p. 25

²⁸⁶ “Como dijimos anteriormente, la Liga Mediterránea fue suspendida en la temporada 37-38, jugándose un torneo regional entre equipos catalanes, así como una Liga. El Barcelona ganaría las dos competiciones a pesar de que alineó a jugadores jóvenes completamente desconocidos, pues la mayor parte de las figuras se habían quedado en el extranjero tras la gira por México y Estados Unidos... En el Campeonato catalán, el Barça obtiene 21 puntos con 42 goles a favor y 13 en contra. En la Liga posterior, alcanza 29 puntos con 84 goles a favor y 26 en contra. El último torneo que se jugó en Cataluña, ya con el Ejército de Franco en las inmediaciones, fue el Torneo “Ciudad de Barcelona”, iniciado el último día de octubre del 38. Tomaron parte el Europa, Júpiter, Gracia, Avenc, Sarts, Martinenc y el Barcelona suplentes. Pero la guerra impidió que se terminase.” Ibid. p. 47

leadership and guidance of Rafael Sánchez Guerra. Not only this, the madrileños also honored the memory of assassinated Barcelona president and prominent republican figure Josep Sunyol by creating a battalion in his name to fight against Fascism. They even went so far as to authorize the use of all club facilities to socios affiliated with republican organizations, and they stayed primarily within the confines of their besieged city and war-torn country over the course of the civil conflict. FC Barcelona, on the other hand, emphasized maintaining the essence of their regional Campeonato de Catalunya, failed to come to the aid of their fellow republicans, and consequently put their interests in autonomy over those of the Republican cause as a whole. In addition, they chose to go abroad as representatives of the Second Republic in order to acquire enough funding to keep their club organization intact. These events not only demonstrate the heightened importance of these teams as actors on political, regional and purely sporting levels, they also show that Madrid CF and FC Barcelona were no where near as polarized from the onset as many choose to believe.

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By the latter half of 1937, Franco's Nationalist faction had gained official control over some of Spain's most well known clubs, including Athletic Bilbao, Sevilla, Betis, Zaragoza, Celta and Deportivo de la Coruña. From these acquisitions and the consolidation and militarization of the latter war periods emerged a changing character for the world of Spanish football. Created by decree on 27 August 1938, the *Consejo Nacional de Deportes*, or Ministry for Sport, began to impose a variety of fascist symbols and rituals on Spanish sport– the fascist salute and the substitution of the Spanish national football team's previously red tops for blue ones (the red ones

too closely identifiable with Communism) being two such examples. The Falange “regarded sport as an excellent instrument to mobilize and forge citizens in the national spirit and the new values”, and thus began a sequence of changes that drastically altered the character of Spanish football.²⁸⁷ Along with the previously mentioned impositions, the Consejo forced the elimination of foreign-sounding words from the names of all clubs, and prohibited the use of any and all peripheral languages.

The *Federación Española de Fútbol* (FEF) and the Consejo Nacional de Deportes, two of the most powerful football and sporting institutions in the country, were both led by prominent military figures upon reformation— Colonel Troncoso at the head of the FEF and General Moscardó (defender of the Alcázar de Toledo in 1936) leader of the Consejo— a fact indicative of the drastic changes in the character of Spanish football taking place at this time.²⁸⁸ On top of their appointments as the leaders of Spain’s most prominent sporting organizations, the fact that the country was still immersed in a brutal Civil War in the late 1930s was surprisingly “judged irrelevant by FIFA, world football’s governing body”, who officially recognized the newly reformed FEF and Consejo under the direction of these nationalist generals.²⁸⁹

The following year, on 21 December 1938, in the first issue of the sports weekly *Marca*, General Moscardó’s interventionist and militaristic policy— which came to define the sporting world (and particularly the world of football) after the

²⁸⁷ Solís, *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia: Competing Narratives of National Identity*. p. 40

²⁸⁸ Crolley, "Real Madrid V Barcelona: The State against a Nation? The Changing Role of Football in Spain." p. 36

