



Argentine exiles in Spain: Translation as a practice of solidarity

Alejandrina Falcón

National Scientific and Technical Research Council &

Dr. Emilio Ravignani Institute of Argentine and American History

alejafal@gmail.com

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Abstract: As part of its solidarity activities with Chilean, Uruguayan, and Argentine exiles in Catalonia, the NGO Agermanament led by Father Josep Ribera and the Lliga dels Drets dels Pobles published a register of exiles organized according to their professional activity in the magazine *Agermanament* in 1979. The categories included in the list were “visual artists, doctors/psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, musicians, actors and singers, publicists, jurists, architects, and photographers”. Translators were not included in the list, even though their professional status had been recognized by the UNESCO in 1976 and thousands of Latin American exiles who had fled dictatorships and arrived in Spain without refugee status were working as translators. Due to the toll on the publishing sector, heavily damaged by political and cultural repression, numerous exiled Latin American intellectuals and writers entered the Catalan publishing industry as translators, proofreaders, and editors. This article aims to shed light on the quantitative and qualitative importance of translation as a practice of solidarity within the publishing sector during the Spanish transition to democracy. I want to show that members of the Latin American diaspora contributed to the constitution of a transnational publishing space, which was possible thanks to the solidarity of local publishers and exiles who created a labor network through the commission of translations.

Keywords: Argentine exile, 1970s, translation, solidarity, Ibero-American publishing.

Introduction

In order to understand the phenomenon of Argentine exile in the 1970s, we must understand the political and cultural dynamics of each receiving country as well as the factors that were common to all the Argentine diaspora. These include the creation of exile groups, together with their publications and distribution channels, transnational activities of solidarity, and reporting on human rights violations (Jensen, 2010). The notion of ‘solidarity’ has a long tradition in the political left. Historically, it refers to a way of understanding international support based on ideological affinity. According to Marina Franco (2011), “the Latin American exiles of the 1960s to 1980s are a good example of new and complex forms of solidarity that articulate traditional ideological parameters with new humanitarian ones, which are no less political” (2011, p.91). At the methodological level, and following Franco’s reasoning, this paper considers the notion of ‘solidarity’ as a native category, meaning that it was circumscribed to the actors of the time, whose proper contextualization reveals a diversity of historically situated empirical situations.

Social and labor inclusion in receiving societies, as well as professional transformation, are also common problems directly related to solidarity networks built jointly by local institutions and those in exile. Translation in publishing is an adequate platform in which to study the issue of labor insertion for two reasons: 1) translation is one of the forms of professional writing; and 2) it is an instrument to analyze literary geography, studies of cultural transference and cultural stories, which are the dominant forms of global history (Chartier, 2022, pp. 157-164). The general aim of this article is to explore these two aspects, understanding translation as a professional writing practice within a cultural context affected by political exile.

This work's general perspective is that of a sociology of translation (Heilbron, 2010; Heilbron & Sapiro, 2008), sociocultural history of Latin American translation (Payás, Pagni & Willson, 2011; Castro Ramírez, 2013; Willson, 2004, 2019), and especially the history of translation in Argentina's publishing industry (Sorá 2003, 2021; Falcón 2016; Falcón & Willson, 2022), interested in the role publishers, international writers and publishing collaborators played in commissioning translations aimed at facilitating labor insertion. Numerous testimonies show a common narrative in which translation is presented as a practice of labor solidarity driven by ideological affinity between European publishers and Latin American writers and intellectuals in Paris, Barcelona, and other places the Argentine diaspora fled to after 1974, when the first exiles began to arrive, prior to the 1976 coup d'état. Before offering an a priori definition of 'translation solidarity', we are interested in understanding this phenomenon as it appears in the experience and discourse of people in exile to answer the following questions: How is solidarity in publishing expressed in discourse? Who were the editors that commissioned translations as a way of helping overcome the precariousness of exile? What was the other face of 'translation solidarity'?

