

**POLISHING THE PAST?
THE MEMORIES OF DEPORTATION AND THE HOLOCAUST
IN SPANISH LAW AND SOCIETY***

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**INTRODUCTION: THE HOLOCAUST AS «COSMOPOLITAN
MEMORY» AND SPAIN**

Collective remembrance plays a crucial role in building national identities. Societies define themselves by referring to the past too. As a social system, Law makes also references to the past and influences collective identity: Legislators try to build the future by actualizing the past¹. Today, the Shoah is present in legal discourses in Western countries, as well as in Spain. The following pages analyze the actualization of the Holocaust in legal and political discourses in Spain over the last few years.

The process of updating the Holocaust narrative is an important part of the process of building collective memory and national identity of many Western countries. As Israeli scholars Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider showed in 2008, the Holocaust has become a cornerstone of the so-called cosmopolitan memory². Countries and cultural collectives across Europe, their former colonies, and far beyond include references to the Holocaust in their modern identity.

* This is a written version of a presentation at the conference History, Memory and European Identity held in Maastricht in June 2014 and organized by Eugen Pfister and Aline Sierp. The text was revised by Mr. Bradley Hayes. I thank Maite Ojeda and Maria Vila for reading and correcting the text. The text is part of the project of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Spain, DER2010-21986-C02-02 / JURI.

¹ GIORDANO, 1996.

² N. SZNAIDER, 2002.

Every national or cultural collective has developed a particular relationship to this historical episode. Levy and Sznajder pointed out how profoundly the memory of the Holocaust defines some national identities, such as those of Germany and of the United States, not to mention Israel³. Yet the memory of the Shoah also plays an important role in other countries such as Poland, France, and Italy.

These two scholars identified different stages in the construction of this global awareness of the Holocaust. Immediately after World War II, victims were ignored and, as described by the writer and survivor Ruth Klüger, even asked to forget their past⁴. The explanation offered is that, in the aftermath of such destruction, the Allies felt the need to pay tribute to the fighters and liberators and to build a heroic discourse while rebuilding Europe⁵. According to Enzo Traverso the Holocaust had a marginal place in culture: the dominant attitude was silence⁶.

This situation started to change in the 1960s, when attention increasingly focused on the victims of the war, including Jews. Undoubtedly, the fact that, after a lapse of twenty years, more survivors started writing about their experiences played an important role in this change, the Eichmann case, and the generational change cannot be understated. Around the same time, growing interest in, or even, according to Samuel Moyn⁷ [The Last Utopia], the birth of the human rights movement, enabled many countries to confront the violations that had occurred in their recent past. Then, in the 1990s, another episode changed the way the Holocaust was remembered. As Stokholm Banke observed, «what happened in Ex-Yugoslavia during the 1990's was nevertheless the beginning of a Europeanization of the Holocaust, both as history and as moral guidepost»⁸.

The political and pedagogical implications of the Holocaust have also helped in the construction of a moral imperative in today's globalized world, as Alejandro Baer has recently pointed out⁹. In recent years, the most recent phase in this process has become evident, that of the conversion of the memory of the Holocaust into a global phenomenon, thanks to, among other factors, the Hollywood film industry, economic and political union in Europe, and the importance of human rights discourse in international relations. The Holocaust and in general the deportation to the Nazi camps have now become part of the memory of most European countries. More recently, much effort has been devoted to the building of a new legitimizing discourse, especially since the economic crisis of 2008 and the legitimacy crisis it entailed for the European Union¹⁰.

³ Op cit.

⁴ R. KLÜGER, 1994.

⁵ A. ASSMAN, 2006, 17.

⁶ E. TRAVERSO, 2001, 17.

⁷ S. MOYN, 2012.

⁸ C. STOKHOLM BANKE, 2009.

⁹ A. BAER, 2011, 95.

¹⁰ Vid. FEINDT et alii, 2014, 11.

The role of Holocaust remembrance in this process of identity-building is problematic for countries that did not directly experience the Holocaust, of which Spain is one. A few years ago, Alejandro Baer wrote that «[m]ultiple discourses on the Holocaust emerge in different contexts in today's Spain. They are influenced by broader transnational trends, but they also incorporate and reflect national and local specificities»¹¹. There is a clear desire on the part of the Spanish Government to participate in this global culture and to integrate Spain in this emerging European culture of remembrance. This interest explains the ways in which the Spanish State institutions have sought to commemorate the Holocaust, to inscribe the history of the Spanish Righteous among the Nations, and the recent Bill for the naturalization of Sephardic Jews.

