

## Linking repression and exile: a geography of the Spanish Republican Diaspora, 1939-1975

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### Abstract:

This paper's assumption is that the human geography of Republican exiles is directly encircled by a repression that spread its tentacles beyond the confines of Spain. It unravels a peculiar geography whose scope can be found in the files of the 'Tribunal against Masonry and Communism,' the 'Tribunal of Political Responsibilities,' and the 'Archive of the Administration' among others. The importance of documenting the scams and subterfuges employed to outlaw the exiles is highlighted. The essential task to further understand the nature of Franco's repression, its reach in time and space, and the silence that followed during the so-called transition to democracy after 1976, is also emphasized. For many years the topics of repression and exile were considered too controversial politically and socially to be part of the public discourse; unfortunately so were their consequences.

The Diaspora is contextualized by a review of the latest available sources on facts and figures on the refugees. I make the case for interlocking this paper's main themes (exile, persecution, and repression), through the inclusion of a telling example drawn from archival material to show why it is important not only to *quantify* the terror but also to *qualify* it in the sense of

assessing its long term social and political consequences. Forced self-censorship, state censorship, coercion, the segregation of the defeated, discrimination based on gender and culture, lack of religious freedom and, for sure, the prohibition to choose political representatives, are part and parcel of the repression.

It is my hope that this paper will contribute even in a small measure to underline the unavoidable links between exile, repression and oblivion; as well as the catastrophe of a human geography stretched to its limits by a senseless persecution that continues to affect Spain's body politic to date.

Undoubtedly the volume of studies on the Spanish Civil War and Franco's regime is staggering. The English output begun with George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* has continued to date and has been followed by works in Spanish, Catalan and other languages.<sup>1</sup> However, the body of research thins out considerably when attention centers on the post-war repression (1939 to 1975)<sup>2</sup> and it becomes even scarcer on the matter of Republican exiles. Only in recent times has an investigative upsurge taken place to recover the memory of exile and chart the dispersal of the Diaspora. In tandem with these academic efforts, several civil associations in Spain, France, Mexico and elsewhere are retrieving personal histories and documenting collective experiences to disclose facts and events obscured and dismissed by the dictatorship after 1939.<sup>3</sup> Thus is coming to the fore an expansion of knowledge about the refugees' lives and times ignored and neglected throughout decades.<sup>4</sup>

This paper's broader aim is to establish the links between repression and exile. I wish to demonstrate that the human geography of exile is directly encircled by a repression that spread its tentacles beyond the confines of Spain. From the beginning of the war the theme of repression was political-

<sup>1</sup> Some classical and recent works on the war are Hugh Thomas' *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Modern Library, 2001); Patricia Knight's *The Spanish Civil War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Gabriele Ranzato's *The Spanish Civil War* (Gloucestershire: Windrush Press, 1999); Stanley G. Payne's *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union and Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2004) and Antony Beevor's *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Orbis Publisher, 1982), this latter having just been published by Editorial Critica in Spanish almost 14 years after the English version. For an introduction to the Franco regime, see Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, 2nd ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981); and Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Far more than its acts of political repression, the most analyzed aspects of Franco's regime are domestic bureaucracy, international relations, industrialization and economic performance.

<sup>3</sup> These associations are numerous and I mention only the ones that have been in place for a longer time. Red de Estudios y Difusion del Exilio Republicano de 1939 (REDER) created in the year 2000; the Grupo de Estudios del Exilio Literario de 1939 (GEXEL); the Amical de Mauthausen, the Fondation pour la Memoire de la Deportation; the Foro por la Memoria; the Archivo Guerra Civil y Exilio (AGE); the No Jubilem la Memòria; the Asociación de Descendientes del Exilio Español; the Associació per a la Recuperació de la Memòria Històrica de Catalunya.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that throughout the decades of exile, most people referred to themselves as "los refugiados"; the term exile and exiles having been given to them much later by writers and historians.

ly manipulated by Francoists attributing to the Republican side all the excesses, while ignoring their own (Fontana 2000:16). It was a useful fabrication that would be utilized for the almost forty years of Franco's reign to obscure and negate the posterior use of violence against the defeated. Immediately after the insurgents' victory in 1939, the persecution of refugees living in France began in earnest. Emissaries of the regime monitored and spied their activities and whereabouts. As early as August 1939 the fascist party FET had delegates in Paris to report on the Republican refugees.<sup>5</sup> Following the Nazi invasion many were handed back to the Spanish police by the government of Vichy, a situation that led a majority to seek a safe haven in other countries. Thus after the start of World War II, a big Republican exodus took place that lasted throughout the 1940s.

### Fig 1. Concentration Camps after 1939, and the border passes used by the refugees

#### Pluviometria de Gurb i comparació amb altres punts de la comarca

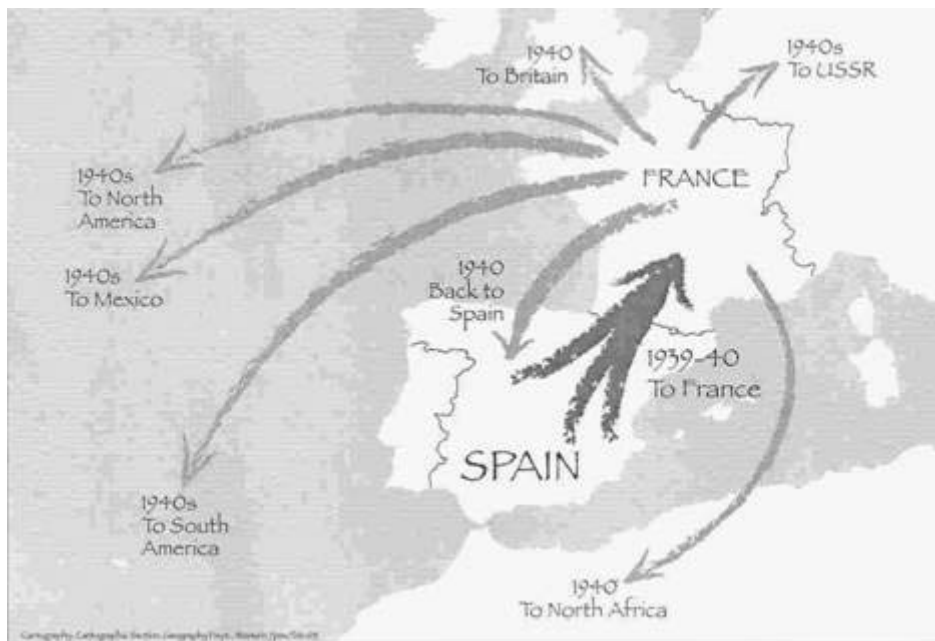
Aquest treball està centrat en la meteorologia, vaig escollir aquest tema ja que en el d'escollir es parlava molt de que l'any 2005 seria un any de sequera, fins i tot en alguns Catalunya es van patir restriccions, ja que el nivell del pantans havia baixat molt. Aque tema de notícia cada dia, així que vaig pensar que aquest podia ser un tema interessant, a més també era un tema bastant proper a mi, ja que disposava de pluviomètriques de diversos anys, degut a que el meu avi havia recollit dades meteorològiques de 1961 en el municipi de Gurb.

