

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Anthony M. Messina, Series Editor

CARLOS JEREZ-FARRAN AND SAMUEL AMALU

UNEARTHING FRANCO'S LEGACY

**Mass Graves and the Recovery
of Historical Memory in Spain**

**University of Notre Dame Press
Notre Dame, Indiana**

Copyright © 2010 by University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
www.undpress.nd.edu
All Rights Reserved

*To those who fought and continue to fight for justice
and the defense of democratic rights, arduously gained,
perilously maintained.*

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Unearthing Franco's legacy : mass graves and the recovery of historical
memory in Spain / edited by Carlos Jerez-Farrán and Samuel Amago.

p. cm. — (Contemporary European politics and society)

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN-13: 978-0-268-03268-5 (paper : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-268-03268-8 (paper : alk. paper)

1. Franco, Francisco, 1892-1975—Influence. 2. Political violence—Spain—History—20th century. 3. Murder—Spain—History—20th century. 4. Mass burials—Spain—History—20th century.
5. Spain—Politics and government—1931-1939. 6. Spain—Politics and government—1939-1975. 7. Spain—History—Civil War, 1936-1939.
8. Collective memory—Spain. 9. Spain—Social conditions—1975-
I. Jerez Farrán, Carlos, 1950- II. Amago, Samuel, 1974-
DP264.F7U54 2010
946.082—dc22

2010001660

*∞ The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability
of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council
on Library Resources.*

Memory Politics among Perpetrators and Bereaved Relatives about Spain's Mass Graves

Antonius C. G. M. Robben

Dozens of mass graves have been discovered and rediscovered in Spain since the much publicized exhumation in Priaranza del Bierzo, León, in 2000. These burial sites contain the skeletal remains of thousands of the seventy thousand to a hundred thousand Spaniards executed by Francoist troops during the 1936–1939 Civil War and in its aftermath. The significance of these mass graves has changed over the decades. Silenced during Franco's reign and ignored by subsequent democratic governments, they have recently become the center of national commemoration, historical debate, and public and private mourning. Francisco Ferrándiz and Ignacio Fernández de Mata reveal with much sensitivity and insight the complexities of exhumation practices, commemoration politics, and the suffering of relatives who were only small children or not yet born when their parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts were led away to the firing squad. They mourn losses that they hardly understood then and that still remain incomprehensible for many today. In this commentary on the superb essays of the anthropologists Ferrándiz and Fernández de Mata, I want to elaborate on this incomprehensibility of the Civil War executions, discuss the contested memories surrounding the exhumations, and draw some more attention to the perspective of the perpetrators, partly in comparison with my own research on similar themes in Latin America.

FACING AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE PAST

The time lag between the summary execution of twelve Asturian men and five women in October 1937 and their exhumation in July 2003 is so great that attempts to recuperate the truth surrounding that tragic event seem futile. Perpetrators and eyewitnesses have died, are too old to remember, or refuse to speak about the past. Even more tantalizing than this inevitable loss of testimony is the awareness that every traumatic experience is ultimately incomprehensible because the violent event is so psychologically overwhelming and disorienting that it can never be grasped, remembered, or understood in full. There are always unknowns and unknowables at the heart of trauma (Caruth, Introduction), and what is known cannot be fully integrated into consciousness because the reality is too horrible to acknowledge (Gampel). Traumatized people will therefore protect themselves by keeping the terrifying experiences separate from their everyday lives, even though traumatic memories might intrude on consciousness in nightmares, disturbing daydreams, or compulsive thoughts.

Exhumations are intrusions from a different order. They may upset the fragile emotional balance reached by surviving relatives after decades of silent suffering and thus cause renewed distress, but they may also provide a historical understanding, a podium for recounting hardships, and possibly a personal closure that allows survivors to reconcile themselves with the course of their lives and that of their executed relatives' lives. Furthermore, as Ferrándiz says in his essay in this volume, the official condemnation of the killings "has a clear relevance in order to rescue and rehabilitate the memory of the victims for the present and the future and affects both the most public and the most intimate spaces of political action."

