

The Scenes of Memory during the Era of the Democratic Transition in Spain: Politics and Culture

Los escenarios de la memoria durante la transición democrática en España

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Abstract

In this article we shall examine the scenes of memory of the Civil War and the Franco era during the years of the transition to democracy in Spain, especially 1976 and 1977. After discussing the usefulness for research of the narratives describing the role played by such remembrances, we study the different interplays between memories and oblivions of those historical events. Instead of using memory and oblivion as static and predetermined ideas as is normally the case with such narratives, we highlight the dynamic elements that help organize them (generational changes, culture, political strategies, etc.). While culture became a fertile ground for the remembrance of the Civil War and the Franco era, politics was clearly obliged to limit its use because of the way the transition evolved.

Key Words: Memory, Spanish Civil War, Transition, generation gap.

Resumen

En el presente artículo examinamos los escenarios de la memoria de la Guerra Civil y del franquismo durante los años de la transición a la democracia en España, especialmente 1976 y 1977. Tras discutir la utilidad de las narrativas que han dado cuenta del papel que tales recuerdos han jugado durante de la Transición, estudiamos la interrelación entre los recuerdos y los olvidos de dichos acontecimientos históricos. En lugar de utilizar la memoria y el olvido como ideas predeterminadas y estáticas, subrayamos los elementos dinámicos de ambos (cambios generacionales, cultura, estrategias políticas, etc.). Defendemos que mientras la cultura llegó a convertirse en un terreno destacado para la evocación de la Guerra y el franquismo, la política se trazó a sí misma una serie de límites en el uso de dicha evocación debido al modo en que se desarrolló la propia Transición.

Palabras clave: memoria, guerra civil española, Transición, brecha generacional.

In Spain the current debates and political controversies over the quality of democracy and its future include two memory components. On the one hand, the remembrance of the Civil War of 1936-1939; on the other, evoking the period of democratic transition during the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s.¹ Both of these are the foremost ingredients of functional or living memories operating in Spain in the last decades.² While their definitive contours might have been recently acquired, these debates are underpinned by narratives that in fact date back to the years of the transition itself.

Reducing these narratives to their primary lineaments, those seeing the democratic change as a successful process might also consider the limited political interest in the memory of the Civil War, allegedly prevalent in those years, to be unavoidable and even desirable. The political use of such memory – they assert – would have otherwise turned into an insurmountable obstacle for constructing a democratic coexistence between the erstwhile winners and losers, and their heirs. As the Civil War was already history during the era of the transition, that is, either already in the past or about to be, there was a need to leave it behind in politics, and for that reason amnesia proved absolutely essential.³ However, there are ever more people who think that Spanish democracy has fallen into crisis, or needs to take a leap forward. Such people also pay attention to the aforementioned oblivion of the war during the transition. Nevertheless, they regard it as neither inevitable nor beneficial. They rather see it as the outcome of an intentional strategy, in which the government and the opposition agreed behind closed doors to obviate the past, thereby determining the future of Spanish democracy. According to one of the pioneers, voicing this idea in an essay published in 1981, what had come about during the transition could be defined as a “historical pact of silence” between those in support of reforming Francoism and the opposition, a situation which meant a “lost opportunity” for both the Left, and Spanish democracy itself.⁴

¹ The research for this article is supported by the Project of I+D+i entitled “The Memory of the Spanish Civil War during the Spanish Transition to Democracy”. Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (Spain). HAR2011-25154 (<http://memoriatransicion.unizar.es/>).

The origin of this text is the seminar delivered at the Universities William Paterson and Rutgers-Newark (New Jersey, USA), on 4-5 March 2013, under the title “The Memory of the Civil War in Spain from the Franco Era to Current Times”. Its final version proved to be harder than expected and I would like to thank Yvonne Baker for her help to revise it. Because of the commitments resulting from the aforementioned Project, I wrote a much longer version in Spanish later under the title “Los teatros de la memoria durante la transición a la democracia en España”. This text is to appear in the collective book *Ha estallado la memoria. Las huellas de la Guerra Civil en la Transición a la Democracia* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva).

² Aleida Assmann defines “functional memories” as “group-related”, “normative”, “relevant for the present”, and “future-oriented”. See *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization. Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 123-4.

³ This is a more or less tacit assumption associated with the arguments justifying the so-called “political reform” and “agree-upon rupture” (*ruptura pactada*) in 1976 and 1977, and the idea of “reconciliation”. For examples of its early uses, see Josep Melià, *Qué es la reforma política* (Barcelona: La Gaya Ciencia, 1976), 12; and Santiago Carrillo *Qué es la ruptura democrática* (Barcelona: La Gaya Ciencia, 1976), 42.

⁴ This interpretation was formulated for the first time by José Vidal-Beneyto in *Diario de una ocasión perdida* (Barcelona: Kayrós, 1981). “Revisionist interpretations” discussing the model character of the Spanish transition to democracy, emerging from the 1990s onwards, owe the core of their arguments to this book. For an overview examining such arguments, see Santos Juliá, “Cosas que de la transición que se cuentan”, *Ayer*, 79 (2010/3), 297-319.

If the aforesaid stances were only limited to the fields of politics and the media there would be very little to comment on. They would be regarded as simple narratives of little use for historical analysis in which memory, silence and oblivion operate as static and predetermined ideas. As we can see, the major problem of such stances is that their logic prevents understanding the complex interplay established between the different remembrances and oblivions that was at stake in those years. But the matter is that, since Spanish historians began to show interest in the Spanish transition two decades ago, the social influence of those narratives has not stopped but increased, and neither have historians escaped their influence. It is true that topics from the field of “history of the present” such as that of the Spanish transition are so close to the bone that historians may need to get used to working under the constant examination of public opinion. But as far as historical research is concerned, one might also wonder whether such an influence from political and memory narratives might not be hindering the work of historians instead of contributing to it.

In this article we shall analyse the principal scenes during the transition of the memory of the Civil War and the Franco era, focusing on the interplay between memory and amnesia occurring specially in politics and culture over that time.⁵ Our purpose will be to contribute to outlining the history of remembrances in contemporary Spain, delving into the studies of previous authors. We will also attempt to shed light on the dilemmas between history and memory, such as the aforementioned, which have accumulated since Spanish historians decided to pay attention to this topic.⁶ To avoid these difficulties, we have followed a method other than that of the logic of the narratives presented above, by emphasizing the dynamic components that help organize memories. These elements include generational changes taking place during the Franco era, limits and deliberate forgetfulness in political memory, the balance of forces and strategies in this realm during the transition, the fears and expectations Spaniards harboured in those years, and the importance of cultural platforms.

With such ideas it is possible to form a hypothesis that is capable of meeting the requirements of research. Our hypothesis runs as follows: when Spain began its political transition around 1973-74, a parallel “transition” in memories was also taking place. In fact, what political change brought was accelerating mutation in the remembrances of

⁵ We have left aside other kinds of memories such as those of victims and relatives brought about by the repression triggered by Francoism during the war and the post-war periods. These memories require a treatment different from that reflecting on politics and cultural platforms: an enquiry in oral history, and a search for funerary places of memory (graveyards, monoliths, etc.), since this was rarely considered by the media and cultural platforms, and ignored by politics in those years. For details of that memory during the transition period, see Conxita Mir Curcó, Josep Gelonch Solé (eds.), *Duelo y memoria. Espacios para el recuerdo de las víctimas de la represión franquista en perspectiva comparada* (Lleida: Edicions de la Universitat de Lleida, 2013).