Els objectius del treball són:

- analitzar la pluviometria de Gurb al llarg dels darrers 45 anys
- comparar la pluviometria de diferents punts de la comarca d'Osona
- analitzar si les precipitacions al llarg del temps segueixen cap tendència
- comprovar si l'any 2005 ha set tan sec com es preveia

El treball s'ha elaborat a través de la recopilació de dades pluviomètriques de diferents punts de la comarca, concretament s'ha tingut accés a dades d'onze observatoris dels municipis ci avall. Després d'obtenir aquestes dades s'han calculat les mitjanes anuals, mensuals, per i estacionals en el cas de Gurb ja que es disposava de la precipitació de cada dia de l'any dels 45 anys; a partir d'aquestes dades s'han elaborat els gràfics per tal de poguer-ne extreure conclusions.

<sup>5</sup> AGA, Presidencia, Section 9, Box 5. Correspondence between the Paris delegate Aurelio Pérez Rumbao, and FET offices in Spain. The delegates included as well Eduardo Aunós, Pedro Abadal, Federico Vellilla, Fidel Lapetra, and Pedro María Irisarri.

**Fig 2. Spanish Republican exodus 1939-1940s**

Nearly everyone of the older generation never went back to Spain and died in exile. Come what may, the repressive apparatus remained in place within Spain whilst the refugees continued to be monitored abroad. More than a few cases corroborate unremitting persecutions carried on at least till the 1960s. People then in their old age would be officially indicted and prosecuted even if they had been out of Spain for decades. This peculiar geography, whose scope can be found in the files of the ‘Tribunal contra la Masonería y el Comunismo,’ the ‘Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas,’ the ‘Archivo General de la Administración,’ and other centers just recently opened for consultation in Salamanca, Ávila, Barcelona, Madrid, has not been systematically examined so far.<sup>6</sup>

Evidently Franco and his ministers knew the exiles’ whereabouts, who were they and how and when had they fled. Money and resources of a state near bankruptcy after the ravages of war were employed to follow up the lives of people established in other countries and beyond their reach. In the meantime the Spanish media was instructed to depict the vanquished as rabble and trash, to ignore the exiles’ destitution, and to dismiss the accomplishments of those Republicans that the world community regarded as exceptional for their

<sup>6</sup> Archivo de la Guerra Civil, Salamanca; Archivo General de la Administración, Alcalá de Henares (AGA); Arxiu General del ‘Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas’ del Tribunal Superior de Justícia de Catalunya (ATRP); Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat. However, as Josep Fontana (2000:44) decried in his introduction to *España bajo el franquismo*, the files of the Civil Guard and the ‘Cuartel General’ (the military) are inaccessible.

contribution to scientific discovery, literature and the arts.<sup>7</sup> Likewise reports on post-war victims were simply not published.<sup>8</sup> By omitting and negating the killing and imprisonment of thousands, the press concocted a story of sorts to justify both the exile and the repression. How did the press under the dictatorship explain the exodus and events of the Republican Diaspora? What image of the exiles was given to those who remained in Spain? What kind of information was presented to the public? These questions have yet to be answered, but I wish here to begin an attempt to understand the links between exile, repression and the media.

That the exile would have come to an end and the refugees allowed to come back had the dictatorship evolved into a democratic government in its early years is a moot point. Most people had a deep longing for their former homes and lives but were afraid of the regime's ferocity; for they knew that going back to Spain meant either death or imprisonment. However, many believed they had no crimes to be punished for and were not sure what the punishment was about, adding to the separation anxiety of their loss the uncertainty of their fate. Hence the importance of finding and documenting the scams and subterfuges employed to outlaw the exiles by a regime that simultaneously persecuted, demonized and ignored them. The search for evidence has become an essential task to further understand the nature of Franco's repression, its reach in time and space, and the silence that followed during the so-called transition to democracy after 1976. For many years the topics of repression and exile were considered too controversial politically and socially to be part of the public discourse; unfortunately so were their consequences.<sup>9</sup>

I have made an informed judgment by inferential use of scattered evidence in newspapers, documents, biographies and published sources, and have compensated for the lack of precision by examining a relatively large sample of periodicals encompassing the period from 1939 to 1975, as well as a number of declassified documents in Spanish archives.<sup>10</sup> Newspapers reflect the multiple and conflicting messages about national policies and directions with which competing groups of elites have attempted to forge

<sup>7</sup> Picasso, Pau Casals, and Luis Buñuel, are some of the exiled public figures internationally renowned that were berated or ignored by the regime.

<sup>8</sup> At present these atrocities are beginning to be documented by archaeologists digging the remains of the executed in several sites in Spain. See for example, "Han sido localizados los primeros restos de una fosa de un grupo de fusilados –entre 10 y 12 civiles– en el termino municipal de El Bruc (Anoia)" in *La Vanguardia*, Nov 17, 2003, p. 31; and "La Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, sin apenas ayuda oficial, ha realizado 536 exhumaciones en tres años" in *El País*, Oct 12, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> It is not uncommon for countries that have achieved democracy to be late in their recognition of arbitrary and repressive acts towards some of its citizens. A case in point is the recent recognition and reparation in Canada of terrible wrongs done to its aboriginal children, early immigrants from China, Canadians of Ukrainian descent during the First World War, and the internment of Italian, German and Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, among others. "Other groups still battling for reparation" in *The Globe & Mail*, August 26, 2005, p. A8

<sup>10</sup> This research forms the bulk of my forthcoming analysis of the Spanish media and Republican exiles. I contrast and compare the 1939-1975 period to contemporary media representation of exiles utilizing *La Vanguardia Española* and *La Vanguardia* as a principal source.

popular support for their respective political projects. That in Franco's Spain the press was monitored and censored is common knowledge. Nonetheless, newspapers reflect and convey the climate of the period and thus embody the dictator's image of exile.

