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Echoes of the Spanish Civil War in Tolkien's Legendarium

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Over the past several decades, war emerged as a major subject in Tolkien studies. Military conflicts are crucial in many stories of the legendarium; equally important to its development are Tolkien's own experiences and memories of war. Janet Brennan Croft, John Garth, and many others demonstrated the centrality of war to our understanding of Tolkien's work. Naturally, they focus on World Wars, the two major conflicts of Tolkien's lifetime.

Given his personal experiences, Tolkien has been primarily described as a WWI writer, even though World War II also had a profound effect on Tolkien. Tom Shippey argues that he could be classified as a post-WWII writer, just as Golding, Orwell, or T.H.White ("Tolkien" 84-85). Christine Chism shows how in his 1938-54 "power-wary war and post-war writings," Tolkien began to question the use of power, even his own—the author's—power of language (67-68). However, many intellectual and literary developments of the 1930s and 40s began not with WWII but earlier; often the catalyst was the Spanish Civil War.

In our collective memory, WWII largely displaced the local conflicts that preceded it. This was true even for the generation that lived through them. Tolkien himself wrote in the forward to the second edition of *LotR* that "it seems now often forgotten that to be caught in youth by 1914 was no less hideous an experience than to be involved in 1939 and the following years" (xxiv), both acknowledging the partial loss of historic memory and, inadvertently, exemplifying it. The actual involvement in the war was certainly far more "hideous" than simply taking in the terrible news that were coming out of Germany and Spain but this does not mean that the pre-WWII years of 1936-38 did not feel oppressive. In hindsight they were a "foreshadow of 1939" (*LotR* xxiv) and, even though not many anticipated the immediate coming of another world war in 1936, most felt the catastrophic nature of events. As Orwell said about this watershed moment, "History stopped in 1936" (202).[1]

The Spanish Civil War profoundly affected such distinct British authors as W.H.Auden, Graham Greene, and George Orwell; many others, from left-wingers such as Stephen Spender to conservatives such as Evelyn Waugh were deeply preoccupied with events in Spain (Buchanan 140-68). The War, seen as a fight between the Church and diabolical forces of communism,[2] often dominated British Catholics' discourse (Edwards 33-37). Priscilla Tolkien recalled that the "whole period of the Civil War cast a great shadow over my father's life and is a powerful and lasting memory from my childhood" (Ferrández Bru 16). The War must have affected Tolkien—the man and the writer, a Catholic and an intellectual—deeply, yet this subject has been barely studied.

Tolkien's personal position on the Civil War and, more generally, his political views in the pre-WWII period are certainly interesting by themselves. However, their potential reflection in his literary output of the time such as the first stories of Númenor and the early drafts of *The Lord of the Rings* make them crucial to our understanding of his work. After discussing the War and Tolkien's position I will explain in the second half of this article how multiple aspects of his incipient tales of the Second and Third Ages—from politics and emerging focus on religion to the deeper acknowledgement of the psychological aspects of warfare—may stem from the "great shadow" of news coming out of Spain. Thus, this article will also focus on how the Civil War

[1] Orwell meant the advent of total propaganda: "I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts,[...] and eager intellectuals building emotional superstructures over events that had never happened" (202). Tolkien, though independently-minded, could be one of these intellectuals too.

[2] An editorial in *Blackfriars*, a publication of Oxford Dominicans, declared: "There is a diabolical agency at work in Spain, and Communism appears as its specially chosen instrument" (726). This was printed in a journal regularly questioning the unreserved support for Franco, widespread in Catholic circles, even asking "Must God go Fascist?" (Buchanan 180, Villis 203-5). Most British Catholic press was even more virulent.

could influence Tolkien's writings in the late 1930s, a critical period in the development of the legendarium.

At the time, many saw only two viable political alternatives: communism or fascism. The former, with its clear opposition to religion, was unacceptable to Tolkien and so, as for many British Catholics, the latter became a necessary evil, supported in so far as it defended the Church. As I show below, unlike many in his intellectual circle, Tolkien was probably unwilling to go further and completely side with Franco and his even more repugnant allies. His opposition to the Nazi doctrines or, more generally, the statist program of fascism come clear through contemporary letters.[3] On the other hand, so does the unwavering commitment to the Francist "crusade" in Spain, as endorsed by the Catholic hierarchy.

Many decades later, few are familiar with the course of the Spanish Civil War, hence I felt it necessary to provide a quick discussion of its history, while focusing on a more relevant subject: British, and especially British Catholic, perception of the War. Following Orwell, I can only note that to the public far removed from the battlefields, the actual facts about the War mattered less than the mostly biased reports. For the study of his writings, how Tolkien perceived the events is more important than the actual events themselves.

This historical discussion is preceded by a summary of Tolkien's known statements about the War (all but one of them taken from *Letter* #83) with the review of (admittedly meager) previous studies of the subject, and is followed by an attempt to clarify his personal views. I do not claim to establish with certainty what Tolkien thought and felt. Absent the emergence of new documented evidence, we will never know his actual position on the Civil War. Or rather, positions, because clearly, they changed over the years. After the War began, he likely saw it primarily in religious terms, with more sorrow than hope. Even clearer is his support for the Nationalist side, though as with many Catholics, this does not necessarily mark him as pro-fascist.

Turning to the potential influence of the Civil War on Tolkien's writing, I will show how the theme of civil strife emerges contemporaneously in the legendarium. In particular, it becomes a permanent element in the story of Númenor, even while the story itself gets heavily revised. Other developments that may be linked to the Civil War include the overall "darkening" of Tolkien's stories such as an emerging focus on the psychological effects of torture and persecution of religious minorities.

Politics or Religion?

Despite its potential importance in Tolkien's life and the influence on his writings, the subject of the Spanish Civil War has been barely covered in Tolkien studies. I am aware of only one specific proposal of how the legendarium could be influenced by the events of the Spanish Civil War: a conjectural connection between the Party Tree and the Oak of Guernica (Black 167-74) but even this hypothesis has been disputed (Hammond and Scull "Tolkien Notes 11").

Probably the only serious investigation of Tolkien's attitudes towards the Spanish Civil War is due to José Manuel Ferrández Bru. His article in *Mallorn* begins with a discussion of Tolkien's personal connections to Spain but, most importantly, contains several personal statements by

[3] The new, expanded, version of Tolkien's *Letters* was published when this paper was going through the editorial process. This new source offers no additional insights into Tolkien's views on the Spanish Civil War; however, it does elucidate his political positions. I have incorporated some of this newly available material into the final version (and cite it in the bibliography) but a further study may reveal additional information concerning Tolkien's views on statism, fascism, imperialism, etc.

Priscilla Tolkien, cited above. Discussing Tolkien's views of the Civil War, Ferrández Bru rightly decries the simplistic identification of right-wing, pro-Franco, and fascist positions. Unfortunately, he falls prey to a similar simplification when considering the British public opinion in the 1930s and ultimately distinguishes only the pro-Republic and pro-Franco sides, equating them with pro- and anti-Church positions. The reality was more nuanced. When in 1937 *The Left Review* sent a questionnaire to British and Irish writers asking if they supported the Government of Spain or Franco, the responses, published as *Authors Take Sides*, fell into three categories: for the Government, against, and neutral. Even within each category, the positions are difficult to reconcile (4-31). Similarly, though Franco's alignment with the Church greatly influenced the attitudes of British Catholics, this group was hardly monolithic. Ben Edwards notes in his study of Christian responses to the Civil War: "The multifaceted nature of Catholicism in Britain meant there was never going to be a single homogeneous Catholic reaction to the Spanish conflict" (12). Even within the tight-knit community of Catholic intellectuals in Oxford, views of the Republic changed with time, as I discuss below. All of this warrants a more careful approach to the question of Tolkien and the Spanish Civil War.

Available primary sources are as thin as the secondary. The only published statements that Tolkien made about the Spanish Civil War come from *Letter* #83 of 1944, addressed to Christopher Tolkien. In private correspondence, there was no need for him to attempt what Verlyn Flieger called "negotiating his way across the minefield of public opinion" ("But what" 153). Tolkien's positions in the letter are very direct, yet open to misreading if taken out of context. He is unapologetically pro-Franco but his reasons, well understood by his son, may be obscure to a modern audience.

The central events in *Letter* #83 are two meetings with Roy Campbell, a poet and perhaps the most famous apologist for Franco among British writers. He specifically sought out Tolkien and C.S.Lewis on the recommendation of Fr. Martin D'Arcy, a leading Catholic theologian and the Master of Campion Hall at Oxford. Campbell himself was an ardent Catholic (he converted in 1935, while living in Spain). The background and further details about the meetings were discussed by Joe Christopher (36-46); particularly interesting is Lewis's take on the matter, quite different from Tolkien's. For modern readers, just as for contemporaries, the most startling aspect of the affair is that even in 1944 Campbell was considered to be an unrepentant fascist.

Peter Alexander in his biography of Campbell tries to wave away charges of fascism by pleading political naivete:

> Campbell proved to be an easy mark for Franco's propaganda for a number of purely personal reasons: his recent conversion to Catholicism, his anti-Semitism, his enmity towards left-wing writers, the horror engendered by his personal experience of the left-wing terror in Toledo, his observation that there was more bread to be had on Franco's side of the line, and so on. He was a political simpleton; but to term him a Fascist is to misjudge him (177).

