

THE ANNUAL JOAN GILI MEMORIAL LECTURE

Antoni Segura

Catalunya year zero

The Anglo-Catalan Society
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This is the eighth in the regular series of lectures convened by The Anglo-Catalan Society, to be delivered at its annual conference, in commemoration of the figure of Joan Lluís Gili i Serra (1907–1998), founder member of the Society and Honorary Life President from 1979. The object of the publication is to ensure wider diffusion, in English, for an address to the Society given by a distinguished figure of Catalan Studies whose specialism coincides with an aspect of the multiple interests and achievements of Joan Gili, as scholar, bibliophile and translator. This lecture was given by Antoni Segura i Mas at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, on 19th November 2005.

The text of the lecture was translated by Richard Mansell, and edited for publication by Helena Buffery. Whilst the lecture was based on the chapter ‘Catalunya any zero’, in *El franquisme a Catalunya: la dictadura totalitària (1939-1945)* (2005), Segura gave a fresh presentation of the material to fit in with one of the central aims of the LI Anglo-Catalan Society conference, which was to reflect on the impact of the death of Franco on contemporary Catalan culture. Grateful acknowledgement is made of the sponsorship of The Annual Joan Gili Memorial Lectures provided by the Institut Ramon Llull and the Fundació Congrés de Cultura Catalana.

Antoni Segura i Mas (1952) is Professor of Contemporary History and Director of the Centre for International Historical Studies at the University of Barcelona. Whilst his early work was on economic and agrarian history, he has taught and published widely on many aspects of contemporary history and international relations. His publications range from general histories like the *Historia Económica Mundial* (1993), *El mundo actual. De la Segunda Guerra Mundial a nuestros días* (1995) and *Senyors i vassalls del segle XXI* (2004) to specific studies of contemporary Spanish and Catalan economic and political history: *Els catalans a Espanya, 1760–1914* (1996); *La reorganització autonòmica de l'Estat espanyol* (1998); *Empresaris de la postguerra* (1999) and *Memòria de la Transició a Espanya i Catalunya* (2000). He is perhaps best known for his work on the Islamic world, on which he has organised and delivered numerous courses and conference papers. His many books on the subject include *El Magreb: del colonialisme al islamisme* (1994), *El món àrab actual* (1997), *Aproximació al món islàmic, des dels orígens fins a l'actualitat* (2000), *El Sàhara en la dinàmica política magrebí y las dificultades del Plan de Paz (1995–2000)* (2000) and *Irak en la encrucijada* (2003). Antoni Segura is a fearless critic of contemporary US foreign policy and publishes regular articles in the Catalan press on contemporary Catalan politics. He is currently working on a project on the impact of the Franco regime in Catalonia.

Catalonia Year 0: Catalan culture and society in the face of the Francoist victory¹

On Friday 10th February 1939 Francoist troops occupied La Jonquera and the end of the Spanish Civil War in Catalonia was officially declared, even though some 5,000 men, the last remnants of the Republican Army, after listening to ‘L’emigrant’ on the violin, would still cross the border with France at Coll d’Ares on the 13th. It was a sad epilogue, because on the descent to Prats de Molló night caught them unawares and a sudden drop in temperature claimed yet more lives. On the 11th, *La Vanguardia*, the only newspaper published in Barcelona, broke the news with huge front-page headlines: ‘The War in Catalonia is over! Long live Spain! Long live Franco! *¡Arriba España!*’ For the victors it was the ‘Third Triumphant Year’. For the vanquished it was the beginning of Year 0, the year of the total annihilation of the country, its people, its institutions, its language, its culture; and so began the post-war nightmare.