The significance of the exhumations is magnified among people who were small children when the executions occurred. Already unable to grasp the political complexity of a Spain at war with itself, they failed to understand how their communities became entangled in the violence and why relatives were assassinated. Fernández de Mata describes the humiliation, stigmatization, ostracism, and pauperization of victimized children as a personal rupture of the world. What precisely was ruptured for these children?

When Fernández de Mata observes that the assassination of parents or siblings, and the ensuing misery and social exclusion, “shattered what should have been the safe haven of childhood for the surviving relatives of the victims of the repression of 1936,” he is indirectly referring to the damage inflicted on what psychologists have called their basic trust (Erikson). Basic trust is acquired during early childhood, when infants learn that they can rely on their parents for love, care, and protection against external threats. They eventually develop a strong enough ego to cope with life’s discomforts and have sufficient trust in humankind that they do not feel threatened by outsiders (see Bowlby, Erikson). Spanish children with traumatic Civil War experiences learned that they could not rely unquestionably on their parents for safety and that the outside world was a dangerous environment in which hostile forces deprived them forever of the affection of their executed parents. This distrust was repeatedly fed by the official silencing of the executions, the public commemorations of Franco’s victory, and the memorials erected in memory of fallen Nationalists.

Francisco Ferrándiz describes movingly how an aging Esther Cimadevilla had been searching for a father whose image, life, and predicament were kept from her by her mother. She only recovered a threadbare account from the fading memory of her ninety-year-old mother a few months before she died. Her father, Emilio Montoto, had been executed in Valdediós, Asturias, in October 1937 and interred in a mass grave. Esther traveled from the United States to Spain in 2003 to assist the exhumation “in order to rescue and vindicate his memory.” This rescue mission must have had a heightened importance because of her mother’s deliberate silence. Extrapolating from my own research among relatives of the Argentine disappeared, I suspect that Esther’s determination to find and bury her father was a manifestation of a deep-seated reciprocal care that exists between parent and child (see Robben, “Assault”). This daughterly obligation was intensified by her mother’s outward emotional neglect of her dead husband. Esther undid her mother’s and her native country’s silence and provided her father with a proper burial, even though the forensic identification of Emilio Montoto was inconclusive.

The personal rupture of the world and the incomprehensibility of the tragic events extend also to the collective level, albeit in an inverse man-

ner. The Spanish state ignored the Civil War executions and the presence of mass graves between 1939 and 2000. Although understandable during the Franco dictatorship and even during Aznar’s Partido Popular government, the silence of the Socialist government of Felipe González is harder to grasp. Common understanding from genocide and especially Holocaust studies has it that societies need to repress or at least silence major atrocities for an extended time because they are not ready to face the many dead or admit to their own complicity in the killings. The belated soul-searching about the Holocaust in Western Europe is taken as emblematic of a universal social reaction to mass violence, notwithstanding the ongoing private suffering of the survivors. As I have pointed out in an analysis of Argentina’s compulsive remembering of the state repression of the 1976–1983 dictatorship, the European response was historically, politically, and psychologically specific (see Robben, “Traumatized”). Unlike in the case of the Holocaust, Argentine society did not silence the horrors of the so-called dirty war when the military regime fell in 1983, but immediately created a Truth Commission to determine the fate of more than ten thousand disappeared Argentines, opened mass graves, divulged the testimonies of torture victims, prosecuted perpetrators, and sentenced five junta members to lengthy prison terms.

The Spanish silence about the Civil War atrocities compares therefore neither to the Argentine nor to the Western European situation but resembles more closely the Chilean indifference to the horrors of its 1973–1990 military regime. Both Chile and Spain underwent negotiated transitions to democracy: Chile with General Pinochet remaining in power as commander in chief of the armed forces and Spain with the transformation of a dictatorship into a parliamentary monarchy. Both countries were unable to hold perpetrators accountable because of amnesty legislation, and, just as important, both countries reaped the benefits from the rapid economic growth begun during authoritarian rule.

