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introduction

On 17 July 1936, Francisco Franco and a group of generals launched their coup d'etat in Morocco against the republican government. What they expected to be a quick takeover evolved into a bloody civil war as the divided Spanish people fought for their ideals. After three years of fighting, Franco declared victory in Spain on 1 April 1939. On the first anniversary of his victory, he broke ground on El Valle de los Caídos (The Valley of the Fallen). The Valley was to be his monument to honor, reputedly, both Republican and Nationalist fallen soldiers of the Guerra Civil (Civil War). Franco foresaw this monument as the grand legacy of his regime, as well as his own glorified burial place. The next thirty-five years of his regime marked a time of repression and censorship in Spain, with the state-controlled media imposing a common memory of the war and Franco around which the people were supposed to rally. Years before the dictator's death, however, cracks were starting to emerge in this plan, as many dared to ask what would come of Spain once Franco was gone.

The period after Franco's death on 20 November 1975 has come to be known as the "Transition," since it marks Spain's remarkably peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy. Despite the many political changes that occurred, including an end to official censorship, the new regime imposed an unofficial silence concerning any past transgressions by the former government. The new leaders had many reasons to pursue this path, but its impact on the formation of historical memory in modern Spain must be recognized. Evoking fears of
another civil war, this state silence denied the Spanish people the opportunity to openly debate their repressive past.

When I first began researching the issue of historical memory, I took fault with the state’s decision to move on in 1976 through the institution of a general amnesia and amnesty towards the past. Through the research and writing process, I came to better understand as a historian the need to approach history and historical memory not as faults committed or should-haves, but rather the reasons why actions were taken or not taken. This change in understanding especially has affected my interpretations of events after “20-N,” 1975, the date of Franco’s death colloquially expressed. For the most part, Spain’s leaders acted in what they thought was the best interest for the future of the country based on the information they had at the time. No matter how various factions in Spain interpret that decision today, my purpose is solely to analyze why they made the decisions they made and how the state in this period affected historical memory. Only in the past two decades have the Spanish people more openly begun to question the actions of the state, and the process of remembering has caused a monumental shift within the country, as the state has taken proactive steps in recognizing the many different ways its people remember the past.

In 2007, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s Socialist government passed the “Law of Historical Memory.” The law represented the first clear step by the Spanish government to reconcile its democratic present with its anti-democratic past. The law’s somewhat radical title suggested that Spain would be one of the first countries to address the issue of historical memory in a legislative context. However, in practice, the law was relatively conservative in nature. It addressed mostly family and individual concerns, such as reparations for families of political prisoners and citizenship for children of exiles, and fell far short of a “truth and reconciliation
process," like that undertaken in South Africa after apartheid. Although 2007 marked a turning point in the discussion on twentieth century historical memory in Spain, the topic of historical memory, in Spain and in the study of history as a whole, began long before this law’s passage. Many factors were at play in this progression, from the formal role of the state to the more informal role played by journalists, novelists, and historians.

Anthropologist Paul A. Shackel’s interpretations of the formation of historical memory will provide a framework through which to analyze the creation of historical memory in Spain. Shackel’s anthropological research on American historical memory and monuments can translate effectively into a study of a Spanish monument. Shackel asserts that public memory is a power struggle of different factions that relies on present conditions more than past occurrences: “Public memory is more a reflection of present political and social relations than a true reconstruction of the past...The control of a group’s memory is often a question of power. Individuals and groups often struggle over the meaning of memory as the official memory is imposed by the power elite.” Shackel’s analysis accurately reflects the state of historical memory in Spain about the remembrance of the Civil War and the Franco period, and specifically that of El Valle de los Caidos. Commissioned by Franco as a way for Spain to remember his legacy, the Valley has slowly evolved due to the influences of many groups. Some have tried to maintain Franco’s original pursuit, while others have attempted to change the memory of the monument and its view by the public. Various sectors of the Spanish public shaped the monument’s history and at the same time influenced historical memory over time.

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3 Ibid., 656.
Historiography

This work will engage four different bodies of literature: that of Franco and his regime, the history of the Transition from dictatorship to democracy, the debate over historical memory in Spain, and the broader topic of historical memory as a whole. Rather than disagree outright with most works, it will instead build upon research and analysis already completed to demonstrate how, despite years of memory dominance by the state, the people at the grassroots level over time have taken control of the remembrance of Franco’s regime. After many years hidden below the surface, the power struggle for control of collective memory has gone public and the people have become just as important players as the state.

I will build upon the work of these scholars, but rather than try to find some unknown aspect of the dictator’s life, I will use the works completed about Franco to analyze what memory he was trying to create, what legacy he was trying to leave, and how he attempted complete his vision. Through analysis of his life’s details provided by his biographers and his own words, the state tried to impose its own carefully constructed memory about the greatness of the regime and its role as savior of the Spanish people. In addition to state-controlled media and other propaganda methods, the most important way Franco attempted to manipulate memory was through the construction of the Valley.

The first body of research this thesis engages is that on Franco and his regime. The majority of the work concerns biographies of Franco’s life as well as military analyses of the civil war.\(^4\) Since a large number of documents from the regime have yet to be declassified, most

primary sources from this time period are personal conversations with Franco, the regime’s public discourses, or newspaper articles and state documentaries. Included in this research, though fairly atypical for the time period, is Daniel Sueiro’s work focusing on El Valle de los Caídos. Rather than rely on official histories of the monument, like that by Diego Méndez, Sueiro takes his own oral histories about the monument and its formation. Sueiro’s work is vital for examining how the people began to perceive its construction and meaning, while Franco’s own words will show the contrast between the memory he tried to create and its effect on the population. Yet this thesis goes beyond Sueiro’s work in that it will connect the Valley to the growing debate on historical memory. It will compare Franco’s rhetoric about the Valley to the official memory he actually constructed for the Spanish people and to what extent this memory was maintained over time.

The second body of research this paper will engage is that of the Transition in Spain. Currently, the focus for most researchers is on the political aspects of the shift from dictatorship to democracy, especially analyzing the role of the new and old political parties; or how the Spanish government achieved such a feat without a military coup or a Communist takeover. This thesis will take a different approach to the literature. It will not look at how democracy developed, but at how the decisions made by the new democratic state affected the formation of

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5 Daniel Sueiro, El Valle de los Caídos (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2006).
historical memory for years to come. Most importantly, it will analyze how the state decision to impose official amnesia about the past profoundly impacted Spain's present, creating the "two Spains" that exist today. One Spain is primarily composed of the wealthier, older generation that believes forgetting is the only way for Spain to stay united and move on. The other Spain includes the younger generation that believes that this sense of unity is false, and the only way for Spain to progress is by addressing its repressive past. This chapter will show that though the former started as the louder voice in the process, the latter evolved over time into the leader in the memory debate.

The third body of research that will be addressed is that of the study of specifically Spanish historical memory. Despite the fact that this body of research is relatively new to the study of Spanish history, in the past two decades a number of formative articles on the subject have been written. However, while many of these articles address the creation of memory in history since the Transition, they do not go back in historical analysis much farther than 1975, which does not let them understand why the leaders of the Transition made the decisions they did. Alternatively, Paloma Aguilar's book Memory and Amnesia examines Spanish memory from the beginning of the Franco regime through the adoption of the constitution in 1978. This thesis will attempt to integrate these two dissonant bodies of work together by offering a broader analysis that will look at all the themes of historical memory since Franco's rise to power in 1939 to today. Additionally, this thesis will look at how newspaper articles, especially those found in El País, have become a very popular method for the people to discuss historical memory. Newspapers like El País offer a way for the common people, and not just the

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politicians, to join in the debate over the formation of historical memory, especially through the use of their online forums. Although the general struggle among factions to define memory has not changed, this thesis will show that more players are joining the game and that the new media has given a voice to previously silenced groups.

The final body of research this thesis will address is that of the study of historical memory as a whole, especially in relation to the study of memory and monuments. Collective memory was first defined by Maurice Holbwachs in 1925 in his formative work, Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire. The study of historical memory has progressed since this date, and currently is exemplified by the study of memory and the Holocaust, as this topic comprises most of the research in the field. Two other significant areas for the study of historical memory are the American Civil War and Apartheid in South Africa, two areas with considerable conflict that both struggled to reconcile their pasts.

Unfortunately, little of this research has extended to Spain. However, this thesis will argue that many common themes emerge even among continents and countries, such as the common power struggle for the creation of memory. This thesis will also show that the dominated versus dominant lieux de mémoire theory, as expressed by Pierre Nora in his groundbreaking research on memory and monuments, can apply to other communities and

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cultures than just postwar France. In addition to showing similarities in the study of historical memory among communities, Spain has many unique features which will make this thesis a valuable addition to the current body of historical memory research. Even after a nearly forty-year-long repressive regime, Franco remains a venerated figure for large parts of Spain, represented by the Valley’s continued stance as a place of homage to the man. This thesis will explain why Spaniards, unlike Russians, did not topple statues of Franco after democracy, but instead kept them in places of prominence until the twenty-first century.

Chapter Organization

The thesis has three chapters. The first chapter looks at Franco’s victory and the beginning of his regime. Most importantly, it will show the active steps that the regime and especially the dictator himself took in an effort to create a carefully tailored legacy for the future, using various propaganda techniques and through the building of El Valle. The first chapter will also describe the initial steps taken by Spanish civilians to challenge the prescribed memory. Shackel argues that “people experience and remember or forget collectively, and they figure out how to interpret these experiences. They develop a collective memory by molding, shaping, and agreeing upon what to remember, although this process may not be always consciously planned.” The process of collective memory evolved along these lines in twentieth century Spain; as individual groups fought to have their unique voices heard, a collective remembrance about Franco’s role has developed. Although very little public discussion of the meaning of the regime took place while Franco was still in power, private recollections written in diaries and

13 Ibid., 655.
collected in interviews published after Franco’s death show certain sections of the public already trying to reconcile their own recollections and interpretations with that of the “official memory” or what the state sought to create.

The second chapter discusses the Transition between 1975 and 1978 from dictatorship to democracy, as well as the time period afterwards when the country struggled to define itself internally and externally. It will focus on the succession crisis that occurred after Franco’s death on 20 November 1975, though the uncertainty started much earlier, as the country which had known no other leader than Franco for the previous forty years struggled to create a legitimate democratic government. Part of this struggle included a desire to define its national identity on the world stage and especially in the new Europe. The chapter will look at the final years of the Franco regime as Franco’s health deteriorated and questions about the future consumed the public, as demonstrated by the newspaper headlines and editorials of the day. Afraid that open debate would lead to another civil war, the new state government decided to change the previous role of the state and purposefully stay silent on issues of the country’s past divisions and transgressions. This chapter will analyze the effect this silence had on the Spanish public and how new voices emerged to fill this silence, such as authors of historical works and the popular media. It will also look at the decision to forget and what factors were at play in the state’s decision. It will argue that the state’s silence allowed the official Franquist legacy to continue past his death.

