Spanish exiles, transnational soldiers

From the French internment camps to the Free French Forces

Abstract:

Thousands of Spaniards contributed to the defence and the liberation of France as military contractors, legionnaires and soldiers between 1939 and 1945. This paper focuses on three elements of their contributions. First, it investigates the importance of French internment camps for Spanish refugees that became key recruitment grounds for soldiers and labourers. Secondly, it will analyse the importance of the military background Spanish volunteers acquired in both Spanish and French ranks. Thirdly, it will analyse the features of Free French Spanish volunteers and their fighting itineraries as transnational soldiers. Despite its importance, politicians in both France and Spain only recognised Spanish contributions to the French resistance after the Second World War. This is a fourth aspect of the entangled Franco-Spanish history of the Second World War that this article analyses. By incorporating the accounts of French Gaullists, Communists and Spanish Francoists, it demonstrates how the context of the Cold War, which reinforced these interpretations, left little room for the study and commemorative inclusion of these 'outsiders'.

Keywords: Transnational resistance, transnational soldiers, Spanish refugees, Spanish exile, Spanish Civil War, French Foreign Legion, CFA, Free France, FFL, Resistance in France

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> I fought without fear. I knew I could be killed or injured, but I was not afraid. The truth is that my only thought was I was fighting for freedom. Not to liberate France, fighting for freedom, which is different. For me, that war was the continuation of the Spanish war (Interview with Luis Royo Ibáñez (Paris, February 24, 2010).

Transnational resistance could be defined briefly as a series of resistance practices developed by an individual outside his or her country of origin. For example, an American International Brigade volunteer who fought in the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939, or a Spaniard who did so as a *maquisard* in France from 1943. This phenomenon, however, is not only a question of location as transnational resistance can also take the form of the meeting of individuals of (inter)national origins in a particular national context, movement or structure, such as in the case of the participation of foreign volunteers, native and colonial soldiers in the Free French Forces. This transnational resistance often had a very marked anti-fascist character, involving anti-Nazis or anti-fascist volunteers, wherever it existed: in Spain between 1936 and 1939, in France from 1940, in North Africa form late 1942. Nonetheless, this transnational resistance often involved people on the move as a result of several forms of persecution and repressive policies. This includes not only the large numbers of Jews and communists who fled states due to the aggressive and persecutory policies of dictatorial regimes during the 1930s, but also prisoners of war, forced labourers, and the hundreds of thousands of Spanish exiles and political refugees who escaped the impending repression of the embryonic Francoist state between 1936 and 1939.

Between 1939 and 1943, these Spanish refugees were either pushed into new spaces, such as internment camps, or they found their way into other spaces such as foreign workers' companies (*companies de travailleurs étrangers*, CTE) and military units. This was the case of those who joined the French Foreign Legion and Marching Regiments of Foreign Volunteers (Régiment de Marche de Volontaires Étrangers, RMVE) during the 1939-40 campaign, the *Corps Franc d'Afrique* (CFA) in 1943, and the Free French Forces (Forces Françaises libres, FFL) between June 1940 and July 1943. This article establishes links between these three cases and shows how internment camps facilitated transnational encounters and helped to structure foreign contributions to French national defence and, subsequently, resistance following the armistice.

The article draws primarily on the experiences of Spaniards and connects their personal engagement and combat experiences with several recruitment campaigns which the French authorities implemented in internment camps between 1939 and 1943. Moreover, it reflects on how French – and Spanish – historians in the post-war era conditioned the study and recognition of the contribution these Spaniards made to French resistance during the Second World War. Indeed, the French Government did not recognise French nationals or foreign volunteers who fought against German troops during the 'Phoney War' of 1939-1940 as forces of 'resistance' because resistance only officially began in June 1940. Accordingly, regardless of the amendments, adjustments and the broad evolution which the legislation underwent to promote and recognise Spanish military participation between 1939 and 1940 – whether it was the CTE, French Foreign Legion or the RMVE – did not receive recognition as an 'act of resistance against

the enemy' after the Second World War from the several bodies responsible for acknowledging and assessing the services of those who took part in the resistance against Nazi Germany and its allies (*JORF*, April 26th, 1951; BOC 1981, vol 308; http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr).

