In a House, But Not a Home: Spanish Republican Exiles Find Refuge in Mexico The Question of Memory and Identity for Republican Refugees

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In a House, But Not a Home: Spanish Republican Exiles Find Refuge in Mexico
The Question of Memory and Identity for Republican Refugees

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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Honors Capstone Project in Spanish Language, Literature, and Culture

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Abstract

After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the victorious fascist Nationalists dominated the liberal sympathizers and established Republican government and forced those unwilling to comply into exile. Once in a state of exile, how were Republican Spaniards able or unable to maintain their Spanish identity? By focusing on Mexico as a location of refuge for these exiles, this thesis seeks to determine the important role played by memory, both collective and individual, and how allowing themselves to connect to the past helped exiles and influenced future generations to learn about the past of their relatives. Using support from personal interviews and published poetry (of Luis Cernuda) it can be understood that Spanish Republican exiles that settled in Mexico were able to maintain their Spanish identity. At the same time, a more complicated and developed identity for their future relatives has been established by uncovering a past that continued to be repressed even after the initial event of exile.
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Executive Summary

After the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) between the established Republican government and the Fascist Nationalists, a Nationalist victory began the reign of dictator Francisco Franco and forced thousands of Republican sympathizers into exile if they failed to conform to conservative politics and renounce liberal political affiliations. Some exiles ended up in deplorable conditions in France or elsewhere in Europe, but many others made the journey to Mexico to start over. Mexico stands out as a final place of refuge for exiles because there are parallels between Republican Spain and Mexico that made such an important connection possible for the lives of thousands of people. After all of
these years, following the death of Franco and his dictatorship and the country’s journey into the European Union, Spain and those affected by the Spanish Civil War are ready to remember the events that shaped their country’s history. Many Republican exiles have been able to reconcile with the memories of where they came from, whether resentful or nostalgic, and appreciate the opportunities provided by the helping hand of Mexico.

I started out my Capstone journey being the student that had no idea what project I was going to pursue. Not until film director Trisha Ziff came to speak to my Spanish class, titled Immigrant Identity and Gender Politics in Spain, did I realize the direction in which my project would head. Ziff came into our class to talk about her documentary, *The Mexican Suitcase*. The title refers to a box discovered in Mexico City that contained film negatives of photographs taken during the Spanish Civil War, which occurred in Spain from 1936-1939. The documentary focused on the involvement of the famous war photographers that took these previously lost photos, but also the personal stories and first hand accounts of people affected by the civil war in Spain. These personal accounts were what stood out to me as something I needed to investigate further.

Along with Ziff’s documentary, I have been able to use a variety of sources to create a well-balanced selection of information through my research. With my ability to read Spanish, I am not limited to translated sources and can rely on primary sources along with publications in English. I was able to find a documentary from the 1980’s in English with many interviews in Spanish. The date for this film is important because it was made 40-odd years after the war
ended, but only several years after the death of dictator Francisco Franco and the subsequent end of his regime. It featured interviews with people from both sides of the war, many who were no longer alive during the making of Ziff’s film. Publications from the years close after Franco’s death provide insight into the situation in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War that was previously repressed due to Franco’s command.

As evidenced by the inspiration I drew from Ziff’s film, I have also relied on current projects and publications. The current generations are one of the primary reasons the stories of the exiles have come to the forefront in recent years. In a history where so much was kept hidden, young adults in Spain and countries effected by the Spanish Civil War now desire to know the history of their past. When I discovered the project “Hijos y nietos del exilio republicano, mexicanos en Catalunya” (“Children and Grandchildren of Republican Exile, Mexicans in Catalonia”) I knew that I had found a wealth of personal stories. The interviews are with relatives of Republican exiles that made the journey to Mexico, and that lends it self to the importance I attribute to the current generations and how they connect to Spain, while also filling the void in my research for a personal story that had yet to be shared with a majority of the public. For my public example, I turn to the life and works of Spanish poet and Republican exile Luis Cernuda. His published poems and experiences provided me with a more universal example of the emotions of an exile, while maintaining the importance of having a national identity.
The Spanish Civil War ended in 1939, the same year that World War II started; yet before traveling abroad in Spain the spring of my sophomore year, I knew almost nothing about the war. Before watching *The Mexican Suitcase* and beginning my research, I had a general understanding of what transpired from 1936-1939 in Spain, but I was scarce on details and wanted to know more. For me, learning about the Spanish Civil War was a relatively new intake of knowledge, and realizing what I was about to uncover through my project, it honestly began to surprise me how much I didn’t know about Spain’s history having taken Spanish classes for the majority of my life. I was incredibly interested in the historical aspects (pre-war, post-war dictatorship, etc.), but the personal stories I began to find definitely struck me as important historical data to support the general facts.

As my research progressed, it became apparent that my lack of knowledge on the subject was similar to the current generation of Spaniards. In the last few decades, it has not become uncommon for relatives of those involved in the war, people who lost their lives and exiles alike, to begin asking questions. While much of the truth was hushed, or simply not talked about, during the 36 year dictatorship of Francisco Franco, current generations of Spaniards and those related to Spanish exiles, who traveled to Mexico and elsewhere around the world, deserve to be able to look back on their ancestors’ history today with an honest viewpoint. With knowledge of their past, Spaniards and Mexicans related to Republican exiles are able to connect to their pasts in a way that was never before allowed.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to my parents for supporting me every step of the way during my project, even when all I wanted to do was complain instead of actually getting any work done. Without your constant support every day of my life, I would most definitely be having a breakdown somewhere right now.

“Mil gracias” to my advisor, Kathryn Everly, for not only trusting me to complete my project, but for keeping my love for the Spanish language alive throughout my college career. I’ll never forget when I found out you were a Midwest girl that loved Spanish, just like me.

“Y otro mil gracias” to my reader, Alejandro Garcia Reidy, for lending another set of eyes to my project to make sure what I was writing made sense to people other than myself.
Chapter 1: Introduction

I am American. I was born in the United States, so I am a U.S. citizen. My parents and grandparents were born in the United States, but my great grandparents were born in Europe. My ancestry is mainly French, German, and Polish, but my family left the countries they were born in completely on their own accord. They were immigrants going to a foreign place, but their journey was not the same as someone forced from their home. In his article “Exile as a Dissociative State,” author Andrew Harlem distinguishes immigration from exile with five statements:

“First, while the immigrant migrates voluntarily, the exile leaves out of necessity, against his will. Second, the immigrant has time to prepare for departure from the homeland, while the exile departs without sufficient time to prepare, often in haste to avoid threat. Third, the exile’s migration, unlike the immigrant’s, is precipitated by traumatic events, usually of sociopolitical nature. Fourth, the immigrant is afforded the possibility of returning to the homeland— a privilege denied the exile. Finally, the immigrant is received more positively than the exile by the host country population” (Harlem 2010, 467).