It was, as Antoni Rovira i Virgili had predicted, ‘the most concentrated and most threatening of all the invasions recorded in the course of Catalan history. It is the furious invasion of hatred. Hatred of Catalonia, of Republican Catalonia, of liberal Catalonia, of national Catalonia [...]. [T]his time it is not only a military, political and administrative blow. It is not aimed at the outer shell of legal organisation, but rather at Catalonia’s spirit, its idea, its culture, its very strength and life. Their aim is to destroy not only the political structure, but rather the national soul. The blow is aimed at Catalonia as a nation, at Catalan civilisation’.² In many ways the blow was harsher even than 1716, when the Decree of the Nueva Planta (New Plan) abolished all Catalan institutions. In the early eighteenth century the pre-modern State did not pervade every confine of the country and, despite all manner of prohibitions, the country, language and culture lived on in many corners of the Principality. Even Rafael Casanova, the last head of the *Consell de Cent*, Barcelona’s government, managed to hide away and re-emerged in 1719 to practise law in Barcelona, dying in

¹ This text is a modified and updated version of the chapter ‘Catalunya any zero’ which was written for Josep M. Solé Sabaté and Joan Villarroya, *El franquisme a Catalunya: la dictadura totalitària (1939-1945)*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2005.

² Antoni Rovira i Virgili, ‘Batalla a Catalunya’, in *La Humanitat*, 1st January 1939. Reprinted in Antoni Rovira i Virgili: *‘La guerra que han provocat’*. *Selecció d’articles sobre la guerra civil espanyola*, ed. Josep M. Roig i Rosich, Barcelona: Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 1998. [Translator’s note: the translations of all citations are my own].

Sant Boi de Llobregat in 1768 at the age of 80. But not now; now the occupation was absolute and it reached even the most remote of places with the collaboration of those who supported Franco and the dictatorship.

Because to understand the past and its consequences in the process of nation building, we must debunk two myths. The Spanish Civil War was not a war against Catalonia, it was a war against a Fascism that would ultimately liquidate the individual and collective freedoms and rights of Catalans and Spaniards. As such, it was also a war between Catalans, and the regime enjoyed solid support in Catalonia until the very day the dictator died. And later still. Even today, the scab of Francoist Catalans lives on in many political and social activities.

The end of the war was, indeed, experienced with a kind of relief because it meant the end of the air raids and the hunger, but very soon it was clear that hunger was on its way back accompanied by the terror of persecutions, firing squads and prisons. It was a white terror, institutionalised, official and relentless, without anyone to intervene for the victims or to try to save them from a tragic fate. A long night had begun, a night of silence, repression and oblivion.

The defeat of the ideologies and legal framework that had been in force only the day before was complete and absolute. Never had anybody had at their disposal power as absolute as the power of those days, weeks, months and years that followed the end of the Civil War in Catalonia; when, often at night, from street to street and door to door, a sharp knock would announce the arrival of the terrible and merciless justice of the victors.

Since the occupation of Lleida by General Yagüe's troops on 3rd April 1938, the dictatorship had suppressed Catalan institutions and had begun to deploy the institutions of the new regime. Once the war was over, the acting municipal administrators progressively lost their provisional character and permanent appointments were made based on the unquestionable loyalty of the new civil servants; always people above all suspicion and, as such, devoted to the 'Glorious National Movement' and who often stood out for their feats in war (whether soldiers, ex-prisoners or relations of those 'Fallen for God and for Spain') or for their militancy, in 'National areas' or in the Fifth Column, in the single party or in the sector of traditionalism that had accepted the decree of unification in 1937. Where necessary, they even resorted to distinguished people from the conservative Lliga who, following the lead of Francesc Cambó and just as Ferran Valls i Taberner postulated in 'The False Way' ('La Falsa ruta', *La Vanguardia*, 15th February 1939), had forsworn their Catalanist past to embrace the cause of order, 'of reconstruction of the Spanish

Homeland begun by the National Movement’, of the ‘good path’ and of ‘good sense’.

