

Active-duty Spanish soldiers chant fascist songs in online videos

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In recent days, numerous videos have emerged of Spanish soldiers singing fascist or neo-Nazi songs, while making the fascist salute.

This underscores the criminal role of the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government, which downplayed fascist sentiment in the army after WhatsApp chats emerged of top retired officers calling for mass murder and the restoration of fascist rule. Podemos officials dismissed them as harmless rants from a few retired officers nostalgic for the 1939-1978 fascist regime of General Francisco Franco. It is clear, however, that these chats speak for broader pro-fascist sentiment in the army.

La Marea released a video showing soldiers from the Parachute Brigade (BRIPAC) of the Spanish Army, based in Madrid's Paracuellos del Jarama barracks. With some in uniform and others in civilian clothes, they are singing and dancing in a military tent to Estirpe Imperial, a rock band well known in neo-Nazi circles, and raising their arms making the fascist salute. This took place on December 8 last year during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The song is *Primavera* (Spring), a tribute to Spain's Blue Division, the 45,000-strong infantry division of fascist volunteers sent by Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco during World War II to support Nazi Germany's war of extermination against the Soviet Union. This war left nearly 27 million Soviet dead.

Sources told *La Marea* it is common for higher ranking officers to teach Blue Division or other fascist hymns. One anonymous soldier said to *La Marea*: "It is not at all unusual to hear this song, as well as comments against the government, immigration or in favor of [fascist] Vox among the top and middle officers. On the contrary, it is quite common in the barracks."

video surfaced a day later Another YouTube video showing members of the Spanish Army Alpine unit singing verses of at least two Estirpe Imperial songs in 2017. While marching on Atocha street in Madrid, one soldier sings verses from these songs, which the rest repeat. The soldiers are heard exalting the "Race of *conquistadores*, of noble and loyal people, we prefer death rather than traitors."

The videos shed light on the degraded atmosphere prevailing in NATO military forces, coming only months after neo-Nazi networks were exposed in Germany's military and a year after France's military was authorized to fire on "yellow vest" protesters. As mass protests and strikes erupt outside the control of union bureaucracies spread across the world, the ruling class is grooming the armed forces to carry out ruthless mass repression.

The videos also shed light on why the PSOE-Podemos government has refused to investigate pro-fascist sentiment in the armed forces. This would have revealed widespread fascist sentiment and threatened to trigger deep-rooted opposition to fascism among workers and youth in Spain and across Europe.

This year, the Ministry of Defence refused to respond to a former air force officer who asked, in a freedom of information request, if "any investigation has been carried out in the last 5 years to uncover potential nuclei of extreme-right or anti-Constitutional ideology" within the army.

Público raised the question again with the Ministry in July. The Ministry replied that "to open an investigation there would have to be some suspicious evidence and there are no complaints, nor are there any actions, nor are there data."

Military sources also told *Público* that the far right had boomed in the past years, as the PSOE-Podemos

government mounted an anti-Catalan-independence campaign consisting of wall-to-wall denunciations of Catalan nationalism and glorification of Spanish chauvinism.

The stench of fascism emanating from active-duty troops, coming as the ruling elite pursues a homicidal “herd immunity” policy on COVID-19, points to the fascistic and genocidal state of mind that permeates ruling circles as they facilitate the spread of the disease and impose deep austerity on the working class.

Retired officers have sent the Spanish king many letters denouncing “the social-communist government” for undermining “national unity”, and assuring the king of their “deep loyalty”. The signatories included retired officers whose WhatsApp chats, leaked by *Infolibre*, proclaimed their loyalty to Franco, denounced the left, boasted of links to the general staff, and called to massacre Spanish leftists. One called for mass murder to “extirpate the cancer,” writing: “I think what I’m missing is to shoot 26 million people!!!!!!”

Days later a manifesto emerged on Constitution Day, December 6, with nearly 500 signatories, including two former lieutenant generals and an admiral, calling the government a “serious risk to the unity of Spain and the constitutional order.” Many, including former division-level General Juan Chicharro, the president of the Francisco Franco Foundation, are the same who signed the 2018 pro-Franco manifesto, which ultimately garnered over a 1,000 signatories.

The anger, disgust and opposition to fascism felt by millions finds no political expression in Podemos. Instead, Deputy Prime Minister and Podemos General Secretary Pablo Iglesias was sent by the Spanish government to give a prime-time interview on state television to brazenly insist that the letters and chats were irrelevant. He said, “What these gentlemen say, at their age and already retired, in a chat with a few too many drinks, does not pose any threat.”

On Wednesday, after the videos emerged, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) called on the PSOE-Podemos government’s defence minister, Margarita Robles, to “investigate, detect and eradicate all activity contrary to democratic values” in the army.

Robles replied by vitriolically denouncing the Basque group: “I won’t allow somebody’s prejudices to cast doubt on the 120,000 men and women of the armed forces who, on a salary lower than yours and mine, are

putting their health in danger.” She ordered the PNV to “forget your prejudices” and accused them of being “totalitarian.”

Podemos intervened to make empty pleas to the government, as if they were not part of it. Podemos parliament spokesperson Jaume Asens said Robles should stop “with the apologies for Nazism in the army,” adding that he was “alarmed” at the far-right’s “infiltration” of the army.

Podemos’ statements are completely hypocritical. Asens and Iglesias—who sits on the board that runs Spain’s National Intelligence Centre (CNI), one of whose main purposes is to monitor the army’s coup plots—know full well the extent of fascist sentiment in the army. The CNI, which closely monitors far-right websites and social media, no doubt provides Iglesias and other top officials regular reports on fascist plots within the army.

Asens concluded: “If there are Nazi groups infiltrated in the Army, they must be purged immediately. Any alternative would be to incubate a snake’s egg.”

In reality, the same objective contradictions of capitalism that led the Spanish bourgeoisie to back Franco’s military-fascist coup in 1936 and support the Francoite dictatorship for forty years against the working class are propelling its descendants to again legitimize and support fascist policies.



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