The Spanish Civil War forced people from their homes unlike the voluntary movement of my relatives. The culmination of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 saw the liberal Republican side of the fight lose out
to the conservative Nationalists. With this loss, the Republicans and any sympathizers were forced into social and political exile with only the fate of execution or imprisonment if they chose to stay in their native Spain without rejecting their political views. For many liberal writers and artists, however, those who had published works that revealed their political affiliation or tendencies did not even have conformation as an option.

Republican exiles left Spain and traveled to various locations across the globe, but Mexico played a special role in receiving many of the people who then needed to start a new life. Although Harlem (2010, 467) states that exiles often are not positively received in the new host country, arriving in Mexico represented a feeling of being born again for many of the Spanish Republican exiles, and for others it was simply their only way out of a life of depression and fascism. Spanish born poet Luis Cernuda (September 21, 1902-November 5, 1963) was one of many liberal intellectuals given no choice but to leave the country in exile due to his political affiliations. Cernuda escaped from Spain and moved around to various countries before arriving for the first time in Mexico in 1949, and eventually dying there in 1963, but he was able to use his art not only to help his own grieving process, but also to help many understand his emotions regarding being exiled.

After the war, Mexico and Russia were the only two countries to never recognize dictator Francisco Franco’s oppressive reign of terror
as the official government of Spain (Ziff 2011). A grandson of an exile explained, “They’d been in Spain for so long, so harshly repressed and persecuted that now it was like regaining their freedom, the dignity of free men. It was everything they had lacked in Spain” (Ziff 2011). After being violently driven from the country where they were born, lived, and grew, a majority of the Spanish Republicans found themselves without the option of staying home after the end of the Spanish Civil War.

Although Harlem describes exiles as “not just someone who has lost his home” but someone “who can’t think of another” (Harlem 2010, 471), Mexico represented, for many, hope for starting a new life with their families and future generations after the only home they knew (Republican Spain) essentially disappeared into a black hole (Fascism). This group of people was forced to leave behind the lives they had made up until the late 1930s. Mexico, however, could never replace Spain because the forced loss of the established home continued to be overwhelmed by the desire to always remember their past. Those involved knew their own stories, but for generations after the war, Spaniards as a population chose not to publically remember. It has been said, “Remembering works not so as to open wounds for revenge, to get some loot, to grab something. It is to know what’s there, to close a chapter” (Ziff 2011). This chapter may be closing for those directly
involved by finally being able to publically remember, but efforts to 
prolong the memory of the victims continue.

On December 27, 2007, La Ley de Memoria Histórica (the Law of 
Historical Memory) was passed in Spain in an effort to recognize the 
injustice served by the exile of many Spaniards during the Spanish Civil 
War and the dictatorship (Memoriahistorica.gob.es 2014). Although 
public funding for the connected Project of Historical Memory was 
reduced by almost 60% since 2013 due to budget restructuring by the 
government of Spanish President Mariano Rajoy (Publico.es 2012), the 
law still allows the acquisition of Spanish citizenship by persons with 
parents who were originally Spanish and by grandchildren of those 
who lost their citizenship or had to renounce it as a consequence of 
exile (Memoriahistorica.gob.es 2014). Nearing the seventy-five year 
anniversary of the end of the Spanish Civil War, generations of those 
involved, new and old, are ready to remember. These Spaniards would 
never forget where they came from, some remembered longingly and 
others bitterly, but Mexico provided the refuge necessary to begin to 
heal and simply start living all over again.

Universal Remembrance

The Spanish Civil War was not the first occurrence of a group of 
people coming together and sharing an experience of struggle. It has
also not been the last event in which many people remember that specific experience. The details of an individual’s story, like those shared later in this paper, may belong only to one human, but the feelings from that time and the feelings conjured when looking back on a memory can link entire groups, forming a common identity. In her dissertation, titled “History, Memory, and Identity: Remembering the Homeland in Exile,” Nida Bikmen (2007) discusses the importance that collective memory has for exiled groups of people from around the world. For those who have experienced the emotional act of being exiled, Bikmen connects the idea of a group identity to the term collective memory saying, “the content of a group identity is composed of the history of that group as remembered and/or reconstructed and is transmitted to the next generation by members of the group” (Bikmen 2007, 21). This common history, shared by individuals involved in a communal event, solidifies occurrences of the past that only survive through the mind.

As an exile, more specifically a Republican exile from Spain, these sympathizers were given no choice but to escape guaranteed persecution placed upon them by an opposing faction. The event of an exile is not a choice, rather a decision often made by an enemy, therefore, those mandating the expulsion may have more than just contrasting viewpoints. Bikmen (2007, 22) discusses that different social groups, like the Spanish Republicans and Nationalists, will
understandably have distinctive memories of a specific situation. Varying retellings of a situation will exist no matter who you ask, but this fact speaks to the importance of linking a group together with common memories after a stressful experience like that of exile. And originating from a place plagued by repression, even after the end of the war, Spanish Republican exiles merit remembrance not just as citizens of Spain, but also as their own group with an important and unique history.

There is no doubt that connecting collective memories and identity serves to be of extreme emotional importance for not only those who experienced exile, but also for anyone related to the original group. Every individual has a distinctive personal history, but without memories, the explanation of an identity disappears into thin air. Bikmen (2007, 23) remarks, “the act of remembering produces a meaning that not only commemorates the past and makes sense of the present, but is also oriented toward the future.” Children and grandchildren, and future generations related to these exiles no longer need to stay in the dark about the origins of their past. They must know the significance of growing up where they have and in the manner they have. As humans have been pushed from a place they identify with as a home, how does this define, or redefine, who they are? A Spanish Republican exile became a Spaniard by birth, a Republican by choice, and an exile by force, but shared memories with
people who are like themselves provide them with yet another identity that deserves to be recognized and understood by more than just these individuals.

