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THE ANARCHIST INQUISITION: TERRORISM AND THE ETHICS OF
MODERNITY IN SPAIN, 1893-1909

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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“The Anarchist Inquisition” examines how a nascent international human rights discourse grew out of a broader “ethics of modernity” in response to anarchist terrorism and state repression in Spain from 1893-1909. As authorities enhanced the scope of their arrests and torture and curtailed civil liberties in response to the bombing of a procession in Barcelona in 1896, an international movement for the rights of the victims of the Spanish state was born. In the next decade, several more instances of governmental brutality sparked campaigns that mobilized notions of human rights, even if they did not use the exact term. Using police records, press coverage, and correspondence between diplomats, activists and politicians in archives across Spain, France, the Netherlands, and England, I place Spain at the center of the story of how terrorism catalyzed the development of human rights.

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Introduction

In the early 1890s, anarchist bombers, such as Ravachol in France or Paulino Pallás in Spain, ushered in a decade of unprecedented violence against the state that included assassinations of presidents and prime ministers, kings and queens. This decade of “propaganda by the deed,” the term anarchists used to describe the propagandistic goal of their assaults against symbols of oppression, resulted in the death of more than sixty and injuries for over 200 across Europe, the United States and Australia.¹ *Fin de siècle* anarchist violence, like the doctrine of anarchism itself, has long been characterized by Marxist and liberal scholars alike as the last gasp of the “primitive,” pre-modern revolutionism of the marginalized lower classes who the expansion of trade unionism, social democracy, and parliamentary politics had failed to tame.² But what if anarchist propaganda by the deed was actually an *accelerant* to the development of ‘modern’ politics rather than an exceptionally noisy obstacle?

This dissertation makes that very claim. It argues that at the turn of the twentieth century anarchists were central to the development of what many have considered *the* modern political concept *par excellence*: human rights. I show how anarchists played key roles in human rights history during this era in three ways. First, Spanish anarchist propaganda by the deed inadvertently stimulated the development of transnational human rights activism long before many historians have acknowledged by provoking such extreme state violence that the treatment of anarchists became an important litmus test for

¹ Richard Bach Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878-1934* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), 36.

² E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965). For a thorough refutation of this position see Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia 1868-1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

evaluating the rights of prisoners. The scale of repression meted out by the Monarchy in response to anarchist propaganda by the deed steadily increased from the early 1890s onward until it boiled over into an international scandal with *el proceso de Montjuich* in Barcelona from 1896-1900 when the acuteness of the anarchist threat provoked mass arrests, torture, executions, a widespread lack of due process, and harsh anti-anarchist laws that limited civil liberties. The Spanish government's brutal anti-anarchist measures were undergirded by the argument, widely echoed in the press, that the desire of the anarchists to violently destroy the existing social order rendered them no better than animals, and thereby excluded them from the rights to which men were entitled. The intensity of the anarchist threat incited the state into a campaign of dehumanization against those who politicians and the media had denounced as the universal enemies of society.

Yet, the plight of anarchist and other radical prisoners in Barcelona was so extreme that an international network of unionists, lawyers, freemasons, journalists, politicians, freethinkers, and other allies skillfully re-signified the state's campaign of dehumanization into a movement of humanization on behalf of some of the most marginal prisoners in Western Europe. Much like the anti-slavery campaigns of earlier decades and the Congo and Portuguese West African campaigns of the next decade, the international campaigns in support of Spanish prisoners could most passionately fight "in the name of the rights of humanity"³ when defending those whose humanity was most thoroughly denied.

³ *El Imparcial*, June 25, 1899; *El País*, June 25, 1899; *La Época*, June 25, 1899; *L'Intransigeant*, June 1, 1897.

These campaigns succeeded not only by developing diverse transnational coalitions, but also by rhetorically targeting the Spanish monarchy where it felt vulnerable: its rapidly disintegrating empire and peripheral status in relation to the ‘Great Powers’ of Europe. Campaigners adeptly linked the Crown’s peninsular abuses with the atrocities it was committing in Cuba and the Philippines (and later to the Moroccan war of 1909) to conjure up the potent image of the “Revival of the Inquisition in Spain.” These activists tapped into a widely shared value system I refer to as “the ethics of modernity” that associated modernity with ethical national conduct and therefore argued that groups and individuals who committed atrocities were ‘backwards,’ ‘uncivilized,’ and mired in the Middle Ages. The Spanish prisoner campaigns soiled the Crown’s international reputation during the war with the United States when it started to realize the importance of promoting a positive reputation abroad after distancing itself from international relations over the previous decades in favor of dynastic and religious bonds.⁴

After the success of the first international campaign to liberate the prisoners of Montjuich castle in Barcelona in 1900, campaigns on behalf of anarchist prisoners effectively implemented the transnational human rights template that the Montjuich campaign developed over the next decade. Moving into the twentieth century, these campaigns forced the Spanish government to develop an appreciation for the potential international ramifications of domestic repression. This paved the way for several more campaigns to free imprisoned anarchists who otherwise would have been forgotten behind bars.

⁴ Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

Anarchists made their second contribution to human rights as activists. Not only human rights canaries in the European coal mine, anarchists spearheaded all of the campaigns in defense of Spanish prisoners and even played an important role in the campaign to exonerate Captain Alfred Dreyfus during the French Dreyfus Affair at the turn of the century. Former Spanish prisoners such as the engineering professor Fernando Tarrida del Marmol and the lay teacher Joan Montseny tapped into broader networks to collaborate with anarchist allies such as Dreyfusards Charles Malato and Sebastien Faure in France, Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis in the Netherlands, Joseph Perry and Peter Kropotkin in England, and Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Cleyre in the United States to start campaigns in their own countries. These anarchists succeeded in expanding their campaigns beyond anarchist circles by appealing to sympathetic allies and the broader public on the grounds of morality and ‘humanity’ rather than sectarian politics. This apolitical veneer allowed anarchists to attract mass support from “all men of heart” regardless of their politics.⁵ The decision to downplay the rhetorical role of anarchist politics in these international campaigns was a strategic maneuver to compensate for the weakness of the anarchist movement to respond to repression with revolution. Especially with so many labor organizers and propagandists imprisoned, the Spanish anarchists needed all the help they could get to free themselves and their comrades. In that way, anarchists and their revolutionary allies demonstrated how human rights politics could be mobilized to veil political sectarianism in a way that prefigured the contentious struggles of latter twentieth century institutionalized human rights advocacy.

Yet, while anarchist appeals to ‘men of conscience’ certainly belied contingent strategizing, the anarchist defense of the “rights of humanity” was entirely sincere. The

⁵ *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Dec-26, 1896-Jan. 1, 1897.

third significant contribution anarchists made to human rights history was developing and articulating the first conception of human rights outside and beyond the state. While scholars of human rights have debated when the concept first emerged, historian Samuel Moyn convincingly argues that before the 1970s rights were “part of the authority of the state, not invoked to transcend it.”⁶ However, Moyn overlooks the anarchists whose entire agenda revolved around transcending the state. In the following sections, I will discuss scholarly debates over human rights and the absence of anarchists within them.

Human Rights and Activism

A number of scholars have debated whether ‘human rights’ originated in antiquity, the Enlightenment, or the twentieth century (whether during or after WWII, or in the 1970s).⁷ To a large extent these competing periodizations rely on different definitions of the term in question and the importance that historians place on the use of the specific phrase “human rights.” Although my aim is not to incorporate the entirety of Lynn Hunt’s argument about the origins of human rights, I share her interpretation of human rights in *Inventing Human Rights* as rights that are considered natural, equal, and universal.⁸ Therefore, I argue that the basic concept behind what we have come to refer to as “human rights” was a product of the era of the Enlightenment although the phrase

⁶ Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 7.

⁷ For the antiquity argument see: Stephen James, *Universal Human Rights: Origins and Development* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2007). For the Enlightenment argument see: Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007); Peter N. Stearns, *Human Rights in World History* (London: Routledge, 2012); Kirsten Sellars, *The Rise and Rise of Human Rights* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2002). For the 20th century argument see: Louis Henkin, *The Age of Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Moyn, *The Last Utopia*.

⁸ Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*, 20.

itself was not commonly used until the second half of the twentieth century.⁹ As historian Peter N. Stearns, argues, “what the 18th century meant by ‘rights of man’ ...overlaps so fully with human rights ideas that to quibble about terminology is simply distracting.”¹⁰ The concept is far more important historically than the term that it eventually adopted especially when one considers the cynical geopolitical calculations that informed the decision of the American and Soviet Allies to coin the popular usage of “human rights” as their shared values in the face of fascism and the subsequent surge in the use of the phrase as the foremost Western challenge to the Soviet Bloc shortly thereafter.¹¹ And the concept of rights to which all human beings are entitled regardless of their race or nationality played an important role in a number of campaigns and social struggles in the nineteenth century, long before it rose to the global prominence it would enjoy from the 1970s onward, even if the period between abolitionism and World War II saw a relative lull in the language and philosophy of human rights.¹²

Nineteenth century campaigns for the “rights of humanity” grew out of the movement for the abolition of chattel slavery in the Americas.¹³ As Adam Hochschild

⁹ The exact phrase “human rights” was used from time to time during this era. See *Freedom*, Dec. 1896. Also phrases like “rights of humanity” and “human right” were used in addition to the more common “rights of man.” See *Freedom*, Dec. 1897; *El Imparcial*, June 25, 1899; *El País*, June 25, 1899; *La Época*, June 25, 1899; *L’Intransigeant*, June 1, 1897.

¹⁰ Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*, 54.

¹¹ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 44-5.

¹² Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman eds., *Human Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1981), 4. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman argues that as the concept of human rights phased out of the 19th century, it was temporarily replaced by “civilization,” “race,” “nation” and others. See Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, “Introduction: Genealogies of Human Rights,” in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman ed. *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1.

¹³ Scholars who argue that the abolitionist movement was the first human rights or humanitarian movement include: Peter N. Stearns, *Human Rights in World History* (London: Routledge, 2012), 1; Aryeh Neier, *The International Human Rights Movement: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 33; Jenny S. Martinez, *The Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 13; Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 5; Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 57; Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (New York: Verso, 2013).

argued, the abolitionist movement was “the first time a large number of people became outraged, and stayed outraged for many years, over someone *else’s* rights. And most startling of all, the rights of people of another color, on another continent.”¹⁴ This historic upsurge of sympathy and concern for the plight of others birthed a number of abolitionist organizations such as The Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1823 or the Aborigines’ Protection Society founded in 1837 that continued the struggle against “new forms of slavery” beyond the 1838 achievement of abolition in the British Empire.¹⁵ Key to their success was their ability to frame the question of enslavement within the realm of morality rather than politics and thereby appeal to ‘men of conscience’ across partisan political divides. Abolitionism and the groups it created fostered the development of the non-sectarian pursuit of egalitarian, single-issue goals through the construction of broad political coalitions. This model of political action, often labeled “humanitarian” or “human rights” activism, became a cornerstone of politics in Britain and beyond throughout the nineteenth century. Although these organizations made important contributions to the consolidation of “humanitarianism” within British self-identity by the 1840s, shortly thereafter, popular support dwindled to the point where their memberships remained limited to small circles of well-connected middle class reformers.¹⁶

Nevertheless, these middle class reformers kept the tradition alive by organizing foreign advocacy campaigns through groups such as London Greek Committee, the International Association of the Friends of Armenia, the Eastern Question Association,

¹⁴ Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 5.

¹⁵ Stearns, *Human Rights*, 92; Andrew Porter, “Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism” in Andrew Porter ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 209-216.

¹⁶ Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slavery in Africa, 1885-1926* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 25; Porter, “Trusteeship,” 198 and 214.

the Cretan Relief Committee, and the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, which I examine in Chapter Four. Beyond the trajectories of specific groups, as historian Davide Rodogno writes, the abolitionist movement “gave birth to the politics of pressure groups, including mass petitions, publication of magazines and tracts, holding of public meetings, appealing to public opinion, and founding of voluntary societies.”¹⁷ Turn of the century campaigns against the abuses of the Spanish monarchy on the peninsula and in the colonies, the Dreyfus Affair, and the movements against slavery in the Congo Free State, Portuguese West Africa, and the South American Putumayo jungle bridged the gap between middle-class reformers and mass society by using “the politics of pressure groups” to stir the emotions of British nonconformist congregations, Belgian trade unions, French socialist parties, and many more. For some, such as the British Congo campaigner E.D. Morel, these campaigns were truly single-issue matters, while for others, such as the French anarchist Charles Malato, fighting for the freedom of the Spanish prisoners or the liberation of Captain Dreyfus was a useful step toward inciting a popular upheaval against the state, church, and military. Either way, the human rights activism of the turn of the century contributed significantly toward the creation of a climate of opinion among both the popular classes and elites that was sensitive to, and increasingly sympathetic toward, human rights claims. Certainly the creation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and Amnesty International later in the twentieth century were the results of events that transpired after the era currently under examination. Yet, the human rights activism of the perpetually overlooked decades that saddled the turn of the twentieth century made a crucial contribution to fomenting

¹⁷ Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914: The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 7.

advocacy from below and pressuring sensitivity to the international ramifications of abuses from above.

Human Rights, Anarchism, and the State

One of the most influential contemporary works that considers the origins of “human rights” in the 1970s is *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* by Samuel Moyn. A central element in his argument is that whereas earlier rights movements, which he refers to as “rights of man movements” were “part of the authority of the state,” later human rights movements were about rights “invoked to transcend it.” Moyn states that “until recently the state was their essential crucible” and “the ‘rights of man’ were about a whole people incorporating itself in a state, not a few foreign people criticizing another state for its wrongdoings.” While he acknowledges that “after about 1870, international organizations and leagues began to sprout, some of which prioritized the promotion of a new global consciousness,” he clarifies that “none of them moved the notion of rights to the international level.” Finally, he states that “even the most internationalist late-nineteenth-century socialists were not able in the end to escape the gravitation of state and nation...”¹⁸ Likewise, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman argues that in the 19th century “the European Left emphasized not freedom *from* the state, but rather freedom *in* and *through* the state,” but adds that “only during the Dreyfus affair and the founding of the *Ligue pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme* at the end of the century did socialists and republicans discover the value of individual rights vis-à-vis the state.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 7-41.

¹⁹ Hoffman, “Introduction,” in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, 9-10.

Moyn and Hoffman make a convincing case about the relationship between rights and the state shifting, but once again we have returned to the matter of definition. Is the transcendence of the state crucial to a useful definition of “human rights” or not? If, for the sake of argument, we side with Moyn and Hoffman on the importance of a definition that includes state transcendence, we can *still* find their conception operating in the nineteenth century if we stop to take a look at the perpetually ignored case of the anarchists. After all, there is no better summary of what transpired in response to the torture in Barcelona’s Montjuich Castle or the execution of Ferrer a decade later than “a few foreign people criticizing another state for its wrongdoings,” and they certainly promoted equal, universal, natural rights on an “international level.”

Whereas most socialists of the era couldn’t “escape the gravitation of state and nation,” anarchists defined themselves in opposition to the state, in their eyes the epitome of hierarchical domination and the armed guardian of class rule, and saw no hope in relying on states to protect individual rights. When anarchist activists such as Joan Montseny, Domela Nieuwenhuis, or Emma Goldman called for the end of torture in Spain and the freedom of Spanish prisoners, they may have been calling for the state to alter its behavior in the short term, but the long-term goal was its abolition and its replacement with a decentralized international federation of directly democratic organs of collective self-management. Anarchism grew out of the wing of the socialist movement that prioritized maximizing the autonomy of the individual and the collective in relation to the rest of society while holding onto principles of mutual aid and solidarity. According to Peter Kropotkin, the prominent Russian anarchist émigré and campaigner for Spanish prisoners, anarchism was “a synthesis of the two chief aims pursued by

humanity since the dawn of its history—economic freedom and political freedom.”²⁰ For Kropotkin and his comrades, true economic freedom meant anarchist communism and true political freedom meant federalism on a collective level and autonomy on an individual level. I will discuss anarchist communism at greater length in Chapter 1, but, in short, it was an anarchist adoption of the communist maxim “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.” The anarchist argument in favor of fulfilling human needs corresponds to the concept of positive rights while their advocacy of federalism and autonomy corresponds to negative rights. Yet, did anarchists of the era articulate their desire to fulfill material needs and maximize individual and collective autonomy in terms of rights?

The anarchist press of the era shows that they often did. For example, the British anarchist paper *Freedom* argued that “The hungry man has the right to satisfy his needs, all laws notwithstanding.”²¹ Even the anarchist communist articulation of the future society was often framed in terms of rights:

The communist society whose advent we advocate, will provide the individual with the absolutely free enjoyment of all types of moral, intellectual, material, educational, nutritional, and recreational rights; and the individual, in just reciprocity, will voluntarily and freely give society all of the latent forces of their being...²²

This quote from the Spanish anarchist theoretical journal *Natura* in 1903 illustrates that anarchists often spoke of rights in relation to responsibilities. This tendency dated back to the slogan of the First International in Spain: “No more rights without responsibilities, no more responsibilities without rights” which emphasized how the privileged classes had a

²⁰ Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles,” in *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*, ed. Roger N. Baldwin (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002), 61.

²¹ *Freedom*, Jan. 1903.

²² *Natura*, Dec. 1, 1903.

monopoly on rights while the working classes were saddled with all of the responsibilities.²³

Not all anarchists were enamored with a rights framework, however. In 1903, *Natura* published an interesting debate on natural rights from an anarchist perspective. In an article entitled “Rights and Responsibilities,” Alejandra Myrial argued from a relatively nihilist position that “every individual really has the *right* to do what they have the *ability* to do.” Myrial scoffed at the notion of “natural rights,” asking sarcastically “in what laboratories, in what experiment rooms was this discovery made?” Even if there were some basis to natural rights, Myrial concluded that the most important rights, like the right to eat, had been ignored while “the most demanded rights, those for whom humanity has struggled the most and shed the most blood, don’t directly affect human life.”²⁴ While many fought and died for suffrage and other legal rights, material rights were neglected.

The next issue printed a response from Clemencia Jacquinet, the first director of Francisco Ferrer’s Modern School, who defended natural rights from a variation of a liberal social contract framework.²⁵ Later in the article, Jacquinet made a very insightful argument that reflects the duality of anarchist approaches to human rights during the Spanish prisoner campaigns of the turn of the century. She wrote that the term “right” has become “a *permission* granted reluctantly by the powerful to their slaves or subjects; this does not imply in any way that the primordial notion has ceased to be true.” She added that “rights and responsibilities have been conceded to the *pueblo* in inverse reason to

²³ Teresa Martínez de Sas ed., *Cartas, comunicaciones y circulares de la Comisión Federal de la Región Española* vol. 7 (Barcelona: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 1987), 304.

²⁴ *Natura*, Oct. 15, 1903.

²⁵ Pere Solà Gussinyer, *Ferrer Guardia pedagogo y hombre de acción: La mirada apasionada de Alban Rosell sobre el fundador de la Escuela Moderna* (Barcelona: Clavell Cultura, 2011), 55.

their true standing,”²⁶ meaning that elites conceded formal political rights without acknowledging the economic rights that were more pressing for the lower classes. Jacquinet’s words demonstrate how anarchists considered the existing regime of rights to be an insidious reflection of class oppression. Nevertheless, during this period they developed a strategy to champion and augment those rights that had been “granted reluctantly by the powerful” in order to broaden their coalitions against the Spanish monarchy while simultaneously propagandizing “the primordial notion” of rights that nature had bequeathed and the bourgeoisie had allegedly warped.

Clearly anarchists of the era thought about rights, but were they *human* rights? The anarchist rejection of nationalism propelled anarchists of the era toward a focus on humanity as a whole even if the prevalent Eurocentrism of the period limited what that meant in practice. Moreover, as opposed to turn of the century Marxists who focused on the industrial proletariat of advanced economies, anarchists developed a broader vision of resistance encompassing the peasantry, elements of the petit bourgeoisie, the lumpenproletariat and other dispossessed elements. The significance of the broader class focus of anarchism was evident in a controversial book written by the Parisian anarchist Sébastien Faure who was one of the most active Dreyfusards and advocates for the Spanish prisoners. In 1895, Faure published *La Douleur universelle*, which argued that the social question was not exclusively a proletarian issue, but rather one that should concern all social classes since the existing social system was detrimental for all.²⁷ Similarly, in 1901 the anarchist pedagogue Francisco Ferrer wrote an article entitled “The General Strike will Enrich the Poor without Impoverishing the Rich” where he argued

²⁶ *Natura*, Nov. 15, 1903.

²⁷ Sébastien Faure, *La Douleur universelle* (Paris: Savine, 1895).

that “the rich will be happier than today because they will continue enjoying without seeing others suffer.”²⁸ As a result of this multi-class focus, anarchists frequently spoke and wrote in terms of “humanity.”

In analyzing the rhetorical use of the language of humanity in the Spanish prisoner campaigns and other similar foreign advocacy campaigns of the era, it’s clear that while the use of this universal language was prevalent, it often seemed to have been tacked onto a writing or speech about a particular issue in order to gain the sympathy of an intended audience. Although most of the activists who used this language meant what they wrote and said, phrases about defending “humanity” primarily constituted what historian Griffiths has called “clan languages” or “stock languages” to consolidate activist group identity and demonize their enemies. Just as “truth and justice” became one of the rhetorical symbols of the French Dreyfusards, appeals to “humanity” bridged the political gaps that otherwise separated Spanish prisoner activists and seemed to endow their cause with a foundation in basic ethical truth.²⁹

There are many examples of anarchists framing their conceptions of natural rights in an equal, universal manner for all of humanity. In an article titled “The Right to Live,” Anselmo Lorenzo, the prominent Spanish anarchist theorist and former Montjuich prisoner argued in favor of “the right to live, to which all the world is subject.” For Lorenzo “all in the universe, from the most infinitely small to the most infinitely large, can parody the aphorism of Descartes: “I exist, therefore I have the right to be.”³⁰ For Lorenzo, “to live” implied the right to fully enjoy all of the fruits of life in accord with

²⁸ *La Huelga General*, Dec. 5, 1901.

²⁹ Richard Griffiths, *The Use of Abuse: The Polemics of the Dreyfus Affair and its Aftermath* (New York: Berg, 1991), xii-17.

³⁰ *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, May 31, 1905.

the principles of anarchist communism laid out in his book *The Banquet of Life*, to which all were entitled to take a seat.³¹ In the British anarchist journal *Freedom*, the Georgian anarchist émigré W. Tcherkesov argued in favor of European intervention to protect the Armenians from Turkish abuse in 1896 writing that “Europe has abandoned the traditions of humanitarianism and the fight for human rights...”³² As early as 1878 the Geneva branch of the anarchist Jura Federation passed a resolution calling Max Hödel, the attempted assassin of Kaiser Wilhelm, a “martyr for the rights of mankind.”³³ This last example points to the potential contradiction some may see in acts that many would subsume under the umbrella of “terrorism” being lauded as supporting “the rights of mankind.” While it may seem inconsistent for an advocate of human rights to endorse violence against those thought to be opposed to human rights, this dynamic is actually at the heart of human rights history. After all, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was born of the storming of the Bastille and the phrase “human rights” came out of the Second World War. More fundamentally, however, a key component of human rights enforcement revolves around the use of state violence (or the threat of it) to imprison human rights violators or coerce them into desisting. Anarchist violence has been interpreted differently largely because it has occurred without the sanctifying halo of state sovereignty. Unless one has to be a complete pacifist who never makes recourse to state violence to enforce human rights, then there is nothing particularly contradictory about anarchist human rights advocates applauding the assassination of a genocidal Prime Minister, for example.

³¹ Anselmo Lorenzo, *El banquete de la vida: concordancia entre la naturaleza, el hombre, y la sociedad* (Barcelona: Imprenta Luz, 1905).

³² *Freedom*, Dec. 1896.

³³ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 24.

Anarchist perspectives on rights also raise the question of how human rights could be enforced in the absence of the state. Since the hierarchical state has been taken for granted as the model of modern societal organization, it has been widely assumed that human rights need states to matter in practice. Yet, if we step back from the state model and think more broadly of negative rights as spheres of autonomy from the interference of the rest of society and positive rights as obligations that the rest of society has to the individual, then, theoretically, human rights could be put into practice under any social organization. There is no necessary link to hierarchical states. Undoubtedly, many readers will find the turn of the century anarchist vision of social transformation unconvincing, but that shouldn't blind us to the possibilities of human rights being applied to alternative models of human governance.

Yet, Moyn would still not be convinced about the anarchists because he argues for a thorough conception of human rights that includes the combination of several factors: an interpretation of human rights as individual freedoms from the state (which the anarchists had), use of the phrase "human rights" (which anarchists did use occasionally but not enough to satisfy Moyn), and what essentially amounts to a human rights political ideology that seeks to install a human rights framework into the existing constellation of states without seeking to further transform them. In other words, for Moyn the modern, 1970s human rights movement was characterized by people who had given up on earlier political "utopias" and embraced a "minimalist" human rights worldview representing "a realism that demanded the possible."³⁴ In contrast, socialist and anarchist perspectives on individual rights were inextricably linked to their larger projects of "utopian

³⁴ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 121.

transformation”³⁵ and therefore were distinct from Moyn’s “last utopia.” As I argued above, I reject the excessive importance attached to the term “human rights.” The concept of natural, equal, universal rights ended up being identified with the phrase “human rights” through contingent historical circumstances. Allowing that phrase to dominate the concept obscures how the idea flourished well before the term was coined. I also disagree with Moyn’s argument that the concept of human rights is incompatible with projects of “utopian transformation.” Instead of seeing human rights as a framework that can be applied in a myriad of contexts, Moyn essentially attempts to restrict the concept to a liberal human-rights-ism. As Aryeh Neier pointed out, Moyn’s perspective “liken[s] the human rights cause itself to a universalistic scheme, implying that it includes a vision for the organization of society.”³⁶ If we hone in on the content of human rights without limiting ourselves to the label and allow for the concept to be applied in a plurality of ideological contexts, then we can see that anarchists articulated a human rights vision beyond the state long before Moyn’s transformational 1970s.

Human Rights and/or Humanitarianism?

Any discussion of turn of the century “human rights,” a contested term whose common usage emerged in the twentieth century, must take into account “humanitarianism,” a far less controversial label that was commonplace in the nineteenth.³⁷ In *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, Michael Barnett

³⁵ Ibid., 40.

³⁶ Neier, *The International Human Rights Movement*, 4.

³⁷ The term “humanitarian” was first used in England in 1844 to describe “all that is concerned with benevolence toward humanity as a whole, with human welfare as a primary good.” Although the term was originally used as an insult for ‘do-gooders,’ by the end of the nineteenth century individuals and groups involved in aid work embraced the term. Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, “Introduction: The Morality of Sight: Humanitarian Photography in History,” in Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno eds.,

argues that the term “humanitarianism” was popularized in the early nineteenth century when earlier forms of compassion emerged from the private sphere into the public thereby taking on a more organized form as burgeoning interest in the ‘science’ of social organization shed light on the insufficiency of traditional charity to redress all of society’s ills in the context of the industrial revolution’s social upheavals.³⁸ Characterized by the core values of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, humanitarianism sought to alleviate human suffering across borders by remaining above the fray of the kinds of partisan politics that all too often obscured the humanity of the ‘other.’³⁹

The first “official” humanitarian organization was the International Committee of the Red Cross founded in 1863.⁴⁰ From the beginning, the Red Cross was not interested in ascribing blame regarding the origins of a given conflict or even in ending war as a phenomenon of human activity. Rather, the Red Cross sought to “humanize war” by reducing suffering. French sociologist Luc Boltanski has argued that humanitarians have essentially adopted a medical perspective on alleviating pain in the present.⁴¹ The politics (or lack thereof) of humanitarianism come into focus when they are juxtaposed with the most famous human rights organization, Amnesty International. Founded in 1961, Amnesty is entirely focused on ascribing blame to those who have violated international law. In so doing, the goal is to create and reinforce an international legal structure to prevent such abuses in the future. The Red Cross established itself as impartial in order to

Humanitarian Photography: A History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 7. In contrast, Michael Barnett claims that “humanitarianism” came into “everyday use” in the early nineteenth century. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 10.

³⁸ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 19, 21, 49, and 52

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴¹ Bronwyn Leebaw, “The Politics of Impartial Activism: Humanitarianism and Human Rights” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 2 (2007), 224.

aid victims of war on both sides. Amnesty International established itself as impartial as a precondition for being able to launch normative assaults on injustices wherever they exist. In the twentieth century, tensions emerged between attending to suffering and prosecuting those responsible for suffering. Barnett characterizes popular understandings of the differences between the two types of activism as follows:

Human rights relies on a discourse of rights, humanitarianism on a discourse of needs. Human rights focuses on legal discourse and frameworks, whereas humanitarianism shifts attention to moral codes and sentiments. Human rights typically focuses on the long-term goal of eliminating the causes of suffering, humanitarianism on the urgent goal of keeping people alive.⁴²

The examples of the Red Cross and Amnesty International shed light on the differences between the ‘purest’ examples of humanitarian and human rights activism, but it’s not always so easy to distinguish between the two. After all, historians Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno argue that “humanitarianism is not a singular *-ism*,” since “humanitarian actors have moved rather fluidly between aid, relief, or reform efforts.”⁴³ Barnett encourages us to think in terms of “humanitarianisms, not humanitarianism” and argues for a distinction between “emergency” humanitarianism, which, as its name suggests, focuses on addressing immediate crises, and “alchemical” humanitarianism, which also targets the underlying conditions that give rise to crisis.⁴⁴

However, Barnett’s comparison is between a model of humanitarian activism that grew out of the nineteenth century and a model of human rights activism that grew out of the twentieth century. Therefore, the relatively clear-cut differences that Barnett cites to differentiate between the two become quite blurry in the context of the anarchist-driven

⁴² Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 16.

⁴³ Fehrenbach and Rodogno, “Introduction” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*, 8.

⁴⁴ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 10.

Spanish prisoner campaigns of the turn of the century. The Spanish campaigns explicitly championed the “rights” of the prisoners, but many of the activists behind the campaigns were motivated by anarchist and socialist perspectives grounded in fulfilling needs. Despite this focus on rights, the campaigns of this era were far more concerned with “moral codes and sentiments” than with “legal discourse and frameworks” precisely because they envisioned natural, universal rights beyond the laws of existing governments. Focusing these campaigns on existing Spanish law would have run counter to the universality of their messages. Finally, these transnational appeals to “men of conscience” were grounded in the urgent need to release suffering prisoners and prevent executions, but they also set their sights on long-term social transformation.

If we allow for an element of long-term social change in humanitarianism, note that legal discourse usually rests upon moral foundations, and bear in mind that rights discourses are often erected to promote the fulfillment of needs, then the barriers start to break down. Moreover, the distinction between rights and needs has generally been characterized by the prevalent liberal confinement of rights to the sphere of negative rights, meaning the rights of non-interference in the realms of speech, assembly, property ownership, corporeal integrity, and so forth, as opposed to the positive rights to have one’s needs for food, shelter, or medical care fulfilled that anarchists and socialists have emphasized.⁴⁵ Liberal perspectives on rights have essentially ensconced “negative rights” within the human rights legal framework while jettisoning “positive rights” to the realm of humanitarianism and needs. However, if we venture to argue that healthcare or shelter are rights to which all human beings are entitled, and that any social formation that

⁴⁵ Andrew Bradley, “Positive Rights, Negative Rights and Health Care,” *Journal of Medical Ethics* 36, No. 12 (2010), 838-841.

systematically deprives significant numbers of people of those basic needs is blameworthy, then the distinction disintegrates further.⁴⁶

Barnett's distinctions between popular understandings of humanitarianism and human rights activism can help us delineate broad tendencies and contrasts in emphasis and discourse between different kinds of activism, but they maintain their form more easily in terms of twentieth century organizational outlooks and prerogatives than they do in terms of nineteenth and early twentieth century campaigns that often freely blended elements that had yet to be firmly solidified. If one examines abolitionism, European protests against the Tsar, the international indignation that developed against Ottoman abuses of Greeks, Cretans, Bulgarians, and Armenians, American and European indignation at Spanish abuse of Cubans, the Dreyfus Affair in France, and the Spanish prisoner campaigns in the nineteenth century or the movement against the abuses of the Congo Free State and the opposition to slavery in Portuguese West Africa during the first decade of the twentieth century, one can discern a blend of both kinds of activism.⁴⁷ Depending on the campaign, and differing between organizations, groups, and other formations within each campaign, there was a consistent moral appeal to humanity with varying levels of legal emphasis, a much stronger focus on rights than needs (though many of the more radical campaigners would have argued for the right to have one's

⁴⁶ Paul Gordon Lauren includes the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions, two examples that Barnett classifies squarely within the realm of humanitarianism, within his history of human rights. Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

⁴⁷ Blackburn, *The American Crucible*; Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*; Martinez, *The Slave Trade*; Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Bass, Gary J. *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008); Joseph E. Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press (1895-1898)* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965); George R. Whyte, *The Dreyfus Affair: A Chronological History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*.

needs met), and a mixed temporal focus on urgent crises in need of rectification and more long-term issues that produced the crises in question. While it's certainly difficult to consistently differentiate between human rights and humanitarian activism in the nineteenth century, it's important to distinguish between human rights *activism* and the underlying *concept* of human rights principles. If we divorce the advocacy of natural, equal, universal rights from its association with overtly legalistic rhetoric or the organizational methods of the latter twentieth century, then we find that human rights were more widely espoused than scholars who have limited the notion to a later era have argued.

The Ethics of Modernity

Yet, if we limit ourselves to analyzing competing interpretations of “humanitarianism” and “human rights,” we run the risk of losing sight of a much broader, fundamental, and far-reaching shift that occurred in discourses of power moving into the late nineteenth century. The discursive shift that I am flagging here is toward the predominance of what I refer to as the “ethics of modernity.” As conceptions of forward-moving historical progress premised upon the capacities of human rationality and ingenuity to mold society proliferated, they were increasingly associated with a corresponding moral advancement. Historians agree that a “passion for compassion,” as Hannah Arendt phrased it, reshaped the ethical landscape during this period.⁴⁸ As Michael Barnett argued, “the revolution in moral sentiments and the emergence of a

⁴⁸ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 50. Rebecca Gill has written about a “rationalisation of compassion.” Rebecca Gill, “‘The Rational Administration of Compassion’: The Origins of British Relief in War,” *Le Mouvement Social* (April-June 2009): 9-26, cited in Christina Twomey, “Framing Atrocity: Photography and Humanitarianism,” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*, 50.

culture of compassion is one of the great unheralded developments of the last three centuries...the alleviation of human suffering became a defining element of modern society.”⁴⁹

There is ample evidence of this transformation in imperial policy, for example. Historian John Cell argues that “until the late eighteenth century the British had gone about the business of imperialism remarkably unconstrained by moral scruples.”⁵⁰ Yet, for Cell the combined impact of abolitionism and expanded missionary activity promoted “the idea that Englishmen overseas could be held accountable to some higher, collective ‘conscience,’ that imperialism must be regulated according to moral standards...”⁵¹ Edmund Burke was a prominent conservative voice in favor of an ethical colonialism arguing in Parliament in 1783 that “All political power which is set over men...in exclusion of them, being wholly artificial...and derogation from the natural equality of mankind at large, ought to be some way or other exercised for their benefit...”⁵² Although Burke strongly disagreed with the concept of natural rights that transcended tradition, his argument that colonialism ought to be “in the strictest sense a trust,” and the subsequent prominence of the notion of trusteeship in the self-image of nineteenth century European global domination, nevertheless epitomized this broader shift in values that I am emphasizing.⁵³ The power of the concept of the British “civilizing mission” or the French *mission civilisatrice* is also evident in the shift that both imperial powers experienced from their traditional tendency to refrain from interfering in what they perceived to be

⁴⁹ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 49.

⁵⁰ John Cell, “The Imperial Conscience,” in Peter Marsh, ed., *The Conscience of the Victorian State* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1979), 179.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁵² Porter, “Trusteeship” in Porter ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 198-199.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

“backward” indigenous practices toward a more active commitment to the active uplift of imperial subjects.⁵⁴ This was reflected in the contrast between the reluctance of the British colonial administration to involve itself in relieving the Indian famine of 1803-4 as opposed to its unprecedented intervention in response to the famine of 1837. This shift mirrored the increasingly active role that states were coming to play in addressing the social ills of their societies, such as the passage of the New Poor Law in Britain three years before the famine of 1837. Ultimately, the enhancement of the capacities of their populations to be effectively mobilized for industrial and military purposes remained the prime incentive for state intervention in society, but the mounting moral outcry allowed policymakers to shroud their actions in virtue.⁵⁵ This heightened ethical sensibility was also reflected in the development of penitentiaries and greater concern for the welfare of prisoners and the mentally ill, the disfavor shown toward the abuse of children and animals, and the declining utilization of corporal punishment, such as flogging, in the military.⁵⁶

Historians have cited a wide variety of factors to explain this “compassionate” shift. An early element that influenced its trajectory was what Norbert Elias famously referred to as the “civilizing process” in the manners and personal habits of Europeans during the early modern period.⁵⁷ This “refinement” in manners produced a modern sensibility that considered compassion to be “civilized” and brutality to be “savage.”

⁵⁴ Alice L. Conklin, “Colonialism and Human Rights, A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914,” *The American Historical Review* 103, No. 2 (1998), 424.

⁵⁵ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 62-3.

⁵⁶ Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” *The American Historical Review* 100, No. 2 (1995), 319-20.

⁵⁷ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978). See also: Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: H. Fertig, 1985).

Historian Karen Halttunen demonstrates how the “culture of sensibility” that emerged in the eighteenth century entailed a shift from traditional Christian perspectives on pain as punishment for sin and a focal point for redemption to our modern revulsion at pain and desire to eliminate it. This paralleled shifts in medicine where traditional interpretations of pain as crucial for healing gave way to the pursuit of painless surgery and medicine. Halttunen then traces how this “civilized” sensibility found its expression in “sentimental art”: paintings, novels, and poetry designed to elicit an “emotional response rather than rational judgment as the proper criterion for evaluation” and thereby demonstrate one’s “spectatorial sympathy.”⁵⁸ In *Inventing Human Rights*, Lynn Hunt echoes some of Halttunen’s arguments by claiming that new forms of novel reading in the eighteenth century promoted empathetic sensibilities by encouraging readers to identify with the situations of their protagonists.⁵⁹ Historian G. J. Barker-Benfield argues that by the eighteenth century British economic development had created a middle class whose consciousness developed at a significant distance from physical suffering.⁶⁰ One might conclude, perhaps, that such a personal distance from suffering opened space to imagine and empathize with the pain of others, real, imagined, or somewhere in between. Regardless of the importance we place on art, this broad shift toward the “ethics of modernity” certainly benefitted from rising literacy rates, improved printing technologies, and escalating urbanization.

⁵⁸ Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain.”

⁵⁹ Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*.

⁶⁰ G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Especially in Britain it grew out of the rise of Evangelical and Nonconformist Christianity, which profoundly affected the abolitionist movement.⁶¹ Unlike Calvinist notions of predestination, Evangelicals believed that every individual, regardless of race or nationality, had the free will to choose salvation often through emotive “awakenings,” a dedication to saving souls and carrying out good works. This voluntaristic evangelism translated into a serious missionary fervor that altered the ways that empires justified themselves and, as Michael Barnett argues, it “transformed religion into reform.”⁶² This tradition was also influenced by the Latitudinarians of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries who argued that God had designed human beings as inherently sympathetic creatures.⁶³ A final factor in (and result of) the development of a broad “culture of sensibility” was secular Enlightenment thought epitomized by the theories of ethicists such as Immanuel Kant and utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

The “ethics of modernity” highlights how morality was understood chronologically, how time became the lynchpin metaphor for understanding the late nineteenth century European moral universe, and how the concept of “modernity” was freighted with moral value. Whereas the ahistorical, pre-modern European ethical sensibility considered justice and morality to be unchanging, timeless values existent since time immemorial, the widespread historical consciousness that developed by the end of the nineteenth century could reflect upon the previous century’s track-record of

⁶¹ M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); John Randall Jr., “The Churches and the Liberal Tradition,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 256 (1948), 148-64; Heather D. Curtis, “Picturing Pain: Evangelicals and the Politics of Pictorial Humanitarianism in an Imperial Age,” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*.

⁶² Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 52-3.

⁶³ Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain,” 304.

reform to observe that standards had changed, or at least note that society's ability to live up to its Christian values had been enhanced. Yet, the point being made here isn't merely that Europeans came to the awareness that their moral status had improved over time, but rather that the societal attainment of ethical superiority proceeded in stages. As historian Bruce Mazlish explains, "civilization," a word that was coined in 1756 whose use expanded rapidly over the following decades, came to be understood as the third stage of human history after savagery and barbarism.⁶⁴ While the concept of "civilization" encompassed far more than morality, it came to be grounded in a refined ethical sensibility at odds with "backwards," "brutish" behavior thought to be close to the animal kingdom. In the same vein, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, and other philosophers published their own stage-oriented historical theories that explicitly or implicitly involved the gradual development of the human potential.⁶⁵ Therefore, the "ethics of modernity" entails the perspective that ethics can only be truly achieved in their fullest sense once a society surpasses "savagery," "barbarism," or any other "backwards" stages of human pre-history to reach modernity. Morality took time and there were no shortcuts. The inverse of that equation is that those who have not surpassed "barbarism" are literally unable to fulfill, or perhaps even recognize, moral imperatives. This analysis undergirded the "civilizing mission" by lending it a "scientific" veneer. Therefore, the concept of the "ethics of modernity" builds upon earlier scholarship by pointing specifically to the sense of moral self-satisfaction that many in the Western world had developed by the late

⁶⁴ Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and its Contents* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 7-8; Mark Mazower, "The End of Civilization and the Rise of Human Rights: The Mid-Twentieth-Century Disjuncture," in Stefan Ludwig Hoffman ed., *Human Rights in The Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁶⁵ G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 102.

nineteenth century by comparing what they saw as their ethical enlightenment compared to the “backwardness” and “moral depravity” of earlier centuries. The “ethics of modernity” comes into being as the West starts to consider the task of transcending its past cruelties to be finished and therefore imagines that the stage of advanced civilization has been attained. The “ethics of modernity” entailed the end of a story of internal redemption for the West and the start of another about external redemption. Both “humanitarian” or “human rights” campaigns and imperial “civilizing missions” were products of this shift in the guiding narrative of the West.

Yet, for the purposes of our inquiry, it’s less important that Europeans considered “barbarians” to be immoral than it is that they considered immorality to be “barbaric.” The terror that allegations of atrocities elicited in Europeans was primarily grounded in popular anxieties about the distance between “civilization” and “barbarism” (apart from the specific political or economic setbacks that such accusations could present to a given government or enterprise). The importance of “civilization,” understood as the highest stage of societal (and here specifically ethical) development, sheds light on why I argue that time became the lynchpin metaphor for understanding the late nineteenth century European moral universe. For the “backwards” peoples of the world weren’t seen as simply less capable; in a surprisingly literal sense they were thought to be living in the past. Although a rift divided more tolerant Europeans, who argued that other peoples could eventually attain at least a similar level of civilizational development, from those who fully embraced recently developed “scientific” racism to deny that “backwards” peoples could ever catch up, the dominant schematic for the hierarchy of societies was conceived in fundamentally chronological terms. And, as Charles Darwin noted, the

process could be reversed so that a currently “civilized” society could spiral back into “barbarism.”⁶⁶ Such a prospect stalked countries on the margins of European “respectability” such as Spain and Russia.

At home this logic was also applied to aspects of the “social question.” For Edmund Burke and many conservatives, the specter of revolution was the latest incarnation of barbarism’s continual threat to civilization.⁶⁷ Criminologists such as Cesare Lombroso argued that the behavior of criminals and anarchists stemmed from their “atavistic” traits while social critics such as Max Nordau argued that modern values and aesthetics resulted in widespread “degeneration” which threatened to set back the development of civilization. This association was clear when, in response to the anarchist bombing of the Gran Vía in 1893, *La Época* argued that anarchist violence “fills the country with great fear...that makes social life impossible, hoping to drag us back to a state of barbarism unimaginable even in primitive times.”⁶⁸

The chronological perception of morality and civilization also served to endow modernity, implicitly considered to be the highest incarnation of time, with inherently moral value. The frequently parlayed argument that a compassionate practice was modern, or that a brutal practice was pre-modern, weighed heavily on sentiments of those listening to Spanish prisoner advocates in the 1890s, for example. The association between the novelty of modernity and virtue was also apparent in the trend of early to mid 19th century nationalist groups to call themselves “young” such as Young Italy, Young Poland, or Young Ireland. Therefore, the “ethics of modernity” simultaneously conveys how morality was understood in terms of time, how time came to be moralized,

⁶⁶ Mazlish, *Civilization*, 69.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁸ *La Época*, Sept. 25, 1893.

and how the concept of “modernity” was endowed with normative content. The prevalence of these dynamics is evident in the fact that both anti-anarchist media campaigns and pro-anarchist international movements mobilized the ethical-chronological rhetoric of modernity progressing out of barbarism to shame their enemies. A revealing example of this rhetorical tactics can be found in a flier arguing for the innocence of the prisoners being held in Montjuich castle in Barcelona distributed by the anarchist *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca* in 1900. The paper asked readers to insert the fliers into every copy of their local papers to spread the word. Among other points, it read “Without the colonies, we will lose [Spain’s] own nationality if we don’t know how to assimilate the conquests of the moral universe that constitute the political life of modern peoples...”⁶⁹ In the era of the “ethics of modernity,” national pride was contingent on ethical conduct. Here, we see the anarchist strategy of leveraging popular anxieties about national decline, despite their anti-nationalist values, and the argument that in order to partake in “the political life of modern peoples” it was necessary for Spain to catch up with the “ethics of modernity.”

Another benefit of the term “ethics of modernity” is that it encapsulates how this widespread ethical standard impacted even those political actors who were most antagonistic to notions of “the rights of man” or “humanitarianism.” One of the most revealing aspects of the Spanish campaigns or the movement against slavery in the Congo Free State is how imperialists and traditional monarchists were incensed by the accusations leveled against them and attempted to shield themselves with variations of the same rhetoric that was being launched against them. As opposed to eighteenth century debates over the institution of slavery where the gulf that separated the avowed principles

⁶⁹ *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, Nov. 3, 1900.

of abolitionists and advocates of enslavement was rather wide, by the turn of the twentieth century the conflict wasn't over the ethical question of whether slavery or torture was acceptable, but rather over the factual question of whether in fact these practices had occurred or not. The core of the "ethics of modernity" was agreed upon by just about everyone across the ideological spectrum and so, rhetorically, politics became a matter of positioning oneself in the best position to champion those widely shared values. The concept of the "ethics of modernity" allows us to understand the broader value-system that not only gave birth to the theories and activist strategies of "human rights" and "humanitarian" groups, but also provided societal standards that could be mobilized in favor of their appeals to humanity.

Terrorism

Like the debate over the origins of human rights, the historical debate over terrorism juxtaposes those who see it as an ancient practice from those who see it as a specifically modern variant on the classical assassination. For example, in *A History of Terrorism*, Walter Laqueur argues for a smooth continuum between tyrannicide and terrorism and historian Gus Martin argues that "terrorism, however defined, has always challenged the stability of societies and the peace of mind of everyday people."⁷⁰ In contrast, David C. Rapoport argues that the terrorist is very different from the assassin:

In his mind the assassin destroys men who are corrupting a system while the terrorist destroys the system which has already corrupted everyone it touches. The vastness of this difference and the variety of ensuing consequences simply cannot be

⁷⁰ Walter Laqueur, *A History of Terrorism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001); Gus Martin, *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives, and Issues* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 2.

overestimated... Assassination is an incident, a passing deed, an event; terrorism is a process, a way of life, a dedication.⁷¹

Likewise, Claudia Verhoeven rejects the timeless interpretation of terrorism and posits its origins in Dmitry Karakazov's failed attempt to assassinate the Tsar on April 4, 1866 (which he called "factual propaganda") and the influence that act had on Narodnaia Volia's successful assassination of Alexander II in 1881. After his failed attempt, Karakazov said "I cannot but feel sorry that I made an attempt on the life of a ruler like Alexander II, but it was not at him that I shot; I took action against the emperor in him—and this I do not regret." As Verhoeven writes, with the terrorist attack of the 19th century "the people finally also see the autocracy as a mythical monster, a monster rooted in a myth, a myth rooted in power. And that was the point of [Karakazov's attack]: nothing—a vision of power's void."⁷² Some scholars argue that "the first to provide a full-fledged doctrine of modern terrorism" was the mid 19th century German republican revolutionary Karl Heinzen who argued that "murder is the principle agent of historical progress," and claimed that his goal was "to make murder of despots a cause of the people, so that the people may, without considering the genteel great men, murder democratically on every occasion..."⁷³

Regardless of the precise origins of terrorism, it seems clear that there was a dramatic shift in the intentions and repercussions of assassinations with the modern development of the press and mass politics. After all, "without communication there can

⁷¹ David C. Rapoport, *Assassination & Terrorism* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corp, 1971), 37-38.

⁷² Claudia Verhoeven, *The Odd Man Karakazov: Imperial Russia, Modernity, and the Birth of Terrorism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 178-179.

⁷³ Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, "From the Dagger to the Bomb: Karl Heinzen and the Evolution of Political Terror," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, 97-115.

be no terrorism.”⁷⁴ Certainly, the anarchist ‘terrorists’ of the turn of the century considered their acts of “propaganda by the deed” to be powerful revolutionary catalysts that would simultaneously tarnish the seeming invincibility of symbols of domination while also emboldening resistance and inspiring individuals to carry out their own actions. Some of these men (there were no female anarchist ‘terrorists’ in Spain or Western Europe during this era despite the prominence that women played in Russian terrorist groups) used the words “terror” and “terrorism” to describe their actions and outlooks, and they wished to inspire fear and insecurity among the upper classes. Therefore, the term “terrorist” would be an accurate label for anarchist practitioners of “propaganda by the deed.”

However, the use of the terms “terrorism” and “terrorist” is not so straightforward as the historical literature would have us believe. Especially since the “War on Terror” most potential readers will assume that the word “terrorist” is a pejorative term connoting a normative ethical valuation of a given act. Given my desire to avoid ethical judgments about the actions of historical actors, I have chosen refrain from incorporating the connotations that this term carries into this dissertation. As the Italian political scientist Luigi Bonanate wrote “...deciding whether an action is terrorist...is more the result of a verdict than the establishing of a fact; the formulating of a social judgment rather than the description of a set of phenomena.”⁷⁵ This dynamic is further exacerbated by the fact that although the term “terrorism” was first associated with “the terror” of the French Revolution and state-orchestrated violence, the word has come to be associated

⁷⁴ Alex P Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media* (London: Sage Publications, 1982), 2.

⁷⁵ Alex P. Schmid, *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983), 7.

exclusively with non-state actors despite the efforts of some writers to promote the concept of “state terrorism.” This often lets states off the hook and demonizes even those revolutionary groups who only target enemy combatants. After all, the British Prevention of Terrorism Act, for example, says that “for the purposes of the legislation, terrorism is ‘the use of violence for political ends.’”⁷⁶ Instead, I describe the actions of key figures using direct terms such as “bombing,” “assassination,” or “attack” (the most common term in the French, Spanish, and Catalan language literature: *attentat*, *atentado*, *atemptat*). In so doing, my aim is to incorporate the historical specificity of this form of political violence without allowing the term “terrorism” to overshadow the events themselves.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1, “The Birth of the Anarchist ‘Propagandist by the Deed,’” analyzes the groundbreaking bombings of the Parisian anarchist Ravachol and his Spanish counterpart Paulino Pallás in the early 1890s. I argue that as opposed to the largely anonymous bombings of the previous decade, Ravachol and Pallás catapulted themselves to notoriety by incarnating revolution as the “propagandist by the deed.” Beyond establishing the templates of explosive anarchist martyrdom in France and Spain, these bombings elicited extremely repressive responses from both governments that threatened to overrun the rights of dissidents and prisoners.

Chapter 2, “Introducing the ‘Lottery of Death,’” examines how the precedent set by Ravachol and Paulino Pallás was transformed into attacks on “bourgeois” society as a whole. For many, this represented a “lottery of death” as targets like crowded theaters

⁷⁶ Ibid., 11.

and cafes were chosen simply for the alleged class composition of their patrons. This escalation in anarchist tactics further accelerated rising state repression in France and Spain where both governments passed severe anti-anarchist laws to justify their mass arrests. However, whereas the French government eventually reversed course on its harsh measures after the assassination of President Carnot and the absolution of the anarchist theorists tried in the Trial of the Thirty, the Spanish police and legal system would only escalate their assaults on anarchists, unionists, and other dissidents over the coming years.

Chapter 3, “The Return of Torquemada,” explores how the bombing of Cambios Nuevos in Barcelona in 1896 led to groundless mass arrests, torture, and executions in Montjuich Castle. The Spanish monarchy attempted to take the opportunity provided by the media consensus on the need to treat the anarchists like “wild beasts” to expand and enhance its repressive apparatus. Yet, once accounts of torture started to filter out of Montjuich, a groundbreaking transnational campaign linked peninsular oppression with the Monarchy’s colonial atrocities to paint a portrait of the “Revival of the Inquisition in Spain.”

Chapter 4, “All of Spain is Montjuich,” charts the development of the Montjuich campaign into a magnet for popular discontent as the colonies slipped through the fingers of the Spanish Monarchy. After the return of constitutional guarantees, the Montjuich campaign was able to spread across the country by capitalizing on the momentum that had been generated abroad and modeling itself on the campaign to exonerate the Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus who had been wrongfully charged with treason. Just as the *intellectuelles* came to the fore with Dreyfus in France, Spanish *intelectuales* took the

lead in demanding that the government release the prisoners. By 1900 Alfonso XIII gave in and pardoned the remaining prisoners. This victory set an important precedent for the next decade: despite new *atentados* and insurrections, the government would be far more reluctant to turn to mass arrests and executions for fear of triggering another international campaign.

Chapter 5, “After Montjuich: The Expansion of the ‘Campaign of Liberation,’” demonstrates how the successful model of the Montjuich campaign was successfully recreated to liberate forgotten anarchist prisoners in several campaigns at the start of the twentieth century. During the same period in the United Kingdom, different networks composed of missionaries, nonconformist congregations, chambers of commerce, and governmental officials were working to publicize the use of slave labor in the Congo Free State, Portuguese West Africa, and the South American Putumayo jungle. Although the anti-slavery networks and the networks around the Dreyfus Affair and the Spanish campaigns drew upon rather different values and politics, both manifested a similar desire to pressure governments to live up to the moral standards of the day embodied in the “ethics of modernity.” Ultimately, the networks that were created to free the Montjuich prisoners would be put to the test in defense of the Spanish anarchist pedagogue Francisco Ferrer after he was charged as an accessory to a 1906 attempt on the life of the king and a mastermind of rebellion in 1909. While they eventually failed to save Ferrer from the firing squad in 1909, they had a great impact on the consciousness of human rights from above and below.

Chapter 1: The Birth of the Anarchist ‘Propagandist by the Deed’

At the turn of the twentieth century groundbreaking human rights campaigns in defense of imprisoned anarchists and other dissidents in Spain emerged to counteract the Spanish monarchy’s brutal response to ‘propaganda by the deed.’ Anarchist bombings in theaters and cafes in the 1890s provoked mass arrests, the passage of harsh anti-anarchist laws and even torture and executions. The legal and physical repression of anarchists and radicals grew out of the fury of the dynastic press, which every day demanded harsh measures against the ‘enemies of society’ in their columns. Unknowingly, these monarchist journalist were crafting anti-anarchist rhetoric whose moral thrust was linked to its grounding in a value system that was increasingly pervasive moving toward the end of the nineteenth century. This value system, which I refer to as the “ethics of modernity,” was a widespread standard of progress measured by levels of moral development that granted modernity to ‘humane’ peoples while withholding it from their ‘brutal’ counterparts.

The press was focused on (literally) demonizing anarchism and using the political and social chaos that their explosions generated to score political points against their opponents. The Conservatives used them to decry the Liberals who were in power for their inability to enact ‘law and order,’ while republicans argued that the inequality and destitution at the root of anarchist attacks were the results of monarchist rule that could only be remedied by the formation of a republic. Across the political spectrum the debate was pervaded by arguments about how anarchism, facilitated by the misguided policies of one’s political opponents, was an inhuman social contagion that impeded ‘progress’

and the development of ‘civilization.’ If left unchecked, anarchism threatened to return Spain to the dark ages leaving it on a moral par with ‘backwards’ regions like Africa. In 1893, almost all non-anarchists were in agreement that anarchists were atavistic parasites who threatened to retard the progress of the nation if they were not eradicated. Liberals, Conservatives, and republicans may have fought amongst themselves over the mantle of ‘progress,’ but those in favor of extremely harsh anti-anarchist measures maintained a monopoly on the “ethics of modernity” as the anarchists were locked up and tortured.

In the early 1890s the dynastic press did not yet realize that the values they championed could be twisted against them. They could not imagine that their moral outrage at anarchist bombings could be transformed by a broader Western European public sphere into moral outrage at the ‘inquisitorial’ methods used to repress anarchists. While that dynamic will be explored in chapters 3 to 5, in this chapter I will focus on how the press inadvertently propelled ‘propaganda by the deed.’ For dynastic journalists and their political allies this was a more immediately terrifying unintended consequence of the media’s anti-anarchist campaign. After all, without the extensive media coverage that “propaganda by the deed” generated, it would have been drained of its propagandistic *raison d’être*. Obsessed with the popular reception of their acts, anarchist bombers sought to orchestrate astounding spectacles of rebellion. In this way, the invention of dynamite and the popular dailies of the late nineteenth century, aided by advances in photography and the innovation of the telegraph, provided anarchists with the means necessary to launch what historian David C. Rapoport referred to as “the first global or truly international terrorist experience in history.”¹ Beyond providing the necessary

¹ David C. Rapoport, “The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism,” in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes eds., *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University

preconditions for the emergence of “propaganda by the deed,” modern mass media also helped to create the “propagandist by the deed”: the anarchist avenger personality who devoted his life, often in a literally sacrificial sense, to violently dismantling systems of oppression. Although anarchists had resorted to dynamite throughout the 1880s, including 46 explosions in Barcelona between 1884 and 1893, it was not until the emergence of Ravachol in France and Paulino Pallás in Spain in the early 1890s that the anarchist bombing came to be interpreted as the embodiment of a personality whose ethos transcended the act itself and whose identity represented revolution incarnate. As a hybrid of the modern celebrity and the pre-modern saint, the “propagandist by the deed” captivated international audiences. The saga of the “propagandist by the deed” sold newspapers by epitomizing the collision between two hallmarks of late nineteenth century journalism: sensational news and the human-interest story.² While the spectacular act drew readers into the daily construction of the anarchist’s biography, the tales of personal destitution, depression, and determination that popular newspapers cobbled together to drag out the journalistic marketability of an *atentado* for an extra week or two endowed a bombing or assassination attempt with a humanizing narrative element.

