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Empire, Colony and Dictatorship: The Colonial Question and the Making of Spanish Fascism

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This text proposes the consideration of the political culture of Spanish colonialism and the Hispanic imperial project from a historical perspective concerning so-called 'Spanish fascism'. This contribution argues that Spanish fascism was the consequence of colonial ideology derived from the Spanish Empire in a context that could be considered as the return of coloniality into the Iberian Peninsula in the 1930s, after the closure and failure of the Spanish colonial enterprise first in the Caribbean and then, second, in Africa. This article proposes a journey through the first third of the 20th century, from the end of the Spanish colonial presence in Latin America, the Caribbean and the North of Africa, to the return of the Africanist military, imperial ideology, and colonial violence into the Peninsula. The paper considers the period from the Battle of Annual (1921) to the revolution in Asturias (1934), the military coup in 1936 and the colonial military's establishment of the Francoist dictatorship.

1. Introduction: The Dialectics of Coloniality under Discussion

This article is part of intellectual efforts produced in the last decade around what has come to be called the epistemological decolonization of Europe. From different perspectives, authors such as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos, 2010; 2019), Heriberto Cairo and Ramón Grosfoguel (2010), Grosfoguel (2011), Dispesh Chakrabarty (2008), Montserrat Garcelán (2016), Manuela Boatca (2006), María Paula Meneses (2011), Larisa Pérez Flores (2018), Pastora Filigrana (2020) and (García Fernández 2016; 2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2021) have worked on producing critical thinking about Eurocentrism from Europe itself. In all these works, we find what elsewhere has become known as a particular dialectic of coloniality (García Fernández, 2021). This concept argues that so-called hegemonic Europe has developed its pattern of colonial, capitalist, racist and patriarchal power both in its external expansion into the world and in the internal development that preceded it. It has created a global power pattern that echoes the relationship between between internal domination and external colonial expansion. We can observe this colonial dialectic in economic extractivism, racialization and social classification, or epistemic violence against national, ethnic and cultural minorities. This dialectic of coloniality starts from Ramón Grosfoguel's proposal of double coloniality when he points out that decolonization implies an intervention, inside and outside Europe and the United States, in the racial, political, economic and gender hierarchies constructed under centuries of European colonialism in the world (García Fernández, 2019b; Grosfoguel, 2009: 19). In turn, this double coloniality has its origins in the concept of double consciousness, expressed by the African-American thinker WEB du Bois (1994: 2).

The development of colonial violence, both internally and externally, has haunted the historical development of the Spanish state for at least the last five hundred years. Thinking about coloniality in a dialectical way allows us to understand that colonial policies and coloniality had different internal journeys in Europe before and were contemporary to the configuration of modern colonialism. The logic of colonial domination and the forms of oppression in the colonial context permeate and impregnate the internal oppression that European states exercise against their population. This logic is operates in a dialectical relationship between forms of external colonial domination and internal colonial domination against minoritized ethnic and cultural communities. This violence that nation-states exercise in specific contexts against their population implies the application of applying colonial violence to their metropolitan populations: for example, in processes of dehumanization such as the violence of Nazism against European Jews or the violence of Spanish fascism against republican, communist and anarchist sectors; also against ethnic minorities such as

gipsies and Afro-descendants and national minorities such as Catalans, Basques or Andalusians. This internal colonial violence is constitutive of European states. It is also central to explaining the history of 20th-century Europe and phenomena such as fascism, the world wars and the crisis of European world hegemony after the end of World War II in 1945 (Arendt, 1998; Balfour, 1997; Casanova, 2020).

In different works in Latin America, in the Caribbean or in Europe itself, other forms of coloniality, colonial oppression, and cultural violence towards collectives whose colonial marker was not strictly skin colour have been theorized (González Casanova, 2006; Dussel, 2016; Fanon, 1963; Grosfoguel, 2020; Lafont, 1971; de los Santos, 1979; Sousa Santos, 2016). This paper analyzes those of ethnonational oppression in southern European populations whose marker of colonial oppression is not strictly the racial marker; I also make reference to ethnic, cultural, class and territorial markers. It is of relevance for this paper to rescue the reading of Ramón Grosfoguel (2012), whose Fanonian reading of racism goes beyond skin colour, as Grosfoguel refers to the set of oppressions that question the idea of humanity. This reading of racism allows us to understand the consequences of colonialism and coloniality in terms of dehumanization as an important marker and not only in terms of discrimination against skin colour (Grosfoguel, 2012: 93–94).

Similarly, there are already numerous works and intellectual discussions that allow us to understand the pattern of colonial power as a matrix of domination that is historically generated in the peripheries of Europe and that later expands with external conquests (Bartlett, 2003; Grosfoguel, 2013; Dussel, 2008; García Fernández, 2018b). The dialectic of coloniality invites us to think about the processes of conquest and colonization, of ethnic and cultural oppression at the margins of Europe; also the methods of racial domination, whiteness and colonial capitalism developed by the elites of African and American countries in recent centuries. It invites us to look beyond the homogenizing and romantic visions of a white and colonizing Europe constructed by the white, bourgeois and colonizing elites themselves in the face of the racialized and colonized world.

To make the concept of colonialism more complex and to think from an external and internal dialectic, we must consider what Ramón Grosfoguel (2013) calls the four genocides/epistemicides that constitute Western modernity. According to Grosfoguel, the four extraordinary processes of colonial violence that include modernity are the following: the conquest of Al-Andalus and the Andalusian genocide; the conquest of Latin America and the indigenous genocide; the kidnapping of the African population and the slave trade, and the burning of witches in Europe which constitutes feminicide. Of these four genocides/epistemicides, two of them arise in European territory and are

directed at the European population, such as the Moorish communities and the women witches (Ramón Grosfoguel, 2013). While on the other hand, the other two took place in the internal space of the Spanish Empire, namely the Andalusian genocide and the American genocide. We must also consider the ramifications of the conquests and colonial violence do not end with the independence of the colonies. Nor does coloniality end in the territories of the new American republics.

