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Passive Resistance.
*Notes for a more complete understanding of the resistance practices
of the rural population during the Franco dictatorship*

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Social Science, Peasantry and Passivity: a Difficult Relationship

The Italian historian Giacomo Ortu contemplates how to interpret the « non-participation » of peasants and shepherds in rural Sardinia who joined neither the fascist organizations nor the activities promoted by the Italian State. He proposes that a more complex evaluation would offer a different thesis than the usual one given in Sardinian historiography: that of simple apathy towards fascism among the rural population. Ortu suggests that if the term « indifference » is taken to an extreme it would indicate subversion among the rural masses. However, if « passivity » were taken in the opposite direction it would acquire a contrary meaning of basic acceptance of the regime². In this article, we seek to examine passivity, which has been one of the most difficult attitudes to interpret in the realm of social attitudes. We shall focus on the period of early Francoism (1940-50s) and on a specific social group, the peasantry. It is quite difficult to interpret passivity, the action of not becoming involved, since it can be seen as a display of disagreement, a desire to distance oneself from the policies of the political system, or alternately as a sign of basic acceptance³.

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² Ortu, Giacomo, « Tensioni e conflitti nelle campagne sarde durante il fascismo », Chiodo, Marinella, (ed.), *Geografia e forme del dissenso sociale in Italia durante il Fascismo (1928-1934)*, Cosenza, Luigi Pellegrini Editore, 1990, pp. 199-204, p. 201.

³ For examples of this ways of interpreting passivity, see Fegan, Brian, « Tenants. Non-violent resistance to landowner claims in a Central Luzon Village », *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 13, 2, 1986, pp. 87-106 and Bernal, Antonio M., « Resignación de los campesinos andaluces: la resistencia pasiva durante el franquismo », Sánchez, Isidro & Manuel Ortíz & David Ruíz, (coord.), *España franquista. Causa general y actitudes sociales ante la dictadura*, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla la Mancha, 1993, pp. 145-159.

As our object of study, we shall look at actions and attitudes that denote passivity and that have traditionally been considered irrelevant by the dominant social science paradigms. These paradigms have focused on the analysis of rebellions and revolutions under the supposition that the historical process is modified mainly by sporadic episodes. These are rare events within the historical processes affecting rural society and peasants and their absence has often been used as a critique of the lack of peasant action. This perspective – which considers conflict and progress to be united in one evolutionist process⁴ – no longer holds; though in the past it sufficed to devalue other types of action as « second-rate ».

In fact, social history has generally relegated these less visible and spectacular forms of protest to the dustbin of insignificance, given that they originated in a portion of the population that had been labeled as « apolitical »⁵. Fortunately, since the 1970s, the study of peasants has been channeled through new paradigms. The new analytical approaches of social and agrarian history have allowed us to question some of the most frequent connotations that defined the theoretical and methodological framework of peasant history. Much reflection and research has dwelt upon the collapse of the classical interpretive paradigm, criticizing its teleological and aprioristic components and offering alternative theoretical structures. New paths for the study of the social history of the peasantry were opened by overcoming the restrictive framework imposed by such issues as the presence or absence of collective action in peasant protests, the weight of contemporary interferences, and the cumulative and linear understanding of progress⁶. We think it necessary to consider peasants and the whole of rural society as subjects capable of altering and energizing their historical trajectory from the parameters of their own daily lives.

This analytical opening in how social protest is perceived becomes foundational to the study of a subordinate group such as the peasantry, who has historically carried out its protest far from the frameworks of revolutionary conflict. In fact, until the work of Barrington Moore in the 1970s, even the role of peasants in revolutions had not been taken into account, either by orthodox social or Marxist theory⁷. With the growth of rural studies after 1970, scholars began to examine « peasant revolutions », encouraged by a socio-political context that favored the rapid adoption of certain categories and theoretical schemes that were shared by the social movements of that period. Among these we can mention the contributions of Wolf, Migdal and Paige, who made Third World countries their common sphere of analysis⁸. These and similar works influenced by the Vietnam War introduced the rural population as a « subject » and actor in social change, but only in terms of its involvement in rebellion. The

⁴ Norgaard, Richard B., *Development Betrayed: the end of progress and a coevolutionary revisioning of the future*, London, Routledge, 1994; Campillo, Antonio, *Adiós al progreso. Una meditación desde la historia*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 1995.