**Why Mexico?**

The first obvious connection between Spain and Mexico is the language. History, and with it the Spanish language and its culture, between the two countries goes back to the days of Christopher Columbus, but 400 years later interactions between Spain and Mexico would pick up in the years during and leading up to the Spanish Civil War. Mexico went through a revolutionary period and its own civil war during the 1910s, so Sebastiaan Faber equates Spain’s relationship with post-revolutionary Mexico as “something of a political mirror image in which both conservative and progressive groups saw their objectives being alternately threatened and realized” (Faber 2002, 12). Mexico saw these political similarities as a link to their former ruler, but they paid attention to the political rumblings across the ocean because of fear or concern as to how it would affect the rest of the world. Mexico assumed that, “whichever political or ideological tendency got a foothold in Spain would soon spread to its former colonies” (Faber 2002, 12). The revolutionary politicians of Mexico’s civil war supported the overthrowing of the Spanish monarchy in 1931
and the formation of the third government of the Second Spanish Republic in 1936 because these shifts marked political transitions towards liberal leadership. These revolutionary politicians and leftist Spanish governments shared similar political ideas and concerns such as land reform, social justice for all citizens, and the separation of church and state (Faber 2002, 13). Just before the left Second Spanish Republic regained progressive power in Spain, in 1934, General Lázaro Cárdenas, who identified with the left, became the president of Mexico and the liberal and conservative sides were polarized (Faber 2002, 13) in the same way that would, within two years, lead Spain into its own civil war.

When the Spanish Civil War started in 1936, Mexico continued to stay up to date on the developing tensions understanding that their own country might eventually feel the effects. As the conservative military coup arose in Spain, Cárdenas automatically put his support behind the Republic. He began by sending arms to the Republican army and supported the liberal government on an international front (Faber 2002, 13). While Mexican leftists feared the spread of fascism to Spanish America if the Spanish Republic were to lose, Mexican right-wingers held out hope that Franco would be able to stop Communism from spreading (Faber 2002, 13). The fears of the politicians in Mexico were understandably in line with the corresponding sides of the two sides fighting in Spain. When war activity in Spain picked up, Cárdenas
continued to send aid, and in 1937 his wife Amalia arranged the journey of five hundred Spanish children to Mexico. Early in the war, many of these children, who would become known as the “niños de Morelia,” (the children of Morelia) named after the location in Mexico where they took up residence (Vigil), were orphaned, and their passage to Mexico was one of the first of Spaniards seeking refuge from the war (Faber 2002, 14).

President Cárdenas continued his support for the Spanish Republican until the end of the war. When it began to appear obvious that the Republican side was going to lose to the Nationalists, Cárdenas declared in 1938 that “Mexico would admit as many as sixty thousand Spanish refugees,” and by the end of the war, an estimated thirty thousand Spaniards took advantage of the generous offer of asylum (Faber 2002, 16). Stemming from its own civil war and revolution from 1910 until 1920, Mexico took pride in offering a safe haven for political refugees like those from Spain. Initial and continued support for the Spanish Republic had been “motivated by its anti-imperialist stance and its strong belief in national self-determination” (Faber 2002, 16-17), and this assistance was notably not forthcoming from almost all of the rest of the similar liberal governments around the world. After Cárdenas, the Mexican government shifted to a more moderate front in 1940 with the election of Manuel Ávila Camacho. Yet, even with a move away from the Socialist left, Spanish refugees expressed
acceptance: “it was not a real dictatorship. There was no terror, no censorship, and you could say what you wanted without too much danger, as long as you did not attack the government” (Faber 2002, 26).

Despite a general lack of organized support from governments around the world, with Cárdenas in the lead Mexico remained loyal and supporting to the liberal Spanish Republic during and after the end of the Spanish Civil War.

Chapter 2
The Tale of Two Spains

Beginning in 1936, almost 20 years after the end of the First World War, the Spanish Civil War is often looked at as a prelude to the Second World War and battle by many countries against the continuing
spread of fascism around the world. The more intricate details of Spain’s war and the affects on the country’s people are often overshadowed by the more global events of World War II.

The 1930s in Spain started a period of extreme transition that ultimately lead to a political divide so large only war seemed to be the answer to determine which side would hold the power. Traditionally lead by a monarchy, Spain transitioned to a republican democracy on April 14, 1931 with the fall of King Alfonso XIII ("Prelude to Tragedy", *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). The monarchy was considered oppressive to the working class, but as this middle class liberal government was elected over the monarchy, it stood alone as one of the only governments of its kind for the time ("Prelude to Tragedy", *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Narciso Julián, a Socialist worker living in Spain, expressed that, “La república significaba para la clase obrera una gran esperanza” ["For the working class, the Republic signified a great hope"] ("Prelude to Tragedy", *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). This new government, for Spain, appeared to give the underdogs a voice, something not often seen in traditional conservative governments of past generations around the world. Despite this new sense of hope and power for the lower classes, the conservative Catholic church, a powerful army, and the greedy upper class still remained as remnants of the monarchy, these conservatives held out hope that the right would regain power.
Spain as a country had gained a new government, but individual regional communities, especially those of Catalonia and the Basque Country, desired more independence than ever. The Republic then granted Catalonia “home rule” and citizens were encouraged to embrace their nationality. This increased individualism of regions worried Spanish army officers who were united under the idea of a single united Spain, and on August 10, 1932, part of the Spanish army tried and failed to overthrow a still new democratic government (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). During the 1933 elections in Spain the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (National Confederation of Workers) an anarchist group, grew in popularity due to a restless working class, but the Confederación Española de Derechas Autonomas (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups), a mass Catholic party which drew inspiration from the Nazis, won the election and took the government in Spain back to the conservative right (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Also in 1933, José Antonio Primo de Rivera founded the extreme right party of the Falange, influenced by fascism, which would eventually be banned in Spain in 1936 (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). As fascism gained more strength in Germany and Italy, Spain settled back into a conservative setting and liberal Socialists knew they had to regain power of the government by electing a liberal leader back into office.
With the support of a majority of the commoners in the country, including the anarchists, during the elections in 1936 the liberal Popular Front once again regained control of Spain’s government (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Military prisoners, mostly left-wingers arrested for fear of opposition, were immediately freed upon the liberal ascension, and only a month later around 60,000 landless workers in the west of Spain rebelled (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Remembering the military’s past attempt to overthrow a liberal central government, the government in 1936 moved potentially threatening army generals to stations further away from Madrid and the mainland. General Francisco Franco was stationed in the Canary Islands and General Emilio Mola was transferred to Pamplona, from where he would soon organize a secret military uprising (Payne 2012, 66-7). During the Festival of San Fermín in Pamplona, held every year at the beginning of July, General Mola decided that the time was right for a military uprising, but correspondence with Franco hinted that Franco was skeptical of the plan, but agreed it would be more dangerous not to rebel at all (Payne 2012, 68). Events in the days following Mola’s decision quickly set into motion what would become a three year conflict violently pinning the left and right factions of Spain against one another.

