

## Chapter 7

### Music, power and violence in NO-DO: Folkloric cultures in 1940s Francoist cinema

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#### Abstract

During the Spanish Civil War and the years immediately after it, the Franco regime established its structures of political, ideological, moral and cultural governance using formulas that were characteristic of a colonial state: violence, invasion of territory, purging of all opposition and control and surveillance of the population. Folkloric music traditions acquired an important role in the achievement of the aims of state policy, as they were placed at the service of both domestic and international legitimation of the regime at times of serious crisis.

This chapter analyses the rhetorical and narrative strategies and the ways the regime used and represented Spain's musical heritage, which was objectified and **folklorised** in the cinematic propaganda of the NO-DO newsreels throughout the 1940s and served as an instrument of legitimation to ensure public acceptance of Francisco Franco's long rule over Spain. At the same time, it offers an epistemological reflection from the perspective of gender and feminist anthropology, considering how women and the feminisation of Spanish folkloric traditions constituted an essential part of the regime's strategy.

#### Introduction

At 10:30 p.m. on 1 April 1939, the actor and radio announcer Fernando Fernández de Córdoba read out the final official war report on Radio Nacional de España (**Spanish state-sponsored radio**) in Madrid. It was the announcement that declared the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and the establishment of Franco's dictatorship. A few months later, Spain entered the 1940s, a decade of severe repression in every dimension of human life: economic, social, spiritual, ontological and cultural. In this context, the inhabitants of Spain's diverse regions could view one another

with the kind of solidarity that unites victims of the same process of terror, violence, torture, hatred and suffering.

Antonio Gramsci argued that no domination can last without the passive consent of the dominated. To ensure the subjugation of the Spanish population and its subsequent acceptance of the Franco regime, the structures of governance—political, linguistic, ideological, moral and cultural—were established based on formulas that were characteristic of a colonial state: violence, invasion, the purging of any sign of opposition, and the consolidation of the regime initially by force and subsequently by passive acceptance. However, to secure the state of constant control and surveillance achieved by the long-lasting Franco regime, criminal violence alone was not enough. To hold onto power for 40 years it had to mutate, to develop subtler strategies of violence and to manipulate the rhetoric, even when this resulted in paradoxes.

The brutal violence and hatemongering employed as part of the wartime measures of so many totalitarian states is the first step in a series of repressive strategies. In the case of Francoism, the scale of the moral barbarity to which the Spanish population was subjected during the Civil War and the years immediately after it (the first years of the 1940s) was huge, as the atrocities targeted the ontological consciousness of the opposition. Those who resisted were ultimately unable to bear any more of the dehumanisation, cruelty, pain and anguish caused by the violence they suffered. The absence of moral restraint that marked those first years of the regime, in which any kind of heinous act could be committed, was essential to impose the rule of an illegitimate political system, as it established a frame of reference that paralysed the individual through terror. However, as the French post-structuralists point out, no regime can maintain control through the use of brutal violence alone. Both Foucault's concept of the genealogy of power and decolonial subaltern studies show that once such violence has been taken to its limit, the regime (in colonial systems that first invade the territory and then seek to impose their control over the colony) must produce "things" and "discourses" to subjugate the colonised. The "things" have to do with the process of legitimisation: a regime that builds housing, bridges, infrastructure, etc., develops an image of itself over "others" with a powerful symbolic effect because it benefits, protects, provides, and gives (Foucault 1978.) The "discourse" on the colonised is related to the

individual's acceptance of this new structure: the regime must produce a representation of the subaltern whereby subjects can recognise themselves in the new order of things and in the new place assigned to them in this system, even though that representation may be a distortion of who they really are (Fanon 1970.) In other words, the regime produces an image of itself but also a representation of the colonised in the framework of colonial rule. "An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation" (Bhabha 1994, 75.)

It is here that cinema becomes a *dispositif* of power, as it constitutes a machinery of representation in which subalterns can see themselves represented in the new order. It is also here that music ceases to be something through which we can represent ourselves freely and becomes a tool of domination, repression, indoctrination and violence. Music also colonises, disciplines, indoctrinates and even tortures. From this anthropological and political perspective, music is no longer an artistic or creative activity; instead, it is a tool for controlling and repressing bodies—especially women's bodies, as will be shown here. This is why women were always the object in the representation of subjugated alterity: as subalterns, they were (re)presented sewing, cleaning, or caring for the children in the domestic space, as well as singing and dancing in a submissive, feminine horizontality subordinated to the verticality and vigorous strength of men (Bourdieu 1980.)

