Alejandro Baer

THE VOIDS OF SEPHARAD: THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST IN SPAIN

The Holocaust did not take place within Spain's borders. Isolated and detached from the tragedy that consumed the rest of the European continent, Spain at that time was essentially submerged in the trauma of her own Civil War and its aftermath. When Spain finally emerged from the grip of Franco's dictatorship, the country's democracy was rebuilt on the margins of the prevailing European value system, in which the memory of Auschwitz and its ilk occupy a central place. It is only in the last decade, as a consequence of both institutional initiatives to organize commemorative ceremonies and the effects of cultural and educational transnationalization, that Spain has been progressively absorbed into the wider European debate about history, culture, and memory. As a result, discussions about the Holocaust have gained a more significant presence in Spanish public life. The process is an arduous one because it requires Spain to liberate itself from the shackles of its own past, specifically from the mantle of ignorance and prejudice that, until very recently, has covered everything related to Jews.

Several authors have argued that the Holocaust has become a globalized and cosmopolitan memory. In other words, the connection with this past goes beyond the groups or the nations that were directly affected by it or were responsible for perpetrating it, transcending those stable social frameworks that, for Halbwachs, constitute the basis for the emergence of "collective memory." As a deterritorialized memory that is increasingly shared by individuals otherwise dispersed by culture, ethnic origin, religion, or class, the global memory of the Holocaust has been transformed into a universal imperative. As such, it makes the issue of universal human rights, tolerance, and pluralism politically relevant to all who share this new form of memory (Levy and Sznaider). At the same time, the Holocaust has become a "bridging metaphor" and a powerful symbolic resource (Alexander) that is frequently invoked in connection with other tragic events to compare or highlight their moral consequences.

With this conception of the Holocaust as both universal imperative and symbolic resource as its basis, this article approaches the memory, or the memories, of the Holocaust in Spain. In historical terms, Spanish society does not have an immediate connection to the Holocaust, although the general public is now certainly more aware of its symbolic significance. Multiple 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. Concurrently, various social groups have begun to code their own traumatic experiences by creating parallels with the Holocaust.

Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies Vol. 12, No. 1 March 2011, pp. 95–120
ISSN 1463-6204 print/ISSN 1469-9818 online
http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals DOI: 10.1080/14636204.2011.556879

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Spain and the Holocaust: so distant, yet so near

If we follow a straightforward historical approach to the Holocaust, closely adhering to the most basic facts, Spain cannot be considered as one of the main culprits in the genocide of the Jewish people during World War II. Jews were not deported from Spain, nor did Spain establish racial laws.[1] Franco's main targets included a wide ideological spectrum, but they consisted primarily of of sympathizers of the Spanish Republic, mainly Socialists, Communists, and Masons. Even though the Spanish dictator often compared these groups to the Jews—take, for instance, his frequent and disturbing rants about a so-called Jewish–Masonic–Communist Conspiracy—the antisemitic rhetoric of the Francoist regime was different from the radical antisemitism that was the central axis of Nazi ideology. This explains why no formal discrimination between Jewish and non-Jewish refugees was applied, when, after the fall of France in the summer of 1940, numerous refugees fled to the Pyrenean border, hoping to travel through Spain toward Portugal and America. The regime's strategy was primarily political: to block the way to enemies of the National Cause and to keep the number of refugees in the country as low as possible.

At first glance, then, Spain seems to have maintained a safe distance from the Holocaust. This distance is significantly shortened, however, when we consider that the Civil War and the first Francoism occurred in the general context of World War II. Spanish ideological affinity for and its economic and military cooperation with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany began when Hitler helped the Nationals during the Spanish Civil War. Franco repaid these favors during World War II by supplying raw materials for the German armament industry. Between 1941 and 1943, Franco sent to the Eastern Front 47,000 volunteers, *La División Azul* (the Blue Division), who were enlisted to fight, along with German soldiers, against the Soviet army. Today, a road in central Madrid still memorializes these soldiers through its name, "The Fallen of the Blue Division." The fate of Spanish Republican refugees in France is also directly linked to World War II and to Nazi crimes. When Hitler's Germany occupied France in 1940, thousands of Spanish Republican refugees were left at the mercy of the collaborationist Vichy regime. After Franco's government denied them recognition as

FIGURE 1 Refugees at the Irun–Hendaya border 1940. General Administration Archives.

citizens, 9000 Spaniards—most of whom were Republican veterans who had enlisted in the French Army, in the *Résistance,* or in the militarized Labor Units—were deported to German concentration camps, mainly Mauthausen in Austria. There, about 5000 lost their lives. Consequently, the significance of Nazi crimes in Spanish Republican memory is indisputable.

Finally, we may draw a third link between Spain and the Holocaust. This one is not defined in immediate historical terms but has a deeper historical and philosophical meaning. As Miguel Marinas explains, what happened to the Jews in Europe during the Holocaust concerns us in Spain because of Sepharad, the Jewish Spain that vanished in the fifteenth century. The stigmatization, exclusion, persecution, and exile of the Iberian Jews and, particularly, the discrimination against converts by the "Estatutos de limpieza de sangre" (Stallaert 106) to some extent set a precedent for later Nazi crimes. The absence of Sepharad creates an immeasurable void in the present, precisely because of the fact that in Franco's Spain and even in later years, Auschwitz was considered to be a distant issue that concerned only Jews and Germans. Reyes Mate writes: "How can we think that this does not affect us when so many Spaniards were educated in Franco's Spain, that is, with categories that removed the significance of this catastrophe?" ("Presentación" 13). In this last sense, the expunging of the memory of Jewish Spain helps explain why Spaniards remained distant from and peripheral to discussions regarding the Holocaust for so long. This void around Sepharad both informs and influences how the Holocaust is remembered in contemporary Spain.

History of an invisible memory

> España, imbuida de su espíritu cristiano y universal de amor a todas las razas de la tierra contribuyó al rescate de judíos y procedió más por intereses espirituales que por razones políticas o simplemente jurídicas. La ayuda de nuestro gobierno no sólo se extendió a los sefarditas dispersos por los continentes, sino también a todos los judíos cuando se presentó la ocasión, sin considerar su nacionalidad o el lugar en que se hallaban.
>
> [Spain, inspired by its universal Christian spirit of love toward all the races of the Earth, contributed to the rescue of the Jews, motivated more by spiritual interests than by political or merely legal reasons. Our government's aid extended not only to Sephardim dispersed across every continent but also to all Jews wherever the occasion arose, without regard to their nationality or whereabouts.] (*España y los judíos* [Spain and the Jews], 1949 pamphlet published by the Spanish Diplomatic Information Bureau 15)

With the aim of strengthening its international position after World War II, Franco's regime tried to whitewash its past links with Nazi Germany. During this period, the Spanish government presented idealized narratives of its attitudes and actions during the years of persecution and genocide of Jews in Europe.[2] Another myth that was firmly entrenched during the dictatorship was that of Spain's neutrality during World

War II, when, in reality, Franco played both sides of the fence, as an open sympathizer with the Nazi cause and as a cautious non-belligerent country for the Western allies (Avni "La guerra" 18; Rother 83–91). Both myths persisted for decades within Spanish diplomatic circles. But for the general public in Spain, World War II, the destruction of European Jewry, and even the efforts to rescue Jews during the Holocaust were distant and unknown issues. This was mainly because, as Álvarez Chillida explains, during Franco's regime, "Nazi Germany continued to appear on the side of good in the great battle against Communism" and "the Jewish genocide was hidden as best it could be, which was a lot" (419–420).[3] The remembrance of Spanish Republican victims of Nazi Germany was deliberately banned. In 1962, the association *Amical de Mauthausen*, which brought together those exiled Republicans who had suffered deportation to the Nazi camps, was founded in secret. The organization was not legalized until 1978 ("Amical"). Jorge Semprún, detained in France and deported to Buchenwald for belonging to the French *Résistance* and probably the best-known Spanish survivor, published his testimony, *Le grand voyage,* in Paris in 1963. In Spain, the translation, *El largo viaje*, appeared after the death of the Dictator in 1976. At that moment in Spanish history, the remembrance of Nazi crimes was principally tied to victims' groups based within the country: the former Republican deportees and the small Spanish Jewish community.[4]

Would things change with the arrival of democracy? Regime change in Spain followed a different path than, years later, in Latin America or South Africa because Spain opted for a tacit agreement to leave the legacy of the war and the dictatorship out of the political debate, a strategy that Santos Juliá calls a "push to oblivion," and which others have defined as a "pact of silence." The Spanish transition was marked by a kind of collective social amnesia, a voluntary forgetting of the past via a social pact designed to ensure that conflicts of the recent past would not happen again in the future. Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy established a political culture of consensus that advocated forgetting for the benefit of the public good, placing the need for peace above that for justice. Thus, there was no substantial change, even at a symbolic level, in the acknowledgment of the suffering that was caused by Franco. Monuments, statues, and plaques of Franco's regime, such as those erected for those "fallen for God and for Spain," lasted for years and some even for decades after the death of the General. Equally, coins with Franco's effigy were slowly removed from circulation and continued to be accepted as legal tender until the arrival of the euro in 2000. In this context, neither the deported Republicans nor Auschwitz was discussed, not even in textbooks.[5] As Antonio Muñoz Molina concisely explained: "The history banned by Franco was a history simply abandoned by democracy" (11).