During the Transition, the new leaders tried to impose a collective amnesia on the people. In his work on American memory after the Civil War, Shackley shows how collective forgetting is a “well-documented [phenomenon].”14 He describes in detail the collective decision of the people of Harper’s Ferry to forget a significant part of the town’s past: “I think it is not an

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14 Ibid., 656.
accident that Harpers Ferrians, mostly merchants and working-class families, ignored much of the town's Victorian industrial history... While the town had industrial success [in this period], people chose to forget their exploitation as well as their relatives." In this case, an entire town chose to forget a key part of its past. In a similar fashion, Spain's leaders decided that an entire country should forget part of its history.

The third chapter looks at the last two decades of Spanish history, up to the present day. Only after the official silence began to break, through the work of journalists, historians, novelists, and other artists, did the Spanish people gain a voice they did not have before, giving them a chance to finally actively shape the way Franco is remembered. The third chapter will show how various groups started to call into question the decision to forget and how, this time, the state followed the people's lead rather than the other way around. Like what Shackley observed in the US after the American Civil War, this time period in Spain exemplifies the "struggle to create or subvert a past [that] often develops between competing interest groups." The chapter will show how the younger generation's demand for answers propelled the discussion of memory forward in public life, while many in the older generation still fought for the amnesia adopted at the time of the Transition. It will show how the voices of a minority faction eventually became loud enough to effect a change as great as that of the Historical Memory Law. Although not revolutionary by any means, the law represents a new period in Spanish history in which the people’s voices are loud enough to affect the state’s actions.

While Spain’s history has many exceptional elements, the never-ending struggle to create a collective memory represents a common occurrence within nations and states that have experienced a significant trauma, such as a dictatorship or a civil war. In order for a state to

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15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
reconcile its past with its present, many different voices will emerge and attempt to impose their own understanding of the past onto others, like many individual men in a crowd trying to make their voices heard. Reconciled with the present political situation, this internal struggle creates historical memory.
On 17 July 1936, General Francisco Franco and his fellow conservative military leaders began their revolt in Morocco against the Spanish Republican government. The next day, with Italian aid, they transferred their revolt to the mainland. That night of 18 July, Franco declared that “Spain has been saved,” believing he had swiftly achieved his coup d’état with the support of the Spanish public. However, the same public that had voted the Frente Popular into office, a coalition of leftist and center parties, just months earlier rallied around the Republic. Rather than a quick takeover of power, Franco’s revolt launched Spain into a long and bloody civil war that would tear apart its cities and divide its people over the next three years.

While some authors have described the war as merely a series of separate battles divided by ideologies and geography, at its most basic form, the Spanish Civil War was a war between two opposite belief systems: that of the conservative Nationalists and that of the liberal Republicans. Most of the Republicans were fighting to save Spain’s “Second Republic” that came into power only five years earlier, though the Communists’ influence expanded as the war continued, due in part to Soviet support. The Nationalists’ objectives cannot be easily simplified—they could not even agree amongst themselves if they wanted a return to monarchy, a dictator, or some other form of government—but they were unified in their extreme distrust of the newly founded republic. On 1 April 1939, after three years of tragedy, the bloody war finally

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came to a close. While the Nationalists claimed victory for their Cruzada (Crusade), their Generalísimo (supreme general) Francisco Franco emerged as not only their military head, but also as their political leader. Spain would have its Caudillo for the next thirty-six years.

On the anniversary of his day of victory, 1 April 1940, Franco pledged to build a monument “to perpetuate the memory of those who fell in our glorious Cruzada.” According to Diego Méndez, the architect of the monument that came to be known as “El Valle de los Caídos,” Franco obsessed over the idea in his desire to create a landmark that would connect two epic periods of history, that of Spain’s golden age and the current reign. For Franco, the Valley would be more than a memorial for the fallen, but a lasting legacy of his reign for future generations to revere. The near twenty-year construction of El Valle de los Caídos from 1940 to 1959 is an example of how Franco attempted to manipulate the way the Spanish people would remember him for centuries to come. This chapter shows Franco’s vision for future generations’ memory of him and his regime, as well as how this dream began to shatter even before his death, most notably in the 1960s through the growing resistance and succession crisis. Although the state, represented by Franco in this period, played an important role in the constant struggle in the evolution of historical memory, over time, the informal resistance mounted by journalists, novelists, and historians affected the memory’s formation just as much, if not more so, than the leaders of the state.

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Franco’s Ideological Motives

Little debate exists among historians today about Franco’s vision for the Valley. For the most part, they agree that El Caudillo sought to connect his regime to that of Spain’s past kings and queens of its golden age (*El Siglo de Oro*). This desire is demonstrated most obviously by the construction of the Valley in Cuelgamuros, just a few miles away from El Escorial, the regal monastery and palace built by King Philip II in the late sixteenth century to commemorate Spain’s victory in the Battle of San Quintín. One of Franco’s cousins and his secretary, General Franco Salgado-Araujo, suggested this very connection, which has since become a thought espoused by many others and no doubt one that Franco intentionally tried to create. Daniel Suiero, author of the definitive work on the construction of the Valley, contends that the Valley for Franco was like his very own pyramid, a “challenge to posterity” to achieve a victory as great as his own. In order to reach this conclusion, Sueiro cites Méndez, the architect of the Valley, as testifying to Franco’s obsession with the construction of a monument. According to Méndez, “since the beginning of the war, Franco felt a moral necessity, we could say almost a physical need,” to build a monument that could ‘honor the dead as much as they honored us [the survivors].’ As the architect of the monument receiving his salary from the regime, Méndez undoubtedly felt the need to paint Franco’s obsession in a flattering manner. Sueiro takes a harsher stance, relating this obsession more to Franco’s personal ego than to a selfless desire to honor the fallen. Many historians support Sueiro’s analysis, including Paul Preston, a renowned historian of the Franco regime.

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5 “Desafío a la posteridad” / Ibid., 23.
6 “Desde el principio de la Guerra, Franco sintió la necesidad moral, podríamos decir que hasta física,’ de levantar un monumento con el que ‘honrar a los muertos cuanto ellos nos honraron.’” / Diego Méndez quoted in Sueiro, *El Valle*, 23.
In his definitive biography of General Franco, Paul Preston states that Franco’s egotism led him to believe that “like the Pharaohs, he could think in terms of a monument on a scale that would defy posterity.” Preston’s phrase “defy posterity” along with Sueiro’s “challenge to posterity” both imply that with the Valley, Franco sought to create his own memory, one of eminent grandeur and awe-inspiring greatness, and then challenged future generations to forget him by building a monument of such magnitude. To accomplish this goal, he oversaw every detail of construction, from imagining the initial plan to serving personally as a supervisor on-site on many occasions.

In order to understand the extent of Franco’s obsession, one must understand the monument that he constructed. The cross above the mausoleum alone is over fifty meters tall, a permanent reminder of Spain’s connection to the Catholic Church. The cross also aptly demonstrates the lie behind Franco’s professed desire to honor the Nationalists and the Republicans, as the Republic was profoundly anti-clerical. In addition to the cross, the marble and stone crypt is filled with religious symbols, from the angels and martyrs (resembling members of the Falange, the Spanish Fascist party) painted on the walls to the gigantic crucifix above the tomb of the founder of the Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera. There are no symbols of reconciliation or statements of peace on the walls, merely phrases like “Fallen for God and for Spain,” referencing both the inherent militarism of the regime as well as its Catholic core. On the outside, the monument features stone gargoyles, perhaps meant to intimidate any visitors or impress upon them the grandeur of this time period. Although the Valley is built just minutes away from El Escorial, its cold and austere exterior frightens rather than impresses.

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9 Méndez, El Valle, 209.
10 Sueiro, El Valle, photos (see insert).
11 “Caidos por Dios y por España”. / Ibid., 268.
Preston devotes a considerable amount of time in his biography to analyzing the reasons behind Franco’s fascination with the Valley. Most notably, Preston finds that the symbolically devastating loss of Spain’s final colonies in the 1898 war with the United States caused Franco to yearn for the military splendor of Spain’s golden age.\textsuperscript{12} Throughout his life, Franco made repeated references to this catastrophic loss; his rhetoric indicates that this loss served at the very least as a partial motive for wanting to reclaim Spain’s grandeur. Gabrielle Ashford Hodges, another Franco biographer, claims that Franco not only wanted immortality when he embarked on the building of his monument, but also feared that he would be forgotten. She compares Franco’s obsession with the Valley to Hitler’s similarly self-serving pursuits, such as spending hours upon hours designing grand monuments in his honor to build after the war:

Like Hitler... Franco immersed himself in drawing up plans for the location, design and building of an enormous mausoleum to Nationalists who had fallen to his cause during the civil war... On the one hand, it helped maintain Franco’s tenuous notions of immortality; on the other, it may have reflected his deep-rooted fear that the people would need a very significant reminder of him after his death.\textsuperscript{13}

Though certainly not the first historian to compare Franco to Hitler, Hodges interestingly compares their personalities instead of their governing styles. Hitler’s mania included an obsession with drawing up plans of self-venerating monuments. Franco seemed to suffer from a similar obsession: the desire to live forever through his monument. Hodges speculates that Franco feared that future generations would forget him if the Franquist regime did not create a grand monument to force the people to remember him. The Valley was Franco’s solution.

Franco’s own public statements seem to confirm Sueiro’s and the other historians’ analyses. In his same statement initiating the construction of the monument, Franco declared that this memorial would be better than “the simple monuments that usually commemorate the fallen

\textsuperscript{12} Preston, \textit{Franco}, 6.
\textsuperscript{13} Gabrielle Ashford Hodges, \textit{Franco} (New York: St. Martin’s, 2000), 166.
in towns and cities.”

Franco insisted that his monument “[would] have the grandeur of the ancient monuments that challenged time and forgetting and [would] consist of a place of meditation and repose for future generations to pay the tribute of admiration to those who left a better Spain.”

These statements support the theories espoused above by Sueiro, Preston, and Hodges. Franco explicitly connects the Valley with monuments from Spain’s past and then dares future generations to forget him and his Cruzada. He would maintain this same vision for Spain throughout his reign, demonstrated again by the following speech to the Falangist Council in 1942. After beginning construction on the Valley, Franco continued to profess his vision for Spain’s future and build up the savior-like image of his regime.

