

AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES AND MODERNIZATION IN FRANCO'S SPAIN

Ana Cabana
Alba Díaz¹

It seems appropriate to carry out an analysis of this subject by defining three key periods that characterize the Spanish agricultural modernization process and the role of technical experts in this process. The first period is marked by the imposition of the fascist regime (1936-1951); the second by de-fascistization and the rise of the technical experts (1951-1960); and the third by the adoption of the new, North American technological model of agrarian extensionism (1960-1976). Given that this panel is primarily dedicated to the study of agricultural evolution in fascist systems, we will give most of our attention to the first phase, using the others as references for comparison. Following a brief explanation of these phases, we will describe how the discourse that accompanied these processes evolved, identifying its defining principles and commenting on the distance between the oratory that surrounded agrarian policy and the objectives it pursued.

1. Rural fascism in Spain

If we are going to talk in a pure sense about fascism and fascist agriculture in Spain, 1936-1945 stands out as the period of deliberate fascistization by the regime. This period spans from the beginning of the Civil War until the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II. Although fascism is typically considered an Italian or German product and is far from being a unitary phenomenon, we will use it here to refer to the Spanish version. To the Italian model (secular, nationalist, semi-totalitarian, idealist, populist) and the German model (irrational, radical totalitarian) we can add other variants such as the Romanian, Portuguese or Spanish models, each with its own particular flavour: religiosity, traditionalism, reactionary nature, etc. During this period the Spanish regime clearly modelled itself after the European fascist dictatorships of the interwar period and agrarian policy was one of the areas where most influence can be seen. Using Italian and German realities as a reference point, it added a deliberate autarky policy that extended into the 1950s, resulting in stagnation of the agrarian sector. This led the Franco government to adopt an agrarian policy that involved a new set of parameters.

Before we analyze the dimensions of the fascist agrarian policy and its effects in this first stage, it seems fitting to acknowledge the rupture it created with the pre-war reality in the sphere of research and agrarian services, the main work scenarios of the agrarian experts (veterinarians, agronomy and forestry engineers). This break can be described by its key aspects:

¹ This paper is part of the Research Project: *The representation of agrarian interest in peripheral economics. A multifunctional model, the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula as a case study (1890- 1975)*. Reference: HUM2007-65962/HIST. Financing Entity: Ministry of Education and Science of Spain.

1) *Repression of agricultural experts.* We refer here to the repression suffered by technical experts committed to left-wing ideas and projects, both during the war in areas where the Francoist forces seized power and during the long post-war period. Researchers and technical experts who were considered unsympathetic to the new regime were purged. More than the physical disappearances that were much more prevalent in other sectors (death sentences, firing squads, etc.), here we are talking about professional reprisals such as prison sentences, economic sanctions, demotions, formal accusations, transfers or forced exile. Such repression deprived the Ministry of Agriculture, its administration and its agronomic institutions of highly trained and experienced human capital in many areas (research, university teaching, publishing, management of institutions or daily exercise of the profession)².

We should also be aware of the repression endured by agricultural experts in Republican areas during the Civil War. Engineers were terrorized and assassinated by militants who took justice into their own hands.³ This was due more to their social standing (bourgeois, civil servants, Catholic, etc.) than their political views.

2) *Precarious situation.* Apart from the lack of human resources, the various agronomic research and training centres and the agrarian State bureaucracies found it tremendously difficult to carry on their work for lack of funds. Shoestring budgets brought an end to new and even well-established lines of investigation, to training tools such as teaching fields, to publications and to the purchase of international reference material. These last two, along with the impossibility for many experts to continue making training or research trips (due to both economic limitations and the ideological control of the regime), led to isolation.

