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Did Catalonia endure a (cultural) genocide?

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Abstract. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Spanish fascism developed its own repressive tools and resources against their enemies (Republicans, Socialists, Communists and Anarchists among others) in the same way other European fascisms did. The depth of the Spanish nationalism brought Franco's repression against the Catalan society to the height of the processes of cultural and linguistic persecution in the same way that Nazism or Italian fascism had done in the territories they occupied during the years of World War II.

Keywords: Fascism, Francoism, genocide, Raphael Lemkin, Catalanism

« By shaping the term “genocide” Lemkin was posing a challenge to Historians »¹

Y. Ternon

1 What Paul Preston reminded us of: genocide as a form of Francoist repression.

In 2011, Paul Preston's book *The Spanish Holocaust. Hate and extermination during the Spanish Civil war and afterwards* (published also in Catalan and in Spanish)² awoke the old ghosts of the nominal debates, full-blown qualifications (or disqualifications), and the quantitative and qualitative hierarchies of the repressive processes of the Franco regime. Could terms like "holocaust" be used without taking any harm? Was it not a grueling

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¹ «Al forjar el término “genocidio”, Lemkin lanzaba un desafío a los historiadores.» (Ternon, 1995: 59)

² In its Catalan edition *L'holocaust espanyol. Odi i extermini durant la Guerra Civil i després*, Base (2011).

exaggeration, fueled only by publishing interests? Had not Paul Preston exaggerated the note, considering his leftist tendencies?

Beyond the arguments and discussions on Preston's work —and its title—, to which I will refer further on, the controversy was not new in Catalonia. It felt like the visit of an old acquaintance whom you have not seen for a long time. The starting point of the identification of the repression/genocide concept in the Catalan territories can be placed in 1973, when Josep Benet published, in Paris, the book *Catalunya sota el règim franquista. Informe sobre la persecució de la llengua i la cultura de Catalunya pel règim del general Franco (1a. part)*.³ In the Parisian edition's preface (which dates from January 1972, «XXXII Barcelona's occupation Anniversary by Franco's armies»), Josep Benet showed his cards:

The persecution against the Catalan language and culture was the inevitable fulfillment of one of the essential goals of the Francoist regime, the victor of the Spanish Civil War: the extinction of Catalonia as a minority nation within the Spanish State by destroying its linguistic and cultural identity, and the reduction of its language to a "patois" condition. In short: the main goal was to erase Catalan's specific personality and to colonize Catalonia in a linguistic, political, cultural and economic way. (Benet, 1972: 10)

Having confirmed their intentions and updated their program which they defined as the «inevitable fulfillment of one of the essential goals», Benet also made a second consideration which, oddly enough, has gone unnoticed:

The persecution of the Francoist regime against Catalan culture and language, during the first years of the Spanish post-war era, took place at the same time as the fierce repression the Francoism unleashed against those defeated in the conflict. This repression spread all across the Spanish territory by way of hundreds of thousands of executions, hundreds of thousands of prisoners and political exiles and by a severe undermining of the essential human rights. (Benet, 1972: 10-11)

Although the text was not quite clear, Benet suggested two fundamental issues: (i) the persecution against the language and the culture of the Catalans and (ii) the link between Catalan repression and the general violence enforced by the Francoist regime across Spain. It is important to emphasize this double aspect because one of the most common criticisms addressed to Josep Benet is that he took a sectorial and territorial repression (cultural and linguistic) for a cultural genocide, which was deemed to be a quite different issue.

However, the core of the «Benetian» thesis appeared further on:

We believe that our studies on the persecution against the Catalan language and culture prove that the Francoist State was responsible for an attempt of cultural genocide. It is true that the concept of cultural genocide was not included in the final text of the Convention for prevention and repression of genocide crimes of December 9th 1948. [...] However —and despite its exclusion— this concept unfortunately reflects a number of realities that are not only predictable but existed and continue to exist nowadays. (Benet, 1972: 11)⁴

The ambiguity of the situation was as follows: Josep Benet was dealing with an idea —«cultural genocide»—, which had been accepted in the final statement of United Nations, but was not recognized by the legal and international documents that followed, in spite of a complementary proposal suggested by the USSR and

³. *Catalonia under Francoist regime. Report on the Catalan language and culture persecution by the General Franco regime* (1st part) Edicions Catalanes de París. As it is well known, the book was distributed secretly inside the country. In 1978, Editorial Blume had republished the book in Barcelona. The success was prominent because two more reprints were published in 1978 and 1979. In 1995, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat published the final edition, under a long time expected title: *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra Catalunya* (The Francoist attempt at cultural genocide against Catalonia).

⁴. «L'estudi que presentem sobre la persecució contra la llengua i la cultura a Catalunya creiem que prova que l'Estat franquista és responsable d'un intent de genocidi cultural. És cert que el concepte de genocidi cultural no es troba previst en el text definitiu de la Convenció per a la prevenció i repressió del crim de genocidi del 9 de desembre de 1948. [...] Però, tanmateix, malgrat l'exclusió del concepte de genocidi cultural d'aquesta Convenció, aquest concepte, dissortadament, respon a unes realitats no sols previsibles, sinó que han existit i continuen existint en el món actual.»

rejected by Western countries.⁵ This proposal contained the idea that «genocide is any deliberate action carried out to destroy the language, the religion or the culture of a national, racial or religious group...» (Benet, 1972: 11). Genocidal practices could be summarized into two areas. The first one would be to forbid the use of the language in daily relations, to prohibit teaching the language at schools and to publish and distribute articles and books written in this language. The second one would be the destruction or rejection of the language in «libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, religious places or other institutions and cultural venues» (Benet, 1972: 11).

Following the Soviet proposal, Josep Benet had no doubt that «the persecution case against Catalan language and culture is clearly included into this definition of cultural genocide, and almost every description that contains has been carried out in Catalonia by General Franco's regime.» (Benet, 1972: 12). He concluded:

Given the severity of cultural genocide, one would expect the United Nations to include it among the cases that the Convention contemplates. It is imperative for the protection of Human Rights and for the rights of nations, as well as for the protection of Humanity's cultural heritage.⁶

Josep Benet was partially right in his claim of considering this concept, even if it had not been incorporated into the official legal texts. According to a normative-nominalist point of view, a «cultural genocide» never took place in Spain. Denial of the cultural genocide became the official version of what happened in Catalonia since 1939, according to the parameters designed by Raphael Lemkin which were incorporated in the project's resolution but dismissed by the United Nations Commission —the sole responsible for the final text.⁷

As years passed, Josep Benet's book and concept of «cultural genocide» became part of the canon of Catalan historical literature on the first Francoism and post-war repression. Nevertheless, Spanish historical research in general, and a good part of Catalan research addressed to Spanish Civil War studies, Francoism, repression and political violence, clearly ignored or criticized Josep Benet's book. Especially since 1995, when the title of the new edition included the word 'genocide'. The central and concurrent argument was that the title was mainly showing a nationalist point of view —i.e., biased and partial—, with an incorrect and abusive use of the concept, which was in fact created and designed to define other historical realities.⁸

The situation became more complicated when Josep Benet —along with other historians who followed his interpretation— did not clarify an important misunderstanding: they were using a *descriptive* category, «cultural genocide», which was not codified and, because of that, did not have a recognized regulatory paradigm according to the international legal canon. It is worth mentioning that it was a helpful tool to define a historical process, not a legal or criminal one. Thus, by using this concept no one was expecting an international condemnatory answer against the criminals —in this case the Spanish fascist regime. It is important to point this out because most of the criticisms and disqualifications Josep Benet and his followers received relied on self-interested misunderstandings: the Catalan historian invented a criminal, nonexistent qualification, for his own sake to define a specific historical situation. In other words, how could we ever qualify as «cultural genocide»

⁵ This has changed in recent times, as international lawyers, legal scholars, and international institutions are seriously taking into account the concept of «cultural genocide». For a recent update, see Novic (2016).

