

Spain's 'pact of silence' and the Removal of Franco's Statues

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Introduction

The Spanish Law of Historical Memory, passed in 2007, is an important milestone in addressing several issues that have remained unresolved since the death of Franco, 32 years earlier. The law calls for, among other important provisions,¹ the removal of all Francoist symbols from public buildings and spaces. Franco was highly visible in the public sphere, using his own images to legitimise his rule, not unlike other dictators, contemporaneous or historical. But, what makes Franco's case so interesting, is that he remained present in the public sphere for decades after his death, due to a 'pact of silence' that Spanish society agreed upon at the time of transition to democracy. In Giles Tremlett's words:

for almost four decades [after his death] General Francisco Franco was someone Spaniards could not escape. He was there in school books, church prayers, statues, plaques, street names and thousands of other reminders of a violent insurrection that led to a vicious civil war. Now his face and name are being erased from public view.²

The reactions to the removal of statues, from the most publicised Madrid event in 2005 to a stream of other removals following the passing of the 2007 law, illustrate the divisions that are still present in Spanish society with regard to its recent past, and they encapsulate the main attitudes towards the re-evaluation of that past. At the core of these attitudes lies the period of transition from dictatorship to democracy, when any memories that might have provided an alternative to the official version of history, as supported by the old Francoist regime, were effectively silenced. Current attempts to revive those memories, considered by many people to be both necessary and urgent, are labelled dangerous and against the spirit of reconciliation by spokespeople of the

1 It condemns Franco's regime, recognises all victims of the war and violence on both sides of the conflict, annuls prior legislation, offers government assistance in identifying victims buried in clandestine mass graves, prohibits political events at *Valle de los Caídos* (Valley of the Fallen, burial place of Franco and a monument to nationalist soldiers who perished in the war), and grants Spanish citizenship to descendants of Republican exiles from the Civil War, as well as surviving members of the International Brigades.

2 Giles Tremlett, 'Franco's Face and Name Erased from Public View in Spain', *Guardian*, 6 October 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/06/franco-name-erased-spain> accessed 2 September 2010.

opposing camp. What some see as the necessary exposure of still open wounds to the light of day in order to heal, others see as the reopening of wounds that have already healed.

Franco's iconography

Few images remain of Franco in his early years, before his spectacular military career lifted him from the unknown to a ruthless leader of the Moroccan campaign, to the leader of the insurgency that toppled the Spanish Republican government, to the victor of a three-year bloody civil war and the first military confrontation between fascism and the rest of the world.³ The images that appear after the end of the war hardly resemble the shy and plain looking boy from the early years of his training at the military academy.⁴ Franco the victor, the saviour of Spain from all things evil, made regular and heavily orchestrated public appearances all over the country,⁵ which were then broadcast as newsreels — carefully prepared sets of 'news' for the Spanish public, the only news that it was regarded as acceptable for Spaniards to see and hear, as they were now safely under the protection of the *caudillo*.⁶ The broadcasts were under tight government control and presented an image of the dictator at ease in a variety of situations: gentle family man with his wife and daughter; pious Catholic coming out of mass; thoughtful head of government in consultation with his advisers; and, ultimately, a firm military commander in full control of his troops and his country.

For Franco, his own images were part of an extensive propaganda machine, designed and implemented in an effort to legitimise his rule, as is often the case with dictatorships. Along with newsreels, public displays such as posters, busts and statues of Franco were being erected all over Spain from the very early

3 The Spanish Civil War is also often referred to as the 'Little World War' as it was the first direct confrontation between fascism and communism, on the eve of World War II.

4 The website <http://www.generalisimofranco.com> has the most extensive gallery of photos of Franco available on the internet, and it includes some lesser known pictures of him from the early years, as well as the more iconic images of Franco as a saviour of the Spanish nation, which were widely circulated and publicised as part of the propaganda machine of the regime.

5 The public image of Franco while he was in power is in stark contrast with the image of General Salazar, the military dictator of neighbouring Portugal. While ideologically both Franco and Salazar represented right wing politics, fascism and defence of Catholicism against the communist threat, Salazar did not appear in public as much as Franco, and his appearances were not as carefully prepared by his advisers to project the image of imperial grandeur to which Franco aspired. The comparison between the two personalities is the topic of an excellent Portuguese documentary from 2004 (*Franco and Salazar*, produced by Jaquin Vieira and Fernanda Bizarro) but, surprisingly, it has not yet been examined in a dedicated academic study in Spanish or English.

6 Similarly to Hitler referring to himself as Führer, and Mussolini as Il Duce, Franco decided to call himself 'Caudillo de España, por la gracia de Dios': 'the "great leader" of Spain, by the grace of God'. The term *caudillo* originated in 19th century South America, and has strong connotations of military authoritarian power, often of populist nature and based on personality cult.

days of his rule. Jesús De Andrés⁷ dates the commissioning of the first one,⁸ a bust to be placed in Salamanca's main square, to November 1936⁹ — only a few months after the beginning of the insurgency on 18 July, and in the midst of a brutal war with, at that point, no clear winner. The first equestrian statue was commissioned by the *Servicio Nacional de Prensa y Propaganda* (National Service for Press and Propaganda) in 1938. Diverting resources to iconography in such early stages of his rule is a powerful sign of Franco's obsession with his own image and his aspirations to grandeur, but it also reflects the cult of the leader, essential to fascist ideology, and the role of iconography in a conflict that was fought on the propaganda front almost as much as on the battlefield.¹⁰ What sets Spain aside from other fascist and authoritarian regimes of its time is the persistence of the iconography in the public sphere for decades after the dictator's death, as well as its society's inability or lack of willingness to, until recently, seriously address the human rights abuses of the Franco era.¹¹

Francoism or fascism

Whether Franco's regime was actually fascist is contentious and subject to an ongoing debate. Most academic literature from the 1970s and 1980s, especially by non-Spanish scholars, avoided the classification of Franco and his regime as fascist, preferring instead the more benevolent term of 'Francoism' that did not invite direct comparisons with other fascist regimes of the early twentieth century. Stanley G. Payne,¹² Paul Preston¹³ and Christopher J. Ross¹⁴ all focus on the ideological aspect of the Franco regime and point out that it was not 'purely fascist' and that it distanced itself from fascism due to international pressure.¹⁵

7 Jesús De Andrés, 'Las estatuas de Franco y la memoria histórica del franquismo', (Bilbao: Asociación de Historia Contemporánea, 2003), <http://www.ahistcon.org/docs/Santiago/pdfs/s1g.pdf> accessed 1 July 2011.

8 De Andrés, *ibid.*, points out that, already in October 1936, a decision was made to erect a statue in El Ferrol, Franco's birthplace, but it was not actually carried out until 1967.

9 The bust was installed on 1 October 1937, while the war was not officially over until 1 April 1939.

10 De Andrés. 'Las estatuas', offers an interesting analysis of the aesthetics of the various monuments in the context of the three widely accepted stages of the dictatorship, as well as the impact of international circumstances, such as the fall of Nazi Germany, on the symbolic meaning of different elements of sculptures, thereby demonstrating Franco's understanding of the symbolism behind the public use of his images.

11 For an excellent introduction to a discussion on human rights abuses in the Franco era, in the context of the 'pact of forgetting' and the politics of memory, see Madeleine Davis, 'Is Spain Recovering its Memory? Breaking the Pacto del Olvido', *Human Rights Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (August 2005): 858–80, and Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Samuel Amago, eds, *Unearthing Franco's Legacy. Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

12 Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

13 Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).

