



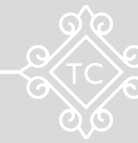
—
TORRERO CEMETERY
WALKING ROUTES

THE TORRERO CEMETERY: A PLACE OF MEMORIES (1936-2010)

JULIÁN CASANOVA



Zaragoza
AYUNTAMIENTO



TORRERO CEMETERY
WALKING ROUTES

THE TORRERO CEMETERY: A PLACE OF MEMORIES (1936-2010)

JULIÁN CASANOVA

page 3

LINING UP TO DIE

page 6

VICTIMS

page 14

MEMORY OF THE VICTORIOUS
AND THE DEFEATED

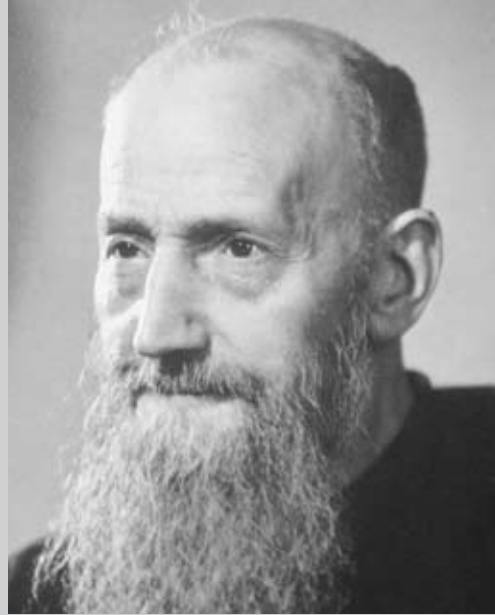
- **Published by:** Zaragoza City Council
- **Texts:** Julián Casanova
Chair of Modern History, University of Zaragoza
- **Design:** www.rosetayoihana.com
- **Deposit copy:**

The Torrero Cemetery: a place of memories* (1936-2010)

In July 1936 a significant part of the Spanish army took up arms against the Second Republic. The plan consisted of staging an uprising that would lead to a quick victory and the subsequent seizure of power. Things, however, did not go as planned: the insurgents were defeated in most of the big cities and the attempt to gain power resulted in a long civil war lasting nearly three years.

In Aragon, with a very united garrison and with the Guardia Civil and the Guardia de Asalto joining forces with the army, Zaragoza fell very early on the side of the rebels, despite the fact that trade union organisations held a strike and raised armed resistance for a few days. The uprising was also victorious in all the towns in Aragon with military garrisons, in Teruel, Huesca, Jaca and Calatayud, with the exception of Barbastro, where Colonel Villalba remained loyal to the government. Some days later, armed militants from Catalonia and the autonomous community of Valencia penetrated Aragon with the intention of taking back the three capitals. Although they did not accomplish their goal, they nevertheless occupied the eastern half of the region, an extensive area of more than 20,000 square kilometres and home to 400,000 inhabitants. Aragon, like Spain, had been split in two. Spain was drained and the Republic was

obligated to take on a civil war, a violent struggle that involved both the military and civilians alike.



Gumersindo de Estella, chaplain of Torrero prison (1937-1942)

Events unfolded in a very similar way in all three Aragonese capitals. The soldiers emerged from their barracks, took to the streets and declared a state of war. The presence of squads of soldiers armed with machine guns installed in front of the main public buildings made it clear that it was no joke. Civil governors were replaced by members of the military. From that new position, political authorities were dismissed and the Guardia Civil took power in the towns that supported the uprising.

* I would like to thank Pedro Villasol, head of administration of the Torrero Cemetery for the information and documentation made available to me for this research.

And thus began the mass imprisonments, the selective repression to wipe out resistance, the systematic torture and the “hot” terror, which left citizens lying where they fell, in ditches on the side of the road, on the banks of the rivers, along the walls of the cemeteries. Obedience to the law was replaced by the language and dialect of weapons, by disdain for human rights and the cult of violence. Political and ideological adversaries, or just plain adversaries, no longer had the right to be considered compatriots. With the declaration of war, the uprising soldiers considered anyone who defended the Republic a “rebel”.