⁶ «Hom té dret a esperar que l'organització de les Nacions Unides, davant la gravetat del crim que representa el genocidi cultural, es decidirà a incloure aquest crim entre els casos previstos en l'esmentada Convenció contra el genocidi. Així ho reclama la salvaguarda dels drets de la persona humana i dels pobles i, també, la del patrimoni cultural de tota la humanitat».

⁷ For a summary on the exclusion proceeding of the term «cultural genocide» and the United Nations discussions, see Gil (1999: 166-168).

⁸ Without mentioning Benet's book as a source (he would do it further on, as we will see), and in a more updated point of view of the debate, Professor Jorge Marco did not refrain himself in showing his own satisfaction to be able to invoke Christian Gerlach, the Swiss historian (one of the best experts in the so-defined «genocide studies») which, «en su más reciente trabajo ofrece diversos argumentos para renunciar al concepto de genocidio, pero atendiendo a la cuestión de los usos públicos señala uno de vital importancia: la mayor parte de los "genocidas scholars" han asumido las narrativas nacionalistas, cuyo discurso utiliza el concepto de genocidio – gracias a la cada vez mayor etnicización de la historia – para construir y reforzar sus identidades nacionales» (aforementioned Marco, J. 2012: 339). In any case, Jorge Marco's interpretation of Gerlach's words seems a little bit exaggerated; at least, this is what can be deduced from reading Gerlach and Luna (2010), in which Christian Gerlach's explanations on «ethnicity [sic] of history» seems somewhat confusing. See also the critical review by H. Travis on Gerlach's book at *Journal of Genocide Studies* (2012).

some minor repressive episodes? It is remarkable how Spanish historical research —and some of the Catalan research as well— have had the tendency to minimize this aspect of the Francoist repressive system, arguing that this category had not been incorporated into the legal texts, that is to say, into the international conventions to prevent genocides.

On the other side, the fact remains that the term “genocide” has become chronic in a variety of Catalan texts — not only those related to History (mainly in the fields of political essay, journalism, etc.). It has also reached a place in Spanish historical research, in which the concept itself has been distorted and, of course, abused.⁹ With this consideration in mind, one can be tempted to say that it is a bad practice of Catalan nationalist historical research —thus agreeing with Christian Gerlach and his peculiar idea of *«the ever-growing ethnicization of History»*—, which would allow to dismiss any further discussion that could take us deeper into a more interesting and scientific debate.

Nationalist simplifications sometimes neglect certain aspects of Franco’s era, and makes them impossible to be discussed. What would Christian Gerlach and Professor Jorge Marco say when someone as unsuspecting of being a Catalan nationalist as Josep M. Castellet describes what he experienced in 1939? He clearly stated that that they were experiencing «annihilation» and «cultural genocide»:

The cultural repression was much worse than what the most pessimistic could have ever thought. Not only were political responsibilities persecuted, but also an entire plan, very well prepared, was executed with the solely aim of destroying everything that had been politically and culturally built in the previous years. None of it could survive, precisely because the annihilation plan was so well organized. (Castellet, 1983: 82)¹⁰

Then he added:

Someday we shall find amongst the Francoist files —if they had not been destroyed—the briefings and reports of what became a true cultural genocide. It seems obvious that in the drafting process, there were not only fascist politicians who contributed to its creation but also people coming from the intellectual world of the enemy faction. (Castellet, 1983: 82)¹¹

Josep M. Castellet was not wrong. Catalan Phalangists, the «camisas viejas» as well as newcomers from the new weekly newspaper *Destino. Política de Unidad*, made clear that besides the «annihilation» issue:

Concurrently with Catalonia’s physical occupation, it will also be necessary to conduct a sort of moral occupation. This moral occupation is, in fact, most urgent since it requires not only the kindling of a specific political inclination but also —especially— the uprooting of the existing one. («La Falange», *Destino. Política de Unidad*, 97; 8th January 1939)¹²

The «political awareness» to be absolutely destroyed mentioned in the text is the Catalan political/cultural identity. To “uproot” or to “eradicate” means to annihilate as well, as pointed out by Josep M. Castellet.

The Professor of Linguistics and Philology, Jordi Castellanos, extended the scope beyond a strictly academic approach by defining «a genocide attempt» (Castellanos, 2013 [1995]). He added other factors besides the repressive one alone: «the defeat of the war and the experience of being in exile». The sort of phenomenon that

⁹. One of the many random criticism ramifications of the Benetian thesis can be found in a historic-political combat essay by Ferrer Gironès, 1985, in which “cultural genocide” is taken a step further to “Catalan holocaust”.

¹⁰. «*La repressió cultural va ser molt més forta que no pas havien pensat els més pessimistes. Perquè no es buscaren, solament, responsabilitats polítiques, sinó que es posà en marxa un pla, molt ben preparat, d’anorreament de tot el que havia estat construït, políticament i culturalment, en els anys precedents. No es va poder salvar res, precisament perquè la planificació de l’aniquilament estava curosament pensada*»

¹¹. «*Algún dia es trobaran, en els arxius franquistes —si no és que els hagin destruït—, els informes més o menys programats, del que va esdevenir un autèntic genocidi cultural. És evident que, en la seva redacció, no hi van intervenir només els polítics feixistes, sinó gent procedent del món intel·lectual de la facció enemiga*»

¹². «*Paralela a la ocupación física de Cataluña, cabrá, pues fundamentalmente, una manera de ocupación moral. Ocupación moral que apremia tanto más, cuanto que se trata no sólo de crear una conciencia política determinada, sino primordialmente, de desarraigar otra*».

would help to destroy the structure of the Catalan society by leaving it parentless, without «leaders, politicians or intellectuals»; a very similar image, as we shall see, to the one portrayed by Raphael Lemkin in his texts.

The sociologist and publisher Francesc Vallverdú referred to «*L'intent de genocidi lingüístic*» [The attempt at linguistic genocide] (Gabriel, 1998: 75 and ff.), an odd perspective for a conspicuous text that did not contain enough data to justify such a severe assertion. However, his work reminded the prohibitive measures of dictatorship, and the setback of the social use of Catalan, not only at the (forbidden) public level, but also in the private domain. This setback related to the regime's most supportive social sectors and families, who «freely» switched from Catalan to Spanish, because Spanish could be identified more easily with Fascism and the victors of the war. Language ended up becoming a matter of social status and/or, merely, an opportunity to thrive in the new situation.¹³

Ten years later, after Josep Benet's book was republished with a new title *L'intent franquista de genocidi cultural contra Catalunya*, the term and its descriptive capacity remained very active among historians. It looked like Catalonia was experiencing, once again, a very interesting battle where opinions about the nature of Franco's repression faced the ignorance of peninsular historical studies, strictly ideologically and Spanish--centered.