As part of this effort, however, the Spanish Government proposes a version of history between 1936 and 1945 that obscures both the Nazi and fascist participation in the Civil War and Franco's support of Hitler during World War II and his complicity in the deportation of Spanish Jews and Republicans to Nazi camps.

The different, conflicting memories in Spain involving its Civil War, World War II and deportations to Nazi camps together form the object of this article, along with certain particularities of modern Spanish collective identity that is democratic yet not as antifascist as the French, the Italian or the German identities. I will explain how the official history of the Spanish Civil War conceals its European dimension and how the official history of WWII conceals its Spanish dimension.

SPAIN'S «OFFICIAL» REMEMBRANCE OF WWII AND THE CIVIL WAR

We cannot analyze the Spanish memory of the Holocaust without first understanding the political and social reconstruction of what happened in Spain and Europe between 1936 and 1945 and the Spanish historiographical narrative concerning this period. In this sense, we should speak of memories in the plural rather than memory in the singular, even if the official history of the Franco dictatorship still retains a hegemonic position.

Spain was in the midst of a democratic process that began with the elections in 1931 that inaugurated the Second Republic¹². In this interval the Spanish State had recognized women's rights, the separation of Church and State and the collective rights of the territorial minorities. At the international level, Spain had committed to the League of Nations and the Zionist project. The Azaña Government facilitated the nationalization of Sephardic Jews but kept a strict immigration

¹¹ A. BAER, 2011, 95.

¹² J. CASANOVA, 2014, 147.

policy¹³. The Republic was not peaceful and instability and social and political unrest were common. After the «pronunciamiento» in July 1936, the Spanish Republic collapsed.

In 1936, a coalition of members of the Army, Falangists and traditionalists attempted to overthrow the democratic regime, and subsequently started the Civil War. The rebels had the support of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The German and Italian air forces used the occasion to test their new machines of war by bombing cities such as Guernica and Barcelona, killing nearly 1500 people in Barcelona alone¹⁴. On the democratic Republican side, thousands joined the International Brigades, a third of whom were of Jewish origin, to fight against fascism¹⁵. Significantly, the Soviet Union benefited from the failure of the Western democratic powers to act by intervening in the fight, albeit to combat fascists, anarchist and Trotskyite factions.

The Civil War ended in 1939 with the victory of Francisco Franco. In September of that year, World War II began and Spain, although not formally entering the war, provided material support to Germany until 1943, when, after Nazi defeats on the eastern front, Franco sought the support of the Allies.

The role played by Spain as «non-belligerent» or «neutral» country has long been discussed, largely based on diplomatic documents. This discussion, however, masks Spain's actual involvement in WWII and supporting National Socialism in Europe. Baer has pointed out that Spain played «both sides of the fence»¹⁶. Franco's Spain was a *de forma* or *de facto* ally of National Socialism from 1936 on and collaborated, starting in 1939, in the deportation of Spanish and non-Spanish citizens to Nazi concentration camps.

From 1939 to 1960, the Spanish Institutions, promoted a discourse equating the Civil War with a «crusade». Franco's authorities presented the three-year war that followed the failed «coup d'état» as a war of liberation between the Spanish Nation and «Anti-Spain» –socialists, leftists and defenders of national minority rights inside Spain. According to Franco's propaganda, Spain had lost its independence during the Second Republic to a «Russian-Jewish», «Jewish-Masonic» or «Jewish-Communist» conspiracy. For more than 20 years, the State institutions annually commemorated the «Nationalist Uprising», the «Crusade» and the «Victory» over this conspiracy¹⁷.

The narrative began to change in the early 1960s. The fact that Spain needed to end its isolation became urgent, and economic elites realized that future pros-

¹³ D. ROZENBERG, 2010, 140.

¹⁴ DOMÈNECH, 2007.

¹⁵ M. SUGARMAN, 2012.

¹⁶ A. BAER, 2011.