Simpleton he certainly appears to be and some of the attacks on Campbell reacted to his bombast rather than personal politics. Self-aggrandizement was as natural to him as breathing. His tales of service with Franco's forces were almost a complete fabrication; the only visit to the front was a day trip (Alexander 173). "It remains extraordinary how many of Campbell's contemporaries chose to believe such transparent tales, and to condemn their teller as a Fascist brute" (179). Yet not being a brute does not absolve him of charges of fascism. Alexander claims that "Campbell was as incapable of perceiving the true nature of Fascism as, for instance, Spender and Arthur Koestler at the time were of seeing the true nature of Communism" (177). Of course, Spender and

Koestler openly broke with communism and for both, the catalyst was their trips to Spain. Campbell observed the violence of the left and of the right, yet he remained absolutely committed to Franco.

Tolkien knew this but at their meeting he was completely charmed: "the man is in himself gentle, modest, and compassionate;" "a rare character, both a soldier and a poet, and a Christian convert" (*Letter* #83). The story of fighting on Franco's side was accepted with delight. Yet Tolkien felt the need to add "But he is a patriotic man, and has fought for the B. Army since." The juxtaposition of enthusiasm for Franco and British patriotism ("But [...]") is significant. For Tolkien in 1944 an admission of pro-Franco, that is quite pro-fascist, sympathies looked suspect and potentially unpatriotic. It is a natural stand at the time of war with fascism, yet in the rest of the letter its writer takes up a pro-Franco position himself: "[C.S.Lewis] believes all that is said against Franco, and nothing that is said for him." And what is to be said for Franco? Tolkien's only argument is the defense of the Church, when "Catholic priests are slaughtered." He does not feel the need to justify his position further. Campbell talked about witnessing anti-clerical violence in Barcelona, where "Carmelite fathers [..] were caught & butchered." Lewis disbelieved it, a "tribute to Red propaganda," but for Tolkien it was the crux of the matter. The only other tale of Campbell's, that he relates, essentially concerns a theft of holy relics. Read in isolation, *Letter* #83 talks about a religious, not civil, war and shows Tolkien's appreciation of a holy warrior, not a fascist.

The primacy of the religious, rather than political, aspect of events in Spain for Tolkien may be glimpsed from another letter. In May 1939, he wrote to R.W.Chambers, a colleague and a biographer of Thomas More: "None of us are very happy. It is not so much the dread of war, as fear and distrust of the situation [...] Have people already forgotten the murders and executions of Easter 1938?" (Cabot 93) The reference to "murders and executions" is obscure. In 1938, Easter fell on April 17 but the events of late spring that Tolkien could potentially reference were mostly political (the Anschluss or the Anglo-Italian accords) or purely military (the Nationalists' cleaving the Republican territory in two in Spain or the Sino-Japanese War). There were contemporary reports of the Soviet purges in the top ranks but these could not be seen as harbingers of a world war. Franco's bombing campaigns were indeed murderous but could not be called executions. Of all the relevant events, most probably Tolkien was referring to an official report from the Vatican "listing 1,379 priests and members of religious orders allegedly slain by government forces in Spain" released on April 19 ("Lists"). The "murders and executions" happened over the course of several years but in his memory, they could have fused with the date of the report.[4] The emphasis on this particular atrocity (rather than on e.g. the bombing of Barcelona in March 1938 or Guernica) is telling: for Tolkien it was the anti-clerical violence that fueled the "fear and distrust" and portended "the dread of war."

Even on its own, *Letter* #83 very clearly outlines Tolkien's main concerns in the War: the fate of the Catholic Church and the fight against the anti-Church communism. He is not a complete supporter of Franco (not all of what is "said against" him is potentially a lie) and is wary of an openly pro-fascist stand. This would be a position shared by many in the right-wing British Catholic intelligentsia in 1944. As at the height of the Civil War, Campbell was rather an aberration, though his non-mainstream views were still acceptable in such circles. However, individual positions often shifted with new political developments. A letter from 1944 or even

[4] As discussed below, there were earlier reports of murders and executions of clergy in Spain, mostly promulgated by the Nationalists, but some confirmed by independent sources. However, in April 1938 the confirmation came directly from the Vatican.

1939 sheds relatively little light on what Tolkien believed and felt in 1937, a crucial year for his writing. Perhaps the only constant was his faith but even this needs to be explored carefully: there was no uniform British Catholic position on the Civil War.

British Catholic Intellectuals and the Spanish Civil War

In 1937, just as Tolkien was preparing *The Hobbit* for publication, the Spanish Civil War continued to dominate the news. To the British public, it seemed far more important than events in Germany, underreported (Galbraith 78) and seemingly unvaried (Chandler 188-91). Following anti-clerical violence of 1936, British Catholics paid more attention to the plight of their brethren in territories still controlled by the Spanish Republic than to the fate of Catholics in Germany (even after the publication of papal encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* that condemned many Nazi practices). The British "had no very clear sense that they were living in a pre-war world, at least until late in 1938" (Chandler 8).

A detailed exposition of the Spanish Civil War is beyond the scope of this article. The standard reference for its history in English is still Hugh Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War*; a more thematic discussion of major events can also be found in Helen Graham's *The Spanish Civil War: Very Short Introduction*. The British public's response to the War was covered by Tom Buchanan in *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*. Reactions of British Catholics, relevant to any considerations of Tolkien's personal politics, were discussed in e.g. *British Catholics and Fascism* by Tom Villis and *With God On Our Side* by Ben Edwards.

The Civil War followed the revolution of 1931 that proclaimed the second Spanish Republic. The next five years saw relative stability, punctuated by sporadic violence, and a robust democratic process with several general elections and peaceful changes of government. However, social and economic reforms, deemed necessary by most political forces, were stalling. The election of 1936 was won by the Popular Front, a coalition of left forces including communists. The country was becoming more polarized and several months later, the army rebelled. The resulting Civil War would last for almost three years and, though limited to Spain, become a major international event. The Rebels (Insurgents) or Nationalists, led by Franco, were openly supported by Germany and Italy. The Government side, Republicans or Loyalists, soon gained the support of the Soviet Union. Most countries, including Britain and France, adopted the policy of non-intervention but some of their citizens came to Spain to join one of the sides. Eventually, the Nationalists began to call their fight a Cruzada (crusade), emphasizing relations with the Catholic Church and attempting to gain close support from Spanish and foreign Catholics.

Politically both the Republicans and the Nationalists were not monolithic groupings but rather coalitions of diverse forces. Outside of Spain their supporters showed even greater heterogeneity, often despite the efforts to present a united front. The collection of responses to *Authors Take Sides*, quite naturally features mostly pro-Government responses, from Samuel Beckett's terse proclamation "¡UPTHEREPUBLIC!" (4) to more nuanced takes. Of those declaring neutrality, H.G.Wells was equally disgusted by "Anarch-Syndicalists on the one hand and the Franco pronunciamento on the other" (28), while T.S.Eliot felt "convinced that it is best that at least a few men of letters should remain isolated" (27) and refused to take sides. Also neutral, "Graham Greene later recalled that he did not respond to the questionnaire because, while he was against Franco, he was unhappy with Republican brutality" (Buchanan 160), probably meaning the actions directed against the Church. Only a few responses were against the Government, Evelyn Waugh providing perhaps the clearest statement: "If I were a Spaniard I should be fighting for General

Franco. As an Englishman I am not in the predicament of choosing between two evils. I am not a Fascist nor shall I become one unless it were the only alternative to Marxism" (30). Waugh did not explain why he would be fighting on the Nationalist side. Politically, he was a conservative, but just as Greene, he was also a fervent Catholic. Roy Campbell, a fellow Catholic, certainly shared Waugh's sentiments (and did claim to fight for Franco).

Just as Campbell, Tolkien was not asked to provide a statement to *Authors Take Sides*. If he were, he would hardly take the Government's side in 1937, though as many British Catholics, he might have supported the Republic initially (Flint 365). Anti-clerical violence of 1931 started to turn a number against the Republic (T.Greene 71-4) and the even larger wave of violence in 1936 firmly drove many to the pro-Franco side, despite deep political divisions among British Catholics (Edwards 12-13). Differences of opinion, similar to those between Greene and Waugh, were well represented in the Catholic press (Flint 370-73). What we know of Tolkien's political views suffices to put him on the right wing of British politics but this is not enough to clarify his position in the Civil War. At the time "the right-wing response [to the Civil War] may be divided into fascist, Catholic, and conservative reactions" (Benson 22); unlike the former two, conservatives did not follow any distinctive ideology but were strongly anti-communist.[5] Within this classification, Tolkien was obviously Catholic and conservative[6] but not necessarily fascist. Among the Catholic elite and intellectuals (as compared to the working class), support for the Nationalists was also driven by the conservative opposition to communists and fear of their purported activities in Britain; just as support for the Republic was often driven by anti-fascism (Edwards 32-6, 51-2). Specific political positions were not static, affected by events in Spain as well as debates at home. By 1937 many British Catholics questioned the "viability and legitimacy of the Republic, if not its legality" (T.Greene 70) but the debate over fascism and Franco still continued; support for the Rebels' side developed gradually (Buchanan 179-80, Villis 48-52). Whatever Tolkien's position, it certainly evolved over time, as different sectors of the British public were responding to the progress of the Civil War.

