

## GHOSTS OF THE PAST, CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT: NEW AND OLD “OTHERS” IN CONTEMPORARY SPAIN

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Several weeks after the conclusion of the war in Gaza, rather infelicitously codenamed *Operation Cast Lead*, we were invited to dinner at the home of the Spanish ambassador to Israel. We were surprised to see the tightened security around the house, a direct result of the political tensions between the two countries. One Spanish diplomat told us about a meeting with Israeli business people at which he was surprised to be asked whether it was safe for Israelis to go to Spain. A few days later the Israeli ambassador to Spain was called a “Jew dog” as he was leaving a Real Madrid-Barcelona soccer match in the Spanish capital (Ravid, 2009). On the same day a Spanish judge announced that he would move forward with a criminal investigation of seven Israeli officers and politicians concerning a 2002 air strike in the Gaza Strip that killed a Hamas militant and 14 civilians (Harel and Zarchin, 2009).

These anecdotes underscore the fact that relations between Israel and Spain have always been dogged by misunderstanding. The roots of the problem can be traced back to the long absence of any meaningful Jewish presence in Spain, from the expulsion of Jews in the late fifteenth century to the late nineteenth century when a small number of Jews resettled in the Iberian Peninsula (Lichtenstein, 1962; Aronsfeld, 1979; Caro Baroja, 1978; González García, 1991; Lisbona, 1993). Spain’s neutrality in World War II and the fact that not only did it not participate in the Jewish Holocaust but it actually helped save the lives of thousands of Jews supposedly absolved the country of any guilt concerning the Jews.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the absence of diplomatic relations between Spain and Israel until January 1986 contributed to Spaniards’ relative ignorance about Jewish and Israeli issues.<sup>2</sup>

This brief paper makes two arguments. First, there is a huge gap between public discourse and social realities. While Spanish media and politicians often express a hostility towards Israel that borders on anti-Semitism, this has not hindered the development of Jewish life in Spain.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays Jews, both individually and collectively, enjoy a richer and more prosperous life in Spain than at any time during the past century. Second and even more important, Spanish attitudes towards Jews must be viewed within two wider contexts: recent demographic changes and the struggle to reshape Spanish collective identities, both of which require a comparative approach. Accordingly, we should analyze Spanish society’s attitudes towards the three traditional “others” in Spain: Jews, Muslims and Latin (or Hispanic) Americans—a departure from Jewish historians’ traditional tendency to look at Jews as the prime victims in any given context. In fact, Islamophobia, much more than anti-Semitism, is a source of concern for many inside and outside Spain; and while in recent years there have been several cases of violence against Muslims in Spain, and even a few against Latin Americans, there have been practically none against Jews.

## Identity, Demography, and Politics

No other European country seems to have experienced such passionate public debates over its “national essence” and “destiny” as Spain. For centuries, the discussions on nation and identity in Spain were mostly inward-looking. This was true, for example, of the famous debates of the so-called Generation of ‘98, following the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the consequent loss of the remnants of the Spanish empire. To a large extent the debates were between Spanish nationalists and regional nationalists, and between liberal civic nationalists and conservative national Catholics. The participants included intellectuals, writers, journalists, and politicians (Ramsden, 1974; Shaw, 1975; Rein, 2005: 211–225). The debaters are the same today, but the discussion is no longer inward-looking. The transition to democracy, with the consequent cessation of state efforts to impose homogeneous identities, as well as Spain’s integration into the European Union, stimulated new or renewed soul-searching about collective identities. Such meditations aroused anxiety among *españolistas*, who feared even a partial loss of national sovereignty or any threat to the Spanish “essence”. Some of them saw the opportunity the European Union provided for the international representation of regional nationalisms as a threat to national identity because it offered alternative, or at least multiple, identities to Spaniards (Balfour and Quiroga, 2008).

In recent years the Spanish political system has become polarized over a variety of issues but none more so than the question of nation and collective memories. The José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero government’s efforts to lay the ghosts of the Spanish Civil War (1931–1939) by righting the wrongs of the Francisco Franco dictatorship and memorializing its victims—encouraging, in this way, attempts to find and re-open mass graves from the Franco era—have contributed to this polarization (Espinosa Maestre, 2006). As we all know, representations of the past necessarily have an impact on the present. After all, the past is often the arena where contemporary political and ideological struggles are waged. National narratives are always embedded in collective identities and world views. Spain has also undergone dramatic demographic changes in recent years. The country that for centuries saw millions of its own leave to seek a better life in far-off places has now become the destination of choice for many immigrants. Immigration since the advent of democracy has resulted in a significant ethnic and cultural transformation of the national profile. In fact, Spain has become one of the main immigrant-receiving countries of the European Union. Although the number of immigrants is relatively small compared to the figures for some other European countries, and probably

represents less than 10 percent of the total population, the foreign-born population in Spain still more than doubled during the first five years of this century. Excluding illegal immigration, the number of immigrants increased eightfold between 1996 and 2006, to almost 4 million. Traditional economic and cultural ties with North Africa and Spanish America have encouraged immigration from these regions to Spain. According to various sources, the largest groups of immigrants in Spain today are from Latin America (more than one-third) and Africa (more than one-fifth).<sup>4</sup>