¹⁷ J. CASANOVA, 2014.

perity depended on integration into the European Community. Legitimacy of origin gave way to legitimacy of performance, elaborated politically by politicians and academics such as Manuel Fraga Iribarne, university professor, Minister under Franco, and also one of the «fathers» of the 1978 Spanish Constitution¹⁸. The political and legal façade thus had to change, and with it the social and political reconstruction of the past.

That is why, for example, «Victory Day» became «Peace Day» 1964. To operate the change, the Government deployed through the Ministry of Information and Tourism different political campaigns: one, a powerful propaganda campaign, «25 Years of Peace» (*XXV Años de Paz*); the other, one whose political content was not apparent: «Spain is Different». The idea behind this campaign was that Spain was different from the rest of Europe. It was «the spiritual reserve of the West,» «the only victor over communism in the battlefield,» and that Spain was following its own way to a representative regime and a Rule of Law State¹⁹. Campaign was directed by Minister Fraga Iribarne and produced documentaries, books and propaganda documents. It was very successful in spreading the idea of normality of the Spanish Regime. The documentary «Franco ese hombre»²⁰ and the book *Pensamiento político de Franco*²¹ are very good example of the new discourses in the sixties which have been analyzed by Federico Fernández-Crehuet²².

What Spain had experienced between 1936 and 1939 was, according to the new official discourse, a «war between brothers,» a war that had taken place as a consequence of the opposition between «two Spains». The war, in this discourse, had nothing to do with the dominant political and social currents of the European Continent.

This official version of Spain's Civil War concealed the German Nazi and Italian Fascist participation. The Spanish war was presented as the fourth civil war in Spain's modern history, but not as part of European history. In truth, as mentioned above, the Civil War is now largely considered the preface to WWII. The official discourse, however, minimized the foreign intervention on its behalf and emphasized the involvement of the Soviet Union on the Republican side to legitimize Franco's anti-communist crusade.

Something similar happened with the political discourse about World War II: according to the official discourse, the war was a European conflict in which Spain was neutral. This version of WWII was already formulated by 1944, as Nazism and Fascism neared defeat. Franco appointed a foreign minister with the right profile for rapprochement with the Allies and hid the most totalitarian ele-

¹⁸ M. FRAGA IRIBARNE, 1965.

¹⁹ M. FRAGA IRIBARNE, 1965; F. FRANCO, 1964.

²⁰ J. L. SÁENZ DE HEREDIA, 1964, («Franco ese Hombre»).

²¹ F. FRANCO, 1964.

²² F. FERNÁNDEZ-CREHUET, 2009, 171.

ments of his administration, as well as the Spanish support to the German war industry, the participation of thousands of soldiers on the eastern front in the Soviet Union and the complicit deportation of Jews and Republicans to the Nazi camps. At the same time, the Spanish government tried to erase the memory of Spanish Republicans' participation in the French Resistance. When Paris was liberated by French and Spanish troops, the Spanish (Franco) government managed, through adept maneuvering, to prevent the presence of the Spanish Republican flag at the celebration of the liberation.

FRANCO AND THE DEPORTATION OF SPANISH REPUBLICANS AND SPANISH JEWS

Here I would like to examine Spain's participation in the deportation of Jews and Republicans to the Nazi camps and the discourse the Spanish institutions constructed after 1945. According to the Catalan government's database of Spanish deportees, more than 9500 Republican Spaniards were deported, mostly from France, to the *Stalag* between 1940 and 1944²³. They were members of the French Resistance or soldiers in the French Free Army. German authorities asked the Spanish government about the treatment these prisoners were to receive, for they were citizens of Spain, an ally. Yet they were Reds and therefore enemies of the Reich. The Spanish Government, according to Archive documents, gave the response to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 1940: they were to be treated as Reds, not Spaniards. This was the information the Germans needed to begin deporting them to the camps²⁴. More than 60% of them died according to the Database of the Spanish deportees to the Nazi camps of the Democratic Memorial of Catalonia²⁵. The survivors had no government to protect them after the liberation. Most decided to remain in France or to emigrate to America. Only a few returned to Spain, where they had to hide their past: as Reds, and therefore enemies of Franco, but also, furthermore, because they were living evidence of Spanish cooperation with Hitler.