⁶ For the memories from late Francoism and the transition, see the following books published since then: Paloma Aguilar Fernández, *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española* (Madrid: Alianza, 1996), and *Políticas de la memoria y memorias de la política. El caso español en perspectiva comparada*, (Madrid: Alianza, 2008, with interesting changes in relation to the book published in 1996); Santos Juliá (ed.), *Memoria de la guerra civil y del franquismo* (Madrid: Taurus, Fundación Pablo Iglesias, 2006); Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *Cine y guerra civil. Del mito a la memoria* (Madrid: Alianza, 2006); Josefina Cuesta Bustillo, *La odisea de la memoria. Historia de la memoria en España. Siglo XX* (Madrid: Alianza, 2008), 258-319, 378-93; Walther Bernecker, Sören Brinkmann, *Memorias divididas. Guerra civil y franquismo en la sociedad y en la política españolas* (Madrid: Abada, 2009), pp. 203-30; and Gregorio Alonso, Diego Muro, *The Politics and Memory of Democratic Transition. The Spanish Model* (New York, London: Routledge, 2011).

Spaniards which had started at the end of the 1950s, and continued during the sixties and seventies, until the 1980s and 1990s when democracy strengthened, and is still in progress today. This was a process that confirms the golden rule of cultural memory whereby the modern traumas of a country end up becoming part of its collective heritage.⁷ However, as this process takes decades to be assimilated and several generations to solidify, the “photo” that the final years of the Franco era and the transition reveals is that of its beginnings, namely the moment when a dynamic interplay of remembrances and oblivions began to gain strength. The main feature of that situation was the coexistence between very fragmented political memories and an active cultural realm, highly sensitive to recollections and historical curiosity. To explain this interplay among the elements of memory, it is necessary to contemplate the generation gap taking place in the 1960s, the action of anti-Francoist cultures, their platforms (clandestine parties, social movements, dissenting publishers, etc.), and even the adaptations of the Franco regime itself. But above all, there is also a need to look carefully at the political circumstances which converged during the transition.

The article is divided into three sections: in the first, we will examine the antecedents of the social and political memories in the transition era and the erosion of the official remembrance of Francoism, which date back to the second half of the 1950s; in the second, we will study the field of politics, the political interest in memory by the government and opposition in 1976 and 1977, and its limits; the third section will be devoted to the cultural moment, that is, to the platforms through which memory and historical interest burst onto the scene, and evolved into a productive cultural market.

Official and communicative memories during the Franco era

It is well known that for decades the principal idea that served to legitimize the Franco dictatorship was its victory in the Civil War, which the regime itself always considered a “foundational event”. This remembrance was based on such an omnipresent narrative as to pervade politics, artistic expression, urban space, education and culture, and to remove the memory of the so-called losers.⁸ This meant that for years too, the Spanish people, marked as they were by the aftermath of the war, remained utterly ignorant of any narrative that attempted to examine its historical meaning through different voices or perspectives. Spaniards could only look at that event through its tragic consequences (poverty, censorship and control of culture, and repression), or conjure it up thanks to a “communicative memory” that wandered

⁷ Aleida Assmann defines cultural memory as “a prosthetic device, an externalized and reinternalizable collective creation that is transmitted and transformed over time and reshaped by succeeding generations”, in which literary canon, archival material, and countless symbols, narratives, remains, etc., are included (*Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 395-98).

⁸ For the narrative elements and platforms of the Franco memory, Alexandre Cirici, *La estética del franquismo* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1977), 76-183; Antonio Bonet Correa (ed.), *Arte del franquismo* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1981); Paloma Aguilar Fernández, *Memoria y olvido*, 86-137; Ángel Luis Abós Santabàrbara, *La historia que nos enseñaron, 1937-1975* (Madrid: Foca, 2003), 44-84, 165-81, *passim*; Alberto Reig Tapia, *Memoria de la guerra civil: los mitos de la tribu* (Madrid: Alianza, 1999), 153-57, *passim*; idem, “Los mitos políticos franquistas de la guerra civil y su función: el ‘espíritu del 18 de julio de 1936’”, in Julio Aróstegui, François Godicheau (eds.), *Guerra Civil. Mito y memoria* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, Casa de Velázquez, 2006), 217-19; Walther Bernecker, Sören Brinkmann, *Memorias divididas*, 167-202; and Zira Vox Valera, *España, año Cero. La construcción simbólica del franquismo* (Madrid: Alianza, 2010).

around family remembrances and clandestine circles.⁹ The British Hispanist Raymond Carr says that, on the first visit he paid to Spain in the 1950s, he was greatly surprised by the strong “psychological presence of the Civil War” and the widespread restlessness with the regime that could be felt among the population because of the extent of poverty, corruption, cost of living, and the black market.¹⁰

At least until the mid-1960s, as far as the issue of the war is concerned, Spain remained largely isolated from the rest of the world, and books on this topic were deeply influenced by the “myth of Franco’s crusade”. There was no starker contrast than the one separating this religious and warlike picture and how international opinion regarding the war had been shaped by war correspondents, journalists, intellectuals, exiles, and Hispanist scholars.¹¹ And yet, during the 1960s and 1970s, this domestic mix of living presence, propaganda and ignorance of the historical meaning of the war started to undergo crucial changes. Spain became a modern country where only places of official memory (names of streets, statues of Franco, the monument of the Valley of the Fallen, public holidays, etc.) still explicitly reminded visitors that in this land a devastating war had raged only three decades before.

As this modernization became widespread to broad strata of society and strategic sectors of the economy – and, with it, strikes, opposition movements, emigration, social unrest at universities, but at the same time consumption, mass culture and tourism – in the 1960s, Francoism began to seriously consider the advantages of keeping Spaniards depoliticized by insisting on other messages apart from that of the victory. The calls for explicit support under the banner of 18 July 1936, so significant in earlier times, were reduced in the end to the demonstrations in the Plaza de Oriente, in Madrid, in 1971, 1974 and 1975, when international protests against Francoism intensified. The result of this amalgamation of relative official silence and real social modernization caught on in intellectual circles and mass culture and was transferred to remembrance and interest in the war. From the mid-1960s onwards, a new historical curiosity along with the flimsy emergence of communicative memory in the public sphere, previously stifled by fear and official propaganda, came into being. Attempts to modernize memory were also made by the regime itself.

Perhaps the principal change in the scenes of communicative memory and historical curiosity during the latter years of Francoism was the spread of a remembrance of the recent past associated with segments of the population that did not “wage” or suffer the war as adults, and only knew it either as children or through family memories. It is not easy to evaluate the importance of this memory in depth, or even to observe its personal or complete narratives directly – at least not until Franco’s final years and the transition, when the so-called children of the war decided to divulge their

⁹ “Communicative memory” is the memory based on any group or circle that makes everyday communication possible (family, job, trade union, associations, friends, etc.). See Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”, *New German Critique*, 65 (1995), 125-33.

¹⁰ María Jesús González, *Raymond Carr. La curiosidad del zorro. Una biografía* (Barcelona: Círculo de lectores-Galaxia Gutenberg, 2010), 183.

¹¹ See the classic bibliographic enquiry by Herbert R. Southworth, *El mito de la cruzada de Franco* (1963), trans. Ana María Pérez (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2008), 79, 83, *passim*. The aforesaid isolation was alleviated by the books from exile which circulated in a clandestine way during the 1950s and 1960s. See Xavier Moret, *Tiempo de editores. Historia de la edición en España, 1939-1975* (Barcelona: Destino, 2002), 162; and Albert Forment, *José Martínez: la epopeya de Ruedo Ibérico* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2000), 187, 208, *passim*.

experiences from childhood.¹² It is however of great interest that, when Franco died in 1975, only 30% of the population that had lived through the war as adults were still alive.¹³ There is a twofold reason that makes this figure particularly relevant: it suggests the presence of new generations (70% of the population) that could grapple with the future with more optimism and display a new historical interest, and provides an idea of the noteworthy significance of family memories themselves. Referring as they did to a war where friends, relatives and people from the same town fought in enemy trenches, or acted as victims and executioners, these, as one can imagine, were a crucial factor. In a poll on the war carried out in 1983 by the magazine *Diario 16*, in answer to the question “How do you obtain information on the Civil War?” “through relatives” (57%) occupied first place, way above the media, television, films, books, journals, and school and university.¹⁴

To prove the presence of second-generation memory, Professor Paloma Aguilar uses a poll from the Instituto de Opinión Pública which shows that the pardon for crimes committed before 1939, granted by the Franco regime thirty years later, was well received by the citizens.¹⁵ No less relevant is the poll the Catalan publisher Rafael Borràs Betriu included in his book *Los que no hicimos la guerra* (1971). There, 97 people from the world of culture, with ages ranging from 24 to 44 years old, were asked seven specific questions that included aspects such as early recollections of the war, repercussions on lives and careers, opinion of its presumed inevitability, or current impact.