⁵ The author that most established the idea of the peasantry as a « primitive » and « prepolitical » secondary social actor was Eric Hobsbawm, vd. See Hobsbawm, Eric, *Rebeldes primitivos. Estudios sobre las formas arcaicas de los movimientos sociales en los siglos XIX y XX*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1976 and Hobsbawm, Eric, *Los campesinos y la política*, Barcelona, Anagrama, 1976.

⁶ Scott, James C., *The moral economy of the peasant: rebellion and subsistence in South-East Asia*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1976; Scott, James C., *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995; Guha, Ranajit & Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak & Edward Said (ed.), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988; Fox, Richard G. & Orin Starn, (ed.), *Between resistance and revolution. Cultural politics and social protest*, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1997; Colburn, Forrest D., (ed.), *Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, London, M. E. Sharpe, 1989.

⁷ Moore, Barrington, *Los orígenes sociales de la Dictadura y la Democracia: señores y campesinos en la construcción del mundo moderno*, Barcelona, Península, 1973[1966].

⁸ Paige, Jeffery M., *Agrarian Revolution: social movements and export agriculture in the Underdeveloped World*, New York, Free Press, 1975; Wolf, Eric, *Las luchas campesinas del siglo XX*, Madrid, Ed. Siglo XXI, 1973; Migdal, Joel S., *Peasant, politics and revolution: pressures toward political and social change in the Third World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974.

tendency to objectively study conflict typologies beyond peasant uprisings surfaced in the 1980s. Research in the last 20 years has abandoned the reductionism of looking only at uprisings or rebellions, which are too restrictive or insufficient for understanding peasant forms of protest, and has sought to analyze peasant behavior and attitudes from a different perspective. The historiographical error has been the lack of an adequate conceptual instrument for understanding the particularities of subordinate groups such as the peasantry. In our view, the social history of peasants, particularly in the sphere of forms of protest in the late modern era, should be analyzed not from a perspective of decisive, heroic, committed and militant actions, but should instead consider the greater part of peasant existence – the rigors of daily life.

Another powerful myth of our time has also begun to crumble under the lens of scholarly critique: that of blind fury and misery as the only images for explaining peasant protest⁹. Thanks to some valuable contributions from sociology and anthropology, social conflict has emerged as essentially a difference in mindsets and as a discursive confrontation. Socio-economic factors mediated by processes of attribution of meanings and the role of cultural and identity elements should not be undervalued. We think it is important to see conflict as a dynamic by which diverse interests are expressed, which in turn creates room for the differentiation of visions and the modification of membership ties in a group or community. This process also defines criteria of exclusion, establishing profiles for « the other ». On these new premises, manifestations of protest such as « everyday resistance »¹⁰ or subsistence mutinies, which were traditionally considered irrational and pre-modern, can be seen as a calculated response to a perceived aggression¹¹.

Until now, questions regarding the social attitudes of the Galician rural population during the early period of Francoism have been answered with uncertainties, *aprioristic* reasoning and information based on superficial analysis. This increases our interest both in the geographical context of this study and its actors. Finding the keys to the behavior of the population in an eminently rural region such as Galicia will provide understanding of a virtually global and little-known reality. We have chosen to limit our study to the first two decades of the Franco period, since they provide an understanding of the whole period, while the changes that took place in the 1960s constitute a singular new political and social panorama¹². Research is now available on indicators of the attitudes of the entire Spanish population during the period defined by this paper¹³. These studies generally conclude that

⁹ Skocpol, Theda, « What makes peasants revolutionary? », *Comparative Politics*, 14, 3, 1982, pp. 351-375; Kindcaid, Douglas, « Peasants into Rebels: Community and Class in rural El Salvador », Levine, Daniel, (ed.), *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1987, pp. 466-494.

¹⁰ Scott, James C., *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985.

¹¹ González Millán, Xoán, *Resistencia cultural e diferencia histórica. A experiencia da subalternidade*, Santiago de Compostela, Soutelo Blanco, 2000; Anderson, Leslie, « Alternative action in Costa Rica: peasants as positive participants », *Journal of Latin American Studies*, n° 22, 1990, pp. 89-113.

