

From Migrants to Exiles: the Spanish Civil War and the Spanish Immigrant Communities in the United States

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ABSTRACT

This article combines two aspects of the Spanish diasporic experience in the Americas often treated separately: migration and exile. Studies of the Republican exile have concentrated primarily on members of political and cultural elites forced to leave Spain in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's victory in 1939. Here, I look instead at how events in Spain affected the lives of Spaniards living abroad when civil war broke out in 1936. I analyze the activities in support of the Republic organized by Spaniards in the United States, and argue that the war in Spain and the Popular Front culture forged in America in the 1930s transformed these communities deeply. Not only did they become more visible, but, perhaps more important, they participated in events that fostered collaboration across generations, ethnicities, races, creeds, and social classes. The article highlights the important role played by women and children in these communities, and examines how the war shaped the identity of Spanish-American youth. These activities helped pave the way for the integration of Spanish immigrants into American society. This Americanization, often reluctant, was linked to Franco's victory, an outcome that, for many, closed the door to a possible

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Varela-Lago, A. "From Migrants to Exiles: the Spanish Civil War and the Spanish Immigrant Communities in the United States". *Camino Real*, 7:10. Alcalá de Henares: Instituto Franklin – UAH, 2015: 109-126. Print.

Recibido: 1/12/2014; 2ª versión: 26/1/2015.

return to Spain, transforming migrants into exiles. As such, they continued to struggle for the restoration of democracy in Spain during the four decades of the dictatorship.

Keywords: Confederated Hispanic Societies, Spaniards in the United States, Spanish Civil War, Spanish diaspora, Spanish exile, Spanish migration, Spanish Republic.

RESUMEN

Este artículo combina dos aspectos de la experiencia de la diáspora española en América que suelen tratarse por separado: emigración y exilio. Los estudios del exilio republicano se han concentrado generalmente en miembros de las élites políticas y culturales forzados a abandonar España a consecuencia de la guerra civil y la victoria franquista en 1939. Aquí examino cómo los sucesos en España afectaron las vidas de españoles residentes en el extranjero cuando estalló la guerra en 1936. Analizando las actividades de ayuda a la República organizadas por españoles en los Estados Unidos, arguyo que la guerra en España y la cultura frentepopulista que se forjó en América en los años treinta transformaron estas comunidades profundamente. No sólo aumentaron su visibilidad, quizás más importante fue su participación en actos que fomentaban la colaboración entre grupos de diversas generaciones, etnias, razas, credos, y clases sociales. El artículo subraya el importante papel jugado por mujeres y niños en estas comunidades y examina cómo la guerra marcó el proceso identitario de la juventud de origen español en los Estados Unidos. Estas actividades facilitaron la integración de los inmigrantes españoles en la sociedad estadounidense. Esta americanización, a menudo reticente, estaba vinculada a la victoria franquista, un resultado que, para muchos, cerró las puertas a un posible retorno a España, transformando a emigrantes en exiliados. Como tales continuaron la lucha por la restauración de la democracia en España durante las cuatro décadas de la dictadura.

Palabras clave: diáspora española, emigración española, españoles en Estados Unidos, exilio, Guerra Civil Española, Segunda República, Sociedades Hispanas Condederadas.

In *The Disinherited*, historian Henry Kamen argues that Spanish culture has been marked by the imprint of exile, as Spain's national consolidation was built upon exclusion (Jews, Muslims, Protestants, Liberals) rather than inclusion (ix-xvi). Among

the waves of exodus mentioned by Kamen is the one caused by the Spanish Civil War. The literature on this migration has focused primarily on the intellectual elites who left Spain after Franco's victory, often to settle in Spanish-speaking America. Here, I explore a different geography of exile by looking at the experiences of Spanish immigrants in the United States, many of whom became exiles as Franco's victory dashed their hopes of returning to Spain. The civil war transformed the Spanish diaspora in the United States, encouraging unprecedented levels of visibility and political participation in their adopted country. The article analyzes the activities in support of the Republic during the war, and the consequences of the outcome of the war when it ended in 1939.

