Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America

Crossing Borders

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Ramiro de Maeztu as a transnational agent of corporatism

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Dissecting ideologies is a little like cutting mist with a knife. Even though simplification is often a necessary sacrifice in order to present the readers with a clear and accessible scenario, we should always bear in mind that it represents a communication tool: certainly useful, but inevitably not precise or accurate. Concerning the history of ideas, for instance, although the mainstream historical narrative is often articulated on stories of antipodes and dichotomies – left and right; conservative and labour; fascists and non-fascists; Catholic and Protestant; authoritarians and democrats – the past is (fortunately) far more multifaceted and fascinating.

Actually, absolutes are rather uncommon findings in the history ideas. When carefully observed, the discipline reveals itself as predominantly characterized by intellectual experiences of crossing borders between different systems of thought: nuances, therefore, together with transfers and influences, appear to be the rule rather than the exception. Thus political intersections, hybrid forms, inter-cultural dialogues and connections represent the true challenge for historians who try to overcome a flat point of view on the subject in order to appreciate the history of ideas in all its wide-ranging and charming complexity.

That complexity reaches perhaps one of its highest levels during the interwar period, when a profound distrust for old-fashioned political discourses, as well as for the traditional remedies to the economic problems, was widespread throughout the whole Europe, encompassing different political cultures, movements and parties. Moreover, well before the First World War, a common sense of impending and unavoidable transformation reached many areas of the public discourse, shaping a series of concepts and metaphors within the political language concerning the idea of a liberal state in crisis. The widespread perception was indeed one of decline and fall: the deterioration of a model of civil, political, juridical and economic cohabitation grounded on the 18th and 19th centuries principles of individual freedom and rights. Under the pressure of brand new political and economic organisms (such as parties, trade unions and industrial associations) the functions, structures and role of the state were progressively put under criticism, challenging the core of the liberal ideology.

These criticisms entailed a change of perspective concerning the traditional juridical understanding of social relationships, underpinned by an absolute distinction between private and public spheres, or rather between individuals and organized society. Condemning industrial capitalism and liberalism as the main causes for the weakening and disappearance of the so-called social bonds, a series of writers of the interwar period started looking at the medieval society as an alternative model of organic organization leading to a harmonious and ordered community, therefore opposing the chaotic, ailing, conflicting capitalist society.[1]

In this sense, since the mid-1970s a growing body of literature has established the resurgence, between the 19th and 20th centuries, of a general socio-economic and political theory of corporatism, described by Philippe Schmitter in 1979 as 'a system of interest and/or attitude representation, a particular model of ideal-typical institutional arrangement for linking the associationally organized interests of civil society with the decisional structures of the State'.[2] The final purpose of corporatist authors, thus, was to replace the liberal individualistic socio-economic order with a collectivist, status-based and hierarchical one, where individuals' rights and duties reflect their status or function, within the society.

While attempting to highlight the density of transnational and transcultural influences involved in the process of building a different (corporatist) politico-juridical paradigm,[3] this chapter focuses on a particular case study of corporatist thinker: the Anglo–Spanish intellectual and politician Ramiro De Maeztu.[4]

The reasons why his life and thought result in being particularly noteworthy for a transnational history of corporatist ideas are twofold. First of all, De Maeztu personifies a typical transnational agent in the elaboration and diffusion of corporatist thought, having lived and worked in Spain, United Kingdom and Latin America with numerous travels to France, Italy, Germany and the United States. Secondly, what is extremely fascinating is noting that De Maeztu's 'corporatist turn' happened during his British period, under the influence of a vast and heterogenic corporatist political movement that is the New Age Circle. Although never defined as 'corporatist', this informal network included authors fascinated by the idea of medieval guilds, such as Alfred R. Orage, Arthur J. Penty, G. D. H. Cole, Samuel G. Hobson, Gilbert K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Thomas E. Hulme.

The chapter is divided into three main parts and a final conclusion. The first section explores Ramiro De Maeztu's early life (1874–1905), with special regards to his family origins, education and first cultural influences in late 19th-century Spain. The second part focuses on the British period (1905–1919), analysing the aforementioned 'corporatist turn' in connections with the New Age Circle intellectuals. The third part (1919–1936) started with De Maeztu's return to Spain in 1919 and his support for Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. During the 1920s, then, he fully developed his traditional, Catholic and authoritarian version of corporatism and, after supporting Primo de Rivera, he was appointed Spanish Ambassador in Argentina in 1927. Returning to Spain in 1930, he founded the right-wing monarchist movement

Acción Española in 1931 before taking the side of Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War, eventually dying on 29 October 1936, killed by Republican soldiers in the early days of the war near Madrid.

Finis Hispaniae: the generation of '98

Ramiro de Maeztu was born on 4 May of 1874 in Vitoria, capital of the Alava province in northern Spain, not far from Bilbao. The first of five sons, he descended from a very multinational family. His father, Manuel de Maeztu Rodríguez, was Cuban-born Spanish with land properties in the Caribbean island. He received his education in France, where he met a Catholic Scottish–French woman, Juana Whitney, daughter of a British diplomat in Nice. Ramiro de Maeztu spent his childhood and adolescence between Vitoria, Paris and Havana, where his father was forced to return in order to face some administrative problems linked to his economic activities in Cuba. As reported by his sister, the educator and feminist activist Maria de Maeztu, Ramiro received a European aristocratic education, learning to speak Spanish, English and French fluently, and studying History and Latin as well as Chemistry, Physics and Natural Sciences. After his father's death in 1894, he returned to Spain, settling with his mother and siblings in Bilbao, before moving again three years later, in 1897, to Madrid, where he started working as a publicist in several Spanish newspapers and reviews, such as 'Germinal', 'El País', 'Vida Nueva', 'La España Moderna' and 'El Socialista'.[5]