This extraordinary rise in immigration to Spain over the last few years has contributed to a sense of lost identity. It poses a major challenge to traditional narratives of national and/or collective identity at both national and regional levels. Responses have ranged from xenophobia and anti-Semitism to Islamophobia, and from calls for assimilation to multiculturalism projects. The current debates are reminiscent of the intellectual polemics in Spain during the late 1940s. In 1948, the pro-Republican philologist Américo Castro published the pioneering book *España en su historia*, in which he argued that Spain's national identity had been shaped by the interactions between Jews, Muslims, and Christians during the medieval period (Castro, 1948). In other words, Castro saw Spanish collective identity as essentially pluralist, and believed that Jews and Muslims should not be considered foreigners, but rather autochthonous Spanish minorities. Castro's arguments were contested a few years later by the medievalist Claudio Sánchez Albornoz in his work *España, un enigma histórico* (Sánchez Albornoz, 1956). Sánchez Albornoz posited the existence of a *homo hispanicus* from the era of the *celtíberos* in pre-Roman times. Arabs and Jews were, in his view, essentially different from Spaniards. Sánchez Albornoz's perspective has in fact probably been the dominant view throughout most of Spanish history, but Castro's ideas seem to be far more influential in modern Spain.

Still, for many Spaniards the new social reality is apparently not at all desirable. An opinion poll carried out by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) in December 2006 revealed that 59.2 percent of all Spaniards considered immigration to be their country's biggest problem, while data published by S.O.S. Racismo that same year showed that three out of four Spaniards blamed the arrival of immigrants for the increase in delinquency in the country.<sup>5</sup>

These results coincide with the findings of a couple of Pew attitudes survey in 2006 and 2009, according to which Spanish opinions of both Muslims and Jews deteriorated sharply since 2005.<sup>6</sup> In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 and the March 11, 2004 bombing in Madrid, immigration has also become increasingly linked to security, encouraging an emphasis on immigration restrictions instead of policies designed to improve immigrants' social integration. Hostility towards

all Muslims has increased noticeably.

Another important reference here is Henri Zukier's article on the function that anti-Semitism fulfills in the construction of Western collective identities (Zukier, 2003: 118–130). Zukier highlights the fact that “the Other”, the “outsider”, is psychologically constructed as the projected image of the negations and repressions of every society. Having been constituted on this basis, and having undergone a process of demonization, the Other becomes an emotionally charged object that may be “manipulated, preserved and called up at will” by the members of the group, and that has the capacity to trigger powerful “mechanical” feelings and reactions. Zukier's article is relevant to the analysis of Spain's official discourse and policies concerning three ethnic groups that have played a central role in the country's history and collective identity since the late fifteenth century: Jews, Muslims and Latin Americans. While major advances have been noted in Spanish attitudes towards these three groups since the return to democratic rule in the mid 1970s, the expedient nature of the official discourse—a self-congratulating myth of tolerance and pluralism—does not always foster positive change.

In Spain, the past has not been put to rest either culturally or ideologically—particularly the immediate past of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975). Ignoring the often traumatic past and present experiences of different social and ethnic groups—in this case Jews, Muslims, and Latin Americans—and their own perspectives on their relations with the Spanish state, is in fact an obstacle to reconciliation and the de-essentialization of the Other in contemporary Spain.