To understand the potential transformation of Tolkien's views, it may be instructive to look at the case of a more public intellectual, Fr. Alfonso de Zulueta. A scion of a noble Anglo-Spanish family (Drumm 85),[7] he went to Oxford and was a frequent commenter on Spanish affairs in the British Catholic press. His positions are thus well-documented. In 1939 de Zulueta became the Catholic chaplain at Oxford. Not only Tolkien knew him personally; his appointment likely required support from such influential figures as Fr. Martin D'Arcy and Fr. Ronald Knox, de Zulueta's predecessor. Both were quite close to Tolkien.[8] Thus de Zulueta represents a window

[5] On the right anti-communism clearly trumped anti-fascism. A very telling story is that of the publication of *Yellow Spot*, a 1936 report on the Jewish persecution in Germany: some of the conservative supporters questioned its accuracy because those involved in its transmission and initial printing in France had communist connections (Chandler 172).

[6] An editorial note in *Letter #*284 reports that Tolkien read *The Daily Telegraph* every morning.

[7] A relative, Francis de Zulueta, was the Regis Professor of Law at Oxford and, more relevantly, the godfather of Priscilla Tolkien (Ferrandez Bru 17).

[8] Knox was simply "Ronnie" to Tolkien and the Lewis brothers (Lewis 242). His mention in *Letter* #242a also implies some familiarity: "after hearing Knox (on a private occasion)." Knox supported the Nationalist uprising "to avoid the possible horrors of a Communist or an anarchist dictatorship" (Waugh, *Life* 228).

The way d'Arcy is mentioned in *Letter #*83 clearly implies a certain degree of familiarity between D'Arcy and the Inklings, as does a brief story in D'Arcy's memoirs about meeting Tolkien at a public lecture. Moreover, D'Arcy hosted C.S.Lewis and Knox at his dinners—more private affairs—also attended by Graham Greene, Edwin Lutyens, Evelyn Waugh, and many others (Sire 94). Tolkien, a fellow Catholic don, could be there too. D'Arcy, a Jesuit, unequivocally supported the Nationalist side in the war (as did others of his order, unlike the more neutral Dominicans); his personal contacts in Spain were mostly former monarchists who joined Franco (Sire 122-3).

into the views on the Civil War if not held by Tolkien himself, then prevalent in Tolkien's Catholic circle.[9]

In October 1931, de Zulueta had a short article in *Blackfriars*, in which he blamed the old regime (though not the king) for the country's troubles and even chided the Church for avoiding social responsibility. In light of his future position, his comment on anti-clerical violence in May of that year is striking: "When, then, the mob burns convents and churches, [...] we must see further and ask, What has been intended?" (599) In de Zulueta's view, it was not Catholicism that had been attacked but "its distorted and narrow view" (599). In this he was far more moderate than most English Catholics (T.Greene 72).

Two years later, in December 1933, de Zulueta had a longer piece in *The Ampleforth Journal*. At the time the attacks on the Catholic Church in Spain had intensified and de Zulueta defended it forcefully. It was "an angry little group of 'self-styled intellectuals' " (5) leading people blinded by ignorance that was the source of all the troubles, while the Church remained blameless. (In the 1931 *Blackfriars* piece, he both attacked and praised such intellectuals equally.) As for social responsibility, "education was excellently carried on by the religious orders" (4). De Zulueta's position had clearly hardened over the two years; nevertheless, he still supported the Republic and accepted the separation of Church and state. In politics, he praised Accion Nacional, a right-wing Catholic party,[10] and declared Spain "a country singularly unsuited to Fascist experiments" (4).

In March 1937, in a letter to the editor of *Blackfriars*, de Zulueta took a very different position. The Civil War was "fundamentally a clash of principles, of two totally opposite concepts of life, the Christian and the Marxist" with the former defending and the latter trying to destroy the Spanish civilization (224). The sudden lack of nuance is not surprising given that the conflict had long transcended the political dimension. The War was provoked by the communists, who are "responsible for the martyrdom of thousands of priests and religious, and for a systematic attempt to destroy religion, which has only been stopped by the Nationalists" (225). The anti-clerical violence in Spain was real and, in 1936, produced a strong response in the Catholic community. For many, including de Zulueta, the Nationalist side was leading the Cruzada to save the martyred Church. Going further, he concluded that "all those who side with Franco are doing so for Law, Order, Liberty of the true kind, and the immense majority for Religion, irrespective of party" (225). The "irrespective of party" marks de Zulueta's complete transformation: along with more traditionalist former members of Accion Nacional, he now accepts and embraces the fully fascist elements of Franco's coalition.

If Alfonso de Zulueta's opinions are representative of his intellectual circle, it follows that in about five years, some Catholics in Tolkien's orbit moved from a right-wing, Christian Democratic, perspective to a full acceptance of fascism.[11] Even mild criticism of the pre-revolutionary Church was no longer acceptable. The chief catalysts were the (perceived) radicalization of the Republican government and violence against the Church. Could Tolkien's position in 1937 be similar to de Zulueta's?

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[9] Well connected, De Zulueta certainly received some if not most of his news directly from Spain. He was thus instrumental in influencing the position of British Catholics, making his views even more representative. In contrast, Tolkien's sources would have been British, despite his known affinity for Spain.

[10] Accion Nacional became the largest party in the Cortes after the November 1933 elections and supported the newly-formed centrist government, initially from the outside.

[11] It continued throughout WWII. Zulueta's chaplaincy at Oxford ended abruptly in 1945; the Foreign Office pressured for his dismissal due to his open support for Franco. He resigned but wrote, defiantly, that Franco was "a good thing on the whole for Spain," determined to keep it out of the war (Drumm 86, 192). *Letter #*83 suggests that Tolkien could share this position.

Tolkien and the Spanish Civil War

Tolkien clearly opposed the Nazi "pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine" (see *Letter* #29) and despised Hitler for "ruining, perverting, misapplying, and making for ever accursed, that noble northern spirit" (*Letter* #45). Despite Nationalists' close relations with Nazi Germany, he could hold a pro-Franco but anti-Hitler position, as did many British Catholics (Chandler 186). Some, like Ronald Knox, while repudiating its racial doctrine in principle, were willing to tolerate Nazism as long as it did not infringe on the rights of the Church (Knox 5-8) but Tolkien's opposition seems more fundamental. Replying to an inquiry from a German publisher, he foresees how soon "a German name will no longer be a source of pride" because of the race laws and explains that nation and ethnicity are determined, at least in part, by culture and language: "I am not of Aryan extraction: that is Indo-iranian; as far as I am aware none of my ancestors spoke Hindustani, Persian, Gypsy, or any related dialects" (*Letter* #30). As intended, his statement mocked the Nazi doctrine but, in its emphasis on language alone, it also contradicted the milder fascist statements that "the State [...] is also the custodian and transmitter of the spirit of the people, as it has grown up through the centuries in language, in customs and in faith" (Mussolini 22). There is no place for "the State" in Tolkien's concept of the people.

He is more direct in *Letter* #52: "I would arrest anybody who uses the word State. [...] Government is an abstract noun meaning the art and process of governing and it should be an offence to write it with a capital G or so as to refer to people." The State, capitalized, was often a codeword for the fascist viewpoint. Tolkien's position is the exact opposite of Mussolini's dictum: "Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative" (21). Evelyn Waugh, a disenchanted supporter of Mussolini (Villis 161-62), still declared in 1938 that "Fascist enterprises in Italy and North Africa in draining marshes, watering deserts, binding loose sand and so on, have shown what land settlement means in efficient hands" (*Robbery* 195). Tolkien would only shudder at such massive state works.

Tolkien is often seen as an arch-traditionalist and, thus, a potential supporter of the hard right. Yet, when grumbling about the government-imposed food rations and standardized recipes, he wrote: "My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control not whiskered men with bombs) – or to 'unconstitutional' Monarchy" (*Letter* #52). This is clearly anti-statist and anti-corporativist, i.e. incompatible with fascism or communism. Tolkien seemed to despise both equally.

Not every anti-statist in Britain was anti-fascist. Tolkien's views have often been compared to Distributism, a movement led by G.K.Chesterton and Hillaire Belloc that promoted wide-spread ownership of property and means of production in opposition to both socialism and large-scale capitalism. Distributists were thus simultaneously anti-state and anti-Marxist and, also similar to Tolkien, they deplored industrialization. (Jay Atkins' article in *Mallorn* goes deeper into Tolkien's relation to and with Distributism.) Just as their leaders, most Distributists were Catholic and, over the course of the 1930s, many of them were taking an increasingly pro-fascist position (Villis 92-98). Paradoxically, the anti-statists were supporting State-worshippers. However, the support was not initially total and stemmed from the two movements agreeing on distrust of the elites, anti-parliamentarism, and anti-Semitism (Villis 77-85). The starting point was the contention that "fascists were somewhat better than socialists in that they were more honest and less self-contradictory, but they both wrongly worshiped the state" (Villis 91). Tolkien may have disliked the contemporary system of liberal democracy (*Letter* #52) but he was not an anti-Semite (*Letters*

29, 30) and, unlike Distibutists, he was never anti-elite. It seems unlikely that, like Belloc, he could overcome his anti-statist principles and find an increasingly common ground with the fascists.

*Letter #*52 may also clarify Tolkien's view on the Civil War; after all, the strongest political Anarchist movement of the time was Spanish as both the letter's author and its recipient knew. Of all parties on the left, Anarchists were the only ones not to join the Popular Front and the tensions between them escalated to open conflicts over the course of the War. On the right, a similar position was occupied by a segment of the Carlists movement, ardent monarchists, who supported neither Franco nor his democratic opponents (Bowen 67). Tolkien thus again stakes both the anti-communist and anti-fascist positions. In this he somewhat echoes H.G.Wells's "neutral" stand with a clear disgust for both sides.

