

Enduring Resistance and the Value of Memory: The History and Representation of Spanish
Republican Women during the Second World War and the Holocaust

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2018

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This article was researched and produced on the unceded Coast Salish territories of the
Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples, specifically the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, whose
deeply historic relations with the land continue to this day, and on whose land I have had the
pleasure to learn and live on.

há'ysx^w q̓ə.

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Abstract

Spanish women's stories of antifascist resistance do not begin with the birth of the French Resistance in 1940, but rather with their role in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). After fleeing a fledgling fascist dictatorship under Francisco Franco in Spain in 1939, Spanish Republicans faced a Nazi occupation in France one year later. In response, Republicans, including Spanish women, quickly joined the Resistance. Yet, history does not tell the story of *republicanas deportadas* who played key roles in the Resistance and became victims of Nazi camps.

During the Second World War and the Holocaust, approximately 15,000 Spanish Republicans, including 400 women, were deported to concentration and death camps across Europe. Franco's dictatorship imposed heavy censorship around discussions of the Holocaust in Spain, and even after Spain's transition to democracy in 1975 there was little national acknowledgement on the history of Republicans in Nazi concentration camps.

As evidenced through the narratives of *republicanas deportadas*, Spain has personal links to suffering in Nazi concentration camps. In researching the relatively forgotten story of Spanish women at Ravensbrück and other Nazi camps, this article probes the larger history of the role of *republicanas* in the Holocaust and World War Two in Spanish public memory.

After discussing the changing memorial landscape in Spain, this article proposes a new memorial for women. A memorial mural for *republicanas deportadas* in Madrid could inspire a shift in the historiographical, educational, and memorial spaces by launching a more open, nuanced dialogue about the past. It is key to bridge memory gaps between: Spain and the Holocaust, Spanish women and the fight against fascism, and Spain's traumatic past from the Civil War and dictatorship.

This article advocates for the historic preservation of the efforts of *republicanas españolas* in their fight against fascism and to honour the immense risk they undertook for the liberation of Europe from the clutches of authoritarianism and persecution. Time has been detrimental to the historical memory and memorialization of *españolas deportadas*. Survivors have passed, and we face the risk of losing their stories to history entirely without action.

Dedication

Thank you to my strong community of friends and family, my graduate department, and contacts

*I was lucky to make in Spain and Germany, for supporting me through this work, especially
during a global pandemic.*

*Este artículo lo dedico a las republicanas españolas quiénes hasta hoy no han tenido el
reconocimiento que se merecen. Su memoria tiene valor y valor*

Enduring Resistance and the Value of Memory



Introduction

“Some women had illusions [about the camps]. Spanish women did not so much. [They] already knew fascism.”¹ Mercedes Núñez Targa writes these words in a memoir that spells out her experiences of fascist persecution and imprisonment in Spain, France, and Germany during the Second World War and the Holocaust. In 1944, she became one of an estimated four hundred *republicanas españolas* (Spanish Republican women) to be deported to Ravensbrück, a Nazi concentration camp for women, for her involvement in the French Resistance.² The French Resistance was made up of more than French citizens rebelling against the 1940-1944 Nazi occupation of their country. Spanish Republicans, and crucially, Spanish Republican *women*, helped make this renowned resistance successful, and in some instances helped establish units in different French cities and towns. Yet, history does not tell the story of *republicanas deportadas* (female Spanish Republican deportees) who fought in the Resistance and became victims of Nazi camps such as Ravensbrück. In any case, their stories do not begin with the birth of the French Resistance in 1940. Their identities as antifascists were birthed during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and memories of the fight born in Spain are connected to their recollections of Nazi camps, even by those who did not ultimately survive. Neus Català typifies this linkage by describing Ravensbrück as “the peak of the rough mountain that the outbreak [of war] on 18 July 1936 made [her] climb.”³

¹ When Mercedes Núñez Targa, a Spanish Republican woman and her convoy arrived at Sarrebruck (Saarbrücken), she writes that “algunas se hacen ilusiones. Las españolas no demasiadas. Conocemos ya el fascismo.” Mercedes Núñez Targa, *El valor de la memoria: De la cárcel de Ventas al campo de Ravensbrück*, (Sevilla: Editorial Renacimiento, 2016), 152. See Appendix A for more on Núñez.

² “Mónica González Álvarez: Las guardianas nazis eran analfabetas y fáciles de manipular,” *Onda Cero* (podcast interview by Podcast interview by Carlos Alsina.), December 17, 2012, accessed June 7, 2021, https://www.ondacero.es/programas/herrera/monica-gonzalez-alvarez-guardianas-nazis-eran-analfabetas-faciles-manipular_20121217563a1a156584a85dd3301f39.html.

³ “Ravensbrück era la cima del áspero monte que el estallido del 18 de julio de 1936 me hizo escalar.” Neus Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación: 50 testimonios de mujeres españolas*, (Barcelona: Memorial Democràtic, 2015), 36. See Appendix B for more on Català.

Català and Núñez were two of more than 500,000 Spanish Republicans who fled Spain following the end of the Civil War between Republicans, an alliance of leftists and those who supported the Spanish Republic, against the Nationalists, a right-wing coalition of fascists and conservatives.⁴ After three years of extreme violence, Francisco Franco, the leader of the Nationalists, emerged victorious and enforced fascism in Spain. This resulted in a mass exodus, known as *la Retirada* (The Retreat), of Republicans escaping ongoing Nationalist brutality. Franco continued to repress Republicans even after the war ended, keeping martial law in place until 1948. Franco's rise to power was synonymous with the harsh punishment of those with oppositional ideologies. Republicans in Spain were imprisoned, subjected to forced labour in work camps, and summarily executed.⁵ Republicans who sought refuge across the border after the *Retirada* came face-to-face with danger again following the 1940 German occupation of France. They re-joined the fight against fascism during World War II, playing key roles in the French Resistance between 1940-1944.

Spanish Republicans were already classified as enemies of National Socialism due to their fight against the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War, whom Nazi Germany had supported militarily. Their ongoing resistance against the Nazis in France further marked

⁴ The Civil War was fought between the Nationalists and Republicans. The Nationalists are sometimes also referred to as Francoists. They were supported by traditionalists, conservatives, Catholics, monarchists (or Carlistas) and Falangists (fascists). Although Franco was not officially the head of the Falangists, he co-opted the existing Falangist movement/fascist party (founded in 1934). The Nationalists viewed pro-Republic Spaniards as "godless Bolsheviks who needed to be eradicated in order to create a new Spain."

The Republican side was comprised of those in support of the current Spanish Republic, moderate democrats, liberals, socialists, anarchists, and communists. "Spanish Civil War," Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed July 8th, 2021, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/spanish-civil-war>.

⁵ An estimated 20,000-50,000 Republicans were sentenced to death after the Civil War ended in 1939, in addition to the estimated 100,000 who were executed during the Civil War. Ibid.

Republicans as guilty of political conspiracy against the German state.⁶ Moreover, the Franco government revoked the citizenship of Spaniards living outside of Spain during this time, leaving Republicans stateless and effectively sealing their fates in the hands of the Nazis. Now, as stateless enemies of the Reich, Republicans were marked as “unsalvageable,” a category of people for whom the Nazis reserved some of their worst treatment.⁷ Franco turned his back on Spanish Republicans facing probable death in Nazi concentration camps, allowing for the destruction of his political enemies to take place without his “direct” involvement.

Throughout the course of the Second World War and the Holocaust, approximately 15,000 Spanish Republicans were deported to concentration and death camps across the Third Reich, including Mauthausen, Auschwitz, and Ravensbrück. Franco’s dictatorship refused to acknowledge playing a role in the deportation of Spanish Republicans and imposed heavy censorship around discussions of the Holocaust in Spain. Even after Spain’s transition to democracy in 1975 following Franco’s death, there was little national acknowledgement on the history of Republicans in Nazi concentration camps. During the transition from fascism beginning in 1975, the architects of Spain’s new democratic age sought to leave the sensitive, traumatic topic of the Civil War and dictatorship behind to build a peaceful and unified future for Spain. As a result, the histories of Spanish Republicans in Nazi camps were neglected. Stories of *republicanas españolas* were especially affected by this neglect, in part likely because many *republicanas* were wrongly identified in camps as *French* resisters. The Franco regime constructed a narrative painting Spain as a neutral entity removed from events of the Second World War and the Holocaust; an historical myth which has been carried forward, largely intact,

⁶ Sarah J. Brenneis, *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp 1946-2015* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 15.

⁷ Alicia Hernández-Grande, “Stumbling over History: *Stolpersteine* and the Performance of Memory in Spain’s Streets,” *Theatre Research International* 45, no. 1 (2020), 9.

until today. However, as evidenced through the narratives of *republicanas españolas*, Spain has personal links to suffering in the Nazi concentration camp system.

In researching the relatively forgotten story of Spanish Republican women at Ravensbrück and other Nazi camps, this article aims to probe the larger history of the role of *republicanas* in the Holocaust and World War Two in Spanish public memory. The public history, academic historiography, and memorial landscape regarding Spanish suffering under the Nazis has begun to shift. This is especially evident in the installment of Spain's first *Stolpersteine* ("Stumbling Stones," a series of small memorials across Europe created by German artist Gunter Demnig) in December 2018; and Madrid's inauguration on 30 January 2020 of the first state-sponsored memorial for Spanish Republicans who perished in Nazi concentration camps. Still, major gaps exist between discussions of Republican men and *republicanas deportadas* within the Spanish memoryscape.⁸ Whether through [in] film, books, or memorials, Republican women are largely missing. This article begins to fill historical gaps by: introducing the historical trajectory of *republicanas españolas* from Spain to Ravensbrück and other Nazi camps; drawing attention to important themes that arise in the memories of survivors; discussing the changing memorial landscape in Spain; and proposing the establishment of a new memorial for women, fleshing out its significance and symbolism. By proposing a memorial for *republicanas deportadas*, in the form of a mural in Madrid, I hope to inspire a shift in the

⁸ I employ the term "memoryscape" throughout the paper, as used by Slawomir Kapralski, who applies it to demonstrate the complex nature of social memory. Memoryscape "refers to a material and symbolic space, in which social memory is expressed." My use of the term covers a space where public remembrance appears, ranging from (but not limited to): official monuments, memorials, and commemoration through public and popular culture such as film, literature, and podcasts. Slawomir Kapralski, "Jews and the Holocaust in Poland's Memoryscapes: An Inquiry into Transcultural Amnesia," in *The Twentieth Century in European Memory: Transcultural Mediation and Reception*, ed. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa Tea and Sindbæk Andersen (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 171.

historiographical, educational, and memorial spaces by launching a more open, nuanced dialogue about the past.

This article brings this information to an international audience, presenting the stories of *republicanas deportadas* to the world rather than keeping them veiled or almost exclusively in Spanish as they have been until now. Likewise, the mural proposed in Section III speaks a global language. This article is also a plea for action: to facilitate the historic preservation of the efforts of *republicanas españolas* in their fight against fascism and to honour the immense risk Spanish women undertook for the liberation of Europe from the clutches of authoritarianism and persecution. This article offers more than just the historicization of *republicanas españolas*. It contains an activist component, advocating for the recovery and memory of Spanish Republican women who were willing to risk (and sometimes gave) their lives fighting and resisting fascism.

I — ‘Her’story, Identity and *Republicanas Deportadas* I.I — Historical Trajectory

Spanish women in exile, like shadows, also wove the nets in which Nazism would be trapped and defeated. But the grand silence over the deaths of our slain launches a cry of alert and awakens our conscience. There are too many signs of fascist survival and resurgence, too many “Holocausts” and in too many parts of the globe to remain silent.

Neus Català⁹

A nucleus for Spanish Republican resistance against the Nazis was born almost immediately after Republicans fled to France following their defeat in 1939. As veterans of the Civil War and vehement antifascists, it was almost natural for Spanish men and women to join the French Resistance in response to the Nazi occupation. They all were aware this meant gambling their

⁹ “Las mujeres españolas del exilio, como sombras, tejían también las redes en el que el nazismo quedaría atrapado y derrotado. Pero el gran silencio de muerte de nuestras inmoladas lanza su grito de alerta y despierta nuestra conciencia. Son demasiados signos de pervivencia y recrudescencia fascista, demasiados “Holocaustos” y en demasiados puntos del globo para quedarnos mudas.” Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 34.

lives and, if caught, immediate arrest and deportation as opponents of Nazi ideology. In light of this, Constanza Martínez Prieto comments that “undoubtedly, women were very active [in the resistance] and without their collaboration it would have been much harder to see operations through.”¹⁰ Neus Català describes how *españolas* bravely helped those escaping persecution get through mountain passes and borders, facilitated contact and support with partisans in prison, filled roles as health care workers, and more.¹¹ They were essential as liaisons relaying messages from town to town, or aiding in the transport of letters, arms, propaganda, and other materials necessary for the Resistance. They faced French and German police patrols, picked up arms in combat, and used their homes as meeting places or to hide *maquis* (partisans).¹²

As couriers for the Resistance, women such as Mercedes Núñez Targa helped recruit new members for the Resistance and spread propaganda. Català travelled up to 95km to relay messages and spent hours walking through the stands at the weekly Saturday market, boldly calling on people not to collaborate with the Nazis. Núñez, Català, and Alfonsina Bueno Ester all opened their homes as important crossroads for the Resistance.¹³ Bueno hosted political refugees fleeing through the Pyrenees in her home in Banyuls, where she lived with her nine-year-old daughter, Angelina.¹⁴ In 1941, Bueno began to transport arms for the *maquis*, and in no time Angelina was assisting her mother. Together, they collected packages dropped by parachutists at night; sometimes having to swim out into the ocean to collect these packages, at great risk not

¹⁰ “Es indudable que las mujeres intervinieron muy activamente en todas estas operaciones y que sin su colaboración hubiera sido mucho más difícil llevarlas a cabo.” Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 315. See Appendix C for more on Martínez Prieto.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 38.

¹² *Maquis* were rural guerrilla bands of French Resistance fighters called *maquisards*.

¹³ For example, Català’s home was used to organize supplies, obtain false documentation, and receive and transport messages and arms. Núñez volunteered her home as an emergency meeting place, where members of the Resistance met to hide or discuss next steps if another member had been arrested.

¹⁴ See Appendix D for more on Alfonsina Bueno Ester. Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 39-40, 153. Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 128.

only of drowning in the rough, deep sea, but also of being deported together.¹⁵ Her husband, also a resister, worried for their safety, to which Bueno retorted in a tone echoing the sentiment of *republicanas españolas* in the Resistance generally: “What did you want me to get involved in if not the Resistance?”¹⁶ It was never a question for these women: to join the Resistance and continue fighting fascism, or stand idly by. Aware of the dangers, they risked their lives regardless.

Català, Martínez, Núñez, and Bueno share similar trajectories from Resistance to concentration camps between the four of them, as well as amongst *republicanas deportadas* more broadly. Their eventual arrests by the Gestapo resulted in detention in a French prison, where they suffered interrogations and torture. Martínez was arrested in a raid that rounded up over 150 Spaniards from Paris and surrounding areas, of which eight were women.¹⁷ From French prisons, they were sent to internment or transit camps, including Romainville (Martínez, Núñez, Bueno) and Compiègne (Català) before their deportations to Ravensbrück.