LINING UP TO DIE

Several thousand citizens were murdered in Zaragoza in the name of religion and patriotism during the Civil War and post-war period. Hundreds of these deaths were never recorded in the death registry, while many others (581 men and 26 women, to be exact) were recorded as “unidentified man or woman”. At first, in the months that followed the military uprising, terror was not subject to proceedings or prior guarantees. Only 27 of the 2,597 victims registered in 1936 appeared before war councils. Sometimes, the judicial authorities were on hand for

the removal of the bodies, but it was more common in those early days to leave the dead abandoned on the banks of the Imperial Canal, in the open fields of Valdespartera or in the rural neighbourhoods surrounding the capital. Very often their executioners were members of paramilitary patrols who were armed by the police, the Guardia Civil and the military authorities and who worked at night without the need for legal processes or requirements.

Several months later, when the military courts were in operation and executions by the authorities of the coup were “legalised”, the firing squads did their work along the walls of the Torrero Cemetery in close proximity to the jail, where prisoners were detained with the hopes that their case would be heard in court, or that they would be set free, or that the “competent authority” would order their release from placement in front of the firing squad.

The Provincial Prison, which was opened by the dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera in October 1928 and was designed to house only 200 people, now held inmates, men and women. On 1 September 1936 there were nearly 1,300 and when the war ended on 1 April 1939, 3,977 people were detained within its walls. Some months later the number of prisoners increased to 4,740 and 1,500 additional people were sent to prisons in Casablanca and San Juan de Mozarrifar. Between those dates, hundreds of prisoners were subjected



Execution site (photo taken in 1979)



Execution site (back wall of the cemetery in 1936)

to indiscriminate “extractions”, an arbitrary procedure used during the first months to choose victims, or were driven to the cemetery to be executed after death sentences dictated by military courts.

There was an exceptional witness to these transports and executions, Gumersindo de Estella, a capuchin priest who was put in charge of providing “spiritual assistance to the accused” and who wrote in the form of a diary a hair-raising memoir. In it, he tells of the daily ritual of the firing squads, the secrets of those condemned to death, the attitude of a part of the Catholic clergy who strove “to accredit with their divine seal a passionate undertaking of hatred and violence.” He began as chaplain of the prison on 22 June 1937 and there he stayed, apart from a few compulsory absences due to illness, until 11 March 1942.

The chapel of the Torrero prison in Zaragoza was actually a space designed as a “judges’ room” which was forced into service on execution days furnished with an improvised altar and everything needed to perform mass. A portrait of Franco presided over the ceremony until in mid 1938 Gumersindo de Estella managed to have it removed after having insistently pointed out to the authorities that “the presence of Franco in the chapel and at its altar like a saint jarred the nerves of the accused and caused them extreme indignation because they knew that their death sentences were signed by him.”

The prisoners entered the chapel at about five o’clock in the morning. The priest spoke with them, asked them about their families, why they were sentenced to death, and above all whether they practiced any religion. Some confessed and accepted communion “with enviable devotion”. Others had to be convinced of the need to “seek consolation in the supernatural”. There were some who would not talk or who refused spiritual assistance. “No, sir, do not invite me to practice religion,” said one of the accused on 11 June 1938, “rights are being killed in the name of religion and the war is being fought in the name of religion. And a religion that inspires so much cruelty is of no interest to me.”

At six in the morning the Guardia Civil began “the job” of binding their hands. From the prison they were transported to the walls of the cemetery in a truck. During the short journey they muttered and cried out constantly, which the priest tried to calm by having them kiss the crucifix. He went with them as they were placed in a row facing the wall. After the shots of the firing squad left them lying on the ground, he would give them absolution and administer extreme unction before the lieutenant in charge came forward and delivered the coup de grace, “two or three pistol shots to the head”.

VICTIMS

The soldiers of the coup sowed the seeds of terror from the first instant, intimidating, killing, crushing any resistance. When the military coup turned into a war, the destruction of the adversary became a top priority. The first victims were the political authorities, well-respected republicans and political and union leaders. These were public figures, people who appeared in the newspapers, people who lived in well recognised homes and people who, in many cases, had taken part in the same events, meetings and even parties as some of the soldiers who ordered their deaths. Eight republican or socialist councilmen from the Zaragoza City Council were executed: Alfonso Sarría, Bernardo Aladrén, Genaro Sánchez Remiro, Antonio Ruiz, Antonio Aramendi, Casimiro Sarría, Joaquín Uriarte and Manuel Pérez Lizano. This last councilman, Manuel Pérez, had been the republican mayor of Zaragoza for ten months in 1932-33 and was the president of the Zaragoza Provincial Council of the Red Cross in 1936. His body was found by members of that institution on the banks of the Imperial Canal of Aragon. The cause of death, according to the entry in the death registry dated 13 August 1936, was a “fractured cranium”. He was 38 years old.