Over time, publicists and government authorities would come to realize that detailed accounts of the lives of anarchist assassins and their exploits actually stimulated the perpetuation of “propaganda by the deed” and ran the risk of seducing many poor and working class readers as much as repulsing those whose status made them fearful. By the late 1890s, this would impel some newspapers to refrain from printing even the names of

Press, 2004), 47. Richard Bach Jensen agrees with Rapoport. See Richard Bach Jensen, “The International Campaign Against Anarchist Terrorism, 1880-1930s,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, No. 1, 89-109.

² Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 91.

anarchist assassins,³ but by then it was too late: the “propagandist by the deed” had already established himself as archetype of popular resistance and opened a pantheon of anarchist martyrs whose membership would grow into the twentieth century.

The Bombing of the Gran Vía

As the blaring of the Bourbon trumpeters marching down the Gran Vía in Barcelona on the 24th of September, 1893 faded into the shouts and *vivas* of the throngs of ebullient onlookers, General Arsenio Martínez Campos sat comfortably atop his steed reviewing an oncoming squadron of lancers. From the balconies above, heads tilted to get a glimpse of this unusual spectacle of military grandeur in celebration of the *fiestas* of the Virgin of Mercy.⁴ However, Martínez Campos later recounted that at 12:30, merely a half hour into the day’s festivities, he was “contemplating with satisfaction the military spirit and good demeanor of our lancers, when at the instant they passed in front of me I was surprised by a very powerful detonation accompanied by a large cloud of smoke, running and shouting.” Since the general was “a little hard of hearing,” at first he assumed there had been an accidental artillery explosion, but instants later he heard, and felt, another blast knocking him off his horse.⁵

Moments earlier, municipal officer Agustín Agudo noticed a man push out of the crowd onto the street and advance toward Martínez Campos. While Agudo “was asking

³ For example, *El Imparcial* stopped printing the name of Michele Angiolillo, the assassin of Prime Minister Cánovas del Castillo. The paper simply referred to him as “the prisoner” or “the murder of Cánovas.” *El Imparcial*, Aug. 17, 1897.

⁴ The celebration of the Virgin of Mercy had not previously included a military parade. See Temma Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso’s Barcelona* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 30; *Archives nationales* (AN), F7, 12725, “Attentats de Barcelone 1893-1908.”

⁵ For a diagram of the scene see: *La Época*, Sept. 26, 1893. For the general’s description of events see: *La Época* Sept. 25, 1893.

himself what this subject was up to,” he saw the man hurl two Orsini bombs at Martínez Campos that exploded at the feet of his horse mutilating the animal, but only slightly injuring the general’s leg (though the fall bruised his shoulder and head).⁶ Nearby generals Castellvi and Molins received similarly minor contusions, but Jaime Tous of the Civil Guard had a leg blown off and died shortly thereafter at a military hospital. Overall, the bombing caused one death and 16 injuries; some quite severe such as that of twenty-four year old spectator Rosalia Barbé who had her leg amputated.⁷

The explosions and screams unleashed a wave of frenzied panic. “The multitude, crazy, blind, ran in opposite directions knocking over everything, falling here, smashing into benches, trees, clogging up doorways and stores forming legitimate human mountains...”⁸ “Some of the soldiers remained immobile and stupefied. Others broke formation as if they were ready to run. Others, here and there, as if ripped by panic, pointed their rifles at the people.”⁹ But rather than take advantage of the chaos to escape, right after the explosion the bomber threw his cap in the air shouting “¡Viva la *anarquía!*” and offered no resistance as Agudo, saber in hand, seized him by the collar while another officer grabbed him around the waist.¹⁰ His name was Paulino Pallás Latorre.

⁶ Agudo’s account in: *El País*, Sept. 29, 1893; *El Diluvio*, Sept. 27, 1893.

⁷ Nine of the 17 victims of the attack were military personnel; for the most detailed and accurate account of the victims see: Antoni Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc: Barcelona Al Final Del Segle XIX* (Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2010), 63-4.

⁸ *El Imparcial*, Sept. 27, 1893.

⁹ Gaziel [Augustí Calvet i Pasqual], *Tots els camins duen a Roma. Història d'un destí (1893–1914). Memòries*, vol. 1 (Barcelona: Ediciones "La Caixa" d'Estalvis Laietana, 1977), 32–33, as quoted in Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 30.

¹⁰ *El País*, Sept. 29, 1893. Ramon Sempau, *Los victimarios: notas relativas al proceso de Montjuich* (Barcelona: García y Manent, 1900), 277. Though there was some debate about who *actually* apprehended Pallás. Several *agentes de vigilancia* wrote letters to *El Diluvio* with competing interpretations. *El Diluvio*, Sept. 28, 29, 30, 1893.

Not long after his arrest, the police, who previously knew nothing of Pallás, paid a visit to his cramped apartment in the working-class neighborhood of Sants in Barcelona where they found his pregnant wife Angela, their three young children, his widowed mother Francisca, and his fifteen-year-old brother Justo who all lived together in a “modest room.”¹¹ Angela claimed that she knew nothing of the bombing. According to his later testimony, Pallás went into Barcelona and ate a meal at a *taverna* at around 8:30 before continuing up Montjuich mountain to a cave where he dug up the two bombs that he had previously buried wrapped in cotton to protect them from the humidity. He claimed to have acquired the bombs from an Italian anarchist named Francesco Momo (a convenient story since Momo had accidentally blown himself up the previous March). After unearthing the small spherical explosives, Pallás wrapped them in handkerchiefs, rested them in his sash, and set off for the military parade.¹²

In the Pallás home, the police found a laminated lithograph portrait of the Haymarket martyrs, anarchist pamphlets and periodicals, and a copy of *The Conquest of Bread* by the prominent Russian anarchist theorist Kropotkin.¹³ Certainly Pallás had wholeheartedly embraced the anarchist doctrine, but he had only done so a few years earlier. Considered to be generous and altruistic by those who knew him, Pallás was said to have adopted “authoritarian socialism” in the late 1880s before moving his family to Argentina to find employment.¹⁴ In Buenos Aires, and then Rosario de Santa Fe, Pallás immersed himself in the diverse, multi-lingual world of Argentine revolutionary politics,

¹¹ *La Época*, Sept. 26, 1893; *El Imparcial*, Oct. 4, 1893.

¹² *La Época*, Sept 30, 1893; *El País*, Oct. 2, 1893; Ángel Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social: violencia y represión en la España de entre siglos (1868-1909)* (Madrid: Catarata, 2011), 96.

¹³ *La Época*, Sept. 26, 1893 incorrectly lists *The Conquest of Bread* as having been written by Bakunin. *El Diluvio*, Sept. 24, 1893.

¹⁴ Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 65-70.

regularly attending discussion groups and increasingly making a name for himself as an orator at public events. It was rumored that he got to know the famed Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, then living in Argentina, who influenced Pallás's shift toward anarchist communism. Continually in search of work, the penniless Pallás arrived in São Paulo where he sought work at a local Italian cafe frequented by Spaniards and Catalans, though to no avail. By the following year the family had relocated to Rio de Janeiro where on May 1st, 1891, Pallás threw a bomb into the Alcántara Theater: a prelude of things to come. We can see that his journey from socialism to anarchism mirrored his voyage to South America and grew out of his circulation among bustling trans-Atlantic anarchist networks. Eventually the Pallás family returned to Barcelona. The couple opened a little cloth shop before Pallás left the enterprise for more stable employment at a printing workshop, but was fired for his political activities. After allegedly spending some time in Paris where he would have been influenced by the frenzy whipped up by the soon-to-be-legendary French anarchist Ravachol, Pallás returned to Barcelona in the fall of 1892 and helped publish an anarchist periodical in Sabadell bearing his name (*Ravachol*).¹⁵

The day after the bombing, before there was time to clean up the abandoned carriages, broken tree branches, and shattered glass from street lamps that still littered the intersection of Gran Vía and carrer de Muntaner, the journalistic panic and politicking had already begun.¹⁶ Politicians and commentators from across the political spectrum demanded that the government unleash harsh repression upon the anarchists whose

¹⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 70-2. *Ravachol: periódico anarquista* published two editions out of Sabadell (Oct. 22 and Nov. 11, 1892) before changing its name to *El Eco de Ravachol* for one more edition (Jan. 21, 1893).

¹⁶ *La Época* Sept. 25, 1893; *El Imparcial* Sept. 27, 1893.

crimes were commonly described in the press as an affront to humanity that turned back the clock on civilization. The conservative *La Época* of Madrid wrote that anarchist violence “fills the country with great fear...that makes social life impossible, hoping to drag us back to a state of barbarism unimaginable even in primitive times.”¹⁷ In the Madrid liberal daily *El Imparcial* it was the “barbarous anarchists that are the shame of humanity.”¹⁸

However, although the press was universally horrified at what had transpired, Liberal, Conservative, and republican journalists and politicians did not hesitate to steer the intense public debate toward their competing political purposes. With the Liberal Party in power at the time, conservative figures such as Romero Robledo pinned the blame on their opponents. “Providence,” he said, “is the only force here that in the abandonment and total absence of Government in which we live, can protect people and things.” Aware that he might come across as attempting to score political points, he clarified that, “Not in the name of a political interest, but rather in the name of the interest of the *Patria*, we ask for a remedy of this evil. The Conservative Party doesn’t want Power; we wouldn’t accept it. But we ask that Government exist.”¹⁹ Similarly, *La Dinastía*, a conservative paper from Barcelona, lamented the lack of response it had gotten over the years from its calls for the authorities to shut down the unions and revolutionary societies that bred threats to public order.²⁰ Like the editors of *La Dinastía*, more and more politicians and journalists started to look to what they saw as the root of the threat: the uncontested spread of anarchist ideas and associations. The editors of *La*

¹⁷ *La Época*, Sept. 25, 1893.

¹⁸ *El Imparcial*, Sept. 25, 1893.

¹⁹ *La Época*, Sept. 25, 1893.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Época argued two days after the bombing that there have always been those born with the criminal germ, but in the past they were “without mutual solidarity” so their crimes were “hidden in shadow...It was reserved for our century this new...progress of criminality as much in its methods as in its systematic organization.” The solution, therefore, was to crush the ability of those biologically predisposed to crime to associate or propagate their ideas, but,

...modern Governments have remained apathetic, conceding to theoretical anarchism the same prerogatives and liberties that the most noble and holy ideas deserve to enjoy. The result of this weak tolerance has been all of these horrors committed by Hoedel and Nobiling, by the incendiaries of the Commune in Paris, by the vandals of Alcoy, by the assassins of Barcelona...In the Spanish Parliament there has been no shortage of orators who have declared the legitimacy of anarchist ideas, as long as they remain *purely* in the realm of theory. ‘Liberty—they said—has a correction for its deviations in liberty itself’; and armed with the phrase...they thought they had resolved the dreadful problem [of the anarchists]. The recent events of Paris, Madrid and Barcelona have been necessary to prove the ridiculous nature of such garrulous language...Today all tolerance of the anarchists should be gravely censured...it is necessary, in addition, to persecute without rest and without compassion those who espouse anarchist ideas. Their secret sessions, their meetings, their periodicals, their libels are outside of the law.²¹

Conservative critics considered the Gran Vía bombing to be definitive proof that liberal tolerance for free speech inevitably ended with carnage. Like the anarchists themselves, ironically enough, conservatives argued that even theoretical anarchist ideas would over time catalyze social upheaval. Social defense, they claimed, required the government to jettison its liberal commitment to universal free speech (as incomplete as it was in reality) to distinguish between constructive and destructive ideas. The prominent Liberal Party mouthpiece *El Imparcial* attempted to defend liberal values in the article “Punishment, not Laws” by cautioning against repressive laws:

²¹ Hoedel and Nobiling each attempted to assassinate the German Kaiser in 1878. See *La Época*, Sept. 26, 1893.

If there are police deficiencies in Barcelona then this is something that should be disclosed to the *ministro de la Gobernación* with the governor of Barcelona, but to hope to charge liberal methods with the blame for these crimes which are committed under all governments, and one could even add with more frequency when the means of command are tighter, is to hope for the impossible, because it would be the same as hoping that a few coercive laws would cure what an absolutist government and a real police army in Russia haven't been able to cure...

If the methods of Tsarism, the most repressive government on the continent, actually augmented bombings and assassinations, the liberals argued, then abandoning civil liberties and shutting down newspapers might even run the risk of exacerbating the problem. Simply enhancing repression at the expense of liberties wouldn't work, but, as *El Imparcial* was quick to point out, neither would turning in the other direction toward a republic since anarchist violence was “a social form from which neither monarchies nor republics are exempt.”²² The dynastic papers, eager to lump republicanism in with anarchism, attacked the republican *El Diluvio* for its alleged lack of outrage²³ and even accused the republican *El País* of apologizing for the attack; an accusation the paper's editors were anxious to deny. Over the following weeks, *El País* continued to focus on distancing republicans from the attack: “Republicans, from the most conservative and governmental to the most radical, including those that profess a form of armchair socialism, agree on the necessity of respecting the traditional foundations of society...” After making their stance clear, their articles quickly transitioned into suggesting that anarchist violence would disappear under a republic:

The republicans would make the ferocious intransigence of anarchism useless from the moment that they facilitate a legal path for the rational just demands of the working classes. If the Republic translated into laws all or the greater part of the

²² *El Imparcial*, Sept. 26, 1893.

²³ *La Época*, Sept. 25, 1893; *El Imparcial*, Sept. 27, 1893. While *El Diluvio* clearly considered the *atentado* to be lamentable, its articles over the following days were factual, lacking the emotional, extreme outrage of other papers.

aspirations of the workers...what purpose would dynamite bombs have any more? The Republic isn't only law and justice. The Republic is peace.²⁴

The only way to stop more bombs from exploding, the republicans argued, was to resolve the social issues that turned poor people into enemies of the state. They promised that a future republic would be up to the task. Conveniently, they chose to ignore the prickly problem of explaining why the French Third Republic was struggling through its own wave of propaganda by the deed.

Regardless of public debate over the proper response to the bombing, the police wasted no time in rounding up between eleven and twenty 'suspected accomplices' the next day, before reaching 60 arrests shortly thereafter.²⁵ Inspector Tressols and his agents targeted labor leaders and local well-known anarchists, including Martín Borràs and Emili Hugas who were the most influential anarcho-communists in Gràcia just outside of Barcelona, and those suspected of involvement in past bombings, such as Joan Gabaldà who had been arrested for the bombing of Plaça Reial in February 1892. Several foreigners were also arrested such as the Italians Hector Lui and Ettore Luigi Bernardini (who had also been arrested previously for the Plaça Reial bombing) and the French Benito Pepot.²⁶

“With Fire and Dynamite”: The Pallás Trial and the Fear of Vengeance

²⁴ *El País*, Oct. 2, 1893.

²⁵ *El País* listed the number at 20, *El Imparcial* put it at 11, while Herrerín López lists the figure at 17. See *El País*, Sept. 26, 1893; *El Imparcial*, Sept. 28, 1893; Herrerín López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 94.

²⁶ Herrerín López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 93-4; *La Época* Sept. 27, 1893. Moreover, the civil governor banned a planned anarchists theatrical production of the drama “The Enemy of the People” to be followed up a talk on “socialist dramatic art” in the Poble Sec district of Barcelona. See *La Época*, Sept. 29, 1893.

During the days after his bombing, Pallás sat in a cell in the Atarazanas barracks at the end of the Rambla awaiting trial. While in his cell, he was said to have told the guards “I am an anarchist and they will kill me; but someone will avenge me.”²⁷ The act of propaganda by the deed was intended to inspire others to act similarly and foment resistance more broadly. Pallás recognized that his martyrdom could play a key role in this process by creating a specific opportunity for vengeance. As we will see in Chapter 2, that is exactly what occurred. Five days later, Pallás was escorted into the courtroom of the Atarazanas Barracks “with serenity” by a group of soldiers and sat down opposite the judge who ordered that he be untied during the proceedings. When the judge asked “to what political society does the prisoner belong?” Pallás responded “To none, I am an individualist” affirming his opposition to organized association. In the center of the room, packed with eager journalists, rested fragments of Pallas’ bomb, a box of pistons, his black sash, and some anarchist papers. Pallás stated that he developed the idea to attack General Martínez Campos in 1874 when the general led the coup that restored the Bourbon monarchy at the expense of the fragile first Spanish republic. He feared that Martínez Campos’ recent appointment as Captain General of Catalonia would allow him to unleash brutal repression on the region so he acted to prevent such an outcome.²⁸

In fact, several days later Pallás wrote a letter to *El País* that was published posthumously and reproduced widely explaining the reasons for his attack and emphasizing the hypocrisy of those who rejected his methods while lauding official military slaughter. The letter emphasized two important ideas: that honor and morality are contextual since “there are neither heroes nor traitors; there are children of

²⁷ *El Imparcial* Sept. 25, 1893; The Atarazanas Barracks was the site of the last stand of the nationalist rebels of Barcelona at the outset of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936.

²⁸ *El País*, Sept. 30 and Oct. 2, 1893; *El Imparcial*, Sept. 30, 1893; *La Época*, Sept. 30, 1893.

circumstances,” and that because social change requires bloody sacrifice, “the death of a few shouldn’t at all influence one not to move forward with a regenerative idea.” Pallás was very concerned about his legacy, the afterlife of his deed, clarifying that he could have escaped but “didn’t want to in order to avoid being called a murderer.” But he also wanted to point out that he wasn’t interested in what society thought of him. He explained that:

[I am not] afraid of, or concerned about, the judgment of this stupid, hypocritical, and evil society, but rather because I don’t want my children to be considered children of a murderer, but rather children of an honorable man, who gave his life for a cause, that perhaps wrongly he thought the best, but that in good faith he gave his blood thinking that he was doing a service for humanity.²⁹

Pallás recognized that many people, especially those who upheld the existing society, would denigrate his actions. He wasn’t troubled by that, but he was desperate to clarify to both his critics and supporters that he acted in good faith based on his conscience and that he willingly gave his life for the advancement of “humanity.” Beyond political differences about the military or capitalism, Pallás sought to communicate the purity of his motivations.

Although Pallás refused to be represented by an attorney, military authorities appointed a first lieutenant of artillery to speak on his behalf. The attorney spoke of Pallás’ poverty and portrayed him as a good father and husband whose industrious personality led him to seek work in South America. He continued to plead for clemency, claiming that he suffered from a “psychiatric affliction,” but as he argued that his client had repented, Pallás shook his head “energetically” in disagreement, causing the judge to send him out of the courtroom. When the prosecutor called for the death penalty, Pallás

²⁹ *El País*, Oct. 8, 1893.

shouted “*aprobado*” (approved), demonstrating his agreement with the requested sentence. At the very end, when it was customary to beg for a pardon, Pallás stated “I don’t repent; I don’t want a pardon.” He started to explain that his only regret was failing to kill the general, but he was cut off and the Council of War ended the trial.³⁰

Pallás was sentenced to death by firing squad to be carried out at Montjuich castle, an ominous mountaintop edifice overlooking the city beside the sea. After signing his sentence, Pallás solemnly affirmed: “Signing this death sentence, I sign that of my prosecutors! This fulfills the law of Talión: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Republican deputies Sol y Ortega and Avila visited Pallás to explain their plans to push for a pardon, but Pallás rejected their proposal saying that “ideas are stronger than walls and real anarchists should die defending their cause.” Masonic groups and even the bishop himself urged the queen regent to issue a pardon, but to no avail. However, Pallás used the opportunity he had before the republican deputies to ask them to send his head to a phrenologist who could prove that he wasn’t ‘insane,’ and that his head and his clothes be put on display in a museum after examination. None of his requests were granted, but they demonstrate the importance that Pallás, as a propagandist, attached to his legacy.³¹

While republicans and masons were pushing for a pardon, anarchist and insurrectionary figures around the city were taking the opportunity to foment a climate of fear and retaliation leading up to Pallás’ execution. Anonymous posters were plastered around Barcelona threatening the authorities if Pallás were executed and a number of “distinguished people,” such as the director of *El Noticiero Universal*, received anonymous threats in the mail. Even the director of the band scheduled to play for the

³⁰ *La Época*, Sept. 30, 1893; *El Diluvio*, Sept. 30, 1893; *El Imparcial*, Oct. 4, 1893; *El País*, Sept. 30 and Oct. 2, 1893.

³¹ *El Imparcial*, Oct. 6 and Oct. 7, 1893; *El Diluvio*, Oct. 6, 1893.

participants of the International Literary Congress that General Martínez Campos attended after the bombing received a threat that a bomb would go off during their performance. Meanwhile, the police came across a proclamation calling on workers to rise up saying “War to the tyrants! The blood of Pallás should run mixed with that of the captain general. *¡Viva la anarquía!*” A different pamphlet advised anarchists to arm themselves with gasoline, dynamite, knives or any weapons at their disposal for the day of the execution and ended saying that “governments impose terror with hunger and rifles, the anarchists have to impose it themselves with fire and dynamite.” A similar writing vowed that in response to “white terror we will respond with red terror. We will avenge Pallás.”³² Even the British ambassador to Spain, Drummond Wolf, wrote that the bombing and its aftermath “caused a deep impression in Madrid, where the feeling of security is never very strong.”³³ However, anarchists were not unanimously enthusiastic about Pallás’ act, or propaganda by the deed in general. The debate that emerged in response to the Gran Vía bombing was but the latest confrontation between predominantly anti-organizational, pro-dynamite, anarchist communists and anti-dynamite anarchist collectivist unionists that had been simmering for years, the subject of the following section.

Anarchism Communism and Propaganda By the Deed

The origins of both the economic philosophy of anarchist communism and the strategic focus of propaganda by the deed emerged around the same time after the 1876

³² *El País*, Oct. 6, 1893; *El Imparcial*, Oct. 2 and Oct. 5, 1893

³³ Eduardo González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza: Orden Público, Subversión y Violencia Política en la España de la Restauración (1875-1917)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1998), 272.

death of the Russian ex-aristocrat Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), the most influential figure in the development of anarchism. Although Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) was the first to describe himself as an anarchist and center his critique on the oppressive nature of the state, his market-based economic program and distaste for class struggle stood in stark contrast with Bakunin's socialist revolutionism. Bakunin essentially infused Marx's critique of capitalism with Proudhon's anti-statism to develop an anarchism that was anti-hierarchical, decentralized, completely opposed to private property and market-based exchange, and focused on fomenting a popular class war that would abolish capital and the state. Yet, Bakunin held onto Proudhon's perspective that workers should receive the integral product of their labor according to the maxim "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his productivity." To distinguish his ideas from Marx's 'authoritarianism,' Bakunin called his economic theory "collectivism." Anarchism, Bakunin said, was simply "Proudhonism, greatly developed and taken to its ultimate conclusion."³⁴ Furthermore, although Bakunin famously quipped, "the passion for destruction is at the same time a creative passion," he saw anti-authoritarian unionism and mass action as the keys to revolution rather than isolated, individual reprisals against symbols of oppression.³⁵ This was evident in the fact that the heavily Bakuninist Spanish anarchist movement emerged in 1870 as the strongest faction in the labor organization *Federación Regional Española* (FRE), the Spanish section of the International Workingman's Association (IWMA) known as the First International.³⁶

³⁴ Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 84.

³⁵ Mark Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 111.

³⁶ Although the Spanish FRE officially lasted until 1881 when it was disbanded to form the *Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española* (FTRE), it was essentially shut down in 1874 when it was forced underground by government repression. See Esenwein, George Richard, *Anarchist Ideology and the*

Towards the end of his life, however, a number of Bakunin's disciples and comrades started to rethink elements of his thought. Upon his death, any reluctance to offend the aging revolutionary faded away, and two influential and interrelated theoretical innovations in anarchist doctrine emerged over the next few years: anarchist communism (or anarcho-communism) and "propaganda by the deed." In the late 1870s, the foundational theories of anarchist communism developed among Bakunin's former comrades in the Swiss Jura Federation including Italians Errico Malatesta, Andrea Costa, and Carlo Cafiero, the French geographer Élisée Reclus, and the Russian anarchist émigré Pyotr Kropotkin.³⁷ As opposed to the collectivist focus on building a post-capitalist society that would provide the worker with the integral product of their labor based on their level of production, the anarchist communists shared Marx's final goal of a society where remuneration would follow Louis Blanc's famous 1839 slogan, "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."³⁸ From the communist perspective, in order to create a truly just society it was essential to disentangle one's productivity in the workplace or the economy from their ability to survive. As the influential Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón phrased it, "a man is free, truly free, when he doesn't need to rent out his arms to anyone in order to lift a piece of bread to his mouth."³⁹

Working-Class Movement in Spain, 1868-1898 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989), 44.

³⁷ According to Max Nettlau the phrase "anarchist communism" was first written in a pamphlet entitled "*Aux travailleurs manuels partisans de l'action politique*" written in 1876 by Francois Dumartheray who was an associate of Élisée Reclus. See Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 107. Cafiero was influenced by the hybrid collectivist-communist pamphlet of 1876 "Ideas on Social Organization" by Bakunin's disciple James Guillaume. See Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 111-112.

³⁸ Leier, *Bakunin*, 110.

³⁹ Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter eds., *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 216.

In 1880, the term “anarchist communism” was formally adopted at the Congress of the Jura Federation marking the point when this new doctrine had surpassed collectivism throughout most of Europe except in Spain where it would not win out until the turn of the century. Since collectivism privileged the quantitative production of the workforce, it was much stronger in Spain where anarchists maintained their dominance in the labor movement, as opposed to the rest of Europe where socialists were pushing their anti-authoritarian competitors to the margins in the unions. Before the advent of anarcho-syndicalism in the early twentieth century, anarchists struggled to respond to the growing popularity of Marxian socialism especially in northern Europe. Given the growing distance between anarchism and labor across most of Europe, it’s no surprise that many in the anarchist movement started to question the ability of unionism to bring the revolution. As early as 1873, at the Geneva Congress of the Anti-Authoritarian International, almost everyone was highly pessimistic about the general strike except the Spanish delegate.⁴⁰

At the 1876 Berne Congress of the Anarchist International, the Italian delegates advocated the “insurrectionary deed,” a way to directly put rebellion into practice, as a substitute for increasingly institutionalized trade unionism. Yet, the majority of the delegates backed the Belgians who pushed for the union struggle. Determined to follow through on their arguments about promoting ideas through action, the Italian delegates formed a group of 26 militants that took to the Matese mountains in central Italy in April 1877 to start a rural popular insurrection. Notable anarchist communists Errico Malatesta

⁴⁰ The 1872 Hague Conference of the IWMA resulted in the formal split between the Marxist and Bakuninist camps. Marx moved the headquarters of the IWMA to New York City, and Bakunin’s followers established a competing Anti-Authoritarian International in Switzerland lasting from 1873-1877. See Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 56 and 109.

and Carlo Cafiero organized what came to be known as the “Benevento Affair” along with the former Russian artillery officer turned revolutionary Sergei Kravchinskii (known as Stepniak). Previously, Stepniak had been a member of the socialist Circle of Tchaiykovsky in the early 1870s with Kropotkin, and later met Malatesta in the Balkans while fighting alongside the Slavs against the Turks in 1876. As phrased by one of their comrades, the idea was to transition from the peaceful propaganda of ideas to “clamorous and solemn propaganda of insurrections and barricades.” Although initially the guerrillas managed to wreck the local public record office, thereby destroying property deeds, and gain the support of some of the villagers, their plan unraveled when the soldiers arrived. For a little under a week, they wandered through the mountains occasionally pausing to burn more documents before they eventually had to surrender without resistance.⁴¹

Months later, the French anarchist doctor Paul Brousse, who had listened to Malatesta and Cafiero argue for the “insurrectionary deed” at the Berne Congress, used his position as temporary editor of the *Bulletin de la Fédération Jurassienne* to publish an article titled “Propaganda by the Deed,” the first use of the term that would become a mainstay of the anarchist lexicon. Yet, by ‘propaganda by the deed,’ Brousse simply meant putting ideas into action. The original concept was about actively and collectively creating revolutionary situations rather than waiting for them to emerge. For Brousse, the

⁴¹ This attempt was reminiscent of the failed campaign of Risorgimento legend Carlo Pisane to foment popular insurrection in Sicily with a band of 300 men in 1857. See Juan Avilés, “Propaganda por el hecho y regicidio en Italia,” in Juan Avilés and Ángel Herrérin eds., *El nacimiento del terrorismo en occidente: anarquía, nihilismo y violencia revolucionaria* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2008), 2-5; Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 60-2; Claudia Verhoeven, “The Making of Russian Revolutionary Terrorism” in Isaac Land ed., *Enemies of Humanity: The Nineteenth-Century War on Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 99.

Paris Commune was the epitome of propaganda by the deed.⁴² Shortly thereafter, though, the term ‘propaganda by the deed’ started to develop its longstanding association with the kinds of isolated, individual attacks on symbols of oppression that would come to identify the anarchist with the shadowy bomb-thrower in the global popular imagination. This shift toward individual bombings and assassinations had a number of significant historical precedents from the previous decades.

As early as 1866, Dmitri Karakazov attempted to shoot the Russian Tsar Alexander II as an attempt to carry out what he described as “factual propaganda.” In contrast to the pre-modern regicide who sought to replace one ruler with another, Karakazov became the first terrorist in history, according to historian Claudia Verhoeven, because he targeted Alexander as a symbol. Karakazov explained, “I cannot but feel sorry that I made an attempt on the life of a ruler like Alexander II, but it was not at him that I shot; I took action against the emperor in him—and this I do not regret.” Although it’s unclear whether this specific act influenced later anarchists, Karakazov’s desire to target symbols of oppression to unleash popular fury at the Empire prefigured many important aspects of propaganda by the deed.⁴³ Years later in 1878, Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich continued Karakazov’s legacy by shooting and wounding General Trepov, the governor of St. Petersburg, for having ordered a young prisoner to be flogged for not doffing his cap in his presence. In his influential exposé on the hidden Russian revolutionary underworld *Underground Russia*, Stepniak, who later that very same year

⁴² Paul Brousse, “Propaganda by the Deed,” in Robert Graham ed., *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume One: From Anarchy to Anarchism (300CE to 1939)* (Montreal: Black Rose, 2005), 150-1.

⁴³ Verhoeven, *The Odd Man Karakozov*. Walter Laqueur argues, though, that Karl Heinzen was the “first to provide a full-fledged doctrine of modern terrorism.” See Grob-Fitzgibbon, ““From the Dagger to the Bomb,”” 99.

returned to Russia and assassinated the St. Petersburg Chief of Police, wrote that Zasulich's act "gave to Terrorism a most powerful impulse. It illuminated it with its divine aureola, and gave to it the sanction of sacrifice and of public opinion."⁴⁴

Overall, 1878 saw an astounding proliferation of assassination attempts across Europe. In February, a bomb exploded in Florence at the funeral for King Victor Emmanuel II and later in the year more bombs exploded in Florence and Pisa before the failed attempt of Giovanni Passanante to assassinate Humberto I in Naples.⁴⁵ That same year, attempts were made on the lives of Kaiser Wilhelm I and King Alfonso XII of Spain.⁴⁶ This wave of assassination attempts culminated with the successful attack on Tsar Alexander II in March 1881 by *Narodnya Volya*. Years later, Kropotkin recounted how in the early 1870s his underground revolutionary Circle of Tchaikovsky, founded by future *Narodnya Volya* assassin Sophia Perovskaya, had been committed to promoting a mass movement and had been so opposed to assassinations that they even stopped a would-be assassin who came to St. Petersburg to kill Tsar Alexander II.⁴⁷ By the early 1880s, however, Stepniak, Perovskaya and Kropotkin had wholeheartedly embraced propaganda by the deed. Kropotkin considered it to be a method of "revolutionary education" and in *Le Révolté* he published an article calling for "permanent revolt in

⁴⁴ Ana Siljak, *Angel of Vengeance: The "Girl Assassin," The Governor of St. Petersburg, and Russia's Revolutionary World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 1 and 9.

⁴⁵ Avilés, "Propaganda por el hecho y regicidio en Italia," in *El nacimiento del terrorismo en occidente*, 5.

⁴⁶ Oliva declared his allegiance to the International after his arrest and as a result several members of the International were arrested. Also, there was another attempt on the life of Alfonso XII in December 1879 by Francisco Otero. See Rafael Núñez Florencio, *El terrorismo anarquista 1888-1909* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1983), 38.

⁴⁷ Pyotr Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899), 304-316.

speech, writing, by the dagger and the gun, or by dynamite,” written by former Benevento rebel Carlo Cafiero.⁴⁸

Although the assassins of this era were not anarchists, the dynamism of their actions convinced many anarchists of the exponential potential of an individual or a small group to drastically arouse society with a single bold act. At an international anarchist congress in London in the summer of 1881, months after the assassination of the Tsar, an interpretation of propaganda by the deed in terms of individual or small group attacks on power was agreed upon as an important strategy of the movement. From this point onward, the individualist version of propaganda by the deed dominated Brousse’s earlier popular insurrectionary interpretation. The congress was attended by a wide variety of influential anarchists including Malatesta, Kropotkin, and the German devotee of dynamite Johan Most.⁴⁹ Most had been a Social Democratic representative in the Reichstag until Bismarck’s anti-socialist law of 1878 forced him to flee to London where he became an anarchist advocate of propaganda by the deed. Inspired by the explosive attacks of the Irish Fenians and the assassination of the Tsar, Most published “The Science of Revolutionary Warfare—A Manual of Instruction in the Use and Preparation of Nitroglycerine, Dynamite, Gun-Cotton, Fulminating Mercury, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons, etc., etc.,” in the mid 1880s after emigrating to the United States. He wrote that recently

⁴⁸ González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 255; Avilés, “Propaganda por el hecho y regicidio en Italia,” in *El nacimiento del terrorismo en occidente*, 5.

⁴⁹ Also at that congress was Francesco Saverio Merlino, the young lawyer who defended the Benevento rebels a few years earlier. See Avilés, “Propaganda por el hecho y regicidio en Italia,” in *El nacimiento del terrorismo en occidente*, 6. Upon returning from that conference, Kropotkin learned that the Swiss government had expelled him from the country. See Kropotkin, *Memoirs*, 436-7.

invented dynamite was “a genuine boon for the disinherited, while it brings terror and fear to the robbers [i.e. capitalists]...”⁵⁰

In some cases, the police were eager to provoke an incendiary, yet ineffectual, application of propaganda by the deed. For example, a key factor behind the adoption of propaganda by the deed at the 1881 anarchist congress was the enthusiasm of several provocateurs including Serraux, the alias of an agent of the Parisian Prefecture of Police.⁵¹ Months earlier, Serraux had been behind the 1880 creation of the first French anarchist newspaper after the Commune, *La Révolution sociale*. The paper was masterminded and funded by Andrieux, the Prefect of Police, as a way to “place Anarchy on the payroll” and have direct knowledge of the movement.⁵² Kropotkin described *La Révolution sociale* as “of an unheard-of violence; burning, assassination, dynamite bombs—there was nothing but that in it.”⁵³ Serraux opposed plans to attack the Banque de France or the prefecture of police, and redirected the group toward the far more harmless target of the statue of Thiers, though their bomb failed to harm the statue at all.⁵⁴ Historian Walter Laqueur argues that such police funding and instigating was quite common among incendiary revolutionary papers in the 1880s and 1890s.⁵⁵

One of the most important incidents in the history of propaganda by the deed occurred on May 4, 1886 when a bomb was thrown into a group of 200 police officers

⁵⁰ For more on Most: John Merriman, *The Dynamite Club: How a Bombing in Fin-de-Siècle Paris Ignited the Age of Modern Terror* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), 75-6. Alfred Nobel patented dynamite in 1867 and in gelignite was invented in 1875. See Ze’ev Iviavsky, “Individual Terror: Concept and Typology,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12:1, 47.

⁵¹ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 17.

⁵² Alexandre Skirida, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968* (Oakland: AK Press, 2002), 43-5.

⁵³ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 45-6.

⁵⁴ Skirida, *Facing the Enemy*, 44-5.

⁵⁵ Walter Laqueur, *The Age of Terrorism* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), 135. A number of anarchist papers were founded by a police agent in southern Italy from 1894-1899. See Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 46.

entering Haymarket Square in Chicago to shut down a demonstration protesting the previous day's deadly police attack on a demonstration for the eight-hour day. When the bomb exploded, the police opened fire on the crowd and some workers, wary of being shot at as the day before, returned fire. At the end, seven officers were mortally wounded and about three times as many workers lay dead. Although the identity of the bomber has never been discovered, eight anarchists, mainly German immigrants, were charged with the bombing without any evidence. The eventual execution of the seven men (the eighth received a long prison sentence) who would come to be known as the "Haymarket martyrs" was a pivotal moment in the popularization of anarchist propaganda by the deed and the legacy of anarchist martyrdom. Over the coming years, the memory of their illegitimate executions would play a central role in anarchist (and socialist) May Day demonstrations, but their forced martyrdom was of a very different kind than that of the self-professed anarchist bomber who sacrificed his life for 'the idea.'⁵⁶

In Spain, however, propaganda by the deed developed in response to a significantly different set of factors. As opposed to many other European anarchists who attempted to respond to the growth of reformist social democratic electoral action and unionism, Spanish anarchists developed their early theory and practice of propaganda by the deed in response to harsh state repression that made legal resistance impossible. After the destruction of the First Spanish Republic and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1874, the FRE (Spanish section of the First International) was declared illegal and thousands of republicans, socialists, and anarchists were forcibly relocated to remote corners of the Spanish Empire. In response, the FRE started to create a "secret

⁵⁶ George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), 462-3.

revolutionary organization” with “an executive nucleus of vengeance” to coordinate “committees of revolutionary action” inspired by the long nineteenth-century tradition of clandestine cell-based organizing and secret societies.⁵⁷ At the 1877 congress of the anti-authoritarian international in Verviers, the Spanish delegate argued for a version of propaganda by the deed inspired by the Russian nihilists as a method of self-defense.⁵⁸

By the time the Liberal Party took control and legalized political association in 1881, an irreconcilable split had already developed between the advocates of mass unionism and propaganda by the deed, fracturing the FRE. Determined to create a legal labor organization free from the influence of propaganda by the deed, anarchist unionists formed the *Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española* (FTRE) in 1881 in an effort to return to the tactics of the early FRE. Although the FTRE stated that it would respond to violent bourgeois efforts to impede its progress with force, it emphasized that “we will never achieve our aspirations by violent or criminal methods.” By 1882, the federation boasted a membership of 57,934, two-thirds of which were from the rural southern province of Andalusia. Although the FTRE did its best to cover up the insurrectionary decisions of the London Congress, the insurrectionary line reemerged by the second Congress of the FTRE in Seville in 1882. In part, this reflected the ongoing tension within the movement between urban, skilled industrial workers and the unskilled rural membership in Andalusia. In the 1870s, the Spanish agricultural economy was increasingly susceptible to fluctuations in the global market culminating in waves of

⁵⁷ González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 227. For example the Spanish Democratic Party was forced underground in 1857 and organized approximately 80,000 people in Catalonia and Andalusia into ten-person cells called *chozas* coordinated by a central committee called a Phalanstery. See Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 58.

⁵⁸ At the Andalusian regional conferences of the FRE in 1876 and 1880 the necessity of reprisals against class enemies was accepted. See González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 228.

conflict across Andalusia, Extremadura, and the Levant toward the end of the decade. Prior to the return of the Liberal Party, the Civil Guard of Andalusia brutally repressed “illicit political associations,” but even after civil liberties were reinstated bread riots spurred on by a historically disastrous year for cereal production were confronted with cavalry charges and mass arrests.⁵⁹

The most dramatic episode of this era took place in 1882-3 when authorities blamed a series of murders in the Andalusian town of Jerez de la Frontera on a shadowy, clandestine anarchist group called *Mano Negra*. Historians disagree about the existence of the *Mano Negra*,⁶⁰ but regardless of whether it was a police fabrication or not, it was certainly used as a pretext to repress the FTRE in the region. Ultimately, there were nine executions, hundreds arrested and dozens deported for their supposed involvement in *Mano Negra*. Combined with the more general repression of the FTRE, by mid-1883 over 2,000 militants had been arrested amid accusations of torture and suicides in prison. Convinced that a massive “Black International” was behind the murders, General Camilo Polavieja asked for special anti-anarchist laws, but such laws wouldn’t materialize for another decade.⁶¹ Yet, unlike later episodes of widespread repression, there was no public outcry on behalf of the *Mano Negra* or FTRE prisoners.

The increasingly moderate FTRE attempted to distance itself from the *Mano Negra* saying that they had never “been party to robbery, arson, kidnapping or

⁵⁹ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 83; González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 229-33.

⁶⁰ Clara Lida and Ángel Herrérin López argued that *Mano Negra* existed, while James Joll, Glen A. Waggoner, and George Esenwein, denied its existence. José Álvarez Junco referred to it as a “miniscule, if not imaginary, conspiracy.” See Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 88-9; Herrérin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 58; José Álvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo: Lerroux y la Demagogia Populista* (Madrid: Alianza, 1990), 142.

⁶¹ Herrérin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 59; González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 233-6; Juan Áviles, *Francisco Ferrer y Guerdia: pedagogo, anarquista y mártir* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, Ediciones de Historia, S. A., 2006), 135.

assassination” and that they’d never had anything to do with any group “whose object is the perpetration of common crimes.”⁶² The director of *La Revista Social*, the Madrid-based FTRE organ, was even trying to convince his comrades not to argue for the innocence of those arrested until the ruling of the court.⁶³ Eventually, the eagerness of the FTRE to distance itself from the kinds of everyday tactics of insurrection and illegality that *campesinos* felt forced to turn to in repressive circumstances alienated much of the federation’s rural base. Over time, groups in favor of insurrection and propaganda by the deed, such as The Disinherited (*Los Desheredados*), were purged by the federation or left voluntarily.

This conflict was aggravated by the development of anarchist communism starting in the mid-1880s. Although anarchist communist ideas had spread to major cities such as Barcelona and Madrid by the start of the decade, the power of collectivism, as promoted through the FTRE, and the relative isolation of Spain from the most up-to-date currents of European anarchist thought delayed the doctrine’s development below the Pyrenees. The first public defense of anarchist communist ideas was made by the shoemaker Miguel Rubio at a FTRE regional congress in Seville in 1882. A year later, a small anarchist communist nucleus developed in the Barcelona suburb of Gràcia around the shoemaker Martín Borràs and the tailor and typographer Emili Hugas (among the first arrested immediately following the bombing of the Gran Vía ten years later). In large part, their interest in anarchist communism stemmed from the fact that their French language skills enabled them to read Kropotkin’s anarchist communist *Le Révolté* published out of Geneva. At a time when most sections in the region supported the FTRE

⁶² Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 87.

⁶³ Álvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 142.

Federal Commission against the insurrectionary minority, the Gràcia shoemakers section dissented, and even put forward a proposal to counteract the “bureaucratic centralism” of the federal commission.⁶⁴

By 1885, Borràs and Hugas helped create the first explicitly anarchist communist group in Spain, “Grupo de Gràcia.” By 1887, communist currents spread faster with the translation of Kropotkin’s writings on the subject, spearheaded by the Anarchist Communist Library of Gràcia, and the first anarchist communist newspapers *La Justicia Humana* (1886) and *Tierra y Libertad* (1888-9), also published by the “Grupo de Gràcia.”⁶⁵ Propaganda by the deed fit so well with anarchist communism because just as the communist economic vision shifted emphasis away from the quantifiable production of workers to the wellbeing of the dispossessed as a whole, propaganda by the deed emerged as a broad, flexible vision of resistance beyond the constraints of the workplace. Anyone could pick up a knife or follow a simple dynamite recipe and change history.

During this period, anarchist communists tended to be opposed to formal organization beyond the small affinity group of 8-12 *compañeros*, and fully committed to any tactic, no matter how destructive, that could eat away at structures of power and hasten the popular inheritance of the wealth of society. For example, *Ravachol*, the anarchist communist paper that Pallás worked on prior to his bombing, argued in an article titled “Organization and Revolution” that organization

is the principle obstacle to the revolution: it uproots from the daily struggle considerable quantities of men, who bury within it their freedom of thought, to work

⁶⁴ Antoni Dalmau i Ribalta, “Martí Borràs i Jover (1845-1894) o el primer comunisme llibertari,” *Revista d’Igualada*, 26 (2007), 20-1.

⁶⁵ Dalmau, “Martí Borràs i Jover,” 22. In fact a major factor in the spread of communist ideas in the Spanish anarchist movement was the attention it received from collectivist denunciations in *La Revista Social*. See Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 111-13.

and to judge for themselves, it breaks their power, it kills individual initiative, and it makes them uselessly serve as instruments.⁶⁶

As opposed to anarchist labor leaders who spent a significant amount of time embroiled in meetings and polemics, the anti-organizational anarchist communists called for immediate action. They argued that if even a small fraction of the thousands of union members that existed in Spain took up arms, the revolution could be at hand. Yet, the bureaucratic unions stifled the spontaneous initiative necessary for revolution. In a similar vein, the first issue of the anarchist communist *La Justicia Humana* argued that,

We are illegalists, that is, not believing that with the help of laws made by and in the benefit of our exploiters, can we arrive at the social revolution...We are not advocates of organizing the working classes in a positive sense; we aspire for a negative organization. Anarchists in every expression of the word without forming a manageable body...We believe this should be by groups, without statutes...⁶⁷

From the anti-organizational communist position, large labor federations were “always propelled by hidden bosses” that turned members into “dues machines” and curbed “all initiative” leaving the organization a “school of laziness.”⁶⁸ Instead, anarchist communists saw the revolution as resulting from a buildup of individual and small-scale acts of resistance that would trigger mass revolt as was evident in an article from *La Controversia* from Valencia: “in the social world each great revolution is fertilized and determined by an infinite number of isolated or partial rebellions that are the immense accumulation of the forces necessary to transmit movement to the final action.”⁶⁹

The FTRE finally collapsed in 1888 and although other labor federations with varying degrees of anarchist influence were formed in its wake, the center of gravity of

⁶⁶ *Ravachol: periódico anarquista*, Oct. 22, 1892.

⁶⁷ Dalmau, “Martí Borràs i Jover,” 23.

⁶⁸ *Ravachol: periódico anarquista*, Oct. 22, 1892.

⁶⁹ *La Controversia*, Oct. 7, 1893. Another example can be found in *La Lutte sociale* which wrote that “Small actions often lead to big things, that’s why we applaud with all our heart when we learn here and there of a bourgeois, a boss who comes to roll in the dust, with a dagger in his side.” *La Lutte sociale*, Oct. 2, 1886.

Spanish anarchism shifted toward cultural centers, cafes, clubs, *ateneos*, newspapers and informal groupings into the 1890s.⁷⁰ As the federation was falling apart, the frequency of anarchist propaganda by the deed escalated. Elsewhere in Europe, the 1880s saw very few acts of anarchist propaganda by the deed despite the rhetorical storm that accompanied the theory, but in Spain there were quite a few explosions heading into the 1890s. Such attacks usually related to a particular, local ongoing struggle or conflict, and so workers targeted their bosses or police officials. There were also several attacks on the *Foment del Treball* employers' association such as the 1886 bombing that injured five bosses.⁷¹ By carrying out such a public attack with broad, national symbolism transcending his specific circumstances, Pallás' *atentado* marked an important development in the history of Spanish propaganda by the deed.

Unsurprisingly, the contours of the debate over Pallás' actions in anarchist circles followed the familiar collectivist/communist debate. José Llunas' satirical, Barcelona-based, Catalan-language anarchist paper *La Tramontana* represented the collectivist position. Llunas was a veteran of both the FRE and the FTRE and had been harshly criticized for his collectivist stance on the *Mano Negra* affair a decade earlier.⁷² His paper continued the traditional collectivist disdain for propaganda by the deed writing that they were "repulsed at *dinamiterisme*," and that there was an "incongruency between this method and genuinely and rationally anarchist ideas." *La Tramontana* speculated that Pallás may have been miserable and turned to propaganda by the deed as a spectacular form of suicide. It also warned that "the execution of Pallás will foment *dinamiterisme*

⁷⁰ Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 124.

⁷¹ For more detailed statistics on bombings during this era see: Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 38-50.

⁷² "Llunas Pujals, José" in Miguel Íñiguez ed., *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español* (Vitoria: Asociación Isaac Puente, 2008), 940-1.

much more than if his sentence were commuted...Pallás, executed, will have admirers like a saint.”⁷³ In contrast, the anarchist communist *La Revancha* from Reus in Catalonia reveled at Pallás’ martyrdom and characterized his act as one “of reparatory justice, an act purely regenerative and highly human” (as opposed to dynastic critics which characterized propaganda by the deed as monstrous and inhuman). A common argument made by the defenders of propaganda by the deed was that it was hypocritical for monarchists and capitalists to be horrified at the collateral damage of bombings when their own military operations and exploitative economic systems have killed so many more:

To achieve our objective, we employ and we will employ every method of violence that we need...but we’ll never cause as many victims as you have caused in the course of the centuries, and you still cause with your whims in Melilla and in the workshops and factories of the towns and cities.⁷⁴

Anarchist communists refused to shy away from violence when their adversaries had piled up so many bodies. Pallás echoed this point himself in his letter to *El País* when he wrote that reading the newspaper articles about his bombing

has made me feel like vomiting; I have turned away from them in horror with a nauseated stomach. They are indignant, horrified, frightened of my crime: they, who celebrate the massacres of Olot, of Cuenca and of a thousand others with lewd orgies...When will anarchism have the number of victims that these ferocious white-collar bandits have? Where can they find an anarchist who resembles the priest of Santa Cruz, to Rosa Samaniego, to Saballs or the tiger of Maestrazgo?⁷⁵

Pallás and his fellow defenders of propaganda by the deed argued that capital and the state produced unparalleled violence that was obscured by their mystifying legitimacy.

In their eyes, the only reason they were singled out as violent was that their

⁷³ *La Tramontana*, Oct. 6, 1893.

⁷⁴ *La Revancha*, Oct. 14, 1893.

⁷⁵ *El País*, Oct. 8, 1893.

atentados occurred beyond the sanctifying parameters of the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force. *La Controversia* also attacked the "disgusting conduct" of the collectivist *La Tramontana* whose director, José Llunas "calls himself an anarchist." Yet despite their differences, all of the anarchist periodicals agreed that acts of propaganda by the deed were the result of a "social infirmity" caused by "misery and the lack of workers' rights."⁷⁶ Therefore, papers across the divide joined in creating subscriptions for the Pallás family, while the dynastic papers opened subscriptions for the family of the dead Civil Guard Jaime Tous.⁷⁷

However, beyond the sectarian conflict, some started to realize that Pallás' *atentado* was different from earlier bombings insofar as it catapulted the figure of Pallás into popular consciousness as the epitome of 'the bomber.' As strange as it may sound, Pallás was actually the first bomber to be apprehended in the history of Barcelona propaganda by the deed although 46 explosions had occurred, in addition to more than twenty additional bombs that the police discovered (or planted), since 1884.⁷⁸ Since Pallás gave himself up without fleeing and eagerly confessed to the bombing, he managed to embody the ethos of the individual bomber whose bravery and martyrdom transcended the act itself. As *La Tramontana* noted, "Pallás, obscure, unknown Sunday morning, by the afternoon was almost a...celebrity." Pallás fueled

the popular fantasy... of those who suffer in misery, and see in him an avenger of their punishments and an *entire character* who has boldly defied all of the powers that sustain the present state of things, they admire that valor, that temerity, they love that

⁷⁶ *La Tramontana*, Oct. 6, 1893. Pallás' paper *Ravachol* changed its name to *El Eco de Ravachol* to publish one more issue in which they attacked Llunas "who—with the name of anarchist—mystifies the workers, bastardizes the great emancipatory ideals, insults and denounces, with his periodical, and plays the game of the bourgeoisie." See *El Eco de Ravachol*, Jan. 21, 1893.

⁷⁷ Papers that raised money for the Pallás family included: *La Tramontana*, *La Revancha*, *El Corsario* from La Coruña, *Bomba Pallás* from Buenos Aires, and *El Despertar* from New York. See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 90.

⁷⁸ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 41-50 and 75.

suicide that made him a hero...they raise him to the category of martyr, searching for his portrait and guarding it carefully and finally erecting altars to him in their heart, for being the only one before them truly worthy of adoration.⁷⁹

Many within the angry, destitute, lower classes of Barcelona transposed their dreams and desires onto Pallás' single suicidal act of complete defiance. His *atentado* and subsequent indifference about his fate had struck such a chord that instead of simply being the man behind the bomb, the bomb came to be seen as the epitome of the man, "an *entire character*." Pallás had become the first Spaniard to shift the focus from *propaganda* by the deed to *the propagandist* by the deed and present an ascetic image of pure revolutionary sacrifice. Yet, he was not the first European anarchist to self-consciously construct this image. The first man to project the identity of the 'propagandist of the deed' was the namesake of Pallás's newspaper, the "violent christ" Ravachol.⁸⁰

Ravachol: The Original "Propagandist by the Deed"

In 1892, Ravachol carried out an unprecedented series of bombings that shook Paris to its foundations and opened "*l'ère des attentats*" in France that would culminate in the assassination of President Sadi Carnot in 1894. In the process, Ravachol became the first anarchist personality to embody the spirit of vengeance in the form of the "propagandist by the deed." Ravachol was born François Koenigstein near the industrial town of Saint-Chamond in 1859. As a child, he struggled to support his deeply impoverished family by working odd jobs.⁸¹ That not sufficing, he also started stealing

⁷⁹ Italics mine. *La Tramontana*, Oct. 6, 1893.

⁸⁰ Ravachol called "a sort of violent Christ" by Victor Barrucand in *L'Endehors* on July 24, 1892, see Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 260.

⁸¹ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 69-70; Jean Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France: Des origines à 1914* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 224-5.

chickens while his brother stole coal.⁸² Later, he expanded his illegal activities by dabbling in counterfeiting, smuggling alcohol, and even grave robbing when he opened the coffin of a countess discovering, to his disappointment, nothing more than decaying flesh and flowers. In addition to opening the tomb, the act that most significantly tarnished Ravachol's reputation in the eyes of many anarchists years later when it was publicized was his 1891 murder of Jacques Brunel, an old miser thought to be hoarding riches. As it turned out, the rumors were true and Ravachol and his accomplices walked away with fifteen thousand francs. He would later explain his actions by saying that "If I killed, it was first of all to satisfy my personal needs, then to come to the aid of the anarchist cause, for we work for the happiness of the people."⁸³ Although it's unclear exactly how all of that money was used, Ravachol did use a significant quantity of it for political ends, as we will see shortly. However, Ravachol was making a more fundamental point when he argued that the poor had to rob the rich "to escape living like brute beasts" and that "to die of hunger... is cowardly and degrading.... I preferred to turn contrabandist, coiner of counterfeit money, and murderer."⁸⁴

Two separate incidents on May 1st 1891, the same day that Paulino Pallás threw a bomb into a Rio de Janeiro theater, propelled Ravachol toward his notorious bombings. First, in Fourmies, a town of 15,000 in northern France, an ongoing textile strike culminated in a march of several hundred that was gunned down by soldiers wielding (recently-invented) machine guns as it made its way into a local square. It was the first

⁸² Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 70.

⁸³ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 307-9. Malato claimed that a good friend of Ravachol explained that he had not intended to kill the hermit. Apparently he broke in when he thought the man would be out, and grabbed his neck to silence his shouts but simply squeezed too hard. Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

⁸⁴ Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

time the Third Republic had authorized the killing of its own citizens.⁸⁵ The same day in Paris, a group of anarchists was marching toward Clichy when four cops tried to obstruct their progress causing a scuffle. The police chased the anarchists into a nearby bar to seize the red flag they had been carrying and a gunfight ensued. Most of the anarchists escaped, but three of them continued to fight until saber-wielding gendarmes defeated them. At the police station they were beaten, deprived of water, and denied medical care despite their saber wounds. French anarchist Charles Malato later described their treatment as “an outrage upon humanity.”⁸⁶ Although one of them was subsequently acquitted, the rest received what were considered to be exceptionally harsh sentences of five and three years in prison. Some of the surviving Fourmies workers were also convicted at their trial.⁸⁷

These events enraged the workers movement leading many to call for revenge. Shortly before the Clichy trial, a demonstration of 700 was organized in the Salle du Commerce in Paris to demand justice, while a group called “Revenge for Fourmies” formed in the 15th arrondissement. Ravachol was among those determined to achieve vengeance. To that end, on the night of February 14-15, 1892, he and others stole thirty kilograms of dynamite and other explosives equipment from a quarry southeast of Paris. Two weeks later, a bomb went off at an upper class restaurant on rue Saint-Dominique, which heightened tensions amid calls for reprisals despite the fact that it caused only minor damage. Though it’s unknown whether this bombing was directly connected with

⁸⁵ David Drake, *French Intellectuals and Politics from the Dreyfus Affair to the Occupation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 12.