The Chilean sociologists Moulian and Lechner argue that the three-decades-long indifference to the repressive past by large sectors of Chilean society was caused by a collective complicity with military rule. They even speak of a compulsion to forget, exactly the opposite of the compulsion to remember that has typified Argentina. The Chilean silence was fed by the country’s economic success and safeguarded by a military

that zealously protected their personal and institutional interests. The Chilean middle and upper classes drowned their guilt about this complicity in consumerism, argue Moulán and Lechner. The businessmen, technocrats, and neoliberal intellectuals pretended to be afraid of endangering the calm and economically successful transition from dictatorship to democracy if they raised the Chilean military's accountability. This fear was held responsible for the national silence, while in fact it served to cover up their collaboration with Pinochet's regime, from whose neoliberal policies they benefited most. Pinochet even turned from dictator into patriarch as time passed. He became seen as Chile's principal benefactor who had given the country peace and prosperity.

Thus Chile's past was silenced to avoid a critical self-examination about civil society's complicity with the military regime, to prevent the eruption of social fractures that might undermine the transition from dictatorship to democracy, and to protect the blooming economy from a political instability that might deter foreign investments. Chilean society was so geared toward the future that it buried the past. It was a collective conspiratorial silence. The sudden discovery of a mass grave or a public testimony by a survivor of torture might briefly move the nation, but these revelations were not assumed in full by either the subsequent democratic governments or large segments of Chilean society out of deep guilt feelings. Silence was bought off with consumer goods to fill the emotional gaps left by seventeen years of dictatorship, the guilt of complicity, and the guilt of failing to empathize with suffering fellow citizens.

Has such complicity also been at play in Spain? Fernández de Mata mentions the collective rupture with the world at the outbreak of the Civil War and the post-Civil War social reordering that affected norms, values, gender roles, and the country's socioeconomic organization. The spoils of war were reaped by a petty bourgeoisie who took the jobs of executed workers, defeated Republicans, and blacklisted neighbors. The Spanish middle class owes its current prosperity to the growing industrialization and tourism industry initiated during Franco's dictatorship since the 1960s. There seems a parallel here with the Chilean silence, the consumerism, and the fear of destabilizing the country and the booming economy by raking up traumatic memories. Another parallel appears in the recent reexamination of the past in Chile and Spain. Just as the

exhumation in León in 2000 turned into an unstoppable confrontation with a past silenced for more than six decades, so the detention of General Pinochet after an indictment by Judge Garzón in 1998, and especially the 2004 revelation of the former dictator's secret foreign bank accounts, have finally broken the Chilean embargo on the past. Pinochet's betrayal undid the societal pact of silence and is engendering national soul-searching with a yet uncertain outcome.

THE PERPETRATORS' HIDDEN CARTOGRAPHY

The exhumations in Spain have made "a formerly neglected cartography of terror and repression" visible, so writes Francisco Ferrándiz perceptively, one "that encompasses many landscapes and localities throughout the country." Ferrándiz observes that each opening of a mass grave confronts Spain with violated human remains, resignifies the past through extensive media coverage, reorders national space through the creation of commemorative landmarks, and redraws collective memory with the testimonies of witnesses and survivors.

Still, what remained invisible for more than half a century had always been known to survivors and perpetrators. If the Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen) memorial publicly acknowledged "the memory of those who fell during our glorious Crusade," then the mass graves with executed Republicans were the hidden memorial sites of Franco's victory (*El Valle*). General Franco regarded the Civil War as a divine reconquest of Spain—reminiscent of the Reconquista by the fifteenth-century Catholic kings and queens—that reclaimed lost symbolic and national territory from the Republican atheists. A military victory became therefore measurable in cities conquered and enemies buried in mass graves.

The summary executions during the Civil War symbolized a lasting victory. The executioners outlived their enemies at the moment of killing, a powerful feeling that has been described as follows by Elias Canetti: "The moment of survival is the moment of power. Horror at the sight of death turns into satisfaction that it is someone else who is dead. . . . This feeling of superiority to the dead is known to everyone who has fought in a war. It may be masked by grief for comrades, but

these are few and the dead are always many. The feeling of strength, of standing alone against the dead, is in the end stronger than any grief. It is a feeling of being chosen from amongst the many who manifestly shared the same fate" (227–28).