1. "FRENZIED 'VIVAS!' FOR THE REPUBLIC"

News of the proclamation of the Spanish Republic in April 1931 was greeted with excitement in Spanish immigrant communities across the United States. The local press in Tampa, Florida, captured this transnational exhilaration as it reported: "Frenzied 'Vivas!' for the new republic were heard from Madrid to Main street, West Tampa" (*Tampa Daily Times* 15 April 1931: 1). In New York, the editor of the Spanish daily *La Prensa* declared republicanism to be a system of government more in tune with the social and economic structure of the modern world (*La Prensa* 15 April 1931: 4). This harmony contributed to the appeal of the Republic among Spanish migrants; many shared President Niceto Alcalá Zamora's wish to unite Spain with the Americas "through the bonds of republicanism to march together on the path of progress and civilization" (*España Republicana* May 1931: 3).

In the days that followed Alcalá Zamora's speech, Spaniards in the United States showed their support for the Republic in a variety of ways. In Los Angeles, Josep Carner-Ribalta, a Catalan nationalist who worked in Hollywood, and Spanish playwright Gregorio Martínez Sierra, went to the Spanish consulate to "dismiss the monarchic consul" and to hoist the republican flag from its balcony (136). In Tampa, the *Centro Español* removed the portrait of Alfonso XIII and raised the republican flag to the music of the *Himno de Riego*, Spain's new national anthem (*La Gaceta* 4 May 1931: 1). There too, the consul was a target. The *Frente Unico de Acción Republicana* led a signature campaign requesting his removal (*La Gaceta* 10 May 1931: 1). In New York, the newly created *Alianza Republicana Española* (ARE) started publishing the monthly *España Republicana*. Some of the leading members of the ARE returned to Spain to work for the new government. Carner-Ribalta, too, left Los Angeles for Barcelona, where he was instrumental in establishing the Catalan film industry in the 1930s (137-150).¹ In Tampa, Spanish cigarmakers renewed their calls to end the government

monopoly on tobacco production, and offered their expertise to help develop the free tobacco industry in the peninsula (*España Nueva* December 1932: 6).

The Republican government encouraged closer relations with the Spanish diaspora in the Americas. In his first radio broadcast to the continent, Alcalá Zamora announced a number of initiatives dear to the migrants' hearts: an amnesty for those who had left Spain for political or military reasons (to avoid the draft), the repatriation of migrants left unemployed by the onset of the Great Depression, and the possibility of granting parliamentary representation to Spaniards living in America (*New York Times* 30 April 1931: 1; *España Republicana* May 1931: 3). He also mentioned the reorganization of the consular service, a constant source of migrants' complaints. The Republic tried to modernize the diplomatic career, adapting it to the needs of the new regime. Its failure to republicanize the diplomatic corps was to prove fatal when the war broke out in 1936.

2. SPANISH IMMIGRANTS AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR²

The military uprising and ensuing civil war sparked an unprecedented mobilization of the Spanish immigrant communities in the United States. Hundreds of Spaniards volunteered to fight, and scores of committees were established to raise funds for the beleaguered Republic.³ These loosely organized coalitions appealed not only to Spaniards. The mobilization of the Spanish communities reflected as much the ties that bound them to their homeland as their participation in what Michael Denning has dubbed "the laboring of American culture" (xvi). The Popular Front culture that emerged in the United States in the 1930s encouraged immigrants to move beyond their ethnic enclaves and establish alliances with like-minded Americans regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, age, class, or creed.

In San Francisco, Spaniards organized *Acción Demócrata Española*, with branches in neighboring communities. The Spanish Consul remarked on the connection between the group and the New Deal movement. Its name, he wrote, was an "unconscious influence of the campaign to re-elect President Roosevelt, contemporaneous with its establishment [in 1936]." In Los Angeles, an antifascist group with anarchist leanings published the newspaper *El Antifascista* (AGA-MAE 1938a). In New York, a demonstration organized by the United Committee in Support of the Struggle against Spanish Fascism drew over four thousand participants to Union Square (*New York Times* 1 August 1936: 2). In Chicago, the chair of the Committee for the Defense of Spanish Liberties, Spanish anarchist Maximiliano Olay, joined Communist and Socialist leaders in a mass meeting that raised \$1,100 for the Republic (*Chicago Daily*

Tribune 12 August 1936: 2). In Tampa, the foundational meeting of the *Comité Popular de Defensa del Frente Popular Español* included representatives from labor unions, the International Labor Defense, the Labor Alliance, the Communist Party, and the Italian Antifascist Group (*La Gaceta* 4 August 1936: 1). Protestant ministers also joined. They were instrumental in a number of organizations in support of the Republic, including the American Friends of Spanish Democracy, the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, and the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy.

