



**Women's Labour Universities. Transgression instruments of the model of women during the Franco regime?**

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| Journal:         | <i>Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education</i>           |
| Manuscript ID    | PH-2023-1674.R1   |
| Manuscript Type: | Research Article  |
| Keywords:        | History of education in Spain, Dictatorship, Ideology, Working class, Vocational training |
|                  |   |

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## Women's Labour Universities. Transgression instruments of the model of women during the Franco regime?

One of the primary goals of Franco's education policy was to train the working class in the doctrinal principles of regime. Labour Universities were one of the education institutions created for this purpose; there were three for women (Zaragoza, Cáceres and Huesca). This article focuses on analysing the purposes sought by these macro-institutions when training working-class women, using diverse primary sources: documentary, audiovisual, archive and legal. Findings indicate that Women's Labour Universities aimed to provide specialised vocational training and also to impose the doctrine of the ideological principles advocated by the regime in relation to the model of women. However, these goals were somewhat incompatible as providing women with vocational training promoted their emancipation, contrary to the female ideal mainly advocated.

Keywords: history of education; Spain; dictatorship; working class; woman; vocational training.

### Introduction

One of the primary goals of the Franco regime education policy was providing regulated or unregulated training for the working class as an effective mechanism to eliminate the legacy of the Second Republic, based on militancy and the growth of trade unions. Building the "New State" implied annihilating the labour movement and all workers' and republican organisations with a Marxist slant. Tight control over society, and particularly the working classes, was also necessary in order to eradicate the "social issue" in Spain by eliminating the "class struggle". Point 11 of the Traditionalist Spanish Falange (FET) and the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive (JONS), collectively known as *FET y de las JONS* programme states: "The National-Syndicalist State will not cruelly refrain from economic struggles between men, nor will it impassively watch the domination of the weakest class by the strongest. Our regime

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3 will make the class struggle radically impossible since all who cooperate in production  
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5 constitute an organic totality in it".<sup>1</sup>  
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9 Labour Universities created in the 1950s were designed to train the children of the  
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11 working class as future components of a submissive and technically skilled society. In 1964,  
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13 the Ministry of Labour, through Mutual Labour Funds, created the Women's Labour  
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15 Universities to correct training deficiencies among workers' daughters. Following in the  
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17 footsteps of the Men's Labour Universities, their purpose was not only to provide working-  
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19 class women with vocational training, but also to indoctrinate them in the ideological principles  
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21 advocated by the regime.<sup>2</sup> These educational centres therefore not only provided vocational  
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23 training, but also cultural and ideological training.  
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28 Professionally and in accordance with new industrialising trends, the curriculums aimed  
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30 to solve one of the biggest educational problems in Spain: the lack of a vocational training  
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32 model adapted to new production systems requiring qualified, specialised labour. At the cultural  
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34 and ideological level, however, declassifying working-class women and the promotion of  
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36 apoliticism were not the only concerns; perpetuating the traditional roles of daughter, mother  
37  
38 and wife were also a key interest.<sup>3</sup>  
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42 Based on this introduction, this article aims to analyse Women's Labour Universities  
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44 not only from the perspective of vocational training offered, but also the ideological education  
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46 conveyed. Could traditional women's roles thus be combined with vocational training which,  
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53 <sup>1</sup> The Spanish Falange and JONS programme comprised a total of twenty-six points. See: *Boletín Oficial*  
54 *del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1937) Decree 255 of 19 April. BOE, 20 April.

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56 <sup>2</sup> [Authors, 2017]

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58 <sup>3</sup> Matilde Peinado, *Enseñando a señoritas y sirvientas. Formación femenina y clasismo en el franquismo*  
59 (Madrid: Catarata, 2012).  
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3 in light of Developmentalism, supported a different model for an emancipated, independent  
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5 woman?  
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### 9 **Francoist Developmentalism**

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11 General Franco's dictatorship was known for its authoritarianism, centralism and single  
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13 political party, called the *Movimiento Nacional* (National Movement). This party, created by  
14  
15 the Unification Decree of 19 April 1937<sup>4</sup>, was a conglomerate of the political forces that  
16  
17 supported Franco. It included mainly monarchists (both "Carlistas" and "Alfonsinos"),  
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19 falangists and catholic corporatists. With the support of the army and the Catholic Church,  
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21 Franco always tried to maintain a skilful balance between these factions, which on more than  
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23 one occasion had disagreements over the policies pursued by the National Movement.  
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30 However, the length of this dictatorship—in power from 1939 to 1975— means we  
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32 must break it down into different periods. One reason is that the ideological essence of the  
33  
34 regime became increasingly more complex as time progressed, existing alongside the fascist  
35  
36 and post-fascist social democratic eras worldwide.<sup>5</sup> According to Moradiellos, historians  
37  
38 generally accept there being three periods in the Franco regime.<sup>6</sup> Following Preston, this article  
39  
40 differentiates between three phases: the Blue Period (1936-1945), of an imperialist and fascist  
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42 nature; the National Catholic Corporatism Period (1945-1959); and Developmentalism or  
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44 Technocracy (1959-1975).<sup>7</sup> This research focuses on the latter period.  
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51 <sup>4</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1937) Decree 255 of 19 April. BOE, 20  
52 April.

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54 <sup>5</sup> Stanley Payne, *El régimen de Franco: 1936-1975* (Madrid: Alianza, 1987).

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56 <sup>6</sup> Enrique Moradiellos, *Las caras de Franco: una revisión histórica del caudillo y su régimen* (Madrid:  
57 Siglo XXI, 2017).

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59 <sup>7</sup> Paul Preston, *Franco: caudillo de España* (Madrid: Debate, 2015).  
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Developmentalism signalled a break from interventionist politics, which had already run its course by the mid-1950s, and rolling out an economic plan that abandoned autarkic economy typical of the first two phases of Francoism in favour of what is known as “neo-capitalism”, thus seeking the development of the economy based on the promotion of private companies.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, technical and financial aid from bodies such as the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation and the International Monetary Fund led to the collapse of the autarkic economy.<sup>9</sup> This new economic reality dependent on the Western economy involved a drop in government interventionism and the acceptance of market policies. From 1957, the ideological principles defended by the National Movement gradually succumbed to the economic arguments that drove the actions of the technocratic governments.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the famous Economic Stabilisation Plan was thus approved in the summer of 1959. Its core principles underlined the abandonment of economic control by the regime’s authorities, leaving economic agents freedom to manoeuvre within the market.<sup>11</sup>

García and Jiménez highlight three factors that marked the so-called “economic miracle” of Developmentalism: the tourism boom, money sent from emigrants and, of course, the influx of foreign capital.<sup>12</sup> These factors financed the greatest period of industrialisation in Spain’s history, notably improving the standard of living for most of the population and forming

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<sup>8</sup> Antonio Cañellas, “La tecnocracia franquista: el sentido ideológico del desarrollo económico”, *Studia histórica. Historia Contemporánea* 24 (2006): 257—288.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Catharina Hormann, “1959. El Plan de Estabilizacion”, in *Historia Mundial de España*, dir. Xosé M. Nuñez Seixas (Barcelona: Destino, 2018), 830—836.

<sup>10</sup> Antonio Cañellas, “La tecnocracia franquista”, 258.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Catharina Hormann, “1959. El Plan de Estabilizacion”, 832.

<sup>12</sup> José Luis García and José Carlos Jiménez, *Un siglo de España: la economía* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003).