¹² We should not forget that Francoist policies, particularly agrarian policies, were disrupted after 1959. The demise of autarky altered the relationship between the ruling State powers and the rural population. However, we consider the deepest transformation to have arisen from the rural population itself. The characteristics that defined the Galician rural population in the forties and fifties were completely different a decade later. The generational change that took place in the seventies led to a qualitative transformation of society. This generation had not experienced the war or felt the effects of the intense early postwar repression. They had been to school, were literate, and even familiar with mass media. There was also the rural exodus, which began in the mid-fifties and had significant mid-range cultural consequences. Finally, the « Green Revolution » changed lifestyles and even consciences; this technological paradigm brought about the profound mutation experienced by agriculture as a productive sector.

¹³ Among them, see Sánchez Recio, Glicerio; Roque Moreno Fonseret & Francisco Sevillano, *Estudios sobre el franquismo en la provincia de Alicante. Poder político, actitudes económicas y opinión*, Alicante, Universidad de Alicante, 1995; Saz, Ismael & Alberto Gómez Roda, (ed.), *El franquismo en Valencia. Formas de vida y*

during the long post-war years and in spite of the institutional and social mechanisms of the new Spanish State, most Spaniards demonstrated outward compliance with the regime. This was a consequence of the complete disarticulation of civil society through social coercion and State control of the media, which extended political apathy among the population. Yet within this passivity there was both « diffuse support » of the dictatorship and « dissidence », attitudes that manifest themselves during the moments of highest national political and social tension. This was also the case in the Galician rural areas. What emerged resembled Kershaw's analysis of the opinions and attitudes of the German population towards the Third Reich: being «dissatisfied » with specific economic, social or political policies was compatible with generically « accepting » the system¹⁴.

Did peasant passivity imply conformity to the Franco regime?

Social conflict and how it is perceived have much to do with the forms and means of public administration and, through these, with the limits of action that political power imposes upon society. The State and its norms define what is considered conflict in each regime and at each period. The manner in which the different forms of conflictiveness are punished or repressed provides a clear indication of the margin of tolerance and of what is considered subversive by the State. In the case of Francoism, everything contrary to its ideological, economic or social agendas became a political matter. For example, purchases outside the official price ranges were identified as a « crime against the homeland ». Many habitual and everyday types of behavior were transformed into punishable crimes and signs of anti-Francoism. This point is of great importance: since we seek to interpret peasant passivity it is fundamental to know what the State and authorities thought of it. We are less interested in identifying the intent of the subject who acts from a certain disposition than in perceiving the attitude of the State to it. Official documents are therefore of primary importance as source materials for our research.

As mentioned, historiography habitually censured the passive attitudes of the peasantry, considering them evidence of collaboration with fascist regimes. When that option seemed unlikely, the comfortable alternative explanation of the pre-political nature of land workers was preferred. Yet passivity at times comes much closer to implying resistance than conformity and can be seen as a formula for boycotting State policies and initiatives. Francoism sought the complete acquiescence of the rural population, particularly those groups that had experience with political participation and social organization, such as the Galicians through the agrarian movement of the early 20th century¹⁵. Various repressive

actitudes sociales en la posguerra, Valencia, Episteme, 1999, pp. 37-76; Cenarro, Angela, « Las múltiples formas de resistencia cotidiana al régimen de Franco en Aragón, 1936-1945 », Frías Corredor, Carmen & Miguel Ángel Ruíz Carnicer, (coords.), *Nuevas Tendencias historiográficas e historia local en España. Actas del II Congreso de Historia Local de Aragón*, 2001, pp. 350-358; Molinero, Carme & Pèrre Ysàs, *Productores disciplinados y minorías subversivas. Clase obrera y conflictividad laboral en la España franquista*, Madrid, Siglo XXI, 1998.

¹⁴ Kershaw, Ian, *Popular opinion and political dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria 1933-1945*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983, p. 154.

¹⁵ « Agrarianism » was the social articulation of the rural population through diverse forms of associationism (trade unions, agrarian societies, etc.) This self-organization came about as a response to the changes that were affecting agriculture and the countryside due to the agrarian crisis that affected Europe at the end of the 19th century. The goal of agrarianism was to provide a social response to the new challenges that arose from the capitalist restructuring of the world economy and the globalization of the agricultural market. It meant new forms of organization to defend the interests of the Galician countryside (the need for full land ownership, collective livestock sales, etc.). This served as a channel to politicize the peasantry. Cabo, Miguel, « Agrarisme et agrariens en Galice: bilan et perspectives de recherche », en Pierre Cornu & Jean-Luc Mayaud, (eds.), *Au nom*

methods were used to ensure that no stone was left standing from the agrarian associationism prior to the Civil War. The few associations that did survive were entirely unrecognizable after 1936 – they had lost all their prior form and function. The goal of the regime after the Spanish Civil War was to generate apathy among the population regarding trade unionism and this meant disposing of any past experience, even though it also meant delaying the implementation of the Francoist trade union model. We pointed out in another work that there is no greater evidence of the de-mobilizing objectives of the regime – and thus of the desire for passivity in the rural areas – than the period of total absence of trade unionism generated and coordinated by the State itself¹⁶.