²⁸⁹ Burns, *Barça: A People's Passion*. p. 116

rebels' victory— was made very clear. He wrote that “*todo es función de Estado... Nosotros nombraremos a los presidentes de las federaciones, que, a su vez, por contar con nuestra absoluta confianza, inspirarán los movimientos de aquéllas en los procedimientos que se estimen más eficaces para el alto interés de la Patria*”.²⁹⁰

Everything in the world of football would be a function of the State. He and his associates would name club presidents, who in turn would inspire trends in club procedures that would ultimately be deemed most effective for the high interest of the *Patria*. Also included in this issue was a piece by sports journalist Jacinto Miquelarena, who wrote that “*el fútbol era durante la República una orgia roja de las más pequeñas pasiones regionales y de las más viles*”, effectively blaming the Second Republic for the evils of Spanish football, which had been no more than a “red orgy of the smallest and most vile regional passions” over the course of the 1930s.²⁹¹ For later Francoist propaganda, the Second Republic “became synonymous with sporting weakness and disunity”.²⁹² This newfound militaristic tone (in both the actions of these organizations and the words of official publications) would go on to change the world of Spanish sport forever, stressing as it did “the importance of spiritual values over technique”, and thus transforming the sporting experience into a “quasi-religious experience”.²⁹³

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²⁹⁰ *Marca*, 21/12/1938

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² Solís, *Negotiating Spain and Catalonia: Competing Narratives of National Identity*. p. 40

²⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 40-41

On 1 April 1939, the sickly General Franco— suffering from a bout of the flu— announced that the long and horrific Spanish Civil War had finally come to an end. The Nationalists had won. When asked to ruminate on how influential Franco really was in the victory, Payne points out that while it is often said that “amateurs do strategy” and “professionals do logistics”, Franco “certainly did logistics”; each and every one of his military operations was organized to an unprecedented level, and he “saw to it that his forces were better prepared in every respect”.²⁹⁴ In addition, he maintained “an effective domestic administration and a home front that sustained morale, mobilized the population, and fostered a distinctly higher level of economic production than the other side, whose economy was increasingly hollowed out by the ravages of revolution”.²⁹⁵ Perhaps most importantly, Franco’s wartime diplomacy neutralized Britain and France, limited supplies to the Second Republic, and garnered the support of the Germans and Italians.²⁹⁶ Therefore, it is clear that his influence was truly prodigious.

Outside of Franco’s individual efforts and strong leadership abilities, there were a number of other factors that contributed to the Nationalist victory and the subsequent imposition of the Generalísimo’s thirty-six-year dictatorship. Azaña and Casares had been reckless in their policies and decision-making in the weeks leading up to the conflict; the Nationalists had managed to maintain a much more cohesive

²⁹⁴ Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. p. 193

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ The importance of this foreign intervention cannot be overemphasized. From within Spain, this may have appeared to be a conflict between Nationalist and Republican factions accompanied by the threat of social revolution, but the influence of Italian and German support for and coordination with the rebel forces (and lack thereof from the likes of Britain and France) made the unfolding struggle at the turn of the decade global in essence.

military operation over the course of the three-year war; the Nationalists had also succeeded in gaining greater military assistance from abroad and were more effective in the mobilization of their forces and resources; the Second Republic had remained disunited, fractured and weakened by internal differences and things like the “dissidence of anarchists and of Basque and Catalan nationalists”; and the social revolution had left these regions in ruins in more ways than one.²⁹⁷

All in all, the Spanish Civil War resulted in “the most destructive experience in modern Spanish history”, prompting “great loss of life, much human suffering, disruption of the society and the economy, distortion and repression in cultural affairs, and retardation of the country’s political development”.²⁹⁸ It was under these circumstances that Franco officially rose to power in 1939, holding strongly to the belief that he could set a new era in motion, “one that would not only transform politics and culture but also achieve economic modernization and, importantly, increase the country’s international role and its standing among the powers”.²⁹⁹ He moved his home base from Burgos to Madrid in October of 1939, and thus commenced a long and terribly dark epoch in Spanish history: *El Franquismo*.