This article consists of three parts. The first one offers the basic historical coordinates of Argentine political exiles in the 1970s by analyzing two labor-related issues that were common to all the places of exile: professional disqualification and the language barrier. The second part introduces two solidarity forms through which translation operated: one in which translators who had the same ideology as the Argentine exiles took part in international solidarity campaigns; and a second one in which exiles received translation commissions as a way of economic and legal integration. The third section digs deeper into the latter frame while attempting to address another issue directly related to it, namely the chauvinistic public discourse that reveals the other side of solidarity with political exiles and how this tension becomes visible as translation practices.

1. The Argentine exile: Professional competence and language barriers

The most recent Argentine political migration began in the 1970s amid a social and political process marked by an ideological radicalization, armed struggle as a way of political intervention and a string of economic and social crises that set off a wave of state and para-state repression. During the Isabel Perón government in 1974, an organization known as the Triple A (Argentine Anticommunist Alliance) persecuted and murdered political militants and leaders, union activists and students, university professors, artists, journalists, and professionals from several fields. In March 1976, the Argentine Armed Forces staged a coup and removed the government that had been democratically elected in 1973 and that was led by the Peronist Party, the country's largest. The

so-called Process of National Reorganization imposed its first president, General Jorge Rafael Videla, through an agreement it reached with political parties, business associations, Catholic Church leaders, and the Rural Society, counting as well with the backing of the media. Destined to systematically eliminate all traces of dissent and any actions intended to ignite criticism and social mobilization, repression was intended to propel a neoliberal economic plan of state reduction and destruction of its interventionist tradition without opposition, in order to favor financial speculation in benefit of large international capitals. State and non-state sponsored repression resulted in dramatic outcomes such as murder, imprisonment, labor exclusion and exile for a large number of citizens (Aguila, 2023).

The political migration that began in those years had flows of varying intensity, eventually acquiring characteristics of economic migration once the negative effect of neoliberal policies on social life and the national economy started becoming apparent. Country exits were concentrated between 1974 and 1978, peaking in 1976, the year of the coup. Beyond the different experiences and the specificity of each experience depending on the country, there were numerous common factors that allow us to analyze transnational phenomena (Jensen, 2010).

Social and labor inclusion, as well as the reconfiguration of professional trajectories, were common issues and particularly important ones, as they affected a group comprised mainly of middle-class professionals and university students. Regardless of the host country, labor uncertainty and professional disqualification were constant issues during the first years of exile. Difficulties in labor or professional insertion were often connected to a lack of knowledge of the foreign language, but also to issues with degree validation. In countries like France or Italy, and even more so in the Netherlands, Sweden, or Norway, knowing the local language was a decisive factor in obtaining qualified jobs. The degree of difficulty varied according to the cultural distance and the level of proficiency in the language of the host country. In Sweden, for instance, the state provided language classes, but the difficulties in adult education guided job seekers to employment in which language was not a requirement, like janitors in schools or hospitals, care givers, seasonal agricultural workers, and other jobs that were far from their qualifications and previous occupations (Canelo, 2007, pp. 103-126). In France, and despite its cultural closeness with Argentina, poor knowledge of French also led to professional disqualification, although exiles were later able to obtain more qualified work, like Spanish language teaching or translation (Franco, 2006, p. 229; 2008).

In Spain, the country that received the most Argentine exiles, the linguistic problem was not a main professional barrier. What was a problem, however, was the economic crises that coincided with the arrival of Latin American exiles. Regarding professional continuity, did a common language help advance the careers of exiles? The answer is not simple. A record of Latin American exiles according to their professions, compiled by Catalanian NGO *Agermanament* directed by Father Josep Ribera and the *Lliga dels Drets dels Pobles* as part of its solidarity actions with Latin American exiles in Catalonia, shows that there were painters, doctors, psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, musicians, actors and singers, publicists, lawyers, architects, and photographers (*Agermanament*, 1979, p. 37). This list of liberal professionals and artists, however, sits in contrast with the occasional jobs exiles were also forced to do to survive: from street vendor to door-to-door salesperson, all the way to the design and sale of arts and crafts; in time, some managed to resume their careers and make it into publishing and journalism, and obtained university positions (Yankelevich & Jensen, 2007: 247). Even though job insecurity and underqualification were part of the initial experience for exiles in Spain,