The Spanish capital resulted to be the cultural scenario of De Maeztu's first intellectual education. A scenario that was experiencing a profound change of paradigms and models, marked by a deep sense of decay, particularly evident after the defeat of the Spanish army in the Spanish–American War of 1898. The conflict was as a sort of national trauma, especially concerning the loss of Cuba, which was seen as a province rather than a colony. As a consequence of the American victory, Spain was eventually left only with a handful of minor overseas territories, essentially putting an end to a centuries-old Spanish Empire decline.[6]

In the wake of these events, a group of writers, novelists, philosophers, academics and poets, that has become known as Generación del '98 – a term coined in 1913 by José Martinez Ruiz – started to claim that the loss of the last colonies was the logic consequence of a moral, social, political and economic crisis of Spain. Alluding to the moral degeneration of the entire establishment, the group was permeated by a cultural climate of Finis Hispaniae, which was leading them to voice the urgency of a pangenetic project of national regeneration aimed to completely re-shape Spanish cultural and political life. Key figures of the group – all of them born in the 1870s and whose major works fall in the two decades after 1898 – were Antonio Machado, Manuel Machado, Miguel de Unamuno, José Martinez Ruiz, Pio Baroja and, indeed, Ramiro de Maeztu. At the turn of the century, all of

them were committed to write essays, texts or poems marked by a sense of dissatisfaction, radicalism and rebellion, although in a very broad sense.[7]

Under the influence of Miguel de Unamuno, De Maeztu was introduced to what Stuart Hughes called the intellectual revolution against 19th century positivism:[8] a wave of philosophies emerging at the turn of the century that undermined rational-scientific assumptions. Consequentially, between 1897 and 1905, De Maeztu was an enthusiastic reader of authors such as Henri Bergson, Herbert Spencer, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Benjamin Kidd and Friedrich Nietzsche. Interested in a moral revolution, Nietzsche was for De Maeztu an obvious and immediate reference, especially because of his idea of the Übermensch as a creator of anew values. Within the Spanish context, that concept became tool to re-invent and re-unite the national community after the shock of the Spanish–American war of 1898, therefore using the Übermensch notion to navigate from an old Spanish Imperial dream towards a new and modern idea of nationalism.[9]

The political repercussions of this stream of thought were certainly complex. For our purpose it is important to highlight that denying rationalism as an all-encompassing tool to explain reality and guide politics allowed readers of both left and right to pursue projects of cultural, political and institutional re-organization with a new organicist perspective. Therefore, in the whole of Europe, a series of authors started to address their enthusiasm towards a revolutionary reaction against liberal ideology and its political emblem, the Parliament, which became, as De Maeztu put in 1897, no more than a charade or a farce. Simultaneously, some of these thinkers began to recover a religious-conservative perspective on the political problems, especially recalling Catholic corporatism, as embedded in Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* of 1891. The final objective was to find the solution to the so-called social question – rather the permanent conflict arose by the industrial revolution between the working class and the industrialists – through the creation of a harmonic society built on constant co-operation between all the producers.

Within this anti-liberal climate, De Maeztu's first work appeared in 1899, entitled Hacia Otra España,[10] announcing a common generational desire of complete renovation. During this period he started his reflections on how to create a sense of national unity in a peripheral country as Spain, looking for an alternative to the liberal model rooted on the concept of scientific progress and individual freedom. Nevertheless, De Maeztu, while attacking liberalism, remained loyal to the idea of private property and economic individual initiative as the sole method of triggering national unity and industrial progress – both necessary to increase the well-being of the entire Spanish population.

During these years, De Maeztu found the subject of his national revolution in the industrial bourgeois of the Basque Country and Catalonia, who had to replace the land-based aristocracy currently in power. The solution envisaged was an alliance between the bourgeois and the intellectuals in order to propose a non-Marxist conservative socialism, interpreted with a sort of

Nietzschean and nationalist spirit as a way to set up a co-operation between social classes.[11]

London calling

This philosophical background – where Nietzsche and Spencer lived together with socialism, nationalism and Catholicism – constituted De Maeztu's cultural baggage when he decided to move to London in 1905, working as foreign correspondent for several Spanish newspapers, such as *La Correspondencia de España, Nuevo Mundo* and *Heraldo de Madrid*.

He arrived in the capital of the British Empire in a period of profound change. Queen Victoria died in 1901, in the midst of the Boer War, and Edward VII ruled a country undergoing an era of relative economic decline, as well as of cultural and political transformation. After the general elections of 1906, a new Liberal government took office, led by Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, with David Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Winston Churchill at the Board of Trade. In 1907 Asquith's cabinet was traditionally recalled to be the first government in history to pass a welfare reformation programme through a series of acts of social legislation, such as the Old Age Pensions Act and the Children and Young Persons Act, both enacted in 1908; the Trade Boards Act of 1909, which created boards empowered to set legally enforceable minimum wage criteria; and finally the National Insurance Act of 1911, which provided compulsory health insurance for workers earning less than £160 per year.[12]

The British years – De Maeztu returned to Spain only at the end of the war, in 1919 – represent an important turning point in the intellectual evolution of De Maeztu's thought, who came back to Madrid with a more clear-minded political perspective, shown by his advocating of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship and, later, of Franco's. It is important to highlight that his 'corporatist turn' occurred principally under the stimulus of non-fascist political groups. In fact, despite his future outcomes, De Maeztu was vividly influenced by a heterogeneous non-Marxist, anti-parliamentary, inexplicitly corporatist, socialist and Catholic world, gathered together around the figure of Alfred R. Orage, editor of *The New Age* between 1907 and 1921.