The Civil War was truly the time in which the purportedly fixed identities of Spain’s two biggest clubs, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, were solidified and polarized to a previously unknown extreme. Moving into the Franco dictatorship, FC Barcelona would continue to strengthen its identification with the city of Barcelona (and more broadly with the region of Catalunya), which eventually resulted in the

²⁹⁷ Payne and Palacios, *Franco: A Personal and Political Biography*. p. 195

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 198

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 212

motto ‘*El Barça es més que un club*’, perhaps the most salient descriptor of the club to this day. As the Catalan writer Vázquez Montalbán points out, FC Barcelona owes its “meaning to the historical misfortunes of Catalonia, in everlasting real or metaphorical Civil War with the Spanish State”.³⁰⁰ But as Lowe writes in his work, “to present Madrid as Franco’s team and Barcelona as victims on the basis of the civil war is to stretch the boundaries of time and project onto the period between 1936 and 1939 events that actually occurred later, in different years and under different circumstances”.³⁰¹

The intricacies of the wartime period have very often been simplified and even personified in the personages of Josep Sunyol for Barça and Santiago Bernabéu—Madrid’s sports secretary at the time who served as a corporal in Franco’s army— for Madrid CF, in a way that fails to recognize the complexities and paradoxes in the actions and reactions of both clubs during this time. Through an analysis of the events that took place primarily during the Second Republic and Civil War, it has been my intention to demonstrate that the roles that Real Madrid and FC Barcelona have been given over time in regional, political and purely footballing terms are far more complex and convoluted than popular perceptions and official histories lead us to believe. Football can be an excellent tool and primary point of departure for historical analysis, and these two clubs stand above the rest in their ability to reflect the incredibly complex relations between the two cities, regions and political ideas that they have come to represent.

³⁰⁰ Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Barcelonas*(Verso, 1992). p. 5

³⁰¹ Lowe, *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona Vs. Real Madrid*. p. 48

Conclusion

Sunday, 22 March, marks the first Clásico of 2015 and the 230th competitive match between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. The equipo madrileño—plummeting deep into crisis mode after suffering several negative results in recent gameweeks—will travel to Catalunya to take on their bitter rivals with just one point separating the two sides at the top of the table. It will be the second Clásico of the 2014-15 season, with Real Madrid winning the first edition 3-1 at the Bernabéu this past October, and the spectacle will undoubtedly herald a new and exciting (and most-likely incredibly dramatic) chapter in the history of this celebrated rivalry. It seems only fitting that the completion of my work be sandwiched between these two massive games.

While preparing for my Wesleyan History Department Thesis Colloquium on 23 October 2014— a mere two days before the first Clásico of the season— I stumbled upon a new Carles Torras documentary on the Real Madrid–FC Barcelona rivalry being broadcast on Catalan public television’s TV3. The documentary premiered a week prior to my presentation, on Thursday, 16 October, on a program called *Sense ficció*. The title was *Madrid real: la leyenda negra de la gloria blanca*. In English, this translates to *Real Madrid: The Black Legend of the White Glory*. In the fifth emission of the day there were nearly 400,000 viewers eager to peek through the keyhole of what Torras described as the “*puerta falsa*”, or “false door”, of Real Madrid in order to see what he insisted was hidden behind it: a powerful and very influential connection between Francisco Franco and Real Madrid.³⁰²

³⁰² Carles Torras, "Madrid Real: La Leyenda Negra De La Gloria Blanca," in *Sense ficció*, ed. Joan Salvat(Catalunya: TV3, 2014).