2. Colonial Violence, Fascism and Imperial Projects: a Post-Colonial Discussion

How colonial violence operates in the context of minority communities within Europe is an under-researched topic. The relationship between external colonial violence and dehumanization phenomena is a subject that post-colonial studies must necessarily address. As Jesús Izquierdo Martín points out:

> Postcolonial criticism has emphasized the back-and-forth path of the colonial process, primarily through the great diasporas that, coming from colonial territories, have affected the heart of the metropolises. However, the other side of this internal colonisation has yet to be emphasized as much: it is the side of colonisation that Europe develops concerning itself.[1] (2018: 920)

The historiographical field of study of the relationship between internal coloniality and colonial expansion has been particularly neglected in the 19th and 20th centuries, that is, after the post-colonial period that opened up following the independence of the American republics in the first third of the 19th century. Studies that highlight the relationship between the forms adopted by colonial violence and fascism and totalitarianism in Europe are, as aforementioned, scarce. The Jewish and anti-fascist thinker Hannah Arendt was the first author to point out the intimate relationship between colonial violence and the violence of authoritarian regimes within Europe. In her work *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt, 1998), published in 1951, she addresses the relationship between the imperialist violence that European powers exercised in Africa and the violence exercised by totalitarian regimes against ethnic and cultural minorities in Europe itself. The author points out how colonial violence anticipates the violence exercised by European authoritarian regimes. In Hannah Arendt's words:

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[1] 'La crítica poscolonial ha destacado el camino de ida y vuelta del proceso colonial, especialmente a través de las grandes diásporas que, procedentes de los territorios coloniales, han afectado al corazón de las metrópolis. Pero la otra cara de esta colonización interna no ha sido tan enfatizada: es el lado de la colonización que Europa desarrolla con respecto de sí misma.' From this work and from all the works consulted in Spanish that are cited in English, all translations are by the author himself.

The three decades between 1884 and 1914 separate the 19th century, which ends with the struggle for Africa and the birth of the pan-movements, from the 20th century, which begins with the First World War. It is the period of imperialism, with its mobile calm in Europe and its dizzying development in Africa and Asia. Some of the fundamental aspects of this period seem so close to the totalitarian phenomena of the 20th century that it may be justified to consider the whole period as a preparatory case for later catastrophes.[2] (Arendt, 1998: 181)

Hannah Arendt experienced Nazi violence first-hand. As a Jewish activist, she was involved in various movements for the rights of the Jewish people in Germany. Due to her political activity, she had to go into exile several times; first to France in the second decade of the 20th century and finally to the United States from the 1930s onwards, after Hitler came to power. For the author, imperialism was the military and commercial expansion phase of the old logic of industrial economic expansion that would eventually explode within Europe (Arendt, 1998: 207). According to Arendt, the transformations that took place within the old Europe of between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th century gave rise to three extraordinary centrifugal and centripetal expansionary processes: Nazism in Germany, the rise of the USSR, and the imperialism of France and Great Britain (Arendt, 1998: 181). In an exact reflection of this, Arendt states that the series of explosive transformations experienced by Europe after the industrial revolution and the fall of the old empires (Austro-Hungarian, German, Russian and Ottoman) clouded the future of Europe and led it into a situation of decadence that seemed to have no way out. The solution to this conundrum was imperialism (208). For the author, European imperialism imploded both in its external dimension and in another internal dimension which is little explored in studies on imperialism. This internal dimension is described by the author as 'continental imperialism' (29). This continental imperialism, according to Arendt, developed the same policies of violence, racial difference, social classification and dehumanization in the internal context of Europe as it had developed in the continents of Africa, Latin America and Asia (299). From Jewish subjectivity and Arendt's thought, a first analysis can be observed that puts the violence of imperialism and its relation to the violence of fascism in dialogue. In this case, Arendt never considered the Spanish case, as she never considered Spain as a case for analysis, neither in its colonial expansion nor its

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[2] 'Las tres décadas que median entre 1884 y 1914 separan al siglo XIX, que acabó con la rapiña por África y el nacimiento de los pan-movimientos, del siglo XX, que comenzó con la primera guerra mundial. Este es el periodo del imperialismo, con su móvil sosiego en Europa y su vertiginoso desarrollo en África y Asia. Algunos de los aspectos fundamentales de esta época parecen tan próximos al fenómeno totalitario del siglo XX, que puede resultar justificable considerar a todo el periodo como una case preparatoria de las subsiguientes catástrofes.'

totalitarian regime. These early and premature reflections, contemporary to fascism itself, will guide further research into the relationship between Spanish colonialism and fascism in the Iberian Peninsula.

Second, it is essential to take up the contributions of the Caribbean anti-colonial thinker Aimé Césaire, a Martinican communist leader, poet and mayor of Fort-de-France (capital of Martinique). In his work *Discours sur le colonialism* [*Discourse on Colonialism*], the author points out that the impact of fascism in Europe had brought the violence that Europe had previously unleashed on the world to the heart of Europe (Césaire, 2006: 15).

The tremendous shock experienced by Spaniards and and all societies in Europe was to see how the Africanist army carried out colonial-style violence against its population. Based on this reflection by Aimé Césaire in 1955, we will analyze the rise of Spanish fascism and its Africanist origins, exploring the consideration of the civil war as a peninsular colonial war and Franco's military dictatorship as an authoritarian regime typical of regimes born of colonial violence. In the 1990s, a colonial genealogy of the extermination methods of European fascism is evidenced in Giorgio Agamben's 1996 work, *Mezzi Senza Fine. Note Sulla Politica* [*Ends without means. Notes on politics*]. In a tangential manner, and devoting very little attention to this question, Agamben considers that the fundamental antecedents of the Nazi extermination camps are to be found in the colonial forms of punishment of rebellions in colonial territories. In this respect, Agamben discusses whether the first appearance of the camps should be identified with the camps created by the Spanish in Cuba in 1896 to repress the insurrections of the colony's population, or with the concentration camps in which the British, at the beginning of the century, crammed the Boers. What matters here is that in both cases, according to Agamben, it is a question of the extension of a state of exception linked to a colonial war to an entire civilian population (Agamben, 1996).

More recently, the last decade has seen the publication of a series of relevant works that discuss the relationship between colonial violence and the forms of the domination of fascism in Europe. An example is the work *Topographies of Fascism: Habitus, Space, and Writing in Twentieth-Century Spain*, published by Nil Santiañez from Saint Louis University, Missouri, in 2013. In this work, the author proposes the concept of fascist habitus (Santiañez, 2013) as the political behaviour developed by the colonial military before Spanish fascism. This concept explains that the discursive formation of Spanish fascism developed fundamentally during the Spanish colonial experience in the Rif between 1921 and 1927. According to the author, the practices of colonial violence developed in North Africa in the 1920s would form the foundations of the project that Spanish fascism would institutionalize from 1936 onwards (Santiañez, 2013).