So how would the military and its conservative allies bring about such revolution against a once again liberal Spanish government?
On July 12, José Castillo, a police officer employed by the leftist Republic, exited his home for his police job in Madrid and was murdered by several members of the Falange party (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Only a day later, José Calvo-Sotelo, a right wing political leader, was picked up by the same police officers with whom Castillo worked, and they assassinated him. Conservative officials considered this retaliation a personal attack, and now the revolution could officially take place (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). With revolution imminent and unavoidable, Josep Tarradellas, the minister of the Catalanian Government, pleaded with the Spanish Prime Minister Santiago Casares Quiroga to heed the rumors of a military uprising, but Casares Quiroga refused to take further action (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Other sources indicate that Casares Quiroga listened to the rumors of a military uprising but did not have enough information to persecute specific ringleaders if he made a formal accusation (Payne 2012, 72). Finally, on July 17, 1936, a successful military uprising began in Spanish Morocco and Seville, which gave Franco’s troops a place to land on the mainland (“Prelude to Tragedy”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Despite the strong threat, the Second Spanish Republic government was not defeated in a traditional (or routine) coup d’etat since the military uprising only gained support in
certain regions of the country, but the civil war had officially commenced.

Spain would be broken into two sides, the Republicans and the Nationalists. The Nationalists, the conservative right, would be made up of members of the military, the Falange, and monarchists, as well as members of the upper class. The Nationalists goal for the war was to ‘purify’ Spain, and their crusade functioned to “purge the motherland of alien ideologies: atheistic, Masonic, Marxist, or for that matter, liberal” ("Revolution, Counter-revolution, and Terror", *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). The Nationalist goals were not just political, but also held ideological and religious reform as a priority. The other European fascist superpowers of Germany and Italy helped train Nationalists officers as well as provided volunteers and arms to aid a cause similar to their own ("Battleground for Idealists", *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). This aid, coupled with advanced military experience and organization, would prove helpful to the Nationalists throughout the war.

The Republicans, the liberal left, included mainly Communists, Socialists, and the middle and working classes, as well as Anarchist support despite their opposition to organized government ("Revolution, Counter-revolution, and Terror", *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). The undeniable divide between liberal and conservative and the subsequent war, "marked both the high point and the end of that extraordinary period during which it seemed feasible to unite the progressive forces
of Communism, socialism, and liberal democracy” (Faber 2002, 15). In addition to this support from within Spain, volunteers also helped the Republicans from abroad.

Volunteer groups were unattached to their respective governments because “England, France, and the other Western democracies had agreed not to intervene in what they had labeled—for strategic or opportunistic reasons—an ‘internal’ conflict” (Faber 2002, 14). Despite the rising fear of fascism throughout the world, countries that shared similar views with the Spanish Republicans “ignored the fact that the military rebels sought to overthrow a democratically elected government—with the help, moreover, of Hitler and Mussolini (Faber 2002, 14). People from all around the world, often writers or poets, formed the International Brigades and saw it as their duty to help the Republican cause. These volunteers, which included Ernest Hemingway, Julian Bell, and George Orwell, were mostly communists and joined the Republican front because of the growing global threat of fascism (“Battleground for Idealists”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). They were “ashamed by their governments’ passive stance,” and “went to Spain on their own account to help in the fight against fascism” (Faber 2002, 15). Just as Germany and Italy provided arms for the Nationalist side, the Communist run Soviet Union also sent arms to the Spanish Republic (“Battleground for Idealists”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983).
This civil war was garnering volunteered international support, but it was still all about Spain.

Madrid, Spain is not only the capital city, but it is located almost directly in the center of the country. This location symbolically and literally represented the core strength of the Republican forces, and its downfall would be the key to a Nationalist victory and complete defeat of the Second Spanish Republic. Popular Republican slogans in the capital city included “¡No pasarán!” (They shall not pass!) and “¡Madrid será la tumba del fascismo!” (Madrid will be the tomb of fascism) (Payne 2012, 90). Two months after the start of the war in 1936, Nationalist troops neared Madrid, but it would remain under Republican control for another three years until the war’s end in 1939 (“Inside the Revolution”, The Spanish Civil War 1983).

After the fall of the government that was in place when the war began, Socialist Union leader Francisco Largo Caballero formed what he called a “Government of Victory”. This reformed government employed both Socialist and Communist ministers and included a strong military presence (“Inside the Revolution”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). Anarchists continued to be opposed to this type of organized government, but the rest of the liberals appeared to approve.

The Republic then staved off a Nationalist attack on the capital in November of 1936, with a notable casualty being that of anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti (“Inside the Revolution”, The Spanish
**Civil War 1983**). Durruti had brought troops from Barcelona to aid the Republican protection of Madrid, but lost his life. Several Anarchist ministers were added to the Government of Victory, but Anarchists, highly concentrated in the home-rule region of Catalonia, had their own ideas of revolution in mind after the death of their leader. In Catalonia, the Anarchists fought against their liberal counterparts [the Socialists and Communists] but the Anarchists were unable to gain any control and moved back into the position of supporting the Republican effort ("Inside the Revolution", *The Spanish Civil War 1983*). At the same time, back in Madrid changes were also taking place.

Largo Caballero, the founder of the Government of Victory, was overthrown in 1937 for being too passive, and was replaced by Socialist party member Juan Negrín, who would serve as the political leader of the Republican government until Franco’s victory ("Inside the Revolution", *The Spanish Civil War 1983*). For the next two years, the Republicans maintained their position in Madrid and throughout Catalonia, but the Nationalists continued to gain more and more republican land due to military experience and sufficient arms. By January of 1938, Franco’s troops continued their victories and prepared to make a push from the north in Aragón towards the territory closest to the Mediterranean Sea. By April of 1938, the Nationalists reached the Mediterranean Sea in the east and the Republic land was cut into two pieces ("Inside the Revolution", *The
Spanish Civil War 1983). This event would be the first major event of the war that would lead to the unraveling and subsequent defeat of the Republican government and forces.

With access to the Mediterranean Sea, it was only a matter of time before the Nationalists would seize Catalonia, the hot bed of anarchy and independence, leaving the Republicans with only their loose hold on Madrid and the Southeast and East region of Spain, including Valencia. July 28, 1938 marked the beginning of the Battle of the Ebro (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). The Ebro River travels from the northern coast of Spain along the northern regions of the country and enters the Mediterranean Sea along the eastern coast of Spain almost equidistant between the major cities of Barcelona to the north and Valencia to the south (Rodríguez 2013). The river’s geographical position made it an understandable location for what would be the longest single battle of the Spanish Civil War. The conflict lasted 4 months, from July of 1938 until November of 1938, and only ended when the Republican side gave up their stronghold on Hill 666 that overlooked the area and was forced to retreat (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). Having lost a large number of soldiers and resources, Juan Negrín hoped that the Allies against fascism, France and England, would ultimately help the Republicans defeat the Nationalists before war exploded across the rest of Europe (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). Negrín, while still
outwardly supporting Communism, even secretly began trying to negotiate a peace deal with General Franco, but Franco would only accept complete victory ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). German aid from Hitler continued to the Nationalists in hopes of ending the civil war sooner and advancing their own cause of spreading fascism around the world.