The return of «cultural genocide» to historical analysis about Francoism, beyond its use in the media, came back with the work and the group led by Josep M. Solé i Sabaté. Professor Solé assembled the four volumes of *El franquisme a Catalunya [Francoism in Catalonia]*, published at Edicions 62 between 2005 and 2007. Josep M. Solé Sabaté wrote in the Introduction to the first volume (*The totalitarian dictatorship, 1939-1945*):

The Francoist dictatorship wished to eliminate Catalonia as a people and as an identity, as a culture and as a reality, in an unsuccessful attempt of cultural genocide that nevertheless, it has to be said, found Catalan collaborationists...¹⁴

The fundamental thesis — and the way of expressing it — leads to the influence exerted by Josep Benet's work about an important area of Catalan historical research. The transmission of this *Benetian* interpretation becomes also visible in the historian David Tormo's introduction to the same first volume. He entitled his statement on cultural and linguistic repression «Genocidi cultural i lingüístic. La imposició d'una cultura espanyolitzadora i uniformista» [Cultural and linguistic genocide. The imposition of a Spanishizing and uniformizing culture] (Tormo, 2007: 162-175). This work consisted of a thorough compilation of the most important legal rules and regulations aimed at implementing the prohibition of the use of the Catalan language in the public domain, completed with some examples of the Spanish cultural imposition in the country. His text is very interesting — especially the effort he makes in the summary — although he does not explain what is, according to him, the link between «cultural genocide» and Francoist repression. Implicitly, the reader can conclude that the amount of coercive measures was enough to justify the use of the expression.

Nevertheless, the reappearance of the term in this publication did not trigger any significant discussion nor any controversy. The *Benetian* terminology has been incorporated into Catalan historical research on Francoism carried out by historians, philologists and cultural historian with greater or lesser intensity, and with more or less critical approach. The term “repression” has been overlooked in other cultural or linguistic approaches. Spanish historical research publications and studies have apparently lost interest in Catalan scientific production in the past few years — in the historical one, at the very least.

Not surprisingly, Spain had to wait for a historian from the Spanish periphery, Borja de Riquer, to adopt the term «cultural genocide». Riquer explained the way this genocide was put into practice within the general frame of

¹³. Esther Tusquets' testimony regarding this aspect is fair enough: «*Mis padres, que siempre habían hablado conmigo en catalán, utilizaron con mi hermano, nacido tras la guerra, el castellano [...], que era, por una parte, el idioma de la gran pija aristocrática y alto burguesa, y, por otra, el que utilizábamos con el servicio procedentes casi siempre de otras partes de España*». (Tusquets, 2007: 24-25)

¹⁴. «*la dictadura franquista va voler fer desaparèixer Catalunya com a poble i com a identitat pròpia, com a cultura i com a realitat específica en un fracassat intent de genocidi cultural però que, tot s'ha de dir, va trobar col·laboracionistes catalans...*» (Solé, 2005-2007: 12).

repression, and how it related to the Francoist nature itself (Riquer, 2010). According to him, the first step to implement the genocide was in fact extremely easy: in addition to the dictatorship's fascist nature —or the will to turn others into fascists—, the Francoist regime was inherently and genetically *nationalistic*. Within this framework, Catholics and fundamentalists, monarchical supporters, the army, Carlists and Phalangists —or in some cases merely fascists—, could argue and confront each other within the rules and limits established by the Dictatorship and the Dictator. Despite their differences, all of them shared a common element: they represented «the most aggressive and unionist inclinations of Spanish nationalism» (Riquer, 2010: 20). To round up his explanation, Borja de Riquer added:

Even though both nationalist projects [the ultra-Catholic one and the Phalangist one, for short] were quite antagonistic and they had many passionate confrontations during Franco's dictatorship, they also showed significant ideological overlapping. Thus they agreed on the need of a “Spanish re-nationalization” and on the importance of fighting off the left-wing influences from the different nationalisms, especially the Catalan and Basque ones. (Riquer, 2010: 21).¹⁵

Indeed, the so-called historical nations (Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia) became the main targets of the new/old Spanish nationalist program, which shared and contaminated the speeches of the rebels:

One of the main obsessions of the new regime's authorities was to eliminate every single non-Spanish sign of identity, and one of the main priorities was to make the populations that shared separatist ideologies Spanish. Their aim was to cut out the entire constitutive values of the nationalist movements and their Catalan, Basque and Galician identities, as well as in other regionalist territories. Franco's Spanish nationalist project aimed at “overcoming” the existing differences within the Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician social bodies. For that reason, the Spanish national unity inevitably led to a total Unitarianism. It was necessary to overcome class struggle, to abolish all separatist movements, to forbid every political party and every trade union, and to block any dissemination of democratic and revolutionary ideas. To erase every single aspect of heterogeneity: political, ideological, or cultural identity. (Riquer, 2010: 21)¹⁶

From this point of view, cultural and linguistic repression of a particular territory, for example Catalonia, became another ring in the complex political, social, economic and nationalizing (or renationalizing) repressive system; much in the same way of what was being done in European territories under fascist and Nazi occupations.¹⁷ After describing the repressive measures effectively implemented¹⁸, he concluded:

The repressive policy against Catalan identity, not only against political Catalanism, can be considered an aggression toward a community, toward an identity, and this idea is also applicable to the repression

¹⁵. «*Aunque ambos proyectos nacionalistas eran bastante antagónicos, y se enfrentaron con pasión durante toda la dictadura de Franco, también había importantes coincidencias e incluso aspectos complementarios. Coincidián así, en la necesidad de “re-nacionalizar España” y de combatir las influencias dejadas por los nacionalismos alternativos, especialmente el catalán y el vasco.*»

¹⁶. «*Una de las mayores obsesiones de las autoridades del nuevo régimen fue la eliminación de todo signo de identidad diferente del español, por lo que una de las principales prioridades sería la españolización de la población de los territorios influidos por las ideas separatistas. Se aspiraba a extirpar totalmente los valores constitutivos de los movimientos y las identidades nacionalistas catalana, vasca y gallega, así como de los regionalismos. El proyecto nacionalista español del franquismo aspiraba a “superar” las divisiones y diversidades existentes en el cuerpo social. Por ello, la defensa de la unidad nacional española conducía inevitablemente a un unitarismo total. Era preciso superar la lucha de clases, abolir los separatismos, prohibir los partidos políticos y los sindicatos, e impedir la difusión de las ideas democráticas y revolucionarias. Es decir, borrar todo rasgo de heterogeneidad política, ideológica, identitaria o cultural.*»

¹⁷. The term ‘renacionalization’ allows us to embrace both denationalization and nationalization processes carried out by the fascisms on the conquered territories —the ones they think that they do not completely belong to the main fascist-land (Germany, Italy, Spain). Alsace and Slovenia would be almost alien territories from the central Nation (Germany, Italy). Catalonia would be partially part of this central Nation, especially if we are aware of the Spanish nationalist (in other words Francoist and Phalangist) point of view. According to this self-explanation of Spain, Catalonia was deemed to be Spanish before the Roman empire (as it can be found in the works by José M. Pemán or Pedro Font Puig, for example), and was kidnapped by an anti-Spanish minority during the second half of the 19th century at the same time that Catalans experienced a cultural rebirth, and Spain went deeply into the crisis at the end of the century.

¹⁸ Prohibition of Catalan language in the public domain, the administration and education at all levels; its disappearance from the media, from publishers; the purge and executions of persons of the cultural sphere; the Hispanicization not only of people's names, but also of country toponymy (villages, cities, rivers, mountains) and commercial companies and brands, etc.

against the Basque and Galician identities. Some historians have qualified this policy of repression as an open attempt at cultural genocide. This statement sounds very blunt, but I think we should keep in mind Javier Tusell's observation: "those who fought against Franco and were not Catalan or Basque, and those who considered themselves the true victims of the repression of the post-war era, should remember that there was a heavier punishment that was not inflicted upon them: the inability of using one's own language". Those facts well deserve the name "cultural genocide". (Riquer, 2010: 168)^{19 20}

When Paul Preston published *El Holocausto español* (2011) one year later the discussion in Spain was suddenly poisoned. In Hispanic terms, the discussion referred mainly to the use of the term *Holocaust* in the title of the book, while the subtitle, *Odio y exterminio (Hate and extermination)*, went unnoticed. In the prologue, paradoxically, the author justified the use of an expression that had been reserved to date to qualify the Jewish extermination by the Nazis. He defended his point of view by putting at the same level the numbers and degree of the Francoist repression. Further down, he wrote about «the extermination of the left», the «procedures of horror and extermination», «the extermination that targeted rebels», etc. Actually, there was no need to be shocked by this kind of vocabulary. One may remember José M. Pemán —who happily died as a respected liberal monarchic supporter— writing in 1937: «The war, with its trifle light, has helped us open our eyes. The idea of turn or political game has been replaced forever by the idea of extermination and expulsion»²¹. It was common mentioning the war and the Francoist repression in these terms.