Another important work is María Agustina Monasterio Baldor's 2016 New York University doctoral thesis, titled *Contributions of Blood: Subalternity, Post-Slavery and Necropolitics Between Cuba, Morocco and Spain (1868–1936)*, in which, based on Satiañez's hypotheses, she explores the Caribbean antecedents to Spanish colonial violence in Africa. The author also confronts slave violence, the processes of denial and dehumanization produced by colonial slave economies in the Caribbean, to explain the processes of political repression in the North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula during the 1930s (Monasterio Baldor, 2016: 138).

I would also like to highlight the work published by historian Pablo Sánchez León *¿Tan solo una guerra civil? 1936 como conquista colonial civilizadora y yihad católica moderna* [*Just a civil war? 1936 as a civilising colonial conquest and modern Catholic Jihad*], published in 2017. The author traces some of the characteristics of the Spanish Civil War as a war of religious extermination based on the forms of ethnic and cultural cleansing that can be found in the war against the Republican enemy during the colonial military uprising and the Civil War.

Two recent contributions from the field of criminology and legal sociology have also been made, first by the sociologist and jurist Aitor Jimenez González, *Enemigos del Estado: Las Guerras Legales de España contra obreros e independentistas* [*Enemies of the State: Spain's legal wars against Workers and Independence*] (2018) and, on the other hand, by the sociologists Ignasi Bernat and David Whyte, *Postfascism in Spain: The struggle for Catalonia* (2020). Both contributions point out that the authoritarianism and political violence of the dictatorship (1936–1977) and post-Francoism (1978–2020) cannot be understood without a historical analysis of the relationship between the Spanish colonial army and the repression against the workers' movement in the first third of the 20th century in Spain.

Finally, historian Julian Casanova's published work *Una violencia indómita: El siglo XX europeo* [*An Indomitable Violence: Europe's 20th century*] (2020) incorporates a chapter called 'Race and Empire' in which he explores the relationship between colonial acts of violence and the forms of extermination produced in the internal context of 20th-century Europe. The Latin American wars of independence in the 1820s and 1830s led to a new bifurcation of Spanish colonialism in the Caribbean, specifically towards Cuba and Puerto Rico, and in the 20th century to North Africa, specifically to the Protectorate of Morocco. This new bifurcation of Spanish colonialism towards North Africa resulted from the decline of the Iberian empires. The Spanish hegemonic cycle (which ended at the end of the 19th century with the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico) and the rise of the new French and British hegemony led to a new phase of Spanish colonialism in Africa. The first Spanish-Moroccan war of 1859–1860 and

the Berlin Conference of 1885 started this new colonial phase. In his recently published work, historian Julián Casanova argues that the similarities in the means of colonial rule and internal oppression resulted from processes of international collaboration and imitation in conquest and the suppression of revolts. The violence unleashed by Europeans in the colonies followed similar patterns, including the deployment of indigenous auxiliary forces, the construction of concentration camps, or the use of collective reprisals. The introduction of discriminatory racial laws and the construction of white supremacist colonial identities were also a part of these shared experiences, from the time of Christopher Columbus in the 15th century to the wars of decolonization in the mid-20th century (Casanova, 2020: 54).

Fourteen years after the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898, Spanish colonialism was dragged towards the hegemonic spaces of French colonialism in North Africa. The Protectorate of Morocco was inaugurated in 1912; it would also be the territory where the colonial military arrived from the Caribbean after the defeat of 1898. The fundamental elements that would make up and characterize the coup intervention of 1936 and the consolidation of so-called Spanish fascism were condensed in North Africa. A new war of conquest led by foreign troops, such as the Legion, resulted in ethnic cleansing, colonial intervention, extreme violence and dehumanization. These are the constitutive elements of Spanish fascism and the military dictatorship imposed after 1939.

The hypothesis of this contribution has to do with the return of colonial policy to the Peninsula in 1936. This withdrawal occurred in the context of the exhaustion of the Imperial project and the rise of authoritarianism in Europe. Thus, Spanish colonialism was configured as a colonial culture applied and institutionalized on the Peninsula. That return, encountered with the colonial and racist practices, developed against ethnic minorities such as gipsies, Jews, Moors and national minorities. Therefore, it is a strange return since this colonial violence is re-encountered in the Peninsula with a logic that never disappeared.

This paper wishes to emphasize Spanish fascism as the withdrawal of colonial policy to the Peninsula; a withdrawal preceded by the Castilian expansion towards the south of the Peninsula and the Canary Islands in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, in the Caribbean and Latin America between the 16th and 19th centuries, and in North Africa in the first third of the 20th century. This long history of the Spanish Empire has yet to be studied, and I agree with Aitor Jiménez González on the need to investigate and deepen the study of the Spanish imperial colonial habitus (Jiménez Gonzalez, 2018) in the last 500 years. It is particularly relevant to understand contemporary Spanish history from the perspective of the two inherent tensions pointed out by Aimé Césaire, namely the

colonial question and the common question. To begin our historical journey through Spain's 20th century, we will have to reconstruct briefly the country's 19th-century views. According to Jiménez González, the 19th century in Spain has been presented as the century of conflict between liberals and conservatives, between absolutism and constitutional monarchy. Without being wrong, these considerations have been hiding other sources of conflict; perhaps, and considering the facts, they could be the most relevant. Specifically, I speak of three sources or axes of conflict: centralism versus federalizing forces, working and peasant classes versus owning classes, and finally, independentists versus imperialists (Jiménez Gonzalez, 2018: 185).

The approach this paper will take to explain the history of Spain in the 19th and 20th centuries (specifically about the first third of the 20th century) will be to consider the tension around the proletarian and peasant question vis-à-vis the economic elites, and the tension around the colonial/federal questions vis-à-vis the centralist/imperialist logics. From Jiménez González's reflections on the three sources of tension that explain the history of Spain, we will synthesize them into two. On one hand, the tension between the working and peasant classes against the landowners; on the other, we will condense the tension between centralism and federalist forces and between independentists and imperialists. The fusion of these last two tensions responds to the fact that both are part of a single power matrix—that of centralists/imperialists versus federalists/independentists.