In 1933, Tolkien's position could be close to de Zulueta's. By 1937, the strong pro-Catholic views very likely pushed him to support the Cruzada and thus, Nationalists. Even in 1944 Tolkien seemed to fully accept Campbell's decision to fight for Franco (but grounded it in religion). If he were to provide a statement to *Authors Take Sides*, he could probably repeat Evelyn Waugh's, omitting only the "unless" clause and substituting instead Geoffrey Moss's declaration, though differently understood: "I am not for Fascism, but I am for Nationalism, as opposed to Internationalism" (29). Generally pro-Franco, Tolkien would not agree with de Zulueta's "irrespective of party" because of his anti-statism. The Catholic majority's turn toward the more pro-fascist position or toleration of some of its features by fellow Oxford Catholics would not sway him; crowds never did. He was more likely to view the Civil War not as a clash between two political forces, abhorrent to him, but as a religious conflict.

The Legendarium and the Spanish Civil War

To understand how the Spanish Civil War or, more generally, any other historical event could influence Tolkien, it is crucial to establish how such influence can be traced. The question is, ultimately, of methodology.

Even obvious similarities between some tales in the legendarium and the historical events of 1936-45 do not necessarily imply that the former were influenced by the latter: the narrative could have multiple sources, if any, and some of them may be less obvious even to a careful reader. For example, consider the Scouring of the Shire, a tale that also has a distinctive "modern" feel and thus one of the favorites to interpret in a historical context. Jeremy Donnelly provides a strong argument that the takeover of the Shire by Saruman's ruffians is similar to a Nazi occupation, in particular the fictional Nazi occupations of Britain that appeared in print and film during the war years (83). Yet the behavior of Hobbit collaborators, e.g. the Shirriffs, resembles that of minor-level officials in any totalitarian state. Could Tolkien, given his anti-communist leanings, also allude to the conditions in the Soviet Union or the late Spanish Republic (as he would understand them)? He denied that " 'The Scouring of the Shire' reflects the situation in England [after the war]" (*LotR* xxiv) but it could still be his general comment on the socialist system. So, Nazis or communists? Tolkien also wrote that the chapter "has indeed some basis in experience [when] the country in which I lived in childhood was being shabbily destroyed before I was ten" (xxv). If so, forcefully connecting any real historical events to the history of the Shire may obscure potential ecological and pastoral readings.

Even a close affinity between the real and legendarium histories does not necessarily imply a connection. For example, Tolkien had a well-known love for the so-called minority languages of

Europe, such as Welsh and, at the time he started learning it, Finnish. Less known is his defense of minority language communities as in his statement of 1955, where he essentially attacked the treatment and historical suppression of Welsh as "the maleficent interference of the Government with the usual object of governments: uniformity" ("English and Welsh" 182). A similar sentiment appears in *LotR*, with the King of Gondor protecting the Forest of Drúadan and Shire, essentially two autonomous communities within his domain (the former obviously speaking a minority language of Middle-earth). The early legendarium contains no comparable story; no cultural or linguistic minority within a larger state receives additional protection for its borders and culture. It would be natural to speculate what may have caused Tokien to begin emphasizing the rights of these communities, both real and imaginary. Could it simply be just the dislike of governments "with a capital G"? Or could a particular event influence him and if so, could it be the plight of the Basques during the Spanish Civil War? (The local Catholic Church largely supported the Basque autonomy but the Nationalists obviously did not; Tolkien could side with the former, as did Graham Greene.) But no direct evidence supports this claim; it is an idle speculation of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* variety. Not every opinion or belief of his found its way into the legendarium.

We can claim particular historical developments as Tolkien's sources or inspirations only when specific new elements begin to appear regularly in his writings and their links to outside events can be justified rather than conjectured. The reading should be consistent internally (within the narrative itself), externally (in the larger historical context), and logically (in its documented argument for the source). For instance, the dragons of Melko at the siege of Gondolin—clearly mechanical—were likely inspired by the tanks at the Somme that the Second Lieutenant Tolkien saw on e.g. 22 October 1916. The logical connection is that describing tanks as mythological monsters was a fairly common trope at the time (Garth 199, 220-1). Only such a rigorous approach can lead to claims of true historical influence. The rest is what Tolkien called "applicability," when the reader can consistently connect personal thoughts or experiences to the text but cannot claim a relation to the author's intent (*LotR* xxiv).

Tolkien as a Post-Spanish Civil War Writer

Before considering the specific influence of the Spanish Civil War on the legendarium or, more generally, its applicability to the tales from the late 1930s, a broader perspective is necessary. The period of 1937-39 brought significant changes to Tolkien's style and subjects. Overall, the legendarium becomes more complicated and darker. As Tolkien explained in October 1938, "The darkness of the present days has had some effect" (*Letter* #34). Later he remarked that in *LotR* "he wanted a large canvas" (*Letter* #163) but an earlier unfinished novel, *The Lost Road*, also stretched large (in time). New and larger themes were already emerging before the composition of *LotR*.

It is an obvious stretch to trace their appearance to the influence of the Spanish Civil War (or any other single factor). On the other hand, if similar to Orwell and many others, Tolkien can be called, in the words of Tom Shippey, a post-WWII writer ("Tolkien" 84), then, just as Orwell, its "great shadow" would mark him as a post-Spanish Civil War writer.[12] Where the elements of the *Book of Lost Tales* and, to a lesser degree, the first edition of *The Hobbit* were still Edwardian, the *Lost Road* and later writings feel decidedly 20th century. Tolkien may not have yet felt the "dread of war" in early 1939 but the dreadful feelings were there and they certainly found their way into

[12] I am grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting this parallel.

his literary output. The romantic mood of earlier tales was leaching out, replaced by more modernist sentiments.

Dimitra Fimi provides perhaps the most detailed analysis of Tolkien's stylistic changes in the late 1930s, in comparison to the earlier legendarium. She detects a "paradigm shift caused by *The Lord of the Rings*" (6), with the writing turning from myth to history. Fimi identifies several elements of this transformation: declining interest in creating a national mythology (129), more complicated cosmology of the 'sub-creation' (127-28), and greater interest in Men as opposed to Elves (131). The latter two underline the emergence of a more complex world. There are other aspects to this transformation. For example, Kristine Larsen observes Tolkien's greater use of eschatological themes in the 1930s (1) and Verlyn Flieger notices changes in framing (*Music* 87-91) and a "confusion of perspective" (*Time* 70).

Elements of uncertainty and skepticism that begin to creep into Tolkien's writing at this time suggest a turn towards a more contemporary style, in some respect closer to modernism.[13] Of course, for a writer of a war generation, Tolkien is often seen as decidedly anti-modernist, even by his biggest supporters, but comparisons with modernists may still be the right framework to understand his "paradigm shift."[14] Keeping in mind the crucible in which some of the modernist British literature was born, "the Somme would seem to have no effect on Tolkien's writing at all" (Garth 289) as he remained wedded to the pre-war literary models. Yet the choices of traditional style, subject matter, and even language do not necessarily signal a total adherence to the tradition itself. The post-Somme *Book of Lost Tales* is imbued with melancholy: the time of Elves is almost over. The style may be traditional but it describes a loss of tradition. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Tolkien aims to "arrive in modernity not via ironic disenchantment but by commemorating of what has been lost" (Honegger 211). A crucial aspect that separated Tolkien from other writers of the same generation was a professional and personal devotion to medieval literature. As John Garth explains in his careful comparison of Tolkien with modernist war writers, he "remained committed to an archaic air because it was the one he breathed" (291). This is, again, a difference of style and manner. On the other hand, as Margaret Hiley showed, certain structural elements of Tolkien's writing in *LotR* are not just modern but decidedly modernist (59-69). Crucially, his subject could be modern too, despite the language:

> 'Thou art mad,' said his son, turning at last upon his side and facing Elendil, with dread and fear in his eyes. 'Do not say such things to me! They might, they might…'
>
> 'Who are they, and what might they do?' said Elendil, but a chill fear passed from his son's eyes to his own heart.

[13] For more on the subject, see *Tolkien and Modernity*. The suggestion is not that Tolkien became, in some sense, a "modernist" but that his fiction began to lose some of its more traditionalist elements. For a discussion of how a writer can be "allied to modernism" while lacking some of its formal characteristics, see e.g. Phyllis Rose's essay on Willa Carter. Despite the obvious differences between the two, some modernist tendencies that Rose observes in Carter also apply, though differently, to Tolkien, for example, the attempts "to transcend the complexity of modern life by annexing the structural complexity of myth" (144).

[14] Tom Shippey in *Author of the Century* convincingly argues that Tolkien is modern, i.e. "one of the authors of the twentieth century who have spoken most powerfully to and for their contemporaries" (viii), but this is different from modernism as a literary movement. Verlyn Flieger in *Question of Time* sees Tolkien as "both retrograde and modern" (18), with retrogression described "just as contemporary a response to cultural forces as that of the avant-garde" (16), i.e. anti-modernism. See also *Tolkien among the Moderns*, especially the essays by Phillip Donelly and Dominic Manganiello contrasting Joyce, positioned as an exemplary modernist, and Tolkien.

> 'Do not ask! And do not speak – so loud!' Herendil turned away, and lay prone with his face buried in his hands. 'Thou knowest it is dangerous – to us all. Whatever he be, Sauron is mighty, and hath ears. I fear the dungeons. (*HME*5 61)

With wording appropriately adjusted this passage could come from a dystopian novel—not modernist but decidedly twentieth-century. However, such elements do not appear in his earliest writings, which are anchored in melancholy, not dread. Could another war, observed from afar but still heartfelt, affect him?