Over the first few months of the occupation, the signs of the victors were imposed obsessively and any last trace of an autonomous and Republican Catalonia was erased. Nothing escaped the actions of the victors. So, on 16th February by decree ‘the use of Catalan [was] hereby prohibited given its status as a second language’ and the ban even affected death notices and gravestones and, as of December, popular Nativity plays. On 28th March, the ‘Palau de la Música Catalana’ became the ‘Palacio de la Música’. On 12th April Barcelona City Council agreed to remove the monument to Rafael Casanova (the bust of Prat de la Riba and the statue of Pau Claris were also removed, along with monuments to Francesc Layret and Doctor Robert, whereas the monument to the president of Spain’s First Republic, Pi i Maragall, after some opportune changes – the removal of the medallion featuring his bust, and of the allegorical statue of the Republic – was converted into a monument to Franco’s victory). On 7th May the Ateneu Barcelonès reopened after the purging of filing cabinets and books from its library. On 9th July F.C. Barcelona’s Les Corts ground was opened following a ceremony aimed at exorcising the Catalan nationalist past of the club (its last chairman, Josep Sunyol, was shot by the Nationalists on 6th August 1936 in the Guadarrama mountains, near the town of the same name) and its followers.

At the same time, the military parades, signs, monuments and public acts of the victors and the Church that had blessed the ‘Crusade’, spread and multiplied everywhere, deepening the sense of oppression and of military occupation. Particularly significant events were: the open-air mass in the *Plaça de Catalunya* in Barcelona (29th January); the parade of Nationalist troops along the *Diagonal* with Franco presiding over the event (21st February); the inauguration of the inscription in honour of José Antonio Primo de Rivera on the side of the façade of Barcelona Cathedral (the inscription, in huge letters, comprised the Falangist symbol of the yoke and arrows and the words ‘José Antonio Primo de Rivera and others fallen for God and for Spain’, and up until a few years ago you could still see part of the inscription and guess at the rest); mass acts of confirmation and celebration of the Eucharist in various places throughout Catalonia, always accompanied by Fascist salutes and the inevitable chants of long live Spain and Franco.

The machinery and institutions of the new regime began, then, to act quickly to erase any visible sign of the recent past and, above all, to bring the full weight of victory crashing down upon the vanquished. Repression would become key in achieving this objective.

Firstly, the Republican prisoners of war had to be dealt with. Between 24th December 1938 and 16th February 1939, the final offensive on Catalonia had left more than 108,000 prisoners, according to a report published in Burgos on 24th February. The prisoners were taken to concentration camps. The most wretched thing was the hunger. According to Trinitario Rubio Cuevas (b. Useres, Castelló, 1920), ‘I’ve never been as hungry as I was there. They gave you a dozen beans or lentils, and the rest was water’. And the beatings: ‘they even killed a few with truncheon blows’, and the punishment and mistreatment. ‘We had no plates, six of us ate with just one spoon’, ‘we slept in cells that must have been three by two metres, like a tin of sardines. There might have been thirteen of us to a cell’. In Valencia, *sacas* were frequent – the process whereby prisoners were ‘transferred’ and never seen again. ‘Fourteen or fifteen were taken out every day’.³

Secondly, there was the political repression of Republican leaders and activists, political and trade union leaders, intellectuals, teachers and professionals, workers who had declared themselves to be politically active, and presidents of bodies and associations. By the end of January 1939 the Catalan War Commission was formed and began its work immediately. The first proceedings were not long in coming. The first death sentence was for Eduardo Barriobero, the controversial lawyer of the CNT trade union.⁴ He was arrested on 1st February, tried on the 8th and shot at the Camp de la Bota on the 14th. From the start of the court martial to the execution only six days went by. It was the beginning of a repressive fury that, according to Solé i Sabaté’s study,⁵ in the course of 1939 would claim a total of 2,077 lives in Catalonia (165 in Lleida, 455 in Tarragona, 1,087 in Barcelona and 370 in Girona). 1939 saw nearly two thirds (65%) of the total executions for the period 1939–43. The process was well established: a court martial with no guarantees which, over a few hours or days, tried a group of people, not even necessarily for the same crimes in the same place, and sentence was passed based on what were often anonymous declarations and accusations, and reports from the Civil Guard, the Falange and the parish of the place with which the defendants were associated. Once sentence had been passed, if

³ See statements collected in Queralt Solé i Barjau, *A les presons de Franco*, Barcelona: Proa, 2004.