As a new perspective to interpret and explain the significant events of 20th-century Spain, I focus on the evolution and series of transformations that Spanish colonialism underwent at the end of the first third of the 20th century, specifically around what we can call the return of the colonial to the Iberian Peninsula. Once the colonial army began to withdraw to the Peninsula, it began to take an increasingly active and interfering part in national politics, resuming the military interventionism typical of the second third of the 19th century. A new approach incorporating a critical analysis of Spanish colonialism allows us to understand 20th-century Spanish history from a new perspective, and this further analysis aims to consider Spanish colonial history to explain Spanish fascism.

3. From the Spanish-American Empire to Africanist Colonialism: Crisis, Decline and New Bifurcations of Spanish Colonialism in the Age of Post-Empire

The history of Spanish colonialism in Africa is not unrelated to the history of Spanish colonialism in Latin America. After the independence of the American republics (between 1808 and 1833), the first Spanish-Moroccan War (1856–1860) took place thirty years later. The Spanish-Moroccan War had two significant consequences:

first, a new power group began to take shape in the army, the so-called 'Africanists' (Iglesias Amorín, 2016: 101); second, a debate of struggle against the Moor that had been dormant was reactivated (Gil-Benumeya, 2018: 46). The loss of Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico and what is referred to as the 'end of the Spanish Empire' meant a new reorientation of the imperial project. Due to the push of England and the US in the Caribbean and in Latin America, Spain's foreign relations were limited to the role that the tension between France and England allowed them to play in North Africa. Spanish colonialism in Africa did not start from a tabula rasa but now brought with it the Spanish-American imperial legacy to a much closer frontier: the African frontier. This progressive transition of the colonial project to territories ever closer to the Peninsula will have as consequences the penetration of the Spanish colonial project into the heart of peninsular Spain; as Aitor Jiménez González points out, the fall of Cuba and the Philippines, seen as a disaster by Spanish intellectuals, did not mean the end of Spanish colonialism but rather implied its resurgence in North Africa (Jiménez Gonzalez, 2018: 185). This had terrible consequences during the second quarter of the 20th century. Between 1893 and 1926, Spain had conducted four military campaigns in Morocco, three campaigns in Melilla, and the Rif War. Morocco was a field of military and political experimentation. Repressive measures that would later be implemented on the population of the peninsular were practised and extended to its people (187).

The Spanish state played the role of secondary power in European colonialism in Africa, occupying almost exclusively the peripheral borders of French rule. It also occupied the Atlantic side of North Africa with British support to prevent France from accessing the eastern Atlantic. Moreover, Spain participated in the Berlin Conference of 1885 and the Algeciras Conference of 1906 as an invited observer (Casanova, 2020: 55).

The first significant event that occurred in the territories of Spanish presence in North Africa was the so-called 'Barranco del Lobo disaster' (also called the Melilla War) in 1909–1910 (Martín Corrales, 2011). It was a small and marginal event in which Rifian rebels attacked and killed Spanish army troops in an ambush. This event attracted the attention of Spanish public life: the president of the government, Antonio Maura, decreed the forced recruitment of levies to take young men of military age to North Africa to strengthen the Spanish presence in the positions near Melilla. Trade unionists and socialist organizations denounced this forced recruitment using levies as a system that could be avoided by paying an administrative amount that circumvented conscription; it was also denounced as a class bias whereby young men from the bourgeois and landed classes avoided conscription, and that it was only effective for young men of the working class and poor peasants. In the days following the announcement of the draft, marches and protests began in several Spanish cities. In Barcelona, the Tragic Week

took place (Martín Corrales, 2011), where riots paralyzed the city of Barcelona from July 26 to August 1, 1909. Police repression by the minister Juan de la Cierva and Peñafiel led to more than 80 deaths in the riots, and five were condemned to death. The Tragic Week resulted in the social mobilization against the war by the labour movement and intellectuals, which widened the gap between the army and the people, deepening the conflict and the sense of alienation of the colonial officers from the institutions of civil society (Balfour, 1997: 191).

After the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, the colonial army experienced a situation of deep frustration and incomprehension on the part of Spanish civil society and sectors of the army that did not support the colonial enterprise (Jauné Miret, 2020; Elizalde, 2019; Sánchez Gómez, 2019). It explains why the colonial structure installed in Africa did not originate in the Peninsula, since peninsular Spain had no experience in this type of imperialist colonial expansion that emerged in the 19th century. The colonial army installed in Morocco came from the colonial tradition in the Caribbean that originated in the old Spanish Empire of the 14th century (Sebastián Balfour, 2002: 257).

The colonial army carried out this new deployment in North Africa. There it found a new 'homeland': a new place to settle, develop and create a military culture. All this was far from peninsular political life, which was deeply hostile to the colonial army because of the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and the Barranco del Lobo disaster. Families linked to the colonial project in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the colonial military and intellectuals were nostalgic for the Empire; they found a new refuge to settle with their family structures in North Africa. They could deploy the colonial project in this new place after losing the previous colonies in the Caribbean and Asia.

North Africa would come to be a new home of the sectors most linked to the colonial project, now called the Africanists. Thus, the military established in North Africa would find in the Protectorate a new refuge where they would entrench themselves and generate a new political culture of colonial and authoritarian roots. This colonial political culture was deeply illiberal, contrary to civil society and connected to the imperial project. Moreover, the Spanish colonial project was now re-encountered with Islamophobia and anti-Moro racism in this new Africanist stage of the Spanish colonial project (Balfour, 2002: 312).

The Spanish colonial presence in North Africa did not respond to the classic pattern of colonialism, neither of settlement nor exploitation. Behind the military presence was no cultural project, nor a population settlement, institutional project, or even much of an economic project: except for the iron mines, exploited since 1907 by the Spanish Company of Mines of the Rif, there was no tremendous economic exploitation or process of economic extractivism. One of the hypotheses I put forward is that the

epigonal presence of Spanish colonialism in Africa responds to three decades in which the structure of the colonial army wandered in the process of withdrawal towards the Peninsula. These Africanist sectors are located outside the national territory, but they assert themselves as guardians of national glory and the resurgence of the Empire (Iglesias Amorín, 2016: 103).