To contextualize the Diaspora's preliminary geography, and underline the most prominent features of the repression, I have relied on books and articles with the latest available sources on facts and figures on the refugees. I make the case for interlocking this paper's main themes (exile, persecution, and repression), through the inclusion of a telling example drawn from archival material. My analysis of newspaper articles –mainly from *La Vanguardia Española* from 1939 to 1975— complements the above. Newspaper articles convey more than facts about events; through value judgments, selection and omission of topics, emphasis, imagery, and format they suggest notions about the relationship between the regime and its foes in the past and the present, and determine how an event is put together in a meaningful manner to suit particular intentions.

### Marking inquiries on repression

Research on post-Civil War repression had to wait decades before it could be systematically undertaken by scholars and journalists alike. The most evident obstacle was the lack of access to archival documents. However, as Richards (1996:236) makes clear, many of the accounts have amounted to only the partial recounting of a series of specific violent episodes and memoirs.<sup>11</sup> Although these episodes focusing on specific groups and aspects of the repression are commendable and indispensable, lacking for the most part have been the attempts to explain the origins of this violence, its usefulness to the regime, its consequences in terms of social development, and its reach in time and space. Yet to be uncovered in its totality is the nature of a “program of terror with definable social and political objectives” (Richards 1996:239) whose harm is still being felt today at personal and institutional levels; and although English authors have included aspects of the repression as coda to their studies of the Civil War, the sole wide-ranging studies so far in English are those of Michael Richards (1998 and 1996), and Paul Preston (1990).

In Spain, most analyses are of recent vintage. One of the earliest is Cisqueña, Erviti and Sorolla's study first published 1977 and rounded out in 2002. It is a comprehensive analysis of the Press Law established in 1966 by

<sup>11</sup> See some recent examples: Josep Recasens Llord, *La repressio franquista a la Conca de Barbera (1939-1945)*. Montblanc, 2000; Emilio Silva & Santiago Macías, *Las fosas de Franco*. Temas de Hoy, 2003; Josep González-Agápito & Salomó Marquès Sureda, *La repressio del profesorat a Catalunya sota el franquisme (1939-1943)*, Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1996; Mirta Núñez Díaz-Balart & Antonio Rojas Friend, *Consejo de guerra: los fusilamientos en el Madrid de la posguerra (1939-1945)*, Madrid: Literaria, 1997.

Manuel Fraga Iribarne that under the guise of a benign and modified law permitted unfettered censorship and outright cultural repression. Under the title "The Repression" (1998), a collection put together by the editors of the *Biblioteca de la Guerra Civil*, consists of eleven chapters that give the impression that the repression only took place from 1936 to 1939, for the killings and executions of the post-war period are lumped together with the war's casualties. One single chapter deals with the incarceration and execution in Valencia of a group of visual artists by the Franco regime. *España bajo el franquismo*, (2000) first published in 1986, is an effort to analyze the regime's politics, economy and ideology; the more directly engaged essay on repression by Ferrer Benimeli describes the regime's hatred of Masons. On the other hand, a rather complete analysis of the dictatorship's violence has been edited by Julian Casanova under the title *Morir, Matar, Sobrevivir* (2002). As well, Santos Juliá's (1999) seminal collection on the victims of the civil war includes sections by Solé i Sabaté and Villarroya on the years of the war, and a whole section by Francisco Moreno is assigned to post-war terror organized into its physical, economic, and ideological characteristics. Finally, the work of Carles Santacana (2000) verifies the regime's hostile actions against Catalan culture through documents suppressed hitherto of the "Consejo Nacional del Movimiento." Other works in Spanish include references and sections on the repression, but just as an issue among others. The terror unleashed against defeated Republicans and exiles is not treated as an outstanding theme worth a thorough examination.<sup>12</sup>

As many of the authors cited recognize, the words 'forgiveness' and 'amnesty' were unknown to Franco's Spain. His rule of almost forty years allowed him to shape and control the formation of collective memory and the writing of history much more efficiently than in post-war Germany or Italy. Indeed, the history of the 1930s or the little that was permitted publication in Spain was written by policemen, soldiers, state functionaries and priests (Richards 1996:198; Preston 1990). Very little of this repressed, hidden or distorted memory has been recovered in the new democratic Spain, for the Francoist political class would be compensated by an obligatory exercise in collective amnesia (Richards, 1996:201). Moreover, the lack of official support to investigate the repression has been denounced by Alberto Reig Tapia in recent times (cited in Núñez Díaz-Balart & Rojas Friend, 1997:25-26).

*Quantifying the terror.* For the next five or six years after Franco's declaration of the end of the war in April 1939, thousands of executions took place in Spain. The regime, however, continued to kill political prisoners until the 1970s. Richards (1996) cites the works of Josep M. Solé i Sabaté to confirm the enormous number of records that have been purposely destroyed

<sup>12</sup> For example Enrique Moradiellos (2000) *La España de Franco*. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, has a section on francoist repression; and Julio Valdeón, Joseph Perez and Santos Juliá (2003) *Historia de España*, Madrid: Austral, also discuss some aspects of the repression.

to obscure the repression's magnitude. As early as 1965, Jackson (1965) calculated close to two hundred thousand men and women killed by the Nationalist repression. Authors Núñez Díaz-Balart and Rojas Friend have situated the number of executions around 150,000 (1997:26). Conversely, Payne (2004:337) makes the case for 30,000, the figure cited by Salas Larrázabal, whom he quotes approvingly along other supporters of Franco's regime such as Comín Colomer and de la Cierva. On the other hand, Richards (1998:30) asserts that the precise number of those killed by the dictatorship might be much bigger since many executions often were not recorded, and explains that in Galicia, as in other regions, an explicit order was given that no death certificates be issued even to those family members brave enough to identify the body of the summarily executed. It is common knowledge that when certificates were issued the cause of death for many of the executed was listed as "heart attack," "accident," "natural death," and the like.<sup>13</sup> Given the severe limitations of available sources the magnitude of the killing will never be known with precision. The argument over 'exact' quantification, however, should not distract from the executions' enormous magnitude.<sup>14</sup>