#### Renewed Jewish Life in Spain

Up to the eighteenth century, no significant political group contested the assumption that the Spanish collective body had to be protected from the “contaminating” influence of both Muslim and Jewish blood by such means as the Blood Purity Statutes (*Estatutos de limpieza de sangre*) and the Inquisition. The advent of the Enlightenment broke this consensus, although it did not call into question the self-identification of the vast majority of Spaniards with Catholicism. Even the Spanish liberals and reformists of the nineteenth century, despite their strong anti-clericalism and vehement repudiation of anything hinting of Catholic integritism, perceived Spain as a Christian state. In fact, they considered that both the Inquisition and the Blood Purity Statutes betrayed the essence of the Spanish people precisely because tolerance was one of the core values of Christianity. This attitude persisted at least through the first half of the twentieth century. According to Christiane Stallaert, Spaniards' ethnic identification with Catholicism was not only a fundamental belief of the Francoists during the Civil War of 1936–39, but was also widespread among the Spanish “reds” (Socialists, Communists, and

Anarchists) (Stallaert, 1998: 48–49, 52–53; Álvarez Chillida, 2002: 308–310). Furthermore, at least some of these revolutionary Spaniards interpreted their Christian identity as the negation of the Moor/Jew, in spite of the pluralistic and philo-Semitic policies of the Second Republic (1931–1936).<sup>7</sup> Despite these traditions, there have also been some important transformations in the way Spaniards perceive both Jews and Muslims.

With the establishment of democracy after Francisco Franco's death in November 1975, Spain laid the institutional and political bases for a multiethnic and multireligious state. In something like the spirit of Américo Castro's ideas, the government expressed its desire for reparation and reconciliation through a series of official acts, such as a declaration that Judaism, Protestantism, and Islam were "religions that clearly had deep roots in Spain" ("de notorio arraigo") (see Valls, 1989; Bastante, 2004: 48–49). Certainly the resolve of successive democratic Spanish governments to reconnect Spanish culture and identity to their Jewish and Muslim-Arab roots has been reinforced by Spain's entry into the European Community, given the New Europe's emphasis on pluralism, multiculturalism, and respect for human rights.

Despite having settled in the Peninsula at an early point in history—during the Phoenician era—and having enjoyed periods of relative greatness there, the Jews of Spain have also suffered a long history of persecution and martyrdom. They were gone for nearly four centuries, starting with the expulsion decreed by the Catholic monarchs in 1492, although later, despite their physical absence, "Jewish elements" populated the popular imagination and artistic creation (Álvarez Chillida, 2002). In the mid-nineteenth century Jews began returning to Spain (during the Spanish-Moroccan War of 1859–1860). Only 406 people identified themselves as Jewish in the national census of 1877, but several waves of immigration later the number of Jews reached the current figure of over 40,000.

Spain's current Jewish population is concentrated in Madrid and Barcelona, followed by Malaga. Smaller communities are found in Alicante, Benidorm, Cadiz, Granada, Marbella, Majorca, Torremolinos, and Valencia.

Spanish North Africa has Jewish communities in Ceuta and Melilla. Today's Jewish community is relatively new, largely a product of post-World War II migration. The first significant wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in 1956, after Morocco's new independence from French and Spanish colonial rule triggered Jewish fears of oppression by the new Muslim government. The Six Day War in 1967 prompted a similar exodus of North African Jews. Other Jews came from the Balkans and other European countries, and, most recently (in the 1970s and 1980s), from Latin America, especially Argentina. Speaking to *The Jewish Press* correspondent a couple of years ago, the Chief Rabbi of Madrid, Rabbi Ben Dahan, pointed out the dynamism of the small Jewish community in Madrid: "Although this is a small Jewish community, we have a dedicated congregation which has a vibrant schedule for shiurim,

gemilut chasadim and a very active youth wing which networks with the Jewish youth in Portugal and is very active in pro-Israel activities.” (Matzner Bekerman, 2006)

Indeed, one of our arguments here concerns precisely the gap between public discourse and social reality. We would like to borrow the concept of “cultural code”, a term Shulamit Volkov coined in 1978 in the context of the historiography of German anti-Semitism (Volkov, 1978: 25–46). The term reflected the idea that late nineteenth-century anti-Semitism did not solely express an antagonism, Christians toward Jews, but rather signaled a political identity with the German right.

Volkov’s interpretation viewed anti-Semitism as a cultural way of marking political space. It also supported a contextual explanation for anti-Semitism, emphasizing its function in given historical constellations instead of regarding it as an unchanging, ahistorical enmity. In 1930s Spain, right-wing nationalists targeted the Jews as part of their campaign against Communism, regional separatism, and masonry, all supposedly conspiring together to destroy the Spanish state. Nowadays, an anti-Israeli discourse, with certain anti-Semitic overtones, appears to be central to the identity of the Spanish left—an identity forged in the decades-long struggle against the Francoist dictatorship and its main political ally, the “imperialistic” United States. In other words, in order to achieve distance from the political right, the political left, especially the Communists and the Socialists, gradually became anti- Israeli. There is some irony to this, since Israel rejected Franco’s efforts to establish diplomatic ties between the two countries in the late 1940s, and joined forces with the countries in the United Nations calling for a diplomatic boycott of the Spanish dictatorship, which had been established with the help of Hitler and Mussolini (Rein, 1997: Chaps.1–2).