Today, however, a number of factors, many of them originating outside the country, have created a platform in Spain where the Holocaust can actually be discussed. It is worthwhile to chart a brief chronology of these factors, even in a schematic way: Spain joined the European Union in 1986, and this same year it established diplomatic relations with the State of Israel (the last European country to do so). In 1992, the fifth centenary of the Expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish government sponsored a series of cultural and educational initiatives on Judeo-Spanish heritage.[6] The transitions to democracy in countries of the Latin American Southern Cone roused interest in Spain, and, later, the involvement of Spanish judges in the persecution of former military officials on charges of crimes

against humanity in Argentina and Chile dominated front pages and discussions in the media. There was also growing public awareness of genocide and ethnic cleansing through reports of the war in the Balkans and the conflict in Rwanda. In addition, the Spanish media prominently featured the flow of news from the rest of Europe about restitution to Jewish Holocaust survivors and Nazi slave workers. In 1997, the "Commission for the Investigation of the Gold Transactions Proceeding from the Third Reich during the Second World War" was created. The Commission's objective was to explore the possible involvement of Franco's government in laundering money and valuable objects from Nazi victims. However, the topic did not lead to the important public debate that was witnessed in other countries. Moreover, the outcome remained pre-determined by the questionable choice of commission members, whose findings contradicted the Eizenstadt report. In the Commission's eyes, the Spanish purchases were "legally impeccable."[7]

It is essential to note that in Spain the Holocaust gained the public's attention through American and European TV series and films that featured this topic (to the discomfort of many). The series *Holocaust* was aired in 1979 on Spanish state television (TVE). As in other countries, this was the first time that the extermination of the Jews came to the attention of the general public.[8] In Spain, however, interest in the topic peaked in the 1990s. In 1994, the film *Schindler's List* premiered with huge success, followed by *Life is Beautiful (La vita é bella)* in 1998. Moreover, the numerous documentaries and reports that were issued on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camps and the end of World War II brought the history of the Nazi genocide to mass audiences. It was in this context, too, during the nineties, that the media's spotlight fell on Violeta Friedman, an Auschwitz survivor and Madrid resident. In the course of a major legal battle against León Degrelle, the former Belgian Waffen SS and prominent figure in the neo-Nazi movement, Friedman also began a personal struggle to spread knowledge about the Holocaust as well as to fight against neo-Nazi Holocaust denial on television and radio, and through antiracist associations, universities, and schools. The case of *Violeta Friedman vs. León Degrelle* also illuminated a fact upon which few had reflected at this time: the presence of Nazi criminals in Spain since the end of World War II.

Since 2000, there has been an explosion of interest in the Civil War and Franco. The trigger was a heterogeneous and extraordinarily active civic movement that was organized around the so-called *recuperación de la memoria histórica* (recovery of historical memory). This movement contends that "forgetting" Franco's Republican victims during the transition to democracy has had negative effects on the quality of Spain's democracy.[9] As Francisco Ferrándiz explains, lingering questions about the politics of memory, together with standing accusations that the previous generation wrongly closed the past, reveal significant shortcomings in the collective management of memory. This change in social sensitivity toward memory and the emergence of new debates around the nature and significance of the traumatic past has led to a greater interest in the Holocaust. Already present during the previous decade through the media, literature, and historical research, the Holocaust and the debates surrounding it have, in turn, influenced current debates on memory in Spain.[10] We shall see that there is not one single pattern to the way this debate has emerged. Instead, there are several arguments and discourses on the Holocaust in contemporary Spain. The subject matter has also been appropriated for different social and political purposes.

Commemorations: from *Yom Hashoah* to January 27

> Al igual que otros muchos países europeos, hoy queremos sumarnos al recuerdo del Holocausto, de la "Shoah," al profundo dolor y más firme repulsa de la Humanidad ante el brutal exterminio de tantos millones de seres humanos, que golpeó nuestra propia esencia como personas. Y lo hacemos con el alma de esta tierra a la que la tradición judía identificó, desde sus más lejanas raíces, como Sefarad.
>
> [Like many other European countries, today we want to join in the memory of the Holocaust, the "Shoah," in the profound suffering and firm rejection by humanity of the brutal extermination of so many millions of human beings, that impact our own essence as persons. And we do it with the soul of this land, which the Jewish tradition identified, from its distant roots, as Sepharad.] (King Juan Carlos I, Commemoration Ceremony on the Day of the Memory of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity, 26 January 2006)

The official Holocaust commemorations that have been held ever since the beginning of the new millennium are an interesting observation point from which to explore the frictions, resistances, and meanings that are associated with the memory of the Holocaust in Spain, a country that is still facing the ghosts of its own past. In January 2000, Spain joined the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust and signed a commitment, together with the rest of the participating states from the European Union, to develop appropriate forms of commemoration and ways of transferring information, knowledge, and ethical mobilization to younger generations.[11] The signing of this document, however, lacked tangible, immediate consequences in Spain at the official level. Nonetheless, the Stockholm Forum gave Jewish organizations from Madrid an opportunity, under the initiative of the cultural association *Hebraica*, to propose to the Madrid Assembly (the Parliament for the Autonomous Community of Madrid) that it should host the first public ceremony to commemorate the Holocaust. The date chosen was that of *Yom Hashoah*[12] —the 27th day of *Nissan* in the Jewish calendar (at the end of April). An interesting debate began between various Jewish associations on how to shape this public ceremony and how it should include other, non-Jewish, victims of the Nazi regime. The organizers suggested a ceremonial format that came to serve as a model for other official commemorations and state events in Madrid in the following years. The ceremony consisted of speeches from politicians and community representatives, musical interludes, the Jewish prayer *El Maale Rahamim* and, at the culmination of the service, the lighting of six candles. This sequence echoes a ceremonial format that was conventionalized by the Israeli memorial Yad Vashem and has been followed by many Jewish communities, in which six torches symbolize the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust or *Shoah*.

The peculiarity in this case was that the Jewish community included Spanish Republicans and gypsies in the ceremonial lighting of the candles. In other words, beside the people representing the Jewish community (generally survivors or children of survivors, children from Jewish schools, and the Israeli Ambassador), a Spanish Republican survivor from the Nazi camps and a representative from a Gypsy

association also lit candles "in memory of the Spanish victims who died in the concentration camps" and "in memory of the victims from the Gypsy community and other groups persecuted by the Nazis."[13] Hence, the ceremony, Jewish in its origins, symbolically incorporates the Spanish memories that are associated with the Holocaust. By semantically opening the term "Holocaust" (so it was not exclusive to Jewish genocide but referred to Nazi atrocities in more general terms), as well as by attaching more universal themes to the historical event, this distant past could be somehow linked to Spain. The connection was established by invoking Spain's past (the Second Republic and the fatal destiny of many of its defenders in the Nazi camps) and by connecting it to the present through the creation of a ceremony that pays respect to diversity in a multiracial and multicultural society, including Gypsies and "other groups." Since 2000, the Autonomous Community of Madrid has hosted this ceremony annually, even though the event was moved some years later from April (*Yom Hashoah*) to January 27, the date of the liberation of Auschwitz. The date change represents a step forward in the politics of Holocaust memory in Spain, and it is also an unequivocal indicator of Spain's progressive incorporation into the transnational Holocaust memory.

During the conservative Popular Party's second term in office (2000–2004), Holocaust commemoration initiatives were a result of the involvement and activism of Jewish communities. Following the Socialist Party's victory in 2004, however, the commemorations were officially sponsored by the central government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In general terms, the Socialist government has played a more active role in establishing an official Holocaust memorial day at the national level. From the very start, an important issue was raised: what date should Spain choose for remembering the Holocaust? The preference of the Jewish communities for *Yom Hashoah* did not coincide with that of the associations representing deported Republicans, who annually hold their ceremony on May 5, the day the Mauthausen concentration camp was liberated. However, the government opted to follow the example of other European countries and chose January 27. The symbolism of this date is as evident as the message to the concerned groups: it is not about remembering one particular history, but about collectively invoking this European and global symbol of absolute evil—with Auschwitz as its token—and projecting it into the mainstream. During the meeting of the Council of Ministers that took place on December 15, 2004, the government declared January 27 "Día Oficial de la Memoria del Holocausto y Prevención de Crímenes contra la Humanidad." Significantly, the resolution included *the prevention of crimes against Humanity* as part of the event's focus. In the aforementioned resolution, the government promised to promote activities that would give meaning to this official day.