On 3 February 1943, Català made what she describes as her “triumphant entrance to the world of death, at 22 degrees below zero.”¹⁸ There were at least ten other Spanish women on Català’s convoy to Ravensbrück from France. Evidence of gender-targeted violence and degradation is apparent in the collective memories of *republicanas*’ arrivals to the deadly camp. Bueno’s first impression of Ravensbrück after her registration and medical examination was the infirmary, where she suffered sexualized violence that affected her health for the rest of her

¹⁵ Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 154.

¹⁶ “¿En qué querías que me metiera si no en la Resistencia?” Ibid, 153.

¹⁷ Nantes, Saint Nazaire, Rennes, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux.

¹⁸ “Hicimos nuestra entrada triunfal en el mundo de los muertos, a 22 grados bajo cero, el 3 de febrero de 1944 [...]” Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 23.

life.¹⁹ Women at Ravensbrück were often violated by having chemicals injected into their genitals, as part of the human experimentation that infamously took place at the camp.

Núñez recalls with a tone of shame the torment of the *Appell* (“roll call”), which at Ravensbrück was used as a tool to physically weaken the women as well as sexually terrorize them. She describes the dehumanization of having to stand for hours, unable to show any signs of humanity: no swaying or shivering, still as stone. In addition to the physical challenge of complete impassivity regardless of exhaustion or climate, they were sometimes forced to stand in the *Appellplatz* (“roll call square”) nude. She describes the *Appell* as humiliating, making women feel defeated and cowardly; she felt her dignity as a combatant had been stripped, leaving shame and disgust in its place.²⁰ It is striking how integral Núñez’ role as a combatant was to her sense of self. The loss of identity as an agent of resistance was more humiliating to her than forced nudity, starvation, beatings, or the constant threat of death. Their cast as antifascists was part and parcel to their identities as Spanish women and the hope they placed in securing the downfall of fascism in Spain and Europe through their fight. Blows to the strength they found through their identities as combatants risked compromising the strength they had to continue fighting from within the camps, for both their lives and Europe’s liberty.

As active antifascists, some Republican women were directly marked for disappearance and murder under the Nazi *Nacht und Nebel* (Spanish: *Noche y Niebla*) program. “Night and Fog”

¹⁹ She describes a nurse in the infirmary who injected her in her cervix with an unknown substance. From then on she was always sick, sometimes gravely. “[..][U]na enfermera rusa fue obligada a inyectarnos en la vagina, o, mejor dicho, en el cuello del útero, un líquido que ni ella seguramente sabía lo que era. [...] Desde entonces estuve siempre enferma, muchas veces grave.” Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 156.

²⁰ “Ni el hambre, ni los azotes, ni la perpetua amenaza de la cámara de gas te llegan tan al fondo del alma aquella humillación profunda de verte obligada a ordenar a tus propios músculos una inmovilidad de piedra [...]. Te sientes vencida, cobarde, como si de golpe te hubieran arrebatado tu dignidad de combatiente, sientes asco y vergüenza de ti misma. [...] Os lo cuento para que podáis comprender qué profunda herida, como la señal de un hierro ardiente, he dejado el *Appell* en nosotros, los deportados.” Ibid, 170-1.

was a codename given to persons from occupied territories who were “caught engaging in activities intended to undermine the security of German troops.”²¹ Adolf Hitler issued a decree in December 1941 demanding these prisoners completely disappear under the cover of night and fog.²² Upon her arrival at Ravensbrück, Alfonsina Bueno was sent to an isolated block at the back of the camp, Block 32, where all designated *Nacht und Nebel* prisoners were assigned. Her assignment to this block sealed her fate: she was absolutely not meant to survive the concentration camp system.

It is difficult to know the precise number of *republicanas* deported to Nazi concentration camps overall. Academics estimate four hundred *españolas* were deported to Ravensbrück. Perhaps this number is higher, but if they belonged to the Night and Fog program they were likely deported without a trace. Some women were also deported and registered in camps as French rather than Spanish, making it difficult to determine their number conclusively.²³

Known antifascists from across Europe were most commonly not sent to Ravensbrück, however, but to Mauthausen, a camp in Austria designed to “eliminate enemies of the German Reich through a combination of overwork, starvation, and violence.”²⁴ A majority of the 7200 Republicans deported to Mauthausen were men, and thus they have taken up most of the space in

²¹ “Night and Fog Decree,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 11 December 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/night-and-fog-decree>.

²² Initially, resistance ringleaders were executed immediately, but Hitler believed this would create martyrs. Under the Night and Fog decree, they were to be deported and executed in secret, their names and whereabouts never to be known. Sarah Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler’s Concentration Camp for Women*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2015), 367; Brenneis, *Spaniards in Mauthausen*, 276n26.

A note on Sarah Helm’s book *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler’s Concentration Camp for Women*: it discusses women sent to the camp from across Europe, from Yugoslavia to France to Russia, without one single mention of Spanish women.

²³ Hintz, “Neus Català’s ‘De la resistència y la deportación,’” 32.

²⁴ *The Mauthausen Concentration Camp Complex: World War II and Postwar Records*, compiled by Amy Schmidt and Gudrun Loehrer, (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2008), 1.

Holocaust and World War Two narratives in Spain.²⁵ However, *republicanas* were also sent to Mauthausen, an underacknowledged fact. Additionally, since the discussion of Spanish Republican deportees most often centres around Mauthausen, this effectively erases the presence of Spaniards in other camps, such as: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Neuengamme, Flossenbürg, Auschwitz, and of course Ravensbrück. Mauthausen's designation as one of the only category III camps in the Third Reich, where prisoners were sent for extermination through hard labour, resulted in its reception of prisoners considered "beyond hope for redemption."²⁶ It was an official Night and Fog camp, where "severely incriminated, especially previously convicted criminals and asocials," were sent. This is precisely what Spanish Republicans were seen as in the eyes of the Nazis. When Franco left them stateless, they stopped being considered Prisoners of War. This, paired with their political affiliations as antifascist combatants, rendered them "unsalvageable" in the Nazi mind.²⁷

The SS (Nazi paramilitary organization)²⁸ brought hundreds of women to Mauthausen after October 1943, though it is important to note that the number of women at Mauthausen always paled in comparison to men. At least eight *republicanas* were among those sent to the camp after this time: Carmen Zapater Aguilera, Ángeles Martínez (Night and Fog), Carlota (Charly) García (Night and Fog), Hermina Martorell Rosales, Feliciano Pintos Navas, Rosita de Silva (Night and

²⁵ Genviève Dreyfus-Armand, "Spanish Republicans Exiled in France during the Second World War: War and Resistance" in *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, ed. Gina Herrmann and Sarah J. Brenneis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 187.

²⁶ In early 1941, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, classified the concentration camps into three categories: *Stufe I*, where rehabilitation was possible under certain circumstances (ex: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Auschwitz I). *Stufe II* where prisoners in these camps were charged with more serious crimes, but some were still considered capable of redemption (ex: Buchenwald, Auschwitz III [Monowitz], Flossenbürg, Neuengamme). Lastly, *Stufe III*, which included only Mauthausen, Groß-Rosen, and Auschwitz II [Birkenau]. This third category was considered the harshest and was reserved only for "hardened criminals and antisocial elements incapable of rehabilitation." The classification *Stufe III* represented a camp where prisoners were never to be released. David Wingate Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust; Mauthausen, the Horror on the Danube* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 14.

²⁷ Brenneis, *Spaniards in Mauthausen*, 15.

²⁸ The SS were made up of the "racial elite," and were responsible for duties including: security, "solving" the so-called "Jewish question," intelligence collection, and guarding concentration and death camps.

Fog), Constanza Martínez Prieto, and Alfonsina Bueno.²⁹ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum suggests women were sent to Mauthausen for one of three reasons: temporarily before transit to another camp (such as Constanza Martínez³⁰), to work (coercively) in the brothel, or to be killed.³¹ There is not enough evidence to conclude that *republicanas* were sent to Mauthausen to service the bordello, but it is likely they were sent in transit to other camps or to be worked to death in the labour system due to their *Nacht und Nebel* designations.

Republicanas were not ignorant of the risks that came with working for the Resistance, namely death or deportation. Deportation meant exposure to disease, starvation, dangerous physical labour, sexualized violence, brutality, trauma, and more. Numerous *republicanas* were marked for murder as Night and Fog prisoners, a designation reserved for what the Nazis determined to be the worst political threats. Despite the danger they consciously put themselves in, *republicanas* viewed their resistance as a duty. Their identities as Republicans — as antifascists — were fundamental, calling them forward to resist even if it meant facing death within the concentration camp system.

I.II — Forging Identities through Solidarity and Resistance

In her memoir *El valor de la memoria*, Mercedes Núñez Targa recalls the moment she and her convoy of French and Spanish women were herded into a cattle train for deportation from Sarrebruck (Neue Bremm, a Nazi torture camp in France) to Ravensbrück. Consumed with rage at their inhumane conditions and deportation, they were compelled to “yell loudly and

²⁹ Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas a Ravensbrück*, (Barcelona, 2012). See Appendices E to I for more.

³⁰ See Prieto’s appendix for more.

³¹ “Mauthausen: Prisoners,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 20 February 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/mauthausen-prisoners?series=18606>.

strongly what [they] are: women of the Resistance.”³² The autobiographies of *republicanas deportadas* exhibit the boundless pride and devotion they had to their identities as Republicans and antifascist agents. Significant common themes arise in their narratives, from their collective identities as Spanish antifascists to their understanding of resistance as a duty, both before and after their deportations to the camps, where they continued to resist. How and why did *republicanas* continue to resist the Nazis from within Ravensbrück and its subcamps, and what themes do their reported histories have in common?

I.II.I — Solidarity

Republicanas deportadas felt strikingly loyal to one another, linked as comrades through their mutual political identities and shared past. This allegiance was manifested in several ways, including by protecting and taking care of each other mentally and physically. The women affirmed the importance of the individual within the collective by describing each other as “comrade,” “sister,” “daughter,” or “mother,” forming “camp families.”³³ These families became a glue that brought women together over common antifascist identities and resulted in a sense of protection towards one another, even contributing to ongoing resistance efforts within concentration camps. Everyone believed they played a role, from mother figures to active resisters.³⁴ Women also maintained morale in the camps by sharing recipes, and Núñez recalls the strength she felt after receiving a small Spanish Republican flag while in the infirmary in Leipzig. Núñez fell ill with scarlet fever and tuberculosis and had been selected for transport to

³² “Tenemos que gritar bien alto y bien fuerte lo que somos, mujeres de la Resistencia.” Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 158.

³³ Neus Català highlights this theme multiple times in her memoir. She describes how she loved one of the other Spanish deportees as her own daughter, and when she describes her sudden transfer from Ravensbrück to Holleischen, she notes that the families they organized were thus undone (“[...] son deshechas las familias que habíamos organizado [...]”). Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 51, 62-3.

³⁴ “A las ‘ancianas’ de 50 años las llamábamos madre, y las jóvenes las nacíamos creer que las necesitábamos para resistir y las protegíamos discretamente.” ‘We called the ‘elderly’ 50-year-old women mother, and we let the young women believe we needed them for the resistance, and we protected them discreetly.’ Ibid, 65.

the gas chamber the day before the Nazis evacuated the camp as the Allies drew closer. Before the *republicanas* in her Kommando left, they gifted her a clandestinely sewn Republican flag, telling her to put it on as soon as she was liberated. The Allies arrived one day later, on 14 April 1945, and Núñez immediately pinned the flag to her uniform.³⁵

Many *republicanas* identify loyalty as a force that helped keep them alive in concentration camps. For example, when Ángeles Martínez fell ill with tuberculosis during her internment at Mauthausen, fellow *republicana*, Carlota García (alias Charly) risked her own life to protect Ángeles.³⁶ Charly prevented Ángeles from being discovered by the SS guards, distracting them to ensure she was not sent to the infirmary where she would have faced lethal injection or a transport to the gas chambers at Hartheim.³⁷ Català echoes this, explaining that while the ability to continue their resistance in the camps required luck, it overall depended on “[their] moral struggle, not thinking of oneself, and being in solidarity with the others.”³⁸ This is demonstrated across camps, particularly at Holleischen (a factory at a Flossenbürg subcamp) and HASAG (a factory at a Buchenwald satellite camp).³⁹

³⁵ The flag was sewn by Carme Buatell. See appendix K for more on Buatell. “[...] Carmeta, muy emocionada, saca de un saquito una pequeña bandera republicana. ‘Toma. La hemos hecho para ti. Mañana es el 14 de abril. Si estás libre, te la pones.’” As soon as the camp was liberated, Núñez writes, “sólo recuerdo que mi primer reflejo fue ponerme rápidamente la banderita republicana [...]” Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 226.

³⁶ See Appendix F for more on Ángeles Martínez, and Appendix G for more on Carlota García. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 77.

³⁷ Sick with tuberculosis, as well as a Night and Fog prisoner, the Nazis would not have hesitated to send her to the gas chambers rather than spend time and resources to cure her. Hartheim castle, located close to Mauthausen in Linz, Austria, was used as a T-4 (the Nazis’ “euthanasia” program) extermination centre. A gas chamber was found there, which was often used by Mauthausen.

³⁸ “¿Cómo se pudo resistir? Fue, de un lado, cuestión de suerte; pero, sobre todo, por nuestra moral de lucha, no pensando en una misma y siendo solidaria con las demás.” Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 65.

³⁹ Holleischen was a female subcamp and munitions factory, and training camp for female camp guards. Of almost 700 prisoners, over half were French. Spanish women are not directly listed, suggesting they are included in the French population.

HASAG, in Leipzig, produced missiles during the War. Both civilian workers and slave labourers from across Europe, including 8 known *republicanas*, worked there. Buchenwald satellite camps were set up nearby, where the deportees stayed.

Català, sent to Holleischen on 11 April 1944, and Núñez, sent to HASAG in August 1944, displayed parallel examples of moral resistance and remarkable solidarity. Holleischen and HASAG both used slave labour from concentration camps, as well as employed civilian German workers. The SS guards at both factories wanted to “pay” the deportees with vouchers in the presence of the German workers to keep up appearances. At both locations, the women unanimously agreed to collectively refuse the vouchers, risking severe punishment to proclaim their status as political prisoners. These examples of resistance and defiance worked because of solidarity, because women chose the (antifascist) cause over themselves. When Núñez writes about the resistance she and other Spanish women at HASAG carried out, discussing their political identities as a driving force takes precedence over highlighting the punitive retribution they faced: “We just demonstrated that we are antifascist fighters. We raised our heads with pride.”⁴⁰ While refusing the vouchers, Núñez pointed to the red triangle on her chest, screaming “¡política!” – “political [prisoner]!”⁴¹ This act of defiance turned a tool used by the Nazis intended to dehumanize the deportees on its head: rather than feeling shame, she donned the label with pride: *política*, a synonym for antifascist.

Spanish concentration camp survivors are very vocal about their collective identities as agents of antifascism, which were first fostered in Spain during the Civil War. For Català, Spain

Holleischen (Holýšov) Subcamp,” KZ-Gedenkstätte Flossenbürg, accessed 30 June 2021, <https://www.gedenkstaette-flossenbuerg.de/en/history/satellite-camps/holleischen>; “HASAG,” Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, accessed 30 June 2021, <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/nazioccupation/hasag.html>.