Borràs’s book had serious trouble with censorship since it was one of the first works published in Spain openly challenging the official thesis of the unanimity of Spaniards around Franco.¹⁶ Nevertheless, *Los que no hicimos la guerra* mirrored a range of opinions which, as far as perspectives on the present and future is concerned, were as ambiguous as they were wary. The people surveyed limited themselves to expressing their wish for or concern with “economic progress”, “reconciliation” or “freedom of association”.¹⁷ As for the opinions on the war, one can observe an interesting ambiguity that anticipates a widespread disposition in important strata of the Spanish population during the transition years: people recognized that the war was still a living event, something present that had somehow influenced their lives, family experiences and careers, but most of them admitted no longer feeling identified with either side. Their answers contained in fact as much interest in learning about the war as

¹² For instance through books like that of Teresa Pàmies, *Los niños de la Guerra* (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1977). See the analysis by Magdalena González, “La generación herida. La guerra civil y el primer franquismo como señas de identidad en los niños nacidos hasta el año 1940”, *Jerónimo Zurita*, 84 (2009), 87-112.

¹³ We regard here as adults people over the age of 13. For information on the percentages, see Julio Aróstegui, “Traumas colectivos y memorias generacionales: el caso de la guerra civil”, in Julio Aróstegui, François Godicheau (eds.), *Guerra Civil*, 85; and Walther Bernecker, Sören Brinkmann, *Memorias divididas*, 237.

¹⁴ “Especial guerra civil (3). Los testigos del horror”, *Cambio 16*, 618 (3 October 1983), 78.

¹⁵ Paloma Aguilar Fernández, *Memoria y olvido*, 147-50. For the relationship between generations and the political memory of the war, see Josefina Cuesta Bustillo, “‘Las capas de la memoria’. Contemporaneidad, sucesión y transmisión generacionales en España (1931-2006)”, *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 7 (2007) (<http://hispanianova.rediris.es/7/dossier/07d009.pdf>).

¹⁶ Perhaps with the much-applauded novel *Ha estallado la paz* by José María Gironella, released in 1966. Difficulties with censorship of Borràs’s book can be seen in the Archivo General de la Administración [henceforth AGA], Alcalá de Henares, Madrid. Signature 73/00663. Record 2384.

¹⁷ Rafael Borràs Betriu, *Los que no hicimos la guerra* (Barcelona: Nauta, 1971), 32, 80, 124, 204, *passim*.

the wishes to leave it behind as an existential problem. However, the question is this: is it possible to confirm the results of the Instituto de Opinión Pública and Borràs's poll in the cultural and political field?

At least current historiography during the late Franco and transition eras, interested as it is in social and cultural aspects, does tend to validate that outcome – although in an indirect way. As experts have shown, during the latter years of Francoism the emergence of a large variety of organizations and movements was gaining importance for the forthcoming period. Not only was it about clandestine parties and trade unions, it also involved platforms of students and young teachers, Christian organizations, artistic activities such as the popular song, and feminist and neighbourhood movements, which developed under the Law of Association enacted in December 1964. It is nevertheless true that the level of importance of those opinions or positions is hard to evaluate accurately and to translate into the realm of memories since anti-Francoist movements were few and far between during much of the Franco era. Moreover, some authors have also pointed out that, in general, before the transition most Spaniards were not concerned about politics and had an acquiescent attitude to the regime.¹⁸

In all these circles the growth of a democratic culture would in many ways have irretrievably eroded both the Francoist memory and legitimacy. In some cases, such as students, singer-songwriters and dissident Catholics from official Catholicism, this led to a demystifying attitude towards the memory of the war as a “crusade”, a less nostalgic political discourse, a recovery of intellectuals banned by official culture, or simply a criticism of the regime in a more or less concealed manner. In others, as in the early feminist associations, ideas of class or gender opposing the official stereotypes associated with National Catholicism enabled them to denounce women's legal status in Spain. In yet other cases, such as neighbourhood movements, it was about a “horizontal culture”, with a discourse of “self-government” and civic participation, going beyond what the so-called organic democracy was expected to be.¹⁹

Glimpses of this unmasking disposition can be discerned through the university protests in February 1956 in Madrid. Nevertheless, it was especially during the 1960s when a wide range of opposition groups within the country began to carry out crucial political and trade-union activities as social unrest and protests increased. The Communist Party (PCE), which acted in isolation most of the time, was the foremost political movement. This party had begun to adapt its political memory to the long-

¹⁸ Víctor Pérez Díaz, *La primacía de la sociedad civil. El proceso de formación de la España democrática* (Madrid: Alianza, 1993), 47; and Cayo Sastre García, *Transición y desmovilización política en España: 1975-78* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1997), 70-95. Defending the importance of mobilization, Pere Ysàs, “¿Una sociedad pasiva? Actitudes, activismo y conflictividad social en el franquismo tardío”, *Ayer*, 68 (2007), 31-57; and idem, “La Transición española. Luces y sombras”, *Ayer*, 79 (2010), 31-57.

¹⁹ In addition to works that will be quoted in other footnotes, we have followed these overviews: María Ángeles Larumbe, *Una inmensa minoría. Influencia y feminismo y en la Transición* (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias, 2002), 139-59; Elena Hernández Sandoica, Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, Marc Baldó Lacomba, *Estudiantes contra Franco (1939-1975). Oposición política y movilización juvenil* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2007), 144-276; Feliciano Montero, *La Iglesia: de la colaboración a la disidencia (1956-1975). La oposición durante el franquismo/4* (Madrid: Encuentro, 2009), 123-19; and Pamela B. Radcliff, *Making Citizens in Spain. Civil Society and Popular Origins of the Transition, 1960-78* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 235-318.

standing doctrine of “national reconciliation”, as a result of the 1956 protests. There the PCE called for the exiles and the Francoist dissidents to join forces.²⁰ However, it was during the 1960s when the opposition was also to be nurtured by a myriad of Catholics rejecting National Catholicism, socialists, anarchists, Basque and Catalan nationalists, liberals, monarchists, and even leftist dissidents from the PCE.

With the possible exception of the monarchists, for whom the influence of the war generation was momentous, in most cases the generation gap increasingly made its presence felt in these circles; and far-reaching consequences in the realm of political memory came quickly. For young people, the remembrance of the Second Republic and the war, although present in their homes, was soon to play a more indirect role in the promotion of their activism. For example, in the 1960s, among the new generations, belonging to a Republican or anti-Francoist family was no longer the sole or sufficient requirement to join clandestine or new trade unions (the Unión General de Trabajadores, the Unión Sindical Obrera, and Comisiones Obreras), as had happened in the previous decade.²¹ Moreover, the mid-1960s saw the emergence of different “Marxism-Leninist” organizations who criticized the PCE. These groups were made up of young men and women that were born after the war, were not conditioned by the need to justify any memory of the war and, even less, were influenced by the culture of exile.²²

In fact, the belief that the anti-Francoist fight should be left to inside groups inevitably spread over the 1960s and this circumstance also entailed a shift in political memory. Even in the PCE, which was the most powerful and disciplined party, one thing was the doctrine taken by the leadership in exile, and another the aspects of daily application which fell on the young militants in the country itself.²³ Raúl Morodo, a young socialist intellectual from the “Salamanca group”, for instance, expressed the importance of inside groups in terms of memory in a much talked about contribution in *Ibérica*, the famous New York journal published by Victoria Kent during her exile. There, Morodo, under the pseudonym Rogelio del Moral, claimed the need for a new analysis both of the Francoist dictatorship and the Republican “legitimacy”. This was because –he wrote in reply to his critics from exile– “the new generations do not feel themselves to be either the ‘victors’ or the ‘vanquished’ of the 1936-39 conflict. They are not with the regime, but neither are they with the exiles”²⁴.