At first, the government suggested to the Jewish community that they should continue with the format that had been established by the Madrid Assembly but to elevate it to a state ceremony and relocate it to the International Room of the Spanish Congress of Deputies. But, after their expectations had been raised, representatives from other victims' groups were not invited to deliver any speeches, and they participated only in the lighting of the candles. This decision caused unease, especially among Republican associations, which then threatened to hold their own ceremony at the doors of Congress if they were not allowed to speak. The threat of protest worked and, finally, Enric Marco, the octogenarian president of *Amical de Mauthausen,* was

invited to give a speech. Marco's speech stirred up the emotions of Jewish listeners—both survivors and members of the audience, especially when he alluded to "the concentration camps of today," among which he mentioned Guantanamo and the "camps in Palestine." The incident surrounding Enric Marco's speech, together with a scandal involving his invented identity a few months later, caused a rift among the various victims' groups.[14] As a result, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain, which had hosted the ceremony together with the president of Congress, decided that a Republican speaker would not be on the program in future commemorations to be held at the Congress of Deputies.

Since 2006, three official memorial ceremonies have commemorated the Holocaust: these were held by the Madrid Assembly and the Congress of Deputies, and a state ceremony was sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and Foreign Affairs. Based on the adequacy of its facilities and its symbolism, the auditorium of the *Universidad Complutense* in Madrid was chosen to house the state ceremony.[15] This event included the presence of the prime minister. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero had already attended the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen camp in May 2005, the first time that such a high-ranking government representative had participated in this ceremony along with the survivors and Republican associations. Likewise, the royal family was invited. The organizers anticipated that a conflict might arise from participation in the same ceremony by both the King and Republican survivors. To reduce possible tensions, the organizers decided that former Spanish Minister of Culture, Jorge Semprún, a survivor, writer, and highly regarded figure among all attending groups, should take part as a speaker. Because of a sudden illness, however, Semprún could not attend the ceremony and sent a written address. The presence of the King was problematic for the Republican associations. In his speech, the King chose his words carefully, referring to the Republican victims, while avoiding the explicit word "Republican." "Hoy no podemos dejar de reservar, como españoles una mención especial al emocionado recuerdo que merecen los miles de hijos de España, que tanto padecieron y a quienes vilmente les fue arrebatada la vida en aquellos campos del horror" ["Today, as Spaniards, we can do no less than render a special mention to the deeply moving memory that thousands of 'children [sons] of Spain,' who suffered so much, deserve. Their lives were vilely snatched in those camps of horror"] (Commemoration Ceremony on the Day of the Memory of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity, January 26, 2006).

The 2006 ceremony followed a format similar to that of previous ones. A Jewish survivor from Salonika, Jack Stroumsa, known as "the Violinist of Auschwitz," also took part. He played the Jewish song "Eli Eli" (My God). Another musician played the melody of "Chants de Marais" (the hymn of political deportees) on his violin, and a Gypsy singer sang *a cappella* the international gypsy hymn, "Gelem Gelem". The ceremony was presided over by the prime minister, the King and Queen, and the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain, Jacobo Israel Garzón. The fact that such prominent personalities came together at a Holocaust commemoration ceremony was a complete novelty in contemporary Spain, as well as a significant landmark in the history of Holocaust remembrance. The merging of Jewish and Republican collective memories—which was accomplished with subtlety and tact from both sides—together with the "two Españas" united under the motto, "Sons of Spain," created an opportunity for understanding, shared memories, and

reconciliation. Top-level Spanish officials paid tribute to *Shoah* victims and, at the same time, to the Spanish (Republican) victims of the Nazi concentration camps. That the memory of the (Jewish) Holocaust should pave the way for the institutional recognition of Republican victims is both telling and somewhat paradoxical.

In 2007, the main theme of the ceremony was the memory of Spanish Jews: the Sephardim. In his speech of the previous year, the King had used the word Sepharad, which is an intensely evocative one for Jews but remains, nevertheless, quite tenuous within the Spanish collective imaginary. Organizers invited 14 Jewish Holocaust survivors, 12 of whom were Sephardim. Their intention was to enhance the understanding of the Holocaust on the basis of a part of Spanish history that remained, to many, largely unknown: the Spanish-speaking Jews from the Iberian Peninsula who had been expelled in 1492. This idea of the origin and exodus of the Sephardic Jews was embodied in the state ceremony by the participation of rabbis and synagogue cantors (*jazanim)* from different (Sephardic) Diasporic traditions (Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, and Israel), two of whom shared the distinctly Spanish surname Toledano. On this particular occasion, the King did not participate in the ceremony, but he invited the survivors to his residence, the Zarzuela Palace. Their descent from Jews who were expelled from Spain (as was made known to the monarch) gave the meeting an obvious symbolic value. Along with the state commemorations, a number of cultural and educational activities were held to further highlight the philosophy and meaning of the celebration. The Spanish Senate hosted a concert titled "Liturgical music of the Sephardic diaspora in the Mediterranean world," and, during that same week, the cultural center, *Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid,* held a conference, "Transmission, Memory, and Identity: The Judeo-Spanish during the *Shoah*." It is worth noting, too, that, as part of this commemorative cycle, *Casa Sefarad-Israel* was officially opened; this Spanish public institution aims to strengthen Spain's relationship with the State of Israel and Jewish communities and organizations. Also in 2007, the first monument dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust was inaugurated in Madrid.[16]

In 2008, Spain again held official ceremonies to commemorate the Holocaust. By then, several regional parliaments had joined in the commemorative initiatives (Cataluña, Cantabria, Asturias, and the Balearic Islands, among others). The form of the

FIGURE 2 The King and Queen of Spain and Prime Minister Zapatero at the Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony, 2006.

ritual was modified according to local circumstances and the organizers' plans. In Melilla, for example, an invitation was extended to the Muslim community to attend the ceremony, while, in other regions, representatives of the Bahai and the gay communities were encouraged to participate and light candles. It was decided that the 2008 state ceremony in Madrid should revolve around two themes, namely, Europe and the passing down of memory to succeeding generations. The purpose was to establish a direct link between these two ideas and Spain through symbolic expression: just as the fall of Fascism was followed by reconciliation between European nations, so Spaniards were brought together after Franco's death. At the ceremony, children, who played a crucial role that year, embodied the transmission of memory. In addition to the speeches, prayers, and the lighting of the candles, all of which were an established ritual, the ceremony included the reading of the names of 27 Jewish children who were murdered during the Holocaust, each name corresponding to one of the 27 countries of the European Union. Another novel feature was the participation of children's choirs in the ceremony. The choir of the *Liceo Francés* (a French school in Madrid) sang the "Chant de Marais," the Jewish School's choir sang the popular Israeli song "Yerushalaym shel Zahav" (Jerusalem of Gold), and a choir of Gypsy Evangelists, along with a soloist, sang "Gelem Gelem."[17] Finally, the choir from *Escolanía de la Abadía de la Santa Cruz* sang portions of Psalm 23 as an accompaniment to the reading of the names and closed the ceremony with the "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.[18] The incorporation of children thus highlighted the multiple cultural intersections that existed among deported Republicans, Jews, Gypsies, and Catholics, and between each of them and Europe. In the words of Henar Corbi, one of the organizers of the ceremony: "A los jóvenes se les entrega la llama del recuerdo. Es como decirles: 'Sois europeos porque habéis nacido europeos. Pero tenéis que incorporar en vuestro conocimiento la memoria de Europa'" ["The torch of remembrance is handed over to the children. It is like saying to them, 'You are European, because you were born European. But you need to incorporate the memory of Europe into your knowledge'"].[19]

In 2009, positive values were once again the central theme. In this case, the commemoration featured the stories of the so-called *Righteous among the Nations* and the value of solidarity. The ceremony was preceded by an international seminar titled "Sparks of Humanity during the Holocaust," which focused on the "lessons" to be drawn from individuals who had set an example of moral rectitude during the Holocaust. Furthermore, a direct link with Spain was again established by bringing to light the stories of those who assisted persecuted Jews by helping them either to secure visas at Spanish embassies and consulates or to sneak across the border from France (Avni "La guerra"; Calvet).[20] The act of lighting the candles has always symbolized the intersection of different memories; it has also become an occasion for people representing different groups to gather together, as they are all (Jewish and Gypsy children, the Righteous and the Saved, Jewish and Spanish Republican victims) asked to light the candle jointly.