The aim of this chapter is to show how this state violence was perpetrated on Spanish women in the 1940s through music, and how this enabled the Franco regime to control the population. It also explores the role played by the NO-DO (*Noticiario Documental*, or **Spanish state-sponsored Documentary Newsreels**) in securing the legitimacy that the regime did not have in Spain in 1939 but that it ultimately achieved through passive acceptance over the years.

### **Contextualisation and theoretical framework**

NO-DO was the Franco regime's cinematic propaganda tool. It was created by a resolution of the Vice-Secretariat for Popular Education on 29 September 1942 and by a second resolution by the

same authority on 17 December 1942, as a service for the production of news reports filmed in Spain and abroad “with the aim of maintaining a national cinematic information service with its own resources and suitable guidelines” (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca 2006, 13.)

The cinematic project was launched in early 1943, with the release of a 23-minute newsreel on 4 January (RTVE 1943a) (although as the years passed the length of newsreels would be reduced, ultimately stabilising at around 10 minutes.) That day marked the beginning of a state film project whose intention was to control, produce and reproduce the information that reached the Spanish population and the colonies under Spanish rule (Rodríguez Martínez 1999; Sánchez-Biosca 2014; Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca 2006.)

NO-DO was given exclusive control over news production, and the screening of the newsreels prior to the presentation of feature films in cinemas was made compulsory. This requirement remained in force for 33 years throughout Spain’s national territory, possessions and colonies until 22 August 1975, when it was struck down by an Order of the Ministry of Information and Tourism (which took effect in January 1976.) From that time on, screening the newsreels became optional, and despite the fact that Franco had died in November 1975 and Spain’s first parliamentary elections were held in June 1977, their production would not cease entirely until 1983, when NO-DO employees would be transferred to Spain’s national public broadcaster, Radio Televisión Española (RTVE.)

Our understanding of the internal chronology of the Franco regime is hampered by a lack of consensus among historians specializing in the period. Nevertheless, the first years of NO-DO can be considered to coincide with the “blue era of apparent Falangist dominance” (Preston 2003, 108), also referred to as the “national syndicalist” period (Moradiellos 2003, 27.) It was thus created in the shadow of two wars: one a domestic conflict and the other an international war with a huge political impact on Spain. With the final capitulation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in 1945, the Franco regime was faced with the urgent need to shift its political and diplomatic image, both within the country itself and on the world stage. NO-DO was used for this purpose, and to address these domestic and international political needs, music became a state matter; Franco’s Spain was

also created by dancing (Busto Miramontes 2012, 2021; Casero 2000; Martínez del Fresno 2013; Núñez Seixas 2021; Ortiz 1997, 2012.)

Throughout the regime's 40 years, probably the only three constants of Francoism were legitimization, mutation and contradiction: as a government imposed by means of territorial invasion, it was always in need of legitimization and was therefore constantly compelled to navigate between rhetorical extremes. In the process, it was always having to manage dramatic ideological contradictions.

This constant need for legitimization and acceptance is why Hispanists specialising in Francoism, such as Stanley Payne (1987, 2005) and Paul Preston (1999, 2006, 2011), argue that the Franco regime was not truly fascist, despite the fact that it never fully dissociated itself from fascist ideology. It was fascist when it needed to be (in the 1940s), it referred to itself as "organic Catholic democracy" when it needed to abandon fascism (in the 1950s), it was anti-communist and pro-capitalist during its developmentalist period,<sup>1</sup> and it was progressive when students and workers began protesting in May 1968 (1960s and 1970s.) Nevertheless, Francoism did take inspiration from German Nazism and Italian Fascism, and two products of that inspiration were the creation of NO-DO and the exploitation of Spanish folkloric traditions.

Like the regime that founded it, NO-DO itself evolved, offering a portrait of the regime's changing interests, conflicts, crises (reflected more in their deliberate omission than in their inclusion in the news coverage), advances and changes. The music featured in NO-DO newsreels changed as well, as it supported the regime's performativity of itself and its paradoxes.