The Republicans were not as lucky with support because in October of 1938, the International Brigades left Spain and Russia became preoccupied with their own country’s safety as Hitler continued to gain power ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). Russia was the strongest Communist power of the time, and with the Nationalists’ continued support from the fascist superpowers of Germany and Italy, the weakening Republican government needed any defense it could muster. Furthering the woes of the Republicans after their loss of aid and losses at the Battle of the Ebro, in December of 1938, the Nationalists were able to cross the Ebro River with help from the Germans and continue their campaign to take all of Catalonia north of the river from the Republicans and their anarchist allies ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). Marching north towards Barcelona, the Nationalists would take Tarragona in January of 1939 and an increasing number of Republican sympathizers began to flee Spain through the Pyrenees into France out of fear of the Nationalists ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). On
January 26, 1939, the Nationalist forces finally moved into Barcelona and any opposition left in the city knew that they would not be safe when the city fell (“Victory and Defeat”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983).

As the Republican control of Catalonia continued to wane, the Republican government was left to make decisions about how to maintain the parts of Spain they still controlled, including the most important part of the country, being Madrid. In a final meeting of his council in Figueras, north of Barcelona and near the Spain and France border, Negrín started to make concessions, insisting that if the Republicans were indeed to lose the war, Francisco Franco must agree that the Nationalists would not do anything violent and malicious to the losers (“Victory and Defeat”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983).

Eventually, the Nationalists reached the border between Spain and France by mid-February, and Catalonia had officially and completely fallen to the Nationalists (Payne 2012, 202). Negrín and his council had already left Spain from Figueras, and so the remaining Republican army and 5 million refugees followed suit. At its highest volume, there were 5,000 refugees crossing the treacherous mountain border every hour, and these now exiled people were then shoved into French internments camps used to control the incoming population (“Victory and Defeat”, *The Spanish Civil War* 1983). Despite the heavy loss of Catalonia, the Republican army still had not lost control of Madrid, but with their victory, the Nationalists were closing in.
By March of 1939, Madrid still had not fallen to the Nationalists, but hunger was becoming rampant on both sides and served as motivation for an end of the war in the near future. Negrín and most of the other government officials had returned to Spain after fleeing north knowing that they needed to see through to the end of the war. They were positioned in the southeast of Spain while Colonel Segismundo Casado commanded the Spanish Republican Army in Madrid (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). With the desperation that most shared throughout the country, Colonel Casado organized his own coup d’état from within Republican lines against Negrín’s government in secret initiative to make peace with Franco as Negrín was unable to, but Franco was still only interested in complete victory (Payne 2012, 228). Negrín, although surprised by the commander’s actions, did not organize resistance against Casado, and he and the rest of the Republican government officials left Spain once again. With seemingly no other options and no government officials, Casado ordered the Republican army to surrender, allowing the Nationalists to walk into Madrid without any fighting at all (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). This embarrassing defeat would seal the fate of the Republican campaign.

With the Nationalists now in control of the country’s capital city, any and all Republican troops and sympathizers recognized the urgent necessity to leave Spain as quickly as possible. Republicans
started traveling towards the port in Alicante on the southeastern coast, where only a fraction of the now Republican refugees were able to leave to safety. Almost immediately 500 Republican leaders left the port in a British ship, but around 20,000 common refugees were left on the shores to wait (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). Many people waited for several days, but as the Nationalists closed in on the final remaining Republican territory, they were forced to make the decision between life and death.

Having seen the last of the Republican authorities flee the country in resignation, the Spanish Civil War officially ended on April 1, 1939 with Franco declaring complete victory (Payne 2012, 229). Now Caudillo [Leader] Francisco Franco hoped to bring Spain back to its pre-Republic glory with the power of the church and wealthy landowners. He stated that any opponent to his cause, pre-war or during would be held accountable for their actions and beliefs (“Victory and Defeat”, The Spanish Civil War 1983). For those Republicans that did not, or were unable, to automatically seek asylum outside of Spain, Franco stuck true to this pledge and in his first months in office led a final purge to rid his new Spain of any leftover enemies.

This purifying of Spain included quick shootings but also the use of concentration camps to hold prisoners until later actions was decided. People waited in the camps for selection for execution, often by Falange party members who were encouraged to identify old
neighbors, friends, or acquaintances ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). Communist refugee Narciso Julián recalls, “We were never considered human beings, that’s the way it was under Franco. We were always considered his things, never as human beings” ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). What little hope Negrín had that Franco would not treat the Republicans badly must have disappeared quickly after the war’s end. Approximately 30,000 people were held in camps inside Spain, but there is no record as to how many actually died there ("Victory and Defeat", The Spanish Civil War 1983). The Spanish Civil War tore the country in two, reverting back to a traditional rule with benefits for military loyalists, monarchists, and other right-wing sympathizers. Spain would remain under Franco’s dictatorship until his death in 1975, but those Republicans that were lucky enough to leave alive were now without a home and any tangible belongings that came with it.

Chapter 3: Stories of Exile

Daughter of Spain
Many different projects and collections sharing the stories of Republican exiles and their families have been published or come to light over the years following the Spanish Civil War. Until the death of dictator Francisco Franco in 1975, it was still taboo to talk about opinions other than those congruent with the government. In the time since Franco’s death, however, survivors and their families have published more and more stories. This is greatly due to the curiosity of the current generation to know what happened to their parents, grandparents, or aunts and uncles before them. The project (2008) “Hijos y nietos del exilio republicano, mexicanos en Catalunya” (“Children and Grandchildren of Republican Exile, Mexicans in Catalonia”) accomplishes that goal. Through a series of interviews, the project aims to discover what life was like as an exile and a Spaniard, more specifically a Spaniard from Catalonia, in Mexico. The entire project consists of forty-one individual interviews and two group interviews (31 sons and daughters, 9 grandsons and granddaughters, and one son and grandson) with questions about family and personal living as an exile in Mexico and later living in Catalonia (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008).ii.

The interview through the project with Ana Victoria Segura Terradas chronicles her parents’ journey to and life in Mexico after being exiled from Spain due to political reasons. Segura Terradas herself was born in Mexico as the daughter of a father from the
Spanish region of Murcia and a mother from Catalonia. Her father, Antonio Segura Sánchez, was a member of the political party Spanish Socialist Worker Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE) and was also a deputy mayor and judge in the city of Murcia. Her mother, Carmen Terradas Ferrer, worked in the Spanish Bank of Catalonia as well as several political organizations. Segura Terradas’s parents met in France after leaving Spain due to political pressure after the start of the war. Carmen Terradas Ferrer worked at the Mexican consulate in France and the couple decided to move to Mexico after the birth of their first child (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008).