On 8 December 1942, in Madrid, General Franco gave a rousing speech to the Falangist Council, the leaders of the Fascist faction of the one-party state’s “Partido Movimiento Nacional” (National Movement Party). In this speech, translated and printed in the New York Times on 9 December, Franco praises Mussolini and the tenets of Fascism. Yet the most intriguing aspect of this speech is his defensive tone, the apologetic voice straining to create legitimacy for his movement. Franco describes how his men fought for the “preservation of [Spain’s] eternal values,” and how, even if he had not achieved international popularity, he was only doing what was best for Spain:

The people might not be with Spain, but what is inadmissible is that any one should be against Spain. The foundations of our policy were laid in the beginnings of our movement, when our youth prepared itself for fight and engendered a spirit of our crusade that they derived from our soundest traditions of spiritual values and merged them with the social yearnings of our times....

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14 “Los sencillos monumentos con los que suelen conmemorarse en villas y ciudades...” / Franco, “Decreto Fundacional”

15 “...que tengan la grandeza de los monumentos antiguos que desafían al tiempo y al olvido y constituyan lugar de meditación y de reposo en que las generaciones futuras rindan tributo de admiración a los que les legaron una España mejor tiempo.” / Ibid.

Franco seems to beg his listeners (presumably not just the Falangist Council, but also the Allied Powers) to understand his motives solely as what he believes is best for Spain, using religious rhetoric like “crusade” and “spiritual values” to bolster his argument. He declares the death of liberalism and claims fascism is the way of the future. Most important, however, are Franco’s appeals to “national unity.” Franco states that Spain’s destiny and “the preservation of her eternal values” rely on certain sacrifices from the Spanish people, “all for the benefit of national unity—a guarantee of Spain’s future.”

Franco paints any kind of dissension or disagreement with his regime as a threat to national unity and therefore a threat to Spain’s very future. By playing on the fears of a physically and emotionally exhausted country, he can easily suppress any opposition as dangerous to Spain’s stability.

Despite the artful manipulation of fears presented in this speech and the call for national unity, construction of the Valley seems to have lacked any practical purpose as it failed to serve as a unifying force for the country or even a place to mourn the fallen. Considering the financial woes of the country after the war (the Republicans had liquidated all gold reserves), erecting an expensive and overblown monument at this time would only make sense from an ideological perspective. Franco himself acknowledged the financial ruin of the country after the war in a private conversation to General Salgado-Araujo a few days after the inauguration of the finished monument: “At the beginning of our war, I realized that even if we won, we would encounter a Fatherland (Patria) in ruins, with an economy at rock-bottom, without industry, with all destroyed...”

Franco continues with a condemnation of the “Reds” for causing such destruction and asserts that his government actually took large measures to improve the

17 Ibid.
18 “Al iniciarse nuestra guerra, me di cuenta de que aunque la ganáramos iba a encontrar una Patria en ruinas, con su economía por los suelos, sin industrias, con todo destruido...” / Francisco Franco quoted in Lieutenant General Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976), 262.
economy. Yet his imprudent spending on such a large-scale project during an economic crisis demonstrates the overwhelmingly religious (a tribute to his Cruzada) and personally glorifying overtones of the project. Even Franco’s trusted advisor, cousin, and friend General Salgado-Araujo observed in his memoirs in June 1955 that a foundation in honor of the war would have been a better investment in Spain’s future:

I respect what the Generalísimo did when he spent millions of dollars in order to commemorate the Cruzada, but I think it would have been more positive and practical to have made a great foundation in order to convene in it all the sons and daughters of the war victims, without distinction as Reds [Republicans] or Whites [Nationalists]... A foundation that would have the means to sustain itself for many years and to remind the coming generations that we who rebelled for a better Spain are not resentful nor do we want hate and intransigence to separate our children from the same Fatherland (Patria) forever and we wish for Spain the highest grandeur.19

Imagining what could have been is often a futile exercise, but Salgado-Araujo offers a delicate criticism of monies invested in the Valley when he proffers the idea of a foundation dedicated to remembering the war. His emphasis on the need for a more practical commemoration of the fallen proves that Franco’s obsession with Spain’s grandeur was the primary motivation for the construction of the Valley. Moreover, by arguing what a foundation could have done, Salgado-Araujo actually reveals what the Valley failed to achieve; it was seen solely as a monument to Nationalist soldiers and not Republican soldiers. In his memoirs on 30 July 1957, Salgado-Araujo finally reveals his true feelings about the monument:

This work was exclusively inspired by Franco down to the minutest details… In Spain there is no sentiment for this monument, since although fear of another civil war endures, a large percentage of the population tends to forgive and forget. I do not believe that the

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19 “Yo respeto lo que hizo el Generalísimo gastando muchos millones en el Valle de los Caídos para conmemorar la Cruzada, pero considero que hubiera sido más positivo y práctico haber hecho una gran fundación para recoger en ella a todos los hijos de las víctimas de la guerra, sin distinción de blancos o rojos... Una fundación que tuviese medios para ser sostenida durante muchos años y así recordar a las generaciones venideras que los que nos alzamos por una España mejor no somos rancorosos ni queremos que el odio y la intransigencia separen siempre a los que somos hijos de la misma Patria y deseamos para ella la mayor grandeza.” / Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones, 118.
families of the Reds nor the Whites want their relatives to enter the crypt, that if it is only for the Whites it will establish an eternal disunion between the Spanish people.20

Salgado-Araujo recognizes the divisive nature that the Valley will have, accurately predicting its divisive effect on Spanish collective memory for years to come. His thoughts demonstrate that the construction of the Valley emerged only through Franco's personal obsession with linking the greatness of Spain's past with the grandeur of his Nationalist Cruzada. As long as state control of the media and fear of reprisal continued, the state could monopolize the collective memory of their regime and the war through their official memory. As soon as cracks began to form in these repressive measures, however, the struggle for control of historical memory would begin.

Possible Practical Motives

Although Franco's personal obsession with constructing an impractical monument did not necessarily accomplish his goal of national unity, other measures taken by the government did successfully impose Franco's interpretation of the Civil War and his rise to power, at least in the beginning. Historian Paloma Aguilar theorizes that the struggle for legitimization of Franco's new government resulted in the creation of an official memory radically different from the true passage of events.21 This official memory, or dominant memory in the words of Pierre Nora, would take years to completely subvert.22

20 "Esta obra está exclusivamente inspirada por Franco hasta en los más mínimos detalles... En España no hay ambiente para ese monumento, pues aunque dure el miedo a otra Guerra Civil, gran parte de la población tiende a perdonar y a olvidar. No creo que ni los familiares de los blancos ni de los rojos sientan deseos de que sus deudos vayan a la cripta, que si sólo es para los blancos establecerá para siempre una eterna desunión entre los españoles." / Ibid., 215.
21 Aguilar, Memory, 30.
Despite the Nationalists’ undeniable victory in April 1939, a state of chaos continued to reign for some time after. Although the Nationalists originally pursued a policy of imprisoning many of their political detractors, as time went on they needed to develop alternative methods of controlling the population. As the sole source of public information, achieved through state control of the radio, newspapers, and film, the Franquist state to some extent could manipulate “the interpretation of history” by its people, especially in the 1940s and 50s. As the sole source of public information, achieved through state control of the radio, newspapers, and film, the Franquist state to some extent could manipulate “the interpretation of history” by its people, especially in the 1940s and 50s.²³ Although building the Valley was far from the cheapest or best way to assert the Franquist interpretation of the Civil War, it did help to cement the idea of the conflict as a crusade or a religious “war of liberation,” rather than a civil war with two equal sides.²⁴ According to Aguilar, by presenting such a religious monument as a tribute to the Nationalists’ Cruzada (no one, not even Sagrado-Araujo, believed that the Valley was truly a resting place to honor Republicans and Nationalists), Franco effectively erased the defeated Republicans’ identity as Spaniards.²⁵ Franco portrayed his Cruzada and himself as the Savior of Spain and then took many creative means to impose this interpretation as the official memory of the regime.

Further legitimization of the regime was achieved through significant levels of propaganda. Aguilar analyzes the state-owned “No-Do” (Noticias y Documentales / News and Documentaries) organization, which created propagandistic films under the auspices of the Sub-Department of Popular Education, as well as the description of the war in children’s textbooks during the regime. (For Aguilar, the constant description of the war as a “war of liberation” or the “Glorious uprising” in textbooks resulted in a “[deception] of even the youngest readers about the fratricidal nature of the war.”²⁶) She further argues that the authoritarian government

²³ Aguilar, Memory, 30.
²⁴ Ibid., 77.
²⁵ Ibid.
²⁶ Ibid., 61.
had to create a story about the origins of the Civil War and promote it through “official channels,” in order to potentially counteract the influence of “private channels.” In this case, the official story vilified the leaders of the Spanish Republic by labeling their Communist ties as the true cause of the Civil War, rather than the Nationalist coup d’état, and portrayed Franco as Spain’s savior. Such a coloring of the war allowed the new regime to legitimize its authoritarian measures as necessary to maintain the peace.

With such a deep-seated imposition of the official memory, it would take years for any other faction to challenge any of its claims on a wide-scale. The process was further complicated by the fact that any private channels that sought to subvert the official memory were inherently limited. A high percentage of defeated Republicans had left Spain in exile, while many Republicans who stayed in Spain took a self-imposed vow of silence in order to protect their families from discrimination. Nevertheless, the formation of historical memory is a constant struggle between competing factions and cannot be held stationary even by the most powerful of government forces. As the younger generation grows up and begins to ask questions, the way the past is remembered will assuredly change. Paul Shackel argues that public memory is affected more by the present than a factual reconstruction of the past: “As present conditions change socially, politically, and ideologically, the collective memory of the past will also change.” Although they took time, the gradual changes in collective memory in Spain exemplify Shackel’s argument.

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27 Ibid., 33.
28 Ibid., 32.
The Memory Begins to Change

The following chapter will discuss in greater detail the 1960s and the divergent memories that became public as the succession crisis came to a head. Nevertheless, as early as January of 1957, the Franquist government recognized the resistance that was beginning to mount against the official memory. Salgado-Araujo admitted that the “anti-government sentiment against was great, above all in Madrid and Barcelona.” According to Salgado-Araujo, even the press was criticizing the management of the government. Franco replied that he would dissolve the current government and replace it with another: “Opinion is impressionable, and after a few months of a new government, they will ask for another and they will miss the current one.” His carefree tone suggests that Franco had considerable faith in his powers of manipulation of the Spanish people and their fickle attentions; he seemed to have no fear of coup d’état against him. Salgado-Araujo, however, is more cognizant of the danger to the official memory of an organized and angry resistance: “The reality is that the bad sentiment continues, proven by the strike in Barcelona, and that it is a symptom of general discontent…” Already in 1957, to a limited degree, resistance was mounting to the imposition of the government on the people. Franco, however, was not ready quite yet to recognize this change. In fact, he believed until the end that the succession would follow exactly as he had planned after his death and the National Movement would live on through King Juan Carlos.