3) *Breakage in the fluid link between agricultural experts and farmers, trade unions and agricultural associations.* Francoism pulled up by its roots the class-based trade-unionism that had become widespread since the agrarian crisis of the late nineteenth century. Such associations were organizationally suppressed and forbidden to continue operating, which left them inert in the early 1940s. This meant the destruction of forums for presenting technological advances and innovations, which also affected the synergies they created with the needs of local agriculture, and with the economic and reproductive structure of rural communities. A corporative and compulsory trade union apparatus was set up to ensure discipline and demobilization and contain any conflict among the rural population⁴. Thus, contact between agricultural experts and farmers became

² On the repression of civil servant engineers in the Ministry of Agriculture, see PAN-MONTOJO, J., (2009), "La depuración de los ingenieros del Ministerio de Agricultura, 1936-1942", in CUESTA BUSTILLO, J., (coord.), *La depuración de funcionarios bajo la dictadura franquista: (1936-1975)*, Madrid, Fundación Largo Caballero, pp. 232-247; regarding the repression of the technical experts that managed agrarian research centres, see BERNÁRDEZ SOBREIRA, A. & CABO VILLAVARDE, M., (1996), "Ciencia y dictadura: la investigación agronómica en Galicia durante el primer franquismo (1936-1950)", *Noticario de Historia Agraria*, 12, pp. 119-139; on the repression and exile of members of the veterinarians corps, see CORDERO DEL CAMPILLO, M., (2003), *La Medicina en el exilio republicano*, Alcalá de Henares, Universidad de Alcalá.

³ PAN-MONTOJO, J., (2005), *Apostolado, profesión y tecnología. Una historia de los ingenieros agrónomos en España*, Madrid, MAPA, pp. 299-302.

⁴ Regarding the repression of trade-unionism in the pre-war period, see FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, L., (1993), "Represión franquista y desarticulación social en Galicia. La destrucción de la organización societaria campesina, 1936-1942", *Historia Social*, 15, pp. 49-70; CABANA IGLESIA, A. & CABO

infrequent and difficult, and even press, radio and other broadcasting efforts were debilitated. The role of the engineers in the Brotherhoods (*Hermandades*) was circumscribed to structural design. The experts lost all their day-to-day and management influence. Civil servant positions closely linked to farmers were occupied by unqualified individuals whose only merit was to have participated and suffered on Franco's side in the Civil War (by being jailed, having had property confiscated, being mutilated, etc.). The relationship between the experts and the *Hermandades* personnel was conflictive. The latter were quick to place all responsibility for agricultural problems on the former, thus freeing themselves from the consequences of their own incompetence. This led to a distancing of the experts from any institutions involved in deploying agrarian policy or approaching farmers, even as consultants.

The *Hermandades* had decisive influence in areas such as hiring agricultural labour and reallocating scarce agricultural funds and confiscated resources. Many authors have established parallels between these membership organizations and those developed in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany⁵. Gómez Herráez (2008) pointed out that corporativism in Spain was not just a component of the Falangist programme, it was also entrenched in Catholic and traditionalist thinking, with antecedents in the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and in the experiences of Catholic trade unions. During this period that was strongly inspired by the European fascist movements, some aspects of the Spanish trade union institutions derived from the German Labour Front (DAF) and Italian corporations.

4) *Return of the large-scale landowner as the preferred subject for innovation* (Fernández Prieto, 2007: 307-312). The Franco regime entirely transformed the image of the peasantry. The dominant paternalist view of the nineteenth century revived among the agricultural experts, who blamed the poor reception of their innovations on rustic individualism or aversion to change. This biased and prejudiced view had been gradually overcome in the first third of the twentieth

VILLAVERDE, M., (2006), "Cuando lo viejo muere y lo nuevo no acaba de nacer: la represión del asociacionismo agrario en Galicia (1936-1945)", in JUANA, J.de & PRADA, X., *Lo que han hecho en Galicia*, Barcelona, Crítica, pp. 165-185; MATEOS, A., (1998), "Violencia, política, nacionalsindicalismo y contrarreforma agraria. Cantabria, 1937-1941", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, Serie V, T. 1, pp. 159-189; Sobre las *Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos*, ORTÍZ HERAS, M., (1992), *Las Hermandades de labradores en el franquismo: Albacete 1943-1977*, Albacete, Estudios Albacetenses; COLLARTE PÉREZ, A. (2006), *Labregos no franquismo. Economía e sociedade rural na Galiza interior. As "hermandades sindicales" en Ourense (1943-1979)*, Ourense, Difusora de Letras, Artes e Ideas.; LANERO TÁBOAS, D., (2005), *Sindicalismo agrario franquista na provincia de Pontevedra: (1936-1975)*, Santiago de Compostela, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela; GARCÍA GIL, P., (2005), *Las Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos (1944-1977). Historia, documentos y fuentes*, Cuenca, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha; GÓMEZ HERRÁEZ, J.M., (2008), "Las Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos (1942-1977). Del análisis franquista a la historiografía actual", *Historia Agraria*, 44, pp. 119-155.