The Jewish concept of "the Righteous among the Nations" highlighted, once again, an ongoing problem in Spanish Holocaust commemoration, namely, the irreconcilable tension between particular and universal memory discourses, which was present in the ceremony from the outset.[21] As was the case with the Talmudic saying that was included in Steven Spielberg's famous Holocaust film ("Whoever saves one life, saves the entire

world"), the Righteous could be given a universal meaning only through a semantic alteration.[22] During the course of this ceremony, one of the six candles was lit "in honor of the Righteous among the nations, who risked their lives to save the persecuted." This alteration implies all of the persecuted, not just the Jews. Likewise, the mention of the one-and-a-half million *Jewish children* who were murdered, which is a crucial part of the symbolic repertoire of *Shoah* commemoration, underwent a slight change for the sake of universality. The candle was lit "in memory of the one and a half million *children* who were murdered in the gas chambers." The word "Jewish" was omitted.

Between exploitation and "memory envy"

> En el museo (de Yad Vashem) no existen apenas referencias a otras etnias y colectivos—gitanos, homosexuales, comunistas, etc.—que también fueron exterminados sistemáticamente por el régimen de Hitler.
>
> [In the (Yad Vashem) museum there are hardly any references to other races or groups—such as Gypsies, homosexuals, Communists, etc.—who were also systematically exterminated by Hitler's regime.] (*El País,* September 13, 2007[23])

What is meant by the Holocaust? Does it refer only to the genocide of European Jews (the *Shoah)*? Or does the term stand in a broader sense for crimes committed by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945? Moreover, if we accept the first definition, is the

FIGURE 3 The State Ceremony of 2009, presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Miguel Angel Moratinos.

Holocaust singular and unique, or can it be compared with other atrocities of the past and the present? As noted previously, these are recurrent questions in the debates and conflicts regarding Holocaust representation in historiography (La Capra, Bauer) as well as in its commemoration and teaching in non-Jewish contexts. Let us look into the specific implications for Spain of these debates about the meaning of the term "Holocaust."

In Germany, the *Historikerstreit* (the debate among historians) showed that there was a plainly self-critical element to the emphasis on the singularity of the Holocaust, insofar as it questioned citizens' identification with their national history. On the other hand, putting the Nazi genocide into perspective by comparing it to Stalin's crimes is necessarily exculpatory ("We are not the only ones to have committed atrocities. . ."). However, for Nazi Germany's allies and sympathizers, such as Italy or Spain, rather the opposite is the case: highlighting the singularity of the Holocaust may result in self-exculpation regarding the (Fascist and Francoist) past. The public memory of Nazi crimes has long been an embarrassing issue for the Spanish political right (consider how hard it has been for the conservative Popular Party to erase its ideological—Francoist—legacy), because it criminalizes Hitler's allies (Franco) and promotes sympathy toward the victims of Nazism (the Republicans).[24] The concentric circles that make up the history of the Spanish War in relation to World War II reach Spain: they touch a sore spot by drawing our attention to past events that had been "forced into oblivion" instead of being fully thought through. And, yet, the very uniqueness of the Holocaust allows us to draw a radical distinction between Nazism and Fascism (both in its Italian and its Spanish form) and hence to dissociate Franco from the horror. It enables Spain to remember the Holocaust without questioning itself, without probing into its own past. This paradox becomes quite apparent in Holocaust commemorations. It is hardly surprising, for instance, that Esperanza Aguirre, the president of the Autonomous Community of Madrid and a member of the Popular Party, never mentioned in her speeches the other groups (such as Spanish Republicans and Gypsies) that were persecuted by the Nazis, even though representatives of these groups were invited to the ceremonies held by the Madrid parliament. As much as the *Shoah,* and not the Holocaust in a broader sense, becomes the object of remembrance, Aguirre (like the State of Israel and the Jewish communities, for that matter) mentioned *only* the Jewish victims, which led to an interesting convergence of perspectives, however different their motives may have been. While the Spanish victims of Nazism (i.e., the Republicans) were ignored, other analogies to the Holocaust were drawn on a rhetorical level. According to Aguirre, the "Jews" today are those who suffer the violence of ETA, and Basque terrorists are the new "Nazis."[25] Another interesting displacement occurred during that same ceremony. Since the discourse on "memory" is linked to the previously mentioned *Movimiento de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* and to the left side of the political spectrum, the president of the Madrid parliament, Elvira Rodríguez, indirectly referred to it when she said that "initiatives like this one from the Jewish community are not prompted by a thirst for revenge or by a sense of vindictiveness, but by the idea of jointly remembering the pain of those who suffered the repression."[26]

Beyond this blatant partisan exploitation of the commemorative ceremony, we are faced with a form of public remembrance that forecloses all of its critical potential. Exemplarity is bound up with universal but abstract values that highlight the

"distance" from the event. This act of "jointly remembering" that was mentioned by Rodríguez is an embalmed and hollow memory of the Holocaust that excludes the slightest suggestion of responsibility. Conservative politicians speak of Nazi antisemitism, and whenever they draw attention to the fact that antisemitism is still alive today, they invariably use it as a dialectical weapon against their political opponents—in connection with the frequent excesses of the anti-Zionist Left. They fail to mention the role played by Catholicism in the origin of Jew hatred or the continuing presence of antisemitism in the Spanish Catholic Church.[27]

Yet, we can also notice the effects that are associated with the opposite phenomenon, that is, the broadening of the semantic scope of the term "Holocaust." If the deported Republicans are "Holocaust victims," the link between Hitler and Franco (which the partisan-driven discourse of singularity intentionally precludes) can be established. Applying the term to all the victims of Nazism undoubtedly obscures the centrality of the Jews in the Holocaust. This was the subject of intense discussion between Jewish organizations and government representatives when it came to planning what kind of commemorative ritual would take place. Since Spain played only a peripheral role in the history of the Holocaust, and Spanish victims of Nazism were mostly Republicans, the above-mentioned problem, which is by no means confined to Spain, nevertheless possesses unique nuances in this country. There may well be a kind of "memory envy" (Hartman 79) on the part of Republican groups, which is no doubt motivated by a sense of grievance at having remained "invisible" throughout 30 years of democracy.[28] However, this "memory envy" sometimes prompts such groups to question the very centrality of the Holocaust (i.e., the Jewish genocide perpetrated by the Nazis) as an object of public commemoration. Thus, in public debates over Republican memory, the Jewish communities and the State of Israel are more or less openly accused of claiming for themselves an inordinately prominent place in the commemorations and, in some cases, of appropriating the tragedy to themselves.[29] We must stress, though, that we are not dealing here with the criticism of Jewish-centered or Zionist interpretations of the Holocaust, but, as we have seen in the previous examples, with a failure to understand the historical uniqueness of the event and the universality of its implications along the lines of the argument articulated in the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, which details how the *Shoah* holds wide-ranging political, moral, and pedagogic meaning.

The accusation of blocking out or overshadowing other forms of memory—in reference to (Republican) memories of anti-Fascism—does not hold any water. Rather, the contrary seems to be the case. In Spain (as opposed to France), in the context of bitter negotiations over its Francoist past, it is, ironically, Jewish memories in their globalized version—those created by the cultural industry and by institutional initiatives—which have paved the way for the public emergence of social memories of Republican deportation. As Michael Rothberg explains, "many people assume that the public sphere in which collective memories are articulated is a scarce resource and that the interaction of different collective memories within that sphere takes the form of a zero-sum struggle for pre-eminence" (2–3). This tendency is also common in Spain. Yet the particular case of the memory of the Republican deportation and its relation to the memory of the destruction of European Jewry needs to be understood as the productive, intercultural dynamic that Rothberg calls "multidirectional

memory" (3). If there is indeed such a problem of other memories being overshadowed, it is bound up with the distinctly European debate over the lack of symmetry in the remembrance of the past, in which the memory of Nazism and Fascism threatens to hamper perception of Stalinist crimes. This controversy also allows for a specifically Spanish interpretation as part of the broader debate over the "recovery of historical memory," in which accusations are bandied about: the right-wing is charged with minimizing the heinous nature of Franco's regime, whereas the left is attacked for its lack of self-criticism regarding the so-called Red Terror.