⁴⁰ “Acabamos de demostrar que somos luchadores antifascistas. Nosotras alzamos la cabeza con orgullo.” Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 203.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 202-3.

and her “Spanish-ness” are major themes.⁴² Her identity not only as an antifascist, but as a *Spanish* antifascist were badges she wore with pride, that she, like the other *republicanas*, did not want anyone to forget. Català was maddened by the fact that *republicanas* deported to Ravensbrück were sometimes registered or remembered as French instead of Spanish:

Españolas were discriminated against in this regard; we [were deported] from France, and that was another whim of the SS that we have not deciphered. Hence the confusion that is still there. A marked tendency to diminish our important participation in the Resistance and recognition of the high number of missing people in deportation.⁴³

Patriotism contributed to resistance, not just for Català but many Spanish women. A love for Spain, their *patria* (homeland), devastated by fascism, motivated their fighting the Nazis in France. Català’s national identity is described by her children, Luis and Margarita, as her compass. She viewed herself as a daughter of her *patria*.⁴⁴ Resistance, therefore, was her loyal duty to her country, and the threat to its liberty was a force that transgressed borders.⁴⁵ The recognition of resistance as a “duty” is a thread that weaves numerous *republicanas*’ testimonies together. Rita Pérez, for example, describes that they “did what had to be done: [...] because fascism was fought wherever it might be found.”⁴⁶ Similarly, Concha González de Boix speaks of her “duty, solidarity, and [the] sense of collective efforts” during her time in the Resistance.⁴⁷

⁴² It was always important people knew she and her fellow Spaniards were exactly that: *Spanish* antifascists. Veterans in the fight against fascism. This is especially seen by Català when she expressed her frustration that Mimí de Pau’s story was shared by the French without mention of her Spanish nationality. This pride is very much echoed by Núñez in *El valor de la memoria*, too. Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 67-8.

⁴³ “Las españolas fuimos discriminadas en este sentido; veníamos de Francia, y ése fue otro de los caprichos de los SS que no hemos descifrado. De ahí la confusión aún existente. Una tendencia marcada a aminorar nuestra importante participación en la Resistencia y al reconocimiento del elevado número de desaparecidos en deportación.” Ibid, 56.

⁴⁴ “La brújula de Neus: ser hija (y, en la posguerra, huérfana) de un lugar [su patria].” ‘Neus’ compass: being the daughter (and, in the postwar, the orphan) of a place (her homeland). Ibid, 23.

⁴⁵ Català explains that her resistance was her “simply fulfilling her duty.” Ibid, 39.

⁴⁶ See Appendix K for more on Pérez.

Maureen Tobin Stanley, “Female Voices of Resistance in Neus Català’s *De la resistencia y la deportación*: The Triumph of Life, Dignity, and Solidarity During the Holocaust,” in *Female Exiles in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Europe*, ed. Maureen Tobin Stanley and Gesa Zinn (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 66.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 55.

This sense of duty, paired with their connections to Spain and a history of antifascist combat, established a fusing bond of solidarity among Republican deportees, resulting in their ongoing drive to resist and fight from within the belly of the beast.

II.II — Resistance

I fled from Spain when the [Civil War] was lost, but [I was] not defeated, and here, locked up, I am fighting for its reconquest.

Neus Català⁴⁸

Republicanas españolas continuously risked their lives to uphold their antifascism in active resistance, which, in Ravensbrück and the subcamps to which *republicanas* were deported, mostly happened through acts of sabotage. Moreover, maintaining morale, which I describe as moral resistance, inspired an enduring resistance by the *deportadas*, and contributed to its long-term continuity in the camps. Moral resistance continues to demonstrate the importance of solidarity in resistance. For instance, political songs were sung in dark moments, which exemplify the importance of ideology and identity to the women. When Ángeles Martínez was sentenced to fourteen days of solitary confinement at Mauthausen after being accused of participating in clandestine activities, Charly García told her: “your seclusion will be difficult, extremely difficult, but you have to come out alive. When you feel sad, sing. Sing and you will live.”⁴⁹

La Paloma, *La Marseillaise* (Spanish: *La Marsellesa*), and *Des Partisans* are mentioned across Spanish recollections as songs sung in resistance and to boost morale, including quietly to oneself during the gruelling *Appell*.⁵⁰ Núñez strikingly recalls “the verses of the French Revolutionary hymn [exploding] like a challenge” moments before her deportation from

⁴⁸ “Yo he salido de España perdida la guerra, pero no vencida y, aquí encerrada, estoy luchando por su reconquista.” Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 66.

⁴⁹ Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 77.

⁵⁰ Núñez writes that sometimes the women whispered revolutionary songs to themselves during the *Appell*, which brought smiles to their faces. Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 175.

Sarrebruck to Ravensbrück. She describes the way the *deportadas*, French and Spanish, sang *La Marsellesa*, “with fury, with rage.” She had never heard the *Marseillaise* sung with such strength and conviction.⁵¹ Popular or revolutionary songs were sung not only among Spanish women, but also collectively with different national groups each in their own languages.⁵²

Acts of sabotage are described most commonly by *republicanas españolas* as the active resistance Spanish women undertook in Nazi camps. The sentence if they were caught was high treason, and they would have been subjected to torture, being hanged by their hands and feet, hung up on meat hooks, and experiencing a slow, agonizing death. Mimi de Pau died this way, a *republicana* deported and since then remembered as French.⁵³ Sabotaging the Nazi war effort, in which *republicanas* were forced to participate as slave labourers, was seen as the key to long-term survival and victory and understood collectively as a dutiful and worthy sacrifice. They rendered munitions useless by mixing substances or small objects (including flies, oil, cockroaches, and spit) into the shells during the assembly process; and they slowed production down by up to half of the expected output.⁵⁴ Català estimates that in nine months, her *Kommando* subverted ten million anti-aircraft projectiles. Bueno and the other Night and Fog

⁵¹ *La Marseillaise* is a call to come together and fight tyranny. Born during the French Revolution, it has become a universal emblem representing a call for human rights. *Des Partisans* conveys a collective struggle: “Ami, si tu tombes, un autre ami sort de l’ombre et prend ta place” ‘Friend, if you fall, another friend will appear from the shadows and take your place.’ Stanley, “Female Voices of Resistance,” 64.

“Con furia, con rabia, a viva voz, empezamos a cantar La Marsellesa. [...] Las estrofas del Himno de la Revolución francesa estallan como un desafío a la estación engalanada con cruces gamadas.” Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 158.

⁵² “A menudo cantamos canciones revolucionarias o populares [...]. Cada una utiliza su propia lengua [...], con un instinto musical exigua.” Ibid, 208.

⁵³ Català mentions that de Pau was recognized as a French woman in two books: *Les françaises à Ravensbrück* (French Women at Ravensbrück), and *Triangulo Rojo* (Red Triangle). Both books claim that she was one of three French women hanged at Holleischen. Català says that she swears Mimi was Spanish, and Sabina González and other women in her *Kommando* can testify to this. Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 67.

⁵⁴ Català, for example, recalls her group lowering the expected output of 10,000 anti-aircraft projectiles at Holleischen to 5000-6000. It is not clear in her memoir how many people were included in each group, and whether this number was daily or weekly. Ibid, 66.

women at Ravensbrück worked slowly to decrease productivity despite how closely they were already being watched because of their designations, and regardless of their fear of ferocious repercussions. They were committed to participate in resistance until their final moments.⁵⁵

Braulia (Mónica) Cánovas Molero, a *republicana* sent to a subcamp of Neuengamme (Hannover-Misburg), describes sabotaging the production of gas masks by blowing fuses in machines to slow production.⁵⁶ Knowing “every shell not used is a life [they] save” drove Núñez and others to continue sabotaging despite the risks, because “disrupting the war effort [represented] winning an important battle.”⁵⁷ *Republicanas* understood the defeat of the Nazis as both their survival and Spain’s. Subverting the Nazis’ intentions meant winning a battle in the war that for them began in 1936.

Republicana biographies acquaint readers with communal themes that provide an understanding of both how and why Spanish women consistently continued resistance in Ravensbrück and its subcamps. Unmistakably, camaraderie, community, and unity were indispensable among *españolas* in the camps. Moral and active resistance (through participation in the French Resistance and sabotage in the camps) were understood as a duty and were made possible through solidarity and the collective efforts of *republicanas españolas*.

“Some names may be missing, and some dates, too, but facts are facts,” Català writes, underscoring that notwithstanding both the disappearance of *republicanas* during the Second

⁵⁵ ‘We sabotaged despite our fear of the ferocious regime that we were subjected to in Block 32. [...] **We knew that our block was condemned to disappear**, but we participated in resistance until our last moments. **If they would have caught us, they would have tortured and hanged us**, we knew it.’ (Emphasis added). “Hicimos sabotaje a pesar del miedo y del régimen tan feroz a que estaba sometido el Block 32. [...] Sabíamos que nuestro Block estaba condenado a desaparecer, pero haríamos la resistencia hasta el último momento. Si nos hubieran descubierto no habríamos torturado y ahorcado, lo sabíamos.” Ibid, 157.

⁵⁶ Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 59.

⁵⁷ “Tenemos que recordar que cada obús inutilizado son vidas de los nuestros ahorrados. Desorganizar la industria de guerra representa ganar una batalla importante.” Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 189.

World War and the Holocaust, and the loss of identity through misidentification within the concentration camp system, Spanish women **were there**, and must be remembered.⁵⁸ Yet, the Nazis are not exclusively responsible for the erasure of Spanish experiences, especially those of women, during the Holocaust and Second World War. The Francoist government bears responsibility for the disconnect in historical memory between Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust; and contemporary Spain can likewise be held accountable for the ongoing gaps in the (non)memory of *republicanas deportadas*.

II — Memory and Memorialization of Republican Deportees in Spain

There are no traces here of what we could call a culture of the Holocaust. Spain has lived with its back turned to this singular event, the most significant of the twentieth century.

Reyes Mate⁵⁹

During Spain's *transición* (transition, 1975-1980) away from Franco's dictatorship, the political actors introducing democracy tacitly agreed to overcome Francoism through a *pacto del olvido* (Pact of Forgetting).⁶⁰ This set Spain up for the dangerous burial of a traumatic past. Ignoring history through the *pacto del olvido*, sent a message that discussions of the Civil War and Franco era pose a threat to reconciliation, progress towards a unified society, and cordiality between all Spaniards. The consequences of the *pacto* are still felt today, as major gaps in

⁵⁸ "Fallará algún nombre e incluso alguna fecha, pero los hechos, hechos son [...]." Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 33.

⁵⁹ "Aquí no hay rastro de lo que pudiéramos llamar una cultura del Holocausto. España ha vivido de espaldas a ese acontecimiento singular, el más significativo del siglo XX." — Reyes Mate, 1998. Quote from Marta Simó, "Teaching and Learning About the Holocaust in Spain," in *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, ed. Gina Herrmann and Sarah J. Brenneis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 586.

⁶⁰ The transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy in Spain took place under the *pacto del olvido*, wherein Spaniards, both on the political right and left, decided to turn their backs on the past to focus on democratizing Spain and unifying the nation. Ibid, 587.

Quote in text from Alejandro Baer and Natan Sznajder, "Francoism Reframed: The Disappeared of the Spanish Holocaust" in *Memory and Forgetting in the Post-Holocaust Era: The Ethnic of Never Again*, (New York: Routledge, 2017), 66, 71.

Holocaust memory and memorialization (especially regarding Republican deportees) prevail in Spain. These gaps are exacerbated by Holocaust censorship implemented by Franco during the 1940s, which, by omitting certain truths, advanced the constructed narrative that Spain was removed from events of the Second World War, preventing Spanish survivors from publicly sharing their testimonies. During Franco's dictatorship, only two Mauthausen survivors (both male) had permission from the regime to publish versions of their experiences in Nazi camps in Spain: Carlos Rodríguez del Risco (*Yo he estado en Mauthausen*, 1946) and Joaquim Amat-Piniella (*K.L. Reich*, 1963).⁶¹ A first wave of survivor memoir publications was seen in Spain following Franco's death, from 1975 to the 1980s/mid-1990s. Among these were Mercedes Núñez Targa's *El Carretó dels gossos: Una catalana a Ravensbrück (The Dog's Wagon: A Catalan Woman at Ravensbrück*, 1980)⁶² and Neus Català's collection of fifty *republicana* testimonies in *De la resistència y la deportación (Of Resistance and Deportation*, 1984). Since the mid-1990s, where have stories of Spanish Republicans deported to Nazi camps been shared? Spanish public history has begun to break from the *pacto del olvido*; however, what little exists on the history of Spaniards in Nazi concentration camps focuses on Mauthausen and men, with a

⁶¹ Del Risco's memoir was published in a 34-part series in Spain's fascist newspaper *¡Arriba!*. The full title of his memoir series was *Yo he estado en Mauthausen: Carlos R. del Risco relata en exclusiva para "Arriba" sus siete años de aventura en el exilio* (I was in Mauthausen: Carlos R. del Risco recounts exclusively for "Arriba" his seven years of adventure in exile). This was the first published account of a Republican deported to a Nazi camp in Spain, and in it, del Risco absolves Nazis of their crimes, shifting the focus of violence to the victims/Kapos, and applauds Spain's return to 'peace' under Franco. His narration of Mauthausen paints him as a victim of the abuses of the SS and a witness to the Holocaust, but also an antisemite and Nazi apologist who praised Hitler as a patriot. Still, he is recognized as having painted a picture of the Spanish experience in the camp.

Amat-Piniella's *K.L. Reich* was a semi-autobiographical novel. The way these accounts were presented demonstrate the difficulties Spaniards faced under strict censorship to address their histories and experiences abroad during the Second World War and the Holocaust, especially when the constructed narrative was that Spain was not involved. Sarah J. Brenneis, "Spain's Mauthausen: Narratives of the Nazi Deportation of Spanish Republicans," in *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, ed. Gina Herrmann and Sarah J. Brenneis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 275-6.

⁶² Núñez released *Cárcel de Ventas* (Ventas Prison) in Paris, written in Spanish, in 1967, and released the Catalan version of her experience in Nazi camps in 1980. In 2016, these two memoirs were released together in one book, *El valor de la memoria*.

significant focus on the figure of Francisco Boix. Where do *republicanas deportadas* fit in Spanish public history and memory today?⁶³

II.I — Spanish Republicans, the Holocaust, and Spanish Public History

II.I.I — Literature and Graphic Novels

A second and final significant wave of memoir and literary publications on Spanish Republicans in Nazi camps began from 1995 to the mid 2000s, following a relative lull in Spanish Holocaust narratives, plausibly in reaction to Spain's continuously turbulent transition to democracy.⁶⁴ It is shortly after this time that Núñez' *El valor de la memoria (The Value of Memory)* was published, in 2016, but a majority of works discussed in academic bodies of literature — including two by Sarah J. Brenneis — still focus on the memory and experiences of Spanish Republican *men*.⁶⁵ Historical novels are included in this wave, such as: *El violinista de Mauthausen* by Andres Pérez Domínguez (*The Violinist of Mauthausen*, 2009); *Lo que esconde tu nombre* by Clara Sánchez (*The Scent of Lemon Leaves*, 2010); and graphic novel *Prisionero en Mauthausen* by Toni Carbo and Javier Cosnova (*Prisoner in Mauthausen*, 2011).⁶⁶ Such publications evidence an increasing interest in Republican history during the Holocaust, outside of an audience of survivors and their descendants. In 2018, another graphic novel was added to this collection, titled *El fotógrafo de Mauthausen (The Photographer of Mauthausen)*. It illustrates perhaps the most famous story of a Spanish Republican — and Republican resistance

⁶³ An important comment vis-à-vis the upcoming section: I do not have space in this project to analyze all the creations in Section II in a more detailed manner. My aim in touching on all of these works (films, books, podcasts, radio shows) is to discuss them only in the context of highlighting that they all A) focus on men and B) focus on Mauthausen.