Beyond the general discussion triggered by the book, its title and its contents, parts of the debate evidenced the lethal combination of Neo-Francoist historical research, ignorance and ideological prejudices.²² Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, for instance, became an implacable prosecutor of Paul Preston's theories. A statement that ignited a new debate on the subject has caught our attention (González Cuevas, 2011a: 154). Almost at the end of the review, Pedro Carlos González Cueva writes:

Finally, Preston tends to emphasize the "almost racist" hatred of the Francoists towards Catalonia. Were not there Catalans in the ranks of the National Army? Undoubtedly, the prohibition of the Catalan language in public places was both a political and historical mistake; Of course the prohibition of Catalan in public places was a mistake both from a political and a historical perspective; but from that to describe what happened as an extermination of Catalan population because of their self-identity is disproportionate at best. Therefore, we can ask ourselves if that hatred was so strong and intense, why

¹⁹. «*Pero la política franquista con respecto a la catalanidad, y no solo al catalanismo político, bien puede considerarse como una agresión, a una comunidad, a una identidad, y eso también puede aplicarse a los casos de las identidades vasca y gallega. Algunos historiadores han calificado esta política franquista de claro intento de genocidio cultural. La frase puede parecer muy contundente, pero pienso que debe retenerse el razonamiento de Javier Tusell: "los militantes antifranquistas no catalanes o vascos, que consideran que ellos mismos sufrieron el ápice de la represión de la posguerra, debieran tener en cuenta existió una pena que ellos no padecieron, la imposibilidad de utilizar la propia lengua. Lo que produjo entonces bien merece ser designado como genocidio cultural"*. »

²⁰. Regarding these synthetic works, for instance the one from Borja de Riquer, it is a bit disturbing that, in the book dedicated to culture and society during the Dictatorship (Gracia García y Ruiz Carnec, 2001) —a similar compilation as the one from Marcial Pons-Crítica (the same publishing company in charge of the previous Borja de Riquer's book)— there are no comments nor mentions of the cultural and linguistic repression, either in Catalonia, the Basque Country nor Galicia. The closest to some kind of deliberation on this matter appears within a generic paragraph, in which the most important thing is to talk about the adjective «fascist»: «Franco's regime behaves as a fascist regime. The regime was trying to implement a certain political culture among citizens that was able to allow war vanquishers to remain and keep the power. As for the Italian case, and the German, a new cultural official discourse was instituted in a wider sense, but as if it was coming from their own population» (Gracia y Ruiz 2001: 69); «*el régimen de Franco se comporta como un régimen fascista. Lo que el régimen pretendía era implantar una determinada cultura política entre los ciudadanos que permitiera la continuidad en el poder de los vencedores de la Guerra. Tanto en el caso italiano como alemán, se intenta imponer un nuevo discurso cultural en el sentido más amplio, pero identificando como algo procedente de la población*» (Gracia y Ruiz, 2001: 69) And the icing on the cake: we realize that «*la poderosa presión política de la cultura del régimen*» had a «*expresión castellana y antinacionalista de intención política*» (Gracia y Ruiz, 2001: 66). That is to say: Francoism and Phalangism were "anti-nationalist".

²¹. «*La guerra, con su luz de fruslería, nos ha abierto los ojos a todos. La idea de turno o juego político ha sido sustituida para siempre por la idea de exterminio y de expulsión.* »

²²The most important argument took place in the magazine *Historia del Presente*, 17 (2011) and 18 (2011), with the statements by Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, Gutmaro Gómez Brava and Ismael Saz. Furthermore, González Cuevas reviewed Paul Preston's book at the extreme right-wing and neo-francoist magazine *Razón Española* (2011b). Other remarkable overviews can be found in Reig Tapia (2012) and Sanz, (2011).

Franco's Spain not carried out mass, selective or permanent expulsions of the Basque or Catalan population. There was no deportation project in the Franco Spain for creating an ethnically homogenous or politically secure state. That, I believe, should be taken into account when so many references are made, generally very lightly, about assumptions and theories on genocide and extermination projects.²³

Of course, Paul Preston had not written what was attributed to him by the Spanish historian, at least not this grotesque description stated by González Cuevas. Preston just tried to explain the main events of Francoist occupation in moderate terms, as shared by many other Spanish historians that had investigated this subject. E.g. the «arbitrary brutality» (2011: 739) and extreme violence exerted against the Catalan region of Lleida (among many victims Preston presents 18 women «two of them pregnant and at least two raped»), «the wild nature» of the repression of General Sagardía's troops in Pallars Sobirà, etc.²⁴ From here on, the British historian just documented (by using lots of examples from local history research brilliantly developed in the last decades) women's rape episodes, extrajudicial executions, confiscations, disappearances, etc. He also recalled — and that was maybe one of the things that most bothered Pedro C. González Cuevas — the words used by José Artero, Canon of the Cathedral of Salamanca, during the Mass to honor Tarragona's occupation: « ¡Perros catalanes! No sois dignos del sol que os alumbrá. » [Catalan dogs, you don't deserve the light of the sun!]. Preston also mentioned the main classical Francoist writers, such as Victor Ruíz Albéniz, El Tebib Arrumi, and his well-known judgment about Catalonia:

[Catalans] need a biblical punishment (Sodoma, Gomorra) in order to purify their red city, home of anarchists and separatists... as the only possible remedy of those two cancers by using an implacable method.²⁵

Nowhere did he consider the violence and repression of the Francoists as genocide or holocaust. On the matter of cultural and linguistic repression, he only mentioned the testimony of such a qualified person as the first Civil Governor of Barcelona, Wenceslao González Oliveros, showing that there was no tolerance towards regionalisms or particular regional identity, because this weakness would provoke, once again, the «same putrefaction just removed surgically».²⁶

Ismael Saz (2011) contested González Cuevas' manipulative statement, and the spark came from somewhere else as well. This is confirming that in 2011 the capacity of understanding of certain Spanish academy was beneath acceptable. It is true that González Cuevas is an extreme right-wing political scientist and a radical Spanish nationalist, but this is no excuse for the mistake. Jorge Marco did the same when he placed Josep Benet's book in the same basket in which all the reactionary unworthiness of Vicente Cárceles Ortí and the obnoxious and demagogical theories of César Vidal were thrown (Marco, 2012: 365, note 6).

No one seemed to understand that Josep Benet and his followers were referring to the so-called «cultural genocide», as a concept that even someone as unfriendly towards Catalan and Catalanist historiography as

²³. «Por último, Preston tiende a enfatizar el odio "casi racista" de los franquistas hacia Cataluña. ¿Acaso no hubo catalanes en las filas del Ejército Nacional? Sin duda, la prohibición de la lengua catalana en los lugares públicos fue un error tanto político como histórico; pero de ahí al exterminio de catalanes por el hecho de serlo hay una distancia sideral. Por ello, podemos preguntarnos que si ese odio fue tan fuerte e intenso, ¿por qué la España de Franco no llevó a cabo expulsiones masivas, selectivas o permanentes de la población vasca o catalana? No existió en la España de Franco ningún proyecto de deportación de pueblos con el objetivos de crear un Estado étnicamente homogéneo o políticamente seguro. Esto, creo yo, debería tomarse muy en cuenta cuando se hacen tantas referencias, por lo general a la ligera, sobre supuestos afanes o proyectos exterminadores o genocidas.»