⁴ According to Federico Vázquez (in *La rebel·lió dels tribunals: l’administració de justícia a Catalunya, 1931-1953: la judicatura i el ministeri fiscal*, Catarroja-Barcelona: Afers, 2005), in September 1937 the Republican courts had charged Eduardo Barriobero ‘with possessing monies and jewellery in a foreign bank, and these may derive from the requisitions and inspections carried out when he was head of the revolutionary court’.

⁵ Josep M. Solé i Sabaté, *La repressió franquista a Catalunya*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2003 (1985).

it was a death sentence the dictator's agreement had to be gained for the execution to take place, which normally happened in a very short space of time.

The most fortunate received prison sentences, but the sheer volume of prisoners meant that new prisons had to be improvised. Living conditions in the prisons were another form of repression that, in many cases, ended in death, and so proved to be a slow and indirect execution. The Model prison in Barcelona, which was built to house 820 inmates, had accumulated by 1939 between 12,000 and 15,000 prisoners. And living conditions can be summarised in a few short words, 'overcrowding, hunger, misery, disease and death, extremely long sentences and dawn executions, disciplinary control and punishment'. And punishment. Pere Carbonell i Fita bore testimony to the Cànem prison, 'a kind of malignant tumour that had sprung up at the heart of the Poble Nou [...]. Since the Francoist authorities, given the repression, did not know what to do with the considerable number of prisoners, they improvised a prison in *El Cànem*, the old disused factory owned by the Godós, the family that owned *La Vanguardia* [...]. They stuck us in a couple of warehouses where, at night, we had to lie down on the ground, on the fourteen-inch-wide space we were given. That compact multitude, stretched over the floor of the warehouse, offered up an exhibition of Dantesque proportions'.⁶ However, for the majority of witnesses, the harshest of living conditions in the prisons (hunger, punishment, overcrowding etc) were not the worst thing. The worst thing was the anguish of those condemned to death; it was listening to the splutter of the motorbike of the civil servant carrying the list of those who would be shot at dawn; the amusement of the guards when they read slowly or made mistakes on purpose with the list of those who would not live to see tomorrow; and, finally, when the fateful time came, the *sacas*.

Repression was felt at all levels of everyday life, because the aim was to establish a 'New Plan' regime to annihilate any vestige of a Republican and independent past and to block any possibility of resistance. That is why as well as suppressing Republican institutions and Catalonia's self-governance, they banned, just as has been shown, the use of the language and any expression of Catalan culture. They began a process of cleansing that affected all areas of administration, the Law of Political Responsibility was passed and enforced, the Commission for Industrial and Mercantile Incorporation Number 2 (CIIM-2) was created, and the work of the State Delegation for the Recuperation of Documents (DERD) continued.

⁶ Pere Carbonell i Fita, *Tres Nadals empresonats (1939-1943)*, Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1999.

One of the main tools of repression was the cleansing of civil servants in Catalonia, in the areas that included State level, local administration, the judiciary and education. This cleansing meant going through an inquisitorial process where you had to prove you had never had Republican tendencies, that you accepted all the consequences of the new Fascist legal framework and, if such a thing is possible, that you had supported the rebellion since it first saw the light of day on 18th July 1936. The Catalan primary school system was cleansed of around 30–40% of its teachers; the same or perhaps more in secondary education; whilst in the case of the University of Barcelona, Jaume Claret found ‘written proof of sanctions against 135 academics: 71 in Medicine, 41 in Philosophy, Letters and Education, 11 in Law, 9 in Science and 3 in Pharmacy [...]. As for professors, 27% received some kind of sanctions [...], whereas 65% were reinstated and 8% died in the war’.⁷ However, amongst the younger non-permanent staff, the rates were much higher. In short, what with sanctions, war dead, exiles and the phobia of culture that characterised Fascism, the University of Barcelona had become a wasteland where only three or four academics stood out. In the case of local government, according to data from Solé i Sabaté,⁸ the percentage of civil servants in Barcelona City Council who were sanctioned via the cleansing process was 69.5%; in Lleida it was 59.4%; in Tarragona, 63.5%; and in Girona, 16.3%. Finally, the Bar in Barcelona suspended 58 of its members and publicly reprehended 36.

