Projects concerning the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Experiences in the recovery of historical memory and the reparation of victims of repression

Riksarkivet, Oslo

25 September 2019

anc.gencat.cat

@arxiunacional
Projects of the National Archive of Catalonia on historical memory and reparation of victims

1. The processing of military judicial proceedings brought in Catalonia by Franco’s regime and the Law on legal reparation for the victims

2. The processing of archives from men’s and women’s prisons in Barcelona

3. The processing of documentation on Catalans in exile

4. The recovery of documentation confiscated from Catalonia by Franco’s regime and its restitution to its rightful owners

5. The location and entry of archives on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression from all over the world
Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

1931, April: Second Spanish Republic proclamation
1936, July: general Francisco Franco’s military uprising
1936-1939: Spanish Civil War
Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

1936-1939: Spanish Civil War

Bombing map over Catalonia
Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Estimated figures about the War and Francoism

- **500,000** deaths during the War and repression
- **140,000** missing people
- **450,000** exiles
- **300,000** political prisoners
- **70,000** people tried on political grounds in Catalonia
- **3,368** people executed in Catalonia
Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

1978: Restoration of democracy

- Still **140,000 missing people**
- Most **victims** have not been identified yet
- Their juridical **rights and dignity** have not been totally repaired yet
- **Crimes** of war and Dictatorship have not been investigated yet
The National Archive of Catalonia and the recovery of documentary testimonies of the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Work streams

• **Identifying** and describing Francoism **victims** in Catalonia

• **Locating** and recovering Catalan documentation that was **dispersed** by war or **confiscated** by Franco’s regime

• **Locating and entering** documentary **testimonies** on the War, exile and repression from all over the world
Project 1: Processing of military court proceedings brought in Catalonia by Franco’s regime

- A 10-year-project (2003-2013)
- 100,000 military court proceedings (1939-1978)
- In cooperation with other organizations
Project 1: Processing of military court proceedings brought in Catalonia by Franco’s regime

Archive of the Third Territorial Military Court: 100,000 military court proceedings
**Project 1: Processing of military court proceedings brought in Catalonia by Franco’s regime**

**Prosecuted people in Catalonia catalogue**

- **150,000** records identifying people tried
- **70,000** people tried for political and social reasons
- **3,368** executed

**Catalogue data**

- Name of the victim
- Age
- Gender
- Date the trial began
- Date of the sentence issue
- Type of crime
- Sentence handed down
- People executed
- Place of birth
- Place of residence
Project 1: Processing of military court proceedings brought in Catalonia by Franco’s regime

Project outcomes

- Documents preservation has been ensured
- Citizens’ access has been made easier
- The catalogue allows to know the exact number of people tried
- Legal reparation for the victims has been facilitated
Project 1: Law 11/2017 on legal reparation for the victims of Franco’s regime

- Passed by the Catalan Parliament in 2017
- Military courts acting in Catalonia are declared illegal
- Court decisions on political grounds are declared null and void
- First law in Spain that declares the nullity of Francoism trials
- In accordance with the international regulations on human rights
Project 1: Law 11/2017 on legal reparation for the victims of Franco’s regime

- The National Archive of Catalonia is authorised to publish the list of Francoism victims
- The prosecuted people catalogue has been an indispensable tool
Project 1: Law 11/2017 on legal reparation for the victims of Franco’s regime

Official document restoring the honour, dignity and memory of one of the victims of Franco's courts
Project 1: Law 11/2017 on legal reparation for the victims of Franco’s regime

- Thousands of nullity document requests
- Thousands of visits to our website
- Large number of inquiries attended
- Broad coverage in the media
- Many reactions on social media
- Many open data downloads

Today it is real. The National Archive publishes the list of legal reparation for the victims of the Franco regime ... I love you grandpa

I just found our grandfather on the list.... So many years! Thank you Catalan government!

I have found the grandfather. Great emotion. Grandpa, Catalonia has given you back your dignity! Thank you...
Project 2: Processing of archives from men’s and women’s prisons in Barcelona

- Two of the most consulted archives
- They contain the prisoners’ files of Franco's regime
Project 2: Processing of archives from men’s and women’s prisons in Barcelona

The archive of the men’s prison in Barcelona

- Date: 1888-2006
- Francoist period files predominate
- 200,000 prisoners’ files
- 130,000 corresponding to Francoist period

Files of executed prisoners
Project 2: Processing of archives from men’s and women’s prisons in Barcelona

The archive of the women’s prison in Barcelona

- Date: 1931-2006
- Most of Francoism files are missing
- 13,000 prisoners’ files
- 8,000 corresponding to Francoist period
**Project 2: Processing of archives from men’s and women’s prisons in Barcelona**

- Project carried out in **7 years** (2007-2014)

- Description of both political and common prisoners’ files of Franco’s regime

- In **cooperation** with other organizations

**Project outcomes**

- **Two catalogues** containing all the prisoners’ files, both men and women

- **140,000** records corresponding to Francoist period
Project 3: Processing of documentation on Catalans in exile

1939, January-February: 450,000 people crossed the French border to the exile
Project 3: Processing of documentation on Catalans in exile

- Confined in large refugee camps
- Boarding toward America
- Returned to Spain
- Claimed by relatives

- Admitted in some of the 1,000 refugee shelters throughout the country
- Recruited into one of the French Companies of Foreign Workers