Segura Terradas explains her parents’ journey to Mexico and how they both adjusted to living in a new country. According to Segura Terradas they went to Mexico in one of the last boats that left Europe with refugees. In their first moments as exiles, she said they were hungry and needed to find work. Her mother started working as a seamstress day and night just so she could buy milk for her children. Segura Terradas’s mother came from a working family, so there was not as much of an adjustment economically, but her father was from a rich family with important political status, and the changes his family underwent were harder for him to deal with.

Her mother interacted with other refugees from Catalonia, but her father was less sociable. When asked if anyone talked about the war or exile in their house, Segura Terradas stated, “A little, they were
painful topics, my mother talked more, but with tears and much
nostalgia. My father talked very little, they were painful topics. The
longing for Spain, for books, for chorizo, for the family, was
continuousiii (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008). Her parents finally made
the decision to return to Spain in 1961 when her father became sick
and expressed his distaste in dying in Mexico, a country where he had
never truly felt at home. Segura Terradas’s father’s feelings towards his
exile were strong, she explained,

“He missed his homeland but he never had the intention of going
back…it’s different when you want to travel or you go because
you want to or because the necessity forces you. He felt cast
from his land, from his relationships, from his job and his
profession, then he wanted to return, but he found a Spain that
did not have anything to do with what he had left and us as his
children did not take much to adapting to the situation in Spain
in this era” (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008).

Upon her parents’ return to Spain, she remembers the homecoming and
the negative feelings. She described her parents as seeming extremely
disappointed, that after twenty years they had returned, but it was
nothing like they expected. Her interview suggests that the
disappointment of returning home still during the era of Franco may
have contributed to the premature death of her mother at only fifty-
two years old. Nothing was the same, “No one dared to defend a ‘red,’ it
was like the devil, because it appeared that you were also going against religion” (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008). Her parents’ former political affiliations lingered, and with Franco still in control, nothing could be expected to change soon. Segura Terradas was asked if she had an idea of what it meant to her parents to be exiled. She explained, “My mother adapted more, but my father missed home, and never fully assimilated...he had to go back [to Spain] and go back even though it was the era of Franco, and it was also hard because they made him go through a [political] trial and later pardoned him” (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008). When her father returned to Spain, he came with a Mexican passport and with the permission from the Spanish embassy in Mexico. He had not been back to Spain in 20 years, and so his political crimes had expired, but the police still made him go through a full trial. Once he was pardoned, Segura Sánchez was left alone, and after all, he had returned to Spain because he wanted to die in his home country (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008).

Reading the story of the parents of Ana Victoria Segura Terradas, it is clear that being exiled affected both people in a manner only explainable by extreme emotional turmoil with little control of the situation. There is no doubt her father remained proud of his Spanish identity throughout his time away and that the pain of being forced to leave never subsided. The only place for him to die in peace was his home country, political beliefs aside. The hardest part of Antonio
Segura Sánchez’s journey was leaving and living in a foreign country, while his wife’s experience differed. Carmen Terradas Ferrer adjusted better than her husband, but on returning to Spain, she was disillusioned and disappointed in the fate of the country she was proud to call home. Such emotions are hard to understand never having experienced a parallel situation. It can be surmised, however, that Mexico continued to serve as refuge despite never filling the void of the traditions, lifestyle, and routines of pre-civil war Spain. Through her parents’ story, their family’s history, even though Ana Victoria Segura Terradas was born in Mexico, she is a daughter of Spain.

**Bitter Nostalgia: A Poet Supremey Influenced by Exile**

The testimony of Ana Victoria Segura Terradas’s parents defines only their individual stories, through literature, however, a writer is able to share his experiences while reaching a more universal level of representation. So what inspires a writer, like Spanish poet Luis Cernuda, to make their life and emotions public? There is not a single answer, but it cannot be denied that a person’s individual experiences lend themselves to any number of creative aspects in someone’s life. One explanation that aids the understanding between an experience and a final written product is the event of being exiled and the possible creative results. This connection suggests that the experiences of
forgotten and exiled people have the great opportunity to directly influence literature on an extremely personal and emotional, yet often simultaneously universal, level. Being exiled draws attention to the experiences and the necessity of sharing the experience of loss, but at the same time not forgetting them (Ibarz 2007, 2). This idea, and the importance of memory and nostalgia for the past, can be connected with literature in any part of the world, but is obvious when looking at the exile experience of writers and poets from Spain.

In the case of certain works by Luis Cernuda (September 21, 1902-November 5, 1963), the experience of his exile after the Spanish Civil War during the 1930s and therefore, the loss of his country, clearly manifests itself in his writing by influencing themes and emotions. Cernuda is only one example of a person, originally from Spain, who has the opportunity to share his experiences and feelings of exile, notably nostalgia, through his work, whether as an obvious description or a metaphorical reference. The Spanish Civil War forced many people to leave their country of origin and, during those first years of his exile and continuing to his death, publically affected the works of Cernuda. Cernuda’s poetry is filled with emotions of yearning and loneliness in the form of obvious influences and subtle metaphors regarding his individual exile and personal memories, yet his writing still embodies a universal sense of what so many others felt being forced from their homes, often never to return again.
Born in Seville, Spain in 1902, Luis Cernuda is one of the most influential Spanish poets of the 20th Century. After a brief stint studying law at the University of Seville, in 1928, Cernuda accepted a position as a lecturer in Spanish Language and Literature at the University of Toulouse and then moved to Madrid in 1929 (Smith 2002, 106). Cernuda was one of the originals in a group of Spanish poets, which also included Cernuda’s friend Federico García Lorca, called la Generación de ’27. This literary group was founded in the year 1927, which also marked the 300-year anniversary of the death of Spanish baroque poet Luis de Góngora (Enforex.com 2013). Cernuda was a homosexual, and because of this, he felt alienated in Spain’s conventional society even before the start of the civil war (Logan 2007, 16). He learned to embrace his homosexuality, and as a member of the Communist party, supported the Republican effort during the war.

At the beginning of the war, Cernuda contributed to a program with the objective of bettering the moral of the Republican supporters (Logan 2007, 5). After the execution of his friend and colleague Lorca at the hand of the Spanish Nationalists, and further developments in the war, Cernuda left Spain. In 1938, two years after the start of the Spanish Civil War, Cernuda traveled to Paris and then to England with the purpose of delivering a few lectures, but he never returned to Spain (Smith 2002, 107). After leaving England, he worked as a professor at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, before visiting Mexico for
the first time in 1949. Cernuda was drawn to Mexico because of its similarities to Spain and his hometown of Seville, and he moved there permanently in 1952 (Smith 2002, 107). After another teaching stint in the United States during the early 1960s, Cernuda returned to Mexico in 1963 for the final time and passed away later that year, never having made the trip back to Spain (Smith 2002, 107). Survived by his works today, it is evident that Luis Cernuda never forgot where he came from or stopped wishing he could go back.