In addition to the symbolic content of the Africanist sectors of the army, the permanence of the colonial territories meant a place of privilege and protection that was not recognized in the Peninsula. The strong discredit of the colonial war isolated the military from political peninsular life; it also separated them from the rest of the remaining army sectors in the Peninsula. The political establishment was against colonial intervention abroad because of its high cost and destabilizing role in Spanish political life.

North Africa was also considered a good destination by the military, who wanted to make a quick and successful professional career. All the series of skirmishes and harmless manoeuvres that the army developed in the Protectorate were rewarded with numerous war merits. Civil society and the military, who remained in the Peninsula, viewed this promotion system highly suspiciously. In addition, a series of colonial military corps were explicitly created for the institutional development of the Protectorate. In 1911 a first battalion of four companies and a squadron of regulars was created in Melilla, which would later become the Tropa de Regulares, that is to say, a regular army formed with the North African Muslim population. Moreover, in 1912, the Regulars Corps was officially created in all the territories of Spanish domination in Morocco.

The formation of this army of indigenous troops was the way the colonial army evolved in order to build a collaboration with the indigenous population. By distributing economic means, it hired local forces and created a whole clientelistic network of favours and salaried work to improve food conditions. All this was in impoverished populations, such as the Rifian communities of North Africa. In 1920 the Tercio de Extranjeros o Legión Española [Spanish Legion] was created in the image and likeness of the French Foreign Legion. This Spanish Legion would soon become the Legion,[3] which constituted a shock force in the colonial campaigns. The Legion was created through the battlefield's mystique of death and surrender (Ballenilla García de Gamarra, 2010). According to Alfonso Iglesias Amorín, one of the best-known aspects of the

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[3] The Spanish Legion was the military apparatus created in the 1920s for colonial warfare. It came from the Hispanic colonial tradition in the Caribbean and was furthermore created under the influence of French colonial troops in North Africa. To this colonial corps belonged Francisco Franco, Emilio Mola, José Sanjurjo, José Millán-Astra and most of the Africanist soldiers who were trained in the African colonial war. They would later lead the coup d'état in 1936 and the formation of the military dictatorship in 1939.

legionary mentality is its mythologized vision of death, which occupied a central place in the legionary creed, including its motto of *¡Viva la muerte!* [*Long live death!*] (Iglesias Amorín, 2016: 105). The Legion is thus founded on the concretization of the policies of dehumanization proper to colonial violence, the authoritarian political culture appropriate to militarism and the colonial legacy of the Empire. As Sebastian Belfour points out: 'racism, imperialism and militarism were thus important components of a new right-wing culture that developed within the army' (Balfour, 2002: 65). It is in this context of Spanish colonialism that what Nil Santiáñez has called the fascist habitus so characteristic of later Spanish fascism is forged. An interweaving of violence, practised in conquered territory against the local population, leads to the extreme dehumanization of the enemy (Santiáñez, 2013).

4. From the Battle of Annual in 1921 to the Asturian Miners' Strike of 1934

The most crucial military moment of the Spanish colonial presence in the Rif was known as the 'Rif Wars'. They were fought between the Spanish military authorities and the confederation of Rif communities led by Muhammad Ibn 'Abd el-Karim El-Kattabi. Abd el-Krim, who had worked for the Protectorate, gathered and revolted against the most critical local lords and Rif communities, proclaiming the Rif Republic between 1921–1926. In 1921, a Rifian-organized rebellion attacked a Spanish penetration campaign from Melilla to the Bay of Al Hoceima. At the local level, the confederation of Rif communities led by Abd el-Krim constituted the Republic of the Rif between 1921 and 1926. The Spanish contingent, commanded by General Silvestre, advanced without protecting the rear. A surprise attack from the rear by the Rifians cut them off between Melilla and the advance to Al Hoceima. Primo de Rivera came to power with non-interventionist promises but ended up giving in to the interests of the Africanist military. The Spanish army suffered tremendous panic, even losing the body of General Silvestre, and in excess of 9,000 Spanish soldiers were reported killed in the battle. More than 2,000 of those were regular troops (Martín Corrales, 2011). The so-called 'Annual Disaster' would have tremendous consequences on several levels: on the Peninsula, the Disaster was an earthquake in Spanish politics that led to the fall of the Restoration regime, whose fragile stability had driven Spanish politics for half a century, from 1874–1921; the monarchy's legitimacy crisis provoked a coup d'état by the militarian Miguel Primo de Rivera.

The Annual Disaster came at a time of profound institutional crisis, delegitimization of the monarchy and a severe social and economic situation. General Primo de Rivera's coup attempted to bring order to a delegitimized monarchical system and also sought to put an end to the policy of colonial interventionism. Although, Primo de Rivera came

from colonial experience (he had fought in Morocco, Cuba and the Philippines), his first promises on coming to power were not to intervene in colonial policy and to move towards a policy of abandoning the Protectorate (Auñón Manzanares and Albasanz Mata, 1995). Nevertheless, in the end, Primo de Rivera gave in to the Africanist sectors and developed a three-pronged colonial policy: first, an over-financing of the colonial war. According to Carlos Arenas Posadas: 'The "reconquest" of the lost territory in the summer of 1921 multiplied by five the budget allocated to Morocco—from 116 to 641 million pesetas per year—which stimulated the mystique of primitive heroism to the detriment of any peaceful solution' (Arenas Posadas, 2019: 208). Second, he began to bring some of the highest-ranking military officers to the Peninsula, such as José Sanjurjo and Francisco Franco, to occupy top positions in state security. Third, the great turn would be deploying a large joint military operation with the French army to resume the colonial war a few years later. What became known as the 'Al Hoceima landing' was a joint operation between the French army led by General Philippe Pétain and the Spanish army led by General José Sanjurjo. The Al Hoceima landings marked the beginning of a Spanish-French campaign that would end with the proclamation of the Rif Republic and the surrender and exile of Abd el-Krim to Réunion Island, from where he fled to Egypt. The Al Hoceima landing operation once again raised the spirits of the military and conservative sectors of Spanish society, who began to see the Africanist generals as a new spiritual direction for Spain at a time of profound and unsalvageable decline (Iglesias Amorín, 2016: 107). What seems to stand out is that, for the first time, colonial politics could declare exceptionality in a context of interventionism and put the colonial agenda at the forefront of state priorities (108).