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3 a previously almost non-existent middle class that did not have to experience the repression  
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5 typical of the previous periods.  
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9 As a direct result of industrialisation, urban development led to the abandonment of  
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11 rural living, which led to growing cities full of large blocks of flats and even commuter towns.  
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13 As Berzal de la Rosa maintains, this had a negative side such as overcrowded living for workers  
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15 in industrial suburbs, regional imbalances and the collapse of the countryside.<sup>13</sup>  
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19 This economic progress was not accompanied by political and social advances. The  
20  
21 rigid political and social framework established by the dictatorship wanted to maintain its  
22  
23 doctrinal principles as far as the lives of Spaniards were concerned. However, Vidal Beneyto  
24  
25 affirms that “the great protagonists of this phase were not Francoist policies but the Spaniards  
26  
27 and civil society who, distancing themselves from the ups and downs, managed to set an urgent  
28  
29 pace of change on the different sectors of national reality”.<sup>14</sup> Society changed whether the  
30  
31 regime want it to or not. In fact, it was the social sphere that experienced the most and more  
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33 profound changes in that period. So, we can say that the pillars of Francoism started to crack as  
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35 of the 1960s when new dynamics emerged in civil society.<sup>15</sup>  
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46 <sup>13</sup> Enrique Berzal de la Rosa, “Clérigos y fieles ante el franquismo: La evolución de las actitudes  
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48 políticas de los católicos durante el Desarrollismo” in *No sólo miedo. Actitudes políticas y opinión*  
49  
50 *popular bajo la dictadura franquista (1936-1977)*, eds. Miguel Ángel Del Arco Blanco, Carlos  
51  
52 Fuertes Muñoz, Claudio Hernández Burgos and Jorge Marco (Granada: Comares, 2016), 177—  
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54 194.

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56 <sup>14</sup> José Vidal Beneyto, *Memoria democrática* (Madrid: Foca, 2007): 51.

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58 <sup>15</sup> Óscar Martín García, “La polis paralela. Espacios de participación política en el franquismo final” in  
59  
60 *No sólo miedo. Actitudes políticas y opinión popular bajo la dictadura franquista (1936-1977)*,  
eds. Miguel Ángel Del Arco Blanco, Carlos Fuertes Muñoz, Claudio Hernández Burgos and Jorge  
Marco (Granada: Comares, 2016), 195.

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3 Widespread discontent due to lack of freedom contributed to aggravating existing  
4 tension and increasing student revolts, street demonstrations and workers' strikes. The feeling  
5 on class awareness thus gradually became entrenched among workers. According to  
6 Domènech, the 1960s represented the formative stage of the new labour movement where social  
7 protest was the most powerful weapon in the fight for social rights and freedoms.<sup>16</sup> All this led  
8 to the labour movement gaining more social prominence, becoming the driving force behind  
9 the fight against Franco.<sup>17</sup>

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12 Social changes were not, however, incited from the perspective of the class struggle;  
13 tourism, a fundamental force for the economic boost, gave rise to sexual liberation as foreigners  
14 brought new customs with them, from the bikini to the contraceptive pill. These new customs  
15 were a symbol of how the new generations rejected the values of traditional Spain, as well as  
16 family authoritarianism encouraged by the regime and, of course, by the ecclesiastical  
17 hierarchy.

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20 In view of this social dissidence, the Franco regime responded with a policy based on  
21 one hand on coercive confrontation with objectors, leading to their imprisonment, exile or even  
22 assassination. On the other, at ideological level, the regime attempted to demobilise the growing  
23 labour movement and eliminated imported liberal customs, all based on social control, where  
24 education would be a very valuable instrument.<sup>18</sup> With this goal in mind, Labour Universities  
25 are a clear example of how the regime tried to deproletarianise the sons and daughters of

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28 <sup>16</sup> Xavier Domènech, "La clase obrera bajo el franquismo. Aproximación a sus elementos formativos",  
29 *Ayer* 85, no. 1 (2012): 201—225.

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32 <sup>17</sup> Carme Molinero and Pere Ysàs, *Productores disciplinados y minorías subversivas. Clase obrera y*  
33 *conflictividad laboral en la España franquista* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1998).

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36 <sup>18</sup> Antonio Viñao, "La educación en el franquismo (1936-1975)", *Educación en Revista* 51 (2014): 19—  
37 35.

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3 working class families, attempting to instil in them the doctrinal principles advocated by the  
4  
5 National Movement.  
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### 9 **Labour Universities: a new concept of vocational training for workers**

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11 The Franco regime took a turn in terms of education policy as of the 1950s. This shift was  
12  
13 motivated by new training demands from the emerging industry, demographic growth and the  
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15 migratory flow from the country to the city in search of job opportunities. Vocational teaching  
16  
17 became more and more necessary in this context for the country's economic development, as  
18  
19 shown by the battery of measures adopted by the State to intensify and project this teaching at  
20  
21 national level: implementing the Vocational Baccalaureate (Law of 16 July 1949); raising  
22  
23 Industrial Vocational Training to intermediate level (20 July 1955); creating new Labour  
24  
25 Universities (11 May 1959, although they were already running since 1955); establishing  
26  
27 Accelerated Vocational Training (18 October 1957); founding Intensive Vocational Training  
28  
29 by the Labour Protection Board (8 January 1962) and the Worker Vocational Promotion  
30  
31 Programme (8 April 1964), which was key "for the vocational training of new workers or those  
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33 transferring from the primary sector to industry or services"<sup>19</sup> because specialists and  
34  
35 intermediate technical managers were needed to respond to labour demands.  
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43 In this context and at the initiative of the then Labour Minister José Antonio Girón de  
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45 Velasco, Labour Universities were justified as a training instrument for the social promotion of  
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47 the working class: "they aspired to forge a new man, which the reborn Homeland needed.  
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58 <sup>19</sup> A Women's Vocational Baccalaureate was later created in 1957 to foster women joining the  
59 workforce for certain jobs. See Antonio Viñao, "La educación en el franquismo (1936-1975)", 29.  
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3 Human in his feeling and technical is his doing”.<sup>20</sup> The need to tackle the “subversive problem”  
4  
5 of opposition groups was indeed decisive in creating these institutions.  
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9 Vocational training itself was already provided by other teaching centres, such as  
10  
11 Labour Institutes. The idea was not to contribute to the training of qualified workers under the  
12  
13 ideological premises that underpinned the authoritarian regime. This ideological mission to  
14  
15 train them in the values of the Franco regime was translated into the professional and social  
16  
17 promotion of the worker with job qualifications, and cultural and political training. The task of  
18  
19 developing a new political concept of “social promotion” based of fostering culture, education,  
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21 work and industrial property through cooperatives was entrusted to the first Director-General  
22  
23 of Labour Universities, Torcuato Fernández Miranda.<sup>21</sup> According to the Labour Minister at  
24  
25 the time, Licinio de la Fuente:  
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30 The Labour University is a teaching centre. But it is also —and I would go so far as to say that it is, above  
31  
32 all— a social promotion service, since its reason for being, its legitimation was and is to provide and  
33  
34 guarantee that all workers take part in knowing and, with it, participating in political development, in  
35  
36 economic development and in social development.<sup>22</sup>  
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40 With the aim of being a “university”, not in its content but in its conception. These great  
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42 educational complexes thus aimed to make up for a lack of basic education and vocational  
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44 training schools in rural regions at a disadvantage compared to provincial capitals, which had  
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46 more schools and education on offer. Promoted by the Labour Ministry, they were defined as:  
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52 <sup>20</sup> “Las Universidades Laborales: evolución, situación y perspectivas. Versión provisional” 1977, Fondo  
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54 Universidad Laboral, C. 205572/26, page 9, General Administration Archive (AGA), Alcalá de  
55  
56 Henares.

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58 <sup>21</sup> [Authors, 2012]

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60 <sup>22</sup> Licinio de la Fuente, *Universidades Laborales y Promoción Social* (Madrid: Labour Ministry  
Publications Service, 1971), 17.