²⁴. General Sagardía's and the behavior of his troops in the Catalan Pallars region could surely be categorized as «war crimes». They followed the same procedures as that of many episodes during the Second World War, mainly in territories occupied by the armies of the Fascist Regimes. Gimeno (1989) synthesizes the episode. It is worth mentioning that this General still holds his name in lots of streets and squares and even some villages in Northern Spain.

²⁵. « un castigo bíblico (Sodoma y Gomorra) para purificar la ciudad roja, la sede del anarquismo y del separatismo..., como único remedio para extirpar esos dos cánceres por el termocauterío implacable ».

²⁶. «España se alzó, con tanta o mayor fiereza, contra los Estatutos desmembradores que contra el comunismo», «mismo proceso de putrefacción que acabamos de extirpar quirúrgicamente» [Spain raised in arms, in a strong and fierce way against the autonomous Statutes that were tearing Spain apart as well as against Communism] *La Vanguardia Española*, August 5th 1939

Antonio Elorza (2012) defends with remarkable enthusiasm.²⁷ This is the key of a false debate, that has been based either on a lie —pretending that the Catalan cultural genocide meant the whole Francoist repression extended over the Catalan society— or on ignorance. Very likely, this ignorance is due to not knowing the Catalan historical literature concerning these affairs. This is quite possible.²⁸

It is also true that mistakes made by historians like Albert Balcells help to increase the confusion and disregard that Catalan historical research endures. Balcells, without quoting anyone, had stated:

United Nations defined on December 9th 1948, that Cultural genocide is not only the physical extermination of a people but also any other action with the aim to destroy their language, their religion and their culture. It consists in forbidding this language in schools and in periodical publications. According to this definition, it exactly was an Identity genocide imposed over Catalonia by the Spanish Civil War winners. (Balcells, 2012: 83)

Balcells not only went much further than Josep Benet, but defended an approach that was not true. All the arguments that supposedly sustained this approach were inconsistent. To make matters worse, he invented the «identity genocide» concept that does not appear in any other orthodox historical text.

His mistake was very serious, and over-ruled any subsequent approach. However, it had a positive aspect as it kindled the need, the urgent need, to come back to the intellectual sources concerning the issue, and to pull out Catalan historical research from the dead end in which it had been trapped.

2 The original source: Rapahel Lemkin and his impact.

The primary source is Raphael Lemkin's work —the jurist of Polish origin who created and defined the term *genocide* in his seminal *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944).²⁹ Lemkin defines the concept as a «new term and a new inception to destroy nations»:

New conceptions require new terms. By "genocide" we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc. Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group. (Lemkin, 1944: 79)

But Raphael Lemkin said more things, and some of them are extremely useful to define some of the Francoist repressive politics conducted in Catalonia. Genocide, he explained, has two phases: the first one is the destruction of the national features that an oppressed group has; the second is the imposition of the features of the oppressor's national identity:

²⁷. Indeed, the author defends this concept, but he doesn't mention any of these cultural genocide's examples.

²⁸. In the very long and irregular report at *Hispania Nova* which has been mentioned so many times. coordinated by Julio Aróstegui, Jorge Marco and Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, under the general title «De Genocidios, Holocaustos, Exterminios... Sobre los procesos represivos en España durante la Guerra Civil y la Dictadura», there is a remarkable absence in the bibliographical and historical mentions about repressive proceedings held in Catalonia, even though a lot of research has been made.

²⁹. Lemkin's book has been translated into many language, e.g. into French (2008) and Spanish (2009).

Denationalization was the word used in the past to describe the destruction of a national pattern. The author believes, however, that this is inadequate because: (1) it does not connote the destruction of the biological structure; (2) in connoting the destruction of one national pattern, it does not connote the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor; and (3) denationalization is used by some authors to mean only deprivation of citizenship.

Many authors, instead of using a generic term, use currently terms connoting only some functional aspect of the main generic notion of genocide. Thus, the terms " Germanization," " Magyarization," "Italianization," for example, are used to connote the imposition by one stronger nation (Germany, Hungary, Italy) of its national pattern upon a national group controlled by it. The author believes that these terms are also inadequate because they do not convey the common elements of one generic notion and they treat mainly the cultural, economic, and social aspects of genocide, leaving out the biological aspect, such as causing the physical decline and even destruction of the population involved. (Lemkin, 1944: 79-80)

Ultimately, "cultural genocide" would be a partial aspect of an overall reach, the physical destruction of a national group (that is to say, a genocide).³⁰ Had Catalan historians who have used this terminology returned to the original source, Raphael Lemkin, instead of persistently standing on what he might or might not have said, a political and juridical agreement between ideological antagonistic States within United Nations would have taken a different and much more interesting path.

In 1944, Lemkin had no doubt about the political and cultural dimension of genocide's phenomena. Instead, by the time he was defining several genocide techniques he was pointing at some realities not that far from Catalonia. In the political sphere, the way he described the consequences of German occupation of Western Poland, Eupen, Malmédy and Moresnet, as well as Luxembourg, Alsace and Lorraine, were very similar to ours:

Every reminder of former national character was obliterated. Even commercial signs and inscriptions on buildings, roads, and streets, as well as names of communities and of localities, were changed to a German form. Nationals of Luxemburg having foreign or non-German first names are required to assume in lieu thereof the corresponding German first names; or, if that is impossible, they must select German first names. As to their family names, if they were of German origin and their names have been changed to a non-German form, they must be changed again to the original German. (Lemkin, 1944: 83)

Lemkin wrote about other strategies which were not implemented in Spain —the occupied territory's colonization by expulsing the native population, for instance—, confiscation of assets and properties to be given to the German settlers —as happened, for instance, in Poland—. Nevertheless, there were enough troubling coincidences. On the cultural side:

(...) the local population is forbidden to use its own language in schools and in printing. According to the decree of August 6, 1940, the language of instruction in all Luxemburg schools was made exclusively German. The French language was not permitted to be taught in primary schools; only in secondary schools could courses in that language continue to be given. German teachers were introduced into the schools and they were compelled to teach according to the principles of National. (Lemkin, 1944: 85)

It should be pointed out that in the post-war era in Catalonia, Francoism went a little further than Germans: Catalan disappeared from all educational levels, from primary school to university.

³⁰. Jorge Marco (2015) tried to question the analytic working base of Raphael Lemkin —the genocide as a persecution and destruction of a national group: destroying its own featuring and defining elements— by making a fake antinationalist analysis, crowned by the so well appreciated statement by Spanish nationalist historians —that «all national identities belonging to nations, ethnical or racial groups are only "imaginary communities" [Benedict Anderson is the author of this expression]». But if you take this as a valid point, why then, in Catalonia, that many people were persecuted for being «rojo-separatistas» («red-separatists»)? It doesn't look like Francoists and Phalangists believed very deeply in the «imaginary community» concept; that is to say, it seems they considered this community very real, in fact. On the other side, it is also true that Marco didn't know that this «rojo-separatista» criminal category (so to speak) existed. Further on I will get back to this point.