⁶⁴ Brenneis, "Spain's Mauthausen," 280.

⁶⁵ "Spain's Mauthausen" in *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust, and Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp, 1940-2015* (2018).

⁶⁶ Brenneis critiques these publications as having turned towards mass media by banalizing Mauthausen "for the purposes of entertainment." Still, she notes that despite this they have "brought the historical fact of the deportation to new audiences" in Spain. Brenneis, "Spain's Mauthausen," 284.

— in a Nazi camp: that of Francisco Boix.⁶⁷ Boix is renowned for his daring resistance at Mauthausen, saving approximately 20,000 photos (an estimated one-third of those taken by the SS) from Nazi destruction; of which one to two thousand survived to liberation.⁶⁸ Representations of Spanish Republicans in literature (memoirs, novels, and graphic novels) implicitly argue for the relevance of the Republican deportee narrative within the Spanish collective memory. However, they need to be cautious in order to avoid minimizing the ordeal of Spaniards in Nazi camps outside of Mauthausen. Looking to the future, this includes ensuring the experiences of Republican women are not excluded or underrepresented in these narratives.

II.I.II — Film and Documentary

The same year that Franco died, Llorenç Soler premiered the first (and for 25 years the only) limited release documentary on Spaniards in Mauthausen: *Sobrevivir en Mauthausen* (Surviving in Mauthausen, 1975). From 2000, however, documentaries relating to Spanish deportees began to screen at film festivals and on local TV channels.⁶⁹ Three films focusing on the Mauthausen experience came out in 2000, including another by Soler: *Francisco Boix, un fotógrafo en el infierno* (Francisco Boix, a Photographer in Hell).⁷⁰ In 2004, Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis released *El convoy de los 927. Los Republicanos españoles inauguran los trenes de la muerte* (The Convoy of 927. Spanish Republicans Inaugurate the Death Trains) for

⁶⁷ Francisco Boix, a Republican veteran from Catalonia, arrived at Mauthausen in January 1941. Because Boix spoke German, he was first assigned to work as an interpreter, and later worked as a photography lab technician for the SS photographer Paul Ricken. The prisoners working in this lab (including two other Spaniards) were making five prints of each photo negative for the SS, as per instruction, and one secret sixth print, which they hid in the back of a drawer and in other parts of the camp. When the Nazis ordered the photographs to be destroyed in 1943, Boix and the resistance continued to preserve these illicit images, smuggling them out of the lab and even out of the camp. The photos Boix and his accomplices risked their lives to save have helped historians construct an understanding of the events that transpired at the death camp and were used in the Nuremberg Trials of 1946. Brenneis, *Spaniards in Mauthausen*, 46, 63.

⁶⁸ Tereixa Constenla, “The Spanish photographer who captured the horrors of Mauthausen,” *El País*, 12 May 2015, https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2015/05/11/inenglish/1431348909_486618.html.

⁶⁹ Brenneis, *Spaniards in Mauthausen*, 205.

⁷⁰ The other documentaries released were *Cerca del Danubio* (Near the Danube) by Felipe Vega and *Mauthausen, el deber de recordar* (Mauthausen, the Duty to Remember) by Joan Selia and Cesc Tomás.

the Catalan television station.⁷¹ The documentary discusses some of the earliest Mauthausen prisoners: Spaniards who arrived at the camp in August 1940. At this stage of the camp's history, Mauthausen was not yet considered a camp suitable for women, yet Spanish women and girls were included in the convoy of 927. Confused by the arrival of women and girls, who were not seen as useful for Nazi slave labour, the SS consulted the Spanish consulate in Berlin, and together they decided to send the women and children younger than twelve back to Spain.⁷² This event highlights an important detail often overlooked in the historiography of Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust: the direct involvement of the Spanish government in the deportation of Republicans.⁷³ Just as the Spanish government held some level of responsibility for the deportation of Republicans in the 1940s, so do they hold responsibility for securing a space for Spanish victims and survivors of Nazi atrocity in Spain's national/collective memory today.

Perhaps the most famous contribution to Spain's public history of Republicans in Nazi camps is Mar Targarona's movie *El fotógrafo de Mauthausen* (2018). Sharing a name and

⁷¹ A book by the same title/authors was released the following year, in 2005. Isabel Estrada, "To Mauthausen and Back: The Holocaust as a Reference in Spanish Civil War and Memory Studies" in *The Holocaust in Spanish Memory: Historical Perceptions and Cultural Discourse*, ed. Antonio Gómez López-Quiñones and Susanne Zepp (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010), 37.

⁷² Mauthausen's prisoners were exclusively male until c.1942. According to historian David Wingeate Pike, an error was made by including women and children in the August 1940 convoy, "since Mauthausen was not built to cater for women and children." The USHMM states the first women to *arrive* at Mauthausen were two dozen sent from Ravensbrück to fill the brothel in June 1942 — except for four Yugoslav women who were brought to Mauthausen earlier in 1942 to be executed. However, the first women *registered* as prisoners at Mauthausen arrived on 5 October 1943. Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, 64; "Mauthausen: Prisoners," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁷³ To this day, Spain has not officially acknowledged its role in the deportations of Republicans. In addition to this specific August 1941 event, throughout the 1940s the Nazis sent *communiqués* to Spanish diplomats in Germany, as well as the Franco government directly, to ask for guidance on how to proceed with the Spaniards they were holding. Moreover, Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister, Ramón Serrano Suñer met with Hitler in Berlin in September 1940. During his time there, the Gestapo "released an order mandating the forced imprisonment of the *Rotspanienkämpfer*, the Spanish 'reds' [...]: that Serrano Suñer was involved in this order is now widely accepted by historians." This links Franco's government directly to the deportation of some 15,000 Republicans. Brenneis, *Spain's Mauthausen*, 272.

publication date with the graphic novel, *El fotógrafo de Mauthausen* likewise relays the incredible story of Francisco Boix's courageous resistance at Mauthausen. The movie features a Spanish woman whom Boix meets in the camp brothel, becoming one of the many contacts who helps him conceal and preserve photographic evidence of the Holocaust as it transpired at Mauthausen. Her role in Boix's resistance campaign is key, putting her life at risk to help him on his mission; yet, her character remains a footnote in Boix's storyline as told by Targarona.⁷⁴ At the end of the movie, while the credits roll, original photographs taken by Boix cycle across the screen. Among them is Figure 1, validating at the very least that women were present at the camp. The photograph alone does not reveal whether this woman was Spanish, or if she helped Boix in his resistance. However, the appearance of this female character in Targarona's film hints at various truths about *republicanas*: they were deported to camps (*including* Mauthausen), they experienced sexualized violence, and they participated in resistance within Nazi concentration camps.⁷⁵ These facts require more attention than they received in *El fotógrafo de Mauthausen*, but it appears to be the first major film released in Spanish cinemas to acknowledge Spanish Republican women at Mauthausen at all. Still, the reams of literature and film overall

⁷⁴ In the movie, after Boix burns what Paul Ricken thinks are film negatives (but are unused roles of film), Ricken "rewards" Boix with time in the brothel. At 0:38:00, the woman appears. She is thin, pale, in poor health, and has dark circles around her eyes. He notices a Spanish book on her table and asks if she is Spanish. She responds by pointing to the blue triangle on her uniform and speaking her only line in this scene: "Put a, alcolica, anarquista, lo que prefieres" ("Whore, alcoholic, anarchist... whatever you prefer," 0:39:16). She appears again a few minutes later, after Boix recruits a group of men to help him in his resistance, explaining that the Nazis took her to Ravensbrück where they told her she would be free after six months if she serviced the brothel... one year prior. Boix asks her if she wants to participate in the resistance, and she nods in agreement (0:41:20). She does not appear again until the end of the movie, after the camp's liberation. Boix is collecting his hidden film and photographing the scenes of liberation. He takes her picture (a recreation of Figure 1) and she says "hola," smiling shyly and handing him the film she hid in her book. In total, she receives less than three minutes of screen time. The audience doesn't know her story, or her even her name. This is the space *republicanas*, assuming she is a *republicana*, are given in perhaps the biggest cinematic release of Spaniards and the Holocaust. Her demeanour overall appears passive, in contrast to the strong and proud personalities that show up in *republicanas*' memoirs. *El fotógrafo de Mauthausen*, directed by Mar Targarona (FilmTeam, 2018).

⁷⁵ An important note here: the photograph (fig.1) alone does not suggest sexualized violence; however, the appearance of a woman in Targarona's film, forced to work in the brothel, touches on the history of female sexualized violence at Mauthausen.

fail to acknowledge both the presence of Spaniards in camps outside of Mauthausen, and the presence of Spanish women in Nazi concentration camps.

II.I.III — Radio and Podcasts

In recent years, stories of Spanish Republicans in the context of the Third Reich have begun to appear in radio shows and podcasts. In 2009, Aragón Radio aired a twelve-minute segment on Mariano Constante, one of the early Spaniards to be deported to Mauthausen in 1941. This would be the first of six short shows on the radio channel that, generally, discuss Aragonese and Spanish deportees in Mauthausen.⁷⁶ If one is interested in listening to podcasts about Republican deportees, a simple Google search brings up four links to: *La escóbula de la brújula*, *Onda Cero*, *El Abrazo del Oso*, and *Con Memoria*.⁷⁷ Most of the podcasts analyzed for this article spend most of, if not all their time discussing Mauthausen.

La escóbula de la brújula's episode “*Campos de exterminio*” (*The Witch's Broom* “Extermination Camps”) was released in early 2018 and features Spanish author Montserrat Llor, who discusses some of the twenty testimonies she gathered her book published in 2014.⁷⁸ The two-hour podcast acknowledges that there is little written on Spaniards who were deported to camps other than Mauthausen. Mercedes Núñez, Neus Català, and Conchita Grange are referenced in a brief discussion of *republicanas deportadas*, where memories of their lived and

⁷⁶ At least, the first available on their website. I am not aware of any radio shows through Aragón Radio regarding Republicans in Nazi camps before 2009. They also had an episode interviewing the daughter of a (male) survivor, and an episode on Aragonese students who went on a school trip to the camp. They could have mentioned that Aragonese women were sent to Ravensbrück, but only ever focus on men at Mauthausen. Bueno, for example identifies a 13-year-old girl from Aragon at the camp (see Appendix D).

⁷⁷ Note: *La escóbula de la brújula* is not a title that translates well into English. It is a play on words/variation of the Spanish phrase “la escoba de la bruja” (the witch’s broom). *Brújula* actually translates to compass. Further note that *Con Memoria* is a podcast show by *Radio Republicana*. It has two episodes on Nazi camps, neither of which discuss women or Ravensbrück.

⁷⁸ Her book is titled *Vivos en el averno nazi: En busca de los últimos supervivientes españoles de los campos de concentración de la segunda guerra mundial* (Alive in the Nazi Hell: Searching for the Last Spanish Survivors of the Concentration Camps of World War Two). She acknowledges that her work brings attention to that which has been long ignored vis-à-vis Spaniards, resistance, fighting, and suffering.

witnessed atrocities at Ravensbrück are shared.⁷⁹ Importantly, Llor highlights the pride *deportadas* had in their solidarity and resistance. The episode dedicates the most time (five minutes) to Ravensbrück survivor Lisa London, whom they identify as a French resister and International Brigades veteran. Significant background information on London is not provided, and her name does not sound Spanish, raising the question of why she, specifically, was given prominence in the episode. A Spanish memorial book reveals what the podcast does not mention or clarify: that London was born Elisa Ricol López, daughter of Spanish immigrants to France. Lisa London was her alias during the Resistance.⁸⁰ Did the podcast's time constraints prevent this clarification? Did the hosts assume people would know London's roots? Did they think it was irrelevant? Or did they miss these details themselves? The lack of accessibility to data on the histories of *republicanas deportadas* needs particular attention. Even when there is interest in their stories, researching them is challenging, especially now that survivors have passed.

Onda Cero (Wave Zero) features two interviews with author Mónica González Álvarez that discuss the Holocaust, Ravensbrück, and mention *republicanas*.⁸¹ Both of these interviews begin to exemplify one way in which future conversations about Ravensbrück, World War Two,

⁷⁹ The podcast further includes some brief audio clips of Neus Català speaking. One clip discusses how women may have been afraid during their resistance, where Català describes that “everyone was scared, of course, but you had to overcome it” — even in the face of Gestapo torture and deportation to Ravensbrück. Jesús Callejo, “Campos de exterminio,” *La escóbula de la brújula* (podcast), February 28, 2018, accessed June 7, 2021, <https://www.podiumpodcast.com/la-escobula-de-la-brujula/temporada-3/podcast-101-campos-de-exterminio/>: 92:22-95:37.

⁸⁰ See Appendix L for more. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 124-126. Note that this book is quite inaccessible, as it is not available online or in many Spanish bookstores. I was only able to access this volume through direct correspondence with the secretary of the Amical the Ravensbrück in Barcelona, who was kind enough to send me a copy to Canada during the Covid-19 pandemic for my research.

⁸¹ One episode mentions Neus Català very briefly and clarifies that a chapter in González' book *Guardianas nazis* (Female Nazi Guards, 2012) is dedicated to the 400 *republicanas* deported to Ravensbrück. The second spends approximately three-minutes talking about Català and medical experimentation. “Mónica González Álvarez,” *Onda Cero*; “Un mundo feliz: Esterilización desde el nazismo hasta hoy,” *Onda Cero* (podcast interview by Carlos Alsina.), accessed June 7, 2021, https://www.ondacero.es/programas/la-rosa-de-los-vientos/audios-podcast/un-mundo-feliz/mundo-feliz-genocidio-campo-concentracion-ravensbruck_201404215540745b0cf21d2cb1b4caf9.html.

and the Holocaust could look in Spain: referencing Spanish Republicans, including women, in Nazi camps to emphasize a connection between Spain and the Holocaust.

There is a podcast episode on *El Abrazo del Oso* (The Bear Hug) that focuses on Boix and Mauthausen, identifying Mauthausen as “the worst protagonist” in the history of Spaniards in Nazi camps.⁸² It is immediately clear the podcast does not include significant, if any, information on women. In fact, it arguably undermines the experience of *republicanas deportadas* by suggesting that Mauthausen was the worst chapter for all Spaniards. Four hundred *republicanas* were sent to Ravensbrück, with only an estimated eight of them experiencing Mauthausen; so, for them the worst chapter was Ravensbrück. In fact, Alfonsina Bueno, who experienced both, comments that Mauthausen was “just as bad as Ravensbrück,” highlighting how she was “punished more often in Ravensbrück” than at Mauthausen.⁸³ The Ravensbrück experience subjected women to different dangers than men, namely experimentation, which is why it is vital that their stories are not excluded, and that the focus does not remain primarily and exclusively on Mauthausen.⁸⁴

II.I.IV. — Theatre productions

Eighty-two years after the end of the Spanish Civil War, debates in Spain continue over whether to remember, whom to remember, and how to stage acts of remembering. In the twenty-first century, Spanish theatre has begun to respond to these shifting debates through *teatro de memoria* (theatre of memory). José Sanchis Sinisterra defines this as a means

⁸² “Conoceremos [...] el horror de campos como el de Mauthausen-Gusen, el peor protagonista de esta historia en el que recalaron la gran mayoría de los españoles azotados por el nazismo [...]” Podcast episode is titled ‘Mauthausen: Spanish Republicans in the Nazi Concentration Camp.’ “Mauthausen, republicanos españoles en el campo de concentración nazi,” *El Abrazo del Oso* (podcast), October 16, 2018, accessed June 7, 2021, https://www.ivoox.com/abrazo-del-oso-mauthausen-republicanos-espanoles-audios-mp3_rf_29355886_1.html.