⁵ The deactivation of the pre-existing rural associative structure took place generally during the initial phases of the establishment of fascist or fascistized regimes in various parts of Europe. This became a required step in the construction of any trade union organization, which would form part of the State structure. In the case of Spanish fascism, we encounter a unique characteristic: while the various fascist regimes imposed their ideas throughout Europe while maintaining continuity with the pre-existing agrarian social structures, in Spain the established structures were instead dismantled and no new national-socialist system was planted until almost a decade later (Cabana & Cabo, 2006: 180-183).

century, so that both land-owning and tenant farmers had come to be recognized as the only possible historical subject of innovation. Now, the agricultural experts viewed peasants as infantile and the discourse of the regime was plagued with ruralist demagoguery. Later on, we will observe and discuss the distance between this discourse and the agrarian policy objectives of the Franco regime.

Francoism held that it was not socio-political initiatives but rather technical reforms that were needed to resolve agrarian problems. The agrarian policies of this period launched an entire fleet of legislative machinery and institutions designed to increase the standard of living in rural areas by safeguarding the interests of the large-scale agricultural landholders (Ortega López, 2007: 531-532) and dismantling the former Republican 'counterrevolutionary' approach. A multitude of administrative norms and technical and control services were established at the very outset. This gave the experts a central role in institutional design and as agrarian price and production regulation interventionists. The results were institutions and offices such as the National Wheat Service, the High Prosecutor's Office for Rates and the General Commissariat for Supplies and Transport.

Thus, autarky policy was "sustained, guided and advised" (Arco, 2005: 224) by technical experts, specifically by the agricultural engineers. Their faith in the elusive dream of self-sufficiency led them to ignore both environmental limitations and the peasant response to market demands in a context of State-managed agriculture. This included reducing the amount of land dedicated to cultivating products involved in State intervention, by falsifying harvest data in order to sell crops on the black market, by an inability to re-invest, etc. The consequences were catastrophic at all levels; agricultural production, productivity and output did not return to pre-war Republican levels until the 1960s.

The flagship agrarian policies of those years were reforestation and colonization, which focused on technical reform and implied an attempt to contain aspirations of land re-distribution, even though the programmes promised such reforms. We will see that while colonization had minimal effects, reforestation was very successful and resulted in the dominance of forestry engineers among the experts during the early Franco years.

Colonization involved the development of the agrarian programme of the Falange, the Spanish fascist party. However, it scarcely moved beyond legislative dispositions during the early Franco years. Colonization policy was based on respect for private property, autarky, irrigation and implementation of the Catholic social doctrine, with family as the basis for the socioeconomic organization of agriculture and the social function of property. The Falange assimilated features from its reference models, including State intervention, large transformative projects, integral reform, tutelage and transformation over redistribution, taken from Mussolini's *bonifica integral*, in conjunction with the ruralism, order and hierarchy of Nazi Germany. It also found inspiration in policies applied during the colonization of America (financing, irrigation plans, economic objectives, etc.). Last but not least, it was influenced by a negative model: the Republican agrarian reform and its collectivization, social aims, expropriations, etc. The research of Carlos Barciela (1986, 1990, 2001) describes the absolute failure of the National Colonization Institute (NCI), created in 1939. It could not solve the problem for which it was designed, the reform and adaptation of agrarian structures; nor did it clearly

mitigate problems such as unemployment in the agrarian sector. In fact, in its first ten years of existence, the NCI only managed to settle 1,759 families, rather than the official number of more than 25,000. The lack of financial resources was responsible for the gap between the plans and the reality of the colonization programme, both in regards to the number of colonists settled and the number of hectares of new irrigation. Pérez Rubio (1995:364) points out that the colonization policy was ever-present in public political messages during the Franco era, and became a 'star policy' in areas dominated by large landholdings. The actual results of this policy were mediocre at best.