Hence, we find ourselves in a very peculiar situation. The European culture of memory and the globalized discourse on the Holocaust introduces a foreign body of ideas into Spain, which are simultaneously rejected and appropriated. They are rejected because there is no immediate historical connection with the events that are to be remembered and because the prevailing logic in Spanish political culture has been alien to memory; not until the past decade has this logic begun to be questioned. And they are appropriated in different ways by identification and comparison with the Spanish tragedy. The main contradiction posed by the memory of the Holocaust is sometimes expressed by Franco's victims themselves: What does it mean to remember the Holocaust if we forget what happened in Spain? This issue is raised by Clarisa, who belongs to a family with four *desaparecidos* (those who "disappeared"), in the book *Las fosas del silencio*:

> No oigo a nadie decir que se olviden del holocausto, que se olviden del tren de la muerte que iba a Auschwitz o a Mauthausen, que se olviden de Pinochet. Sin embargo, en España hubo que correr un tupido velo, olvidar a todos nuestros familiares, olvidar las penas y las angustias. No sé por qué hay que olvidarlo todo y borrón y cuenta nueva. Me parece grotesco querer ser los justicieros del mundo y que aquí no pase nada.
>
> [I don't hear anybody say that we should forget the Holocaust, that we should forget the death trains headed for Auschwitz or Mauthausen, that we need to forget Pinochet. In Spain, however, a veil was drawn over the past, we had to forget our families, forget the suffering and the anguish. I don't know why we need to forget everything and let bygones be bygones. It seems grotesque to me that we should want to mete out justice all over the world while nothing at all is done here.] (Armengou and Belis *Las fosas* 24)

The "Spanish Holocaust": Nazism as a paradigm

The most distinctive feature of the so-called globalization of Holocaust discourse is that the Holocaust has begun to function as a bridging metaphor that establishes analogic connections to other events, particularly to other traumatic histories and their memories (Alexander 46; Huyssen 24). In Spain, these histories are mostly those that emerge from the Civil War and Franco's repressive policies. The exhumation of mass graves, the projects that involve recording and archiving testimonies of survivors, the public tributes and commemorative ceremonies connected with exhumation sites, Franco's prisons and concentration camps, all reflect the influence

of Holocaust culture. Indeed, this is quite apparent in the different ways of expressing the memory of the Spanish tragedy. Images and concepts related to the Holocaust and the term "Holocaust" itself, together with the symbolic repertoire associated with those who were forcibly "disappeared" at the hands of the South American military regimes (itself influenced by the Holocaust), constitute a kind of cultural matrix for various forms of production, circulation, and consumption of traumatic memory (Ferrándiz and Baer 6). It is interesting to note that sometimes the victims themselves resort in their testimonies to the "Holocaust" trope to describe their experiences:

> La represión franquista fue algo terrible, muy criminal, muy cruel. . .como lo que vemos en las películas de Hitler. Igual. No nos echaron a los crematorios, pero la gente moría en las cárceles y en los campos de concentración, morían de hambre y suciedad, y de avitaminosis, y de parásitos, morían de todas las crueldades que hay para el ser humano. Fue un holocausto todo lo que nos pasó, y la gente no lo sabe todavía.
>
> [Franco's repression was horrific, very criminal, truly cruel. . .much the same thing that we can see in the films about Hitler. We weren't thrown into crematoria, but people died in the prisons and in the concentration camps. They died from hunger and malnutrition, they died in squalor, infected with parasites. They were the victims of all the forms of cruelty a human being can possibly experience. What happened to us was a holocaust and people still don't know about it.] (Armengou and Belis *Las fosas* 161)

Likewise, analogies to Nazism and the Holocaust appear in numerous historical works about the Civil War and Franco's regime. "Is there a Spanish Holocaust?" is the subtitle chosen by the authors of *The Graves of Silence*, a recent work based on the testimonies of victims of Franco's repression. The terminology used in the indictment of Nazi crimes is also used to characterize the acts of extreme violence that were perpetrated by Franco's troops and henchmen during and after the Spanish Civil War. Javier Rodrigo notes the frequent use of terms such as "genocide" or "holocaust" in the historiography of Francoism, and the fact that the Civil War is often referred to as a "war of annihilation" or "extermination."[30] Francisco Espinosa, for example, claims that the mass killings that took place in the Badajoz bullring in August 1936 prefigured Auschwitz. Ferrán Gallego maintains that "the forms of extermination carried out by both German and Spanish Fascists were more or less systematic, and thoroughly planned" (xii–xiii). The use of these analogies is perhaps best understood in the context of an extremely polarized historiography that resorts to hyperbole insofar as there is no agreement on the facts and, more important, as to how they are to be interpreted.[31] Equating Franco's violence to that of the Nazis makes it possible to emphasize the moral equivalence between the perpetrators. In addition, as historian Carlos Pabón explains, those atrocities or mass killings of civilians—whether they occurred in the past or are going on in the present—which are not recognized as genocide are easily subjected to trivialization and even invisibility. This combination of "moralism and legalism," in detriment of any analytical or explanatory value, is present in the instrumental uses of the terms "genocide" and "Holocaust."[32]

It is also interesting to note that revisionist historians and, occasionally, Franco apologists resort to the same analogies when addressing the issue of the so-called "red terror." For example, Pío Moa claims that "the persecution of priests and nuns, who were often massacred with unspeakable sadism, is qualitatively similar to the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis against the Jews; just as the Jews were murdered simply for being Jews, so clerics in Spain were murdered for being clerics."

The Holocaust in Palestine

> El dinero de los judíos de EEUU tiene comprada la opinión (. . .) Resulta desalentador para el resto de la humanidad, que vive día a día un nuevo holocausto de palestinos mientras apedrean de nuevo a un Goliat más embravecido que nunca.
>
> [The money of the Jews in the United States has bought public opinion (. . .) This is dispiriting for the rest of the world, as it witnesses each day a new holocaust, namely the one suffered by the Palestinians. They are meanwhile reduced to throwing stones at a Goliath who is more determined than ever.] (Antonio Gala, *El Mundo*, October 9, 2004)

As mentioned above, it is a fact that the Holocaust, standing as it does as a symbol of radical evil and supreme infamy, is all too easily projected as a metaphor onto totally different phenomena. The crucial difference lies in the fact that the erstwhile victims (Jews) are now described as victimizers. While the opening of the Holocaust semantic serves transnationally for those with anti-Israeli sentiments to strike where it "hurts" most, namely at the country which claims to keep the flame of Holocaust remembrance alive, there is again a Spanish specificity that demands explanation.

In comparison with other European countries, in Spain it is surprisingly easy to come across terms, symbols, and images associated with the Holocaust in news reports, opinion columns, and cartoons dealing with Israel and the Middle East conflict in the mainstream media. In recent years, cartoons and caricatures about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict published in the Spanish press have been rife with allusions to Nazism and the Holocaust (Baer and Zukermann 94; Baer and López 38; López Alonso 163–164). This inordinate tendency in Spain to draw equivalences between Israel and Nazi Germany might therefore go beyond the use of the Holocaust as a universal symbol. It must be linked to the absence of both civic culture and a proper education regarding the Holocaust. Its persistence also suggests an underlying antisemitism (Baer "Spain's Jewish Problem").

This drift or, rather, this melding of Holocaust analogies into a mere rhetorical projection rooted in the semantics of antisemitism became quite apparent in the spring of 2002 when literature Nobel Prize-winner José Saramago compared the situation in the Palestinian city of Ramallah with Auschwitz. His declaration was widely accepted in Spain. The Portuguese laureate not only saw Jews as a mirror of their previous executioners, but unequivocal elements of traditional religious antisemitism were added to his view of the Israeli–Palestinian reality. In an article published in *El País,* he

FIGURE 4 *El Periódico de Catalunya*, March 15, 2003.

portrayed a vengeful Jew carrying out the work of a vengeful God. The racism attributed to Israel in its treatment of Palestinians is said to be endemic to the religion of the Jews, who are "pathological exclusionists." Israel and all of its "real and

FIGURE 5 *El País*, July 20, 2006.

potential inhabitants"—that is, the Jews—today incarnate the evil that used to characterize the Nazis.[33] In other words, Judaism itself has been the evil inspiration for Israeli policies.