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3 “higher institution of culture in work in the triple human, technical and professional dimension,  
4 founded and maintained under the State by Spanish workers”.<sup>23</sup> It would therefore be no  
5 exaggeration to consider Labour Universities as the maximum paradigmatic reference of the  
6 institutional proposal for vocational training and social policy of the Franco regime. Over the  
7 years they stood out for their grand architecture and modern facilities, defined as “cities of  
8 work”<sup>24</sup> as they combine different types of teaching centres in the same space while also  
9 covering a wide range of regulated and non-regulated technical and manual studies. They ran  
10 for over 23 years (1955 to 1979) leaving an important legacy in terms of architecture —with a  
11 network of centres spread around 21 bases in Spain— and also training and culture as almost  
12 half a million students from working class families studied in their classrooms in search of a  
13 better future.<sup>25</sup>

### 28 **Women and the world of work during Developmentalism**

30 The predominant female archetype during the Franco dictatorship has been analysed in various  
31 studies.<sup>26</sup> Scanlon and Mòdol highlight the value of submission and the definition of three roles:

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37 <sup>23</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1956) Order of 12 July, Provincial Statute  
38 of Labour Universities. BOE, 19 July.

39 *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1959) Law 40/59 of 11 May, regulating  
40 Labour Universities. BOE, 12 May.

41 *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1960) Decree 2266/60 of 24 November,  
42 Organic Regulation on Labour Universities. BOE, 25 November.

43 <sup>24</sup> *NO-DO*, no. 526, 2 February 1953. Curiously, vocational training for women was not as newsworthy  
44 in the *NO-DO* (first tool used for propaganda news by the Franco regime) as pointed out by Carmen  
45 Sanchidrián and María Dolores Molina, “La formación profesional vista a través de *NO-DO* (1943-  
46 1981): Propaganda e ideología en un pasado reciente”, *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* 7, no. 2  
47 (2020): 135—156.

48 <sup>25</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1972) Decree 2061/1972 of 21 July,  
49 integrating Labour Universities in the academic system of the General Education Act. BOE, 31  
50 July.

51 <sup>26</sup> Geraldine Scanlon, “La mujer bajo el franquismo”, *Tiempo de Historia* 27 (1977): 4—28.

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3 daughter, wife and mother. To the great value of submission Ofer adds compassion, self-  
4 sacrifice and discipline. As for the possibilities of women working or studying, they were  
5 considered as special situations that veered from the norm, only tolerated if they were subject  
6 to extremely strict conditions appropriate to their gender.<sup>27</sup> In fact, one of the ideological  
7 principles of the regime was the exaltation and protection of the family as the foundation of  
8 society. They claimed that the family was in crisis, which was largely caused by the figure of  
9 the working woman, who was abandoning the home and her traditional roles (daughter, wife  
10 and mother).<sup>28</sup>

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23 In this respect, it must be stressed that the Catholic Church played a leading role in  
24 shaping the predominant model of woman during Franco's regime.<sup>29</sup> This situation was  
25 maintained during the first two phases of the regime but changed during Developmentalism.  
26 This last phase brought new times that allowed Spain women to be liberated from the social  
27 constraints they were subjected to. Specifically, the predominant model of women was altered  
28 by technocratic governments, because they subjected social policy to the needs of the economic  
29 policy that they sought to establish.<sup>30</sup> Of course, they did not abandon the essence of the  
30 dominant female role in society; they added new nuances to afford them greater freedom.

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45 Jarné Mòdol, "Models formals i sentimentals al Server de la fenineïtat: la postguerra a Lleida  
46 (1939-1945)", *Ilerda* 49 (1991): 189—207.

48 Inbal Ofer, *Señoritas in blue. The making of a female political elite in Franco's Spain* (Great Britain:  
49 Sussex Academic, 2009).

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52 <sup>27</sup> Aurora Morcillo, *En cuerpo y alma. Ser mujer en tiempos de Franco* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2015).

53 <sup>28</sup> Gerardo Meil, "La política familiar española durante el franquismo", *Revista Internacional de*  
54 *Sociología* 11 (1995): 47—87.

55 <sup>29</sup> Carme Molinero, "Mujer, franquismo, fascismo. La clausura forzada en un mundo pequeño", *Historia*  
56 *Social* 30 (1998): 97—117.

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59 <sup>30</sup> Gerardo Meil, "La política familiar española durante el franquismo".

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3 The great exodus towards the cities as a direct result of industrialisation therefore  
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5 created a great need for labour. The country's economic bodies began to understand that  
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7 including women in the workforce was immediately subject to their vocational training as this  
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9 group was one of the most unjustified wastes of human capital.<sup>31</sup> The increased working female  
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11 population was clearly evidenced between 1960 and 1970, rising from 18.2% to 24.4%, with  
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13 health, teaching, banking and commerce being the sectors with the most significant increased  
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15 female presence.<sup>32</sup>

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20 However, this emancipation of women did not gel with the feminine model mainly  
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22 defended by the regime (which tried to seclude women in the domestic space), causing much  
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24 tension between the changing Spanish society of the 1970s and public powers. "At first, the  
25  
26 term women's advancement was used to call for improvements in education and work, and  
27  
28 greater intellectual autonomy. But soon there was a demand for freedom".<sup>33</sup> In this situation,  
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30 María Concepción Borreguero Sierra, a Technician at the General Technical Secretariat of the  
31  
32 Ministry of Labour, denounced the great paradox in Spain:

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37 (...) it has wanted to keep the young woman at home and not encouraged her to receive adequate training  
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39 for a more or less long period, has not been able to prevent her from leaving the home to work somewhere  
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41 and, in any case, with no specialisation and having to accept minimum wage or less.<sup>34</sup>

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46 <sup>31</sup> Carmen Agulló Díaz, "De ignorada a necesaria: la formación profesional de las mujeres en el  
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48 franquismo (1936-1975)" in *Entre lo doméstico y lo público. Capacitación profesional de las*  
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50 *mujeres en España (1940-1977)*, ed. Sara Ramos Zamora (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2016), 45—  
51  
52 72.

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54 <sup>32</sup> Pilar Folguera Crespo, "El franquismo. El repertorio a la esfera privada (1939-1975)" in *Historia de*  
55  
56 *las Mujeres en España*, ed. Elisa Garrido (Madrid: Síntesis, 1997), 527—548.

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58 <sup>33</sup> Mónica Moreno, "Mujer y culturas políticas en el franquismo y el antifranquismo", *Pasado y Memoria*  
59  
60 7 (2008): 165—185.

<sup>34</sup> María Concepción Borreguero Sierra, "La formación profesional femenina", *Revista Educación* 188  
(1967): 72.