The fury of the soldiers and Falangists was especially centred on the representatives elected by the coalition of the Popular Front in February 1936. According to the report drawn up by the Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies and published on 22 August 1938, 40 had been executed and 12 were made prisoners or “disappeared” in “rebel territory”. Gregorio Vilatela



Manuel Pérez Lizano

Abad, a lawyer and elected republican representative in the province of Teruel, was detained after the military uprising. They transported him from Teruel to Zaragoza and he was executed on 10 August by means of the firing squad. According to the registry, he died of “internal haemorrhaging”.

A good part of the success of the uprising stemmed from impeding the actions and possible resistance of civil governors, the highest political authority in every Spanish province. The republican Ángel Vera Coronel had been named civil governor of Zaragoza on 22 February 1936. He was a postal official, an industrialist from the city



Façade of Torrero prison

of Elda in Alicante and the chairman of the board of the Banco de Elda. He was 40 years old and before arriving in Zaragoza he had already been involved in the civil governments of Cáceres and Cádiz. In the months of that spring of 1936, he was often able to mediate in the negotiations between owners and workers – a difficult task in a city which had known numerous conflicts during the republican period including a bloody insurrection in December 1933 and a long general strike in spring of 1934.

On the night of 18 July, before General Cabanellas declared a state of war, the trade unions CNT and UGT requested that he distribute weapons – a request he did not grant. Isolated in the building of the civil government, where he never had the loyalty of the security forces, he was detained by the commander of the Guardia Civil, Julián Lasierra, who took over his position as governor. He remained in prison for almost exactly one year. On 20 July 1937 he was selected along with twenty other detainees and grouped in a special convoy reserved for “the more important accused” with the supposed intention of transferring them to prison in Tarazona as, in the words of the delegate of Public Order, it was necessary to “decongest the jails and other analogous establishments”. The expedition was never to arrive at its destination. According to statements from the security forces that served as guards on the trip, as the expedition was passing through the area of Pedrola

in the province of Zaragoza, the “cell car” had to stop “due to some piles of rocks that were in the road and certainly placed there in accordance with the prisoners, who asked Vera Coronel and Ángel Montejano for permission to relieve themselves.” When the guards opened the door, “the detainees rushed them when someone shouted ‘now!’ (...) and anyone in sight who looked like he was aiming to escape (...) came under fire.”

In other words, the “escapee law” was applied, as well as article 253 of the Military Justice Code which “condemns to death anyone who, with a group, commits deeds of ill-treatment aimed at the sentry or safeguard.” Vera Coronel was recorded in Pedrola as a “postal official”. The cause of death: “firearm injury”. Among those that were executed along with him were the socialist councilman of the Zaragoza City Council, Joaquín Uriarte, the chair of medicine Francisco Aranda, who had been accused of belonging to the Freemasonry and of “being dangerous in his teachings” or, in other words, of not having “the right concept”. A year after the uprising, even more people died in Zaragoza in “extractions” and “outings” than those put in front of the firing squad by the military justice system through war councils. Not even the civil governor was conceded that reprieve – and that after having survived the mass executions of August and September of 1936.

“The law was upheld,” the police reports usually said. The law was

frequently upheld, for example, among teachers, who for a very long time fell constantly under its attack. The hatred of the conservatives, Catholics and Falangists toward the members of this group because they had been identified as people with liberal, republican or socialist ideas, or because of their battle against religious education, or because they had proposed “sovietising” the school system, was deep and endless. Amanecer, the Falangist newspaper of Zaragoza, memorialises that hatred in this passage: “for the pregnant poets, the swollen philosophers and the young teachers and other relatives, we can give nothing more than that given in a classical romance: a friar to confess them and a harquebus to kill them.”

It was not a harquebus that would kill them in 1936, but the weapon that would do the deed was the least of their worries. Thirty-three teachers were executed in Zaragoza, most of them in the weeks following the military uprising. The bureaucratic tangle of red tape created for the “purge” was terrific. According to an order of 19 August 1936 from the Burgos Defence Committee, the highest body of power of the rebelling military presided over by General Miguel Cabanellas, mayors had to inform the rectors of the universities by the 30th of that month about the “political-social conduct and moral education” of the teachers in their towns. From that time on, the rectors could dismiss anyone who had anything “disturbing” in his or her background. On 17 September 1936, the rector of

the University of Zaragoza, Gonzalo Calamita, suspended the employment and salary of twenty-three teachers, although three of them had already been executed in August.