*Qualifying the terror.* One last objective of the Republican government had been to sign a peace deal with the rebel forces to forestall revengeful actions against the defeated. However, the unconditional surrender to General Franco on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1939, unleashed a frenzy that encompassed more than outright physical extermination: many lives were affected in other ways. Besides the number of studies documenting summary executions mentioned above, all of those who spent years in jail,<sup>15</sup> in concentration camps, and in disciplinary battalions employed as slave labor to build public works such as roads and monument, saw their lives devalued and those of their relatives forever affected.<sup>16</sup>

About one million men and women were incarcerated and lost property, jobs and the possibility of making a living after their sentence was over (Núñez Díaz-Balart & Rojas Friend 1997:16). Forced self-censorship, state censorship, coercion, the segregation of the 'defeated,' discrimination based on gender and culture, lack of religious freedom and, for sure, the prohibition to choose political representatives, are also part and parcel of the repression. An ex-fascist intellectual cited in Richards (1998:31) Dionisio

<sup>13</sup> One of the foremost examples is the death certificate of Catalonia's President Lluís Companys, executed at Montjuic in 1940 by fire squad. It defines the cause of death as 'internal hemorrhage'.

<sup>14</sup> According to Preston (1990:41) about 300,000 Spaniards were killed during the hostilities; 440,000 went into exile; 10,000 were to die in Nazi concentration camps (although it seems that not all the internees died) another 400,000 spent time in Franco's prisons, in concentration camps, or labour battalions.

<sup>15</sup> Catalonia's former President Jordi Pujol was awarded \$5000.00 Euros on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2003 as a compensation for his imprisonment of two and a half years in Franco's jails. To this date a total of 9724 compensations have been awarded for a total of 26 million Euros, only in Catalonia, without counting those who already benefited from a similar initiative from the Spanish government between 1990 and 1992, limited to those older than 65 (*La Vanguardia Digital*, January 9, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> The Valley of the Fallen in the outskirts of Madrid was built with prisoners labour.



Ridruejo, described the repression as one with a single central intention: “the physical destruction of the ranks of the parties of the Popular Front, of the unions and of the Masonic organizations.” It was a repressive framework that would be completed by the “Law for the Repression of Masonry and Communism (March 1940) and the total reform of the educational system. Under Franco, education, religion, press, radio, and the censorship of literature were all aimed at the de-politicization of social consciousness (Richards 1998:147).

The manipulation of social consciousness is remarkably illustrated by Carolyn P. Boyd in the last three chapters of *Historia Patria* (1997). Her investigation of the dictatorship uncovers the way in which Spain’s privileged classes were to resist the process of social, political, and cultural modernization unleashed by the proclamation of the Second Republic. It was the threat posed by the republican cultural project that most frightened the right. For that reason, professors and teachers were some of the most persecuted. At the end of the war, 118 university professors, 200 secondary school professors, and 2,000 teachers (maestros) went into exile (Boyd 1997: 245). These figures, however, do not reflect the magnitude of the repression. From those who did not leave, only in Catalonia there were close to 2000 impeached teachers who lost jobs or were relocated in other areas of Spain (González-Agápito & Marquès-Sureda, 1996:55 passim). Accordingly, Francoist history textbooks established a contrast to the “naturalism,” “rationalism,” and “materialism” of the Republic’s progressive pedagogy and, in opposition to its “Judeo-Masonic” internationalism and pacifism, the Catholic right offered ardent patriotism and “social peace.” A multitude of sins were encompassed by the epithet “anti-Spanish”: internationalism, pacifism, contempt for or indifference to the “saints, martyrs, and colonizers” responsible for Spanish greatness, materialism, naturalism, and *extranjerismo* (Boyd 1997:225).

Franco’s task was made easier by the right’s opposition to the liberal democratic and socialist currents that had battled for dominance in Spanish society during the 1930s and by the perception that “the red revolution was forged in the field of education” (Boyd 1997:233). To accomplish the total alteration of the Republican model, the democratic constitution would be rescinded, social reforms and regional autonomy reversed, political parties and syndicalist organizations outlawed, and their leaders neutralized by death, imprisonment, or exile. Even some well intentioned efforts like that of the Falangist intellectual Pedro Lain Entralgo to make room in the national past for the 1939 defeated “other Spain” was rejected by Opus Dei fundamentalists like Rafael Calvo Serer (Boyd 1997:239).

The tone of the repression however would change in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Cold War climate was at its anti-communist height and Spain diplomatic isolation ended. The policy of economic modernization and growth would signal the decline of the National Catholic ideology that tried

to resurrect a nation of imperial warriors and saints in a society battered by hunger, isolation, and bitterness (Boyd 1997:304). The experience of the Franco regime suggests that not only the medium but the message itself was an obstacle to the development of Spanish identity. Boyd (1997) states that Franco's definition of national identity was divisive, rather than communitarian, because it rested on dichotomies (good Spaniards/bad Spaniards), a definition of the nation that justified the victory of one-half of its members over the other half, and that elevated misery and humiliation to the status of national virtues could not hope to set deep roots.

And yet, as Preston (1990:30) indicates, the "politics of revenge" did not die with the end of the regime's autarchy. "Those who were more directly implicated in the regime's networks of corruption and repression, the beneficiaries of the killings and the pillage, were especially susceptible to hints that only Franco stood between them and the revenge of their victims. They were to make up what in the 1970s came to be known as the 'bunker,' the die-hard Francoists who came prepared to fight for the values of the Civil War." The executions of political prisoners commanded by Franco in March 1974 and September 1975 evidently assisted this bunker mentality.