⁸³ Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 159.

⁸⁴ Not to mention Spaniards who were deported to Auschwitz.

by which to revisit the past through a lived, performative act of “witnessing” to understand the past and choose a future.⁸⁵ Similarly to films, theatre productions to date have *heavily* focused on the male, Mauthausen experience.

The first play in a major Spanish theatre to represent the Republican experience in Nazi camps opened in 2014: *El triángulo azul* (The Blue Triangle) by Laila Ripoll and Mariano Llorente.⁸⁶ The play does not introduce anything new to the discussion of the Spanish memoryscape in this paper, as it, too, centres around the story of Boix and Mauthausen.⁸⁷ While the creation of this play is an important educational contribution to the public history of Spanish Republicans in Spain, the exclusion of *republicanas* in the production maintains elements of the *pacto del olvido*, even if subconsciously. The play contributes to the gap in public knowledge of their place in this history.

Likewise, the 2017 play *J'attendrai* (I Will Wait) by José Ramón Fernández centres around the experience of men at Mauthausen. Through characters representing both the living and the dead, the play tells the story of several Republicans from the Civil War until 2007, and includes Mauthausen and antifascist resistance. It is described by Marilén Loyola as a commemorative play, and an attempt to “push through the pain of silence, resist oblivion, and commit to transmitting a collective Spanish memory of Nazi persecution and terror.”⁸⁸ These

⁸⁵ Marilén Loyola, “Memory and the Ethical Imagination: The Holocaust and Deportation to Mauthausen in Twenty-First-Century Spanish Theatre,” in *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, ed. Gina Herrmann and Sarah J. Brenneis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 503-504.

⁸⁶ The title references the colour of the triangle Spaniards were forced to wear on their uniforms in Mauthausen.

⁸⁷ It takes place in Mauthausen and features a Nazi sub-official recalling how a group of Spanish prisoners smuggled photographic negatives out of the camp, incriminating Nazi guards in the Nuremberg Trials, and highlighting different aspects of the brutality of the camp in the process. “El triángulo azul,” Spain is Culture/España es cultura, accessed June 15, 2021, http://www.spainisculture.com/en/obras_culturales/triangulo-azul.html.

⁸⁸ Dr. Marilén Loyola is a professor of Spanish at Rockford University, Illinois. Loyola, “Memory and the Ethical Imagination,” 511.

attempts as understood though *J'attendrai* are commendable; however, a holistic transmission of collective Spanish memory regarding Nazi brutality cannot happen if women continue to be pushed to the sidelines.

II.II — A Glance at the Contemporary Memoryscape in Spain

A criticism of Spain's lack of “un triste monolito” (a single sad monument) to remember Spanish victims of Nazi atrocity was underscored in Ripoll and Llorente's website for *El triángulo azul*.⁸⁹ Six years later, on 30 January 2020, the first state-commissioned memorial recognizing the fate of some exiled Spaniards in Nazi camps was unveiled in Madrid. The *Homenaje para los republicanos españoles* (Homage for Spanish Republicans, Figure 2), is topped with a plaque reading: “The Spanish Government pays tribute and homage to Spaniards who were deported to and died at Mauthausen and other camps, and to all Spanish victims of Nazism.”⁹⁰ The existence of this monolith in the Spanish memoryscape is significant, as it explicitly draws attention to Spanish deportation and casualties at the hands of the Nazis.⁹¹ However, its focus remains generalized and primarily on Mauthausen, running the risk of *continuing* to footnote the memory of experiences men *and* women had in other camps. Moreover, the memorial's location in Nuevos Ministerios, a government complex outside of Madrid's city centre, means both locals and tourists — who would equally benefit from accessibility to a memorial of this nature — will not see the memorial unless they explicitly seek it out. Additionally, it does not provide any significant information: there are no numbers or no

⁸⁹ Ibid, 505.

⁹⁰ Translated from the original Spanish: “El Gobierno de España rinde tributo y homenaje a los españoles deportados y fallecidos en Mauthausen y en otros campos y a todas las víctimas españolas del nazismo.”

⁹¹ Despite its significance, the unveiling of the monolith received very little media coverage. The memorial was unveiled by the Spanish Vice President, Carmen Calvo, and other Ministers, representatives of important organizations (Amical de Mauthausen and Federation of Spanish Jewish Communities), and Ambassadors (Germany, Austria, France, Russia, Poland) were also present. The attempted action to address ongoing memory polemics in Spain was met with little active and fluid dialogue about it in the public press. However, there was more coverage through official, journalistic, and independent Twitter accounts — such as @SpainMemoryWars.

names; nothing to humanize it or acknowledge in detail the Spanish victims of Nazi atrocity.⁹² Moreover, the words “Republican” and “Holocaust” are not written on the memorial. It is clear the Spanish state continues to struggle to allow a disruption to the commonly disseminated national narrative of the past, wherein Spain is disconnected from the rest of Europe during the Holocaust. Ostensibly, the tensions between Republicanism and Francoism from the Civil War era are ongoing.⁹³

While the memorial topography for Spanish Republicans, especially women, deported to Nazi camps remains underwhelming in Spain, recent years have seen slight shifts in the dialogue vis-à-vis the nation’s ties to the Holocaust and World War Two. This is especially marked by the 2018 installment of Spain’s first *Stolpersteine* (Stumbling Stones), a memorial the size of a cobble stone placed in the streets to commemorate individual victims of Nazi persecution.⁹⁴ PhD candidate Alicia Hernández-Grande notes how *Stolpersteine* create “performance possibilities” inviting passersby to engage in “past history and trauma;” an act comparable to the goal of the

⁹² The memorial is found in Nuevos Ministerios, a government neighbourhood of Madrid, outside of the Ministry of Transport, Mobility, and Urban Agenda. Interestingly, journalist Alejandro Torrús notes that the memorial stands in proximity to an emblematic space in Madrid: the plaza San Juan de la Cruz — where a statue of Francisco Franco mounted on a horse (in a very heroic style) stood for nearly 50 years. It was only removed from the area in 2005. Torrús is a journalist focusing on historical memory, rights, and liberties for *Publico España*. Alejandro Torrús, “El Gobierno tiene listo un monolito para homenajear a los republicanos en campos nazis,” *Público*, January 24, 2020, last modified January 24, 2020, <https://www.publico.es/politica/gobierno-listo-monolito-homenajear-republicanos-campos-nazis.html>.

⁹³ Statues and memorials for Francisco Franco have been removed or recontextualized in Spain as recently as October 2019, when Francisco Franco’s remains were removed from the Valle de los Caídos. That memorials for Franco continued to exist in the early 21st century, when memorials for Republicans murdered in Nazi camps in Spain did not exist, demonstrate the state of these ongoing tensions.

⁹⁴ *Stolpersteine* are a memorial created by German artist Gunther Demnig. They are brass plaques the size of a cobble stones found across Europe, collectively making up the continent’s largest Holocaust memorial. Originally created for Jewish victims and survivors, they have now expanded and are commissioned for various Holocaust and Nazi atrocity victims – including, as of recent, Spanish Republicans. They are commissioned privately and are placed outside of the final residence of an individual who suffered in the Holocaust or in a Nazi concentration camp, and include the individual’s name, birth date, year of deportation (or exile), place of deportation, and year of death (if applicable).

One of the first Stumbling Stones to be laid in Spain was damaged two months after it was installed by Demnig. See more here: <https://twitter.com/ISTolpersteine/status/991051345544273920>.

mural to be proposed in Section III.⁹⁵ Hundreds of stones have been installed throughout the country since 2018, and it is estimated that by the end of 2021 there will be close to 500 Stumbling Stones in Spain.⁹⁶ As of 20 May 2021, only *one* of hundreds of *Stolpersteine* in Spain names a woman: Neus Català's in Els Guiamets (Tarragona). At the end of May 2021, the city of Madrid had thirty-five new *Stolpersteine* in their possession ready to install and were requesting the creation of twenty-six more.⁹⁷ Of the thirty-five stones in their possession, three are for women (María Gisbert Merino, Anita Winter Flesh, and Constanza Martínez Prieto), and thirty-one were installed by 2 July 2021 (Figure 3).⁹⁸ While major gaps continue to exist between Spanish Republican men and women in the Spanish memoryscape, *Stolpersteine* are beginning to address these lacuna. Still, as powerful and significant as Stumbling Stones are, they are very individualistic. *Republicanas* should be looked at both as a group as well as individuals to show what united them.

Stolpersteine serve as an important link between Spain's traumatic past, starting with the Civil War, and Europe's history through the Holocaust. They reserve a space in the contemporary cityscape topography for victims, which books, films, podcasts, and even the *Homenaje para los republicanos españoles* do not do effectively, *especially* for women. As debates continue vis-à-vis whether to remember, whom to remember, and how to remember, a more intentional effort is needed to ensure that women are not left out of these shifting discussions. What Spain needs is an act of resistance against the silencing efforts of the Franco-

⁹⁵ Hernández-Grande, "Stumbling over History," 4.

⁹⁶ @IStolpersteine, Twitter direct message to author, May 20, 2021.

⁹⁷ There was a delay in laying the stones because Demnig could not travel due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

⁹⁸ Antonio Pérez, "Quince 'stolpersteine' en Centro luchan contra la desmemoria," *El Diario Madrid*, July 2, 2021, accessed August 3, 2021, https://www.eldiario.es/madrid/somos/noticias/quince-stolpersteine-centro-luchan-desmemoria_3_8109746.html.

era and *transición* period. This includes acknowledging the active role women played in the wartime Resistance, and their resulting imprisonment and deportation. Perhaps the creation of *La memoria del valor* will encourage an accelerated and nuanced presence of Republican women in the Spanish memoryscape.⁹⁹ A larger-scale memorial for *republicanas* in the form of a mural will work to restore lost-to-history identities of underrepresented women in the already lackluster memoryscape of deported Republicans. It has the potential to bridge memory gaps between: Spain and the Holocaust, Spanish women and the fight against fascism, and Spain's traumatic past from the Civil War and dictatorship. Art is living memory, as Patrizia Violi (University of Bologna) illustrates. Whether it is theatre, music, film, paintings, or murals, art "becomes the means of keeping memory alive, connecting it to the present;" transforming into a memory capable of "looking to the future as well as conserving the past."¹⁰⁰ The time has come for Spain to revive the memory of *republicanas deportadas*: antifascist resisters, and victims of Nazi (and Francoist) atrocity. Continuing the trend of Franco-perpetuated silence not only does a disservice to a community of Spaniards who suffered at the hands of both Spanish Fascism and German Nazism, but also suggests that Spain is *still* unwilling to face the historical truth of its past.

⁹⁹ In addition to Stumbling Stones, the Spanish islands of Mallorca and Menorca have Remembrance Stones. They are also the work of Demnig, and they are dedicated to victims of Francoism. They look the same as *Stolpersteine*, but they are a grey metal, rather than brass/gold. Mallorca requested Demnig create them, and he agreed — a special gesture, as he has never created anything similar for victim groups. There are ten Remembrance Stones for women in Mallorca and Menorca. The Remembrance Stones are spreading from the Balearic Islands to the Spanish peninsula as well.

¹⁰⁰ Violi, a Professor of Semiotics in the Department of Philosophy and Communication at the University of Bologna, writes about the functions of art, place, and memory in *Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Space, History*, trans. Alastair McEwen (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd, 2017), 297-299.

III — Mural Proposal: La memoria del valor

The most iconic Spanish Civil War image — perhaps the most iconic anti-war painting of the twentieth century — is Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica* (1937).¹⁰¹ *Guernica* is more than a piece of art or a mural: it is a memorial that brought international attention to the Spanish Civil War, and a powerful political statement, showing the war’s devastation, especially on civilians. Section II brought attention to the major gaps and inequities when it comes to *republicanas deportadas* in the Spanish memoryscape. This is why I am proposing the creation of a mural (*La memoria del valor*) in the heart of Spain.¹⁰² In the same way that *Guernica* brought [inter]national attention to the Civil War, *La memoria del valor* aims to bring recognition to the historical role *republicanas* played during the Holocaust and Second World War. Madrid needs a mural of this nature because these women were victims of, and resisters against, fascism and Nazism. *Republicanas deportadas* played a key role in antifascist resistance; they fought, experienced concentration camps, witnessed the Holocaust first-hand, lost their lives, and survived Nazi persecution and brutalization reserved for what the Nazis deemed the worst criminals. Yet, they are absent from the public memory of antifascist resisters and victims of Nazi atrocity, both outside of, but especially within Spain.

The time to fill the gaps in the historiography and memory of Spain’s connection to the Holocaust and the Second World War is long overdue. These women deserve visible, intentional, and accessible commemoration that amounts to more than a footnote in the Spanish

¹⁰¹ The painting was a reaction to the 2-hour long Nazi bombing, at the request of Franco’s Nationalists, in the Basque town on Guernica on 26 April 1937. It was displayed at the 1937 Paris International Exposition, which Picasso was commissioned to paint for by the Spanish Republican government (prior to the Guernica bombing). Once he heard what had happened in Guernica, he abandoned his original idea to work on *Guernica*. “Guernica, 1937 by Pablo Picasso,” Pablo Picasso, accessed May 31, 2021, <https://www.pablocicasso.org/guernica.jsp>.

¹⁰² The title, *La memoria del valor*, is inspired by the 2016 edition of Mercedes Núñez Targa’s memoir *El valor de la memoria*. This title has a double meaning: “The Value of Memory” and “The Bravery of Memory,” as *valor* means both value and bravery. *La memoria del valor*, however, has only one translation: The Bravery of Memory.

memoryscape. Placing the mural in Madrid, and especially in an historically significant space in the city, returns their histories to the starting point. The location links *deportadas* and their fight against fascism between Spain (where their resistance began), France, and Nazi concentration camps (where their resistance continued). It thereby acknowledges the relationship between the Spanish Civil War and the Spanish concentration camp experience during the Holocaust.

III.I — The Vision

I propose the founding of an international competition, calling for mural designs. The call will be advertised across social media platforms, the official *Journal of the European Union*, and other artistic and Holocaust-related journals and organizations, including: *Yad Vashem España*, the *Amical de Ravensbrück*, the *Oxford Art Journal*, the *European Journal of Arts*, *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, and the *Memory Studies Journal*.¹⁰³ *La memoria del valor* will be an artistic tribute to Spanish Republican women who resisted fascism and Nazism across borders, and faced deportation and persecution as a consequence. The mural will be a place to honour their memory, reflect, and learn of Spain's role and connection to events in Europe during the Holocaust. The vision is to create an image that is eye-catching, bold, and fits into the central Madrid art scene. A mural to be appreciated as art, but also taken seriously as a tribute to Nazi and Francoist atrocity. It will affirm a commitment to stand united against fascism; and serve multiple functions including acting as a site of historical memory, a memorial, a work of art, and civil (and in some ways political) testimony, poignant and powerful like Picasso's *Guernica*.¹⁰⁴ It will be an installation that poses questions and challenges the long-

¹⁰³ Oxford Art Journal: <https://academic.oup.com/oaj>; European Journal of Arts: <http://ppublishing.org/journals/404/>; Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History: <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rhos20/current>; Memory Studies: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/mss>.