The Francoist desire to de-mobilize the population built upon the assumption that all passivity was a success for the political system. Yet passivity should not be taken necessarily as a sign of consent; cooperation was needed from the population in order to impose and implement the various regime policies. Thus, the passivity that was demanded from the population in certain matters became an obstacle to the State, and was recognized as such by the State when carrying out other policies. For example, the indolence of land workers when it came time to participate in sham elections within the Francoist trade union apparatus was in fact consented and supported by the system and never punished even though it was punishable *de jure*. In contrast, non-participation in repair projects or collective work required by the trade union was penalized with economic sanctions and criticized by the authorities as an obstacle to the proper functioning of the system¹⁷.

Apathy and indolence in many spheres cannot be seen simply as the triumph of the system over submissive land workers. We hope to demonstrate that the comments of civil authorities suggest and even explicitly interpret apathy and lack of interest by land workers as resistance to certain projects. Even in the sphere of trade unionism, passivity had more than one meaning. De-activation was initially sought in order to give time to deconstruct pre-war trade unionism at all levels; but the passivity later shown by land workers towards the compulsory Francoist agrarian trade unions (known as *Hermandades*, or Brotherhoods) was ultimately criticized by the authorities. Passivity was likewise censured when it undermined regime programs or activities, such as the low membership of the Single Party, the *Falange*, or the implementation of the social policies of the regime, such as the creation of rural cooperatives. The individualism and lack of cooperation in land workers turned into multifunctional explanations for the weak participation in rural areas and were used to justify the very limited tangible results of the trade union system.

The report by the local *Falange* Chief of the Lugo municipality of Sarria is very clear in this regard, indicating that,

The Falange is unpopular, in [Sarria] the people are indifferent to it, they want nothing to do with anything. That is, there is not even a favorable or unfavorable echo, and anything that does not generate a response,

de la terre. Agrariens et agrarisme en France et en Europe du 19e siècle à nos jours, Paris, La boutique de l'Histoire, 2008, pp. 65-84.

¹⁶ On the repression of the agrarian movement, see Cabana, Ana & Miguel Cabo, « Cuando lo viejo muere y lo nuevo no acaba de nacer. El asociacionismo agrario en Galicia entre el Golpe de Estado y la creación de las Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos », Juana, Jesús de & Julio Prada (coords.), *Lo que han hecho en Galicia*, Barcelona, Crítica, pp. 167-185; Fernández Prieto, Lourenzo, “Represión franquista y desarticulación social en Galicia. La destrucción de la organización societaria campesina. 1936-1942”, *Historia Social*, 15, 2003, pp. 49-65.

¹⁷ We can highlight the dearth of wartime volunteers for the harvest in recently liberated areas, a plan set up under the *Servicio de Recuperación Agrícola* (Agricultural Recovery Service) or the resistance in the area around Santiago to offering free labor for the construction of the Labacolla airport in the 1940s. Cabo, Miguel, *A integración política do pequeno campesiñado: o caso galego no marco europeo, 1890-1939*, Doctoral Dissertation for the Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1999, p. 417.

*good or bad, that is not capable of awakening enthusiasm or antipathy, is something that has no life, something dead...*¹⁸

Salas Pombo, Governor of the province of A Coruña and one of the leading authorities of the regime in Galicia recognized that many of the problems associated with implementing compulsory trade unionism had to do with the « traditional and inherent distrust in Galician peasants...Galician peasants, skeptical by nature, have remained totally distant from the *Falange*. We are established in the towns but not in the villages, of which there are thousands in these lands ». This « nature » was also, in his opinion, behind the weak influence of the *Falange*, since « the backwardness and rudeness of the peasants had them completely bound to the old clientelist system, a dying monster that still agonizes today »¹⁹.

The regular propaganda messages of the *Hermandades*, presenting their efficacy and worth in matters of interest to land workers, are clear symptoms of the trade union authorities' desire to stimulate popular participation.

PEASANT

Do you want to build chicken coops, manure bins, etc.?