14 Christopher J. Ross, *Spain 1812–2004*, 2nd ed. (London: Arnold, 2004).

15 Referring to the 'New State', Ross says that 'the name he [Franco] gave it emphasised its affinity with fascism, as did the special status enjoyed by the Falange. Short for 'Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista' or FE JONS (Spanish Falanx of the Assemblies of the National Syndicalist Offensive) from its founding in 1933 to 1937, and 'Falange Española Tradicionalista de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional

On the other hand, many Spanish historians from the late 1970s and through the 1980s insist on the classification of Franco's regime as fascist.¹⁶ António Costa Pinto observes that 'the debate "fascism-authoritarianism" has, during the past decade, lost its ideological content in both Portugal and in Spain'.¹⁷ Instead, the most recent literature seems more preoccupied with the issue of violence applied heavily by the Franco regime, particularly in the immediate post-war period. Peter Anderson, who calls Falange 'the Spanish fascist party led by Franco'¹⁸ points out that:

only in recent years have historians uncovered conclusive evidence that reveals the massive scale of the Francoist repression. One of the conclusions these historians have drawn from their research is that Francoism formed an important component within the European totalitarian and fascist movements of the mid-twentieth century period.¹⁹

Javier Rodrigo supports the above argument that a comparative analysis of fascist movements in twentieth-century Europe indicates the fascist nature of Franco's regime.²⁰ It can be argued that the use of a 'fascist' categorisation of the Franco regime is in sync with leftist political ideas — Vyacheslav Molotov insisted on that categorisation throughout the post-war negotiations, and even convinced the Allies to adopt it in the text of the Potsdam Agreement.²¹ The association of Franco with fascism was present during his rule in the minds of his Republican opponents, and represented as such by the Republicans in exile. Those who had fought in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Republic, had

Sindicalista' or FET JONS (Spanish Traditionalist Phalanx of the Assemblies of the National Syndicalist Offensive) from 1937 when Franco combined the original Falange with the Carlist party and assumed its leadership. It was the only legally permitted political party in Spain while Franco was in power. Although to a large extent a reflection of Franco's own ideas, its economic policy also had fascist overtones' (ibid., 99–100). He agrees that Falange played an important part and fascist symbols such as the salute were adopted (ibid., 100–02) but points out that 'As soon as it became clear that the western democracies were going to prevail in the World War, Franco began to downplay the fascist side of his regime' (ibid., 102).

16 For example: Juan Marsal, *Pensar bajo el franquismo: Intelectuales y política en la generación de los años cincuenta* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 1979); Raúl Morodo, *Los orígenes ideológicos del franquismo: Acción Española* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1985) and Julio Rodríguez Puértolas, *Literatura fascista española* (Madrid: Akal, 1986).

17 António Costa Pinto, 'Elites, Single Parties and Political Decision-making in Fascist-era Dictatorships', *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 3 (2002): 437, note 29.

18 Peter Anderson, 'Singling Out Victims: Denunciation and Collusion in the Post-Civil War Francoist Repression in Spain, 1939–1945', *European History Quarterly* 39, no. 7 (2009): 16.

19 ibid., 22. Also see Ángela Cenarro, 'Matar, vigilar y delatar: la quiebra de la sociedad civil durante la guerra y la posguerra en España (1936–1948)', *Historia Social* no. 44 (2002): 65–86, for an interesting perspective on the participation of civil society in the violence and terror, through right-wing mobilisation and other tactics that were employed to engage the 'good Spaniards' in the oppression characteristic of the New State.

20 Javier Rodrigo, 'La naturaleza del franquismo: un acercamiento desde la perspectiva comparada de los fascismos europeos', in *Universo de micromundos*, eds, Carmelo Romero and Alberto Sabio (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2009), 47–62.

21 See Enrique Moradiellos, 'The Potsdam Conference and the Spanish Problem', *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 1 (March 2001): 82–89.

fought a war against fascism. Supporters of the Republican version of history are strongly opposed to the classification of Franco's regime as Francoist instead of fascist. According to Vicenç Navarro:

its replacement by the term Francoist represents a successful conservative project of representing the regime only as *caudillista* while in reality it brings together all the characteristics of a fascist regime. And not only at the beginning but until the end.²²

Navarro's firm conviction that the regime maintained its fascist characteristics until the end is in contrast to many scholarly opinions that argue that Franco distanced himself from fascism as early as 1942.²³ Peter Pierson analyses Franco's policies and appointment of specific people to crucial posts as a way of gaining international acceptance, especially from the United States, and proposes that Franco manipulated the make-up of the government and the external appearances of his regime to appease the international community. 'To appeal to the Catholic world, Franco stressed Spain's Catholicism and downplayed the role of the Falange.'²⁴ Stanley Payne in his 1987 work identifies the reforms of 1967–68 as the final phase of the defascitization of the regime,²⁵ and reiterates in 2011 (quoting David W. Pike²⁶) that 'in 1945 Franco was almost universally denounced as "the last surviving fascist dictator", and would never entirely escape "the Axis stigma". Nonetheless, most scholars conclude that the Spanish regime was not intrinsically fascist, though it included aspects of fascism'.²⁷ Aristotle A. Kallis analyses an additional category of para-fascism that could be applicable to 'a larger category of regimes that adapted or aped "fascist" formal and organisational structures, but did not share the revolutionary ideological vision of genuine fascism',²⁸ including that of Franco's Spain.

Similar disagreements surround the debate on whether Franco's regime was totalitarian. Since Raymond Carr's famous quote, 'Francoism was not a totalitarian

22 'su sustitución por el término franquista responde a un proyecto conservador exitoso de presentar aquel régimen sólo como caudillista, cuando en realidad reunió todas las características de un régimen fascista. Y no sólo al principio sino hasta el final.' Vicenç Navarro, '¿Franquismo o fascismo?', *Público*, 7 July 2011, <http://blogs.publico.es/dominiopublico/3625/%C2%BFfranquismo-o-fascismo/> accessed 15 November 2011.

23 'The defascitization of the Franco regime began as early as 1942 and proceeded in several stages' (Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 629). 'Franco distances himself from fascism in a variety of ways after 1942, and more rapidly after 1945. Thus, the raised-arm salute was dropped, as was the name "New State". The Falange representation in government was cut, and its presence in public life generally reduced' (Ross, 103). Peter Pierson in *The History of Spain* (Westport, CO and London: Greenwood Press, 1999, 109) also points out the change of name as an important factor in changing the image of the regime, especially in the international arena.

24 Pierson, 161.

25 Payne, 629.

26 David W. Pike, *Franco and the Axis Stigma* (New York: Macmillan, 2008).

27 Payne, *Spain: A Unique History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 224.

28 Aristotle A. Kallis, "'Fascism", "Para-Fascism" and "Fascitization": On the Similarities of Three Conceptual Categories', *European History Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2003): 220.

regime'²⁹ and Payne's firm conviction that 'the Spanish regime was obviously authoritarian, not totalitarian',³⁰ a re-conceptualisation of totalitarianism has occurred in global historiography. Anderson, with reference to Abbott Gleason³¹ and Sheila Fitzpatrick,³² points out that:

ironically this effort to understand Francoism as an important example of European totalitarianism came exactly at the time that historians of other mid-twentieth century terror regimes began to challenge some of the reductions of Cold War totalitarian theory. In this theory ideologically driven regimes control and direct their passive societies in both the public and private sphere through their use of a terror police force that is independent of the society it bends to its own will.³³

Recently it has been proposed that specific categorisations of the Franco regime should be abandoned as they do not advance or benefit the analysis and debate of emerging critical issues related to the regime. Howard J. Wiarda and Margaret MacLeish Mott refuse the following denominations: 'military dictatorship', 'clerical' or 'theocratic dictatorship' and 'fascist',³⁴ and posit that one cannot describe the Franco and Salazar regimes 'by employing bumper sticker labels', but rather 'by analysing them carefully'.³⁵ They refer to Juan José Linz's early work³⁶ based on a:

distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, a distinction that was not always apparent to the victims of these regimes but which is helpful in understanding them. Linz argues that both the Spanish and Portuguese regimes should be understood as occupying an intermediary position, clearly not liberal, but not totalitarian either, and thus in between these two major types — an authoritarian regime that has its own distinctive politics and dynamics.³⁷

Navarro, however, who points out Linz's conservative terminology of fascist origins,³⁸ is convinced that:

29 'In spite of the Fascist trimmings of the early years — the goosestep and the Fascist salute — Francoism was not a totalitarian regime. It was a conservative, Catholic, authoritarian system, its original corporatist features modified over time.' Raymond Carr, *Modern Spain 1875–1980* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 165.

30 Payne, *The Franco Regime*, 626.

31 Abbott Gleason, 'Totalitarianism in 1984', *Russian Review* 43, no. 2 (April 1984): 145–59.

32 Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'New Perspectives on Stalinism', *Russian Review* 45, no. 4 (October 1986): 357–73.