The Spanish authorities, moreover, also collaborated in the deportation of Jews, with or without Spanish citizenship, to Nazi camps. Thousands of European Jews escaped the Nazis by crossing the French Spanish border, sometimes illegally over the Pyrenees following what have been called «freedom trails»²⁶. The Spanish

²³ Database of the Spanish Deportees to the Nazi Camp of the Democratic Memorial of Catalonia. www.memorialdemocratic.gencat.cat.

²⁴ D.W. PIKE, 2003, 42.

²⁵ www.memorialdemocratic.gencat.cat

²⁶ J. CALVET, 2008, 64.

police and Guardia Civil (the national militarized police force) turned many Jews escaping France through the Pyrenees over to the French or German authorities²⁷.

Spain also cooperated, actively and passively, in the deportation of Spanish Jews who lived all across Europe, especially in the Balkans. Sephardic Jews with Spanish citizenship asked the Spanish diplomats for protection, as the Germans allowed neutral countries to repatriate their Jewish nationals. Although denied in the Spanish propaganda, official documents of the Spanish foreign affairs ministry reveal Spain's responsibility for their deportation. The Spanish government ordered its diplomats not to assist these Spaniards because, even if they were formally Spanish citizens, according to Foreign Policy Director José María Doussinague from January the 18th 1943 these Spanish Jews could not be «likened [*«equiparados»*] to Spaniards from Spain, who had Spanish parents and lived in the atmosphere [*«ambiente»*] and in the spirit of Spain»²⁸.

The number of Spanish Jews who were deported is unknown. We only know the names of 400 Jews who were saved at the last minute in 1944, when Spain changed its policy. The war was almost over and Spanish diplomats had begun preparing for its aftermath. They responded to demands of British and American diplomats by seeking the repatriation of the Spanish Jews. Most had been sent to the «work camps in Poland» months before. The Spanish government also changed the instructions sent to the diplomats, allowing and encouraging them to save Jews, just to please the American authorities in a moment where it was clear who was losing the war. It was political opportunism more than heroic humanitarianism²⁹. A group of 400 Spanish Jews from Thessaloniki was rescued at the last moment. They had been deported to Bergen-Belsen and not to Auschwitz. Bergen Belsen was a camp for PoW and for Jews of allied and neutral countries. The Spanish Government asked in 1944 for their repatriation and they were sent from Bergen-Belsen to Portbou, at the Spanish-French border³⁰.

We do not know how many Spanish Jews were deported to the death camps from France, the Balkans and other countries. In the database of Yad Vashem their names can be found but no reference to Spanish nationality is usually given: survivors and relatives most likely failed to mention it because Spanish citizenship had been of no use.

Despite Spain's responsibility for the deportation of Jews to Nazi camps, despite the fact that Spain was the only «neutral» country that did not repatriate

²⁷ Idem.

²⁸ Archives of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. AMAE 1546/8/1/43, 14.

²⁹ S. MARIMON, 2011.

³⁰ The names of these Spanish Jews are in a document from February 5th 1944 at the Archivo Histórico Nacional. Fondos Contemporáneos. Expedientes policiales, H657. They have been incorporated to the Database of the Democratic Memorial of Catalonia.

its Jewish citizens from Athens and Saloniki, and despite its history of delivering fleeing Jews to German authorities, Spain managed to construct a narrative which has largely enjoyed success to this very day³¹. Immediately after the war, the Franco regime maneuvered to present its final hour demands to the German authorities and the individual heroism of certain diplomats as representative of the Franco regime's policy towards Jews during the Holocaust. The information services put out a book, *Spain and the Jews*, detailing this version of Spanish participation in saving Jews from the Holocaust³². The book was distributed in the United Kingdom and the United States in an attempt to win the votes of these two countries for Spain's entry into the United Nations.

SPAIN: BUILDING A NEW IDENTITY BY GLOSSING ITS ROLE IN THE HOLOCAUST

It is interesting that the product of this political propaganda effort still remains the official historical account in Spain. And it is even more interesting to see that the deportation of Spanish Republicans to the Nazi camps by the Nazis still remains absent from the official Spanish memory. During Spain's transition to democracy, political prisoners were released and the Republican survivors of the camps were able to organize to seek their rights. Yet the Spanish government did not grant them any official reparation, economic or symbolic. As Rafael Escudero has observed³³, a pact of silence was made in 1978: for the sake of democracy, the victims were obliged to forget their grievances. There was neither reparation nor justice for the victims of the Franco dictatorship, and no recognition for the victims of Nazism. Nor did the Spanish Governments modify its narratives of deportation, of its involvement in WWII, or of the nature of the Civil War.