Israel and the Middle East conflict have been the objects of unusually frequent imagery of and analogies to Nazism, the Holocaust, and genocide, which reduces the two events to the same scale, more or less. It is also common to see a sort of inverse juxtaposition, as criticism of Israel is mixed with news about the memory and commemoration of the Holocaust. For example, in the wake of the commemorative ceremonies of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the daily *ABC* published a cartoon showing an individual with the characteristic black and white *kefia* looking at a watch tower and a barbed wire fence with the following caption: "Palestinian, understanding the Jewish pain of the Holocaust, given the assassination of his whole family by the Israelis." A similar association (Holocaust–Palestine) was produced in the mind of a journalist from the national news agency EFE, perhaps due to a mere Freudian slip, about the traveling exhibit, "Not a child's game. Children in the Holocaust," that was commissioned by the Spanish institution Casa Sefarad-Israel. Referring to the number of Jewish victims of Nazism, he wrote: "six million murdered Zionists."[34]

The use of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a catch-all for projections of analogies and equivalences with the Holocaust has also given rise to intense controversies concerning the commemorative ceremonies that were officially celebrated starting in 2005. Reference has already been made to the first official ceremony that took place at the Parliament in January 2005, where Enric Marco, then the president of the *Amical de Mauthausen*, referred in his speech to the "concentration camps of the present," among which he mentioned the "camps in Palestine," remarks that led to considerable friction with the Jewish community of Spain. Another much-discussed incident was the initiative by some municipalities governed by the left in which the events commemorating the Holocaust were replaced by a "Commemoration of the Palestinian genocide"[35] or, as in 2008, the obstruction of an Institutional Declaration to condemn Nazism and to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust by the Nationalist Galician Bloc, which was then sharing power in the Autonomous Region of Galicia. The reason given was that the Declaration's text did not include "the blockade which the Gaza strip is now suffering, or the separation wall being built by the State of Israel as part of the military occupation of Palestine." In 2009, the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip brought reiterations of these accusations and comparisons, bringing them to the fore of Spanish public opinion. A multitudinous demonstration led by members of the governing Socialist party, unions, and artists under the slogan "Let's stop the genocide in Gaza" marched through the streets of Madrid, as well as in other large Spanish cities. This public outcry was followed by a flood of expressions and accusations in the media that would have been difficult to find in the press of other European countries. For example, the daily Internet publication *El Plural* offered a political analysis by Carlos Carnicero equating Israel to Nazi Germany titled "The expiration date of the Holocaust." Its content left little room for mistake: "El cerebro del exterminio de los palestinos no es distinto del que diseñó la Alemania nazi" ["The mind behind the extermination of the Palestinians is no different than the one that designed Nazi Germany"].[36] In the aftermath of the Gaza offensive we also find an incendiary opinion piece by writer Antonio Gala in *El Mundo*, Spain's second-largest

newspaper in terms of circulation: "Sin paz, sin límites, sin freno a la avaricia y a las falsas historias, el pueblo judío sucumbirá de nuevo (...) ¿No haría bien preguntándose el porqué les ocurre siempre igual? ¿O estará el resto del mundo siempre equivocado?" ["Without peace, without limits, without ending the greed and the false histories, the Jewish people will succumb once again (...) shouldn't they [the Jews] ask themselves why things always happen to them in the same way? Or is it the rest of the world that is mistaken?"].[37]

While in previous decades most of this kind of unambiguously antisemitic expression in the media would have gone uncontested, it is important to note that from 2000 onward, especially in the context of media attention to the Second Intifada, a few critical and concerned voices have also made their way into public attention. Some articles stressed the dangerous slide toward antisemitism and pointed out that what is happening in Spain could not be explained as humanitarian indignation against Israeli actions in Gaza alone. An editorial in *La Vanguardia* titled "Anti-judaism, what cannot come to be" says, "Gaza tensa los ánimos y los sentimientos, convoca la crítica y la protesta, pero la relativización del holocausto (...) y la siniestra reaparición del antijudaísmo son inadmisibles" ["Gaza produces tension and invites criticism and protest, but the relativization of the Holocaust (...) and the sinister reappearance of anti-judaism are not acceptable"]. In response to Antonio Gala, journalist David Gistau wrote in *El Mundo*: "¿Por qué en la España de la corrección política, donde un nimio matiz retórico o un chiste que haga mofa de las minorías protegidas te condenan a la caverna, es posible avalar el Holocausto y volverlo contra quienes lo sufrieron sin que ocurra nada?" ["Why is it that in politically correct Spain, where the slightest rhetorical slip or a joke about protected minorities will have you sent to the galleys, it is possible to endorse the Holocaust and to turn it against those who suffered its consequences, without anyone raising their voice in indignation?"].[38]

The Gaza conflict, or rather its aftershocks in the Spanish media and streets, affected Holocaust commemoration ceremonies in Spain (in Melilla they were not held, and in Catalonia public events were suspended, although official ones were held behind closed doors). In Madrid, the official State commemoration took place, although at the doors of the ceremonial room a group of 20 activists demonstrated with signs that gave a definition of the Holocaust, then pointedly questioned: "And what is happening in Gaza?" Spain faces the paradox of a notorious lack of Holocaust education in the context of an ever-more-globalized discussion and increased presence of Holocaust motifs in the media. Against the backdrop of the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict, manifestations of Holocaust memory unleash discourses containing considerable antisemitic hostility. The term "Holocaust" itself triggers associations to "Jewish victimization politics," "ulterior motives," and a "Palestinian Holocaust" among a wide sector of Spanish public opinion. Unlike in other European countries, in Spain these arguments are not marginal, but rather they are mainstream. As the writer and journalist Enric Juliana wrote in a series of articles under the title *Spain and Israel*, "un político europeo se lo pensará dos o tres veces antes de acompañar una manifestación que concluya con la quema de la estrella de David" ["a European politician would think two or three times before accompanying a demonstration followed by the burning of the Star of David"]. Along similar lines, we could add, the publisher of a European newspaper might feel a certain hesitation

before printing an obviously antisemitic cartoon. In Spain, "the memory of the Holocaust is weak" concludes Juliana, so "who cares. . .?"[39]

Conclusion: traces of Sepharad

After this exploration, we can now return to the initial question regarding the link between Spain and the memory of the Holocaust. The weakness of this link is not historical but cultural. It is not due to a (relative) distance from historical events, but mainly due to their weak reception, from 1945 onward, in a country that has been practically *judenrein* for the past five centuries. To a large extent, it is the voids, the silences, and the abiding prejudices regarding Judaism (which were exacerbated during Franco's dictatorship but did not fade away after democracy was established) that shape in sociological terms the discursive activity on the Holocaust in contemporary Spain.

There certainly exist different ways of remembering the Holocaust throughout Spain. There is the form of memory that is typical of those groups that were directly involved or affected by the event, and which Todorov describes as singular or literal, since "it remains an intransitive fact, leading nowhere beyond itself" (Todorov 14). There is also the universal and exemplary memory that is mostly promoted by transnational institutions and symbolically enacted during official ceremonies of remembrance. On a third level, there are the multiple ways of identifying with and projecting memory in connection with other acts of extreme violence. But there may well be a further approach to the Holocaust in Spain that brings us back to the very title and beginning of this essay: the forgotten traces of Sepharad. This specifically Spanish memory of the Holocaust would allow for a critical reflection on the present: indeed, according to Walter Benjamin, the fleeting force of a previously forgotten past can instantly illuminate the present. In other words, it is a question of acknowledging that the erasure of the past is part of reality and shapes the present. Therefore, if we were to choose a date for holding Holocaust commemoration ceremonies, Spain might not be able to experience that illumination on January 27 (through universal yet abstract memory), nor in April on *Yom Hashoah*, or on May 5 (with its definite yet particular and somehow exclusive—Jewish and Republican—group memories), but rather it would more assuredly find its own link from past to present on March 31, since on this very date, in 1492, the Catholic monarchs issued the Edict of Expulsion of Jews from the Spanish Kingdoms. Several centuries later, Franco praised the edict and believed it to be still in force.[40]

In twenty-first-century Spain, it is common to invoke the medieval "Land of Three Cultures," a kind of origin myth (featuring the peaceful coexistence of Christians, Jews, and Muslims) that accounts for a supposedly innate tolerance in Spaniards. And yet, as Reyes Mate points out, we cannot claim the legacy of that Spain unless we question present-day Spain, because "we are directly descended from intolerant Spain" (*La herencia* 142). Here we can see an extraordinary link with a specifically Spanish memory of the Holocaust. We hardly need to remind the reader that Franco belonged to the tradition of Spanish intolerance, so that Sepharad and the Second Spanish Republic can be regarded as closely intertwined memories. In

contrast, the Republic strengthened ties with the Sephardic communities in the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco and in the Balkans, in addition to passing unprecedented laws recognizing and protecting religious freedom. Liberal and progressive Republicans embodied the antithesis of the very same nationalism and clerical conservatism that cast all things Jewish into oblivion once again and profoundly influenced Spanish society for decades. These voids and burdens shape the ways the Holocaust is recalled in present-day Spain. Remembering the Holocaust while keeping alive the memory of Sepharad (including the Inquisition's centuries-long persecution of *conversos*) is not only an apt tribute to the victims of both tragedies but it may also help, as Benjamin suggests, to illuminate the present.[41]

Notes

1 The Jewish population in Spain is very small at this time. According to Haim Avni (1982), the population did not exceed 6000 in 1936. The civil war and fluctuations in the refugee population made estimations difficult after this date.