33 Anderson, 11.

34 Howard J. Wiarda and Margaret MacLeish Mott, *Catholic Roots and Democratic Flowers: Political Systems in Spain and Portugal* (Westport, CO and London: Praeger, 2001), 48.

35 *ibid.*

36 Juan José Linz, 'An Authoritarian Regime: Spain', in *Mass Politics*, eds, Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 251–83.

37 Wiarda and MacLeish Mott, 48–49.

38 '... autores conservadores (procedentes de la misma nomenclatura fascista como Juan Linz)', Navarro, *Tergiversaciones*, 3.

if in Spain there had been a rupture with the dictatorship (as it happened in Eastern European countries) instead of a transition (which was executed under specific division of power, with a very right and a very weak left wing), today we would be speaking of fascism instead of Francoism.³⁹

He also warns against considering Francoism a neutral term, given its political and ideological connotations: 'the language that we use is not neutral, nor is the term Francoism that is used to define the dictatorship'.⁴⁰

Madrid statue

The polarisation of academic standpoints on these terms and classifications of the regime are reflected in the public opinion as expressed in press and blogs. The events in Spain's capital, Madrid, in 2005, and the accompanying press coverage, provide a good example of the attitudes towards the dictatorship and its memory that have prevailed in the Spanish society until the last decade. Until then, a seven-metre-tall bronze equestrian statue of Franco stood undisturbed in a square where it had been originally erected in 1959. On 17 March 2005 it was removed, initially without fanfare and with minimal media coverage.⁴¹ A small neo-fascist group protested against the removal of the statue while an even smaller group of supporters of the action cheered on. In an attempt to minimise any possible demonstrations or public debate, the event was not publicised in advance. In fact, the operation was kept secret even from the city authorities, which the mayor of Madrid complained about the next day. The removal occurred in the early hours of the morning, starting at 2 am, supposedly to avoid disturbing traffic. Interestingly, the statue was covered for transport, a clear sign that the authorities were nervous about the removal even at that time of the day. To pre-empt confrontation, there was a heavy police presence and spectators were told to disperse.⁴² Except for a few shouts and fascist salutes,

39 'Pero creo que en España, si hubiera habido una ruptura con la dictadura (tal como ha ocurrido en los países del Este de Europa) en lugar de una transición (que se ha realizado en condiciones de gran poder de las derechas y una gran debilidad de las izquierdas), hoy se hablaría del fascismo en vez de franquismo.' *ibid.*, 15.

40 'El lenguaje que utilizamos no es neutro, y el término franquismo, que se usa para definir la dictadura, tampoco lo es.' *ibid.*

41 The first removal of a Franco statue took place in 1981 in Puente Genil (Córdoba), according to Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARHM, Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory), while, in Santander, a monument was also removed in 1981, only to be put back in 1983. It was an exact replica of the Madrid statue and was still standing in front of the city's Town Hall in 2005. The removal of the Madrid statue in 2005 is the most significant event of this kind since the death of Spain's dictator, General Francisco Franco, 32 years earlier, save, perhaps, only the removal of a statue in 2002 in the city of El Ferrol, Franco's birthplace, and thus very heavy in symbolism in its own way but not nearly as widely reported in the Spanish or international media.

42 Most sources do not provide any estimates as to the size of the crowd protesting during the actual removal, and concentrate on the demonstration on the following day.

it was uneventful. Until the next day, that is, when people started gathering around the empty pedestal and adorned it with flowers and a Spanish flag, some praying on their knees. A demonstration in protest of the removal, organised by the Spanish fascist party Falange, was attended by approximately 700 people⁴³ who assembled in front of a large portrait of Franco that had been placed in front of the empty pedestal. One of the iconic images of Franco as a crusader was beamed onto the scaffolding that the authorities had placed there, projecting a virtual presence of Franco where the physical monument of him had stood before. This demonstration was reported in major international media outlets, complete with the image of the fascist salute, and was followed by a heated public debate in the Spanish media.

While international media focused on the resurgence of the Spanish far right, the public debate in Spain took a very different direction, mainly revolving around the issues of memory and commemoration. The opinions of two politicians who were frequently quoted in the Spanish media epitomised the divisions in Spanish society with regard to this particular event, as well as the discord regarding how Spain should deal with its difficult past in general. On the one hand, the leader of one of the ruling parties, Gaspar Llamazares of the *Izquierda Unida* (IU, United Left), declared that, despite the statue being removed in the early hours of the morning, it 'could have been done in the light of the day' as 'there is no shame in removing what is shameful'.⁴⁴ In contrast, the opposition, according to Javier Arenas of the *Partido Popular* (PP, Popular Party), considered the removal of the Franco statue an 'unnecessary reopening of wounds' stemming from the Spanish experience of dictatorship, and accused the ruling party of 'hijacking the process of reconciliation'.⁴⁵ On the same day, the Catalan edition of *El País* also published a short editorial by Isabel Olesti about a book called *Mujer y exilio 1939* (*Women and Exile 1939*), as well as a talk delivered by its author, Antonina Rodrigo. Olesti finished her editorial with a quote from Rodrigo: 'Franco's death should have opened the doors of history. Instead a pact of silence was agreed upon and nothing happened. And we are left with what they taught us. And the wound remains open'.⁴⁶

43 According to estimates in *El País*, Spain's leading newspaper: 'El PP critica la retirada y 700 fascistas protestan ante el pedestal', 18 March 2005, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/PP/critica/retirada/700/fascistas/protestan/pedestal/elpepiesp/20050318elpepinac_10/Tes accessed 10 August 2005.

44 'Aunque comprende que se haya retirado de madrugada para no alterar el tráfico en una ciudad colapsada, entiende que sería "ilustrativo que se pueda hacer a la luz del día", porque "no hay ninguna vergüenza en quitar lo que es una vergüenza: que se mantengan símbolos de una dictadura que se deberían haber retirado hace mucho tiempo."' 'El PP critica la retirada de la estatua de Franco porque puede "abrir heridas" en la sociedad', *El País*, 17 March 2005, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/PP/critica/retirada/estatua/Franco/puede/abrir/heridas/sociedad/elpepuesp/20050317elpepunac_6/Tes accessed 10 August 2005.

45 'Me parece muy mal que el PSOE esté intentando cargarse la reconciliación nacional. ... es un error y abre heridas innecesarias en la sociedad española'. Javier Arenas, interview for the program *Mirada Crítica* on channel Telecinco on 17 March 2005, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1925031/>

46 'Con la muerte de Franco se tenía que haber abierto las puertas de la historia. Pero se hizo un pacto de silencio: aquí no ha pasado nada. Y nos quedamos con lo que nos contaron. Y la herida sigue abierta.' Rodrigo,

Pact of silence

The 'pact of silence' (*pacto de silencio*) that Rodrigo refers to was an actual political agreement between parties⁴⁷ that delayed the removal of statues of Franco, such as that in Madrid, until almost 30 years after his death. It was agreed upon by post-Franco Spanish society in the name of the greater good — that of a peaceful transition to democracy and the regaining of political and economic stability in a country still bearing the scars of the war and facing great uncertainties as to the transition of power upon the dictator's death. The fragility of the peace and the conflicting interests of the various groups that would make a grab for power were on everybody's mind when Franco died in November 1975. He was almost 83 years old and his health had been declining in the last few years of his life, so the end of his rule had been anticipated. The totalitarian regime imposed on Spanish society after the end of the civil war in April 1939 had already softened significantly,⁴⁸ and a successor to Franco had been nominated since 1969.⁴⁹ However, executions of political opponents were still being carried out as late as September 1975, and emotions were still running high. Many feared that Spain could find itself at the brink of another conflict between the Francoists, who would resort to anything in order to cling to power, and the opposition, who would use the opportunity to seize power and exact revenge.

Nonetheless, a peaceful transition was achieved, in spite of the odds against it, by setting the immediate past aside and moving forward, but at the same time keeping the existing political structure and legal mechanisms. In the words of Salvador Cardús i Ros:

in Isabel Olesti, 'Mujer y exilio', *El País*, 17 March 2005, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/cataluna/Mujer/exilio/elpepiespcat/20050317elpcat_3/Tes accessed 10 August 2005.

