Makeshift *furancho* signs in Galicia. Image provided by Trespés Cooperativa (Redondela).

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culture today.

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A COMPANION TO GALICIAN CULTURE

HELENA MIGUÉLEZ-CARBALLEIRA (ed.)

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Edited by

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Contemporary Galicia: From Agrarian Crisis to High-Speed Trains

XOSÉ RAMÓN VEIGA

The railway linking A Coruña in northern Galicia to inland Spain was completed in 1883. This link – after more than twenty years of construction work – gave rise to a rethink about Galicia's territorial isolation. The railway is a good metaphor for Galicia's recent history from the second half of the nineteenth century up until today: a metaphor that still poignantly chronicles how symbols of economic progress have appeared later in Galicia than in other parts of Spain. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the export of fattened calves to Great Britain, which had been the principal commercial activity in Galicia in the second half of the century, entered a period of steep decline as a result of competition with the arrival of frozen meat from Argentina. The English market was thus replaced by trade within the Iberian Peninsula which had been facilitated by the new railway – a clear sign of the changing times. This type of rapid transformation in the region's economic structure would partially bring about the agrarian crisis that took place in fin-de-siècle Galicia. For the purposes of this chapter on contemporary Galician history, we shall take this crisis as the starting point for our journey.

In the transition between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries Galician society showed the characteristically blurred façade of a fading world that had not quite yet defined itself with regard to its new conditions. If we take the arrival of the railway as a historical prism, it is clear that a new spectrum of possibilities was opened up by what the Galician poet Curros Enríquez termed the 'modern-day Christ'. It is no less true, however, that internal communications within the region as a whole – which were needed to guarantee Galicia's integration and cohesion – were barely better than cart tracks.

From the perspective of landownership the structures of indenture had persisted well into the early twentieth century with their division between the owners of the *directo* (those who received the rent) and the owners of the *útil*

(those who worked the land). The Galician *foro* (agrarian land-lease contract) continued to be the dominant contract and its characteristics influenced other landowning formulas in use at the time. Galician society was, therefore, an eminently agrarian one divided between landlords and land workers (whether *foreiros* or other kinds). All this was, however, about to change as a consequence of the agrarian crisis. The steep fall in the price of agricultural produce led many landowners to decide to sell the land to their indentured labourers, who in turn became outright owners of the land in a process which fuelled a new society based on smallholdings. This shift in ownership structures was not accompanied, however, by structural changes in agricultural practice apart from the isolated efforts of a few 'gentlemen farmers' and a slew of innovative landowners. Nevertheless, the Galician agricultural system, though bereft of planning methods and reliant on a spectacular patchwork of smallholdings, proved to possess a high level of functionality achieved by farming practices based on the combination of poly-cultivation and cattle breeding. Thanks to the intensive use of communal forested areas (which provided a natural source of manure, pasture areas, wood and game) and an over-exploitation of the workforce, Galician agrarian production in the late nineteenth century had achieved positive results for an agriculture that was still completely organic.

With regard to Galicia's industrial development during the nineteenth century, the country could be described as still awaiting its revolution. The high expectations with which the eighteenth century had ended – with the establishment of the blast furnace at Sargadelos (northern Lugo) and the domestic production of linen – had been completely frustrated by the end of the nineteenth century. The closure of the Sargadelos factory in 1875 can be seen, in fact, as an apt metaphor of Galicia's industrial decline during this period. Ironworks and leatherworks met with a similar fate, since they were unable to make the technological leap necessary to compete with foreign manufacturers. State-funded industries such as the tobacco factory of A Coruña and the naval dockyards of Ferrol did not have the desired spin-off effect on other areas and remained islands in an otherwise unindustrialized sea. Yet things were set to change in this sphere too, just as they had in the areas of commerce and banking, above all in A Coruña and Vigo, thanks to the possibilities offered by trade with Cuba which led to the establishment of the first Galician banks.