The Númenorean chapters of *The Lost Road* (*HME5*) describe, specifically, a civil war: "We have begun to slay one another. For Númenor now seems narrow, that was so large. Men covet, therefore, the lands that other families have long possessed. They fret as men in chains" (67). In a medieval setting, this description fits a peasant revolt but it also applies to many internal European conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries. A 1937 reader (or writer) would be reminded of the Russian or Spanish revolutions. For Tolkien even such a vague allusion is as contemporary as possible.

The Lost Road is not a modernist work but it feels more modern that anything Tolkien wrote before and not only because of the initial contemporary setting. Its modern chapters are full of ambiguity. The first story a father tells his son is immediately described as "not a good story" (37); further stories continue to mix up with persistent dreams, neither pleasant nor nightmarish. A character questions success and duty: "He was, perhaps, a pretty good professor, as they go. Only in a small southern university, of course, and he did not suppose he would get a move. [...] He did his duty, at least, or he hoped so" (45). Families in the completed fragments are just fathers and sons. One of the mothers died in childbirth (37) but there is no mention of the other. The two father and son pairs in modern chapters are all philologically gifted yet cannot articulate their yearnings. For a writer who relished inventing history, the narrative is artificially fragmentary.

It is perhaps fruitless to speculate what caused Tolkien to write about breakdowns: incomplete (in his opinion) families, academics in mid-life crisis (his career was going well at the time), or dreams invading reality. However, the emergence of other themes such as oppressive powers of the state or civil wars can be linked to the real-world news coming out of Spain, as I show below.

Spain and Númenor

Tolkien likely started setting down the story of Númenor in 1936. Christopher Tolkien believed that his father's suggestion of an earlier date in *Letter #*257 was in error (*HME*5 9). If so, the tale was conceived and developed just as the Spanish Civil War began and its news filled the front pages. Spain saw bouts of anti-clerical violence throughout the early 1930s, even before the rebellion began in July of 1936. Already by September the Rebels painted themselves as the defenders of the Church and were supported in this by the Pope (H.Thomas 496-7). Their propaganda widely distributed in the UK in October 1936 presented the War as a fight against the communists instigating anti-clerical "atrocities committed in Southern Spain" (Southworth 4). For a Catholic and anti-communist like Tolkien the struggle may have seemed existential.

The Fall of Númenor may be the most destructive event in the history of Middle-earth, the most pessimistic that Tolkien ever wrote. Although the legendarium contains other large-scale catastrophes, such as the destruction of Beleriand or the defeat and fading of the Elves of Tol Eressëa (*HME*2 287-89), neither combines the almost total disappearance of both the land and its people. The catastrophe at the end of the *Silmarillion* is balanced by a great victory, while the fading is gradual and, potentially, still on-going. Númenor's destruction is abrupt and almost

absolute; most likely, not even all of the Faithful survive. Unlike the endings of the *Book of Lost Tales* or the *Silmarillion*, the sorrow of the story of the Fall is not tempered by wistfulness.[15]

Tolkien's societies often exhibit internal divisions; however, before the Númenor stories, they never erupt in a large open conflict. Frictions are either resolved peacefully or continue to fester until subsumed by a larger struggle, often with an outside power. Thus houses of Fëanor and Fingolfin continued in uneasy coexistence throughout the First Age. There are wars between kin, such as Fëanor's attack on the Teleri and various fights between tribes of Men, but no such conflict is internal. (The Teleri and the Noldor have different material cultures and speak diverging dialects; they do not belong to the same society.)

Númenorean civil war is the first but not the last in the legendarium. Another one will erupt in Gondor as a consequence of a dynastic fight. Appendix A of *LotR* calls it kin-strife but the term "civil war" is used as well (*LotR* 1045).

One other conflict was initially planned as a civil war. According to Christopher Tolkien, an August 1939 outline for the end of the novel proposed "Sackville-Baggins [and] his friends hurt [the] lands. There was war between the four quarters" (*HME*6 380). It is not surprising that even early in the writing process Tolkien expected to finish the story where it started and that the war had to come to the Shire. "The very last stroke [...] should fall here, at the very door of Bag End" (*LotR* 1020). The crucial difference between the 1939 outline and the final version is the apparent absence of an occupation. Instead of firmly tying the developments in the Shire to the larger conflict, Tolkien envisioned a civil war. (He would also refer to the potentiality of such a conflict later, writing in *Letter* #194 that Frodo "was mainly horrified at the prospect of civil war among Hobbits.") Unlike its counterpart in Númenor, it does not seem to have a religious component, yet it is remarkable that less than a month before the start of WWII, Tolkien's default conflict is still internal.

Tolkien rewrote the story of Númenor several times. *The Fall of Númenor* (multiple versions, begun in 1936, completed before 1942, *HME*5 and *HME*9) is chronologically the first and was potentially intended as a background for *The Lost Road* (*HME*5). This unfinished novel has two "Númenorean chapters" but they don't deal with the general history. *The Drowning of Anadûnê* (*HME*9) was similarly related to the unfinished *Notions Club Papers* of 1945-46. *The Tale of Years* (Appendix B to *LotR*) with a detailed chronology of Númenor was likely completed in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Finally, *Akallabêth* that now forms a part of *The Silmarillion* was written at about the same time (Scull–Hammond 339). All stories feature an internal conflict, at least partly based on religious differences, sometimes openly described as a civil war.

Despite different settings, the conflict in Númenor has three major elements: changes in the state religion, with the Elf-friends or Faithful becoming the dissident minority; the persecution of this minority; open civil strife/war due to the religious and political changes. The last written and perhaps the most well-known story, *Akallabêth*, sets the events thus:

> [...] the people of Númenor became divided. On the one hand was the greater party, and they were called the King's Men, and they grew proud and were estranged from the Eldar and the Valar. And on the other hand was the lesser party, and they were called the Elendili, the Elf-friends [...] Ar-Gimilzôr commanded all that he could discover to be of this party to remove from the west and dwell in the east of the land; and there they were watched.

[15] Michael Drout notices that sadness is "the dominant emotion in all of Tolkien's works," often manifested through images of ruins (177-78). In this framework the only surviving memory of Númenor is from its Middle-earth colonies. Of the mother country nothing remains and even the top of Meneltarma, that may still remain above water, is beyond Men's reach.

> [...] [After coming of Sauron] the hearts of the Elf-friends were sorely troubled, and many fell away out of fear; and although those that remained still called themselves the Faithful, their enemies named them rebels.[16] [...] And most often from among the Faithful they chose their victims; yet never openly on the charge that they would not worship Melkor, the Giver of Freedom, rather was cause sought against them that they hated the King and were his rebels, or that they plotted against their kin, devising lies and poisons. These charges were for the most part false [...] And men took weapons in those days and slew one another for little cause; for they were become quick to anger, and Sauron, or those whom he had bound to himself, went about the land setting man against man, so that the people murmured against the King and the lords, or against any that had aught that they had not; and the men of power took cruel revenge. (*Silm* 266-74)

On the other hand, Appendices A and B of *LotR* set the "civil war" (1045) in Númenor before the arrival of Sauron, framed as a rebellion in which Ar-Pharazôn seizes power. The fighting appears to last many years but obviously has a clear outcome. Conversely, *Akallabêth* provides no specific reasons for the beginnings of the civil strife; in this it follows the earlier text of *The Drowning of Anadûnê* verbatim: "men took weapons" etc (*HME*9 367). It seems that, regardless of details, Tolkien expected violence to erupt in Númenorean society but could not settle on its immediate origins.

In the earliest of the Second Age tales, the *Fall of Númenor*, an open war between different factions begins after the fall and removal to Middle-earth (*HME*5 18). A later, expanded, version of this story explains that after the destruction of their homeland, of the remaining Númenóreans "some were evil and forsook not Sauron in their hearts; and some were of good will and retained memory of the Gods" (28) and so they fought.

There are thus three different versions of an open conflict either in Númenor or its former colonies:

1. civil war, religious in its undercurrents but ultimately political, resulting in a dynastic change;
2. civil strife, encouraged by religious authorities, but having its ultimate origin in social, economic, and religious discontent;
3. religious war.

To provide these three versions in the order they were composed (emphasis added):

> (3) *Fall of Númenor*: But not all the hearts of the Númenóreans were crooked; and the lore of the old days descending from the Fathers of Men, and the Elf-friends [...] and they avoided the shadow of Morgoth according to their power, and hated Thû. And they assailed his temples and their servants, and there were *wars of allegiance*[17] *among the mighty* of this world. (*HME*5 18)

> (1) *Appendix A* of *LotR*: Then the Númenóreans became divided: on the one hand were the Kings and those who followed them, and were estranged from the Eldar and the Valar; on the other were the few who called themselves the Faithful. [...] Tar-Palantir attempted to amend

[16] Paradoxically, there is (yet) no rebellion to go with "rebels." Tolkien seems to equate fidelity to traditional religion with open political defiance. This would be the case in the late 1930s in Spain or Germany.

[17] "wars of faith" in the second version (*HME*5 28). Númenóreans, some "evil" and some "of good will," fought on both sides.