Contemporary Spain has undoubtedly made significant steps toward pluralism and tolerance. This implies, naturally, a fundamental change in the attitude it has shown toward three of its historical Others: Jews, Muslims, and Latin Americans (Gypsies and Africans are similar cases, but are outside the scope of this paper). This new attitude is also driven by important political and economic interests, since Spain aspires to serve as a bridge between Europe and the Arab world on the one hand and between Europe and Latin America on the other. Accordingly, there is some danger that this new outlook may prove to be mostly a means to an end. Ultimately, the true scope of the change will be measured by the abandonment of the extensive self-celebratory monologue on the basis of which the Spanish elites have historically constructed their Others.

Given Spain’s historical identification with Roman Catholic Christianity, the construction of the Jew as a Spanish Other cannot be separated from the Catholic Church’s official accusations of deicide against the Jewish people from earliest times until the *Nostra Aetate* declaration in 1965. Considered guilty of a crime of cosmic magnitude, the Jews came to be perceived as the

incarnation of Satan's desires, as the physical manifestation of Evil, against which every good Christian should fight indefatigably. Naturally, the Jew as Other has, through the centuries, played a central role in constructing the image that both Christians and Spaniards had of themselves. Jews became the physical, psychological, and emotional receptacle for the collective projection of all those attributes considered to be essentially antagonistic to Christianity. Identifying Evil and everything associated with it with Judaism lay the ground-work for the proclamation of Catholic Spain as the representative of good on earth, and invested it with a providential evangelizing role. Today, in post-Franco Spain, although the 1978 Constitution guarantees the state's non-confessional status and the freedom of religion and belief (Article 16), the Catholic Church retains a privileged standing in the country's public institutions. A survey carried out in December 2006 showed that 77.1 percent of Spaniards viewed themselves as Catholics. Four months later, 19 percent of the total population asserted that the Jews were responsible for the death of Christ.<sup>8</sup> Without a doubt, secular Christian anti-Semitism, reinforced by modern anti-Semitic movements in other European nations, continues to influence the image of the Jew in Spain. A survey conducted in October 2002 determined that 34 percent of Spanish interviewees held mostly anti-Semitic beliefs, a higher percentage than the figures recorded in France, Germany, Italy, or Poland. A more recent ADL survey, carried out in the midst of an international financial and economic crisis and published in February 2009, detected similar perceptions; in that survey more than 50 percent of Spanish respondents believed that Jews held too much economic power.<sup>9</sup> Such prejudices, still alive in present-day Spanish society and popular culture, also affect Spaniards' opinion of the Jewish state, Israel, especially since many of them strongly believe that European Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their home countries.

At the same time, the process of democratic transition initiated with the death of the dictator Francisco Franco in late 1975 laid the political and institutional bases for the construction of a democratic and pluralistic state. In addition to the establishment of the Spanish state's secular status, a series of institutional gestures recognized the contributions of Jews and Muslims to Spain's culture and history.

These included the official declarations made in 1984 and 1989 establishing that both Judaism and Islam were deeply rooted religions in Spain, and the inclusion of Sefarad (the Hebrew name of Spain) '92, a working group for the "rediscovery of Spain's Jewry", and Al-Andalus (the Arab name of Spain) '92 programs in the celebrations of the "Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America" in 1992. Naturally, this move was strengthened by the significant emphasis that the European Union placed, at least ostensibly, on pluralism, multiculturalism, and respect for human rights as basic values.

The magnitude of the rehabilitation of the image of Jews in Spain over the

last decades should not be underestimated. However, one pivotal area has showed virtually no progress, notably the Spanish state's official whitewash of relations with its Jewish minority throughout the centuries. According to the official line taken by Spanish diplomacy during the commemorative ceremonies of 1992, the process of "rediscovering Jewish Spain" would take place under the "conciliatory banner of coexistence and the cultural fusion that formed the backbone of the Hispanic nation", and anxiously sought to avoid "negative elements like the memory of the expulsion, the inquisitorial persecution, intolerance, the negative aspects of the colonial past, etc." (Lisbona, 1993: 351–352). This stance is reflected in the words used in the description of the Prince of Asturias Friendship Prize awarded to the Sephardic communities worldwide in 1990, in the speech that King Juan Carlos delivered in Madrid's synagogue in 1992, and most of the publicity surrounding Expo Sevilla '92—words such as "reencounter", "friendship", "distancing", "mutual respect", "tolerance", "pluralism", "dialog", and "bridges".<sup>10</sup>