30 “...el ambiente contra el gobierno era grande, sobre todo en Madrid y Barcelona.” / Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones, 194.
31 “La opinión es impresionable, y a los pocos meses de un nuevo gobierno pedirá otro y echarán de menos al actual.” / Franco quoted in Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones, 194.
32 “La realidad es que el ambiente no es bueno, como lo prueba la huelga de Barcelona, que sigue, y esto es un síntoma de descontento general...” / Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones, 194.
On 3 October 1968, Salgado-Araujo carefully expressed his concerns about the succession. He told Franco, “What you decide while you live will be respected after your death. What you leave up in the air, will convert into disunity and each political group will want to put their interests first. That is to say, confusion and maybe even chaos [will develop].” Salgado-Araujo subtly suggested to Franco that he leave a clearer plan for succession than he had already left. The Caudillo, however, refused to acknowledge this concern. He answered: “All is provided for by the Law of Succession and nothing will happen the day that I die.” He maintained an overwhelming arrogance about his legacy all the way to the end. Franco refused to recognize that memory constantly evolves which meant that he was proven wrong at his death. No, Spain did not fall into a state of chaos and anarchy like Salgado-Araujo feared. But in his eyes something much worse happened: Spain became a democracy.

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33 “Lo que tú decidas en vida será respetado a su muerte. Lo que tú dejes pendiente, se convertirá en desunión y cada grupo político querrá arrimar el ascua a su sardina. Es decir, la confusión y tal vez el caos.” / Ibid., 533.
34 “Todo está previsto en la ley de sucesión y no pasará nada el día en que yo falte.” / Franco quoted in Salgado-Araujo, Mis conversaciones, 533.
After Franco’s death on 20 November 1975, Spain was faced with the succession crisis that its top leaders had feared for a decade. Both collaborators and resisters feared that Spain could fall victim to a number of undesirable outcomes, such as a Communist takeover or a military dictatorship. So they settled on an agreement that they thought would be best for Spain, a decision that would shape the future of the country. These leaders believed that only through calculated silence about the past, a blanket amnesia about the civil war and the Franquist regime, could Spain begin to reconcile and succeed in the future. This collective amnesia instituted by the state had a profound effect on the way historical memory developed in Spain. Although other voices emerged in this time period, such as those of fiction writers and historians who subtly argued for a reckoning with the past, the state’s imposed silence ironically spoke the loudest. This chapter will analyze the voices, official and unofficial, that emerged during the time of the Transition after Franco’s death and throughout the next two decades. It will show how the state, which had so much to say about the Valley and Spain’s legacy when Franco was the ruler, dramatically reversed its role, doing away with the propaganda of the previous regime. The propagandistic vacuum left by the state allowed different voices to surface.

Many books have been written on the purely political aspects of the transition from dictatorship to democracy between 1975 and 1978. Some authors have seen the transition as a model for the future, while others have questioned why a more radical rupture with the past did
not occur—for example, something along the lines of the Truth and Reconciliation Process in the early 1990s in South Africa. Yet 20 November 1975 does not necessarily reflect the correct date for the beginning of change in Spain. Under Franco’s reign, the Caudillo slowly began limited reforms, including the right to “associations of public opinion” in 1969.\(^1\) While far from sweeping reforms of any kind, these decisions reflect the understanding by Franco’s advisors in his Movement’s National Council, though more from the *aperturista* (open) faction than the *inmovilistas* (ultra-conservatives), that Spain’s people were beginning to demand change. In the words of National Council Member Alberto Ballarín Marcial, “we must avoid the formation of a parallel, and clandestine Spain, [therefore, we must] offer, not a police order to control them, but an alternative, a channel of integration.”\(^2\) As the Caudillo and the Guerra Civil generation aged, certain groups in Spain grew more comfortable with the idea of change. In fact, this look towards the future and a possible succession crisis began even before the final years of the regime.

**1960s Spain**

The 1960s in Franco Spain were marked by progressive steps that, though limited in their scope, began to demonstrate a changing tide. After a series of strikes in May 1962 led by the Syndical Organization in their pursuit of “authentic unions,” the government pursued its least aggressive retaliation methods yet, and even passed a new decree in July 1962 allowing workers’ representatives to participate in a factory’s leadership council.\(^3\) That same month, Franco appointed a vice-president of government and second in command for the first time,

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\(^2\) Alberto Ballarín Marcial quoted in Palomares, 65.
acknowledging his mortality and the need to establish a line of succession. This new government also included Manual Fraga Iribarne, who would prove to be an important player in Spain’s government post-Franco and even a cautious advocate of political reform under the regime itself. One of his important contributions in the 1960s was to relax the rules on censorship, especially towards the new popular medium, television. In this decade, as Spain prospered economically and entered into diplomatic relations with the rest of Europe, small cracks began to show in the seemingly authoritarian regime.

In 1966, the final reforms were enacted through the “Organic Law of the State.” According to historian Stanley Payne, “[the law] was designed not to be a new Fundamental Law in the sense of introducing major institutional features, but rather to serve as codification, clarification, and partial reform of existing practices... It reflected primarily the position of Carrero Blanco and López Rodó (and of Franco himself), whose notion of reform was administrative and economic rather than directly political...” Most importantly, the law presented details for the Law of Succession that eventually declared in July 1960 that Juan Carlos I, the “Pretender,” would serve as the Spanish monarch and ruler after the Caudillo’s death. Despite the fact that Juan Carlos had sworn loyalty to Franco’s National Movement, his trademark discretion about his own political beliefs led the people of Spain to suspect he had a more liberal agenda. Supplementary legislation to the Organic Law included limited freedom of religion and a limited show of representative government, as the “Law on Family Representation” allowed approximately twenty percent of the Cortes (the national assembly) to be elected by the heads of families. Although Franco proceeded with extraneous exhibitions of

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4 Ibid., 503.
5 Ibid., 513.
6 Palomares, *Quest for Survival*, 116-117.
power, such as public executions of dissidents in the final years and crackdowns on demonstrations at universities, the limited reforms pushed through by his ministers in the final years of his life reflect even the government’s understanding that Spain was evolving and the time of the lone Caudillo had passed.  

Franco’s Propagandist Success: the Fear of Anarchy

One of the demonstrations of power Franco put together included a propaganda campaign exalting “twenty-five years of peace” with a celebration held at the Valley of the Fallen on 1 April 1964. While there, Franco pardoned all those who committed certain minor political crimes as a show of reconciliation. This act demonstrates his continued belief in El Valle de los Caídos as a site for both sides of the civil war, and a site for all of Spain to appreciate and honor. Publishers released books commemorating the anniversary and emphasizing the benefits Franco had brought to the country. Attendance at the event does not appear to be documented, and determining the opinions of the Spanish populace towards the Valley at this time may be impossible. It nevertheless shows once again Franco’s vision for the Valley and his overwhelmingly positive view of his own administration.

As another part of the process of making historical memory, newspapers can approximate the thoughts and issues important to the Spanish public. Prior to the Caudillo’s death, the issue of succession consumed the press. Headlines as early as 1966 questioned the future of Spain’s government, even in pro-Franco newspapers, including, “La sucesión en España: ¿Monarquía? ¿República? ¿Regencia?” (The Succession in Spain: Monarchy? Republic? Regency?) in the

8 Ibid., 518.
9 Ibid., 508.
10 Ibid.
newsletter for the Catholic Youth Action League.\textsuperscript{11} Most Spaniards either had known Franco as the leader for their entire life or remembered the partisan strife of the 1930s and ultimately the civil war; experiences for both generations led to a panic concerning the issue of transition.

According to the author of the headline cited above, written in the section “El sí y el no,” (The Yes and the No) as an editorial piece: “One of today’s very topical themes in Spain is that of the succession…. Almost all the newspapers are discussing the term and each one, more or less in a veiled way, is trying to put their own interests’ first. They consider systems, they take positions, and, thanks to the opening that the Press Law has given us, they are giving us solutions to complete Franco’s institutional mark.” The Carlista editorialist continues in his discussion of the ceaseless coverage by newspapers of the succession issue, demonstrating its pervasive relevance to Spanish society at this time. He also mentions the importance of the passage of the 1966 Press Law, which relaxed censorship and restrictions on the press. Fraga Iribarne, the minister of information and tourism, advocated for the law.\textsuperscript{12} Articles like this one give us a balanced idea for the first time of the issues consuming the Spanish people and their concerns for the future.

Another title from the same year but a different paper declares, “Mercado común: Clima favorable para España,” (The Common Market: A Favorable Climate for Spain) an example of economic hope and change for the evolving country.\textsuperscript{13} Yet another article from the Carlistas’ collection states, “La esperanza de 1967,” (The Hope of 1967) and seems to suggest an excitement about the Law of Succession, presumably due to the establishment of monarchy,

\textsuperscript{11} “Uno de los temas que hoy resultan de más actualidad en España es el de la sucesión... Casi todos los periódicos están tratando el tema y cada cual, más o menos veladamente, trata de arrimar el asa a su sardina. Se barajan sistemas, se toman posiciones y, gracias a la apertura que nos ha dado la Ley de Prensa, se van dando soluciones para completar el marco institucional de Franco.” / “La sucesión en España: ¿Monarquía? ¿República? ¿Regencia?” Signo (21 May 1966). Found in the Carlistas’ records housed in the PARES archives of the Spanish Government.

\textsuperscript{12} Payne, Franco Regime, 519.

though the text has become smudged over the years which makes it difficult to discern the author’s argument.  

These newspaper and newsletter headlines serve as a representation of the changing themes and opinions before the official Transition. They show that a favorable climate for reform had already developed, making transition to democracy not so radical a proposition after Franco’s death. Remarkably, however, they also show that, though Spain felt prepared to move on, no one knew what change would come after the dictator passed. According to Payne, “the ceremony of July 1969 finally solved the immediate question ‘After Franco, who?’ It did not generally answer the accompanying query, ‘After Franco, what?’” The Spanish people now knew who their leader would be after the Caudillo’s death, but they did not know what kind of government he would lead. Franco expected Juan Carlos to maintain the National Movement single party system even as he reinstalled the monarchy. Most Spaniards, including even Salgado-Araujo, were not so certain Franco’s dream would come to pass. Spaniards knew that once the dictator was gone, anything could happen.

Franco died believing that all would be fine after his death and that his plans for a monarchy were well laid. Spaniards waited to see if his final prediction would come true. In Franco’s words, “all is tied up, and well tied up.” Just two days later, on 22 November 1975, Juan Carlos was crowned King of Spain and the Spanish people looked to him to see what was to come. Although not officially the political head of government, as monarch, Juan Carlos had the power to form the new government. According to historian Cristina Palomares, “the Spanish people expected the King to form a new executive capable of transforming Spain into a modern and progressive country. For that purpose, the monarch had to jettison the old Francoists, and

14 “La esperanza de 1967,” found in the Carlistas’ newsletter, date unknown.
15 Payne, Franco Regime, 543.
16 “…todo ha quedado atado y bien atado…” / Franco quoted in Palomares, 143.
appoint young politicians to create a democratic nation.' Palomares’s assumption seems to ring true based on the mounting evidence of a pro-reform nation from the end of the regime. However, she does not give explicit evidence to support her broad claim that all the Spanish people expected a smooth transition into democracy, and it begs questioning to what extent all Spaniards expected a democracy to develop immediately.