Two interconnected factors determined this lack of recognition. Firstly, political and commemorative conflicts pitted Gaullists and French Communists against one another in an effort to impose their own interpretation of the resistance and its shortcomings. As a result, both groups failed to compromise and adopt a consensus on this issue. Secondly, the development of a legislative arsenal, influenced by the national and international context of the Cold War, produced a long-lasting dispute from which emerged restrictive, elitist and masculine interpretations of the Resistance supported by Gaullism. These conflicts determined the drafting and passing of laws and statutes by the bodies in charge of assessing and recognising a combatant's acts of opposition against the enemy and the establishment of a specific framework as to what constituted a 'resister'. Accordingly, this framework limited who was and was not included within the concept of a 'resister'. These restrictions, however, produced the context from which the concept of 'premature resisters' could emerge and incorporate those who did not meet the necessary requirements to receive recognition as a 'resister' in post-war French legislation, but had fought against German aggression during the first phase of the Second World War (Gaspar Celaya 2018)

State of art

The historiography of the 'French' resistance, with a slight delay compared to that of Vichy, has progressed considerably during the last thirty years. From this evolution has come solid monographs devoted to the political history of the Resistance, its political-social ideology and military organization, as well as to various resistance movements and remarkable individuals (Wieviorka 1995; Douzou 1998; Piketti 1998; Aglan 1999; Azema 2000; Le Beguec, and Peschanski 2000; Buton, and Guillon 2002). More recently, this research has shared prominence with new studies that explore both social and cultural aspects of the resistance phenomenon and the features of its members thorough an interdisciplinary analysis fuelled by the combination of sociology, anthropology and comparative studies (Guillon, and Laborie 1995; Douzou 2005; Douzou 2010). A paradigmatic example of this historiographical evolution are the dictionaries of the Resistance published during the last fifteen years (Marcot 2005; Andrieu, Braud, and Piketti 2006; Broche, Caïtucoli, and Muracciole 2010). But in this new historiographical movement, the Free France and its members were the last to be concerned, as the *Dictionnaire de la France libre*, the last volume of the collection inaugurated by Robert Lafont in 2005 – and Jean-François Muracciole's and Eric Jennings' monographs demonstrate (Muracciole 2009; Broche, Caïtucoli, and Muracciole 2010, Jennings 2014). These works are the proof of a late and incomplete study of the 'External Resistance' and its members, in comparison with the level of precision that presents a good part of the research which tackles the different structures and components of the 'Internal Resistance'. A good example of this distortion could be find in (Courtois, Peschanski, and Rayski 1989).

Therefore, it is not surprising that some obscure areas of the history of Free France and the French Committee of National Liberation (CFLN) remain to be discovered (Muracciole 2009). One of these areas is the Free French population and, more specifically, the foreign volunteers who joined it. Fuelled by anti-fascism and their

experiences of exile, around 1,100 Spanish volunteers joined other international volunteers in the French ranks, where they demonstrated their commitment to transnational resistance alongside French and colonial brothers-in-arms. Historians, however, have paid little attention to these Spaniards and their experiences have been overlooked in both French and Spanish historiographies. Accordingly, this article sheds light on the Spaniards who joined the ranks of the Free French Forces (FFL) as transnational soldiers between June 1940 and July 1943 (Gaspar Celaya 2017).

This study of Spanish contributions to the FFL must be seen in conjunction with testimonies preserved in non-academic works written since the 1960s, the sporadic academic works that address their participation, and with the study of the Spanish volunteers' individual records held in French military archives (namely the *Service Historique de la Défense* in Paris and the *Centre d'Archives du Personnel Militaire* in Pau). Collectively, these sources allow for both the reconstruction of the trajectories of Spanish volunteers and comparison with the trajectories of the German, Italian, Belgian, Polish and Turkish volunteers who also joined the FFL. Moreover, through this approach we can highlight the particular features of the Spanish volunteers and better understand the main engagement phases of both foreign and national soldiers. This, in turn, enables us to reflect upon the transnational nature of those volunteers and their experiences as Resistance participants.

Limited by law

Any research aiming to study the Free French community requires a preliminary definition of the "Free French" concept with which we can identify those susceptible to integration into this category. In July 1953, the French Ministry of Defence defined this in an Instruction Note as "those volunteers who joined the FFL between 18 June 1940 and 31 July 1943". This Note also allowed for the inclusion of those "who were injured or contracted an illness that caused their death" while trying to join the FFL, those who died after joining but were unable to formalise their enrolment through military action as a result of their early death, and those who died while engaged in military action. The "Free French" family was precisely defined in the Instruction Note No. 21022 / SEFAG / EMP of the French Ministry of Defence in July 1953, concerning the allocation of titles which recognize the services lent by a volunteer to Free France. Following this note, could be considered as a "Free French: "those soldiers who voluntarily joined the FFL between June 18, 1940 and July 31, 1943". "The people who were injured or contracted an illness that caused their death during the same period by trying to join the FFL, after having joined them but without having been able to formalize their enrolment, or in the execution of a mission which was entrusted to them by a competent authority of the Fighting France". "The approved P1 [intermittent] and P2 [permanent] agents who belonged before July 31, 1943 to one of the information or action networks affiliated to the French National Committee". And finally "the escapees from occupied France or from a territory under the control of the de facto Government, before 8 November 1942, who returned to an ex-FFL unit, even after 31 July 1943 for causes force majeure as imprisonment following their escape " (BOA 1981; Broche, Caïtucoli, and Muracciole 2010, 616; Muracciole 2009, 26).