The reforestation policy bore clear marks of Italian fascist legislative influence. This is seen in the legislative dispositions, the institutions created and even the manner in which the State proceeded in this area. It emulated the entrepreneurial attitude of the Italian fascist State, which became active in the industrialization of the wood and forestry products sector. Following the extreme all-encompassing regulatory approach of the Italians, it reorganized the *Patrimonio Forestal del Estado*, the organism in charge of reforestation policies, to give it a strong interventionist nature. The forest engineers working in the various levels of government or as professors at the *Escuela de Montes* (Forestry School) became the champions of the autarkic ideals of the State. For them it was a matter of delving deeper into the principles that they had already adopted during the earlier Primo de Rivera dictatorship⁶. They accepted the precepts of intensive forestry almost unanimously, without significant changes to their nineteenth-century guiding principles, and included new technical innovations such as intensive use of farm machinery, chemicals, etc.⁷

The corps of forest engineers also benefitted from the strategic purpose that the paper products industry was given within the economic policy of the autarkic regime. Their power within the State administration was only matched by that of civil servants in the national tax authority (*Hacienda*). Thus, corporative conflicts with agricultural engineers over whether to use land for agricultural or forest purposes were invariably resolved to the benefit of forestry. The success of reforestation policies throughout Spain made forestry experts the most hated in rural communities, since reforestation brought an end to the historical mixed use of land for farming, pasture and forestry⁸.

⁶ CASALS COSTA, V., (1996), *Los ingenieros de montes en la España contemporánea, 1848-1936*, Barcelona, Ed. Del Serbal

⁷ Some forestry engineers were favourable to conservationism as the forestry ideal, but this was limited to a theoretical debate between technical experts. It never went beyond that for lack of defenders and because of the dictatorial regime, which would demote anyone that had the valour to criticize the formulas that were being applied. RICO BOQUETE, E., (1999), (ed.) *Pensamento forestal no século XX*, Santiago de Compostela, Xunta de Galicia & Caixa Ourense

⁸ The Franco regime's forestry policies altered the existing balance of the agricultural ecosystem, transforming spaces that had been used for agriculture, forestry and pasture into areas used exclusively for forestry. These areas were increasingly disconnected from the agricultural context, especially due to the reforestation program based on the substitution of autochthonous species with other, faster growing ones.

2. After fascism: technocracy

The 1950s ushered in a new period for agriculture in Spain, and for the agricultural experts, who would experience their moment of greatest recognition. The autarky ideal of the 1940s and the deep agricultural crisis it had provoked were left behind and a process of recovery began, based on price liberalization and structural transformation. The Franco regime abandoned national trade union principles and entered a technocratic phase. An attempt was made to reform the agricultural sector with one objective in mind: to increase agricultural productivity and economic efficiency through technical improvements. Thus agrarian policy was placed under the direction of its engineers.

In the prior phase trade unions and forestry engineers had played the key roles, but now the agronomy engineers took centre stage. They began the technical reform of Spanish agriculture by imposing the principles of the Green Revolution⁹. The isolation of the prior period was overcome, a period in which technical experts had carried out research with scant resources and designed actions that were not implemented. This had stunted their ability to stimulate technological innovation¹⁰. Engineers now became involved in all steps: as ideologues, but also designing policies, executing projects, etc. They came back into touch with the farmers. However, the relationship did not return to what it had been in the first third of the twentieth century. Instead of a certain mutual empathy and cooperation, there was now 'mutual distrust' (Fernández Prieto, 2007:311). The experts perceived the farmers as beings incapable of recognizing their own interests, and thus paid no attention to counterproposals or misgivings based on economic or reproductive rationale. Because they could not perceive the land-worker as an innovator, they made no effort to adapt scientific or academic culture to the rural environment or to facilitate understanding. This disdain for the farmers eventually compromised the spread of innovation. The engineers were entirely confident in the 'progress' that could be achieved through their new technology. The measures they proposed were not open to discussion or modification, especially by 'ignorant peasants'. Innovations were often imposed without consensus, simply because there was a dictatorship that allowed such things. The Spanish road to the Green Revolution diverged from the agricultural modernization process of Western Europe, with its democratic political arenas, pluralist societies, spreading Welfare States, trade union agreements, etc. In Spain, the Green Revolution industrial-agrarian development model was imposed by coercion. Unlike the agrarian crisis of the late nineteenth century, it allowed no margin for the peasants to adapt to the new circumstances under the best possible conditions.