Cultural activities, in all its expressions, were perfectly controlled by the State:

In order to prevent the expression of the national spirit through artistic media, a rigid control of all cultural activities has been introduced. All persons engaged in painting, drawing, sculpture, music, literature, and the theater are required to obtain a license for the continuation of their activities. Control in these fields is exercised through German authorities. In Luxemburg this control is exercised through the Public Relations Section of the Reich Propaganda Office and embraces music, painting, theater, architecture, literature, press, radio, and cinema. Every one of these activities is controlled through a special chamber and all these chambers are controlled by one chamber, which is called the Reich Chamber of Culture (*Reichskulturkammer*). The local chambers of culture are presided over by the propaganda chief of the National Socialist Party in the given area. Not only have national creative activities in the cultural and artistic field been rendered impossible by regimentation, but the population has also been deprived of inspiration from the existing cultural and artistic values. (Lemkin, 1944: 84)

Transfers cannot be automatically made from one to another reality. However, taking into account the early period of the Francoist totalitarian behavior, and Nazi-fascists influence on the first cultural activities and organizations of the dictatorship —and, at the same time, the forced nationalization they wanted to develop— one could think that what was being done in the occupied territories (designed in Berlin) could become an interesting reference model for Spain.

Data provided by Lemkin allows a comparative analysis or, in general, a study of the linguistic and cultural repression mechanisms (also probably political) applied to various European regions during the World War II.³¹ It would thus be interesting to know how the Italian policies on the French territories, temporary dominated by the Italian fascists (Nice, Haute-Savoie, Corsica), or in the Dalmatian coast, performed.³² Indeed, in the occupation of Istria, an interesting paradox takes place: the first news about the Italian occupation that reached Barcelona when Franco's regime was at its height were published without problems. Manuel Brunet —a non-suspicious republican or left-wing journalist— disclosed in a couple of articles in the weekly newspaper *Destino* the Italian's occupation results in Istria:

The fascist regime was very hard against the Croatian and Slovenian population in Istria. Their language and even their popular songs were forbidden, and a flood of Italian public servants invaded the whole Istrian territory, ruling it as a conquered country. [...] Under the fascist regime, the change was brutal, and non-Istrian Italians felt uncomfortable in their own homes. In some important villages there was no governmental authority: the mayor of one of them was a civil servant of the Governor and prefect of Fiume, he was a native of Southern Italy and was not precisely known for his administrative morality. (Brunet [signing *Romano*], 1947)

Manuel Brunet was more specific on another occasion. In a little fishing village called Volosca, next to Abbazia, where Francesc Cambó had a residence, in the province of Fiume —which became part of the Yugoslavian Republic in 1947, in the Croatian region—:

In the parochial church from Volosca, a village next to Fiume, we established a relation with a Croatian old man with whom we shared a seat on the pew. He was a very distinguished man. [...] One day, after the dominical mass, he offered us a seat in a bench in the little garden that decorated the high piazza of the church. We had never exchanged a single word with him. We were very surprised, that, very naturally and without any precaution, he said in a broken Italian: "Isn't it sad that since Volosca belongs to Italy it is forbidden to preach the Gospel in the Croatian language? I feel like a foreigner in my church. Isn't it very sad that in order to sing our inoffensive popular songs we all have to assemble in the loneliest country houses in the mountains? I already know you are Spanish³³ and that you won't

³¹ Spanish historical research interest on Francoism for its repressive practices in the cultural and intellectual spheres, etc, is disappointing in general terms, but quite helpful in other most specialized areas (I think of work by professor Fernando Larraz and his digital magazine, *Represura*). But, in the fields of repression and Francoist violence the connection between repressive, social and economic politics, and renationalization procedures as well as cultural and linguistic thefts, is almost nonexistent, to the extent that a majority of historians refuse or ignore it (or simply because they are Spanish fascists).

³² A different comparative and in some cases debatable yet interesting approach (perhaps the translation from the original text made by the own author contributes to the confusion) can be found in Skerrett (2007).

³³ Taking into account the kind of conversation, it is very possible that this Volosca man considered Manuel Brunet as a Catalan. Indeed, Brunet should had censured himself while writing the article.

betray me.” The subject of the conversation was always the same when, after coming out of the church we used to smoke a cigarette sitting in the little square’s bench. And it wasn’t easy to make him change the subject, talking about the rain season or the Adriatic Sea travels. Perhaps, if our pew’s neighbor is still alive, he is now persecuted for his fervent Catholicism or for owning some land in his beloved Istrian coast. It is also possible that this Croatian patriot was killed under the Croatian government rule. Because, fascist or communist, totalitarian states have to infringe, one way or another, the natural laws of freedom, and they must base their success on the triumph of hatred and practicing power over the law.»³⁴ (Brunet [Romano], 1945)

An attempt to make a comparative analysis should acknowledge the fundamental idea that temporary contexts, historical circumstances or basic policies —mainly the racist ones, which led to the displacements of the population, the violent «Germanisation» that Rapahel Lemkin spoke of, etc.— are not automatically comparable to States and societies as different as the Italian, German and Spanish ones. This premise cannot be challenged, but it forecloses a descriptive approach to different repression levels of the nationalization processes, such as the Slovenian, the Alsatian or the Catalan ones, who suffered from different degrees of repression and violent policies, politically, culturally and linguistic.

Looking at the geography of repression in occupied territories —and, in this sense, Catalonia was militarily occupied, the same way as Alsace, Slovenia and the French Savoy, we need only to read the fascist texts of the time—, we realize that fascist regimes shared many basic, elemental mechanisms. In a second phase, Italians and Germans developed racist and/or exterminatory policies that, in the Spanish case —fortunately—, were not applied. But, as a matter of fact, some of the geographical, ethnical, historical and social practices implemented in those territories were exchangeable. In Alsace —as Rapahel Lemkin stated in 1944—, the Germanisation of names and surnames —in Spanish paradoxically family names had not been questioned—, commercial trading names and shops, were implemented very fast and in a very brutal way (Verneret, 2011). Indeed, the Nazi occupation was extraordinarily tough: speaking French in public could be punished with temporary detention; civil servants were obligated to sign a loyalty statement to the Reich and to Adolf Hitler —something very similar happened in Spain, where university professors had to swear allegiance to the «Movement principles» (*Principios del Movimiento*) etc. In other occupied areas, procedures were very similar across all fascist European countries:

The associative fabric has almost all been replaced by the satellite organizations of the NSDAP, which cultivated the taste of the uniform of the Nazi symbolism. From school to businesses and even to leisure organizations for women, children, seniors, etc., the regime marks its presence by the Nazi symbolism and the will of a complete indoctrination of society. (Verneret, 2011)

Most probably, without the efficiency and the visual power that Nazi organizations projected, we must remember the Franco-phalangist efforts to frame Spanish society within the *Sección Femenina* (Female Section), el *Frente de Juventudes* (the Youth Front), etc.