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3 At a legislative level, the turning point was Law 59/1961, of 22 July, on the professional  
4 political and working rights of women, which established equality of sexes in work and salary,  
5 although with notable exceptions, such as women's access to the legal profession, which would  
6 not be possible until 1966.<sup>35</sup> In this regard, it should be stressed that the Catholic Church did  
7 not accept this law willingly. However, leaders of the Women's Section supported and  
8 promoted it. This provoked an underground confrontation between the Women's Section and  
9 other sectors of the National Movement. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that with actions  
10 of this magnitude, the Women's Section tried to improve women's professional opportunities  
11 during the period of Developmentalism, and even enhanced their public and social visibility.  
12 However, the Women's Section did not abandon the defence of the Falangist model of women,  
13 which led it to fall into contradictions.<sup>36</sup>  
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30 In 1964, the Ministry for National Education created the first Official Women's  
31 Industrial School which offered courses in dressmaking, hairdressing and cosmetics. The  
32 Church had 17 industrial vocational training centres for women; the Spanish Syndical  
33 Organization had six; there were five private institutions approved and authorised by the  
34 Ministry of Education; and the Women's Section of *FET y de las JONS* had four. The total  
35 number of centres exclusively for the industrial vocational training of women in 1964 was  
36 therefore 33, compared to 369 centres for male students. A huge disproportion that was  
37 reflected in the 5.90% of male students attending regulated vocational training centres  
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53 <sup>35</sup> Carmen Sarasúa and Carme Molinero, "Trabajo y niveles de vida en el franquismo. Un estado de la  
54 cuestión desde una perspectiva de género", in *La historia de las mujeres: Perspectivas actuales*,  
55 ed. Cristina Borderías (Barcelona: Icaria, 2009), 309—354.  
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58 <sup>36</sup> Sara Ramos y Teresa Rabazas, "Mujeres e instrucción rural en el Desarrollismo español", *Historia de*  
59 *la Educación* 26 (2007): 221—256.  
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3 compared to 0.36% among women.<sup>37</sup> Another of the female vocational training initiatives were  
4 the Vocational Training Schools in rural areas. These schools were aimed at the professional  
5 training of peasant women in industry, thus seeking to promote a professional opportunity for  
6 rural women and their social promotion.<sup>38</sup> In this way, the Falangist discourse on women,  
7 which kept them relegated to the home, coexisted with some training practices that timidly  
8 promoted their active incorporation into the world of work.  
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18 Meanwhile, the first National Commission for Women's Work was created in 1970 and  
19 its duties and objectives were established one year later, in 1971, including the study of  
20 vocational training and the social promotion of women. The possibilities seemed to be  
21 conducive to their incorporation in the workforce, at least in theory.<sup>39</sup> These changes, along  
22 with other cultural changes in the nearby international context—the so-called “second wave of  
23 feminism”—in the context of new social movements in favour of civil rights, generated a major  
24 transformation in the collective Spanish mentality.<sup>40</sup>  
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39 <sup>37</sup> María Concepción Borreguero Sierra, “La formación profesional femenina”, *Revista Educación* 188  
40 (1967): 74.

41  
42 <sup>38</sup> Sara Ramos Zamora y Carmen Colmenar Orzaes, “Mujeres rurales y capacitación profesional en el  
43 franquismo a través de la prensa femenina (1939-1959)”, *Educació i Història: Revista d'Història*  
44 *de l'Educació* 24 (2014): 135—171.

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47 María Antonia Paz y Carlota Coronado, “Mujer y formación profesional durante el franquismo”,  
48 *Pandora: revue d'etudes hispaniques* 5 (2005): 133—145.

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50 <sup>39</sup> Teresa Rabazas and Sara Ramos, “La construcción del género en el franquismo y los discursos  
51 educativos de la Sección Femenina”, *Encounters on Education* 7 (2006): 43—70.

52  
53 Antonio Canales and Amparo Gómez (eds.), *La larga noche de la educación española. El sistema*  
54 *educativo español en la posguerra* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015).

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56 <sup>40</sup> Amparo Moreno, “Mujeres en el franquismo” in *100 años en femenino. Una historia de las mujeres*  
57 *en España*, eds. Oliva Rubio and M<sup>a</sup> Isabel Tejada (Madrid: Acción Cultural Española, 2012),  
58 79—98.  
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3 As a result, the figure of a more modern working woman emerged; a woman who saw  
4 herself as a fully-fledged citizen, far from traditional axiology and oriented toward updated  
5 horizons in a new setting, both public and private.<sup>41</sup> By gaining employment they had salaries  
6 and no longer depended on family resources. They could therefore gradually break away from  
7 the authority of their father or husband, a decisive push for the emancipation of women.  
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15 This emerging situation had to deal with the paradoxes of traditional values and the  
16 secularisation of their behaviours in the construction of urban, materialistic and industrialised  
17 society where the emancipation of women was a reality and where women were gradually  
18 becoming independent individuals beyond family restraints.  
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### 26 **Women's Labour Universities in the Spain of Developmentalism**

27 Women's Labour Universities emerged and were developed in the context of the Spain of the  
28 1st Economic and Social Development Plan (1964-67) and with the proliferation of these  
29 centres (1965-70).<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the period of greatest institutional expansion of Labour  
30 Universities began under the mandate of the first Opus Dei technocrats, with the three women's  
31 centres inaugurated in 1967: "Virgen del Pilar" Labour University of Zaragoza,  
32 "Hispanoamericano" Labour University of Cáceres, and Labour University of Huesca.  
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48 <sup>41</sup> Carmen Romo, "El desorden de la identidad persistente: cambio social y estatus de la mujer en la  
49 España desarrollista", *Arenal: Revista de historia de las mujeres* 12, no. 1 (2005): 91—109.

50  
51  
52 <sup>42</sup> The new Directorate-General for Social Promotion was also created by the Ministry of Labour. *Boletín*  
53 *Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1964) Order of 8 April. BOE, 23 April. This  
54 signified a change in the justification of the social policy of the regime, and specifically of Labour  
55 Universities, which went from being seen as "offensive welfare" so often used in speeches by  
56 Girón de Velasco during the first phase of creating Labour Universities, to a system of educational  
57 and vocational "social promotion" for the working class.  
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3 Most studies were geared toward a technical-professional specialisation; an attractive  
4 training opportunity for incorporating women in the educational, professional and social  
5 spheres although not exempt from obstacles in their integration process. Only a minority of  
6 female students pursued higher education with most limited to training in functional and  
7 mechanical skills. According to María Ángeles Jiménez:  
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15 Faced with the effort required to accept the responsibilities of correctly performing a qualified position,  
16 many well-prepared women with authentic professional vocation give up to dedicate themselves to the  
17 family, rendering their knowledge useless and feeling frustrated in most cases, especially once they had  
18 passed their youth. Others who were more courageous accept these responsibilities and attempt to juggle  
19 family and work.<sup>43</sup>  
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26 In this context of economic developmentalism, Women's Labour Universities became  
27 true beacons for the social and labour promotion of women. Their educational model was based  
28 on "comprehensive improvement" combining vocational training and cultural education as  
29 unifying elements of the State's ideological and social policy.<sup>44</sup> An educational experience that  
30 brought together two essential vectors: political and union indoctrination of young female  
31 students in the human order and professional training in the new professional fields necessary  
32 for the country's economic development process. The Labour Universities' Provisional Bylaws  
33 stress the need for occupational teaching for women, separated and differentiated from men.  
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52 <sup>43</sup> María Ángeles Jiménez, "Promoción Profesional de la Mujer en la nueva sociedad", in *Ministerio de*  
53 *Trabajo. Primera Mesa Redonda sobre Promoción Profesional de la Mujer en la nueva sociedad.*  
54 *24 al 28 de septiembre* (Madrid: National Female Work Committee/Directorate-General for Social  
55 Promotion, 1973), 40.  
56

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58 <sup>44</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1967) Order of 6 May, definitively  
59 approving the order of 29 September 1966 on amending 1964 curriculums. BOE, 23 May.  
60



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3 The right of working women to adequate occupational education is recognised. This education may be  
4 organised in a separate University or in a different section dependent on existing Labour Universities,  
5 always with the separation of sexes in building and teaching.<sup>45</sup>  
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10 Consequently, women could initially access vocational teaching at Labour Universities  
11 for men with a Social Vocational Training course designed exclusively for women. The Labour  
12 University of Tarragona was the first to offer a vocational training course as reported in *Levante*  
13 newspaper on 14 November 1958:  
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20 It is logical that a female mutual worker receives the benefits to which she is entitled. A test Social  
21 Vocational Training course has been organised in Tarragona for female workers from different fields of  
22 production, whose success was definitive. This has forced us to think of the importance of extending  
23 vocational and social training, taking into account that women are the core of the home and shaping future  
24 generations.<sup>46</sup>  
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30 Growing pressure to include female workers in studies offered by men's Labour  
31 Universities forced the State to create an educational space combining higher studies. Women's  
32 Labour Universities were thus launched in the late 1960s: a new centre in Zaragoza; in Cáceres,  
33 transformed into a women's university one year after its inauguration; and a mixed centre in  
34 Huesca. Like the men's institutions, they were dependent on the Ministry of Labour and were  
35 a real attraction for a good number of middle and lower-class female students who saw  
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50 <sup>45</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1956) Order of 12 July, Provincial Statute  
51 of Labour Universities. BOE, 19 July. Although these teachings were not incorporated until two  
52 years later following approval of the Teaching Statute: *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official  
53 State Gazette] (1958) Order of 16 August, approving the Teaching Statute of Labour Universities.  
54 BOE, 28 August.  
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58 <sup>46</sup> "La Universidad Laboral de Tarragona oferta curso de Formación Profesional Social", *Diario*  
59 *Levante*, November 14, 1958.  
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3 vocational training as the best way to prosper socially. According to architect José Antonio  
4  
5 Alfaro:

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8 For a girl from a humble, rural family suddenly entering one of the most modern buildings at the time in  
9  
10 Spain was incredible. A new life opened up to them. They were authentic social elevators.<sup>47</sup>

### 11 12 **The role of labour mutualism. Repercussions for female emancipation.**

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14  
15 This network of centres was launched thanks to the training action of the Ministry of Labour  
16  
17 and contributions by Spanish workers through their Mutual Labour Funds, which played an  
18  
19 essential role in the field of education and social-labour promotion.<sup>48</sup> This original model of  
20  
21 financing through worker contributions to Mutual Labour Funds, depending on the branch of  
22  
23 activity, was a complementary pension system that funded almost 90% of Labour University  
24  
25 expenses. The daily *ABC* reported on this peculiar financing system, highlighting that:

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30 Labour Universities do not weigh on public funds; they are financially independent organisations,  
31  
32 directed and supervised by the workers themselves to guarantee the education of their children. (...) with  
33  
34 the firm will to live in harmony with the other State teaching centres.<sup>49</sup>

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37 Perhaps the element that justifies their success is precisely that these institutions were  
38  
39 funded with money from workers through Mutual Labour Funds, which granted scholarships  
40  
41 to all Labour University students.<sup>50</sup> Scholarships that were designed for the school and labour  
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43 population, both young people and adults. In other words, for each member of the family unit,  
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49 <sup>47</sup> José Antonio Alfaro, "Megaestructuras modernas: La Universidad Laboral de Huesca" *II Congreso*  
50  
51 *Pioneros de la Arquitectura Moderna Española: Aprender de una obra* (2015): 19.

52  
53 <sup>48</sup> Ministry of Labour, *25 años de la mutualidad laboral de la construcción* (Madrid: Publications  
54  
55 Service, 1971).

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57 <sup>49</sup> "Universidades Laborales", *ABC*, November 8, 1966, Education section, 21.

58  
59 <sup>50</sup> Ricardo Zafrilla Tobarra and Julia Utiel Heras, *Universidades Laborales: aproximación a su historia*  
60  
61 *económica* (Madrid: Popular Libros, 2006), 98.

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2  
3 including women as of the 1960s. In this sense, it was a scholarship system that excluded  
4  
5 workers' daughters until women's centres were created. So, while parents with sons could apply  
6  
7 for scholarships for male centres, parents with daughters—who paid the same taxes—had not  
8  
9 access to scholarships as there were no places in schools or Labour Universities for young  
10  
11 women. This discrimination and social injustice towards women changed as of the 1960s with  
12  
13 the construction of the first Women's Labour Universities, favouring their presence in  
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15 education, although always notably inferior compared with male students.<sup>51</sup>  
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20 Table 1. Evolution of female students at Labour Universities.  
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22

23 The scholarship covered all expenses for the academic year in accordance with the  
24  
25 financial support from the Mutual Labour Fund. In other words, the student entered the centre  
26  
27 absolutely free of charge. They were mostly daughters of mutual fund members, reason why  
28  
29 they were granted the scholarship, and to maintain it they had to perform well in their studies,  
30  
31 passing all subjects in the June and September exam periods.<sup>52</sup> Those who gained access to  
32  
33 these institutions were therefore in a very special situation compared to other students in the  
34  
35 country. Their promotion and vocational training depended on their own "merits", which  
36  
37 determined their continuity.<sup>53</sup> An unfavourable grade thus meant the student was expelled. As  
38  
39 a former student at the Labour University of Zaragoza remembers, "we were obsessed with  
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41 getting good marks. And there was an atmosphere of study and work that got you involved from  
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49 <sup>51</sup>In the early 1960s female students barely reached 15.7% of total male students. "La formación  
50  
51 profesional de la mujer en la Universidad Laboral", Magazine *UNI* 18 (1972): 8.  
52

53 <sup>52</sup> The scholarship covered all aspects related to school life: enrolment, materials and text books, board  
54  
55 and accommodation, second-class train tickets from the family home to the Labour University and  
56  
57 vice versa, clothing (outerwear, two pyjamas, dress schools, gym clothes, work uniform, dressing  
58  
59 gown, etc.), medical and pharmaceutical service, personal hygiene items, etc.  
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<sup>53</sup> [Authors, 2010]

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3 the first day”<sup>54</sup>. This environment of encouraging effort was indicated in three documents  
4 received by students on arrival at the centre: Letter from the headteacher, promise of  
5 commitment to the centre and an employment contract.<sup>55</sup> They felt that they owed “a debt to  
6 the Spanish working world as a whole, since through the *Mutualismo Laboral*, they had made  
7 possible a promotion that had previously been reserved for the economically strongest”.<sup>56</sup>  
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### 16 **Women’s Labour Universities. Macro-cities not only for training purposes**

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18 Women’s Labour Universities were located in areas conducive to decentralisation, similar to  
19 Labour Institutes. The aim was to make up for the lack of primary and vocational training  
20 schools in rural regions. New institutions were therefore located away from regional and  
21 provincial capitals, several kilometres from the main cities they belonged to (see Table 2). The  
22 reasons for this “retreat” may have been due, on one hand, to the very approach with which  
23 they were conceived—independent and self-sufficient macro-centres—and, on the other hand,  
24 to the aim of isolating students from their families both physically and socially by putting them  
25 far away from the urban centre, making them easier to placate in the event of any uprising  
26 against the regime. They followed the model of “total institutions”<sup>57</sup> in terms of both their  
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42 <sup>54</sup> Interview with CDM a former student at the Labour University of Zaragoza, November 15, 2022.

43 <sup>55</sup> Regulation for Labour University Scholarship System of 9 April 1959, amended in 1962 by a  
44 Resolution issued by the Directorate-General of Welfare. *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish  
45 Official State Gazette] (1962) Resolution of the Directorate-General of Welfare of 24 April. BOE,  
46 25 April.  
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50 Ministerial Order of 21 May 1969, issued by the Directorate-General of Social Promotion and the  
51 General Delegation of Labour Universities, approving the Student Regulation. *Boletín Oficial del*  
52 *Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1969). BOE, 4 June. The new regulation specified both  
53 requirements for becoming a student and academic requirements to maintain that status.  
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56 <sup>56</sup> Magazine *Vínculo*. Universidad Laboral 12 (1969): 4.

57 <sup>57</sup> Sociologist Goffman describes them as, “a place of residence and work, where a great number of  
58 individuals in the same situation, isolated from society for a significant period of time, share in  
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totalitarian status and their comprehensive nature, which implied separating and uprooting students from their family environment.

This absorbing tendency was evident in “the obstacles against social interaction with the outside and the exodus of members”.<sup>58</sup> This need not even be reflected in the resources, we just have to analyse the physical distance between Labour Universities and the rest of the community, always a few kilometres from the nearest city (see Table 2). Furthermore, the terms of the scholarship required students to remain in the centre for practically all their free time. As Ricardo Zafrilla points out, there were a kind of “moral debt” to the Franco regime as the majority would not have been able to achieve the same level of culture and training had it not been for this initiative.<sup>59</sup> This location criteria also led to each institution offering certain training specialities —textile, maritime, chemical, industrial, etc.— according to the economic activities and demand for qualified labour in the area (see Table 2).