language was not an a priori motive for exclusion from the labor market. On the contrary, knowing Spanish and having had training in foreign languages – especially French, English, Italian, and to a lesser degree German – were valuable intellectual assets.

In order to understand the difficulties of professional insertion, it is essential to understand that, unlike France, Sweden, the Netherlands or Norway, political exiles in Spain did not enjoy state protection, since Spain did not join the Refugee Status Convention until July of 1978, the year in which it included the right to asylum in its Constitution, although it delayed its enforcement until 1984. Migrant policy at the time imposed restrictions on residency, work permits, and validation of university and professional qualifications that lasted until 1985 (Yankelevich & Jensen, 2007, pp. 232-233). Even though nationals from Hispanic America, Portugal, Brazil, Andorra and the Philippines had been exempted by Spanish law from the work permit requirement since 1969, exiles were trapped in a bureaucratic circle: to obtain legal residence they needed a work permit exemption, which in turn was something required to obtain legal residence. Because of this, many remained in the country with a tourist visa they renewed every three months at the French border. Their passports were marked with a distinctive stamp: “Not authorized to work in Spain” (Falcón, 2018, p. 63).

2. Translation as a solidarity practice

Conceptual and theoretical affinities between solidarity and translation can be productively studied by analyzing the different functions of translation in a context of exile. In the case of Argentines in Barcelona and other destinations of exile, literary, political, and solidarity functions became interwoven, as I have studied elsewhere (Falcón, 2018, pp.111-131; Falcón, 2022, pp. 330-345). However, if we focus on the solidarity function, in Spain we note two different solidarity forms. The first one, which we will not elaborate on here, is a model in which solidarity translation is driven by the motivation of translators and interpreters who are political activists, as well as volunteers involved in international solidarity campaigns. The second form, the one explained in this article, is based on solidarity toward and amongst immigrants through job offers linked to translation and interpretation. I will list several cases that show different solidarity forms through which translation operated as a way of economic and legal integration.

On October 20, 1981, the Spanish newspaper *El País* published the following short text in its “Letters to the Editor” section:

The night in Madrid has become cold as I return home from the International Press Club walking, thinking. A short and simple ceremony to present a book called *Argentina: How to Kill Culture* has just ended. It is a testimony, an accusation, a report on the sad and painful cultural situation that brotherly country is undergoing. During the presentation, someone said that culture could never be killed off. Cortázar himself, one of the book’s authors, writes the following towards the end: “If cultural genocide is infamously vigorous in Argentina today, the fierce multiplicity of its forms shown in this book is the most compelling evidence that it is not easily done, that it is resisted at every stage, and that its failure is already present in its own threatening violence [...]” (Author unknown, *El País* 30/10/81).

The letter in question refers to the presentation of the book *Argentina: Cómo matar una cultura. Testimonios: 1976-1981* [*Argentina How to Kill*

Culture: Testimonies: 1976-1981], published in Madrid in 1981 by Editorial Revolución. Beyond the singular geopolitical context, marked by Spain's admittance to the European Economic Community and its official entry to NATO, the reference to this event was an excuse to raise its voice and "join that small group that, with all clarity and conviction, defends a policy of total closeness with Hispanic America [...] greater cooperation and assistance, which is absolutely meager at the time, in every country of Latin America" (Author unknown, *El País* 30/10/81).