Despite discrepancies, during the 1960s Spanish culture was fruitful in developing initiatives aimed at establishing contacts between the interior and exile, which also contributed to undermining the memory and Francoist legitimacy. “El puente” (1963-1968), for instance, released by the exiled intellectual Guillermo de

²⁰ See the interpretation by Carme Molinero, “La política de reconciliación nacional. Su contenido durante el franquismo, su lectura durante la Transición”, *Ayer*, 66 (2007), 206-16; and the classic by Gregorio Morán, *Miseria y grandeza del Partido Comunista de España, 1939-1985* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986), 276-80.

²¹ José María Maravall, *Dictadura y disenso político: obreros y estudiantes bajo el franquismo* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1978), 147-53.

²² For an overview of these groups, see Consuelo Laiz, *La lucha final. Los partidos de la izquierda radical durante la transición española* (Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata, 1995).

²³ See Manuel Bueno, Carmen García, José Hinojosa (eds.), *Historia del PCE. I Congreso, 1920-1977* (Madrid: Fundación de Investigaciones Marxistas, 2007), vol. II, 13-423.

²⁴ Rogelio del Moral (Raúl Morodo), “Interior and Exterior: Replies to some Interlocutors in Exile”, *Ibérica for a Free Spain*, vol. 12, 11(15 December 1965), 5.

Torre by the Argentine publisher Sudamericana, which opened a Barcelona branch (Edhasa), was the first collection that brought writers together that had fought in enemy trenches during the war.²⁵ The well-known Fourth Congress of the European Movement assembling eighty dissident intellectuals from inside and thirty-eight from outside the country had been held shortly before in Munich from 5 to 8 June 1962. There, the speech of the republican exiled writer, Salvador de Madariaga, stating that “the Civil War ended the day before yesterday on 6 June 1962”, would be much applauded.²⁶ In 1963, the well-known journal *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* was established in Madrid. This would be complemented in 1965 with the foundation of a publishing house under the name of Edicusa from the same intellectual group. With a proposal for “dialogue” to open the doors of Catholicism to other secular proposals and varied doctrines, including Marxism, these platforms also served to evaluate both general philosophical political aspects and topics of contemporary Spain. In this field *Cuadernos para el Diálogo* and *Edicusa* were soon ripe for the idea of reconciliation. At first they endorsed this concept through a religious discourse, but later they did so in a more direct political way by talking of “national reconciliation” and “amnesty”, with the collaboration of some exiles, and through their interest in figures like the socialist leaders Julián Besteiro and Fernando de los Ríos, or President Manuel Azaña.²⁷ The first publisher devoted to recovering the memory of the Spanish labour movement in Spain, ZIX, also came from dissident Catholic ranks. Founded in 1964 by a handful of workers from the Castilian Hermandades Obreras de Acción Católica, ZIX released a huge number of the early books relating to labour, including the history of the Spanish labour movement.²⁸ One can also see in its catalogues the first work published in Spain by the legendary General Vicente Rojo Lluch, commander-in-chief of the republican forces during the war, who had returned to Spain from Bolivian exile in 1957 but spent his last years ostracized by the Francoist regime (he died in 1966).²⁹

Adaptations of the Franco regime itself to social change also played an interesting role in helping modify the memory scene during the 1960s and early 1970s. In addition to its origins, the regime also began to draw attention to its “achievements” with the so-called economic policy of “desarrollismo”, thereby developing an additional legitimacy resulting in the repeated slogan “peace and progress”.³⁰ For our purpose, the most important proof of this new stance was the enactment of the Press and Printing Law of 1966, in force until 1978. This law, which reformed the previous censorship system stemming from the war, was designed to modernize the control of culture. The law looked at culture as a kind of propaganda, like previous legislation, but it was more interested in mass culture than in controlling learned culture; hence the leeway given to some topics – always providing they did not directly question the political or intellectual

²⁵ Antonio Largo Carballo, Nicanor Gómez Villegas (eds.), *Un viaje de ida y vuelta: la edición española e iberoamericana (1936-75)* (Madrid: Siruela, 2006), 126.

²⁶ Javier Tusell, *La oposición democrática*, 388-443 (the sentence quoted, in p. 395).

²⁷ Javier Muñoz Soro, *Cuadernos para el Diálogo (1963-1976). Una historia cultural del segundo franquismo* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 142-59.

²⁸ Enrique Berzal de la Rosa, *Sotanas rebeldes. Contribución cristiana a la transición democrática* (Valladolid: Diputación Provincial de Valladolid, 2007), 52-59; and María del Mar Araus Segura, “Editorial ZIX. S.A.: editorial obrera frente al franquismo”, in *El franquismo: el régimen y la oposición. Actas de las IV Jornadas sobre Castilla-La Mancha sobre investigación en archivos. Guadalajara 9-12 noviembre 1999* (Guadalajara: ANABAD, 1999), Vol. II, 1001-16.

²⁹ Vicente Rojo, *El ejército como institución social* (Madrid: ZIX, 1968). On his latter years, José Andrés Rojo, *Vicente Rojo. Retrato de un general republicano* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2006), 384-429.

³⁰ Paloma Aguilar Fernández, *Memoria y olvido*, 68, 164-88.

foundations of the regime – like certain books of Marxist philosophy intended for minorities.³¹ With this new legal framework, publishers and intellectuals soon trained their sight on the topic of the war, both as an object of public memory and “history” intended to satisfy the curiosity of new generations. As the publishers of the pioneering collection “Horas de España” (founded in 1966 by the Barcelona publishing house Ariel) announced on the flaps of their books, “The collection focuses on topics of the immediate past, because this is undoubtedly what will arouse most interest in our readers and is also the period with which new generations are least familiar”. Thus, in topics relating to the war, from the mid-1960s onwards, a slow – because of the censorship – but irreversible process of the modernization of publishing began to unfold in Spain.³²

The Civil War was also a matter directly concerning the Ministry of Information and Tourism, worried as it was by the image of Spain abroad. For this reason, the *Sección de Estudios sobre la Guerra de España* in the charge of Ricardo de la Cierva, a recent civil servant in the Ministry, would be established in 1965. While much has been said about la Cierva’s “neo-Francoist” historical view, hardly anything has been written about this *Sección de Estudios*, which he ran throughout the period from 1965 to 1973.³³ Nevertheless, as the censorship records indicate, the Section developed a decisive consultative function aimed at advising the Ministry on all topics concerning the censorship of books on the Civil War (in 1964 military supervision on this topic ceased and censorship became the sole province of the Ministry). This task was complemented by the more visible reviews of relevant literature and compilation of bibliographies, in which Vicente Palacio Atard, Professor of the University of Madrid, soon also played a prominent role. Such activities were important in that they formed part of an attempt to modernize the Francoist memory of the war safeguarding the backbone of such narrative. A significant novelty in this “distancing” was the fact that both la Cierva and Palacio Atard began to use expressions such as “Civil War” and “war of Spain”, absent from the Francoist official propaganda or politically forbidden until such times because of the ubiquity of the expression “Franco’s crusade”.³⁴

Political memory, expectations and fears during the transition

Although the changes hitherto commented on started to reach the public arena in the 1960s, the development of a public interest in the war – other than official propaganda – only exhibited a noteworthy increase when the post-Franco era started

³¹ See Francisco Rojas Claros, “Poder, disidencia editorial y cambio cultural en la España durante los años sesenta”, *Pasado y Memoria*, 5 (2006), 59-80.

³² For the origins of this modernisation, see Gonzalo Pasamar, “El recuerdo de la Guerra Civil española durante la Transición: los editores y las colecciones históricas y de memorias”, *Historia Social*, 77 (2013), 55 ff. As for the works of fiction, what can be seen since the mid-1960s is that the topic of the war is tackled from a more critical perspective. Authors, who belong to the first war generation, adopt a more critical viewpoint and highlight the complexity and tragic nature of the conflict. See some examples in Jeremy Treglown, *Franco’s Crypt. Spanish Culture and Memory since 1936* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 148-56.