De Maeztu's British years could be divided in two different phases, mirroring his rapid change of interests and political affiliations. The first one goes from his arrival in London, in 1905, until the end of 1911, and is characterized by a fascination for the new liberal ideas of Leonard T. Hobhouse, explicated in his volume *Liberalism* and embedded by Herbert Asquith government of 1907. The second phase started in 1912 and is marked by De Maeztu's affiliation with the New Age Circle, which led to strengthen his notion of a hierarchical, corporatist and organicist society.

As soon as he got to the United Kingdom, De Maeztu established himself in a little apartment in Marylebone, in central London, finding a lively and well-organized intellectual environment, structured in clubs, meetings and debates.

The main philosophical inspiration for the British liberal renewal of the 1910s has to be found in the reflection carried on by the so-called British Idealists, based at the Balliol College of the Oxford University and led by Thomas H. Green and Bernand Bosanquet and their disciples, Francis H. Bradley and David G. Ritchie.[13] Furthermore, the Balliol College proved to be, in the first two decades of the 20th century, a real hotbed of a new generation of politicians, whether socialist, liberal and conservative, such as, for example, the already mentioned Asquith, G. D. H. Cole – the principal theorist of Guild Socialism – and Harold Macmillan, the leader of a young Tory generation of politicians in the 1920s and 1930s, and Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963.

British Idealism was a movement largely developed from German Idealism,[14] particularly recalling authors such as Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel, and mostly aiming at emancipating British culture from Spencer's individualism and Social Darwinism. Essentially, on the political side, these philosophers were concerned to refuse the atomistic idea of liberal democracy, based on individualism, rediscovering the concept of humans as social being existing in a society understood as a living organism where all the parts have to co-operate in order to reach a supreme, national well-being.

De Maeztu's fascination for this kind of thought is shown by a series of conferences held in Bilbao, Madrid and Barcelona during a short-term return to Spain between October 1910 and the first half of 1911. The British welfare legislation of the period 1907–1912 had a concrete impact on De Maeztu's ideas as he started to orient his proposals towards what he called 'el liberalismo-socialismo'. The British world confirmed to De Maeztu the importance of reforming the political system in order to avoid an Anarchist or Marxist revolution, which would eventually destroy the Western civilization. Therefore, the choice was between reform and revolution.

Finally, in the last meeting held in Barcelona in March 1911, De Maeztu pointed out the flaws of Marxism and started to recognize the weaknesses of liberal capitalism. A common theme to the whole corporatist thought started to emerge, which is the common flaw of Marxism and liberalism: both of them, in De Maeztu's opinion, were the result of materialist and rationalist thinking. Instead, economic ends have to be subordinated to goals of other kinds, such as social and moral objectives.[15]

His return to London in 1912 – after a short-term stay at the University of Marburg in Germany in order to get in contact with the neo-Kantian German school led by Hermann Cohen – marks the beginning of De Maeztu's second transformation phase. Two main events determined his 'corporatist turn': the first one was certainly the First World War that showed the clear failure of the liberal political class in the whole Europe, eventually leading to the Soviet Revolution; the second fact was his association with *The New Age*.

Orage, editor of the *The New Age* from 1907, was a former associate of the Fabian Society and, like De Maeztu, a scholar of Nietzsche. Following his editorial tolerance, the review soon became an open discussion forum for

those intellectuals interested in socio-economic issues. The New Age Circle was an informal cultural network formed by an interesting mixture of thinkers coming from the whole political spectrum. Besides Orage, other important personalities of the group were Arthur J. Penty, architect and social thinker deeply influenced by William Morris and John Ruskin; G. D. H. Cole and Samuel G. Hobson, two of the leading authors of Guild Socialism; G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Maurice Reckitt, Catholic thinkers profoundly influenced by the *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII; and finally, Thomas E. Hulme, philosopher, scholar and translator of Nietzsche, Bergson and Sorel, who died in the trenches during the First World War in September 1917.[16]

De Maeztu was introduced to Orage and Penty by Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish former diplomat who was writing for the 'Times' in that period, probably between the end of 1912 and the first half of 1913. Madariaga had a great estimate of De Maeztu, as well as of the editorial work of Orage and Penty, who was frequent to his house in London, together with other important personalities of the unorthodox British intellectual world of the period, such as the historian Richard H. Tawney and Thomas E. Hulme.

In presence of several unorthodox political cultures, the circle led by Orage symbolized a sort of a junction-point, between 1907 and postwar years, where different philosophies were knitting together their ideas in debates, discussions and disputes. It is important to underline that the links realized through and inside the circle bound together several experiences in a single network had a strong effect on De Maeztu's future ideas. Therefore, in order to fully understand his changing of perspective, it seems important to briefly sketch the circle's intellectual origins and landmarks.

Four key political cultures could be detected within the New Age Circle, each one proposing a peculiar version of a different typology of political, socio-economic and institutional organization of the society: the juridical ideas of Frederic W. Maitland and John N. Figgis; the Social Medievalism of Alfred R. Orage and Arthur J. Penty; the Social Catholicism of G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc; the Guild socialism of G. D. H. Cole and Samuel G. Hobson.

Fellowship, guild and function

Chronologically, the first cultural experience that pre-dates some of the (corporatist) notions of the New Age Circle is a different interpretation of the concept of juridical personality. Originally formed within the German romantic environment, that idea finds some of the most important representatives in Britain in the historian and jurist Frederic W. Maitland and his disciple, the Catholic thinker John N. Figgis. Both of them found a source of inspiration in the ideas of the German historian and juridical thinker Otto Von Gierke and his major work, the titanic *Das Deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* – which could be translated as 'the German law of fellowship' – appeared in Berlin in four volumes between 1868 and 1913.