Do you want to analyze irrigation and electrification projects with neighboring land workers?

Do you want low-interest, long-term loans?

Do you want livestock insurance coverage?

Do you want the protection of the Rural Police Service for your crops?

*All these benefits and many more are available through the Hermandad in your area.*²⁰

Undoubtedly the most significant document was authored by the directors of the *Hermandad* of the municipality of Ribadumia in Pontevedra. In 1956 its leaders proposed measures in an attempt to overcome the lack of public involvement in this institution. The passivity of the land workers operated as one of the causes of the failure of its objectives. It is also significant because it recognizes the decisive role and deep social roots of the pre-war trade union in the city. This realization led to an attempt to imitate the pre-war trade union, to the extent of seeking to buy the same building in hopes that the *Hermandad* would become interesting to the land workers:

*...a small number of members attended ...this Brotherhood lacks any warmth and energy among its members since its somewhat routine functions are reduced to the annual administration of its resources and the acquisition of disinfectants, fertilizer and seed. I have always considered the best procedure for attracting land workers to the Hermandad to be by restoring to it part of the purpose that the extinct Society of Farmers of the Umia had 30 years ago. The latter ... was considered the most active institution of that locality... first of all to gain ownership for the Hermandad of the building that was formerly the Society of Farmers of the Umia ... for the memory that remains with the land workers ... managed to lose prestige among the land workers who even today do not give it the necessary attention and support.*²¹

The lack of efficacy and inadequate functioning of various organisms was commented on by the authorities in private correspondence and internal reports but hidden in their public appearances and communication. The Provincial Secretary of the Cooperative Trade Union Project (*Obra Sindical de Cooperación*) wrote in June, 1973, about the lack of operational capacity of the cooperatives during the 30 years of their existence. He insists on the

¹⁸ General Archive of the Administration (Archivo General de la Administración, AGA). Presidency. Monthly reports by the *Falange*. Report for the month of October, 1942. Lugo. Box 51/20593.

¹⁹ *Estudio sobre la organización del Movimiento en Galicia*. AGA. Ministry of Interior (*Gobernación*). Box 89; Presidency, Box 51/20586. Report for the month of April, 1942.

²⁰ AGRO, June 1949. AGRO is the title of the *Hermandad* press of the Province of Pontevedra.

²¹ Pereiro Leiro, Argimiro José, *Sindicalismo agrario franquista en la provincia de Pontevedra*, Santiago de Compostela, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Unpublished undergraduate thesis, 1994, pp. 156-157.

disinterest of the population towards this initiative and describes an attitude which could be labeled « hardly respectful » towards the civil servants in charge of gathering information on it:

*... When we began the first visits, in the areas where the cooperatives existed but were hardly functioning or languished ... our presence was taken almost as a joke, no one knew of the existence of a Cooperative Project, no one had the least idea that there was a Law and Regulation that required the involvement of the cooperatives under the Trade Union ...*²²

In a press article that appeared in 1943 in defense of the Francoist cooperatives, Antonio Rosón, President of the provincial Agrarian Chamber of Lugo and future president of the Agricultural Commission of the Economic and Trade Union Council of Northwest Spain, granted that:

*... provincial socio-economic problems had not yet been tackled in the sense of carrying out projects. Lugo is not exactly an urban province and rural organization is still controlled by inhibiting concepts of a liberal nature. We do not believe in the rabid and congenital individualism of every Spaniard but must recognize that the most serious and pressing problem of the Galician countryside and particularly of the province of Lugo lies in the extremely fragmentary nature of its inhabitants. In general, our producers carry out their activities anarchically, in a coarse and primitive manner, constantly colliding with the interests of one another. This is where the fruits of liberalism become most bitter and the greatest resistance arises to adapting to the new order.*²³

In July, 1963, the provincial Vicesecretariat for Projects informed the Provincial Delegation of Lugo of the scarce cooperative progress being made, which we shall see was a matter of interest to the Francoist authorities. The report cites the same causes that Salas Pombo had listed 20 years earlier to explain the languid situation of the Francoist Trade Unions, this time transforming them into endogenous characteristics of the Galician land workers:

*...as for the Agrarian Cooperatives, we must highlight that in this aspect the province of Lugo has been dedicating special attention to this matter, in spite of the multiple difficulties that Galicia and our province in particular offer, in order to achieve the voluntary union of groups of land workers into cooperatives. These difficulties are due to the low cultural level that unfortunately persists in our rural areas as a consequence of the great dispersion of its relatively isolated rural population, the condition of many of the roads and the lack of a high economic standard of living...*²⁴