### **(Not really) folkloric music in NO-DO**

Altered representations of the folkloric music of the regions of the Spanish state are everywhere in NO-DO newsreel footage. Music in general (but especially folkloric music) occupied a prominent place in Francoist cinema, as it could make an oppressive regime appear more agreeable to much of the population. However, the aim of its use was not to provide the Spanish people with a musical culture, as it was in Europe's other totalitarian states. The most prominent uses of music in NO-DO are associated with the version of folkloric traditions created by the

regime's own agencies or with a strategy of rhetorical beautification of all kinds of "soft news" (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca 2012), involving stories of no real consequence (a skating elephant, for example) whose production date is impossible to determine.

In the new national project forcibly imposed on Spain, folkloric music came to be of vital importance. In the same way that other totalitarian regimes had used cultural elements as national emblems, the Franco regime attempted to exploit Spanish folkloric traditions. However, Spain's identity was (and still is) complicated by the fact of its regional diversity, in economic, linguistic, cultural and musical terms.<sup>2</sup> This meant that in the absence of a single folkloric tradition—which, from an anthropological perspective, is probably impossible without processes of cultural invention (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983)—the folkloric traditions of Spain's different regions had to be used to "unite" rather than separate the country.

As contradiction was an inherent feature of the Francoist state, the issue of Spain's diversity was resolved with the assertion that the differences that existed between the various regions were merely superficial, while the qualities that united them were much more powerful than those that separated them. Each specific cultural characteristic was thus subjected to a process of cultural assimilation and symbolic deactivation. Moreover, the regime that had been forcibly imposed on the Spanish people, in addition to being ultra-Spanish, was also ultra-Catholic, which meant that folkloric traditions not only had to serve national unity but also to uphold moral decorum. This aspect made Francoism markedly different from Nazism and Italian Fascism, both of which outright rejected the fervent, moralist, puritanical and repressive religiosity that characterised Spanish Catholicism.

Paradoxically, this mission was placed in the hands of women: Sección Femenina de Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS, an organisation founded by Pilar Primo de Rivera<sup>3</sup> in 1937 in imitation of Nazi Germany's Frauenschaft (Jordan 2019, 546), which would be responsible for the education, indoctrination and discipline of Spanish women throughout the 40 years of the dictatorship (Richmond 2004.) It was also the female branch of the Spanish Falange, the fascist political party founded in 1934 by Primo de Rivera's brother, José Antonio Primo de Rivera. In 1938, Sección Femenina established its own Department of Music, which was given

the mission of recovering “authentic” Spanish folkloric traditions. As a result, the official responsibility for the reproduction, transmission and especially representation of folkloric music was assumed by a government organisation: Coros y Danzas de España.

Coros y Danzas held such extraordinary control over the reproduction and representation of Spanish music that NO-DO newsreels contain practically no music other than the simplistic folkloric styles performed by this organisation. This meant that the only folkloric music shown on Spanish film screens for nearly 40 years (and which filmgoers were under obligation to watch) was the Falangist version of folkloric traditions approved by Sección Femenina. In short, “the Spain that danced with Franco” (Casero 2000) was Francoist, Catholic, misogynistic and stereotypically Spanish, and outside this model there was no folkloric music in Spain according to the NO-DO newsreels.

Coros y Danzas and its directors (with Pilar Primo de Rivera at the helm) became the ideologues and architects of the “new” folkloric project for Spain, responsible for turning it into much more than a purely musical phenomenon, so that instead it became an act of political violence. The NO-DO folkloric style—which was essentially the folkloric style of Coros y Danzas—was not the musical heritage that was still shared orally among the Spanish peoples (Busto Miramontes 2021; Jordan 2019), yet the discourse that the NO-DO newsreels spread to every film screen of the nation was based on the constant repetition of the claim that these Falangist women had rescued Spanish folkloric music from oblivion in order to give it back to the people, when in reality what they were “giving back” was something homogeneous, stereotypical, invented, cleaned-up, censored and paradoxically misogynistic (despite the fact that Sección Femenina was an organisation exclusively for women until the 1960s), in the form of staid spectacles such as competitions and performances held in the main squares of Spanish towns. It was a version of Spanish **folklore** that was completely bereft of anthropological, ethnographic, linguistic and musical honesty and utterly lacking in methodological and ethical rigour (Casero 2000, Ortiz 1997; Jordan 2019.)