In this context of the intervention of the colonial sectors in the internal politics of the Spanish state, we have to consider an issue pointed out by Arendt in her work *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, published in 1955, in which she describes the tension between the institutions of civil society and the imperialist interests of the colonial armies. In Arendt's words: 'The only greatness of imperialism lies in the lost battle against it that the nation has fought' (Arendt, 1998: 191). The only battle that Spanish imperialism fought victoriously was against the state, democratic institutions, parliaments and the project of the Republic. Neither Catalonia nor Madrid's civil society institutions could control or overcome the colonial military. The latter ended up seizing power from 1925 (with the triumphant landing at Al Hoceima) to 1939 with the defeat of the Republican army and the exile of the last Republican institutions to France and Argentina.

The dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923–1930) saw a new escalation of military violence, both in the dehumanization provoked by the colonial violence in North Africa and the exceptional nature of Spanish politics. In the words of

Carlos Arenas Posadas: 'The dictator's first measure was the declaration of a state of war which, prolonged for a year and a half until March 16 1925, implied the suspension of constitutional guarantees, the closure of parliament, prior censorship and the illegalization of workers' societies' (2019: 212). Miguel Primo de Rivera inaugurated a new cycle of exceptionality in Spanish politics, which he brought with him because of his experience as a colonial military man. I referred to exceptionality, defined by Carlos Arenas Posadas as the 'West Indian model of governance', a combination of economic extractivism, a state of exception and institutionalized repressive violence (2019: 213).

The fall of Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1931 led to the period known as the 'Dictablanda': a transitional government presided over by Damaso Berenger Fusté, a Spanish military officer born in San Juan de los Remedios, Cuba, which consolidated the power of the Africanist military during the Republic. The Second Republic brought little change to the role that the dictatorship had given to the Africanist military in high national security posts. The army felt that it had an unquestionable position in the face of a republican system it had never approved. Manuel Azaña, president of the first Republican government, designed new defence legislation to strip the army of its decisive role in Spanish politics. Yet, despite this, he kept both Emilio Mola and Francisco Franco in office.

In 1933, Manuel Azaña's Socialist Republican government lost the election. A right-wing coalition came to power, formed by Alejandro Lerroux's Radical Republican Party, the Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wingers (CEDA) and the Agrarian Party. This new right-wing coalition took the opportunity to overthrow all legislation favourable to workers and peasants, both on labour issues and land reform. The social tension caused by this employer's offensive provoked a social outburst led by the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) [General Union of Workers] and the *Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores* (CNT) [National Confederation of Labor]. The call followed to a certain extent throughout Spain, spreading with extraordinary belligerence in Asturias, where the subsequent Revolution of 1934 occurred. It was a genuine, organized popular uprising between 5–19 October 1934, which was put down by the army's leading officials, with the Africanists Mola and Franco at the top of the national security leadership. Paul Preston, in his now classic *The Spanish Holocaust: Hate and Extermination in the Civil War and After* (2011), notes:

> Franco knew Asturias inside out: its geography, its communications and its military organisation. He had been stationed in the region and had taken part in the repression of the 1917 general strike, and had visited the area frequently since he had married an Asturian, Carmen Polo. As Alcalá Zamora feared, and to the satisfaction of the

right, Franco responded to the miners' rebellion in Asturias in the same way he had dealt with the Moroccan tribes. [...] The methods employed by the colonial army, as had happened previously in Morocco, were aimed at paralysing the civilian enemy through the use of terror. The African Army deployed against the Asturian rebels a brutality more akin to its usual practices in razing Moroccan villages than was required by the resistance of the miners. The soldiers used the leftists they took prisoner as human shields to cover their advances. Innocent men, women and children were shot to cover their advances. Innocent men, women and children were shot at random by Moroccan units under the command of one of Franco's top cronies, Lieutenant Colonel Juan Yagüe Blanco, further demoralising the virtually unarmed revolutionaries.[4] (Preston, 2011: 131–132).

The colonial soldiers, known as Africanists, gradually began a return to the Peninsula which was promoted by the republic governement, to integrate them into the political life of the peninsula. They had their first military intervention in the repression of the Asturias revolution. This episode must be read in the context of the return of the colonial we have observed. Franco had been a member of the regular troops since 1913, where he fought alongside Moroccan soldiers enlisted in the Spanish army. In 1920, he was recruited by José Millán-Astray to join the newly created Tercio de Extranjeros, which later became the Spanish Legion. Franco trained as a colonial soldier in wars of profound dehumanization and extreme violence. He also experienced two periods of deep crisis and frustration in the army: first, the Disaster of '98, as his father was a colonial troop and served in Cuba and the Philippines; second, the Annual Disaster, in which he was caught as a member of the Legion, the first shock troops to arrive in Melilla in the subsequent revenge of the Al Hoceima landings. As Paul Preston notes: 'Franco met the problem with the icy cruelty that had underpinned his successes in the colonial wars' (2011: 132).

The Asturias repression's novelty was 'using the army against Spanish civilians as if it were a foreign enemy' (Preston, 2011: 132). During the first decades of the

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[4] 'Franco conocía Asturias a la perfección: su geografía, sus comunicaciones y su organización militar. Había estado destinado en la región y había tomado parte en la represión de la huelga general de 1917, y visitaba la zona con frecuencia desde que se había casado con una Asturiana, Carmen Polo. Tal como se temía Alcalá Zamora, y para satisfacción de la derecha, Franco respondía a la rebelión de mineros en Asturias del mismo modo que se enfrentaba a las tribus marroquíes. [...] Los métodos empleados por el Ejército colonial, como había ocurrido anteriormente en Marruecos, se proponían paralizar al enemigo civil mediante el uso del terror. El Ejército africano desplegó contra los rebeldes asturianos una brutalidad más similar a sus prácticas habituales al arrasar las aldeas marroquíes que la que requería la resistencia de los mineros. Los soldados utilizaron a los izquierdistas que tomaron prisioneros como escudos humanos para cubrir sus avances. Hombres, mujeres y niños inocentes fueron fusilados para cubrir sus avances. Hombres, mujeres y niños inocentes fueron fusilados al azar por las unidades marroquíes al mando de uno de los principales compinches de franco, el teniente coronel Juan Yagüe Blanco, lo que contribuyó a desmoralizar todavía más a los revolucionarios prácticamente desarmados.'