⁸⁶ Charles Malato, “Some Anarchist Portraits,” in *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

⁸⁷ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 71-2; Michael Burleigh, *Blood and Rage: A Cultural History of Terrorism* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 80; Isaac Land, “Men with Faces of Brutes: Physiognomy, Urban Anxieties, and Police States,” in Land ed., *Enemies of Humanity*, 131.

the dynamite heist, on March 7th in a Saint-Denis warehouse Ravachol and his comrade “Cookie” constructed a bomb made of 50 dynamite cartridges and iron shards packed into a pot that they intended to detonate at the Clichy police station. Since it was too difficult to get close to the station, especially given the rumors circulating that it was a prime target, they decided to go after Judge Benoît who had convicted the Clichy anarchists. Ravachol, armed with 2 pistols, entered Benoît’s building and lit the fuse on the second floor in the middle of the building, since he didn’t know exactly where the judge lived, and ran out. He made it to the sidewalk as the bomb exploded causing minor injuries for one person but leaving Judge Benoît unscathed in his fifth floor apartment.⁸⁸ Several days later, Ravachol and his accomplices were constructing another bomb. This one was more than twice as powerful as the first, with 120 dynamite cartridges, and intended for the Clichy prosecutor Bulot. Ravachol detonated the new bomb in Bulot’s building on rue de Clichy injuring seven but not Bulot who was out at the time. Shortly thereafter, he was arrested at a restaurant when he was identified by one of the waiters.⁸⁹ The cycle of revenge continued when one of Ravachol’s comrades bombed the restaurant where he was captured.⁹⁰

The April 1892 trial of Ravachol and his accomplices began amid swirling rumors of revenge and a mounting wave of hysteria that increasingly scared away foreign tourists. Soldiers protected the courtroom in the Palace of Justice and police stood guard around the jury and judge. Across the courtroom, the prosecutor Bulot took on the task of condemning the men who had attempted to kill him. In his testimony, Ravachol stated

⁸⁸ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 79.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 79-80; Burleigh, *Blood and Rage*, 80-1; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 213.

⁹⁰ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 81; Barbara W. Tuchman, “Anarchism in France,” in Irving Louis Horowitz ed., *The Anarchists* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1964), 445; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 215-6 and 227-8.

that his goal was to avenge the Clichy anarchists who had been abused and “not even given water to wash their wounds.” He sought “to terrorize so as to force society to look attentively at those who suffer.”⁹¹ Ravachol was sentenced to life in prison with hard labor since his bombs had failed to take life.⁹² The next month, however, Ravachol was condemned to death at a second trial in Montbrison for his earlier murder and some others that he vehemently denied having committed.⁹³ He calmly told the judges that “I have made a sacrifice of my person. If I still fight, it is for the anarchist idea. Whether I am condemned matters little to me. I know that I shall be avenged.”⁹⁴ Upon hearing his sentence he shouted “*Vive l’anarchie!*” On July 11, 1892 Ravachol walked to the guillotine defiantly shouting the “Song of Père Duchesne.” Shortly thereafter the falling blade interrupted his attempt to scream “*Vive la révolution!*”⁹⁵

His death triggered an unprecedented wave of homage and martyr-worship for a man previously unknown to the French radical left. “I admire his valor, the goodness of his heart,” Elisée Reclus proclaimed, “[and] I am one of those who see in Ravachol a hero gifted with a rare greatness of soul.”⁹⁶ Several songs eulogized this anarchist avenger including “*Les Exploits de Ravachol*” and a new anthem of class resentment, “*La Ravachole*,” which was sung to the tune of the popular revolutionary song “Carmagnole.”⁹⁷ The lyrics of “La Ravachole” were printed next to a woodcut portraying

⁹¹ Tuchman, “Anarchism in France,” in Horowitz ed., *The Anarchists*, 445; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 218-9.

⁹² Cookie died two years later in a prison riot on Devil’s Island. See Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 82.

⁹³ For a complete list of charges against him at this trial, see Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 217-8.

⁹⁴ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 309. Ravachol was apparently calm throughout the interrogation. See Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 218.

⁹⁵ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 82; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 219. The first four stanzas of “Père Duchesne” dated from the era of the Directory while the fifth and sixth were from the June Days of 1848. See Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 124.

⁹⁶ *El Productor*, July 21, 1892.

⁹⁷ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 84-5; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 223.

Ravachol as a heroic martyr in Emile Pouget's *Almanach du Père Peinard*.⁹⁸ Eccentric French avant-garde figure Octave Mirbeau described Ravachol as "the peal of thunder to which succeeds the joy of sunlight and of peaceful skies."⁹⁹ Oscar Wilde was apparently so fascinated by this mysterious French bomber that he visited Ravachol's body after his death.¹⁰⁰ His exploits became such a popular phenomenon that the verb "*ravacholiser*," meaning 'to blow up,' came into vogue and was even used as a potent threat.¹⁰¹ For example, an anonymous group from "the school of Ravachol" mailed a threatening letter to the wealthy property owner Madame Boubonneaud saying "we are going to Ravachol you."¹⁰² In fact, the Archive of the Prefecture of Police in Paris has nearly three thousand threatening letters filling three boxes from 1892.¹⁰³ Most were sent to targets considered to be class enemies around the city with signatures like "the avengers of Ravachol," "the *compagnons* of Ravachol," or simply "Dynamite." This concerted attempt to capitalize on Ravachol's bombings to broaden the scope of bourgeois horror succeeded to the point where affluent Parisians hesitated to go out to high class restaurants or theaters and landlords were reluctant to rent apartments to magistrates.¹⁰⁴ Coron, head of the Sûreté recounted that:

Many [magistrates] were given notice, and whenever they showed up at other premises seeking to rent, they were shown the door, at times even rudely. There was one concierge who said one day, with great dignity: 'Monsieur Dresch, the police inspector who arrested Ravachol, was left for several weeks with nowhere to stay but the house of a friend!'¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 124.

⁹⁹ Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Harper Perennial, 2008), 438-440.

¹⁰⁰ David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 90-1.

¹⁰¹ Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 438.

¹⁰² Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 86-7.

¹⁰³ APP, Ba 508, 509, and 510 cited in Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 228.

¹⁰⁴ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 86-7.

¹⁰⁵ Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*, 56.

The cycle of reprisals had accelerated to such a point that judges and police officers were walking targets for anarchist avengers. The prosecutor Bulot exclaimed, “Really! The profession of judge is becoming impossible because of the anarchists!”¹⁰⁶

In his “Eulogy for Ravachol” the novelist Paul Adam wrote that, “his benevolence, his disinterest, the vigor of his actions, his valor before irremediable death, exalt him to the splendor of legend. In these times of cynicism and irony, a saint has been born to us.” As Adam astutely noted, the death of Ravachol the man was necessary for the birth of Ravachol the legend, a “Christ” who became the “renovator of the essential sacrifice,” and whose death, Adam noted, “will open an era.”¹⁰⁷

And “open an era” it certainly did. Ravachol, and even more importantly the construction of his posthumous legendary status, marked the transition from ‘propaganda by the deed’ to ‘the propagandist by the deed’ in anarchist history. Whereas earlier in the 1880s the focus of anarchist propaganda was the (oft times potential) attack on the bourgeoisie itself, given the lack of exemplary martyrs ‘of the deed,’ Ravachol came to be understood as the act incarnate in human flesh. He was not someone who simply put aside some time to strike a single blow at a tyrant before going on with his life; he was interpreted as someone who selflessly transformed himself into a weapon of popular vengeance committing himself fully to continual assaults on oppression until either he or the state collapsed. Ravachol was the prototype of the anarchist avenger who set the mold for Paulino Pallás a year later. Subsequently a litany of individual portraits would populate the canon of anarchist martyrs ‘of the deed’ alongside that of the original protagonist of dynamite himself.

¹⁰⁶ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 86.

¹⁰⁷ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 305; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 83.

If, as historian Fred Inglis claims, the modern notion of celebrity “combines knowability with distance,”¹⁰⁸ then we can see how the popular mystique of the “propagandist by the deed” fostered the ability of many within the Spanish and French lower classes to identify with the class origins, experiences, and resentments of men like Ravachol or Paulino Pallás while the explosive act maintained an insurmountable gap with their sympathizers. For as much as many readers undoubtedly fantasized about carrying out similar acts of class vengeance against the guardians of wealth and privilege, almost none of them would ever actually risk it all to follow through. That expanse between fantasy and tragically sacrificial reality generated the element of transcendence at the core of appeal of the propagandist by the deed. In his eyes, and the eyes of his sympathizers, he burst through the mundane constraints of an oppressive everyday existence to strike a blow at the heart of elite society and thereby sacrifice himself on behalf of those who could not or dared not. This tantalizing combination of “knowability with distance” points to the fact that anarchist “propagandists by the deed” could be included among the earliest international (anti-)celebrities with explorers,¹⁰⁹ artists, and other figures. Yet, although the “propagandist by the deed” emerged out of the same individualistic and sensational mass media developments as the celebrity, a more influential model of “knowability with distance” came from the personal incarnation of God in the form of Jesus Christ. Catholicism informed the cultural and metaphorical worlds of late nineteenth century France and (especially) Spain even among anti-clerical radicals. Spanish anarchist propagandists were referred to as “apostles of the idea,” Pallás would come to be thought of as a sort of anarchist saint, and, as we have already seen,

¹⁰⁸ Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 11.

¹⁰⁹ Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 27.

Ravachol came to be known as a “violent christ.” In addition, given the remoteness of social revolution after the destruction of the Paris Commune, for some Ravachol’s exploits likely encapsulated the guillotines of 1793 and the barricades of 1871 in small explosive packages. Therefore the “propagandist by the deed” was the hybrid product of the modernity of “terrorism” and celebrity and older popular religious and political traditions.

The degree to which Ravachol’s actions were recognized as a turning point was evident in comments from the Spanish Minister of State in April 1892, a month after Ravachol’s bombings. Although Barcelona had experienced 46 explosions prior to the Gran Vía *atentado*, the Minister wrote that “in Spain, without doubt, the contagion has not arrived to such an extreme that the assertion could be ventured that *atentados* will occur among us such as those that... are committed in other places.”¹¹⁰ Likewise, in June 1892, Llunas, the director of *La Tramontana*, published a letter in *El Liberal* in response to Ravachol speculating about the possibility of a Spanish equivalent:

I don’t know if there could be in Spain above all, an anarchist of good faith who thinks that they can do something worthwhile in favor of their ideas in particular and the working class in general, exploding bombs...what I do know is that if we had one, all other anarchists would have the unavoidable obligation of bringing them out of their error making them see, beyond the repulsive and abominable nature of the method, how counterproductive it would be for their ideals.¹¹¹

In 1892, the notion of an anarchist bomber personality seemed remote if not impossible despite the detonation of a significant number of bombs in Spain over the previous years. After Pallás, such questions were no longer posed in the hypothetical.

However, it’s essential to note that the birth of the anarchist avenger identity occurred when the consensus in international anarchist circles around the efficacy of

¹¹⁰ Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Gobernación, 2A, Exp. 15.

¹¹¹ *La Tramontana*, June 3, 1892.

propaganda by the deed was deteriorating. For example, Kropotkin had advocated for propaganda by the deed in the 1880s, believing that the revolution was imminent. Yet, by the early 1890s prospects had faded and he came to see *most* acts of propaganda by the deed as counterproductive. “When the Russian revolutionaries had killed the tsar,” Kropotkin reflected in 1891, “...European anarchists imagined that henceforth a handful of zealous revolutionaries, armed with a few bombs, would be enough to make the social revolution ... [but] an edifice built upon centuries of history cannot be destroyed by a few kilos of explosives...”¹¹² Regarding Ravachol, Kropotkin was especially harsh about his earlier robberies and murders, writing at the time that his actions “are not the steady, daily work of preparation, little seen but immense, which the revolution demands. This requires other men than Ravachols. Leave them to the fin-de-siècle bourgeois whose product they are.”¹¹³ Yet, once his bombings had elevated his stature, *La Révolte* called for vengeance and wrote that his earlier actions “made it seem like he had acted for his own personal interest, but the acts accomplished subsequently, present the affair in a different light, and certainly force us to modify our appreciation.”¹¹⁴ Although Kropotkin was increasingly pessimistic about the ability of propaganda by the deed to bring the revolution, he maintained solidarity with anarchists who he saw as striking back against oppression. His opinion may have been similar to that of Charles Malato who said that although Ravachol’s actions “far from sufficed to bring about a desirable transformation of society...we did not think we had a right to insult a man, however dubious his deeds might be, who seemed to have acted from conviction and disinterestedness, and who was

¹¹² Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*, 55.

¹¹³ Tuchman, “Anarchism in France,” in Horowitz ed., *The Anarchists*, 446.

¹¹⁴ *La Révolte*, April 23-30, 1892.

about to pay the penalty with his head.”¹¹⁵ Such hesitation about the larger strategic question would eventually expand, but in the early 1890s the immediacy of dynamite vengeance was intoxicating.

Conclusion

Back in his cell, Paulino Pallás passed his final days on earth trying to shoo away the Jesuit fathers and brothers of the Brotherhood of Peace and Charity who repeatedly attempted to persuade him to accept religious council.¹¹⁶ Since they would not leave him alone, Pallás would discuss sociology and religion with them though he refused to confess. Meanwhile, more and more anarchists and labor organizers were being imprisoned in Montjuich, including the Italian anarchist painter Mancini imprisoned in the cell next to Pallás. Mancini spent his time painting an “allegory of anarchy” mural on his cell wall with the names of all of the prisoners at the bottom. Once the authorities learned of the mural, they had it destroyed.¹¹⁷

The night before his execution Pallás barely ate any of his final meal of soup, chicken and fish, though he had some coffee and smoked a little. He sat on his bed in between two Brothers of Peace and Charity who would not leave him alone until around midnight when he went to bed with the Brothers and a captain of the Civil Guard watching him. On the morning of October 6, Pallás was led to the *Lengua de sierpe* (Tongue of the Snake), an area outside of the Castle, where he was to be shot. As he crossed the plaza, he sang an anarchist hymn, and as he approached the *Lengua*, he started to hear some shouts of “¡Viva la anarquía!” “¡Viva la dinamita!” and “¡Viva la

¹¹⁵ Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

¹¹⁶ *El Diluvio*, Oct. 6, 1893.

¹¹⁷ *La Época*, Oct. 5 and Oct. 6, 1893.

vengeanza!” (vengeance) from workers who were dispersed by the soldiers.¹¹⁸ Once Pallás reached the firing squad, he kneeled with his back to an infantry regiment from Asia and shouted, “The vengeance will be terrible!” before the fatal shots were fired.

Overall, 5-6,000 people had trekked up the mountain along the road guarded by infantry units and two additional cavalry squadrons to attend his 9AM execution, “especially vendors of portraits and biographies of Pallás.” In fact, lithographic portraits were “produced profusely” and sold at so many kiosks in Barcelona that the day after the execution the police spent time confiscating them. As *La Tramontana* had written, Pallás had come to epitomize the aura of the selfless avenger of the people as no Spanish anarchist had before him. Over the coming days, over 20,000 people came to visit his grave prompting authorities to station a guard there for fear that his corpse would be exhumed.¹¹⁹ Joan Montseny, an anarchist schoolteacher from Reus, published a pamphlet defending the bombing titled *Considerations on the act and death of Pallás* which got him arrested and fined for apologizing for propaganda by the deed. The pamphlet proclaimed:

The leaders of the international ruling class shout ‘one less bandit!’; we shout ‘one more martyr!’ ... He will be one of the greatest figures of [the] martyrology [of the future society]: his memory will be decorated with the crown of the martyrs: he won’t be made a saint, but he will be made a hero and immortal.¹²⁰

Propaganda by the deed was fueled by creating martyrs, avenging them, and repeating the cycle. For Montseny, Pallás had become essentially a saint whose sacrifice was so momentous and inspirational that it marked a definitive step toward the world of the

¹¹⁸ *El Diluvio*, Oct. 6, 1893.

¹¹⁹ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 79-89; *La Época* reported his final words as “¡Viva la anarquía!” See *La Época*, Oct. 6, 1893; Miguel López Corral, *La Guardia Civil en la Restauración, 1875-1905: militarismo contra subversión y terrorismo anarquista* (Madrid: Ministerio del Interior, 2004), 574.

¹²⁰ J. Monseny, *Consideraciones sobre el hecho y muerte de Pallás* at IISG.

future. Especially in death, the idealized image of Pallás the martyr became a receptacle for popular devotion and a model that many others would attempt to recreate over the following decades. About three years later, Montseny would become one of the most important figures in the human rights campaign against the torture of Barcelona prisoners, but in 1893 his pamphlet contributed to a swirling atmosphere of class conflict and martyrdom that almost exactly a month after the execution of Pallás culminated in an act of vengeance that was terrible indeed.

Chapter 2: Introducing the “Lottery of Death”¹

On November 7, 1893, the Spanish anarchist Santiago Salvador bombed the crowded Liceu² Theater in Barcelona to avenge the recent execution of his comrade and friend Paulino Pallás for his bombing of the Gran Vía. By chilling elite society to the bone with his “random” attack on theatergoers, Salvador picked up the torch of the “propagandist by the deed” from his fallen predecessor. Just as Salvador was motivated by Pallás’ sacrifice, the young middle class French anarchist Émile Henry took inspiration from Ravachol’s explosive campaign as well as the Barcelona bombings when he hurled a bomb into the crowded Café Terminus in Paris in early 1894.³ Like Pallás and Ravachol before them, Salvador and Henry adopted the mantra of vengeance incarnate, yet, unlike their notorious forerunners who singled out specific individuals for their ire, in this case generals and judges, Salvador and Henry targeted what they perceived to be an entire class: the “bourgeoisie.” Relatively anonymous members of Parisian or Barcelona high society maintained their sense of personal safety as long as the anarchists went after figures in the headlines, but once bombs began to explode in theaters and cafes, a routine evening out on the town could prove deadly. Salvador and Henry considered their bombings to be anything but random. From their perspectives, they were striking a blow at the heart of bourgeois tranquility; exposing the soft underbelly of elite society to the ravages of the ongoing class war. In so doing, the propaganda by the deed of Salvador and Henry used dynamite to expand the culpability for societal oppression beyond a

¹ *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893.

² The name is “Liceu” in Catalan and “Liceo” in Castilian. In this chapter, I have chosen to use the Catalan spelling though my quotations from the Castilian-language press use their spelling.

³ APP Ba 1115; Charles Malato, “Some Anarchist Portraits.” *Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

handful of notorious individuals to wider segments of upper class society.⁴ To the press, such “random” attacks were far more harrowing than those that preceded them. The notion that their victims were anything but innocent was inconceivable. For journalists and politicians, this seemed to mark the introduction of the “lottery of death”⁵: an era when one’s life could be ended instantaneously without the slightest reason. In Spain, this dynamic was compounded by the shift in targets from Paulino Pallas’ bombing of a Virgin of Mercy procession out in public on the Gran Vía to Santiago Salvador’s bombing of the enclosed space of the Liceu theater where many elite patrons subtly assumed a level of class privacy and security that the explosion shattered.

Journalists argued that anarchist viciousness had reached unimaginable depths. Killing “innocent” people without warning or any personal animus was considered evidence of their lack of humanity. For some, they were no better than wild beasts while for others they were even worse since at least animal brutality stemmed from the natural imperatives of survival. If such wanton violence were allowed to grow, commentators claimed, society would be returned to the Dark Ages. As this chapter shows, the dehumanizing press campaign that followed the anarchist bombings of the Liceu Theater in Barcelona and the Chamber of Deputies and Café Terminus in Paris in 1893-94 set the stage for both the Spanish and French governments to pass harsh anti-anarchist laws that not only clamped down on anarchists with no relation to dynamite but also drastically restricted the rights of association, expression, and self-identification of a wide range of political dissidents in both countries.

⁴ Judith Rowbotham, Marianna Muravyeva, and David Nash eds., *Shame, Blame and Culpability: Crime and Violence in the Modern State* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

⁵ *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893.

The French state stepped back from extreme repression after the acquittal of the anarchist intellectuals at the Trial of the Thirty and the presidential amnesty of 1894. Throughout this era the prestige of anarchist (and ‘anarchistic’) intellectuals proved vital for efforts to protect the rights of unknown working class anarchists. The French government could get away with locking up anonymous militants, but it balked at the potential backlash of imprisoning well-regarded thinkers merely for their ideas. The assassination of President Sadi Carnot in 1894 marked the end of “*l’ère des attentats*” in France as anarchism shifted toward syndicalism moving into the next decade. In contrast, the arrests, torture, and executions in Spain from 1893 to 1894 were only a preview of the “inquisitorial” practices that the state would become infamous for by the end of the decade. The expansion of repression in Spain grew out of the widespread support that it enjoyed among dynastic journalists and politicians of both the Liberal and Conservative Parties and the corresponding lack of voices of protest. Although a chorus of such voices would develop a few years later when a wide spectrum of republicans, socialists, free-thinkers, and masons would conclude that infringements on the rights of anarchists could easily morph into assaults on the right to dissent in general, at this early stage the anarchists were isolated from other political factions and therefore largely impotent to resist the onslaught on their rights and their lives triggered by Santiago Salvador’s bombing of the Liceu Theater.

The Bombing of the Liceu Theater

A little over a month after the execution of Paulino Pallás atop nearby Montjuich mountain, much of the anxiety that had plagued Barcelona elites had begun to fade as life

seemed to be gradually returning to normal. Certainly, the early November explosion of the *Cabo Machichaco* transporting dynamite to the port of Santander that killed 590 people renewed the pervasive fear of explosives, but at least it was accidental. For some, the opening of the winter season of the opera at the Liceu Theater must have been a welcomed diversion from dynamite. This was especially true for General Martínez Campos's wife and two daughters who filed into the near-capacity crowd of 4,000 to experience Rossini's "William Tell" on the rainy evening of November 7, 1893.⁶ "In the theater were the most florid, the most brilliant of the bourgeoisie,"⁷ "the most select of Barcelona society,"⁸ "a very distinguished crowd,"⁹ that applauded and whistled for several hours until two Orsini bombs cascaded from the fifth floor of the balcony into the crowd below toward the end of the second act at 10:45.¹⁰ After a relatively quiet explosion, the theater quickly filled with a dense cloud of gray smoke emanating black rays. At first, much of the audience and even the musicians applauded, thinking the noise was part of the show, but once the reality of the situation became clear, the singers and orchestra froze in horror. Instantly, panic gripped the screaming, frenzied mass of terrified theater-goers as they formed an "avalanche of human flesh,"¹¹ trampling each

⁶ The theater had 1,300 seats but had a capacity of 4,000 including standing room. See *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 10, 1893. Since it was raining so hard some of those who had purchased tickets didn't attend. See *La Dinastía*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁷ *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 10, 1893.

⁸ Archivo General del Palacio (AGP), Reinados, Alfonso XIII, Cajón 7, Exp. 2.

⁹ *La Dinastía*, Nov 8, 1893.

¹⁰ Some sources say it exploded at the start of the third act. See *La Dinastía*, Nov. 8, 1893. Napoleon III was on his way to attend William Tell when Felice Orsini attempted to assassinate him in 1858. That failed assassination initiated the use of the "Orsini Bomb." See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 102-103. Moreover, the legendary Swiss archer was considered to be an ancestral hero by late 19th century European radicals and at its first convention in 1879 *Narodnya Volya*'s program said, "We will fight with the means employed by Wilhelm Tell." See Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (New York: Verso, 2005), 116. William Tell would not be performed at the Liceu again until Dec. 19, 1925. Tomás Caballé y Clos, *Barcelona de antaño: memorias de un viejo reportero Barcelonés* (Barcelona: Aries, 1944), 88.

¹¹ *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893.

other and crashing into the seats in a desperate rush to the exit. Moments later, the groans and screams of the injured and maimed rose above the general cacophony. Artists, singers, dancers and extras in full costume “hallucinating from terror” pushed through the spectators onto the street.¹²

The authorities arrived soon thereafter followed by stretchers from the military hospital of the Atarazanas Barracks down La Rambla and priests hurrying to administer last rites. When they entered the theater they found a “mountain of cadavers”¹³ surrounded by a vast puddle of blood extending across several rows. For many it was too late for the priests. The journalists who arrived took care to note every gory detail of each corpse in the macabre scene, noting what they were wearing and detailing their fatal injuries, such as a man whose chest had been torn open exposing his heart or another man still sitting upright in his seat with his brain oozing out of his skull. One of the Orsini bombs exploded on impact shattering seats and sending hundreds of splinters and metal shards into the air, even injuring spectators in the upper rows, such as a man in the third row who lost an eye. The bombing killed twenty people, more than the total number of deaths caused by propaganda by the deed in the world over the previous thirty years.¹⁴ It’s impossible to know exactly how many injuries it caused, but estimates range between 27-35.¹⁵ Had it not been for the malfunctioning of the second Orsini bomb, which did not explode, the totals would have certainly been higher.¹⁶ The injured were rushed to nearby

¹² La Dinastía, Nov. 8, 1893. Most of the daily newspapers of the time had thorough descriptions of the bombing on November 8 or 9. See *La Dinastía*, Nov 8-9, 1893; *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893; *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893; *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 8, 1893.

¹³ *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 8, 1893.

¹⁴ Twelve died on the spot while the rest died soon thereafter while receiving medical treatment. Five deaths came from the Cardellach i Anfruns family. Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 115, 117-19 and 135.

¹⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 116.

¹⁶ Some accounts describe the second bomb as having been placed under the seat, not thrown. Some speculated this was to target those coming to aid the injured. See *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 9, 1893

pharmacies, medical facilities and especially to Santa Cruz Hospital around the corner (today the *Biblioteca de Catalunya*). Fortunately for the injured, the audience was packed with doctors.¹⁷ As a top military official telegraphed to the Minister of War an hour later, “the anarchists keep their promises.”¹⁸

News of the explosion spread rapidly causing “people with family members in the theater [to run] through the streets terrified.”¹⁹ When they arrived, friends and family pressed up against the door of the theater trying to push through to find their loved ones.²⁰ The overwhelmed police on hand tried to keep the hoards of saddened relatives and curious onlookers back and prevent those in attendance from leaving so they could apprehend the culprit. Immediately they arrested a 44-year-old Italian marble worker named Alberto Saldani who had already been arrested for the Gran Vía bombing. They accused him of being an anarchist and claimed that he was near the theater that night carrying a handkerchief, which appeared to be stained from the pistons of a small bomb. When he was arrested, he was carrying a nice women’s jacket and umbrella, which he seemed to have stolen in the panic of the explosion. Also arrested was the 54-year-old French anarchist baker Jean Aragon who had already been detained for the 1892 bombing of the plaça Reial.²¹ A local jeweler who had the fortune to emerge from the theater unharmed, returned home to find that someone had taken advantage of the police focus on the chaos and commotion of the Liceu bombing to rob his jewelry store down the

¹⁷ *La Dinastía*, Nov 8-9, 1893; *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893; *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893; *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 8, 1893; *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893

¹⁸ AGP, Reinados, Alfonso XIII, Cajón 7, Exp. 2.

¹⁹ *La Dinastía*, Nov 8, 1893.

²⁰ Several papers reported that when the merchant D. Eugenio Guillo heard about the *atentado* “he died suddenly.” See *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893.

²¹ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 8, 1893; AGP, Reinados, Alfonso XIII, Cajón 7, Exp. 2. According to anarchists imprisoned during the era, Saldani was not an anarchist but Aragon was. See J. Montseny, *El proceso de un gran crimen*, (La Coruña: 1895), 27-8.

street from the theater.²² Not only did the police miss the jewel heist, but in their chaotic efforts to arrest the first suspicious person they could get their hands on, they failed to notice that the real author of the *atentado* was under their nose the entire time. Amidst the wailing wounded, sobbing relatives, frenzied police, and curious passers-by, the twenty-eight year old Aragonese anarchist Santiago Salvador stood back and admired his work.

Santiago Salvador and the Aftermath of the Liceu Bombing

Salvador was born in the tiny village of Castellseràs in Baix Aragó in 1865. At the age of sixteen, he left home to find work in Barcelona where he was a servant in the homes of the president of the Banc de Barcelona and the Portuguese consul among others. As an alienated, isolated teenager trying to find his way in the big city, Salvador started to read anarchist periodicals sold at the kiosks on La Rambla. Representing the most complete break possible from his ultra-monarchist, Catholic upbringing, anarchism appealed greatly to the young servant.²³ In 1891, Salvador moved to Barcelona permanently where he began a family and started working at a tavern and selling wine. Around this time, he heard about “one of the best orators” of the anarchist movement named Paulino Pallás. Salvador later recounted,

I went to listen to him, I liked him a lot, we became friends, and together we read the writings that he got and the ones that I had. From that point onward my only *compañeros* were those who sustained the idea; I didn't go to other places than those that we used for meetings, nor did I have interests other than reading and discussing.²⁴

²² *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893; *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 9, 1893.

²³ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 124-7.

²⁴ D. Manuel Gil Maestre, *El anarquismo en España y el especial de Barcelona* (Madrid: Imprenta de los hijos de M. G. Hernández, 1897), 37.

During this period, Salvador allegedly joined Pallás' affinity group; however, during Pallás's trial Salvador's name was never mentioned.²⁵ Salvador closely followed the final days of his *compañero* Pallás. He recounted that

The death of Pallás produced a terrible effect in me and, to avenge him, as a tribute to his memory, I developed the goal of committing an act that would frighten those who had delighted at his death and believed that now they had nothing to fear; I wanted to disillusion them and also enjoy it myself. I didn't think a lot nor did I vacillate; I fulfilled my duty. I only pondered the method to achieve it so that it would make a lot of noise.²⁶

Salvador knew that bombing the Liceu Theater would not only maim and kill those in attendance but shatter the upper class sense of security. While he intended to inflict suffering upon those in attendance, the wider ramifications of his attack were perhaps even more appealing to him. With these goals in mind, on November 7, 1893, Salvador set out for the Liceu Theater with one *peseta* and two Orisini bombs. Although regular admission was two *pesetas*, seats on the fifth floor were only one *peseta*, so Salvador paid the price of admission and entered through a side door on carrer de Sant Pau.²⁷

Toward the end of the second act of the production, Salvador threw the bombs into the crowd below. After the explosion, he filed out with the confused theatergoers:

On the street, I stayed near the Theater for a long time, very close where the police allowed the transients and the curious, letting me slip between circles where they were making commentaries on what had happened...I saw the authorities and the priests enter the Liceo... How frightened are the bourgeoisie!²⁸

For Salvador, the fear he had generated was even more gratifying to watch amidst the chaos than the death his bomb had produced inside the theater. Not especially concerned about getting caught, the next day Salvador took a victorious stroll throughout the city

²⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 127-8.

²⁶ Gil Maestre, *El anarquismo en España*, 37.

²⁷ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 127-30. *La Dinastía*, Nov. 7, 1893.

²⁸ Caballé y Clos, *Barcelona de antaño*, 95.

reading as many accounts of the Liceu bombing as he could get a hold of in the daily papers. “I wanted to know everything they said and all that they wrote ‘about the Liceo.’ What fear, what panic among the bourgeoisie! The truth is that my ‘blow’ caused a colossal surprise, making ‘the mood tumble’ in society.”²⁹ What he found in the papers was that just as journalists described Pallás’ *atentado* as inhuman, they decried the Liceu bomber(s) as “monsters in human form”³⁰ with the “instincts of a hyena, the hatreds of a savage,”³¹ “without any human vestige”³² who are causing “a regression of hundreds of years in human civilization.”³³ Dynastic and republican journalists argued that the “instinctive cruelty”³⁴ of the bombers, who were immediately assumed to be anarchists, was evident in their decision to target “innocent” people in a cross-class setting. *La Vanguardia* imagined Barcelona as

eminently democratic, where everyone works and toils during the day, and where the particular *fiestas* and receptions, that can mark a certain isolation of the classes, are celebrated only rarely, [so] there is a need for a general center...All of Barcelona goes to the Liceo. The barriers that in other cities can separate the different classes of society don’t exist in our capital.³⁵

The notion that the bomber had targeted the Liceu because of the class character of the audience, or the suggestion that Barcelona was marked by class conflict at all, were unfathomable considerations for the press. To counter the obvious objective of striking a blow at a “bourgeois” crowd, the papers emphasized that cries of protest came “from all social classes, from the man of the pueblo and the gentleman” against “this crime whose

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 12, 1893.

³¹ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 8, 1893.

³² *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 8, 1893.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ *Diario Mercantil*, Nov. 8, 1893.

³⁵ *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 12, 1893.

victims are some of the most innocent.”³⁶ In light of the seeming randomness of the target and perceived innocence of the victims, journalists considered the Liceu bombing to be without precedent. “In the lamentable gallery of voluntary *atentados* against human life nothing is known that equals the despicable and horrible killing of Barcelona,” *El País* argued.

The Irish dynamiters blow up the tower of London, Westminster palace, buildings of the enemy state; the nihilists put dynamite in the imperial palace. Still to none of the criminal fanatics of anarchism had it occurred that it was permissible to kill spectators of a theatrical function for the honor and glory of their cause...Pallás was in the infancy of crime. It was yesterday and it seems like a century has passed.³⁷

For *El País* and most other papers, attacks against clearly defined political opponents were at least intelligible if no less reprehensible. Yet, killing “random” people made more “political” crimes seem tame. Similarly, *La Correspondencia de España* added,

Crime is always crime, but up until here these odious conspiracies...had as their target elevated personalities like in Russia; magistrates who had participated in famous trials like in France; a leader in the army or men of state like in Spain, and all of them, warned of the risk, can take precautions...what has not been seen before...[is] a kind of lottery of death.³⁸

If ‘anyone’ could be blown to bits at any moment in a “lottery of death,” then the foundations of society and even ‘civilization’ were seriously threatened. Fearing the inability of the authorities to squelch the anarchist threat, *La Vanguardia* asked “where will we end up if we allow tigers to roam free in the heart of society?”³⁹ But *La Dinastía* rejected the notion that the “pleasure of making damage” of the “dynamiter” even had parallels in the animal world.

³⁶ Ibid., Nov. 8 and 11, 1893

³⁷ *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893.

³⁸ *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893.

³⁹ *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 8, 1893. The tiger quote also reproduced in *La Dinastía*, Nov. 9, 1893.

Nature itself with its blind impetuses of instinct doesn't offer even in the irrational an example of such cruelty. The lion, the tiger, only attack when threatened by hunger or by danger; the scorpion and the asp only bite when provoked; only the dynamiter searches for contact with those who have not offended him personally...⁴⁰

Anarchists were coming to be seen as not only inhuman but even unnaturally malignant. Regardless of whether anarchists were considered animals or worse, they were certainly considered a force external to society waging a “war, not against a politics, nor against a social order, but rather against the entirety of humanity.”⁴¹ The government, legal system and police were all seen as impotent before this perverse threat without precedents “in the annals of crime.”⁴² “Dynamite demonstrates for us that while the authorities rest, it stays awake and works and torments its victims.”⁴³

As in the aftermath of the Gran Vía bombing months earlier, the Liceu bombing prompted public political clashes over the limits of civil liberties such as free speech and association. In that vein, the conservative *La Dinastía* blamed the development of the anarchist threat on “utopian democratic principles.” “In their shadows and under the protection of these strange liberties, schools of criminals called meetings have grown and spread whose civilizing idea is to destroy everyone as in the heart of Africa, as in the most savage countries; even worse.”⁴⁴ Conservatives argued that political liberties disarmed the state before its most ruthless adversaries whose heinous violence against the state was identical to the “savage” aggression of Africans. And just as the “savage” violence of Africans rendered them unfit to enjoy the same rights as Europeans under prevailing imperial logic, so too did anarchist bombings banish them from the realm of

⁴⁰ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁴¹ *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Nov. 8, 1893.

⁴³ *El Noticiero Universal*, Nov. 8, 1893.

⁴⁴ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 12, 1893.

“modern” rights considerations. The conservative solution was to remedy the excess of rights that gave birth to the anarchist menace while depriving anarchists of all rights since their “inhumanity” made them unworthy of the privilege. The deadly outgrowth of expansive civil liberties was posited as evidence of the bankruptcy of republicanism. *La Dinastía* argued that,

Those who a few years ago laughed at anarchist publications and meetings supposing that liberty was the valve to ease the hatreds of these madmen, should start to change their criteria before the destroyed cadavers of the calle de Cortes and the Liceo theater. If we were *fusionistas* or republicans and as such had confidently defended the freedom of propaganda, we would publicly confess our error and we would search for the remedy in another system.⁴⁵

Anarchist explosions were considered to be the logical conclusion of liberalism and a definitive refutation of the republican position. In response, the republican *El País* argued that such a bombing wouldn’t occur “under a republican or revolutionary regime. It appears after 19 years of restoration...What is the mission of the monarchy according to its advocates? To conserve order, defend social interests. Valliant defense!”⁴⁶ If the underlying rationale for the return of the monarchy was the preservation of safety and security, then, for the republicans, the bombings demonstrated the uselessness of such an anachronistic institution.

The conservative solution to this dangerous excess of liberties was to enact powerful anti-anarchist legislation or, if that failed, to organize any form of social defense that would treat the anarchists like the inhuman monsters they were thought to be. Even more than after the bombing of the Gran Vía, ““Special laws against anarchism!’ [was] the general cry, and no one dare[d] to oppose such a measure.”⁴⁷ In a

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁴⁶ *El País*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁴⁷ *El Imparcial*, Nov. 10, 1893.

powerful article indicative of the elite, conservative reaction to the Liceu bombing called “Inside or Outside the Law” published in *La Dinastía*, the author argued that if a special anti-anarchist law were not enacted “honorable men will have to move beyond the law.”⁴⁸ Many elites saw the struggle in Darwinist terms: as the epitome of “El *struggle for life*” waged against “the dregs of anarchism.”⁴⁹ Under this framework, “regarding natural [law], its first precept, its most imperative mandate, is the legitimate defense of one’s own life and the lives of parents, spouses, children and siblings.”⁵⁰ For society to adhere to natural law and defend itself from this inhuman menace, it was necessary, conservatives argued, to wield the full force of the law against anarchism. Yet this would not contradict the liberal principles of the monarchy since laws and rights were “for men, not for bloody wild beasts.”⁵¹ “If they are not men, if they are wild beasts, then they deserve to be treated as wild beasts and not as men...they have to be persecuted and exterminated without waiting for them to commit one of their horrendous crimes.”⁵² It was not an infringement upon the rights of Spaniards to deny the “right to murder” which did not “fit in our century of laws and rights.”⁵³ If “security is a myth”⁵⁴ then “all defense is legitimate. And we will defend ourselves.”⁵⁵ The rhetorical dehumanization of anarchists played an important role in paving the way for their physical dehumanization by framing the issue as a question of popular survival that transcended debates about the legitimate scope of rights, which were only fit for “men.” One letter to the editor of *La Correspondencia de España* drew upon lessons from how white people responded to

⁴⁸ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 9, 1893

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 10, 1893.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Correo Catalán*, Nov. 8, 1893.

⁵⁵ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 9, 1893.

‘internal threats’ in the United States when it argued for “proceeding *á la americana* and applying to all of them the law of Lynch” since they threatened “our women and children.”⁵⁶ Pressure was mounting for Barcelona authorities to stem the tide of dynamite before members of the upper class set out to do it themselves.

In some cases, this pressure took concrete form as in a letter to the editor of *La Dinastía* that argued for the creation of a private “secret police” that the “wealthy classes” would fund to destroy anarchism.⁵⁷ “The hour has arrived,” the author argued, “when the wealthy classes search for an effective method to protect themselves...and to be able to counterattack force with force and cunning with cunning.” Momentum for such a secret police developed to the point where the Employers’ Association, Barcelona elites, conservative papers such as *La Dinastía* and *Diario de Barcelona*, and even the republican *La Publicidad* endorsed the idea. Only *El Diluvio*, the paper attacked by the right for not condemning the Liceo bombing, feared that a secret police force would “commit abuses” against republicans and those who opposed it.⁵⁸

For many, it was clear that something had to be done to rectify the woeful state of Barcelona security forces. As late as 1896, the Barcelona police force had only 193 officers for a population over 400,000 while Madrid had 1,500.⁵⁹ Around the same time London had 14,000 police and Paris had 16,000 municipal police and 9,000 agents (with 21,000 gendarmes across the country).⁶⁰ But the problem was much deeper than numbers. The day after the bombing, a special French commission in Barcelona filed a report on

⁵⁶ *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 9, 1893.

⁵⁷ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 12, 1893.

⁵⁸ Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 144.

⁵⁹ Specifically, in 1894 Madrid had one colonel, 20 officials and 1,190 members of the *Cuerpo de Seguridad*; 10 *delegados*, 20 inspectors, 16 sub-inspectors, 10 secretaries, 25 scribes and 329 agents of the 1st and 2nd *Cuerpo de Vigilancia*; and 6 *jefes*, 53 officials, and 935 members of the Guardia Civil (698 Infantry and 237 Cavalry). See González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 43.

⁶⁰ González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 43.

the state of law and order in the city. The report stated that “the very numerous and powerful anarchist element, in Barcelona, isn’t sufficiently monitored.” Moreover, when each new government came into power the first thing they’d do is “fire the police chiefs that served the preceding minister” and bring back their own political allies.⁶¹ The only training afforded to Spanish police was a massive manual with 226 articles, yet most officers were largely or entirely illiterate. When this system of replacing the police force every few years was abolished in 1908 and all officers were required to take competency exams, most failed.⁶² Moreover, Civil Governors were authorized to dispose of police personnel as they desired and it was not uncommon for police officers to spend their time doing domestic work for the civil governor, such as picking up his children from school. Given the clientalistic relationship between the political parties, Civil Governors and the police, it’s unsurprising that many officers collected paychecks without working.⁶³

Something had to change. Or at least local officials had to make an effort to appease the upper class fear of spiraling into chaos. To that end, General Martínez Campos, still recovering from the shock of his family’s near-death experience, had a

⁶¹ The commission also proposed a joint French/Spanish effort to address propaganda by the deed but nothing came of it. See AN, F7, 12725. In fact, firing police based on government affiliation was a pervasive problem in the Spanish police force dating back to system of “*puestos de confianza*” implemented by the fragmented Restoration regime after the end of the Third Carlist War in the late 1870s, whereby the Liberal and Conservative parties would each recruit their own police forces when in power. With the inauguration of the “*turno pacífico*” in 1881, a measure for the regular alternation in power between the two dynastic parties, life as a police commander also rotated between years of work and unemployment. See Martín Turrado Vidal, *Policía y Delincuencia a Finales del Siglo XIX* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2001), 52.

⁶² Turrado Vidal, *Policía y Delincuencia*, 52 and 82-3. In 1877, 72% of the Spanish population was illiterate, and that figure only decreased to 59% by 1910. See Carolyn P. Boyd, “The Anarchists and Education in Spain, 1868-1909,” *The Journal of Modern History* 48 (December 1976): 134. In contrast, the Berlin police force instituted a five-week paid training program for its members in 1883. Those promoted to sergeant were required to undergo additional training. Vienna had its new officers undergo a yearlong course and periodic continual training thereafter. See Frank J. Thomason, “Uniformed Police in the City of Berlin Under the Empire,” in Emilio Viano and Jeffrey H. Reiman eds., *The Police in Society* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1975), 110.

⁶³ In Zaragoza in 1898 only half of the 48 members of city’s *Cuerpo de Vigilancia* worked on any given day. In addition to its inefficiency, this situation infuriated those who actually worked every day. See Turrado Vidal, *Policía y Delincuencia*, 67.

conference call with the Interior Minister and the Minister of War about how to respond to the seemingly perpetual threat of anarchist dynamite that reflected the tensions between force and restraint, military versus civil authority, that would plague the Spanish state over the coming years.⁶⁴ After congratulating the general on his family's fortunate survival, the Minister of War proposed "the declaration of a state of war in the province of Barcelona or in the entire Principality; the only effective method, for the moment, that occurs to me to bring the guilty before military tribunals and energetic regulation."⁶⁵ Yet, Martínez Campos replied that,

You can't adopt states of war except when the civil authority is impotent. I already know that now it is almost impotent before anarchism, because the organization of this sect makes it almost invulnerable; but...I think military prosecutors are less appropriate for discovering these plots. Ordinary civil jurisdiction would work better and doubly so here where the military prosecutors are almost useless. In my judgment it would be a scandal before Europe to declare a state of war...⁶⁶

Bypassing the civil legal system was not only less effective, Martínez Campos argued, it also ran the risk of tarnishing Spain's international image of liberal monarchism. While he opposed trying to fuse the case of the Liceu bombing to the Gran Vía bombing without evidence, he suggested that the Cortes pass an anti-anarchist law that would bring before military tribunals not only those accused of committing *atentados*, but also those who instigated them or possessed explosives in order to "tranquilize opinion, which is excited and horrified."⁶⁷ While it was important to crush anarchism, Spanish officials that were attuned to broader European opinion, such as the general, did not want to overreact by declaring a state of war, thereby projecting weakness, especially in the context of

⁶⁴ AGP, Reinados, Alfonso XIII, Cajón 7, Exp. 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

ongoing military operations in Morocco.⁶⁸ Yet, in order to quell the powerful demand for repression General Martínez Campos, and eventually the government as a whole, decided to legislate military courts for the adjudication of anarchist crimes, despite doubts as to their efficacy, and suspend constitutional guarantees.

After suspending constitutional guarantees, in late November 1893 the notorious General Valeriano Weyler was called back from his post as the Captain General of the Philippines to be the new Captain General of Catalonia. The youngest man of the era to achieve the rank of general for his role in putting down the Céspedes revolt in Cuba, Weyler had made a name for himself as a counter-insurgency specialist. He had helped defeat the 1863 popular revolt, aided by Haiti, in the Dominican Republic against its re-incorporation into the Spanish Empire, returned home to Spain to put down the Carlist rising of the 1870s, and most recently he distinguished himself as the merciless persecutor of the Filipino resistance.⁶⁹ The Spanish government hoped that his experience putting down uprisings at home and abroad could inform a successful strategy to root out clandestine anarchist networks.

In addition to installing Weyler as Captain General of Catalonia, the government also implemented a number of administrative and bureaucratic reforms to streamline police and judicial operations. For example, the Minister of Government, López Puigcerver, issued an ordinance in mid-December creating indexes of anarchist suspects in each province,⁷⁰ and judges across Spain were instructed to mete out harsher sentences

⁶⁸ Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), 56-88.

⁶⁹ Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 93-4, 103, and 146.

⁷⁰ López Corral, *La Guardia Civil en la Restauración*, 570.

for apologists of anarchism.⁷¹ Civil Governor Ramón Larroca created a register of foreigners living in Catalonia, initiated deportations, and worked with French authorities to prevent anarchists from crossing the porous border.⁷² Yet, their collaboration was not without obstacles. In December 1893, the Spanish requested permission to deport nine anarchists to France, but the French would only take the three that were French nationals, returning six Italians. Subsequently the Spanish simply stopped asking.⁷³ Over the coming years, tensions around anarchist deportations would spark several international incidents, as later chapters will show. At the same time that the Spanish government was trying to slip deported anarchists through the French border in late 1893, they were trying to win the approval of French and other European governments for their “project for common international action for the repression of anarchism.” Although Portugal and Austria (in collaboration with Hungary) said they would sign on, unfortunately for the Spanish initiative, France and Great Britain turned them down, dooming the project.⁷⁴

The British explained that

Her Majesty’s ministers are of the opinion that the present law is quite adequate for dealing with this class of crime, and are therefore unable to enter into any international engagement which might hamper or complicate their liberty of action.⁷⁵

Not only did Britain lack a domestic anarchist threat that was sufficiently threatening to cause alarm, the British also distrusted the potentially authoritarian results of an international anti-anarchist accord. In a confidential note, the Foreign Office’s Earl of Rosebery explained to H. Drummond Wolff, the British ambassador to Spain, that part of the Foreign Office’s unease with an international anti-anarchist accord was that “it was

⁷¹ González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 273.

⁷² Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 149.

⁷³ Ibid., 221-2.

⁷⁴ Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Asuntos Exteriores, Sección Histórica, 2750.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

not easy to draw a clear line between Anarchism and other forms of more or less extreme opinion.”⁷⁶ Increasingly, the British were concerned that such measures would provide *carte blanche* for continental repression and erode their liberal sensibilities.

Domestically, Barcelona mayor Manuel Henrich eventually acceded to mounting pressure and created a secret anti-anarchist police force. Led by Alfredo Peña Martín, a lieutenant of the *Guardia Civil*, and staffed with former members of local police forces, this new secret force participated in a massive roundup of known or suspected anarchists. Yet, as there were no new *atentados* over the coming months, the funding for the new secret police was gradually reduced until it faded out of existence in the spring of 1894.⁷⁷ It would not be the last of its kind. Spurred on by the Jesuits and the recently formed Fathers’ Association of Catalonia against Immorality, which informed the authorities about local indecency, the police carried out many more arrests than they had after the bombing of the Gran Vía. Whereas by mid November there had been 26 arrests following the actions of Pallás, by March 1894 at least 415 arrests had been made for the Liceo bombing.⁷⁸ Prisoners were packed into Montjuich Castle, the prison of carrer d’Amàlia in the Raval neighborhood of central Barcelona, the prison of the Atarazanas Barracks, and even held aboard the *Navarra*, a ship brought into the port to house the overflow of suspected accomplices to the Liceo bombing.⁷⁹ The dragnet was so wide that 13 anarchists were arrested out in Sant Feliu de Guíxols simply for their political beliefs.⁸⁰ Ironically enough, José Llunas, the vehemently anti-*dinamiterisme* director of the

⁷⁶ Letter from Nov. 22, 1893 in The National Archives, Foreign Office (FO), 881/6427.

⁷⁷ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 144-7.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 137 and 152; Dalmau, “Martí Borràs i Jover”, 26-7.

⁷⁹ *El Noticiero Universal*, March 14, 1894.

⁸⁰ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 149.

anarchist collectivist newspaper *La Tramontana*, was among those arrested.⁸¹ Not surprisingly, *La Tramontana* wrote that the Liceu bombing “is not something that can be explained rationally more than to suppose an unfortunate aberration of emotion and intelligence in whoever committed, sponsored, conceived of, justified or applauded an act like this.”⁸² The editorial staff of the paper was so frustrated that they thought it was “useless to repeat our arguments against *dinamiterisme*, since we have recently explained them several times... [such actions only] exacerbate the passions and make it so that coercive measures are enacted that victimize many innocents.”⁸³ Instead of writing a new article, the editorial staff put together a compilation of all of their anti-*atentado* articles stretching back six years. Despite their anarchist orientation, their critiques mirrored those of the dynastic and republican press. A supposed bomb plot in 1888 was described as “a criminal action,” the bombing of the Plaza Real in 1892 was “fit for savages,” and, overall, *dinamitarisme* was described as “barbarous and savage violence” that brought “dishonor to civilization.” Given the suspension of constitutional guarantees the paper decided to shut down after this issue.⁸⁴

In contrast, the pro-dynamite *El Corsario* argued that the bourgeoisie was hypocritical in mourning the Liceo victims while perpetrating far worse crimes on the working class. Speaking to the bourgeoisie of the entire world, *El Corsario* wrote that:

The salaried press, reflecting bourgeois sentiments, cries for the victims...Hypocrites! Why do you count the twenty victims of this catastrophe...[but] you don't notice the hundreds sacrificed in Melilla...You cry for the victims of the Liceo and aren't moved at all when 200 miners are buried...which could have been avoided if your thirst for

⁸¹ *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 9, 1893. *La Tramontana* reacted to his arrest by writing that “Given that the ideas of our Director about *dinamitarisme* are very well known, we can't explain his arrest.” *La Tramontana*, Nov. 10, 1893.

⁸² *La Tramontana*, Nov. 17, 1893.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Nov. 10, 1893.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

gold didn't stop you; and you don't only consider these victims necessary to enrich yourselves, —as you say, expanding industry is the locomotive of civilization—but rather you squander in orgies and gross bacchanals what you gain piled on top of the thousands of bodies and rivers of blood of our brothers...In Fourmies, in Chicago, in Jerez and so many other places you cowardly murder honorable workers...⁸⁵

Regardless of their position on dynamite, anarchists argued that the selective sadness of elite society at the death of theatergoers rather than miners or orphans was the clearest reflection of the class nature of their emotions. As opposed to what *El Corsario* characterized as the narrow focus of the Barcelona bourgeoisie on the death of their friends and loved ones, anarchists situated their martyrs within the framework of a global class war with victims around the world.

By the end of 1893, the authorities were patting each other on the back for having rooted out a vast anarchist conspiracy that lurked behind both the Gran Vía and Liceo bombings. Thirty-two-year-old shoemaker Mariano Cerezuela and twenty-six-year-old locksmith Josep Codina confessed to their participation in both plots while Codina even revealed that he was the author of the Liceo *atentado* and the group's bomb-maker. Although Pallás insisted that he acted alone, the Gran Vía case was left open after the Liceo bombing to connect both incidents. Civil Governor Ramon Larroca basked in the media's adoration.⁸⁶ This neat narrative was scrambled, however, on the evening of January 1, 1894 when the police arrested Santiago Salvador in Zaragoza. The Civil Guard had been tracking him for days after evidence started to mount back in Barcelona about his central role in the bombing. When Salvador eagerly and fully confessed to sole responsibility for the Liceo bombing, allegations emerged that the confessions of

⁸⁵ *El Corsario*, Nov. 19, 1893.

⁸⁶ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 188-190.

Cerezuela and Codina had been coerced through torture.⁸⁷ Although the Federal Republican organ *El Nuevo Régimen* protested the treatment of anarchists, the Federal Republican deputy Baldomero Lostau wrote a letter of protest about the torture to the Minister of War, and a few anarchist and Madrid newspapers covered the allegations, momentum did not develop for a more thoroughgoing investigation into the treatment of prisoners.⁸⁸ The most substantial account of the torture was Joan Montseny's *El proceso de un gran crimen*, which consisted of letters from the tortured and executed, biographies of a number of those imprisoned, and Montseny's political-philosophical defense of anarchism.⁸⁹

The trial for the alleged accomplices of Santiago Salvador unfolded before a closed-door military tribunal at Montjuich castle. The proceedings were carried out at a breakneck pace, skipping several steps along the way. Six death sentences and four life sentences were handed out although the defendants argued that their confessions had been coerced through torture.⁹⁰ Although some republican politicians, such as Francisco Pi y Margall, sent petitions of protest about the irregularities in the trial, the verdict stood.⁹¹ Most republicans, including *El País*, remained silent.⁹² On May 21, 1894, the prisoners were executed outside Montjuich castle.⁹³ The Liberal Party did not engage with the accusations of judicial irregularities or torture since they sought to fend off

⁸⁷ Ibid., 188-192 and 195-6.

⁸⁸ Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 156, 179-80, and 191-2; *El Nuevo Régimen*, Dec. 16, 1893. In his May 20, 1894 letter, Lostau argues that the execution of these men will aid the anarchist cause by giving them "six more martyrs." See J. Montseny, *El proceso de un gran crimen*, 23-25. The night of his arrest, Saldani seems to have been beaten up, perhaps by the police. Caballé y Clos, *Barcelona de antaño*, 88.

⁸⁹ Montseny, *El proceso de un gran crimen*.

⁹⁰ Sempau, *Los Victimarios*, 279; J. Montseny, *El proceso de un gran crimen*, 37 and 41-2.

⁹¹ Other letters of protest came from Gumersindo de Azcárate, the mayor of Barcelona, and the bishop of the diocese. See Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 202-5.

⁹² Álvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 149.

⁹³ *El País*, May 22, 1894. Four of them collapsed instantly but the other two required extra bullets before they hit the earth. Also apparently "thousands" more people arrived late for the execution. *El Imparcial*, May 22, 1894.

Conservative accusations of governmental laxity, and most Republicans wanted to reaffirm their nationalistic credentials by distancing themselves as much as possible from the anarchists. When a paper in Nantes published the charge that early confessions had been obtained through torture, the prominent republican paper *El País* was thoroughly offended, writing that the claim of “horrible treatment...does not seem to be true.”⁹⁴ Since 1892, the paper’s editor had been the fiery Alejandro Lerroux. Known for his aggressive, demagogic personality, Lerroux had consolidated his power through a series of successful duels against rival journalists. Lerroux was focused on consolidating his hold over *El País*, honing his polemics against a myriad of republican micro-factions, and projecting a masculine image of militaristic, nationalist populism. At this point, not only was there no room in his equation for the rights of anarchists, *El País* even suggested that anarchists be subjected to the infamous “*ley de fugas*,” where guards pretend that convicts are escaping as an excuse for extrajudicial executions.⁹⁵ As the historian José Alvarez Junco wrote, “there were already screams coming from Montjuich in 1894. But *El País* still didn’t hear them.”⁹⁶ One of the most important causes of the deafness of *El País* and the republicans was that their political center of gravity was Republican France, which had just passed harsh anti-anarchist laws, which *El País* considered “heroic remedies,” and was in the process of unleashing a wave of repression unseen in France since the Commune.⁹⁷

“L’ère des attentats,” Repression, and Moderation in France

⁹⁴ *El País*, Jan. 17 and May 21, 1894.

⁹⁵ *El País*, Nov. 26, 1893 cited in Álvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 146.

⁹⁶ Álvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 150.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 146; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 143.

More than a year had passed since the era of Ravachol in 1892. Perhaps, given the recent commotion generated by the bombings of the Gran Vía and Liceo over the previous months, many hoped that propaganda by the deed had migrated across the Pyrenees. Yet, over the next months such hopes would be dashed in France. In December 1893, an unemployed thirty-two-year old anarchist named Auguste Vaillant threw a small bomb into the Chamber of Deputies from the second row of the public gallery.⁹⁸ A former socialist (who once edited *L'Union Socialiste*), Vaillant developed links with local anarchist groups, such as the Independents and the Equals, and met prominent figures in the movement, such as Jean Grave and Sébastien Faure.⁹⁹ During his later testimony, Vaillant explained that he was “tired of leading this life of suffering and cowardice.”¹⁰⁰ Utterly distraught about the state of his family and world around him, Vaillant decided to attack

an infamous society which permits a few individuals to monopolize all the social wealth, while there are hundreds of thousands of unfortunates who have not even the bread that is not refused to dogs, and while entire families are committing suicide for want of the necessities of life.¹⁰¹

The bomb he carried into the assembly hidden in an oval tin box was rather weak.¹⁰² It sprayed metal shards into the air lightly wounding several deputies and a priest, but there were no fatalities or serious injuries. Although anarchists usually debated the merits of every *attentat*, no one publicly critiqued Vaillant. Malato explained this writing that “his

⁹⁸ APP, Ba 141.

⁹⁹ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 137-8; Tuchman, “Anarchism in France,” in Horowitz ed., *The Anarchists*, 451-2. He was also the secretary of *La fédération des groupes indépendants*. Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

¹⁰⁰ Vaillant’s speech cited in Emma Goldman, “The Psychology of Political Violence,” in *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader, Third Edition* edited by Alix Kates Shulman (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1998), 268-271.