To be sure, the ruptura (Rupture) movement, or the call for complete rupture with past institutions, had its supporters. For the Socialist Luis Yáñez, ruptura was “the alternative that offers least risk of social commotion, chaos, or anarchy.” To many others, nevertheless, ruptura seemed the quickest path to “violence, anarchy, trauma, and disorder.” Even leaders of the PSOE saw the complete destruction of Franco governmental structures as the quickest way to a Communist takeover or even a new civil war, while leaders of the AP (Alianza Popular/ Popular Alliance Party]) actively stirred up the fear of change in the people in order to promote their own form of conservative government. In this case, Palomares provides evidence of the Spaniards’ beliefs taken from a survey conducted in December 1975 by Cuadernos para el Diálogo (Notebooks for Dialogue). According to this survey, the Spanish people wanted democracy and political freedoms, but also included “a demand for amnesty as the decisive key for a pluralistic and tolerant coexistence.” Whether or not these fears were justified, they explain why the more moderate reforma option won and the state of mind of the Spanish people at this moment. In a December 1990 article published in El País, Javier Padera theorized that the historical memory of the Republican government’s defeat in 1936 was fresh on the minds of the

17 Palomares, Quest for Survival, 144.
18 Yáñez, quoted in Palomares, 148.
19 Palomares, Quest for Survival, 148.
21 Quoted in Palomares, Quest for Survival, 148.
democracy’s new leaders when they sought amnesty for the past. In this case, the official memory proffered by Franco, concerning the excesses and failures of the Spanish Republic that led to its downfall, stayed ingrained in the collective memory even forty years later.

**The Transition Begins**

The official Franquist memory changed slowly for many reasons. The most important factor was the conciliatory actions of the leaders during the transition to democracy. After Franco died on 20 November 1975, Prince Juan Carlos appointed Carlos Arias Navarro, the current President of the Government under Franco, as president of the new government which took effect on 5 December 1975. Many were surprised by the monarch’s decision to continue with the old regime, and Arias’s presidency was marked by a large number of general strikes and general uproar in the nation. By 1 April 1976, over 17,731 strikes had already occurred nationwide. This same year, new opposition newspapers formed, most notably *El País*. Nevertheless, Juan Carlos stuck to his appointment of Arias because he “could not afford to alienate Franco’s hardliners. Changes had to be introduced slowly.” Juan Carlos thought that if he were to start with a clean break from the Franco regime he would cast Spain into turmoil once again. Although we will never know if this outcome was possible given different decisions made, Juan Carlos’s careful transition ensured stability through this difficult time.

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23 Palomares, *Quest for Survival*, 146.
25 Ibid., 149.
Arias’s presidency soon fell into disfavor, especially after he declared that he would continue in the vein of the Franquist regime. Recognizing that Arias’s time had come to an end, the king appointed then-Minister-Secretary of the Movement, Adolfo Suárez, the new president in July 1976. Suárez would be the one to lead Spain through this difficult transition. He understood the fear of disorder of the Spanish people and “believed at the time of Franco’s death that the principal concern of the Spanish people was the fear of a new civil war.” In order to ensure that their greatest fears would not be realized, Suárez embarked on a program of reconciliation, including the “avoidance of confrontations among political groups” as one of his primary objectives. In a speech before the Cortes in April 1978, Suárez clearly expressed this desire: “...the government must restrict its options to those which would not produce dissensus, because that is the only way to avoid what would be the gravest danger to the body politics: the lack of a concord rooted in the country...” With this end goal in mind, Suárez pursued a policy of limited and structured reforma, of which the key aspects for the impact on historical memory were the decisions to grant amnesty to Franco collaborators and develop an official amnesia in regards to the outcomes of the Franquist regime.

Many shared Suárez’s theory of reconciliation, including the Communist party, the PCE. The Communist leaders in particular remembered the horrors of the civil war and absorbed the Franquist interpretation that the leaders of the former republic were somehow to blame. Subsequently, their decision, that of the largest opposition party, to “adopt and implement a policy of national reconciliation and firmly reject rancorous and uncompromising behavior

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26 Ibid., 152.
27 Palomares, Quest for Survival, 161.
29 Ibid.
30 Adolfo Suárez quoted in Gunther, et al., 119.
during this critical constituent period” was not only vital to the success of the Transition but also provides a clear example of the impact of State-influenced historical memory on even an opposition group’s conscience. Like Franco’s profound effect on the Spanish consciousness, demonstrated clearly and physically through the symbolism of the Valley, Suárez and the other political parties’ decision to invoke amnesia and amnesty would have a lasting effect.

After the informal decision to agree to silence regarding the Franquist regime, the pact was made official with the Amnesty Law of 1977, which forgave acts of violence during the regime and all the way back to the civil war. The Amnesty Law also demonstrates the extent of the fear that the new leaders felt for even those with significant grievances such as the Socialists (represented by PSOE) and the Communists (PCE) signed on. This decision led to official state silence on the issue for almost three decades. However, just because the state stayed quiet, that did not mean the Spanish people were silent.

The Role of Historians and Novelists in the Formation of Historical Memory

With the adoption of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, official censorship came to an end. Therefore, despite the state’s official silence (and the de facto silence of the press right after the Transition which lacked any significant debate about the issues of the past), historians published more than fifteen thousand titles concerning the civil war. During the 1980s and 90s, popular programs on television and fictionalized movies also told the story of the civil war, though discussions of Franco’s repression were far less common. When television shows failed to tackle this difficult topic, authors stepped in to fill this void. For example, Carmen Martín

31 Gunther, et al., Spain after Franco, 118.
32 Boyd, 135.
33 Ibid., 136.
Gaite’s *El cuarto de atrás* (The Back Room), published in 1978, describes her childhood experiences under the Franquist regime, including allusions to censorship of the era. For the purpose of the interpretation of historical memory concerning Franco and the Valley, the publication of Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s *Autobiografía del General Franco* (The Autobiography of General Franco) in 1992, represents a pivotal turning point in the discussion of the Franquist regime.

Though his themes are more overt than others employed by most authors of this time period, Vázquez Montalbán’s novel can serve as a strong example of the anti-Franco literature due to the author’s enduring popularity and critical acclaim. Not only did he receive a number of literary prizes throughout his life, he was a very popular and well-known author. When he died abruptly in October of 2003, they say all of Barcelona entered into a state of mourning.34

**Montalbán and the Autobiografía del general Franco**

Manuel Vázquez Montalbán was born in Barcelona in 1939. During his childhood and adolescence, Vázquez Montalbán knew no other leader than Franco, and his numerous works reflect his understanding of Franco’s effect on Spain. A proud member of the resistance during the Franquist regime, Vázquez Montalbán was even imprisoned in 1962 for a year and a half due to his introduction of an anti-Franco message into many of his articles published in the state-sanctioned newspaper, *Solidaridad Nacional* (National Solidarity).35 His novels invoke a sense of “localismo” or a heightened awareness of the history and personality of his location.

*Autobiografía del general Franco* represents an incredibly original form of novel in that its title

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35 Ibid.
suggests that the book truly is an autobiography written by the Caudillo. The true author, however, or the first person narrator of the story, is a struggling writer paid a large sum of money to be Franco’s “ghost writer.”36

As the narrator José García Hernández spouts forth truisms and various mantras which sound disturbingly realistic in relation to the published speeches and written works of Francisco Franco, the author must face his own family’s demons. José’s father was a political prisoner under the regime and his family faced repression and persecution throughout his childhood. These snippets of his own story emerge throughout the novel as though they are thoughts popping into the author’s mind. When the time comes to submit the final draft, the author includes his own musings as a sort of counter to the words of the dictator. The editor, in his purely economic pursuit, rushes the final product and refuses to publish Hernandez’s thoughts due to the fact that 1992 is Franco’s hundredth birthday and they would sell more copies if he keeps to a purely “autobiographical” tale. Within this fictional novel, a similar struggle emerges for control of the way the regime is remembered.

Jose’s thoughts allude to the inner-conflict within many Spaniards’ hearts and minds. They also show the disparities between the official, propagandized version of events and Jose’s families’ own experiences, a common occurrence within Spanish families, especially those of former Republican soldiers. In one crucial passage of the autobiography, “Franco” discusses why Spain needs him as ruler: “The second [debt] is owed to another exceptional man whom God has placed in Spain so that he can save Spain when all seems lost, another man who due to the spell of a fatherland that does not want to die, picks up the last beatings of its heart, strengthens them, and from the Spain that was, he creates a Spain that is all he promised: the Generalísimo

36 Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Autobiografia del general Franco (Barcelona: Planeta, 1993).
Franco.\textsuperscript{37} Vázquez Montalbán employs the same bombastic and religious rhetoric used by Franco in many of his speeches. He envisions Franco’s autobiography as an exaltation of his personal self as the savior of Spain. Yet from this false adoration, Jose’s anger at this official memory spills over into tangents in the margins of the autobiography: “I am not going to tell other stories than those that I lived, Your Excellency, as a son of a man condemned to death, I returned to see my father in the course of a military trial to which they brought me, in spite of my ten years, I could pity those lesser military gods dressed in khaki, khaki, khaki, khaki, all was khaki up to the smell of that room…”\textsuperscript{38} Jose’s stream of consciousness reveals an inner turmoil over his father’s arrest and fury with the dictator’s attempt to impose his own interpretation of the conflict as the single memory allowed. Jose’s bitter sentiments explode onto the text as he is incapable of holding them in after years of repression. While a literary example, Jose’s feelings no doubt reflect those of many other Spaniards at this time, especially the sons and daughters of former Republican soldiers.

Although \textit{La autobiografía del general Franco} was not published until 1992, it represents one of the best examples of literature that attempted to challenge the official memory of the regime beginning as early as 1978. Rather than some obscure piece of literature, over 90,000 copies of this novel were sold, demonstrating its popularity with the Spanish people. Below the surface, in informal channels, a memory debate was starting to brew.

\textsuperscript{37} “La segunda [deuda] se debe a otro hombre excepcional que Dios ha puesto en España para que España se salvea cuando todo parecía perdido, otro hombre que al conjunto de una patria que no quiere morir recoge sus últimos latidos, los fortalece y de una España que era, hace una España que todo lo promete: el generalísimo Franco.” / Vázquez Montalbán, \textit{Autobiografía}, 389.