47 In a strong critique of the debates on historical memory, Payne argues that "'Pact of silence" is simply a propaganda slogan. No such thing ever existed. ...What was agreed upon was not "silence" but the understanding that historical conflicts would be consigned to the labours of the historians and journalists, and that politicians would not make use of them in their parties' mutual competition, which would direct itself to present and future conflicts'. Payne, *Spain*, 251.

48 Wiarda and MacLeish Mott subscribe to the idea of 'soft' dictatorship in the later stages of Franco's rule: 'By the early 1970s such vast economic, social, cultural even political changes had occurred in Spain and Portugal that the two countries were hardly recognizable from what they had been earlier. What had once been "hard" dictatorships were now "soft" dictatorships led by enfeebled old men. These once fierce authoritarian regimes were now tired, out of date, old-fashioned, and hanging on mainly by inertia. It would not take much to topple them.' Wiarda and MacLeish Mott, 59.

49 Franco reinstated the monarchy in 1947 and named himself regent for life. In 1969 he named as heir to the throne the previous king's grandson, Juan Carlos de Borbón, who was enthroned two days after Franco's death and who is still the King of Spain today. Effectively, the successor approved by and groomed by Franco remains as the head of the Spanish state over 35 years after the death of the dictator, although his role in initiating a democratisation process and his firm stand against the attempted coup in 1981 demonstrates an unquestionable departure from Franco's ideology and politics. For an excellent analysis of the figure of the King and his role in the transition process see Paul Preston, *Juan Carlos: A People's King* (London: HarperCollins, 2004).

The transition is, basically, a process of historical and social amnesia, and the invention of a new political tradition (the contradiction is valid). ... [It] is, in effect, the manufacturing of a great lie ... that had the politically laudable intention of turning the page from an authoritarian to a democratic regime without bringing about a political breakdown and, in the process, achieving the unheard of situation in which the dictatorship's juridico-political framework became the source of legitimacy for the new democratic model.⁵⁰

The end of the dictatorship and the re-establishment of democracy should have made it possible, in theory, to contest the official version of the past, prosecute crimes, and seek reparations for victims. This, however, could have potentially led to purges, retribution, and even another armed conflict. The peace was too precious to Spaniards from both sides to jeopardise, even if it meant that anti-Francoists had to forgo a basic sense of justice. The political compromises achieved during the early transition period were reinforced by the amnesty law proclaimed in 1977, which was deemed necessary for the success of national reconciliation and the possibility of an open dialogue. The amnesty law guaranteed that there would be no legal avenues for the prosecution of crimes committed during the war and the dictatorial regime; however, it did not provide for any sort of public accounting of the abuses committed by those in power during that time. Moreover, the law recognised the continuing validity of the military tribunals from the Franco era and it was not until 1990 that the first capital punishment verdict against a political prisoner was annulled.⁵¹

The 'pact of silence' not only silenced any attempt to bring to light the violent excesses of the regime; it effectively prevented any legal action to punish those guilty of human rights abuses, as well as any rehabilitation or compensation of victims. Navarro, who moved back to Spain after three decades in exile, is vocal in denouncing the pact of silence and its role in the *transición* that, he said in an interview with Javier Valenzuela, 'was a political pact to erase responsibilities, including the moral ones and the symbolic ones. Besides amnesty it was decided that there should be amnesia'.⁵² There was no attempt at a truth and reconciliation commission and, in fact, the term 'reconciliation' signified the

50 Salvador Cardús i Ros, 'Politics and the Invention of Memory: For a Sociology of the Transition to Democracy in Spain', in *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, ed., Joan Ramon Resina (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi), 18–19.

51 While the 1963 verdict was legally annulled in 1990, and the execution of Julián Grimau deemed illegal, in 2002 PP blocked a parliamentary proposal of IU to formally rehabilitate him. In 2005 the IU lodged a similar proposal with the Assembly of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, and it was again successfully blocked by the PP.

52 'La transición', dice, 'fue un pacto político para borrar las responsabilidades, incluidas las morales, las simbólicas. Además de amnistía se decidió que hubiera amnesia.' Javier Valenzuela, 'El despertar tras la amnesia', *El País*, 6 November 2002, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/semana/despertar/amnesia/elpepuculba/b/20021102elpebase_9/Tes accessed 20 September 2010.

pact of silence.⁵³ In the name of the 'spirit of reconciliation', members of Spanish society were asked to leave the memories of their traumas outside of the public sphere or, as Helen Graham put it, 'those who had been obliged to be silent for nearly 40 years were once again required to accept that there would be no public recognition of their past lives or memories'.⁵⁴ Thus, the traumas of the war and the dictatorship were not dealt with collectively; the 'smooth' transition and the 'spirit of reconciliation' did not allow for any blame to be cast, and effectively removed the question of trauma from the public sphere. The political and social changes that Spain underwent from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s excluded a collective memory of war and oppression and, as Susana Narotzky and Gavin Smith's research concludes, 'exposed in practice the split realities of public and private memories of the past'.⁵⁵ In keeping with these split realities, Franco continued to dominate the public sphere with his presence in the form of monuments, street names and even on the coins that were not withdrawn until the 1990s⁵⁶ while, for many Republican families, the memories of those killed or persecuted had to remain in the private sphere without public recognition or acknowledgement.

The 'pact of silence' is also often referred to as the 'pact of forgetting' as there was a tacit agreement to forget a war that Spaniards were no longer proud of. Preston points out that years of Franco's indoctrination about a glorious 'crusade of Spanish values against blood-crazed Communist barbarians'⁵⁷ dissipated quickly after the transition and, by 1983, an opinion poll showed that 73 per cent of Spaniards regarded the Civil War as 'a shameful period of Spanish history that is better to forget'.⁵⁸ Referred to often as 'amnesia' (*amnesia*), 'silence' (*silencio*), 'forgetting' (*olvido*), or 'disremembering' (*desmemoria*), this phenomenon is interpreted in various ways. Michael Richards argues that:

53 The Franco regime did not allow the public use of the term 'reconciliation', even by priests. Preston tells of a case where 'the Primate of Spain, Cardinal Gomá, had a pastoral letter censored on August 9th, 1939, for using the word "reconciliation" instead of the officially sanctioned "recuperation"'. Preston, 'Revenge and Reconciliation', *History Today* 39, no. 3 (March 1989): 32.

54 Helen Graham, 'Coming to Terms with the Past: Spain's Memory Wars', *History Today* 54, no. 5 (May 2004): 30. And Paloma Aguilar points out that it also meant that the war veterans on the Republican side were never awarded the pension rights that had been enjoyed for years by the Nationalist veterans (Aguilar, 'Agents of Memory: Spanish Civil War Veterans and Disabled Soldiers' in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, eds, Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 84–103).

55 Susan Narotzky and Gavin Smith, "'Being *politico*" in Spain: An Ethnographic Account of Memories, Silences and Public Politics', *History and Memory* 14, no. 1/2 (2002): 211.

56 Davis.

57 Preston, *Revenge*, 32.

58 *ibid.*, 33.

'Amnesia', individual and collective, came gradually to be seen as the best medicine for Spain. This prognosis was in line with the generalised and tacit agreement in the 1960s and 1970s that the Civil War had been a tragic act of madness for which all Spaniards were somehow to blame.⁵⁹

In addition to Richards's idea of 'madness' involving the whole of the society, Preston's concept of 'shame' puts the blame on the Nationalists, and Aguilar⁶⁰ explores the 'anaesthetic, narcotic' aspects of forgetting when the trauma is in fact very well remembered.