Table 2. Distance, plot area and estimated population of Women’s Labour Universities.

For one of the directors of the Labour University of Zaragoza, the system of labour universities: “it was seen from the outside as something closed, with a certain suspicion. As something foreign to the education system. And from the point or view of those who were inside, they didn't feel comfortable as part of the education system”.<sup>60</sup>

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their confinement a daily routine, formally administered”. Erwing Goffman, *Internados. Ensayos sobre la situación social de los enfermos mentales* (Madrid: Amorrortu, 2007), 18.

<sup>58</sup> Erwing Goffman, *Internados*, 18.

<sup>59</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1967) Order of 31 July, regularising the situation of boarding students at Labour Universities. BOE, 18 August.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with FFL one of the directors of the Labour University of Zaragoza, November 30, 2022.

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3 The aim of these new centres was for the structure of teaching facilities to stand out for  
4 their functionality, so that classrooms and workshops would form a series of residences with  
5 their corresponding schools. Moreover, during this stage better infrastructure, equipment and  
6 pedagogical innovations were available, such as teaching departments, classroom boards,  
7 specific audio-visual rooms, etc.<sup>61</sup> Their architecture reflected what the regime aimed to  
8 represent: solid institutions admired for their educational and spiritual purposes. A grandeur  
9 and functionality in both architecture and educational resources that were generally not  
10 available in other public centres, and which included a series of resources for social,  
11 educational, human and sporting aspects.<sup>62</sup> From a functional perspective, from their first day  
12 students joined a kind of micro-city with all the resources needed for daily life: from sleeping  
13 to residences; for practical classes in training workshops and laboratories (industry) or at the  
14 training farm or fields (livestock and farming); classroom training; interacting with other  
15 classmates in the sports and leisure facilities. According to the Labour Minister Licinio de la  
16 Fuente:  
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45 <sup>61</sup> José Utrera Molina, *Nuevos horizontes de las Universidades Laborales* (Madrid: Ministry of Labour,  
46 1970).

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49 <sup>62</sup> The role of youth magazines regularly published at Labour Universities is interesting as they  
50 represented their own propaganda, dissemination and communication resources. They were  
51 dependent on the institutions, which centralised and disseminated information on academic,  
52 sporting, cultural, religious and professional activities at each centre, and often included  
53 information generated at other Labour Universities provided they were of use to the teaching  
54 community. They were usually divided into thematic blocks covering university life and  
55 educational, cultural and professional projects, focusing on teachers, students, service staff,  
56 visitors, academic authorities, former students, etc.  
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We are sometimes berated that Labour Universities have many resources, that they are located in modern, spacious and comfortable buildings. And we must ask: Is light, hygiene, harmony, comfort and well-being a luxury when it comes to the education of young people?<sup>63</sup>

### **General organisation of Women's Labour Universities: vocational and human training**

The Women's Section as the governing organisation of the single party FET y de las JONS, was entrusted with the organisation and internal stability of Women's Labour Universities.<sup>64</sup> From an ideological perspective, the Women's Section was the only women's organisation recognised by the Franco regime and it was a tool for conveying traditional thought in their education and moral training.<sup>65</sup> However, the Women's Section had to adapt its discourse to the new developmentalist context such that, not without internal and external contradictions, it maintained the regime's archetype of domestic woman while accepting that of the modern, working woman with better education and culture, in order to respond to the new horizons of social, educational, cultural and economic change.<sup>66</sup> This impossible imbalance was clearly seen in the Women's Labour Universities as the Women's Section, as the institution that championed the traditional role of women, managed the institutions that trained them professionally, which invariably led to female emancipation.<sup>67</sup> According to a former student:

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Licinio de la Fuente, *Televisión Española*, 1971.

<sup>64</sup> From its creation in 1934 to its termination in 1977, it was led by Pilar Primo de Rivera, sister of José Antonio, founder of the Falange, and daughter of Spanish dictator Miguel (1923-1930).

<sup>65</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1939) Decree of 28 December, regulating the powers of the Women's Section, including vocational training for women. BOE, 29 December.

<sup>66</sup> Carmen Sanchidrián, "Educación y cultura en el franquismo: del nacional-catolicismo al modelo tecnocrático de educación (1937-1972)", in *Educación y cultura en la Málaga contemporánea*, coord. Mercedes Vico (Malaga: University of Malaga, 1995), 178.

<sup>67</sup> Cristina Gómez Cuesta, "La Sección Femenina y su modelo de mujer: un discurso contradictorio", in *El siglo XX: balance y perspectivas* (Valencia: University of Valencia, 2000), 195—202.

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2  
3 "The Women's Section made me a leftist. I couldn't stand orders without reasoning. Everything  
4 was regulated and although there were many resources, there was no reasoning".<sup>68</sup> We can  
5 indicate that the social events of the time were relevant factors in the social change that was  
6 taking place.  
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13 The institution obviously tried to show resistance in this regard, as seen in the  
14 organisational model. Thus, these *Advanced Vocational Training Centres* comprised a series of  
15 educational institutions covering a variety of courses, with at least one section for vocational  
16 training, technical training and social skills, professional improvement aimed at adult female  
17 workers, and education common for all students —called Human Training— based on the  
18 ideological principles of the National Movement; this training would acquire special  
19 prominence. While promoting school activities, an intense, three-fold cultural, social and  
20 religious complementary activity was also fostered.<sup>69</sup>  
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32 Studies offered by Women's Labour Universities were related to industry and services,  
33 reflecting economic and social modernisation in the country and moving away from traditional  
34 sectors such as agriculture and crafts. Industrial Vocational Training was the educational and  
35 professional option most demanded by female students. Regulated in the Industrial Vocational  
36 Training Act, it was defined as the branch of education designed to prepare female workers for  
37 different industrial activities.<sup>70</sup> These studies were therefore intended for those who had no  
38 qualifications, or qualifications other than those sought, and wanted to receive theoretical and  
39 practical learning of a profession that would enable them to perform a job. The aim was for  
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54 <sup>68</sup> Interview with CDM a former student at the Labour University of Zaragoza, November 15, 2022.

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56 <sup>69</sup> Ministry of Labour, *Universidades Laborales* (Madrid: Labour Ministry Publications Service, 1967).

57  
58 <sup>70</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1955) Industrial Vocational Training Act  
59 of 20 July. BOE, 21 July.  
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3 them to acquire the necessary tools to perform an industrial speciality in the workplace, while  
4  
5 also promoting their professional orientation and ideological training. In short:  
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7

8 (... ) giving Spanish girls their training, the training they need, that the new society is entitled to expect  
9  
10 and this, not because they are prepared for a type of profession that is especially female in soul and matrix,  
11  
12 which is already a lot, but because by training them for any type of profession they are imbued with a  
13  
14 temperature, a climate, which is essentially theirs, in other words, of women.<sup>71</sup>  
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### 17 18 19 **Women's Labour Universities: Zaragoza, Cáceres and Huesca**

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21 As indicated, only three Labour Universities for women were created: Zaragoza, Cáceres and  
22  
23 Huesca. During the time they operated, student numbers gradually rose from 1,881 during the  
24  
25 1967-1968 academic year to 5,422 in 1977-1978 (see Table 1).  
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29  
30 Zaragoza was the most relevant; it had the most students during all academic years from  
31  
32 the first year until Labour Universities were closed in the late 1970s (see Table 1) and was the  
33  
34 only centre always for women. The Labour University of Cáceres was initially only for men  
35  
36 and did not accept women until 1968. The case of the Labour University of Huesca is even  
37  
38 more interesting as it was the first co-ed centre of this type.<sup>72</sup>  
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#### 41 ***“Virgen del Pilar” Labour University, Zaragoza***

42  
43 “Virgen del Pilar” Labour University in Zaragoza was the first all-female centre thanks to the  
44  
45 City Council granting land in the Malpica industrial estate to construct the first building, 11  
46  
47 kilometres from the city. Construction work began on 7 March 1967 and was completed in the  
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<sup>71</sup> Magazine *UNI* 3 (1968): 7.