¹⁰¹ Vaillant’s speech cited in Emma Goldman, “The Psychology of Political Violence,” in *Red Emma Speaks*, 268-271.

¹⁰² Burleigh, *Blood and Rage*, 81.

deed was accomplished with such clearness and precision of purpose, was so free from all ambiguous or painful consequences, that we all joined in a chorus of praise.”¹⁰³ In contrast, the prominent socialist Jules Guesde described the bombing as “just monstrous. It’s the act of a madman. Those who do this aren’t just beyond the law, they are *beyond humanity*.”¹⁰⁴

Conscious of the impact that his *attentat* would produce in the press, Vaillant went to have a photograph of himself taken the week before the attack, and he seems to have had his comrades send it to the press.¹⁰⁵ Vaillant was cognizant of continuing the new tradition of the celebrity-martyr of the “propagandist by the deed.” Like Pallàs and Karakazov before him, Vaillant noted in his journal the day before the bombing that “I don’t feel any hatred against those who will fall tomorrow.”¹⁰⁶ His action wasn’t about the individual politicians but about taking a step to “hasten the advent of the new era.”¹⁰⁷ Vaillant and many of his anarchist comrades saw their actions as the seeds of an imminent modernity whose roots were just starting to grow. At his trial, he argued that “massacres” were necessary for the success of the French Revolution, and that it was hypocritical to criticize him for his bombing considering

the dead and wounded of Tonquin, Madagascar, Dahomey, adding thereto the thousands, yes millions of unfortunates who die in the factories, the mines, and wherever the grinding power of capital is felt. Add also those who die of hunger, and all this with the assent of our Deputies. Beside all this, of how little weight are the reproaches now brought against me!¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Malato also emphasized that Vaillant’s action received nearly universal approval among the popular classes. Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

¹⁰⁴ *Le Journal*, Dec. 10, 1894. He even suggested that the recent “anarchist epidemic” was a police fabrication. See Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 257.

¹⁰⁵ *El Imparcial*, Dec. 14, 1893.

¹⁰⁶ His journal entries were published in *Le Figaro*, July 21, 1894.

¹⁰⁷ *Le Figaro*, July 21, 1894, cited in Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 232.

¹⁰⁸ Vaillant’s speech cited in Emma Goldman, “The Psychology of Political Violence,” in *Red Emma Speaks*, 268-271.

Like *El Corsario* and the Spanish defenders of dynamite, Vaillant rejected the demonization of his actions by accusers who perpetrated far worse crimes across the French Empire.

While Spanish deputies were still debating special anti-anarchist legislation, French lawmakers wasted no time in enacting the first two of what would become three anti-anarchist laws known pejoratively as the “*lois scélérates*,” or “villainous laws,” days after Vaillant’s *attentat*. The first law targeted writers who sympathized with assassinations, bombings, arson, or any kind of illegal violence in addition to antimilitary sentiments. Those convicted faced one to five years in jail and fines of 100-3,000 francs. The second law targeted all “formal or informal associations...which prepare or commit crimes,” essentially outlawing anarchism.¹⁰⁹ This measure was really designed to stamp out anarchism as a whole rather than focus on propaganda by the deed specifically as was noted in an April 1894 police report, which said that the law “only responds imperfectly to the nature of anarchist procedures,” because “the execution of the criminal act is always an isolated work in their houses.”¹¹⁰ There was no evidence to suggest that the *attentats* were originating from associations. Therefore, from the start, socialists and radicals started to fear that the contours of the laws were so nebulous that their scope would extend beyond anarchists to dissidents in general.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Full text of the laws: Henri Varennes, *De Ravachol a Caserio: (Notes et Documents)* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1895), 353-5; Louis Patsouras, *Jean Grave and the Anarchist Tradition in France* (Middletown, NJ: The Calson Company, 1995), 32; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 139-141.

¹¹⁰ AN F7 12504.

¹¹¹ Meanwhile, in Spain the Republican *El País* applauded the French legislation of “social defense” and used it to indict the Spanish monarchy: “in France surely a month won’t pass without the law being applied to the criminals. Meanwhile in Spain two individuals have been prisoners for more than a year for a similar crime and it’s still unknown when they will see a trial.” *El País*, Dec. 10 and 16, 1893. In contrast, *El Nuevo Régimen*, the federal republican organ, described the French laws as “measures which have already been rejected in other times,” and pointed out that “this could easily initiate an era of persecution, where

On January 1, 1894, the same day that Spanish police apprehended Santiago Salvador, their French counterparts initiated an extensive series of 552 searches yielding 248 arrests of suspected anarchists across the country over the next two months. In a number of cases, the police entrapped anarchists by planting suspicious evidence, but according to the official memo from the Prefecture of Police, simply discovering anarchist writings represented sufficient grounds for arrest.¹¹² The police prohibited kiosks from selling anarchist papers and most were shut down including *Père Peinard*, whose director, Émile Pouget, fled to London, and *La Révolte*, whose director, Jean Grave, was arrested.¹¹³ He was sentenced to two years in jail and a 100 franc fine for violating the first anti-anarchist law with his book *La Société mourante et l'anarchie*.¹¹⁴ This harsh application of the new legislation outraged the Parisian intelligentsia who organized a petition signed by 120 artists and intellectuals (including Paul Gauguin but not Zola who thought Grave's work was actually incendiary) that was published in *L'Echo de Paris*.¹¹⁵ Socialist deputy Clovis Hugues cautioned against a return to the authoritarianism of the Second Empire and charged the police with conflating intellectuals with anarchists of action.¹¹⁶ Yet, such protests did not dissuade the repressive momentum. The Minister of the Interior applauded the blow they had dealt to anarchism stating that government actions had "thrown terror into the anarchist camp."¹¹⁷

ideas are confounded with actions." *El Nuevo Régimen*, Dec. 16, 1893. The conservative *La Época* applauded the legislation. See *La Época*, Dec. 11, 1893.

¹¹² AN F7 12508; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 143-4.

¹¹³ APP, BA 1500, Patsouras, *Jean Grave*, 35; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 143-4, Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 252.

¹¹⁴ Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 253.

¹¹⁵ Patsouras, *Jean Grave*, 35.

¹¹⁶ Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 20.

¹¹⁷ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 144.

As January rolled into February, Auguste Vaillant's trial for the bombing of the Chamber of Deputies concluded amidst general curiosity about whether President Sadi Carnot would condemn the bomber to death. A petition in the Chamber of Deputies beseeching the President to spare the life of the bomber gathered sixty signatures while Vaillant's daughter Sidonie wrote a letter to Carnot's wife on behalf of her father.¹¹⁸ An article in *Le Parti socialiste*, which earned its author two years in jail and a fine of 1,000 Francs, argued that if Carnot "coldly" chose death for Vaillant, "there won't be a single man in France to complain for him, if one day he has the small inconvenience of seeing his carriage blown to bits by a bomb."¹¹⁹ The likelihood of reprisals was enhanced by anarchist posters plastered onto the Arc de Triomphe saying "The bourgeoisie will be victims of anarchist vengeance if they touch Vaillant's head. *Vive l'anarchie!* Death to the bourgeoisie! *Vive Ravachol! Vive Vaillant!*"¹²⁰ Undeterred by the prospect of retribution, Carnot sentenced Vaillant to death. It was the first time in nineteenth century France that someone had been sentenced to death without having killed anyone.¹²¹ Moreover, since the capital punishment for political crimes had been outlawed by the Constitution of 1848, Vaillant's death sentence demonstrates how the judicial system conveniently considered anarchist attacks to be apolitical crimes.¹²² Clearly, French officials wanted to send a strong message. When Vaillant learned that he would die, he cried out "*Vive l'anarchie! My death will be avenged.*"¹²³ As the date of the execution approached, the usual rumors of anarchist plans to bomb the execution or assassinate the

¹¹⁸ Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 233-4.

¹¹⁹ *Le Parti socialiste*, Jan. 28-Feb. 3, 1894 cited in Varennes, *De Ravachol a Caserio*, 125; and Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 235.

¹²⁰ *El Imparcial*, Dec. 13, 1893 citing notice from *La Liberté*.

¹²¹ Even Ravachol wasn't sentenced to death at his first trial for his bombings, only later for the earlier murders. See Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 233.

¹²² Louis Begley, *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 18.

¹²³ Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 235.

executioner swirled throughout Paris. Yet, the guillotine dropped at dawn on the gray, cloudy morning of February 5 as scheduled. Over the coming months Vaillant's grave received so many visitors that politicians started to complain.¹²⁴

Given the brutal repression being unleashed on French anarchism, a Parisian anarchist named Émile Henry decided it was time for him to “answer terrorism by terrorism”¹²⁵ by avenging Auguste Vaillant. Having exploded a bomb in a Paris police station several years earlier, Henry was well-versed in the art of the *attentat*. Days after Vaillant's execution, Henry started to flesh out a plan of attack against a space of bourgeois leisure. On the evening of February 12, 1894, Henry threw a bomb into the dining room of Cafe Terminus. It hit the chandelier and crashed to the floor near the orchestra bursting with metal shards in every direction mortally wounding one person who would die later and injuring about twenty.¹²⁶ Shortly thereafter, he was apprehended by the police and taken into custody.¹²⁷ Although initially he refused to reveal any information about himself, Henry eventually confessed to both the bombing of the Terminus Café and the police station on the rue des Bons Enfants and explained that he hadn't targeted certain people in particular, “but rather the entire bourgeoisie, of which the former was only a representative.”¹²⁸ Like Pallás, Henry wrote a letter to his loved ones urging them to recognize the heroism of his actions. “You know me and can say to

¹²⁴ Several songs were written after his execution such as *L'Orpheline en deuil* about Sidonie and *La Complainte de Vaillant*. See APP Ba 1289. Like Pallás, Vaillant wanted his body to be studied by science after his death. Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

¹²⁵ Charles Malato, *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1894.

¹²⁶ APP, Ba 141 and 1115; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 149-52 and 157-8; Patsouras, *Jean Grave*, 32-3; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 239.

¹²⁷ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 149-53.

¹²⁸ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 157 and 166.

them that the real criminals are those who make life impossible for anyone with a heart, those men who uphold a society in which everyone suffers.”¹²⁹

While in prison, Henry met some legendary figures in the history of French law enforcement and criminology, indicative of the important role of anarchism in catalyzing criminal justice innovations. Over the coming days, he was interrogated by Prefect of Police Louis L  pine and inspected by Alphonse Bertillon, head of the anthropomorphic department.¹³⁰ L  pine was given command of the Prefecture in 1892 in response to first waves of anarchist propaganda by the deed. Although the police responded to the *attentats* of Ravachol, Vaillant, and Henry with mass arrests, L  pine, inspired by the British police, started to believe that effective, long-term policing required developing a favorable public image for the force and positive relations with the community. Unlike his European contemporaries, L  pine came to argue that prevention, rather than repression, was the key to ‘maintaining order’ and crushing anarchism since mass arrests only prolonged cycles of retaliation. Over time, L  pine instituted a much more selective hiring process for officers and administrators paired with state of the art training including modern crowd control.¹³¹ L  pine certainly played a crucial role in steering the French state away from reaching the heights of repressive brutality that their Spanish counterpart was heading toward and thereby ending the cycle of reprisals that seemed to be engulfing the country.

Henry was also brought into the anthropometric department where Alphonse Bertillon measured his head and body including the lengths of his extremities and digits.

¹²⁹ APP, Ba 1115.

¹³⁰ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 154-7.

¹³¹ Frederic S. Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police Abroad: Policing Europe in a Modernising World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 12-14.

Bertillon had developed a pioneering system of physical measurements and descriptions to scientifically quantify and identify criminals. This system, which the Prefecture had used since 1883, came to be known as *portrait parlé* (spoken portrait) or *Bertillonage*. Bertillon's examinations were seen as decisive in connecting Ravachol to his earlier crimes, and the growing field of criminal anthropology played an important role in disseminating the rhetoric of the inhuman, atavistic anarchist.¹³² *Bertillonage* had spread throughout the Americas, North Africa and India, and after 1898 it started to spread across much of Europe, except the Balkans, though by 1901 Scotland Yard switched to fingerprinting.¹³³ In 1895 it was instituted in Barcelona.¹³⁴

Unsurprisingly, Henry's *attentat* compounded the panic and alarm that had developed over the previous years. Given the regularity of anarchist bombings, French conservatives started to fear that men like Henry were indicative of a new generation of rebellion produced by France's modern secular educational system. Others feared that this violence reflected the generation born in the wake of the Commune (one journalist wrote that Henry had been conceived during the Commune, thereby predetermining his later actions).¹³⁵ Foreshadowing the Dreyfus Affair which would begin only months later, *Le Soleil* described Henry as "a materialist and atheist...the natural product of our Judeo-Freemason society, of our frivolous and corrupt society, without beliefs, ideals, and faith."¹³⁶ Some tried to use the opportunity to smear the entire left and blame the socialists, who had gained ground in recent elections, even to the point of arguing that

¹³² Isaac Land, "Men with the Faces of Brutes: Physiognomy, Urban Anxieties, and Police States" in Land ed., *Enemies of Humanity*, 128-30.

¹³³ Rh Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 173.

¹³⁴ Turrado Vidal, *Policía y Delincuencia*, 75.

¹³⁵ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 171-2

¹³⁶ *Le Soleil*, May 6, 1894 cited in Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 171.

their red flag be outlawed. In a letter to *L'Intransigeant*, a woman from Marseille feared that if anarchists *attentats* weren't curbed soon, France would become "a new Poland" that was partitioned out of existence by stronger neighbors.¹³⁷ This internal anarchist enemy seemed to be chewing away at the very foundations of the Republic. The French avant-garde writer Octave Mirbeau lamented that "a mortal enemy of anarchism could not have done better than Émile Henry when he hurled his inexplicable bomb in the midst of tranquil and anonymous people who had come to a cafe to drink a beer before going to bed."¹³⁸ The French anarchist Charles Malato, who knew Henry fairly well, said

I entirely share Octave Mirbeau's appraisal: the act of Émile Henry, who is nevertheless an anarchist of the utmost intelligence and great courage, has above all struck anarchy...I approve of all violence that... strikes the enemy, not that which strikes blindly.¹³⁹

Although Malato was sympathetic to propaganda by the deed, he worried that its propagandistic value would disappear if the political import of the target were unclear. Simply blowing up people at upper class locales ran the risk of alienating potential sympathizers. Over the coming days, the police were on high alert guarding major hotels and monuments. At one theater the scenery fell over triggering pandemonium. Reports of small bomb-shaped objects proliferated, with just enough of them actually containing explosives to keep the police on edge.¹⁴⁰

On April 27, 1894, Henry sat across from the prosecutor Bulot, whom Ravachol had attempted to blow up years earlier, as his trial commenced. A doctor brought in as an expert witness argued that Henry was mentally ill, possibly as a result from the typhoid

¹³⁷ *L'Intransigeant*, Feb. 14, 1894 cited in Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 161-4.

¹³⁸ *Le Journal*, Feb. 19, 1894.

¹³⁹ *Le Matin*, Feb. 28, 1894 cited in Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 247.

¹⁴⁰ A bomb exploded in Lyon and one was found in Paris and another in Saint-Étienne. See Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 163 and 172.

fever he endured as a child. When Henry was granted the opportunity to speak on his behalf, he argued in favor of propaganda by the deed and anarchism and explained how in response to the violence of the bourgeoisie and the police it was time “to hunt the hunters.” His act, and those like it, were intended to demonstrate that “those who suffer have finally had enough: they are showing their teeth and will strike even more brutally than they have been abused.”¹⁴¹ Responding to the notion that his *attentat* was uniquely heinous for its targeting of ‘innocent’ people, Henry explained that anarchists would

spare neither women nor children because the women and children we love have not been spared. Are they not innocent victims, these children, who in the faubourgs slowly die of anemia, because bread is rare at home; these women who in your workshops suffer exhaustion and are worn out in order to earn forty cents a day, happy that misery has not yet forced them into prostitution...¹⁴²

After all, in Henry’s eyes “there are no innocent bourgeois.”¹⁴³ In the hope of dissuading any considerations of leniency or pardons, Henry concluded with the following roll call of anarchist martyrdom:

In the merciless war that we have declared on the bourgeoisie, we ask no mercy. We mete out death and we must face it. For that reason I await your verdict with indifference. I know that mine will not be the last head you will sever...Hanged in Chicago, beheaded in Germany, garroted in Xerez, shot in Barcelona, guillotined in Montbrison and in Paris, our dead are many: but the bosom of a rotten society that is falling apart; [anarchism] is a violent backlash against the established order; it stands for the aspirations to equality and liberty which have entered the lists against the current authoritarianism. It is everywhere. That is what makes it indomitable, and it will end by defeating you and killing you.¹⁴⁴

Henry simply desired the death sentence that would allow him to pass on the mantle of the “propagandist by the deed” thereby fulfilling the deadly terms of engagement that related anarchists and the state. When the judge read the expected guilty verdict carrying

¹⁴¹ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 184-6.

¹⁴² Ibid., 187.

¹⁴³ Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 22.

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Guérin ed., *No Gods No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 396.

a death sentence, Henry said “good” and shouted “Courage, comrades! And *vive l’anarchie!*” as he was led out of the courtroom. Paul Brousse, former anarchist pioneer of propaganda by the deed turned reformist socialist, lamented that the execution would inevitably generate reprisals. As one who understood the dynamics of propaganda by the deed as well as anyone, he said Henry’s execution “is the life of anarchism: to kill the doctrine, we must spare the indoctrinator.”¹⁴⁵ Yet, this indoctrinator was not spared. On May 21, 1894 the guillotine fell down upon Henry around the same time as the six alleged accomplices of Santiago Salvador perished in Barcelona.

Brousse’s ominous warning materialized a month later in Lyon when French president Sadi Carnot was visiting the Universal Exposition. At a little past nine in the evening on June 24, 1894, his carriage was leaving the Palace of Commerce to head to the *Grand Théâtre* for a performance. The president told his guards to allow the lively crowd surrounding the carriage to come close, but a young man rushed forward carrying a newspaper, which guards thought contained flowers but in fact concealed a knife.¹⁴⁶ The assassin lunged at the presidential carriage thrusting his knife into Carnot shouting “*Vive la Révolution! Vive l’Anarchie!*”¹⁴⁷ Carnot died three hours later. The next day, Carnot’s wife received a photograph of Ravachol in the mail. On the back was written, “he is well avenged.”¹⁴⁸ Likewise an anarchist poster put up the following day titled “To Carnot the Murderer” finished with the line: “You have had the head of Vaillant, we’ll

¹⁴⁵ *La Petite République*, May 7, 1894 cited in Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 189.

¹⁴⁶ Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 247-8; Tuchman, “Anarchism in France,” in Horowitz ed., *The Anarchists*, 455-6.

¹⁴⁷ Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 313.

¹⁴⁸ Varennes, *De Ravachol a Caserio*, 260.

have yours, Président Carnot!”¹⁴⁹ By executing the indoctrinator, the doctrine of propaganda by the deed had found a new opportunity to manifest itself.

The assailant was Santo Jeronimo Caserio, a twenty-year-old anarchist apprentice baker from Lombardy who had journeyed to Lyon to commit a “great feat” and avenge Vaillant and Henry.¹⁵⁰ Like his fellow anarchist practitioners of propaganda by the deed, Caserio claimed to have acted alone. At his trial, he maintained a calm demeanor and even interjected some humor by responding to the question of whether he wanted to kill the king of Italy and the Pope with “Not both at once...they never go out together.”¹⁵¹ Unsurprisingly Caserio was quickly sentenced to death and brought before the guillotine on August 15, 1894.¹⁵²

The assassination of Carnot spurred the proposal of a third anti-anarchist law on July 9, 1894, which passed several weeks later, outlawing anarchist propaganda.¹⁵³ This French legislation was indicative of a broader European trend of anti-anarchist measures enacted over the last decades of the nineteenth century. Previously, anti-anarchist/anti-explosives legislation had been passed in the UK in 1883, Germany in 1884, Belgium in 1887, Portugal in 1892, Switzerland months earlier in April 1894, and in Italy a month earlier in June 1894.¹⁵⁴ The day after the new French law, the Liberal Sagasta government finally passed their anti-explosives law in Spain. The law targeted not only those who fabricated explosives, but also anyone who aided in the creation of explosives,

¹⁴⁹ AN, F7 12512.

¹⁵⁰ Tuchman, “Anarchism in France,” in Horowitz ed., *The Anarchists*, 456; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 248; Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 206; James Joll, *The Anarchists* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), 132.

¹⁵¹ Merriman, *The Dynamite Club*, 206-7.

¹⁵² His attack spawned a wave of anti-Italian violence as Italian stores were attacked across Lyon. See Avilés, “Propaganda por el hecho y regicidio en Italia,” in *El nacimiento del terrorismo*, 9.

¹⁵³ Full text of the law: Varennes, *De Ravachol a Caserio*, 355-6. Even court transcripts could be censored if they were considered to be incendiary. See Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 21.

¹⁵⁴ González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 282.

provoked or apologized for their illegal use, or participated in any association that encouraged or facilitated such acts.¹⁵⁵ Some left republicans complained, but in general Spanish republicanism was swept up in, or silenced by, the momentum behind anti-anarchist measures.

Shortly after the third French anti-anarchist law, what became known as the “Trial of the Thirty” commenced in August 1894. Overall, nineteen anarchist theoreticians and artists and eleven anarchist ‘thieves’ or ‘criminals’ were tried in a judicial attempt to target the perceived connection between ideas and actions in anarchism. Although several notable figures fled the country, the trial featured some of the most prominent radical figures of the era. The main targets of perennial anarchist nemesis prosecutor Bulot were Sebastián Faure, Jean Grave, Felix Fénéon, Charles Chatel, editor of *Revue anarchiste*, and Émile Henry’s close friend Louis Mathas. Throughout the trial, the agents of the state were unable to prove a connection between the thoughts of the defendants and illegal actions, but perhaps more importantly they were consistently outmatched by the wit of their interlocutors. For example, Fénéon was accused of being the intimate friend of a German anarchist but he replied that “the intimacy couldn’t have been so great. I don’t speak a word of German and he is ignorant of French.”¹⁵⁶ What was originally intended as a showcase of the latent criminality residing in the writings of subversive dissidents quickly morphed into a spectacle of judicial absurdity as the defendants mocked the charges being leveled against them.

In the end, the intellectuals were acquitted (though Grave continued to serve his sentence until President Faure’s 1895 amnesty) while three of the ‘criminals’ were

¹⁵⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 185.

¹⁵⁶ Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 255.

convicted to sentences of six months, eight years, and fifteen years.¹⁵⁷ The ability of the French system to stop short of spiraling into the kind of authoritarianism that socialist deputies feared helped to end the cycle of *attentats*. The fact that France didn't continue down the path of repression that Spain followed over the coming years has much to do with the relative power of socialists and radical republicans in parliament and the higher level of respect for civil liberties in French governmental institutions. Although some of the defendants were convicted, their low profiles were insufficient to generate outrage, let alone retribution. The acquittals at the Trial of the Thirty and the presidential pardon a year later sapped some of the potential motivation for another *attentat* while the daily home inspections that police were carrying out on 'suspicious' Parisian anarchists posed daunting logistical problems.¹⁵⁸ Over the next few years, the popularity of revolutionary syndicalism would help to seal the end of "*l'ère des attentats*" in France.

Conclusion

Toward the end of August 1894, word started to spread throughout the Spanish press that Santiago Salvador had renounced anarchism, accepted communion, and even desired to become a Franciscan monk. As it turned out, this was a ploy to avoid execution, but for a while it had many convinced. A group of aristocratic women organized a campaign for clemency,¹⁵⁹ and the Association of Saint Vincent de Paul printed photographs of the newly Catholic Salvador to promote the conquest of their faith. However, the Civil Governor banned the publication or sale of any portraits or

¹⁵⁷ Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics*, 26; Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste*, 256; Constance Bantman, *The French Anarchists in London, 1880-1914: Exile and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 25-6.

¹⁵⁸ AN F7 12504.

¹⁵⁹ Álvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 148-9.

biographies of Salvador fearing the potential ramifications of his glorification despite his conversion.¹⁶⁰ In mid-October, the police confiscated 68 portraits of Salvador in one day.¹⁶¹ While most of the interest in such portraits stemmed from the mistaken belief that Salvador had miraculously embraced Catholicism in prison, authorities rightly feared that the portraits could be interpreted as a celebration of his bombing. Salvador had embraced the legacy of his fallen comrade Pallás and established himself as the next celebrity-martyr in what would become a long lineage of propagandists by the deed. Images of Salvador and accounts of his actions were crucial in connecting his deeds to those who came after him.

Regardless of how many people believed Salvador's performance, the twists and turns of his final days captivated Barcelona where "no one speaks of anything but the attitude that the prisoner has suddenly assumed"¹⁶² and "the public grabs at the vendors of *El Noticiero Universal* to know the details of his time in the chapel."¹⁶³ Although the papers were prohibited from publishing his image, they recounted the most minute details of the final twenty-four hours of Salvador's life from his breakfast of fried eggs with bread and wine the day before his execution ("Fortunately if I have indigestion, it will only last a few hours" he joked), to the furniture of his room,¹⁶⁴ to his pulse and temperature at different points in the day, reflecting the increasing interest in the relationship between biology and criminality.¹⁶⁵ The level of detail provided by the press outraged conservative senators leading to a Royal Order several days later tightening the

¹⁶⁰ *El País*, Oct 20 and 22, 1894.

¹⁶¹ *La Dinastía*, Oct. 19, 1894.

¹⁶² *El Liberal*, Nov. 21, 1894.

¹⁶³ *El País*, Nov. 21, 1894.

¹⁶⁴ *El Liberal*, Nov. 21, 1894.

¹⁶⁵ For references to his pulse and/or temperature see: *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 21 and 22, 1894; *El Liberal*, Nov. 21, 1894; *El País*, Nov. 21, 1894; *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 21, 1894.

amount of information that could be printed about the last hours of prisoners awaiting execution.¹⁶⁶ In late November 1894 Santiago Salvador was subjected to the most loathsome form of execution reserved for the most despicable criminals: the *garrote vil*.¹⁶⁷ His body was left on the platform until 4 PM to send a clear message to anyone considering a similar *atentado*.

The widespread curiosity that the execution elicited brought many middle and upper class people into the working-class Raval neighborhood to see the Reina Amalia prison for the first time. They were not encouraged with what they saw. According to *La Dinastía*, those who saw the prison's dilapidated exterior exclaimed things like "This is the prison of the second capital of Spain!" and "Is it possible that this building, of such a ruinous and damp appearance, has conditions of security and hygiene!"¹⁶⁸ Although the paper tried to explain that the interior was well maintained, the image of the prison did not reassure public opinion. During this period one can detect sporadic incidents of concern, protest, or even outrage at the conditions of prisons, the treatment of prisoners, and the practices of the judicial system, but no campaign on behalf of the tortured prisoners materialized. It would take a much more dramatic sequence of events beginning about a year and a half later for these inklings of rights consciousness to coalesce into a powerful international force.

¹⁶⁶ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 232-3. In protest, the conservative *La Dinastía* barely published any information on Salvador, and what they included was slipped into the "local news" section. See *La Dinastía*, Nov. 21-2, 1894. Even before the definitive proof of the insincerity of Salvador's conversion, *La Dinastía* attacked papers that printed "miniscule details of [prisoners'] time in the chapel as if they were dealing with heroes rather than vulgar criminals." *La Dinastía*, Oct. 22, 1894.

¹⁶⁷ ACA, Sentencias Criminales, 186; *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 21, 1894; *El Liberal*, Nov. 22, 1894; *La Correspondencia de España*, Nov. 22, 1894; *La Vanguardia*, Nov. 22, 1894; *La Campana de Gracia*, Nov. 24, 1894.

¹⁶⁸ *La Dinastía*, Nov. 23, 1894.

Chapter 3: The Return of Torquemada

On June 7, 1896 a bomb exploded in the middle of a Corpus Christi procession in Barcelona. Although the identity of the author of the *atentado* (attack) was never definitively proven, authorities nevertheless responded with a massive wave of indiscriminate arrests culminating in the systematic implementation of a program of torture to extract confessions from innocent anarchists and radicals in the city's infamous Montjuich Castle. The repression that resulted from the bombing was so extreme, however, that it afforded an opportunity for anarchist prisoners, such as Fernando Tarrida del Mírmol and Joan Montseny, in conjunction with their liberal and republican allies to spark a historic international campaign against the torture and legal mistreatment of prisoners in Montjuich Castle. This campaign was one of the most significant and overlooked international human rights campaigns of the turn of the twentieth century. Although historians of human rights tend to underestimate the importance of the period between the abolitionist movement and World War II, the Montjuich campaign is an important example of human rights advocacy that, along with the French Dreyfus Affair and the movement against slavery in the Congo, epitomized an era of international agitation in the name of "humanity."

This chapter demonstrates how the Montjuich campaign operated based on the argument that torture and groundless executions were not only reprehensible, but inhuman. The power of such claims stemmed from a widely shared "ethics of modernity" that Montjuich organizers mobilized to argue that humanity, especially as represented by its vanguard known as 'civilization,' had progressed to such a point that it should have discarded pre-modern acts of barbarity long ago. The persistence of such 'savage'

practices into the present day was considered to be indicative of Spain's systemic societal backwardness and degeneration. As the last remnants of Spain's American empire were slipping away, the Montjuich campaign perpetuated the perception that Spain had at least plummeted to the bottom of the European hierarchy with Russia, if not joined the middling ranks of brutality with Turkey and Morocco, or, worst of all, found itself on a moral par with Africa.

Although some campaigners undoubtedly viewed the world according to this hierarchical lens, for others it seemed as if they were simply making claims about global morality. Nevertheless, (at least outwardly) campaigners tapped into a broader societal consensus, superficial though it may have been, that atrocities such as torture were supremely antiquated and inconsistent with modern values. The campaign was consistently clear that it acted "in the name of the rights of humanity"¹ which were considered to be natural, universal rights that applied equally to everyone. Yet, the concept of 'civilization' played an important rhetorical role in emphasizing the widely held perspective that by now Europe 'should know better' because of its supposedly more advanced state. If Europe claimed to be at the forefront of humanity, campaigners argued, it should assume some kind of moral leadership. The inverse of emphasizing Spain's dismal ethical ranking was the often implicit, though occasionally explicit, fact that if Spain was on the bottom, then someone had to be on the top. At the European demonstrations outside of Spain, a number of French, Belgian, and British orators made it clear that their homelands occupied the top rung (a similar dynamic occurred in the United States with Cuba). To some extent, the horror of French and British crowds at

¹ *El Imparcial*, June 25, 1899.

Montjuich demonstrations elicited an underlying patriotic affection for nations thought to be the epitome of progress, but it also often reflected a sincere internationalism.

Anarchists, whose internationalist and anti-state views were grounded in a vision of humanity beyond borders, nations, and races, assumed leadership in the campaign against Spain's use of torture at home and abroad. Not only did anarchists seek to abolish the hierarchical institution of the state in favor of decentralized, directly democratic federations of community and workplace councils, they also sought to maximize the autonomy of the individual from the control of the collective. This was a revolutionary vision of human rights agitation apart from the state and human rights visioning beyond the state although it was not always theorized in terms of 'rights.' The anarchist goal of stateless autonomy represented a competing conception of personal freedom that stands in sharp contrast with state-centric interpretations of human rights.

To advance their campaign, however, anarchists played upon the same nationalistic insecurities on which non-anarchist campaigners focused. Overall, the Montjuich campaign portrayed itself as non-political and aimed not at a specific cross-section of society, but at everyone with a heart. While a number of scholars have attempted to classify this style of politics as either "humanitarian" or "human rights" activism, the heterogeneous tendencies at play in the Montjuich campaign and its nineteenth-century internationalist predecessors, such as the movements against the alleged Ottoman abuse of Greeks, Bulgarians, Cretans and Armenians or resistance to Tsarist oppression in Russia, defied narrow categorization.² Although I argue that the Montjuich campaign mobilized what was essentially human rights rhetoric and values,

² Rodogno, *Against Massacre*; Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Stearns, *Human Rights in World History*; Martinez, *The Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Law*; Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*; Blackburn, *The American Crucible*.

the organizational and litigious connotations that the concept of “human rights” activism has adopted from the global explosion of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) over the past half-century does not fit in this earlier context. Instead, the strategies and tactics of the Montjuich campaign sought to demonize the Spanish monarchy by tapping into the prevailing “ethics of modernity” without forcing the actions of activists into pre-designed analytical boxes.

In many ways, the Montjuich movement was a mirror image of the earlier press campaign against anarchist *atentados* waged from 1893-1896 that I analyze in Chapters 1 and 2. The anti-anarchist campaign of the 1890s argued that anarchist terrorism was so heinous that it fell beyond the pale of humanity, that it was indicative of the backwardness of society, that all people of good conscience regardless of political views or class condemned it, and that those responsible for it were no better than wild beasts. But as I demonstrate, the Montjuich campaign of 1896 to 1900 followed the exact same script but replaced ‘anarchist terrorism’ with ‘torture.’ Just as the ‘apolitical’ nature of the anti-anarchist campaign fostered the widespread political unity necessary for the near-universal endorsement of the harsh anti-anarchist law of 1896, the Montjuich campaign managed to keep anti-anarchist sentiment at arm’s length and construct an extremely diverse coalition of newspapers, unions, political parties, and other factions by speaking about the ‘interests of humanity’ that transcended ‘politics.’ The uncanny resemblance between the two campaigns reflects the flexibility of the “ethics of modernity” and rhetoric around “humanity” more broadly. The “ethics of modernity” was a widespread standard of progress that was almost invisible in its omnipresence and was mobilized by figures across the political spectrum from conservative imperialists to anarchists. The

remarkable success of the Montjuich campaign owed a great deal to its ability to shift the moral question from anarchist violence to violence against anarchists and, in so doing, temporarily monopolize the “ethics of modernity” despite the persistence of earth-shaking anarchist attacks that could have derailed it.

This chapter charts the course set by the Cambios Nuevos bombing of 1896 and the repression and international mobilization it generated. It follows the Spanish press as it leveraged the “ethics of modernity” to justify the abrogation of the rights of anarchists whose actions were said to have put them beyond the pale of humanity, and explains how more intellectual anarchist prisoners, such as engineer and professor Fernando Tarrida del Mármol and the lay teacher Joan Montseny, leveraged their connections with European journalists and politicians to propel an international campaign for the rights of the victims of the Spanish state that managed to successfully recapture the mantle of humanity in its attacks on the “inquisitors” of the Civil Guard. Initially the campaign took shape through the relationships of solidarity that existed across the Pyrenees between Spanish and French republicans, anarchists, radicals, and journalists. Given the censorship that reigned in Spain, it was republican France that provided the opportunity for the allegations of torture to reach a European and global audience. Over time, the campaign was sustained by broader coalitions of rights advocates such as the Spanish Atrocities Committee and the Anglo-Spanish Anti-Inquisitorial Club in Britain, some of whom were also members of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, or the Franco-Spanish Revolutionary Committee based out of Paris that organized large public meetings and publicized the evidence of torture in the international press. The campaign gained momentum by linking its protest against the monarchy’s abuses in Barcelona with its

repression of the Cuban independence movement, which was gaining significant coverage in American newspapers. Suddenly, the widespread condemnation of Spanish abuses in Cuba was compounded by the emergence of journalistic and diplomatic attacks on abuses committed at home.

Gradually, Spanish authorities started to realize that they could no longer ignore the international clamor that their actions had aroused. In an attempt to stem the tide of accusations, the government tried to manufacture favorable coverage and pressure foreign governments to clamp down on protests, but it was too little too late. As opposed to the Russian government, which had honed its international counter-revolutionary infrastructure over the course of decades, the Spanish crown was late in accounting for the significance of popular international responses to its actions. Perhaps the most significant example of the impact of the campaign on the repression of the Spanish state was the reduction of the number of death sentences handed out for the alleged authors of the Cambios Nuevos bombing from twenty-eight to five in the midst of mounting pressure. In a matter of months the campaign spread to France, Belgium, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Germany, Austria, Norway, Italy, the United States, Argentina, and Uruguay, but because of domestic censorship and repression, it took longer to materialize in a significant way in Spain. The transnational networks of advocacy and solidarity that brought the Spanish Crown before the court of international opinion, ultimately compelled its recalcitrant leaders to accede in the face of unprecedented global opprobrium.

The Bombing of Cambios Nuevos

On the evening of June 7, 1896, Captain General Despujol³ led one of Barcelona's nine Corpus Christi processions away from its starting point at the Cathedral behind the *gegants*: giant street puppets characteristic of Catalan popular processions. This Corpus Christi procession, the second most popular in the city, had marched from the Cathedral to the Church of Santa María del Mar since the fourteenth century. This day, the clergy and representatives of Barcelona's historic guilds (such as the dyers and tailors) marched behind the *gegants*, followed by the military and then the common people. Several hours later, the procession was finally winding down as the host was entering Santa María del Mar.⁴ A light rain started to fall on the masses of people clogging up the entrance to the church as the tail of the procession continued to proceed down the small side street of Cambios Nuevos.⁵

Moments later, the sound of an explosion rang out causing the priest in the church to faint.⁶ To stem the panic and put forth a sense of order, Captain Despujol hurriedly called upon the military band to play the Royal March.⁷ As the glass from streetlights and windows crashed to the ground, people scattered in every direction.⁸ In his later testimony, one witness claimed that just as the military contingent passed by, he started to head home and came across a package the size of a melon wrapped in burning cloth. Thinking it might be a bomb, he immediately fled to safety right before it detonated. A second witness later stated that around the same time he too saw a package wrapped in

³ Eulogi Despujol Dusay had taken over for Valeriano Weyler as Captain General of the Philippines several years earlier and then taken over for him again in Barcelona in January 1896. In 1892, when Despujol was a lieutenant, he was injured in the eye during the *atentado* of the Plaça Reial in Barcelona. See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 254-5; Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 155.

⁴ Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 31-4.

⁵ Joaquim M. de Nadal, *Cromos de la vida vuitcentista . Reculls històrics (1801-1900)* (Barcelona: Llibreria Dalmau, 1946), 239-40.

⁶ *El País*, June 9, 1896; AHDB, "1896 Atentado cometido en la calle de Cambios Nuevos."

⁷ de Nadal, *Cromos de la vida vuitcentista*, 239-40.

⁸ *La Época*, June 8, 1896.

rag emitting smoke, but this man made the unfortunate choice of poking it with his foot to see what it was and it exploded.⁹

Immediately after the explosion, which ultimately killed 12 people and injured 40-70 more,¹⁰ the police arrested a number of ‘suspicious’ looking people near the scene and searched nearby homes.¹¹ By the following day, newspapers reported that the police had already made 38 arrests¹² although the *atentado* had occurred in the evening. Yet, initially there was one man considered to be most ‘suspicious’ of all in the papers: a French “*mulato*” or “*negro*” named Luís Lafau who had been injured in the blast and had “not properly justified his presence at the location where he was injured.”¹³ That night, theatrical functions and other processions were cancelled¹⁴ and at an emergency meeting of the Captain General, Civil Governor, and other authorities, they decided to suspend constitutional guarantees in the province of Barcelona.¹⁵

The *atentado* polarized the emotions of Barcelona, with masses of people fleeing to surrounding towns and staying indoors¹⁶ while so many curious visitors came to witness the site of the explosion that the newspapers complained that they were clogging up transit.¹⁷ Reflecting the marketable intrigue of the *atentado*, there were even vendors on the Rambla selling what they claimed were “little pieces of the shell of the bomb...for

⁹ Biblioteca de Catalunya, fondo Pere Corominas, 2637, doc. 23.

¹⁰ Kaplan lists 40, Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 34; Núñez Florencio lists 42 but specifies that this figures counts a few who died shortly thereafter, Núñez Florencio, *El terrorismo anarquista*, 57; Esenwein lists 45, Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 191; Dalmau lists 50, Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 249; and Herrerin López lists 70, Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 129.

¹¹ *El Imparcial*, June 8, 1896; *Las Noticias*, June 8, 1896.

¹² Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 133.

¹³ *El Imparcial*, June 13, 1896; *Las Noticias*, June 8 and 13, 1896; *La Época*, June 10, 1896. Six days later *La Época* reported that although he claimed to be French, he was actually Cuban. See *La Época*, June 13, 1896.

¹⁴ *El País*, June 9, 1896.

¹⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 250.

¹⁶ *El Noticiero Universal*, June 11, 1896.

¹⁷ *El Imparcial*, June 9, 1896. See also: ANC, 217, Caja 1.

good prices.”¹⁸ Several days after the *atentado*, a large public funeral procession similar to the one organized after the Liceu bombing in 1893 set off from the Santa Cruz Hospital down the Rambla to the Columbus statue by the pier where the flags of the ships stood at half mast. More than 50,000 people (“all of Barcelona”) watched as the white coffins of the children and the black coffins of the adults accompanied by local elites and cross-bearing clergy passed beneath the black hangings covering the streetlights and draped over the balconies.¹⁹

Unsurprisingly, the press was out for blood. Much like their responses to the earlier *atentados*, journalists continued to dehumanize anarchists as “wild beasts more ferocious than those raised in virgin jungles”²⁰ or “fanatics of destruction and vengeance”²¹ without “ideas, but rather instincts”²² whose bombings aroused the “indignation of all of the civilized world”²³ and therefore warranted the mass execution of anarchists “as if they were rabid dogs.”²⁴ Although several years had gone by without explosions, and many Spaniards and Catalans had come to assume that anarchist bombings had faded into history as they seemed to have done in France after the assassination of President Carnot,²⁵ the Cambios Nuevos bombing reignited the memories of the Gran Vía and the Liceu bombings, making propaganda by the deed seem like a continuous threat. As *Las Noticias* wrote,

When will this end? We don’t want to blame anyone but if in Paris, the populous capital of the south, but if in London, the populous capital of the North, the panther has been shackled, why is it that in Barcelona there isn’t even a break to control the

¹⁸ *Las Noticias*, June 9, 1896.

¹⁹ *El Imparcial*, June 10, 1896; *El País*, June 10, 1896.

²⁰ *Las Noticias*, June 9, 1896.

²¹ *La Época*, June 8, 1896.

²² *Ibid.*, June 9, 1896.

²³ *El Imparcial*, June 9, 1896.

²⁴ *La Dinastía*, June 8, 1896.

²⁵ Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 251.

wild beast? We are giving the world a show. Anarchism invades us. If firing squads aren't enough, find another way.²⁶

Certainly the latest *atentado* had significantly pushed influential public opinion to the breaking point. As *La Época* wrote, “Few times have we seen such unanimity as shown by the press of the capital and the provinces regarding the absolute need to repress antisocial anarchist propaganda.”²⁷ *El Imparcial* concurred, writing that

For the first time since anarchist *atentados* have occurred in Spain, upon speaking of the need for preventative measures, no one has responded with limitations or objections founded in mistrust of democracy before possible abuses of governors.²⁸

Much of the urgency and vengeful unanimity that the bombing elicited stemmed from the growing perception that the lingering prevalence of propaganda by the deed reflected poorly on Spain and could be interpreted as a symptom of graver underlying social disorders. For example, *El Movimiento Católico* used the *atentado* to ring the alarm bells about the rapid decay of traditional society by arguing that Barcelona was suffering anarchist bombings because of its “industrialism without Christ and its unbridled pleasures.”²⁹ *Las Noticias* mounted a secular defense of Barcelona by writing that the real factors behind the prevalence of *atentados* in Barcelona as opposed to Madrid were Barcelona’s more developed industry and the fact that its proximity to the border, its port, its greater supply of jobs, and superior train system made it more desirable for French and Italian migrants than Madrid. Barcelona was no less religious or more immoral than anywhere else, *Las Noticias* argued.³⁰ Likewise, in the days after the bombing, *La Época* emphasized that the *atentado* could not be seen as an indictment of Barcelona’s society

²⁶ *Las Noticias*, June 8, 1896.

²⁷ *La Época*, June 11, 1896.

²⁸ *El Imparcial*, June 11, 1896.

²⁹ *Las Noticias*, June 13, 1896.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Several days earlier, *Las Noticias* also went to great lengths to argue that propaganda by the deed was not a pervasive problem in Barcelona, but rather a series of isolated actions organized by “five or six hopeless [people] lacking valor and with dirty consciences...” See *Las Noticias*, June 8, 1896.

since, the paper argued, there was no lack of work or charity, and misery did not exist among the Catalan working class. Any “individual misery” that existed, *La Época* claimed, was due to vice and disorder and therefore the fault of the individual.³¹ Yet, in a larger European context where the United Kingdom and France were carving up Africa while the Spanish crown’s grip on Cuba and the Philippines faltered, domestic nationalist sentiment was eager to eradicate anarchism, “a tumor on the social body”³² that exacerbated the mounting perception of Spanish backwardness. *El Herald* even referred to Spain as the “Turkey of the Occident.”³³

To accomplish this urgent task, it was generally agreed that exceptional measures were necessary to defeat “those who reject the human conscience.”³⁴ This time, *La Dinastía* wrote, there was “unanimity of the Madrid papers in asking for measures of rare vigor, some asking for deportation, others for *lynchamiento*...” *La Dinastía* also mentioned that while some suggested sending the anarchists to the penal colony of Fernando Poo, others advocated “the system of the revolutionaries of Nantes in 1793,” (i.e. the guillotine) sentiments expressed even by “those who profess the most advanced ideas.”³⁵ In the aftermath of the bombing, journalists came to argue that extreme repression was warranted against all anarchists regardless of their involvement in the bombing because

given that anarchist methods are murder, whoever continues to be affiliated with anarchism places themselves in solidarity with this crime. The distinction between theory and practice, between the ideal and the actions, has no place here given that

³¹ *La Época*, June 8 and 9, 1896. In contrast, *El Socialista* argued in the wake of the *atentado* that “the pauperism” of Barcelona was “greater than in any other city in Spain” and that this dynamic exacerbated anarchist terrorism. See *El Socialista*, June 19, 1896.

³² *La Dinastía*, June 12, 1896.

³³ *Las Noticias*, June 17, 1896.

³⁴ *El País*, June 9, 1896.

³⁵ *La Dinastía*, June 10, 1896.

the one is born from the other and that from the heat of anarchic propaganda emerge criminals like Caserio, Pallás and Salvador.³⁶

Likewise, the liberal *El Imparcial* was not at all concerned with guilt or innocence, writing that all anarchists “will be treated as wolves and exterminated as wolves are exterminated. No one asks if the wolf that is being pursued has done damage or not within a herd; it’s a wolf, that’s enough; if it still hasn’t caused damage it could in the future.”³⁷ Ultimately, it was necessary “that human justice not see anything more in any anarchist, whether peaceful or active, than a murderer; they deserve to be exterminated.”³⁸ Even the Republican *El País* argued that these anarchists were “inhuman criminals”³⁹ who were

killing for the sake of killing...[without] any right to mercy or compassion... We are not advocates of the death penalty; but in cases like this, in the presence of this devastating fever that aspires to social regeneration through extermination; before such repugnant brutality, reason fails and one can only hear the voice of indignation and ire.⁴⁰

The conservative *La Dinastía* went so far as to demand that the new measures not only target anarchists but “even socialists who walk very close” with them.⁴¹ There was such a disregard for due process, especially when pertaining to anarchists, that the former governor of Barcelona Sánchez de Toledo stated that, based on his experience, the best the authorities could do was simply arrest as many suspicious people as possible the night before big festivals and public events since the anarchist methods of operating in small

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *El Imparcial*, June 9, 1896.

³⁸ From *El Día* cited in *La Época*, June 9, 1896.

³⁹ *El País*, June 8, 1896.

⁴⁰ Ibid., June 9, 1896.

⁴¹ *La Dinastía*, June 11, 1896.

groups and changing meeting places frequently made actually uncovering a specific plot nearly impossible.⁴²

The only political factions opposed to an extremely violent backlash, apart from the anarchists themselves, were the federal republicans and the socialists. Francisco Pi y Arsuaga, son of the legendary former president of the First Republic Francisco Pi y Margall, was aghast at the eagerness of supposedly liberal and democratic journalists and politicians to advocate the most draconian measures. In *El Nuevo Régimen*, organ of the federal republicans, he wrote that “the press that calls itself liberal [is] surrendering, in an hour of fear, all of the conquests of a century. Calm, señores, calm.”⁴³ Likewise, *El Socialista* warned that if liberals, democrats and republicans went down the path of punishing anarchists for their ideas, “can’t they see that one day their [ideas] will be considered the same by the most retrograde elements of the bourgeoisie? ... if today it starts with punishing anarchist ideas, tomorrow the same will be done with others that the exploiters dislike...”⁴⁴ Indeed, the repression that unfolded over the following months would bear out such ominous prognostications.

Mass Arrests, Torture, and the Anti-Anarchist Law of 1896

As opposed to the journalistic responses to the Gran Vía and Liceu bombings of 1893 when the newspapers were demanding new anti-anarchist legislation, arguments about new laws were quite rare in the aftermath of the Cambios Nuevos *atentado*. For although the government’s 1894 anti-anarchist legislation seemed to have been successful

⁴² *El Imparcial*, June 9, 1896.

⁴³ F. Pi y Arsuaga, “Los anarquistas,” *El Nuevo Régimen*, June 13, 1896. *El Nuevo Régimen* and *El Socialista* were some of the only papers to point the obvious fact that there was no evidence to prove that the author was an anarchist. *El Nuevo Régimen*, June 13, 1896; *El Socialista*, June 19, 1896.

⁴⁴ *El Socialista*, June 19, 1896.

during the two-year lull in *atentados*, its failure to impede the recent explosion furthered a conception of the problem of propaganda by the deed as beyond the traditional liberal confines of constitutional jurisprudence. Laws were considered safeguards against the dangers of humanity, but if anarchists weren't human, then how could society rely solely on the law? Among the rare cases of appeals for new laws was an article titled "Vengeance!" from the satirical anticlerical republican paper *El Motín*, run by the firebrand José Nakens, which argued that it was necessary "to annihilate, to exterminate" the anarchists and "if current laws weren't sufficient [to be able to exterminate the anarchists], may they pass other laws..."⁴⁵ In other words, what was needed was an 'anti-law': a law justifying the extra-legal persecution of anarchism, giving the authorities *carte blanche* to disregard legal safeguards in hunting down those whose actions had placed them beyond the law to begin with.

An 'anti-law' is exactly what was presented to Congress a week after the explosion. Designed to augment the repressive powers of the 1894 law, this new piece of legislation, to be in effect for three years before being subject to renewal, authorized the arrest of anyone with an anarchist outlook and the closure of "all periodicals, centers and places of anarchist recreation."⁴⁶ It also mandated a death sentence for anyone whose attacks with explosives or flammable materials killed anyone, and a life sentence if such an attack merely caused injuries or occurred in a public building (even if it caused no damage).⁴⁷ Moreover, such cases were now to be adjudicated by military courts.⁴⁸ One of the only voices against the proposed law was *El Nuevo Régimen*, which cautioned that "if

⁴⁵ *El Motín*, June 13, 1896.

⁴⁶ The language, phrasing and some minor details of the law underwent some adjustments and amendments before its final passage on September 2, 1896. See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 382-4.

⁴⁷ They were likely thinking of the case of Auguste Vaillant with this provision.

⁴⁸ Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 136-7.

this law is approved, we will have put in the hands of governments a weapon, not against the anarchists...but rather against all those who for whatever reason arouse the displeasure of he who commands.”⁴⁹

Yet, this law should not be understood as the impetus behind the enormous wave of repression that struck the anarchist movement, but rather as parliamentary window dressing for an escalation of brutal state methods that had been developing for several years reaching especially malignant levels after the recent *atentado*. After all, the mass arrests and censorship started well before the new legislation was finally signed into law in early September 1896. The police did not spare a moment awaiting a rubber stamp. After arresting 38 people in less than 24 hours, the police raised their total to 80 by June 12, 193 by June 22,⁵⁰ 224 by June 27, and 359 by September 7, 1896.⁵¹ About a year later, Despujol cited a figure of 424 total arrests in a letter to the Minister of War, but historian Antoni Dalmau found the names of 558 people who were at one point arrested following the Cambios Nuevos bombing, and he estimates that the real total was between 600-700.⁵² The press recognized that the police were carrying out “innumerable arrests,”⁵³ and that “the majority [of those arrested] had already been prisoners after the Liceo [bombing].”⁵⁴

Given the repression and torture that followed the Liceu bombing, the anarchists knew to expect the worst. Four days after the Cambios Nuevos *atentado*, *El Corsario*

⁴⁹ Pi y Arsuaga, “Los anarquistas,” *El Nuevo Régimen*, June 13, 1896

⁵⁰ *Diario de Barcelona*, June 8, 1896.

⁵¹ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 279. For the cards made by police to identify the prisoners see: AEP, “tarjetas del Castillo de Montjuich.”

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *El Imparcial*, June 10, 1896.

⁵⁴ *Las Noticias*, June 11, 1896.

ominously predicted that “they’re going to repeat their inquisitorial acts again.”⁵⁵ Like most anarchists, *El Corsario* vehemently opposed the most recent bombing, since its “consequences tragically affect innocent beings,” but they knew that, nevertheless, they would feel the repercussions as would “any political party in opposition to the government.”⁵⁶ Madrid socialists held a protest meeting days after the announcement of the new anti-anarchist law.⁵⁷ They could see the mounting danger.

Certainly from the start the police arrested every ‘suspicious’ dissident they could find. Beyond hauling in anarchist militants, editors, theorists, and especially those who had been previously detained for one of the earlier *atentados*, the police also arrested typesetters for anarchist periodicals, anyone who had ever subscribed to the anarchist paper *El Productor* (though it had stopped publishing two years earlier), and those known to have visited an anarchist center or suspicious workers’ center or cafe. The police were concerned about working-class foreigners as well. In fact, a dispatch from the British Consul to Barcelona stated that the police were keeping lists of them and questioning any known to “have frequented certain of the low class cabarets.”⁵⁸ Police also arrested some secular people who had not baptized their children or fasted during lent, or who had civil marriages or had given their relatives lay burials.⁵⁹ A sizeable number of socialists and republicans were arrested as well, but, as we will see shortly, the number of republican arrests ballooned in August in a way that would have a dramatic effect on the response to police repression.

⁵⁵ *El Corsario*, June 11, 1896.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, June 25, 1896.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ The National Archives, FO 72/2013.

⁵⁹ “Influencia Jesuítica en lo de Montjuich,” in *La Campaña de “El Progreso” en favor de las víctimas del proceso de Montjuich* (Barcelona: Tarascó, Viladot y Cuesta Impresores, 1897-1898), 35-6.

The inept and indiscriminate measures of the police were obvious to the French commissioner in Barcelona, Thiellement, who, days after the explosion, informed the French Interior Minister that the authorities had no idea who the bomber was and that their mass arrests had been fruitless. To compensate for their cluelessness, Thiellement wrote, the police plan seemed to be that “the individuals arrested would end up singing, that’s the term, when they’re on trial; and the rest will be coerced.”⁶⁰ Captain General Despujol admitted the haphazard police strategy in an internal report stating that since the authorities lacked “sufficient data to be able to skillfully conduct the investigation...it became necessary to arrest numerous individuals, who if they did not immediately offer sufficient reason for suspicion of participation in the act to fall upon them, were known as having anarchist ideas and more or less secretly propagandists of their doctrine.”⁶¹

The masses of prisoners were typically imprisoned first in the Atarazanas prison near the docks at the end of the Rambla before being transferred up the hill to the infamous Montjuich castle. As the days passed, more and more unfortunate workers from across Catalonia were squeezed in including prominent anarchists and revolutionaries such as Juan Bautista Esteve, an anarchist shoemaker from Gracia,⁶² Anselmo Lorenzo, Fernando Tarrida del Mármol, Bautista Cervera and others. Although most of those arrested were men, a significant number of women were incarcerated in the women’s prison on *carrer Reina Amalia* including the influential anarchist unionist Teresa

⁶⁰ Thiellement went on to claim that a number of “foreign suspects have already left Barcelona, either to take refuge in the interior of Spain, or to go back across the border into France.” Among those cited as doing so was “Angiolillo.” Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, La Courneuve, Correspondence politique, 1871-1896 “Espagne,” vol. 8, p. 10.

⁶¹ Writing of the Captain General on March 4, 1897 cited in Herrerín López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 133.

⁶² Íñiguez ed., *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, 557.

Claramunt.⁶³ Whereas the common prisoners spent all day in the outdoor patio, the anarchist and political prisoners were never allowed outside.⁶⁴ The majority of the prisoners had no idea why there were imprisoned and the authorities were not eager to alleviate that condition. The judge only visited the prison once or twice a week to conduct interrogations with one or two prisoners.

On August 4, 1896, the day of Santo Domingo de Guzman considered by many to be the founder of the Inquisition, the stakes were raised. That evening in Montjuich, soldiers came to escort several prisoners out of their cells. They were taken across the castle's central plaza and then down a set of stairs through a hall with five cells where each was locked up in isolation.⁶⁵ Over the coming days, these prisoners faced a similarly torturous ordeal. Each prisoner was tied up tightly and told to walk back and forth across their cell as a guard kept watch through a hole in the door. They were beaten when they faltered, and given dried cod when they asked for water. If they revealed who threw the bomb, the guards said, they would be given rest, bread, water and wine. Each prisoner pleaded that they had no idea who had committed the crime, but the walking only continued. The amount of time walking ranged between four and sixteen days. The republican Francisco Gana recounted that he walked until "the last night the walls seemed like houses in reverse, the doors seemed like men with guns and the stones seemed like dead bodies."⁶⁶ After the walking, they asked Gana again what he knew, and when he again replied that he knew nothing, they grabbed and twisted his genitalia with

⁶³ Sempau, *Los Victimarios*, 381-2; Letter from Teresa Maymí in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 112-116; Maria Amàlia Pradas Baena, *Teresa Claramunt, la virgen roja Barcelonesa: biografía y escritos* (Barcelona: Virus, 2006), 47.

⁶⁴ Federico Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 1 (Barcelona: Publicaciones de la Revista Blanca, 1932), 108.