*In closing*, Richards (1998:170) has pointed out that "The memories of those who suffered defeat and repression in the Spanish post-war years are shrouded in darkness and silence." Indeed, for years, even after the dictator's death in 1975, people refused to talk and remember. This is unfortunate because the majority of the defeated have died; those who remained in Spain and those who were exiled cannot make known their ordeals anymore. The first cohort to pass away had been borne in the late 1800s, their children, now in their eighties and nineties are also departing. In Spain their descendants refuse to acknowledge the past, while the exiles' offspring are scattered worldwide and barely remember the old folks' stories of war and defeat. Avoiding the past sadly does nothing to erase it. One in four Spaniards has a relative who was killed in the war; one in ten had a relative forced into exile in 1939; two out of three had a relative who fought in the Civil War (Preston, 1990:40). Learning about the lives and deeds of those who for decades could not express their feelings and tell their own version of events makes the retrieval of historical memory and its interconnected geography a pressing task.

### **Who were the exiles? From intellectuals to ordinary people**

It is estimated that more than five hundred thousand refugees crossed the Pyrenees in an attempt to flee Franco's revenge in the first months of 1939. Many, about seventy thousand, went back to Spain, some extradited by authorities of Vichy France and others voluntarily fleeing concentration camps where food was scarce and conditions appalling. Still another contin-

gent ended up in German concentration camps; most Communists went to the Soviet Union; and a substantial group made up of different political factions at the core of the democratic Republican institutions (liberals, socialists, anarchists, communists) escaped to the Americas, with a sizeable component fleeing to Mexico.<sup>17</sup> The dispersal encompassed many countries and continents. But the quantification of the exodus is difficult to fine tune. The Valiere report, made under the auspices of the French Government on March 9, 1939, calculates 440,000 refugees of which 170,000 were women children and the elderly, 220,000 soldiers and militia, 40,000 in poor health and 10,000 wounded. A year later, 167,000 still remained in France, plus those who had reached places in the Americas and the North of Africa. In total about 200,000 émigrés are considered to be the bulk of the Spanish Republican exile (Exilio, 2002:24). But other accounts vary to some extent (see Pike 1993:1).<sup>18</sup>

Yet in the fiftieth anniversary of the exile in 1989, the socialist government in Spain chose not to commemorate the occasion. In fact, not a single post-Franco government has officially recognized the magnitude of the exile and the fate of the refugees. It was left to a civil association, the Fundación Pablo Iglesias (1989) to issue the proceedings of the conference “1939-1989 de la España en conflicto a la Europa de la paz.” The Republican exile, however, has not been forgotten altogether within Spain. As early as 1975 (with the death of Franco permitting it), an extended collective work directed by José Luis Abellán, dealt with the exile’s history, politics, thought, culture, literature, art and science.<sup>19</sup> Abellán has tackled myriad aspects of the exile under three important categories: number of exiles, geographical dispersion, and chronology. In all of Spain’s history of migrations and exile, the numbers of ousted Republicans are the highest and the Diaspora’s geography astonishing. The exiles dispersed all over European countries from Great Britain to the Soviet Union and all of the Americas, from Argentina to the United States. Fewer also went to the north of Africa and some Asian countries.

It has been customary to associate the 1939 Spanish Diaspora with an impressive array of influential intellectuals. To commemorate the exile’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1999, José María Balcells and José Antonio Pérez Bowie (2003) edited a collection detailing the contributions to the arts, literature, philosophy and science of the Spanish Republicans in exile. More than thir-

<sup>17</sup> About 24,000 refugees arrived in 1939 and 1940, but in later years until 1950 there more arrivals (Pla Brugat et al, 1997:13-49)

<sup>18</sup> Pike mentions 460,000 refugees from whom 70,000 agreed to return at the end of March 1939, after a barrage of heavy propaganda by the victors of the war.

<sup>19</sup> Among the many publications of Abellán, see for example, *El exilio filosófico en América: los transterrados de 1939*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica 1998; *De la Guerra Civil al exilio republicano*. Madrid: Mezquita 1983; (Ed.) *El exilio español de 1939*. Madrid: Taurus 1976; (Ed.) *La emigración republicana*. Madrid: Taurus 1976; Abellán, J.L. et al. 1998 *Los refugiados españoles y la cultura mexicana*. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes; Abellán, J.L. et al. 1990 *La otra cara del exilio: la diáspora del 39*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense

ty authors discuss in this volume the achievements of philosophers, novelists, teachers, medical doctors, visual artists, historians, architects, and last but not least the rich input of exiled poets. The editors and contributors' main motivation is to offset the entrenched and systematic denial and oblivion of the exiles, and the dismissal of their struggle to keep alive the continuity of modern Spanish thought in their host countries, a thought censored and impaired within Spain by the dictatorship.

In his book about Spanish intellectuals exiled in Mexico, Faber (2001) brings about a critical review of the elite that contributed to their host countries in the fields of science, art and literature. His analysis indicates the conflict between the dream of a unified Spain and the exiles' continuous frustration due to internal and external obstacles. The main themes are general reflections on intellectual aspects, the first years abroad and the exiles' political reorientation in reaction to the international recognition of Franco's regime. But the author also recognizes the partial nature of his study, for "the phenomenon of Spanish Civil War exile is so enormous and diverse that it is almost impossible to avoid the trap of generalization, of confusing the whole with what is only a part of the matter" (Faber 2001:xiii). This is a crucial declaration because what sets apart the 1939 exile is precisely the tremendous diversity in political orientations, regional affiliations, professional interests, and personal reactions to exile; not to mention the diversity of underrepresented groups such as women, Catalans, Basques, Galicians and the second and third generations of exiles.

This diversity has been unnoticed by many chroniclers for one reason or another. Especially for the duration of Franco's regime it was customary to present all Republicans as communists to justify political assassinations and repression in the name of anti-communism. In a ghastly mirror image of the Masonic purge (see below "A case of Overseas Persecution") communists were to be incarcerated and killed, whether they were communists or not.<sup>20</sup> Hence communists have remained the most observed and written about of all Republican factions while their numbers and power have most probably been greatly exaggerated. Even the landmark study of David W. Pike (1993) on the Spanish communists in exile begins with ambiguous numbers: "tens of thousands..." although in subsequent pages it is mentioned that only 6,000 entered the Soviet Union and another 2,000 left for the Americas (Pike 1993:17-35).<sup>21</sup> Throughout the book it is impossible to gauge the number of exiled communists for even the records of Spanish prisoners in Nazi concentration camps such as Gusen, Mauthausen, Dachau, etc. do not clarify who were and who were not communists. For sure there might have been

<sup>20</sup> "Franco accused the conservative Basques of being 'Soviet-separatists'" (Bevor 1982:281).