By offering a new account of this illustrious football rivalry over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries— with a specific emphasis on the 1930s, where I believe many of the fictitious elements of narratives of the rivalry had their origin— I have attempted to refute, or more accurately to demystify the mythological elements that serve as focal points in Torras’s narrative. The history of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona is *much* more than a tale of two clubs that represent antithetical political identifications and simplistic center-periphery opposition on the football pitch; my narrative uncovers, and subsequently highlights, the complexities of the rivalry in a way that problematizes the concept of Madrid as the team of the Generalísimo and Barça as the team of the left. By using football to unearth the true complexities in the relations between these two clubs in a less-analyzed historical context, it is my hope that the reader begins to discern that FC Barcelona was perhaps slightly more aristocratic in origin than its counterpart in the capital; that Madrid CF’s founder was actually a Catalan; that Madrid was led by Rafael Sánchez Guerra, an important figure in the officially constituted Republican government, throughout the first half of the 1930s; that Josep Sunyol was honored by a sporting battalion in the capital long before he was recognized at home in Catalunya (keeping in mind the strict censorship that the region faced at the time); that the democratization of Madrid CF saw the displacement of old right-wing socios; and that FC Barcelona refused Madrid CF’s petition to enter and alter the essence of its regional Campeonato de Catalunya. The list of complexities extends well beyond these few examples. But as these historical digressions are compiled, analyzed and brought together to form a new narrative of the 1930s, a marked conclusion becomes evident: Real Madrid and

FC Barcelona are much more alike than they are disparate, and an analysis of the 1930s proves that the mythological elements of the rivalry carry weight solely based on the fact that they are so prevalent and persistent in the minds of fans of both teams to this day.

If Real Madrid and FC Barcelona are not as irreconcilable as they appear to be upon first glance, why do the myths and legends of the Civil War period and decades of dictatorship that ensued in its aftermath persist in the minds of fans from around the world? If Sánchez Guerra democratized Madrid CF as much as (or more than) Sunyol at FC Barcelona, why does the former refuse to revise its history and place greater emphasis on his influence? Finally, if all signs point to Francisco Franco using Real Madrid as a tool for political propaganda only after the club's success on a European level in the late 1950s, why isn't there a resolute effort to re-examine the club's past in order to construct a new and more accurate narrative? In Spain, there seems to be a tendency to close oneself off from the past and forget the dark decades that began with the onset of the Civil War, and Real Madrid seems just as eager to look towards the future rather than reopening old wounds and re-evaluating possible political connections. In a discussion with *The Guardian* and ESPNFC journalist Sid Lowe in Madrid outside the Estadio Vicente Calderón this past January, he explicitly stated that Real Madrid club officials made it very difficult for him to enter the club's archive, for they had little to no interest in dwelling on the past or in hearing about others interested in doing the work for them. As was stated in the introduction of this work, football in Spain has become "so politicized" that it is "virtually impossible" to answer questions regarding Madrid's connection to Franco "from a local

perspective”; Real Madrid would prefer to look towards the future and purport to be an apolitical sporting organization before choosing to open up politicized debates on the club’s history.³⁰³ I have attempted to reassess these difficult times in the history of Spain from an outsider’s perspective– through the specific lens of football– in order to find out what was really going on.

Football unites people in both a physical and a metaphorical way. It provides a means for collective identity. It brings people together and distinguishes them from their opposition. The identity creation taking place on the football pitch and in stadiums more generally has the power to provide novel insight on constructions of nation, place and identity, particularly during times of great change like those of turn-of-the-century Spain. Constructions of this nature in relation to Madrid and Catalunya, and Real Madrid and FC Barcelona more specifically, have latched onto the minds of many fans in dangerous ways; Real Madrid has more often than not been looked upon with overly critical eyes, while “much of what has been written about Barcelona is so uncritical that it has created an unhealthy climate of literary lap-dogism that in the end does the phenomenon no favours”.³⁰⁴ Over the course of my narrative, I have attempted to shine light on elements that serve to complicate excessively negative and exorbitantly positive images of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona respectively, proving– to the vexation of fans of both teams– that the two powerhouses of Spanish football are much more similar than they are irreconcilably different.

³⁰³ Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*. p. 141

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 95

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