⁶⁵ Francisco Gana, "Carta de F. Gana" in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 22.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

such force that he fell unconscious. When he awoke, he couldn't walk because they had mutilated his toenails while he was asleep. After he made an unsuccessful attempt on his life, the prison authorities told him they had finally realized that he wasn't an anarchist, so they took off his cuffs, gave him some water and soup and let him sleep on the floor. Despite this respite, the constant onslaught of flies around his open wounds plagued Gana who was alarmed to notice that his right arm and leg had become paralyzed from the torture. Fortunately the paralysis started to fade after five days. Nevertheless, for days he laid there on the cold, filthy prison floor listening to the screams of the other prisoners.⁶⁷ After a while, however, their repressive repertoire expanded when the Montjuich guards put an iron helmet on the head of a prisoner named Luís Mas that pulled his upper lip up over his nose and the lower lip down over his jaw tearing the flesh from his face as the sides of the mask crushed his temples.⁶⁸

By mid-August, Civil Guard Lieutenant Narciso Portas, the main man in charge of the interrogations, had completed the first stage of his project of constructing the vast anarchist conspiracy that he and so many others in the upper echelons of power envisioned. He soon reported that he had obtained confessions from Tomás Ascheri, the accused bomber, and his alleged accomplices by means of "continuous interrogation" (a phrase far more literal than some officials might have guessed).⁶⁹ For Portas and his fellow torturers, the next stage of the plan was to use the men that they had broken as tools to implicate other prisoners that they wanted to ensnare. After a week or two of

⁶⁷ Francisco Gana, "Carta de F. Gana" in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 23-5; Ascheri, "Carta de Ascheri" in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 69-70; Juan Bautista Ollé, "Juan Bautista Ollé," in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 143; "Sebastián Suñé Gavalda" in Íñiguez ed., *Enciclopedia histórica del anarquismo español*, 1667; Sebastián Suñé, "Relato de Suñé," in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 4-6; Letter from Nogués in *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 127-8.

⁶⁸ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 359.

⁶⁹ Fons Coromines, Biblioteca de Catalunya, 2637, 21.

continual torture, the main suspects became the puppets of the torturers to spout all sorts of accusations against the other prisoners to justify their charges.

Interestingly, not long after the announcement of the confessions, on August 18 the police arrested at least twenty prominent republicans including lawyers Pere Coromines and Josep M. Vallès i Ribot as well as several former deputies such as Nicolás Estévanez, Joan Martí i Torres, and the Federal Republican Baldomero Lostau who had written a letter of protest to the Minister of War about the torture of the Liceu prisoners.⁷⁰ While there had been a trickle of republican arrests since the bombing, the coordinated nature of these arrests on a single day could not have been a coincidence. Perhaps emboldened by Portas' success in extracting confessions from his prisoners, state authorities may have sought to use the repressive momentum to further quash opposition by attempting to lump republicanism in with anarchism. Another motivation, according to Amadeu Hurtado, the lawyer who would represent Coromines at his trial, was that "republican politicians were prisoners as a precautionary measure of the Government, against the fear of disturbances, because of the war in Cuba which was every day more grave..."⁷¹ Regardless of their motivation, the expansion of repression to significantly target high profile republicans had the unintended effect of broadening domestic and international interest in the plight of the Montjuich prisoners and facilitating an alliance of anarchists and republicans around the 'apolitical' banner of "humanity."

⁷⁰ Of the 38 prisoners that Antoni Dalmau could identify as republican, 24 were arrested in August, 1896, and 20 of them were arrested on August 18th. Another indicative case was that of the industrialist Emili Gili who was arrested on August 18th by accident. They confused him with his republican brother. See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 285-338. These arrests noted in *Las Noticias*, August 19, 1896. Lostau died in October. See *El Nuevo Régimen*, Oct. 17, 1896.

⁷¹ Amadeu Hurtado, *Quaranta anys d'advocat: història del meu temps*, vol. 1 (Esplugues de Llobregat: Edicions Ariel, 1967-69), 23-42; cited in Pere Coromines, *Diaris i records de Pere Coromines: els anys de joventut i el procés de Montjuïc* (Barcelona: Curial, 1974), 49-50.

For “Humanity and Justice”: The Montjuich Campaign Begins

After his release from Montjuich, the anarchist engineer and professor at the University of Barcelona Fernando Tarrida del Mármol spared little time crossing the border to France. As soon as he could, he headed straight for Paris where he met with Charles Malato in the office of *l’Intransigeant*. After Tarrida recounted the gruesome details of the repression in Barcelona, Malato introduced him to Henri Rochefort of *l’Intransigeant* and the Natanson brothers who founded *La Revue Blanche*.⁷² Not long after, on October 15, 1896 Tarrida del Mármol published the first article exposing the atrocities of Montjuich in *La Revue Blanche* under the title “One Month in the Prisons of Spain.”⁷³ In this exposé, Tarrida recounted stories of unlawful imprisonment and mistreatment in addition to letters from some of those tortured and executed in 1894. Needless to say, the article produced a “profound sensation.”⁷⁴ Over the following weeks excerpts of Tarrida’s article were reprinted in *l’Intransigeant* and other sympathetic French papers. Given the prevalent desire to castigate the authors of the Cambios Nuevos bombing, which quickly morphed into an eagerness to stamp out anarchism completely, press censorship in Catalonia, and the widespread preoccupation with Spain’s colonial conflicts, it’s understandable that the campaign against the repression of the Spanish state started abroad.

From the very start, the outcries of the Montjuich prisoners and their allies appealed to a universal audience of “humanity” in their protest letters to newspapers in

⁷² Teresa Abelló i Güell, *Les relacions internacionals de L’Anarquisme Català (1881-1914)* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1987), 159.

⁷³ F. Tarrida del Mármol, “Un mois dans les prisons d’Espagne,” *La Revue Blanche*, Oct. 15, 1896.

⁷⁴ Fernando Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne, Montjuich, Cuba, Philippines* (Paris: Stock, 1897), 32.

Spain and abroad.⁷⁵ Although this tendency reflected the importance of internationalism in the politics of the anarchist and socialist prisoners, the emphasis on “humanity” also functioned as an apolitical strategy to appeal to potential allies with more moderate outlooks and a rhetorical weapon to shame conservatives invested in the notion of the “ethics of modernity.” The combination of principled internationalism, strategically apolitical universality, and the rhetoric of imperial shaming was evident in the writings of the anarchist prisoner Joan Montseny. For example, one of Montseny’s earliest letters, written under the pseudonym Federico Urales, was titled “For Humanity.” Despite his internationalist politics, in this letter Montseny utilized the prevalent nationalist fear of sliding down the international hierarchy when he wrote that “[Spaniards] are deserving, very deserving of being the barbarians of the modern era. Years ago Turkey and Russia beat us; we have been outstanding students. Barcelona and the Philippines compete advantageously with Armenia and Siberia.”⁷⁶ Their efforts did little to influence the situation, however. Montseny later recalled that “during the first months of our secret campaign, no element of the Catalan bourgeoisie stood at our side at all...The Evil Castle, with its horrors, didn’t exist for them.”⁷⁷

In November 1896, the first large-scale statement of an “official character” from the Montjuich prisoners made its way to the press. Signed by 66 prisoners “belonging to diverse parties, many of whom have been quite far from politics,” this letter was intended

⁷⁵ The prisoners wrote under assumed names. Lorenzo wrote under the name Abdon Terradas, Cardenal under the name Felipe Cubas, and Montseny experimented with a variety of mountain-themed names such as Andes, Montserrat, Montblanch, and Montsant before sticking with his original pseudonym, Federico Urales. Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 1, 142. *El País* published articles from Felipe Cubas on Feb. 11, 1897, March 3 and 19, 1897 and Sept. 15, 1897, and from Urales on Jan. 5, 17, and 26, 1897, Feb. 15, 1897, April 12, 22, and 29, 1897, and May 6, 1897.

⁷⁶ *El País*, Jan. 5, 1897.

⁷⁷ Montseny does clarify that there was some response from Catalan elites, but only from “the friends of Pedro Corominas, Amadeo Hurtado, Lluhí Rissech and David Ferrer.” Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 1, 146.

to “prove to the entire world the innocence of the men who have been involved in this *atentado*.” The authors of this letter certainly envisioned their audience as those with “a love of humanity and justice” rather than Spain or Europe specifically, and they sought to bring about “a movement that influences public opinion to rectify the action of justice” rather than appeal directly to the Spanish government to intervene.⁷⁸ The Parisian paper *L’Intransigeant* published the Montjuich letter and followed it with an article the next day, arguing that the torture of the prisoners morally “banished [Spain] from humanity,” and another highly influential piece titled “Torquemada” by the paper’s editor Henri Rochefort after that.⁷⁹ In his article, the fiercely anti-clerical Rochefort claimed that the true author of the *atentado* had not been imprisoned and was not Spanish. He also emphasized that the focus of the repression in Spain was the non-religious, quipping that “it seems like we are returning to the days of Philip II,” and made the unsubstantiated but sensational claim that even children were being tortured. Given the paper’s support for “*Cuba libre*,” Rochefort also included Spanish atrocities in Cuba in his inquisitorial portrait.

As a result of the traction that the accounts of torture were gaining in France after Tarrida’s article and Rochefort’s editorial, and the high volume of leaked prison correspondence,⁸⁰ the Madrid republican daily *El País* gradually started to pay attention. Whereas in late October the paper simply parroted the official rendition of the case and casually referred to the “87 anarchist defendants” on trial, on November 21, for the first

⁷⁸ *La Campaña de “El Progreso,”* 271-2. Published in *El País* on Nov. 29, 1896; *El Nuevo Régimen*, Nov. 28, 1896; *L’Intransigeant*, Nov. 27, 1896. The letter did not manage to circulate to the area of the prison where Joan Montseny, Anselmo Lorenzo and their cellmates were imprisoned.

⁷⁹ *L’Intransigeant*, Nov. 27-29, 1896.

⁸⁰ *El País* was receiving letters and documents “daily” and *El Nuevo Régimen* also reported a high volume of letters. See *El País*, Nov. 30, 1896; *El Nuevo Régimen*, Nov. 28, 1896.

time, they acknowledged that “we are told from Barcelona that...the police are committing real abuses, imprisoning peaceful citizens that have never been, nor are, nor will be anarchists.”⁸¹ By the end of the month, the paper’s sympathies had dramatically shifted to the side of the prisoners. It published the collectively written Montjuich letter, printed a summary of Rochefort’s article, and started a column called “For the Love of Justice” which pointed out that,

While public opinion was concerned with the wars in Cuba and the Philippines, little to no attention was given to the grave events that were developing in the interior... [but this is] very important, not only in terms of the honor and good name of Spain, [but also] the dignity and prestige of justice and the interests of humanity, which have a tight relationship with the so-called case of the anarchists.⁸²

The case of the “87 anarchist defendants” had quickly become “the so-called case of the anarchists”; a domestic scandal whose explosion onto the international scene threatened the international stature of the country and its people. After all, according to *El País* Tarrida’s article contained “very grave accusations that, if true, would put Spain well below the most savage African nations.”⁸³ They would make Spain “more savage than Morocco and Turkey, and the Spanish people, if they consent to this great shame, are irresistibly lost for civilization.”⁸⁴

Following Portas’ successful acquisition of confessions in August and his appointment to the head of the new section of the judicial police in mid October,⁸⁵ state authorities in Barcelona and Madrid seem to have been feeling confident about their response to the Cambios Nuevos *atentado*. However, as their ship sprung more and more

⁸¹ *El País*, Nov. 21, 1896.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1896.

⁸³ *El País*, Dec. 2, 1896.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 14, 1896. The calculus of the exact location of Spain based on such an embarrassment shifted. In a later article, *El País* wrote that the accusations “put us not at the level of Turkey, but rather with the Moors of the Riff.” *El País*, Dec. 17, 1896.

⁸⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 372.

leaks to the press moving into November and December,⁸⁶ their confidence started to waver right as the military trial of the supposed authors and accomplices of the bombing began. Over the previous months, the governor of Montjuich had guards tear through the cells to confiscate any paper or ink they could find. The most recent search was motivated by the attention the affair was receiving in the Spanish press. “Even in the prison cells there are echoes of their protests!” Joan Montseny remembered the governor shouting. Unbeknownst to the governor, however, the paper and ink was actually being provided by some of the sympathetic guards, so by the evening the prisoners were restocked and writing.⁸⁷

Just as the first articles in support of the Montjuich prisoners were published in Paris, so too was the first public protest on their behalf held at the *Maison du Peuple* on December 12, 1896. In several key aspects this protest meeting organized by the Franco-Spanish Revolutionary Committee was indicative of the composition, tone and strategy of the emerging international movement.⁸⁸ With over 500 people in the audience, the protest featured speakers from across the left including anarchists like Charles Malato and Tortelier, who finished his speech with “Down with authority! Long live liberty!” to socialists like the Parisian deputy Marcel Sembat and the veteran of the Paris Commune Paule Mink. Charles Malato also read statement of solidarity from Louise Michel and Henri Rochefort.⁸⁹ Despite the fact that deputies of the Third Republic shared the stage

⁸⁶ The reports of torture and abuse were printed in *Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento* and *La Unión Republicana* in December. See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 459.

⁸⁷ Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 1, 128 and 135.

⁸⁸ Little is known about the composition and activities of this group. It seems to have been a label for a loose grouping of activists rather than a serious organizational home.

⁸⁹ *L'Intransigeant*, Dec 13 and 14, 1896; Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d'Espagne*, 166-172. Leading up to the meeting, large red posters were plastered around Paris saying “At the end of the 19th century one can see in a European country, in Spain, a government that is crazy with clerical reaction, determined to reestablish...this medieval monstrosity that is called *Inquisition*.” *El País*, Dec. 17, 1896.

with anarchists, there was a strong emphasis on unity in the name of ‘humanity.’ Malato argued that those in attendance were addressing a “question of humanity” and that although they may disagree about the shape of the future society, such atrocities aroused the contempt of anyone with a conscience and a heart.⁹⁰ Vaillant of the Franco-Spanish Revolutionary Committee argued that such international unity was “an obligation of revolutionary solidarity and humanity.”⁹¹ When the Parisian deputy Ernest Roche spoke, he described the Spanish victims as “the republicans,” downplaying the role of revolutionary politics. In speaking about the need to unite this protest with outcries against Spanish abuses in Cuba, Roche proclaimed that “Paris is the head and the heart of the civilized universe; there isn’t a human suffering or a social iniquity that does not have an immediate repercussion in its admirable brain.”⁹² Roche’s comments point to the crucial role of nationalism in fueling not only the Spanish fear of being perceived as sub-European, but also the French interest in highlighting the abuses of others to reaffirm their righteousness. Although the anarchists and some of the socialists rejected this brand of social justice nationalism, they must have felt like they had little choice but to work with it to reach broader public opinion.

The Spanish government was far from oblivious to the rising tide of international public opinion. The day after the Paris protest meeting, Captain General Despujol wrote a telegram to the Minister of War about the need to work with the Spanish embassy in Paris to combat the “truly grotesque views falsely attributed to the prosecutor of the anarchist

⁹⁰ *L’Intransigeant*, Dec 14, 1896.

⁹¹ Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 168.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 170-1.

trial by French periodicals.”⁹³ Despujol then articulated the increasing fear that this case could spiral out of control:

What is to be done before radical France if every Spanish republican of every shade transcribes the atrocities of the Montjuich prisoners daily, copying them without doubt from anarchist pamphlets published after earlier analogous cases...? What is to be done if some monarchist papers and even eminent conservative figures, without having examined the case, admit a priori that abuses and legal errors are possible and even probable and work in favor of one of the accused?⁹⁴

Just as Spanish authorities were starting to feel confident about the outcomes of their offensive against anarchists, republicans, and dissidents, they suddenly found themselves on the defensive in the realm of international public opinion where castle dungeons, torture and firing squads were of no use. As opposed to the Russian government, which had been honing its media and surveillance skills abroad to counteract press attacks on its brutality and repression since the early 1880s, the Spanish government was caught flat-footed by the start of the campaign. *La Época* shed some light on this dynamic when it pointed out that to a significant number of “public men,” public opinion was nothing more than “a myth, a voice without substance.”⁹⁵

The vast intelligence network Tsardom had extended across the continent over the previous decade demonstrates just how unprepared Spanish officials were for the challenge they were about to face. The Russian government took intensive, pre-emptive, and successful steps to counteract the perception that the Russian government was ‘barbaric.’ The Russian Foreign Agentura (*Zagranichnaia agentura*) was founded in 1883, not long after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, to warn the government of terrorist plots that were being planned from abroad and monitor dissident

⁹³ AIHCM, sección 2a, división 4a, legajo 157.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *La Época*, June 25, 1899.

émigrés in an uncooperative European political climate. It manipulated the international press by hiring foreign journalists to write favorable articles in European periodicals, harassing émigré writers to the point where many stopped writing or shifted to writing favorable articles, and planting articles portraying Russia as the last bulwark against Jewish world dominance.⁹⁶

The Agentura went so far as to fabricate plots to demonstrate the imminence of the threat they were combating and therefore the legitimacy of their repressive tactics. At times this was done to gain more support and funding from the Russian government, and at times it was designed to gain the favor of foreign governments. The most notable example was a plan created by P. I. Rachkovskii, the head of the Foreign Agentura, in 1890 to assassinate Alexander III. Rachkovskii sent one of his most experienced agents, Abram Landezen, to recruit Russian dissidents to join him in a plot to kill the Tsar. With funds from the Agentura that Landezen claimed to have received from his uncle, he built a bomb factory in the woods outside of Paris. Once the plans of the conspirators had advanced, the French Minister of the Interior was informed of the plot by the Russian ambassador and the Prefect of Police arrested nine would-be assassins. Landezen escaped. The ‘discovery’ of this plot caused French public opinion to be far more sympathetic to Russia, and it caused Monsieur Loze, the Prefect of Paris, to contact Rachkovskii about conducting joint action to keep émigrés under surveillance.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Lev Tikhomirov, one of the most famous émigré propagandists, had his press smashed by Agentura agents on several occasions after France refused to extradite him. The Agentura pressured his landlord into having him evicted, threatened doctors who would treat his children, and funded articles in the press that attacked his reputation. Eventually Tikhomirov arranged a deal with the Agentura that ended in his support for Tsardom. See Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police Abroad*, 134; Barry Hollingsworth, “The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom: English Liberals and Russian Socialists, 1890-1917,” *Oxford Slavonic Papers* (1970), 52.

⁹⁷ Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police Abroad*, 136-8. Landezen was the code name of Abraham Hekel’man who later served as the director of the Foreign Agentura under the name A. M. Harting. In 1908

Unlike the Russian press, the Spanish government at first underestimated the impact of the repression on international public opinion, and was slow to respond. Moreover, its security focus had been strictly national. Over the previous years, Spanish authorities had attempted to deport as many ‘troublemakers’ as possible without much concern for what they did once they were across the border. In contrast, the Russian government hounded its opponents across the continent. The almost frantic concern that Spanish authorities manifested about the potential impact of a widely tarnished international reputation in the midst of a desperate colonial war demonstrates how the Montjuich campaigners had accurately calibrated their message of “humanity” to pinpoint festering imperial anxieties. Perhaps the most tangible outcome of this international pressure emerged with the reduction of the sentences meted out to the Montjuich prisoners by the military court.

“Agitation All Over The World”: The Trial and the International Expansion of the Montjuich Campaign

From a media standpoint, it might have been prudent for military authorities in Catalonia to have delayed the Council of War’s trial against the alleged authors and accomplices of the Cambios Nuevos *atentado* until the outrage subsided. Sympathetic papers had been abuzz with the revelations of torture in late November and early December, and the trial provided a new outlet for the campaign to continue. If the trial had been put off a few months, the press might have run out of new material to sustain

his role in the bomb plot of 1890 under the name of Landezen was revealed to the French press and Harting was forced to resign as the head of the Agentura. See Zuckerman, *The Tsarist Secret Police Abroad*, 166.

the momentum. But traditional army officers were not about to let the words of a few Parisian socialists or Madrid republicans influence their agenda.

The trial lasted from December 11-15, 1896. Despite the petitions of several newspapers and some of the defendants, journalists were prohibited.⁹⁸ However, in the context of the campaign, this prohibition, along with the fact that the defendants often could not call their own witnesses, select their own lawyers or represent themselves, contributed greatly to the story despite the lack of specific details on the proceedings. The most prominent defendant in the press was certainly the young republican lawyer Pere Coromines. Although articles on the trial also mentioned supposed details on the main suspects, journalists were especially captivated by the travails of Coromines whose education, social prestige, and supposedly moderate republicanism seemed to exemplify the injustice of the ‘clerical’ reaction to sympathizers or demonstrate the insidious threat posed by ‘theorists of anarchy’ to opponents.⁹⁹ Beyond the intrigue he generated, Coromines’ status helped generate some influential allies. Miguel de Unamuno and Joaquín Costa, prominent writers soon to be known as members of the “Generation of ’98,” organized a campaign for his release, as did former Prime Ministers of the First Republic, Francesc Pi i Margall and Nicolás Salmerón, and future liberal Prime Minister José Canalejas.¹⁰⁰ A number of professionals served as character witnesses at the trial, portraying Coromines as a centrist focused on sociological research rather than on revolutionary politics.¹⁰¹ They included several doctors and a lawyer named Salvador

⁹⁸ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 405. Even if the authorities had considered allowing the public to attend, there were so many defendants that there was no space. *El País*, Dec. 12, 1896.

⁹⁹ Sympathetic portrayals included: *l’Intransigeant*, Dec. 13, 1896;

¹⁰⁰ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 404.

¹⁰¹ Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 139.

Dalí whose future son would take up painting.¹⁰² Dalí and fellow lawyer Amadeu Hurtado also advised Coromines' mandated military lawyer from the outside.¹⁰³ Initially there were 28 death sentences and 59 life sentences handed out, but a few days later the Council of War reduced it to eight death sentences and more lenient prison terms.¹⁰⁴ The London anarchist paper *Freedom* claimed this reduction in executions as a victory, writing that it was "the result of a three month's agitation all over the world."¹⁰⁵

Despite the lack of press coverage on the courtroom torture allegations and the reduction of the sentences, the momentum against the 'revival of the Inquisition' was only getting started. The day after the announcement of the sentence, Madrid socialists held the first protest meeting on Spanish soil calling upon "all those who have not had their sentiment of humanity completely crushed."¹⁰⁶ The secretary of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) emphasized that this issue "wasn't about the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but rather to find out the accuracy of the allegations of torture in the French press...so that foreign newspapers can't say, as they have been saying, that Spain continues to be the country of Torquemada."¹⁰⁷ Even socialists were concerned about Spain's national reputation. They were also just as interested as everyone else in using the scandal to score political points as was evident when PSOE founder Pablo Iglesias argued that the protest showed that their party was "the greatest

¹⁰² Ibid., 139-40.

¹⁰³ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 403.

¹⁰⁴ Regarding the prison terms, *La Dinastía* reported that four prisoners got 20 years, 14 got a little over 19 years, 13 got a little over 9 years, 35 got a little over 8 years, and 12 were absolved. *La Dinastía*, Jan. 3, 1897. Coromines got a sentence of eight years. See Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 408; Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita y revolución social*, 142-3.

¹⁰⁵ *Freedom*, April 1897.

¹⁰⁶ *El Socialista*, Dec. 25, 1896.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

lover of justice and Humanity” which they proved by defending “those who politically had been their greatest enemies.”¹⁰⁸

Yet the Madrid protest was still an anomaly at this point since the campaign was spreading fastest in France and Belgium where the echoes of the increasingly belligerent American press campaign against Spanish abuses in Cuba were emerging. The American press considered Captain General Arsenio Martínez Campos’ response to the 1895 Cuban uprising to be humane and measured, but the Crown was increasingly displeased with his inability to crush the rebellion. Martínez Campos merely organized a police response to the insurgency by guarding plantations and other strategic points from the insurgents, so he was unprepared for the rebel invasion of the more affluent western half of the island from the more impoverished, rebellious, and Afro-Cuban east. Perhaps his main failure, however, was his inability to cut the rebels off from their bases of support and corner them into sustained traditional warfare where the Spanish forces could overwhelm the Cuban Liberation Army with its numbers. Martínez Campos started to realize that more aggressive and invasive measures were necessary writing to Prime Minister Cánovas del Castillo that

We could reconcentrate the families of the countryside in the towns, but much force would be needed to compel them, since already there are very few in the interior who want to be [Spanish] volunteers...the misery and hunger would be terrible: I would then have to give them rations, which reached 40,000 a day in the last war. It would isolate the country from the towns...Perhaps we will come to this, but only in a last resort, and I think I lack the qualities to carry through such a policy.¹⁰⁹

Martínez Campos was starting to conclude that victory may require unleashing unspeakable cruelties upon the civilian population but was unsure if he could carry them out.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 91-2.

The Spanish Crown, however, did not wait long before replacing him with the internationally notorious Captain General of Catalonia, Valeriano Weyler.¹¹⁰ As opposed to Martínez Campos's cautious, stationary plan, Weyler launched an aggressive military strategy by pursuing the Cuban Liberation Army and confining the civilian population to "reconcentration camps" (sometimes referred to as "concentration camps") to prevent them from aiding the rebellion.¹¹¹ With the civilian population relocated, the Spanish army systematically burned down the surrounding fields and houses to isolate potential insurgents from food and shelter.¹¹² Yet, as Martínez Campos had foreseen, the Spanish were ill-prepared to feed the approximately 400,000 reconcentrated people resulting in the death of about 155,000-170,000 Cubans from disease and starvation.¹¹³ Martínez Campos wrote to Cánovas that "as the representative of a civilized nation" he could not unleash cruelty upon the Cuban people if they had not been vicious to the Spanish army.¹¹⁴ Weyler had no qualms about the ethics of warfare, famously quipping that "one does not make war with bonbons."¹¹⁵

The American press attacked Spanish actions and increasingly alleged abuses against American citizens living in Cuba moving into the summer of 1896. The Spanish government simply responded to the American press campaign with censorship and the

¹¹⁰ Joseph E. Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press, 1895-1898* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 66-7 and 88. Upon his return to Spain, the disgraced Martínez Campos was the target of a number of angry demonstrations including a Madrid event of 20,000 organized by *El País*. Alejandro Lerroux led the demonstration from a carriage as the angry mob shouted for the death of the general. The *Guardia Civil* fired into the air causing the death of a fisherman. Authorities issued a warrant for Lerroux's arrest but accidentally detained his brother. Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del paralelo*, 136-7.

¹¹¹ John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 113-4.

¹¹² John Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" *OAH Magazine of History* 12, No. 3 (1998), 19.

¹¹³ Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 223. Ada Ferrer estimates that about half of the 400,000 died. Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 152.

¹¹⁴ Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 121.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

deportation of journalists.¹¹⁶ As would become evident with its response to the Montjuich campaign, the Spanish government did not fully understand the ramifications of international public opinion and the corresponding need for a proactive response to antagonistic press campaigns. Since journalists were prohibited from embedding themselves with the Spanish army, they followed the Cuban rebels who spoon-fed the American media their finely crafted accounts of Spanish ‘barbarism.’¹¹⁷

The American press campaign, fed by the bitter rivalry between Pulitzer’s *World* and Hearst’s *Journal*, reached new levels of intensity in the winter of 1896-1897 at the same time that the Montjuich atrocities were receiving their first major international recognition with protests in Paris, Amiens, Lyon, Marseille, Chalon-sur-Saône, Dijon, Reims, and Brussels.¹¹⁸ Building on the momentum of the meetings in support of the Cuban insurrection that had been organized across France months earlier,¹¹⁹ this new wave of protest combined popular outrage against Spain’s colonial and domestic atrocities. For example, the four protest meetings held in Paris in late December and early January all attacked the Spanish government on both fronts. The December 28 protest organized by the “Scientific International” in the overflowing *salle Pétrelle* featured a member of the French Committee of *Cuba Libre*, as well as anarchists Sébastien Faure,

¹¹⁶ Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis*, 153-4 and 194-5.

¹¹⁷ Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 219.

¹¹⁸ Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis*, 220-2; Elizabeth Lowry, “The Flower of Cuba: Rhetoric, Representation and Circulation at the Outbreak of the Spanish-American War,” *Rhetoric Review* 32, No. 2 (2013), 174-190. Parisian protests occurred on Dec. 27 and 28, 1896 and Jan. 5 and 11, 1897, and anarchists organized a protest in Amiens on Jan. 9, 1897. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Dec. 26-Jan.1, 1896-1897 and Jan. 16-22, 1897. Lyon socialists organized a protest of more than 2,000 on Dec. 26, 1897. *L’Intransigeant*, Dec. 30, 1896. There also seems to have been a Lyon event in mid December. *L’Intransigeant*, Dec. 14, 1896. The Marseille protest was on Jan. 10, 1897 and the Chalon-sur-Saône protest was Jan. 9, 1897. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Jan. 9-15, 1897. The Dijon protest held on Jan. 14, 1897. Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 179. The Reims protest was on Jan. 16, 1897. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Jan. 16-22, 1897. The Brussels protest was on Dec. 22, 1896. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Dec. 19-25, 1896.

¹¹⁹ Pro-Cuban event held in Marseille on Oct. 14, 1896. *Le Figaro*, Oct. 16, 1896; *L’Intransigeant*, Oct. 16, 1896. Pro-Cuban event in Toulouse on Nov. 2, 1896. *El País*, Nov. 3, 1896.

who spoke on the centrality of Jesuitism in the Spanish reaction, and Charles Malato, who lauded the interracial nature of the Cuban Liberation Army and argued that Spanish actions in Cuba “trampled all of their rights,” in addition to the socialist deputy Marcel Sembat.¹²⁰ The meeting’s announcement emphasized the urgency of a non-sectarian approach in the face of such atrocities: “on this terrain, the differences of school disappear; sincere revolutionary socialists and anarchists should find themselves in accord to protest against the crimes of the Spanish government.”¹²¹

Just as the critics of the monarchy were connecting Cuba and the Philippines with Montjuich, so too were its defenders. Since the start of the most recent Cuban conflict in 1895, the Spanish press had made a conscious effort to taint the insurrection by calling the Cuban rebels “anarchist dynamiters.”¹²² In part this stemmed from the Cuban use of dynamite to destroy railroads, telegraphs, and other infrastructure in their guerrilla struggle, and the collaboration of anarchists and Cuban nationalists in the failed assassination attempt on Captain General Weyler in April 1896.¹²³ Nevertheless, the primary motive was to conflate the dark skin of the predominantly Afro-Cuban Cuban Liberation Army with the ‘dark’ deeds of anarchism. This was evident in *La Época*’s description of a January 1897 Parisian protest meeting against Spanish atrocities as an “anarcho-filibuster demonstration.”¹²⁴ This protest meeting at Tivoli-Waux-Hall organized by the anarchist *Le Libertaire* attracted 2-3,000 people to hear the usual lineup of speakers, such as Faure and Malato, who compared Montjuich to the Haymarket

¹²⁰ The event also featured Cipriani, Achille Steens, Ernest Roche, Vaillant, Fabérot, Tortelier, Louis Dubreuilh, Albert Goullé, Prost, Girault, and Buteaud. There was also a Paris protest the day before organized by the *Libertaires du XIV^e*. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Dec. 26, 1896-Jan. 1, 1897; *L’Intransigeant*, Dec. 31, 1896; Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 177.

¹²¹ *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Dec. 26, 1896-Jan. 1, 1897; *L’Intransigeant*, Dec. 26, 1896.

¹²² Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 92.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 173-4.

¹²⁴ *La Época*, Jan. 6, 1897.

martyrs ten years earlier.¹²⁵ But this time approximately 200 rowdy protesters shouting “Down with the executioners!” “*Vive la Révolution!*” and “Death to Cánovas!” marched to the Spanish embassy. When they arrived they shouted “*Vive Cuba libre!*” and “*Vive Maceo!*” (honoring the recently deceased Afro-Cuban general) before the police charged, injuring some with their sabers and arresting others.¹²⁶ The conservative Spanish press was eager to emphasize that the embassy protest was given scant attention in France and condemned by ‘respectable’ papers since Spain was “a nation...that is the admiration of the world.”¹²⁷ Over the course of the next week, Parisian anarchists organized smaller neighborhood events against “Inquisitorial Spain,”¹²⁸ and *Cuba Libre* solidarity groups were increasingly incorporating peninsular oppression into their protests.¹²⁹

Meanwhile, the Dutch anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis organized a protest in conjunction with the *Sozialistenboond* in front of the Spanish embassy in The Hague.¹³⁰ Similar protest meetings were also organized in Switzerland and Norway and a New York City group called “*Jovenes Anarquistas*” (Anarchist Youth) published a

¹²⁵ *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Jan. 16-22, 1897; *L’Intransigeant*, Jan. 7, 1897.

¹²⁶ *L’Intransigeant*, Jan. 7, 1897; Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 172-6; *Freemans Journal*, Jan. 5, 1897; *The Standard*, Jan. 6, 1897; Avilés, *Francisco Ferrer y Guardia*, 77; APP, Ba, 138. *La Época* claimed that only 40 men marched to the embassy. *La Época*, Jan. 6, 1897. *El País* attributed the rowdiness of this group to its sympathy for the Cuban “filibusters.” After the protest, two cops were stationed outside of the embassy to prevent another incident and, according to *El País*, the government decided to expel eight Spanish and Italian “anarchists” considered to have been contributing to public disorder. *El País*, Jan. 8, 1897. By January 13, sixteen Spanish “anarchists” had been arrested in Paris in response to the embassy protest. *El País*, Jan. 13, 1897. Charles Malato (Cosmo) indignantly referred to the arrest of “Spanish republicans,” rather than anarchists, in *L’Intransigeant* likely reflecting his desire to gain republican sympathy for the cause. *L’Intransigeant*, Jan. 8, 1897. The Prefect of Police demanded that all foreign anarchists be expelled from France. *Daily News*, Jan. 6, 1897.

¹²⁷ *La Dinastía*, Jan. 7, 1897; *La Época*, Jan. 6, 1897.

¹²⁸ Meetings were held in Montmartre, Villette, Belleville, and Grenelle on January 9, 11 and 12, 1897. *El País*, Jan. 8, 1897.

¹²⁹ An example would be a Parisian protest meeting held on Jan. 14 organized by “young defenders of Cuba Libre” about the Cuban situation and the “Inquisition in Spain.” *L’Intransigeant*, Jan. 15, 1897. Another held at the salldu Centenaire in late January included torture issues. *L’Intransigeant*, Jan. 24, 1897.

¹³⁰ *L’Intransigeant*, Jan. 20, 1897; Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 181-2.

pamphlet called “Savage Spain.”¹³¹ In the spring of 1897 Emma Goldman spearheaded a New York City group that organized a protest outside of the Spanish consulate with Spanish, Jewish, German, Italian and American speakers. Likewise in Philadelphia, Voltairine de Cleyre kicked off a Montjuich campaign by writing letters to Congress and helping publish a pamphlet called *The Modern Inquisition in Spain*.¹³²

The allegations of Spanish torture had aroused enough interest in Germany for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to send its own reporter to Barcelona to investigate. The German journalist spoke with lawyers, former prisoners, friends and relatives and even military officials who attested to the ghostly appearance of the main suspects at their trial. He concluded that “I am sorry to have to confess that I have acquired the strongest conviction that the published details of the Barcelona horrors are quite correctly reported—perhaps, even, they understate what has happened.”¹³³ Interest in the ‘revival of the Spanish inquisition’ had spread to Germany by the start of 1897 with reports in a number of newspapers including the anarchist *Der Sozialist* and German Socialist Party (SPD) organ *Vorwärts* in addition to “several capitalist papers.”¹³⁴ A key figure in the collective behind *Der Sozialist* was Gustav Landauer who penned the widely distributed pamphlet *Die Justizgreuel von Barcelona* (The Judicial Abomination in Barcelona).¹³⁵ In response to Bismarckian defenses of the legitimacy of torture for anarchists, the Viennese novelist Friedrich Spielhagen wrote an article entitled “Thou shalt not torture” that

¹³¹ *Freedom*, April, 1897.

¹³² Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 112-14.

¹³³ *Freedom*, March and April 1897. Other reports on the *Frankfurter Zeitung* article in *L’Intransigeant*, March 22, 1897

¹³⁴ *Freedom*, Feb. 1897. *Der Sozialist* also raised money for the families of the prisoners, which it sent to *Les Temps Nouveaux* so that it could be transmitted to Spain. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, May 1-7, 1897.

¹³⁵ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 464; Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, Ed. and trans. Gabriel Kuhn (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 22.

argued that this commandment was not included in the Ten Commandments because they were intended for rational human beings, not torturers.¹³⁶ A debate over the plight of two German prisoners who were swept up in the wave of repression in Barcelona developed in the Reichstag. Socialists such as August Bebel called on the government to protect its subjects while the Secretary of State disagreed, arguing that one of the prisoners had lost her citizenship since she had spent over ten years out of the country, and the other man had been arrested after every strike or explosion since he arrived in Barcelona in 1891, was a deserter and therefore not entitled to government support.¹³⁷

As the campaign gained international traction, former Montjuich prisoner Tarrida del Màrmol fled to Portsmouth, England “to thwart the infernal malice of the Spanish government which sought to implicate me in a ridiculous history of bombs, to obtain my extradition.”¹³⁸ From the safety of liberal England, he published another article in *La Revue Blanche* called “To the Inquisitors of Spain.” Apart from his attacks on the colonial and peninsular crimes of the monarchy, Tarrida aimed to persuade a moderate audience by presenting himself as neither unpatriotic nor radical. He clarified that “I do not intend to attack Spain, rather that which dishonors it.”¹³⁹ He continued to emphasize that although the Cuban rebel was attacked as a “filibuster,” the peninsular rebel as an “anarchist,” and the Filipino rebel as a “freemason,” “I am Cuban, but not a filibuster; an autonomist, but not an anarchist; a free-thinker, but not a freemason.”¹⁴⁰ When the Spanish press mentioned his role in the campaign, they called Tarrida a “Catalan

¹³⁶ *Freedom*, March 1897.

¹³⁷ *El País*, March 29, 1897; *Freedom*, April 1897.

¹³⁸ Tarrida del Màrmol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 33.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

anarchist,”¹⁴¹ a label that many readers would have considered doubly anti-Spanish, but he took great care to present himself to the world as a non-ideological defender of “human liberty and dignity.”¹⁴² Not long after, a collection of his writings was published in book form in Paris as *Les Inquisiteurs d’Espagne: Montjuich, Cuba, Philippines* with a preface by Charles Malato who wrote that “there has been reason to believe that a century after the French Revolution whose ideas spread across Europe, that torture was really something of the past or, at most, abandoned to the oriental despots...aren’t we in an epoch of scientific progress?”¹⁴³

After Tarrida arrived in England, the campaign followed him. On January 28, 1897 “a humanitarian protest against the new Inquisition” was held at the Club and Institute Union Hall in London that mirrored earlier French mobilizations in its wide range of speakers and universal outlook. The first orator was Joseph Perry, editor of *Freedom: A Journal of Anarchist Communism*, who argued, as paraphrased in *Freedom*, that such atrocities were

...done in the name of law and order—the order which ruled at Warsaw after the people had been massacred, the order in the name of which John Brown and the Chicago Anarchists, Vaillant and Pallas were killed—the peace which we see in Madagascar, in Rhodesia, in Ireland.¹⁴⁴

J.C. Kenworthy, a Tolstoyan pastor active with the Land Colonisation Society,¹⁴⁵ also compared the torture in Montjuich to the suffering of Irish prisoners before echoing Perry’s anarchist critique of the state: “This is done by persons who in ordinary life need not be monsters but who are under a fascination perpetrated for centuries, the superstition

¹⁴¹ *La Época*, Jan. 6, 1897. *La Dinastía* called him “un catalán indigno.” *La Dinastía*, Jan. 7, 1897.

¹⁴² Tarrida del Mármol, *Les inquisiteurs d’Espagne*, 165.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, viii-x.

¹⁴⁴ *Freedom*, Feb. 1897. This meeting was also covered in *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Deb. 13-19, 1897.

¹⁴⁵ Matthew Thomas, *Anarchist Ideas and Counter-Cultures in Britain, 1880-1914: Revolutions in Everyday Life* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 107.

of government by force.”¹⁴⁶ Other prominent anarchists spoke such as Louise Michel, Sam Mainwaring, and Peter Kropotkin who pointed out that the Spanish government had been torturing prisoners for years since the aftermath of the Gran Vía and Liceo bombings of 1893 and argued that “everywhere, where there is a prison there is torture.”¹⁴⁷ Anarchist unionist John Turner astutely “set forth how this system of government by torture overreaches itself; how by the very enormity of the atrocities sympathy is created everywhere...”¹⁴⁸ The explosive dynamic between excessive repression and international backlash was clearly taking shape.

Apart from the anarchists, Herbert Burrows of the Social Democratic Federation and former Russian populist leader N. Tchaikovsky spoke, and Joseph Perry read letters of support from the socialists Tom Mann, Robert Blatchford, and Rev. Steward Headlam, the artist and illustrator Walter Crane, Edward Carpenter, who called the torture a “violation at once of justice, good sense and humanity.” Humanitarian League founder and animal rights pioneer H. S. Salt argued that “if *Cruelty* is international, that is all the more reason why *Humanity* should be international also, and why a protest of this sort should be made as worldwide as possible.”¹⁴⁹ Reflecting the interest that the London paper *Freedom* had developed in Turkish oppression of Armenians,¹⁵⁰ Perry also read a

¹⁴⁶ *Freedom*, Feb. 1897.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ For example, in the December 1897 issue of *Freedom*, W. Tcherkesov (also known as Varlaam Cherkessov), a former Georgian aristocrat turned anarchist communist who co-founded *Le Révolté* with Kropotkin and Reclus in 1879, published an article called “Armenia and Europe.” Before Montjuich was really on the British radar, Cherkessov was referring to Turkish abuses as “horrors, which disgrace humanity.” He was distraught that “Europe has abandoned the traditions of humanitarianism and the fight for human rights, and has left to the rulers the fate of nations and the cause of freedom.” Strangely, however, he advocates for Western governments to intervene in Turkey (perhaps foreshadowing his endorsement of the Manifesto of the Sixteen in support of the Allied Powers in WWI) and juxtaposes their reluctance with what he considered to be the more just example of Western intervention to save the Armenians during the crusades. *Freedom*, Dec. 1896; Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 202 and 216; Bantman, *The*

letter of solidarity from Avetis Nazarbek, editor of the Armenian paper *Hentchak*. Shortly thereafter, this group of activists would consolidate into the Spanish Atrocities Committee.

The Montjuich campaign in general, and the Spanish Atrocities Committee in particular, represent an interesting attempt by revolutionary anarchists to tap into the apolitical framework of liberal, middle class advocacy in order to liberate their imprisoned comrades so that they could return to the ongoing struggle to dismantle capitalism and the state, the bedrock values of their new moderate allies. “Humanity” was the glue that held these disparate political elements together and toned down potential conflicts. Some historians have described this tradition of nineteenth-century foreign advocacy that the Montjuich campaign tapped into as “humanitarian” activism while others have called it “human rights” activism. Although I argue that the campaign consistently acted in the name of the natural, equal, universal rights of humanity, which I consider to be human rights, the strategic tradition the campaign adopted cannot so easily be subsumed within either label. Rather, as the next section elucidates, the distinct traditions of “humanitarian” and “human rights” activism that some historians have theorized tend to blend into each other in the nineteenth century. The numerous examples of international outrage during the period are better understood on a spectrum of foreign advocacy operating within a broader value system I refer to as the “ethics of modernity.”

The Precedents of the Montjuich Campaign: Foreign Advocacy Groups

French Anarchists in London, 15. *Freedom* also ran an article “Rebel, and Always Rebel” lauding the resistance in Crete against the “disgusting tyranny of the ‘unspeakable Turk.’” *Freedom*, Aug.-Sept. 1896.

This section examines a variety “foreign advocacy groups” that established the model of upper and middle class press activism that the Montjuich campaign adapted for a more popular audience. I use the term “foreign advocacy group” to emphasize that I am focusing on groups whose missions had an international focus and to avoid delving into the muddled, and at times misleading, distinction between “human rights” and “humanitarian” groups. While some of these groups, or at least some of their members, advocated natural, equal, universal rights, some of them did not. Nevertheless, apart from the specific content of their appeals, their tactics and strategies helped to extend the abolitionist template into the late nineteenth-century and they provided a mechanism for the anarchist supporters of the Spanish prisoners to attract liberal, middle class support under an apolitical banner.

This tradition that informed the strategic decisions of Western European anarchists took its first steps apart from abolitionism in response to the alleged crimes of the “sick man of Europe”: the Ottoman Empire. Ever since the Greek uprisings of the early 1820s that culminated in Greek independence in 1830, Europe had been flooded with tales of Turkish atrocities. In 1823 a London Greek Committee was formed to publicize Turkish abuses such as the infamous Scio massacre of 1822, while ignoring or downplaying Greek atrocities, and to pressure the British government to support Greek independence politically and militarily. A clear precedent for the foreign advocacy committees of the decades to come, the London Greek Committee included a number of MPs and famous intellectuals such as Lord Byron, Jeremy Bentham and David Ricardo. The British philhellenes of this era were mainly liberal evangelicals and Whigs who envisioned the Greek independence struggle as a clear conflict between the “first

enlightened nation,” as Jeremy Bentham phrased it, and Eastern “savagery.”¹⁵¹ Across the Channel, the Philanthropic Society in Favor of the Greeks (or Greek Committee for short) was founded in France in 1825. Formed out of the earlier Society of Christian Morality, the French Greek Committee organized elegant fundraising events to promote the Greek cause among elite society.¹⁵²

While Gary Bass argues that the philhellenes were “something like one of the first modern human rights groups,”¹⁵³ Davide Rodogno is “not entirely convinced that they can be considered humanitarians.”¹⁵⁴ Such distinctions are often blurry, but the philhellenes clearly only protested against the massacres because the victims were European Christians, not so much because they were human beings. Rev. Thomas S. Hughes, one of the more active British philhellenes, even argued for the “extermination” of the Turks because “there are some races whom it is a human duty to suppress.”¹⁵⁵ Scholars of humanitarianism allow for the role that racism played in narrowing the scope of those eligible for nineteenth century humanitarian consideration, such as the Eurocentric racism of Henry Dunant and the founders of the Red Cross,¹⁵⁶ but to include a group’s discourse within the realm of human rights a rhetorical consistent commitment to aiding people because of their shared humanity is essential. Nevertheless, the philhellenes played an important role in implementing the abolitionist playbook to defend foreign victims of atrocities outside of the sphere of enslavement.

¹⁵¹ Bass, *Freedom’s Battle*, 49-77.

¹⁵² Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 72-3.

¹⁵³ Bass, *Freedom’s Battle*, 49.

¹⁵⁴ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 72.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 75.

¹⁵⁶ Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 13.

British sympathy for the victims of the Ottoman Empire reemerged in response to the massacre of several Bulgarian villages that declared independence in 1876.

Immediately the press called upon the government to put an end to the violence out of “duty to an oppressed people and to humanity.” The campaign really took shape around the efforts of the prominent liberal politician and future Montjuich campaigner William Gladstone who had recently finished the first of what would be four terms as Prime Minister under Queen Victoria. Gladstone had a history of activism around foreign abuses dating back to his outrage against the repression of liberals in Naples and his protest against Britain’s brutal repression of a minor rebellion in Jamaica. In 1876 he assembled a broad pro-Bulgarian coalition, highlighted by the support of Charles Darwin, Florence Nightingale and even Queen Victoria herself, that generated hundreds of meetings, resolutions from town governments, and 455 petitions directed to the Foreign Office. Although elite liberals triggered the campaign, it was the local efforts of Nonconformist churches that gave the movement genuine popular support. Gladstone himself conducted a pro-Bulgarian speaking tour, which seems to have played a part in prompting him to pioneer mass electioneering in the election of 1879.¹⁵⁷ Ultimately the campaign fell short of its goal of military intervention, but it continued the lineage of foreign advocacy.

The tradition of European opposition to alleged Ottoman abuses continued into the 1890s with the formation of British and French groups in favor of Armenians and Cretans. Gladstone helped kick off a new campaign in response to a new series of massacres of Armenians in 1894 and 1895 that resulted in the arrival of British warships in Ottoman waters. Although the plight of the Armenians did not arouse as much public

¹⁵⁷ Bass, *Freedom’s Battle*, 256-84.

sympathy in the 1890s as the brutality unleashed against the Bulgarians had stimulated in the 1870s, it still managed to trigger a significant campaign in the name of the “rights of humanity” that united Anglican and Nonconformist congregations. It also produced a number of small advocacy groups such as the Anglo-Armenian Association, lead by several MPs, the British Armenia Committee, the Friends of Armenia, and the Scottish Armenian Association in addition to the older Eastern Question Association, which had been publicizing abuses against Armenians for decades. A notable campaign developed in France as well behind the *Comité Franco-Arménien* and the review *Pro Armenia*, which had editorial offices in London, Paris, and Rome. The editors of the paper argued that “we don’t speak in the name of a French political party, nor of an Armenian group...we intend, to the contrary, to make an act of union between all of the men of heart and good will.” Several of the most prominent French supporters of the Montjuich prisoners also participated in the campaign for “the Greeks of Asia,” as the Armenians were called, including Anatole France, Henri Rochefort, Francis de Pressensé, Georges Clemenceau, and Jean Jaurès.¹⁵⁸ By the end of the decade, the oppression of the Armenians had become so well known internationally that it was a popular standard for inhumanity. This was evident in American newspaper coverage of Weyler’s abuses in Cuba with the *San Francisco Examiner* arguing that “Cuba is our Armenia,” and the *New York Journal* cautioning that “The American people will not tolerate in the Western Hemisphere the methods of the Turkish savages in Armenia...”¹⁵⁹

Meanwhile, in 1897 Greek nationalists fomented revolt among the Greek population of the Ottoman island of Crete, which culminated in a war that Greece lost to

¹⁵⁸ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 188-209.

¹⁵⁹ Bass, *Freedom’s Battle*, 317.

its former imperial rulers. European opinion was enraptured with this ‘east versus west’ conflict and took every opportunity to portray the Turks as brutal oppressors especially in the context of the massacres of Armenians. The Eastern Question Association and a newly formed Cretan Relief Committee supported the Greek rebels. In contrast, the Ottoman leadership justified their military actions in Crete based on the importance of protecting the Muslim Cretans “in the name of humanity.”¹⁶⁰ For several months in 1897, *L’Intransigeant* put the Montjuich campaign on the backburner to attack Turkish ‘barbarity’ against Greeks in Crete with a significant though lesser focus on Turkish massacres of Armenians. Daily front-page articles on the developing Greco-Turkish war overshadowed Charles Malato’s occasional updates on the plight of the Barcelona prisoners.¹⁶¹ By the 1890s a thirst for new tales of exotic atrocities had developed amongst the Western European public but campaigners had to struggle to get their cause into the headlines.

The campaign against Turkish atrocities in Crete spread around the world, with protests organized by Greek émigrés in Milan, Chicago, Cairo, London, Manchester, Vienna, and Brussels,¹⁶² and it was especially strident in France where it took on an anti-Semitic tone that contrasted sharply with the Montjuich campaign’s focus on aggrieved humanity. For example, a Parisian event was organized in February by “students of the anti-Semitic circle of boulevard Saint-Michel” which culminated in a crowd of 300 demonstrators cheering Henri Rochefort outside of *L’Intransigeant*’s editorial office.¹⁶³ A few days later demonstrators at another anti-Turkish assembly in France chanted “Long

¹⁶⁰ Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 212-226.

¹⁶¹ Malato wrote articles on Barcelona in *L’Intransigeant* with the pen name ‘Cosmo.’ He also wrote a bit on Crete. See *L’Intransigeant*, Feb. 27, 1897 and April 23, 1897.

¹⁶² *L’Intransigeant*, Feb. 18, 26, 27, and March 8, 1897.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 19, 1897.

live Greece! Down with the Jews!”¹⁶⁴ This was the same month that the royalist Jules Guérin re-established the *Ligue nationale antisémitique*.¹⁶⁵ Campaigns against foreign affronts to “humanity” had the power to unite heterogeneous factions across the political spectrum, but this unity ran the risk of ignoring the emergence of other oppressive tendencies in the process. As the next chapter will explore, this paradox surged to the fore when pro-Montjuich campaigner Henri Rochefort continued to lead the anti-Semitic charge during the Dreyfus Affair.

Like the Ottoman Empire, Russia provided a fertile opportunity for British liberals to simultaneously vent their anger at foreign cruelty and tacitly celebrate their perceived ethical superiority. The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom (SFRF) was founded in 1890 by Russian émigrés and sympathetic British progressives to “to aid, to the extent of its powers, the Russian patriots who are trying to obtain for their country that Political Freedom and Self-government which Western nations have enjoyed for generations.”¹⁶⁶ Although the Society’s founders included Kropotkin and Sergei Kravchinskii (known as Stepniak, a former assassin, anarchist collaborator, and author of *Underground Russia*), the Society’s organ *Free Russia*, which Stepniak edited for a while, distanced itself as much as possible from anything that smacked of terrorism, anarchism, or socialist revolution.¹⁶⁷ The paper limited itself to highlighting abuses and

¹⁶⁴ *L’Intransigeant*, Feb. 24, 1897.

¹⁶⁵ Whyte, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 91.

¹⁶⁶ *Free Russia*, Nov. 1, 1892. *Free Russia* was somewhat similar to the short-lived *Darkest Russia*, organ of the Russo-Jewish Committee, which existed from 1891-92 before returning from 1912-14. Sam Johnson, “Confronting the East: *Darkest Russia*, British Opinion and Tsarism’s ‘Jewish Question,’ 1890-1914,” *East European Jewish Affairs* Vol. 36, No. 2, December 2006. The Russian Foreign Agentura monitored the SFRF.

¹⁶⁷ For example see: “Russian Revolutionists and West European Anarchists,” *Free Russia*, Feb. 1, 1894; “Belligerent Impotence,” *Free Russia*, March 1, 1894. Stepniak had also been part of an earlier initiative to form a Society of Friends of Russia in 1885 with Kropotkin, George Bernard Shaw and others but nothing came of it. Hollingsworth, “The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom,” 49-50.

presenting a sympathetic portrayal of essentially liberal Russian democrats yearning for their political freedoms. When William Morris proposed that the establishment of socialism in Britain was an important prerequisite for Russian liberation at a Society meeting in 1891, SFRF members criticized him for bringing British politics into the conversation.¹⁶⁸ For many progressive campaigners, domestic neutrality was important to unite public opinion against foreign ‘savagery.’ Stepniak understood this dynamic perfectly, and so clarified in his writings in the British press that there was no need to alter the political system of the United Kingdom.¹⁶⁹ The Society expanded to have chapters in six British cities, *Free Russia* was distributed across Western and Central Europe and translated into Russian for clandestine delivery to St. Petersburg, a German edition of *Free Russia* was founded in Switzerland,¹⁷⁰ and Stepniak even founded an American Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom in Boston in 1891 with Mark Twain, William Lloyd Garrison, and explorer George Kennan. Despite an up and down existence and a small membership of predominantly affluent liberals, groups were established in several major cities including a New York Branch co-founded by Emma Goldman and Unitarian minister Rev. Minot Savage which sometimes met in Goldman’s apartment.¹⁷¹

The influence of the SFRF on the direction of the Montjuich campaign in Britain was evident in the participation of SFRF members in the formation of the Spanish Atrocities Committee (SAC). Although the first officially constituted British group in this

¹⁶⁸ Anat Vernitski, “Russian Revolutionaries and English Sympathizers in 1890s London: The Case of Olive Garnett and Sergei Stepniak,” *Journal of European Studies* 35 (3): 303.

¹⁶⁹ Vernitski, “Russian Revolutionaries and English Sympathizers,” 307.

¹⁷⁰ Hollingsworth, “The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom,” 51-54.

¹⁷¹ The American Society was largely dormant from 1894 until 1904 when it was revived by Goldman and others. Candace Falk, Barry Pateman, Jessica Moran eds., *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years, Volume 2: Making Speech Free, 1902-1909* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 555-6.

campaign was the Anglo-Spanish Anti-Inquisitorial Club, which included Herbert Spencer, William Gladstone, and as Joseph Perry,¹⁷² it was really the SAC that spearheaded the campaign in the UK. The SAC included a range of leftist figures including Edward Carpenter, SFRF collaborator Walter Crane, Gertrude L. Mallet of the SFRF, J. Frederick Green of the SFRF and the Fabian Society, Henry S. Salt of the Humanitarian League, Paul Campbell of the Independent Labour Party, Cunninghame Graham of the Scottish Labour Party, James McDonald from the London Trades Council, W. G. Barwick of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), Herbert Burrows of the SFRF and the SDF (who acted as treasurer), and Joseph Perry and Nannie Florence Dryhurst of the Freedom Anarchist-Communist Group. Throughout 1897 the SAC championed the cause of the Montjuich prisoners in the tradition of the foreign advocacy groups that came before them: by publishing pamphlets such as *Revival of the Inquisition: Details of the Tortures Inflicted on Spanish Political Prisoners*, pressuring the media,¹⁷³ organizing demonstrations, and sending protest letters to the Spanish embassy, the Foreign Office and the Royal Courts of Justice. In response, on February 22, 1897 Patrick O'Brien raised the accusations of torture in the House of Commons where it was agreed to make an inquiry of the Spanish government on the matter.¹⁷⁴ On May 30, 1897, the SAC organized a rally of about 2,500 people in Trafalgar Square against the Spanish "outrages on humanity and civilisation." Charles Malato, speaking on behalf of *L'Intransigeant*, included Turkish massacres of Armenians with his diatribe against Spanish crimes. Tarrida del Mrmol also spoke on behalf of *La Revue Blanche* along with Joseph Perry,

¹⁷² Dalmau, *El Procs de Montjuc*, 481.

¹⁷³ *The Times*, Aug. 3, 1897; AGA, Asuntos exteriores, Embajada en Londres, 7016.

¹⁷⁴ *Freedom*, April, 1897; *The Morning Post*, Feb. 23, 1897. A few days later the British Consul in Barcelona officially inquired as to whether any British subjects were imprisoned. He was told that none were. *Edinburgh Evening News*, Feb. 25, 1897.

Keir Hardie of the Independent Labor Party, J. F. Green of the SFRF and others.¹⁷⁵ In addition to highlighting Spanish abuses, the speakers also lambasted prison conditions in England and Ireland and referenced Oscar Wilde's letter on Reading Prison.¹⁷⁶ The Spanish Atrocities Committee readily adopted the established nineteenth century tradition of foreign advocacy established by earlier groups such as the London Greek Committee or the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom to unite a wide variety of disparate political factions under the apolitical banner of "humanity." Eventually the cumulative moral power of the international campaign was too much for the Spanish monarchy to ignore.