The main lines of action during this period were the concentration of land and ongoing reforestation and colonization policies, with the latter actually moving beyond the sphere of publicity to achieve full development. This meant prioritizing

⁹ FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, L., (2007), *El apagón tecnológico del franquismo: estado e innovación en la agricultura española del siglo XX*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, pp. 311-317

¹⁰ Studies of technological change have established a precise chronology of technological innovation in Spanish agriculture. They emphasize the fact that the Civil War and post-war period postponed innovation by altering the economic and social conditions of technological transformation, as well as the role of the State and institutions. FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, L., (2001), "Caminos del cambio tecnológico en las agriculturas españolas contemporáneas", in PUJOL, J. et al., *El Pozo de todos los males: sobre el atraso en la agricultura española contemporánea*, Barcelona, Crítica, pp. 95-146

the irrigation of new land and establishing land units and cultivation methods that were adequate for implementing the measures included in the Green Revolution model, such as the introduction of large-scale machinery and chemical fertilization. Along with colonization, concentration of landholdings became the main pillar of the Franco regime's policy for changing agrarian structure. This essentially technical approach was scrupulously respectful of private property. It sought to solve the problems caused by the extraordinary fragmentation of small property holdings and to establish landholdings of adequate size and structure for introducing mechanization, which involved opening new roads, for example. Although landholding concentration was present from the very beginning of the economic and social land reform programme, the regime did not develop a legal tool to implement it until 1949-1952. Land concentration occurred only occasionally until the 1960s, and met its greatest success during the following decade.

3. A new model: agrarian extensionism

The 1960s were primarily years of continuity with the Francoist Green Revolution agrarian policy of the 1950s, but should be understood as a new phase because a different dynamic developed between the experts and the farmers. Parting from a situation of total distrust, the two groups advanced towards each other in a new model where the experts came to see themselves as permanent consultants for the farmers. The derogatory view of farmers as a group incapable of accepting changes and innovations was overcome. This philosophical change was in large part due to the importation of the United States' extensionist model¹¹. In post-war Europe, the Marshall Plan contemplated sending U.S. experts to Europe to provide consulting services regarding the basic principles of U.S. agricultural extensionism. Though not included in the Marshall Plan, the U.S. Economic Mission found its way to Spain (Sánchez de Puerta, 1997: 922). A new series of scholarships was offered in 1956 and enlarged in 1960, in order to train agronomists abroad, mostly in the United States. The primary objective of the Agrarian Extension Service (AES) was to increase agricultural production and thus increase the standard of living in rural areas, based on the pragmatic modernization philosophy that more is better. Agrarian producers were offered professional, business and commercial training along with assistance in the application of new technologies. Women were offered extra-agrarian activities in home economics and domestic arts such as crafts, food preservation techniques, dressmaking and sewing, diet and nutrition, hygiene, child care and home skills (Gómez Benito, 1996: 213).

In contrast with the prior period, the aim was to make the agrarian expert available to the farmer. To this end the experts dedicated themselves exclusively to teaching, with no fiscal-type or control functions whatever. However, the relationship was still understood as one where the former guided the latter (Gómez Benito, 1996: 210). From a functionalist perspective of social change, the AES sought to be a 'civilizing agent', to the point that its work was actually defined as 'apostolic' (Gómez Benito, 1996: 218; Fernández Prieto, 2007: 332). It was as if the birth of new

¹¹ In spite of its novelty, it was not starting with a clean slate. In the nineteenth century there were already public agencies in several European countries and the United States that were linked to the ministries or departments of education and made use of itinerant professors to extend education beyond the formal sphere and into rural areas (Sánchez de Puerta, 1997: 920).

peasants with new values had been entrusted to technological transfer. All who have studied the AES agree regarding its significant culturizing effects.