Sometimes the authorities were more explicit and spoke openly of the « lack of interest » found in the population as the main cause for the failure of their projects. When listing the difficulties that were encountered by the technicians of the Cooperative Trade Union Project in establishing a planned cooperative in the province of Lugo, they conclude in their report that « our final impression is heavily pessimistic and we consider any sort of project virtually impossible ». Eight reasons are mentioned, problems such as the miniature landholdings, pitiful roads and lack of running water; and also, « in spite of everything, the most serious inconvenience is the lack of interest of the people of that area proof of which can be found in the fact that only three people came to the meeting...»²⁵. In 1969, a report sent by the Provincial Delegate of the Trade Union Organization in Lugo regarding the progress of the rural cooperatives listed a whole series of cooperatives that had had no administrative activity

²² Provincial Historical Archive of Lugo (Archivo Histórico Provincial de Lugo, AHPL). AISS. Box 1560.

²³ EL PROGRESO, 18-7-1943. EL PROGRESO is the periodical of the Province of Lugo.

²⁴ AHPL. AISS. Box 1560.

²⁵ AHPL. AISS. Report of activities. Minutes 1953-1976. Dossier 1560.

since their foundation (23 were recognized as only existing on paper). The reasons listed for the failure echo those already listed for the other cooperative²⁶.

Historian Antonio Bernárdez refers to the poor implementation of the Galician Agricultural Plan, the lack of economic means and other obstacles such as the internal corporative conflicts between veterinarians and agronomists. These serve as evidence of the passivity of the land workers, which impeded progress of activities such as agricultural education²⁷. This was the case with courses proposed by the Trade Union Headquarters (*Central Sindical*) and conferences given by engineers, who found they had to pay people in order to get anyone to attend. One of the most prominent Francoist projects for rural Galicia was to foster specialization in the provision of livestock and forestry products. Though cloaked in paternalist discourse by technicians and politicians, its failure was in large part blamed on the disagreeable and passive behavior of the land workers. In contrast with the pre-war period, it clearly illustrates how, in spite of coercive pressure by an authoritarian political system, absenteeism existed in this sphere after the Civil War. The Francoist objective of social demobilization to strengthen control over individuals turned against the regime when it sought to involve the population in socio-economic projects.

Along these lines of land worker passivity and non-cooperation as a weapon against an attempt at social control, we find the neglect of the rural population to respond to the proposal for Livestock Insurance Services within the Francoist trade union. Its purpose was to build a single association and simultaneously destroy all pre-existing associationism in the insurance mutuals. In February of 1945 the authorities made public the benefits of this proposal and established precise and proximate dates for the initiative to begin.

*A Provincial Livestock Mutual will be created to look after your goods, preserving them from death and disaster. It will not be a new organism, but rather the extension and unification of all the regulations of the Mutual Associations that you already know, unifying their experience and knowledge into a single set of norms. All those interested in livestock shall participate in the assembly of the 28th. Ask the Secretary of your Brotherhood to explain the project, presented by the Provincial Livestock Trade Union, and take note of your amendments to the articles in order for them to be recognized at the Provincial Assembly. With a single Mutual, you will ensure the immediate end of your fees and the preservation of your assets from any risk.*²⁸

Lack of cooperation led the authorities to choose a less ambitious plan in January of 1946. A year later, the report on their experience indicated that the results obtained « demonstrate the impossibility of continuing with this form of organization and procedures »²⁹. In 1949 the creation of Livestock Insurance Mutuals in three municipalities were announced, with five more to be organized « shortly »³⁰. The apathy of the land workers was so great that an initiative launched in 1945 was still being announced four years later in the trade union press as an action still to be launched. This was a poor outcome for an initiative that the trade union authorities considered a priority task and expected to be successful³¹. Such a display of disinterest by the land workers, along with the proliferation of parish livestock mutuals outside the channels of official trade unionism in those years, constitute an example of how land workers could show inconformity by passively renouncing a State initiative that was *not*

²⁶ AHPL. AISS. Correspondence.