In political terms Galicia was by the end of the nineteenth century fully enmeshed in the machinery of Spanish politics. In fact the presence of Galician ministers seemed to have become a fixture of successive Spanish governments, particularly during the Bourbon Restoration from 1874 onwards. The cultures of patronage and cronyism permeated political life in the region, although, in this, Galicia was no different from other parts of Spain. What distinguished the

Galician political context of the period was the existence of a substantial number of quasi-feudal electoral districts controlled by political families who could place their own candidates in the Spanish Parliament after a process of local and state-level negotiations, thereby leaving barely a chance for the aspiring *cuneros* – those candidates who had not been born in the constituency they were called to represent and therefore had no functional access to local political elites. Until the period known as the Democratic *Sexenio* (1868–74), Liberals – divided into moderates, unionists and progressives – and 'Carlists' – aligned largely with the values of the Ancien Régime – occupied most sectors of the country's political spectrum, with republicanism filling in the gaps though not without encountering some deep-rooted resistance from 1868 onwards. A similar distribution of power was exhibited by *galeguismo*, the political movement defined by its promotion of Galicia's uniqueness within Spain which, from its humble beginnings and with more success in the cultural sphere than in politics, had succeeded in establishing a small network of associations across the Galician territory towards the end of the century. It was also during this six-year democratic period that the first manifestations of the workers' movement appeared in Galicia, which mainly coalesced around anarchism. But it was not until the final decade of the nineteenth century that the first episodes of social conflict would occur with workers' strikes in A Coruña, Compostela, Vigo and Ferrol and the appearance of the first socialist groups. Their impact, however, was limited to Galicia's cities.

The fin-de-siècle agrarian crisis (1890–1936)

The large-scale arrival in Europe of agricultural produce from America and the inability of native production to compete with its lower prices caused an unprecedented economic crisis. In Galicia this situation brought about a steep devaluation of agricultural land-related profit which affected both the gentry (a social group characterized by their landowning lifestyle) and the bourgeoisie, who had acquired lands as a result of the ecclesiastical confiscations of the late eighteenth century. This loss of value forced the landowning classes to sell their properties to working labourers, thus practically bringing about a revolution in the structures of Galician agriculture. Former bonded labourers became smallholders while the Galician gentry gradually disappeared and with them the Galician agrarian land-lease system, which had dominated Galicia's socio-economic system for 400 years. Pressure from agrarian unions favouring this exchange and the increase in the purchasing power of the peasantry (in the form of monies coming from the émigré communities and the sale of livestock) also pushed up land sales. The decree abolishing indenture in 1926 acted as the legal foundation for a process which had already proved to be unstoppable in

the preceding decades. This evolution towards the proprietarization of land was completed with the enclosure of the communal forested areas which were now available for reforestation.

Alongside the transformation of land acquisition described above came the gradual organization of a solid agrarian movement which was well placed to face new challenges. Land labourers' unions and societies were created with the objective of defending their members' interests, disseminating advances in agricultural practices and integrating Galician's rural population into local political life. This agrarian phenomenon grew out of parish structures but it would soon expand and develop into federations at a regional level. Its programmatic vision and political orientation varied widely from one association to the next: some were socialist or anarchist while others were Catholic; some focused on the improvement of farming practices while others encouraged political struggle. Many campaigned for the abolition of land leases while others saw this as a secondary issue. In general, during the period of greatest political repression – notably Primo de Rivera's dictatorship from 1923 to 1929 – there was a clear focus on technical improvement, while in the years of greatest political freedom – during the Second Republic – the significance of the political component increased. In the early stages the leaders of the agrarian movement were often unionist leaders or émigrés who had returned 'home' from urban environments. However, these émigrés were soon replaced, particularly after 1931, by a first generation of homegrown committees and rural leaders; men such as José Puente Figueiras or Maximiliano Coto López spring to mind.

Common to all agrarian movements is their interest in cooperatives. In Galicia the most successful cooperative formula involved the collective purchasing of products such as fertilizers, selected seeds and herbicides together with the acquisition of machinery (ploughs and threshing machines). The collective acquisition of technical goods and commodities brought technology to Galician agriculture and led to the gradual mechanization of the sector. Buttressing this process was a network of associations for agricultural innovation such as the Granxa Agrícola Experimental d'A Coruña (Experimental Agricultural Farm in A Coruña) and the Misión Biolóxica de Galiza (Biological Mission of Galicia), both of which were state-funded. Neither the new culture of credit cooperatives nor the new platforms for production and commercialization, however, reaped the expected rewards, with the possible exception of the Federación Agraria de Ortigueira (Agrarian Association of Ortigueira), which was very active in the commercialization of livestock.