The songs collected in towns and villages by Sección Femenina’s amateur instructors (most of whom had no musical training whatsoever) were transcribed and confirmed as authentic by a

small group of intellectuals (all men) who had never worked in the field. The songs and dances were performed according to the dictates of Sección Femenina, which transformed them into decontextualised spectacles, choreographing them, changing their formal, musical and linguistic structures, and dressing the performers in absurdly contrived (and ideologised) “regional attire” that would end up becoming the “folkloric costumes” of a map of Spanish regional styles. Profoundly misogynistic body stances were also introduced into the dances, such as the “arms akimbo” position or the genuflexion of the man before the woman to “take her out” to dance, and additional garments were invented specifically to cover the underwear, including a kind of bloomers known as *pololos*, which became a feature of all of Spain’s “regional costumes” in order to keep the “demon of the body” under control while dancing (Busto Miramontes 2021; Casero 2000; Martínez del Fresno 2013; Martínez del Fresno & Vega Pichaco 2017; Ortiz 1997, 2012; Stehrenberger 2009.)

The above observations highlight the need for an analysis of the work of Coros y Danzas (and NO-DO, as the organisation’s main distribution platform) as the principal architects of a violent, hegemonic cultural discourse based on musical and gender stereotypes that would be fixed in the Spanish collective unconscious, with an impact on the musical reality of the country’s different communities and on the cultural self-awareness and self-perception that Spaniards had of their intangible cultural, linguistic and artistic heritage.

In short, the formula for folkloric music in the NO-DO newsreels was not really Spanish folkloric music, and what they presented in Spanish cinemas for 40 years was “folklore turned into folklorism” (Martí 1996) in the practically monolithic version of Coros y Danzas. In other words, NO-DO presented what was not only the replacement of folkloric music styles with a Falangist folkloric tradition, but also a narrative on how that tradition was to be used. NO-DO’s “folklorised folklore” not only served to feed and further consolidate the map of Spanish stereotypes, but also invented new formulas in the process: it used folkloric traditions for clearly political purposes, to colonise, legitimise, indoctrinate, subjugate, control, discipline and repress the population—especially women—through music.

### **Uses of folkloric music: levels of legitimation**

The 1940s was a complex decade for the Franco regime. As noted above, the national syndicalist period was profoundly affected by both the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War in Europe. The end of the first conflict forced the regime to find ways to legitimise its rule domestically, while the conclusion of the second compelled it to persuade the international diplomatic community of its legitimacy. As a result, the 1940s were characterised by a desperate need for constant legitimation in order to hold onto power. The use of folkloric music—turned into stereotypically Spanish folklorism—served the needs for legitimation on both domestic and international levels.

Significant examples of legitimation efforts on the domestic level can be found in the NO-DO archives from the end of the Civil War and the most repressive and brutal years of the 1940s. Many of these make explicit reference to institutional acts by the regime itself (referring not only to the senior leadership but also to other state institutions that expressed power in official visits, speeches, conferences, memorials and anniversaries, masses, inaugurations, openings, closures, parades, etc.

There are numerous significant examples where the regime's pseudo-folk music formed part of the performative staging of power. The French anthropologist George Balandier refers to this type of staging as "theatrocracy", establishing an interesting parallel for analysis between power and the dramatic stage: "all political power ultimately secures subordination through theatricality" (Balandier 1994, 23.) This theoretical perspective is quite suitable for analysing NO-DO, given that the film image constructs its set in a theatrical space whose conventions have already been established. In other words, NO-DO is the staging apparatus that chooses what and what not to show, where and where not to focus, what and what not to censor, when and when not to add a voice-over. It is a theatre director working on a cinematic stage that already exists on the physical level, as every inauguration, speech, mass, opening or closure is subject to a theatrical protocol that leaves nothing to chance, especially in a totalitarian state. Thus, the regime's ceremonial acts can also be analysed as rituals. And in effect, that is what they are, as the regime selects the urban architecture for the staging of the act, the objects, icons and emblems that will surround it, the

stage on which the act will take place (whether in the street among the people, in a theatre, or on the balcony of the Royal Palace in Madrid), the lectern from which the speech will be delivered, the body language and verbal rhetoric to be used and the adornments to be added (such as music.) All of this is related to a total theatricality that the NO-DO newsreels perfected and sublimated to the regime.