These definitions are important because they define the frame of reference to which various post-war bureaucrats referred in order to complete the homologation of the services provided by the staff who accommodated met these conditions. Accordingly, as this definition is part of an official text published in 1953, we must use it with some

caution. However, this definition also stipulates that the category of 'Free French' is independent of any nationality or political tendency and meets a fundamental criterion: voluntary enlistment in the "Free French", in either a military or civil capacity, before 31 July 1943. This date corresponds to the merger of the forces that remained under the command of General Giraud with the FFL, when both entities were dissolved in order to set up the new French Combatant Forces (FFC); that is, the army of the French Committee of National Liberation.

Since its creation, scholars have accepted this definition when establishing the limits of the 'Free French' category. Nevertheless, in order to identify Spanish 'Free French' individuals it has been necessary to apply this definition carefully and practically. To do so, this article includes the criterion of the nationality in its analysis of both the personal records (16P series of SHD), upon which the bulk of this research is based, and the personal records located at the CAPM. Accordingly, the 'Spanish-Free-French' definition comprises of two main criteria: firstly, the volunteers' Spanish nationality or, where it is not listed, their place of birth (for instance, the Balearic or Canary Islands, or Spanish Morocco); and secondly, their having been confirmed by the French Ministry of Defence as affiliated to FFL as a result of their military contribution.

Transnational soldiers

As this article has already discussed, we can define transnational resistance as some form of resistance outside an individual's country of origin (Gildea & Tames 2020). A salient example, for instance, is that of Joseph Putz. Born in Brussels in 1895, Putz served in the XIV International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War and later became a recruitment agent for the enlistment of Spaniards in the African Free Corps (CFA) and the FFL (Joseph Putz, individual records, SHD/GR, 16P 494000; The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, Moscow (RGASPI) 545/6/1361; Notin, 2000). Of course, this transnational character does not relate only to location. The meeting of individuals and sharing of experiences in a particular national context, for instance, can also define an individual as a transnational fighter, as is the case here within the context of the FFL (Arielli & Collins, 2012; Arielli 2018). The social and political contexts of the 1930s and 1940s adds difficulty to any attempt to find a definition of a 'transnational resister' (Marco 2020). The clash of fascism and communism in the 1930s gave rise to the rhetoric of presenting any form of political or social struggle as a conflict of one ideology against the other, regardless of whether it bore any relation to either ideology (Gildea & Tames 2020; Garcia, and Yusta, and Tabet, and Clímaco, 2016). Moreover, this political and social polarisation singled out minority groups as the cause for Europe's evils during this decade and forced many groups to flee their countries as a result of repression or persecution. Jews and communists, for instance, had little choice but to leave Germany after the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party and their subsequent dismantling of democracy. The Spanish Civil War allowed these conflicting ideologies to fight one another while at the same time attracting persecuted groups to fight against their oppressors within a new national and international context. In this sense, many individuals flocked to Spain as anti-fascists, determined to fight against their oppressors in the only environment that provided them with the opportunity at the time (Poznanski, in Marcot 2006, 897-898; Skoutelsky 2006; Kirschenbaum 2015).

In the cases we are examining – the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War – the individual records of the SHD allow us to identify Spaniards in the FFL according to their geographical origin in Spain and, thanks to the existence of records of their civil

status and birth certificates, we can further identify them by age and marital status. Most Spanish volunteers in the FFL came from Andalusia, Catalonia and the Spanish Levant (today known as the regions of Valencia and Murcia), although all regions were represented. The typical Spanish volunteer, was 26 years old and single (i.e. not married). Moreover, most had gained military experience prior to joining the Free French ranks, either in the Spanish Civil War or through enlistment in the French Foreign Legion, the *Régiment de Marche de Volontaires Étrangers* and the *Corps Franc d'Afrique* (Gaspar Celaya 2015).