Around the year 2000, however, two important phenomena occurred. The first phenomenon consisted of what Margalida Capellà has called «the grandchildren's revolt»³⁴. A new generation of Spaniards, together with the older ones, started demanding justice, reparation and truth by forming associations, usually at the local or regional level. The second phenomenon involved the popular reception of the new «commercial» memory of the Holocaust through films and novels.

³¹ AVNI, 1982; MARQUINA and OSPINA, 1987; A. ARAGONESES, 2011; MARTÍN DE POZUELO, 2012.

³² Spain, Bureau d'Information Diplomatique 1949, Spanish Embassy in Washington 1949 quoted by Avni 1982, 179.

³³ R. ESCUDERO, 2014.

³⁴ M. CAPELLÀ, 2008.

The grandchildren's revolt placed pressure on the government and the parliament. This pressure led to the beginning of the public commemoration of January 27 in Spain, the visit of President Zapatero to Mauthausen in 2005 and the law known as the «Spanish Historical Memory Law»³⁵. This norm was passed by the Spanish Parliament on the 31st of October 2007 in a moment of high political tension.

This Law did not satisfy the victims' demands. It did not establish any criminal procedures or truth commissions; it privatized the exhumation of the bodies of the victims and failed to declare void the judicial convictions of hundreds of thousands of republicans. The Law only declares that these judicial decisions were «unfair». This norm failed also at creating an antifascist collective conscience. According to Rafael Escudero it paved a «road to impunity»³⁶.

The social and political reconstruction of the Holocaust in Spain must be interpreted in this particular context of impunity and lack of antifascist (or anti-Franco) culture in Spanish law and politics.

Yet during this same period, the memory of the Holocaust became, as described earlier, a global phenomenon. As mentioned, the remembrance of the Shoah played a role in the construction of a global conscience and memory, and the question arose as to the part that Spain would have in them.

The Spanish authorities opted not to recognize Spain's complicity in the deportation of Republicans and Jews, although the Spanish institutions did confront, very superficially, its dictatorial past with a greater focus on the Holocaust which took place in Eastern Europe than on the massive killings which occurred in Spain. The Government did not take the German path of confronting its past, which would mean recognizing the cooperation between Franco and Hitler or Spanish responsibility for the deportation of Jews and Republicans. The Spanish institutions instead chose to use –and abuse– the story of a few Spanish 'Righteous among the Nations,' Spanish diplomats who saved Jewish lives by disobeying government instructions. Spain also started commemorating Holocaust Day, in a way that included a reference to the Spanish Republicans, but avoided organizing any formal commemoration of the victims of the Franco regime.

Mention must be made of the difficulty of constructing a new memory in Spain based on the particular version European Institutions decide to promote. The European national and regional parliaments adopted certain discourses to speak of and give the past a significant role in the legitimation of the European Union integration process. The European Union presented itself as a means to repair and move beyond the destruction of the war against Fascism and Nazism.

³⁵ «Ley 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura». *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (27th December 2007): 53410-53416.

³⁶ R. ESCUDERO, 2014.

After the incorporation of Eastern European countries, however, references to the totalitarianism regimes of the East had to be made, references that made Stalinism equivalent to Nazism. This explains why the European Parliament decided, in 2008, to commemorate both the victims of Nazism and Stalinism³⁷. One year earlier, interestingly, the members of the European Parliament were unable to agree on a declaration condemning Franco's 1936 coup. The Christian Democrats, responding to pressure from the conservative Spanish People's Party, refused to join. In the end, the Parliament decided to issue a statement from its President, the Spaniard José Borrell³⁸, followed by other statements by various MEPs, including one by Jaime Mayor Oreja refusing to condemn the Franco dictatorship and warning of the danger of meddling with historical memory. In the words of Mr. Mayor Oreja, «We must not change our attitude, and many Spaniards believe it to be an historical mistake to try to promote a second transition today, as if the first one had grown old and obsolete; it is an historical mistake to unilaterally destroy the essence of our Constitution of harmony; it is historically foolish to introduce the debate on the right to self-determination in Spain, the creation within Spain of new nations that have never existed; it is an historical mistake because it moves us away from the harmony we have created»³⁹. Here the existing double standard in Europe and in Spain becomes evident. While Stalinism and Nazism are considered equivalent and the historical memory of these two periods are promoted by European Institutions, Franquismo does not enter in the same category.

