



Florentino Rodao. *Franquistas sin Franco: Una historia alternativa de la Guerra Civil Española desde Filipinas*. Granada: Editorial Comares, 2012. xxviii + 355 pp. EUR 28.00 (paper), ISBN 978-84-9045-018-5.

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Franquistas sin Franco: Una historia alternativa de la Guerra Civil Española desde Filipinas

In his new study of the Spanish community in the Philippines during the Spanish Civil War, Florentino Rodao sets out to show that the definitive decline of Spanish influence in the western Pacific took place in the late 1930s—not in 1898, as typically assumed. The Spanish population in the Philippines had never been large, numbering only a few thousand, mainly in Manila, even at its height in the colonial period. The relatively small community's disproportionate influence was based on wealth, political sway, and cultural capital, all of which helped preserve a broader "Fil-Hispanic" identity and served as a check on American ascendancy and Japanese expansionism during the first decades of the twentieth century.

The outbreak of war on the distant Iberian Peninsula in 1936 initially raised the profile of this community. The social composition of the Spanish community predicted overall support for the Nationalist rebellion, though there also existed a set of older liberal-bourgeois families that supported the Republic. Pro-Republican activism was limited, however. Its major organ, Pío Brun's *Democracia Española*, reintroduced Filipino society to Spain's anticlerical, socialist currents hitherto invisible at so great a distance, but, according to Rodao, the paper's tendency to repeat "orientalist" stereotypes prevented it from gaining broad appeal in the Philippines. Moreover, the American authorities engaged in a kind of neutrality that worked against the Republicans, banning films and other activities related to the "diffusion of socialism and communism" (p. 64)—a dynamic similar to other foreign venues, like Tangier, where the "two Spains" clashed.

The major part of Rodao's study is devoted to the Right, which was far more numerous and dynamic. As on the Peninsula, the pro-Franco camp was split between the more traditional conservative anticommunist coalition of business owners and conservative Catholics on the one hand, and the more radical Falange party on the other.

In contrast to Spain, these "*franquistas sin Franco*" lacked the disciplining presence of a military in wartime, and all sides were spared the traumas of real political violence. Rather than attaining unity under Franco's leadership, the two factions engaged in a process of competitive radicalization that proved acrimonious for the Spanish community and off-putting to outside observers in Manila society. The strongest sections of Rodao's work focus on the institutional dynamics of this process. He provides thorough analysis of organizations like the Spanish Chamber of Commerce and Casa de España of Manila, the main arenas in which ideological differences turned into political and financial struggles. Readers may also be interested in Rodao's rich biographical portraits of several prominent Spaniards in the Philippines. Figures like the Falangist leader Martín Pou, who made a powerful but ultimately unsuccessful bid to turn the Manila Falange into the official diplomatic liaison with Nationalist Spain, and Andrés Soriano, a major industrialist (and founder of Philippine Airlines) who sought to become a major financier of the Franco regime, are but two examples of Spain's global reach in this period.

After Rodao's skillful analysis of politics within this community numbering some three thousand, questions remain as to the consequences for the war and for Spain's position in Asia. Certainly, finance played some role in the war, with the pro-Franco camp providing about 10 million *pesetas* in donations and loans (about half of amount given by Juan March, the rebellion's greatest individual financier). Possibly the most significant contribution from the Philippines took the form of large cigarette shipments, which helped to give the *nacionales* an immeasurable advantage in morale over Republican forces. The Republican side generated much less, and much of what was sent anyhow fell into the hands of Franco's forces as they swallowed the Republican zone. The Falange, though less significant as a funding source,

became the public face of the Nationalist side, establishing the first Falangist social assistance programs outside Spain (predating those of Tangier and Havana), mounting parades and other public spectacles, and integrating Spanish women and children into the movement. Yet the success of the Filipino Falange may have undercut the legitimacy of the Francoist cause in a place where Americans were watching; the party's extreme Anglophobia and the pro-Japanese gambit could not have helped.

Rodao's accomplishment is considerable. The work not only presents an exemplary analysis of political mobilization in an expatriate community, but also alleviates what the author sees as the "exaggerated ethnocentrism" present in contemporary Spanish historiography (p. xvii). Although a certain amount of navel-gazing may be understandable in any literature centered on a civil war, Rodao opens many paths for more analyses of the Spanish Civil War as a global event. This is not only the story of an internecine conflict playing out among expatriates; it is also one of a political process that was

deeply engaged with Asian radicalisms of the late 1930s and with Philippine politics during a pivotal moment in that country's transition to independence.

Regarding Hispano-Filipino relations, Rodao places responsibility for the Filipino Spanish community's definitive decline on the civil war generation, rather than the American bogeyman of 1898. Through its obsessive radicalization, the community thoroughly alienated itself from Manila society while also failing to gain a significant position with either the Francoist order or the Republican exile. Although not unpersuasive, this argument would have come across more clearly if Rodao had provided a fuller portrait of the Fil-Hispanic socio-cultural imaginary between 1898 and 1936, a topic that is relegated rather inexplicably and incompletely to a final chapter that should have come nearer to the beginning. It is nevertheless a welcome addition to the new, "post-memory" wave of Spanish Civil War scholarship, and should be of particular interest to a larger project of understanding the war's global dimensions.

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