In this sense, we can see how the experiences of the Spanish Civil War and the forced exile many had to endure after Franco's victory intertwined with the experiences of the many political and religious exiles in Europe at the time. (Prezioso 2007, Seidman 2017). The Spanish exodus had a remarkable effect on French society and placed an unfathomable task at the hands of the French authorities charged to deal with the influx of volunteers in early 1939. Indeed, in January and February 1939 alone, approximately 470,000 Spanish refugees entered French territory, making the Spanish refugee crisis more substantial than the number of Jewish refugees that had fled Germany and Austria by this stage (Friedlaender 1997; Dwork, and Jan Van Pelt 2009; Caestecker, and Moore 2010). In response to these numbers, the French authorities put into practice a 'special reception' policy with which they hoped to be able to regulate the number of Spanish refugees entering French territory. This policy ultimately failed, but it did lead to the creation of dozens of internment camps intended to provide places of refuge for the victims of the Civil War (Peschanski 2002).

Spanish refugees endured appalling conditions in the camps due to insufficient food supplies, medical care and adequate sanitation, but their use proved crucial in the enlistment of Spaniards in the FFL. Indeed, the French government allowed refugees in the camps to choose one among several options to get out of the camps: they could be repatriated to Spain, where they risked persecution under the new Franco dictatorship; emigrate to another country (usually to Latin America, which was a more welcoming region due to language and culture); be hired by groups outside the camps; or join French military units or foreign workers' companies (Compagnies de Travailleurs Étrangers, CTE) (Gaspar Celaya 2015, 129-182; Adámez Castro 2017; Martínez Martínez 2019). The majority of Spanish refugees opted for repatriation before the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, but enlistment in the Foreign Legion or the RMVE was the second most popular option, and many of these individuals would later serve in the FFL (Gaspar Celaya 2014). In fact, as the cases of Juan Aragon (who enlisted in the XXII RMVE) and José Cortes (who served in the I and III Foreign Regiment of Infantry) illustrate, more than 46 per cent of the Spanish FFL volunteers served in both corps before the armistice. This double enlistment was the first contact most Spaniards had with French military discipline and set in motion a period of continuity in fighting under a French flag for almost half of the Spanish volunteers in the FFL (Juan Aragon, SHD/GR, 16P 15858; José Cortes CAPM/ (41) 44/50.08492).

Young and experienced fighters

Manuel Fernández, a single farmer anarchist Spaniard, was a militiaman, Franco's prisoner, refugee and legionnaire in France before he deserted form the CFA to enlisted himself in the FFL on July 24, 1943 at the age of twenty-four years old. (Manuel Fernández, SHD/GR, 16P 221082). Children when the first world conflict was declared, teenagers during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, young at the time the Second Republic

arrived, and combatants in the Spanish Civil War. This is the mainstream profile, to which we could add a timid Andalusian accent, of the Spanish volunteers who served in the Free French armies.

Personal files of the FFL Spaniards do not systematically mention their participation in the Spanish Civil War. However we can deduce their active participation in the Spanish conflict by consulting secondary sources, analysing in detail the year of recruitment indicated in their service records (1936, 1937 or 1938) and analysing the formulas used by the French Administration (such as «previous services: in Spain» or «Spanish War») within their respective personal files. Nevertheless, we can also intuit this active participation relating the Spanish volunteers date of birth with the coup of July 18, 1936. This ratio places the average of Free French Spaniards -at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War- at 20.5 years . Whereas if we only analyse the average age of the class of 1910's -which, represents more than two-thirds of the total number of Spanish FFL volunteers- the average age drops slightly to 19.8 years. So, when related these two similar figures to the recruitment systems implemented in Spain by both sides, the result suggest the active participation of most of them in the conflict, regardless the army they served in Spain (Matthews 2013, 41-108).

Why enlist?

Among the various reasons Spaniards gave as their reasons for enlisting in the RMVEs and the Foreign Legion, the opportunity to continue the fight against fascism was among the most prominent. The testimony of Manuel Fernandez, a volunteer from Asturias aged 79 years highlights this clearly on 2010 (Marquardt):

> I had one thing on my mind, in France there was war against the Germans, and this was an opportunity to get revenge […] I passed the border, and the next day I was in a barracks. I did not come to France to go to lock myself in a camp. I came to make war. And after eight or ten days I was already on my way to the front with the Foreign Legion.