Conclusion

By the spring of 1897 domestic and international pressure succeeded in convincing Spanish officials to reduce the number of death sentences from eight to five and acquit 62 of the alleged accomplices in the Barcelona bombing. After the execution of the supposed bombers, those who had been acquitted were deported to France and England in an effort by the authorities to rid themselves of the Montjuich agitation. Despite their best efforts, however, a new *atentado* would dramatically restore the Montjuich campaign to the international fore. On the morning of August 8, 1897 Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas del Castillo was assassinated by the Italian anarchist Michele Angiolillo as he vacationed at a spa in northern Spain. Angiolillo had travelled from England through France into Spain to avenge the Montjuich prisoners by striking down

¹⁷⁵ *Freedom* put the turnout at 2,500 while *L'Intransigeant* said it was 10,000. *Freedom*, July 1897; *L'Intransigeant*, June 1, 1897. Other speakers included: Herbert Burrows who presided, Lothrop Withington, John Turner, F. Macpherson, James McDonald, and Mestre Amabile (Cuban former officer in the Spanish Navy. Frank Lockwood, Tom Mann, R. Spence Watson, G. Russell. H. M. Hynden, and Ramón Emeterio Betances sent their regrets and being unable to attend while 5 MPs who were invited, including P. O'Brien who had raised the issue in parliament, did not reply.

¹⁷⁶ *Freedom*, July 1897.

the leader who had come to represent both domestic and foreign Spanish brutality. A mere twelve days after he pulled the trigger, Angiolillo was subjected to the most loathsome form of execution reserved for the worst criminals: *garrote vil*.

Yet, although this *atentado* was far more threatening to the monarchy than the bombing of *Cambios Nuevos*, which elicited an extreme response, there was no mass roundup of anarchists and other radicals following the assassination of Prime Minister Cánovas. In part this was because most of those who would have been arrested were already in jail or abroad, but it also stemmed from a reluctance on the part of state authorities to stir up more international protest (which always had the potential of spawning more propaganda by the deed). While there were scattered arrests of ‘suspicious’ foreigners across the country, such as a German on his way to Bilbao who spoke Italian a little ‘too well,’¹⁷⁷ the mass roundup that undoubtedly would have occurred should Cánovas have been assassinated before *el proceso de Montjuich* did not materialize. The political landscape of repression had drastically shifted in less than a year.

A far more significant ramification of the campaign unfolded when the conservative Cánovas was replaced in office by the Liberal Party leader Sagasta. As the next chapter will demonstrate, unlike his obstinate predecessor Sagasta decided that the best way to respond to the mounting international campaign against the actions of the Spanish crown was not to remain intractable, but rather to seek compromise and reconciliation in Cuba and to end the suspension of constitutional guarantees and release almost all of the those imprisoned after the bombing of *Cambios Nuevos* at home. The

¹⁷⁷ *El País*, Aug. 15, 1897; *La Época*, Aug. 14, 1897. Some houses were searched and arrests made in Barcelona. *El País*, Aug. 10, 1897. Arrests were made in Cádiz. *El Imparcial*, Aug. 11, 1897.

Montjuich campaign's appeals to humanity clearly succeeded in raising the cost of repression to the point where Sagasta was simply unwilling to pay any more and concluded that acquiescence was the most practical option if the monarchy wanted to stall its precipitous slide down the imagined European and international hierarchy of nations.

Chapter 4: “All of Spain is Montjuich”

At the turn of the twentieth century anarchists made important contributions to the history of human rights activism through their roles in the Montjuich campaign and the campaign to liberate the wrongfully imprisoned French Captain Alfred Dreyfus. They managed to make such a significant impact on these movements by successfully forming coalitions with a broad spectrum of progressive allies from socialists to freethinkers, from humanitarians to trade union activists. By establishing such politically diverse movements, anarchist activists managed to bypass the negative reputation that anarchism had developed and tap into an image of respectability that endowed their efforts with a wider public reception. This dynamic emerged in France where Spanish anarchist exiles petitioned for the release of their comrades and spread internationally before it returned home to take root in Spain. Once the new Liberal Prime Minister Práxedes Mateo Sagasta restored constitutional guarantees in Barcelona, months after the assassination of his Conservative predecessor Cánovas del Castillo, street demonstrations could finally clamor for the revision of the Montjuich case. The return of civil liberties coincided with the explosion of the French Dreyfus Affair onto the international stage. Although the intensity of the Dreyfus Affair largely obliterated French interest in the Montjuich campaign, the model of non-sectarian activism against affronts to “humanity” that it generated electrified Spanish protesters, lending their campaign an aura of international prestige. Just as Spanish republicans had stood with the Third Republic’s harsh response to “*l’ère des attentats*” in the early 1890s by demanding harsh anti-anarchist legislation

at home, so too did they raise their voices for the rights of the oppressed in Barcelona in tandem with their Dreyfusard brethren.

State censorship had managed to suppress a wide range of grievances that had been simmering for years while censorship was in effect, but after the return of free speech and assembly, the Montjuich campaign became a magnet for popular anger. This anger animated tens of thousands to march not only in Barcelona and Madrid, but across seemingly every province in Spain in opposition to the monarchy's "inquisitorial" deeds, which had come to represent all that was wrong with Spain. The crystallization of anti-government sentiment into the Montjuich campaign was reflected in its most popular slogan coined by the prominent Liberal politician José Canalejas: "All of Spain is Montjuich." What had once been considered merely a factual question about the veracity of torture allegations involving a handful of men in one specific prison became a popular referendum on the monarchy and the nation itself after the crushing defeat to the United States in 1898 in the so-called Spanish American War. This military failure, commonly known as "*el desastre*," ignited an intense debate over the root causes of Spain's precipitous plunge from its former imperial heights to a country seen by many as a peripheral, degenerate anachronism. While a wide variety of alleged national defects were cited, and an even wider array of solutions were proposed for "*la regeneración*" of Spain, the first popular initiative to "regenerate" Spain was the Montjuich movement of 1898-1900. More and more Spaniards came to believe that Spain had lost to the United States because "All of Spain is Montjuich."

The painful process of national regeneration seemed to require a fundamental transformation of society's most basic values and practices starting with its most

marginalized and vulnerable population: anarchist prisoners. As Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben and others have argued, the meaning and value of human rights often come into focus most clearly regarding those who have lost access to all other rights.¹ Although a wide variety of political dissidents, including republicans, socialists, freethinkers, and secularists as well as anarchists were incarcerated, tortured, and executed without due process, prior to the start of the Montjuich campaign “influential” public opinion unanimously agreed that all anarchists, regardless of their culpability, should be stripped of any and all rights and killed like the wild beasts that they allegedly were. By 1899, the campaign against this attempt to reduce anarchists to what Agamben refers to as “bare life” had grown from a ragtag international network of radicals and humanitarians with minimal vocal Spanish support (largely because of censorship) into the most pressing social issue in Spain. Like the Dreyfusards, the Montjuich activists hinged their appeals on behalf of “humanity” around the “impartial” statements of the newly coined “intellectuals” whose supposed position outside the fray of partisan politics allowed them to objectively assess the torture accusations. By merging the support of intellectuals, journalists, and politicians with broader working-class opposition to the state’s crackdown on trade unions, the campaign became a potent cross-class alliance that thoroughly re-drew the political landscape.

The campaign accomplished the astounding feat of converting many of the Liberal and Conservative journalists who had been most ardent in their calls for the indiscriminate extermination of all anarchists into passionate advocates for the rights of all of Barcelona’s prisoners in a matter of three years. By the end of the decade, many

¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1973), 267-304; Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 126-135; Lynn Festa, “Humanity without Feathers,” *Humanity* 1, No. 1 (Fall 2010), 3-27.

nationalists (especially from the Liberal Party) who were ashamed about Spain's tainted international reputation started to support the Montjuich campaign as a way to harness anti-Spanish attacks for their patriotic purposes and thereby re-signify the rhetoric about "inquisitorial Spain." The campaign won the allegiance of influential politicians and journalists by shifting the locus of the "ethics of modernity" away from the "inhumanity" of anarchist bombings and the "righteousness" of harsh anti-anarchist measures toward the "inhumanity" of torture and the "righteousness" of championing the "rights of humanity." It helped create a fast-flowing current of opinion, both domestically and internationally, that was progressively more difficult to swim against and increasingly appealed to arguments developed in the Dreyfus Affair and the disrepute plaguing the monarchy after "*el desastre*." The campaign could no longer be ignored, but authorities found themselves in a precarious position balancing popular outrage with the powerful upper class and military reluctance to cede ground to "anarchist sympathizers." Under extreme popular pressure, the monarchy ultimately pardoned the Barcelona prisoners as a way to silence the uproar without admitting wrongdoing. Although many Montjuich activists considered this only a partial victory, it demonstrated the power of what Montjuich prisoner and campaigner Joan Montseny called "the campaign of liberation" moving into the twentieth century.²

Delving into the calculations and motivations of the Montjuich (or Dreyfus) activists and their supporters reminds us that human rights campaigns, or perhaps all political campaigns, tell us more about the campaigners themselves than the objects of their indignation or empathy. As the Montjuich campaign grew, it became an arena for the pursuit of disparate political objectives that were often at odds with each other. This

² Urales, *Mi Vida* Vol. 2, 66.

dynamic was also evident in the international arena in the 1898 anti-anarchist conference in Rome. Organized in response to the anarchist assassination of Empress Elizabeth of Austria, the Rome conference foundered over its inability to synthesize the conflicting perspectives of liberal and authoritarian governments about how to define “anarchists” and what to do with them once identified. Yet, debates over definitions and procedures reveal the underlying relationships between participating governments and domestic dissent and distinct visions of the future of European security and stability. Both the Montjuich campaign and the 1898 Rome conference show how the construction of the anarchist as the universal enemy of society inadvertently allowed anarchists to become an important litmus test for the limits of repression and the status of human rights in Europe and beyond.

From Repression to Acquiescence

With the death of Prime Minister Cánovas, the Liberal Party and their historic icon Práxedes Mateo Sagasta assumed power in early October 1897 after the brief interim term of Conservative Marcelo Azcárraga Palmero. After the destruction of the first republic and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1874, Sagasta and his followers were granted liberal concessions and guaranteed a significant parliamentary minority by the Conservatives to bring them into the fold so they could marginalize intransigent republican elements.³ Thus was born the *turno pacífico*: an anti-democratic parliamentary mechanism to ensure the stability of the restoration by regularly rotating between Conservative and Liberal governments, thereby excluding external electoral competition.

³ José A. Piqueras Arenas, *Cánovas y la derecha española: del magnicidio a los neocon* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 2008), 114-5.

Over the last quarter of the century, the Janus faces of the *turno* were Cánovas, who died during his sixth term, and Sagasta, who in 1897 was about to start the sixth of what would be a total of seven terms as Prime Minister. Although Spain incorporated universal manhood suffrage relatively early in 1890,⁴ it was widely known that elections were rigged by local land-owning political bosses known as *caciques* who coerced, concocted, or otherwise created electoral outcomes favorable to their chosen dynastic party.

It was not until the first decade of the twentieth century that the two-party system would face its first serious electoral challenges, but fissures in the restoration facade with far-reaching consequences started to develop in the mid-1890s as a result of the war of Cuba's war for independence. For years there had been relatively little ideological distance between the Conservative and Liberal parties, but this foreign policy shift was evident in the new Liberal Party slogan "not a man or a *peseta* more" developed in response to Cánovas' sharp vow to fight "to the last *peseta* and the last drop of blood."⁵ In the spring of 1897 Liberal critiques of Cánovas' policy intensified to the point where Liberal leader Segismundo Moret promised to pursue a proposal for Cuban autonomy the next time his party held power. After the death of Cánovas, the Liberals made good on their promise by drafting a new Cuban constitution granting the island limited autonomy. They also replaced Captain General Valeriano Weyler in mid-November 1897, thereby ending his brutal policy of reconcentration responsible for the deaths of approximately 155,000-170,000 people. An extra incentive for these policy shifts was the enhanced

⁴ In contrast, universal manhood suffrage was implemented in Belgium in 1894, Norway in 1898, Austria in 1907, Sweden in 1909, Italy in 1912, the Netherlands in 1917. Jonathan Sperber, *Europe 1850-1914: Progress, Participation and Apprehension* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 293; Renée Frangeur, "Social Democrats and the Woman Question in Sweden: A History of Contradiction," in Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves eds., *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1998), 427; Nancy Bermeo and Philip Nord, *Civil Society Before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, England: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), xii.

⁵ Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 49 and 234.

pressure put on the Sagasta government by American President McKinley who promised to encourage the Cuban rebels to disarm if Spain would implement such reforms. Unlike the intractable Cánovas, Sagasta made every effort to appease the United States and his new Captain General Ramón Blanco implemented a more passive strategy toward the rebels in the hope that military de-escalation could provide space for a diplomatic solution.⁶

A domestic corollary to Sagasta's foreign policy was his continuation of the ongoing efforts of state officials to rid themselves of the Montjuich prisoners and the negative press and retaliatory *atentados* that followed them. Days after he took office, the 112 remaining Barcelona prisoners wrote a letter affirming their innocence and demanding their freedom that was published in several Spanish periodicals and translated into French by former prisoner Tarrida del Mármol.⁷ Over the coming days several more prison letters were published.⁸ The colonial wars and potential of American intervention were already enough for the new Sagasta government to deal with on their own without the lingering headache of Montjuich. As a result, less than a month later on November 1, 1897, 54 prisoners were released from the prison on *carrer Reina Amàlia* and another 58 were released from Montjuich on November 3rd. Although 11 of them were too 'dangerous' to reside in Catalonia, the rest were unconditionally free. The liberation of the remaining Barcelona prisoners (there were still prisoners in North Africa) stood in stark contrast with the exile of those released earlier, leading to a Royal Order on December 16, 1897 allowing the deported anarchists to come home as long as they reported their domiciles to the authorities. The next day, the suspension of constitutional

⁶ Ibid., 223 and 234-8.

⁷ *Germinal*, Oct. 15, 1897; *El Noticiero Universal*, Oct. 12, 1897; *La revue blanche*, Nov. 1, 1897.

⁸ The following letters were dated Oct. 12 and 14. *El País*, Oct. 17 and 18, 1897.

guarantees in the province of Barcelona was lifted.⁹ Sagasta had presided over the mass arrests and torture of 1893-94, but the political landscape had shifted over the following years. The havoc wrought by the colonial wars created a context in which the international campaign could enhance the political cost of repression to the point where leniency became the most expedient option. However, despite the release of prisoners, the campaign for the full exoneration of those arrested, tortured, and executed continued to grow under the powerful influence of the emerging Dreyfus Affair.

The Intensification of the Montjuich Campaign and the Dreyfus Affair

The new Liberal government certainly tried to brush the whole affair under the rug, but former prisoner and anarchist Joan Montseny and his comrades would not rest until there was an official acknowledgement of the innocence of those arrested, the reality of their torture, and the falsified confessions behind the executions. Days after his arrival in Madrid from his exile in France, Montseny went to find the firebrand Spanish republican journalist Alejandro Lerroux at the editorial office of his new paper, *El Progreso*, down the street from Puerta del Sol. For years Lerroux had been at the helm of Spain's most prominent republican paper, *El País*, but over the past few months he had fallen out with Antonio Catena, the paper's owner. In large part the conflict developed over the succession of the leadership of the *Partido Republicano Progresista* after the death of Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla, a former president of the First Republic and the prototypical late nineteenth-century revolutionary republican conspirator. As a result of

⁹ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 441-2. On Nov. 9, 1897 a protest meeting of 5,000 at the Tivoli Theater in Barcelona was held for the return of constitutional guarantees and the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich*. Pere Coromines and Juan Sol y Ortega spoke. *El País*, Nov. 10 and 13, 1897.

this conflict, Lerroux left with most of the editorial staff to found *El Progreso* in October 1897.¹⁰

When Montseny arrived at the editorial office of *El Progreso*, he proposed that the paper grant him a regular column to continue the Montjuich campaign. Lerroux reluctantly agreed despite the skepticism that low sales during the earlier campaign with *El País* had produced within him. Over the coming months, Lerroux and Montseny printed numerous letters from prisoners and their relatives, and Montseny wrote a daily column called “Revision of the Case: The Infamies of Montjuich.” To Lerroux’s delight, the campaign immediately tripled the sales of the fledgling republican paper.¹¹ A key factor in the popular interest that the campaign managed to generate even after the prisoners were released, and therefore a key factor in Lerroux’s decision to continue it, was the Dreyfus Affair.

Alfred Dreyfus was a Jewish artillery officer in the French army. In 1894, he was wrongfully arrested for allegedly selling military secrets to the Germans based on evidence a spy had uncovered in the garbage of the German embassy. Although innocent, Dreyfus was convicted and banished to Devil’s Island in 1895. For several years, Dreyfus lived in isolated exile hoping that the French army would realize their error and reinstate him. but for the most part interest in the scandal subsided. However, this started to change in the fall of 1897 when the campaign for his exoneration took shape in the French press. The first significant breakthrough for Dreyfus occurred when an honorary

¹⁰ Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 116-20.

¹¹ This according to Montseny writing in *La Publicidad*, Sept. 14, 1907. Cited in Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 163.

senator named Scheurer-Kestner publicly supported him in October of 1897.¹²

Immediately, Henri Rochefort and *L'Intransigeant* went on the attack calling Scheurer-Kestner an “abominable old scoundrel” and insinuating that he was related to a prominent German Jewish banker.¹³ The opening of this public conflict between Scheurer-Kestner and the anti-Semitic press created a strong pro-Dreyfus camp for the first time.

Although most histories of the Dreyfus Affair limit their accounts to writings and orations of prominent politicians and journalists, anarchists played a significant and overlooked role in the human rights campaign to defend Alfred Dreyfus. For example, in February 1895 Alfred Dreyfus’ brother Mathieu reached out to the Jewish anarchist writer Bernard Lazare, “the first Dreyfusard,” after learning of his recent book on the history of anti-Semitism.¹⁴ As an anarchist and a Jew, Lazare argued for the cultural assimilation of French Jews through collective social revolution. The rabid anti-Semitism he would witness over the next few years as the Affair exploded across French society would shake his hope in assimilation and lead him to craft a form of anarchist Zionism grounded in a federalist vision of Jewish autonomy.¹⁵ Nevertheless, he heartily embraced the cause of the imprisoned captain and crafted his brand of anarchist Zionism into a foundation for human rights arguments on behalf of Dreyfus in his 1896 *Une Erreur judiciaire*. This highly influential text expounded upon the facts of the case, and personally influenced the support of some of the most significant Dreyfusards including

¹² James F. Brennan, *The Reflection of the Dreyfus Affair in the European Press, 1897-1899* (New York: P. Lang, 1998), 31.

¹³ Brennan, *The Reflection of the Dreyfus Affair*, 31-2.

¹⁴ Martin P. Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair: Honour and Politics in the Belle Époque* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 156; Drake, *French Intellectuals*, 16.

¹⁵ Even after adopting Zionism Lazare broke with Theodor Herzl over his advocacy of a ‘bourgeois’ Jewish state, and in 1899 he abandoned the official Zionist movement despite maintaining his belief in Jewish autonomy and self-management. Jean-Marc Izrine, *Les libertaires dans l’affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: Éditions d’Alternative libertaire, 2012), 61-64.

Jean Jaurès, Léon Blum, Georges Clemenceau, and Aristide Briand.¹⁶ Lazare also managed to convince the prominent anarchist Sébastien Faure to devote his newspaper *Le Libertaire* to defending Dreyfus.¹⁷ Initially, most socialists and anarchists were reluctant to get caught up in a “bourgeois civil war” by supporting an imprisoned army captain, but once the case started to generate mainstream debate and provide opportunities to attack the army or the Church, most became Dreyfusards.¹⁸

In December 1897, Sébastien Faure and the famous veteran of the Paris Commune, Louise Michel, organized the first specifically anarchist meeting of 300 anarchist events in the history of the Affair Dreyfus.¹⁹ In fact, Faure organized approximately two Dreyfusard meetings a week throughout the peak of the campaign.²⁰ The anarchists also worked closely with the *Ligue des droits de l’homme et du citoyen*, which was created in February 1898 to defend Alfred Dreyfus and anyone else whose rights were threatened. Its founders included a wide range of journalists, lawyers, artists, and elite professors of physiology, philology, history, and anthropology.²¹ The *Ligue* opened itself to “all those who, without distinction of religious belief or political opinion...are convinced that all forms of arbitrariness and intolerance threaten to tear the country apart and menace civilization and Progress.”²² Faure was among the invited speakers at the *Ligue*’s constitutive assembly, the anarchist Paul Reclus was on its

¹⁶ Izrine, *Les libertaires*, 65.

¹⁷ Guillaume Davranche, “Préambule: Quand le racisme n’était ni ‘de gauche’ ni ‘de droite’” in Izrine, *Les libertaires*, 8.

¹⁸ The phrase “bourgeois civil war” used in the *Manifeste des députés socialistes*. Griffiths, *The Use of Abuse*, 24.

¹⁹ Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 84; Izrine, *Les libertaires*, 74-5.

²⁰ Robert L. Hoffman, *More Than a Trial: The Struggle Over Captain Dreyfus* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 128.

²¹ Wendy Ellen Perry, “Remembering Dreyfus: The Ligue des Droits de l’Homme and the Making of the Modern French Human Rights Movement” (PhD diss, University of North Carolina, 1998), xvi.

²² *Ibid.*, 13.

Central Committee, and joint meetings were organized between the *Ligue* and the *Coalition révolutionnaire* (a group of anarchists and anti-parliamentary socialists).²³

Although the *Ligue* was initially wary of mass politics and public meetings, which the first *Ligue* president considered to be “occasions for troubles,” the failures of their early high-level petitions convinced the central committee to issue an “Appeal to the Public” and start an impressive campaign of public events that was essentially a “traveling road show of Dreyfusard celebrities.”²⁴

As many have noted, the Dreyfus campaign was propelled by the support of the newly coined “intellectuals,” such as Anatole France, Emile Durkheim, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Claude Monet. Yet, although the term was coined in Clemenceau’s pro-Dreyfus “Manifesto of the Intellectuals” petition, which gathered 12,000 signatures, historian Martin P. Johnson points out that actually three to four times as many “intellectuals” opposed the revision of the Dreyfus trial. Overall, Johnson argues that more prestigious figures tended to oppose revision of Dreyfus’ conviction while most Dreyfusard intellectuals were peripheral figures making it “a case of ‘ins’ versus ‘outs’” in the French “intellectual” world. After all, more than half of the members of the *Academie Française* joined the conservative *Ligue de la Patrie Française* whose membership of 100,000 dwarfed the *Ligue des droits de l’homme*’s 22,000 members.²⁵

Excessive focus on the orations and writings of elite professionals has obscured the impact of grassroots mobilizing and the role of anarchists in fighting for human rights and counteracting anti-Semitic mob violence. In January 1898, Émile Zola published his

²³ Perry, “Remembering Dreyfus,” xvi; Izrine, *Les libertaires*, 75.

²⁴ Max A. Likin, “Defending Civil Society and the State: The Ligue des Droits de l’Homme in French and European Politics, 1898-1948” (PhD diss, Rutgers University, 2004), 20-1; Hoffman, *More Than a Trial*, 165.

²⁵ Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 98-9.

famous “*J’Accuse*” (I Accuse) denouncing the recent acquittal of Major Esterhazy, the real traitor to the French government, and accusing the officers behind the Affair “in the name of humanity.”²⁶ The publication of “*J’Accuse*” triggered anti-Semitic riots in dozens of cities across France. Mobs of students and other anti-Semites sacked Jewish shops and synagogues and even killed several people in Algeria.²⁷ Days after the looting and rioting, anarchists started to organize Dreyfus supporters to forcibly interrupt and disperse meetings of the *Ligue Antisémitique* and other anti-Dreyfusard groups. Over the coming months, anarchists and their allies formed the *Coalition révolutionnaire* inviting people to “fight the reactionary gangs in the glorious street, the street of energetic protests, the street of barricades.”²⁸ The *Coalition* followed through on its mission by confronting the violence of the anti-Semitic *Ligues* and organizing protection for Dreyfusard orators at meetings and pro-Dreyfus witnesses outside of courthouses. “If ‘*J’Accuse*’ mobilized the intelligentsia,” Jean-Marc Izrine argued, “the anarchists and [non-parliamentary socialists] mobilized the streets.”²⁹ In addition to their newspapers, pamphlets, and public meetings, anarchists and their allies made a significant contribution as the shock troops of the movement. As the Catholic socialist poet Charles Péguy remarked in February 1898, “the anarchists are the only ones to respond to the war cry of Zola.”³⁰ The mounting threat of a right-wing coup heightened the urgency of the campaign and even caused many anarchists to form a bloc at the massive march in defense of the Republic in June 1899. Yet, the revolutionary Dreyfusard faction ruptured over the tension inherent in the fact that fighting the anti-Semitic, monarchist right meant

²⁶ *L’Aurore*, Jan. 13, 1898.

²⁷ Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 88-90; Hoffman, *More Than a Trial*, 117.

²⁸ Izrine, *Les libertaires*, 76.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

implicitly defending the very Republic that the anarchists lived to destroy. It was much easier to maintain coalitions between revolutionaries and reformists in the Montjuich campaign in Spain where all parties could agree on the need to eliminate, or at least significantly restructure, the Spanish monarchy than in France where the Dreyfus campaign revolved around the defense of the institutional status quo through appeals for the Republic to live up to its egalitarian values. Nevertheless, many anarchists made significant, though often overlooked, contributions to the campaign for the liberation of Alfred Dreyfus.

While the Dreyfus Affair unfolded across the Pyrenees, hopes for the revision of the Montjuich case were buoyed by the surprising January 1898 announcement that the Spanish judiciary was opening an official investigation into the allegations of torture citing evidence published in *El País*, *El Progreso* and *El Nuevo Régimen*.³¹ On the heels of this unprecedented announcement, the first major demonstration in Barcelona against “methods of torture that humanity hates and civilization stigmatizes” was organized on February 13, 1898 by a predominantly republican executive committee with the support of a wide range of groups including republican,³² Masonic,³³ socialist,³⁴ Marxist,³⁵ anarchist,³⁶ Catalanist,³⁷ student,³⁸ spiritist,³⁹ and freethinking and educational⁴⁰ groups,

³¹ *El Imparcial*, Jan. 21, 1898.

³² Examples included: Centro Democrático Federal, Liga federal del Instituto, Unión Republicana de Hostafranchs, Círculo Republicano del la Derecha del Ensanche, Centro Federal, Pacto Federal, Comité Republicano Progresista del segundo distrito, Comité Republicano, Centro de “Unión Republicana,” La Juventud Republicana, and many, many more. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

³³ Revista masónica, Logia “Redención,” Revue Maçonnique, and Logia “Constancia.” *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

³⁴ Agrupación Socialista, Ateneo socialista barcelonés. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

³⁵ Centro marxista. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

³⁶ Antoni Dalmau writes that some of the co-sponsors were anarchist groups but since none of them bore an explicitly anarchist label, he is most likely referring to some of the labor groups which were anarchist without the label since anarchism was still illegal. Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 497.

in addition to sympathetic newspapers,⁴¹ choral societies,⁴² intellectual and literary groups,⁴³ women's societies,⁴⁴ and workers' organizations and labor unions.⁴⁵ The massive march of 30-50,000 that set off from the Tivoli Theater to City Hall to protest this "crime against humanity"⁴⁶ demonstrated not only the power of the Montjuich campaign to unite broad sectors of society across class and cultural divides, but also how the campaign provided a potent forum for dissent that had been suppressed for years while constitutional guarantees were suspended.⁴⁷ In late February 1898 Alejandro

³⁷ "Centro Escolar Catalanista." *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

³⁸ Los estudiantes liberales de la Facultad de Derecho and Estudiantes liberales de Medicina. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898. A black banner with white letters read "Students demand justice." *La Correspondencia de España*, Feb. 14, 1898.

³⁹ Unión Espiritista Kardesiana and Revista de la Unión Espiritista. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴⁰ Asociación Librepensadora, Colegio laico Colón, Asociación Escolar Liberal, and Asociación de librepensadores "El Fénix." *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴¹ *El Diluvio*, *La Voz del Pueblo*, *Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, *Idea Libre*, *La Campana de Gracia*, *La Publicidad*, *La Esquella de la Torratxa*, and *El País*. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898. *El Progreso* was handed out at this event and a representative of the paper participated in the meeting. Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 163.

⁴² Asociación "Coros de Clavé," Coro Federal, and Sociedad coral "Catalunya Nova." *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴³ Centro Barcelonés de Estudios Psicológicos, Círculo Literario de Barcelona, and La Revista de Estudios Psicológicos. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴⁴ Asociación Progresiva femenina and Grupo femenino librepensador catalán. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898. Reports of the demonstration commented on the high number of women. *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898; *La Vanguardia*, Feb. 14, 1898; *La Correspondencia de España*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴⁵ Examples included the prominent socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), Tres Clases de Vapor, Sociedad de Corrajeros Mecánicos, Sociedad de Trabajadores de la carga y descarga de la madera, Sociedad carga y descarga del carbón, Sociedad de Panaderos "Luz del Porvenir," Sociedad de Oficiales Carpinteros, Union de Sociedades Obreras, Sociedad de impresores de Barcelona, Sociedad de Marmolistas, and many, many more. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴⁶ This phrase was used in the poster "Al Pueblo de Barcelona" plastered around the city to promote the event. *La Publicidad*, edición de la mañana, Feb. 12, 1898; *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898.

⁴⁷ There was also a large demonstration for the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich* and obligatory military service (since the rich could buy their way out) in Teruel on the same day. *El País*, Feb. 14, 1898. There were also demonstrations in Valencia on Feb. 20, 1898 and Valladolid in March 1898. Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 495.

Lerroux launched an ambitious Montjuich speaking tour with at least 15 engagements through La Mancha and Andalusia.⁴⁸

In the United Kingdom, the Spanish Atrocities Committee (SAC) continued its agitation on behalf of the Montjuich prisoners by organizing another large demonstration in Trafalgar Square in late 1897. The shocking assassination of Cánovas only fueled the popular interest in lurid details of Spanish ‘barbarism’ that had developed in response to the landing of the 28 anarchists in Liverpool and the debate stirred up by the Swedish diplomat’s letter, as discussed in the previous chapter. As opposed to the earlier 1897 public meeting organized by SAC, which was completely ignored, this time *The Times* was even running stories on the planning meetings at the German Club leading up to the demonstration.⁴⁹ When the day arrived, a “vast crowd” showed up to hear a wide variety of speakers. The organizers framed the event as a “protest against these detestable outrages on the common humanity of the civilized world” and showed “a certain degree of resentment... at the gathering being called an anarchist demonstration.”⁵⁰ Meeting chairman Pete Curran of the Gas Workers’ Union emphasized that this was not an anarchist event and that none of the speakers endorsed violence or political crime. Although they disagreed with anarchism, he claimed, they supported anarchists’ rights to free speech. This was certainly not entirely accurate, especially given the presence of anarchists such as Joseph Perry and John Turner who received a hearty applause when he self-identified as an anarchist during his speech, but it is indicative of the non-sectarian

⁴⁸ *Progreso*, Sept. 30, 1900. Cited in Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 163.

⁴⁹ *The Times*, Aug. 13 and 16, 1897. *The Times* also reported a meeting for the Spanish exiles organized by the London Trades Council with nine Spanish representatives, including Gana who recounted his torture, and John Turner. *The Times*, Aug. 13, 1897. There was also a demonstration against the Spanish monarchy in Glasgow with 1,500 people (which apparently would have been higher if not for the heavy rain). *The Times*, Aug. 16, 1897.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, Aug. 23, 1897; *The Standard*, Aug. 23, 1897.

emphasis of the international campaign.⁵¹ This emphasis was useful in gaining the support of organizations such as the National Secular Society, which appointed three delegates to the SAC but threatened to withdraw them if “they found that the protest was not humanitarian but political.”⁵² G. W. Foote of the National Secular Society injected some nationalism into the proceedings when he argued that England was the only European country that could have such a protest meeting.⁵³ Notwithstanding ample examples to the contrary, Foote’s remark demonstrates how the desire to attack foreign atrocities was often fueled by a nationalist desire to juxtapose the allegedly superior moral stature of one’s own country.

The main argument of the speakers was that when it came to abuses as severe as those alleged in Spain, ‘politics’ didn’t matter. Such abuses transcended sectarianism to strike at humanity itself. This was clear in a letter the French anarchist Charles Malato read on behalf of *l’Intransigeant* editor Henri Rochefort, which explained that the campaign was being waged “not in the name of party, but of humanity.”⁵⁴ Likewise, in a letter that Perry read from Walter Crane, Crane stated that

I am not an Anarchist, but I detest all forms of violence, coercion, and cruelty, under whatever name perpetrated. The revolting tortures practised upon Spanish citizens, according to the published statements, ought to move every humane person to protest.⁵⁵

A large group of Spanish exiles was in the audience including anarchist Joan Montseny who recalled that there were platforms in all the different corners of the square with

⁵¹ *The Times*, Aug. 23, 1897; *The Standard*, Aug. 23, 1897. There was a similar protest against Spanish atrocities in Glasgow on August 25 featuring some of the same speakers including Gana and Perry. Some Councillors said they’d attend but then backed out “for fear of being identified with Anarchism.” *Freedom*, November 1897.

⁵² *The Times*, Aug. 16, 1897.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Aug. 23, 1897; *The Standard*, Aug. 23, 1897.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

orators speaking French, German, Russian and Italian in addition to the main English-language podium reflecting the international dimensions of the Montjuich campaign.⁵⁶

Some of the exiles spoke, such as former Montjuich prisoner Fernando Tarrida del Mírmol who received the loudest applause according to Montseny.⁵⁷ Tarrida had been deported from France shortly after the death of Cánovas because of a vitriolic speech he gave about the Prime Minister at approximately the same time as his death, which many considered to be more than a coincidence.⁵⁸ Catalan anarchist Teresa Claramunt also connected the Montjuich campaign to ongoing anti-colonial struggles, saying that “We must protest against torture in Spain, in the Philippine Islands and in Cuba until Spain is free and the torturers are no more.”⁵⁹ As she spoke, a small group of hecklers toward the back of the crowd started to interrupt her. Later, they also jeered former prisoner Francisco Gana who was invited to come out of the crowd to speak and interrupted the vote on the resolution by singing the National Anthem. When the meeting ended, the hecklers harassed some of the anarchists and Spanish exiles forcing Gana to

⁵⁶ Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 1, 227-8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁵⁸ This event of 2,000 people was organized by anarchist papers *Le Libéraire*, *Les Temps Nouveaux*, and *Père Peinard* in conjunction with *La Justice*, *L’Intransigeant*, and *La Lanterne* at the *Théâtre de la République*. It started at 2pm, an hour and a half or so after Angiolillo shot Cánovas. When Tarrida started to speak he was greeted with shouts of “Long live anarchy!” whereas when future Prime Minister Aristide Briand spoke some in the audience shouted “Down with the politicians!” reflecting the tension within the anarchist movement over collaboration with outside factions. This incident deeply upset Jean Grave who wrote that “Some imbeciles who call themselves anarchists tried to stop citizen Briand from speaking. We, anarchists, who demand absolute liberty, we have no need to learn about tolerance, and we should know to respect the liberty of those who do not think like us, since we want them to respect ours.” *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Aug. 14-20, 1897; APP, Ba 138. Cited in Avilés, *Francisco Ferrer y Guardia*, 82. Many pointed to the fact that this event was held on the same day as the assassination of Cánovas, thereby indicating foreknowledge of the *atentado*, but a week before *Les Temps Nouveaux* explained that the event was going to be earlier but was moved back to avoid a conflict with the annual demonstration of freethinkers and atheists at the statue of Etienne Dolet. *Les Temps Nouveaux*, July 31-Aug. 6, 1897. According to Montseny, Tarrida was sent from France to Belgium, then to the Netherlands followed by Denmark before ending up in London again. Urales, *Mi Vida*, vol. 1, 229.

⁵⁹ *The Times*, Aug. 23, 1897; *The Standard*, Aug. 23, 1897.

flee toward Charing Cross Station where he escaped into a passing cab.⁶⁰ Whether they were paid off or simply antagonistic toward foreign anarchists, clearly not all of British society was enthusiastic about the campaign.

While the campaign certainly depended on its ability to mobilize mass demonstrations, it involved a variety of different tactics to cultivate public respectability including the innovative idea of a “jury of honor.” This focus on the “honorable” reputation of prominent members of society along with its focus on inflammatory newspaper articles was indicative of the campaign’s reliance on the eloquence and erudition of notable figures such as journalists or politicians. This focus on expertise was evident in other initiatives that the Montjuich campaign produced such as medical examinations of the prisoners. For example, at the demonstration the SAC distributed a pamphlet titled “Spanish Tortures! Official Tortures!” boasting “absolute proof of the tortures.”⁶¹ It included Montjuich torture victim Francisco Gana’s affidavit before the *Daily Chronicle* and reports from Cuban revolutionary leader Dr. Betances in Paris (listed as Bétanier, perhaps to make him sound French) and Dr. William McDonald in Glasgow verifying the truth of Gana’s allegations based on their examinations of his scars, abrasions, and other signs of abuse.

This initiative stemmed from one of Tarrida’s articles published in the spring called “To the witness stand” where he proposed the formation of “a new trial, logical and genuine, where the former victims appear as the accusers, the former accusers as the accused.”⁶² Alongside *Daily Chronicle* editor Henry Massingham, Tarrida promoted the creation of a “jury of honor” composed of prominent men to put the torturers and

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ AGA, Asuntos exteriores, Embajada en Londres, 7016.

⁶² “A la barre,” *La Revue Blanche*, June, 1897.

executioners on trial before the world. After all, Tarrida remarked, “one cannot resuscitate the dead, but one can rehabilitate their memory” by publicly demonstrating their innocence through such a trial. Massingham was tasked with creating a jury of eminent figures in London including William Gladstone, Tarrida was to create one in Madrid, and the proposed lineup in Paris included prominent Parisian editors such as Henri Rochefort of *L’Intransigeant*, Paul de Cassagnac of *l’Autorité*, Édouard Drumont of *La Libre Parole*, Georges Clemenceau of *La Justice*, and Alexandre Natanson of *La Revue Blanche*. Tarrida made a point of emphasizing the impartiality of this jury, writing that it included “a socialist, a monarchist, a Catholic, a radical, and an independent.” He concluded his article with the tongue-in-cheek point that “If those whom I have called modern inquisitors would like to show that they are not guilty, they can thank me for giving them the opportunity to rehabilitate those they have dishonored before Spain and those they have outraged before humanity.”⁶³ Having ‘impartial’ doctors inspect Gana provided these ‘juries’ with evidence to base their decision. Needless to say, the monarchy was found ‘guilty.’

In analyzing the rhetorical use of the language of humanity in the Spanish prisoner campaigns and other similar foreign advocacy campaigns of the era, it’s clear that while the use of this universal language was prevalent, it often seemed to have been tacked onto a writing or speech about a particular issue in order to gain the sympathy of an intended audience. Although most of the activists who used this language meant what they wrote and said, phrases about defending “humanity” primarily constituted what historian Griffiths has called “clan languages” or “stock languages” to consolidate activist group identity and demonize their enemies. Just as “truth and justice” became one

⁶³ “A la barre,” *La Revue Blanche*, June, 1897; “Pour la Justice,” *La Revue Blanche*, second half of 1897.

of the rhetorical symbols of the French Dreyfusards, appeals to “humanity” bridged the political gaps that otherwise separated Spanish prisoner activists and seemed to endow their cause with a foundation in basic ethical truth.⁶⁴ The phenomenon of language gaining such ubiquity that its symbolic power overtakes its literal meaning is not unusual and should not dissuade us from taking activist appeals to humanity seriously. Rather, the centrality of language in forming group identity sheds light on how the shared enlightenment heritage of the various factions of the Montjuich campaign could be effectively mobilized by endowing it with a rhetorical symbol.

Back in Madrid, Joan Montseny was using the rhetoric of humanity to convince Nicolás Salmerón and Francesc Pi i Margall, heads of some of the various factions of Spanish republicanism, to join Alejandro Lerroux on a Madrid commission for the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich* that *El Progreso* had created following the initiative of the Catalan organizers of the large February 1898 march. The Barcelona republicans had proposed that every city create its own local commission that would send a representative to a central committee in Barcelona.⁶⁵ At that time Pi i Margall was working with the prominent lawyer and former Montjuich prisoner Pere Coromines and other left republicans on a local electoral project in Barcelona called *Candidatura de justicia* to promote the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich*, but this initiative ended in failure.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Pi y Margall and Salmerón agreed to join the committee and endorse a march that *El Progreso* had organized with the Socialist Party. Former Montjuich prisoner Montseny remembered the April 3, 1898 march that made its way from the Atocha Basilica past the Botanical Gardens and the Prado as having been rather

⁶⁴ Griffiths, *The Use of Abuse*, xii-17.

⁶⁵ *La Campaña de “El Progreso,”* 286-292.

⁶⁶ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 498.

successful, but newspaper accounts portray it as somewhere between a minor success and a frustrating disappointment with between 1,500-5,000 people depending on the source.⁶⁷ Following up on the medical examination published in the SAC pamphlet and indicative of the campaign's utilization of expertise, later that month *El Progreso* published the findings of Juan Giné y Partagás, professor of clinical surgery and deacon of the Barcelona Faculty of Medicine, and Ignacio Valentí Vivó, professor of legal Medicine and Toxicology at the same institution, who verified Francisco Gana's accusations of abuse after a thorough physical inspection.⁶⁸

The urgency and power of human rights arguments was drastically augmented by the Spanish monarchy's loss of its remaining colonies following its defeat to the United States in 1898. Tensions had been building between the two countries since the explosion of the USS *Maine* in February 1898. Although a number of contemporary experts reported that coal fire problems had caused the explosion, a claim verified by subsequent historical investigation, the American Secretary of the Navy marginalized such evidence so that President McKinley was handed a report attributing the blast to a Spanish submarine mine. The American army was relatively unprepared for the war, but it did not take long to defeat the desperate, starving, and diseased Spanish soldiers after Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish Asiatic Squadron in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898.⁶⁹ Spain surrendered in mid-July, and eventually ceded Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam to the United States, which, despite its earlier rhetoric, did not grant independence to its newly acquired colonies.

⁶⁷ *El País* reported 5-6,000, *El Imparcial* listed 3,000, and *La Vanguardia* listed 1,500. *El País*, April 4, 1898; *El Imparcial*, April 4, 1898; *La Vanguardia*, April 4, 1898.

⁶⁸ *La Campaña de "El Progreso,"* 720-732; Sempau, *Los Victimarios*, 357-362.

⁶⁹ Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba*, 241-43, 257 and 278-80.

Predictably the ruling Liberal Party was blamed for the “disaster.”⁷⁰ Protests against Sagasta’s decision to recall Weyler had erupted since the end of 1897 and events such as an attack on the office of the Liberal paper *El Reconcentrado* by 110 Spanish officers and Weyler supporters in January 1898 precipitated the arrival of the *Maine* in Havana.⁷¹ Republican editor and Montjuich campaigner Alejandro Lerroux shared this antagonism toward Cuban autonomy and support for General Weyler in the pages of *El Progreso*.⁷² Yet, Lerroux’s collaborator and former Montjuich prisoner Joan Montseny recalled that since the paper had attracted a lot of anarchists and leftists as a result of its advocacy for the Montjuich campaign, the paper received a lot of backlash for its support of Weyler and suggestion that he could be the forward-thinking military strongman to lead the desired republican coup. Such articles aggravated underlying political tensions that the campaign had often managed to gloss over and eventually contributed to the end of *El Progreso*.⁷³ Despite the vicissitudes brought about by the war with the United States and internal conflict within the Montjuich coalition, as the following section shows, the popular support that the campaign had generated was evident in the two acquittals that the republican journalist Ramón Sempau received after his attempt on the life of main Montjuich torturer, Civil Guard Lieutenant Portas.

Ramón Sempau Avenges the Montjuich Martyrs

⁷⁰ Ibid., 286.

⁷¹ Ibid., 239-40.

⁷² José Álvarez Junco cites at least 13 pro-Weyler articles in *El Progreso* during its first year. Álvarez Junco, *El emperador del paralelo*, 127.

⁷³ Urales, *Mi Vida*, vol. 2, 31-2. Lerroux’s position on Weyler was standard for Spanish republicans. Only the legendary federalist Pi y Margall disagreed saying “I renounce the Republic if Weyer has to bring it tied to the tail of his horse.” Álvarez Junco, *El emperador del paralelo*, 127.

In late August 1897, the press reported that the Spanish government had received word from London that there was an anarchist plot being hatched against a key political figure in Spain.⁷⁴ Given the assassination of Uruguayan president Juan Idiarte Borda on August 25, 1897 (initially thought to be the work of an anarchist but really committed by a dissident from Borda's party),⁷⁵ the alleged plot by the French anarchist butcher and former Montjuich prisoner José Ventre to assassinate the Duke of Arcos, a Spanish official stationed in Mexico City,⁷⁶ and reports of a French mayor being stabbed by a man alleged to have anarchist sympathies⁷⁷ coming on the heels of the assassination of Cánovas, fear of the international anarchist menace was stalking Spanish officials. "There is much talk about the fear that all ministers are dealing with," one paper claimed.⁷⁸ When reporters asked one official about the police retinue that supposedly accompanied him everywhere he went, he angrily replied that "I always go alone, I'm not afraid of anyone because I haven't done anything bad."⁷⁹

The conscience of Lieutenant Narciso Portas, the main Montjuich torturer, may not have felt so clean. At about 1AM on September 4, 1897, Portas, who had come to be known as "the Spanish Trepov" after the brutal St. Petersburg police chief that Vera Zasulich shot in 1878, was walking home with a few other police officials from a performance they had attended at the *Circo Encuestre* on the *Plaça de Catalunya* in Barcelona. Amidst a large Friday night crowd pulsing through the heart of the Catalan capital, the officers paused between two lampposts as they reached the start of the

⁷⁴ *El País*, Aug. 29, 1897.

⁷⁵ Michael Newton, *Famous Assassinations in World History: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2014), 231. *El País* initially assumed that the assailant was an anarchist. *El País*, Aug. 26, 1897.

⁷⁶ *El País*, Aug. 30 and Sept. 7, 1897.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Sept. 3, 1897.

⁷⁸ This quote from a "monarchist paper" was cited in *El País*. *El País*, Aug. 29, 1897.

⁷⁹ The official was Tejada de Valdosera. *El País*, Aug. 31, 1897.

Rambla. Suddenly, someone opened fire on Portas and his fellow officers. The first bullet missed Portas, but the second grazed his chest before striking his arm. Undaunted, Portas ran at the gunman who shot again but missed. Portas pulled out his revolver and returned fire, but his target fled into a nearby *cervecería*. The police pursued the attacker, finding him hiding under a table inside the *cervecería*.⁸⁰ It was the radical republican journalist Ramón Sempau.

Soon thereafter, Sempau found himself in Montjuich Castle sharing a cell with the Filipino anthropologist and journalist Isabelo de los Reyes who had been chained and shipped half way around the world for his increasingly vocal opposition to Spanish rule.⁸¹ Although a secret council of war initially sentenced Sempau to death, the Captain General disagreed with the military judge about the sentence so the case was passed to the Supreme Council of War and the Navy, which decided to transfer the case to civil jurisdiction.⁸² This shift from a secret military death sentence to a public jury trial was influenced by pressure from the liberal press, such as an article in the Liberal organ *El Correo* arguing for a civil trial, and more deeply reflected the political toll that the international campaign against Spanish judicial ‘irregularities’ was taking on state officials.⁸³

More than a year passed between Sempau’s *atentado* and the start of his trial in late 1898 after the loss of the colonies. Perhaps to his surprise, the jury agreed with the defense argument that, given the reputation for extreme and often unprovoked brutality that Portas and his associates had developed, Sempau had every reason to fear for his

⁸⁰ *El Imparcial*, Sept. 4, 1897.

⁸¹ Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, 5 and 198.

⁸² Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 375.

⁸³ Urales, *Mi Vida*, vol. 2, 80.

safety in their presence and had therefore acted in legitimate self-defense. Outraged, the prosecutor called for a second trial that was held two months later. To his dismay, however, the second jury returned with essentially the same opinion, only sentencing Sempau to two months and a day in prison.⁸⁴ The civil jurisdiction of the tribunal provided space for mounting popular outrage to put the “Inquisitors” on trial instead of Sempau. His acquittal was their conviction. As the former Prime Minister of the First Republic Nicolás Salmerón wrote in the anarchist paper *La Revista Blanca*, “The second absolution of Sempau demonstrates anew the desire that the Spanish people feel to bring light to the sinister *proceso de Montjuich*. The jury...declares that it also condemns the torture applied in the famous Catalan castle...”⁸⁵ The verdict was also an opportunity for the influential novelist Vicente Blasco Ibáñez to lament Spain’s place in the world:

...And it’s that all of Spain is embarrassed by the vile spectacles of ferocity that we have given the world in these recent years. We even dreamed that Europe would be at our side in the conflict we sustained with the United States! Why? Paris is the mind of Europe: there, continental opinion is formed, there, the floodgates of sympathy and antipathy for the nations open. And in Paris, a sensational drama has been performed throughout this entire past year. *Les mauvais bergères* by Octave Mirbeau. In this drama, the Parisian public cried hearing accounts of their protagonist, an enlightened and revolutionary worker that spoke of the torments suffered in the cells of Barcelona, like an explorer in Morocco would speak about the prisons of Fez, or Stanley of the sacrifices of the tribes of central Africa.⁸⁶

As Ibáñez’s remarks demonstrate, the loss to the United States played a critical role in alerting the Spanish population to its government’s isolation in the international arena and the Montjuich campaign compounded this popular shame by indicting Spanish identity before a European stage. For many there was no greater disgrace than being put

⁸⁴ ACA, Sentencias Criminales, 205.

⁸⁵ N. S., “Sempau y Montjuich,” *La Revista Blanca*, Jan. 1, 1899. Cited in Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 376.

⁸⁶ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 377. Sarah Bernhardt starred in this Parisian production. *Freedom*, Jan. 1898. After his release, Sempau published an extensive collection of prison testimonies and protest and media summaries call *Los Victimarios*.

on a moral par with African “savages.” This embarrassment that the torture and executions generated in the wake of the devastating loss of the last remnants of Spain’s once expansive empire renewed governmental interest in coordinating with other countries to combat the international anarchist menace. In so doing, Spanish authorities likely aspired to use the establishment of anti-anarchist protocols as a way to start the difficult process of regaining its status among European powers. By far the most significant attempt to unite European governments against their mortal enemies was the anti-anarchist conference held in Rome in 1898.

The Rome Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898

On September 10, 1898 Italian anarchist Luigi Luccheni was laying in wait at a boat dock in Geneva hoping to see the French duke of Orleans, his intended target, appear at any moment. When he failed to materialize, Luccheni pulled out a sharp tool used to file the eyes of industrial needles and plunged it into Austro-Hungarian Empress Elizabeth, the wife of emperor Franz Joseph, who happened to pass by.⁸⁷ After she was knocked to the ground, she staggered onto the boat before noticing the hole left by the attack. She died shortly thereafter in her hotel.⁸⁸ The police apprehended the assailant as he attempted to flee.

Luccheni placed a great deal of importance on carrying out an act that would not only target “everyone who attempts to bring his fellow-men into subjection for his own profit,” but grant him fame in the process. He is even said to have remarked to a friend

⁸⁷ Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 209; Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Chronologies of Modern Terrorism* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 18. Elizabeth hated having a royal procession so she insisted on walking to the steamer that was to take her to Montreaux without her entourage. Newton, *Famous*, 132.

⁸⁸ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 131.

“Ah! How I should like to kill somebody; but it must be some person of great importance, so that it might get into the papers.”⁸⁹ After his arrest, Luccheni longed for martyrdom but was appalled to learn that he was given life in prison rather than death since Switzerland had abolished capital punishment. He demanded that his trial be moved to the Canton of Lucerne where executions were still carried out, but his request was denied. He would commit suicide in prison twelve years later, however. Luccheni justified his actions by arguing that “I came to Geneva to kill a sovereign, with object of giving an example to those who suffer...it did not matter to me who the sovereign was whom I should kill...It was not a woman I struck, but an Empress; it was a crown that I had in view.”⁹⁰ Not all anarchists were convinced by his reasoning. Unlike Angiolillo’s assassination of Cánovas, which elicited a fair amount of sympathy among the lower classes, many anarchists were appalled at Luccheni’s attack on the nearly 62-year-old, politically irrelevant Empress.⁹¹ Broader European public opinion was even more appalled at the murder of a woman, let alone the widely beloved Empress Sisi, once considered the most beautiful woman in the world.⁹²

The prominent role that Italian anarchists were playing in the most spectacular assassinations of the era (Caserio, Angiolillo, Luccheni and Acciarito’s failed attempt on Italian king Umberto in April 1897) and the desire of the Italian government to

⁸⁹ Ibid., 136-8.

⁹⁰ Newton, *Famous Assassinations*, 133-4.

⁹¹ Francesco Tamburini, “La conferenza internazionale di Roma per la difesa sociale contro gli anarchici (24 Novembre-21 Dicembre 1898),” *Clio* vol. 2 (1997), 229; J. Avilés, “Propaganda por el hecho y regicidio en Italia” in Avilés and Herrerin eds., *El nacimiento del terrorismo en occidente*, 12. For example, *Freedom* described Angiolillo as “a brave, a generous, a disinterested nature [who] gave [himself] unhesitatingly for the cause of human freedom,” but Luccheni’s “act was cruel, and as aimed against a defenceless woman cowardly; no Anarchist having the welfare of humanity at heart, but will admit but will admit that deeds of this nature are primarily repellent from their unreasoning ferocity, and certainly deterrent to the progress of Anarchist propaganda.” *Freedom*, Jan. and Oct. 1898.

⁹² Her domestic popularity was evident in the hundreds of thousands of people visited her coffin in Vienna, black banners adorned Budapest as men and women wept in the streets, and anti-Italian riots broke out in Trieste, Ljubljana, Fiume and Budapest. Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 139.

coordinate international repression prompted Foreign Minister Napoleone Canevaro and the notoriously brutal General Pelloux to start planning an international anti-anarchist conference weeks after the assassination of Empress Sisi.⁹³ There were some powerful forces prodding them behind the scenes, however. At Sisi's funeral Franz Joseph and Kaiser Wilhelm agreed to push for international action against anarchism, which Wilhelm described as the product of "liberalism, humanitarian slop, demagoguery, and above all, from the cowardice of parliaments."⁹⁴ Days later, Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Count Goluchowski started to spread the concept of an "international league against anarchism" in diplomatic circles and pushed Italy to expand its scope beyond relations with Switzerland.⁹⁵ It was important for Austria-Hungary and Germany to nudge their Triple Alliance ally Italy to the forefront of such an international initiative to entice the participation of liberal governments like France and the UK, who were on much more favorable terms with Italy, and avoid exacerbating their authoritarian reputation which could provoke retaliatory anarchist attacks and domestic unrest.⁹⁶

Although past attempts at international anti-anarchist coordination had run aground over the impossibility of accommodating the perspectives of authoritarian and liberal regimes, the Italian government managed to convince twenty European governments to send representatives, including diplomats and police officials, whether

⁹³ Pelloux ordered the repression of a labor protest in Milan in May. González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, 257. In response to the repression, many of the activists and anarchists behind the SAC, SFRF, and their allies "belonging to every nationality and of diverse political opinions" wrote a letter of protest akin to their Montjuich denunciations. This was supported by the International Arbitration and Peace Association, which opposed "the abuse of power in any shape in any country." There were also articles of protest published in *L'Aurore*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily News* and *Star*. Freedom, May 1898.

⁹⁴ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 140.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 133, 146-7, and 153.

out of genuine interest, courtesy, or some combination thereof.⁹⁷ Prime Minister Francesco Crispi saw no reason for this trend to change. Shortly after the conference began he wrote that “it is doubtful if the conference will have practical results...Anarchism is a grave social disease for which I can see no remedy save in assiduous and conscientious effort on the part of every Government to eliminate at home the causes of those crying social inequalities which fertilize and develop the sad and cruel germs of social destruction.”⁹⁸ Social reformers like Crispi who sought to extirpate the social ills they considered to be at the root of anarchism clashed with more traditional authoritarians whose solution was repressive force. The International Conference for the Social Defense against Anarchists held in Rome from November 24-December 21, 1898 would do little to overcome that gap.

One of the most controversial and challenging tasks for the closed sessions of the conference to address was the very basic question of defining ‘anarchism.’ If joint agreements for the suppression of anarchism were to be achieved, then there must be some basic understanding of what they were combating. As these debates would show, the conflict was really far less about the definition itself than it was about the clash between liberal and authoritarian views of Europe’s future. In anticipation of the contentious nature of the definition debate, deputy M. V. Dejeante addressed the French Chamber of Deputies:

⁹⁷ The 21 countries that participated were: Italy, Spain, France, UK, Germany, Romania, Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Serbia, Portugal, Russia, Montenegro (represented by Russia), Greece, The Netherlands, Belgium, Monaco, Luxemburg, Sweden and Norway, Switzerland, Bulgaria, and Turkey. British Prime Minister Salisbury stated that the participation of his government was merely a favor to Italy and that he opposed giving anarchists so much attention since their “members live on vanity above all!” Austria-Hungary told Italy to limit it to Europe to accelerate the organization of the conference. Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 147 and 150.

⁹⁸ *Daily Mail*, Nov. 30, 1898.