³³ For further information on Ricardo de la Cierva, see Gonzalo Pasamar, Ignacio Peiró, *Diccionario Akal de historiadores españoles contemporáneos (1840-1980)* (Madrid: Akal, 2002), 189-90; Alberto Reig Tapia, *Ideología e historia sobre la represión franquista y la guerra civil* (Madrid: Akal, 1982), 74-89; and the posthumous essay by Herbert R. Southworth, *Conspiracy and the Spanish Civil War. The brainwashing of Francisco Franco* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), ix-x, 105-9.

³⁴ For this Palacio Atard’s aspect, see Secundino-José Gutiérrez Álvarez, “Palacio Atard y los estudios sobre la guerra civil española”, *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 9 (1988), 85-112.

coalesce on the horizon, approximately in the years 1973 and 1974. It was as though the past became more attractive and the object of increasing curiosity for a large segment of the Spanish population when it foresaw that, with Franco's death approaching, the war might cease to be "present" at that time.

On 20 December 1973, Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco's assassination provoked a crisis in the regime, from which it would never recover, and 1974 saw how General Franco fell seriously ill for the first time while the "Carnation Revolution" broke out across the frontier in neighbouring Portugal. Sociological reports of the FOESSA Foundation also pointed out that, from 1974 onwards, "strong expectations of political change had been forged" in Spanish society, since "the optimism created in the years of economic growth was imperceptibly transferred to the political field".³⁵ However, in 1974 and 1975 democratic expectations were only a possibility amid a complex panorama darkened by fears and uncertainties. It would be necessary to wait well into 1976 to realize that post-Francoism was up a blind alley and the possibility of Spain becoming a democracy started to look more likely. To understand the development of public interest in the war, and to what extent it was capable of reaching the political arena, there is a need to examine how fears combined with expectations and with the contemplation of the past, and all these factors had an influence on the political field where the balance of forces at stake was of the utmost importance.

In those days Spaniards frequently associated the idea of leaving Francoism behind with the need to overcome fear. According to a poll carried out in October 1975 on fears about the future, one month before Franco's death, Spaniards were much more concerned and frightened about the political situation than five years earlier.³⁶ Some months later, the journalist Juan Luis Cebrián would comment that "Spanish society has been living in fear over the past few decades", although "we have to admit that nothing apocalyptic has happened as was predicted".³⁷ The most famous song during the months of the referendum on the Ley para la Reforma Política (below), "Libertad sin ira" [freedom without rage], by the Andalusian group Jarcha, also talked of how the chance to leave the war behind had arrived, and to achieve it, the song invited people to "leave aside your fear and rage".³⁸ On the other hand, it is possible that the sentiment which polls, essays and other cultural expressions were reflecting was not exactly the fear that another war like the war of 1936 would break out, but rather a more vague sense of alarm at the possibility that violence could put an abrupt end to expectations of change frustrated them for a long time or bring back the worst days of the post-war period. This was, for instance, clearly perceptible in the so-called "tragic week" at the end of January 1977: there was no shortage of Spaniards who in those days came to believe that the coincidence of tragic events such as the murder of the labour lawyers of the calle Atocha in Madrid, two students shot dead by the police, and several attacks by terrorist organization GRAPO, had not been a mere coincidence.³⁹

³⁵ Darío Vila Carro, Francisco Andrés Orizo, Manuel Gómez-Reino, "Sociología del actual cambio político", in *Síntesis actualizada del III informe FOESSA 1978* (Madrid: Euramérica, 1978), 682.

³⁶ Rafael López Pintor, *La opinión pública española del franquismo a la democracia* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1982), 102. In general the presence of fear in the politics of the transition has been highlighted by specialists, such as, for instance, Josep María Colomer, *La transición a la democracia: el modelo español* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1998), 40-41.

³⁷ Juan Luis Cebrián, "La calle", *El País*, 18 September 1976.

³⁸ "Libertad sin ira" (lyrics), <http://www.jarcha.com/discografia/> (accessed on 1 April 2013).

³⁹ For echoes of this opinion, see Justino Sinova (ed.), *Historia de la Transición. Diez años que cambiaron España. 1973-1983* (Madrid: Diario 16, 1983-84, vol. 25), 377-79, 382-83.

But if the belief that Spanish recent past was associated with violence had a strong influence in memories, the increasing expectations after Franco's death was also a factor in the scenes of political remembrance. Adolfo Suárez's proposal for political reform is perhaps the first factor to explain these increasing expectations.

At the age of 43, Suárez had so far been a modest supporter of reforming Francoism, an "aperturista" from inside the regime. After his appointment as President of the Cabinet in July 1976, he became the first ruler from the Francoist ranks to openly speak of a political reform without conditioning its final result. Such flexibility, which included the promise of general elections, a certain slackening of cultural censorship, limited amnesty, and informal contacts with the opposition, may explain how Suárez was so easily able to connect with the expectations of a gradual and peaceful transition to democracy espoused by the bulk of Spaniards so far not interested in politics. In the referendum of 15 December 1976, the so-called Ley para la Reforma Política, the approval and implementation of which implied the onset of the dismantling of the Francoist regime, gained the support of more than 94% of the voters. However, Suárez's calculated flexibility had not emerged overnight. It had arisen as an attempt by some supporters in favour of reforming Francoism to recover the political initiative that had been lost when Carrero Blanco disappeared. The trajectory of the first government of the monarchy, presided over by Carlos Arias Navarro (November 1975-June 1976), who considered himself to be the guardian of the Francoist regime's quintessential principles, had shown that simple reforms designed to perpetuate it proved to be of no use. Neither were such reforms going to stop the growing social protest, nor were they going to fulfil the expectations citizens had placed in change, even less silence the criticisms coming from the ranks of the supporters about leaving the regime untouched. Instead the opposite might happen: if that situation continued, the monarchy itself would be risking its own position.

It is also interesting to observe that throughout 1976, Franco's myth underwent a rapid weakening in public opinion, which confirms the will of most Spaniards to turn the page of the war. This does not contradict the fact that Franco was able to maintain a positive image among a remarkable number of citizens in the following years as a "historical figure". In the aforementioned poll of 1983, for example, up to 40% of survey respondents agreed with the idea that Franco had saved Spain, and that his whole behaviour during the war was motivated by his great love for Spain.⁴⁰ It was not easy for the consequences of decades of a policy of official memory to vanish so quickly, but only a few months were required after Franco's death for a perceptible demystification of his figure to take place. It is no surprise that the bestseller in 1976 in Spain was a sort of biography of Franco by his cousin and confidant, Lt. General Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco*, published upon his death by his widow. The book is a diary comprising the years 1954-1971, which, in the critics' opinion, had a paradoxically devastating effect on Franco's mythical image. Apart from gathering unexpected and surprising opinions on a wide range of disparate events and public figures of the regime plus unknown details, the diary was completely dispassionate and distant with Franco, who lost his halo as a great statesman.⁴¹

⁴⁰ "Especial guerra civil (2). Lo que queda del 36", *Cambio* 16, 617 (26 September 1983), 69.

⁴¹ Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Crónica sentimental de la transición* (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2005), 125.

What did Suárez's political reform represent in terms of memory and legitimacy? Basically two interwoven eventualities: on the one hand, that the same monarch appointed by Franco as "successor with the title of King" in 1969, himself might be capable of obtaining an independent legitimacy. This possibility would help the monarchy guarantee its image and survival, and thereby recount a historical narrative other than that of 18 July 1936. On the other hand, that legitimacy represented by the Spanish Republic, which was associated with democracy, was excluded from the political arena, clearing the way for the legality of the monarchy.