For many volunteers, the opportunity to escape the harsh conditions of the refugee camps in France motivated them to enlist to fight, although this often intertwined with the desire to continue the fight they had lost against Franco and fascism. Moreover, some testimonies reveal that certain individuals were not ready or willing to accept their status as a refugee or consider the war against fascism lost. For instance, as Enrique Ballester Romero later recounted to Vilanova (1969):

> For me, this war represents the continuation of that of Spain. Therefore, without feeling attracted to war, I prefer the risks of the soldier in campaign, to the humiliating refugee status between the wires that surround me. I prefer the broad horizon of the battlefield, to the limited space of a concentration camp; the fraternity of a comrade to the hostility of a companion in disgrace. And when the war is over, if I am alive, I will shout to the face of the world that I won my freedom with the gun in my hand, so I do not to have to bow my head if you ask me: what did you during the war to remain active?

The opportunity to fight under the command of De Gaulle or Leclerc, whom many Spanish volunteers perceived as defenders of freedom, bolstered some in their motivation to enlist in the FFL. Moreover, enlisting in the FFL also provided the opportunity to fight

as part of a well-armed and organised army, thus allowing for the chance to achieve victory over the enemy. During the Spanish Civil War, this was not the case, as many Spaniards had fought with outdated weapons and alongside untrained soldiers against the professional Moroccan, German and Italian troops in the ranks of the rebel military. As former Spanish FFL Manuel Fernández and Faustino Solana recalled to Mesquida (2008):

> Fernandez: "Following the Tunis campaign I heard about the Leclerc column and the Free French troops coming from Libya for the very first time. Suddenly I deserted to joining them. At that time it was not Col Leclerc who encouraged me to enlist, I had not met him. It was Gen. De Gaulle […] For me, De Gaulle was the man who never bent his knee to the Germans, the man who represented freedom. Since Leclerc was with him, representing the Free France, I chose him". (Mesquida, 246)

> Solana: "When we were finally shipped [from France to England], we knew that we would soon face the Germans again. We were waiting for him, but now we had had in our hands a powerful material. And, above all, because we thought that as soon as we finished with them we would go back to make war on Spain" (Mesquida, 231).

> Fernández: "It was in the region of Temara (Morocco) where General Leclerc stationed the troops and the second armoured division was formed. [...] We were very well trained and we had excellent war material. With that material, thinking of the Germans, I told myself: "You will see." I knew they were strong enemies. [...] In Spain and Tunisia [when confronted with them] we didn't have weapons and we fought with old rifles, but now, with the weapons we received from the Americans, I knew we could face them without fear. Nonetheless, above all, we thought that with that material, when the war was over, we would cross the Pyrenees" (Mesquida 246-247).

In arms

Youth, a lack of commitment to a home and some degree of military experience combined with exile prompted many Spaniards to enlist in the FFL. In fact, Spaniards made up the largest group by nationality to enlist in the FFL, followed by Poles, Belgians, Germans and Italians (Gaspar Celaya, 2015). The main recruitment drives came in three distinct periods which coincided with the broader waves of enlistment into the FFL. Firstly, in Great Britain and French Equatorial Africa (AEF) from June to August 1940 (when 10 per cent of the total Spanish enlistments occurred); secondly, in the French Levant in the summer of 1941 (when a further 32 per cent of the total number of Spaniards enlisted); and, lastly, in French North Africa between May and July 1943 (when 41 per cent enlisted). The rest (15.9% of the total) joined the FFL in a different period, and also outside metropolitan France (SHD/GR, 16P). These figures demonstrate that the majority of Free French volunteers, including Spaniards, enlisted somewhere other than mainland France, with the exception of those who served in different information, action and/or escape lines (Gildea 2015).

Closer analysis on the Spanish engagement shows the prominence of some key-units as origin and destination of enlisted Spaniards in those phases. This was the case of the 13th DBMLE (origin) and the 14th DBLE (destination) in Great Britain during the summer of 1940. However, archival records from the Royal Pioneer Corps Association

allow us to verify that, among the Spanish legionaries who neglected to enlist in or engage with the FFL in London, as well as those who refused to return to bases in French North Africa, some Spaniards finally decided to enlist in the British Pioneers Corps. Those who did were sent to the III Royal Pioneer Corps Training Centre located in Westward Ho!, Devon, where they joined the Number One Spanish Company. This was an auxiliary and non-combatant unit in which most of them served during the Second World War, alongside a small group of Spanish labourers coming from 185 ° CTE who had served at the British base of Savenay (Loire-Atlantique) prior to the armistice and managed to flee to England in June 1940 (Gaspar Celaya 2015, 331-346).