Canetti was not a soldier, and his interpretation lacks grounding in lived experience, but his intuition was right. The following quote from a retired American officer specialized in the psychology of killing says very much the same: "Mass murder and execution can be sources of mass empowerment. . . . The soldier who does kill must overcome that part of him that says that he is a murderer of women and children, a foul beast who has done the unforgivable. . . . He must believe that not only is this atrocity right, but it is proof that he is morally, socially, and culturally superior to those whom he has killed. It is the ultimate act of denial of their humanity. It is the ultimate act of affirmation of his superiority" (Grossman 208–10).

Franco's troops reappropriated Spain by occupying the country with mass graves. These graves were material proof of the military's superior force and gave the troops the confidence that they were winning the war against the atheist revolutionaries. Once again, Canetti has tried to verbalize the feelings of a victorious soldier in the presence of his slain enemies: "As he walks among the graves he feels that he is alone. Side by side at his feet lie the unknown dead, and they are many. How many is not known, but the number is very great and there will be more and more of them. They cannot move, but must remain there, crowded together. He alone comes and goes as he wishes: he alone stands upright" (277). The symbolic power of mass graves derives from their reference to the mass of enemies, so suggests Canetti, and to the diminishing ranks of opposition through death, thus imbuing perpetrators with omnipotence.

The unceremonial burial of the defeated was the final act of victory. The dead were not acknowledged as fellow Spaniards who deserved a proper burial to reincorporate them into society as deceased members. Their death was seen as a gain for, rather than a loss to, society. The dumping of their executed bodies symbolized their inhumanity. Unlike the dead on the Nationalist side, who were immortalized at the Valle de los Caídos memorial, the executed were considered unpatriotic.

Yet the dead were present in the Spanish collective memory, as both authors have shown convincingly. They remained alive not only in the suffering of the surviving relatives who were unable to express their anguish openly, but I suspect that the perpetrators also remembered the executions they had carried out. Some might have been troubled by remorse and regarded the executions as a stain on their victory. Others took refuge in Spain's official public silence, while still others privately rejoiced in their horrendous deeds. These perpetrators would be reminded frequently of the dark past as they drove by the secret burial sites on their way to work or on vacation. The hidden mass graves served as faceless monuments to the glorious victory. What for the bereaved relatives became "a road map linking the political production of terror with the intimate experiences of the victims of repression," according to Ferrándiz, was an itinerary of triumphs for the perpetrators.

My interpretation of mass graves as invisible monuments is less speculative than it might appear at first sight. The earliest Spanish meaning of the word *monumento* is a place of burial (*sepulcro*), a memorial to a heroic act. Here lies one meaning of the mass graves for the victorious Nationalist troops. The concealed burial grounds were a constant reminder of their victory over evil. The mass grave/monument was a commemoration of the slaying of the "Reds," the atheists who had violated in July 1936 the graves of Spanish nuns, priests, and saints and openly displayed the mummified remains (see Lincoln). Such desecration did not serve as a justification for the unceremonial burial of the executed Republicans but was certainly known to the executioners and might have increased already existing feelings of revenge.

The second symbolic meaning of the mass graves for the victors was that they represented the worthlessness of the dead. The slain enemies did not merit a proper burial place as one would accord the fallen in a conventional war. The Republican atheists were less than human in the eyes of the military and deserved nothing better than a dog's grave. They did not need to be remembered by Spanish society and had to be prevented from turning into martyrs for future generations.

The third meaning of the mass graves was that their hidden location heightened the dead person's fall from society's grace. Evil could only be buried in unhallowed soil, not in a cemetery that would provide them

with an identifiable status in a Catholic universe. The executed had become outcasts whose place outside the new social order was emphasized by their unacknowledged presence in mass graves. This spiritual, social, and spatial exclusion of the undesirable dead is of symbolic importance in many societies but has an added relevance in a deeply Catholic society like Spain.