Contemporary authors have pointed out that the final purpose of the Ley para la Reforma Política was "to close up the parenthesis of the Civil War".⁴² According to this interpretation, only a political reform that was able to dismantle Francoism from the inside (guaranteed by the Spanish people in a referendum) could update the legitimacy of the Spanish monarchy to distinguish itself from that of the 18th July. However, in order to do so, it was crucial to envisage an effective "constitutional" change. Torcuato Fernández-Miranda, architect of that Law and chairing the institutions able to pass it – the Cortes and the Council of State – summarized such an idea in an acclaimed expression invoking a reform which needed moving "from law to law". As far as political use of the past is concerned, the meaning of this thesis was closely related to the aforementioned search for monarchic and not republican legitimacy. Fernández-Miranda himself, who had been Professor of Political Law and had a good knowledge of Spanish political history, also argued for this aspect by pointing out that the Ley para la Reforma Política was a way of opening up a stage of peaceful "constitutional change" that would put an end to a presumed history of "revolutionary" constitutional changes in contemporary Spain.⁴³

This mechanism was all the more urgent given the need to persuade the Army, in which legitimacy of the 18th July was established, for the convenience of a moderate political change that left the presence of the war behind for good. The solution for this paradox was offered by the appointment of Lt. Manuel Gutiérrez Mellado as Vice President of Suárez's government in September 1976. Gutiérrez Mellado was to be the person responsible for convincing the military that, once the 18th July had become a perfectly legitimate historical fact after Franco's death, it was appropriate to endorse the political reform. As he once assured the press, while it was true that in 1936 the generals rose up against the Republic in an inevitable and legitimate way, this conflict no longer belonged to the present: "Everyone fought for his own ideals. Today it is necessary to move on and realize that (the Civil War) is now history and that there is much still left to do by whoever wants Spain to continue to progress without hatred and rancour".⁴⁴

In fact, the balance of forces, or of "witnesses"⁴⁵, between the "reformists" and the opposition, at stake throughout 1976 and the spring of 1977, was leading the

⁴² See for instance Josep Melià, *Qué es la reforma política*, 12, 23, 31. Moreover, Victoria Prego, *Así se hizo la transición* (Madrid: Plaza & Janés, 1995), 556, 562.

⁴³ Pilar Fernández-Miranda Lozana, Alfonso Fernández Miranda-Campoamor, *Lo que el Rey me ha pedido: Torcuato Fernández Miranda y la reforma política* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1995), 38-40.

⁴⁴ Teniente General Gutiérrez Mellado, "Planes y programas de actuación" (Transcription of the interview granted to the President of Agencia EFE one month after his appointment as Vice President, 24 October, 1976) (Instituto Universitario General Gutiérrez Mellado. Investigaciones sobre la Paz, la Seguridad y la Defensa, <http://iugm.es/>) (accessed on 22 March 2013).

⁴⁵ The term, in Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Crónica sentimental*, 155.

participants, who were moulded by different political cultures, to a gradual change in which they were obliged to mark out a series of limits in their allusions to the past. This situation, more than a presumed “pact of historical silence” around the memory of the war and the Franco era, was a rapprochement of positions that depended on political circumstances and how Spanish public opinion behaved during those months. The main figure in this scene of political memories would be the inclination of the principal actors to highlight the differences separating the situations of 1936 and 1976-77.

Adolfo Suárez, for instance, in his political speeches always preferred to look ahead rather than stir up the past with allusions to Franco and the war. In his message on 10 September 1976 on bill for the Ley para la Reforma Política (echoing a famous sentence uttered by Roosevelt), Suárez would state that “we are going to start a great national debate over our future”, and “there is no reason to be afraid of anything. The only national fear that should hit us is the fear to fear itself”.⁴⁶ The message of 14 December on the referendum began by pointing out that “everything is changed in this nation” and was limited to only mentioning Franco once by saying that this “exceptional figure has disappeared”.⁴⁷ These absences of references to the past pointed to a strategic purpose. A few months before the general elections took place, Suárez had himself recognized that criticizing Francoism openly proved to be a bad strategy since “this hurts many sensibilities” and could scare moderate voters.⁴⁸ But in no way did this mean disinterest in the past. In the speech of 3 May 1977, announcing his candidacy for the post of President of the Government in the June elections, we can see how Suárez insists on the “risks” revealed by history of “the political division of the Spanish people into two antagonistic fronts”.⁴⁹

Throughout 1976 and early 1977, the Francoist opposition also went through a process of change. In its early formula, the “rupture” championed by the opposition lay in the belief that Spaniards were ripe for a mobilization that would destroy Francoism and hand over power to a provisional government made up exclusively of the opposition forces. This government would favour a “constituent process” (a concept influenced by the memory of the Constitution of 1931), guarantee democratic freedoms, decree an amnesty, and call for general elections to a constitutional assembly to decide on the form of government. Behind such a stage there was the erstwhile idea of closing up the divisions from the war, uniting the “historical” anti-Francoist parties and the increasing number of dissidents from the ranks of the regime, as well as letting Spaniards decide what form of state they wanted to have. However, after decades of scattered strategies, between the summer of 1974 and the spring of 1976, the opposition also evolved to an internal understanding. This agreement, represented by the so-called “Democratic Coordination” born on 26 March 1976 (popularly known as the “Platajunta”)⁵⁰ also brought both new strategies and historical arguments.

⁴⁶ Adolfo Suárez, “Mensaje del 10 de septiembre de 1976 sobre la reforma política” (Fundación Transición Española, <http://transicion.org/>) (accessed on 20 March 2013).

⁴⁷ Adolfo Suárez, “Mensaje del 14 de diciembre de 1976. El referéndum nacional sobre la Ley para la Reforma Política”, *Ibid.* (accessed on 22 December, 2013).

⁴⁸ José María de Areilza, *Cuadernos de la transición* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1983), 120.

⁴⁹ Adolfo Suárez, “Discurso del 3 de mayo de 1977, candidatura del presidente” (Fundación Transición Española, <http://transicion.org/>) (accessed on 20 March 2013).

⁵⁰ For this process, which dates back to the 1960s in Catalonia, see Santiago Míguez González, *La preparación de la transición a la democracia en España* (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias, 1990), 403-79.

From that time to June 1977, the pressure that the Platajunta exerted to defend its political objectives led to the paradox that by spring 1977 Suárez's government had assumed most of the opposition's political program in the implementation of the Ley para la Reforma Política (except for the "total amnesty", the legalization of historical republican parties and Marxist-Leninist groups, and Catalan and Basque aspirations to self-government). Suárez had in fact been free to use contacts, negotiations, and the rhythms implicit in reforms. But the pressure exerted by the opposition – backed by noteworthy social movements – and the need to guarantee credible elections provided the factors obliging him to dismantle the "Movimiento Nacional", or at least to sign its demise, and legalize the PCE before the general elections of June. Meanwhile, in 1976 and the first half of 1977, the socialists and communists had not only adapted to new circumstances emerging at that time both in Spain and abroad, they were also in a process of reformulating their political memory.

In the early 1970s Spanish socialism had little in common, as far as political culture is concerned, with the movement from the Second Republic, the war and "historical" exile. Socialists were rather a gathering of scattered movements made up of young people (which included the exiles' sons and daughters), some intellectuals and veteran militants with many years in Francoist jails behind them, who seriously disagreed with the strategy of non-intervention in anti-Francoist movements in Spain promoted by the leaders of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) in Toulouse (France). One of the most active and veteran socialist groups, for instance, was the Partido Socialista "en el interior", founded in 1967 and renamed Partido Socialista Popular in 1974. This circle not only criticized the "prejudices of the pre-war era", it also moved towards a reconciliatory approach of contacts with other groups of the opposition and endorsement of the trade union strategy put forward by Comisiones Obreras, and even came to regard the eventuality of a democratic monarchy.⁵¹ By the early 1970s, different groups of young socialists were seriously considering the idea of reconstituting the PSOE from the inside in order to maintain contacts with other movements, lead the way for Spanish socialism, and gain the support of the Socialist International, which was achieved between 1974 and 1976.⁵²

It is very interesting to observe that in 1976, rather than just the republican memory, the line taken by this renewed PSOE (re-founded in October 1974 in Suresnes, near Paris) was the view of itself as the leader of Socialism, the labour movement and even of the whole of the Spanish left. As General Secretary, Felipe González Márquez wrote at the time, "the trauma which the Civil War caused in the life of the socialist party has been overcome (...) [and] the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (...) is today becoming, as in 1931, the cornerstone and significant guarantee of a democratic alternative".⁵³ Another book of political propaganda from 1976 declared that "its history [that of the PSOE] fuses with the history of the Spanish proletariat", and "because of its theoretical and practical legacy, the Partido Socialista Obrero Español is the collective

⁵¹ See Enrique Tierno Galván, *Cabos sueltos* (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1981), 284-94, 523-35, and Francisco Bobillo, *PSP. Partido Socialista Popular* (Barcelona: Avance, 1976), 11-64.