Most Spaniards who joined the FFL in the French Levant during the summer of 1941 did so mainly from bases in Palestine, Lebanon and Damascus, originating from different legionary units that remained loyal to the Vichy government following the armistice in June 1940. Most of these enlistments occurred after the success of the Allied campaign in Vichy Syria and Lebanon between June 1940 and July 1941. The majority enlisted in the First Light Free French Division (1ere Division Légère Française Libre), in which many Spaniards who had joined the Thirteenth Half Brigade of the Foreign Legion (13ème Demi Brigade de la Légion Étrangère) fought.

Other units belonging to the 1ere DLFL, however, also had a significant Spanish contribution, such as the First Marine Battalion (1er Bataillon d'Infanterie de Marine). Francisco Ascencio, born in Murcia in 1915, for instance, joined the Foreign Legion in Perpignan in May 1939 on a five-year enlistment which was interrupted in Qastina (Palestine) in June 1941, when he joined the 13ème DBLE ranks. Roberto Alsina, a Catalan industrialist born in Barcelona in 1913, enlisted for the duration of the war, firstly in the XXIII RMVE and then in the First Battalion of the Marching Volunteers (11éme Bataillon de Marche de Volontaires Étrangers). This unit was sent to Beirut and was concentrated in Baalbek, east of the Lebanese capital, and eventually integrated into the VI REI after being renamed as the XI Battalion of Foreign Volunteers (11éme Bataillon de Volontaires Étrangers). Once it was dissolved in October 1940, the Spaniards enlisted in this unit were assigned to the 1st Group of Foreign Workers of the Levant (1st GTEL) – a unit depending on the Vichy civil authorities and which Alsina quit in July 1941 in order to enlist in the FFL, following the armistice of Saint Jean d'Acre (Francisco Ascencio, SHD/GR, 16P 19299 ; Roberto Alsina, SHD/GR, 16P 9842).

Of the three enlistment phases discussed above, that of May-July 1943 is unique in that it included several people who had little or no involvement in the previous two phases. During this phase, hundreds of individuals who had escaped from France into Spain joined the FFL. An illustrative example in this regard is the trajectory of Francisco Perez. Born in Alicante in 1913, Perez reached Oran (Algeria) at the end of the Spanish Civil War, where he found employment as a metal worker before he joined the CFA in December 1942. Having deserted in March 1943, Perez managed to reach Nantes, from where he began his particular journey – once again – to North Africa. A few weeks later, in July 1943, he crossed the Franco-Spanish border and arrived in Casablanca, where he joined the Free French Intelligence Services (Bureau Central de Renseignement et d'Action, BCRA) (Francisco Perez, SHD/GR, 16P 466401).

Between June 1940 and July 1943, thousands of escapees joined the FFL in other French African territories. Rafael Carretero de Villagrasa, born in Barcelona in 1921, for instance, travelled from France to the Belgian Congo via Spain. Along the way, he was captured and imprisoned in camps at Huesca and Burgos. Once released, Carretero

managed to reach Lisbon, where he asked the Free France Committee in Portugal if he could join the FFL. He enlisted in November 1942 in Kinsasa, although his date of enlistment corresponds to 1 July 1941, when the Francoist authorities arrested him as he crossed the Franco-Spanish border (Rafael Carretero de Villagrasa, SHD/GR, 16P 108663).

However, those who joined the FFL in this third phase were not just people fleeing France. Some individuals, for instance, were deserters from the Armistice Army or the Army of Africa. Bienvenido Laguna, born in Valdepeñas in 1915, enlisted in the Legion in Perpignan in April 1939 and subsequently joined the FFL in Tunis in May 1943. Rafael Castillo López, who deserted the Legion for political reasons in 1942, joined the CFA and then the FFL in 1943. Likewise, let us mention "suspects" of all origins locked up by Vichy's authorities in North Africa internment camps, such as Jose Herrero López (Hervas, 1908), who first joined the CFA at Bou-Arfa camp on January 1943, and later the FFL, on July 1943 in Oran (Algeria). Moreover, local and foreign youth residing in North Africa also joined the FFL as Ben Houcine Abdeselem (Casablanca, 1922) or Jean Reiter (Rosenheim, Germany, 1906) did it in Casablanca and Oran, in late July 1943. And finally CFA ex-combatants such as the Italian Mario Filloni (Bolonia, 1906), the Polish Victor Bade (Krolewska, 1902), and the Spaniards already mentioned Castillo López and Herrero López (Bienvenido Laguna, SHD/GR, 16P 331065; Rafael Castillo López, SHD/GR, 16P 111454; CAPM/CFA (17599) 22/1; 23/1; 25/1, CFA Maroc, Dosier Espagnols, Deserteurs, "Interrogatoire de Castillo Lopez, Rafäel". José Herrero López, SHD/GR, 16P 292046. Ben Houcine Abdeselem, SHD/GR, 16P 1010 ; Jean Reiter, SHD/GR, 16P 504096 ; Mario Filloni, SHD/GR, 16P 224156 ; Victor Bade, SHD/GR, 16P 26548)

