



UNDER COVER OF ANTI-FRANCOISM, THEY ARE REVISING HISTORY

Posted on April 1, 2020 by Arnaud Imatz



For the past fifteen years or so, the use of history for political ends has become the indelible mark of the Spanish Socialist Party ([PSOE](#)) and the cryptocommunist far Left (today united under the acronym, [Podemos Izquierda Unida](#)). The same talking-points are always mentioned by the political authorities and the mainstream media: the Francoist repression" (or White Repression), and the repression of the Left during the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. On the other hand, a careful examination reveals the repression of the Right by the Left. But for the Left - it is said - only "mourning" was done under the dictatorship.

Over the years, the memorialist ideology of the Spanish Left has steadily grown. History, which bizarrely, is said to be dominated by the Right, has become suspect. It has been replaced by "historical and democratic memory." Based on individual and subjective memories, it is not concerned with explaining and understanding, but with selecting, condemning and denouncing.

Forgiveness and Dialogue – All That Is Finished

In the aftermath of the Franco dictatorship, from 1976 to 1982, two principles animated "the spirit of democratic transition:" Reciprocal forgiveness and dialogue between government and opposition. It was not a question of forgetting the past, but of overcoming it and looking resolutely to the future. There was then, as the authorities are pleased to say today, "no voluntary amnesia," nor "a pact of silence."

On the contrary, the democratic transition was based on a perfect awareness of the failures of the past and on the will to overcome them. It was not a question of imposing silence on historians and journalists, but of letting them debate, and refusing to allow politicians to take up the subject for their partisan struggles. There was therefore no oversight; but, on the contrary, a particular attention was paid to history, which led to an impressive number of publications, the likes of which doubtless had never been seen.

But from the 1990s onwards, and in particular after the 1993 election campaign, the attitude of the Socialist Party changed. A neo-Socialist and post-Marxist cultural tidal wave soon overwhelmed Spain. The Manichean history of the first years of Franco's regime, which was believed to be permanently buried with him, has resurfaced, but in another form. With [José Luis Zapatero's Historical Memory Law](#) of 2007, new impetus was given to the arguments of the "Memoria histórica" and a real atmosphere of

pre-civil war gradually settled upon the country.

Memorial Amnesia

In December 2008, the Socialist parliamentary group presented to Parliament a new bill to reform and amplify the 2007 law. In its first draft, this bill provided for a Truth Commission (sic!), composed of eleven designated members by Parliament to tell the historical truth. It also provided for fines of up to 150,000 euros, prison terms for up to 4 years, destruction of published works and the dismissal of teachers found guilty for up to ten years. Luckily, this undemocratic monstrosity has been overhauled and to-date it is a new, "softer" draft that is waiting to be examined and voted on by parliamentarians.

Contrary to what the title of a Parisian evening newspaper recently asserted, it is not the ban on the cult of Franco that divides Spain, but the definition or the meaning that the new memorial bill gives to "the apology of Francoism." It is indeed peculiar and disturbing to see parties of the Left, which have become amnesiac, presenting a supposedly democratic bill which is basically only a step towards the establishment of a kind of soft Sovietism. It is mind-boggling to see left-wing parties claiming to be part of the Second Republic and democracy also forgetting or camouflaging their own historical memory.

The Crimes Of The Left

How can we forget that portion of the Left's responsibility in the origin of the Civil War, when the revolutionary myth of armed struggle was shared by all the Left?

How can we forget that liberal democracy was seen, by the Bolshevized Socialist Party, by the Communist Party and by the Anarchists, only as a means to achieve their ends: "Popular democracy" or the socialist state?

How can we forget the use of massive political violence by the Socialist Party during the October 1934 putsch, or coup d'état against the Liberal-Centrist government of the radical, [Alejandro Lerroux](#), whose party was fueled by Freemasons?

How can we forget that during the elections of the Popular Front, in February 1936, 50 seats on the

Right were invalidated and systematically granted to the Left, so that it could have a majority?

How can we forget that the President of the Republic, [Niceto Alcalá Zamora](#), considered too conservative, was dismissed "in violation of the constitution," after a real "parliamentary coup d'état," according to his own words?

How can we forget the terror on the street (more than 300 dead in three months), the marginalization and exclusion of the parliamentary opposition in June?

Abuses In Both Camps

How can we forget that the atrocities and extrajudicial executions were as terrible and numerous in one camp as in the other? How can we forget that the founding fathers of the Republic, the intellectuals [Marañón](#), [Perez de Ayala](#), [Ortega y Gasset](#), or even [Unamuno](#) – the evil that happened him, according to Alejandro Amenábar – the true liberals and democrats of the time, opposed the Popular Front and chose the National camp?

Why spread the idea that, since the beginning of the establishment of democracy, the Spaniards have been unable to overcome the past, that the Transition has been cowardice, and that the Right continues, for the most part, to be Francoist?

Why delegitimize the democratization of Spain and undermine the 1978 Constitution? Why not finally let the dead bury the dead permanently? In 1547, after having captured the city of Wittenberg, [Charles V](#) visited the tomb of the man who had been his harshest enemy, Martin Luther. Some advisers suggested that he burn the remains of the "heretic." Magnanimously the emperor replied: "He found his judge. I make war on the living, not on the dead."

The 1978 Constitution Flouted

The Civil War historian cannot subscribe to a litany of hate, revenge and demolition. He knows very well that we must not confuse the origins and antecedents of the Civil War with the coup d'état of July 18, 1936, nor the Civil War with Franco's dictatorship; that all these are very different facts; and that, as

such, they can be judged and interpreted in very different ways.

By confusing everything, mixing everything up, we condemn ourselves to not understanding anything. Suitably, article 16 of the 1978 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, ideological freedom and freedom of worship and religious belief, without any other possible restrictions than those derived from the maintenance of public order, protected by law.

Hopefully, parliamentarians will remember it when examining and voting on this new bill, which is so anti-democratic and obscurantist, so radically incompatible with what the "values of the European Union" are or should be.

Arnaud Imatz, a Basque-French political scientist and historian, holds a State Doctorate (DrE) in political science and is a correspondent-member of the Royal Academy of History (Spain), and a former international civil servant at OECD. He is a specialist in the Spanish Civil War, European populism, and the political struggles of the Right and the Left – [all subjects on which he has written several books](#). He has also published numerous articles on the political thought of the founder and theoretician of the Falange, [José Antonio Primo de Rivera](#), as well as the Liberal philosopher, [José Ortega y Gasset](#), and the Catholic traditionalist, [Juan Donoso Cortés](#).

Translated from the Spanish by N. Dass.

The [image](#) shows a child's drawing, at the back of which is this inscription in the child's own hand: "his scene shows a bombing in my town, Port-Bou. María Dolores Sanz, age 13." Drawing ca. 1936-1938.