⁵² For details of this process, see, for instance, Abdón Mateos, "La transición de PSOE durante los años setenta", in Rafael Quiroga-Cheyrouze y Muñoz (coord.), *Historia de la Transición en España. Los inicios del proceso democratizador* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007), 288-94; and Juan Andrade Blanco, *El PCE y el PSOE en (la) transición. La evolución ideológica de la izquierda durante el proceso de cambio político* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2012), 118-22.

⁵³ Felipe González, *Qué es el socialismo* (Barcelona: La Gaya Ciencia, 1976), 39-55.

memory of the proletariat”.⁵⁴ Substituting “workers” for “proletariat”, the same idea can be read in the pamphlet of electoral propaganda in the elections of June 1977 entitled *¿Qué es el PSOE?*⁵⁵

As for the Communist Party (PCE), if since 1974 this had been distinguished by its erstwhile idea of rupture and national reconciliation, in 1976, as the months passed, the main fear that assailed the party was exclusion from the change that would presumably come about in Spain. As Santiago Carrillo, the PCE’s General Secretary, once said, “Legalization was a matter of life and death”.⁵⁶ This is more relevant because at that time the PCE, notwithstanding the propaganda fuelled by Francoism against him, was considered the foremost political force on the Spanish Left. The PCE’s efforts at historical reflection and memory undertaken at that time can only be understood from that perspective. The formula of the “ruptura pactada” (agreed-upon rupture) launched by the PCE in the “Platajunta” summarized that new political and historical analysis. Santiago Carrillo said as much at the end of 1976, before the referendum for the Ley para la Reforma Política was held, when he explained that the only way of bringing democracy to Spain was in the form of a coalition government where all political forces were present, the supporters of the reform included. To strengthen this argument, Carrillo highlighted that the situation in 1936 was very different from the one in the present: “without going into the causes of the Civil War, which is already (...) an historical event, I must radically deny that [the democratic break] was about to revive the past”, he asserted.⁵⁷

The cultural moment

While in the political arena the war was the object of a play of calculated allusions and silences to highlight the differences separating the present from the past (at least among the supporters of reform and of agreed-upon rupture), in the cultural field concern with memory reached its climax in 1976 and 1977. This was aided by the political situation and had no other limits than those imposed by the Spanish cultural market. That attention had been emerging during the latter Francoist period when a new historical curiosity and an interest in leaving aside the official memory started to appear on the scene. But only when censorship began to loosen up, first in a timid way in 1973 and 1974, then in a clearer manner in 1976 and 1977, the war and its associated topics (the Republic, exile, the Franco era) became more than a simple object of consumption, by some splinter groups of militants and people from the world of culture, to transform into a productive market. It is not difficult to observe how such topics, as much the object of remembrance as a matter of historical curiosity, spread to a range of books, films, magazines, journals, songs, television programmes, and tributes devoted to some exiles and emblematic literary figures. The return or visit of some distinguished intellectual exiles between 1976 and 1977 became in most cases a cultural and symbolic event to “perform” the so-called reconciliation, and even the rapprochement, between reformists and the opposition.

⁵⁴ Francisco Bustelo et alii, *PSOE. Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Barcelona: Avance, 1976), 19.

⁵⁵ *¿Qué es el PSOE?*, Barcelona, San Viçents del Horts, 1977.

⁵⁶ Victoria Prego, “Los hombres clave. Santiago Carrillo”, in Santos Juliá, Joaquín Pradera, Joaquín Prieto (eds.), *Memoria de la Transición* (Madrid: Taurus, 1996), 55.

⁵⁷ Santiago Carrillo, *Qué es la ruptura democrática*, 36-43. For adaptations of Carrillo’s memory discourse in 1977, see Juan Andrade Blanco, “Historia y memoria de un secretario general: Santiago Carrillo en la Transición”, *Historia del Presente*, 20 (2012), 147-50.

1976 and 1977 were also the years when books on the war and related topics reached their peak. Among the top 34 bestsellers published at the time, 16 concerned such subjects.⁵⁸ Promotion of the book of propaganda and political philosophy, intended to propagate democratic ideas, also accompanied concern with memory and current history. A relationship between political expectations and a look into the past can be observed here again. Among the collections devoted to promoting political pedagogy, one that stood out in a special way was the Biblioteca de Divulgación Política, which the Barcelona publisher La Gaya Ciencia released between 1976 and 1977 (with 44 titles in small format and, in some cases, a circulation of about 200,000 copies). The collection also clearly reflected the rapprochement between supporters of the reform and the opposition taking place at that time. The topic of the war was also present in a specific volume justified by its author, Juan Benet, who said that “the day in which people in this land can be free from the weight and shadow which that fatal conflict means is a long way off”.⁵⁹

The following classification enables us to present a tentative picture of the range and scope of the book on the war and topics related, and helps understand the will to retrieve remembrances and to narrate events ignoring the Francoist memory:⁶⁰ 1) memories, chronicles and essays of well-known exiles and anti-Francoist intellectuals, many of them previously published abroad; 2) works written by foreign journalists and historians which mirrored an external point of view, but whose sympathies lay more with the defeated than with the winners; 3) memories and essays of intellectuals and Francoist figures, whether erstwhile dissidents, reformists or people retired from public life; and 4) novels and other literary genres dealing with the aforementioned topics.

The first category includes the noteworthy collection “Memorias de la guerra civil española, 1936-39”, released by the Madrid publisher Gregorio del Toro Perdiguero between 1973 and 1977, along with “Biblioteca del 36” by Turner, also published in Madrid. Although in some cases these were books or collections of texts appearing during the war for the first time or shortly afterwards, in most cases the interest in updating them might well be an attempt both to contribute to the historical knowledge of younger generations and to retrieve old memories.

The second class of books was more disperse, but the aforementioned “Horas de España” from Ariel was the one that came to assemble perhaps the most important number of Hispanists. However, in 1977 Hugh Thomas’s *La guerra civil española*, published by Grijalbo, would undoubtedly be the bestseller in the Hispanists’ charts of historical works. It was brought out in 1961 for the legendary Parisian *Éditions Ruedo Ibérico* by José Martínez Gurricebeitia, the leading publisher in exile in the fight against Francoism and in defending the memory of the defeated. But the release of twenty thousand copies by the Barcelona publisher Joan Grijalbo in 1971 had to wait until Suárez came into power to obtain permission for publication at the end of 1976, because of Franco’s personal veto of this book.⁶¹ Once the censorship ended, Thomas would

⁵⁸ Information obtained from *El Libro Español* issues from 231 (March 1977) to 241 (January 1978).

⁵⁹ Juan Benet, *Qué fue la Guerra Civil* (Barcelona, La Gaya Ciencia), 1976, 9.

⁶⁰ For further information, see Gonzalo Pasamar, “El recuerdo de la Guerra Civil española durante la Transición”, 57-65.

⁶¹ For further information retrieved, from the censorship record concerning this book, see AGA, Signature: 73/00498. Record: 197.

also release his *History* in instalments between 1979 and 1981 through the publisher Urbión, which gives an idea of the curiosity aroused by the topic.