Overall, out of the 467 Spaniards who joined the FFL in this third phase, 74 per cent of them joined the French ranks for the first time. Indeed, only 24 per cent had served in a French unit during the 1939-1940 campaign. While these statistics demonstrate that the majority of Spanish volunteers who enlisted in 1943 did not contribute to the campaign of 1939-1940, this does not mean they lacked military experience. Indeed, 82 per cent of them had served in a French unit prior to enlisting in the FFL, 60 per cent of whom had served in the CFA, led by the former French International Brigade volunteer Joseph Putz. Moreover, volunteers in the III CFA battalion were incorporated into the short-lived Chadian March Brigade, later named Regiment de Marche du Tchad (RMT), where they were then regrouped around the Third Battalion (mainly the ninth, tenth, eleventh and the CA3 companies) (Gaspar Celaya 2015, 360-361).

While almost all Spanish volunteers were men, the French authorities recognised three Spanish women after the Second World War as FFL volunteers. These were Luisa Rodriguez (born in Girona in 1922), Sabina Bartoli (born in Setcases in 1918) and the much older Paquita Casanovas (born in Barcelona in 1881). These are exceptions to the profile of the majority of Spanish volunteers, along with 27 other male volunteers. They all served in a network linked to the CNF and carried out their activities primarily in metropolitan France as intermittent or permanent agents. Their experiences were very different from any experienced by FFL soldiers. Indeed, the experiences of these three women were very similar to the context in which 'inner' resisters developed their opposition (More about French/Allied networks and French homologation process on: SHD, 17P).

Of course, regardless of their varied experiences depending on the units they fought with, Spanish volunteers shared with their French comrades and other transnational volunteers a common universe created by war. Tracing their individual and personal experiences is not an easy task, but through an analysis and comparative study of their personal records, we can see that the behaviour of Spanish Free French volunteers was valued highly by their military leaders. Almost half of Spanish FFL fighters, for instance, received promotions to the rank of NCO, and 29 per cent were distinguished with numerous decorations during the Second World War. Very few, however, ever received a promotion to officer rank. In fact, less than 2 per cent (1.8 per cent) received such a promotion, largely because only military experience acquired under the French flag was recognised by the French military authorities. Accordingly, even if their abilities in combat in Spain were recognised, the French authorities acknowledged it as foreign experience that was irrelevant in respect to their rank in the Free French forces. As a result, most Spaniards, regardless of their abilities or experience, had to re-start their military careers simply as soldiers. Although, this does not mean that their services in these were not recognized, in fact practically half of them managed to promote within the scale of NCOs, while 29 per cent of them were distinguished with different decorations.

Apart from promotions and decorations, Spanish volunteers were also protagonists of different minor offenses for which they were punished, even if in no case these were related to violations, executions or serious crimes. The foul that reported a greater number of sanctions among the free French Spaniards, even before they joined the FFL, was the numerous desertions they carried out. Between 1940 and July 31, 1943, hundreds of Spaniards deserted both the Army of Africa and the CFA to join the FFL. These desertions, which could perfectly be connected with the enlistment motivations argued above, had their roots in the political-ideological affinity that many Spaniards demonstrated to Leclerc, De Gaulle and the Free French cause. In fact, many of them saw in those leaders the men who had opposed from the beginning to the armistice, but also two "charismatic leaders" determined to continue the struggle for freedom that many Spanish volunteers had begun in 1936. However, factors such as respect towards their military leaders (Putz, Campos, etc.) survival, or the fact of continuing alongside their brothers in arms, were also important when deciding to abandon a discipline, at the risk of being sentenced to death for it. On the other hand, once they were incorporated to the FFL, 10 per cent of the Spanish volunteers were declared deserters, most of the time due to unjustified absences from their unit, or to be delayed in joining it following a permission period. These offenses were punished with imprisonment and degradations.