¹⁰⁴ I see these functions, which Violi identifies as characteristics of a memorial museum in Bologna, Italy in *Guernica*. I hope that this mural will become recognizable in the same way the *Guernica* is: internationally renowned as a political and memorial statement. Violi, *Landscapes of Memory*, 271.

standing national narrative vis-à-vis Spain's connection to the Second World War and the Holocaust. The danger of a mural is the potential loss of nuance or dehistoricization of the mural and its details. To rectify, a QR code will be included next to the mural. It will link viewers to a webpage explaining the details of the mural, building off the appendices of this article to identify *deportadas* by name (even if they are not represented in the mural directly), and elaborate on their stories from the Spanish Civil War to their deportation to Nazi camps. This could further be paired with a memorial plaque to contextualize the mural instantly for those who may not be able to access the code.

III.II — Overview

Invitations to participate on the panel of consultants will be sent to: Margarita Català, Neus Català's daughter, Teresa del Hoyo Calduch (secretary/treasurer of the Amical de Ravensbrück¹⁰⁵), a representative for the city council of Madrid, and Dr. Sarah Brenneis and Dr. Gina Herrmann (editors of *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust: History and Representation*¹⁰⁶). In the process of choosing finalists, and a winner for the mural competition, we will also consult with the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (ARMH¹⁰⁷), Yad Vashem España, and the Asociación de Descendientes del Exilio Español.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ The Amical de Ravensbrück is an organization founded in Barcelona, Spain, in 2005 working to preserve and transmit the memory and legacy of Spanish Republican *deportadas*. They have a collection of testimonies, publications, and DVDs, and in 2017 helped advocate for the placement of the first *Stolpersteine* and have requested the placement of a stumbling stone for Mercedes Núñez Targa.

¹⁰⁶ Brenneis and Herrmann co-edited and published (2020) the first comprehensive historical and cultural study on the relationship between Spain, World War Two, and the Holocaust. Brenneis' research focuses on Spanish representations Mauthausen in novels, historical texts, films, memoirs, and new media from 1940 to today. Herrmann's research includes the history and representation of antifascist resistance in Spain and France, Holocaust and Trauma Studies, gender studies, and documentary photography and film. She is working on a forthcoming publication titled *The Longest Resistance: Antifascist Women Between Franco and Hitler*.

¹⁰⁷ The ARMH is an NGO in Spain, founded in 2000, with the goal of locating and exhuming mass graves from the Civil War and Franco dictatorship.

¹⁰⁸ A Spanish association whose objectives include (but are not limited to) upholding the historical memory of Republican exiles in Spain and countries who took them in, and establishing social and cultural links between Spain, exiles, and their descendants.

III.III — The Site of Memory

On 18 July 1936, Dolores Ibárruri, the chief propagandist for the Republicans, ended a powerful radio speech with the infamous phrase “¡No Pasarán!,” meaning “They [fascists] Shall Not Pass!” She declared Madrid would be the “tumba del fascismo” (the tomb of fascism). Her words became a resounding motto for the Republican side, printed in pamphlets and posters, and famously hanging from a banner under the Arco de Cofreros, outside the Plaza Mayor in Madrid (Figure 4).¹⁰⁹ In an effort to emphasize the connection between actions against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, in the French Resistance, and in Nazi concentration camps, ideally space for the mural will be found in the area around Plaza Mayor. Alternatively, the mural could include a direct reference to Ibárruri’s declaration and be located in the vibrant, artistic, central neighbourhoods of La Latina, Lavapiés, or Malasaña where a politically charged and large-scale mural would fit the style of the areas, as well as be seen by wide audiences.¹¹⁰

French philosopher Pierre Nora explores the idea of places as “sites of memory” (*lieux de memoire*) in *Realms of Memory* (1996). According to Nora, “place” can become an embodiment of a commemorative consciousness that survives history, meaning that *lieux de memoire* are sites where memory lives, connecting memory (which I suggest can include collective remembrance) and historical study. *Lieux de memoire* can celebrate aspects of a nation’s past (such as the Arc de Triomphe in Paris) and they can likewise hold the nation accountable for its past (as seen with

¹⁰⁹ Juanfer Puebla, “Exposición ‘No pasarán. 16 días. Madrid 1936’,” Pongamos que Hablo de Madrid: La Revista de Madrid, April 4, 2018, <https://pongamosquehablodemadrid.com/2018/04/04/no-pasaran-16-dias-madrid-1936/>.

¹¹⁰ Malasaña is the birthplace of the *movida Madrileña* (the Madrid scene), born after Franco’s death. As the entire country experienced a cultural transition, *Madrileños* began to express newfound freedom, exploring anything considered taboo during Francoism: rock and roll, recreational drug-use, open expressions of sexuality (especially within the LGBTQ+ community), etc. Lori Zaino, “A Brief Introduction to La Movida Madrileña,” *Culture Trip*, June 12, 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/spain/articles/a-brief-introduction-to-la-movida-madrilena/>.

sites of former concentration camps in Germany, for example). *La memoria del valor* has the potential to become one such *lieux de memoire* in Madrid, even though what it directly recalls took place in a space outside of Spain's border. In fact, Patrizia Violi asserts that trauma sites can be constructed anew. This is done by marking them symbolically and recognizing them institutionally or socially as a sign of a traumatic event. This aligns with the goal of the mural for *republicanas deportadas*. Such spaces include monuments, memorials, and memorial museums, where memorial value is given to a physical space.¹¹¹ A trauma site functions as a "mediator and producer of memory," operating as an agent contributing to the development and diffusion of collective memory.¹¹² In other words, a memorial, museum, or in this case a mural, becomes a trauma site through symbolic and vested value, transforming it into a site where memory is recorded in space. That space then becomes a powerful mediator of memory that contributes to the diverse ways in which a community (or nation) reconsiders its traumatic past, how it commemorates it, and how it [re-]constructs it. Nora and Violi's philosophies are noteworthy here because they validate the call for the development of a memorial mural for Spanish *deportadas* in Nazi camps. Spain does not have its own memory/trauma site to collectively remember the history and memory of these women. There may be a geographical discontinuity between the historical experience of *deportadas* in Nazi camps and Spain, but their trauma and the resistance to fascism that continued in France and resulted in deportation to Nazi camps *began* in Spain. Dolores Ibárruri declared that fascism will not pass in Madrid; that Madrid would be the tomb of fascism. Placing this memorial mural as close as possible to where Ibárruri's words hung echoes her sentiments and professes the success of that for which these women risked their lives: the liberty and freedom of Spaniards and Europeans.

¹¹¹ Violi, *Landscapes of Memory*, 14-19.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 18.

III.IV — Design Values

The mural is an opportunity to showcase the key themes and events from the women's own writing. Specifically, the following motifs will be depicted, or could be considered: resistance, solidarity, song, sabotage, Appell, carrying messages and spreading pamphlets, Night and Fog, France, Spain (for example, represented through the clandestine flag Mercedes Núñez Targa writes about, as well as a reference to ¡No Pasarán!). Because these women have nearly been lost to history, this mural is an opportunity to introduce them to Madrid, Spain, and the world. Some of their faces should be shown in the mural, (re)humanizing the women who have yet to be recognized and honoured in Spain. The mural will paint a picture of their experiences during the Second World War and the Holocaust, what connected the women to each other, and what connected them back to Spain. I hope for it to be outstanding, ambitious, sensitive, powerful, reflective, and educative; a place for people to remember, honour, and respect their lives and efforts. It will be bursting with symbolism — including references to songs, their resistance and sabotage, solidarity, their identities as *republicanas españolas*, and more — addressing the details of these women's history in connection to Nazi persecution as well as their Spanish identity. It spells out the Spanish connection to Holocaust history through these women, pushing for an explicit acknowledgement of this connection; straying from the narrative established and normalized by the Franco regime that there is no relationship between Spain and Nazi camps. This mural and its location will become a landmark of national significance, highlighting the relevance and importance of this history to Spain, affirming the goals and standards of the *Ley de la Memoria Histórica*.¹¹³ Commemorating Spanish Republican women

¹¹³ The Ley de la Memoria Histórica, or Historical Memory Law, recognizes and broadens the rights and establishes measures in favour of those who suffered violence and persecution during the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. While by definition this does not specifically include Spaniards persecuted by Nazis, perhaps the mural will inspire an amendment to the specifics of the law.

persecuted by the Nazis is directly related to acknowledging, remembering, and healing from the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship.

Conclusion

Morally, I am as I always was: [an] antifascist, [a] lover of peace and liberty.

Alfonsina Bueno Ester, 1975.¹¹⁴

Consistently, the stories shared by *republicanas españolas* reveal the motif of their notable and vanguard Spanish antifascism as the key to their perseverance in resistance, and their steadfastness in solidarity, despite the conditions they endured at Ravensbrück, Mauthausen, and other Nazi camps. Their stories, individually and collectively, paint a picture of courage, sacrifice, and devotion to antifascism, social justice, and liberty. Recognizing these women and amplifying their histories and voices is valuable to Spain's national memory not only as evidence of participation in resistance and deportation, but also as a direct Spanish witness to the Holocaust.¹¹⁵ Today, there is no national memorial for *republicanas deportadas* in Spain. Active and visible commemoration is overdue to jumpstart the (non)memory of Spanish Republicans condemned to Nazi concentration camps for their commitment to defeating fascism. *La memoria del valor* will bridge the gaps between the memorialization efforts of Spanish men and women deported to Nazi camps in Spain. In the same way that Hernández-Grande describes *Stolpersteine* as a disruption — wherein as a pedestrian “stumbles” across a stone and engages in a memorializing performance that “evokes the missing body of the concentration camp victim,”¹¹⁶ — so too will *La memoria del valor* prompt an historical acknowledgement. Placing a

¹¹⁴ Moralmente, soy como siempre fui: antifascista, amante de la paz y libertad. Català, *De la resistencia*, 160.

¹¹⁵ *Deportadas* to Ravensbrück and Mauthausen not only describe the torment and murder of Jews and Roma with whom they crossed paths, but also experienced some parallels. Their testimonies are valuable contributions to the historical memory of the Holocaust specifically in Spain, in addition to Nazi atrocity more broadly. Gina Herrmann, “Spanish and Catalan Women in Ravensbrück,” in *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, ed. Gina Herrmann and Sarah J. Brenneis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 243.

¹¹⁶ Hernández-Grande, “Stumbling over History, 6.

memorial mural for *republicanas deportadas* in the busy city centre of Madrid will not only introduce a national and international audience to an underrepresented history, but also serve as a warning against forgetting the Nazi past and Franco era, connecting Spanish history to Holocaust history. For decades, the stories and experiences of Spanish Republican women have been buried, affected by misidentification in Nazi camps exacerbating the “Frenchification” of Spanish *deportadas* and resisters, and Francoist censorship. Time has been detrimental to the historical memory and memorialization of *españolas deportadas*. Survivors have passed, and we face the risk of losing their stories to history entirely without action.



Figure 1. Photo from the credits of *El fotógrafo de Mauthausen* directed by Mar Targarona (2018).



Figure 2. The “*Homenaje para los republicanos españoles*” in Madrid, on 30 January 2020. Photo courtesy of Amical de Mauthausen, Twitter (@amauthausen): <https://twitter.com/amauthausen/status/1222793872184692736>



Figure 3. Photos of the three Stumbling Stones for women in Madrid, and Neus Català's in Els Guiamets. At the time these images were shared with me (by @IStolpersteine on Twitter), the stones for Martínez Prieto, Flesch, and Gisbert Merino had not yet been laid.



Figure 4, left: The words of Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) hang on a banner before the Arco de Cofreiros, outside the Plaza Mayor, Madrid, 1936. The banner reads: “They shall not pass! Fascism wants to conquer Madrid. Madrid will be the tomb of fascism.” Puebla, “Exposición ‘No Pasarán,’” <https://pongamosquehablodemadrid.com/2018/04/04/no-pasaran-16-dias-madrid-1936/>.

Appendices and profiles for *Republicanas deportadas*

Appendix A — Mercedes Núñez Targa



Mercedes Núñez Targa. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 102.

Born in Barcelona in 1911, Núñez endured Francoist prisons before Nazi camps (including Ventas in Madrid), accused of participating in a clandestine network of anti-Francoists across northern Spain. She experienced transports in cattle cars from prison to concentration camps and back to prison again in Spain. After her conditional release from Ventas in January 1942, she returned to Barcelona and from there clandestinely escaped Spain through the Pyrenees. She arrived in France as a refugee in July 1942, using the name Francisca Colomer. Her alias in the Carcassonne Resistance was Paquita.

Her home was used by the General Staff of Partisans, and it was chosen as an emergency meeting point. She also interviewed young Spaniards to recruit them for the Resistance, and help spread propaganda. Her memoir is rich with references to other Spaniards in the Resistance and camps, such as a husband-and-wife duo named Tere and Panchín, who helped deliver cases of explosives.

In May 1944, Núñez was arrested in Carcassonne. There, she was interrogated and tortured by a French Gestapo officer, the infamous René Bach. She summarizes his brutality by chronicling how he burned one of her colleagues alive. She was sent to Sarrebruck after one month in a Carcassonne prison. At Sarrebruck she met fellow *republicana* Constanza Martínez Prieto, who eventually followed her to both Ravensbrück and Leipzig. On 23 June 1944, Núñez arrived to Ravensbrück.

During her registration at Ravensbrück, a French woman overheard that Núñez was Spanish, and whispered that she was familiar with Spain from her time in Albacete. The message was clear to Núñez: this woman was alluding to her involvement in the International Brigades, as Albacete was home to the headquarters of the Brigades. Before Núñez left, the woman whispered Dolores Ibárruri's famous Republican phrase, "¡No Pasarán!," which filled Núñez with a force of emotion. This was not the last time that prisoners in the camps greeted her with the phrase.

Shortly after her arrival at Ravensbrück, Núñez encountered her friend, another fighter from Barcelona during the Civil War, who she identifies as Lola García Etxebarrieta (full name:

María Dolores García Etxebarrieta/Etchevarrieta), but who may have actually been Carlota García.¹¹⁷

At Ravensbrück, Núñez was especially close with two Spanish women: Constanza Martínez Prieto and María Valenciana. She was at Ravensbrück for forty days before her transport to Leipzig, where she worked at the HASAG factory, staying in a Buchenwald satellite camp. She estimates as many as 6000 women were sent to perform forced labour here, including eight Spanish women who worked in her *Kommando*. Núñez and Carmen Buatell identify women in this *Kommando* separately in their biographies, both mentioning María Valenciana, Marita Van Aal, Constanza Martínez Prieto, Elisa Ruiz, and Mercedes Bernal. Núñez also mentions a woman named Conxita, and it is possible she is referring to María [Conchita] Ferrer. When she writes about HASAG, she provides insight to the way *republicanas deportadas* maintained morale, which includes them gathering around to share recipes they enjoyed cooking before their deportations.

In addition to the approximately 6000 women working at HASAG, Prisoners of War from across Europe and a small number of German labourers worked in the factory. One day one of the German labourers noticed the red triangle Núñez wore and proceeded to ask her where she was from. When she answered Spain, he asked her: *Franco oder Pasionaria?* They found solidarity in their linked political views as communists. Later, when Núñez was almost caught for her sabotage efforts, he defended her from punishment. Her sabotage paralyzed four machines for ten days, causing the loss of an estimated 7000 shells for the Third Reich.