This collective book is an interesting case to study translation history in the context of political exile, given that it was first published as a translation in Paris as *Argentine, une culture interdite: pièces à conviction 1976-1981* by the left-leaning French publisher Maspero. The French version of the book came out a few months before the Spanish one as a token of international solidarity backed by the Association Internationale de Défense des Artistes Victimes de la Répression dans le Monde (AIDA), which brought together activists, artists and French intellectuals who were committed to denouncing Latin American dictatorships (Cristiá, 2021). It was coordinated by Argentine intellectual Cacho El Kadri with the backing of intellectuals, editors and French professors of Latin American literature who acted as translators: Claire Rosenberg and François Gèze translated the newspaper articles that were published; Monique Blaquièze re-versioned poems by Vicente Zito Lema and Juan Gelman, while Régine Méllac translated the Cortázar article mentioned in the letter to the editor of *El País*. The AIDA publishing initiative opens the door to publishing events that allow us to reflect upon the function of translation solidarity, given that international activism opens multiple scenarios in which translation functions like an essential practice through which exile groups and intellectuals of different places who are supportive of the cause can denounce human rights violations. Solidarity through the commissioning of translations and other writing jobs in publishing or journalism were common across different historical periods in situations where political exiles were located in places that had a sizable publishing industry. To name a particular case, one could point to the actions of international solidarity carried out by exiles that required linguistic mediation, either to conduct international protest campaigns, or as a way of integrating exiles into the local cultural community (Fischer Hubert, 1994; Loedel, 2012; Durán Gómez, 2015; Falcón, 2018, 2022; Fernández, 2020).

Translation is also found at the center of another type of activity that was supportive of Latin American exiles, which was less visible but equally important for translation studies: those activities linked to their opportunities for survival in a context of economic instability and uneasiness. Some of the more visible actors of these actions of solidarity and international campaigning, like Julio Cortázar, who helped by reaching out to his contact network in publishing and international organizations, like the United Nations and UNESCO, to help fellow exiles in different places. The publishing-related correspondence between Julio Cortázar and Juan Martini, an Argentine exile who worked as a literary editor at Catalan publisher Bruguera, illustrates the political and solidarity functions of publishing networks established between Latin American writers living in Europe, especially the political function Cortázar places on the literary and publishing exchange with Martini. In his correspondence centered on publishing issues with Martini, Cortázar does not hesitate to request books from Bruguera for the triumphant Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, with which he was profoundly committed. He also asked for jobs at Bruguera for exiles and former political prisoners. This is evidenced by a letter dated May 13, 1981, where he proposes that Rodolfo Mattarollo, an Argentine defense attorney for political prisoners and jailed

union activists who founded the Argentine Human Rights Commission (CADHU, for its Spanish initials) and who was exiled in Paris, be hired as a translator by Bruguera:

A couple of lines to ask if you could lend our compatriot Rodolfo Mattarolo (sic) a hand as a translator (English/French); he could really use some work to supplement his current low earnings. Of course, do not feel forced to do anything, but if you happen to need some help with translations, I think Mattarolo could come in handy. Just in case, here are his coordinates: 16, rue Jean Zay. 94120 Fontenay Sur Bois (Cortázar, 2012: 356).

This epistolary scene poses a few questions: Who were the Spanish publishers and publishing houses that commissioned translation work, among other jobs in that realm, to Argentine and Latin American exiles? What does this labor solidarity tell us about the place exiles had in the Spanish cultural scene in general, and in the publishing realm in particular?

The Catalonian publishing industry in particular obtained important benefits from the intellectual and linguistic capital of Argentine exiles, given that they worked in different positions in publishing, from proofreading to series editing, literary consultancy, the writing of reading reports and the design and illustration of book covers, among others. Above all else, they did tasks in which they could use their writing skills. Within the publishing world, Argentines were mostly involved in writing commissions: entries for dictionaries, encyclopedias and collections, stylistic correction and adapting translations of Argentine origin, popular novels, generally working under a pseudonym. Insofar a practice of professional writing, translation within the publishing industry was a way of making a living through an intellectual occupation.