Several years ago the Spanish philosopher Manuel Reyes Mate referred to the politics of the memory of the Spanish Civil War: "The past is used as ammunition for the politics of those who rule. They are politics of memory that ... juxtapose and merge the victims' past and the executioners' past in a nice family portrait." (Reyes Mate, 2002) To be sure, this type of proximity does not dismantle "otherness", but merely readjusts its terms, maintaining the centuries-long monologue that constructed the Jews as a function of Spain's identity needs. In present-day Spain, the Jews (among others) appear to be a politically expedient means of strengthening, for both political and financial reasons, the country's national image as a bridge between different cultures and as a symbol of tolerance and pluralism. To a certain extent, this is the aim of Spain's official "reencounter" with its Jews. Nonetheless, these initiatives have also given cultural legitimacy to expressions that are more critical, and more representative of the experiences and perspectives of Jews themselves regarding the role they were forced to play in Spanish history. It is precisely the cultural dimension that provides the key for breaking down the image of the Jew as the Spaniards' metaphysical Other.

Diana Pinto has already pointed to the centrality of the Shoah in the construction of the New Europe: "the Holocaust [is ...] becoming the filter through which a new reading of European identities is being fashioned." Pinto went even further, asserting that, for the first time in 2,000 years of European history, "Jews and their collective history are thus entering into a dialogue with the various national pasts ... The 'Jewish space' has penetrated into the heart of European national identity." (Pinto, 1996: 11)

Even so, Spain has been slower than its European partners in undertaking a policy of memorializing the Holocaust. This delay has been explained by Manuel Reyes Mate and Alejandro Baer by the intertwining of the memory of Auschwitz and that of the Republican victims during the Spanish Civil War of 1936–1939. In their opinion, the Spaniards have had more difficulty in

confronting the memory of the Holocaust because they spent 39 years under the rule of a dictator who achieved power with the help of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Indeed, the collective disavowal of the victims of the Nazis has intrinsically been linked not only to the disavowal of the Republican victims of the Franco régime, but also to the fact that the history of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship is an indissoluble part of the history of European authoritarianism. That is why Baer bluntly asks: “How could a culture of the memory of the Holocaust exist, if there is no culture of the memory of the Spanish tragedy?” (Baer, 2006: 238)

Nevertheless, Spain is slowly but steadily institutionalizing the memory of the Holocaust. One landmark in this advance has been the first public commemoration of the Holocaust, realized in 2000 under the auspices of an official Spanish institution, the Madrid Assembly.

Another important event was the governmental declaration, in 2005, of January 27 as the “Official Day of the Memory of the Holocaust and the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”. In 2006, one of the two official commemorations was headed by the Spanish monarchs and the Spanish prime minister. The ceremony included speeches by the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain, Jacobo Garzón, and the president of the Roma Union, Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia, as well as a message from Jorge Semprún, a Spanish Buchenwald survivor and a leading intellectual who can be considered one of Europe’s “voices of conscience”.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, recent years have witnessed an accelerated revalorization of the cultural and historical legacy of the Jews of Spain. The 1992 celebration of the 500th anniversary of the “discovery” of the American continent became the framework for undertaking some important political, legal, and cultural steps leading to what David Grebler, president of the Sefarad ’92 National Jewish Commission, has rather bombastically described as the “complete normalization of the Jewish element in Spanish society.” (Lisbona, 1993: 13)

The Spanish monarchs contributed greatly to the creation of this rosy atmosphere. Since 1970, even before Don Juan Carlos was proclaimed king, the royal couple had been cultivating good relations with the Jewish community both in Spain and abroad. This was in keeping with their firm commitment to the political principles of democracy and religious freedom. In 1990, their heir, Prince Don Felipe de Borbón, put into words the sentiments of the royal house during the ceremony awarding the Príncipe de Asturias prize to the Sephardic communities around the world: “In the harmonious spirit of today’s Spain, and in my capacity as heir of those who five hundred years ago signed the Decree of Expulsion, I welcome you with open arms, and with great emotion.” (ibid.: 357)

The 1992 events contributing to the normalization of Jewish life in Spain included the visit of the king and queen to the Madrid Synagogue on March 31 (the first such visit in the history of Spain); the signature of the first

cooperation agreement between the Spanish government and the formal organization of the Spanish Jewish community (Federación de Comunidades Israelitas de España) in September; and the implementation of Sefarad '92, a special program aimed at "rediscovering Jewish Spain" (Lisbona, 1993: 303–370).