20th century, the colonial narrative of dehumanizing an enemy by racial logic was translated into a new ideological dehumanization. This further dehumanization affects antagonisms regarding distribution (class/capital) and territorial antagonism (centralism/sovereignty). The latter operates in separatist and sovereigntist movements such as the Catalan, Basque, Galician and Andalusian ones. We only need to recall the assassinations of Lluis Companys, or Blas Infante and the exile of Alfonso Rodríguez Castelao (Madariaga Álvarez-Prida, 2010). As Paul Preston defines it, we could speak of a re-Africanisation of Spain, a new translation to the peninsular territory of the logic of hatred, extermination and violence that had taken place in the war in Africa. According to Preston, the otherness constituted around the Moor was now constituted around the Red (2011: 87). In other words, Alfonso Iglesias Amorín argues that the image of the 'Moorish enemy' merged with that of the 'red enemy' (2016: 110; Velasco de Castro, 2014).

5. 1936 as the Return of the Colonial to the Peninsula

The coup d'état of July 18 must be understood within this logic of colonial policy, military interventionism and exceptionalism. The return of the colonial military to peninsular politics had the coup d'état as a direct consequence. Planned by the colonial generals, the aim was to implant on the Peninsula the model of domination that the Spanish army had developed a century earlier in the Caribbean and North Africa. Recently, several authors have linked the military coup of 1936 to the rise and new centrality of colonial politics in the public life of the Spanish regime (Bernat and Whyte, 2020; Jiménez González, 2018). Aitor Jiménez González and Nil Santiañez both point out that it was precisely in North Africa where the colonial military forged the coup d'état (Jiménez González, 2018; Santiañez, 2013); a coup that was born with an ideological imprint, both in the method of intervention and in the violence of a military coup, developed against a dehumanized population. Sebastian Balfour also speaks of the coup d'état and the subsequent peninsular war as a new reconquest of Spain (2002: 412).

The coup's failure split the state into two blocs with a divided correlation of forces that would not be reorganized through political means but through a military intervention that would allow the Republican government to control the uprising, or for the colonial military to take over the state. The failure of the army coup opened a military conflict led by the Africanist generals, who used methods of conquest typical of the colonial project. Alfonso Iglesias Amorín suggests that the war that followed the coup d'état was a large-scale repetition of the conflict that had taken place in Asturias in 1934. According to this author, the difference was the number of colonial soldiers mobilized from North Africa. It meant that the war quickly acquired the character of a colonial campaign (Iglesias Amorín, 2016: 114). It is, therefore, urgent to define the

military conflict between 1936 and 1939 as a colonial war brought to the Peninsula, both in terms of the composition of colonial troops and in ideological terms. It is not, in any case, a military conflict between civilians representing both projects of society, but a colonial war in the strictest sense; one that took place on the Peninsula (Jimenez Gonzalez, 2018: 187).

Historian Pablo Sánchez León points out that it cannot be said that the naming of 1936 as a crusade has not been the subject of attention by historians (2017: 32). The historian goes on to argue that the genocidal character of Franco's violence is already inescapable in historiographical debates on political violence in Spain in the first half of the 20th century (29). My proposal to interpret the so-called Spanish Civil War as a colonial war in which the violence of conquest returns to the peninsular territory is a reflection indebted to the work of Pablo Sánchez León. In a very similar vein, this author argues that the genocidal practices of violence and extermination carried out by the colonial military are a set of organized and instituted actions that still claim their own insertion within a broader scheme of transfers and relocations of experiences between the colonies and the metropolis that would prove decisive in the genealogy of Franco's extermination (27). Later, the same author points out that the conflict that ended in 1939 with the democratic Republic was a civil war, but not only and not above all: it was also a conquest of the civilizing rationality that conceived of the enemy as a colonial subject (35).

Once the coup failed to seize power, a military conflict began. Sebastian Balfour argues that the success or failure of the military rebellion rested in the hands of the Army of Africa. For the only genuinely professional troop in the Spanish army is the Army of Africa (Balfour, 2002: 416–7). From this point onwards, Nazi Germany's and Fascist Italy's geopolitical support had much to do with Spain's military presence in North Africa and Germany's interests in North Africa. Sebastian Balfour notes that thanks to the region's mineral wealth, they could compensate the Germans for their military contribution by granting the Spanish-German company HISMA privileged access to iron from the Rifian mines (440).

The troops of the Spanish colonial army were able to cross the border of the Strait of Gibraltar thanks to the logistical support of Italian aviation. Once across the border, the advance of the colonial army constituted a typically African campaign from the penetration of the cities of Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba and Badajoz towards the capital (Balfour, 2002: 443). In addition to the techniques of the rebel troops' advance, the colonial army's imprint can be seen very clearly in the war of ethnic cleansing that was taken to the ideological terrain. The colonial military advanced with a view to the physical extermination of the enemy, a dehumanized enemy under an ideological

marker that it sought to exterminate from the perspective of ethnic-racial cleansing. Pablo Sánchez León explains that in the case of the Second World War, until now, special attention has been drawn to the physical extermination and eugenics of social groups and minorities in the territories of conquest and colonization in the name of the Aryan race, but this has been at the expense of marginalizing a more general reflection on the underlying logic of civilizing colonial conquest (2017: 29).

The colonial troops made up of Moroccan regulars and legionaries, carried out extreme violence in addition to the looting and rapes typical of colonial wars. The fundamental objective of this war of extermination was to 'cleanse Spain of its internal enemies' (Balfour, 2002: 444). In Franco's experience in the colonial war, the objective was not so much the victory in the political or military field but to constitute the war as a permanent political institution. Exceptionalism and violence were present as permanent institutions from the military coup until many years after the end of the war. As Paul Preston points out: 'On June 28, 1936, in Burgos, the Junta de Defensa Nacional had declared war throughout the Spanish territory, whether or not the rebels occupied it. This state of war would remain in force until March 1948' (2011: 616). It was, therefore, the military contest that built the new regime of the military dictatorship. The war was the institution from which the rest of the powers and legitimacies in the new regime emanated (Iglesias Amorín, 2016: 116).

6. Contributions to a New Understanding of Spanish Fascism in the Long Colonial History

Before offering some tentative contributions, I should make something that seems crucial explicit: fascism, from my perspective, is not a universal movement but a phenomenon that occurs within the limits of Europe and that supposes, above all, a return to the continent of methods of domination that it brought to the world. Fascism was, from this interpretation, an authoritarian turn of centripetal violence of those European countries that did not possess colonial territories at the height of the first third of the 20th century.