El Barcarès refugee camp (France)
Project 3: Processing of documentation on Catalans in exile

After the German occupation of France, June 1940

- Handed over to the Francoist authorities
- Enrolled in the French Resistance and the allied forces
- Deported to Nazi concentration camps: Gusen and Mauthausen

The cap tucked to the ears. The snow stuck to the wooden sole of the shoes. .... Shivery skeletons
Project 3: Processing of documentation on Catalans in exile

- Lists of refugees in southern France camps
- Lists of refugees throughout the country
- Lists of exiles embarked to the Americas
- Refugees’ correspondence seeking help

My modest contribution to our war ... It has been that of my only son in Teruel and my wife and my eighteen-year-old daughter in a bombing ... The daughter I have left is imprisoned in Barcelona
• **23,000** registered refugees

• **1,000** identified refuges and camps

• Refugees’ correspondence catalogue: **7,000 letters**

Camps and refuges in France

https://ja.cat/EIxuT
**Project 3: Processing of documentation on Catalans in exile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Spanish women with children at the Voló station, after crossing the French border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Syrian family on Kos Island, after being rescued from the open sea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project 3: Processing of documentation on Catalans in exile

Crossing the French border
Project 4: Recovery of documentation confiscated from Catalonia by Franco’s regime

Occupation and search of public institutions, political parties, trade unions, all kinds of organizations, the media, publishing houses, private residences, ....
Project 4: Recovery of documentation confiscated from Catalonia by Franco’s regime

1,700 searches carried out in Barcelona alone in the early months of 1939

Places searched in Barcelona
Project 4: Recovery of documentation confiscated from Catalonia by Franco’s regime

- Confiscation of documents containing personal data to identify dissidents
- Used as evidences to carry out repression
Project 4: Recovery of documentation confiscated from Catalonia by Franco’s regime

- 1939 – 1940: **tons of seized documentation** are transferred to Salamanca
- **3 million** file cards with data on dissidents

---

**Trade unionist**

Mayor

**President of a court of law**

Mayor

---

Documenting social processes and movements
Riksarkivet, Oslo, 25th September 2019
Project 4: Recovery of documentation confiscated from Catalonia by Franco’s regime


- 2003-2006: identification and registration of private documentation producers
  - 476 private producers identified
  - 150 linear metres of documents and 900 books described
  - 1.5 million images digitised

- 2006-2017: appraisal and approval of the documents to be returned to Catalonia
Project 4: Restitution of confiscated documents to their rightful owners

2005: Law on return to the Catalan Government of documents confiscated in Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War

- From 2006 to 2014: **6 documentation returns**
- **95%** of the claimed documentation has been returned
Project 4: Restitution of confiscated documents to their rightful owners

- The 2005 law states the return of seized documents to their rightful owners
- The law entrusts the management of the return to the Government of Catalonia, through the National Archive of Catalonia
Project 4: Restitution of confiscated documents to their rightful owners

Producers according to the volume of seized documentation

1. Trade unions, cooperatives and professional groups
2. Political parties
3. Other organisations of all kinds
4. Individuals, the media, publishing houses
Project 4: Restitution of confiscated documents to their rightful owners

- 2015-2016: 4 public events on document restitution
- 96% of the documentation has been returned to its owners
- Both the returns and the identification tasks of holders are still ongoing
Project 4: Restitution of confiscated documents to their rightful owners

Documents are often testimonies of a past unknown to the victims’ families

Letter from a soldier’s fianceé
Project 5: Location and entry of archives on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

- One of the main activities of the National Archive since its creation
- Private archives of people and organisations who suffered exile or are related with it
- There are currently about 250 collections of this origin and content
- The Catalan archive with the largest number of holdings originating from exile

Documentation entry channels:
- Cooperation agreements with public and private organisations
- Cooperation with people who facilitate contact with the exiles families

Papers and archives of:
- Prominent figures (public officials, politicians, trade unionists, intellectuals, etc)
- Associations and institutions in exile
Project 5: Location and entry of archives on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Documentation of Catalan associations abroad

Processing and digitalisation of archives from six Catalan associations, in Cuba, Uruguay, Mexico, Paraguay and Argentina
Project 5: Location and entry of archives on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Personal papers from the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries: 40 collections

- International Brigades members
- Soviet political commissaries
- Officers and soldiers of the Republican army
- Anti-Francoist guerrilla fighters
Project 5: Location and entry of archives on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Spanish Centre in Moscow

- 15 linear metres of documents and 5,000 photographs
- Documentation on ‘Children of War’ stands out
Project 5: Location and entry of archives on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Francesc Boix photographic Collection

- **1,300** photographs of the Spanish Republic and Civil War periods
- Mauthausen’s images served as accusatory evidence in the Nuremberg trials
The dissemination of information on the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Outreach activities relating to these historical memory topics

• talks, courses, exhibitions, ....
The Educational Service of the National Archive of Catalonia

Activities and materials on historical memory topics

- Thematic **workshops** using documents
- Educational **activity books** to work in the classroom
- Advice for pupils doing **research works**
- Educational **guides for exhibitions** organized by the Archive

Projects concerning the Spanish Civil War, exile and Francoist repression

Archives should become an essential tool for

- Learning about collective memory
- Exerting and claiming individual rights
- Enabling the legal and moral reparation of victims
- Fostering citizens’ critical awareness
- Achieving a truly participatory and transparent democracy