In these performative rituals, folkloric music was placed at the service of power. This is why it would never be used in a military parade, because folkloric music is not “useful” as a symbolic representation of power in such an event. And for this same reason, folkloric music is used in NO-DO newsreels as a way of having the common people themselves legitimise the regime. Folkloric music functions as a gift offered to their *Caudillo*,<sup>4</sup> as a tribute with extraordinary symbolic capital, representing the acceptance by the colonised of their subjugation. Yet what is shown in NO-DO has nothing to do with the common people, even though they form part of the scene. The vast majority of the folkloric music performances presented in NO-DO newsreels involve Coros y Danzas, which, as noted above, is very much a part of the regime.

The only example of folkloric music in NO-DO that was not produced by Coros y Danzas is the music featured in “El Caudillo en Galicia”, a news story at the end of one of the earlier newsreels (Newsreel 18, RTVE 1943b.) On Friday, 16 April 1943, a ceremony was held for the opening of the Puente del Pedrido, a reinforced concrete bridge crossing the Ría de Betanzos estuary in Galicia, joining the municipalities of Bergondo and Paderne. Although the project was actually launched before Franco came to power, NO-DO was there to attribute to achievement to him, and thus, on 5 May 1943, the news story was screened all over Spain, presenting the scene of a crowd of fond onlookers gathered around “their” *Caudillo* while he presented them with the gift of a new bridge. What is not mentioned in the news story is that the entire crowd was the product of a campaign by the political, military and paramilitary authorities, who went from door to door for months in the adjacent towns within a 50-kilometre radius to recruit people, who were then bussed in to take part in the event. A mere 20 seconds of footage is dedicated to the dance, which is shown in disconnected short shots patched together with archive music (the *muiñeira*<sup>5</sup> from the opening to “Alalá das Curuxeiras”, recorded by Coral de Ruada in 1929.) This choice of music

has nothing to do with the piece they would actually have been dancing to, as is well documented by the Galician gaita players of Betanzos, who have been passing the piece down orally from one generation to the next for at least 150 years.

This manipulation of musical information reflects the fact that NO-DO effectively served as an agent of musical decontextualisation due to its lack of documentary rigour, and as an architect of a Galician cultural stereotype through the repeated association of Galicia with the *muiñeira*. A significant cinematic example of the establishment of “otherness” in the constructed stereotype of Galician identity through the *muiñeira* can be found in *Raza* (a film directed by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia with a self-referential screenplay written by Franco himself), in which the patriarch’s arrival in Galicia is associated with a *muiñeira* composed by Manuel Parada specifically for the event (Miranda 2018, 118.)

The newsreel is a tool of ideological propaganda that makes use of the dancers, the music, the costumes and other elements of the dance that are symbolically placed at the service of the narrative of legitimation. In this way, NO-DO developed a narrative about the dominated, colonised subject, constructing a representation of who the subject is to the regime: quite literally, a subject. The regime thus constructed the myths that in turn fed the reality, as the dominated subjects began to relate to and conceive of themselves as subalterns based on the subaltern representations made of them (Bhabha 1994; Fanon 1980; Said 1996.) This is why documentary archaeology can help us to deconstruct these images: the Betanzos Council’s book of minutes for its special meeting on 31 December 1943 documents the approval of accounts that shows that on that day those men went to dance for Franco not out of loyalty, but for 375 pesetas. They charged for the service rendered.

<FIGURE 14.1. HERE>

**Fig.14.1. Francisco Franco inaugurating the *Puente del Pedrido*. Frame from *Noticario 18-1943* (NO-DO)**

<FIGURE 14.2. HERE>

**Fig.14.2. Municipal act from the Betanzos council's book (31 December 1943)**

The second level of legitimation operated mainly on the international stage. For this level, folkloric music tradition was given a primordial role, placed in the hands of the Sección Femenina so that the woman became the Franco regime's diplomatic "message" through musical performance (Amador Carretero 2003.)