The 'pact of forgetting' could have, in theory, led to the erasure of Francoist-era monuments and symbols, and thus the removal of Franco's statues would have appeared natural in this context of 'forgetting' shameful chapters of Spain's history. Instead, the opposite happened. The transition from Franco's regime to a parliamentary monarchy was conceived on the basis of continuity rather than rupture, thus effectively legitimising the dictatorship. Therefore, glorification of the Republican efforts in the war, exile, and resistance would have gone directly against the spirit of political stabilisation. The Second Republic, overthrown by Franco's uprising, was perceived as being so radically to the left that, according to Aguilar and Carsten Humlebaek, 'during the 1980s [it] was regarded favourably by only 5 per cent or less of the Spanish population and it consistently scored less than the Francoist regime', the popularity of which fell from 21 per cent in 1984 to 8 per cent in 1990. At the same time, acceptance of the current political system in Spain rose from 58 to 76 per cent.⁶¹ While these figures do not directly link the current democracy to the previous regime, they certainly indicate a clear rupture from the legacy of the Second Republic.⁶² The reluctance to incorporate any political symbols from that era into the current democracy is such that post-Francoist Spain did not even consider restoring the Republican anthem and, to this day, the Spanish state continues to use the national anthem from the Franco years.

With the amnesty law in 1977, in the famous words of Marcelino Camacho, the spokesman for the Communists, the Spaniards 'buried their dead and their resentments'.⁶³ The main political players of the transition period accepted and put forward for social approval the idea of closing a certain chapter of Spanish

59 Michael Richards, 'From War Culture to Civil Society: Francoism, Social Change and Memories of the Spanish Civil War', *History and Memory* 14, no. 1/2 (2002): 111.

60 Paloma Aguilar Fernández, *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1996).

61 Paloma Aguilar and Carsten Humlebaek, 'Collective Memory and National Identity in the Spanish Democracy. The Legacies of Francoism and the Civil War', *History and Memory* 14, no. 1/2 (2002): 145.

62 Aguilar and Humlebaek's extensive research 'into the symbolic practices and politics of commemoration of post-Franco Spain' leads them to the conclusion that 'there are many more continuities with the Francoist period than with the Second Republic or with any other previous period'. *ibid.*, 152.

63 'Hemos enterrado nuestros muertos y nuestros rencores.'

history without confrontation so that a political dialogue could begin. The overarching need for stability that dictated Spain's political transition remained present in the society long after institutional changes assured the success of a peaceful political process. Aguilar and Humlebaek quote a Eurobarometer study that collected opinion polls between 1970 and 1992, which demonstrates that:

The importance that Spaniards accord, even today, to the values of 'peace', 'order', and 'moderation' remains noticeably higher than in other European countries, a phenomenon undoubtedly linked to the memory of the fratricide and the desire to avoid its recurrence. In comparison, of all the countries of Europe, Spain gives highest priority to the value of 'keeping order', with a score of 11 points above the European mean.⁶⁴

The inertia regarding the re-evaluation of the immediate past is in stark contrast with enormous changes in the Spanish social and cultural life, where the *destape* (lifting the lid) effect led to what is commonly referred to as a revolution, but it remained largely within the spheres of lifestyle and artistic expression. On the political level, care was taken not to alienate the major players in either the ruling party or the opposition thus, in theory, allowing all of the main sectors of society to participate in the political process. The hotly debated issues of regionalism and secularism became the most contentious topics in the political arena. Therefore the 'smooth' transition to democracy was deemed a big success, both domestically and internationally, and the 'Spanish model of transition' became a prototype for other fading dictatorships and dissolving totalitarian regimes. But, in view of the persistence of Spanish society in not addressing its difficult past and not breaking the 'pact of silence' or 'pact of forgetting', it is not surprising that the meaning of the term *transición* (transition) itself is widely debated.

Transición

The term *transición* is traditionally used to describe the three-year period between Franco's death in November 1975 and the implementation of the new constitution in December 1978. As many scholars remark, however, the temporal end markers of the transition period are highly debatable. On one end, the beginning of the *transición* could be moved forward to the time when Franco's regime evolved from the harshly totalitarian state of the 1940s and 1950s to a

64 The respondents were asked 'Which should be the first aim of your country?' and were given four possible answers: '1. Keep order in the nation. 2. Give the people more voice in government decisions. 3. Fight price increases. 4. Protect freedom of expression.' The European mean for 'keeping order in the nation' was 37.8 per cent, with Spain scoring 48.5 per cent and Denmark (46.4 per cent) and Northern Ireland (45.6 per cent) just behind. The lowest score, 26 per cent, came from Belgium, which scored the highest in Europe (40.6 per cent) for the option 'fight price increases'. *ibid.*, 150.

milder version of an authoritarian regime in the 1960s, considering the seeds of change to have been planted while Franco was still in power. Wiarda and MacLeish Mott posit that 'the post-Franco transition ... had begun even while Franco was still alive'.⁶⁵ Raúl Morodo puts forward a concept of *pretransición* (pre-transition), to refer to some changes that Franco applied, forced by international pressures to make Spain appear more open.⁶⁶ Ofelia Ferrán strongly opposes the idea of a pre-transition on the basis that it would credit Franco for preparing Spain for democracy⁶⁷ and points out that executions of political prisoners took place up to the very end of Franco's rule. According to Ramón Buckley, the year 1968 initiated social and cultural changes that laid the ground for the political transition in the 1970s.⁶⁸ Some consider the starting date for the transition to be 20 December 1973, when *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA, Basque Homeland and Freedom) assassinated Luis Carrero Blanco, groomed by Franco to be his successor.⁶⁹ Javier Tusell⁷⁰ reminds us that many comparative studies see the Spanish transition as part of a worldwide process named by Samuel Huntington the 'third wave of democratization'.⁷¹

On the other end, the transition period is sometimes extended until past the *coup d'état* of February 1981, or even the electoral victory of the socialists in 1982,⁷² seen as a more stabilising event than the 1978 Constitution. In 1992 Spain hosted the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the International Expo in Seville, and Madrid was the European Capital of Culture; this is sometimes considered the 'real end of transition', the year in which Spain projected itself to the rest of the world as a modern country, and that in the 15 years since the re-establishment of democracy was able to overcome the shadowy past of a civil war and a fascist regime. Some scholars put the ending date of the transition even later: Teresa Vilarós considers it to be 1993 with the signing of Maastricht treaty, which for Spain meant real integration in the European community and the end of isolationism. Rosa Montero posits the 2000 electoral victory of the PP as the true ending of the transition: 'I have a feeling that this is the true end of the

65 Wiarda and MacLeish Mott, 69.

66 Specifically, Ley de Convenios Colectivos 1958, allowing some union representation for workers, and loosening up of censorship in Ley de Prensa e Imprenta 1966. Raúl Morodo, *La transición política* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1984).

67 Ofelia Ferrán, 'Memory and Forgetting, Resistance and Noise in the Spanish Transition: Semprún and Vázquez Montalbán', in Resina, 193.

68 Ramón Buckley, *La doble transición: política y literatura en la España de los años setenta* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1996).

69 An example is Teresa Vilarós, *El mono del desencanto: una crítica cultural de la transición española (1973–1993)* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1998).

70 Javier Tusell, 'La Transición política: un planteamiento metodológico', in *Historia de la transición 1975–1986*, eds, Javier Tusell and Álvaro Soto (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1996), 109–37.

71 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1991).

72 Gregorio Morán, *El precio de la transición* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1991). Morán considers various possibilities for its beginning, but puts its end firmly in 1982's PSOE electoral win.

Transition, the ultimate proof of our democratic maturity'.⁷³ Joan Ramón Resina puts forward the economic argument, suggesting that market forces rather than any political events were responsible for the transition: 'Spain's insertion into the market economy goes a long way towards explaining the Transition's temporal imprecision and the confusion of those who insist on anchoring it in politically significant events'.⁷⁴

However, as Ferrán points out, 'any historical dates one may try to set for the beginning and end of this variously defined epoch of recent Spanish history are therefore arbitrary and, more importantly, depend on what one is thinking of as having "transitioned"',⁷⁵ and warns that 'any effort to delimit and define the transition period will be arbitrary, and subject to ideological constraints'.⁷⁶ Increasingly the process of transition is thought of as incomplete until the issue of silence and disremembering of the past is dealt with and can be discussed in the open. Dacia Viejo-Rose quotes the results of a 2000 study of *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS, Centre for Sociological Research), where half of the respondents answered 'No' to the question, 'Have you forgotten the divisions and resentment that the Civil War created?' and 66 per cent said 'Yes' to 'Although the divisions and resentment of the past are forgotten, the deep mark left by the Franco period is still palpable',⁷⁷ and observes that these results occur 'despite consensus on the significant changes that Spanish society had undergone in behavior, attitudes and "moral values"'.⁷⁸ But, many scholars and social commentators deem these changes to be insufficient without the accompanying social and political action to bring about a change in attitudes and laws regarding historical memory. Ferrán argues that 'an authoritarian, top-down approach to politics was one of the legacies of the Franco regime. In large measure, this top-down approach characterised much of the transition'.⁷⁹ In this, she evokes Carr and Eduardo Subirats who, she says, 'goes so far as to state that, until such a critical recuperation and re-evaluation of the past is undertaken, no real transition will have taken place',⁸⁰ and for whom:

73 'Tengo la sensación de que éste es el verdadero fin de la Transición, la prueba definitiva de nuestra madurez democrática' (Rosa Montero, 'Progresismo', *El País*, 21 March 2000, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/ultima/Progresismo/elpepiult/20000321elpepiult_2/Tes accessed 20 November 2011).