Francisco Arando, the chair of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Zaragoza, who had been subjected to the “escapee law” in July 1937, was still being processed in April 1940 for “judicial actions stipulated by law and in which the accused may have been involved.” And in October of that same year, the case of another lecturer in the same faculty, Augusto Muniesa, had also not been closed. When the



Cover of the book *El pasado oculto*, 1992 first edition

examining magistrate from Political Responsibilities requested the ruling on the case, the rector answered that “perhaps because said gentleman died during the first months of the National Movement, this university has no record of such a ruling.” Augusto Muniesa had been killed in front of a firing squad on 7 October 1936 along with his brother José María, also a lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine. In both cases the cause of death was recorded as “fracture in the base of the cranium”.

The military and Falangist terror destroyed the political aspirations and conquests of the intellectual, professional and administrative sectors that had developed a common political culture marked by anti-clericalism, republicanism, democratic radicalism and, in some cases, messianism toward the working classes. That destruction, which spread like a tidal wave through towns and cities under the power of the rebels made others, who from the start were behind the “glorious movement that will save Spain”, rethink their position and entertain the notion that perhaps the movement was neither glorious nor a saviour. Those others were, like the republicans that were executed, intellectuals, professionals or civil servants. Some of them had even been republicans before the uprising, and they boasted about it on 14 April. The intense social mobilisation and political radicalisation of the following years which culminated in the spring of 1936, had led them to request what they

believed was a necessary rectification to the Republic. They thought that might be what the military uprising would do. It would clean out what needed cleaning out and redirect the circumstances back down the republican path begun in 1931.

Zaragoza was the site of several examples of the tensions and disappointments experienced by conservative republicans who answered the call of the military to take on public positions, until they were splattered with the blood of their friends and families. That is what happened to the leader of the Radical Party, Luis Orensanz, who was named president of the Provincial Council by the commander of the Guardia Civil, Julián Lasierra, on 25 July. Orensanz was already familiar with the job as he had held it until July 1935. At the event, Lasierra said very little, "Because this is not an occasion for many words and yes, only for many events," and he reminded his listeners that the military was not interested in politics: "we act only on behalf of national decorum."

It was on behalf of that same decorum that the paramilitary groups must have acted when on 10 August they left the cadaver of the former holder of the position on the banks of the Imperial Canal. The execution of republican and liberal Manuel Pérez Lizano moved Luis Orensanz, but it was only the beginning of what awaited him. A week later he was required to submit his resignation, replaced by Miguel Allué Salvador, a more energetic man and

one who "adheres fully to the new principles" and who had already been the city's mayor under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Before the year was out two of Orensanz's brothers would be executed, both doctors: the first, Enrique, 60 years old, was killed on 2 September; Ventura, 50 years old and a well known odontologist would die on 28 November. Ventura was a freemason. Luis was not, but, to top off things off he was accused of being one and he was brought on charges very similar to those that cost his brothers their lives. According to the registry, Enrique's cause of death was "of a violent nature", Ventura's, "fractured cranium by firearm".

These political, intellectual and professional elite that had embraced republicanism therefore constituted one of the targets in the wave of military and fascist terror of 1936. The selective repression also included a considerable number of leaders and activists from trade organisations. Some of these, also very well known, took part in gatherings, meetings and were even related to those republicans; others, the majority, were separated from these elite by their revolutionary aspirations, by their radical dedication to the labour movement or by their hatred for the upper classes. The revolutionary union movement in Zaragoza was blown to pieces and from among the rubble emerged the mutilated bodies of historic anarchists like the brothers Miguel José and Augusto Moisés Alcrudo, Joaquín Aznar, Antonio Ejarque and Valeriano

San Agustín. Recognised leaders of the socialist party and the trade union UGT also met with the same destiny, such as Bernardo Aladrén, Vicente Sist, Antonio Ruiz and Babil Fustiñana.