Beyond their scope of action in the economic sphere the agrarian movement's role in steering Galicia's political and social modernization cannot be overemphasized. The introduction of universal male suffrage in 1890 meant that the

political elites needed the support of the male rural population and the emerging political leaders of the agrarian movement were successful in forcing parties to change their political agendas in order to court their votes. It is true that Galician farmers never managed to organize themselves into a political party and that electoral experiments of this type – including the coalition Solidaridad Gallega (Galician Solidarity) (1907–11) – did not bear the anticipated fruit. It is none the less true that many of the methods and forms of modern politics – the rally, for instance – were introduced into the Galician scene by the agrarian movement, and its increasing political clout played a central role in the diversification of Galicia's political spectrum as well as of its patronage-based procedures. In terms of civil society the booming of the agrarian press during this period also placed the country folk at the centre of the social stage. Some of these publications were the object of public readings which for the first time provided access for a broadly illiterate rural population to written culture and played a formative role in the development of self-esteem among the lower classes. Libraries and schools were created under the movement's auspices, with agrarian associations often acting as intermediaries in the transatlantic interaction between Galician society and migrant communities in America, who often financed educational progress back home. Agricultural unions also had recourse to new methods of collective action such as strikes, which made them a frequent target for violent political repression. On 27 November 1922 an agrarian uprising in Sobredo-Guillarei (Tui) ended with the assassination by Spanish forces of three land labourers who had stood up for a neighbour who was refusing to pay for land lease. An annual act of remembrance is still held to this day in the town.

As a result of these changes the Galician rural population began to have access to landed property and technology as well as to channels for their collective organization and external commerce. It was thanks to these new forms of trade that pre-1936 Galician agriculture saw the definitive abandonment of fallow periods and the increase in the number of fields given over to pasture which was vital for the success of livestock breeding. The railway played a fundamental role in this respect since it allowed the rapid transport of Galicia's cattle, which was now improved as a result of selective breeding, to the inner regions of Spain. The figures relating to this period certainly demonstrate the positive effects that the railway had on Galician agricultural trade. In the 1880s, for example, 21,000 head of livestock per annum were sent to Great Britain. By the 1920s the figure had reached more than 200,000 head of livestock per annum sent to inland Spain. The railway station in Lugo, for example, was transformed into an immense cattle pen.

From 1885 onwards the rapid pace of industrialization led to the development of a manufacturing sector based on fish conservation which until then

had been maintained as a traditional rural activity only. The natural abundance of sardine in the Galician Atlantic margin, the culture's long tradition of salting, the gradual incorporation of technical advances, the innovative spirit of a handful of businessmen and, again, the railway meant that fish processing factories sprang up all along the Galician coast, staffed for the most part by a female workforce under exceedingly harsh conditions. Galicia thus entered the geography of the industrialized world to the point of becoming the market leader over the other Spanish regions. The Rías Baixas area, and particularly the port of Vigo, was the heartland of this revolution which also included exporting fresh fish to the rest of Spain. At the end of the First World War, which brought about a boom in the trade of canned goods, fish production in Galicia had sextupled its late nineteenth-century figures. Despite the economic depression of the late 1920s the sector had been galvanized by the acquisition of a modernized fleet, the use of new (especially Irish) fishing grounds and the exploitation of new fish species such as the Atlantic *bonito*, a type of tuna. Fish-associated industries also developed apace to meet the needs of the booming fishing industry: dockyards, foundries, sawmills and makers of ice as well as stamping and embossing factories cropped up along the coast and were often attached to the canning factories themselves.

A series of more modest activities flourished alongside the fishing industry and its derivatives. Iron and wolfram mining, for example, developed mainly under the control of foreign capital while the emergence of electricity, water, gas, urban and inter-urban transport companies was encouraged by the country's modest urban development. The hike in commercial activity, which was often very closely related to the sale of agrarian products and machinery, also brought about the development of an autochthonous financial sector, the study of which has been a somewhat neglected area in Galician history. From 1900 onwards local banks such as the Banco de Vigo, Banco de La Coruña and Banco Pastor acquired substantial dimensions, with the collapse of the Banco de Vigo in 1925 leaving A Coruña to become the financial capital of Galicia, particularly through the operations of the recently dissolved Banco Pastor as the head of an industrial group that was to hold great sway under the Franco dictatorship.