74 Joan Ramon Resina, 'Short of Memory: the Reclamation of the Past since the Transition to Democracy', in Resina, 93.

75 Ferrán, 192.

76 *ibid.*, 193–94.

77 Dacia Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain. Cultural Heritage and Memory after Civil War* (Brighton, Portland and Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 160.

78 *ibid.*, 159.

79 Ferrán, 196.

80 *ibid.*

a true democracy will have been established only once such a confrontation with the past is undertaken, for only a recuperation of Spain's historical memory will lead to the overcoming of the dangerous 'legacies' of the Franco regime that the transition simply perpetuated.⁸¹

Breaking the 'pact of silence' is seen here as a necessary step for democracy to truly take root in Spain.

Breaking the 'pact of silence'

This break takes place in the decade of the 2000s, based on background work produced since the mid 1990s, with Aguilar's important study⁸² at the forefront of scholarly contributions. In Madeleine Davis's words, this 'unexpected emergence of the belated "memory politics"'⁸³ in the last decade can be explained by a variety of converging factors, including the surprising win of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers Party) in the 2004 elections⁸⁴ and international pressure to deal with past human rights abuses.⁸⁵ A general surge in interest in memory in the 1980s in other European countries such as France and Germany can also be credited. Davis discusses the catalysing effect of the 1996 indictment by Spanish courts of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet for crimes against humanity, Pinochet's arrest in Great Britain in 1998 and Spain's request for his extradition that received enormous media attention and inevitably led to parallels between Pinochet and Franco. And in the year 2000 Emilio Silva founded the *Asociación de la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* (ARMH, Association for the Reclamation of Historical Memory), the first of many Spanish grassroots organisations that will prove

81 *ibid.*, 197. Ferrán returns to the discussion of the place of historical memory in Spain's transition process in *Working through Memory: Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007).

82 Aguilar, *Memoria y olvido*.

83 Davis, 862.

84 PP was predicted to win the 2004 election by a landslide, but its actions following the train bombings in Madrid only a few days prior to the elections changed the public opinion in favour of PSOE, led by Rodríguez Zapatero who promised to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq as part of his electoral campaign.

85 Human rights abuses committed during the war and under Franco's rule started attracting international attention in the early 2000s, and the unwelcome publicity of reports from worldwide organisations such as Amnesty International in the mid 2000s might have aided Zapatero's push for a historical memory law, approved by parliament in 2007. For a discussion of Amnesty International's involvement in the debate and its impact on the political process see Tremlett, 'The Grandsons of Their Grandfathers: An Afterword', in *Unearthing Franco's Legacy. Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain*, eds, Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Samuel Amago (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 327–44. For a comprehensive analysis of associated legal challenges see Mónica Zapico Barbeito, 'Investigating the Crimes of the Franco Regime: Legal Possibilities, Obligations of the Spanish State and Duties towards the Victims', *International Criminal Law Review* 10 (2010): 243–74.

instrumental in bringing historical memory to public attention and leading to a real eruption of what is today called a movement of recuperation of historical memory (*movimiento de la recuperación de la historia memórica*).

AMRH was initially one man's quest to exhume the mass grave where he suspected his grandfather was buried. After successful identification through DNA testing, the association continued the effort of exhuming mass graves from the Civil War and Franco era and identifying bodies, giving the victims a proper burial and allowing the relatives a sense of closure. Based entirely on volunteers and without any financial support from government agencies, AMRH, which aims to identify the graves of all of the estimated 30,000 'disappeared', has also become a forum for information and discussion through its website, aptly named *memoriahistorica.org* (<http://www.memoriahistorica.org>). Celebrating its 10th anniversary in October 2010, AMRH could count the exhumation and identification of 1500 bodies among its achievements, but its impact on society goes well beyond this. ARMH is now credited with initiating a powerful civil society response to the 'pact of silence' that eventually led to a more institutionalised movement for recovering historical memories of the Civil War and the dictatorship.⁸⁶

The internet has acted from the beginning as the medium of choice for activist groups dedicated to recovering the memory of people and events silenced in the official versions of Spanish history. The popular ARMH website has regular updates on the recent developments in the politics of memory in Spain. Archives, testimonies and discussion lists can be found at websites such as *Foro de la Memoria* (Forum for Memory, (<http://www.pce.es/foroporlamemoria>), *Archivo Guerra y Exilio* (War and Exile Archive, <http://www.galeon.com/agenoticias/index.html>) and *La Guerra Civil Española* (The Spanish Civil War, (<http://www.guerracivil.org>)). *Equipo Nizkor* (Team Nizkor, <http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/eng.html>), in its 2004 report on Francoist crimes,⁸⁷ proposed the term 'Spanish model of impunity', which is now accepted by the academic community.⁸⁸ Some educational institutions have used their web servers to archive documents and host moderated discussion groups, thus forming the *Biblioteca del Exilio* (Library of Exile, (<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portal/exilio/>), as well

86 According to Viejo-Rose, 'efforts to create public platforms through which to unearth and share stories from these periods bore fruit in 2004, when a new socialist government began a process termed "the recovery of historic memory"', 160. She specifically mentions ARHM by name, alongside *Foro por la Memoria* (Forum for Memory), as does Tremlett: 'The work of ARHM, which had begun exhuming mass graves of Francoist Civil War victims in 2000, had much to do with the eruption of *memoria histórica* into the public sphere' ('The Grandsons', 329–30).

87 Equipo Nizkor, 'La cuestión de la impunidad en España y los crímenes franquistas', 2004, <http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/espana/doc/impuesp.html> accessed 01 July 2011.

88 Sergio Gálvez Biesca, 'El proceso de la recuperación de la "memoria histórica" en España: Una aproximación a los movimientos sociales por la memoria', *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 19, no. 1 (2006): 25–51.

as a site named *Memoria del exilio* (Memory of Exile, http://clio.rediris.es/index_exilio.htm) that provides educational materials for teaching and research in history. The rapid proliferation of internet sites, the impressive work of collecting documents and information, and of placing them on open access forums and databases, all demonstrate the scale of engagement of civil society and determination to make public what had remained in the private sphere for too long since the re-instatement of democracy in Spain.

Television played an equally important role in spreading the message to wider audiences. The 2000s saw a large number of documentaries about war, dictatorship and exile being produced by the state television company *Radio Televisión Española*, commercial television channels such as Canal+, publishing houses and research foundations. These documentaries combine previously unknown footage and photographs with interviews with survivors and witnesses. The stories they tell are powerful accounts of the suffering of individuals, families and communities, struggles to keep memories alive during the time of repression, frustration and further suffering when the 'pact of silence' does not allow these memories to become public in the long period of transition and, finally, the challenges and determination to not only preserve the memories of what happened many decades ago but to finally bring them forward to the public sphere and acknowledge their right to form part of the nation's history. When aired on television, these documentaries attracted large audiences and were often rebroadcast due to popular demand. DVDs of these programs were often sold out and the demand has remained steady.