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57 <sup>72</sup> On 8 March 1964, it was announced by the Minister of Labour at the Olimpio theatre in Huesca and  
58  
59 a public tender was called for its construction in a Resolution dated 10 August 1965. Magazine  
60  
*UNI* 1 (1968): 4.

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3 short time of six months, the same time required in Alcalá de Henares.<sup>73</sup> That year only one in  
4  
5 four workers were women; four years earlier there had been an initial, timid and superficial  
6  
7 attempt at non-discrimination between sexes in the minimum wage.<sup>74</sup>  
8  
9

10  
11 Like men's centres, it stood out for its superb building typical of "national architecture",  
12  
13 although its architectural lines were more modern and functional, following the new political  
14  
15 context in the country. Inaugurated on 15 November 1967, it was the first experimental centre  
16  
17 for the social and cultural promotion of women. *Veleta* magazine mentioned the role of "the  
18  
19 new Spanish women":  
20  
21

22  
23 A campus on which part of "the new Spanish women" are forged, who mature in a serious job, in  
24  
25 responsible freedom, in cheerful dignity, in the formidable spirit breathed at the Labour University of  
26  
27 Zaragoza, where the style of this new woman is admired who, at the gates of adolescence, is called to  
28  
29 national life.<sup>75</sup>  
30  
31

32  
33 Studies included Industrial Learning, in the fields of: "draughtswomen; food industries;  
34  
35 wood; leather; chemical industries and agriculture derivatives; food and catering; paper  
36  
37 manipulation, electricity and electronics; trade; dressmaking; hairdressing and cosmetics",<sup>76</sup>  
38  
39 the latter were particularly well-viewed as: "in addition to professional knowledge, students  
40  
41 also acquire the rules of good taste and sense of fashion".<sup>77</sup> This was a development in  
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46  
47 <sup>73</sup> In 1968, architect Ambrós received the *Ricardo Magdalena Award for Public Buildings* for his  
48  
49 management of the Women's Labour University of Zaragoza, which became one of the protected  
50  
51 buildings in the capital of the region of Aragón.

52  
53 <sup>74</sup> Carlos Tundidor, "Inauguración de la Universidad Laboral de Zaragoza", Magazine *UNI 0* (1968):  
54  
55 14—15.

56  
57 <sup>75</sup> Magazine *Veleta* 2 (1967): 8.

58  
59 <sup>76</sup> Provincial Branch of the Women's Section, Box 60, signature 259, Documents and Archives of  
60  
61 Aragón. Provincial Historic Archive of Zaragoza, Zaragoza.

<sup>77</sup> *NO-DO*, no. 1519B, 14 February 1972.

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2  
3 vocational training for women as women's training needs in the industrial sector were the  
4  
5 starting point for the first time.<sup>78</sup>  
6  
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8  
9 At a more academic level, there is evidence of a wide range of studies until then  
10  
11 unrelated to women, mainly in industry, with the role of the labourer or intermediate technician.  
12  
13 Elementary Baccalaureate, Higher General Baccalaureate and Higher Technical Baccalaureate,  
14  
15 for administration, secretarial studies and tourism. Vocational Training in Chemistry and  
16  
17 Industrial Technical Engineering. During the final phase, studies were limited to first and  
18  
19 second grade Vocational Training, High School Studies (BUP), University Orientation Course  
20  
21 (COU), Social Work, Teaching, Technical Dressmaking and Workshop Engineering, and  
22  
23 Healthcare Assistant.<sup>79</sup>  
24  
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### 29 ***“Hispanoamericana” Labour University, Cáceres***

30  
31 In August 1957, the Provincial Council of Cáceres agreed to purchase five properties with a  
32  
33 total area of 360 hectares located three kilometres from the city.<sup>80</sup> One year later, in January  
34  
35 1958, a Council meeting approved the transfer of this land to the National Institute of Welfare.  
36  
37 They were ceded to the Labour University in March 1967. Inaugurated in November 1967, the  
38  
39 same month and year as Huesca, by Minister of Labour Jesús Romero Gorriá, accompanied by  
40  
41 Provincial Governor Federico Trillo-Figueroa, Bishop Llopis and Mayor Díaz de Bustamante,  
42  
43 it was defined as “the launch of a university complex which, undoubtedly, will open the lines  
44  
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53 <sup>78</sup> Sara Ramos Zamora, “Tradición y modernidad. Espacios de poder de las mujeres”, *Innovación*  
54 *Educativa* 26 (2016): 101—112.  
55

56 <sup>79</sup> Magazine *UNI* 45 (1978): 26.  
57

58 <sup>80</sup> Called “Cuartillo”, “Valhondos”, “Suerte de Santa María”, “Dehesín” and “Terrenos de Campante”.  
59 From “Memoria del Proyecto”, *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* 31 (1961): 19.  
60

1  
2  
3 of the new times and will anticipate the seasoning of the new harvest”.<sup>81</sup> Although it was  
4 initially, as indicated previously, exclusively for male students for the specialisations of rural  
5 mechanisation and livestock farming, it changed to a female complex in 1968, joining its  
6 namesake in Zaragoza. That year it had 600 female boarding students, almost doubling its  
7 numbers in the 1970s with 1,121 students from all over the country. The magazine *Norba*  
8 defined the project of its centre as an excellent opportunity for the daughters of the workers by  
9 incorporating the “female human factor” in the city of Cáceres.<sup>82</sup>

20 Transforming the centre from male to female just one year after its inauguration entailed  
21 a series of economic and personal problems, reflecting the null or scarce attention to prospective  
22 studies paid by the central services Labour Universities. Reverting the centre also meant  
23 withdrawing the initial educational offer —Industrial Learning, Industrial Technical  
24 Engineering and Higher Technical Baccalaureate— for vocational training and BUP.<sup>83</sup> In  
25 addition to cultural extension activities of the Worker Professional Promotion Programmes in  
26 the different sectors of agriculture, industry and services, reinforcing the social nature of the  
27 centre with a religious, humanistic and patriotic base.<sup>84</sup> Teaching that was unthinkable at that  
28 time, as a former student recalled:

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44  
45 <sup>81</sup> The first chancellor was José Luis del Valle Fernández (1967-1973), who was replaced by María  
46 Antonia Rodríguez Castelo (1973-76). Finally, the chancellor’s office was led by Andrés Sánchez  
47 Pascual until the Labour University was dissolved.

49 <sup>82</sup> Magazine *Norba* (1969): 9.

51 <sup>83</sup> Ricardo Zafrilla points out that this change in studies was not welcomed by the people of Cáceres as  
52 they considered the new educational offer to be of a lower level. Ricardo Zafrilla, “Universidades  
53 Laborales. Un proyecto educativo falangista para el mundo obrero (1955-1978): aproximación  
54 histórica” (Doctoral thesis, University of Castile-La Mancha, 1998).

58 <sup>84</sup> José Antonio Sánchez, *Boletín Forja del Mutualismo Laboral* (Cáceres: Provincial Delegation of  
59 Mutual Funds and Montepíos, 1966).