The word ‘anarchist’ means something quite different when it is used by the government and when it is used by those who are governed. The word also changes in significance from country to country... Were we not in France but in Russia, or Spain, or Italy we would be considered anarchists. And even in some parts of our provinces, if we expressed our doctrines people would not hesitate to call us anarchists.⁹⁹

Beneath debates over the repression of anarchism often lay conflicts over civil liberties and the legitimate frontiers of dissent. Despite liberal opposition to vague definitions of ‘anarchism,’ proposals fell into two basic categories. First, Russia and Germany pushed for expansive definitions capable of ensnaring anyone whose thoughts or actions were contrary to the existing social order.¹⁰⁰ This wide definition would be useful for the repression of nihilists, socialists and other dissidents in addition to anarchists. Second, Monaco put forth a proposal that oriented the definition of an anarchist around the “anarchist act” which had “as its aim the destruction through violent means of all social organization.”¹⁰¹ This focus on the act rather than the ideas behind it was in line with the perspective of the Spanish delegate, renowned criminologist and lawyer Félix Pío de Aramburu, who argued in his summary report that

It wasn’t possible to mistake the anarchic theory for criminal anarchic practices, and include in the same abominable category men like Reclus, Kropotkin, Grave etc. (extraordinary intelligences, at any rate) and delinquents like Ravachol, Vaillant, Caserio, Angiolillo and others...¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Hsi-Huey Liang, *The Rise of Modern Police and the European State System from Metternich to the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 164.

¹⁰⁰ The German proposal targeted “all individuals who have the goal of overthrowing the social order in order to replace it by a new state of affairs without law and without authority and who, in order to attain this end, do not hesitate in respect to [using] any means, whether trying to stir up minds through their subversive theories, or committing or endorsing or glorifying crimes.” The Russian proposal targeted: “those whose acts have as a goal the destruction of all social organization, whatever may be its form, by having recourse to violent means, or provoking them [i.e., violent means] through the propagation of their theories.” Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 157-8.

¹⁰¹ Although the United States was not invited, the US Assistant Attorney General later said that “the fear that the word ‘anarchist’ might be construed to include political offenders prevented the United States from taking any part in this conference.” Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 148 and 157; Tamburini, “La conferenza internazionale di Roma,” 241-2.

¹⁰² *Conferencia internacional de Roma para la defensa social contra el anarquismo. 1898. Memoria del Delegado técnico de España D. Félix de Aramburu y Zuloaga, catedrático de Derecho Penal y Rector de la Universidad de Oviedo*, AHN, Asuntos Exteriores, Sección Histórica, 2750. Aramburu was the only

The Monaco proposal won out over the more extreme German and Russian definitions, and the final protocol paired it with the claim that “anarchism has no relation to politics and cannot under any circumstances be regarded as a political doctrine.”¹⁰³

Unsurprisingly, the UK and some other more liberal northern European representatives opposed its vagueness.¹⁰⁴ The Police Chief of Stockholm argued that if the idea was to speak about actions rather than ideas, then delegates should scrap the term “anarchist” altogether in favor of “authors of criminal attempts,” which is essentially what the Monaco definition said, but this idea ran counter to the *raison d’être* of the conference.¹⁰⁵

The British representative Sir Philippe Currie commented that such vague definitions could apply “to Socialism as easily as to a revolutionary action, as for example the substitution of a King for a Parliament, or of a Parliament for a King.”¹⁰⁶ As a result, the British argued that “a definition isn’t necessary and would be useless...for us, the only question is this: is there a crime or not?”¹⁰⁷ In part, the British were disinterested in the question because they weren’t concerned about anarchists. As Metropolitan Police commissioner Sir Edward Bradford stated that “no English anarchist had ever been

delegate to propose measures to address the social ills at the root of anarchism such as the “amelioration of institutions, laws and customs which incubated injustices” and enhancing the role of “charitable societies and industrial enterprises” in addressing the “conditions of the indigent.” To other governments, such questions were of domestic rather than international significance. Spain also made the unsuccessful proposal of sending all anarchists to a distant island where they could put their ideas into practice. Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 159.

¹⁰³ Liang, *The Rise of Modern Police*, 163; Tamburini, “La conferenza internazionale di Roma,” 240.

¹⁰⁴ France, Belgium, Switzerland, and the UK were also upset with a resolution dictating that crimes carried out in the name of “propaganda by the deed” would be assessed without reference to their political contexts. After the failure of its anarchist definition proposal, the Russians threatened to walk out unless any measure aimed at anarchists also apply explicitly to nihilists. In this they were only supported by Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Germany. González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, 259.

¹⁰⁵ Tamburini, “La conferenza internazionale di Roma,” 243-4.

¹⁰⁶ Liang, *The Rise of Modern Police*, 164.

¹⁰⁷ Tamburini, “La conferenza internazionale di Roma,” 242.

found” and foreign anarchists hadn’t really caused any significant trouble within the UK.¹⁰⁸

The closest to an anarchist outrage that the British had come was an 1894 incident when French anarchist Martial Bourdin accidentally blew himself up near the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park.¹⁰⁹ Joseph Conrad’s fictionalized portrayal of this abortive bombing in *The Secret Agent* portrayed the bomber as the pawn of an agent of the Russian government tasked with orchestrating “a dynamite outrage” in England so that the British government would be “brought into line” with the rest of Europe and participate more vigorously in “the Conference in Milan” (a fictional version of the Rome conference).¹¹⁰ As long as the British did not have to worry about domestic bombings, they were not especially concerned about continuing their role as the foremost European sanctuary for revolutionaries on the run. Conrad captured this dynamic when he had the Russian instigator of the bombing remark on the necessity of

“A series of outrages,” Mr. Vladimir continued, calmly, “executed here in this country; not only planned here—that would not do—they would not mind. Your friends could set half the Continent on fire without influencing the public opinion here [in Great Britain] in favour of a universal repressive legislation. They will not look outside their backyard here.”¹¹¹

Initially the British delegates endeavored to shift authoritarian resolutions in a more liberal direction, but eventually gave up when the isolation of their position made such

¹⁰⁸ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 151-2.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas, *Anarchist Ideas and Counter-Cultures*, 17.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17-36.

¹¹¹ The Russian agent, Mr. Vladimir decides that the bombing of the Observatory would be ideal because such an attack would target the English bourgeois affection for science and would seem “incomprehensible, inexplicable, almost unthinkable.” Conrad captured the over-saturated nature of the coverage of anarchist outrages in the European press. His character Mr. Vladimir explained how the usual targets had become passé. Killing a head of state had become “almost conventional,” an attack on a church (Cambios Nuevos in 1896 or Pauwels’s 1894 bombing in Paris) was “not so effective as a person of an ordinary mind might think,” bombing a restaurant (Cafe Terminus) or a theater (Liceu) “would suffer in the same way from the suggestion of non-political passion... All this is used up; it is no longer instructive as an object lesson in revolutionary anarchism. Every newspaper has ready-made phrases to explain such manifestations away.” Conrad, *The Secret Agent*, 17-36.

efforts fruitless. From that point on the British abstained on nearly every vote, even those concerning broadly repressive proposals.¹¹² The UK didn't even sign the final conference protocol.¹¹³

Switzerland had also developed a reputation as a refuge for political exiles throughout the nineteenth century. After the assassination of Empress Elizabeth, however, the Swiss government was under significant pressure to take measures to prevent such attacks from repeating themselves. They faced harsh criticism for allowing Luccheni to correspond with the press from his cell. The Italian government even accused Switzerland's 'subversive' atmosphere of turning Luccheni into an anarchist.¹¹⁴ To ameliorate such accusations, Swiss officials shared the contents of the police report on the assassination, and allowed an Austrian police official to witness their investigation.¹¹⁵ Moreover, they expelled more than 76 foreign anarchists over the following months and banned some newspapers.¹¹⁶ At the conference, Switzerland was generally cooperative, approving of most resolutions, including extradition proposals, before putting them into effect the following year.¹¹⁷

Ultimately, the conference adopted several repressive German and Russian resolutions that created a vaguely broad range of criminal, "non-political" acts subject to extradition. The French vehemently protested measures that seemed to open the doors to the indiscriminate extradition of all dissidents.¹¹⁸ Their outrage was tempered by the fact that the conference's resolutions were non-binding. Although the Rome conference

¹¹² Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 157 and 160-2.

¹¹³ Ibid., 168.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 142.

¹¹⁵ Liang, *The Rise of Modern Police*, 159.

¹¹⁶ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 143.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 170.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 161-2;

deserves attention as the first international gathering to combat terrorism and a notable precedent to Interpol, it produced very few tangible results. French Ambassador Camille Barrère considered the conference's resolutions to be worth nothing more than "the paper they were written on."¹¹⁹ To some extent, some of the conference's recommendations were taken up, such as its endorsement of the French criminal measurement system "*portrait parlés*," also known as *Bertillonage*, but the Rome conference fell far short of the lofty goals of its organizers. The attempts of more authoritarian governments like Russia and Germany to use anarchism to scare Western Europe into agreeing to their broadly repressive proposals failed. Yet, by analyzing each government through the lens of anarchism we can gain great insight into its underlying perspectives on repression and civil liberties. Meanwhile, the focal point of the Montjuich campaign was shifting away from the international arena to center on mobilizations within Spain itself.

Regeneration, Resistance, and the End of the Montjuich Campaign

The Montjuich campaign went into forced hibernation during the war with the United States and remained in a state of inactivity during the winter of 1898-1899 as the country came to terms with "*el desastre*." The military defeat and forfeiture of the last vestiges of the once 'glorious' Spanish Empire in the Americas heightened the urgency of remedying the political and social ills responsible for Spain's plummeting position in the global order. This widespread yearning for societal rebirth would produce the literary "Generation of '98" over the coming years and it found an ideal outlet in the renewed agitation for the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich* that blossomed anew moving into the spring of 1899 under the liberal politician José Canalejas's slogan "All of Spain is

¹¹⁹ Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, 132.

Montjuich.” Given the centrality of ethical norms in Western conceptions of modernity and progress, the allegations of torture in Barcelona vividly demonstrated the rotten core of the degenerated Spanish monarchy to many sectors of society. How could Spain be expected to move into the twentieth century at the forefront of innovation when it remained mired in the brutality of centuries past? If something weren’t done, Spain would be left behind. In this spirit Nicolás Salmerón referred to a large Montjuich meeting in June 1899 as “the first step in the regeneration of Spain.”¹²⁰ Of course such considerations were far more pressing for middle and upper class journalists and politicians than they were for workers and peasants who were forced to focus on feeding their families and avoiding incarceration. For that reason the Montjuich campaign developed into a powerful cross-class force that united lower class outrage at the abuses suffered by their comrades with more elite insecurity about the diminutive stature of Spain among the concert of powers.

Throughout this period the Dreyfus Affair beacons from across the Pyrenees as a model of dissident unity in the face of a retrograde injustice. As the republican *La Publicidad* noted,

To make justice a fact, to demolish militarism, in the Dreyfus affair the moderates like Pressencé, the radicals like Clemenceau, and the socialists like Jaurés have no objection to uniting with the anarchist Sebastián Faure, and with those who are at the forefront of the Universities, the *intelectuales*.¹²¹

Not long after the Dreyfus Affair cemented the importance of the newly coined ‘*intellectual*’ in the first international “battle of opinion where the press played the crucial role,”¹²² Montjuich campaigners attempted to bridge the gap between the lower classes

¹²⁰ This was how *El País* paraphrased his remark. *El País*, June 25, 1899.

¹²¹ *La Publicidad*, May 15, 1899 (edición de la mañana).

¹²² Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 139.

and their own *intelectuales*. Not long after Émile Zola's trial for insulting the French military unfolded before the world's stage, Spanish liberal Prime Minister Sagasta was replaced with the conservative Silvela.¹²³ The return of the Conservative Party in Spain dimmed hopes that the government would resolve the Montjuich case on its own, which in turn accentuated the absolute necessity for popular action and outrage.

Into this fertile context emerged radical republican publicist Alejandro Lerroux after his eight-month stint in prison for his 'subversive' article in *La Revista Blanca*.¹²⁴ Undaunted by the collapse of *El Progreso* during his imprisonment, Lerroux created the similarly named *Progreso* in March 1899 to continue the Montjuich campaign. As opposed to its predecessor, *Progreso* was a weekly rather than a daily and it lacked a fixed staff after a number of its early collaborators quickly abandoned the project, leaving the bulk of the writing and production work to Lerroux. The majority of the collaborators who stuck with *Progreso* were anarchists invested in the campaign.¹²⁵

Yet, by this point *Progreso* had become one of seemingly countless periodicals, political parties, unions, and other organizations supporting the campaign. On May 15, 1899 the Barcelona committee organized a large protest meeting at the *Circo Barcelonés* that demanded the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich*, the immediate dismissal of those responsible for the torture, and the demolition of Montjuich Castle. The tone, if not necessarily the actual intentions, of the republican orators shifted in a noticeably revolutionary direction as speaker after speaker asserted that if their demands were not

¹²³ Zola was sentenced to one year in prison and a 3,000 franc fine on Feb. 24, 1899 before having the conviction overturned on April 3rd. Brennan, *The Reflection of the Dreyfus Affair*, 42-53.

¹²⁴ Before this section I think I need more of an update on how the war affected campaign, which papers doing what. Could incorporate this info: Pere Corominas initiated a similar campaign in the new weekly *Vida Nueva* founded by José Nakens, Rodrigo Soriano, Dionisio Pérez and others. Its first issue appeared on June 12, 1898. Urales, *Mi Vida*, vol. 2, 9-12 and 39; Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 471. Also in early 1899 *Les presons imaginaries* published.

¹²⁵ Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 164-5.

granted, they would have to be taken by force. One speaker even predicted a rejuvenating sequel to French reign of terror of 1893 to which the ecstatic crowd responded “Let’s begin! Let’s begin!” while the meeting ended with shouts of “Death to the executioner Portas!”¹²⁶ At the same time, the campaign received a boost from the announcement that Civil Guard Corporal Tomás Botas, one of the Montjuich torturers, and Manuel Surroca, a Civil Guard Seargent recently returned from Cuba, were being charged with torturing a worker named Francisco Oliva to get him to confess to a robbery.¹²⁷ The brutality that Botas unleashed on this unfortunate worker seemed to demonstrate the legitimacy of the Montjuich torture accusations.

Yet, a monumental shift occurred in late May when the recently established newspaper *Vida Nueva* convened a broad, unprecedented press committee to coordinate the growing Montjuich campaign. This impressive committee included five liberal papers, *El Imparcial*, *El Correo*, *El Liberal*, *El Globo*, and *El Heraldo de Madrid*, three conservative papers, the Canovite *La Época*, *El Nacional* and *El Español*, and even the Carlist *El Correo Español* in addition to the Republican *El País*. Newspapers that had called for the indiscriminate slaughter of anarchists regardless of their culpability mere months earlier had been won over to the side of revision. Even more surprising, perhaps, was the announcement by *El Heraldo de la Guardia Civil* that it would dissociate itself from any members of the military that had participated in torture.¹²⁸ The near unanimity of the Spanish press about the need to revise *el proceso de Montjuich* shocked Captain

¹²⁶ *La Correspondencia de España*, May 15, 1899; *La Vanguardia*, May 15, 1899; *La Publicidad*, May 15, 1899 (edición de la mañana). *El Socialista* lamented the dearth of press coverage for this event. *El Socialista*, May 19, 1899.

¹²⁷ *El Imparcial*, May 15, 1899; Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 499-500.

¹²⁸ *Vida Nueva*, May 28, 1899. For the politics of the papers see Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 60.

General Despujol who wrote that “every day, not only in more or less radical papers, but in the press of temperate opinions, they call Lieutenant Portas and his guards murderers and executioners; and even in military periodicals (God forgive it!)”¹²⁹

The complete transformation of the outlooks of many of the country’s major periodicals owed a great deal to the perspective that the bad press generated by the campaign had contributed to Spain’s isolation when confronted with the United States and the looming specter of Montjuich becoming the ‘Spanish Dreyfus Affair,’ thereby accelerating what was seen as an ongoing process of societal decay. Yet, for some papers an immediate impetus to their shift was the publication of drawings of the torture implements. For although the Spanish public had read a great deal about the Barcelona atrocities over the past few year, it was not until the spring of 1899 that they saw them. The first images were published in *Vida Nueva* two weeks before it formed the press commission, and *La Campana de Gracia* and the *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca* published more over the coming weeks.¹³⁰ In a culture that was far less visual than our own, where realistic images of pain and suffering were far less common, the sight of genital mutilation, beatings, and other forms of torment was exceptionally startling. For many, the images likely endowed the arguments of the campaign with an immediacy, directness, and emotional impact that written or oral descriptions could not quite muster

¹²⁹ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 504-5.

¹³⁰ *Vida Nueva*, May 14, 1899; *La Campana de Gracia*, May 20, 1899; *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, June 24, 1899. The issue of *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca* with the images was denounced and confiscated by the authorities. *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, July 1, 1899. The drawings from the *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca* were reprinted in a pamphlet called *La Inquisición fin de siglo* printed by the Librería Sociológica in Buenos Aires in 1899. To aid in the propaganda, 4,000 copies were printed and mailed to Spain for free distribution. *La Inquisición fin de siglo* (Buenos Aires: Librería Sociológica, 1899). Available at the IISG.

especially for the illiterate.¹³¹ The power of such images was evident in *La Vanguardia*'s explanation of its shift in favor of the campaign the day after the publication of *Vida*

Nueva's images:

While the accusations weren't concrete, the nature of the affair could oblige the authorities and public opinion to take them with reserve...but when concrete cases are cited, and the papers even publish, without any correction, images of the denounced instruments of torture, it is an elemental duty of those who govern, and a necessity of the good name of the nation, to provide satisfaction to the public sentiment of justice and humanity.¹³²

The images of torture didn't bring about this dramatic about-face on their own, but they proved powerful enough to overcome the lingering reluctance of many papers to join the movement.

Images played an enormous role in the foreign advocacy campaigns of the turn of the twentieth century. As the next chapter will discuss, campaigns against slavery in Portuguese West Africa, Congo, and Putumayo in South America hinged on their abilities to make pain being suffered on other continents immediately palpable for a European audience. The vividness and accuracy of photography surpassed even the most detailed written description of injustice in its ability to make the viewer feel like they had a personal window into the atrocity. Although a photograph is always a selective rendering of a scene that reflects the perspective of the photographer, the Western public received photos of abused Congolese or starving Indians during the famine of 1897 as unmediated

¹³¹ For the importance of visual imagery on humanitarianism see: Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*.

¹³² *La Vanguardia*, May 15, 1899.

truth.¹³³ In that way, “humanitarian imagery is *moral rhetoric* masquerading as evidence,” as Fehrenbach and Rodogno have argued.¹³⁴

The Montjuich campaign did not have recourse to photographs since it would have been impossible to bring a camera into the prison. Some of the survivors of torture, such as Francisco Gana, gave speeches and showed their scars in France and England. These personal interactions with the objects of foreign advocacy certainly would have been very moving for sympathizers in the audience and they represented a possibility for direct contact with victims that was unattainable with abused Africans or South Americans. Spain may have been the ‘other’ of Western Europe, but sympathy for Spanish victims required far less emotional extrapolation for Northern European advocates than for dark-skinned people on other continents. Yet, such presentations were far too dangerous to organize in Spain even if constitutional guarantees had been restored. Rather than presentations by the victims themselves or photographs of the torture implements, the campaign managed to reach a wider segment of society, including many moderates and conservatives, through drawings. Yet, the torture images printed by *Vida Nueva*, *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, and *La Campana de Gracia* may have been more powerful than more straightforward photographs of torture implements on their own because their drawings showed torture implements in use. Sharp metal shards sitting on a table require more imagination to conjure up the pain they would induce than a drawing of them jammed under a victim’s toenails. It may be unclear how a thick wooden gag might be used until seeing a drawing of it in the mouth of a man whose eyes communicated his pain to the viewer. Moderate public opinion was on the fence

¹³³ Curtis, “Picturing Pain,” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*, 22-43.

¹³⁴ Fehrenbach and Rodogno, “Introduction,” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*, 6.

regarding the allegations of torture thanks to the myriad of written accounts published over the previous years, but the stomach-churning drawings pushed it over the edge to the side of revision.

Meanwhile, in June 1899 a massive protest meeting of 10,000 was held at the *Frontón Central* in Madrid featuring fourteen “representatives of all political ideas, of all social classes”¹³⁵ who called for the revision of *el proceso de Montjuich* weeks after the French Supreme Court of Appeal gave Dreyfus a second chance by annulling his court martial.¹³⁶ Among the speakers were many of the most prominent journalists and politicians in the country including liberals like José Canalejas, Segismundo Moret, and *El Imparcial* editor Rafael Gasset, republicans such as Alejandro Lerroux, Pere Coromines, Blasco Ibáñez, Nicolás Salmerón, Melquiades Alvarez, Gumersindo Azcárate, and *La Publicidad* editor Lletget, socialist leader Pablo Iglesias, and even the conservative count of Almenas who announced that although he was conservative and Catholic, he was in favor of “reason and justice” above all else. A number of the speakers represented groups from other locations, such as Isart Bula who spoke on behalf of 74 Catalan workers societies, and Menéndez Pallarés who, on behalf of workers from Almería, stated that “he did not come to carry out an act that was political, nor patriotic, nor of protest against affronts to nationality. We have come to carry out—he said—an act in the name of the rights of humanity.”¹³⁷ Despite the practical political exigencies that

¹³⁵ Quote from Blasco Ibáñez. *La Época*, June 25, 1899.

¹³⁶ This occurred on June 3, 1899. Whyte, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 242.

¹³⁷ Melquiades Alvarez spoke on behalf of republicans from Asturias. *El Imparcial*, June 25, 1899; *El País*, June 25, 1899; *La Época*, June 25, 1899. Francisco Gana was invited to speak at the meeting but declined out of fear from the attacks he endured, allegedly at the instigation of the Spanish embassy, at the Trafalgar Square meeting and because he would have to come all the way from Perpignan to Madrid and his health wouldn’t allow it. Yet, since he supposedly travelled to Barcelona shortly thereafter, *La Revista Blanca* and others started to fear that he was being paid to keep quiet so they published an article raising the question in order to deflate any future ‘confession’ that Gana may have been paid to make about being guilty and

drew this diverse coalition together and the intermittent feuds that perpetually threatened to tear them apart, the Montjuich campaign was consistent in its avowed commitment to humanity above politics. Similarly, an American observer at the meeting wrote that “*Montjuich* has become a Liberal rallying cry, although the movement is not bound in by party lines. It is the Dreyfus *affaire* in a Spanish edition.”¹³⁸

The Montjuich campaign produced a number of creative protest tactics. For example, the night before the Madrid meeting in Barcelona an “immense bonfire” was constructed where locals incinerated symbols of Montjuich including torture implements, dried cod, riding boots, an image of the castle, and a woman in mourning.¹³⁹ However, the foundation of the campaign was still formed by journalistic action and popular mobilization. During this period, Barcelona hosted another large meeting of 10,000 in the Nuevo Retiro Theater with thousands more outside. The meeting resolved to rescind the anti-anarchist law, fire and punish those responsible for torture, and support Spanish deputy Gumersindo Azcárate’s legislative proposal that it be made easier to reopen cases based on faulty or coerced evidence. Although the government had recently announced that Montjuich castle would henceforth only be used for military purposes rather than a prison, a symbolically significant government concession, the meeting nevertheless

fabricating the torture allegations. See *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, July 1, 1899, which also contains Montseny’s reflections on the meeting. During Coromines’s speech someone took a flash photograph, which thoroughly startled a French comrade who thought it was a bomb. He had just gotten out of jail after having been given a basked with two bombs in it by an informant so he immediately shouted “You are all witnesses that I didn’t do it!” Urales, *Mi Vida*, vol. 2, 40. *El País* reported that someone in the gallery thought the flash was a fire. *El País*, June 25, 1899.

¹³⁸ Katharine Lee Bates, *Spanish Highways and Byways* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1900), 210.

¹³⁹ According to the *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, “the creator of the allegory has been arrested although he was not the one who applied the torture to which the symbol referred.” *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, July 1, 1899.

demanded its demolition.¹⁴⁰ The resolutions were endorsed by 73 societies and 14 periodicals.¹⁴¹

That same day Montjuich meetings were held throughout Catalonia and there had recently been large events in other cities like Zaragoza, Valencia, La Línea, and Palma de Mallorca.¹⁴² During the summer of 1899 the campaign spread across the country, with events in Bilbao, Santander, Gijón, el Ferrol, Alcoy, San Sebastián, Salamanca, Granada, and Menorca, and even to Tangier, Morocco where the city's Spanish Commission organized an event on July 9, 1899.¹⁴³ Although the Montjuich campaign was born in Paris and thrived abroad because of the inhospitably repressive political climate in Spain, once the Liberal government restored civil liberties in Spain the movement surged into the public spotlight at home. With the shift back to a Conservative government in 1899 authorities may have hoped to clamp down on the popular agitation that the campaign had unleashed, but it had already attained such substantial proportions that censorship and arrests would only have inflamed the situation.

A more subtle governmental response was necessary to end the campaign. The first part of this response was articulated on January 4, 1900 when the prosecutor in charge of the governmental inquiry into the allegations of torture finally released its report fourteen months after the start of the intentionally lethargic inquiry. The report found that it was impossible "to admit that in the Civil Guard, in this Institute of honorable men, of anonymous heroes, of dark martyrs of duty...there could be brought

¹⁴⁰ For the decision to limit Montjuich to the military see: *La Época*, June 25, 1899. For Azcárate's proposed legislation see: *El Imparcial*, July 2, 1899. For the meeting: *El País*, July 3, 1899; *El Imparcial*, July 3, 1899. Eventually Azcárate's proposal passed but in a depleted, impotent form. Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 521.

¹⁴¹ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 501.

¹⁴² *El País*, July 3, 1899; *El Imparcial*, June 25 and July 3, 1899; *La Dinastía*, July 3, 1899; *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, June 24 and July 1, 1899; Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 500-1.

¹⁴³ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 495-6.

together a half dozen of the cruelest wild beasts in the same Command.”¹⁴⁴ Rather than orchestrated brutality, the accusations were found to be the inventions of the former Montjuich prisoners Pere Coromines and Fernando Tarrida del M  rmol and the prosecutor agreed with the explanation of “the military doctors that the very same supposed victims of torture inflicted certain lesions upon themselves to be able to create a scandal, to interest the press that doesn’t reason or doesn’t want to reason...and manage through this method to obtain the revision of their case.”¹⁴⁵ This line of argumentation was taken to its extreme regarding the severe torture suffered by prisoner Sebasti  n Su   . The report stated that since he worked as a cane cutter he would receive

injuries and show scars on his arm and hand and left side, on his thigh and even on his scrotum for working with a sharp knife...Moreover, such workers work on high ceilings on provisional scaffolding so they frequently experience falls that, naturally, produce lesions and the consequent scars...¹⁴⁶

Apart from the absurdity of blaming such extreme abuse on workplace accidents, Su    had actually left his cane-cutting job to become a doorman before he was arrested.¹⁴⁷ Although the campaign had pushed the crimes of Montjuich to the forefront of the national agenda, it was simply inconceivable for the government to explicitly admit such grave abuses.

Since the report denied any evidence of malfeasance, the only way for the government to squelch the Montjuich campaign was to issue a royal pardon, which is exactly what happened on January 25, 1900. Inspired by “the sentiments of forgiveness and forgetting that fill the soul of” the monarch, those still languishing in African prisons

¹⁴⁴ Dalmau, *El Proc  s de Montju  c*, 510.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 512.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 513.

¹⁴⁷ *La Campa  a de “El Progreso,”* 3.

were to have their sentences commuted to banishment from Spain.¹⁴⁸ The Spanish minister of state explained to the British ambassador that the decision was intended to “calm the passions a little.”¹⁴⁹ The pardon was an effective means of alleviating the mounting pressure for revision that risked boiling over after the governmental report denying wrongdoing without fully alienating the army or the upper classes.¹⁵⁰ It also succeeded in splitting the Montjuich movement between those who were satisfied with the pardon and those who saw it as an arbitrary palliative designed to torpedo the campaign without admitting any wrongdoing. Yet, with the judicial avenue closed and the remaining prisoners liberated, hopes of continuing the pressure dissipated. The campaign came to a close.

On April 16, 1900 a dozen prisoners from Spanish North Africa arrived in Barcelona. They hoped to be brought to the French border the next night, but they spent a week in jail before they even had the opportunity to inform authorities that they wanted to go to Marseille.¹⁵¹ The problem was that neither the French government nor any other wanted to take them in. Upon learning that the French refused their entry, the prisoners wrote a letter “to the French nation and its government” explaining that they had chosen France as their destination because “it is the country that has fought for dignity and human justice the most” but they were shocked to learn that the people who “had written the rights of man into their laws” would turn them away.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 522-23.

¹⁴⁹ AHN, Asuntos Exteriores, Sección Histórica, 2751.

¹⁵⁰ The potential backlash from the military was evident when *El Correo Militar* wrote “revision of this case through ordinary jurisdiction would represent an abuse of authority that the Army will not tolerate.” *El Correo Militar*, Jan. 24, 1898.

¹⁵¹ Urales, *Mi Vida*, vol. 2, 61-2.

¹⁵² *L’Intransigeant*, April 27, 1900. They also wrote a letter of protest to Silvela. The olded prisoner, Rafael Miralles, was allowed to go home to Alcoy at the end of April because of his old age. Dalmau, *El Procés de Montjuïc*, 527.

Despite their attempts to play upon the contrast between the egalitarian French self-image and “barbaric” Spain, the French government would not budge, so the prisoners started leaving to Cuba, Mexico, and Algeria.¹⁵³ On April 27 Barcelona authorities once again loaded eleven prisoners onto a ship bound for Liverpool. Although the identical act had caused an international incident three years earlier, the government was eager to rid itself of the last remnants of Montjuich. During an era when other European governments were struggling to implement accords and measures to facilitate extradition so they could prevent their dissidents from operating abroad, Spain was simply trying to get rid of them.

On May 1, 1900, the British Ambassador asked for an explanation of this blatant violation of the agreements of 1897 and a day later the Spanish Ministry of State clarified that they weren’t sending dangerous criminals, but simply men who had been imprisoned for propaganda (thereby tacitly confirming the accusations of the protests), and that they would take them back if they caused problems in the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁴ British authorities were utterly shocked to catch word of another shipment of anarchists heading their way on May 10, only days after the recent arrival in Liverpool. When confronted, Spanish authorities replied that the ship was stopping in La Coruña rather than continuing to the UK. With the plan to banish more anarchists to England foiled, the ship stopped in Santander where the six prisoners were initially freed before being thrown back in jail 36 hours later.¹⁵⁵ These prisoners had initially asked to go to Mexico but were denied. As a result, the government didn’t know what to do with them. After another letter of protest

¹⁵³ González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, 297; Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 527.

¹⁵⁴ AHN, Asuntos Exteriores, Sección Histórica, 2751. Cited in González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, 297.

¹⁵⁵ *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, May 25 and June 9, 1900.

from the Santander prisoners,¹⁵⁶ in mid-July the monarchy decided to solve the matter in much the same way they had months: by simply rescinding the order of expulsion as long as the former prisoners didn't reside in Catalonia.¹⁵⁷ Yet, it wasn't until the middle of September that the Santander prisoners were released. The next month some of them returned to Catalonia anyway, defying the Royal Decree, and although they were initially arrested they were released shortly thereafter, essentially nullifying the final limitations on their freedom.¹⁵⁸ Although the prisoners were freed, there was no punishment meted out for those responsible for the torture. The monarchy simply wanted to rid itself of the nuisance of the Montjuich campaign and move on. With the movement split over how to respond to the royal pardon, there was no public opposition to prevent it from doing so.

Conclusion

For Alejandro Lerroux, the Montjuich campaign was a “clear, concrete...grand and noble” cause that could unite “all the radicals.”¹⁵⁹ And unite them it did. The campaign's broad, apolitical focus on affronts to humanity allowed for the collaboration of republican factions that barely spoke with each other in conjunction with dynastic Liberals who many republicans considered to be traitors to the First Republic, along with the anti-bourgeois Socialist Party and working class unions and labor organizations, and anarchists who until recently were the universal pariahs. As in France, *intelectuales* were also stirred into this mix in a significant way for the first time. As historian José Alvarez Junco wrote, “it was the first time they used their mobilizing capacity to influence the

¹⁵⁶ *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*, June 16, 1900.

¹⁵⁷ *Gaceta de Madrid*, July 15, 1900.

¹⁵⁸ Dalmau, *El Proceso de Montjuïc*, 530.

¹⁵⁹ *El Progreso*, Feb. 14, 1898. Cited in Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del paralelo*, 162.

media.”¹⁶⁰ Like the Dreyfus Affair, the Montjuich press campaign was the ideal venue for intellectual participation since it oriented itself around expressing an argument to influence public opinion. As opposed to the labor movement, where the average worker had a more direct connection to the struggle than any journalist or writer, the press campaign developed a very clear division of labor wherein the intellectual, journalist, or politician would articulate the maliciousness of the atrocity (sometimes giving space in their text to the direct testimony of the victim) while the workers and peasants would endure the majority of the suffering and provide the bulk of the demonstrators to cheer the speeches of more formally educated orators. Certainly the fact that a number of middle-class, educated figures were incarcerated blurred this dynamic slightly and lent more credibility to the public testimony of men such as Pere Coromines and Fernando Tarrida del Mrmol. Nevertheless, it was clear that the prisoners who languished in Barcelona and Africa moving into 1898, 1899, and 1900 were those who lacked the money to pay for their exile and lacked the political connections to push for their release.

Yet, unlike the Dreyfus Affair, the Montjuich campaign did not face legions of oppositional intellectuals or even anything resembling an activist right at all. There was no Spanish equivalent to the *Ligue de la Patrie Franaise* or any of the other anti-Semitic groups because most Catholics, conservatives, and nationalists were happy with the Bourbon monarchy. There was no need for a “revolutionary right,” or even an activist right, in a country with a highly traditional status quo.¹⁶¹ That would start to change moving into the twentieth century, but in the 1890s the closest one can find is a group like the Fathers’ Association of Catalonia against Immorality, but their aim was to inform

¹⁶⁰ Alvarez Junco, *El emperador del Paralelo*, 171.

¹⁶¹ Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

the police about “immoral” or “criminal” activity rather than appeal to the broader society for action. During this era, when elite Catalans felt threatened, they organized (short-lived) independent police forces to imprison their enemies rather than organize leagues or parties to discredit their ideas. As the monarchy faced the growing Montjuich campaign, its only line of defense in the public realm was the dynastic press, since it lacked a street presence akin to the anti-Dreyfusards. As a result, once the campaign started to win the allegiance of more and more dynastic papers in the spring of 1899, the dyke of monarchist stability broke and a royal pardon was issued months later.

Chapter 5: After Montjuich: The Expansion of the “Campaign of Liberation”¹

By 1900, the Montjuich prisoners had been pardoned and the “campaign of liberation” for their release had ended, but Spanish officials had not put the threat of international public opinion to rest. Spanish anarchists and their radical allies had discovered a powerful weapon capable of pushing back against state repression while simultaneously fomenting popular outrage. Once the Montjuich campaign started to wind down, Joan Montseny, his *compañera* Teresa Mañé, and their comrades re-directed the campaign toward the liberation of their Andalusian comrades such as the Jerez de la Frontera prisoners of 1892, the Mano Negra prisoners of 1882, and the Alcalá del Valle prisoners of 1904. These campaigns eventually succeeded not only because their organizers had developed broad transnational networks and alliances with a wide variety of political parties, unions, newspapers, intellectuals, freethinkers’ societies and more, but because the Montjuich campaign had thoroughly convinced the Spanish monarchy that it was easier to acquiesce to the pressure by releasing a handful of ‘wretched’ prisoners than contribute to the maintenance of the international spotlight on their ‘Inquisitorial’ actions.

These networks would be put to the test in defense of the Catalan anarchist pedagogue and freemason Francisco Ferrer who was accused of being an accomplice of the attempted regicide Mateo Morral in 1906 and of masterminding the Tragic Week rebellion of 1909. With the Ferrer campaigns, we can see a more thorough fusing of the models set forth by the Montjuich and Dreyfus campaigns. In defense of Ferrer, campaigners found themselves struggling for another noble individual ‘wrongfully’

¹ Urales, *Mi Vida* Vol. 2, 66.

accused of dastardly deeds by a ruthless ‘Inquisitorial’ regime. Like the Dreyfus Affair, some working-class revolutionaries were reluctant to support the ‘bourgeois’ Ferrer, while sympathetic intellectuals flocked to sign petitions and pen manifestos on his behalf. More than the earlier Montjuich or Andalusian campaigns, the Ferrer campaigns could be framed as struggles against the attempts of the clerical reaction to squelch ‘modern’ ideas and the forward march of ‘progress.’ Many considered Ferrer’s educational ideas to be the embodiment of twentieth century enlightenment. Defending them merged the intellectual struggle against ultramontane ‘backwardness’ and the political struggle against monarchist repression. The intellectuals and masons who rallied to the defense of Dreyfus and Ferrer clearly valued social engagement, but their commitment to ‘objectivity’ lent them a special affinity for these ‘apolitical’ causes that were matters of factual or ethical ‘truth’ rather than party or ideology. This inclination suggests the importance that the pursuit of ‘modernity’ played in their overall worldview and how it had to be promoted ethically as well as intellectually.

Foreign advocacy campaigns and a growing human rights consciousness were not only linked to events in Spain and France. The first decade of the new century witnessed significant struggles against the use of slave labor in the Congo Free State, Portuguese West Africa, and the Putumayo jungle in Peru. While anti-clerical anti-capitalists were the main organizers of the Spanish and French campaigns, the British campaigns against foreign slavery were sustained by nonconformist ministers and their congregations, free trade advocates, and government officials. Yet, despite the ideological and strategic divides that separated these two distinct networks, these activists argued that abuses like slavery, torture, and a lack of due process were “barbaric” remnants of the past to which

no human being should be exposed. The ethics of modernity required that the governments of Spain, Portugal, Peru and the Congo Free State catch up to the values of the twentieth century to avoid international opprobrium. For some activists, like the English Congo campaigner E. D. Morel, attacks against foreign governments were opportunities to laud the humanitarianism of their own government, while for others, like the Irish Congo and Putumayo campaigner Roger Casement, they merely exposed wider systems of imperial exploitation. Nevertheless, these activists and the campaigns they generated furthered the long-term development of human rights consciousness in the early twentieth century.

The Jerez de la Frontera, Mano Negra, and Alcalá del Valle Campaigns

As the Montjuich campaign started to gain popular momentum, the families of other political prisoners began to write to the editors of *La Revista Blanca* asking them to organize on behalf of their loved ones. This was the case with the relatives of those imprisoned after the 1892 Jerez de la Frontera uprising and the 1882 Mano Negra scandal. The 1892 prisoners had been charged with participating in an insurrection launched on the evening of January 8, 1892 to liberate imprisoned anarchists and labor organizers and trigger a social revolution. Shortly before midnight, approximately 5-600 peasants stormed into Jerez de la Frontera as simultaneous uprisings were attempted in three other Andalusian towns. They managed to burn the town hall and local court but several logistical setbacks hampered the rising, which was ultimately thwarted by police defending the jail. In the aftermath, four workers were executed (three of them were charged with the mob murders of a clerk and a salesman) and many received long prison

sentences based on evidence that was nonexistent or fabricated through torture. Four months later, 121 prisoners had not even received their sentence.² Like the Barcelona authorities four years later, Andalusian officials used this dramatic violence to repress the struggling labor movement. While the repression that the Jerez insurrection provoked represents a clear precedent to *el proceso de Montjuich*, there was no corresponding clamor against the mass arrests and torture. Although there was ample reason for sympathetic labor organizers and leftists to agitate on behalf of these Andalusian prisoners, a popular outcry failed to materialize in earlier decades. The Montjuich campaign was truly unprecedented in Spanish history and its example sparked the imaginations of prisoners and their relatives across the country. In his memoir, Montseny recounted promising to help the Jerez de la Frontier prisoners, but only after the Montjuich campaign had ended “fearing that if we ask for everything at once we’d get nothing.”³

Yet, even before the release of the final Montjuich prisoners, Joan Montseny and his comrades at *La Revista Blanca* launched a campaign for the liberation of the 1892 Jerez de la Frontera prisoners in February 1900. In an effort to narrow the focus of their campaigning, Montseny and his comrades decided to put off public support for the Mano Negra prisoners of 1882 until the freedom of the 1892 prisoners had been achieved. In the first call to action intended to “move good hearts” on behalf of the Jerez prisoners, Montseny repeatedly referred back to the Montjuich campaign as a dynamic precedent for action arguing that “it is necessary that we remind the people of the infamies of Jerez

² Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia*, 172-184; González Calleja, *La Razón de la Fuerza*, 238-9; Herrerín López, *Anarquía, dinamita*, 76-78; Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology*, 178-81.

³ Urales, *Mi Vida* Vol. 2, 66.

as we did with the infamies of Montjuich.”⁴ For Montseny, the lesson of the Montjuich campaign was clear: the Jerez prisoners remained behind bars simply “because there hasn’t been popular agitation in their favor.”⁵

Initially, the editors of *La Revista Blanca* managed to garner the support of some of their recent Montjuich allies but not nearly as many as they would have hoped.⁶ Significant demonstrations were organized across the country,⁷ but a number of factions of the Montjuich movement seem to have been burnt out or simply less inspired by the travails of anonymous Andalusian *campesinos* produced by events that were almost a decade old. The anarchist labor organizer Teresa Claramunt argued that “an energetic and continuous campaign is necessary so that it manages to interest opinion to the point where the [mainstream] papers see in the Jerez case a way to sell more papers...”⁸ In an effort to stimulate public interest, Teresa Mañé (aka Soledad Gustavo) organized a speaking tour across Andalusia in September 1900. After sharing the stage with organizers representing workers’ societies and republican groups at a successful event in Sevilla, local authorities prohibited gatherings in Jerez de la Frontera and Cádiz. Undaunted, Mañé continued with public meetings in several other Andalusian cities and

⁴ *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, Feb. 10, 1900; Urales, *Mi Vida* Vol. 2, 115.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Spanish newspapers that supported the campaign included: *Progreso*, *La Publicidad*, *El Nuevo Régimen*, *La Redención Obrera*, *La Unión Republicana* (Mallorca), *La Lucha* (Vigo), *El Demócrata* (Jerez), *El Coriano* (Coria del Río), *El Clamor Público* (Ferrol) See *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, March 3, March 24, and June 30, 1900. In Buenos Aires the campaign was supported by *El Rebelde*, *L’Avenir*, and *La Protesta Humana* and *Les Temps Nouveaux* supported from Paris. See *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, Aug. 11, 1900.

⁷ Demonstrations were held in Barcelona, Tarragona, Zaragoza, La Coruña, Alcoy, Sevilla, Algeciras, La Línea, Málaga as well as Tangier, Morocco and Buenos Aires. See *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, Feb. 17, April 14, June 30, July 28, Aug. 11, Sept. 1, Oct. 20, Dec. 29, 1900.

⁸ *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, Sept. 1, 1900.

Tangier, Morocco and hurried back to Madrid. The day after she left, the police came looking for her to issue a fine of 500 *pesetas* or fifteen days in jail.⁹

Montseny, Mañé and their fellow organizers continued to implement the tactics and rhetoric that had served them well in the previous campaign. They continued to focus on publishing letters from Jerez prisoners and their despondent relatives and, in an effort to further link the two campaigns, the *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca* also published letters from former Montjuich prisoners in support of current Jerez prisoners.¹⁰ The prison letters and campaign articles demonstrate that Montjuich had become a portable motif that could be applied to any analogous case of state abuse. Eight years earlier, the imprisonment of some unfortunate Andalusian peasants failed to spark wider interest let alone outrage, but now it had become the “*Montjuich jerezano*” (Montjuich of Jerez) and the main torturer “the Portas of Jerez.”¹¹ As Montseny wrote, the Montjuich campaign stimulated “a consideration in the popular conscience that it never had...”¹² By the end of 1900, Emilio Junoy, the former president of the Barcelona Revisionist Committee during the Montjuich campaign, started to reconstruct the framework he oversaw to join the Jerez campaign.¹³ Shortly thereafter, anarchists and their allies in Paris, London, Barcelona, and Madrid formed an international solidarity network to defend freedom of opinion and materially aid the families of political prisoners.¹⁴

Although the Jerez campaign had not managed to duplicate the international uproar of its recent predecessor, in early February 1901 the Council of Ministers decided

⁹ Ibid., Sept. 29-Oct. 20, 1900.

¹⁰ Ibid., Aug. 4 and Nov. 10, 1900.

¹¹ *Suplemento a La Revista Blanca*, May 5 and Dec. 22, 1900.

¹² Ibid., April 28, 1900.

¹³ Ibid., Nov. 24, 1900.

¹⁴ Ibid., Feb 2, 1901.

to pardon the Jerez prisoners.¹⁵ Certainly the campaign had not pushed the government to such a degree that leaving the prisoners in jail would have been untenable, but they were sufficiently alarmed by the potential for a Montjuich sequel that they decided to squelch any popular mobilization before it could materialize. While this strategy may have successfully prevented the birth of a mass movement, it also consolidated the continuation of the precedent set by the Montjuich campaign. Spanish dissidents, and anarchists in particular, had developed a powerful weapon to resist state repression and defend their political rights.

Mañé, Montseny, and their allies put that weapon to use again in January 1902 when they started to agitate for the freedom of the eight remaining prisoners from the *Mano Negra* affair of 1882, as explained in Chapter 1. Eight months later, they had little to show for their efforts, but over the final months of 1902 support from the Parisian anarchist newspaper *Les Temps Nouveaux* generated significant foreign and domestic mobilization. Articles from Mañé and Montseny's *Tierra y Libertad* (the new name for the *Suplemento a la Revista Blanca*) were translated into French for *Les Temps Nouveaux* and then disseminated in papers across the country. The French translations were then re-translated allowing the campaign to spread to the UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Brazil, Austria, Algeria, and Argentina.¹⁶ While significant *Mano Negra* events were organized in many of these countries including a large demonstration

¹⁵ Ibid., Feb. 9, 1901.

¹⁶ *Dépêche de Toulouse, l'Aurore, Frontière du Sud-Ouest, Le Radical, Pages Libres, l'Européen, Le Libéraire, La Voix du Peuple, l'Union républicaine de Béziers, le Patriote de l'Ouest, La Tribune de Saint-Etienne and Le Reveil de l'Esclave* supported the campaign in France, *The Daily News, Daily Chronicle, Labour Leader, and Freedom* in England, *Le Réveil des Travailleurs* and *La Bataille* in Belgium, *De Vrije Socialist* in the Netherlands, *Gazette de Frankfurt* and *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Germany, *Le Réveil, Echo vom Zurichberg, Zoffinger Tagblatt, and Zoffinger Volksblatt* in Switzerland, *l'Agitazione, l'Intransigente, l'Italia del Popolo, La Rivoluzione Sociale, l'Avanti, and La Propaganda* in Italy, *O Amigo do Povo* in Brazil. See *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Jan. 10-16 and Jan. 24-30, 1903; Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 2, 118-138; Avilés, *Francisco Ferrer y Guardia*, 135-6.

in Trafalgar Square supported by the trade unions and a conference in Amsterdam on Spanish atrocities, the flame of the *Mano Negra* campaign burnt most brightly in the afterglow of the Dreyfus Affair in France.¹⁷ The campaign emerged as an outlet for the energy that had been diffused with the end of the Affair's "heroic era" after Dreyfus' 1899 presidential pardon and the 1900 amnesty for all Dreyfus-related charges.¹⁸ For months, *Les Temps Nouveaux*, which had remained neutral throughout the Dreyfus Affair, called upon prominent Dreyfusards to support the Andalusian prisoners asking ironically "could a millionaire captain be more interesting than our Spanish brothers?"¹⁹ The paper's editors argued that "saving them will save others" and "it is necessary to make governments see that not for nothing will they turn the most elemental principles of humanity into a dead letter."²⁰

Finally, many of the leading Dreyfusards rallied to support the *Mano Negra* prisoners, including Anatole France, Georges Clemenceau, and Jean Jaurès, while the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* and the syndicalist labor confederation CGT (*Confédération générale du travail*) officially endorsed the campaign.²¹ In their eyes, "the drama of the Dreyfus affair [had] prepared them to understand other dramas."²² Soon-to-be *Ligue* president Francis de Pressensé²³ made an impassioned appeal to transfer the momentum of the Dreyfus Affair to the *Mano Negra* campaign. After beginning his article in *L'Aurore* by pointing out that "Up until now the Montjuich affair is known" and

¹⁷ Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 2, 118-138.

¹⁸ Johnson, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 144-45.

¹⁹ *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Jan. 10-16, 1903.

²⁰ Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 2, 120-1.

²¹ Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 2, 118-138.

²² This is how Jaurès paraphrased remarks made by Havet and Reclus during his speech at a large *Mano Negra* meeting on January 29, 1903 in Paris. See Urales, *Mi Vida* vol. 2, 127-29.

²³ Perry, "Remembering Dreyfus," 69.

establishing the bloody history of Spanish torture and repression, he concluded by arguing that:

Public opinion was moved in the past by the iniquitous suffering of Captain Dreyfus; it did well. If unfortunately, it is not moved before the tortures of these unfortunates; if the good and sensible bourgeoisie that left their shells of egoism and impassivity for *l’Affaire* shake their heads saying that they don’t care about this affaire...we will have more proof that in our capitalist society not only is there no justice, there isn’t even humanity...²⁴

As the Dreyfusard anarchist poet Pierre Quillard recounted in *Les Temps Nouveaux*, once the campaign gained international momentum it drastically accelerated the efforts of Mañé and Montseny to stimulate Spanish public opinion. By the beginning of 1903, many radical and center-left newspapers supported calls to free the prisoners and demonstrations popped up across the country.²⁵ With the campaign in full swing across Western Europe and gradually gaining prominence at home, the Spanish government remained faithful to the strategy it had pursued in response to the Jerez campaign of 1900-1901 by pardoning the remaining *Mano Negra* prisoners in early March 1903.²⁶ With three victories in three years the potency of political prisoner campaigns was well established.

With each campaign the role of organized labor in Spain grew as unions and workers’ societies reorganized themselves after the governmental assault of the late 1890s and the restoration of constitutional guarantees. The resurgence of labor gradually expanded the repertoire of rights campaigning by coupling public meetings and press campaigns with rejuvenated interest in the revolutionary potential of the general strike.

²⁴ *L’Aurore*, Dec. 31, 1902.

²⁵ Spanish newspapers included *El Corsario* (Valencia), *El Proletario* (Cádiz), *Adelante* (Santander), *El Productor* (Barcelona), *El País* (Madrid), *El Nuevo Régimen* (Madrid), and *El Heraldo de Madrid*. See *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Jan. 10-16, 1903.

²⁶ *El País*, March 5, 1903.

Although the Barcelona general strike of 1902 was brutally repressed, costing the lives of between 60-100 strikers, the broad participation it elicited with 100,000 people out on the streets gave many labor militants hope for the future.²⁷ The mounting popularity of the general strike and the recent success of rights campaigns fused to spark a call for a general strike for the freedom of political prisoners during the summer of 1903.

Among the first to heed the call were the workers of the Andalusian town of Alcalá del Valle. On August 1, 1903 approximately 500 strikers, “including men, women, and children,” were confronted by the Civil Guard as they attempted to shut down shops and workplaces. Both the Civil Guard and the strikers accused the other side of initiating the violence that left one worker dead and five or six injured. During the riot that unfolded, the strikers allegedly set fire to the municipal court and archive. Ultimately reinforcements squelched the attempted strike and 118 faced charges. Although charges were subsequently dropped against 101 of those charged (in sharp contrast with the state practices of the 1890s), six life sentences were handed out.²⁸ In addition to the suppression of the strike, the death of the worker, and the life sentences, unionists and leftists were outraged by more allegations of torture that began to surface. By the beginning of 1904, Spanish anarchist periodicals such as *El Rebelde* and Montseny and Mañé’s *Tierra y Libertad* had successfully propelled Alcalá del Valle into the international spotlight with sympathetic newspaper articles and demonstrations organized across Western and Central Europe and North Africa.

An international committee in Paris put out a call for a weekend of demonstrations in solidarity with the Alcalá del Valle prisoners on March 12-13, 1904. In

²⁷ Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 61-67.

²⁸ AHN, Gobernación, 2A, exp. 15; Herrerín López, *Anarquía, dinamita*, 209.

response to the call to action, events were organized in Spain, France, Portugal, Belgium, The Netherlands, England, Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and Morocco.²⁹ Dockworkers in the French Mediterranean cities of Cette and Marseille launched a boycott of Spanish ships, which succeeded in pressuring local Spanish merchants to plead with the Spanish government to release the Alcalá del Valle prisoners.³⁰ The largely anarchist-controlled *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT) in France even offered to launch a continental boycott of Spanish goods if Spanish workers managed to organize a national general strike.³¹ In Spain, quite a few public meetings occurred, but many local authorities prohibited Alcalá protests especially in Andalusia where class war was simmering below the surface.³² The Spanish press campaign made the most of the latest publishing technology by printing photographs of the tortured workers and their injuries. Although the half-tone process of reprinting photos in newspapers became economically viable in the United States and UK in the 1890s, it was only after 1900 that most Spanish papers started to implement the method.³³ By printing photographs rather than drawings, papers like *El Gráfico* and *El Rebelde* gave their readers a much more visceral connection to the plight of the prisoners and lent claims of torture a seemingly more factual basis. *El Rebelde* also printed photographs of the handwritten prison letters, which also enhanced the immediacy of the reader's connection to the Alcalá del Valle prisoners.³⁴ By the

²⁹ *El Rebelde*, March 11, 18, and 24, 1904; *Les Temps Nouveaux*, March 19-25, 1904.

³⁰ *El Rebelde*, March 18, 1904; *Les Temps Nouveaux*, March 26-April 1, 1904.

³¹ *El Rebelde*, March 24, 1904.

³² A planned Alcalá protest was also shut down in Barcelona. *El Rebelde*, March 18 and 24, 1904.

³³ Fehrenbach and Rodogno, "The Morality of Sight," in Fehrenbach and Rodogno eds., *Humanitarian Photography*, 5.

³⁴ *El Rebelde*, Aug. 18, 1904.

summer of 1904, the campaign began to bear fruit when the government released some of the Alcalá prisoners but it would take until 1909 before the remainder were set free.³⁵

In the interim, Conservative Prime Minister Antonio Maura became the focal point for the Alcalá del Valle protesters. At one of the Paris meetings in March, 1904 an orator shouted out “Maura is the successor of Cánovas; we propose him as such to all advocates of individual action” to which the crowd responded “Death to Maura, the successor of Cánovas!”³⁶ Exactly one month later, on April 12, 1904, a nineteen-year-old anarchist sculptor named Joaquín Miguel Artal answered the call. During Prime Minister Antonio Maura’s visit to Barcelona, Artal jumped up onto the edge of his carriage and stabbed him with a knife. Maura received only a minor wound, however, and Artal was immediately arrested.³⁷ In prison, Artal wrote that he did not attack Maura as a person but rather as one who “personified the highest representation of the principle of authority” to avenge “the tormented of Alcalá del Valle.”³⁸ Although Artal attempted to assassinate the Prime Minister, he was not executed. Rather, he was given seventeen years and four months though he died in prison in 1909.³⁹ While the government’s strategy of acquiescence in the face of popular pressure may have failed to prevent this new *atentado*, after the cycle of reprisals that developed in the 1890s the Spanish government was still loathe to create more martyrs. According to the French inspector stationed in Barcelona, the government was even reluctant to pursue the possibility of a wider conspiracy writing that “it was as if the government wanted Artal not to have had

³⁵ Herrerín López, *Anarquía, dinamita*, 212-3. Andrés Muñoz Villalón died shortly after his release from injuries sustained while in prison. *El Rebelde*, Aug. 11, 1904.

³⁶ *El Rebelde*, March 24, 1904.

³⁷ Rafael Núñez Florencio, “El terrorismo,” in Julián Casanova ed., *Tierra y libertad: cien años de anarquismo en España* (Barcelona: Critica, 2010), 78.

³⁸ *El Rebelde*, July 28, 1904.

³⁹ ATSJJC, Criminal, Sentencias de jurados, 1904, Artal.

accomplices...”⁴⁰ Despite the government’s best effort to prevent the creation of new martyrs, it wouldn’t be long before more would burst into the public spotlight.

The Bombing of the Royal Wedding and the First Ferrer Campaign

On May 31, 1906, King Alfonso XIII was scheduled to wed the English princess and niece of Queen Victoria, Victoria Eugenia of Battenberg at St. Jerome Royal Church in Madrid. Given the resurgence of *atentados* over the previous years, authorities greatly enhanced security in and around the church. The ceremony concluded without incident, and the newly wed royal couple and their entourage set out across Madrid in a festive procession to the Royal Palace. Photographers lined the route hoping to get the perfect shot of the royal couple since prominent papers like *ABC* promised high rates for quality photos. One such photographer was the 17-year-old Eugenio Mesonero Romanos who had just purchased his first camera and set himself up on Calle Mayor waiting for the royal couple. As they moved into his frame, he snapped a photo at the exact moment a bomb wrapped in a bouquet of flowers hurled from one of the balconies overhead exploded, killing 23 and injuring over 100, but not the king and queen. This photo was the first to capture an *atentado* at the exact moment it occurred and its wide publication helped to launch graphic journalism in Spain.⁴¹ While the royal couple was rushed to the safety of the palace, the bomber quickly descended the staircase of the building where he had rented a room in preparation of the attack. He managed to successfully blend into the crowd but several days later he was confronted by a police officer who recognized him from the published description and attempted to apprehend him. The bomber shot the

⁴⁰ ANP, F/7/12725.

⁴¹ Eduard Masjuan, *Un héroe trágico del anarquismo español: Mateo Morral, 1879-1906* (Barcelona: Icaria editorial, 2009), 235-6; Herrerin López, *Anarquía, dinamita*, 225.

officer before committing suicide. His body was put on display to demonstrate the cost of threatening the monarchy.⁴²

The bomber's name was Mateo Morral. This twenty-six-year-old anarchist was the son of a prominent industrialist who owned a major factory in the industrial town of Sabadell outside of Barcelona. Despite his wealthy upbringing, he developed a disdain for affluence and even started to encourage his father's workers to agitate for better working conditions as a young man. During the first few years of the twentieth century, he got involved in the publishing house of The Modern School, a "rationalist" secular school founded in 1901 in Barcelona by the Catalan anarchist pedagogue Francisco Ferrer. Ferrer had founded the Modern School with the fortune of one of his recently deceased students from his days as a Spanish teacher in Paris. The goal of the school was to 'liberate' children from the 'irrationality' and 'dogmatism' of the prevailing Catholic, monarchist education. Although some contemporary anarchists objected that Ferrer and his associates were simply substituting the dogmatism of anarchism for the dogmatism of Catholicism, Ferrer considered the school to be the forefront of the education of the future.⁴³

Days after the bombing of the royal procession, Ferrer was arrested as an alleged collaborator along with the editor of the republican, anti-clerical *El Motín*, José Nakers. The charges against Nakers were rather straightforward since he had taken in Morral when he was on the run after the bombing just as he had (possibly accidentally) lodged Michelle Angiolillo before his assassination of Prime Minister Cánovas in 1897. Ferrer's

⁴² Masjuan, *Un héroe trágico*, 221.