By way of contrast, as demonstrated by Federico Vázquez Osuna,⁹ the ‘cleansing process aimed at the judiciary in March 1936, despite sanctioning a higher percentage of people than the national average, cannot be considered excessively harsh when compared to other public workers’. It is not strange if we remind ourselves that some of the most important leaders of the Fifth Column had their offices in the High Court and carried on with their profession throughout the war.

The Law of Political Responsibility came into force on 14th February 1939 and was not fully repealed until 13th April 1945. As Àngel Garcia i Fontanet points out, ‘political responsibility was a new concept in the legal field, based on the demand for economic compensation for damage caused and the need to anticipate any damage that might be caused in the future bearing in mind one’s political

⁷ Jaume Claret Miranda, *La repressió franquista a la Universitat Catalana*, Vic-Barcelona: Eumo Editorial – Institut Universitari d’Història Jaume Vicens Vives, 2003.

⁸ Solé i Sabaté, 2003.

⁹ Vázquez, 2005.

record'.¹⁰ The law considered as subject to political responsibility all Republican politicians and intellectuals, all presenters and writers from 'red' radio stations and newspapers, those who had delayed their entry into the Glorious National Movement, even those who had fled Republican-held areas and lived in exile until the end of the war. The law punished ideas, it was retroactive in its application to acts committed from 1st October 1934 (including the Catalan and Asturian uprisings of October 1934), it dealt out political responsibility to those who were dead or had been executed, to those who were missing or had vanished, to children and to legal entities.

The CIIM-2 (Commission for Industrial and Mercantile Incorporation Number 2) was created with the aim of kick-starting Catalan businesses and the region's economy after the war. It was chaired until September 1939 by José María Milá y Camps, the Count of Montseny – who also chaired the first *Diputació* (a form of local administration) – and, from then until its dissolution in January 1941 by the army Major and businessman Santiago Gotor y Aisa. The CIIM-2 helped to reorganise economic activity in Catalonia, but it was also often a way to get hold of the property of the vanquished, to settle personal scores, to distribute the spoils of war and to drive forward the regime's new economic policy (State interventionism and autarky, which favoured the black market and smuggling).¹¹

The DERD (State Delegation for the Recuperation of Documents) was created in April 1938 and got to work in Catalonia as Franco's troops occupied the region. Once the war was over, it carried on with its task of 'unifying the collection, custody and classification of all documentation from the archives of administrations, entities and people "hostile and unsympathetic to the National Movement [...] and who are liable to provide the State with information about the activities of its enemies"'.¹² The DERD's actions comprised the main pillar of repression, because the documentation that it collected was the indispensable complement to accusations in order to prove the 'crimes' of Republicans, to justify the rebellion that provoked the

¹⁰ Àngel Garcia i Fontanet, 'Un aspecte de la repressió franquista de la postguerra: la Ley de Responsabilidades Políticas', in Manel Risques Corbella, Francesc Vilanova Vila-Abadala and Ricard Vinyes (eds), *Les ruptures de l'any 1939*, Barcelona: Fundació Carles Pi i Sunyer – Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2000.

¹¹ See Rafael Aracil i Martí, Antoni Segura, Jordi Oliva i Llorens and Maria Pont i Estradera, *Empresaris de la postguerra. La Comisión de Incorporación Industrial y Mercantil n° 2, 1938-1942*, Barcelona: Cambra Oficial de Comerç, Indústria i Navegació de Barcelona, 1999.