I would never have been able to have such a wide range of possibilities had it not been for the Labour University scholarship; I do not care that they still consider us to be the “children of Girón”. (...); students of Vocational Training, of Labour Universities, were always better considered in the business world, they ended up with an awaited contract. All political regimes have at least one good thing, for me it was the chance to train at the Labour University.<sup>85</sup>

### ***Labour University of Huesca***

Minister of Labour Jesús Romeo Gorriá inaugurated the “Quinto Sertorio” Labour University of Huesca on 14 November 1967. Teaching began during the 1967-68 academic year with 500 students, reaching 1,059 in 1970-71. The new educational complex was four kilometres from the city of Huesca, on the road to Zaragoza, built on a 40-hectare trapezoidal plot named “Saso de la Alberca” ceded free of charge by the Provincial Council of Huesca. Its buildings were distributed in a line over 30,000 square metres; they were characterised for their low height, except for the residential area, and linear layout reminiscent of the university campus concept.<sup>86</sup> In terms of architecture, the most relevant feature of the new institution was its pyramid. Rising 25 metres above ground and designed to house the 1,000-capacity assembly hall, it represented religious symbolism by referring to the Herrerian architecture supported by the Franco regime.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Manuel-Vaz Romero “La Universidad Laboral de Cáceres. Encuentro de antiguas alumnas”, *Alcántara* 65 (2006): 89.

<sup>86</sup> José Antonio Alfaro, “Megaestructuras modernas: La Universidad Laboral de Huesca” *II Congreso Pioneros de la Arquitectura Moderna Española: Aprender de una obra* (2015): 19.

<sup>87</sup> Jacinto Contreras, “Reseña histórica de la Universidad Laboral de Huesca en el 40 aniversario de su creación”, Documentos Jaén, <https://docplayer.es/storage/37/17642694/1653498415/jKCzNChGRU7fJS6k2f-xyA/17642694.pdf> (accessed on 18 March 2022).

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2  
3 As for teaching, the Labour University of Huesca was known as a polytechnic centre by  
4 covering a wide range of teachings related to chemistry and technical engineering: Industrial  
5 Vocational Training, specialising in Chemical, Laboratory and Industry Industrial Training, and  
6 Industrial Technical Engineering specialising in chemical process control and industrial  
7 facilities. As well as BUP and COU. A former student of this Labour University recalls the  
8 shock of arriving there: “It was a shock. I came from a small school. And here the way of  
9 teaching, the classmates... The education was very demanding. It was very hard for me”.<sup>88</sup>  
10 During the 1971-72 academic year, the Labour University of Huesca became the first co-ed  
11 institution as it had mixed boarders with 40 female students enrolling in the first year of  
12 Technical Engineering.  
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27 At that time, the approval of the General Education and Financing of the Educational  
28 Reform Act of August 1970 abolished the until then autonomous operation of Women’s Labour  
29 Universities, integrating them into the general academic system. Two years later, on 2 July  
30 1972, they were recognised as non-state teaching centres called Labour University Centres.<sup>89</sup>  
31 Finally, in 1978, coinciding with the political transition, the extinction of their legal status was  
32 approved and the Labour University Centres become solely dependent on the Ministry of  
33 Education and Science through an autonomous body called the National Institute of Integrated  
34 Teaching.<sup>90</sup> They therefore lost their idiosyncrasy as non-state public institutions with their own  
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48 <sup>88</sup> Interview with RDC a former student at the Labour University of Huesca, December 15, 2022.

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50 <sup>89</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State Gazette] (1972) Decree 2061/1972 of 21 July,  
51 integrating Labour Universities in the academic system of the General Education Act. BOE, 31  
52 July.

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54  
55 <sup>90</sup> The Subdirectorate-General for Integrated Teaching Centres was created, dependent on the  
56 Directorate-General for Intermediate Teaching. *Boletín Oficial del Estado* [Spanish Official State  
57 Gazette] (1979) Decree 2049/1979 of 14 August, on the organisation and functions of the National  
58 Institute of Integrated Teaching. BOE, 28 August.  
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3 legal personality, as well as the social promotion powers that made them different from the  
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5 regime's other teaching centres.  
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## 8 9 **Conclusions**

10  
11 There is a historiographical gap regarding the study of Women's Labour Universities created  
12 during the period of Developmentalism. New economic circumstances brought greater demand  
13 for women in different industrial fields, facilitating their emancipation. This new model for  
14 women undoubtedly contradicted the mainly model defended during the first two phases of the  
15 Franco regime. During this final period of dictatorship, economic and market policy agents  
16 prevailed over the interventionism and government control over society so characteristic of the  
17 previous phases. The economic modernisation process developed alongside social, political and  
18 cultural processes that aimed for the country to progressively open to the outside world.  
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31 All this warned of the need to extend the training model promoted by Labour Mutualism  
32 (i.e., Labour Universities) to women. These institutions created new possibilities for women  
33 from working class families as they were trained not only in professions traditionally associated  
34 with women —hairdressing, beauty and dressmaking—, but others that were previously  
35 unthinkable for them, such as draughtswomen, chemists or laboratory assistants. Economic and  
36 social demands served as a lever to push towards the modernisation of intermediate and higher  
37 studies for the daughters of the working class. This entailed increasing industrial vocational  
38 training available and creating the first Women's Labour Universities controlled by the  
39 Women's Section.  
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53 The unique training structure of these institutions, geared towards the modernisation of  
54 vocational education for women, offered public education services as well as human, technical  
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3 and social resources that were unthinkable at the time, and even less so for women. Without a  
4  
5 doubt, all this encourages women to take on new roles as they were no longer chained to the  
6  
7 home. The training received not only increased their cultural level but qualified them for  
8  
9 different jobs, giving them the possibility of financial freedom and independence from men  
10  
11 (whether their fathers, brothers or husbands) unknown to most.  
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16 Were these models compatible with the daughter, wife and mother on one hand, and the  
17  
18 educated, working woman on the other? Despite efforts by the Women's Section to combine  
19  
20 both, the fatigue of not only the first aspect of women but also the Women's Section itself as  
21  
22 an institution supporting it meant that, in times of neo-capitalism and industrialisation, but also  
23  
24 of materialism and consumerism, where Spain was modernising with a Western slant —leaving  
25  
26 behind stale traditional values— the model of a modern woman economically emancipated  
27  
28 thanks to her work, gradually prevailed.  
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32  
33 Society changed and so did women. Despite the regime's attempts at indoctrination,  
34  
35 Women's Labour Universities were another brick used to build a new model of woman, who  
36  
37 saw herself as independent, active and educated; a citizen equal to men who progressively  
38  
39 overcame the weight of the roles imposed and demanded new roles, in both the public and  
40  
41 private spheres, in a society that could already glimpse the end of the regime.  
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Table 1. Distribution of students at Women's Labour Universities.

|          | 67/68 | 68/69 | 69/70 | 70/71 | 71/72 | 72/73 | 73/74 | 74/75 | 75/76 | 76/77 | 77/78 |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Zaragoza | 934   | 975   | 1244  | 1618  | 1786  | 1995  | 2244  | 2458  | 2274  | 2374  | 2350  |
| Cáceres  | 447   | 852   | 945   | 1150  | 1399  | 1600  | 1533  | 1624  | 1820  | 1852  | 1837  |
| Huesca   | 500   | 965   | 972   | 1059  | 1116  | 1091  | 1114  | 1111  | 1326  | 1392  | 1235  |

Source: Magazine *UNI*, 1978, 15- 15. Prepared by authors

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Table 2. Distance, plot area and estimated population of Women's Labour Universities.

| Women's Labour University | Distance between plot and city (km) | Plot area (ha) | School places | Boarding (beds) | Half-board and external (places) |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Zaragoza (1964-1970)      | 11                                  | 20             | 2300          | 2000            | 300                              |
| Cáceres (1964-1967)       | 3                                   | 360            | 1640          | 1640            | 0                                |
| Huesca (1964-1967)        | 4                                   | 44             | 1500          | 1000            | 500                              |

Source: Prepared by authors

For Peer Review Only