She writes about extreme hunger, deteriorating health, the intense *Appell*, selections for transport, and disease. The day before the camp was liberated, Núñez was selected for transport. She was unwell and in the infirmary, unable to walk in the death march (forced evacuation by foot). She was saved by the proximity of the Allies. When she saw Allied soldiers for the first time, she compares the looks of fear and discombobulation on their faces to those she saw on Spanish soldiers during the Civil War in 1938.

After liberation, in July 1945, she testified against René Bach. He was executed in September 1945. Núñez died in Vigo, Spain, in 1986, and her memoir was published in 2016. A street in Vigo was named after her (Rúa Mercedes Núñez Targa) in 2009.

Català, Neus. *De la resistència y la deportación: 50 testimonios de mujeres españolas*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015: 146.

Núñez Targa, Mercedes. *El valor de la memoria: De la cárcel de Ventas al campo de Ravensbrück*. Sevilla: Editorial Renacimiento, 2016.

¹¹⁷ It is unclear if Núñez is talking about Lola García, or, if perhaps she got mixed-up with Carlota García (Charlie/Charly). The details she shares about Lola García in her memoir line up with information about Carlota García. Núñez writes that Lola, who she claims went as Charlie at Ravensbrück, and her husband Olaso died of gas asphyxiation in their Paris apartment after the war. However, it is Carlota García who was married to Olaso and died of gas asphyxiation, not Lola García. The biographies in the Amical de Ravensbrück's book *Memorial de las españolas*, does not mention anything about Lola García having the alias "Charlie," or dying of asphyxiation in Paris. In fact, the Amical notes that Lola was deported to Ravensbrück at the end of the war and was previously held at Dachau. This means that Núñez and García Etxebarrieta may not have even crossed paths at Ravensbrück. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 76-79; Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 167-169.

Appendix B — Neus Català



Neus Català in France (c. 1940-1943). Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 62.

Català was born in Els Guiamets, Spain, in 1915. She faced exile from Catalonia in 1939, finding refuge in France. There, she continued what she calls her “job”: antifascist resistance. She organized a guerrilla movement in the mountains, and, along with her husband (Albert Roger, who did not survive deportation), hid partisans in their home. By December 1942 she was already denounced twice. Still, she continued her resistance, spreading messages for the Resistance (orally), and spending Saturdays at the local market in/around Sarlat, calling on people to resist the Nazis and refuse collaboration. Her home was a meeting point where resisters organized key slogans, planned military operations and sabotage, organized supplies, and made false documents.

Català was arrested on 11 November 1943, along with five others, including her husband. She was the only survivor. She was sent to Limoges, where arrestees were subjected to atrocious brutality. People were killed through shootings or torture. At the Limoges prison, Català writes that the Gestapo were experts in “ripping skin, sticking a red-hot iron into one’s heel until it passes through the bone, or breaking the spine to pieces.”¹¹⁸ Gendered tactics of interrogation were used against Català, attempting to convince her that her husband had been unfaithful in their marriage and that he had already confessed her role in the Resistance. Despite this she did not divulge information. She spent two months in Limoges before being sent to Compiègne, and finally to Ravensbrück on a convoy with at least 11 other *españolas*.

She arrived to Ravensbrück on 3 February 1944. Within the first eight days of arriving, more than eight of her friends died. She writes about her close friend from prison, Titi (Luisa y Teresa Menot), describing how she loved her as a daughter and detailing how she participated in almost all the resistance feats in prison with Català. She describes the arduous, senseless hard labour she and other women were subjected to at Ravensbrück, intended to exhaust and weaken the women, working them to death and wearing them down physically and mentally. One month later, she was transported to Holleischen, a female subcamp of Flossenbürg, where she was conscripted to work in a factory producing anti-aircraft missiles. Català writes that the transport to Holleischen broke apart camp families that had formed at Ravensbrück.

¹¹⁸ Translation: “Allí tenían la gran especialidad de arrancar la piel, clavar un hierro al rojo en el talón hasta atravesar el hueso o romper la espina dorsal a palos.” Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 44.

At Holleischen, Català describes secret “parties” the women held every Sunday to maintain morale. She played an important role speaking to other women to keep their spirits high and reminded them that staying alive and sabotaging the Nazi war effort was their duty in the camp, and by doing so they were securing a better future for forthcoming generations. Her sabotage efforts at Holleischen were valiant, and she estimates that 10,000,000 projectiles were sabotaged by the women in nine months. Sometimes the women asked to use the latrine, and on their way hid gunpowder under their arms to smuggle out of the factory. Other times, if the overseer had their back turned, they slid tools up their sleeves. She survived and was liberated in April 1945. Català was the first woman in Spain to receive a Stumbling Stone. She passed away at 103 in April 2019.



Neus Català after liberation (1945).
Image courtesy of Amical de Ravensbrück.

Amical de Ravensbrück. *Memorial de las españolas deportadas a Ravensbrück*. Barcelona, 2012: 62-64.

Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 35-76.

Appendix C — Constanza Martínez Prieto (Escuer)



Constanza Martínez Prieto.
Amical de Ravensbrück,
Memorial de las españolas,
98.

Constanza Martínez Prieto was born in the Lavapiés neighbourhood of Madrid in 1917. During the Spanish Civil War, Martínez went to Barcelona, and from there to France when the Nationalists won the Civil War.

When France was occupied by Nazis, Martínez joined the French Resistance as a liaison between Nazaire and Nantes. She was detained on 27 June 1942 along with 150 other Spaniards (including eight *españolas*) from Paris and surrounding areas. She was tried in court in December 1943, where she met her future husband, Juan Escuer. Martínez was sentenced to eighteen months in prison in Les Tourelles (Paris), along with five other women. In May 1944, she was deported to Romainville, where she met Mercedes Núñez Targa. From there to Traer, then to Ravensbrück. According to the Amical de Ravensbrück, she was sent to Mauthausen in March 1945.

Martínez does not discuss deportation to Mauthausen, or her *Nacht und Nebel* designation in the testimony she shares with Neus Català in *De la resistencia y la deportación*. However, she likewise does not provide dates for when she was deported to Leipzig. The records on Martínez shared by the Amical de Ravensbrück indicate she was deported to Mauthausen

before her arrival to Leipzig, where she worked in the HASAG factory along with Núñez and six other Spanish women.

Martínez' life at HASAG was saved by pure luck. She needed glasses since she was a child, but the day after her arrival at Leipzig they broke. An SS guard assured Martínez she would have them repaired, but never did. Some days later, during an *Appell*, the camp commandant made every woman with glasses step out of the lines. They were sent to the gas chambers.

During the camp evacuation, she found herself on a death march with a group of three other Spanish women. On the march, they were found by some Prisoners of War who worked on a farm, and who kept them hidden until the Soviet Red Army arrived. Martínez describes feeling jubilant for surviving to liberation, as well as sadness for the comrades who died in the camps and who, also, did not have the “good fortune” to see the triumph of the Allies and antifascists over the Nazis. Martínez passed away in Barcelona on 3 January 1997.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 98-101.
Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 315-318.

Appendix D — Alfonsina Bueno Ester



Alfonsina Bueno and her daughter in 1947.
Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 53.

Born in Berga, Spain, in 1915, Alfonsina Bueno Ester was seventeen years old when the Spanish Civil War broke out. She was just over twenty when the Second World War erupted and France was occupied. She, her husband, and her young daughter all participated in the partisan resistance group run by Paco (Francisco) Ponzán Vidal.¹¹⁹

Bueno was active in the Resistance with her daughter, nine-year-old Angelina, by 1941. First she was requested to go work in Banyuls, where she hosted people en route out of occupied Europe before they crossed the Pyrenees mountains. She was almost denounced on multiple occasions, but the denunciations were intercepted by the Head of the Gendarmerie (a man named Poncet), who was anti-Hitler. She and Angelina collected packages air-dropped for the Resistance. Because Banyuls was so small, their work was especially dangerous, so eventually she and Angelina moved to Toulouse to continue their resistance there. Bueno began to

¹¹⁹ Ponzán was an anarchist from Spain, who fought in the Civil War and withdrew to France after the Nationalists took Catalonia. From France, he set up the first wide-ranging anti-Francoist network around the Pyrenees. He began his work in the French Resistance by participating in the most extensive line of the Resistance (the Pat O’Leary network, 1940-1944), wherein he worked against both the Nazis and Francisco Franco in Spain. He was twice imprisoned, escaping both times. The third time he was caught, he was handed over to the Gestapo and executed. “Remembering Francisco Ponzán Vidal on the 60th Anniversary of His Death,” Kate Sharpley Library, accessed July 13, 2021, <https://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/bk3jzv>.

worry for Angelina's safety after her husband, Josep, had been detained and deported. She was sent to stay with a Spanish woman in a neighbouring town and went to visit Bueno occasionally.

Bueno was arrested by the Gestapo in Toulouse in February 1943. She was interrogated at the Saint Michel prison before being sent to Romainville, and finally Ravensbrück in May 1944, where she was designated a *Nacht und Nebel* prisoner. She describes her arrival to Ravensbrück in a cattle car as atrocious, packed with so many people that one had no choice but to stay on their feet, and distressing due to the constant bombings. She comments that many people arrived to Ravensbrück already dead. When she first arrived, she learned that some days earlier a Spanish woman and her young daughter died of typhus. She also recalls there was a Spanish girl from Aragon at the camp who was only thirteen years old, whom she witnessed walk into the gas chambers. Bueno was immediately subjected to sexualized violence and medical experimentation at Ravensbrück.

She laboured twelve hours per day in the Siemens factory at Ravensbrück. As a *Nacht und Nebel* prisoner, she could not have contact with anyone outside Block 32. Bueno explains that women in Block 32 were always punished without reason, which "formed part of the plan for [their] immediate extermination."¹²⁰ This included depriving them of food or waking them up in the middle of the night for an *Appell* in the cold and rain.

Despite their fear and the close watch they were under as *Nacht und Nebel* prisoners, Bueno and other women in Block 32 resisted the Nazis through sabotage. They deliberately worked slowly to lower production rates. She writes that they all knew their Block was condemned to disappear, but they wanted to resist until the very end, despite the further risks (torture, being hanged) they exposed themselves to. She remembers they maintained morale during their long days at Siemens by singing.

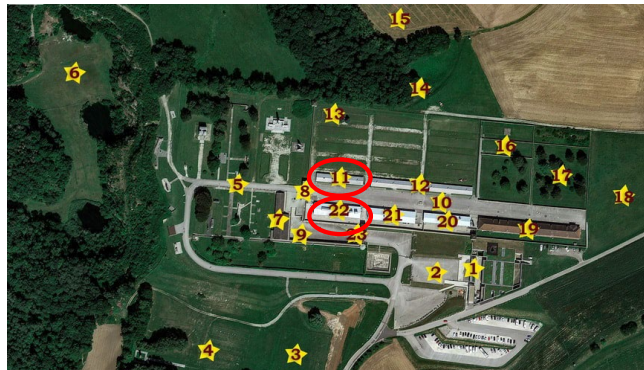
Towards the end of the war, Bueno was sent to Mauthausen, where her brother, husband, and father (gassed at Hartheim castle) were also deported. She does not identify the year in the testimony she shares with Català in *De la resistencia y la deportación*, but the Amical de Ravensbrück marks 1944 as the year she was sent to Mauthausen. The Amical shares that she was able to have a brief and dangerous encounter with her husband outside the camp's laundry facility. Here, interestingly, they pause to note that Alfonsina Bueno faced a risk that few others in her situation faced. Due to her light-coloured eyes, blonde hair, and overall beauty, she was in danger of being entered into the *Lebensborn* program, used by the Nazis to encourage the birth of "racially valuable" children.¹²¹ There is a chance that these details – the laundry block, the

¹²⁰ "[...] [A]quello formaba parte del plan para nuestra inmediata exterminación." Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 156.

¹²¹ "Nazi authorities created the Lebensborn program to increase Germany's population. Pregnant German women deemed "racially valuable" were encouraged to give birth to their children at Lebensborn homes. During World War II, the program became complicit in the kidnapping of foreign children with physical features considered "Aryan" by the Nazis." "The program was designed to be the wellspring of future generations descended from those whom Nazi authorities deemed "racially valuable." It originally focused on encouraging SS men to have large families and discouraging unmarried, pregnant "Aryan" women from seeking illegal abortions." "Lebensborn Program," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 16 December 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lebensborn-program>.

encounter with her husband, and the mention of the *Lebensborn* program (suggesting a distinct sexualization of Bueno by the Nazis) – are indirectly revealing something about Alfonsina Bueno’s experience in Mauthausen.

The laundry facility referenced in *Memorial de las españolas* is found directly across from Block 1: the brothel. Women forced to work in the brothel were even more segregated from the rest of the camp prisoners, permitted to leave the building once, maybe twice per day for a walk around the barrack. This could further explain why the clandestine encounter with her husband was so dangerous.



Map of Mauthausen complex. Maksym Chorni, “Mauthausen Concentration Camp Location,” War-Documentary.Info, accessed 16 December 2020. <https://war-documentary.info/mauthausen-concentration-camp-today/>.



Prisoners carry large stones up the “stairs of death” (Todesstiege) from the Wiener Graben quarry at the Mauthausen concentration camp, 1942. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Archiv der KZ-Gedenkstaette Mauthausen.

If the Amical de Ravensbrück has the correct deportation date for Bueno, she would be the only *republicana* of the eight known to have been at Mauthausen to arrive in 1944, spending the most time there. She refers to Mauthausen as “one of the worst camps,” acknowledging that she was sent there from Ravensbrück “to witness new horrors.” It is interesting that Bueno does not divulge many details about her experience in Mauthausen in her testimony to Català; and the story of her path crossing with her husband was shared in the biography on her in *Memorial de las españolas*. It is not uncommon for survivors to omit details too troubling or traumatic to revisit through memory transmission, and knowing the severe stigma around prostitution and the brothels which existed in Bueno’s time (as well as contemporarily), it is not unlikely that this further prevented her from disclosing the experience. Unfortunately, it is difficult to conclude if she was indeed subjected to the horrors of the camp brothel in the scope of this article. However, she does detail her experience with forced labour in the Mauthausen camp quarry, which could indicate that she did not work in the brothel.

In the quarry, Bueno remembers women, young or old, carrying 40kg (88lbs) up the stairs out of the pit, known as the Stairs of Death. There, she saw the SS guards push three *deportadas* to the bottom of the quarry for not working quickly enough.

Bueno was liberated by the Red Cross on 22 April 1945. She never recovered from the medical experimentation she suffered, and endured health complications for the rest of her life. She died in Toulouse in 1979, and her death is linked to injections she received at Ravensbrück.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 51-53.
Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 153-161.

Appendix E — Carmen Zapater Aguila

It is unclear if Zapater was born in Sevilla or Almería in May 1912. However, historians know that she was arrested for her role in the Resistance in Toulouse on 30 June 1944 and arrived to Ravensbrück on 7 August 1944. She was sent to Mauthausen on 7 March 1945 with a new prisoner number, and on 20 March she was transported to Amstetten, where she was liberated by the Red Cross on 22 April.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 118.

Appendix F — Ángeles Martínez

Martínez was one of the first *republicanas españolas* deported to Ravensbrück. She was born in France in 1919 to Spanish parents, raised with close ties to Spain and supporting the Republican cause during the Spanish Civil War. Her brother fought in Spain, and she helped establish an organization in her home in Saint-Denis, a working-class neighbourhood on the outskirts of Paris, that gathered Spanish women and girls together to provide aid and support to Republicans.