In Tampa, as soon as the *Comité* was established, collections in the cigar factories and fundraising rallies and festivals began. By the end of the war, weekly nickel-and-dime cash donations in the factories and at commercial establishments had reached close to \$200,000. The *Comité* also sent to Spain four ambulances, medical equipment and medicines, thousands of cans of food, over twenty tons of clothing, and thousands of cigars for soldiers at the front.

In New York, the war led to the creation of new organs of communication within the immigrant community. *Frente Popular*, the newspaper of the *Sociedades Hispanas Confederadas* (SHC), began publication on May 1, 1937. Starting on July 19, 1937, the activities of the colony were also showcased on the pages of *La Voz*, a Spanish daily whose reports extended to the broader Hispanic community, and the Iberian world. Its founding was a response to the perceived lukewarm support for the Spanish Republic by the erstwhile organ of the colony, the daily *La Prensa*.

The pages of *Frente Popular* offer a window into the structure of the SHC and unveil a vibrant associational life within the community. The SHC was a federation of Spanish societies that channeled support for the Republic; its affiliates included a gamut of organizations, from social clubs and mutual aid societies to political groups and workers' associations. In the past, this type of segmentation would have been stigmatized as fostering division and draining immigrant resources. Yet, the federated nature of the SHC proved effective to the task at hand. In fact, in 1937, SHC celebrated an unprecedented event in the history of the immigrant community: a national congress where delegates from Spanish societies throughout the country met to discuss problems and decide on future courses of action. This is not to say that internal divisions had vanished. But, as one of the organizers of the congress explained, in the process of working together for the Republic "a true revolution has taken place [...] the unity of the [Hispanic] colony" (SHC 13). The records of the national conference illustrate another "revolution" of sorts: the presence of women among the delegates. More than ever before, the unity of the community came to signify a union that encompassed gender and generation—men, women, youth, and children.

In her study of 1920s Greenwich Village, Caroline F. Ware described the isolation of Spanish women within the immigrant enclave:

No outside agencies had touched these Spanish women in the way that they had reached the Italian women to upset their traditional status and traditional attitudes [...] As far as the women were concerned, the American community might almost as well not exist. (231)

The war in Spain was to challenge this image of female isolation.

In the summer of 1936, Dolores Ibarruri, the communist leader known as “*Pasionaria*” for her fiery oratory, appealed to women in America and the world to help feed and clothe the children of Spain, left behind while “often one or both parents are at the front” (*Tampa Morning Tribune* 9 September 1936: 2). These were the days when militia units helped Republican forces to defend Madrid. Spanish women donned dungarees and joined the barricades to the cry of ¡*No pasarán!* The iconic image of the *miliciana* was recreated many times at events organized by Spanish immigrants. At pro-Loyalist picnics, Tampa Spanish children in *miliciano* outfits paraded under a banner honoring Francisca Solana, a *miliciana* killed in Spain. Choruses of *milicianas*, such as New York’s *Juventud Libertaria Hijas de España* organized festivals for the Republic, singing revolutionary songs of the war.

Elizabeth Faue has stated that in the ideology of the Popular Front these “icons of militant motherhood coexisted with images of female victimization” (83). In Spain, too, women were portrayed as both innocent victims protecting their suckling babies from Fascist bombers and brave Republican citizens taking arms to defend their country against foreign invaders. They appealed to this sense of motherhood to seek aid from “mothers and women of the world.” In November 1938, as the war entered its third winter, the mothers of Loyalist Spain pleaded, “No matter whether you believe our fight is right or wrong--before everything, be mothers [...] Don’t let our children perish of hunger and cold” (Rolfe 3).

Spanish women in the United States responded to these calls ardently, creating *Comités Femeninos* to collect money, food, and clothing for the children of Loyalist Spain, and achieving a visibility they had never had before. “We are poor, working class women, from Spain and Latin America,” read the flyer of the Bronx *Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas* (AMA) advertising a festival to benefit Spanish children (AGAMA 1938b). AMA was one of several committees affiliated with *Comités Femeninos Unidos* (CFU), an organization established by Ernestina González, a prominent Spanish leader whose American husband had been killed in Spain.