In this national and international context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized an exhibition, *Visas for Freedom*, together with the Centro Sefarad-Israel, a public institution that serves to strengthen links between Spain and Israel and Jewish culture. This exhibition portrays the history of the diplomats who saved Jews. Commissioned by Alejandro Baer and Yessica Sanroman, among others, the exhibition is very well documented and organized. The catalogue underscores the political context of the moment, including the alliance between Franco and Hitler and the two sides of Spanish participation in the Holocaust. The catalogue concludes that «Spain's official policy during the period has little to offer in the way of light and displays large grey areas. Light, at all events, for its policy of granting transit visas, which enabled thousands of Jewish refugees to exit through Spain, mainly from 1939 to 1942; and shade in that, with the exception of Budapest, it only offered protection to those who were Spanish subjects and, at

³⁷ European Parliament declaration of 23 September 2008 on the proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism.

³⁸ Instead of condemning the Coup d'état, the European Parliament decided to issue a statement of President of the European Parliament and to include the counterstatements of many other MEPs like Mr. Mayor Oreja who said «We must not change our attitude, and many Spaniards believe it to be an historical mistake to try to promote a second transition today»

³⁹ See previous note.

the critical moment, failed to make any explicit request that they be exempted from the Nazi decrees».

At the beginning of the catalogue, however, it is interesting to note that the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miguel Angel Moratinos, makes no mention of the Franco dictatorship. In its foreword to the catalogue he states *Visas for Freedom* is a respectful tribute to those who decided to serve the interests of Spain and guarantee the freedom of thousands of Jews, most of them Sephardim». He fails to specify that one of the interests of Spain at that time was an alliance with Nazi Germany. The text appears even more interesting in comparison with one written by Israeli President Yitzhak Navon in the same catalogue: «We feel a profound debt of gratitude to these representatives, despite a lingering and uncomfortable sensation of tragic loss – for if the Franco government had been more humane, many thousands who were done to death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz and other death camps would assuredly have survived».

Another example of the effort to participate in the global culture of Holocaust remembrance is the above-mentioned bill to grant Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews all over the world. Maite Ojeda points out the problematic nature of this bill in that, even if it «promotes the incorporation of the Sephardic Jews to the Spanish Nation,» it is «apparently inclusive but it hides and underestimates the Sephardic Jews and their culture. It reinterprets their cultural identities and re-writes their collective historical memories»⁴⁰. This legal initiative, however, not only rewrites the Sephardic identity, but also the Spanish historical memory and identity. The text, published in June 2015⁴¹, begins with an account of the relationship between Sephardic Jews and Spain. It discusses expulsion as not resulting from the will of the Spanish Crown, but rather as due to the «imperatives of history», which, according to Ojeda, is an expression commonly used, by Spanish conservatives, influenced by Menéndez y Pelayo, at the end of 19th Century⁴². The bill does not mention the 1492 royal decree ordering Jews to convert or emigrate, considered an «historical injustice» by the Speaker of the Spanish Government at a press conference in June 2014⁴³. At the same time, the text speaks of the memory and loyalty of these «Spaniards without homeland» («*Españoles sin patria*»), an old expression used by Pulido for the first time in 1905⁴⁴. The text

⁴⁰ M. OJEDA, 2014a, 4.

⁴¹ «Ley en materia de concesión de la nacionalidad española a los sefardíes originarios de España». *Boletín Oficial del Estado*. 24th June 2014.

⁴² M. OJEDA, 2015b, 7.

⁴³ La Vanguardia. (2014). «Los judíos sefarditas tendrán la nacionalidad española con solo acreditar su condición». <http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20140207/54400938718/judios-sefardies-nacionalidad-espanola-acreditar-condicion.html>

⁴⁴ M. OJEDA, 2014a, 277.

projects a particular vision of the Jews in which the Jewish communities «envision a pragmatic and global identity in emerging generations» («*todas ellas vislumbran una identidad pragmática y global en las generaciones emergentes*»).