The AES was created in 1955 and began experimentally in areas of colonization or small parcel concentration. It was organized into district agencies, in a manner coherent with its interest in being close to the farm worker. Its first agents, including women, were required to show good physical attributes, good health, consideration and moral integrity, as well as basic agricultural understanding and concern for rural issues. They saw themselves more as social encouragers than technical experts, though their qualifications were important. They were university graduates, agricultural engineers, teachers, agricultural foremen and even distinguished farmers (Gómez Benito, 1996: 211). Eventually, the AES was composed mainly of mid-level technical experts and expanded to include sociologists. Only a few agrarian engineers or veterinarians could be found in the highest offices, which suggests corporate conflict between mid-level and high-level experts: two groups with different sociological roots and ways of operating.

According to Gómez Benito (1996: 212), the methods used by Extension agents to get their ideas to the farmers fell into three categories: individual attention (visits to farms or services in offices, consultations by telephone or by post, practical demonstrations), group activities (meetings, conferences, demonstrations, courses, trips), which were the prioritized option until the 1970s, and mass media (publications, radio, educational campaigns).

The work focus of the AES in the 1960s was well defined and known as the 'four arms' of the Extension service: youth, families and homes, cooperativism and community development, on-site technology transfer and management training (Sánchez de Puerta, 1997: 931). There were other more social objectives, but in practice the emphasis was education and technology transfer.

Though the objectives were clear, the results were less than clear: was it technical or social improvement that they were actually achieving? This was the inner dilemma of many AES agents, who wondered if their work had actually contributed to improving peasant quality of life or if they had served more as transmitters in the process of shifting the agrarian population to the industrial sector. It seems clear that some were more than that, and among their merits is the key role they played in democratizing the countryside through such vehicles as assembly protocol, group dynamics, direct election systems and the introduction of class-based trade unionism.

The AES introduced a modernized agricultural model that included the specialization of production and producers. It is probable that they were largely successful in extending this model, although the results were eventually counterproductive in some cases. The AES concepts depended on the community as a whole and held that improving productivity would also increase well-being. Young peasants turned agrarian businessmen would then guarantee the future of a rural context adapted to the times. It did not turn out this way: the countryside was depopulated of all qualified personnel, who saw the city and industry as their best option for the future.

4. The evolution and duality of the Francoist rural discourse

In spite of the agrarian rhetoric of the regime, industry immediately became the priority of Francoism, and thus agriculture was *de facto* and consciously relegated to an intermediate plane, as in fascist Italy and fascist Germany¹². But in the images, the discourse and the propaganda ruralism was an idealization or mythification of the peasantry and its identification with the essences of race, traditional values and national identity. It played a decisive role in the legitimization of the new regime during the first phase of Francoism. For the classic fascisms, it became an efficient mobilizer of the rural masses; in the Spanish version, it was used to retain the social support of the peasantry¹³.

The role of R.W. Darré, Minister of Agriculture in the first years of the Nazi regime, is perhaps the most emblematic for its use of rural discourse to generate adherence to the regime. His *Blut und Boden* (blood and land) rhetoric included elements linked to agrarian romanticism, in an effort to infiltrate the agrarian societies of the 1930s, when the Nazi propagandist rural organization began. Darré recovered components of the nineteenth century reactionary tradition such as identification with nature, race and nation, which condemned liberalism and Marxism and criticized the loss of essential traditions associated with the peasantry. The most emblematic Nazi agrarian policies (colonization of the East, territorial reorganization, modification of inheritance systems and market regulation) were always accompanied by a discourse that would please farm workers, who had been transformed into the representatives of the German nation. Darré's ruralist discourse contributed significantly to the rural penetration of the NSDAP and to maintaining the regime after 1933. Its agrarian utopias and mythical images were a key to the conversion of much of the rural population and an effective publicity measure, although many of their legal dispositions proved to be void of content in practice¹⁴. Another example of the use of ruralist-coloured discourse was the Vichy regime, which had the support of most of the peasantry, who were reticent towards parliamentarianism due to the repercussions of the agrarian crisis of the 1930s. *La terre, elle, ne ment pas* (the land, she doesn't lie) became one of the catch-phrases of the official cooperativist doctrine of Pétain.