France, England, Belgium and Holland developed the same methods of violence, dehumanization, exploitation, genocide and extermination that fascism produced within Europe. The countries without significant colonial possessions, such as Germany, Italy, Austria or Romania, developed regimes of extreme violence against their own populations; this was how it was configured from the end of World War I onwards. The decomposition of the Empires in Europe (the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire) favoured the powers with colonial territories, fundamentally the Allied powers. It created disadvantages for the countries that were heirs of the Axis powers. When it is

stated that the Second World War began at the Peace of Versailles, what is being stated, in my opinion, is that by subjecting specific imperial projects (such as the imperial projects of the Axis powers) to contemporary forms of colonialism (of the Allied powers), the balance of Europe was again upset. In this case, countries without colonial territories imposed their colonial and imperial habitus on their own populations.

The international dimension of European fascism is essentially constituted as a new colonial competition: this race consisted in disputing the internal hegemonies of Europe in order to dispute the colonial space again. It was a war between the countries without colonial territories (such as Italy and Germany) against the new colonial empires (England and France). By way of metaphor, both the First and Second World Wars involved a long war of *metropolises against the empires*—the new metropolises of contemporary colonialism against the old kingdoms of Europe.

The Spanish case will be considered an anomaly in Europe and an experience completely in tune with Spanish-African American imperial and colonial history. Spanish fascism was the syncretic concretion of the Europeanization of the Spanish imperial project and the Hispanization of anti-Semitic, racist and colonial European authoritarianism. The peninsular colonial war in Spain gave rise to the form that World War II took and anticipated the application of fascist policies after 1939. The discussion on the nature of Francoism and anti-Francoism wanders between the authoritarian political cultures of Europe in the first third of the 20th century and the Latin American caudillismo of military interference in political and civil life in the 19th and 20th centuries. The debate in Spanish and Western historiography on Franco's dictatorship and Spanish fascism has been to situate them as sui generis phenomena or whether they are situated within the authoritarian political cultures of the first third of the 20th century. In this discussion there is a particular British Hispanist historiography, with authors such as Stanley G. Payne (1985) and North American authors such as Herbert Rutledge Southworth (1971), who analyze Spanish fascism as a political culture born of the so-called 'Joseantonian regenerationism'. This school has theorized the Franco dictatorship and Spanish fascism as a political culture in tune with the authoritarian political cultures of interwar Europe. Second, there has been a properly Spanish tradition, which has settled on the concept of Francoism 'to refer to a distinctly Spanish phenomenon, with a singular and polemical character' (Miguez Macho, 2012: 27). By seeking the roots of Francoism in the internal peninsular development itself, Spanish historiography has decided not to take responsibility for Spanish colonial history and its repercussions on the development of the Spanish 20th century. Both were political repression, extermination policies, and violence against regionalist and independence movements.

It is essential to interpret Spanish fascism beyond its Spanish dimension and beyond its dimension as a homologous phenomenon to German Nazism or Italian fascism. Spanish fascism must also be analyzed in the context of the long history of Spanish colonialism. Fascism constitutes the return of colonialism to the Peninsula once the Empire breaks down with the loss of the colonies in the Caribbean and the Philippines. Spanish fascism would be the adaptation of the long tradition of colonial violence of the Spanish imperial project to the political climate of Europe in the first third of the 20th century.

I therefore propose a definition of Spanish fascism as a political culture inherited from the authoritarian legacy of the Spanish Empire in a new internal, centripetal and post-imperial phase of the Spanish colonial project. The year 1936 marked the return of the colonial to the Peninsula; all the essential components of the new political culture that were consolidated after July 18 1936 would be a structural and constituent part of the colonial project and not of the political culture of fascism in Spain. When I talk about Spanish fascism, I refer to authors such as Ramiro de Ledesma and his newspaper La Conquista del Estado (The Conquest of the State) or José Antonio Primo de Rivera and the activity of his political group, Falange. The fascistization in theoretical terms of the authoritarian regime, consolidated with the military dictatorship, is a way of Europeanising Spain and placing it in a European interpretative context.

In the case of Spain, the antecedents of Spanish fascism cannot be seen only in World War I, understood as a military conflict that broke up the fragmentation of the European empires. This fragmentation and dissolution of the late Spanish Empire occurred in 1898, in the Disaster of '98, with the Spanish defeat in the Spanish-American War and the independence of the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Spanish fascism has its roots not in World War I and the Treaty of Versailles but in the Spanish-American War and the Treaty of Paris 1898, both colonial events. Spain possessed a vast colonial territory during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, which was lost at the end of the 19th century. Spain has to be interpreted concerning its colonial history and not only in relation to Western powers such as France and England, Holland and Belgium; nor only in relation to with countries with little colonial history, such as Germany (1884–1914) or Italy (1882–1947). The ideological roots of Franco's military dictatorship are found in Islamophobia and the struggle of extermination against others in Africa and the Spanish-colonial Caribbean, not in the emergence of an intellectual avant-garde, as people try to characterize Spanish fascism.

Italian fascism and German Nazism came from social upheaval, cultural avant-garde and political accumulation. At the same time, Spanish Francoism resulted from a broken, decadent, exhausted and dead country. Proof of this is that on coming to power,

both Mussolini in Ethiopia and Libya, and Hitler, concerning the lebensraum (German living space), launched campaigns of colonial expansion. When Spanish fascism came to power, it did not experience a new phase of expansion because, for the Africanist military, the territory of conquest had already been, de facto, peninsular Spain itself. Without understanding this internal colonial dimension of Spanish fascism, it is not possible to have a good reading of the historical and political nature of the Spanish state and the way its colonial project returns to its territory. Structural internal coloniality (García Fernández, 2016) as a constitutive logic of the Spanish state should challenge us to view a new history of Spain that does not make colonial history invisible, but quite the contrary. Reinterpreting the Spanish state's history from its colonial history will give us a new perspective on Europe, whose internal and external coloniality is still present in the significant challenges that contemporary social sciences face in contributing to the transformation of Europe and the world. Historians have been historically interpreting Europe for centuries; for us, the time has come to decolonize it.

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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