Pro-Loyalist women led boycott campaigns against products from Germany, Italy, Japan, and the areas of Spain held by Franco. They organized demonstrations

in support of the Republic. In Tampa, following the bombing of Guernica, a group of female cigar workers led five thousand demonstrators to City Hall and asked the mayor to protest the bombing of open cities and to request that president Roosevelt lift the arms embargo against the Republic (*Tampa Daily Times* 7 May 1937: 2; *Tampa Morning Tribune* 7 May 1937: 11). In 1938, eight hundred Spanish-American women, representing the CFU, marched to Washington to petition the State Department to lift the arms embargo on Spain (*Daily Worker* 6 April 1938: 4).

As mothers, Spanish women also played a key role in educating their children in the democratic values they defended. Spanish-American children were prominent in pro-Loyalist events, carrying banners in demonstrations, or singing the Republican anthem and militant songs. In Tampa, in 1938, a children's group participated in the Labor Day parade, carrying American flags and placards that read: "Stop Hitler and Mussolini," and "Help Democracy Defeat Fascism." Parents also removed their children from Catholic schools to protest the Church's support of Franco.

Maurice Isserman has argued that the culture of the Popular Front "provided a bridge by which the children of immigrants could adapt themselves to the culture of the New World without renouncing the ideals that had sustained their parents in the move from the Old" (22). This was particularly the case among Spanish-Americans. For many of these American-born children, the events of solidarity with the Spanish Republic marked their first contact with the traditions of the land of their parents and their first involvement with American politics. "I became involved in something outside of here, the United States," recalled Joaquín de La Llana, "and something that I put my heart into —the Spanish Republic, and it made me a little closer to Spain" (Varela-Lago 1997b: 56).

The Spanish Civil War contributed to shaping a new sense of identity among Spanish-American youth. For seventeen-year-old José Yglesias, a recent transplant from Tampa, the multitudinous inter-ethnic pro-Loyalist meetings at Madison Square Garden were a revelation. "I thought the top of my head would come off," he recalled decades later, "to see that enormous gathering come to its feet during the playing of the *Himno de Ribeiro* (sic) and again when Fernando de los Ríos, the Republic's ambassador in Washington, got up to speak. Incredible!" (Varela-Lago 1997b: 55-56). Yglesias, who struggled with his Spanish-Cuban heritage and had considered changing his name to the more American-sounding "Moran" in order to get a job at a local restaurant, experienced a newfound pride that gave him the strength to face the pressures of assimilation. In 1937, he realized, "Spaniards were heroes [...] and that made me take pride in whatever Spanish heritage I could claim" (55).

Michael Denning, borrowing a term from Raymond Williams, describes the Popular Front as a “structure of feeling,” “a political and cultural charter for a generation” (26). This was true for many Spanish-Americans. It was at this time that Yglesias began to read Spanish, “a language [he] had refused to study in high school,” and to study the history of Spain. He also became interested in American writers, especially those who supported the Loyalists. “It was through Spain that I, like many of my generation, began to know and judge the world,” he wrote (56). While Yglesias was becoming acquainted with the works of Ernest Hemingway, another Spanish-American writer, Brooklynite Prudencio de Pereda, was collaborating with Hemingway in the production of *Spain in Flames*, one of several documentaries and films produced on the war in Spain.

Brooklyn was also the home of *Juventudes Españolas*, an organization founded in 1937 by a group of American-born children of Hispanic parents, that published a home-made mimeographed monthly called *Luz*. The only extant issue of *Luz* underlines the uniqueness of the organization. “The members and friends of JUVENTUDES ESPAÑOLAS and of its modest bulletin must realize that our organization is sailing upon uncharted seas,” they wrote in the English Supplement, “we are in the process of creating something new, something unprecedented [...] a bilingual magazine of interest to both Spanish and English readers” (*Luz* February 1938: 14).