In 1945, the regime became fully aware of the diplomatic difficulties it faced as the only totalitarian state with fascist leanings still standing after the fall of the Axis powers. It was also aware of how much folkloric tradition (on one hand) and women (on the other) could do to mitigate this image problem. Folkloric tradition became the Franco regime's political ambassador, under the exclusive control of Sección Femenina, which used *Coros y Danzas* to pursue an intense diplomatic campaign of folkloric music tours all over the world from the 1940s through to the 1970s.

The first of these tours took place in 1947, in the context of extreme tension with the international community and an urgent need to alter Spain's political image to avoid the possibility of armed intervention in the country. The regime's diplomatic relations with the outside world had broken down completely on 12 December 1946, when the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to debar the Spanish government from membership in international agencies. The resolution recommended that member states immediately recall their ambassadors and diplomats on the grounds that the Spanish government was fascist, that it had been imposed by force and with the aid of the Axis Powers without receiving a legitimate mandate from the Spanish people, and that it had given material assistance to the Nazis and Fascists in the war through direct military support such as that provided by the Blue Division, the Spanish Legion of Volunteers and the Blue Squadron.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the resolution, Spain was isolated from the international community. The only nation that maintained its support for the regime was another military dictatorship: Juan and Eva Perón's Argentina. The Franco regime extracted all the benefits it could from this friendly relationship.

The collaboration between the two nations was formalised by a protocol signed on 30 October 1946 (Moradiellos 2003, 98) and by Eva Perón's visit to Spain in 1947 as part of her "Rainbow Tour" of Europe. The visit—a diplomatic lifeline that the Franco regime exploited obsessively in the NO-DO newsreels (RTVE 1947) and *ABC* (the Spanish national newspaper that ran 11 full front-page stories on Evita over the 19 days she spent in Spain)—provided the opportunity for the first diplomatic event that brought Evita and Coros y Danzas together: on 10 June 1947, the "Tribute from the Spanish Provinces" to the Argentine First Lady was held in Madrid's Plaza Mayor. The event featured the performance of folkloric dances, popular traditional music, and a few *zarzuela* numbers, as well as a procession by 50 provincial groups of Coros y Danzas (including groups from the Spanish colonies.) Each of these 50 groups presented Evita with a wicker box in the form of a female figure, containing a replica of the folkloric (folklorised) costume of the region presenting it. The wicker boxes included undergarments, jewels, socks and accessories, all tailor-made for the First Lady. The gift thus comprised 50 outfits, with a total of 728 pieces, representing a significant self-representation of the nation and of the Franco regime. Evita's trip to Spain strengthened relations between Spain and Argentina, at least officially, and these were further reinforced by the ship's voyage made by Coros y Danzas to Argentina the following year.

Newsreel 291B, released in 1948, features the news item "Argentina y España" (RTVE 1948), which reports on that first major international trip made by Coros y Danzas. The trip had three mutually complementary political objectives. The first was to send a diplomatic message through a political mission "dressed up" in costumes, dances and songs with the aim of connecting Francoist Spain to the outside world and giving its cruel, repressive face a more friendly appearance. The second was to promote women as a message in itself: women who were disciplined but conciliatory towards those who had been forced into exile a few years earlier by the war, and who at the same time could be civilising sisters to those "other" women, the women of Latin America, whom the Spanish women sought to reach out to in the context of the *Hispanidad* project to unite all countries with a Hispanic heritage. The girls of Coros y Danzas thus became ambassadors in a project of colonial femininity to promote the Spanish Falange to

other women, while paradoxically they inhabited bodies very different from the submissive and subjugated body that the regime recommended for women in general (Stehrenberger 2009, 2012.) And the third objective was to turn the women of *Coros y Danzas* into agents who were using music and femininity to represent the existential mission that had unified Spain more than anything else: since the arrival of the *Caudillo*, they danced together, sang together, and lived happily and in peace.