2 The historical reality is notably different. Franco's government acted in accordance with reasons of state that called for minimal involvement in the rescue of the Jews at a time when this was most urgent (from 1942 to the end of 1944). Official instructions to diplomats encouraged passivity, imposed limitations on the beneficiaries of Spanish nationality, and provided dilatory measures for repatriations. Scholars who have approached this period in the last two decades agree on the fact that those who were protected and saved from deportation and probable extermination owe their existence to the individual humanitarian initiative and determination of some Spanish diplomats who interceded on their behalf, as well as to the progress of the war. As the balance tilted increasingly in favor of an Allied victory, it became easier to convince the Spanish government to accede to repatriation of Jews with Spanish nationality (which was not repatriation, as such, but rather an operation of asylum and transit), and also to be flexible with respect to the clandestine flow of refugees across the Pyrenean border. See Rother, Avni *España*, Israel and Baer, and Marquina and Ospina.

3 Alvarez Chillida mentions the censorship in cinema, which involved severe criticism of Hitler's regime. He notes that the scenes of the Nazi concentration camps in the film *Judgment in Nuremberg* (the title in Spain turned significantly into "Vencedores o vencidos") remained banned nearly until the end of the dictatorship.

4 The number of Jews with European origins who called Spain home was relatively tiny. Until the 1980s, the composition of this community was mainly Sephardic with Moroccan origins.

5 In my high-school textbooks on contemporary history, only a very brief mention of the "six million exterminated Jews" appeared in a section within the chapter on World War II titled "Demographic repercussions" (Fernández 370).

6 For Spanish–Israeli relations, see Lisbona. For Fifth Centenary commemorations, see Rozenberg.

7 The investigation commission was not impartial and independent. Commission members were appointed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Eizenstat report from June 1998 explained that Germany used gold stolen from central European Banks in order to pay, through Switzerland, various neutral countries,

including Spain, which had supplied raw materials to the industrial sector during the war. The fact that Spain was a convenient exit for works of art expropriated from Jews is also documented. The Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain sent a protest letter to the then Prime Minister, José María Aznar, on April 10, 2000, explaining that "we deplore the confusing result of the investigation" and that the Government Commission "has worked in a superficial way based on a previously established script" (*Kehilá* Community News Bulletin, May 2009, 9). See also Benasuly.

8 An estimated 16 million people saw the series in Spain, and it received quite a lot of media attention. However, while in Europe the debates mainly revolved around the fact that it was an American series recounting a specifically Continental past, or whether commercial channels should handle such a weighty and complex topic as the industrial annihilation of Jews in Nazi camps, there was a specific Spanish reaction to the series. The facts encompassed by the series (the extermination of Jews) were disputed by members of the extreme right, and their defamatory and antisemitic allegations were reiterated by the mainstream media. On the other hand, a public discussion ensued that centered on the (Zionist) political exploitation of the facts. Most notable was that in a televized discussion panel on *Holocaust*, a former Nazi was invited to express his views, but no Jews were asked to participate. See Baer *Visas*.

9 The web page of the main association (The Association for the Recovery of the Historical Memory) is eloquently titled with the following question: "Why did the founding fathers of the constitution leave my grandmother in a ditch?" ("Association"). The "recovery" of the memory fundamentally entails the exhumation and identification of bodies from mass graves, as well as commemorative ceremonies, cultural initiatives, and investigations of the victims of Franco's regime.

10 In the last 15 years, many novels relating to the Holocaust have been published by Spanish authors (including Jorge Semprún, Antonio Muñoz Molina, Juana Salabert, Adolfo García Ortega), as well as translations of foreign literary works, survivors' testimony, and historical investigations about the relationship between Franco and Nazi Germany. From the end of the 1990s, the research project "Philosophy after the Holocaust" (http://www.ifs.csic.es/holocaus.htm) co-ordinated by Prof. Manuel Reyes Mate at the Spanish Scientific Research Council (CSIC) is the main academic meeting point for the topic in Spain.

11 The international context is of great relevance in this analysis. Among the different transnational initiatives, the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) has a key role. It has existed since May 1998. Spain was incorporated as a full member in 2008. Moreover, the European Parliament decided on May 16, 2000, to establish a European-wide Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27.

12 The majority of Jewish communities throughout the world hold a solemn ceremony on this day. There is not a single, institutionalized format, but the events do not vary considerably. More common elements usually incorporate lighting commemorative candles and reciting a *Kadish* or the *Maale Rajamim*—prayers for the deceased. They can also include other elements, such as talks from survivors and recitation of psalms and names of victims.

13 Program of the Central Ceremony of Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom Hashoah 5760, May 2010.

14 Enric Marco was again in the media spotlight after his testimony was proven to be false, and a historian verified that he had never been in a Nazi concentration camp ("El deportado").

15 Interview with Henar Corbi, the then chief advisor to the Secretary of State for Justice and the ITF representative. He had held the position of state ceremony coordinator since 2006.

16 The work of Spanish-Jewish artists Samuel Nahón and Alberto Stisin shows a Star of David and the death trains headed for the extermination camps. It is also the symbolic link with the mythical Sepharad, which accounts for its location in the Garden of the Three Cultures in Juan Carlos I Park.

17 It is interesting to note the effects of the Holocaust memorial on social groups such as the Gypsies, who were invited to share the memory and join in the ceremony. The Spanish Gypsies' memory of the suffering of their people at the hands of the Nazis has played a minor role in shaping their identity, and, yet, as a result of the Holocaust commemoration ceremonies, they have begun to take stock of this part of their past and to assess how the latter can be incorporated into public remembrance ceremonies. They have thus put forward the idea that the Day of the Gypsy People should not just be a cultural event. They have begun to speak of the Holocaust and the *Parajimos*, or Gypsy genocide.

18 Paradoxically, the boys' choir of the *Escolanía de la Abadía Benedictina de la Santa Cruz* was founded in 1958, with the aim of lending solemnity to liturgical celebrations held in the *Valle de los Caídos* (Valley of the Fallen), the mausoleum built by Franco in the Sierra de Guadarrama, a mountain range close to Madrid.

19 Henar Corbi, interview, *op. cit*.

20 Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the project aimed at recovering the memory of these events, which the local government of Sort (Lerida, Cataluña) has been promoting since 2002. In 2007, Sort inaugurated "El Camí de la Llibertat" (The Path of Freedom) museum.

21 The concept of "Righteous among the nations" stands for non-Jews who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews from extermination by the Nazis and originates with the concept of righteous gentiles, a term used in Judaism to refer to non-Jews who abide by the Seven Laws of Noah.

22 The original Talmud verse states: "Whoever destroys a single soul of Israel is considered as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whoever preserves a single soul of Israel, is considered as though he had preserved a complete world."

23 Article, 'The Holocaust Museum of Jerusalem is awarded the *Premio de la Concordia*,' (a prize for promoting mutual understanding): about the Prince of Asturias Prize awarded to the Yad Vashem memorial.

24 Until November 2002, the Popular Party refused to publicly and explicitly condemn Franco's *coup d'état* of 1936.

25 "Sadly, the indifference toward absolute evil can live with us. Examples of this are always close at hand. We only need to think of the dreadful image of José Ortega Lara (a prison officer who was kidnapped by the terrorist organization ETA and held hostage for two years) emerging from the hole where his kidnappers had held him for over 500 days and compare it to the nonchalance and the ease of mind with which many citizens live, help and encourage those who commit such unspeakable crimes." Speech delivered by E. Aguirre at the Madrid Parliament, January 26, 2008.

26 Speech by Elvira Rodríguez at the Madrid Assembly, January 26, 2008.

27 The journalist and writer Enric Juliana recently remarked that: "the Catholic hierarchy in Spain took great pains to ignore the self-critical assessment of the Church's role during the *Shoah*, which the Vatican first conducted from 1998 to 2000. While Pope John Paul II asked pardon for the faults of the past in front of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, Cardinal Rouco Varela (who was the head of the Catholic Church in Spain at the time) pushed for the beatification of Isabel of Castile (Isabel the Catholic) with José María Aznar's connivance." *La Vanguardia,* January 10, 2009.

28 Geoffrey Hartmann uses the term "memory envy" particularly for individuals who have either weak or no memories themselves, as the "false memory" cases of Benyamin Wilkomirski or the aforementioned Enric Marco. However, memory envy is also at work because of the sense that strong memories bestow social recognition (79–80). In this respect, the term might also be used for this case.

29 "The overwhelming importance of the Jewish Holocaust (. . .) has often caused people to forget about the large number of people of other religions, races, and political beliefs who also died in the extermination camps" (Armengou and Belis *Las fosas* 297).