Modern developments have by no means been uniformly positive, however. The beginning of the second millennium witnessed the conversion of the Holocaust into an instrument for demonizing the Israelis in vaguely anti-Semitic terms. The Israeli government's performance during the second Intifada, the second Lebanon War, and the Gaza operation has repeatedly been interpreted as ultimate proof of the Jewish people's inherent viciousness and of their stubborn unwillingness to learn the lessons of the Shoah.

#### The Growing Presence of Muslims

Many of the points mentioned in our discussion of Spain's Jews are equally relevant to any analysis of the role played by Muslims and Latin Americans in today's Iberia. Muslims are the most "visible" immigrant group owing to their religion, language, and skin color, and their presence has given rise to conflicts of all sorts. By various estimates, there are more than one million Muslims in Spain.<sup>12</sup> The majority of them are from Morocco, the largest immigrant nationality in Spain, representing 1 percent of the total population and 18 percent of the immigrant population.<sup>13</sup> Recent years have witnessed a number of social conflicts involving Muslim immigrants. In the year 2000 a riot against Moroccan immigrants erupted in southeastern Spain, in the town of El Ejido. The pretext was the murder of a young Spanish woman by a mentally unbalanced Moroccan immigrant, but the affair quickly deteriorated into violence against anything and anyone Moroccan (Zapata Barrero, 2003: 523–541). In 2006 there were reports of racist attacks on mosques and Muslim religious centers in various cities and towns, including Córdoba, Huesca, and Girona. Slogans like "Moors out" or "No Moors" were painted on buildings. That year saw wide protests in Catalonia against building mosques in the region. As a consequence, Muslim religious practices had to be conducted in makeshift accommodations in garages or small commercial centers.

It should be remembered that "the Moors", no less than the Jews, were Spain's perennial foreign Other. It was a cultural stereotype against which Spain could define its own identity in its invention of the past and the present, from the Arab "occupation" of Christian Spain for seven centuries to the colonial wars in Northern Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Over the centuries, representations of the Moor, usually laden with racist and religious connotations, became embedded in popular culture. Muslims, like Jews, were often represented as unclean, treasonous, cruel,

cowardly, and the like. Yet in the mid-1930s, when Franco's Nationalists brought Moroccan mercenaries over to fight against the "godless" Republic, their propaganda depicted the Moor as a defender of religious faith in the common struggle against Spanish Republicans, atheists, Communists, Jews, and freemasons, all of whom were bracketed together as the foreign Other (Balfour, 2002: 193–198, 283–286). Today, however, negative stereotypes of Muslims are again widespread, although not politically correct. One Muslim activist stated in a survey that democratic Spain had adopted a double and contradictory standard towards his people: On one hand, Islamic and Moorish culture are being reclaimed and valued as part of the Spanish cultural heritage; on the other hand, the inclusion of Islam in the construction of contemporary Spanish identity is clearly out of the question.

Like the Jews before them, Muslims and many of their brethren who had converted to Christianity under pressure (the *moriscos*) were definitively expelled from Spain in 1609. In the case of the Muslims, however, the long years of physical absence from Spanish territory were shaped and defined not only by the memory of the eight centuries of the so-called Reconquista, but also by Spain's expansionist politics in northern Africa, especially from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries (part of Morocco became a Spanish protectorate in 1912). In addition, the important strategic alliance that Spain built with the Arab nations (known as the "traditional Hispano-Arab friendship") during the Franco years contributed to a rather schizophrenically constructed image of the Muslim peoples. As a matter of fact, the ambivalent policies of Franco's regime, which supported the Arab nations' wars of independence against both French and English colonial rule at the same time that Spain fought to retain its own protectorate in Morocco, can be explained by a relatively simple psychological mechanism plainly described by Eloy Martín Corrales: On one hand, Spaniards retained a "very negative" image of Moroccans; on the other, they cherished "a more or less idyllic perception" of the other Muslim nations—nations that had the additional advantage of geographical distance, making ongoing contact or disturbing incidents less likely (Corrales, 2002: 49). Thus, in this respect, Muslim "otherness" is rooted in historical conflicts and clashes of interest between Christian Spain and specific members of the Arab-Muslim world (the Nazar dynasty and the Moroccan independentistas, for example), generating changing levels of Islamophobia; the negative images and stereotypes have not always dominated. Despite these ambivalences, however, the image of the "Moor" as essentially inferior has played a fundamental role not only in galvanizing an ethnic Christian consciousness, but also in legitimizing Spanish expansion and colonial occupation in the Maghreb. That is why the negative stereotypes have not vanished with the resolution of the conflicts that gave rise to them. As explained by Henri Zukier, once the Other is constructed and the demonization process is concluded, this Other becomes an emotionally charged object with the ability to trigger powerful emotions and reactions automatically.