The folkloric tradition strategy brought the regime two extremely positive benefits. The tour worked to legitimise the regime not only on the world stage, but also within Spain itself, as thanks to Argentina, Spain could boast that it was not as diplomatically isolated as the foreign “conspiracy” claimed it was, and that wherever they went *Coros y Danzas* were winning over the Spanish diaspora. In any case, it is clear that in 1948, to move beyond autarky and show the rest of the world and its own people that Spain was not so alone, the Spanish government urgently needed some international support, and the friendly relationship between Eva Perón and *Coros y Danzas* (a bond between women) was extremely beneficial (much more for Spain than for Argentina.)

Such was the significance of the trip to Argentina that as they boarded the *Monte Albertia* at the port of Cádiz on 17 April 1948, Pilar Primo de Rivera bid the women farewell with the following words:

The mission you are embarking on is so important. To recover for Spain the interest of the Argentines and to bring to the Spaniards living there the whole authentic tradition of their distant Fatherland [...] This journey to South America is not a tourist trip for you; it is yet another act of service, carried out with the same austerity as always and with the joyful discipline imposed upon us by the Falange (Primo de Rivera [n.d.], 237.)

<FIGURE 14.3. HERE>

**Fig.14.3. Women from *Coros y Danzas* on the boat *Monte Albertia* upon arrival in Spain from their tour around Argentina. Frame from *Noticario* 291B-1948 (NO-DO)**

**Conclusion**

Folkloric music culture—turned into folklorism—was exploited by the Franco regime, and the NO-DO newsreels bore witness to this exploitation, serving as an apparatus of representation used by the regime to win public acceptance of its rule in a process of legitimation. In this sense, NO-DO was not merely a reproducer of the regime’s activity but also a power structure in itself, an architect of political, social, cultural and musical realities.

The folk music exploited in NO-DO newsreels is not a reflection of an honest desire to document Spain’s oral culture or musical heritage, as the versions of Spanish musical traditions projected in Francoist cinema were decontextualised, partial, stereotypical and in some cases even invented by agencies and institutions that had absolute, exclusive power to represent what was supposed to be the music of the Spanish people, how the bodies that sang and danced to that music were supposed to appear, and what folkloric music should (and should not) be used for under the regime.

These practices—and the cost associated with them—continue today. Folkloric music is constantly used for the purposes of a political “theatrocracy” as an element that can construct and/or destroy cultural identity and the sense of belonging that a musical identity can offer. The Franco regime destroyed Spain’s musical culture, but contemporary ideological and political structures are still doing the same today. We therefore need to ask ourselves whether we know who we are musically, or whether we only know what the map of stereotypical Spanish folklorism tells us we are.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1959, with the approval of the National Economic Stabilisation Plan, the authoritarian stage of technocratic developmentalism began. The main feature of this stage was rapid economic growth, development and expansion (Moradiellos 2003, 137.)

<sup>2</sup> Between 1934 and 1936, the Spanish parliament approved statutes of autonomy for the Basque Country, Galicia and Catalonia, recognising the right of these regions to protect their cultural differences and granting them further national autonomy. Such differences were not unique to these three regions (although these regions stood out in particular for their different languages), as Spain was (and still is) characterised by an extraordinary degree of cultural (and musical) diversity.

<sup>3</sup> The daughter of the former dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera and sister of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder and principal ideologue of the fascist Falange Española party. She was the founder and “national delegate” of Sección Femenina from its foundation (1937) through to its demise (1977.) She was also one of the most prominent female faces of Francoism and one of the few women who held considerable institutional and political power.

<sup>4</sup> The title that Francisco Franco adopted during his dictatorship. It is derived from the Latin *capitellum* (head) and denotes a military leader with absolute power.

<sup>5</sup> The *muiñeira* is a traditional song and dance of Galicia that is usually played in “loose” pairs, alternating between *puntos* (where the dancers face one another) and *voltas* (where they circle around each other.) The Franco regime used it constantly as the sole genre to represent the music of Galicia, as part of its folklorist project.

<sup>6</sup> The Blue Division was a voluntary infantry unit that fought alongside Nazi Germany’s ground troops from 1941 to 1943. The Spanish Legion of Volunteers, also known as the Blue Legion, was the successor to the Blue Division. The Blue Squadron was a group of volunteer pilots from the Spanish Air Force who joined Nazi Germany’s Luftwaffe and supported their war effort from 1941 to 1944.

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