\textsuperscript{38} “No voy a contar otras historias que las que viví, excelencia, como hijo de condenado a muerte que volvi a ver a mi padre en el transcurso del juicio militar al que me llevaron por si mis diez años podían conmover a aquellos dioses menores militares vestidos de caqui, caqui, caqui, caqui, todo era caqui hasta el olor en aquella sala.” / Ibid., 352.
Conclusion

After the bombastic rhetoric and propaganda of the Franquist regime, the official silence at the beginning of the Transition, though necessary to ensure peace, left a vacuum in terms of the discussion of collective memory and the past. Without the state's interpretation of events, people turned to historians, journalists, and novelists to comment on the past. The state's ending of censorship allowed these informal creators of historical memory to have their say. Although very little overt reference was made to reconcile the past or the construction of a collective memory in this period, the strides made by these groups played an integral part in the overall process. They added new life to the struggle, and formed the essential building blocks of the more explicit appeals to the creation of historical memory in the beginning of the twenty-first century.
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*The Historical Memory Debate on a National Stage: the Silence Breaks*

Even in 2008, Spain is far from unified. Despite the passage of the Historical Memory Law in 2007, there is no “national memory” concerning the Valley or the Franco regime, but instead a number of different understandings and remembrances of the past. The previous two chapters have attempted to show how past factions have attempted to manipulate the historical memory surrounding the Valley, starting with the state and formal memory and continuing with the more informal memory created by historians, novelists, and journalists in the beginning years of the transition. This chapter will expand on the latest developments in the story, including the controversial Historical Memory Law. Although some historians have called this law the end of the debate, it is but another chapter in the constant struggle between a number of diverse viewpoints in Spain today. Two Spanish women can demonstrate well two of the most prominent belief systems about remembering Spain’s past, and also the divisions that continue to exist in Spain. Strong in their own ways, these two women reflect well the convictions of their respective contingents in Spanish society.

**Two Spanish Women Reflect on their Pasts**

During a semester spent abroad in Madrid, I had the opportunity to interview two very different but very intriguing women. The first woman I interviewed was Ana Martínez
Rodríguez, a reserved but passionate woman who had much to say about the Valley’s influence on her life. The daughter of an unwed mother who never knew her father, the conservative government ignored Martínez. Due to her status as a “bastard child,” the state denied Martínez any rights. Born in 1953, she grew up in the hovels around the Valley, shanties that were extemporaneously put together over the two decades of construction. Her uncle was a prisoner of the state forced to work on the monument and, lacking other family to take care of her, Martínez lived with her aunt and cousins while her mother worked as a nurse in the city (who often had to steal medicine for her daughter’s tuberculosis since the state refused Martínez any medical care). Growing up in such conditions, Martínez has developed strong opinions about the Valley. Although she left the area as a young child, when the building was complete, she remembers glimpses of the repression and has engaged in a considerable amount of retrospection about what all these memories from her childhood mean to her today.

These fleeting memories have shaped Martínez’s understanding of the Franquist past; they have formed her own unique historical memory. More than facts, she remembers feelings and emotions, like the overwhelming cold that enveloped her as she fell asleep every night or feeling her mother’s anxiety every time she hugged her goodbye after a weekend together. Two memories do stand out in her mind, however. One time she fell in a ditch and broke her arm. The prisoner who rescued her after hours trapped below received permission to take her to Madrid for care. What stands out so prominently about this episode for her, however, was not just his kindness, but the fear in his eyes as the day progressed. Martínez later realized that they absolutely had to be back before sunset so that he would not be punished. At another time, she saw lists of all the dead interred in the mausoleum, a list that according to Martínez has since disappeared. She speculates that these lists revealed the true number of political prisoners who
died during construction or the number of Republican soldiers who were thrown in mass graves without proper recognition. She doubts that the truth about these questions will ever come to light. When I asked Martínez about her perceptions of the repression, she paused. She explained to me that, as a child who knew no other way of life, she did not know the meaning of liberty. She never considered how different her childhood was until she became an adult, and now a respected psychiatrist. For Martínez, memory today means she no longer has to be silent about her ordeal. The conquered survivors have passed away and their loved ones have started to question the ideologies of the past. The past no longer has to be “left in the past”; Spain’s bloody history no longer has to be forgotten in the name of peace because the threat of a military coup has passed. For Martínez, the 2007 Memory Law was a necessary transition for Spain that was needed in order to truly heal, a law that did not go far enough.¹

I also had the opportunity to interview another woman with starkly different opinions than those of Ana Martínez. According to Señora de Pemartín, “we have to forget and look towards the future.”² Although this opinion is currently in the minority, just a few decades before, the Señora’s statement would have had many supporters. Her difference in opinion no doubt stems from her radically different background from Ana Martínez. She was born in 1933 and remembers going into hiding with her mother in the north of Spain for the duration of the war. The daughter of a wealthy merchant, the Señora was raised in a very Catholic and very conservative household. During the war, her father was captured by the “Reds” and was imprisoned for over a year, while the Republicans killed many of her extended family members. After the war ended, she returned with her family to Madrid and attended public school, though many of her friends whose parents were Republicans did not. In the early 1950s, she married a

¹ Ana Martínez Rodríguez, in discussion with the author, 5 November 2008, Madrid, Spain.
² “Tenemos que olvidar y mirar al futuro.” / La Señora de Pemartín, in discussion with the author, 26 November 2008, Madrid, Spain.
Spanish naval officer, gaining her aristocratic title. Although her husband passed away some years ago, the Señora still bases her identity on his profession, referring to herself as a navy widow.

When I asked the Señora about her impression of the Franquist government, she described Franco as a father figure, a great example of leadership, and a model for Spain even today. Her only suggestion for something he should have done differently was step down five years before his death in order to mentor King Juan Carlos I through the transition. Yet when I asked about the workers at the Valley, including the political prisoners involved in the program of Redención (Redemption), she responded with a confused look and quickly changed the subject. The Señora de Pemartín wanted to retain a fond memory of the Caudillo, as she as a child growing up in privilege during his regime imagined him. She felt that the current memory debate was harmful to Spanish unity; she emphasized that the opening of the past was tearing the country in two and should be put to rest immediately.³ The Señora represents one faction in Spain regarding the understanding of historical memory. Although this group is declining in size, it still makes up a large part of Spanish society. For example, although the conservative newspaper ABC's daily readership has declined by over 50,000 readers in the past two decades (while the more liberal El País has gained more than 50,000 readers in the same time period), approximately 300,000 copies of ABC were still sold per day in 2000 as compared to 435,000 copies of El País.⁴ As an opponent to the 2007 Memory Law, ABC's readership demonstrates that a large minority of Spanish people still support the idea that bringing up any discord from the past could destroy the peace. The Señora's testimony demonstrates just one of the many opinions in Spain; though hers seems to be one of the two dominant belief systems.

³ La Señora de Pemartín, in discussion with the author, 26 November 2008.
Ana Martínez and Señora de Pemartin’s interviews serve as examples of two radically
different viewpoints on Spanish historical memory in order to demonstrate the way one
monument and one leader can be remembered so differently even by two countrywomen.

The 1990s: The Unofficial Memories Grow Louder

The period right after the Transition has come to be known as the time of “forgetting.”
This official amnesia in the words of historian Carolyn Boyd, was legally codified in the 1977
Amnesty Law. Many politicians, including Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez of the PCE, believed
that the only way to transition successfully from dictatorship to democracy was by ignoring the
past and refusing to address grievances. Over time, authors and playwrights, such as Manuel
Vázquez Montalbán rejected this official policy and began to subtly break the silence through
their works, and became key players in the creation of memory. In addition to this literary
interpretation, many historians demonstrated their political activism by researching and
publishing new information on the Civil War, and, most importantly, rejecting the myth of
collective responsibility perpetuated by Franco supporters. As the years passed and a younger
generation began to demand answers, the state evolved its policy and itself. The Valley of the
Fallen, however, remained the same.

Over the past two decades, the Valley has become a kind of macabre tourist attraction
that most Spaniards never visit. While Spain has changed around it, the monument has fallen
prey to passing time. The mausoleum is cold and uninviting; the austere religious reliefs on the

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wall seem to tell any potential visitors to stay away. Seventy thousand victims of the war are buried within its depths, the majority Nationalists. (Some Republicans were even turned away.) Reconciliation of the two sides is obviously not the goal, as there are no conciliatory texts or reliefs chiseled into the walls.

As proof of the lack of reconciliation actually intended, in 1997 historian Paloma Aguilar compared the English and Spanish language versions of the tourist guidebooks offered at the site. The English version was published in 1959 and the Spanish in 1969, and there has been little to no revision since their original publications. According to Aguilar's research, despite an identical design, the English guidebook erases the propagandistic language found in the Spanish version. 8 For example, the English version reads, "the monument to all who fell in the Spanish Civil War," while the Spanish version reads "The monument to those who fell for Spain, an idea conceived during the Crusade and decided upon when it ended..."9 The Spanish version explicitly excludes Republican soldiers from adulation, but includes the religious language omitted from the English version. As only the staunchest Franco supporters in Spain visit the monument, few have contested this partial language. The Valley is an example of the failure of the state to impose a memory on the people. According to Aguilar, "on this occasion, the official version was unable to impose itself on the general consciousness, and the Valley of the Fallen is remembered as an ostentatious and inopportune pantheon, built by Franco for himself and the winning side in the war."10 While the Valley represents a clear example of the rejection of official memory, the struggle between official and unofficial memories was much more complicated concerning other matters.

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9 Ibid., 81.
10 Ibid., 85.
According to Carolyn Boyd, historians in the 1990s finally rejected the theme of "collective responsibility" proffered at the time of the Transition. By providing convincing evidence that the military uprising alone caused the civil war and not the failings of the Second Republic, they "reconceptualize[d]" the memory of Spain's democratic past. This new wave of historians made "the war and the dictatorship ... anomalous interruptions of Spain's entirely normal, if somewhat tardy, path to modernity" and helped to open up a public dialogue on the subject. Most importantly, their works entered the public arena, as more than fifteen thousand titles on the civil war had been published by 1986 and "ordinary Spaniards' apparently insatiable curiosity about the war was satisfied by a deluge of popular publications, television programs, and films." Yet while Boyd claims that the new government did not engage in any form of official censorship, Joan Ramón Resina claims the "disrememberance" of the past was partially intentional censorship in order for politicians and journalists to "protect the interests of political and economic clans," as well as ensure an initial smooth transition to power. He argues that popular curiosity in movies and television did not necessarily mean that the majority of Spaniards were willing to reflect on the Franco regime itself. Ramon Resina's argument could have basis in fact, but since he fails to give sufficient supporting evidence, it comes off more as conspiracy theory than anything else. While many of those who lived through and fought in the Civil War were beginning to pass away, the Franco regime was far from a distant memory and a thoughtful analysis of the "anomalous interruption" or its remnants, such as the Valley, would take more time. Ramon Resina must recognize that the formation of historical memory is a

12 Ibid., 136.
continual process. In order to maintain political and societal stability, the Spanish people needed to come to terms with their past over a significant amount of time.