Undoubtedly, Maitland represents the key figure. Born in London in 1850 and educated at the Trinity College of the University of Cambridge, Maitland was one of most important historians of English law, especially with his volume, co-authored by Frederick Pollock, *History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, published in 1895. Almost in the same lapse of time, he became interested in the field of European comparative jurisprudence, especially in issues such as property rights and constitutional forms. His attention to the European juridical culture culminated first in the translation of Savigny major volumes on Roman law, and second in the translation of the third part of Von Gierke's work, which appeared in 1900 with the title *Political Theories of the Middle Age*.[17]

Thanks to Maitland, it has since became common to render the German term *Genossenschaft* in English as 'fellowship', although philologically that translation could present several issues, as recorded by Maitland himself.[18] The core concept of the juridical personality of the socio-economic group, called corporation or fellowship, introduced by Maitland in the United Kingdom in 1900, was bound to the anti-individualist ideas of the British Idealists, considered of paramount importance in inspiring the so-called British pluralism. During the 1910s, John N. Figgis helped Maitland in spreading the concept of fellowship. Figgis, younger than Maitland, was born in Brighton in 1866 and from 1885 had been educated at St. Catherine's College in Cambridge, where he met Maitland.

Their criticisms were addressed to denounce the falsity of the abstract notion of the individual as the juridical basis of the society, arguing that only the group, socially and economically determined, was the actual juridical entity on which the national political community was built: according to Figgis, for instance, as he put in 1913, 'the notion of isolated individuality is the shadow of a dream'.[19] Recalling the early work of Green and Bradley, he continued affirming that actually 'in the real world, the isolated individual does not exist […] and his personality can develop only in society'.[20] Similarly, ten years earlier, Maitland stated that corporations are 'a real thoroughly person with a real will',[21] specifying that a socio-economic group naturally possesses rights and duties, without other form of legal or governmental justifications. For Maitland, 'the corporation is […] a right-and-duty-bearing unit',[22] thus reshaping the source of national sovereignty, which has to be found neither in the individual nor in the state, but in the group: a fellowship of men united by a common interest or goal.

Almost in the same period, Arthur Penty and Alfred Orage were likewise developing a new interpretation of socialism, inspired by the ideas of Nietzsche and Bergson, as well as by the thinking of two important British intellectuals of the 19th century, William Morris and John Ruskin.

Six years after Maitland's translation of *Von Gierke*, Arthur Penty published one of the most important books for the corporatist thinking in the United Kingdom, titled *The Restoration of the Gild System*.[23] Partially resolving the semantic rebus, Penty described his system as grounded in the

concept of medieval guild, using the idea as a solution to the industrial society's problems. Taking his ideas from Morris and Ruskin, Penty attacked socialist collectivism in order to propose a different method of achieving socialist objectives. In his opinion, the fundamental flaw of Marxist socialism was that it identified the main cause of the impoverishment of the working class in the capitalist economic competition, which, according to Penty, was not bad in itself, but only in the socially disintegrating version of liberalism.

In his opinion, a properly regulated economic market, such as the medieval one, could rather be a positive instrument of socio-economic, cultural and spiritual growth. The institution best suited to produce a global changing in policy-making perspective was, indeed, the guild that, in Penty's words, 'being social, religious, and political as well as industrial institutions, […] postulated in their organization the essential unity of life'.[24]

That perspective – clearly based on the class of producers, namely all the individuals in any form involved in the production process, rather than working class – found its way within the New Age Circle, the group of writers associated with Orage's *The New Age*. According to his contemporaries, Orage was quite a fascinating man. Colleagues and friends often described him as a vibrant and well-informed lecturer with a reflective mind and a personally compelling presence. Born in 1873 in Yorkshire, he became a teacher in an elementary school in Leeds in 1983, where he met Arthur Penty at a study group on Plato, then founding with him in 1900 the Leeds Arts Club, a civic organization aim at debating philosophy, painting, literature, social reform and politics.[25]

The concept of socialism in Orage's mind needs further specification, mainly because it is quite different from a traditional interpretation. In fact, focusing principally on the moral question, Orage soon began to move away from a Marxist analysis of the capitalist society, based on class relations and social conflict, replacing it with a strong nationalist framework. He wrote extensively on these issues, stating, for instance, in September 1909, that in his view 'a Socialist Party is not the party of a class but of the nation'.[26] His rational was 'reconstructing both the theory and the practice of Socialism'[27] in order to create an institutional system where the government was not monopolized by a single class, but rather shared among 'all classes, each according to its political capacity and merits'.[28]

During the pre-war period, thus, within the New Age Circle there could be found an attempt to drift socialism away from its positivist roots, dissociating it both from democratic and parliamentary overtones and leading the socialist culture into a potentially equivocal political dimension, which could rest in several different movements and tendencies.

Similarly – and somehow consequentially – the New Age Circle was also the birthplace of one of the most important unorthodox socialist thinking of the period, Guild Socialism, theorized from 1912–1914 by Samuel G. Hobson and G. D. H. Cole on *The New Age* pages.[29] In Cole's words, Guild Socialism represented 'a plea for functional representation and functional democracy as

against so-called purely political democracy',[30] thus representing a challenge to the idea of traditional representative government and democracy.