In Portugal, the official discourse of the Oliveira Salazar regime was also full of populist and paternalist appeals to farm workers and, as in the German and Spanish cases, understood as the seed of the nation and a source of moral values, or *arrabalde do céu* in its propaganda. Salazar knew how to take advantage of the deeply rooted Catholicism of the *camponeses* and managed to identify it with the values of the regime, which were contrary to the tendencies of secularizing ideologies. Inspired by Scholastic and Thomist philosophy and nineteenth century anti-rationalist, anti-modernist papal encyclicals, Salazarism played to feelings of discontent among farm workers, who were undergoing a transition to capitalism

¹² VELASCO MURVIEDRO, C., (1982), "El pensamiento agrario y la apuesta industrializadora en la España de los 40", *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 23, pp. 237-273.

¹³ RENTON, D., (2001), "The agrarian roots of fascism: German excepcionalism revised", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 28, 4, pp. 127-148, p. 142; CABANA IGLESIA, A., (2009), *Xente de orde. O consentimento cara ao franquismo en Galicia*, Santa Comba, 3C3, pp. 230-248.

¹⁴ SANZ LAFUENTE, G., (2004), "Naturaleza y nacionalsocialismo. Una aproximación a Blut und Boden y a Richard Walther Darré", in FORCADELL, C. et al., (ed.), (2004), *Usos de la Historia y políticos de la memoria*, Zaragoza, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, pp. 494-525.

which transformed them into weak economic players. Salazar's ruralist discourse cast a mystifying aura around the values of the peasant world such as family, duty, nation, religion, community, the glorification of rural work and tradition. To peasant eyes, these elements of the Salazarist rhetoric implied a degree of recognition which they reciprocated by offering their consent to the regime¹⁵. As with other European fascist regimes, this did not keep State policies from subordinating the interests of small and medium-scale landowners to the exclusive benefit of the large-scale *senhores do vinho* (vineyard owners) and especially the *senhores do pão* (grain farmers). Neither did it keep industrial interests from directing mid-century and later New State policies¹⁶.

The situation was identical in Spain¹⁷. The Franco regime authorities consistently used discursive resources that matched those of their European counterparts. González de Benito (1996) suggests that we consider the 'social message' behind State activities in the rural context, a message rooted in pre-war Catholic social tradition. This consisted in showing at least formal and theoretical interest in improving the quality of life in rural areas and applying innovative production mechanisms. Francisco Cobo (2005:41) insists that these innovations or the promise of a fair distribution of land were intended to attract not only elite rural traditionalists and the agrarian bourgeoisie, who desired to finally eradicate all the left-wing novelties established during the Second Republic, but also to attract farm worker collectives, rural professionals (including local artisans and merchants) and even day labourers or sharecroppers who dreamed of becoming landowners. The Francoist discourse assured them that this last point was covered by policies such as colonization. Antonio Bernárdez (1999:64) confirms that ruralist discourse highlighted the role of the spread of technology to improve production and thus avoid social conflict. This was behind the insistence on the need to educate the labourer through Francoist schools and trade unions or by constructing a framework for bringing innovations to the masses. Without a doubt, ruralist discourse and Francoist propaganda was more effective when expressed, if not entirely in religious terms, at least in a mystical tone that alluded to 'community values' and 'providence'. Thus, for example, the obligation to supply a fixed quota of the harvest to the State was frequently explained in terms of solidarity with the less fortunate in other areas and the need to supply soldiers on the front, who were cast as members of the family and the community. Paternalist tones were also used when addressing the rural population. Value was given to the idea of a protective State that was concerned for its peasantry, with significant references to the fact that the *Caudillo* (Franco) and his regime recognized the merit and sacrifices of those who worked the land. To enrich this political attitude, the discourse

¹⁵ SILVA, M.C., (1995), *Resistir e adaptar-se. Constrangimentos e estratégias camponesas no Noroeste de Portugal*, Oporto, Afrontamento, pp. 30-31.

¹⁶ FONSECA, I.; FREIRE, D.; GODINHO, P., *Resistencia e conflicto no contexto rural português (1926-1974)*, Lisboa, *Relatorio final de investigación, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa*.