30 Javier Rodrigo has stressed the need for greater accuracy in the terms used to describe the Spanish case, since Franco's aim was not so much to exterminate as to subdue and transform. Rodrigo thus believes that the term "exclusion policies" is a more appropriate one than "extermination policies." This does not imply that he minimizes the acts of extreme violence that were conducive to such an end.

31 Both sides in the Civil War resorted to forms of extreme violence. The debate as to which side "struck first," which side "struck back," and which one was more systematic and cruel in its use of violence is quite common in Spanish historiography.

32 There is a distinct legal logic adhered to the use of this term. Up to now, the United Nations has declined to undertake legal action against Francoist repression on the grounds that the events took place before 1945 when the Charter of the United Nations was signed, and the International Court of Justice was formed. However, there is a consensus among international courts of law that no statute of limitations applies to crimes against humanity, such as genocide, and that they are imprescriptible. This would entail that those accused of these crimes can be brought to trial even when the actions took place before 1945. (I thank one of the reviewers for bringing my attention to this matter).

33 See Wahnón, Sultana, "La verdad de Saramago." *Lateral*, November 2002.

34 See, for example, http://www.noticias.terra.es/2008/genteycultura/0430/actualidad/la-casa-sefarad-israel-recuerda-a-los-ninos-judios-asesinados-en-el-holocausto.aspx.

35 On January 27, 2007, the municipality of Ciempozuelos (Madrid) celebrated a series of workshops under the title "Commemoration of the Palestinian Genocide."

36 *El Plural.com,* January 4, 2009.

37 *El Mundo*, February 6, 2009. In his book on antisemitism in Spain, Gonzalo Alvarez Chillida identifies Antonio Gala as a writer belonging to the group of "progressive intellectuals" who in his novels "reflected some of the more traditional elements of anti-Semitism" (470).

38 David Gistau, *El Mundo*, February 8, 2009.

39 *La Vanguardia*, January 10, 2009. See also Baer *Tanques*.

40 In his New Year address of 1938, Franco justified the antisemitic actions by the Nazis. In this respect, he added: "We, who rid ourselves of such a heavy burden

centuries ago, by the grace of God and thanks to the wisdom of the Catholic Kings" (qd. in Alvarez Chillida 398).

41 I thank Neal Sokol, Albert Sabanoglu, Natan Sznaider, Bernt Schnettler and Esmeralda Ballesteros for critical feedback and helpful comments. I also wish to thank the blind reviewers for their feedback and, especially, the editors of this volume (Tabea Linhard, Daniela Flesler, and Adrián Pérez Melgosa) for their comments, amendments and patience. I am grateful to Ally Luder and Pablo Sauras for translating and proofreading large sections of this article. This article is a product of the research project "Las políticas de la memoria en la España contemporánea: Análisis del impacto de las exhumaciones de fosas comunes de la Guerra Civil en los primeros años del siglo XXI" (MICINN, CSO2009-09681).

Works cited

Alexander, Jeffrey. "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals. The 'Holocaust' from War Crime to Trauma Drama." *European Journal of Social Theory* 5.1 (2002): 5–85.

Álvarez Chillida, Gonzalo. *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del Judío (1812–2002)*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2002.

"Amical de Mauthausen y otros campos de concentración nazis." <http://www.amical-mauthausen.org>.

Armengou, Montse and Ricard Belis. *Las fosas del silencio ¿Hay un Holocausto español?* Barcelona: De Bolsillo, 2004.

Armengou, Montse, and Ricard Belis. *El convoy de los 927*. Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2005.

"Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica." <http://www.memoriahistorica.org>.

Avni, Haim. *España, Franco y los judíos*. Madrid: Altalena, 1982.

———. "La guerra y las posibilidades de rescate." *Entre la aceptación y el rechazo. América Latina y los refugiados del nazismo*. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003. 13–36.

Baer, Alejandro. "Spain's Jewish Problem. From the 'Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy' to the 'Nazi-Zionist State.'" *Jahrbuch des Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung* 18 (2009): 89–110.

———. *Tanques contra piedras: La imagen de Israel en España*. Documentos de Trabajo del Real Instituto Elcano. Nr. 74. 2007.

———. *Visas for Freedom. Spanish Diplomats and the Holocaust (Exhibition Catalogue)*. Madrid: Ministerio de Exteriores y Cooperación y Casa Sefarad Israel, 2009.

Baer, Alejandro and Federico Zukierman. "Israel y el judaísmo en el humor gráfico español (2000–2003)." *El estigma imborrable: Reflexiones sobre el nuevo antisemitismo*. Ed. Jacobo Israel Garzón. Madrid: Hebraica Ediciones, 2005.

Baer, Alejandro and Paula López. "El conflicto como caricatura. Israel en el humor gráfico español sobre la guerra del Líbano de 2006." *Cuadernos de Análisis. Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia* 30 (2007): 31–44.

Bauer, Yehuda. *Thinking the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Benasuly, Alberto. "Bofetada al oro nazi." *Boletín Gueshernews* 2 (1999, Apr.).

Benjamin, Walter. *Über den Begriff der Geschichte. Gesammelte Schriften I:2*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974.

Calvet, Josep. *Les muntanyes de la llibertat*. Barcelona: L'Avenç, 2008.

"El deportado que nunca estuvo allí." *El País*, 11 May 2005, p. 72.

Espinosa, Francisco. *La columna de la muerte: El avance del ejército franquista de Sevilla a Badajoz*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2003.
Fernández, A. *Historia del mundo contemporáno*. Madrid: Vicens-Vives, 1988.
Ferrándiz, Francisco and Alejandro Baer. "Digital Memory: The Visual Recording of Mass Grave Exhumations in Contemporary Spain." *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung* 9.3 (2008): 621–640. <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1152/2578 >.
Ferrándiz, Francisco. "Exhumaciones y políticas de la memoria en la España contemporánea." *Hispania Nova* 7 (2007).
Gallego, Ferrán. "La España de Franco y el Holocausto. Otra zona para la memoria y la educación (Prólogo)." *Educar contra Auschwitz. Historia y memoria*. Jean Francois Forges. Barcelona: Anthropos, 2008.
Halbwachs, Maurice. *La mémorie collective*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.
Hartman, Geoffrey. *The Longest Shadow*. Indiana: Indiana UP, 2002.
Huyssen, Andreas. "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia." *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 21–38.
Israel, Jacobo, and Baer, Alejandro. *España y el Holocausto. Historia y testimonios*. Madrid: Hebraica Ediciones, 2007.
Juliá, Santos. "Echar al olvido: Memoria y amnistía en la Transición." *Claves de Razón Práctica* 129 (2003): 14–25.
LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. New York: Cornell UP, 1998.
Le Goff, Jaques. *History and Memory*. New York: Columbia UP, 1992.
Levy, Daniel, and Natan Sznaider. *Erinnerung Im Globalen Zeitalter: Der Holocaust*. Zweite Moderne. Ed. Ulrich Beck. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001, 87–106.
Lindo, Elvira. "El tic." *El País*, 2 Feb. 2005.
Lisbona, José Antonio. *España-Israel. Historia de unas relaciones secretas*. Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2002.
López Alonso, Carmen. "La evolución de la prensa española con relación a Israel, el antisemitismo y el conflicto arabe-israelo-palestino." *España e Israel: Veinte años después*. Ed. Raanan Rein. Madrid: Dykinson, 2007.
Marinas, José Miguel. "Como cantar en tierra extraña. Para una memoria española del holocausto." *Isegoría* 23 (2000): 139–53.
Moa, Pío. "Santos Juliá defiende a 'los pobres.'" *Libertad Digital*. 22 Nov. 2007. <http://www.libertaddigital.com >.
Muñoz Molina, Antonio. "Notas escépticas de un republicano." *El País*, 24 Apr. 2006.
Pabón, Carlos. "¿Qué es genocidio? Problemas, límites y retos de un concepto crucial de nuestro tiempo." Unpublished paper, 2009.
Reyes Mate, Manuel. *La herencia del olvido*. Madrid: Errata Naturae, 2008.
———. *Memoria de Auschwitz. Actualidad moral y política*. Madrid: Trotta, 2003.
———. "Presentación." *Holocausto: Recuerdo y representacion*. Alejandro Baer. Madrid: Losada, 2006.
Rodrigo, Javier. "1936: Guerra de exterminio, genocidio, exclusión." *Historia y Política*.10 (2003): 249–58.
Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009.
Rother, Bernd. *Franco y el Holocausto*. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2004.
Rozenberg, Danielle. *L'Espagne contemporaine et la question juive*. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2006.