The books included in the third section were also an attempt to update memory, and the collection “Espejo de España”, which was brought out in 1973 by the Barcelona publisher Planeta, was perhaps the most interesting example.⁶² Books from this collection like, for example, the posthumous *Casi unas memorias* by Dionisio Ridruejo, and *Entre el silencio y la propaganda. La historia como fue: memorias*, by Ramón Serrano Suñer, became bestsellers in 1977. Compared to works from political leaders and intellectuals, memories written by unknown people were much fewer in number than expected; although examples of this kind can be seen in Gregorio del Toro’s collection.

As for the fourth category, novels were a genre which gained a great number of readers in 1977. The list includes, for example, *Señor ex-ministro*, by Torcuato Luca de Tena, which is a defence of the messages of late Francoism, and was used by Alianza Popular in the electoral campaign of 1977; *Si te dicen que caí*, by Juan Marsé, which is influenced by oral history, and above all, *Autobiografía de Federico Sánchez*, by Jorge Semprún. This book, which recounted the expulsion of the author from the PCE in 1964, became famous for winning the Planeta Prize in 1977 only a few months after the legalisation of this party, which was no coincidence. Between 1973 and 1977 all of the Planeta Prizes were awarded to novels set in the Republic, the war and the Francoist period.⁶³

Another phenomenon which serves to sound out the importance of memory in the cultural field is the presence of historical magazines and television programmes devoted to a wide range of people interested in history. In 1977 there was for example on the market one of the most veteran magazines *Tiempo de Historia* (1974-82), the more recent *Historia 16* (founded in 1976) and *Nueva Historia*, by Ricardo de la Cierva, who ran it the first year, 1977. It has been calculated that between 1976 and 1978, this kind of publication had a circulation that altogether exceeded 200,000 copies in each print-run, which places it among the most successful periodicals.⁶⁴

In these magazines the editorial line was marked by the interest in the recent past and in current affairs, in other words, the Second Republic, the war and its aftermath, Francoism and the transition itself. *Tiempo de Historia*, for instance, stated in its farewell issue that its purpose had been to “demythologise” the recent past through “personal testimonies”, “stories” and analyses.⁶⁵ The other historical topics were in many cases a complement designed to provide a wide historical panorama of Spanish and World history, which reflected a sense of plurality that was as professional as it was intellectual and ideological. This broad interest is the reason why these magazines were commercial products and the result of a journalistic activity, although they also offered

⁶² See David Escobar Laplana, *Una colección para la transición. Espejo de España de la editorial Planeta (1973-1978)* (Madrid: Trea, 2012).

⁶³ For the Planeta prizes awarded, see Rafael Borràs Betriu, *La guerra de los planetas* (Barcelona, Ediciones B, 2005), 278-380.

⁶⁴ For further information, see David Ruiz, “La difusión del conocimiento histórico en la crisis del franquismo”, in Santiago Castillo et alii (ed.), *Estudios de historia de España. Homenaje a Manuel Tuñón de Lara* (Madrid: Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, 1981), Vol. II, 388.

⁶⁵ “Presentación”, *Tiempo de Historia*, 1 (December 1974), 4-5; “Adiós a todos”, *Ibid.*, 92-93 (July-August 1982).

a wide range of professional historians and specialists. Something similar happened with the television programme “Tribuna de la historia”, which was broadcast on the second channel between 1978 and 1981, a weekly chat show that lasted sixty minutes, in which different specialists, professors, politicians and people from diplomatic and military careers were invited to discuss a wide range of historical topics, both Spanish and foreign, recent and remote.⁶⁶

Troubles with dignitaries, which blocked Hugh Thomas’s book, also affected the most emblematic film of those years, *Canciones para después de una guerra*, by Basilio Martín Patino. In this case, the main obstacle was the veto issued by Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, who had seen it previously in a private screening. *Canciones* is regarded as the transition’s foremost documentary film. It had originally been shot in 1971, but as a result of the veto, did not obtain permission until the summer of 1976. As a noteworthy example of “compilation film”, experts have highlighted its ability to recreate the ambiance of poverty of the post-war period, the daily life of the popular classes, in stark contrast to the propaganda on peace and prosperity typical of the final years of Francoism, which was perhaps the main obstacle that prevented its screening until the period of the transition.

Canciones was not the only documentary produced in those years but it was the most watched (more than 800,000 viewers in 1976 and 1977).⁶⁷ In fact, the direct or indirect reference to the war was a frequently exploited issue by film directors and scriptwriters in a wide range of fiction films set in the war, Francoism and even the transition itself, especially from 1975 onwards. But the box-office hit was *La guerra de papá*, by Antonio Mercero, seen by almost seven million people between 1977 and 1978. The piece was inspired by the novel *El príncipe destronado* by Miguel Delibes (1973), a story which tells the everyday life of a Spanish middle-class family in the 1960s from the viewpoint of the youngest of the group, a naughty boy called Quico, who feels like a “dethroned prince” when a new member – his little sister Cristina – arrives in the family. It is very significant that to find a title for the film, Mercero preferred to focus on the relationship of the other members of the family and select an underlying memory and generational conflict: the differences between the father, who fought in the Civil War on the winners’ side and kept boasting about it, and his eldest son, a teenager who was in favour of reconciliation. It is not hard to imagine which one was able to capture the sympathies of the viewers.

To conclude

This article has attempted to shed light on the memory of Spaniards during the years of the transition. We have been interested in the recollections of the Civil War and Francoism, the memory *par excellence* at that time in Spain. However, instead of following individual people’s own memory narratives, we have opted for another method: an approach examining the principal factors that made those narratives possible, placing them in a wider historical context of memory. From the outset, we

⁶⁶ We have taken the news from *El País* (1978-81).

⁶⁷ For this film, see, for instance, José Luis García Sánchez, the co-scriptwriter, “Materiales para *Canciones para después de una guerra*”, in A. Yraola (ed.), *Historia contemporánea de España y Cine* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1997); Carlos Martín (ed.), *En esto consistían los paraísos. Aproximaciones a Basilio Martín Patino* (Granada: Centro José Guerrero, Diputación de Granada, 2008), 51-74; and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *Cine y guerra civil*, 250-57.

have eschewed a static and “ahistorical” view of the topic, which is frequently the way memories look at themselves, and emphasised the dynamic elements allowing for change in such memories. In addition to observing that no opposition exists between remembrance and oblivion (this being an obligatory point of departure), we have defended the existence of substantial differences between the impact of memory in the political arena and in culture. In order to examine these differences we have focused on a range of factors such as generational changes – particularly the second generation’s memories –, cultural platforms, limits and deliberate forgetfulness in political memory brought about by circumstances, fears and expectations.

In conclusion, it is possible to assert that the years of the Transition (at least until 1977) represented a period characterised by intense yet uneven memory activity. It was intense on two accounts: first, because the Civil War, as a foundational event, still played an outstanding role in the memory of the declining Francoist regime and of its staunchest defenders in 1976-77; and second, because the gradual lifting of censorship since 1974 led to developments in public opinion and the cultural market that were still extremely bound up in the recent past. This aspect, at least as far as the cultural market is concerned, had already been taking shape throughout the second half of the 1960s. In fact, the feelings of public opinion, along with the aims of editors of journals, magazines, publishers or film directors, only amounted to the exteriorisation of what the great majority of Spaniards already knew through family memories, official propaganda and the presence of Francoism itself. This perception may be summarised thus: the Civil War was still considered a “near event” that was able to cast a long shadow over the present.

Nevertheless, the presence of memory also had an uneven role because of the generation gap during the two previous decades and the circumstances that surrounded the transition process. Those who sought the reform of Francoism, or its dismantling from the inside, also considered that a “relative forgetfulness” of the war was required because this event still provoked confrontation among Spaniards. For these sectors the Civil War already belonged to the past and, for that reason, there was a need to look ahead more than to look back. On the other hand, the political forces that came from the defeated side – where different political memories existed stemming from the war, and obviously younger generations – were also convinced that there were specific conditions for an “agreed-upon rupture”. For those sectors, specific conditions also came to highlight the extant differences between what the year 1936 meant and the current situation where the recovery of freedom was possible.

Profile

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