In the end, these diverse meanings of the Spanish mass graves revolve around memory construction. They diminish the recollection of the Republican dead and fill the collective memory with victorious Nationalists. Together with the silenced memories and hidden memorials of the vanquished, there is an implicit wish to close public space to the suffering of surviving relatives and enlarge the public recognition for the Nationalist losses as sacrifices for the glory of Spain.

CONFLICTING MEMORIES AND TESTIMONIES

Are the recent efforts to exhume mass graves, identify and rebury the dead, return stolen property to the heirs, record the testimonies of survivors and relatives, build memorials, reexamine and preserve archives, hold official commemorations, and rehabilitate the defeated the manifestations of a national trauma? Both Ferrándiz and Fernández de Mata believe it is too early to tell, and they point perceptively to the heterogeneity of the historical memory movement. There are a few aged perpetrators who have unburdened their conscience. There are sons and daughters who search for their parents, young adults who want to reconstruct the life histories of their grandparents, local and regional governments that commemorate the Civil War victims, and a national government that ponders about what to do with Franco's symbolic presence in Spanish public spaces. In addition, there are historians, anthropologists, psychologists, writers, filmmakers, and journalists who have a significant impact on Spanish society through their "production, circulation, and consumption of images and narratives of Civil War terror." Finally, there is a general public who takes notice of, empathizes with, participates in, ignores, or is indifferent to this memory movement.

Most public attention has been drawn to the bereaved families. Fernández de Mata addresses the motivation of these searching relatives.

His explanation points to personal suffering and a social trauma. It is unclear whether there are still relatives with a psychic trauma from the sequels to the Civil War, but Ferrándiz and Fernández de Mata present several examples of intense personal suffering. Persons such as Esther, Maricarmen, Rosa, and Rosita desire a forensic exhumation to finally rebury their relatives with ceremonial honor, fulfill a family and moral obligation fed by basic trust, and provide blood relatives with a place to mourn the losses and remember the dead. This personal motivation is entwined with a social need, found in every human society, to care for the dead, give them a ceremonial burial, accord them a place in the hereafter, and acknowledge the bereavement of the mourners (see Hertz, *Death*). Some relatives experience the exhumation and reburial as the release of a lifelong burden and feel they can now die peacefully, while others acquire renewed energies to set the historical record straight and memorialize the dead in a national context.

The emotional and social closure brought about by the reburials does not inevitably relegate the executed to historical memory. Many relatives share the social trauma of an interrupted family line and bear the burden of having dehumanized ancestors whose lives were considered so unworthy that they were executed without a trial, and buried without ceremony. The trauma continues as unfinished social mourning, a recurrent return to the suffering of the executed, the awareness of their social stigmatization, the incessant call for vindication, and the desire to symbolically undo the harm inflicted on their assassinated relatives. As Krystal has remarked about the social trauma of Holocaust survivors, "unmastered memories represent 'unhealed wounds,' which keep generating painful affects. Memories that cannot be accepted may have to be reinterpreted or modified in a kind of self-detoxification" (156). The exhumations and reburials, the commemorations, an official recognition of injustices, and a rewriting of history help heal those wounds and overcome the social trauma. Bereaved relatives want to restore the agency and protagonism of the executed and make them once again, after six decades of oblivion, full participants and even heroes in Spanish history.

The perpetrators of the war crimes and the crimes against humanity during the Spanish Civil War have a much more subdued public voice in the current memory debate, but their modest role is shored up by

the many relics from Franco's dictatorship. The Valle de los Caídos memorial site is possibly the most visible manifestation of such Nationalist memory, but there are also street names, school names, cemeteries, statues, landmarks, foundations, history books, films, and songs that bear the partisan imprint of the Francoists. Tight-lipped perpetrators conceal the location of mass graves consciously, not just because they are afraid of possible prosecution and reprisals, but because their concealment marks an enduring victory over the defeated, as the slain remain trapped in oblivion. Even the transformation of the Valle de los Caídos into an educational center will not erase the architectural imprint of the Franco dictatorship or make visible the miserable working conditions of the Republican prisoners who built the mausoleum containing the remains of General Francisco Franco and the Falange leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Certain experiences remain unrecoverable, and others are imprinted forever on Spanish society.