¹⁷ See the notion of the "sovereignty of the peasantry" and of "agrarian fascism" in the sense of repression and ruralism in SEVILLA-GUZMÁN, E., (1979), *La evolución del campesinado en España*, Barcelona. Edicions 62; CASTILLO, J.J., (1979), *Proprietarios muy pobres*, Madrid, Ministerio de Agricultura; CAZORLA SÁNCHEZ, A., (1999), *Desarrollo sin reformistas : Dictadura y campesinado en el nacimiento de una nueva sociedad en Almería, 1939-1975*, Almería, Instituto de Estudios Almerienses.

presented Spanish agriculture as a backward, abandoned land that had been consistently neglected by prior governments, in which the peasantry was only interesting as an object of manipulation for the private ends of trade union demagogues and politicians.

In the 1950s there was a change in Francoist agrarian policy and the ideology that sustained it. The discourse followed suit and maintained its basic features through the following decade. Ruralist discourse gave way to a discourse centred on technological improvement. Agriculture was treated as one more economic sector, with the objective of increasing production by introducing technological innovations (Gómez Benito, 1996: 48, 129). As the 'countryside' left behind its idyllic aura to become the aseptic and economizing 'agricultural sector', the 'farm worker' was no longer a 'peasant' full of ethereal virtues but was instead referred to in the discourse of the regime as an 'agricultural businessman'.

Along with the analysis of the farmers as 'subjects of discourse', it is necessary to mention the private agro-industrial groups, the true 'subjects of agrarian policy'. Even though the discourse doesn't indicate it, the objective of the regime was to stimulate industrialization nationwide. State policies promoted the technological development of agriculture to achieve greater production of raw materials for agro-industries, to free up human resources and re-direct them to other economic sectors as cheap labour, and, after that, to increase the standard of living of the peasantry and convert them into consumers of manufactured goods.

Bibliography (other than that indicated in the notes)

- ARCO BLANCO, M.A. del, (2005), *Las alas del Ave Fénix. La política agraria del primer franquismo (1936-1959)*, Granada, Ed. Comares
- BARCIELA, C. (1990), “La colonización agraria en España, 1939-1951”, en PÉREZ PICAZO, M.T.; LEMEUNIER, G., (eds.), *Agua y modo de producción*, Barcelona, Crítica, pp. 98-120
- BARCIELA, C., (1986), “Los costes del franquismo en el sector agrario: la ruptura del proceso de transformaciones”, en GARRABOU, R. et al., (ed.): *Historia agraria de la España Contemporánea. 3. El fin de la agricultura tradicional (1900-1960)*, Barcelona, Crítica
- BARCIELA, C., (2001), *La España de Franco. 1939-1975. Economía*, Madrid, Síntesis
- FERNÁNDEZ PRIETO, L., (2009), “A extensión agraria como instrumento da Revolución Verde en España” en LÓPEZ DÍAZ, M., (ed.), *Estudios en homenaje al profesor José M^a Pérez García. Historia y Cultura*, Vol. 1, Vigo, Universidade de Vigo.
- GÓMEZ BENITO, C., (1996), *Políticos, burócratas y expertos: un estudio de la política agraria y la sociología rural en España (1936-1959)*, Madrid, Siglo XXI
- ORTEGA LÓPEZ, T.M., (2007), “Las miserias del fascismo rural. Las relaciones laborales en la agricultura española, 1936-1948”, *Historia Agraria*, pp. 531-553
- PÉREZ RUBIO, J.A., (1995), *Yunteros, braceros y colonos. La política agraria en Extremadura (1940-1975)*, Madrid, MAPA
- SÁNCHEZ de PUERTA, T., F., (1997), “Estado y agricultura: La extensión agraria”. En GÓMEZ DE BENITO, C. e GONZÁLEZ RODRÍGUEZ, J. J. (ed.), *Agricultura y sociedad en la España contemporánea*, Madrid, MAPA
- SÁNCHEZ de PUERTA T., F. (1996), *Extensión agraria y desarrollo rural. Sobre la evolución de las teorías y praxis extensionistas*, Madrid, Mapa