A space for encounters, coexistence, and transnational sociability was created thanks to activities in publishing. To retrace the labor solidarity networks that helped ease exiles into the publishing world, it is necessary to consider the role played by those who were already there when Argentines started arriving in mass, from 1975 onwards. Chileans and Uruguayans, who had arrived in the early 1970s, helped expand this network of local connections and, in a way, paved the way into the publishing industry (Catelli, 2015, p. 130). In this sense, Chilean and Uruguayan writers like Jorge Edwards, Mauricio Wacquez, and Cristina Peri Rossi played a key role in the process. In addition to the regional component, the generational aspect must also be considered. Labor solidarity networks between exiles were strengthened by the decisive actions of exiles who belonged to a previous generation than those who fled during the years of mass emigration — the average age of the population in exile was estimated to be between 25 and 45 — and had arrived in Europe before the appearance of the dictatorships in the Southern Cone: this was the case of the writers of the Latin American Boom, like Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, and Julio Cortázar, a key figure in this process (Catelli, 2010).

Translation commissions were not sporadic. A review of publishing catalogs from those years reveals the presence of many Argentine, Chilean, and Uruguayan exiles on the list of translators (Falcón, 2018). One explanation for this can be found in the testimonies of exiles themselves, where they clearly state that “offering up a translation” was an act of solidarity, given that translations guaranteed immediate survival (Becció, 2012; Szpunberg, 1999; Cohen, 2014; Martini, 2010). Numerous testimonies confirm this belief (Falcón, 2018). Based on analyzing the discourse of a series of exile testimonies, I will showcase the different forms in which “translation as a solidarity practice” took place.

One of the first forms of solidarity through the commissioning of a translation shows the clear intentionality of the solidarity displayed by publishers, while at the same time casting light on a previous history of publishing solidarity that began in Latin America when the Americas received Spanish Republicans who went into exile due to Francoism:

When I arrived, I started working as a translator for Editorial Salvat with an old Republican who showed solidarity to all of us, Argentines, Uruguayans, and Chileans. Because here in Spain we discovered Chilean and Uruguayan comrades, some who had been exiled in Buenos Aires, escaping from their own dictatorships. This man provided, helped us a lot. He was chief of translation for Salvat, and translations were a way of helping us to scrape by, and he said as much. He was very aware of what he was doing (Interview with A.A., Barcelona, May 8, 1996. Quoted in Jensen 2006: 136).

This testimony confirms the importance of labor solidarity networks and shows the constitution of a transnational publishing sphere built through the incorporation of collaborators who came from other Southern Cone diasporas.

The correspondence between Cortázar and Martini, quoted earlier, shows that translation as a solidarity practice was exercised by local publishers as well as among exiles when one of them obtained a position that allowed them to offer work to their compatriots. In this sense, Martini was in a privileged position at Bruguera. Martini in fact speaks of translation as a solidarity practice in a double sense: from the person who asks for work, and from the one who offers it. Thanks to the recommendation letters he took with him to Spain — one from Juan José Saer for Jordi Martí and another one from Franco Basaglia — he obtained what would be his first and last translation: *The Other Madness: An Anthological Map of Alternative Psychiatry*, published by Tusquets in 1976. It is an indirect translation — the mediating language is Italian, but the source language is French— of a compilation on anti-psychiatry, a popular theme during the Spanish transition to democracy. In Martini's case, the solidarity translation came from the owner of Tusquets Editores, Beatriz de Moura:

It was Beatriz's idea; *I never would have thought of doing a translation*. I know a little Italian, my grandparents were Italian, I went to the Dante [Alighieri school] in Rosario. Beatriz, showing *great solidarity*, told me: "look, what I can offer you right now, if you're interested in this book we are about to publish, is for you to translate it" [...] And I translated it, *I summed up the courage and I did it*, it was not very technical, except for maybe one article (Personal interview. Buenos Aires, August, 2010. My italics).