In terms of the distributions of Spaniards across FFL structures, the majority (90 per cent) served in the ground forces, while the remaining 10 per cent were distributed across other branches. Approximately 5 per cent served with the Free French naval forces, 3 per cent as P1 and P2 agents in several networks linked to the CLN, and 1 per cent as administration staff of Free France. Accordingly, their distribution demonstrates Spanish presence in all theatres of operations where Free France troops were deployed – Dakar, Berchtesgaden, Gabon, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Tunis, Italy and France.

Apart from the analysis of combat itself, it is also interesting to go deeper into the activities that these transnational volunteers developed when they were away from the battlefront. In this regard, in addition to the information provided by the individual records, several testimonies of combatants have been a precious source. In fact, it allowed me to deeply study those periods focusing on material conditions in which the Spanish volunteers lived, as well as their perception of them. Through these testimonies it was

thus possible to verify that, in the memory of the Free French Spaniards – as well as in the memories of the majority of Spanish refugees who arrived in France in 1939 – their reception in France was perceived as a chaotic experience defined by surveillance, separation, improvisation, confinement and hunger. However, the lack of criticism concerning the food in this context may seem logical since, as a soldiers of a regular army, supplies were guaranteed for FFL members. Therefore, once again, material conditions experienced by P1 and P2 Spanish agents deployed in metropolitan soil were different. Thus, the assignment of volunteers to a particular unit, the theatre of operations in which they were deployed and the operational circumstances in which they operated were conditions that directly affected the organization, experiences and supplies of troops, especially when operations took place in the desert (Libya) where water and food were rationed (Gaspar Celaya 2015, 389-415).

Nobody will speak of us when we're dead

Despite its quantitative and qualitative importance, the Spanish contribution to the Resistance in France failed to attract the attention of historians before the 1990s. During this decade, however, there emerged a new academic interest in the social history of the Resistance. Indeed, both in Western and Eastern Europe, the end of the Cold War marked the beginning of a second post-Second World War period which drifted towards identifying new approaches and subjects of study, such as the participation of foreign fighters and women in the Resistance. In the decades that followed the end of the Second World War in 1945, Gaullist and Communist French national narratives dominated our understanding of the Resistance. As Henry Rousso and Tony Judt have pointed out, the 'myth of resistance' served an important political function: 'to advance more easily' into the complex realities of collaboration and complicity in war crimes, condemning certain groups of collaborators, and highlighting that most of the French population had resisted occupation. (Rousso 1990; Judt 2005, 41-47).

In most occupied countries, and especially those in Western Europe, active resistance was largely surpassed by a multifaceted collaboration. In post-war France, however, this was removed from the Gaullist and communist accounts, which constructed French history either around a charismatic leader or around a vanguard party supported by a broad national consensus against Nazi Germany. The result was to brush aside and ignore foreign contributions to the Resistance (Wieviorka, 1992; Dreyfus-Armand 2009).

For Spain, however, almost four decades of dictatorship conditioned researchers to recover the history and memory of Spaniards who did not form part of the Francoist historical narrative. Out of this have come studies uncovering the history and memory of Spanish resisters as part of a wider transnational movement. These studies have also pointed out the way in which the mechanisms of occultation and the positive constructions conditioned, in France as well as in Spain, the study of the Spanish contribution to Resistance in France. In fact, this latter factor also stressed the absence of an official transmission of resisters' memory in Spain, as well as the poverty of a Spanish historiography polluted by the primacy of the testimony and the strength of those positive historical constructions – a praxis that, far from being corrected in democracy, has been carried on, fuelling a whole series of legends that provide a military, masculine and heroic image of the Spanish contribution to the Resistance in France that finds its paradigm in the enormous amount of cultural material devoted to the Spanish soldiers of *La Nueve* who reached Paris on 24 August 1944.

The methodology used in this article has allowed us to ascertain the Spanish contribution to the French Resistance during the Second World War. Through a combination of micro and macro analyses we can identify 1,142 volunteers in the FFL and reconstruct their fighting experiences, their personal histories and even their ages and marital status. By doing so, we can construct a profile of the typical Spanish volunteer: children during the First World War, adolescents during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship of the 1920s, young adults at the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, mature enough to understand the reasons for the outbreak of Civil War in July 1936, and soldiers during the Civil War. This is the identity of the vast majority of Spaniards who joined the FFL. They fought as part of a transnational resistance to the threat of fascism. The Second World War and the FFL allowed them to continue their fight against Franco, an ally of Hitler and Mussolini, who had defeated them in Spain. They were part of the winning side of the Second World War, but the survival of the Franco regime meant many would settle in France and never visit their home country again.

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