In present-day Spain, the age-old negative images of the “Moor” continue to affect reality. A school survey carried out among young people between the ages of 13 and 19 in 1997 revealed that 24 per- cent were in favor of expelling the “Arab-Moors” from the country. According to another study, the proportion of Spaniards holding a positive view of Muslims decreased from 46 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006 (The Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2006: 10).

#### Not So Invisible: Hispanic Americans in Contemporary Spain

As for the last group we will examine, the Latin American population, their “otherness” is supposedly both the most invisible and the least problematic of the triad. After all, most Latin Americans share a language (Spanish) and a religion (Catholicism) with most Spaniards. The clearest example of this fact is the Spanish Congress’s 1987 decision to establish October 12 (the day Columbus arrived in America) as the country’s National Day. Although the representatives of democratic Spain agreed to abandon Dictator Franco’s “Hispanidad Day”, which celebrated the militant, conservative religious spirit of Spanish colonization in America, the “otherness” of Latin America’s indigenous populations implicit in this ideological pillar of Francoism remained intact.

To be sure, the terms employed by the new law to validate the selection of October 12 as the founding episode in the building of Spanish national identity, seeking to avoid any imperialistic or evangelizing connotation, refer to the “beginning of a period of linguistic and cultural projection beyond European borders.”<sup>14</sup> The “otherness” of the Amerindians is clearly implied in this description. By denying the fact that these peoples perceived the Spanish conquest and colonization as ethnocide and exploitation, Spanish officials relegate them to what Simone de Beauvoir called “the unessential” (De Beauvoir, 1949: I: 17). Spanish official discourse neutralized every opportunity of achieving a genuine dialogue, replacing it with what Edward Sampson defines as a “self-celebratory monologue” that ostensibly ignores the experiences and viewpoint of the Other (Sampson, 1993: 3–16).

This attitude was also evident in the official characterization of the Seville World Expo of 1992, for instance, which was dedicated to “the Era of Discoveries” and was thus linked to the Spanish “discovery” of America (Harvey, 1996: 61, 74; Aguilar and Humlebæk, 2002: 139). The Expo was a huge success, visited by almost 42 million people, including 43 heads of state and 26 prime ministers. But it also exposed the fact, as mentioned earlier, that Spain’s past, both the distant and the more immediate, has not been resolved culturally or ideologically. The commemoration of 1492 gave rise to sharp polemics along- side the traditional celebrations in Seville. There was even a violent demonstration in that southern city protesting the distorted historical representation of the “discovery”.

With respect to the construction of “otherness”, the concepts of “discovery”

and “encounter between two cultures” speak for themselves. Essentially, the only Latin Americans whose existence is recognized by official Spain are those who voluntarily participate in Spain’s self-celebratory monologue. At the same time, those Latin Americans who believe that when such an intimate “encounter” occurs against the will of one of the two parties involved it should really be called a “rape”, are denied any formal legitimacy by the Spanish state.

The Spanish attitude was reinforced during a cycle of conferences, carried out under the aegis of the Royal Academy of History, that culminated in 1997 with the publication of *España: Reflexiones sobre el ser de España* (Spain: Reflections on Spain’s Being).

In this book, historian Gonzalo Anes wrote of the second half of the eighteenth century: “No-one believed that that great whole—the one created by Spain and the Indies—should and could be separated” (Real Academia de la Historia, 1997: 240, our emphasis). Obviously, the indigenous populations who during this period continued to fight Spanish domination were deliberately ignored. The same attitude was apparent in an article by Demetrio Ramos, which, referring to the continuities between “las Españas de ultramar” (“the Spains overseas”) and the beginnings of the Latin American emancipation movements, affirmed:

the fact that the same attitude of the overseas Spains was something that lived fundamentally in the spirit of the people, and was not an artificial fact created by the administrative projection of metropolitan designs. The kingdom existed in the blood of the people. That is why it remained valid when its unity broke apart, until it mingled in today’s partisan reality (*ibid.*: 274).

At the social level, there were many clashes of all sorts between local Spanish populations and Latin American immigrants. All too often people identify these immigrants with the increasing rates of delinquency in Spain. A major controversy arose in Madrid in late 2006 over the legalization of the armed youth gang Latin Kings after a similar measure was taken in Barcelona, where a gang of some 250 members was legalized as a cultural association, on condition that members ceased all violent activities. A few months later, fights broke out between Spanish and Latin American youths in a Madrid suburb, Alcorcón. This clash received wide coverage in the media, adding fuel to a xenophobic protest by some thousand youngsters against Latin American immigrants. Extreme right-wing groups tried to take advantage of the situation for their own political purposes.