In contrast to the socio-economic changes described above, the political transformations which took place in Galicia during the first third of the twentieth century appear to be less radical. As pointed out earlier, until the military coup in 1923 Galician politics was characterized by the stifling dominance of a culture of patronage in which a number of political families (the Montero Ríos, Bugallal, Ordóñez or Gasset) maintained tight control over parliamentary representation. Neither republicans nor regionalists – who had begun to take their first footsteps in the political world – were capable of striking

fear into the hearts of Restoration politicians at the turn of the century, and the coalition Solidaridad Gallega, despite having the clear support of the rural sector, did not make any serious inroads into institutional politics. The workers' movement struggled in the face of government animosity on the one hand, and from low membership numbers in Galicia on the other. Adversity notwithstanding, workers' unions were able to carry out several strikes in the early decades of the century (1908, 1917, 1919–20). On the eve of the military coup in 1923 the (socialist) Unión General de Trabajadores (General Workers' Union) (UGT) and the (anarchist) Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Confederation of Workers) (NCT) boasted a membership of 10,000 activists each, and during the years of the Second Republic they repeatedly demonstrated their capacity to mobilize the population to participate in labour conflict. At the opposite end of the spectrum were the Catholic workers' circles led by the ecclesiastical hierarchy with the clear intention of subduing political activity. Uppermost on their agenda was the dissemination of the image of the 'good' worker who focused on family and religion and kept out of political turmoil and trade union activity.

As in the rest of Spain, Primo de Rivera's dictatorship brought about a radical break with patronage politics in Galicia, which was essential for even the mildest kind of regeneration in the country. New mayors, councillors, provincial representatives and governors were recruited from a new middle class of doctors, engineers and solicitors, thus displacing the old hegemony of landowners. The dictatorship's new agrarian discourse, with its order-obsessed, anti-*cacique* rhetoric and its promise to create a Galician *Mancomunidad* (commonwealth), initially attracted the sympathy of the agrarian association and even the nationalist sectors. However, sympathy did not translate into political support, which truncated the eventual consolidation of the dictatorship's single party, the Unión Patriótica (Patriotic Union). By 1929 even the student population of Santiago de Compostela, who were not renowned for their tradition of protest, were making trouble for the dictator.

The local elections of 12 April 1931 gave overall victory to the monarchists but it was the republicans and other left-wing groups who triumphed in the main Galician cities, with the exception of Lugo and Ourense. Several years of intense mobilization would follow, which caused the further consolidation of a profusion of political parties on both the right and the left ends of the spectrum. The authoritarian monarchist right with its fascist leanings and virulent defence of Spanish nationalism thrived mainly in the province of Ourense thanks to a network of patronage relationships gravitating around the Tui-born José Calvo Sotelo, one of Primo de Rivera's ex-ministers. The establishment of a Galician fascist movement, comprising mainly José Antonio Primo de Rivera's supporters, was a slow process, its ranks only swelling after the triumph in February

1936 of the left-wing coalition Frente Popular (Popular Front). The Galician rightist spectrum was, in any case, highly heterogeneous: it was organized around the Unión Regional de Derechas (Rightist Regional Union) and promoted the defence of Catholicism and a social order which was seen as dangerously threatened by republican social reforms.

Centrist positions in Galicia aligned with Alejandro Lerroux's Partido Radical (Radical Party) managed to garner substantial support within the republican spectrum thanks mainly to the charismatic leader Basilio Álvarez, the popular abbot of the village of Beiro (Ourense). In the 1931 election the Partido Radical was surpassed by Casares Quiroga's Organización Republicana Gallega Autónoma (Galician Autonomous Republican Organization) (ORGA), but in the 1933 election it became the foremost political power in the region, in good measure thanks to the successful mobilization of the rural bases by its leaders. The party found it difficult to live up to its perhaps unexpected electoral gains and the Galician radicals ended up falling victims to their own success, a situation that was not helped by the party's internal divisions at state level and the many corruption scandals affecting Lerroux himself.

The most innovative republican political project of the period is probably the above-mentioned ORGA, created by Santiago Casares Quiroga, born in Coruña, who would be the president of the Spanish republican government at the time of the coup d'état in July 1936. Its support bases were highly concentrated in the middle classes of A Coruña and its manifesto was founded on a tepid discourse of Galician autonomy (which was later forgotten), a programme for anti-clerical social reforms and an agricultural policy that favoured smallholdings. ORGA achieved excellent results in the 1931 election but its downfall in 1933 and its leader's quest for a top position amongst the Republican elite in Madrid led the party to renounce its autonomy and subsume the group – which since 1932 had been known as the Partido Republicano Gallego (Galician Republican Party) – under Manuel Azaña's Izquierda Republicana (Republican Left).