Luz’s very conception illuminates how the Spanish Civil War and the Popular Front culture shaped the experience of young Spanish-Americans in the United States in the 1930s. In particular, it illustrates how they struggled with the divisions rending the country of their parents and present in the Spanish diaspora as well. An article titled, “For the Antifascist Union,” reproduced the text of a speech delivered by a delegate of the *Juventudes* to the SHC assembly, where he called on Anarchists and Communists to set aside their differences and to continue working together for Loyalist Spain (*Luz* February 1938: 8). In “Building Democracy,” a remorseful member of the *Juventudes* apologized for his “improper behavior” at a recent meeting, and wrote about the need to “practice democratic principles” in the society, rather than “dictatorial methods.” The emphasis of young Spanish-Americans on maintaining unity and pursuing democratic methods within the colony was complemented by their openness to other antifascist struggles and communities. In “Life goes onward,” a member of the *Juventudes* reported on his participation in a meeting organized by the American League for Peace and Democracy to discuss whether a boycott of Japanese products would help China.

The calls for unity emanating from *Luz* and other pro-Loyalist publications reveal that these organizations were fraught with internal divisions. Yet, despite their differences, they managed to maintain a united front throughout the war. What

accounts for this overwhelming support for the Republic? While the Spanish Civil war was often portrayed as the battleground of the struggle between two international and “modern” movements, Fascism and Communism, the Republican discourse directed to Spaniards in America emphasized the long-lasting internal strife between the so-called “two Spains.” In this way, it appealed to the personal experiences of the emigrants. A flyer printed by the *Círculo Republicano Español* in Cuba seeking contributions for war victims and *milicianos* illustrates this. The center of the page shows a teen-age Spanish peasant, a black beret on his head and hempen sandals covering his feet. He stands at a harbor, a small suitcase by his side, awaiting an approaching transatlantic vessel which, we assume, will take him to America. Above the figure, in bold letters, a question and a reminder: “¿Te acuerdas? ¡Este eras tú!” (Do you remember? This was you!). The text then recounts the causes that forced the young man to leave Spain: the back-breaking toil in the fields, the stark poverty, the prospect of being drafted and killed fighting in Morocco, and, above all, the sense of oppression and alienation felt before the “drunken *señoritos*, Spaniards like you, who never conceived of you as a Spaniard like them.” “You left your homeland,” the flyer continued, “seeking in the democratic nations of America what you were denied by the priest and the *cacique* [local political boss]: the condition and opportunities of a free man.”

In the graphic summary of Spanish history described in the flyer, Franco and his supporters represented “the old Spain of the fascist military, rotten with conventionalism, annihilated by the carrion of her stultified clergy and her idle and vicious nobility.” The Loyalists, in turn, defended a new Spain “vigorous, free and sovereign, offering opportunity and equality to all her children.” Included among all her children were the emigrants, who, in this narrative, had been forced into exile, expelled by a Spain where wealthy *señoritos*, priests, and *caciques* reigned supreme. These were the same forces now confronting the Loyalists, the flyer explained, as it exhorted the emigrants to “reread the blurred pages of the sad book of your life as an expatriate and help them” (*Centro Español Papers*).

On April 1, 1939, as General Franco proclaimed his victory in the Spanish Civil War, the editor of *La Voz* reminded its readers of their country’s long diasporic tradition: “the path opened by the Discovery and the Conquest has been followed many times by the emigrants.” This path, he continued, referring to the Spanish republican refugees, was now open to the “Spanish patriots penned in concentration camps in France” (*La Voz* 1 April 1939: 7). President Roosevelt’s hope that Franco might take a page from the American Civil War and show clemency did not materialize.⁴ While exact figures are still debated, thousands of Spaniards were executed, and close to 400,000 were

imprisoned (Grugel and Rees 26). A similar number crossed the border into France. When France fell to the Nazis in 1940, the situation of the Spanish refugees was made even more precarious. Supporters of the Republic in the United States now turned their activities to helping the exiles settle in the Americas, but Franco's victory was to alter the lives of Spanish immigrants in the United States as well.

3. FROM MIGRANTS TO EXILES

The establishment of the Franco dictatorship had a profound effect on Spaniards in the United States, many of whom saw themselves unwillingly transformed into exiles. This sentiment was evident when George Schnack interviewed Spaniards in California at the end of the war. "Had the Loyalists won the war he might have returned," Schnack wrote of one of his interviewees, "but now that Franco is in power he would not set foot to the ground for anything" (85). Franco's "new Spain" held no appeal for these migrants. "In the Franco government they see the same sort of regime that was partly the cause of their being forced to leave Spain," Schnack explained (98). Similar sentiments were expressed in other locales (Varela-Lago 1997b: 55).