Luis Cernuda incarnates what it means to draw inspiration from your life. His use of memory in his poems makes him an exceptionally profound and complicated poet. His physical exile from Spain influences the metaphorical, symbolic, and literal theme of exile, with an added sense of nostalgia, in his writing. He sometimes writes in a melancholic tone showing an obvious desire for something, and this is in direct relation to his feelings about being an exile. Through his poetry, Cernuda has the ability to describe "la verdad oculta" [the hidden truth] of himself, his experiences, and his art, and his memories also help him affirm the link between those memories and his personal identity as a Spaniard (Logan 2007).

The reality of his life is that he is not welcome in Spain as a consequence of the war and his political opinions. It is obvious from the observed emotions that the reader can interpret from Cernuda’s writing that he desires an alternate life than that of an exile from his
homeland. His wish is to be able to stay in Spain, living and writing. Cernuda’s works do not always describe these facts explicitly, but, as someone can interpret the explanation of a metaphor or the significance of a symbol, it can be understood from where Cernuda draws much of his inspiration.

A metaphorical example of Cernuda’s opinion of exile appears in his poem “Gaviotas en los parques” [Seagulls in the Parks] (1937-40). The poem says that “un viento de infortunio o una mano inconsciente” [an unfortunate wind or an unconscious hand] knocks the birds from their nests: “Lejos quedó su nido de los mares, mecido/ por tormentas” [Far stayed the nest from the seas, rocked/ by storms]iv (Cernuda). The use of the preterit, implying an event that occurred once in the past, describes the finality of the exile of the birds from their nests (Logan 2007, 63). The birds are representations of the forced exiles from their home countries without the option of staying and how a foreigner feels in a new country. Cernuda has also written poems with more literal connections to exile.

The poem “Un español habla de su tierra” [A Spaniard Talks of His Land] (1937-40) reads as a letter from Cernuda to the country of Spain. When read, the reader can feel Cernuda’s emotions on the page. There are feelings that relate the public world of all exiled people, but there is also an internal feeling that is personal and individual to Cernuda. The poem begins positively with descriptions of the nature
and a few monuments, aspects of Spain that Cernuda fondly remembers. He describes these memories as “tan dulces al recuerdo” [so sweet to remember] (Cernuda). This phrase directly translates Cernuda’s positive nostalgia towards the past. But the poem quickly changes to a negative tone with Cernuda saying directly to Spain, “tu nombre ahora envenena sus sueños” [your name now poisons dreams] (Cernuda).

In another one of his poems, called “Lázaro” (1937-40), Cernuda compares the name of Spain with “una lágrima cayendo” [a falling tear] (Logan 2007, 64). From these two examples, Cernuda shares a wide variety of emotions towards a country that had previously given him a home and an identity. At the same time, through exile, so much of those experiences had been taken away from him. In the third stanza of “Un español habla de su tierra,” Cernuda puts his blame directly on the Nationalist side saying:

Ellos, los vencedores
Caínes sempiternos
De todo me arrancaron.
Me dejan el destierro (Cernuda).

[Them, the victorious
Cains everlasting
They ripped everything from me.]
They have left me exile.

The winners of the war, the Nationalists, are the only people that Cernuda considers guilty of his exile. Because of his physical exile, Cernuda can only live in Spain through his memories. The sixth stanza describes his symbolic life that is only maintained through those thoughts, saying:

Amargos son los días
De la vida, viviendo
Sólo una larga espera
A fuerza de recuerdos (Cernuda).

[Bitter are they days
Of life, living
Only a long wait
By force of memories.]  
Cernuda is describing how painful it is to only live in your mind and to remember something that you want to, but cannot, touch. At the end of the poem, it is evident that Cernuda has a feeling of complete resignation. He cannot do anything, so he is waiting to die without his home country. Possibly in death, Cernuda will be able to reunite once again with Spain. Cernuda is a liberal homosexual and Spain is under a conservative dictatorship that has not hesitated to expel and execute nonconformists. Cernuda is stuck in limbo where he cannot live in
Spain, but when he is dead he will no longer be able to experience it. Therefore, death seems to be the next possible opportunity for reunion between Cernuda and Spain.

It appears that by writing this poem, Cernuda is almost giving up hope that his life and his connection with Spain will be established as it once was before his exile. He is sticking with his memories because they are the last connections he has with his birth country. Cernuda loves Spain, as is clear by his nostalgic comments, but also does not understand how he can love something that has given so much suffering to his life. This realization is sad, but it is powerful and helps explain to the reader the complex feelings of another human, and unites the possible feelings of many other exiles of the time. These feelings are the same as those felt by Segura Terradas’s father as he struggled to adjust to his new life in Mexico knowing that he was not able to return to his homeland as he pleased. This link between two different humans proves the importance of sharing difficult experiences to create a new identity when the old is forced out of existence. Luis Cernuda’s personal tragedy, as he expresses in his writing, shares something incredibly sentimental, not just to a fellow exile, but to any reader.

For all of the exiles, the Spanish Civil War changed their lives, but as evidenced by Luis Cernuda, his work, as well as his life, was changed. Spanish Republican refugee Emiliana Claraco describes her
exit from Spain by way of boat. She says that, as the land got smaller and smaller behind her, everyone knew that they would never return. They were happy to leave a war zone, but they were also anguished due to the realization of the loss of their homeland (Ziff 2011). This mix of emotions links the journey of the average exile with the creativity of writing and the confusion involved with doing something against your will, but that you know you must do at the same time. The act of writing, for Cernuda, manifests itself as an escape valve, not only for emotions and nostalgia, but also to help others in understanding a confusing and powerful event in someone’s life. It is not necessary to be exiled to appreciate the influence that the Spanish Civil War had on the life and work of Luis Cernuda; it is only necessary to know the events have inspired many and not been forgotten.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

_The Mexican Suitcase: Memories in a Box_

It has not gone unnoticed that remembering the events of the Spanish Civil War and the occurrences following it can often be painful for those involved, while also serving as a source of curiosity for
others. It is not uncommon for Spaniards to completely ignore the civil war, but many members of the current generation are not satisfied with being kept in the dark about many of their families’ pasts. The documentary *The Mexican Suitcase*, directed by Trisha Ziff, chronicles the discovery of a box of photo negatives in Mexico that helped provide insight towards and close a chapter of Spanish history seemingly lost forever. In 2007, Trisha Ziff found 4,500 negatives were found in a closet in Mexico City, Mexico (2011). The negatives were for photographs taken by photojournalists Robert Capa, David “Chim” Seymour, and Gerda Taro who traveled to Spain as international volunteers to take pictures of the war (see Figures 1-3). All three were foreigners in Spain as well as exiles from their own countries (Hungary, Poland, and Germany, respectively) after declaring an anti-fascist position as fascism grew in popularity across Europe (Ziff 2011).
Fig. 1 (above): Gerda Taro and Robert Capa, Paris, 1936.