Recalling the idea of the industrial guild proposed by Penty, in Cole's hands (Guild) Socialism became a way of ordering and balancing a force to co-operate across the several socio-economic groups existing within the national community: 'true representation – stated Cole in 1920 – […] is always specific and functional […]. What is represented is never a man, the individual, but always certain purposes common to group of individuals.'[31] A more precise form of representation had to be realized, according to Guild Socialism, provoking a change in the very idea of sovereignty that had to rest within the guilds rather than in an abstract geographically elected Parliament.[32] Thus Cole's final objective was to decentralize legislative powers into several specific, functional, industrial organisms, transforming the way in which society was ruled and creating what Figgis defined, in 1913, as 'a society of societies'.[33]

A similar notion was advocated by Social Catholicism, inspired by the work of several European intellectuals such as Giuseppe Toniolo, Emmanuel Von Ketteler and René de la Tour du Pin and especially by the Papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891.[34] Although supported by a minority, Social Catholicism had advocates in the United Kingdom too. One of the key figures in diffusing a different way of interpreting Catholicism was Henry E. Manning, Archbishop of Westminster from 1865, who showed a singular social inclination exemplified, for instance, by his intervention alongside the workers during the London dock strike of 1889. Quite intriguingly, the year after that episode, Manning's portrait was carried by the workers beside that of Marx's during the May Day celebration of 1890.[35]

Manning fulfilled a central role in the increasing debate on socio-economic matters within the British catholic world, especially spreading the idea of Social Catholicism proposed by the aforementioned intellectuals, with whom he carried a regular correspondence. In 1906, Manning founded in London the Christian Socialist League in order to develop a political synthesis between Catholic and socialist values and goals. Interestingly, John N. Figgis, Gilbert and Cecil Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc were all members of Manning's League and later main contributors of *The New Age*. Furthermore, beside writing for *The New Age*, the Chesterton brothers and Belloc also started their own reviews, namely *The Eye Witness* and *The New Witness* – transformed in 1925 in *The G.K.'s Weekly* – where they started to formulate a British version of Social Catholicism called Distributism. In fact, a Distributist League was established in 1926, advocating a widespread diffusion of small proprietors politically organized in economic guilds, where the general economic order would be guaranteed by the institutional interaction between organized industrial and agricultural sectors.[36]

The corporatist turn

This fascinating and manifold cultural activity definitely attracted De Maeztu, who started writing numerous contributions for Orage's review between

November 1913 and September 1920. Especially during the first years, De Maeztu bound a particular friendship and co-operation with Thomas E. Hulme, one of the most original conservative thinkers of the Edwardian era.[37] As recalled, they met at Madariaga's house probably between 1912 and 1913, sharing the same interest for Nietzsche's philosophy and starting to exchange perspectives and viewpoints on several cultural and political issues.

Indeed, Hulme offered to De Maeztu the core philosophical concept for his articles on *The New Age*, published in 1916 in a volume entitled *Authority, Liberty and Function in the Light of the War* and forerun by an introduction written by Orage himself.[38]

The central idea, as for Hulme, was the concept of men's original sin. This is the idea that single men alone were doomed to build up a declining society mainly because individuals would be naturally inclined to sacrifice social good in a campaign for the achievement of their own goals. As De Maeztu would put in a short autobiographical sketch, Hulme was 'un hombre que prometia ser un genio',[39] the person who showed him 'la inmensa trascendencia de la doctrina del pecado original' [Hulme was 'a man destined to become a genius', the person who showed him 'the immense transcendence of the doctrine of the original sin'].[40] Hulme was furthermore instrumental in introducing De Maeztu to the poets T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, as well as to the philosophies of Henri Bergson and Georges Sorel, both translated by Hulme in English respectively in 1912 and 1915.[41]

De Maeztu's volume of 1916 could be seen as the theoretical summa of his changing of perspective on socio-economic and political problems, directly influenced by the whole British cultural environment in which he was absorbed since 1912. Therefore, echoes of Guild Socialism and Social National Medievalism, proposed by Cole, Hobson, Orage and Penty, were bound together with Hulme's conservative pessimism and G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc's Social Catholicism, as well as with Maitland's group juridical personality – descended by Von Gierke's idea of *Genossenchaft* – and Léon Duguit's notion of corporations, partly derived from Durkheim's thought.

In *Authority, Liberty and Function*, as well as in articles of the war period, De Maeztu stressed the existence of an objective good, independently existing above personal preferences, underlining what he defined as 'the doctrine of the primacy of things'.[42] In his view, human societies were formed according to the specific objective of a certain group of individuals, who established strong connections among them in order to reach a precise goal. As he would put in an article appearing in *The New Age* in October 1917, a social community 'is not founded merely on the fact that men need each other, but on the fact that they are in need of things'.[43]

Therefore, while denouncing the flaws of both liberal individualism and state socialism, De Maeztu started to bind together the aforementioned principles and the actual emergence of civil and political rights, entangling his philosophical beliefs with juridical prescriptions. By establishing the presence of objectives desirable a priori, he identified the two fundamental conditions

necessary to create a society: firstly, individuals have to recognize the natural necessity to associate with their similar; secondly, they need to precisely acknowledge and explicit their objectives, rather the function that bind them together. On this matter, in September 1917, De Maeztu clearly wrote that 'society – real society – only begin when it has been founded on a common end in which individual interests are both transcended and united'.[44]

Following this reasoning, De Maeztu affirmed that public recognition of the individual fact came into existence only when it associated with other men in order to fulfil a common purpose. The logic consequence of this juridical approach was to refuse the theory of natural rights, as it was theorized by the Enlightenment and then concretized in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789, and to elaborate a different viewpoint on rights. As De Maeztu wrote in his book in 1916, 'rights only arise when men enters into relation with the good, either to preserve existing goods or to create new ones. In function of the goods, in the relation between men and goods, rights arise'.[45] That proposition clearly entails that rights are not natural facts, pre-existing society, but created only as a consequence of grouping and societies. They do not exist in abstract, but only within the relationship between individuals and social reality. They do not exist in connection to the individual subject, but only in connection to groups with a precise goal, rather a precise function, which led De Maeztu to affirm that, actually, 'every right is functional'.[46]

Therefore, De Maeztu envisaged a new society grounded on a new kind of juridical and institutional balance between individuals and community, between citizens and society – a balance embedded in the principle of function, in the idea that, as he wrote, 'neither the individuals disappear in the society, nor the society disappear in the individuals'.[47] However, if carefully observed, De Maeztu's early proposals in 1916 had already revealed their authoritarian character, consisting in an unbalanced structure in which societal order was a priority in respect to individual freedom. In his orderly, corporatist and hierarchic society, in fact, 'the principle of individual liberty is radically and irremediably opposed to all organisation'.[48] In this sense, De Maeztu did recover ideas from the whole spectrum of the New Age Circle political cultures, but he twisted them to his rising authoritarian and organicist beliefs, making the disciplined society able to make all the political and economic decisions. Individual subjects were left with no space in the new institutional architecture.