If the mobilization in support of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War had contributed to the Americanization of the Spanish immigrant community, Franco's victory secured it through the naturalization of many migrants-turned-exiles who now faced the prospect of never returning to their homeland. Gustavo Jiménez, grandson of the last consul of the Spanish Republic in Tampa, remembered "people getting information for citizenship papers almost constantly" (Varela-Lago 1997b: 55). This was not an easy task, because many Spaniards had entered the country illegally. In fact, *Frente Popular* accused Franco supporters of reporting such immigrants to American authorities so that they would be deported (*Frente Popular* 12 May 1939: 12).⁵ Thus, soon after the war ended, SHC established an "immigration section" to help not only refugees leaving Spain but also Spanish immigrants who feared deportation to Franco's Spain (*España Libre* 26 January 1940: 5; *La Voz* 6 May 1939: 5). SHC could not count on the aid of Spanish consuls. A notice by the General Consul in Puerto Rico captured the new ideology of citizenship emanating from Spain. It declared that consular services would be offered to all Spanish citizens "except those who, due to their recent conduct towards our glorious national movement, have lost the right to be attended and protected by the New Spain" (*Frente Popular* 13 October 1939: 4).⁶

Determined not to recognize Franco's regime, the members of the Spanish mutual aid societies in Tampa changed their bylaws, and declared the stars and stripes their only official flag. The entrance of the United States in World War II accelerated

this process of Americanization, as Spanish immigrants joined in the war effort to protect what they saw as the same values they had defended in Spain. The day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tampa's *Centro Asturiano* affirmed its loyalty to the United States, calling the Club, a "100 percent American organization" (*Tampa Morning Tribune* 8 December 1941: 11). The *Centro Español* pledged its loyalty and the society's holdings, valued at \$500,000, to President Roosevelt (*Tampa Daily Times* 18 December 1941: 3). A year later, it condemned Franco's alleged support for an Axis victory and reiterated the immigrants' allegiance to the United States (*Tampa Morning Tribune* 8 December 1942: 6; 9 December 1942: 2).

The war raised hopes that Franco would be overthrown. ACERE, a Spanish Republican association in New York, suggested that Spanish exiles and immigrants in America be allowed to form a special unit, instead of being drafted into the regular army, to help the allies more effectively in key positions such as the Canary Islands or North Africa (*Ibérica* 1942: 23). The *Casal Catalá* offered Americans a "blueprint for invasion" of Franco's Spain (*Free Catalonia* 1943: 4-5). Through the pages of its bilingual publication, *Free Catalonia*, the *Casal* showcased the history of Catalonia, her links with the United States, and the Catalans' desire to defeat Franco and establish in the peninsula an Iberian confederation of Free States, encompassing Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque country. The Bulletin of the Basque Delegation in the United States, *Basques*, followed a similar model. Seeking to establish a close connection with the United States, an editorial observed that travelers to the Basque Country unanimously compared the Basques with the Anglo-Saxons, and explained that Basques were known in the peninsula as "the Yankees of Spain" (*Basques* 1944: 2).

The onset of the Cold War was soon to dictate a change in American policies towards Spain, with Franco now cast as a valuable anti-Communist ally. In 1951, President Truman restored diplomatic relations. Two years later the two countries signed the Pact of Madrid. It offered American economic and military aid to Spain in exchange for the use of its territory for military bases. American geopolitical interests did not alter Republican supporters' perception of the Franco regime. SHC continued their work, albeit with dwindling resources as attested by the intermittent publication of its newspaper. Throughout the forty years of the regime, *España Libre* readers continued to help needy Spanish exiles, the "legion of the forgotten," as Spanish Refugee Aid founder Nancy Macdonald called them (15).

Keeping the memory of Republican Spain alive was an equally important mission of SHC. Through banquets, festivals, speeches, and other events, they preserved the commemorative calendar forged during the war to support the Loyalists: April 14

(the proclamation of the Republic), July 19 (the popular response against the military coup), and November 7 (the defense of Madrid). The emblematic *Día de la Raza* (celebrating a common Hispanic heritage between Spain and its former American colonies) remained a source of contention between Republicans and Francoists in the diaspora. In 1959, *España Libre* denounced the observance of the date by the *Falange* (Spain's Fascist party) and the imperialist tone of the *Hispanidad* discourse emanating from Franco's *Instituto de Cultura Hispánica*. For *España Libre*, the relevance of the "discovery" lay in it having offered Spaniards the opportunity to enjoy the freedoms they lacked in the peninsula. The Francoist commemoration celebrated the violence and exploitation heaped upon the Indians by the imperial system: the same violence, the article argued, now visited on the Spanish people by Falangist Spain (*España Libre* 2 October 1959: 1).