Magazines, weekly supplements to newspapers and other periodicals had an even bigger impact on society, as they reached out to an audience that included moderates, the disinterested, and even those who considered themselves pro-Francoists; in brief, those who would not have otherwise found out about some painful episodes from recent history. In 2002, *El Semanal*, the weekly supplement of the leading Spanish newspaper *El País*, published an emotive account of a former prisoner of a concentration camp. A photo of the camp and the title of the article: '*Yo viví el campo de concentración franquista*' ('I lived through a Francoist concentration camp') screamed from the displays at newsstands all over the country and caused a sensation. Most Spaniards had never heard of Franco's concentration camps, and many would have considered the idea outrageous; however, they were confronted head-on with the harsh truth of the human right abuses of Franco's regime, in a shock treatment that sent waves through the whole society. Many other magazines devoted entire issues to topics such as mass graves from the Civil War and concentration camps under Franco, most putting confronting images on the front page. And it was

not a fad; the trend continues⁸⁹ as Spanish society goes through an accelerated process of re-evaluating its immediate past and learning the chapters of history that were previously suppressed.

The interest in testimonies and personal accounts of 'silenced' or 'forgotten' memories led to a surge in the publication of autobiographies, memoirs, and fact literature. Faction-style and fully fictionalised novelistic and cinematographic accounts of the war and the dictatorship have also been enormously popular, with Javier Cercas's 2001 'faction' style novel *Soldados de Salamina* (Soldiers of Salamis), an instant bestseller for 40 weeks and selling a million copies in six years, after an initial printing of only 5000 copies,⁹⁰ being heralded by many as the real beginning of the 'waking from amnesia' (*despertar tras la amnesia*) that Spanish society has been undergoing for just over a decade now. Cercas's novel is only one of innumerable fictionalised accounts of the war and the dictatorship,⁹¹ many of them produced by Spanish writers who lived in exile while Franco was still in power. The 1990s saw a publishing boom of these literary works that has since continued. Already in 2002, in a very aptly titled editorial, '*El Despertar tras la Amnesia*' (To wake-up from amnesia), Javier Valenzuela reflects on the popularity and success of publications such as Cercas's book, especially among young Spaniards. The historian Santos Juliá contributes an explanation that it is always more interesting, fascinating, even, for a grandson to inquire about a grandfather, than for a son to look at a father.⁹² This is mirrored by an abundance of scholarly approaches in the fields of literary studies that, alongside historical and political approaches, contribute to the overall body of literature on the way in which Spanish society is coming to terms with its immediate past.

Similarly, the 2003 movie adaptation of Cercas's novel by renowned director David Trueba,⁹³ and other motion picture features such as Antón Reixa's 2002 *El Lápiz del Carpintero* (The Carpenter's Pencil), Mexican filmmaker Guillermo de Toro's 2006 *El laberinto del fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth), as well as one the first

89 In June 2011, issues of two of the most popular history magazines *Clio* and *La Aventura de la Historia* (The Adventure of History), both had large sections devoted to revisiting those chapters in Spain's history. In *Clio* there is a 12-page spread on the Spanish Fascist Party by historian Xavier Casals ('Las siete vidas de Falange o la odisea del fascismo español', *Clio: Revista de Historia* 10, no. 116 (2011): 26–37), complete with a photograph of Juan Antonio Samaranch, future head of the International Olympic Committee, taking the oath. *La Aventura de la Historia* 13, no. 152 (2011) has a powerful photograph of deceased victims of the War on its cover, and four articles over 35 pages inside: Juan Carlos Losada, 'El Golpe y La Guerra', 62–71; Julio Martín Alarcón, 'Testigos de la Tragedia', 76–9; Enrique Moradiellos, 'Bajo la Lupa de Europa', 72–75; Ángel Viñas, 'La Trama', 56–61.

90 The book has been published worldwide in a myriad of languages and won the Independent Fiction Prize in 2004.

91 Cercas' latest work, *Anatomía de un instante* (The Anatomy of a Moment), (Barcelona: Mondadori, 2009), examines the failed coup d'état of February 1981 and earned him the Spanish National Narrative Award (*Premio Nacional de la Narrativa*) in 2010.

92 'Este interés de la nueva generación se corresponde a la mirada del nieto sobre el abuelo, que siempre es más interesada, más fascinada, más curiosa que la mirada del hijo sobre el padre'. Juliá en Valenzuela.

93 Winner of 2004 Goya Awards.

entries in this boom, Vicente Aranda's 1996 *Libertarias* (Freedomfighters [sic]), are quickly becoming the most studied of contemporary Spanish films: popular fascination with this topic again being matched by academic interest. A television series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (Tell Me How It Happened), set in the last years of Franco's regime and in the transition period, has been broadcast since 2001 and it is currently in its 13th season, with previous seasons averaging five million viewers and DVDs of past seasons, out of stock for years, just recently reissued.⁹⁴

Del Toro's film, *El laberinto del fauno*, won three Academy Awards in 2007 (for cinematography, art direction and make-up). It is one of many films and novels depicting the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship era in Spain that found recognition outside of Spain. This, on one hand, confirms the artistic quality of these productions and, on the other, that an historical context can hold attraction for audiences unfamiliar with that context but able to relate to it — it highlights the universality of the fragile and contested boundary between truth and fiction, so often examined and questioned in the contemporary society.⁹⁵ The concept of truth is essential to the Spanish process of reclaiming memory: it originally operated on the assumption that there is one unequivocal truth about certain historical events that had been silenced or distorted, and therefore needs to be revealed or corrected. The prevailing terminology used by Spanish commentators in press articles and on dedicated websites was that of 'falsifying the truth' (*falsificar la verdad*) and 'hiding the truth' (*ocultar la verdad*) during the Franco era, 'silence' (*silencio*) and 'oblivion' (*olvido*) in the first 20 years of democracy, and the urgent need to 'unveil the truth' (*desvelar la verdad*) and 'reclaim memory' (*recuperar la memoria*) as a 'blood debt' (*deuda sangrienta*) of Spanish society to those who perished or suffered oppression. This emotionally charged vocabulary reflected the high level of frustration and disappointment that was felt by the victims and their families, due to the lack of a concerted political effort to publicly recognise the wrongdoings and rehabilitate the victims. It was accompanied by a flood of specialist history books and articles that adopted a more distanced academic language but departed from the same point of claiming the right for a public recognition of human suffering. By exhuming unmarked graves and collecting the personal testimonies of victims and witnesses, activists and historians alike attempted to make public what had until then remained in the private sphere. Rather than entering into the epistemological debate about truth in history, these works exploited the highly emotional nature of the term *truth* in a society that was only recently opening up to the idea of multiple versions of history coexisting in the public sphere.

94 It has already been subject to scholarly inquiries. An example is Rodolfo Serrano, *La España de Cuéntame cómo pasó: el final de los años sesenta* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2004).

95 In the interpretation of Maja Jaggi, writing for the *Guardian* (2011), Vargas Llosa called *Soldiers of Salamis* (the book) 'magnificent' and 'proof that engaged literature is not dead'.

The generation of Spaniards actively engaging in the process of recovery of historical memory is still heavily influenced by the concepts of *one truth* and *one history*, which prevailed in the Franco-era educational system. Older generations, those whose personal memories and testimonies are collected, are even more conditioned, having lived for decades under a regime that relied on a pervasive propaganda for its legitimacy. Franco's propaganda machine had propagated only one official version of history, one in which Franco saved Spain from the clutches of the Reds, not unlike the crusaders fighting the infidels. As the saying goes, history is written by the victors and, in the case of Francoist Spain, this meant that the victors had not only the monopoly on interpretation of the actual conflict and the events leading to it, but also the right to rewrite other chapters of the past. Therefore, under Franco school curricula,⁹⁶ media reports, published books, artistic performances, amongst other forms of public expression, emphasised the glory of Spain's imperial achievements while suppressing knowledge of undesirable historical facts and processes, through strict censorship practices. Preston points out that:

the Franco regime used a distorted historical memory as a major weapon in its propaganda armoury. History under the Francoist dictatorship was a direct instrument of the State, written by policemen and soldiers, Falangists and priests, invigilated by the powerful censorship machinery.⁹⁷

Besides exploiting the legacies of the Civil War and the Second Republic, Franco used Spain's imperialistic and colonial past to reinforce notions of national unity and glory, especially by reinforcing the concept of a Christian crusade against infidels. Angel Luis Abós, in a study that examined over 200 history manuals used in Spanish schools between 1937 and 1975, considered this 'manipulation of the past' for propaganda purposes. As a result, entire generations of Spaniards grew up indoctrinated not only with a selective historical curriculum, but also had the concept of absolute historical truth embedded in them from very early age. Some beliefs that were fabricated and instilled in that era persist in Spanish society today, mainly due to the lack of an open public debate on Spain's recent history, and the fact that, as Graham points out, the 'coverage of the 1930s and 1940s in school history syllabuses is still frequently patchy or non-existent'.⁹⁸ This had an enormous impact on the way in which Spain dealt with the issue of historical memory during the transition in the first place, and in the early stages

96 See Juan Luis Abós, *La historia que nos enseñaron 1937–1975* (Madrid: Foca Ediciones, 2003) and José Antonio Álvarez Osés, Ignacio Cal Freire, María Carmen González Muñoz and Juan Haro Sabater, *La Guerra que aprendieron los españoles: República y Guerra civil en los textos de Bachillerato (1938–1983)* (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2000) for comprehensive analyses of Spanish educational curricula under Franco and into early transition, before changes were implemented.