THE FUTURE OF SPAIN'S EXHUMATIONS

Spain embarked in the year 2000 on an unpredictable journey into its past. Francisco Ferrándiz and Ignacio Fernández de Mata have demonstrated that the exhumations have become a Pandora's box. Fernández de Mata writes of "debates, issues, processes, and struggles that have been increasingly shaking Spanish society since the first mass grave exhumation in October 2000," while Francisco Ferrándiz observes that the "exhumations are bringing to Spanish society . . . rather disturbing information regarding our past, our present, and probably our future as well." Pandora, who was according to Greek mythology the first woman on earth, received a box from Jupiter that encased all human ills. The contents escaped into the world when Pandora opened the box. This metaphor applies also to Spain's exhumations. The recent opening of the Civil War mass graves released the previously silenced suffering, anguished memories, and secrets about the atrocities committed by Franco's insurgent troops into the public arena to be debated, contested, and made public. Decades of silence were broken with painful testimonies. Spanish society began to question the official rendition of the Civil

War, and the human and social costs of this collective fratricide were revealed to the Spanish people.

What will the future bring for the exhumations and Spain's collective soul-searching? The historical reappraisal of the Civil War is barely under way and will develop into many yet unknown directions. Still, some potential developments may be envisioned when we draw upon the experiences with the exhumation of victims of political violence in Latin America. Chile and Argentina have been exhuming mass graves for several decades. The first exhumations produced great commotion because the assassinations had occurred relatively recently and most bereaved relatives were still alive. The expectation among human rights organizations was that the exhumations would lead to the identification of the victims, the restitution of the remains to the relatives for a proper burial, the prosecution and conviction of the perpetrators, and an eventual return to normalcy after the dead had been mourned and society had assumed its responsibility and guilt for past atrocities. But the political reality of these deeply divided societies proved more unpredictable than imagined, and the social traumas more unmanageable than anticipated (see Robben, "Traumatized"). Extrapolating from the consequences of the exhumations in Chile and Argentina, the following six effects might also take place in Spain.

One, the positive identification of skeletal remains becomes increasingly more difficult as time passes. Clothing has disintegrated, dental and medical records are unavailable, and close relatives who may remember accidental bone fractures that help the forensic investigations are no longer alive, while DNA testing is considered either too expensive or impossible because relatives cannot be located. There have been several cases of misidentification in Chile and Argentina, which brought much suffering to the surviving relatives and made people refuse permission for future exhumations, thus expressing doubts about the re-examination of the past. More than seven decades have now passed since the first Civil War executions in Spain. The possibility of some misidentifications is therefore real, and society's reaction uncertain.

Two, the exhumations in Chile and Argentina became regarded as pointless by some when increasingly more mass graves were opened but the perpetrators were not held accountable. The political choice not

to prosecute the executioners made several Argentine human rights organizations oppose the exhumations. Such retraction is less likely to happen in Spain because most perpetrators have died. Furthermore, there are other ways than criminal prosecution for a society to deal with victimizers. Honors and medals can be withdrawn. Streets, squares, and buildings can be renamed. Commemorations can be discontinued, and memorials may be disassembled or remodeled to account for the Republican dead.

Three, the Argentine and Chilean exhumations were regarded as undesirable by certain groups in society because they either caused or dampened political protest. Political groups supportive of the military coups argued that bygones were bygones, and that now Chileans and Argentines had to work toward national reconciliation and economic prosperity. Exhumations were considered counterproductive in achieving those aims, and mass graves should therefore be left alone. On the other side of the political spectrum, in particular in Argentina, there were organizations such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, which began opposing the exhumations because these were setting in motion a mourning process among relatives who had recuperated their dead and thus would cause the political demobilization of the human rights movement and end in a national forgetting of military repression. Some voices of opposition to the ongoing exhumations have also been raised in Spain. They argue that old wounds are opened that will damage Spain's social fabric. It is yet uncertain whether this will be the case, whether Spanish society has not already been torn since 1936, and whether the dignified ritual reburial of the executed and the current soul-searching will not help to pull the country together through a more balanced treatment of the past.