The presence in the United States of several illustrious Spanish émigrés contributed to the perpetuation of Republican sentiment in the diaspora and among the new generations. A number of them began their exile in New York teaching in schools connected to Spanish immigrant societies.⁷ Thus, in 1939, the *Comité Pro Democracia Española* established an Education Section whose main goal was to teach the history of Spain to Spanish youth born in the United States. This knowledge, according to the *Comité*, "was needed in order to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula" (*La Voz* 8 August 1939: 12). They hired Father Leocadio Lobo, a pro-Republic Catholic priest, to lead the school.⁸ Similarly, the *Frente Popular Antifascista Gallego* offered Emilio González López, a Galician ex-congressman, and Daniel Alfonso Castela, an artist and the preeminent leader of Galician nationalism, the opportunity to teach Spanish history and drawing respectively in their societies (*La Voz* 6 November 1939: 6).⁹ González López stayed in New York, remaining involved in the activities of the Spanish community. In 1971, for example, he addressed the gathering commemorating the 40th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic, a meeting where *España Libre* highlighted the presence of young people and the incorporation of new generations in the fight against the dictatorship (*España Libre* 1971: 3).¹⁰

Relations between the Franco regime and the Spanish diaspora in the United States remained strained. In January 1951, the consul in New York reported to the Ambassador on a lecture given by Federico de Onís at the *Casa de Galicia* on poet Antonio Machado, who had died in exile in France. The consul decried that Onís headed the *Instituto de las Españas* at Columbia. He also acknowledged that the *Casa de Galicia* remained "under the influence of the Spanish reds and their sympathizers"

and that the Consulate had not been able “to have any intervention” in it (AGA-MAE 1951a). His predecessor had a similar experience. Contrary to what had been the trend before the Spanish Civil War, he stated that the majority of Spaniards in New York became naturalized shortly after arriving and that they shunned the Spanish official representation (AGA-MAE 1947).

In California, too, the regime’s cultural initiatives seemed to be undermined by exiled intellectuals. Soon after the end of the war, the Del Amo Foundation had approached the embassy to reestablish its program of fellowships for Spaniards to study in California’s universities and Americans to study in Spain. The regime welcomed this initiative, but the Spanish consul in Los Angeles soon discovered that some of the American “fellows” had become, upon returning to the United States, “tenacious detractors of our Fatherland.” He blamed the faulty selection of fellows on the influence in the Foundation of César Barja, a renowned professor of Spanish at UCLA, and, according to the consul, an “openly and declared enemy” of Franco during the civil war (AGA-MAE 1951b). The presence of anti-Franco academics in American universities remained a matter of concern in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consuls were told to provide a list of instructors of Spanish in their jurisdiction and report on their attitude towards the regime (AGA-MAE 1949).

The Spanish diaspora in the United States challenged the legitimacy of Franco’s representatives, and protested honors bestowed upon them by American officials. In 1958, an invitation by Tampa cigar manufacturers to the Spanish Ambassador to attend the annual *Verbena del Tabaco* Festival caused the editor of the local Spanish newspaper to remind the organizers that the Latin community remained as antifascist as it had been in 1936 (*España Libre* 21 November 1958: 1). In 1962, the visit of the Spanish Ambassador to San Francisco was also boycotted by members of the community (*España Libre* 2 February 1962: 5). Two years later, SHC protested the Mayor of New York’s reception of Franco’s Minister of Information and Tourism, in the city to visit the Spanish Pavilion at the World Fair and to inaugurate the new Spanish National Tourism Office in Manhattan (*España Libre* 6 November 1964: 2).

The protests extended to the visit of the new king, Juan Carlos I, to the United States in 1976. As a banquet in honor of the King was being held at the Waldorf, members of SHC and other Spanish and American organizations picketed outside the hotel shouting “*Amnistía-Libertad*,” the same chant heard in the streets of Spain asking for amnesty for political prisoners, and freedom (*España Libre* 1976: 4). While the American mainstream press hailed Juan Carlos as the leader of a “new Spain,” the

Spanish diaspora in the United States saw in Franco's anointed successor the continuity of the regime.