<sup>21</sup> Also indispensable are David W. Pike's *Vae Victis: los republicanos españoles refugiados en Francia (1939-1944)*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1969, and Louis Stern *Beyond Death and Exile: The Spanish Republicans in France 1939-1955*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979

socialists, anarchists and liberal Republicans martyred at the camps as well. In the end Pike (1993:283-84) recognizes that Spanish communists were second to none in their contribution to the antifascist struggle, and that the Republican camp was as deeply divided as were the wartime allies, after the onset of the Cold War. But the reader still misses a hint on the communist percentage of Republican exiles.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise in the most recent account on the role of communist activity in Spain by Stanley G. Payne (2004) percentages are difficult to find. Following a line of thought that proposes Franco's regime as the only alternative to communism, —while democratic rule is brushed aside as utopia— Payne concludes that the Republic had many undemocratic components.<sup>23</sup> Even if that were to be so, there is still no rational validation for the dictatorship forced on Spaniards for almost forty years after the Republic's demise. How can dictatorship of any kind be justified on any grounds? Payne challenges the view that the Civil War was a struggle of fascism against democracy, but how can the triumph of fascism in Spain be explained? On the other hand, the terror unleashed on the defeated, and the exiles' persecutions are not even worth a corollary. But that is no obstacle for the author to affirm that Franco would concede the opportunity "for Republican leaders to flee abroad" (Payne 2004:287), probably in a fit of utter generosity. One can only think of Azaña,<sup>24</sup> Companys and many others captured abroad by Franco's police, killed, imprisoned and persecuted. As Anderson (2003:152) recaps, "Franco worked diligently to keep the conflict alive in the public mind. For those who might question his ... totalitarian state, the corruption and bloody repression, he could remind them that he had saved Spain from the barbarous Red menace and that only he stood in the way of a return to chaos. No public response of the defeated was permitted."

The book of Jordi Guixé Coromines (2002) explores the efforts committed by the regime to control the activities of the exiles from 1943 to 1951, concretely in France. Again, the protagonists are the communists for their political profile was always at the forefront of international relations during the Cold War. Fewer in numbers, they were indeed the soul of anti-Francoist resistance, and the most active contingent against fascism. The author makes his case based on archival research of French and Spanish documents and finds out how the communist guerrilla was the object of French persecution at the end of the Second World War under the command of "Operation Bolero-Paprika" (2002:199 *passim*). He concludes that democratic European

<sup>22</sup> Pike's book merits a more thorough review than the one I can introduce here. For one thing, the amazing amount of numbers and data need to be carefully sorted out.

<sup>23</sup> To make a stronger case for Franco's bonhomie, Payne gives the number of executions during the war as 100,000 for both sides combined (2004:117). It is well known by now that the tally by provinces (only half of them) is 72,527 assassinations on Franco's side which well may be double when it is completed (Juliá, 1999:410 *passim*); also Casanova (2002).

<sup>24</sup> Azaña died in France. But there had been an order for his capture nonetheless.

countries supported Franco's dictatorship in a number of ways, as a result, most certainly, of the impact of the Cold War. The Cold War determined how and why the anti-Francoist resistance was shunned by Europe and the West in general, giving General Franco virtual support to continue his unabated control over Spaniards.

Three recent volumes are dedicated to the Catalan exiles. Joan Villarroya Font (2002) begins with an overview of the exodus, the imprisonment in concentration camps, the Diaspora, Catalan institutions abroad, and finally the return of some exiles to live their last years in Catalonia. The book is comprehensive yet succinct. The names of remarkable men and women can be found in the last sections of the book chronicling their deeds and sadly also their deaths in the host countries. Like all other Spanish exiles, the Catalan exodus encompassed countries in Latin America, Britain and the Soviet Union, and Villarroya conveys in a direct and informed way how they lived, where they went and how they contributed to cultural and scientific advances. An especially poignant case mentioned by Villarroya is Joan Comorera's return to Spain. Thinking that the repression was lessening, he went back to Spain in 1951 only to be captured and condemned to thirty years in prison. He died in the Burgos jail in 1958.

The other two books focus only on those Catalans exiled in Mexico. The first one is authored by Dolores Pla Brugat, Maria Magdalena Ordoñez and Teresa Ferriz Roure (1997). It puts an emphasis on the distinct history, language and tradition of Catalan culture and the degree in which the exiles assimilated to Mexican culture. It devotes, as well, a whole section to demographic data clarifying the number of Spaniards exiled to Mexico of whom 7879 were Catalans (1997:19-22). Most importantly, this slim volume also adds up an annotated bibliography of works of and about Catalans in Mexico, and a list of Catalan periodicals published in Mexico from 1939 to 1975. The second volume (Manent, Soler Vinyes & Murià 2001) also contributes essential data in relation to several generations of Catalan exiles. It lists the first generation born between 1871 and 1885 (see case study below); a most numerous second generation born between 1901 and 1915, and another born between 1916 and 1930 (2001:35-38). What links them is that all were born before the Civil War and had a memory of the Republican years. Yet perhaps the most vulnerable cohort is the one born in 1936-1939 during the war and in 1940 in concentration camps. This last one represents the loss of cultural continuity and the pain of having an undefined identity. Evidently, this is not a biological classification, but rather a sociological one, for each of these cohorts possess different psychological characteristics and cultural approaches to exile that differentiate them (2001:39).

Alicia Alted's (2005) analysis of the exile is set in a wider context. It includes other countries of Europe and America, as well as the years in which a parallel Republican government outside Franco's Spain established a sense of democratic continuity. Alted also makes a link between democracy in con-

temporary Spain and the memory of Republican exile. Other authors such as Antony Beevor (1982:268-78) have briefly commented on the exiles' fate at the outset of their escape noting that the pro-Franco press "insinuated that all Republicans were criminals, dirty and riddled with disease." But the theme of exile and the resistance against Franco's regime, and the last clash in 1960 between the Civil Guard and the guerrilla is just a "postscript" at the end of his study. The refugees are also briefly mentioned by Anderson (2003) giving only their numbers and destinations.

As stated at the outset of this paper, research on the 1939 exile has experienced an increase in recent years.<sup>25</sup> It has taken several decades though to begin to unravel the mystifications put forward by Francoist propaganda about the exiles. A propaganda most certainly fuelled by the press.