Socialists and anarchists, communists, union organisers of the UGT and the CNT fell like flies. But they were not the only ones and the military coup was not only directed against them. The violent contra-revolutionary process that took place in the rebel zone, however, swallowed them up, brought them up "from underground" as Queipo de Llano said, to kill them time and time again. Through them soldiers, Falangists, employers, land owners and the middle-class "gente de orden" settled accounts, resolved old disputes; they were tired

of their unionist demands, of there revolutionary threats, of their social aspirations and their agrarian reform. On the surface they killed them for being "socialists", "communists", "anarchists", "atheists" or "reds" just as their killers might be labelled "Catholics" or "fascists". But behind most of those victims there was a history of struggle and confrontations, which in some cases had its roots in the time before the Second Republic.

Day labourers, railway and construction workers are the most common professions entered for victims when this information was included in the registry. Labourers and activists in the organisations of the Popular Front, or mothers and sisters of activists account for most of the 172 women executed

Victims of francoist violence in Zaragoza

War (19-07-1936/31-03-1939)		Post-war (01-04-1939/August 1946)	
1936	2.597	1939	95
1937	181	1940	128
1938	258	1941	54
1939	60	1942	56
		1943	56
		1944	33
		1945	17
		1946	8

in those years. And the repression had an enormous effect on municipal employees (70 executions) and members of the Guardia Municipal (12 executions).

3,543 people are entered in the different death registries of Zaragoza as victims of that violence (3,096 during the war and 447 in the post-war period), although we do not know the exact number of executions that never made it into the records. 2,597 people were executed from 19 July to 31 December 1936 and by month August was the bloodiest, with 730 executions. On 18 August, a month after the start of the uprising, 64 people were put to a violent death in a single day. "Fractured cranium by firearm" was the most common cause of death recorded on that day.

Nothing changed with the end of the war on 1 April 1939: the same death ritual, the farce of the courts, the same desperation of the innocent prisoners. And although the war had ended in Aragon at the end of March 1938 with the conquest of the republican territory by the troops of General Francisco Franco, from 1 April 1936 to August 1946 there were 447 executions by firing squads, most of them in the Teruel and Zaragoza counties of Bajo Aragón.

During the dictatorship that followed the war, in Franco's peacetime, many families moved heaven and earth to save their loved ones. And what they found were long, false promises and macabre deceptions. This is what

the mother who went to talk to Gumersindo de Estella on 12 February 1940 went through. She was pleased because she was very well received in Madrid and was confident that her son would be pardoned. "Poor wretch!" wrote the capuchin friar in his diary. The mother did not know that her son, Juan García Jarrod, a 22 year old clerk from Caspe, had been sentenced to death by Franco and had been transferred to Zaragoza for his execution. He was executed in front of the firing squad the next day, 13 February, along with eight other condemned prisoners. His pardon arrived three days later.

The executioners had gained so much experience behind the firing squad that they were even able to fine tune the setting where they did their work. On 6 November 1939, when Gumersindo de Estella arrived at the cemetery accompanied by the sixteen prisoners condemned to death that day he found something new. A long plank fence over two metres high had been erected. And between that fence and the wall there was a space of one metre that had been filled in with dirt. The thousands of bullets shot since July 1936 had destroyed the wall and were passing through it to reach the caskets of the niches in the cemetery.

After the war ended, the victors would settle accounts with the defeated, reminding them for nearly four decades who the patriots and who the traitors were. The primary characteristic of the terror that was imposed in the post-war period is that it was organised from

above, based on military jurisdiction, in war courts and councils. After the expected explosion of vengeance in recently conquered cities like Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, the "outings" and the actions of the autonomous powers like the Falangist squads gave way to the monopoly on violence by the new State, which put extraordinary mechanisms of terror into effect – mechanisms that were both sanctioned and legitimatised by

law. With military jurisdiction at top yield, the terror inflicted was cold, administrative and routine. In Zaragoza, the military courts ruled in favour of the death penalty up to 447 times in cases that went back years, that were related to the republican army or that were grouped under the label of activities "in opposition to the new political regime".



Relatives of victims of the Segunda Bandera de la Legión Sanjurjo observe the remains

MEMORY OF THE VICTORIOUS AND THE DEFEATED

Franco's dictatorship always remembered its victory in the war and inflicted a bitter punishment on those who had lost and on the children of their children. Villages, cities, churches and cemeteries were filled with the memory of the victors, with crosses, monuments and plaques dedicated to the memory of those who "fell for God and for the homeland". Streets, squares, schools and hospitals in hundreds of towns and cities have since carried the names of members of the uprising, leading first- and second-rate fascists and Catholic politicians. For decades the devastating effects of anticlerical violence and the red terror were remembered. Meanwhile, thousands of people executed during the reign of military and fascist terror were never recorded or remembered with even a single measly gravestone. The defeated were even too afraid to claim their dead.