Thanks to its coalition with the republicans the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) achieved eight representatives in the 1931 election but did not win a single seat when it later ran by itself in 1933. After entering into coalition with the Frente Popular in 1936 it again gained parliamentary representation and from then until the July coup it experienced significant growth, which was based as always on anti-fascist alliances. The evolution of the Partido Comunista de España (Spanish Communist Party) was much the same: from a position of almost total lack of representation in Galicia it had managed by 1936 to garner important support in the industrializing centres of Vigo and Ferrol as well as in those rural areas where agricultural unions had gained some ground. The anarchist CNT, which enjoyed a strong position in coastal towns and in the city of A Coruña, also played an influential role in Republican Galicia and its electoral processes.

With regard to the political representation of Galician nationalism, two distinct strands can be perceived by the time of the Second Republic's first elections in June 1931. In the province of A Coruña, the old Irmandades da Fala had decided to join Casares Quiroga's ORGA, trusting his promise to fight for a statute of autonomy. However, in Ourense and Pontevedra the nationalist groups had decided either to run by themselves (as was the case in Pontevedra) or in coalition with other forces. The result was as modest in quantity as it was important in quality: for the first time two Galician nationalists, Ramón Otero Pedrayo (representing Ourense) and Alfonso Daniel Rodríguez Castelao (representing Pontevedra), occupied seats in the Spanish Parliament. In December that year the until then disparate nationalist groups decided to unify as the single Partido Galeguista (Galeguista Party). Its chief programmatic aim was to secure a statute of autonomy for Galicia, but resistance from the republican government and the poor support from an ORGA that had abandoned its pro-nationalist policy meant that by the end of 1933 a consensus draft for the Galician statute had not yet been produced. The subsequent centre-right republican governments did not make the task any easier. With the victory of the left-wing coalition Frente Popular in 1936, however, which the Partido Galeguista had joined as part of its process of diversification of its social support, the prospect of Galician autonomy was again on the horizon and finally became a reality with the victory of the 'Yes' vote in the referendum of 28 June 1936. Inexorably, the fascist coup d'état of 17–18 July prevented the implementation of the Galician statute at that time, but its historical significance was recuperated with the Spanish Constitution of 1978, in which Galicia attained the status of one of Spain's 'historical' autonomous regions along with Catalonia and the Basque Country.

Franco's dictatorship in Galicia

It is a widely disseminated fact about the history of the Spanish Civil War that from its first days Galicia remained under the control of the rebel army. Widespread support for the plot in the barracks coupled with the indecision of the Galician civil authorities meant that organized resistance was rapidly quashed. There was therefore no battle front in Galicia, but the price paid by the population in the form of repression was, to put it simply, brutal, a fact that demonstrates the rebels' strategy of eliminating all traces of republican support in Galicia and sowing the seeds of fear among the people. The well over 12,000 documented victims of political repression in Galicia, or in writer Carlos Casares's words the 'mortos daquel verán' (dead of that

summer) (2004), are the tragic evidence of these acts. Over and above the official death-toll figures, thousands of Galicians saw their lives undone by other forms of repression such as political cleansing, forced fines, exile or relocation, all designed to truncate lives both publicly and privately and to instigate social stigmatization.

A dictatorial regime was thus built on this bloody scenery, barely contested by a few hundred *fuxidos*, an army of dispersed fugitives who had fled to the mountains to avoid certain death and who could keep up a degree of armed resistance thanks to the backing of the Communist Party and the support of local families. The dictatorship's pillars of support were, however, numerous in Galicia. The Catholic Church was both an enthusiastic and a decisive collaborator. By its side businessmen and bankers looked favourably on the arrival of a regime of 'order' that could keep workers' protests in line, and many of them made enormous material and symbolic gains from the dictatorship such as the acquisition of nobility titles. Other adherents included affiliates of the Falange, of which there were not many in Galicia, and accidental or opportunistic republicans who later joined right-wing groups and actively participated in a new regime which, if not entirely to their taste, offered the guarantee of social peace and a sense of economic stability. There was no lack of support either from members of those Galician families who had amassed posts in local councils and politics before 1931 and had felt displaced and disaffected during the years of the republican reforms. Determining what the attitudes were among the heterogeneous Galician rural community is altogether more difficult. Specialists such as Ana Cabana have argued that the most widespread position during the 1940s and 1950s was one of 'consent' as part a survival strategy under economic and political duress that did not shy away from alternative forms of resistance (Cabana 2009, 2013). Strong forms of discontent spilled over in periodic skirmishes after 1960 as a result of the support and organizational potential of the clandestine unions. Recent investigations have emphasized the role played by the pompously named Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos (Syndical Brotherhoods of Land-Workers and Cattle-Breeders), the rural counterpart of the dictatorship's Sindicato Vertical (Vertical Union) (Collarte 2006). Their practices were in line with the paternalistic methods of favour-granting and punishment – typical of the ingrained culture of patronage – and their role was mainly to act as nurseries for local leaders who would renounce any aspiration to democracy or freedom in exchange for short-term favours.