¹² See Josep Cruanyes: *Els papers de Salamanca*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2003.

war and to legitimate repression. Between March and July 1939, the DERD made somewhere around 2,000 inspections and brought together documentation, books and other material from at least 118 Catalan towns and cities: a veritable treasure trove of documents that left an indelible trail of blood when used to carry out the victors' repression. This material now forms part of the so-called 'Salamanca papers'.

And, beyond repression, exile, French concentration camps and, as Joan Oliver (also known as 'Pere Quart') wrote, the 'defeated hope'. The number of people who crossed the border was nearly half a million, because, according to Javier Rubio, at the beginning of March 1939 there were 440,000 refugees in France, of whom half were civilians (170,000 women, children and elderly people; 40,000 able-bodied civilian men; 10,000 wounded) and the other half were soldiers. In mid-February 1939, 275,000 refugees filled the French concentration camps in Roussillon, Vallespir and the Cerdagne.¹⁴

On top of defeat, on top of the 'defeated hope'¹³ and 'unending sorrow' of the poet and all those forced to take the path of exile, on top of all that was added, from the very start, the almost hostile reaction of the French authorities, the pitiful conditions of the refugees' survival, social inequalities and the misery of the Republicans' internal divisions. For Catalonia it was the exodus of the country's political and cultural expression. With defeat the Catalans not only lost their institutions and their freedom, but also a whole generation of men and women who made up the cream of the cultural, associative and political life of Republican and autonomous Catalonia. The population was orphaned of its best leaders, and its recovery would only be possible through those who sacrificed themselves and those – initially few in number – who put up a fight and risked their lives and, for the lucky ones at that early time, their freedom to combat the dictatorship.

Resistance in that Year 0 that was 1939 was the fight to survive, not to fall down, overwhelmed by the weight of repression, to take something to eat to your relatives in jail who could have died of hunger, to obtain official permits to find work or to get someone out of prison, to bribe prison officials in order to avoid punishments or improve the living conditions of imprisoned friends. Victor Alba described it well enough: 'People, however, did not die of hunger, because their families brought them packages. One way or another, families managed to bring us something and, if they had to, women would even turn to prostitution'.¹⁵ Resisting was simply surviving

¹³ Joan Oliver – 'Pere Quart': 'Corrandes d'exili'.

¹⁴ See Joan Villarroya i Font: *Desterrats. L'exili català de 1939*, 2nd ed., Barcelona: Editorial Base, 2002.

in the most adverse conditions imaginable. Resisting was rebuilding what little was left of Republican organisations in order to get help to prisoners, to the families of those who suffered reprisals, to get hold of information about the courts martial. Resisting was hiding in the basement of any-old warehouse in *Sants* or *Poble Nou* to get a few clandestine copies of a magazine or Republican newspaper out, or risking your life to sneak over the border to get them into France. And all to keep the flame of resistance alive, a resistance that was barely noticed, even though new unitary organisations surfaced, like the Union of Antifascist Youth (UJA), which, according to Queralt Solé, ‘was one of the first resistance movements in Catalonia when the war was not yet over. It began to get organised just after Franco’s troops entered Barcelona (26th January) and eventually had 21 very young members. They printed antifascist pamphlets and planned acts of sabotage that they never managed to carry out. On 30th May arrests began and the 21 members were accused of a military rebellion’. The result was five death sentences (only one was carried out) and long prison sentences.¹⁶

But, the reality is that the defeat and repression were of such magnitude that they almost totally annihilated any possibility of resistance in those early moments. Nor did the disputes between Republican organisations help to overcome those terrible times.