According to figures supplied by the Zaragoza City Council in March 1942 there were 3,936 people buried in the Torrero Cemetery who "fell in the Liberation Crusade at the front and in hospitals of Aragon". On 14 July 1942, the Municipal Assembly presided over

by the mayor, Francisco Caballero, agreed to build a "religious chapel" and two blocks of niches, one on each side, to collectively honour "those who died in the Glorious Crusade". The work was allocated a year later and, due to budget problems, was not finished until 1945, with a substantial increase in the cost of the original project. The expenses for exhuming and transporting the bodies to the niches were paid for by the city. During the first few months of 1961, the remains of almost all of those victims, 3,560 to be exact, were moved to the Valley of the Fallen, which had been inaugurated two years before on 1 April 1959, according to documentation preserved in the cemetery.

The same mayor, Francisco Caballero, proposed in 1941 "eternalising the memory of our best" and some months later, the municipal corporation held a design competition for the erection of a funerary monument. After several unviable plans, due to their ambitious and very costly construction, the monument, completed by a great cross, was finished in 1954 and was placed in Plaza del Pilar, where the fountain of Hispanidad today stands, dedicated "For



Monument to the Fallen, Plaza del Pilar



Monument to the Fallen



Homage to those Fallen in the Crusade, Plaza del Pilar



Chapel of the Fallen

the heroes and martyrs of Zaragoza: fallen in the Freedom Crusade, 1936-39". There, every 20 November until the end of the dictatorship, an event was held in homage to those "fallen in the Crusade", in which the leading authorities of the National Movement participated. When the Plaza del Pilar underwent remodelling in 1990, the Urban Planning Department of the Zaragoza City Council proposed preserving the monument, moving it "to the main entrance of the modern section of the Catholic Cemetery of Torrero."

The bodies of most of the victims recorded in the death registries, executed in the fields of Valdespartera or in front of the firing squads along the back wall of the Torrero Cemetery,

were buried in two large ditches of about 500 metres in length and between two and four metres in width under the walkway of block 4. The victims lay there forgotten, with no action taken by any authority to disinter them and give them a decent burial until February 1979 when the exhumation began of the remains found in boxes stacked on top of another lined up in several rows.

These graves were opened because the families of 175 people from Navarra and La Rioja who were executed by Falangists and legionnaires of the Segunda Bandera de la Legión Sanjurjo asked the Zaragoza City Council for permission to exhume the remains that were supposed to be buried in the cemetery. The story began in summer



Graves in which the remains of the victims were found



Site of the graves



Relatives of victims of the Segunda Bandera de la Legión Sanjurjo observe the remains of their loved ones after exhumation

of 1936, a few weeks after the military uprising, when hundreds of young people from a few villages in Navarra and La Rioja were recruited by force by the Segunda Bandera de la Legión Sanjurjo. In the first days of October of that year, dozens of them, although the exact number is not known, were executed at the General Military Academy, supposedly because the military leaders discovered their leftist backgrounds and their intentions to desert. Their bodies were transported to the cemetery in trucks, without coffins, and were buried there in those graves. Their names, with a few exceptions, do not appear in the entry registry of the cemetery or in the death registries of Zaragoza.

On 27 January 1979, the mayor of Zaragoza, Miguel Merino, authorised Tenencio Ruiz González, the representative of the relatives executed in 1936, to “move their remains to the towns of their births (...) through the payment of 2,000 pesetas for exhumation fees.” According to the “list of the deceased and locations to which they will be transferred”, drafted by the Regional Delegation of Zaragoza of the Ministry of Health and Social Security, authorisation was granted for the removal of the remains of 175 people to their villages, fourteen in Navarra and two in La Rioja, after being identified by their families.

When those graves were opened, the remains of approximately 2,700 victims were discovered. With the exception of those belonging to the Segunda

Bandera de la Legión de Sanjurjo, they were moved to a common grave on the cemetery’s walkway of the fallen. The first mayor of the current democracy, Ramón Saínz de Varanda, elected in April of 1979, ordered the construction of a simple monument there in their memory, a stone plaque with a monolith on which this inscription was engraved: “For all those who died for freedom and democracy, 1936-1939 and the post-war period.” It was unveiled on 1 November 1980.