And what about the areas under Italian fascist control? If we assume that renationalization procedures were a common practice of the European fascist policies —for instance, Germany, Italy and Spain in 1939—, it is not

³⁴. «En la iglesia parroquial de Volosca, población situada cerca de Fiume, llegamos a trabar relación con un croata ya anciano con quien ocupábamos un extremo del mismo banco. Era un hombre muy distinguido. [...] Un día a la salida del oficio dominical, nos ofreció un puesto en un banco del pequeño jardín que decoraba la elevada plazoleta de la iglesia. Nunca habíamos cambiado con él una sola palabra. Es por esto que nos sorprendió en gran manera que con la mayor naturalidad del mundo, y sin precaución de ninguna clase empezara diciendo en un pésimo italiano: ‘¿No es triste que desde que Volosca es italiana esté prohibido predicar el Evangelio en lengua croata? Me siento forastero en mi iglesia. ¿Y no es también muy triste que para cantar nuestras inofensivas canciones populares tengamos que reunirnos en las casas de campo más solitarias de la montaña? Ya sé que usted es español y que no ha de traicionarme’. El tema de conversación fue siempre el mismo cada vez que al salir de la iglesia fumábamos un cigarrillo sentado en el banco de la plazoleta. Y no era fácil hacerle cambiar de tema hablándole de la proximidad del período de lluvias o de viajes por el Adriático. Tal vez, si es que nuestro vecino del banco de la iglesia de Volosca vive aún, ha sido perseguido ahora por el delito de ser un ferviente católico o de poseer unas tierras en aquel levante istriano que él tanto amaba. Y es probable que ese venerable patriota corata haya sido asesinado al ser gobernado por croatas. Porque, fascista o comunista, el Estado totalitario ha de conculcar una u otra, o todas las libertades del derecho natural y basar sus éxitos en el triunfo del odio y de la fuerza sobre el derecho»

surprising that the Italian management of Slovenia —or regions such as Venezia Giulia or the Alto Adige— was based on repressive and supplanted mechanisms very similar to the ones used in Alsace and Catalonia. Indeed, neither the chronology nor the historical context —the Second World War with all its complexity among all these Balkan and bordering regions: double military occupation, first Italian, then German; the extremist-racist policies; the enforced movements of population, etc.— allow us to make a static and mechanic comparison. But when we read the board that the fascists of Dignano—in the Udine's province, in Friül— made and hanged on the façades of houses, we may recognize the familiar air of Italian fascists nationalization policies:

N.F.-Squadristi-Dignano Command

Warning!

It is absolutely forbidden to speak in Slavic language in public gatherings, in the streets of Dignano and in stores of any kind.

ONLY ITALIAN LANGUAGE

We Squadrists, with persuasive methods, will make this order be complied.

THE QUARTERS

In the years that Slovenia was under Italian fascist domination, the repressive policies of nationalization followed well-known patterns; the non-Italian written media were closed (as well as radio stations): the Slovenian language was forbidden in the educational system; all the names of villages, streets, routes were Italianized, as well as the names, surnames and commercial trading names and brands, etc. These kind of actions were also implemented in Venezia Giulia and in the Alto Adige, with the active participation and enthusiasm of local and regional fascists, who combined the Italian nationalist speech with anticommunist and antidemocratic claims (Premik, 2004). Krožek Premik describes a more general and more extensive program of renationalization, with destitution of civil servants —in an extraordinarily more radical depuration and expulsion process than in the case of Spain—, attempts of agrarian colonization with people from southern Italy, etc., The repressive model resembles much more the project of conquest and construction of the Nazi *lebensraum* than the idea of the «Cataluña recuperada para España» of the Franco-phalangists.

On the eastern border of Italy, in the French Savoy, the occupation and the fascist-nationalization combination worked quite similarly. Nice was submitted to «an intense fascist propaganda aimed at promoting Italianization»: «It is not merely the urban views which are modified by changes in the names of streets, the signs of the shops, or even the signaling, but also the very culture». In Menton, «Italianization is accompanied by the fascistization of the city» (Grillève, 2012: 253-54).

Indeed, the modification of the urban space —for example, with the intervention on street names, or the imposition of language in posters, indicators, etc.— is one of the most obvious samples of these forced processes of renationalization that European fascisms imposed. In the Spanish case, the note published by Wenceslao González Oliveros, Civil Governor of Barcelona, on the liquidation of signage in Catalan language, belonged to a program of ferocious renationalization, as remarkable as the one carried out by Nazis and Italian fascists in their occupied territories. Furthermore, in the Catalan case, the change of language not only affected the public space, but also reached the private sphere, as can be read at the end of the governor's decree:

Barcelona and its province have to offer their residents and visitors, national and foreigners, the appearance of a land as fully Spanish as it was in times of its most glorious tradition, when the monarchs, immortal founders of the Spanish Empire, were as pleased to reside in this city as in their own headquarters. I have arranged to grant a term that will end on the 15th of the current month of September so that the remains of red-separatist inscriptions disappear and be replaced by texts correctly drafted in the national language. Those that still appear in any other language, in facades, commercial samples, documents used in relation to the public, inscriptions and signs, as well as all kinds of writings, announcements and documents of public and private entities, associations and foundations of any kind and, obviously, those that belong to public services without exception, both in the capital and in the province. [*Solidaridad Nacional*, September 5th 1939]

As already stated, the lowest common denominator of repression remained, and this allows us to link most of the repressive practices carried out in three regions as different Alsace, Slovenia and Catalonia, designed and executed within the frame of the renationalization process of the main European fascisms. From 1943, with Benito Mussolini's fall and Fascism in retreat, Germany took control over these regions — in some of them, such as Slovenia or Istria, the violence of war and the cruel combats against the partisans, had radicalized even more the repressive policies— and the repressive nationalization practice made both a brutal qualitative and quantitative leap. But in a new complex and violent reality, some events happened —at least in the cultural-symbolic arena— that were not very far from the Catalan situation of the early forties. For example, the impulse that the German propaganda apparatus gave to the «trestinismo» —the « richiamo al patriottismo locale »— (Colloti, 2002: 195) that referred to Trieste's recoverable past —before 1919—. It reminds us of the «Barcelonism» —the invention of a past that is kind and friendly, almost idyllic, limited to the city of Barcelona— that local Francoist media, such as *Destino. Política de Unidad* as well as *Diario de Barcelona*, continually used against national identities, the local “invented community” (Cassany, 2011: 13-26).

Nevertheless, the three European fascisms failed in their renationalization programs. In the Venezia Giulia's Italian case, Krozek Primek asserted with severity that it was a « *real program for the integral destruction of the national Slovenian and Croatian identity. The outcome was nevertheless quite modest, not for unwillingness, but because of lack of resources which in this one, such as in other fields, rendered unrealistic the totalitarian aspirations of the regime*» (Premik, 2004). In the Spanish case, despite lasting longer, in 1945, before the end of the decade, Franco-phalangist most ambitious project had already failed.

3 The "rojo-separatista" enemy and the genocidal language.

It is possible to find a common minimum denominator across the repressive policies of European Fascists States addressed to fight on the one side social class, ideological or national enemies (communists, democrats, socialists, etc) and, on the other side, for instance, Slovenians, Alsatians or Catalans. One key of this common minimum denominator is the radical nationalism that impregnated these fascisms, and that, in the German case, moves towards extreme racist and exterminating policies. Indeed, Francoism —tied to a fierce Spanish nationalism— did not take things as far as German nationalists did; there was no extermination practice or collective deportation orders, as it happened in the European regions occupied by the Nazis and the Italian fascists even before the beginning of the war in September 1939. Yet, this fact —which can be explained by many different reasons, starting with very different historical and temporary contexts— did not prevent the construction of the image of the enemy and the spreading of an extremely violent discourse against this enemy, who had to be fought and destroyed, not only physically, but morally, culturally and professionally.

Many Spanish historians have tried to define this *enemy*, this obstacle to the radical renationalization process that the lethal combination of Spanish fascism and religious and cultural fanaticism fostered, but have never tuned enough. For instance, in an insufficient and clearly partial analysis, Jorge Marco (2015b) only found the «rojo» (red) as the true «inner enemy» of Spanish fascism:³⁵

Rojo was in fact everyone who contravened, with actions and identities, what the rebels defined as the “natural order” of Spanish society, to the point of being qualified as the denial of the Nation: the anti-Spain. The Rojos were attributed with cultural elements, linked to foreign fashion and political ideologies, from socialism to liberalism, and all the progressive isms of their time. (Souza, 1947b)³⁶

³⁵. Cfr. also Sevillano Calero (2010) and Àngel Duarte (2010). They very astonishingly forget the «rojo-separatista» issue in their links between enemies of the Spanish fascist-nationalists.