And, nevertheless, people did their best to resist. From the very first, there were the heroic responses of people who wanted to get organised; who wanted to stand up to the dictatorship (remember the creation of the Catalan National Front just after the end of the war and how some of its members crossed the border again to initiate acts against the dictatorship whilst in hiding). There were people who resisted and would not renounce their language and culture and who, like Carme Serrallonga, decided to stay – risking their lives – and dedicate themselves to teaching and continue – in an impossible situation – with the experience of the Republican Generalitat’s *Institut-Escola*, a combined primary and secondary public education institution, and the teaching of Catalan the very day after the occupation began. There were writers – like Maria Aurèlia Capmany – who had to stow their writings away, keep their novels in a drawer, because they stubbornly refused to write in the language of the Empire; union activists who struggled to get friends out of prison or commit acts of sabotage; walking, anonymous people, who kept Catalan alive at home and, against the tide, even in the street; and, even this, priests who disobeyed episcopal orders and carried on delivering their sermons in Catalan. There were many of them,

¹⁵ Quoted in Solé i Barjau, 2004.

¹⁶ Solé i Barjau, 2004.

masses of silent and anonymous members of the resistance who, as the poet Salvador Espriu would write later:¹⁷

Però hem viscut per salvar-vos els mots,
per retornar-vos el nom de cada cosa,
perquè seguíssiu el recte camí
d'accés al ple domini de la terra.

But we have lived to save the words for you
To give back the name of everything to you
So you might follow the straight path
To full authority over the land.

But it was terrible, because the bulk of the repression annihilated the ability to resist of one important group: the political and trade-unionist pillars of Republican and autonomous Catalonia. It decimated the activists of Republican and workers' organisations. The 1939 executions (and those of 1938 in the areas of Lleida that had been occupied since the Spring) especially butchered Republican and libertarian activists. So, 42.5% of those executed were from the Catalan Republican Left (ERC); and 37.5% from the anarchist trade union the CNT (in some cases they were also affiliated to the anarchist FAI or the Libertarian Youth). All in all, then, ERC and the CNT bore 80% of the victims in the year when repression was at its most harsh (65% of the victims of repression between 1938 and 1943 correspond to 1939). Then we find Marxist left-wing parties: the POUM with 5.5% of those executed and the PSUC with 5.3%; the *Unió de Rabassaires*, an agricultural workers' party, with 5.1%; the UGT trade union with 2.6% and Catalan State with 1.2%. The rest of the political and trade union organisations (Catalan Action, Agrarian Social Action, Federal Party, Radical Party, Spanish communists (PCE), Spanish socialists (PSOE), Catalan Socialist Union – whose activists had on the whole joined the PSUC –, Catalanist Union, Banyoles Agricultural Union, etc) bore 1.8% of the victims of repression.

The press were in charge of desensitising people's consciousness before the scope of repression, publishing stories daily of SIM prisoners, which told of how cruel the interrogations were, reports on the Stalinist police in Republican Barcelona and the floating prison *Uruguai*, the story of the 295 prisoners freed from Montjuïc (called 'the Montjuïc resurrected') and other Barcelona prisons and the list of the 46 men shot dead in the castle just before Republican troops retreated from Barcelona, degrading reports on the real or imaginary crimes committed by the Republicans, and so on. The official Catalonia, the victors' Catalonia, was thus able to forget the unease of the firing squads at the break of dawn that was so well remembered in the

¹⁷ Salvador Espriu, 'Inici de càntic al temple'.

dawn songs (*albadés*) of the summer of 1936. But, now, they were not uncontrolled, this was not wartime. No, now there was no war and this was repression practised by a totalitarian and bloodthirsty regime that tried to make people believe that it was acting lawfully. Now, there was simply no future nor any hope for the vanquished. That Year 0, two antagonistic countries were born.

