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Creating Legitimacy Through Music: A Study of Folk Music Under the Franco Regime

Creating Legitimacy Through Music A Study of Folk Music Under the Franco Regime

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The use of music by the regimes of Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini has been widely documented by scholars. During the reign of these dictators, many other European countries fell under similar totalitarian leadership for which very little study has focused on the use of music. In Spain, Francisco Franco, inspired by the use of censorship and propaganda in Germany and Italy, focused on the use and limitation of folk music to help create legitimacy.

The Spanish Civil War, which resulted in Franco's rise to power, saw the exodus of many composers thus leaving Spain culturally dry. Noting Hitler's success in the area of creating a hegemonic culture, Spain began cultural exchanges with not only Germany but also Italy.

In Spain, Franco's government focused on creating pro-Franco songs that likened him to great Spanish heroes. In an effort to unify a very culturally diverse Spain, Franco began outlawing dialects and other cultural practices. While Successful at first, Franco's plan ultimately failed. This paper focuses on the case of the Basque nationalist movement which preserved a large amount of Basque culture despite being strongly oppressed.