³⁶. «*Rojo era todo aquel que contravenía con sus prácticas e identidades aquello que los rebeldes consideraban el “orden natural” de la sociedad española, hasta el punto de ser calificados como la negación de la nación: la Anti-España. Al rojo se le atribuían elementos de tipo cultural, vinculados a modas e ideologías extranjeras, desde el socialismo al liberalismo, pasando por la multiplicidad de ismos progresistas de la época.*»

Nevertheless, the enemy was not only «rojo»: it was not even the most important or the most dangerous. To understand the depth of the Spanish fascist violence —during the war and afterwards— it is indispensable to identify the absolute, total enemy: the «rojo-separatista», not only «rojo» but «rojo-separatista».

It is necessary to not make the mistake —common in Spanish historical research— of thinking that the «rojo-separatista» enemy was a category designed only for Catalanist and Basque nationalists. When the Phalangists from Donostia thought of the «rojo-separatista revolution», which was «more cruel and stupid than any of the precedent liberal and communist revolutions» (Souza, 1937c), they were not referring to the independentist or anarchist claims from Barcelona or Bilbao. They were referring to «the savagery of the rojo-separatist leaders, especially the ones in Madrid», responsible for the destruction of the artistic heritage in the Republican area. Was there any «rojo-separatista» leader in Madrid in 1937?

The enemy to be destroyed —responsible for the “martyrdom” of so many Phalangists, «that is expecting the exemplary vengeance that we must pay in their tribute»— (Souza, 1937c) were the «rojo-separatistas», a category whose main creator, Maximiano García Venero (*Tresgallo de Souza* for the glory of the Phalangist letters), made perfectly clear:

We were pleased with the name “reds” which was applied benignly to the components and defenders of the Popular Front. “Reds” are the Anarchists and the Marxists and even their Republican auxiliaries. But among the factors of the tragic war of these months, the separatists have as much responsibility as the “reds”.

The separatists, aided by the federalist and autonomist republicans, made possible the triumph of Marxism and Anarchism. It was the separatists who gave way to the unpatriotic current, which flowed from the decades of parliamentary liberalism. It was necessary that people did not forget the participation of the separatists in the agony of the Spanish essence, culminated in the five years of the Republic. We then gave existence to the word "red-separatist". This entails the rejection and condemnation of the Marxist and Anarchist bandits and the Catalan separatists. This word contained the rejection and the damnation of Marxists and anarchist bandits and of Catalan separatists.» (Souza, 1937c)

Here is the enemy! the «radical problem», that Víctor d’Ors (son of Eugeni d’Ors, the «Xenius» of early cultural Catalanism), wrote referring only to a part of the «rojo-separatista» combination:³⁷

This is a radical problem —from its roots— that must be radically solved. And there is no middle ground. We must not say: "political autonomy, no; administrative, yes "; or else "official language, no, family language, yes". All of these are blunders. There is no Administration without politics, nor familiar language which cannot become, and must become, indeed, a language of culture. And why shouldn't a language of culture have its official consecration? No. We are going to build the New Spain with unsurpassed solidity. And so we say once and for all: any element of differentiation that can irremediably separate Spaniards morally or materially from each another, must be avoided and, if necessary, annihilated.³⁸

Not much has been said in Spanish historical research on the importance of genocide language; and it is perhaps necessary to start analyzing it with attention. We constantly read statements such as the following ones: (i) the war imposed the idea of «expulsion and extermination» (José M. Pemán); (ii) the well-known «¡Catalan dogs! You don't deserve the light of the sun», from the Canon José Artero; (iii) the «biblical punishment, the implacable “termocauterio” (destruction)» (Víctor Ruíz Albéniz); (iv) the «process of putrefaction that we just retired surgically» (Wenceslao González Oliveros); (v) the «separatism infamous and parricide» (Cuadrado); (vi) «the unforgivable crime that is separatism» (Antonio Nero Campelo); (vii) the reconstruction of Spanish

³⁷ As quoted by Riquer (2010: 62). The citation comes from V. Ors (1937) in *Proyección mundial del nacionalsindicalismo. La reconstrucción de España (I)*. It is also mentioned by Núñez Seixas (2006: 313-314).

³⁸ «Esto es un problema radical – de raíz – que radicalmente debe ser resuelto. Y no caben términos medios. No vale decir: “autonomía política, no; administrativa sí”; o bien: “lengua oficial, no, Lengua de familia, sí”. Todo esto son torpezas. No hay Administración sin política, ni lenguaje familiar que no se pueda, y se convierta en efecto, en lengua de cultura. Y una lengua de cultura ¿por qué no ha de tener consagración oficial? No. Vamos a construir la nueva España con solidez sin igual. Y por ello decimos una vez para todas: todo elemento de diferenciación que pueda irremediamente separar moral o materialmente a los españoles, deber ser evitado y, si es preciso, aniquilado”.

national unity is «restored with blood and fire»; (viii) the invocations to «our permanent violence» against separatism and the reminder that «it is not possible to feel pity for separatists. It is the black beast of the Spanish tragedy» or «the exemplar vengeance we must render» the Phalangist martyrs (Maximiano García Venero); (ix) the warning that «we do not only fight to exterminate Marxism and Freemasonry from our ground, but also for the unity and the elevation of Spain itself» (Luis Hurtado Álvarez); (x) the good news such as «criminal separatism has been exterminated» (*El Heraldo de Aragón*, 15th February 1939); (xi) the «final and irrevocable account clearance» (José M. del Moral); (xii) the ineludible Queipo de Llano stating: «Phalangists will end with this plague of nationalists, who are no other than bandits, murderers and non-patriots, and we won't stop until we will see them dragged by a horse or rotting in jail»; (xiii) the famous Francisco de Cossío pointing out that «the stigma of betrayal» of the (Catalan and Basque) separatists «remains sealed by the overpowering violence of conquest».³⁹ These are expressions that should facilitate the reflection of Spanish historical research on these subjects.

Also, Spanish experts in repression and violence procedures could pause and read Professor Xosé M. Núñez-Seixas' opinion about this issue: «For the group of socio-political sectors identified with the rebels, the nationalist discourse was revealed from the beginning as its most efficient mobilizing instrument, as well as its most widespread mobilizing instrument» (2006: 180).⁴⁰ And, thus, the «mobilizing instrument» would be the previous step to the gestation of the «true extermination language» (Ternon, 1995: 97) which, luckily for the Catalans, was only specified with some legal prohibition measures, which were carried with a severity worthy of the Spanish national cause, but that didn't lead to the physical destruction of the national group (who is the one that establishes the official definition of genocide). Further on, by the way, Yves Ternon makes a warning I have never seen a comment in the debates on these questions in Spain: «The verbal aggression sounds the alarm. The use of certain words, of certain formulas, the creation of certain associations of ideas, are already the instruments of a criminal practice» (ibid.).

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³⁹ This little section of examples —it is also possible to find dozens of them in the Francoist and Phalangist war texts and, indeed, the post-war era—, has been made browsing the books by Josep Benet and Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, previously mentioned. It is still necessary to carry out an exhaustive and meticulous research on Francoist bibliography and on the articles published in the media printed in the rebel zone during the war year.

⁴⁰ «Para el conjunto de sectores sociopolíticos identificados con los rebeldes, el discurso nacionalista se reveló desde un principio como su instrumento movilizador más eficiente, así como su instrumento movilizador más extendido»

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