The first signs of organized turmoil against the dictatorship begin to appear in the early 1960s, particularly with the workers' strikes of Vigo and A Coruña. The Communist Party was instrumental in the creation of the union Comisións Obreiras (Workers' Commissions) in 1966 which from the outset deployed a

tactic of *entrismo*, that is to say, participation in the *Sindicato Vertical* in order to attain some benefits for their membership from within. In this same year a conflict took place over the construction of the dam of Castrelo de Miño in the province of Ourense, a sign that fear was being gradually replaced by organized action. With regard to nationalist forms of resistance, this was also the decade when the Marxist-Leninist Unión do Povo Galego (Union of the Galician People) was founded, in 1964. Together with the Partido Socialista Galego (Galician Socialist Party) created in 1963 and an amalgam of cultural and social centres, the Unión do Povo Galego offered a support base for incipient forms of public protest such as the student revolts after 1968. The year 1972 became a key year in this process when, in the course of a naval workers' demonstration on 10 March in Ferrol, the police shot dead two protesters – Amador Rey and Daniel Niebla – and wounded many others. Like all dictatorships Franco's regime did not die without fighting a dirty fight.

During Franco's dictatorship Galicia's economy went through two distinct stages, separated by the watershed year of 1959 when the so-called Plan de Estabilización (Stability Plan), designed to overcome the failed autarchic formulas, was passed. As the rearguard of the rebel army during the war, Galicia became the Francoist forces' larder for human capital and food, which meant that sectors such as canning, the sale of livestock and sawmills saw years of assured demand. The situation took a dramatic change in the post-war years. The dictatorship's isolationist policies and desire to control production tipped the economy into a prolonged depression. The agricultural sector, so dynamic on the eve of 1936, saw the dismantling of its network of unions and associations (occasionally via the murder of their leaders), as well as the loss of human capital and state institutions that had in the past guaranteed support for innovation. The scarcity of fuel and the lack of artificial fertilizers caused production to nosedive. The creation of the Comisaría de Abastecimientos y Transportes (Department of Supplies and Transport), which policed obligatory production quotas and fixed prices, only served to encourage an enormous black market. Potato and wine production slumped and the cultivation of fodder was halted, meaning agriculture went back to cereal production. The raising of cattle and pigs went down too, resulting in a partial return to the old pasture landscape of goats and sheep. Unworked lands went from being used as common agricultural or pasture ground to serving the timber industry via aggressive reforestation programmes that tended to favour fast-growing species such as eucalyptus and pine rather than indigenous, slow-growing trees such as oak and chestnut. Galicia's present-day natural landscape is largely the effect of these transformations.

Industrial development during the post-war period varied widely according to sector. The fishing industry enjoyed a period of growth. Dockyards ex-

panded in the 1940s and 1950s with ships fishing further and further afield, carrying larger cargoes and incorporating the use of ice to conserve the haul. The Irish fishing grounds and later those of Mauritania and Newfoundland became the destination of tireless Galician fishermen and the docks responded to this situation, nimbly meeting the new technical demands. Such dynamism was not visible in the canning sector which saw the prosperous years of the Civil War turn into a sour post-war period. The combination of sourcing difficulties, inefficient state intervention and the loss of foreign markets led the sector into a brutal recession which slowed down the process of upsizing that had been under way before 1936. The timber industry, in which activity depended very much on the fortunes of the canning industry as its main client, experienced a similar decline. Mining, by contrast, went through a period of growth during the Second World War owing to the demand for wolfram from Nazi Germany. Thanks to the high prices paid for this metal, specific areas such as Valdeorras in Ourense or Carballo in A Coruña experienced some years of intense exploitation which came to an abrupt end after 1945. Throughout the 1950s the electricity sector ripened significantly thanks to the construction of dams in the basins of the rivers Miño and Sil, even turning Galicia into an energy exporter. Leading the way in this sector was the FENOSA group, which was created in 1943 and heavily financed by the Banco Pastor. Its successful operations encouraged multinationals to set up plants in Galicia such as Citroën in Vigo and the high energy consumer ENCE, a controversial, highly polluting cellulose factory still in operation on Pontevedra's estuary.