⁴³ For examples of anarchist critiques, see: Ricardo Mella, "El problema de la enseñanza," in Ricardo Mella, *Ideario* (Barcelona: Producciones Editorial, 1978); Clemencia Jacquet, "Cosas de Educación," *Natura*, March 1, 1905 and Clemencia Jacquet, "Los factores de una educación social," *Natura*, June 15, 1905.

involvement in the affair was less clear though suspicious. For example, apart from the personal and political relationship he had with Morral, Ferrer may have attempted to pay Nakens to hide Morral after the bombing. Several months before the bombing, Nakens had written to Ferrer to ask him if he could sell some of the books from the Modern School publishing house in order to raise some money to support *El Motín*, but Ferrer turned him down. Yet, five days before the *atentado*, Ferrer sent Nakens 1,000 *pesetas* out of the blue with a note explaining that the money was to pay Nakens for the publication of two short books that he hoped Nakens would write for his publishing house. Ferrer concluded the letter by adding that

It could seem strange that I add two manuscripts from an enemy of the anarchists to my library, whose foundation is, I confess, to make convinced anarchists; but leaving aside the fact you are their enemy, you know how to write things that they would all approve of. Because of all of this I think you can give me two small volumes. Forgive me and don't forget that you are truly beloved by your F. Ferrer.⁴⁴

Even Ferrer had to acknowledge that it was strange to unexpectedly send so much money to a political “enemy.” Yet, circumstances had changed to such a point that this “enemy” was now “truly beloved.” The money and the unexpected warmth in Ferrer’s letter alarmed Nakens who quickly wrote back explaining that his writing style wouldn’t work well with children’s books. The day of the bombing Ferrer wrote back saying “My dear friend: Enough lies; I want to help you in your revolutionary campaign...Do me a favor and cash the check and continue your work...”⁴⁵ According to Nakens, when Morral

⁴⁴ *Regicidio frustrado, 31 Mayo 1906: Cause contra Mateo Morral, Francisco Ferrer, Jos'Nakens, Pedro Mayoral, Aquilino Martínez, Isidro Ibarra, Bernardo Mata y Concepción Pérez Cuesta* vol. I (Madrid: Sucesores de J. A. García, 1911), 485.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 486.

showed up after the bombing, he greeted Nakens by exclaiming “how great that you know Ferrer!”⁴⁶ Nakens helped Morral, but not because of Ferrer’s money, he claimed.

In his second letter to Nakens, Ferrer wrote that the prominent radical republican and former Montjuich campaigner Alejandro Lerroux would be the ideal figure to “personify” a future revolution. This comment reflects the at times ambiguous relationship between Ferrer’s anarchism and the lingering influence of his earlier days as a republican, but it also accentuates the potential significance of a meeting that occurred in mid May, shortly before Morral left for Madrid for the bombing, between Ferrer, Morral, Lerroux, and the revolutionary republican Nicolás Estévanez up on mount Tibidabo in Barcelona.⁴⁷ According to the French police, these four men orchestrated the attack. Estévanez allegedly acquired the bomb, Morral threw it, Ferrer financed the operation, and Lerroux prepared to lead an uprising that would capitalize on it.⁴⁸ However, historian Eduard Masjuan has demonstrated that Morral fabricated the bomb himself but with instructions sent by Estévanez who wrote to Ferrer in March 1906 saying,

Do me a favor and tell [Morral] for me that only in the last few days have I left home since I’ve had the flu, that I’ll send him books on electricity, not having gotten them earlier since I hadn’t seen any treatise on its application to war or anything in the military libraries on rue Danton, and I agree with what he told me that with discourses and little books we won’t get anywhere. I suppose that that you will tell him for me, since I write little and speak less, and the decisive acts, which one has the right to expect, are of the young people.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid., 488-489.

⁴⁷ Alejandro Lerroux, *Mis Memorias* (Madrid: A. Aguado, 1963), 460-62; Constant Leroy, *Los secretos del anarquismo* (México, D. F.: Librería Renacimiento, 1913), 207.

⁴⁸ AN F7/12725. Several historians have found this hypothesis to be the most plausible. See José Alvarez Junco, *El Emperador del Paralelo*, 306; J. Romero Maura, “Terrorism in Barcelona,” 145.

⁴⁹ *El proceso Ferrer en el Congreso: Recopilación de los discursos pronunciados por varios diputados durante el debate* (Barcelona: Imprenta Lauria, 1911), 140; Masjuan, *Un héroe trágico*, 195 and 201.

This quote clearly suggests that Estévez was tasked with tracking down bomb-making manuals for Morral who is almost certainly one of the “young people” ready to carry out one of the “decisive acts.” It’s unlikely that Ferrer had no suspicion about the potential use of such manuals. In his memoir, Lerroux affirmed that Ferrer must have known about the *atentado* in advance. The final piece of the plan seems to have been a rebellion to coincide with the assassination. On May 31, 1906 groups of anarchists and revolutionary republicans loyal to Lerroux gathered around strategic locations at the center of Barcelona. Allegedly, both Ferrer and Lerroux sat in the same cafe, though at different tables, awaiting word from Madrid.⁵⁰ While none of these pieces of evidence is conclusive, when taken as a whole they seem to suggest that Ferrer had some role in the assassination attempt.

Either way, authorities were certainly convinced of his guilt and eager to rid the country of Ferrer’s anti-Catholic Modern School. In Spain, Ferrer’s most influential and active supporter was the radical republican newspaper editor Alejandro Lerroux (who might also have been his recent co-conspirator). Lerroux took to the defense of Ferrer not only because of their personal relationship and Lerroux’s sympathies for the Modern School, but also because the drama of a new campaign could give him an opportunity to launch another periodical after he lost control of *La Publicidad* and a weapon to counteract the growing power of Catalanism in Barcelona politics. Weeks after Morral’s failed bombing, Lerroux launched the daily *El Progreso* and the weekly *Los Descamisados*, later in the year he started the weekly *La Rebeldía*, and in the spring of 1907 he spearheaded *El Intransigente* as a clear homage to Henri Rochefort’s

⁵⁰ *Regicidio frustrado* vol. 2, 456; Leroy, *Los secretos del anarquismo*, 208; Lerroux, *Mis memorias*, 465.

l'Intransigeant.⁵¹ Yet, clearly Lerroux could dissociate his fondness for Rochefort from his sympathy for the Dreyfusards evident in his decision to venerate Zola by naming *El Progreso*'s regular Ferrer column "The truth on the march."⁵² The other Spanish papers that supported Ferrer were only small local periodicals. Given the gravity of the charges and the magnitude of the bombing of the royal wedding procession, much of the republican press was reticent to get involved.⁵³

Therefore, apart from Lerroux, the bulk of agitation on Ferrer's behalf was orchestrated abroad, especially in France where he lived for the last fifteen years of the previous century. Many of those years were spent as a republican and perhaps briefly as a socialist before embracing anarchism only during the last few years before he returned to Barcelona to launch the Modern School. His initial connection with the exiled Spanish revolutionary republican leader Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla opened doors for him to establish himself among the Parisian left. Moreover, while in France, Ferrer rose to the top of Parisian freemasonry by becoming a "Grand Inspector Inquisitor" at level 31 out of 33 possible ranks under the codename "Cero" (Zero).⁵⁴ Leftism and freemasonry became significantly overlapping spheres of activity in late nineteenth century France. As a result, apart from the outrage that accumulated because of Ferrer's leftist credentials and commitment to lay education, many influential French politicians, union leaders,

⁵¹ According to a French informant *La Rebeldia* was started with the exclusive purpose of supporting the Ferrer campaign. AGA, Asuntos exteriores, Embajada en Paris, 5882; Avilés, *Francisco Ferrer y Guardia*, 179.

⁵² *El Progreso*, August-December 1906.

⁵³ According to the short-lived paper *Pro Ferrer*, there were six pro-Ferrer papers in Madrid, seven in Barcelona, nineteen elsewhere in Spain, ten in France, two in Belgium, two in England, five in Italy, and two in Portugal. *Pro Ferrer*, May 1907.

⁵⁴ Avilés, *Francisco Ferrer y Guardia*, 41; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia from November 4, A. L. 5845 to January 21, A. L. 5847* (Washington: T. Barnard Printer, 1847), 50.

journalists, lawyers and others were offended at this affront to one of the more significant leaders of Western European freemasonry.

In order to gain the support of prominent masons and politicians and appeal to popular opinion, Ferrer's Parisian anarchist comrade Charles Malato and Francis de Pressensé, the president of the *Ligue des droits de l'homme*, strongly demanded that the campaign present Ferrer as a moderate freethinking victim of the Jesuits rather than an anarchist ideologue. According to French police sources, Ferrer's campaign was run by Malato and Ferrer's Spanish republican allies though its public face was represented by the *Ligue*. The centrality of the *Ligue* angered many Parisian anarchists who felt increasingly marginalized in the campaign. Their concerns were only aggravated with the absence of anarchist orators at the first major Parisian meeting before a crowd of 1-2,000 in early January 1907 at the Grand Orient Masonic lodge.⁵⁵ Instead, these irritated anarchists listened to the prominent Dreyfusard and president of the Rennes section of the *Ligue* Victor Basch claim that Ferrer was "not an anarchist, but a reformer." Similar speeches were given by Belgian and Spanish republican deputies including Alejandro Lerroux, Ricardo Fuentes (director of *El País*), and Georges Lorand (president of the Belgian *Ligue*) and Léon Fournemont (secretary of the International Federation of Free Thinking) who travelled to Paris to participate. The words of the prominent Dreyfusard and novelist Anatole France reflected the tone of the campaign: "What is his crime? His crime is being a republican, socialist, freethinker. His crime is having promoted lay education in Barcelona, instructing thousands of children in independent morality; his

⁵⁵ APP, Ba 1075.

crime is having founded a school and a library.”⁵⁶ During this period the campaign took shape in England, Italy, and Portugal, in addition to France and Belgium.

Some French anarchists complained that Ferrer was receiving significant support while relatively unknown French anarchists languished in prison because he was rich and had powerful allies.⁵⁷ Certainly the attention Ferrer received owed a great deal to the status he had developed in the Western European radical freethinking world, the resources he had to finance and orchestrate an effective campaign, and the decision the campaign made to push Ferrer to the fore while his six co-defendants, including José Nakens and others charged with hiding Morral, remained in the background. This was the first of the Spanish campaigns of the era that hinged on a personality and a biography. The Montjuich, Jerez de la Frontera, Mano Negra, and Alcalá del Valle prisoners were overwhelmingly anonymous workers and peasants and the international campaigns on their behalf portrayed their torments as primal manifestations of the extreme degradation of the human body. Although the prison letters that sympathetic newspapers published usually included the names and professions of the victims of torture, the emotional reactions such accounts elicited from far away readers were dislocated from their contexts and transposed onto humanity as a whole. When readers knew next to nothing about the victims, they inevitably imagined the heart-rending physicality of beatings, sleep deprivation, and genital mutilation on the human form writ large. In contrast, the Ferrer campaign was less concerned about the physical damage that a firing squad would unleash upon Ferrer’s body than they were about the affront to the principles of freethinking, secularism, and lay education that a conviction would represent. Ultimately

⁵⁶ *L’Humanité*, Jan. 6, 1907.

⁵⁷ *La guerre sociale*, Jan. 9, 1907.

popular pressure, a lack of concrete evidence, and the fear of reprisals resulted in an acquittal for Ferrer and relatively lenient sentences of nine years apiece for Nakens and the two others accused of harboring Morral.⁵⁸ According to the French police commissioner stationed in Barcelona, this was exactly the sentence that Alfonso XIII wanted to avoid any retaliatory *atentados*.⁵⁹ While the Ferrer campaign was occupying the attention of much of the European continent, a campaign against the atrocities of the Congo Free State was outraging British society.

Anti-Slavery Campaigns

As the Spanish campaigns were gaining strength, a parallel human rights campaign was surging into the international spotlight around the atrocities of Belgian King Leopold's Congo Free State. In 1885, after the negotiations of the Berlin Conference, the Congo Free State was officially recognized as Leopold's personal property outside the jurisdiction of the Belgian government. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, Leopold had commissioned the legendary explorer Henry Morton Stanley to supervise the construction of the elementary infrastructure necessary for the collection of ivory, but by the 1890s his focus had shifted to the profitability of rubber. To compel the local men to harvest the rubber in the most profitable manner possible, the Free State would simply kidnap the women of a village and hold them hostage until the men

⁵⁸ They only ended up serving two years of the sentence. *Regicidio frustrado* vol. 4, 401-3.

⁵⁹ AN, F7/12725.

returned with a certain quantity of rubber. If a village refused to adhere to the Free State demands, everyone would be shot.⁶⁰

Details of the slavery, brutality, and murder of the Congo Free State gradually started to trickle out of Africa in the 1890s through the occasional accounts of foreign missionaries and other outraged travelers but the issue failed to break into popular consciousness.⁶¹ In part, this was because missionaries feared that speaking out would endanger their missionary work.⁶² Popular knowledge of abuses in the Congo started to develop during the first few years of the twentieth century in large part thanks to the efforts of an employee at a Liverpool shipping company named E. D. Morel who started to notice that shipping inventories and drastic trade imbalances with the Congo suggested that while rubber and ivory were coming out of Congo, nothing of worth except guns were going back in. To publicize this injustice, Morel started to publish articles, first anonymously then using his name, in several periodicals before starting his own *West African Mail* to expose these abuses.⁶³ Like most Europeans, Morel was not opposed to colonialism or the notion that European governments could actively uplift “backwards” indigenous populations. Yet, his fervent support for free trade clashed violently with what he rightly deduced was the Congo Free State’s utilization of slave labor. Over time, he

⁶⁰ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 64-165; Tony Ward, “State Crime in the Heart of Darkness,” *The British Journal of Criminology* 45, No. 4 (2005): 434-445.

⁶¹ Examples of figures who attempted to expose the abuses of the Congo Free State during this period include the Americans George Washington Williams and Reverend William Sheppard, the English businessman Alfred Parminter, the Swedish missionary Rev. E. V. Sjömbloom, and H. R. Fox Bourne of the Aborigines Protection Society. See Martin Ewans, *European Atrocity, African Catastrophe: Leopold II, the Congo Free State and its Aftermath* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 175-182; S. J. S. Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question 1885-1913* (London: Longmans, 1968), 22-55; Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 102-114, 152-66, and 173.

⁶² Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slavery in Africa, 1884-1926* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 45.

⁶³ Ewans, *European Atrocity*, 188; Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question*, 58-62; Robert M. Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 34.

and Fox Bourne of the Aborigines Protection Society (APS) developed a Congo coalition with the Manchester, London, and Liverpool Chambers of Commerce.

This coalition succeeded in bringing the Congo question to the British House of Commons where their allies argued that the Free State had violated the free trade provisions of the Berlin Conference and violated the rights of Africans. As the Liberal MP Herbert Samuel explained, although he was “not one of those short-sighted philanthropists who thought that the natives must be treated in all respects on equal terms with white men...there were certain rights which must be common to humanity. The rights of liberty and just treatment should be common to all humanity.”⁶⁴ The House of Commons debate led the government to instruct British consul Roger Casement to officially investigate the allegations of abuse. Over three months of traveling across the Congo, Casement witnessed the depopulation of previously significant communities, the forced detention of women to compel their husbands to collect rubber, and the overall tyranny that the Free State had imposed upon the Congo.⁶⁵ When he returned to Britain, his report once again thrust the Congo into the public debate in Britain. To capitalize on this new momentum, in 1904 Casement convinced Morel to form a new organization exclusively dedicated to exposing the abuses of the Congo Free State: the Congo Reform Association (CRA). Morel explained the necessity of this new organization to fellow Congo activist Charles Dilke:

It is this aspect of the Congo question—its abnormal injustice and extraordinary invasion, at this stage of civilised life, of fundamental human rights, which to my mind calls for the formation of a special body and the formulation of a very special appeal to the humanity of England.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 51-2.

⁶⁵ Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities*, 49-71; Ewans, *European Atrocity*, 193-8; Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 200-1; Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question*, 91-131.

⁶⁶ Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 62.

Morel's explanation reveals several important points. First, it demonstrates that the phrase "human rights" was used, though infrequently, at the turn of the century. Morel's advocacy of human rights stemmed from his development of a cultural relativist respect for African peoples and cultures under the influence of the work of Mary Kingsley coupled with his ardent advocacy of free trade. As opposed to missionaries who sought to sculpt native cultural practices in accord with their Christian teachings, Morel maintained a laissez faire outlook on both trade and culture grounded in the freedom to own property. By depriving local populations of the fundamental rights of property ownership and trade, Morel argued that the Congo Free State violated principles of ethical colonialism based on inculcating a proper capitalist mentality to 'inferior' peoples.⁶⁷

The quote also shows how for Morel the violation of the human rights of Africans posed a challenge to the humanity of the English. If England vented its outrage against the Congo atrocities, it thereby profited from using the suffering of Africa to reaffirm its humanity. If England failed to act, then its humanity would be called into question. This formulation inscribes an ethical content to humanity that compels compassion while also consolidating the superiority of the compassionate. If Morel had attacked European colonialism as a whole, he would have forced England to look itself in the mirror and have deprived nationalists of the superiority they could derive from condemning the Congo Free State. After attacking the Congo Free State, Morel penned a positive account of British colonialism in Nigeria thereby reinforcing the prestige of 'good' colonialism.⁶⁸ Lastly, Morel emphasized that a significant part of the blame that the Free State deserved stemmed from *when* its misdeeds occurred, namely "at this stage of civilised life." This

⁶⁷ Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 33 and 63.

⁶⁸ Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 210.

remark reflects the centrality of the ethics of modernity in his assessment of the Free State atrocities. By the turn of the twentieth century, much of the Western world considered the project of climbing up out of medieval ‘backwardness’ to be finished for their societies. This imagined superiority carried the burden of ‘uplifting’ those in ‘lower positions’ and the moral responsibility to maintain the kind of humane conduct befitting an advanced nation. For Morel, the brutality of Leopold’s agents was exacerbated by their rampant disregard for the ethical standards that the forward march of time had mandated.

Yet, Leopold did not simply watch such antagonistic events unfold without striking back. Instead, he continued to wage the Congo propaganda campaign he had begun decades earlier to create the Free State in the 1880s. During that era, he developed experience planting newspaper articles and paying journalists, creating front organizations and faux humanitarian organizations like the Commission for the Protection of the Natives, and creating an influential Congo lobby in Washington. The humanitarian veneer Leopold had constructed was so convincing that he was named the honorary president of the Aborigines Protection Society.⁶⁹ When this facade started to crack, Leopold realized that just as the creation of the Free State in the 1880s relied on his ability to play the imperial aspirations of the great powers off against each other and curry favor with the Western press by draping his thirst for conquest in humanitarian garb, so too did his continual ability to maintain his brutal rubber-harvesting regime hinge upon maintaining enough doubt and contradictory information in the public sphere to ward off any serious attempts to interfere in the sovereignty of his personal empire. In response to a British Note calling for a new meeting of the Berlin Conference, Leopold

⁶⁹ Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 65-174.

orchestrated a Belgian Note alleging that British protests were nothing but signs of “covetousness” and abuses in the Congo were merely “a few individual and isolated cases.” Similarly, the Belgians pointed out that the British had been responsible for their own “murderous and bloody wars against native populations” in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Somaliland, and elsewhere. This note was followed by the creation of the *Fédération pour la défense des intérêts belges à l'étranger* and the publication of a leaflet called *La Vérite sur le Congo* which circulated throughout Europe, the United States and beyond. For the first time, the Free State’s Department of the Interior created a press bureau, which bribed journalists and planted stories in the United States, Germany, Austria, Italy, and other countries.⁷⁰ King Leopold’s sharp attention to international opinion and proactive press strategy once again stood in sharp contrast with the Spanish monarchy’s perpetual inability to get out ahead of any oppositional press campaigns.

Undaunted, the Congo Reform Association kicked off a series of public meetings to expose the atrocities of the Congo Free State in March 1904. One of the most significant supporters of the Congo campaign was the liberal Quaker chocolate magnate William Cadbury whose large donations kept the CRA afloat during its early years. While his philanthropic commitment to the CRA was in keeping with his Quaker beliefs and previous opposition to the Boer War, it was fundamentally motivated by his desire to deflect attention from the use of slave labor in the production of his chocolate in Portuguese West Africa. Especially after the journalist Henry Nevinson published a series called “The New Slave Trade” in *Harpers* from 1905-1906, Cadbury was desperate to rehabilitate the reputation of his ‘family-friendly’ company. Morel was happy to help Cadbury redirect attention away from his company’s labor practices in exchange for large

⁷⁰ Ewans, *European Atrocity*, 202-5; Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 239.

donations. Morel was even willing to defend conditions in Portuguese West Africa against the allegations of the Aborigines Protection Society and the Anti-Slavery Society.⁷¹ Fundamentally, Morel just didn't think the abuses in Portuguese West Africa were especially worthy of attention. In 1905, he wrote to Cadbury,

I hope the Portuguese inquiry will not lead people off the Congo State scent; bad as the plantation business may be in Portuguese Congo, San Thome etc; it is as nothing compared with the situation in the Congo State...which is infinitely worse than the others; in fact cannot be mentioned in the same breath with them.⁷²

Morel was so fixated on the unique brutality of the Congo Free State that all other concerns were mere distractions. To advance his struggle, however, he needed more than the backing of sympathetic merchants. As Kevin Grant has argued in *A Civilised Savagery*, the campaign developed a significant following because of the support of missionaries and Evangelical communities.⁷³ Initially missionaries were reluctant to work with Morel since he could be accused of simply trying to improve the position of British trade in the Congo, and Morel and Bourne of the APS were unenthusiastic about missionary "enthusiasm" and worried that Evangelical campaigning would alienate Catholics. Yet, once it became clear to Morel and Bourne that they needed to expand their campaign and the British missionaries began to realize that the Congo Free State would not grant them the new mission stations that they had long requested, while more freely distributing them to Belgian and French Catholic missionaries, the two sides came together.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 109-125; Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question*, 138-9; Wm. Roger Louis, "Morel and the Congo Reform Association 1904-1913," in Wm. Roger Louis and Jean Stengers, *E. D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 171-2.

⁷² Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 125.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 46-62; Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities*, 77.

Over the coming years, the Congo campaign gained popular support by organizing tours of “atrocities meetings” where missionaries like Dr. Harry Grattan Guinness and John and Alice Harris would present their Congo lantern slides to captivated audiences of sympathizers and sing religious hymns. The most powerful slides were the “atrocities photographs” that showed mutilated Africans such as a young boy whose hand had been cut off by the Free State’s *Force publique*. Moving into 1906-1907, CRA auxiliary branches sprouted up in many British cities and towns in part thanks to the tireless efforts of the Alice and John Harris who held more than 300 lectures a year during that period. By promoting the meetings in their Sunday services, Nonconformist and Quaker ministers spearheaded the popularization of the campaign evident in the shift from large upper class donations motivated by commercial interests during the early stages of the campaign to more working class and female support later on.⁷⁵ Journalistic interest in the Congo atrocities and the campaign they generated spread across the world, evident in the 4,194 articles that Morel collected from 1902-1912, CRA branches were established in the USA, Germany, France, Norway, and Switzerland, and public meetings were organized in Australia, New Zealand, and Italy.⁷⁶ Adam Hochschild has argued that the Congo campaign was “the most important and sustained crusade of its sort between the Abolitionism of the early and middle nineteenth century and the world-wide boycott and embargo against apartheid-era South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s.”⁷⁷ Yet, as Hochschild acknowledges, in terms of tangible outcomes the campaign was far more important for the self-image of British campaigners than it was for the Africans they were

⁷⁵ The CRA even had a “Ladies’ Branch.” Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 216. Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 66-76; Kevin Grant, “The Limits of Exposure: Atrocity Photographs in the Congo Reform Campaign,” in Fehrenbach and Rodogno, *Humanitarian Photography*, 64-82.

⁷⁶ Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 236 and 241.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 277.

advocating for. The campaign succeeded in popularizing the Congo atrocities to such a point that Leopold was compelled to accede to Belgian annexation in 1908. Yet, even after annexation, Leopold continued to reap tremendous profits while local labor conditions changed little. Leopold had made more than a billion dollars in profit in today's currency at the cost of over 10 million lives.⁷⁸ Likewise, the campaign against slavery in Portuguese West Africa eventually managed to pressure Cadbury to switch his supply of cocoa to the Gold Coast. Yet, slavery continued in Portuguese West Africa even after the declaration of a Portuguese Republic in 1908.⁷⁹ Despite the lack of long-lasting, tangible results, the Congo campaign helped to inspire another significant campaign against the use of slave labor in rubber cultivation several years later this time across the Atlantic.

In 1909, a British press campaign emerged against the use of indigenous and Barbadian slave labor to gather rubber by the Peruvian Amazon Company in the Putumayo on the Colombian border. After the company was established in 1907, its owner Julio César Arana had turned the region into his own personal fiefdom where workers were chained, beaten, and murdered with impunity to capitalize on the rubber boom. As the details of slavery in the Putumayo trickled out through first-person accounts, a press campaign emerged in periodicals like the muckraking *Truth* and spread into mainstream newspapers with the support of John Harris and other members of the Congo Reform Association and the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society (the merger of what had up until 1909 been the Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines' Protection Society). Since the company was incorporated in London and

⁷⁸ Ewans, *European Atrocity*, 227-30; Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 233 and 277-9.

⁷⁹ Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*, 127-32.

utilized indentured workers from Barbados, the Putumayo campaign had enough leverage to compel action from the British government.⁸⁰

Eventually public concern over the allegations of abuse succeeded in pressuring Parliament to induce the Foreign Office to conduct an official inquiry into the operations of the Peruvian Amazon Company. As a result of backdoor influence from the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society, the author of the British government's official Congo Report, Roger Casement, was sent to Putumayo to file a report.⁸¹ In the course of his investigation, Casement witnessed a boy in chains for "trying to escape," countless scars and other evidence of abuse, and extreme hunger and malnutrition among the indigenous children. Despite the horrors he uncovered in the Congo Free State, he concluded that "the cruelties practiced on the Indian tribes exceed in horror the Congo atrocities."⁸² Despite the evidence of abuse, reformers like Casement believed they had few options since the destruction of the Peruvian Amazon Company would isolate the local enslavement of indigenous workers from any element of British oversight. In an effort to end the tyranny of the Peruvian Amazon Company while maintaining 'benevolent' British oversight, Casement unsuccessfully attempted to persuade a number of philanthropists to buy out the brutal Arana.⁸³ Ultimately, the British government's Select Committee concluded that the directors of the Peruvian Amazon Company had been negligent, but the Committee accepted their claim that they had been ignorant of the Putumayo atrocities until 1909 when *Truth* publicized them, thereby excluding the

⁸⁰ Jordan Goodman, *The Devil and Mr. Casement: One Man's Battle for Human Rights in South America's Heart of Darkness* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 3-59; Burroughs, *Travel Writing*, 124-6.

⁸¹ Goodman, *The Devil and Mr. Casement*, 82-5.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 112 and 136; Michael Taussig, "Culture of Terror—Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, No. 3 (1984): 467-97.

⁸³ Goodman, *The Devil and Mr. Casement*, 152-3 and 224.

Company from liability under British law. Moreover, the Committee failed to present any actionable solutions. Unsurprisingly Parliament effectively laid the issue to rest.⁸⁴

Locally, 237 arrest warrants were issued in relation to Putumayo crimes but they only resulted in nine arrests of minor Company agents. The most powerful men charged continued to work in Putumayo without interference.⁸⁵

Regardless of how one assesses the importance or success of the anti-slavery campaigns, they only achieved mass influence in the United Kingdom and, in the case of the Congo, the United States.⁸⁶ When we examine the foundations of the Spanish campaigns or the pro-Dreyfus movement, the reason for the limited geographical expansion of the Congo, Portuguese West African, and Putumayo campaigns comes into relief. These continental campaigns spread and expanded primarily through networks composed of trade unionists, anarchists, socialists, and radical, anti-clerical republicans, journalists, freethinkers, and freemasons. Their anti-clerical, anti-capitalist orientation couldn't have been much farther from the Congo campaign's foundation in free market merchants and ministers, for example. Both networks fought for the rights of the oppressed, but the merchants and ministers were inspired by abolitionism while the continental unionists and socialists turned to the French Revolution.

Comparing the British and continental campaigns also sheds light on the difference between reformist and revolutionary conceptions of human rights. Not only did E. D. Morel stop well short of condemning colonialism as a system, his strategic 'practicality' limited the scope of his activism so that he was unable and unwilling to look beyond the Congo. Joan Montseny may have put off agitating on behalf of the Jerez

⁸⁴ Goodman, *The Devil and Mr. Casement*, 244-8.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁸⁶ Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 243.

de la Frontera and Mano Negra prisoners until the Montjuich campaign was nearly over in order to narrow and simplify the propagandistic focus for public consumption, but he never would have opposed someone else starting such a campaign or aided governmental efforts to refute competing allegations of torture. The major difference between the two cases is the politics behind the human rights. For Morel, human rights were safeguards for, and products of, properly functioning capitalism and colonialism. In this view, human rights primarily functioned as a useful safety feature that could alert Europe when the values behind its global conquest were being violated, thereby allowing ‘men of conscience’ to right the ship. For Montseny, human rights violations were not superficial irritants on an otherwise well-functioning global system, but rather the most egregious examples of a widespread system of domination and exploitation. While Morel wanted to rectify human rights abuses so society could get back to normal, Montseny and his revolutionary allies wanted to not only end human rights abuses but use them as jumping off points to push for more thoroughgoing societal transformation.

Over time, Roger Casement came to occupy a tenuous position between these two polls. Prior to his Congo investigation, he believed that “British rule was to be extended at all costs, because it was the best for everyone under the sun...I was on the high road to being a regular Imperialist jingo.”⁸⁷ Yet, his time in the Congo dampened his enthusiasm for the British Empire and reinvigorated his sense of Irish identity. Casement’s journey to Putumayo only furthered this political transformation. Unlike Morel, who emphasized the allegedly unique nature of the Congo atrocities, Casement believed that the Putumayo abuse was typical of the rubber industry. In 1913, he traveled to the Irish islands of Connemara to witness an outbreak of typhus. He was so appalled by what he saw that he

⁸⁷ Goodman, *The Devil and Mr. Casement*, 91.

joined another campaign against the plight of what he described as the “Irish Putumayo.”⁸⁸ Shortly thereafter he resigned from the Foreign Office and started to work with the Irish Volunteers. In April 1916, he was arrested during the early stages of an armed rebellion against British rule in Ireland and was executed on August 3, 1916.⁸⁹ A campaign against the execution of Francisco Ferrer would draw upon both reformist and revolutionary visions of human rights in the wake of the 1909 Tragic Week rebellion in Barcelona.

The “Tragic Week” and the Second Ferrer Campaign

Among the many proposals put forward for the national regeneration of Spain after “*el desastre*” of 1898, one of the most influential was an expanded Spanish imperial presence in Morocco. By the first few years of the twentieth century, European powers had carved up most of the African continent but Spain only controlled several tiny enclaves in Morocco such as Ceuta and Melilla leftover from the legacy of the Reconquest of the fifteenth century. In 1859 and again in 1893, the Spanish military ventured out to put down Rif tribes that had attacked Spanish positions, but Spain had no more territory to show for it. In 1904, the Spanish sphere of influence in Morocco finally expanded as a result of Spain’s weakness rather than military prowess. In the course of negotiations between Britain and France to maintain their imperial equilibrium, it was

⁸⁸ Angus Mitchell, ““An Irish Putumayo”: Roger Casement’s Humanitarian Relief Campaign Among the Connemara Islanders 1913-14,” *Irish Economic and Social History* 31, (2004): 41-60.

⁸⁹ Goodman, *The Devil and Mr. Casement*, 224 and 250-257. Yet, some scholars question the precise linearity of Casement’s journey from imperialism to rebellion. See Burroughs, *Travel Writing*, 122-4.

agreed to allocate approximately one fifth of Morocco (22,000 square km) to Spain as a way to keep this territory out of the hands of one of the major powers.⁹⁰

The Morocco question further aggravated the divide that had emerged between the Conservative and Liberal parties with Montjuich and the Cuban war years earlier. While the Liberals and their business allies tended to applaud Moroccan expansion as a ‘civilizing mission’ that reaffirmed Spanish grandeur in addition to a major commercial opportunity, the Conservatives were not as enthusiastic. Conservative Prime Minister Silvela argued that

we should banish from our thoughts the idea that the situation in Morocco...represents profit and wealth for us, when, on the contrary, it is the source of poverty, sterility, and stagnation for Spain, and we accept it and we have to maintain it merely to avoid worse ills of a political and international nature.⁹¹

Similarly Antonio Maura, another Conservative Prime Minister of the era, called Morocco a “variegated and contradictory multitude of dispersed, unattached energies without organic solidarity...”⁹² Little did Maura know that events related to Moroccan expansion would soon bring down his government.

Despite the Spanish presence, all of Morocco was still under the official control of the Sultan. Yet, the Sultan had only minimal control over the Berber tribes in the Spanish sphere. Spanish authorities managed to maintain stability in their region for a while by working with the local chieftain El Rogui who arranged meetings with mining and

⁹⁰ David S. Woolman, *Rebels in the Rif: Abd El Krim and the Rif Rebellion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 31-33; Eloy Martín Corrales, “El nacionalismo catalán y la expansión colonial española en Marruecos: de la guerra de África a la entrada en vigor del Protectorado (1860-1912)” in Eloy Martín Corrales ed., *Marruecos y el colonialismo español (1859-1912): De la guerra de África a la “penetración pacífica”* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2002), 167-70; Víctor Morales Lezcano, *El colonialismo Hispanofrances en Marruecos (1898-1927)* (Madrid: Siglo veintiuno de España, 1976), 21-46; Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 4-11; Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 72.

⁹¹ Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 8.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 8.

railroad companies. Yet, the influx of the arms trade and mining companies disrupted regional stability eventually putting El Rogui at odds with the Sultan. With El Rogui out, the chieftain who filled the power vacuum was El Sharif Mohammed Amzian who gathered 5,000 soldiers to wage jihad against Spain.⁹³ On July 9, 1909, the guerrillas of El Sharif Mohammed Amzian attacked the railroad that connected Spanish mines to the port near Melilla. The Spanish government mobilized for war and within weeks, more than 20,000 poorly-trained working-class and peasant conscripts were shipped across the sea to defend Spanish colonial interests. Anger mounted not only because the rich could pay their way out of military service, but also because the ships that transported them were owned by the marquis of Comillas who oversaw the finances of the Jesuits in Spain.⁹⁴ On July 18, 1909, a conflict broke out at the embarkation of a group of conscripts in Barcelona. When a group of affluent women started to distribute medals and cigarettes, some of the angry soldiers threw them in the water igniting the crowd to shout “throw down your weapons” and “let the rich go; all or none!” The police fired into the air and hurriedly removed the gangway to the ship before the situation could escalate further.⁹⁵

The government responded by prohibiting the press from publishing more than official edicts and outlawing public demonstrations against what authorities were referring to as a limited police action.⁹⁶ Working class radicals responded by organizing a general strike against the war for Monday July 26, 1909. The Catalan revolutionary syndicalist labor union *Solidaridad Obrera* was the main force behind the strike, though

⁹³ Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 17-19; Woolman, *Rebels in the Rif*, 38-41.

⁹⁴ Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 274-80; Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 94.

⁹⁵ Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 295-6; Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 94-5; González Calleja, *La Razón de la fuerza*, 427.

⁹⁶ Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 280; González Calleja, *La Razón de la fuerza*, 427-8.

it chose not to officially sponsor it out of fear of repression. Clashes between the Civil Guard and strikers intensified the conflict leading to the construction of barricades and attacks on churches and convents across Barcelona and surrounding cities and towns. Despite the important role of anarchists and socialists in fomenting the general strike, the conflict that ensued took on a much more anticlerical than anti-capitalist orientation evident in the prevalence of church arson and the paucity of workplace occupations or attacks on the upper class.⁹⁷ This stemmed from the influential role of the anticlerical Radical Republican Party and the power of anticlericalism to unite the Barcelona lower classes across political divides. By Friday July 30, the violence started to wane as the authorities reclaimed control of the region. On Monday August 2, Catalan workers returned to work.⁹⁸ Although the rebellion had been put down, it managed to pressure the government to end the policy of allowing the rich to buy their way out of military service two days later on August 4, 1909.⁹⁹ The military campaign itself was a disaster. Since the Spanish forces were ill-equipped, poorly trained, and completely ignorant of the local geography and topography, they often accidentally drifted into open territory where the expert Moroccan guerrilla fighters could ambush them. The most notorious disaster, “Disaster of the Wolf Ravine,” occurred in late July when a rebel ambush inflicted 1,000 casualties including 180 fatalities.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ In 1909 *Solidaridad Obrera* had a membership of 10,000 in Barcelona and 2,000 in surrounding areas. Romero Maura, *La Rosa de fuego*, 500 and 519; Francisco Madrid, *Solidaridad Obrera y el periodismo de raíz ácrata* (Badalona: Ediciones Solidaridad Obrera, 2007), 85-112. For the particularly prominent role of women in the uprising see Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 96.

⁹⁸ González Calleja, *La Razón de la fuerza*, 435; Kaplan, *Red City, Blue Period*, 101; David Martínez Fiol, *La Setmana Tràgica* (Barcelona, Pòrtic, 2009), 73-132; Antoni Dalmau, *Set dies de Fúria: Barcelona i la Setmana Tràgica (juliol de 1909)* (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, 2009), 35-62.

⁹⁹ Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 22-3; Woolman, *Rebels in the Rif*, 42-3.

Back in Barcelona, in the course of what came to be known as “The Tragic Week” between 21-61 churches and 30 convents were burnt, 104 civilians, 4 Red Cross workers, 3 clergy, and 4-8 police were killed, 296 civilians and 124 police were injured, 1,725 were charged and another 2,000 fled to France primarily to evade conscription.¹⁰¹ In the wake of the rebellion, pressure mounted from the Catalan upper classes to crack down on the rebels but the campaigns of the previous fifteen years had taught many in the government that wholesale repression could backfire. Writing to Prime Minister Antonio Maura about the “men of order,” the prominent Conservative politician and future Prime Minister Eduardo Dato explained that

Now they all lament the fact that a mass execution wasn’t carried out as if this were possible and could have extirpated anarchism. Repression could and should have been tougher and more energetic during the conflict but now, as you say very well, there’s only room for the exemplariness that results from the application of the judgment of the tribunals.¹⁰²

Although 1,725 people were charged with crimes pertaining to the rebellion, more than two-thirds were quickly absolved or had the charges dropped. Similarly, although the military initially handed out 17 death sentences, that number was reduced to five people who seem to have been selected less for their actual impact on the overall course of events and more for their “exemplariness,” as Dato phrased it. Those sentenced to death were José Miquel Baró who was charged with leading the local revolt in San Andrés, Antonio Malet Pujol who was charged with burning church property and shooting at the police, Eugenio del Hoyo who was charged with shooting at an army patrol, Ramón Clemente García who was charged with helping to build a barricade and dancing with the

¹⁰¹ Romero Maura, *La Rosa de fuego*, 515; Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 508-513.

¹⁰² AFAM, Correspondencia privada, leg. 34, carp. 9.

disinterred corpse of a nun, and the most famous and influential of the five: Francisco Ferrer who was accused of masterminding the entire uprising.¹⁰³

As opposed to the Calle Mayor bombing of 1906, there is no evidence to suggest that Ferrer was the key figure behind the entire uprising, though he might have wished he were. During the early stages of strike planning, the central committee made the decision to avoid contact with polarizing political figures like Ferrer in order to give the strike a broader appeal.¹⁰⁴ Yet, when the strike began, Ferrer travelled into Barcelona from his farmhouse in Masnou outside of town to meet with the strike leadership to assuage his concerns that their plans would fail due to a lack of political direction. Motivated by loyalty to a figure who had donated a significant amount of money to labor struggles and related projects over the years, some of the strike leaders granted Ferrer short meetings where they hurriedly attempted to reassure his doubts.¹⁰⁵ Others were simply aggravated by his presence. Emiliano Iglesias, the acting leader of the Radical Party while Lerroux was abroad, initially failed to attend a scheduled meeting with Ferrer and then later when they finally met grew so frustrated with Ferrer that he kicked him out of the Party's social center.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Antonio Fabra Ribas, the socialist representative of the strike committee, was so infuriated with Ferrer's attempt to influence the strike leadership that he threatened to resign from the committee if Ferrer were allowed to interfere.¹⁰⁷ After his attempts to influence the course of events in Barcelona failed, Ferrer attempted to rile up rebellion in some of the surrounding towns like Masnou and Premià. Although some

¹⁰³ Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 513-4.

¹⁰⁴ *El País*, Aug. 13, 1909.

¹⁰⁵ Sol Ferrer, *Le véritable Francisco Ferrer: d'après des documents inédits* (Paris: Éditions "Les Deux Sirènes, 1948), 180-2; William Archer, *The Life, Trial and Death of Francisco Ferrer* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1911), 143-4.

¹⁰⁶ *Causa contra Francisco Ferrer Guardia: instruida y fallada por la Jurisdicción de Guerra en Barcelona, año 1909* (Madrid: Sucesores de J. A. García, 1911), 35, 334-5, and 370.

¹⁰⁷ Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 379.

minor incidents unfolded in those towns, it's unclear whether Ferrer had much of an influence on them.¹⁰⁸

At the most, Ferrer was one of the hundreds or thousands of radicals attempting to foment unrest and push the course of events in a more radical direction. Yet, the government ascribed his influence on the Tragic Week with supreme importance despite a complete lack of evidence to support such an extreme charge. Ferrer was singled out for several reasons. First, Ferrer's promulgation of "rationalist education" through the Modern School and related projects was seen as having helped to lay the groundwork for a region in rebellion. Church and state authorities took Ferrer and his comrades seriously when they argued that education had the power to transform society. In striking down Ferrer, Spain's Catholic right saw themselves as squelching the spread of lay education. Next, authorities had lost the stomach necessary to unleash an enormous, thoroughgoing wave of repression targeting major political factions like *Solidaridad Obrera* and the Radical Republican Party. As discussed above, rather than carrying out mass executions, which could have revived rebellion, five 'exemplary' figures were singled out. Moreover, the Radical republican leadership happily turned on Ferrer in what appears to have been a subtle quid pro quo with the government to protect their party. Apart from saving themselves, the Radical leadership had drifted away from Ferrer since he supported *Solidaridad Obrera* in a labor dispute the union had with a Radical print shop several years earlier. Finally, many officials believed that a guilty man had been allowed to walk free after the Calle Mayor bombing of 1906. From their perspective, the execution of

¹⁰⁸ Peter Tiidu Park, "The European Reaction to the Execution of Francisco Ferrer" (PhD diss, University of Virginia, 1970), 100-108; Ullman, *La Semana Trágica*, 468-9.

Ferrer could punish two crimes although there was far more reason to find him guilty in 1906 than in 1909.

Ferrer's arrest sparked protests across Europe and beyond. As in 1906, the campaign was strongest in France where Ferrer had lived for 15 years. Not long after his arrest, Ferrer's Parisian comrades formed the *Comité de défense des victimes de la répression espagnole* to coordinate pro-Ferrer activities. The *Comité* united the various factions that had protagonized the human rights campaigns of the previous decade. It included prominent international anarchists like Peter Kropotkin, Jean Grave, Fernando Tarrida del Mármol, and Charles Malato, socialists like Séverine, Victor Merio and Guy Bowman of the Social Democratic Federation, unionists like Émile Pouget, academics like Ernest Haeckel and the Italian anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi, poets and artists like Charles Morice and Pierre Quillard, members of the French and Belgian *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* like Ernest Tarbouriechand, former Dreyfusards like Anatole France, and members of the Rationalist Press Association, the International Esperantist Freethinkers, the International Arbitration and Peace Association and other groups whose membership included a significant number of freemasons. Another notable signatory was the Mexican revolutionary Manuel Sarabia of Ricardo Flores Magón's *Partido Liberal Mexicano*.¹⁰⁹ The *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* and the CGT labor federation soon officially endorsed the campaign and pro-Ferrer intellectuals organized a petition of university professors that managed to obtain 152 signatures including Émile Durkheim and the president of the French League for the Defense of the Natives of the Congo.¹¹⁰ Labor demonstrations and innovative motorcade protests involving thousands were organized across France over the

¹⁰⁹ *L'Humanité*, Sept. 4-5, 1909.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1909; Park, "The European Reaction to the Execution of Francisco Ferrer," 224-6.

following weeks in addition to sporadic attempts at coordinating a boycott of Spanish goods.¹¹¹ Significant mobilizations also developed in Belgium and Italy.¹¹²

Despite the demonstrations and articles, Ferrer was executed in the early morning of October 13, 1909 at Montjuich castle. The sentence was carried out merely four days after a five-hour military trial where Ferrer was not allowed to call any witnesses or even select his own lawyer.¹¹³ The potential ramifications of the execution were apparent to all observers. On behalf of the Vatican, Cardinal Merry del Val even secretly wrote to the Spanish government saying that although the Pope supported the Ferrer verdict, “if your Majesty and the government would like the Pope to intercede, judging that this could be a useful and opportune way to exit a situation, here you have me.”¹¹⁴ The Spanish government did not take the Vatican up on their offer.

The campaign spread across Europe, North Africa, and the Americas but it only hit its peak in the weeks after Ferrer’s execution when more moderate and liberal elements lent the international movement greater support.¹¹⁵ The night of the execution, a riot broke out at the Spanish embassy in Paris where protesters tore up benches and trees, extinguished streetlamps, broke bank windows, and one protester even fatally shot a police officer.¹¹⁶ Four days later, the largest pro-Ferrer event of the campaign occurred when Parisian socialists organized a calm, peaceful procession of 50-60,000.¹¹⁷ The Ferrer campaign mobilized the same rhetorical techniques focusing on the ‘backward’ and ‘medieval’ nature of ‘Inquisitorial’ practices that had characterized the campaigns of

¹¹¹ *Le Journal*, Sept. 10, 1909; *L’Humanité*, Sept. 12, 1909; *Le Libéraire*, Sept. 12, 1909.

¹¹² Park, “The European Reaction to the Execution of Francisco Ferrer,” 298-412.

¹¹³ Francisco Bergasa, *¿Quién mató a Ferrer i Guardia?* (Madrid: Santillana Ediciones Generales, S. L., 2009).

¹¹⁴ AHN, Asuntos Exteriores, Sección Histórica, 2752, the original is underlined.

¹¹⁵ Pedro Voltes Bou, *La Semana Trágica* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1995), 199-206.

¹¹⁶ *L’Humanité*, Oct. 14, 1909; *L’Intransigeant*, Oct. 14, 1909.

¹¹⁷ Park, “The European Reaction to the Execution of Francisco Ferrer,” 266-9.

the previous decade. The protests were often held in order to alert the “conscience of humanity” to the crimes of “Torquemada.”¹¹⁸ *Le Temps* argued that “universal opinion” was outraged at judicial procedures from “another age.”¹¹⁹ Another paper asked, “How can one kill a man in the twentieth century because he is a freethinker?”¹²⁰ In an effort to win moderates over to Ferrer’s side, the socialist journalist Séverine argued that in countries like Spain and Russia “the men reputed dangerous and subversive, capable of the blackest crimes, are equivalent to our Radical-Socialists at the most. There the republican is the enemy: his nuance matters little.”¹²¹ In response to appeals to “universal conscience,” the defenders of the Spanish crown attempted to uphold the government’s sovereignty. As the conservative *La Época* argued, “all the world must respect [Spain] as a society constitutionally and democratically constituted by public authorities who carry out the laws which the sovereign Nation has established...”¹²²

The campaign did not reach mass proportions in Spain itself, however. In part, this is because Ferrer was actually more well-known and highly regarded abroad than at home, but also because of the censorship and repression that immobilized any potential campaign. With thousands in and out of jail or in exile in the wake of the most serious insurrection Spain had witnessed since the start of the Restoration, it was not easy to organize a massive campaign in a matter of weeks before Ferrer’s rushed execution. Moreover, as alluded to above, a number of republican leaders were anxious to distance themselves from the Tragic Week. Eventually some momentum developed among republican and liberal politicians for a revision of Ferrer’s case and especially for the

¹¹⁸ *L’Action*, Oct. 14, 1909; *Le Siècle*, Oct 14, 1909; *La Petit Parisien*, Oct. 14, 1909.

¹¹⁹ *Le Temps*, Oct. 15, 1909.

¹²⁰ Park, “The European Reaction to the Execution of Francisco Ferrer,” 260.

¹²¹ *L’Intransigeant*, Sept. 9, 1909.

¹²² *La Época*, Oct. 15, 1909.

ouster of the conservative Maura administration. After some heated debates in parliament, Maura offered his resignation to the king thinking he would be turned down. To his utter surprise, the king actually accepted his resignation as a way to diffuse tensions. Years later the king told Maura's son that he was forced to "sacrifice" Maura because it was impossible to "prevail against half of Spain and more than half of Europe."¹²³ While the fall of the Maura government pleased liberal and republican politicians, the king's amnesty for all Tragic Week prisoners in February 1910 appeased popular indignation effectively ending the turmoil and drawing the era of the "campaigns of liberation" to a close.¹²⁴

Conclusion

Ultimately, the international campaign to save Francisco Ferrer from the firing squad failed in 1909. Despite this failure, the power of the Montjuich campaign and the campaigns that followed its legacy powerfully altered the government's response to the Tragic Week. In 1896, the Spanish state imprisoned hundreds for several years, tortured quite a few, and executed five for their alleged connection to a crime that left few traces of evidence to go on. In 1909, the government had the opportunity to prosecute thousands of documented crimes and execute dozens with far more concrete evidence than it had with the Cambios Nuevos bombing. Yet, despite the high number of arrests, only a fraction were convicted and none of them served more than about six months because of the royal pardon. Rather than mass executions, the government gave the death sentence to

¹²³ Gabriel Maura y Gamazo and Melchor Fernández Almagro, *Por qué cayó Alfonso XIII? Evolución y disolución de los partidos históricos durante su reinado* (Madrid: Ediciones Ambos Mundos, S. L., 1948), 154-6.

¹²⁴ González Calleja, *La razón de la fuerza*, 438.

five seemingly ‘representative’ figures from the uprising. It’s safe to surmise that if a similar uprising had broken out in the early 1890s, the state’s reaction would have been significantly more severe.

The results of the Spanish campaigns were much more immediate and easily verifiable than the campaigns against slavery in Africa or South America. While the anti-slavery campaigns managed to bridge the enormous void that separated Europeans from Africans and indigenous South Americans through first-hand accounts and photographs, these victims were not really seen as complete equals with those who were fighting on their behalf. This was also true for most of the British, French, or Belgian demonstrators who came out against the return of the ‘Inquisition’ in Spain, but their shared European identity (as disputed as that could be for Spain) and the prominence of Spanish exiles in the campaigns made that chasm much more easily surmountable.

It did not disappear altogether, however. The foreign advocacy campaigns that developed to support Spanish prisoners gained much of their popular support from the promotion of idealized visions of the prisoners. Rather than anarchists or revolutionary socialists, they were often portrayed as merely unionists being preyed upon by a ‘medieval’ monarchy completely opposed to progress. Ferrer was simply a secular freethinker who was targeted for his ideas alone. Despite the elements of truth in these portrayals, they demonstrate how many foreign demonstrators were primarily protesting to defend their own ideas and ethical/political visions, which were to varying degrees reflected in their own governments. Lost in such calculations was the toll of imperialism that the British, French, Belgian, Dutch, and other European governments were inflicting upon peoples around the globe often without any Western outcry. To some extent, the

anti-slavery campaigns and the continental human rights campaigns each encompassed what the other lacked. The anti-slavery campaigns exposed atrocities in remote locations that were perpetually overlooked by Europeans, yet they failed to pair their protesting with critiques of the fundamental systems that allowed the atrocities to emerge in the first place. The continental campaigns often grew out of radical critiques of existing systems of governance and value-systems such as Catholicism, yet they generally failed to expand their field of vision to far more egregious abuses being committed in far-away lands. Over the following decades, more attempts would be made to extend radical critiques across the global imperial system, but the campaigns of this earlier era helped to establish the raw materials for such pursuits.

Conclusion

The international campaigns on behalf of anarchist and other dissident prisoners in Spain represented a notable and often overlooked chapter in a dynamic period of human rights activism at the turn of the twentieth century along with the Dreyfus Affair and movements against slavery in Africa and South America. When granted the historical significance that these campaigns deserve, they help to form a bridge between abolitionism and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and lend an element of continuity to the chasm that often separates these eras in many histories of human rights. These turn-of-the-century movements also demonstrate the continued importance of activism in maintaining a vision of natural, equal, universal rights after the abolition of slavery. By picking up the torch of ‘humanitarian’ advocacy that anti-Ottoman activists in Britain and France had carried since the early decades of the nineteenth century, Spanish prisoner activists and Congo awareness crusaders made significant contributions toward the popular dissemination of human rights language and concepts.¹ These movements at the turn of the twentieth century not only popularized a human rights outlook but increasingly forced elites to take public opinion into account when they calibrated levels of political repression and labor exploitation.

Yet, the mass popularization of human rights and its role in pressuring authorities to take them seriously relied upon (and helped reinforce) a widely shared value system that I refer to as the “ethics of modernity.” By the end of the nineteenth century, the Western World grew increasingly self-congratulatory in what it perceived as its

¹ Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*; Grant, *A Civilised Savagery*; Cookey, *Britain and the Congo Question*; Louis and Stengers, *E. D. Morel's History of the Congo Reform Movement*.

successful transcendence of the ‘barbarity’ of earlier centuries and its attainment of ‘modernity,’ popularly considered to be the epitome of advanced civilization. As a result, campaigns against the “revival of the Inquisition in Spain”² managed to generate such transnational uproar because the specter of torture seemed to painfully embody the hypocrisy at the heart of the allegedly anachronistic Spanish monarchy. In an era that worshipped modernity perhaps more than any other, the real horror behind allegations of immoral conduct was that they threatened to exclude the perpetrators from membership in the elite circle of advanced civilization.

In part, this membership came to be defined by how governments treated some of their most vulnerable populations like anarchists. Despite the popular caricature of the evil bomb-throwing anarchist, activists often emphasized the significant intellectual clout of prominent anarchist intellectuals, like Pyotr Kropotkin, to argue that no one should be imprisoned and mistreated for their ideas. Just as the bondage of the slave triggered contestations over the boundaries of humanity and the rights that it entailed decades earlier, the campaign of repression against the anarchists opened space for activists across much of the political spectrum to resist state attempts to contract the wide breadth of the human. The undertone of the turn of the century Spanish prisoner campaigns was that in protecting the anarchists activists really envisioned themselves as safeguarding the rights of all.

As activists, anarchists played key roles in both the Spanish prisoner campaigns and, to a lesser though still notable extent, in the Dreyfus Affair.³ Especially in Britain, France, and Spain, they managed to form broad coalitions that united middle class

² AGA, Asuntos exteriores, Embajada en Londres, 7016.

³ Izrine, *Les libertaires*.

humanitarians, radical and socialist politicians, educational and freethinkers societies, labor unions and more under the avowedly apolitical banner of humanity. To some extent, the non-sectarian gloss that anarchist activists lent to these campaigns was a shrewd though cynical maneuver to arouse the indignation of their liberal, republican, and socialist political adversaries on behalf of their imprisoned comrades. Anarchists recognized that if they attempted to agitate for the release of the Montjuich or Mano Negra prisoners on their own they would be dismissed as bomb-throwers given the powerful spread of propaganda by the deed. However, when standing beside prominent lawyers, journalists, and politicians, anarchist appeals could be promoted as the universal demands of ‘humanity.’

Anarchist appeals on behalf of “the rights of humanity” were often watered down rhetorically to appeal to moderate allies, but beneath the strategic messaging lay a sincere commitment to the rights of all. Despite the blind spots that hampered all variants of turn of the century proletarian internationalism, anarchism espoused a vision of equal, natural, universal rights beyond the limitations of nation, race, or gender. When taken in tandem with the anarchist opposition to the state, one could argue that anarchists were the first proponents of human rights beyond a state framework a century before Samuel Moyn and others have argued that such a development emerged in the 1970s.⁴

Apart from the relationship between human rights and states, the coexistence of revolutionary anti-capitalist politics and human rights appeals in the speeches and writings of anarchists and their socialist allies in these turn of the century campaigns demonstrates how human rights often intermingle with a wide variety of ideologies,

⁴ Moyn, *The Last Utopia*.

doctrines, and religious tenets. The emergence of the human rights industry⁵ over the last decades of the twentieth century has generated a popular image of human rights as its own distinct, apolitical vantage point for evaluating the world's behavior almost from the outside looking in. While this caricature of groups such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch omits many of the real-world political influences that shape modern human rights work, beyond its contemporary inaccuracy the popular interpretation of human rights as its own 'human-rights-ism' has done a disservice to those histories of human rights that ignore the coexistence of human rights with a wide variety of ideologies. The human rights language deployed by anarchists and their allies in defense of the wrongfully imprisoned demonstrates how rights-based arguments for human equality developed in a wide variety of political climates among a disparate array of activists and agitators.

⁵ As the anthropologist Lori Allen argues, "the term human rights industry (or *regime*, *system*, or *structure*) refers to the material and financial infrastructures that buttresses human rights works...Broadly, it is the complex of activities and institutions that function under the label *human rights*, including the professionals who work within those organizations, the formulas they have learned in order to write reports and grant applications, and the funding streams that this industry generates and depends on." See Lori Allen, *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 4.

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