> the evil; but it was too late, and there was *rebellion and strife* in Númenor. When he died, his nephew, leader of the rebellion, seized the sceptre. (1036)
>
> (2) *Drowning of Anadûnê*: And men took weapons in those days and slew one another for little cause, for they were become quick to anger; and Zigûr, or those whom he had bound unto himself, went about the land setting *man against man*, so that the people murmured against the king and the lords and any that had aught that they had not, and the men of power took hard revenge. (*HME*9 367)

The version in *Akallabêth* follows the *Drowning* with Zigûr replaced by Sauron and revenge becoming cruel instead of hard (*Silm* 274).

The Drowning also adds a potential domestic terrorist campaign provoked by religious persecution:

> For there men would sacrifice to Mulkhêr [...] And ofttimes it was those of the Faithful that were chosen as victims; but never openly on the charge that they would not worship Mulkhêr, rather was cause sought against them that *they hated the king and were his rebels*, or that they plotted against their kin, devising lies and poisons. And these *charges were for the most part false*, save that wickedness breeds wickedness, and *oppression brings forth murder*. (*HME*9 367, emphasis added)

As discussed above, the incomplete Númenorean chapters of *The Lost Road* also mention a civil conflict, though not directly connected to religion.

Every version of the Númenor story contains an open conflict, yet it is never essential to the downfall. If consequential in one version, in another the same result is reached through other means. The original story even reverses what has become the more familiar sequence of events, with the civil war erupting after the Fall.

In several tales the breakdown in order signals the decline of society and state; however, in others it appears to be superfluous. Pharazôn's coup does not have to be accompanied by a civil war as in *LotR* Appendices but not in other versions; in particular, Tolkien considered a variant where Tar-Miriel yielded the throne to Ar-Pharazon by choice (*HME*12 160-1). Similarly, refugees from Númenor do not have to fight in Middle-earth as they do in the *Fall* but no other tale. For an English Catholic like Tolkien the prime example of an abandonment of an old religion would have been the Anglican reformation, which—though a religious minority was persecuted—did not lead to an open conflict; order prevailed. Abrupt changes in the state religion would not automatically imply the eruption of violence, but in Númenor they always did.

Of course, Tolkien habitually reassigned episodes from one story to another, changing certain elements (characters, locations, etc) while preserving others. The relation between *The Drowning of Anadûnê* and *Akallabêth* is a good example, with the latter story sometimes tracking the earlier one very closely with only an occasional change of names but sometimes diverging heavily. However, different stories of civil war/strife in the Númenor tales have little in common. They are not evolutions of the same original episode and share nothing beyond a single idea of an open religion-based conflict. In comparison, to give just one example, subsequent versions of the Elf-friends' escape from drowning Númenor track each other well:

> *Fall of Númenor*: Partly by the device of Angor, and partly of their own will (because they revered still the Lords of the West and mistrusted Sûr) many had abode in ships upon the east coast of their land, lest the issue of war be evil. Wherefore protected for a while by the

> land they avoided the draught of the sea, and a great wind arose blowing from the gap, and they sped East and came at length to the shores of Middle-earth in the days of ruin. (*HME*5 16)
>
> *Appendix A*: The last leaders of the Faithful, Elendil and his sons, escaped from the Downfall [...] and they were borne on the wind of a great storm and cast upon the shores of Middle-earth. (*LotR* 1037)
>
> *Drowning*: And in this way it came to pass that any were spared from the downfall of Nūmenōrë [...] For Elendil had remained behind, refusing the King's summons when he set out to war, and he went aboard ship, and abode there riding out the storm in the shelter of the eastern shore. And being protected by the land from the great draught of the sea that drew all down into the abyss, he escaped from death in that time. And a mighty wind arose such as had not before been, and it came out of the West, and it blew the sea into great hills; and fleeing before it Elendil and his sons [...] were cast at length up far inland in Middle-earth. (*HME*9 352)
>
> *Akallabêth*: For Elendil had remained in Rómenna, refusing the summons of the King when he set forth to war; and avoiding the soldiers of Sauron that came to seize him and drag him to the fires of the Temple, he went aboard his ship and stood off from the shore, waiting on the time. There he was protected by the land from the great draught of the sea that drew all towards the abyss, and [...] the great wind took him, wilder than any wind that Men had known, roaring from the west, and it swept his ships far away [...] and after many days cast them away upon the shores of Middle-earth. (*Silm* 279)

Details change but this is the same story, as it must be: the escape of the Faithful is critical to the plot. The civil war is not, nor is its connection to religion, yet every version contains internal strife that is linked with religious persecution. The only exception is the page-long summary of the Númenor story (presented as excerpts from an unknown manuscript) in *The Notions Club Papers* (*HME*9): a civil war's absence in this extremely condensed version confirms its extraneity to the downfall.

Changes in religion—turning away from the Valar and ultimately worshiping Melkor—and the subsequent persecution of the Faithful are at the core of the story and so always remain a part of the narrative. However, just as a civil war, religion begins to play a major role in Tolkien's societies only starting with *The Fall of Númenor*. Prior to 1937, the legendarium had no organized worship, no temples or shrines. Men would sometimes pray to the Valar, their Gods: "the prayers of Úrin and Mavwin came even to Manwe" (*HME*2 115), Earendel "prays to Ulmo and hears the conches" (*HME*2 254), "they win through and thanked the Valar therefor" (*HME*2 72), "Úrin had called upon the Valar of the West" (*HME*2 76) but such occasions are rare. There is no sign of organized religion, except for this vision of the future in *The Lay of Leithian:*

> Men called him Thû, and as a god
> in after days beneath his rod
> bewildered bowed to him, and made
> his ghastly temples in the shade.
> (*HME*3, lines 2064-67)

(The same story is retold, in prose, in e.g. *The Earliest Silmarillion* and *The Quenta* (*HME*4).) This is a germ of the final part of *The Fall of Númenor*:

> They avoided the shadow of Morgoth according to their power, and hated Thû. And they assailed his temples and their servants (*HME*5 18)

The temples here are raised to or by Thû, possibly in imitation of the greatest temple of Morgoth in Númenor (whose second coming Thû prophesied) (*HME*5 15).

In the story of the downfall, organized religion is an important structural element of the plot, unlike, for example, other aspects of religious life such as the potential "secret temple" of Dunharrow in *LotR* (795). The latter is just one of Tolkien's "impressions of depth," a vignette intended to demonstrate the complexity of his secondary world (Shippey, *Road* 259). Númenorean worship of Iluvatar and Sauron's heresy are not. The story of a rebellion against the Gods is, by definition, centered on religion and consciously so. It always remained one even when its author tried to minimize the religious context.

Tolkien wrote that *LotR* "is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world" (*Letter #*142). Indeed, Dunharrow is probably the only shrine in the novel. Some men, including Black Númenóreans, worship Sauron (*LotR* 810) but it is unclear if he is revered as a divine being in some kind of "ghastly temples." The Appendices do not mention the temple of Morgoth, let alone the religious strife, yet Tolkien did not remove all religious references from the Númenor story: "Ar-Pharazôn [...] was besotted by the fear of Death" (*LotR* 1037). The same words appear in other Númenor stories:

Fall of Númenor: "the thought of Death was heavy upon them" (*HME*5 16)
The Lost Road: "There is a shadow, but it is the shadow of the fear of Death" (*HME*5 68)
Fall of Númenor, 3rd version: "the fear of death was heavy upon Tar-kalion" (*HME*9 335)
Drowning: "they wished to escape from Death in their own day" (*HME*9 365)
Akallabêth: "the fear of death grew ever darker upon them" (*Silm* 266)

"The fear of death" is the main source of Númenor's anxiety and the ultimate cause of its downfall (along with pride). The phrase appears in the legendarium in another context: Tolkien himself translated the Sindarin *le nallon sí di'nguruthos* as "to thee I cry now in the shadow of (the fear of) death" (*Letter #*211). However, outside of the legendarium, the fear of death, *timor mortis*, is a well-known phrase from the Catholic Office for the Dead, often quoted in late medieval English poetry (R.Greene 238); Tolkien would not use it accidentally.[18] The "shadow of death," of course, reminds of Psalm 23 or Luke 1.79. Thus Tolkien's "practically all references" has an exception and it lies at the heart of the tale of the downfall of Númenor. Unlike in the rest of the legendarium, the religious aspect was present in the Númenorian story from the beginning; Tolkien could never remove it completely.

Despite creating multiple versions of the same story with often radically different sequences of events and transformations of Númenorean society, Tolkien preserved general elements of the tale such as a religious conflict with the Faithful emerging as the persecuted minority, a civil strife, and the downfall itself. While the latter, as the story's culmination, cannot be altered, the former two exist in several modifications. The civil war is not essential to the plot, while the religious strife could easily be replaced—and almost was in the *LotR* Appendices—by a political struggle

[18] The poems were written in the late Middle Ages, i.e. outside of Tolkien's core period, but he almost certainly remembered the phrase from the original prayers and could know the poems too. The article cited is from 1933, as opposed to a more modern source, precisely because it could be read by Tolkien. Its author, Richard Leighton Greene, was visiting Cambridge at the time and could potentially meet Tolkien. (Their professional interests overlapped: Greene quotes the Gordon and Tolkien *Green Knight* in his later work on English carols.)

between the pro- and anti-Elf parties and the opposition to Valar's interdict. And yet, both the internal conflict and its religious underpinnings stay in every edit and rewrite. Tolkien could not fail to realize how these events in his "imaginary world" related to the War in Spain (as he saw it), even if the connection was made "unconscious so at first." Unlike the overt references to religion, he never excised or obscured the civil war; it signified the catastrophe.