In July 1940, she, her brother, and another Spanish woman (Leonor Rubiano), formed part of the first clandestine group of communist youth in occupied Paris. They returned to Saint-Denis, where their role in the Resistance initially consisted of distributing leaflets denouncing the Nazi occupation and Petain's collaboration with the Nazis in Vichy France. They painted messages on walls and the pavement and worked hard to inspire a spirit of rebellion among the civil population.

Her home in Saint-Denis became a site of refuge, a meeting place, and a collections place (where parcels and supplies were sent). Spanish Republicans organized resistance efforts at her home with her family; resistance which increased daily. They caught the attention of the Gestapo, who began to watch them closely. Their neighbourhood was comprised almost entirely of Spanish Republicans.

Martínez recalls that one night around 4:00am in September 1941, their neighbourhood was beleaguered by German police and troops, who placed machine guns in every street corner. The Nazis began to register every single house in the neighbourhood, and almost every man — some three hundred — was detained. She notes that luckily, the head of their local resistance was not home that night and therefore evaded capture, and that most of the men were released the following day due to lack of proof of their actions in the Resistance.

When Martínez was arrested she endured eight months in a Parisian prison before facing deportation to Prüm prison in Germany in spring 1942. They were forced to work in Prüm, and after signing *Le Marseillaise* on Bastille Day (14 July) 1942, she and Rubiano were deported to



Ángeles Martínez shortly before her arrest (c. 1941). Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 92.

Breslau to be tried as leaders of resistance groups. In Breslau the Nazis tried to force her to work in a factory to help produce rockets, which she tried to refuse, convincing others to stand in solidarity and refuse the labour. Because this initial outright refusal resulted in heavy punishment for herself and her co-resisters, they decided to work with the intention to sabotage the daily expected production.

In September 1942, one year after their initial imprisonment, she was deported to Ravensbrück as a *Nacht und Nebel* prisoner. In Block 32 she met other Spanish women, including Charly (Carlota García), who she describes as an incredible woman of resistance.

Martínez survived two years, ten months, and twenty-two days in Nazi prisons and camps. She was liberated at Mauthausen on 22 April 1945.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 92-96.

Appendix G — Carlota García (Charlie Jeantet, Charly Olaso)



Spanish and French Ravensbrück survivors, 1947. In the bottom front row, Carlota García is pictured on the far left, and Ángeles Martínez on the far right. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 78.

Carlota García, whose alias in the French Resistance and Nazi camps was Charlie (Spanish: Charly) Jeantet, was born in the Basque country, Spain, in 1899.

She was detained in France and sent to Sarrebruck on 27 July 1943. On 1 August 1943 she arrived to Ravensbrück, where she was assigned to Block 32. Just over one year and a half later, in March 1945, she was registered at Mauthausen with other Spanish women.

Spanish and French women who survived the camps, including Mercedes Núñez, testify to Charlie's strong and protective character. They share that she was morally uplifting and helped keep spirits among *deportadas* up. She is described as always ready to help her comrades and friends when they needed her, always smiling, playing the role of "camp mother" and saving lives (including Ángeles Martínez') at risk of losing her own.

García survived the Nazi camps. However, when she returned to Paris with her husband, Olaso, they were alone, economically struggling, far from their native Spain, and living with trauma from the camps. Both were found dead of gas asphyxiation in their Paris apartment sometime after 1947.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 76-78.

Appendix H — Hermina Martorell Rosales

Martorell was born in Zaragoza in January 1903. She was imprisoned in Aix-la-Chapelle (on the German and Belgian border) before deportation to Romainville and then Ravensbrück, where she arrived on 16 March 1944. She was liberated from Mauthausen in April, after her arrival there on 7 March 1945. She lived until her early 80s.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 76-78.

Appendix I — Feliciano (Bierge) Pintos Navas



Feliciano Pintos Navas' prisoner ID photo at Auschwitz concentration camp.
Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 109.

Born in Ávila, Spain, in June 1914, Pintos was arrested in Compiègne for her involvement in the Resistance. She was deported to Auschwitz on 24 June 1943. From there she was transported to Ravensbrück, and lastly to Mauthausen, where she arrived on 7 March 1945 (receiving a new prisoner number). She was liberated by the Red Cross in April 1945.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 109.

Appendix J — Rita Martínez Pérez

Rita Pérez was born in 1894 in Asturias. She and her husband, Gregorio Pérez, moved to France in 1915, living in a Spanish neighbourhood of Bordeaux. Here, she hosted meetings at an international level for members of the Resistance.

Rita, Gregorio, and four others were arrested on 4 December 1942. Their sons were in danger of arrest as well. She was held in a prison in Compiègne, from where, on 3 December 1943, she was deported to Ravensbrück. In early 1945 she was sent to Riesling, where she spent approximately three weeks in isolation. She was sent back to Ravensbrück before reaching a third (satellite) camp (which the Amical de Ravensbrück do not name, saying only that it was a *Jugendlager* or a youth camp). She survived the camps.



Rita and Gregorio Pérez. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 97.

Her husband died at Sachsenhausen in 1943, and her youngest son died at Oranienburg. Her eldest survived the camps.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 97-98.

Appendix K — Maria del Carme Buatell Costa (Carme Buatell)



Carme Buatell in her youth.
Català, *De la resistència y la deportación*, 150.

Carme Buatell, born in 1911 in Barcelona, helped organize the first resistance group in Marseille in October 1941. At that time, she was the only foreigner in the group. Her role primarily involved recruiting Spaniards, in addition to collecting parcels that arrived from Algiers. Buatell was not recognized as a resister by the French in her lifetime, despite that everyone else in her group was.

Buatell recalls the sexism and misogyny she had to navigate in addition to the dangers of being caught during her time in the Resistance. For example, on one occasion she had to collect a package that had arrived from Algeria. She was to meet with a French colleague for the exchange, but once he realized she was a woman, he refused to give her the package. After several attempts to re-meet and collect the package, she had arranged another encounter to try and receive the package. When she arrived at the bar where they had set their appointment, the police were arresting him, and consequently they arrested her too. They took her back to her house and searched it trying to find anything incriminating, but to her luck found nothing.

They interrogated her, beat her, pulled her hair, and questioned who she was meeting. Buatell is the first (known) woman to be tortured by the Gestapo in Marseilles for participation in the Resistance.

In January 1943, she was transported to Reims, where she met another *republicana*, Lola (Dolors) Casadellà. In May 1944, Buatell was sent to Romainville, Sarrebruck, and then Ravensbrück. Her convoy spent two days and twelve hours of *Appell* in the hot sun. She notes that their hair was not shaved due to lack of time and labour. She was assigned to Block 32, and three days later she was deported to Leipzig. Working in the HASAG factory, she helped sabotage the production of arms. She clandestinely sewed small Republican flags in the camp. Buatell was liberated and lived in France until her death in 1976.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 48-50.
Català, *De la resistència y la deportación*, 135-151.

Appendix L — Lisa London (Elisa Ricol López)



Lisa London in her youth.
Amical de Ravensbrück,
Memorial de las españolas, 124.

London's parents were both Aragonese and emigrated to France as economic refugees. At 15, London became involved in the French Communist Youth (her father was communist), and at 18 she was sent to work as a secretary in Moscow, where she met her husband, Arthur London, a communist Jewish man from Czechoslovakia. As a 20-year-old in 1936, London went to work for the International Brigades in Albacete, Spain. When Republicans began to flee from Spain, she helped refugees resettle in France.

In June 1940, London joined the Resistance. In 1942, she organized a protest in the heart of Paris against the Nazis, asking for a free France and appealing to armed resistance. When the Nazis arrived chaos ensued, shots were fired, and people died. London was arrested, imprisoned for more than a year, tried in court, and sentenced to death. Her pregnancy saved her from capital punishment, but she was still condemned to hard labour in perpetuity.

London arrived to Ravensbrück some time later, on 15 June 1944. Her husband was also deported to Mauthausen in 1942. At Ravensbrück, London provided emotional support and kept morale high among the women, organizing plays, poetry, and other activities for the women in her barrack. Both she and her husband survived the camps. She died in Paris in 2012, at 96 years old.



Lisa London in her flat in Paris, 2010. Her husband, Arthur, who had already passed, is pictured in the background. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas*, 126.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 124-126.

Appendix M — Dolors Casadellá



Dolors Casadellá (c. 1944-1945).
Image courtesy of Amical de
Ravensbrück.

Dolors (Dolores) Casadellá was born in a Catalanian village, Alcoletge, in 1918. She would become the only “red” (left-leaning, Republican-sympathetic) member of her family during the Civil War. She met her future husband on the front-line of the Spanish Civil War in 1938, in Molins de Rei. They crossed the French border together at the end of the Civil War.

She and her husband were one of thousands of Spaniards to be detained in a refugee camp in France. When they left, they settled in a village outside of Compiègne. She worked with a group to help ensure that the local partisan groups headed for the mountains always had access to food, and that different groups had contact with each other.

She was arrested in August 1942, just before she left for Grenoble. She was accused of plotting against the state and was sentenced to two years of prison. When she recalls her arrival to Ravensbrück in April 1944, she acknowledges she did not think she would survive. She was assigned to Block 32, which she describes as the block for children, Jews, and the so-called “hopeless.” Soon after, she was sent to the Holleischen *Kommando*, where Català also worked. She writes about the importance of sabotage in this work group. Like Català, she recalls when the women of the *Kommando* refused the ruse of payment from the Nazis, who wanted the German labourers to believe the women were being treated fairly.

Casadellá survived the camps and helped Català put together the book of fifty *republicana* testimonies in the 1970s before she passed away.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 59-60.

Appendix N — María Leonor Rubiano Fernández (Leonor Rubiano)

Rubiano was born in Asturias in July 1920. She was close friends with Ángeles Martínez. The two worked closely together in the Resistance, and they were arrested together.¹²² Rubiano was kept in numerous prisons (in Prüm, Cologne, and Brelsau) where she continued to participate in sabotage and resistance, until her trial.

She was deported in a convoy from Paris and arrived to Ravensbrück on 1 September 1942, marked as a *Nacht und Nebel* prisoner. She and Martínez were separated at the camp. A French woman, Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier mentioned Rubiano in her testimony at Nuremberg, which led to confusion around Rubiano’s identity for some time, because Vaillant-Couturier identified her as María Rubiano, and called her a Frenchwoman, not Spanish. She testifies that Rubiano worked in a workshop at the camp called *Schneiderei*, where 200 jackets and pants were sewn per day. It was known for its abysmal conditions, the deportees forced to work here became skin and bones, sickly, and developed poor eyesight and nervous ticks due to beatings.



Leonor Rubiano. Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 112.

Rubiano was selected for transport to the gas chambers on 9 February 1945.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportadas*, 110-112.

“Rubiano Fernández, Leonor,” *Amical de Ravensbrück*, accessed August 9, 2021, https://www.amicalravensbruck.org/portfolio-items/rubiano-fernandez-leonor/?fbclid=IwAR08zVLQ4xspHAI_jkwNxSWkeQTmh9oAjnvCVuyStRiCX6xj7xso9t3cubM.

¹²² See Angeles Martínez’ appendix for more information on their work together.

Appendix O — Elisa Garrido Gracias (Madame Masalles/Masaoilles, Elisa Ruiz)

Elisa Ruiz was born in Zaragoza, Spain, in 1909. She fought in the Spanish Civil War before fleeing to France, where she participated in Paco Ponzán's resistance group.

While she had a resistance leader hidden in her home, the Gestapo showed up at her doorstep in the middle of the night and detained her. She was beaten and tortured, her fingers burned with the tip of a lit cigarette before she was locked away in solitary for twenty-one days. In 1943 she was sent to Paris, then Compiègne, and finally Ravensbrück, where she arrived on 3 February 1944 (the same day as Català). From there she was sent to Buchenwald, arriving on 12 September 1944, and finally she was sent to work at the HASAG factory in Leipzig.

At HASAG, Núñez writes about an explosion that took place at the factory one day which resulted in two German deaths. Ruiz was responsible. She was clearing explosives out of shells that had been rejected for use but were still recoverable. After the explosive was cleared, the shells had to be run through a machine to be shaved down. Ruiz had left a tiny amount of explosive material in every shell. The explosives had accumulated in the machine, which caused an explosion. It is a miracle Ruiz survived. She confessed this to Núñez, pale in the face with fear, but Núñez and the other Spanish women were proud of her, calling her brave.

Ruiz went on a hunger strike at HASAG that affected her daily output production. As punishment, the SS guards released the German Shepherds on her, who bit her legs and left scars for the rest of her life. In addition to the dog attack, a guard beat her until she could no longer stand. She was taken to the hospital/infirmary to recover and eventually returned to the camp, from where the SS intended to deport her back to Ravensbrück to send her to the gas chamber. She was not initially aware, but when she returned and told her comrades that she had been assigned to Block 28 with the Sinti and Roma prisoners, they warned her that meant she was headed for the crematorium. To save herself, she began volunteering for tasks whenever the *Aufseherinnen* (female Nazi guards) or *Blockova* (female inmate in charge of a residential block) requested volunteers for undesirable tasks. She did this until liberation.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportada*, 81-82.

Català, *De la resistencia y la deportación*, 146, 383-392.

Núñez, *El valor de la memoria*, 196.

Appendix P — Mercedes Bernal

Bernal's parents, both Spanish, immigrated to France as economic refugees in 1904, and she was born in Perpignan. She was only 22-years old when she began working with the French Resistance. Like Buatell, one of her roles was to receive packages of supplies arriving from Algeria. One of the ways she hid supplies she was transporting was in aspirin bottles.

She was detained in April 1944. Twice a week for one month, the Gestapo would remove her from her cell to interrogate her, and returned her in a stretcher. After her imprisonment in Perpignan, she was sent to Romainville and Sarrebruck before Ravensbrück. During her transport to Ravensbrück, the allies were bombing the rail line, thinking it was a German convoy. Her wagon was one of the only ones to survive. At Ravensbrück, she was assigned to Block 32, where she spent twenty days before being deported to Buchenwald, then Leipzig. She survived.

Amical de Ravensbrück, *Memorial de las españolas deportada*, 46-47
Català, *De la resistència y la deportación*, 121-126, 146.

Appendix Q — María Ferrer (Conchita/Conxita)

Ferrer was born in Zaragoza, Spain, but had already been in France since before the *retirada*. Her husband made fake identification documents for the Resistance, but she was not aware of this. Still, when her husband was detained, she was also arrested. The Gestapo interrogated her, beat her, tried to get her to share things she simply did not know about, even telling her (like they did to Català) that her husband had been cheating on her with a prostitute.

She spent four months in prison in Toulouse, and from there she was deported to Ravensbrück. She believes that before arriving to Ravensbrück, she was sent to Compiègne, and from there to Germany on a convoy with 27,000 other women.

She was not at Ravensbrück long before being sent to work in Leipzig, where she was forced to make grenades. She was in the camps for fourteen months

Català, *De la resistència y la deportación*, 146, 203-206.



“Una camarade tondue” (Spanish: “Una camarada rapada”, English: “A shaved comrade”). Drawing by Jeanette L'Herminier. Drawing is featured at the end of Bernal's biography in Català, *De la resistència y la deportación*, 126. Image belongs to Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation de Besançon.

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