The traumatic pasts of wars and dictatorships tend to give rise to conflicts between different individual and group memories, between different ways of looking at history. Although many Spaniards believe that this phenomenon of having divided and conflicting memories is exclusive to our country, this kind of fracturing of the past has occurred and continues to occur in all countries that have suffered under criminal political regimes, such as Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia and the military dictatorships of the Southern Cone.

The society that came out of Franco’s dictatorship and that grew in the first two decades of the democracy displayed a high degree of indifference to the cause of the victims of the Civil War and the dictatorship. The struggle to unearth the hidden past, the knowledge of the truth and the demand for justice were never traits of the transition to democracy in Spain despite the effort of many historians to analyse events in order to

understand them and transmit them to future generations. Spain was full of places dedicated to the memory of the winners of the Civil War – the Valley of the Fallen being a prime example – places to challenge “time and obscurity” as the Francoists said, homage to the sacrifice of the “heroes and martyrs of the Crusade”. The other deaths, the tens of thousands of “reds” and people considered “disloyal” who were executed during and after the war did not exist. But neither the governments nor the democratic parties seemed interested in creating a space for debate about the need to rectify that injustice. And there was a lack of strong social pressure to do anything about this official oblivion to the crimes of the Francoist dictatorship.

All of this began to change, slowly, during the second half of the 1990s, when previously unknown events and information came to light about the victims of the Civil War and of Francoist violence. This coincided with the international importance being placed on debates about human rights and the memories of wars and dictatorships after the end of the cold war and the disappearance of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. And thus a new social construction of memory arose. One part of civil society began getting organised, associations were created devoted to the recovery of historic memory, graves were opened in search of the remains of deaths that were never recorded and the descendants of those executed by Francoists, their



Monument: “for all those who died for freedom and democracy”



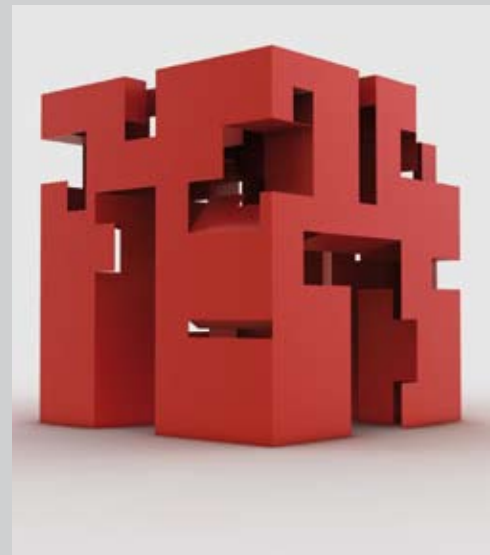
Relatives of the victims show photos

grandchildren more often than their children, began to ask themselves what had happened, why had this history of death and humiliation been concealed and who were the executioners. The past insisted on staying with us, on obstinately remaining, although those taking action to preserve and transmit the memory of those victims and especially to give them public recognition and moral reparation faced many obstacles.

It is time that the Spanish democracy integrates these different memories and comes to terms with the fact that the victims of the repression imposed by the uprising against the Republic and of the violence of Franco's dictatorship need moral reparation and legal and political recognition after so many years of shameful marginalisation. That is the intention with which, in 2010, nearly 75 years after the military

uprising gave rise to the Civil War, the memorial to the victims of Francoism was built in the Torrero Cemetery in accordance with a unanimous agreement of the assembly of the Zaragoza City Council on 25 September 2009.

Official oblivion will not make the memories of the victims disappear because nobody has of yet found the formula for erasing traumatic pasts that come bubbling to the surface time and time again. The future of our memory lies in bringing those experiences of political violence and the violation of human rights to light, in passing them on to new generations, to those who did not participate in that history, and in transmitting them accompanied by messages of tolerance and freedom. It is not only a matter of creating courts with which to judge history, but it is also about trying to understand and explain what happened. As Father Luis Pérez de Aguirre wrote in his "report on disappeared detainees" in Uruguay: "The past is not remembered, it is not judged in order only to punish or condemn, but rather in order to learn."