The royal agenda, however, reflected the monarch's desire to come to grips with some of the darker aspects of the nation's past, including its relationship to the "disinherited" mentioned by Kamen. Thus, the King met with a delegation of American Jews, headed by former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg. Goldberg observed that this was "the first meeting between a Spanish head of state and a Jewish delegation of any nationality since before 1492 when Jews were expelled from Spain" (*Los Angeles Times* 3 June 1976: A1). While not an outsider in the traditional sense of the term, Juan Carlos may have been particularly sensitive to the experience of the diaspora, having spent most of his childhood in exile.¹¹ In his first trip to Mexico, in 1978, he again reached out to the diaspora. Meeting the widow of Manuel Azaña, the last president of the Spanish Republic, the King said, "Your husband, and you yourself are as much part of the history of Spain as I am" (Preston 442).

The remains of Azaña and his widow remain in exile: his in France, hers in Mexico. So do those of many Spanish refugees and immigrants for whom Franco's victory meant the impossibility of returning to their homeland. The old cemetery of the *Centro Español* in Tampa is a witness to this legacy. Close to a replica of the Tower of Hercules, a funerary monument representing the famed Roman lighthouse on the Galician coast—the last landmark seen by many of the emigrants leaving Spain for America, is the tomb of Basilio Alvarez, a former priest, congressman, and political exile. Alvarez fled Spain in 1937, and following stays in Buenos Aires, Havana, and New York, he was welcomed, frail and sick, in Tampa, in 1942. He lived there, in the hospital of the *Centro Español*, until his death in November 1943.

These memorials, like the incessant activity in support of the Republic generated by the immigrant communities, recorded in their publications, and still impressed in the memory of those who experienced it as children, illustrate the complex and rich history of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath. They also illuminate an often-forgotten aspect of the conflict. Its effects, and its outcome, were felt beyond Spain's borders. They transformed the nature of Spanish communities abroad, and produced a wave of exiles not only in the peninsula, but also among those living overseas, including the Spanish diaspora in the United States.

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NOTES

¹ He returned to the United States after the Spanish Civil War and collaborated on several anti-Franco initiatives, including the publication of *Free Catalonia* in the 1940s. He died in California in 1988. (Llauradó)

² Given the focus of this article, I concentrate on the organizations that supported the Spanish Republic. Readers interested in groups that supported General Franco can consult Rey García, and Varela-Lago. (2008)

³ On July 22, 1936, Ramón Pi wrote to the Consul in New York requesting transportation to Spain for himself and fifty-eight volunteers. The *Club Español* reported that hundreds of Spaniards wanted to go to Spain to defend the Republic. AGA-MAE, Caja 4380. In Tampa, 150 volunteered. (*La Gaceta* 4 May 1936: 1)

⁴ Roosevelt expressed this desire to Juan F. de Cárdenas when the new Spanish Ambassador presented his credentials. (AGA-MAE 1939)

⁵ In November 1939, *Frente Popular* changed its name to *España Libre*. On the role of *España Libre* in the Spanish exile community see Feu-López.

⁶ Things got more complicated when, in 1940, the Alien Registration Act required all foreigners to register and state their status. Unlike other European refugees whose countries were occupied by combatants in the war. Spaniards were citizens of a neutral country whose government was recognized by the United States. Yet, many of them had lost their citizenship. In the registration forms they signed as “citizens of the Republic of Spain” (*España Libre* 30 August 1940: 2).

⁷ This arrangement also provided the refugees gainful employment and protected them from being deported for being public charges.

⁸ From May 1939, Lobo was also the editor of New York’s *La Voz*. He died in New York in 1959.

⁹ González López also taught classes for the children of Spanish immigrants belonging to the *Agrupación Socialista Española*. (*España Libre* 12 April 1940: 14)

¹⁰ González López had a prolific career as Professor of Spanish language and literature and Director of the Graduate program at the City University of New York. On González López’s and Castela’s activities in the United States see González López.

¹¹ Born in Rome in 1938, he lived in Italy, Switzerland, and Portugal before setting foot in Spain in 1948 to be groomed as a successor to Franco.