On the one hand, the official Catalonia, the victors' Catalonia, the Catalonia of military parades, the Catalonia of mystic sublimation and the pompousness of religious ceremonies, of concerts in the Liceu, of *La Rosaleda*, *El Cortijo*, the *Rigat* and *Parrilla del Ritz* of the forties, of lectures in the Ateneu Barcelonès, chaired by the Lieutenant General Ignacio Despujol, and in the University of Barcelona. It was also the Catalonia of the second period of *Destino*, the Catalan Falangist periodical started in Burgos in 1937 and published in Barcelona by Josep Oliver, Ignasi Agustí and Joan Ramon Masoliver since June 1939. The same *Destino* that would soon sign up Josep Pla, who published his first article there on 30th September 1939, and, later, Eugeni D'Ors (1941) and Nèstor Luján (1943), then beginning a liberal drift that, years later, would lead the weekly to take critical positions against the dictatorship. Others, however, like Alberto Oliart, understood much earlier the price of victory: 'That was when I began to understand, to be aware that the peace of that April's day in 1939 that we had celebrated with such jubilation and hope, was not the peace that for one moment we had believed in, a peace that would end not only the war, but also fratricidal hatred. The armed struggle had ended, but the war continued; now, by implacably persecuting the enemy, and the enemy was whoever the victors defined as such, in every situation, in every case'.¹⁸

On the other hand, there was the Catalonia of the vanquished, which sometimes leaked out, for a few brief moments, onto the pages of the newspapers. So, on 30th January 1939, *La Vanguardia* wrote that '*Auxilio Social*' – 'Social Aid' – had handed out over three days 60,000 hot meals, 150,000 cold meals and 350,000 portions of bread. And the hunger had only just begun, because the most terrible days of hunger and misery were still to come. They would do so a few months later and would last an entire decade.

It was, then, total defeat; Year 0 of the country and its people. It was the total and absolute annihilation of freedom, of hope, of history, of life and the future. The institutional, systematic and implacable repression no longer had the justification of the war and its horrors. The war had ended with the rebels' victory. It was a repression made in times of peace, of irrevocable victory, destined to reap the lives of the vanquished, but

¹⁸ Alberto Oliart, *Contra el olvido*, Barcelona: Tusquets, 1998.

also to tear out of people's memories any wisp of remembrance, of resistance, of struggle, of hope and future. It was a repression that also caused countless deaths. They are the deaths caused by the living conditions in prisons, by hunger, misery, the lack of work and the return of diseases that had been wiped out more than a decade earlier. They are the silent dead of a day to day existence stained with despair and fear. They are the living dead, the dead of an internal exile, of a graveyard peace that would last nearly four decades. No, the hypocritical lie is no good, the lie they tried to justify during the Transition and that you hear so often: we should forget because there were excesses on both sides. No, on the contrary, we must remember, because the scope of Francoist repression in peacetime has no possible comparison, not even with the other European Fascisms from before the Second World War.

And I would like to end with a reflection that is linked to the present. With the Transition that began with the 1977 elections, the 1978 Constitution, the Catalan Statute of 1979 and the first elections to the Catalan Parliament in 1980, some people, naively, thought that the war had not been lost, that wars are not lost and that, after two or three generations, once the darkest of dictatorships was overcome, everything could begin afresh. No, let's not fool ourselves. Wars, when lost, are lost forever. We lose the life of the people murdered, the contributions of the generations who had to live in exile; and we also lose the hopes and dreams of those who suffered a long and painful internal exile. There is a void that can never be filled. And the message of the victors is imposed, even subtly on to the minds and political attitudes of the democrats who have survived the long night of the dictatorship. The process of nation building is smashed and what was normal, unquestionable and reasonable stops being so and beneath the long shadow of the Constitution – the representation of the collective rights of the Spanish, which denies the collective rights of the other Iberian peoples – we arrive at such irrational behaviour as denying the unity of the Catalan language and our common cultural heritage. Rights already won in the past are denied, and claims that were accepted in Republican times are now passed off as anachronistic. Look no further than what is now happening with the text of the new Statute presented to the Parliament in Madrid on 2nd November 2005. Let's have the dignity, then, at least, to repay the debt we owe the victims of repression. Let's save them from oblivion and silence: an intentional and collusive silence, thirty years after the dictator's death. Note, however, that even that is up for debate nowadays as, calling on other victims – who might well be innocent as well, but were immediately rescued from oblivion by the victors – there is an attempt to compare victims and executioners.

Translated by Richard Mansell, 2006