The Role of Families and Private Organizations

While the state maintained its unofficial silence towards the past even through the 1990s, other groups grew louder in their protest to open the debate concerning historical memory. In 2000, the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH) (the Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory) was formed by Emilio Silva and Santiago Macias. The authors explain the organization’s grassroots beginnings in their 2003 memoirs, Las fosas de Franco (Franco’s Mass Graves). According to Silva, his Republican grandfather disappeared in October 1936. Although Silva’s grandmother searched for her husband’s body for decades, she died in 1998, never knowing the location of her husband’s final resting place. Silva grew up with this burden weighing upon his family and in October of 2000, he had the inspired idea to reach out to others in Spain who may be feeling the same sense of loss. On 8 October 2000, La Crónica de León (The León Chronicle) published his article entitled “Mi abuelo también fue un desaparecido” (My Uncle Too was a Disappeared). Silva purposefully used the term “desaparecido” in order to connect the disappearance of his grandfather with the disappearances in Chile during the time of Pinochet and those in Argentina during the Dirty War. He included his phone number in order to try to connect to anyone else who was missing a loved one. The response to his article was overwhelming. Silva quickly began to form a group in pursuit of answers about the past that included archaeologists and forensic anthropologists, and they began

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14 Emilio Silva and Santiago Macías, Las fosas de Franco (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 2003), 49.
their first excavation of the "Priaranza del Bierzo" mass grave in October of 2000.¹⁵ In December of that same year, Silva officially joined together with the writer Santiago Macías, whom he originally met at the Priaranza del Bierzo site. Macías had already spent years collecting information about the civil war, taking oral interviews and restoring photographs, despite not having a formal focus in this subject area. Together, Macías and Silva decided to found the ARMH. As soon as they registered their new organization with the Interior Ministry, they gained instant notoriety throughout the Spanish countryside, thanks to thousands of families who suffered from a similar despair concerning lost family members and eventual support from the United Nations regarding the human rights violations during the Civil War and the Franquist regime. They received unanimous support from the 24 PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español/ the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party) representatives and the 23 PP (Partido Popular/ the People’s Party) representatives to the local government of Bierzo.¹⁶ Although these representatives did not necessarily support the more controversial aims of the organization, such as an open dialogue about the crimes of the Franquist regime, they could rally around a cause as human as finding the bodies of deceased loved ones. By taking the debate to the graves and out of mere academic debate, ARMH gave Spanish politicians a concrete and nearly irrefutable reason to stop actively forgetting the past.

Some academics have criticized the ARMH for being too sensationalist and merely wanting to uncover bones. During my semester in Madrid, I had the opportunity to interview Professor Pilar Díaz of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She had many helpful observations to make, suggesting various sources I could use such as those found in PARES, the Spanish government’s online portal for historical documents. In the last few minutes of our

¹⁵ Ibid., 50-51.
¹⁶ Ibid. 63-64.
discussion, however, Professor Díaz revealed some of her personal opinions about the debate. As a historian the “sensationalist and opportunist nature” of the grave excavations bothered her. She insisted that opening the graves would not help history progress in any way. While her criticisms certainly have some merit (yes, bones sell newspapers), Professor Díaz fails to see the effect on the formation of historical memory that these “sensationalist” organizations have had. The ARMH along with other similar organizations that were founded on a regional basis have served as the catalyst for a number of significant changes to the official memory in the past decade. Although the primary goal of the newly founded ARMH was to uncover the bones of the lost soldiers, their website also describes a desire to begin a process of reflection and dialogue.

The ARMH even has its own unique definition of historical memory:

Historical memory is a collective memory, an overturned evocation towards the present of symbolic valor of the collective actions lived by a town in the past. Historical memory is an action that preserves the identity and continuity of a town, it is not forgetting what has been learned, many times with blood, it is the walk [necessary] so we do not repeat past errors… There are many who maintain the memory of what happened to their relatives or to themselves. However, if memory does not include a collective vision, a serene reflection about the circumstances that caused or motivated the deeds of the past, this memory could result only in a veil that clouds good understanding.

The ARMH argues for a more active definition of historical memory, necessary in order to stop “history from repeating itself.” Their definition, however, makes it sound like there is only one “historical memory.” In this respect, the ARMH is mistaken. Although reflection on the past does lead to the creation of historical memory, many different memories on the subject can exist that are constantly evolving in relation with the present political climate. Despite this

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17 Professor Pilar Díaz, in discussion with the author, 11 December 2008.
18 “La memoria histórica es un recuerdo colectivo, una evocación volcada hacia el presente del valor simbólico de las acciones colectivas vividas por un pueblo en el pasado. La memoria histórica es una acción que preserva la identidad y la continuidad de un pueblo, es no olvidar lo aprendido, muchas veces con sangre, es el camino para no repetir errores pasados… Son muchos los que mantienen memoria de que sucedido a sus familiares, o a ellos mismos. Pero si el recuerdo no incluye una visión de conjunto, una reflexión serena sobre las circunstancias que causaron o motivaron los hechos del pasado, ese recuerdo puede resultar solamente un velo que nuble el buen entender.” / Pedro García Bilbao, “Acerca de la Memoria Histórica,” Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, http://www.memoriahistorica.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16.
misinterpretation, the prominent role of the ARMH in the formation process over the past decade must be recognized. ARMH began its political lobbying that same year as its foundation. Soon multiple organizations dedicated to similar causes erupted, including sister organizations for individual localities such as the Asociación Granadina para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (The Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory of Granada). Their voices added to the swell of historians and artists, as the official silence long supported by the state began to break. Yet it would take more time before the state directly addressed their concerns.

The Partido Popular (PP), the majority party in power until 2003, did not support an open discussion of the past. They did provide limited backing for grave excavations, but not for any kind of open debate about Spain’s repressive past. The PP’s official stance on the recuperation of historical memory was that it would reopen old wounds and was not necessary at that point in time. The PP and even the Church’s resistance seem to suggest a deeper fear on their part: that if they were to allow the kind of introspection that these new associations advocated, the peace of the Transition would be lost. Both the Church and original members of the Partido Popular (founded originally as the Alianza Popular in 1976 by former ministers in Franco’s government) benefited considerably from the state decision of “reforma” over “ruptura.” What is certain is that opening the doors to the past, including revealing on a main stage past ills committed by Franco collaborators and the Church, would likely damage these two entities. This fact gave the Church and the PP a motive to try to maintain the silence.

In 2006, when an initiative in Congress concerning the victims of the Franco regime began to circulate, the PP, a rightist party, vehemently rejected the proposal submitted by ninety

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20 Gunther, et al., 78. And Ferrán, “Memory and Forgetting,” 195.
admittedly leftist organizations. Although the minority party at this time, the PP had enough votes to temporarily deny these new organizations a legislative voice. According to Ramon Resina, this top-down control of the process was a legacy of the Franco regime incorporated into the new democracy by the intentional amnesia of the Transition: “An authoritarian, top-down approach to politics... [and] a vision of the Spanish people as silent guests at the table of power, where an active role is reserved for a chosen few, [are] certainly [two] of the ‘legacies’ of the Franco regime, to use Raymond Carr’s expression.” In the early 1990s, when Ramón Resina first wrote his article, his interpretation of Franquist legacy may have been closer to the truth. However, since historical memory is a constantly evolving concept with many different iterations even within the same country, in 2010 we can see that the Spanish people are no longer “silent guests at the table of power,” demonstrated by the ARMH’s work in the 2000s and even the informal impact of the media in the 1980s and 1990s. The power of the state in the creation of historical memory is undeniable, but these other informal factions, over time, together can form just as much, if not a louder voice, in the process.

The Role of the Press in the Discussion of Historical Memory

The press represents another crucial player in the constantly evolving understanding of historical memory. Beginning with the first graves discovered by the ARMH in 2000, the largest national newspaper, El País, has devoted significant coverage to the debate over historical memory. A leftist newspaper founded during the Transition in 1976, El País has a history of
progressive stances on issues, such as advising its readers not to vote for the Alianza Popular in 1977 because the new party included a large number of former Franco ministers. Unexpectedly though, the paper supported wholeheartedly the calls for amnesty in July 1976, indicating the sweeping desire for a peaceful transition to democracy after Franco’s death, no matter the cost.

Yet by 2000, the political atmosphere had changed considerably. No longer afraid that any retrospection could destroy Spain’s democracy, El País began to demonstrate a desire for reconciliation with the past. Between 1998 and 2010, the paper printed over a thousand articles, including opinions from its readers, regarding the struggle to address the past. It even has developed a section devoted solely to the study of Spanish historical memory on its website, entitled “La recuperación de la memoria histórica” (The Recuperation of Historical Memory).

The first articles focus primarily on the opening of graves or are calls from opinion writers for historical memory to be addressed, generally on a more localized level since they appear in regional sections and not the national edition. As political cries from the Left for an investigation of the past grew, such as the Izquierda Unida (United Left) party’s call for removal of all Franquist symbols from the streets in 2002, El País’s coverage of the debate also intensified. In 2006, after the condemnation of Franco’s regime on the international stage by the United Nations and a report by Amnesty International, the coverage blew up. With the Historical Memory Law’s passage in 2007 and the call by the Audiencia Nacional (National Audience; comparable to the U.S. Supreme Court) judge Garzón for trials of former Franco ministers in 2008, the issue of historical memory received treatment in almost every issue. However, their progressive take on

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23 Aguilar, Memory, 226.
24 Ibid., 193.
the issue does not represent the totality of Spanish opinion, or even the Spanish press. In stark contrast to *El País*’s activism concerning historical memory, *ABC*, one of the other two national newspapers, printed very little on the subject.

In 2006, *El País* had a circulation of 435,000, the largest of any of the national newspapers in Spain. *El Mundo*, more of an entertaining and sensational newspaper, had 320,000 subscribers and *ABC* had 261,000. While the smallest of the three national dailies, *ABC*’s 261,000 subscribers demonstrated that the newspaper had a significant voice in the country. Founded in 1903 as a monarchist newspaper, the *ABC* continues as a strong supporter of the Partido Popular. The paper has considerably fewer articles addressing the quest for historical memory; only about 50 in total are available on its website, though its search engine seems faulty. Those articles that do address the topic tend to describe the PP’s belief in the fallacy of the movement. For example, in an article from February 2006, the headline reads, “La Junta crea un plan sobre la Memoria Histórica que el PP tacha de querer ‘avalar el renacer,’” (The Government [of Sevilla] Creates a Plan about Historical Memory that the Popular Party Brands ‘Guaranteed Resentment’). The article gives equal weight to the proposal by the Justice minister as it does to the dissent from the PP representative, whose main concern is that the proposal will create further division among the parties and open up another political front. This article is indicative of the PP’s stance (and often, the *ABC*’s as well), concerning historical memory.