The Greatest Cruelty

Tolkien did not compose *The Fall of Númenor* and *The Lost Road* in isolation. To understand the changes in the legendarium at the time, it is necessary to look at his other non-academic writings. According to the Scull–Hammond *Companion*, in 1936-37 Tolkien writes several versions of the Númenor tale and begins *The Lost Road*. *The Hobbit* is typed up in the first half of 1936 from the manuscript written several years earlier (Rateliff xi-xix), so the story belongs to an earlier period. Also, at the end of 1937 Tolkien starts *The Lord of the Rings*. He keeps up with the stories of the First Age and completes *Quenta Silmarillion*. He also revises *Roverandom* and *Farmer Giles of Ham*, though the exact time of the revisions is unclear. He rewrites "Kortirion Among the Trees;" compared to the earlier 1915 versions, the changes are mostly stylistic (*HME*1 33-39). He also revises another poem, "Iumonna Gold Galdre Bewunden," this time substantially, though the story follows the same outline (*Beowulf* 201-5). A number of earlier poems is published in 1936 but they were likely completed earlier. Finally, there are Father Christmas letters, that Tolkien wrote to the younger children every year (they were shown to Stanley Unwin as potentially publishable and so should be included).

In some instances the 1936-37 texts differ from similar earlier writings. For example, starting in 1933, Father Christmas letters always mention goblins and their battles with the denizens of the North Pole. This is likely related to the composition *The Hobbit* (Rateliff xvi,142). The only exceptions are 1936 and 1937, though the work on *The Hobbit* continued in these years (*Father Christmas* years 1933-1941). Author's illness (*Letter* #19) cannot explain the absence of the by now traditional characters. Perhaps the goblins stopped being whimsical.

The new version of the tale of the Silmarils, *Quenta Silmarillion* (QS), is not only larger than its precursors such as *The Sketch of the Mythology* (S) and *Quenta Noldorinwa* (Q) (it incorporates other elements of the mythology); elements of many stories are changed. Christopher Tolkien commented on the increasing complexity: "Maidros' asking of forgiveness for the desertion in Eruman, his returning of the goods of Fingolfin, the waiving of his claim to the kingship, and the secret disavowal of this among his brothers, are all new elements in the narrative" (*HME*5 256). Another change happens earlier in the story and may be the catalyst for the others. The fundamental plot remains as in S and Q: Maidros is ambushed, brought to Angband, tortured, and hung by his right wrist from a rock. Fingon (Finweg in S and Q) finds him, cuts off his hand, and both are born away by an eagle. Then "Maidros' wound was healed, and he lived to wield sword with his left hand more deadly to his foes than his right had been" (*HME*4 102). However, QS adds further details:

> Maidros in time was healed; for the fire of life was hot within him, and his strength was of the ancient world, such as those possessed who were nurtured in Valinor. His body recovered from its torment and became hale, but *the shadow of his pain was in his heart*; and he lived to wield his sword with left hand more deadly than his right had been. (*HME*5 252, emphasis added)

The "shadow of pain" remaining after torture is a new development. Before QS, all physical torture in Middle-earth had only a direct physical effect. Q has "Maidros hanging in torment" (*HME*4 102), while in S, "in his agony he begs to be slain" (*HME*4 23). However, pain stops after his release. Later his "heart was sick and weary with the burden of the dreadful oath" (*HME*4 150) but this is not the result of torture; the mental anguish is self-inflicted. The actual physical pain does not remain in "his heart" until QS.

Other Tolkien's characters were tortured. In perhaps his earliest legendarium tale, *The Fall of Gondolin*, Meglin is "taken by some of the Orcs prowling there, and they would do him evil and terrible hurt" (*HME*2 168). Later, "Melko wove about him the spell of bottomless dread, and he had thereafter neither joy nor quiet in his heart" (169). The spell is a constantly active enchantment, not a psychological consequence of torture because those subjected to it "wandered as in a dream of fear, doing [Melko's] ill bidding" (77). Originally, Meglin decides to betray Gondolin because "evil came into [his] heart" (*HME*2 168) but in Q, "the torment wherewith he was threatened cowed his soul" (*HME*4 144). However, this has no lasting effect on him, unlike Maidros.

The tale of Berend and Luthien also tells of torture:

> Wolves should come
> and slow devour them one by one
> before the others' eyes, and last
> should one alone be left aghast,
> then in a place of horror hung
> with anguish should his limbs be wrung,
> in the bowels of the earth be slow
> endlessly, cruelly, put to woe
> and torment, till he all declared.
> (*HME*3, *Lay of Leithian*, lines 2221-9)

But nothing cowed Beren and he replied to Luthien's song when she came to Thu's stronghold. *The Lay of Leithian* contains the most detailed account of the story of Beren and Luthien; others are essentially derived from the *Lay* with minor variations. In neither is Beren's torture accompanied by lingering psychological effects: their introduction would certainly affect the plot.

Tolkien always understood the horrors of mental, as opposed to physical, torture; the most famous case is Hurin's. The story, first told in the *Book of Lost Tales* (*HME*2), changed little in subsequent Annals and Quentas. Morgoth tells Hurin that the Elves, his allies, did not care properly for his family and that his children died, and then releases him. His purpose is to embitter Hurin and thus use him. In this Morgoth succeeds but he does not use physical torture:

> Then Morgoth devised a cruel punishment; and taking Húrin from prison he set him in a chair of stone upon a high place of Thangorodrim. There he was bound by the power of Morgoth, and Morgoth standing beside him cursed him with a curse of unsleeping sight like unto the Gods, but upon his kin and seed he laid a doom of sorrow and dark mischance. 'Sit now there,' said Morgoth, 'and behold the working of the doom that I have appointed. [...]' As so it came to pass; for Morgoth kept life in Húrin. (*HME*5 313)

Unlike Maidros or Beren, Hurin is not harmed in captivity. From the very first versions of the tale, his torments are psychological; the connection between physical and mental damage is absent. QS stops before Hurin is released. The next time Tolkien picked up the story was in *The Wanderings of Hurin*, where he "went forth in grief, embittered by the lies of the Dark Lord"

(*HME*11 252). His own people shun him, which only increases his bitterness, but the source of his grief is the death of his children's, not a consequence of torture. The story follows the same outline as its first version in the *Books of Lost Tales* (*HME*2 113-15) because the plot requires Hurin to be physically fit to travel across Beleriand. Just as in Beren's story, no enhancement of an earlier outline is possible. Tolkien was not ready to alter his plots radically but, when possible, he would add new, more devastating, secondary details to the stories of torture. Thus, the impetus for torture to become more than a convenient plot device came from outside the narrative.

There is another, lesser known instance of torture in the legendarium. Almost immediately after completing *Quenta Silmarillion*, Tolkien began to work on what would become *The Lord of the Rings*. By August 1938, he reached the Bree chapters. One new character, Trotter, is a hobbit wearing wooden shoes. He reacts strongly when the Riders are mentioned: "He shuddered, and they saw with surprise that he had drawn his hood over his face which was buried in his hands" (*HME*6 153). In *LotR* another character is similarly affected: "Frodo shuddered, remembering the cruel knife with notched blade" (272); however, he recovers much quicker than Trotter. The only other times somebody "shudders" in *HME*6, Glorfindel is shown the same blade (195) and Bingo considers the enslavement of Hobbits by the Dark Lord (78). The word seems to indicate a fairly extreme reaction and, at least in Frodo's case, it is coupled with the memory of physical harm. In later phases of writing, Tolkien extended Trotter's story: he had been to Mordor or, perhaps, Mirkwood and was captured. "'Ever since I have worn shoes,' said Trotter with a shudder, and though he said no more Frodo knew that he had been tortured and his feet hurt in some way" (*HME*6 401). Because he always wore wooden shoes and always shuddered at the mention of the Dark Lord or his servants, it is likely that the elements of captivity and torture were in Trotter's story from the beginning. Once again, torture did not just mutilate the body but constantly tormented the mind, in this case manifesting as a physical and mental reaction.

Perhaps another character can be added to the list. Frodo's condition at the end of *LotR* has long been compared to post-traumatic stress disorder. Janet Brennan Croft demonstrated how Frodo's behavior after return to Hobbiton "almost perfectly" fit modern criteria for PTSD (135-6) as did Michael Livingston (83-6). Their analysis compared Frodo to regular combatants, in particular, WWI soldiers suffering from shell shock. On the one hand, this would explain the detail and realism of Tolkien's description of Frodo's mental state (he undoubtedly observed the consequences of shell shock directly). On the other, Frodo was not, in the strictest sense, a combatant. The most dramatic events in his journey were the attack on Weathertop and the destruction of the Ring. Only slightly less noticeable is confinement in Cirith Ungol, where after physical abuse, the Orcs "questioned me until I thought I should go mad, standing over me, gloating, fingering their knives. I'll never forget their claws and eyes" (910). This is interrogational torture with, perhaps, long-term psychological effects ("I'll never forget"). The attack on Weathertop also results in a combination of physical and long-term mental pain but the sequence of events does not quite describe a combat: the enemies approach Frodo, dread falls over him, he draws a weapon but does not fight, and is wounded. The intent, according to Gandalf, was enslavement by the Dark Lord; "and he would have *tormented* you for trying to keep his Ring" (222, emphasis added). The description recalls torture rather than a true combat experience, on the battlefield or in the trenches. Victims of torture often experience PTSD (Abu Suhaiban et al); however, it is unlikely that Tolkien drew a direct connection between torture and what he knew as

"shell shock." Rather, as the final image of Frodo at the end of his journey began to take shape,[19] he could rely on known symptoms of mental trauma (drawn from observations of PTSD) to describe the wound "that will never really heal" (1025).