#### Conclusion

The achievements and contradictions inherent in the process of building a democratic, pluralistic identity for contemporary Spain can only be fully

grasped in the light of perceptions of the three ethnic groups that have historically played the fundamental role of Other in the public discourse on Spain's national identity from the end of the fifteenth century onward: Jews, Muslims (Moors), and Latin Americans. Contemporary Spain has taken major steps toward breaking down the "otherness" of Jews and Muslims, although the same cannot be said concerning Latin Americans. Unfortunately, in contrast to the rehabilitation of Jews and Muslims, the dismantling of Latin American otherness in present-day Spain has not even been given lip service.

Yet this is an increasingly imperative task, not only for the obvious moral and historical reasons, but also for more practical ones. We refer here both to the significant flow of immigrants from Latin America who are increasingly being absorbed into Spanish society, and to the growing political clout that the indigenous populations of America are finally beginning to achieve in their native countries, after long centuries of suppression and exclusion.

Despite this progress, the most difficult task lies ahead. Only a genuine dialog that legitimizes the experiences and perspectives of those formerly constructed as others will dismantle the artifice of "otherness". Although painful, the experience of opening our souls to the gaze of the other is unavoidable if we are to achieve reconciliation with that part of our own selves that has been repeatedly projected outside. The effort is definitely worthwhile, since, as Edward Sampson articulates: "The gift that the other gives us is our own selfhood." (Sampson, 1993: 155)

<sup>1</sup> On Spain's position during the Second World War and on its policies concerning Jewish refugees, see, among others, Payne, 2008; Avni, 1982; Bowen, 2000; Rother, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> On Spanish-Israeli relations, see Rein, 1997; Marquina and Ospina, 1987; González García, 2001; Lisbona, 2002; Rein, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> On Israel's image in the Spanish media, see Baer, 2007; López Alonso, 2007: 145–169.

<sup>4</sup> Between the years 2000 and 2005 some 5 million Latin Americans left their sub-continent, and Spain was their second most preferred destination, after the United States. Ecuador and Colombia contributed the two largest groups of Latin American immigrants to Spain. See Tedesco, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> See Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Barómetro septiembre 2006, Pregunta 5, [http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2640\\_2659/2654/e265400.html](http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2640_2659/2654/e265400.html), September 30, 2009. See also Federación de Asociaciones de SOS Racismo del Estado Español, Informe anual 2007 sobre el racismo en el Estado español, 9, [http://www.sosracismo.org/reflexions/pdfs/IA2007\\_DossierPrensa.pdf](http://www.sosracismo.org/reflexions/pdfs/IA2007_DossierPrensa.pdf), September 30, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> See Pew Global Attitudes Project, Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe (Sept. 2008), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/262.pdf>, September 30, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> On the Spanish Republic and its attitudes towards Jews, see González García, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Barómetro diciembre 2006, Pregunta 28, [http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2660\\_2679/2666/e266600.html](http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2660_2679/2666/e266600.html) March 29, 2010. See also Anti-Defamation League, Attitudes Toward Jews and the Middle East in Five European Countries (May 2007), [http://www.adl.org/anti\\_semitism/European\\_Attitudes\\_Survey\\_May\\_2007.pdf](http://www.adl.org/anti_semitism/European_Attitudes_Survey_May_2007.pdf) March 29, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Ynet, 11 Feb. 2009. See also the interesting information about racist attitudes in Spanish schools gleaned from a survey undertaken by the Spanish Ministry of Education. Moroccans and gypsies appear to be the main victims of discrimination: Castedo and Berdié, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Lisbona, 1993: 349–370. See also Harvey, 1996: 62; López Alonso, 2007b: 7. For King Juan Carlos' speech see "Palabras de Su Majestad el Rey a la comunidad israelita", Casa de SU Majestad el Rey, <http://www.casareal.es/noticias/news/2100-ides-idweb.html>, March 29, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> See Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación (2006). For a more detailed account of the Spanish process of "memorializing" the Holocaust, see Baer, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Observatorio Andalusí, Estudio demográfico de la población musulmana (Dec. 2007), <http://mx.geocities.com/hispanomuslime/estademograf.doc>, November 18, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> See Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Informe estadístico, 31 Dec. 2006; López García and Briane, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Law 18/1987, October 7, establishing 12 October as Spain's National Day, Boletín Oficial del Estado 241 (1987): 22831.