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28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
Taken together, *El País* and *ABC* provided a balanced commentary on the pros and cons of opening up the memory debate. *El País* especially served as a platform for previously silent voices to be heard. These two newspapers along with many others intensified the debate through publishing the competing voices from the Spanish people. Like the headlines that emerged during the succession crisis in the 1960s, the headlines from this time period reveal the struggle to reconcile the memories of the past with the realities of the present. Although this debate continues and no one collective memory will ever be created, the ending of the silence especially through newspaper publications is a key step in the process.

The Official Reaction to Historical Memory: the State’s New Role

In 2003, the Partido Popular lost control of Spanish Parliament. PSOE, the Socialist party led by Juan Luis Zapatero, took control in March 2004 and has retained its stronghold to this day. One of the new government’s first acts in September 2004 was to form a commission to study the effects of the Franco regime on its “victims.” In the words of author José María Calleja, they opened this discussion because finally enough time had passed to let the Spanish people come to terms with their past: “It is possible that years had to pass, that the Transition had to come to a close, and a new generation had to emerge, that of the murdered soldiers’ grandchildren, that without the hindrance of fear that has marked the other generations… will result in the work of honoring the victims of Franco.”

As Ana Martínez Rodríguez also suggested, perhaps a new generation, one without the scars of pain and fear from living through the regime, was all that was needed to finally address the past.

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31 “Posiblemente han tenido que pasar los años, ha tenido que cerrarse la transición y ha tenido que surgir una generación, la de los nietos de los fusilados que, sin las ataduras del miedo que han marcado a otras generaciones… resuelta la tarea de honrar a las víctimas de Franco.” / María Calleja, *El Valle*, 165.
The 2006 commission, formally known as the "Interministerial Commission for the Study of the Situation of the Victims of the Civil War and Franquism," created considerable controversy within the country, as editorials in *El Mundo, El País,* and *ABC* debated who constituted a victim of the regime and if and how any victims should be compensated.\(^3^2\)

Nevertheless, despite the Partido Popular’s protests, there was no going back now; in the words of many, Pandora’s Box of historical memory had been opened.

After three decades of official silence by the state on the issue of the crimes of the Franco regime, in 2006, PSOE introduced a draft of the Historical Memory Law. Though the law did not pass in 2006, that same year statues of Franco were removed in Madrid and La Coruña, and a Center for the Documentation of Historical Memory was opened in Salamanca. The Law of Historical Memory of 2007 did finally pass Parliament on 26 December 2007. In its preamble, it attempted not to place blame on the leaders of the Transition for the amnesia they imposed. Rather, the preamble insists that while a spirit of reconciliation was necessary thirty years ago, the time had finally come to remember the past:

The spirit of reconciliation and concord, and respect of pluralism and the peaceful defense of all ideas, guided the Transition and allowed us to provide ourselves with a Constitution, that of 1978, that translated into law this will of reunion of the Spaniards, articulating a social and democratic state with a clear will of integration... It is time now, however, that the Spanish democracy, which the living generations today enjoy, honor and recover forever all that directly related to the injustices and offenses produced, for one or many political, ideological, or religious motives, in the painful periods of our history...\(^3^3\)

\(^3^2\) Boyd, “Politics,” 144.

\(^3^3\) “El espíritu de reconciliación y concordia, y de respeto al pluralismo y a la defensa pacífica de todas las ideas, que guió la Transición, nos permitió dotarnos de una Constitución, la de 1978, que tradujo jurídicamente esa voluntad de reencuentro de los españoles, articulando un Estado social y democrático de derecho con clara vocación integradora... Es la hora, así, de que la democracia española y las generaciones vivas que hoy disfrutan de ella hulen y recuperen para siempre a todos los que directamente padecieron las injusticias y agravios producidos, por unos u otros motivos políticos o ideológicos o de creencias religiosas, en aquellos dolorosos períodos de nuestra historia.” / “La Ley de Memoria Histórica,” *Ministerio de Justicia España,* http://leymemoria.mjusticia.es/paginas/es/ley_memoria.html.
This preamble addresses a clear desire to honor any victims of the repression, though it never specifically states Franco’s name. While the law succeeded in that it addressed many concerns of citizen’s interest groups by providing reparations for individuals and families, the law “stopped well short of a truth and reconciliation process.”34 The law focused specifically on compensation for family members of Franco victims and the removal of symbols related to the regime in public places across the country.35 It also specifically addressed El Valle de los Caidos, by restricting the site to a “place of culture” or cultural heritage site without any political nature.36 However, this component has not necessarily been enforced, since the extremist Fundación Francisco Franco (Francisco Franco Foundation) continues to control the site.

Staunch supporters of Franco, the Foundation declared its purpose to be “to disseminate knowledge about the figure of Francisco Franco in his human, political, and military dimensions, through the achievements and realizations carried out by his Regime.”37 Their statement of purpose blatantly demonstrates their endorsement of the Caudillo and provides no information about the other side of the Civil War. As the Foundation publishes any and all tourist material about the Valley, they have an invaluable tool from which to control the collective memory about the Valley. While an important step from a previously silent state to address the past, the Law of Historical Memory does not seem to be enough since it fails to remove control of the Valley from the hands of this Foundation.

According to an El País survey, approximately half of Spaniards agreed with the law and another half did not, a surprising split. Considering the smaller readership of the ABC, the

34 Boyd, “Politics,” 145.
35 “La Ley de Memoria Histórica.”
36 Ibid.
popularity of the PSOE party, and the expected support for the bill by all parties (which did not happen due to the PP’s refusal), this even split was quite surprising.\textsuperscript{38} Boyd suggests that the bill did not go far enough for many and went too far for others, greatly reducing its popularity. No matter its faults, an important aspect of the law is that it never defined Spanish historical memory; “instead, it guarantees the right of each individual or group to remember the past in their own way, while asserting a governmental role in the search for historical knowledge and the promotion of ‘democratic memory’—presumably, a public sphere open to competing ‘memories.’”\textsuperscript{39} The law recognizes that a number of factions work to create historical memory, that Spain’s past is far from singular and unique for almost every citizen.

**Conclusion**

During this most recent period in Spanish history, grassroots efforts had a significant impact on the state’s decision-making. After years of a low murmur, the voices of the people finally became loud enough to break the state’s silence. The ARMH and contributors to \textit{El País} among others finally convinced the new government in power in Parliament, PSOE, that the past could be addressed without the country falling into a state chaos. Unlike Juan Ramon Resina argues, however, the state and most notably PSOE were not engaging in active repression of the past, but rather still felt afraid to break the silence. The people had to let their voices ring out over the crowd; once this happened, the state could follow along. The story is far from over, however, as this contemporary history changes every day. What we can be sure of is there will always be a multitude of voices straining for their interpretation of the past to be heard.

\textsuperscript{38} Boyd, 145-146.
\textsuperscript{39} Boyd, 146.
When I began writing about historical memory in twentieth-century Spain, I used a lot of phrases like, “this should have happened,” “why didn’t this happen?” and “they did it better in this country, what is wrong with Spain?” I inflicted my own opinions and judgments onto Spain’s history and rather than ask “why?” I asked “why not?” While these are questions that any Spaniard could and should ask, my job as a historian is to observe and reflect, not interject myself into the debate. As such, my analysis of the past seventy-five years of Spanish history radically changed throughout my course of study. I understand now that there is no single “historical memory” about a location, even one as politically marked as the Valley, but instead a multitude of memories and conceptions that together form the constant struggle that we know as “collective memory.” Although the Spanish debate over its autocratic past continues to this day, its struggle to define itself for future generations has already led to a number of revelations.

The Spanish identity crisis began centuries before the Civil War. When Franco came to power in 1939, he tried to impose his vision of a return to Spanish greatness onto all the Spanish people. He built El Valle de los Caídos as a testament to this return, yet from the very beginning it failed to connect with many Spaniards, as demonstrated by Salgado-Araujo’s memoirs. Franco had so much control over the Spanish media, however, that he was able to manipulate, at least on the outside, this official memory for the majority of his regime. When Franco passed away on 20 November 1975, his country fell into a state of uncertainty and chaos. Fearful that this newest identity crisis would emulate that of the Second Republic, the leaders of the new Spanish
democratic government enforced an amnesia regarding the repression of the past regime. While this silence played an active role in the process of memory creation, becoming itself an actor in the performance, it did allow other actors to take to the stage in a way they had not been able to do so in the past.

During the Franquist regime, the state played the dominant role and was one of the only public entities to contribute to the process of memory creation. During this time, however, conflicting private memories began to form within families and communities. After the Transition in 1976, historians, journalists, and novelists began to offer their versions of the past and their own memories to the conversation. Their opposing views provided a counterpoint to the official memory of the Franco regime and gave new life to the idea of collective memory. It was at this point in the early 1990s that many historians began to write about the idea of Spanish historical memory in the 20th century, though more as a critique of the Transition politicians than a study of the actual process. In 1992, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán published La autobiografía de general Franco, his thoughtful critique of the imposed memory of the Franco regime and one of the most demonstrative works of this period of collective memory formation. It was not until la Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica began to uncover the graves of long lost soldiers in 2000 that the state began to recognize the idea of collective memory again.

The passage of the 2007 Historical Memory Law was a monumental step in this historical memory process. Though the law was relatively conservative in nature, in that it mostly provided reparations for family members and its vague language about making the Valley a place of "rehabilitating the memory" has come to no avail, it served the purpose of opening up an important dialogue among the Spanish people about the place of historical memory.¹

Newspapers, magazines, even restaurants are full of people discussing the merits of the law and the meaning of the past. The law has acted like a tool to reinvigorate this process of historical memory and to encourage groups to continue to struggle to have their voices be heard. While many have said it did not go far enough, the 2007 law represents another critical step in the process of creating historical memory. Now it needs only to be enforced, including removing the Valley from the Francisco Franco Foundation’s control and converting it into an actual center of for historical memory and reconciliation.

I predict that the debate will develop further once the final members of the Civil War generation pass away. While many were supporters of Franco who benefited from his regime, others were former Republicans taught to be so ashamed of their past that they even hid it from their grandchildren. Once Spain’s leaders do not have to worry about losing this influential generation’s financial and political support, they will be much more likely to open up the sealed records for the public. Only then will they expose the whole truth about the Civil War and the Franco regime. Just like the ARMH opening up the mass graves and creating a visceral experience for families to physically connect them to the past through the bodies of their loved ones, when many of these documents finally come to light, they will no doubt produce many strong reactions. These documents will create another struggle among various Spanish factions and even more interpretations of the past, all taken in consideration of the political climate at the time.

Historical memory is not stagnant, but rather a never-ending cycle of re-interpretation and renewed debate about the past, influenced by a number of dissonant voices struggling to be heard. Studies of historical memory in other countries stricken with internal conflict should analyze how memory evolves over the years and who or what causes the greatest


**Articles**


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