²⁷ Bernárdez, Antonio, *A planificación agraria na Galicia da autarquía (1939-1955)*, Santiago de Compostela, Xunta de Galicia, 1999; Bernárdez, Antonio & Miguel Cabo, « Dous aspectos da política agraria do primeiro franquismo en Galicia. O Plan Agrícola de Galicia e a Estación de Fitopatoloxía Agrícola de A Coruña », *Historia Nova II*, Noia, Asociación Galega de Historiadores 1994, pp. 187-207.

²⁸ AGRO, February, 1945.

²⁹ AGRO, February, 1947.

³⁰ AGRO, May, 1949.

³¹ AGRO, June, 1949.

contrary to their interests and had in fact been one of the most requested measures prior to the Civil War³².

The themes of « individualism » and « backwardness » stated by the authorities along with comments regarding land workers' ignorance as reasons for the passivity that hindered their intentions and projects became the discursive recourse of the regime in order to hide its poor results. Salas Pombo suggested that publicity actions should « adapt to the level of the recipients of the propaganda, with a program based on the facts, since the recipients were too limited to be able to retain or assimilate ». As early as 1938, the Civil Governor of Lugo, when referring to the « process of internalizing » the principles of the regime, pointed out the serious problems in winning over the « ignorant rural peasant masses » because « the poor country people, uneducated and backwards, have not yet understood the spirit of justice that is the basis for the Glorious Movement »³³. The Francoist authorities did not intend these stereotypical prejudices to provide land workers with a discourse of resistance, but they did. Such labels were used as « weapons of the weak »³⁴, allowing land workers to disguise their non-cooperative attitudes towards the regime and elude the effects of repressive action. The mask of ignorance, like that of false submission, served as a strategy to minimize domination³⁵.

By way of a conclusion

Our intent has been to rehabilitate forms of protest that have the common characteristic of leaving few tracks, but serve to hide if not the desire for social and political change, at least an interest in changing certain institutional dispositions. In this sense, they can also transform the dominant quorum, as part of the political process, *without* openly challenging the State. Using official documents from the Franco regime, we have attempted to demonstrate how in many cases passivity and inhibition were not indicative of harmony or consent towards the State, its cronies or its policies. To the contrary, these cases show non-cooperation and aloofness from the initiatives of the administration, which the State understood as resistance to its intent to control the population and successfully implement its projects. We concur with Fernández Vargas, who concludes that « it is possible to say that the internal exile generated civic resistance »³⁶. This explains why the authorities imposed more active forms of engagement with the policies and new symbols of the regime. Popular subscriptions are an example and had been used for several social and political ends prior to the Civil War, but the wartime period resulted in new institutional fundraising. The most prominent causes were those of the *Falange* and others directed at funding Social Aid (*Auxilio Social*). These were masked but real confiscations that were used to determine the level of political subordination and acquiescence. Only ostentatious acceptance and enthusiastic participation were considered adequate indication of « adherence » to the regime, and avoided penalization by one law or another.

³² The decline of the mutuels took place in the seventies, not due to the trade-unionism of the regime, but due to improvement in rural economic conditions, which allowed the livestock owners to assume the losses incurred due to sicknesses or deaths using their own means.

³³ AHPL. Civil Government. Signature 12702.

³⁴ Scott, James C., *Weapons of the weak... op. cit.*

³⁵ This was the case with the members of the *Sindicato de Agricultores y Oficios Varios* in Vilar de Mouros, in the municipality of A Capela, province of A Coruña. In spite of their membership in the anarchist trade union *Central Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT)*, these individuals continued to work together even after the organization had been shut down. They managed to get categorized as « individuals of a rudimentary culture that have no knowledge of the most basic principles of politics and only care about farming and caring for their livestock ». AGA. Justicia. Box 75/951.

³⁶ Fernández Vargas, Valentina, *La resistencia interior en la España de Franco*, Madrid, Istmo, 1981, p. 48.

Rural collaboration with Francoist actions has often been emphasized without explaining the diversity of social attitudes, whether passivity, resignation or adaptation, that arose in the extremely difficult conditions of the post-war period. Our analysis diverges from this vision. First of all, our approach verifies that the deliberate image projected by the Franco regime through its publicity and censorship had a deep effect on collective memory. It managed to to hide, nullify and condemn to forgetfulness many manifestations of dissidence and a whole repertoire of passivity-based attitudes of rejection and hostility. Second, the passivity initially sought by the regime later resulted in resistance to the implementation of its policies. This variable should be included in the analysis of that time as an aspect that heavily influenced the reality of protest and ultimately the rural population's choice of an attitude towards the system.