Franco's Stability Plan (1959) brought about slight improvements for the Galician economy, although invariably on a lower scale than the Spanish average. The end of state interventionism and increases in demand drove Galician agriculture forward; the milk and beef sectors almost became the country's most important areas of agricultural specialization. Collective acquisition of technological goods gave way to the appearance of the first family-owned tractors and threshing machines. The first milk-preservation industries – Feiraco in A Coruña and Complesa in Lugo – were established and were complemented by the appearance of the industrial abattoirs of FRIGSA in Lugo and the Cooperativas Orensanas (COREN) in Ourense, the latter focusing on poultry and eggs.

Meanwhile, the Galician fishing industry continued its expansion. The exploitation of new fishing grounds in the Falklands, Namibia and Mozambique, together with the construction of larger, more sophisticated ships, culminated in the establishment in 1961 of the large fishing company Pescanova in Redondela/Vigo, an undeniable engine of growth for the area, but whose high profile was shattered in 2013 after years of poor management and relentless losses. In

parallel, the more traditional sector of shellfish was subject to its first regulations in 1969 and went on to become a strategic growth area for the economy, with mussel production at its core.

During the 1960s and 1970s Galician industry became widely diversified. The Citroën factory, established in Vigo in 1957 and employing almost 7,000 workers by 1975, is perhaps the best example of this expansion. Sectors which had appeared in the preceding decades became more consolidated during this period. For instance, dockyards such as ASTANO, Bazán, Barreras and ASCON were among the strongest employers in Vigo and Ferrol, while new hydroelectric and thermal electricity plants were also built in the 1960s and 1970s. The timber industry, by contrast, was still blighted by small business structures and obliged to restructure itself (in the process incurring many closures) owing to new competition from plastic packaging. It was the service sector, however, which was most effective at creating employment with the more traditional sectors of trade, banking and transport generating the most jobs.

Democracy and autonomy

The death of the dictator on 20 November 1975 heralded a new period of questions and hopes for Galicia. On the social plane, emigration to Europe had started to subside, giving way to a period characterized demographically by the return of older generations of migrants. The main demographic problem in Galicia became the rapidly ageing population and the concomitant abandonment of a rural interior that even today runs the risk of turning into a 'verdant desert'. Up until the early 1990s the effects of the maritime sector reform with its wave of closures and mass redundancies characterized the region's industry in ways that are still felt today, despite the textile, automobile and wind power sectors enjoying an undeniable period of expansion. Still, the threat of outsourcing and relocation has loomed large over the Galician economy, a fact that has counteracted further consolidation of Galicia's specialized industries.

Spain's entrance into the EEC in 1986 brought about a radical change of scenery. Now in competition with Europe's consolidated milk and meat sectors, the prospects for Galician agriculture and fishing were not as promising, and the passing of time has confirmed these initial negative expectations. The *cuota*, the European limit on milk production, turned out to fall well below actual production capacity and the subsequent fall in prices pushed the sector into a zone of perpetual crisis. A comparable downward trend affected the Galician fishing industry after 1986 when boats lost their fishing grounds and fish-haul limits were tightened, while repeated protests against public powers proved fruitless. In contrast to these trends, however, the

further introduction of technology in agriculture and viticulture improved sales and production.