Fig. 2: David “Chim” Seymour, c. 1942-1944.
Mauricio Maille, of the Televisa Foundation, explains, “So many Spaniards felt great pain on leaving their country, their dead relatives, murdered, to come to Mexico in search of new opportunities. That’s how that suitcase holds that memory” (Ziff 2011). These negatives (as seen in Figure 4), just as many of the Republican exiles, traveled to Mexico from Spain, and their discovery added another layer of understanding to the stories of families and friends, living and passed alike, and the memories attached to any human involved. As these photographs (as seen in Figure 5) were discovered and subsequently displayed on exhibit for present generations, their publicity solidified
the validity of remembering the past of people who had been forced to forget their own history.

Fig 4 (above): Republican soldier waiting to storm forward, Río Segre, Aragón front,
Fig. 5 (above): Republican soldiers, Valencia, 1937.

**Current Generations**

_“They should understand why they were born in Mexico.”_ix

So as children and grandchildren of exiles and those involved in the war begin learning more details of their families’ histories how do the current generations connect themselves and identify with the past? In her interview Ana Victoria Segura Terradas was asked how being the daughter of exiles has influenced her life. She explained that it meant, “cultural wealth, because you had the combination of two cultures,” but that she also believes she inherited the more negative trait of maladjustment due to her parents experiences adapting to a new country and being disillusioned upon their return to Spain (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008). Segura Terradas further elaborates, “You are less deeply rooted evidently because you do not have the familiar experiences of being with your grandparents...You are a satellite out there and then it is very difficult to integrate yourself” (Exiliorepublicano.net 2008). That is, with the positives still comes negative attributes directly the result of her parents’ exile. She is a
Mexican woman born to Spanish parents, given the option to live in either country, while her parents were given no choice.

Segura Terradas’s answer and explanation about the indirect influence on exile on her life is not dissimilar to what other people have recorded. Spanish Republican exile Carmen Ruiz-Funes illustrates how her family identifies with Mexico and how these feelings could only be formed as a result of the war. She says, “My children and their children are Mexican. They feel Mexican, but Mexican with certain traits that others may not have. As for feeling Spanish, well, we used to feel Spanish. Sure, but we felt we belonged to a Spain that no longer existed. Our Spain no longer existed. On returning to Spain, it had nothing to do with the Spain I’d learned about from my parents” (Ziff 2011).

Spain had changed so much after the Spanish Civil War and continued to be affected by the dictatorship of Francisco Franco that followed after. By the time Franco died in 1975, Spain then entered yet another phase of history that would be where the Ruiz-Funes’s family lived. Her relatives can connect with their Spanish heritage, but the Spain they can experience in the present is entirely different from pre-war Spain, civil war Spain, or post-war Franco Spain.

Just as memory provided a special connection between the exile and their homeland, memory also links an exile’s relatives to their family’s history and forming their own personal identity. A scene in
Ziff’s documentary (2011) shows Diego Villarias, the son of a Spanish Republican exile, going through pictures and belongings of his relatives. Villarias works at the coffee shop his father started after arriving in Mexico (Ziff 2011). He admits that he may rely too heavily on the memories he has of his family, but those are the only connections to them he has left. Villarias continues, “I’m in touch with all my memories of them. For me, remembering is essential” (Ziff 2011). His memories are his connection not only to his family, but his family’s past in Spain. Mexico served as a new place for his family to live, but without remembering Spain, his family would have never existed.

Sebastián del Amo, the son of a Spanish Republican exile, shows a sense of gratitude towards Mexico that proves just as important as his family’s past. He expresses, “although I’ve lived, I was born and raised my whole life in Mexico. I am also a direct consequence of the Spanish conflict” (Ziff 2011). For the relatives of Spanish Republican exiles, everything seems to come full circle when they look back at their families’ histories. Without the Spanish Civil War, the Republican faction would not have been pushed out of Spain, they would not have journeyed to Mexico in search of refuge, and who is to say that their families would have played out the same way had they been able to stay in Spain.
Conclusion

Most importantly, memories are what keep the connection to Spain alive between all of the Republican exiles. Uncovering the past proved painful for those involved, but gave those with Spanish heritage the opportunity to discover an identity, in conjunction with their Mexican citizenship, that otherwise would have been unfairly taken away simply due to lack of knowledge. Spanish Civil War veteran Lluis Marti Bielsa called Mexico “the best friend we had during the Spanish civil War…It helped openly, directly with no strings attached” (Ziff 2011). Without Mexico opening their arms to the exiles, in the first massive migration for political reasons in the 20th century (Ziff 2011), it is quite possible these people would have died in fascist Spain without the opportunity to ever share how much Spain meant to them as a birthplace and homeland. Examining the personal narratives of exile, like the stories of Ana Victoria Segura Terradas’s parents and the public expressions of Luis Cernuda’s poetry, allows those not connected to the history to understand as well as providing an explanation for the current generation of relatives. For the Republican Spaniards, choosing exile over conforming, or worse being imprisoned or killed, contributed to the maintenance of a Spanish identity, but at the same time paved the way for future generations to remember their families’ history and embrace a future influenced by their residence in Mexico, but ultimately different from the past.
Notes

i This quotation by Narciso Julián from the episode of The Spanish Civil War (1983) titled “Prelude to Tragedy” was delivered originally in Spanish. The English translation provided is the personal translation of Alyssa Trudeau.

ii Any of the information about Ana Victoria Segura Terradas and her family in the following section (Daughter of Spain) was taken from a transcript of Segura Terradas’s interview published on Exiliorepublicano.net (2008).

iii Any quotations by Ana Victoria Segura Terradas in the following section (Daughter of Spain) were written in Spanish on a transcript of Segura Terradas’s interview published on Exiliorepublicano.net (2008). The English translations provided are the personal translations of Alyssa Trudeau.

iv Any poetry, fragments or stanzas, written by Luis Cernuda in the following section (Bitter Nostalgia: A Poet Supremely Influenced by Exile) were originally published in Spanish. The English translation provided is the personal translation of Alyssa Trudeau.

v Any of the following information regarding The Mexican Suitcase in the following section (The Mexican Suitcase: Memories in a Box), are property of Trisha Ziff (2011).


Works Cited