Frodo's case may be different, in part because the most direct example of his torture, the interrogation at Cirith Ungol, does not play any part later in the text and his most dreadful experience, the Weathertop, only implies a potential future torture. Yet, undoubtedly, two of Tolkien's characters written in 1937-8 exhibit psychological trauma due to torture. Such a somber turn in his writing agrees with the general darkening of his mood: a "great shadow" of the Spanish Civil War was already cast and history will grow still grimmer as he was writing *LotR*. Spain has a direct relevance here: the stories of torture were all over the news during the Civil War. What seemed to be a part of old histories or a literary device—Grendel tormenting the Danes in *Beowulf* or Geirröth torturing his guest in *Grímnismál* of the *Elder Edda*—became real.

There is potentially an even more specific connection to the events in Spain. Though not based on direct evidence, at a minimum it falls under Tolkien's weaker standard of "applicability" (*LotR* xxiv). The start of the rebellion against the Republic coincided with the spike in anti-clerical violence; over the course of the War, 12 bishops, 283 nuns, 4,184 priests, and 2,365 monks were murdered (H.Thomas 259). Attacks on the Church, its clerics, and property were not directed by any single political force and were neither the cause of the rebellion nor, to a large extent, the direct reaction to it (de la Cueva 357-60). Nonetheless, Franco's propaganda quickly began to use the violence as a justification for its Cruzada. *A Preliminary Official Report on the Atrocities Committed in Southern Spain in July and August, 1936, by the Communist Forces of the Madrid Government* was printed in London in October of that year. Subsequent *Second and Third Reports* were published in 1937. All contained shocking descriptions of violence against the clergy, including multiple graphic descriptions of torture.[20] The intended audience were English-speaking Catholics (on both sides of the Atlantic). There can be little doubt that the widely disseminated *Reports* were read and discussed in Tolkien's circle. As mentioned above, the 1938 Vatican report on anti-clerical violence distressed him. Another significant document, *The Joint Letter of the Spanish Bishops on the War in Spain*, appeared a year earlier. For the first time the Spanish Church openly declared for Franco: "there is no hope in Spain for the reconquering of justice and peace and the blessings that derive from them, other than the triumph of the National Movement" (13). Rebel propaganda was now supported by the Church and the *Letter* amplified it too. Concerning torture, the statement began "many have had their limbs amputated or have been dreadfully mutilated before being murdered" and concluded by calling it "the greatest cruelty" (15). The importance of the *Letter* suggests that Tolkien very likely read it. Could Trotter's wooden feet and Frodo's missing finger—the amputated limbs—be echoes of its vivid description of torture?

Another possible indication of Trotter's connection to Spain comes from *Letter* #83. Tolkien's description of his meeting with Campbell references him twice:

[19] Christopher Tolkien commented that Frodo "is portrayed [in first draft] at every stage as an energetic and commanding intelligence, warlike and resolute in action; and the final text of the chapter had been very largely achieved when the changed conception of Frodo's part in the Scouring of the Shire entered." (*HME*9 94).

[20] Authors of the *Preliminary Report* did not aim for veracity. Attached to the *Report* was a historical note on the war, which heavily relied on several forged documents (Southworth 4-5). Casualty figures and the stories of torture could have been exaggerated as well (though the actual level of violence and its spread were shocking (M.Thomas 3-4, 145-72)). However, this is irrelevant for the present discussion: all elements of the report were accepted as true by most British Catholics.

> I could see in his eye that he was taking an interest in the conversation [..]. It was rather like Trotter at the Prancing Pony, in fact v. like. [...] Mostly it interested me to learn that this old-looking war-scarred Trotter, limping from recent wounds, is 9 years younger than I am. (*Letter* #83)

The letter is dated 6 October 1944. Trotter became a man, rather than a Hobbit, in the late summer or autumn of 1939, though he still kept his nickname (*HME*7 8,79). He lost his wooden shoes, the history of torture in Mordor, and so his injured feet. By the time the letter was written, Trotter was very much Aragorn, the future Strider, and Campbell, "a strange tall gaunt man" who listened intently to a conversation, certainly resembled his first appearance at the Prancing Pony. However, the second mention of Trotter is more curious: "old-looking war-scarred" fits the original character much better. At the time of the meeting Tolkien was revising what would become Book III of *LotR*, in particular "The King of the Golden Hall" chapter (*Letter* #82). Aragorn's nickname is not used there and yet this is how Tolkien referred to Campbell. Something likely pushed him towards using an earlier name for the character. It could be the limping but, unlike Campbell, the original Trotter did not limp, despite his injuries. On the other hand, a conversation about the Civil War and its atrocities could lead Tolkien from Aragorn of the Prancing Pony to Trotter.

The emergence of long-term mental effects of torture in Tolkien's prose underlines its darkening in the 1930s; however, the direct connection to the events of the Civil War remains a conjecture. We can only operate on the level of "applicability." Still, the relation between Tolkien's tales of Trotter, Frodo, and Maidros and the "greatest cruelties" of the Civil War goes beyond a mere similarity of grisly deformities; the core stories are of mental struggles. All three tortured characters survive at first but those, whose stories were completed, end tragically: Frodo is forced to leave Middle-earth and Maidros, whose one remaining hand was burned by the Silmaril, "in anguish and despair [...] cast himself into a gaping chasm filled with fire" (*HME*5 331). For comparison, his brother Maglor, one of whose hands is also burned, is forever "singing in pain and regret" (331) over his deeds but survives. The effects of torture and pain are permanent; the torment does not diminish. Bishops' *Letter* concludes with the request to fellow Catholics to "help us to pray, and over our country, watered to-day with the blood of brothers, the rainbow of Christian peace will shine once more" (26). One of the addressees seemed to respond that peace would be possible but not for all: "it has been saved, but not for me" (*LotR* 1029). Tolkien's victims of torture, from Maidros to Frodo, show not only the gruesome character of war but the impossibility of complete recovery, at least in this world. The Spanish Civil War, more than Tolkien's personal experiences of WWI, drove the deep pessimism of his writings from the late 1930s.

Conclusion

Long-lasting effects of torture; religious divisions and persecution of religious minorities; civil war: these themes enter the legendarium in the second half of the 1930s. The history of Middle-earth, wistful from the beginning, becomes deeply sorrowful. Even before attempting the "larger canvas" of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien begins to paint a more pessimistic world with the stories of the destruction of Númenor and the loss of "the straight road," the breakdown of civil societies (again, in Númenor and later in the Shire) and the oppressive powers of the State, false gods and martyrdom of true believers. He also starts considering the impact of harrowing experiences of some of his characters, such as the mental effects of torture. Many of these elements are secondary

to the plot; however, they recur in many versions of his tales of the Second and Third Age, underlying the catastrophic nature of main events.

This parallels the greater pessimism of the age, with its "fear and distrust" and apprehension of future tragedies. Only two political systems seemed to offer a stable future—communism or fascism—and many felt forced to make a choice. For Tolkien, as for other deeply religious Catholics, the atheism of the former, often accompanied by anti-clerical violence, was "diabolical" (*Blackfriars* 726), while the latter, aligned with the Church, was at least an ally. Seen from Oxford, the Cruzada was real and Franco was the true defender of the faith. And yet, just as his Dominican neighbors in the editorial office of *Blackfriars*, Tolkien could ask, "Must God go Fascist?" He despised the Nazi doctrines but, almost as equally, he resented the statism of the fascist movements. A few years later he would write about the choice between the two totalitarian systems that "the special horror of the present world is that the whole damned thing is in one bag. There is nowhere to fly to" (*Letter* #52). In Spain, though, the choice was hard but clear because of the added religious dimension; even as late as 1944, Tolkien was firmly in the Nationalist camp. Like many fellow Catholics, he saw the Spanish Civil War primarily as a religious conflict rather than a struggle between two forces that would oppose each other in World War II. For him, as for many others, the biggest horror of that war was the persistent anti-clerical violence.

Whether intentional at first or not, echoes of the Civil War—its "deep shadow" in the words of Priscilla Tolkien—found its way into the legendarium, particularly the story of Númenor. The civil war itself, fueled by a religious conflict, is perhaps the most paradoxical element of those narratives: structurally unnecessary for the main plot and radically distinct in its origins and course in different versions of the Downfall, it always remains a part of the story. Tolkien, who often completely rewrote earlier drafts and did not hesitate to eliminate major scenes or characters, persisted in retaining internal strife in Númenor. If its destruction represented the ultimate human catastrophe, it could not be complete without apostasy and civil war. In Tolkien's early tales, Gondolin could fall because of hubris, treachery and above all, the terrifying assault by its enemy but this kind of history ended in 1936; the Spanish Civil War revealed the possibility of a far deeper tragedy.

Other new elements enter the narrative, either enhancing earlier tales or leading to new, more complex, stories. Some, such as prolonged mental effects of torture, could be influenced by the news of anti-clerical violence that Tolkien clearly took to heart. Some, like details in the *The Lost Road*, have no specific connection to events in Spain but, bleak and disjoint, they still feel modern compared to stories from the earlier legendarium. Tolkien's worlds, both primary and secondary, become grimmer in the late 1930s paving the way to the sadder and darker narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*.

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