Order, Catholicism and dictatorship

De Maeztu's British reflections were inscribed, as recalled at the beginning of this chapter, within the long-term process of the crisis of the liberal state. This crisis experimented a further important step in the post-war period. After 1918, a general transformation led to an overall decrease in elected parliaments' authority in the whole Europe,[49] as well as to the emergence of fascist movements, parties and regimes which eventually developed corporatist

systems. In the postwar scenario, the intellectual path of De Maeztu could be seen as the logic and consequential effect of the political transformation experienced in the United Kingdom. After 1919 there was no room left for change, but only for reinforcing convictions through a series of direct or indirect influences, such as Sardinha's Integralismo Lusitano, Charles Maurras, Maurice Barrés, Spanish Social Catholicism, Benjamin Kidd's ideas and, finally, Italian Fascism.

De Maeztu returned to Spain at the end of 1919, settling in Barcelona and then in Madrid. One of the most dangerous threats he found in his country, as well as in the rest of Europe, was a potential Anarchist or Marxist revolution. Consequentially, between 1919 and the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, established in September 1923, De Maeztu tried to survey all the possible sources of alliance in order to make his new ideas feasible, living a period of intense cultural and intellectual work.[50]

In Barcelona, De Maeztu reconnected with Eugenio d'Ors, the future General Director of Fine Arts in Franco's provisional government of 1938 in Burgos. The two intellectuals first met at the beginning of the 20th century in Madrid, and in Barcelona they strengthened again their co-operation denouncing the rapid dramatization of the industrial relations in Catalonia, exemplified by the general strike that had begun in Barcelona in February 1919 which paralyzed the entire industrial production of the region for months. During these events, De Maeztu condemned the action both of the government and industrialists, denouncing the end of the liberal culture in Spain and the need for a strong central government capable of maintaining social harmony. In 1920, De Maeztu started to work for 'El Sol', strengthening his connection with Antonio Sardinha, one of the main leaders of the Portuguese Integralismo Lusitano movement, who was exiled in Spain in 1919. In fact, since 1919, Sardinha, largely influenced by the French intellectual Charles Maurras, started to develop a Portuguese version of Catholic corporatism, resulting in publishing, once back in Portugal, the book *A Aliança Peninsular* in 1924.[51]

During Sardinha's staying in Spain, he praised De Maeztu's book *La crisi del humanismo* – the 1919 Spanish translation of *Authority, Liberty and Function in the Light of the War* – assuming it to be one of the fundamental work for a new organicist Iberian thought. The respect between Sardinha and De Maeztu was mutual, with the Spanish intellectual affirming the moral union between Portugal and Spain and the necessity to unify the efforts in order to overcome liberalism and prevent a socialist revolution. Their relationship continued through time, reaching an apex with the translation of Sardinha's book in Spanish, under the title of *La Alianza Peninsular*, published in 1930 and edited by De Maeztu himself.

During the first half of the 1920s, De Maeztu increased his faith in the social unifying powers of Catholicism, on the one hand, and the Army on the other hand.[52] The Church and the Army, in fact, came to be in De Maeztu's ideas the only bastions capable of protecting European civilization from the

attack of the socialist revolution, then helping to build up a corporatist society. In this sense, he rediscovered the ideas both of the British thinker Benjamin Kidd and the Spanish theologian Juan Gonzàlez Arintero. If the latest stressed the crisis of the positivist attitude together proposing the Catholic Church as the only institution capable of restoring the social bonds, Kidd, since his main work *Social Evolution* has been published in 1894, affirmed that religion, and not reason, represented chiefly the agency in promoting social, political and economic progress. Simultaneously, De Maeztu started to praise the national unifying role of the Army stating the complementary role of the Catholic intellectual and the soldier. Both of them, in fact, were useful to accomplish national moral unity, especially because of their pedagogical role among the population.

Apparently, De Maeaztu's hopes were to be satisfied in September 1923, when Primo de Rivera established himself as dictator through a military coup.[53] De Maeztu enthusiastically hailed the emergence of the new dictatorship, affirming that Spain finally had the opportunity to get rid of the liberal democratic representation: 'hasta el sufragio restringido – he stated in October 1923 – puede sustituirse con ventaja per un régimen de representación corporativa' ['limited suffrage … can be advantageously substituted with a regime of corporatist representation'].[54] After travelling to Italy in the first half of 1924 – where he praised Mussolini's government and the anti-socialist alliance between counter-revolutionary forces and the bourgeois – De Maeztu was summoned to be part of the Asemblea Nacional Consultiva in 1927, participating in the Secciòn Primera, which had the duty of drafting a new constitutional proposal. In this context, De Maeztu stood out for his radicalism, proposing the replacement of universal suffrage with another kind of suffrage, in particular denying the right of voting to whom he defined 'los indiferentes'.[55]

Nonetheless, De Maeztu's work in the Secciòn Primera and in the Asemblea Nacional Consultiva was quite evanescent. His proposals were too radical and extreme to be pursues by a dictatorship government that had still to live together with the representatives of the 'old politics'. In fact, at the end of 1927, De Maeztu was appointed Spanish Ambassador in Argentina and he arrived in Buenos Aires on 19 February 1928, leaving after Primo de Rivera's fall at the beginning of 1930. The Argentinian period is very interesting because it allowed De Maeztu to meet other intellectuals influenced by a mixture of Catholic, monarchist and nationalist ideas, such as Leopoldo Lugones, one of the most important right-wing writers in South America; Ernesto Palacio, the editor of the political section of *La Nueva Republica*, the review of Argentinian nationalism; and Rodolfo Irazusta, editor of the same journal, who was seduced by Maurras' ideas during his travels in France before the First World War.[56] De Maeztu established a strong and deep relationship with Ernesto Palacio, with whom he shared several political beliefs, such an anti-democratic and anti-parliamentary feeling as well as the idea that Catholicism was instrumental to re-order a chaotic liberal society.