Memorial: for the victims of violence under Franco (1936-1946)

Bibliographic remarks

Research into the victims of the Francoist repression began over twenty years ago and its results appeared for the first time in Julián Casanova, Ángela Cenarro, Julita Cifuentes, M^a Pilar Maluenda and M^a Pilar Salomón, *El pasado oculto. Fascismo y violencia en Aragón (1936-1939)*, Siglo XXI, Madrid, 1992 (new editions in Mira, Zaragoza, 1999 and 2001). As shown in the last edition of the book, that research yielded the list of victims that appears in the “Memorial to the Victims of Violence under Franco (1936-1946)”, built in the Torrero Cemetery in 2010. More information can be found in Julita Cifuentes Chueca and Pilar Maluenda Pons, *El asalto a la República. Los orígenes del franquismo en Zaragoza (1936-39)*, Institución Fernando el Católico, Zaragoza, 1995.

Basic information about the prisoners and the jail can be found in Iván Heredia Urzáiz, *Delitos políticos y orden social. Historia de la cárcel de Torrero (1928-1939)*, Mira Editores, Zaragoza, 2005. The memoirs of the capuchin friar Gumersindo de Estella were published under the title *Fusilados en Zaragoza, 1936-1939. Tres años de asistencia espiritual a los reos*, Mira Editores, Zaragoza, 2003.

A general account and analysis of the victims and executioners can be found in Santos Juliá (coord.), Julián Casanova, Josep Maria Solé i Sabaté, Joan Villarroya and Francisco Moreno, *Víctimas de la guerra civil*, Temas de Hoy, Madrid, 1999; Julián Casanova (coord.), Francisco Espinosa, Conxita Mir and Francisco Moreno, *Morir, matar y sobrevivir. La violencia en la dictadura de Franco*, Crítica, Barcelona, 2002; and Julián Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco*, Temas de Hoy, Madrid, 2001 (paperback edition with notes, in Crítica, Barcelona, 2005).

Photographic credits

Cambio 16 photographic archive

- Execution site (photo taken in 1979). CAMBIO 16, 30 December 1979, n° 421, pages 82 –85
- Graves in which the remains of the victims were found. CAMBIO 16, 30 December 1979, n° 421, pages 82–85

Interviú photographic archive

- Relatives of victims of the Segunda Bandera de la Legión Sanjurjo observe the remains of their loved ones after exhumation INTERVIÚ, 3-9 January 1980, year 5, n° 190
- Relatives of the victims show photos INTERVIÚ, 3-9 January 1980, year 5, n° 190

Zaragoza City Council, Communications management, photography

- Execution site (back wall of the cemetery in 1936) Félix Bernad. 2010
- Manuel Pérez Lizano. Félix Bernad. 2009
- Monument to the Fallen. Félix Bernad. 2010
- Chapel of the Fallen. Félix Bernad. 2010
- Former site of the graves. Félix Bernad. 2010
- Monument to Those Who Died for Democracy. Félix Bernad. 2010
- Torrero prison. Víctor Lax. 2010
- Book covers. Víctor Lax. 2010

Zaragoza City Council general archive

- Homage to the Fallen. Plaza del Pilar. Zaragoza City Council photographic archive. Marín Chivite.
- Homage to the Fallen. Plaza del Pilar. Zaragoza City Council photographic archive. ALPI, Foto Laboratorio

Acknowledgements

- Cambio 16 magazine
- Andrés Domínguez. Espacio de Información General S.A.
- Interviú magazine
- Jaime Armengol. Editor of El Periódico de Aragón
- Elena Rivas. Zaragoza City Council archive
- Pedro Villasol. Torrero cemetery administration





TORRERO CEMETERY WALKING ROUTES

THE TORRERO CEMETERY: A PLACE OF MEMORIES

The remains of several thousand people killed during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 and under the dictatorship of Franco lie in this cemetery. We remember them today, after decades of silence and neglect, offering information about where they were executed and the graves in which they were buried. And along with that past, the memories of the victors of the Civil War also appear, who honoured with monuments and commemorative plaques only their own dead, only the “heroes and martyrs fallen in the Glorious Crusade”. They are different memories of that war and of the long post-war period – some omnipresent, while others silenced. There are six different locations that evoke the time of the forgotten and the remembered from July 1936 until November 2010.

TORRERO CEMETERY

Administrative offices

Avda de América, 94, 50007 Zaragoza
Tel. 976 259297. Fax. 976 388109
www.zaragoza.es/ciudad/cementerio
Office hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Municipal brigades: Tel. 976 377605

Funerary complex

SERFUTOSA
Servicios Funerarios de Torrero, S.A.
Fray Julián Garcés, s/n, 50007 Zaragoza
Tel. 976 388012. Fax. 976 252498



Zaragoza
AYUNTAMIENTO