97 Preston, *Revenge*, 31.

98 Graham, 31.

of the process of recuperation of historical memory through the mechanisms discussed earlier, and when previously suppressed information was now being revealed as the supposed *truth*, while the version that had been propagated by the Franco regime got labelled *false* or *a lie*.

Politics of memory

While in the last decade there has been an explosion in popular interest in historical memory, the issue was not at the forefront of Spanish political battles between the Right and the Left as early as one might expect. When it was in power from 1982 until 1996, the PSOE did little to advance the cause of the Republicans and can be credited with only limited achievements as far as reparations to and the rehabilitation of the victims of the war and of the fascist regime.⁹⁹ The process then suffered serious setbacks under the government of the right-wing Popular Party between 1996 and 2004,¹⁰⁰ which in turn mobilised activists and academics to continue their research and to organise commemorative events at the local level. ARHM was founded in 2000, just as the PP was re-elected for another term. The return of PSOE to power after the 11 March 2004 Madrid bombings was met with great expectations by the pro-Republicans but, again, the issue of historical memory was upstaged by other urgent and hotly debated social and political issues such as the right of gays to marriage and adoption, and the rights of autonomous regions versus the unity of the Spanish state.

When in September 2004¹⁰¹ the socialist government announced the creation of a special commission to investigate the victims of the Civil War and Francoism,¹⁰² it appeared that the memory of the Spanish Republic would finally become part of Spain's historical memory through a proper institutional change as a law regarding rehabilitation of the victims and reparations was expected to be proposed sometime in late 2005, preferably before the 30th anniversary of Franco's death, or even on the exact day (20 November). Yet on 12 September, the leader of the Commission, Deputy Prime Minister María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, announced not only that no legislation would be proposed in the near

99 As mentioned earlier, from the mid 1980s, some laws were passed regarding reparations to victims, including recognition of time spent in prison as years of work for the purpose of retirement pensions (1984), and provisions for financial compensation for long-term political prisoners of Franco's regime (1990–92).

100 Graham, 30, provides a clear example of PP's political stand on these matters: while denying funding to the ARHM, the government provided financial assistance to the maintenance of the graves of Blue Division volunteers, Spanish fascists who fought alongside the Germans on the eastern front in World War II.

101 Approved on 10 September 2004 and created on 18 October 2004. PSOE rejected similar proposals in June and July 2004, agreeing with the position of the Popular Party, but the General Assembly of PSOE held in July 2004 forced the Executive to take action.

102 Comisión Interministerial para el Estudio de las víctimas de la Guerra Civil y del Franquismo.

future, but also that the project now would include both sides of the conflict and not be used for reopening the wounds but rather to heal them.¹⁰³ In a letter to the editor of *El País*, a supporter of the ARHM countered that argument by declaring that 'nobody wants to reopen old wounds, we are only asking for truth and justice'.¹⁰⁴ But the spirit of reconciliation — meaning the pact of silence — prevailed again. Two days after the 30th anniversary of Franco's death, on 22 November 2005, the King celebrated the 30th anniversary of his coronation and, in his speech, he underlined the importance of reconciliation as the key for understanding what was achieved, and the best guarantee to continue ahead with unity, democracy and freedom.¹⁰⁵

It is not, therefore, surprising that, when the Law of Historical Memory was finally passed in October 2007, it fell short of addressing many issues in a way that would be satisfactory to those engaged in the process of recuperation of memory, and that includes the issue of public displays of Franco's imagery and symbolism.¹⁰⁶ After heated political battle and rejection of various drafts,¹⁰⁷ 'in the end, the Law established that symbols honouring only one side of the war must be removed from all state buildings and recommends that the local governments do the same for all public buildings'.¹⁰⁸ Viejo-Rose points out that 'this was a modified version of the original proposal, demanding that these symbols be removed from all public spaces including church and private property'.¹⁰⁹ The law was expected to deal with all remaining statues of Franco, still on public display at various locations around Spain. It certainly did, in great measure: after the 2005 removal of the Madrid statue, and the one in Zaragoza in 2006, the removals in other cities took place after the law went into effect, in Santander in 2008 and in Ceuta and Valencia in early 2010. In each instance, public demonstrations took place, and the press engaged in the familiar debates

103 'El Ejecutivo ha decidido frenar o al menos ralentizar la ley que preparaba con la idea de buscar un proyecto "ambicioso" que "contiene a los dos bandos y no sirva para reabrir heridas, sino para cicatrizarlas"' (Carlos E. Cué, 'De la Vega frena la ley de memoria histórica para acoger a ambos bandos', *El País*, 12 September 2005, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/Vega/frena/ley/memoria/historica/acoger/ambos/bandos/elpepiesp/20050912elpepinac_9/Tes accessed 20 September 2010).

104 '... aquí nadie quiere reabrir viejas heridas, solo se pide justicia y verdad' (Violeta López de Marcos, 'La memoria histórica', *El País*, 14 September 2005, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/memoria/historica/elpepiopi/20050914elpepiopi_4/Tes accessed 20 September 2010).

105 'El Rey subrayó que "el consenso, concordia y reconciliación están en la base misma de nuestra constitución, la clave para entender lo mucho que hemos logrado y la mejor garantía para seguir progresando con el esfuerzo de todos, unidos, en democracia y libertad"' (Juan Manuel Pardellas, 'El Rey vuelve a pedir consenso, concordia y reconciliación', *El País*, 22 November 2005, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/espana/Rey/vuelve/pedir/consenso/concordia/reconciliacion/elpepiesp/20051122elpepinac_24/Tes accessed 20 September 2010).

106 José María Abad Licerias examines in detail the various legal challenges associated with the application of the Law to the removal of symbols and public monuments, in *Ley de memoria histórica. La problemática jurídica de la retirada o mantenimiento de símbolos y monumentos públicos* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2009).

107 See Tremlett, 'The Grandsons' for an insightful account on the process of drafting the law and the media responses.

108 Viejo-Rose, 161.

109 *ibid.*

about 'erasing memory' and 'reopening of old wounds' while displaying — also very familiar by now — images of Franco's horse suspended from the crane that was lifting it for transport into oblivion. The last equestrian statue of Franco on Spanish territory was lifted in August 2010 in Melilla, however, in the same city, another statue of Franco remains on public display despite the Law of Historical Memory. City authorities had originally committed to the statue's removal early in 2010 but then decided to relegate the responsibilities to the Department of Defence, which in turn refused to accept it.¹¹⁰ In November 2010 the city authorities declared officially that the statue would not be removed because is not against the law: it portrays Franco as commander of the Legion and not as dictator.¹¹¹ It seems that Franco's face is still not erased from public view as Spain moves to the next decade and the next government, with the Popular Party winning the election on 20 November 2011.

110 'Retiran de Melilla la Última estatua ecuestre de Franco expuesta en España', *El Mundo*, 4 August 2010, <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2010/08/04/espana/1280942589.html> accessed 25 October 2010.

111 'Melilla apunta que la estatua de Franco no incumple la Ley de Memoria Histórica', *La Gaceta*, 29 November 2010, <http://www.intereconomia.com/noticias-gaceta/politica/melilla-apunta-que-estatua-franco-no-incumple-ley-memoria-historica> accessed 1 December 2010.