Within the Argentinian nationalist environment, De Maeztu developed another idea of his juridical thought: political rights not only are not natural – as he concluded already at the end of the Great War in the United Kingdom – but they also have to be granted only to those individuals who do not want to destroy public powers. Thus, De Maeztu was again proposing a constitutional reform in order to abolish the universal suffrage and return to a more ordered, hierarchical society, where political and economic powers lie in the hands of a new élite.[57]

De Maeztu returned to Spain in February 1930, following Primo de Rivera's resignation in January. The Spanish political scenario was rapidly changing in a way that could not be welcomed by De Maeztu. At the municipal elections of April 1931 the Republicans obtained a landslide victory and two days later King Alfonso XIII was sent into exile in consequence to the proclamation of the Second Republic, identified by De Maeztu as the Revolution itself. In June, then, a Constituent Cortes were elected to draft a new constitution, which was officially adopted in December, establishing freedom of speech and association, and extending the right of voting to women in 1933.

Right after the inception of the Second Republic, Ramiro De Maeztu started a new intense cultural and political activity to reaffirm his repulsion to a republican and democratic institutional structure, strongly endorsing the necessity of restoring a catholic monarchy to save the Spanish society from chaos, Anarchy and Socialism. His efforts resulted in the foundation of one of the most important right-wing and ultra-conservative catholic reviews of the period, 'Acciòn Espanola', established in December 1931 together with other important personalities of the far-right movement, such as José Calvo Sotelo, minister of Finance in Primo de Rivera's government, and Victor Pradera, a Carlist politician advocate of Social Catholicism and author of *El Estado Nuevo*, published in 1935.[58] In that publication the author endorsed a Spanish version of Catholic–corporatist state on the model of Dolfuss' Austria and Salazar's Portugal. 'Acciòn Espanola', following the model of 'L'Action Française' and the Integralismo Lusitano movement, was committed to support the development of an authoritarian and corporatist monarchic system, a theme always more appealing, in the same period, also to Francisco Franco, who soon started to be a reader and supporter of 'Acción Española'.[59]

De Maeztu, who was appointed editor in chief of the review in 1933, rapidly became the central figure of the cultural association orbiting around the magazine, leading the counter-revolutionary intellectual revolt against the Republic and the new constitutional order of 1931. In the same period, the economic crisis generated in the United States by the Wall Street crash of October 1929 was shading a new light on the flaws of liberal capitalism. De Maeztu's work for 'Acciòn Espanola' resulted in a book, which appeared in 1934, consisting of a collection of his articles published in the review in the last three years and titled *Defensa de la Hispanidad*.[60] In this lapse of time De Maeztu forged his last political concept, indeed the concept of Hispanidad, which became a tool to build a true Hispanic society, grounded on Social

Catholicism and Monarchy as tools useful to create an ordered and hierarchical society based on the institutions of guilds, which became, in 1934, 'las corporaciones', adapting the terminology to the widespread European and Latina American fascist corporatism.

Conclusions

On 18 July 1936, Francisco Franco assumed the leadership of the Spanish Army of Africa, leading his soldiers beyond the Gibraltar Street and triggering the Spanish Civil War, which ended in April 1939 with Franco's victory. However, right after Franco's pronunciamento, De Maeztu was jailed in Madrid, and murdered a few months later by Republican soldiers, on 29 October 1936, together with Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, former leader of the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista, founded in 1931.

The purpose of this chapter has essentially been to conduct an experiment in transnational microhistory, attempting to find answers to large questions in small places. Therefore, the personal dimension of the life and thought of Ramiro De Maeztu discussed earlier can be seen as a paradigmatic example, revealing several aspects about the formation and developing of an authoritarian and corporatist political agenda. De Maeztu was particularly instrumental in preparing the ground for the emergence of the Iberian political corporatist experience that would be the most durable with the dictatorship of Salazar in Portugal and of Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco in Spain.

Retracing the individual experience of Ramiro De Maeztu helps us underpin the interpretation of corporatism as a 'travelling theory in the political culture of the interwar Europe',[61] as recently put by Matteo Pasetti – a travelling theory that took steps in a transnational and transpolitical dialogue that can be grasped only applying a wider geographical and diachronic perspective, thus assuming a long-term and global historiographical viewpoint.

Indeed, Ramiro De Maeztu's life offers a vivid example of the historiographical themes just recalled. First of all, the investigation enhances the idea that the global authoritarian, corporatist and fascist global movement, like Rome, was not built in a day. One the one hand, the First World War and, later, the great economic depression of the 1930s, were certainly fundamental in shaping the form of the several authoritarian and fascist regimes in Europe. However, the interwar corporatist tendencies have a much longer history, whose origins lay in a form of anti-liberal reaction to democracy and Parliament begun in the second half of the 19th century.