### **Franco's Newspapers**

The exiles were seen as one and the same without a trace of difference in Franco's Spain. All of them vanquished enemies associated with godless, totalitarian aims. Neither memory nor empathy about the plight of refugees was to be publicly expressed in the media; nor for that matter regret for the many that perished in the first years of the exodus in French and Nazi concentration camps. They were perceived either as opportunists who fled a poor country in need of reconstruction or criminals escaping the arm of Franco's justice. Every one fell into two categories: masons or communists; or both. For many decades this homogeneous view persisted. In fact, it has taken about sixty years for the Spanish media to begin to untangle such an inaccurate image. In this section I wish to begin to unravel how this image was created in the first place

There was a necessity to convey the memory of the war as a crusade of good versus evil: the victors were impossibly good and virtuous and the defeated the sum of every vice. It was a war "for decades explained as an attempt by the army to thwart a Masonic and communist plot" (Ribeiro de Meneses, 2001, p. xvi). But this simplistic fabrication could only be unleashed by decree in the communication media, for in the world of scholarship the regime's sympathizers could not abide it without some sort of scrutiny. Even a supporter of the scheme of a communist plot (but not the wacky Masonic one that is too embarrassing even to the most loyal Franco backers) recognizes that "Soviet policy proved almost totally counterproductive...[and]...the Soviets did not achieve success in imposing all their policies on the Republican government or in stimulating a Republican victory" (Payne 2004:316-17). In fact, "the Soviet manpower [little more than 3,000 military

<sup>25</sup> This review obviously does not encompass the totality of the literature on exile. The reader is advised to look at the bibliographies of each of the works mentioned to get an inkling of this theme's extent.

personnel] was far exceeded by the approximately 16,000 Germans and 70,000 Italians” that fought on Franco’s side (Payne, 2004:153). Thus the menace of a communist takeover remains unproved although the Spanish public had to endure for decades a campaign instilling fear and promoting hatred for the “reds.”<sup>26</sup> This fabrication was systematically remarked and enforced by several means: through schools and textbooks, the pulpit, the fascist institutions, and the media. Franco’s communication campaign had two aspects to it. One was the direct indictment of Republican exiles as evil communist lackeys. The other was the suppression of news that might challenge this image, best illustrated by the Spanish media’s disregard of the Nobel prizes imparted to Juan Ramon Jiménez and Severo Ochoa, both in exile, neither of them communist.

The method employed by the regime to broadcast the Republicans’ peculiar representation had three apparently contradictory aims: first, the dissemination of a distorted image, second, the suppression of information, and third, a deliberate policy of oblivion and silence. Through this strategy Spaniards were constantly reminded of the Civil War’s horrors and the need to contain dissent in order to forestall another conflict; information about the struggle for democracy during the Second Republic was suppressed and the worth of Republican personalities negated. At the same time, the exiles’ situation in their host countries was disregarded altogether. It was a design that could only be implemented through a tight control of the media. For the duration of the regime all means of communication were subjected to rigid censorship.

The co-optation of the press began when *La Vanguardia*’s original owners recovered the paper seized during the Civil War by the Republican government on January 1939, in the Barcelona invaded by Franco’s troops. The first thing they did was to numerate the issues following those of July 1936, thus discarding two and a half years of events. From 1939 on, the newly called *La Vanguardia Española* became the most successful paper in Spain, printing 200,000 issues by 1965 (Barrera 1995:76). Soon after it was renamed, articles began to appear that reflected the new mentality. The list is long, but a sample reads like this: “Los niños expatriados por los rojos,” [Children expatriated by the reds,] (1939) “Trapisonadas de la horda republicana fugitiva,” [Disgusting acts of the fugitive Republican horde], “La benévola y absurda actitud del gobierno francés,” The absurdly benevolent attitude of the French government, “Los rojos,” [The Reds], “Contra la depredación republicana,” [Against the Republican depredation], “Comunistas españoles confinados en México: Islas Mariás prisión para los comunistas

<sup>26</sup> For a different outlook see Herbert R. Southworth’s *Conspiracy and the Spanish Civil War: the brainwashing of Francisco Franco*. London, New York: Routledge, 2002. This book presents an account on the nature and importance of conspiracy for the extreme right. It also explores how the myth of the Communist secret documents was perpetuated well into the 1970s.



españoles,”[Spanish communists imprisoned in México: Islas Mariás prison for the Spanish communists], “México bajo la peste escarlata,” [México under scarlet fever], “El vandalismo trashumante de los rojos españoles irrumpe en México,” [The vandalism of Spanish reds swamps Mexico], “Las andanzas de los rojos en México,” [The wandering of reds in México], “Pánico entre los elementos rojos refugiados en Francia” [Panic among the red elements refuged in France] (1940). This kind of diatribe went on for the years of the dictatorship but the tone changed in 1979 with an article titled “Veinte mil exiliados,” [Twenty thousand exiles].<sup>27</sup>

Censorship is now a thing of the past. But a particular kind of self-restraint endures in the Spanish media. There is, for example an idiosyncratic censorship that has affected foreign books. Some translations of political fiction have altered the original text to suit Spanish interpretations of events (see Folch-Serra 2002). Others, like George Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia*, are sold nowadays by main publishers such as Ariel, Seix Barral, and Círculo de Lectores with the same expurgated and manipulated translation of 1970 (see *El País*, March 17, 2001, Babelia 1). The old watchwords’ influence on present-day written output affects even academic books where cities are described as “liberated” and “recovered” by Franco’s troops at the ending of the Civil War (see Barrera 1995:34).

*In conclusion*, the regime’s repression became a necessary condition to fabricate the Republican’s image and both image and repression are directly related to each other. They must be studied together in order to understand and deconstruct four decades of press control and media censoring as an instrument for the dissemination of the regime’s ideology and as an implicit part of everyday life in Spain. The following section presents a case of persecution beyond the borders of Spain. Interestingly, most studies document cases occurred during the first five years after the war (see for example Bermejo 1996); this one, however, takes place in the late 1950s and 1960.