Four, a substantial group of veterans of Argentina's "dirty war" has been actively glorifying their victory over the revolutionary insurgents and denying any wrongdoing during military rule. The overruling of amnesties and presidential pardons by the Supreme Court has even led to a resurgence of such political vindication. Plaques are revealed, masses are said, roll calls of the dead are published, videos are produced to shore up words with images, and commemorations are organized in the memory of the victims of the leftist subversion. At the same time,

there has been a growing opposition to this denial of gross human rights violations by self-critical Argentine officers who condemn their former comrades. Instead, Chilean officers have been remarkably quiet about their human rights abuses. They have enjoyed the protection of a self-declared amnesty, while Chilean society was for decades unwilling to examine its past and not interested in demanding the accountability of perpetrators. The international arrest warrants against General Pinochet, the disclosure of his secret bank accounts, and the 2005 election of a president who spent time in Chile's most notorious torture center are changing the political landscape. The passage of time has made the prosecution of Spain's executioners most unlikely and their vindication of less political urgency. Still, the recent appearance in Spanish newspapers of obituaries of persons executed by Nationalist and Republican forces, and especially the combative tone decrying the dead on the Nationalist side, is worrisome. Furthermore, just as the increasing distance from the Civil War has allowed for the exhumation of mass graves, so this time lag may make some people idealize Franco's regime and in particular his role in the economic expansion of the 1960s and 1970s.

Five, exhumed, identified, and reburied victims of state terror have resurrected old political ideals in Chile and especially Argentina. Their violent deaths have given them a political role in history, which continues to incite strong ideological feelings. The Chilean and Argentine disappeared and executed are increasingly seen as idealists whose objective was to improve the lives of their countrymen and whose political ideas continue to be relevant today. I doubt whether Spain will witness a future resurgence of Republicanism, but a historical reappraisal of the five-year pre-Civil War Republic is always a possibility.

Six, Chilean and Argentine sites of trauma are slowly transforming into sites of memory as experience turns into history. Former torture centers have become museums in which school children learn about the military dictatorship. Monuments and memorials are erected at former mass graves. Memory parks arise to remember the dead and symbolize the suffering in artistic forms. In Spain, some memorials and commemoration plaques related to the Civil War executions have recently been inaugurated. Their permanence and significance in Spain's

collective memory cannot be foreseen, but the controversies over their existence will most likely be less intense than in Chile and Argentina, as Spanish society is taking responsibility for its past.

The exhumations in Spain are thus a Pandora's box with many unforeseen effects but not all of them disruptive. When Pandora opened her box and allowed the ills to escape, only hope remained inside. The Spanish exhumations may open wounds inflicted by the Civil War, but they harbor also the hope that a society that is brave enough to uncover an almost forgotten and painful past will finally be at peace after having honestly looked at itself and drawn valuable moral and historical lessons.

The Rupture of the World and the Conflicts of Memory

Ignacio Fernández de Mata

This essay addresses four main topics related with the repression of the defeated in the Spanish Civil War. First, it looks at the narration of the victims' traumatic memories and the problems faced by both the narrator and the interviewer when attempting to recover these memories. Second, it focuses on the actual violence of Francoist repression in the areas controlled by the so-called Nationalists upon the breakout of the insurgency. Third, it analyzes the explanations constructed by different social sectors regarding the assassination of thousands of persons and their interment in mass graves, combined with information gleaned from the available historical record. And finally, it examines the conflicts of memory unleashed by the relatively recent wave of exhumations promulgated by the relatives of the assassinated victims, focusing on those in the province of Burgos, where I have conducted my research.

A YEAR OF MEMORY FOR SPAIN

On June 23, 2006, the Spanish Congress of Deputies declared the year 2006 as the Year of Historical Memory. This year thus commemorates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Second Spanish Republic, and the seventieth anniversary of the start of the Spanish Civil War. The initiative, approved in the last congressional session before summer holidays started, came from