Secondly, the transnational dimension is absolutely central in De Maeztu's experience. In fact, he took part in a vast and multifaceted intellectual network, formed by thinkers coming from different political and cultural backgrounds, as well as from various countries, such as Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and Argentina. National and political differences are certainly important, and they cannot be underestimated as key factors in shaping the different forms that corporatism

assumes in the different contexts. Nonetheless, it is impossible to deny that the emergence, growth and development of a complex political and cultural family of corporatist ideas – meant as both an ideological discourse and a set of political institutions – have had as a scenario a real global context. From Spain to the United Kingdom, from Italy to Latin America, the common objective of the corporatist universe seems to be to propose a general reconsideration of the cultural, juridical, political and economic paradigm of liberalism, redefining the boundaries between private and public spheres, between individuals and the state. That goal was specifically pursued by proposing a different typology of political model, aiming at institutionalizing a corporatist representation scheme, against both to the traditional liberal democracy and to the rising Socialist collectivism.

Thirdly, it needs to be stated a quite surprising characteristic concerning De Maeztu's intellectual. At a superficial glance, in fact, De Maeztu's thought of the late 1920s and the early 1930s could appear as a classic Catholic, authoritarian and corporatist system, as many others of his time. However, his late political positions hide a much more complex theoretical framework and a very articulated cultural background of influences and references. That complexity could be observed particularly during his British years, when he encountered a lively cultural environment, which had a major impact on his political ideas. Upon his return to Spain in 1919, in fact, his political philosophy clearly bore the stamps of the New Age Circle ideas, specifically referring to Orage and Penty's medievalism, to Chesterton and Belloc's Social Catholicism and Distributism, and to Hulme's pessimism. However, it was also referring to other political cultures apparently more distant from his views, such as Maitland and Figgis' ideas of juridical personality of social groups and Hobson and Cole's Guild Socialism.

In conclusion, after an anti-positivist cultural education received in a climate of Spanish decadence at the end of the 19th century, De Maeztu discovered in London the idea of function and the idea of organizing society through industrial guilds, then applying it to post-war Spain. It is indeed important to highlight that this corporatist turn occurred in Great Britain, and especially that it arose by drawing principles and ideas from the British non-Marxist socialism and Social Catholic worlds. Finally, De Maeztu blended all these theories in a sharply authoritarian fashion by binding together the idea of Catholic and monarchic state supremacy with the acknowledgment of the institutional legitimacy of the organized productive and economic forces. Structured in a system of industrial corporations, the new organizations had to acquire a public role under a strong central state, eventually found in Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco's dictatorships.

Notes

1 M. Battini, *L'ordine della gerarchia. I contributi reazionari e progressisti alla crisi della democrazia in Francia, 1789–1914*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1995.

2 P. Schmitter, 'Still the century of corporatism?', in F. B. Pike and T. Stritch, eds, *The New Corporatism: Social-Political Structures in the Iberian World*, Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press, 1974, p. 86. Since then, a vast body of literature has been produced on the concept of corporatism, especially recalling the difference between 'social corporatism' and 'political corporatism'. See, among others, M. Maraffi, ed., *La Società neo-corporativa*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1981; A. Cawson, J. Ballard, *A Bibliography of Corporatism*, Firenze, European University Institute, 1984; L. Ornaghi, *Stato e corporazione. Storia di una dottrina nella crisi del sistema politico contemporaneo*, Milano, Giuffré, 1984; P. J. Williamson, *Varieties of Corporatism: A Conceptual Discussion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985; P. J. Williamson, *Corporatism in Perspective*, London, Sage, 1989; H. J. Wiarda, *Corporatism and Comparative Politics. The Other Great 'Ism'*, Armonk, Sharpe, 1997; and J. L. Cardoso and P. Mendonça, 'Corporatism and beyond: An assessment of recent literature', *ICS Working Papers*, 1, 2012, pp. 1–31.

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4 All the biographical references are in P. C. Gonzalez Cuevas, *Maeztu. Biografia de un nacionalista español*, Madrid, Marcial Pons Historia, 2003 and J. M. Flores, *Ramiro De Maeztu y Whitney: un intelectual querido por España*, Padova, Unipress, 2002. See also A. Botti, *Nazionalcattolicesimo e Spagna nuova (1881–1975)*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1992, pp. 91–101.

5 Gonzalvez Cuevas, pp. 29–64.

6 For an overview on Spanish nationalism see H. Kamen, *Imagining Spain: Historical Myth and National Identity*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008; F. Molina Paricio and X. M. Nuñez Seixas, eds, *Los heterodoxos de la patria. Biografias de nacionalistas atipicos en la Espana del siglo XX*, Granada, Comares, 2011; and I. Saz Campos and F. Archilés Cardona, eds, *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nacion en la España contemporànea*, Zaragoza, Prensas Universitaria de Zaragoza, 2011.

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11 Gonzalvez Cuevas, pp. 64–108.
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13 There is extensive literature on British idealism. See S. M. Den Otter, *British Idealism and Social Explanation: A Study in Late Victorian Thought*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996; P. Nicholson, *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists: Selected Studies*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990; and A. Vincent and R. Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship: The Life and Thought of the British Idealists*, Oxford, Basil Blackett, 1984.
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32 See also idem, *Self-Government in Industry*, London, G. Bell, 1917 and Id., *Guild Socialism Re-Stated*, London, Leonard Parsons, 1920.
33 Figgis, 'The Great Leviatan', p. 49.
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44 Id., 'Beyond the barriers of liberty and authority', *The New Age*, 17, no. 18, 2 September 1915, p. 425.
45 Id., *Authority, Liberty and Function*, p. 253.
46 Ibid.
47 Id., 'On the primacy of things', *The New Age*, 17, no. 26, 28 October 1915, p. 543.
48 Id., 'On liberty and organisation', *The New Age*, 17, no. 16, 19 August 1915, p. 378.
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