Joining the EEC's common market meant that European funding became available to drag Galicia out of its position at the tail end of the least-developed European regions. The history of European funding in Galicia, however, is riddled with inconsistencies and inefficiencies. On the whole European money was channelled into the construction of infrastructure – mainly roads – often on the grounds of spurious local interests and clientelist politics. This injection of European funding did bring about a notable improvement of the road network which had until then been in a sorry state, but it is clear that land connections with Spain – whether by road or railway – have accumulated eloquent delays in the past decades. With regard to the railways the situation has become almost surreal, with the long-awaited Alta Velocidad Española (Spanish High-Speed Train) amassing a terrible record of broken promises. The obsession with keeping three operational airports in A Coruña, Vigo and Santiago de Compostela can hardly be explained either and needs to be understood as the result of local pressures and inter-city rivalry. From the perspective of environmental policy the balance-sheet is woeful: levels of marine pollution in the Galician estuaries – the *rías* – were described as 'shocking' by European inspectors in February 2013, while recycling programmes are still reliant on dubious incineration practices that are widely contested by environmental groups. The problem of uncontrolled fires particularly during the summer period remains seriously unresolved. Even after the traumatic bout of summer fires experienced in 2006, fire prevention policies seem to focus on extinction rather than on proactive prevention. The disastrous episode of the oil tanker *Prestige* in November 2002 would warrant a separate chapter. After weeks of confusing media coverage and wilful neglect on the part of both the Galician and central governments, Galician society was galvanized into an unprecedented mobilization by the movement *Nunca Máis* (Never Again), which focused on the demand for institutional accountability and rapid restorative action. The answer came in the form of the Plan de Dinamización Económica de Galicia (Plan for Galicia's Economic Dynamization), also called the 'Plan Galicia', which has gone down in history as the largest dedicated state-funding programme implemented in the country. Welcomed by the media as a golden opportunity for the Galician economy, the plan comprised a combination of measures that had been on the agenda prior to the ecological crisis and others that have not been implemented to this day. The only positive outcome of this scarring episode was the wave of solidarity it elicited, with thousands of volunteers coming from all parts of the country and abroad to clear the Galician coast of crude oil. In November 2013 the final verdict in the *Prestige* trial found no criminal or political responsibility in the sinking, and absolved the three defendants of crimes against the environment, a resolution which was also met with widespread social protest in Galicia.

Since 2008, and in line with the rest of the state and the surrounding capitalist West, Galicia has been affected at all levels by the economic crisis. After a period of incredulity and perplexity, and particularly after 2010, the Galician working population has suffered thousands of redundancies (especially in the construction sectors and in the markets and activities related to the so-called 'brick bubble', which is today in smithereens). The closure of hundreds of small- and medium-sized businesses, public funding cuts in all sectors and a general fall across all economic indicators have been a constant for more than four years at the time of writing. Moreover Galicia has been at the epicentre of the Spanish banking crisis, with the collapse of the most important Galician savings banks and their subsequent conversion into a bank that is today practically state-financed, managed by external parties and at one step's remove from Galicia's urgent needs. This landscape has been made substantially worse by the *preferentes* scam whereby around 80,000 small depositors in Galicia were fraudulently encouraged to use their savings to buy the bank's 'preferred shares'. Their protests have been at the forefront of media coverage particularly since 2012.

Galicia has been no stranger to the scandals of corruption and malfeasance that have blighted Spanish politics during the recession. The council of Santiago de Compostela, for example, governed by the Partido Popular de Galicia since the local elections of May 2011, has been practically paralysed because of the corrupt dealings of local councillors and the fraudulent awarding of public funding to private companies. There have been copy-cat scandals in other Galician cities such as Lugo and Ourense. In the industrial arena the financial crisis has semi-paralysed the Galician shipping and milk sectors, largely as a result of EU strait-jacketing policies and constantly rising prices. The hopes formerly invested in wind turbines as the saviours of the Galician economy have all but dissipated, as have all activities dependent on public funds for their development. With the two main industrial plants (Citroën and Alúmina-Aluminio) in the hands of multinational brands and the Damoclean sword of outsourcing an ever-present threat, the secondary sector does not currently appear to be a short- or medium-term solution to the crisis. Public funding is undergoing brutal cuts in all areas of education, innovation and research. Meanwhile thousands of highly qualified Galicians are leaving their country every day in search of the opportunities denied them at home, while hospitals lengthen their waiting lists and classrooms fill with more pupils and fewer teachers. Public speeches from the Xunta de Galicia, with the Partido Popular de Galicia holding a comfortable absolute majority since 2009, constantly claim that their

cuts are lower than those in other autonomous communities (which is true if we compare them to those rolled out in Madrid, Catalonia or Castile La Mancha). But while Galician political newspeak begins to incorporate concepts such as 'creative accountancy' or 'delayed gratification', a day-to-day reality of unemployment, student strikes, overstretched hospitals and overcrowded food banks means that more and more young Galicians are packing their bags and leaving behind what is seemingly becoming a 'country for old men'.

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