The bill goes on to define the «undying» («*imperecedero*») link between the Sephardic Jews and the memory of the Holocaust: «the brutal sacrifice (sic) of thousands of Sephardic Jews». The reference to the murder of thousands of Jews as a «sacrifice» and the direct reference to the memory of the Holocaust, is an evidence of the desire to connect Spain to this global identity. What I find problematic is the fact that the legislator does not mention Franco's complicity with Hitler or the deportation of Spanish Jews to the Nazi camps: Spain's participation in the war, according to the bill, consisted of saving Jewish lives and losing thousands of Sephardic Jews. As a matter of fact, Spain also participated by failing to aid and expelling persecuted Jews, not to mention the diplomatic and material assistance, as well as troops, that it provided Adolf Hitler.

A similar version of history is present in Spain's latest education reform. Reference to the Holocaust has been added to primary and secondary education textbooks. There is no reference to Spanish-German cooperation during the War, however, or to the deportation of Republicans. Again, the institutions attempt to incorporate memory of the Holocaust without recovering Spanish complicity with Nazism from oblivion⁴⁵.

Reinventing the past is not unique to the Spanish case. What is taking place in Spain is similar, for instance, to the reconstruction of the past developed in Italy after 1943. There, State and society legitimized the post-1945 republic that condemned fascism but not without cleaning up many details about the Italian participation in WWII. As Focardi describes in his book *Il cattivo Tedesco e il bravo italiano* (literally, «*The Bad German and the Brave Italian*»), the State and the society managed to convey the idea that many crimes were committed because of the special circumstances of the war and to separate the roles played by the Germans and Italians.

SPANISH REMEMBRANCE OF THE HOLOCAUST AND ANTISEMITISM TODAY

The «official» memory in Spain presents a vision of contemporary history in which Spain was isolated from the rest of Europe between 1931 and 1960. According to this narrative, the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust

⁴⁵ Real Decreto 1105/2014 por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*. 3rd January 2015.

played no part whatsoever in Spanish history, except for the heroism of a few brave diplomats under Franco who saved thousands of Jews. This discourse was created after 1945 and survived the Spanish transition to democracy. Even though Spain has dramatically changed since joining the European Community, this version of history has remained untouched.

This has had important consequences not only in the formation of Spain's collective memory but also for social and political relations in Spain. In recent years, the Spanish State and political groups have invested effort to provide education about and commemorate the Holocaust, yet they continue to ignore the Spanish alliance with Hitler⁴⁶. It is not by chance that Nazism and anti-Semitism is becoming increasingly banal in Spain. Examples of this banalization abound, from a wave of anti-Semitic tweets referring to the Holocaust following the victory of Maccabi Tel Aviv over Real Madrid in the European Basketball Championship 2014⁴⁷ to an exhibition sponsored by Movistar in Madrid and Barcelona in autumn 2014 that mentioned reforms introduced by Adolf Hitler «which helped to improve the social and economic situation»⁴⁸. Such lapses are the consequence not only of the lack of adequate public policies of remembrance and education, but also of the failure to assume responsibility for the deportation of Republicans and Jews to the Nazi camps.

From my perspective, it is clear that the Spanish State has decided to participate in the formation of a European memory to legitimize the European Union and to affirm the role of Spain in this regional organization. At the same time, however, it is trying to eliminate references to the episodes where European and Spanish history merged the most: the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Yet confronting Spain's dictatorial past means confronting the facts behind the transition to democracy, the holy founding myth of Spanish democracy, and that, in turn, means undergoing a deeply uncomfortable interrogation of the political status quo.

⁴⁶ From 2005 on Spanish Institutions commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. According to the new Education Bill of 2014 (Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa or LOMCE) the «Jewish Holocaust» is part of the education programs in primary and secondary schools. Vid Real Decreto 126/2014, de 28 de febrero, por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Primaria and real Decreto de Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato. Vid. also MARIMON, 2014.

⁴⁷ RTVE, 2014.

⁴⁸ L. SERRA, 2014.

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