### **A case of overseas persecution**

When Dr. Francisco Folch Calbo was indicted by the “Tribunal Especial Para la Represion de la Masoneria y el Comunismo” in 1958 he had already been in exile for twenty years. In 1939, when he was 61 years old, he had been condemned by the “Tribunal de Responsabilidades Políticas,” under the vague accusation of being “red” and declared an “absentee.” The prosecutors were unable to capture him because he left the country on February 1939. In 1945 the case was closed after it was declared that he had no assets. He had owned, however, a country house inherited from his parents in the village of

<sup>27</sup> For a complete list and description of the articles’ content see my forthcoming study on the Spanish Media, mentioned above.

Montblanc with adjacent land, and two smaller properties in the city of Tarragona. He had held a position as medical officer for sanitation in the province of Tarragona, and also had a full medical practice. But nothing of this was mentioned in the indictment.

Dr. Folch left Spain totally impoverished and never went back. From France to Mexico and later to Cuba off he went. The new charge of 1958 is

therefore rather puzzling; it began with an exchange between Tarragona’s security police and the Tribunal’s officers.

The police had disclosed to the Tribunal that in the previous three years Dr. Folch (who is not addressed by his title in the indictment papers) had lived in Havana and they were not sure if had had ever come back to Spain. A series of exchanges followed that first report.



In its entirety the file has 31 pages and is divided in two sections: the so-called “Expediente Personal” and the Tribunal’s proceedings. The exchange between different agencies (e.g. the “Presidencia del Gobierno”) continues throughout 1958 with reports signed by a variety of officers who assert Dr. Folch’s affiliation to the ‘Tarraco’ Masonic Logia. On December 24, the “Ministerio de Gobernacion” confirms that the accused is indeed a Mason and that steps have been taken to locate him, that he lives in Havana, Cuba and he is about 71

years old and a medical doctor. By March 1959 a request is been made to the General Director of Prisons from the “Dirección General de Seguridad” to proceed to his search and capture.



A previous document dating from November 25, 1956, however, states that the investigation had been in place for an unspecified period of time by the Salamanca Director of Documentary Services, and yet in another twist, it is recognized that on December 4, 1946, there was no evidence of Dr. Folch being a Mason. But now, it is affirmed in an un-dated page of the document, Masonic antecedents have materialized.

The whole file is a confusing affair of incorrect and half-correct information. Evidently his age in 1958 is not 71 as stated in the document, but 80 years old; his place of residence in the city of Tarragona is however correctly identified. The case will never be closed. On May 20, 1960 the document's last page confirms the provisional closure of the file, subject to being reopened if need be, and, as a final indignity, Dr Folch is condemned for 'rebellion' for not having shown up at the Tribunal to recant his Masonic membership. A year later, on May 17, 1961 Dr. Folch dies in Havana, Cuba. He is 83 years old and with him expires his unfulfilled longing to see his country for one last time.

Tellingly, forty years after Dr. Folch's death on May 1961, eighty Masonic Loggias assembled at Madrid on May 2001 for an international congress. On the occasion Tomas Sarobe, the Spanish Grand Master, recounted that under francoism 12,000 masons were executed and close to 40,000 indictments against Masons were brought about, "whether they were Masons or not." Although many of the charges were clearly false, the purge was quite effective for at present there are less that 3,000 Masons in Spain.<sup>28</sup> The pattern of

<sup>28</sup> "Los masones españoles reclaman el patrimonio que les arrebató Franco" in *El País*, May 25, 2001, p. 36 and "La Generalitat ajudará els maçons catalans a recuperar els seus papers de Salamanca" in *Avui*, June 24, 1998, p 40.

improvised persecution, a pattern because it is not difficult to discern the inaccuracies and outright lies of the accusations in many other examples, is well illustrated by Dr. Folch's case.



As Gabriel Jackson (1965) wrote in his landmark study of the Spanish Republic and the Civil War, one of the dictatorship's leading themes was that the Republic had been born of a Masonic plot, a charge that is "a fantastic distortion" brought in by a Francoist author whose books provided a list believed by Jackson to be erroneous (1965: 510). In fact, the archive of Masonic activity kept at Salamanca was based on Eduardo Comin Colomer's far-fetched gazetteer. As Jackson explains, it was the duty of the archivists to send a certain number of index cards to

Madrid each month with the names of newly discovered Masons. In many such documents the adjective "Jacobin," "Jewish" and "Communist" is hyphenated with the "Masonic International" And so, specific Republican politicians and other individuals are referred to as "crypto-Jews," for at the time to prove that the Spanish Republic was the puppet of the Masonic International, Jews, Masons and Communists were all mixed up in the same category (Jackson 1965:512-13).

The above case is not unique. Ferrer Benimeli (2000:266) relates the bizarre spectacle of the Tribunal's sentences for other well known exiles such as Diego Martínez Barrio, Luis Jiménez Asua, Santiago Casares Quiroga, Ángel Galarza, Álvaro de Albornoz, and Julio Álvarez del Vayo, all of them condemned in absentia. It was only in 1964 that the "Tribunal para la Represion de la Masoneria y Comunismo" would be abolished by decree. For all those years, since its foundation in 1940, the Tribunal had had the power to execute, imprison and confiscate the property of those presumed guilty of being Masons.

That this mystification would continue throughout the 1950s and 1960s even when at that time the dictatorship was well established and supported by the international community, and the prospect of the Republic's revival unfeasible —is rather incomprehensible; it reflects a desire of revenge not the least assuaged by Franco's military victory and grip on power. The regime's idle chase of so-called 'Masons' in exile, moreover, only confirms a futile use of cruelty and an exercise in irrationality. For as Ferrer Benimeli (2000:268) declares, Franco's persecution and prosecution of Masons is more than a mere anecdote of the history of Francoism; their annihilation represents the totalitarian nature of the dictatorship. More investigation into this matter is needed for the case of Dr. Folch, as shown above, is not unique. The implementation of terror unnecessarily unleashed against an old man living in exile was heightened by the malice shown in the alteration of his age. To order his capture they made him appear younger (71 years) for the harassment of a man in his eighties would have made too apparent the contemptible nature of Franco's laws.

### **The geographical loop**

What is clear from the themes developed above is that in most of the works reviewed exile and repression are analyzed independently. Most if not all of the studies on exile do not include the context of Francoism and the violence unleashed against the exiles. It is my hope that this paper has conveyed even in a small measure the unavoidable links between exile, repression and forgetfulness; as well as the catastrophe of a human geography stretched to its limits by a senseless persecution that continues to affect Spain's body politic to date.

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