But progressive Catalan publishers were not the only ones to "lend a hand" to exiles by commissioning translations. Argentine compatriots who worked in strategic places also sustained this singular "translation policy":

[Ricardo Rodrigo], at the time, *showed great solidarity*; he welcomed everyone, great listener, very smart, had intelligence and intuition, he would listen: [they would tell him] "I can translate from English and from German". Maybe not that day, or even that week, but he would call you, or have you called in, and commissioned you a translation. He was a supportive guy, would give you work (Personal interview. August, 2010).

Word-of-mouth recommendations were the most common form of labor solidarity. But mediations and requests for help also came through other channels: presentation letters to be delivered in person or recommendations

from abroad sent by mail were common. Years later, Martini would receive letters in his Bruguera office requesting help, as shown by the one Cortázar sent him asking if he could offer some translation work to attorney Rodolfo Mattarollo, who was exiled in Paris.

Figures less prestigious than Cortázar also expressed this sense of publishing solidarity with the newly arrived, who many times were living in a state of painful economic instability marked by extreme life experiences, like having been kidnapped or sent to prison. Jorge Grant, a poet, and narrator who was barely published, a marginal figure compared to those who managed to obtain positions of relative privilege in the cultural world of exile, recalls with astounding details how the first job proposals appeared amidst of a frantic search motivated by poverty and despair:

In 1978, feeling hopeless because we could not find anything and were running out of the little dough we had brought with us, I repeatedly called the few contacts we had left, because we had already gone to see the rest of them and had drained their patience and supplies. On one occasion [...] Marcelo Covián, for whom I worked for doing proofreading at Grijalbo, told me that [Mario Muchnik] was about to launch a collection of cooking books and was looking for someone to do the writing. “Can you see yourself doing that? You will have to write in *castizo* [Spanish].” *Castizo* or not, hunger is not *castizo* and I told him that even if I were Goliath in the Valley of Elah. I presented myself and they hired me... as the writer I lied to them that I would be and was not. My wife wrote the recipes with the arm of Saint Theresa, practically asleep, but, no doubt, would type them and I would correct them (Grant, 2004).

Even though the quote is not about a translation commission, it does illustrate one of the main problems Argentine exiles faced when dealing with translations: the language variance, a topic I have worked on extensively in other publications (Falcón, 2018, pp. 161-187; 2022).

Another link in the network of publishing contacts was Ana Basualdo, a writer and journalist of the *La Vanguardia* newspaper, who arrived in Barcelona on November 8, 1975, just days before the death of dictator Francisco Franco. Just like Catelli, Alberto Szpunberg connected her to a job in publishing:

Ana Basualdo sent me to a Catalonian working in a publishing house, Gustavo Gili. [...] And instead of translating from French to Spanish, I did the translation from French to Argentine [Spanish]. And that did not work out. I started to do little wooden men who were egg-shaped; they had small legs and a sign with a message on it. I sold them next to the Cathedral, where there were lots of artisans (1999, p. 173).

Linguistic unpredictability, a key topic linked to writing and translation done through commissioning, shows the random nature of everyone's beginnings in translation. In its early stages, this non-professionalized labor could sporadically alternate with craftwork or working as a street vendor, as Szpunberg remembers. Translation, however, is the practice that left the most verifiable evidence of the presence of Latin American exiles in the Spanish publishing world in the final decades of the 20th century.

Finally, one way in which translation activities helped in securing assistance was through the provision of documents verifying that publishing labor had been done to be presented at the Immigration department of the Ministry of Labor. According to a document from the archives of publisher and bookseller José Rubén Falbo kept at the “Mariano Moreno” Argentine National Library, this was a key step in trying to obtain permanent residence in the country. The document was signed by Fondo de Cultura Económica director

Federico Álvarez Arregui upon his return to Spain in 1971 from his exile in the Americas. The document is of interest because it certifies freelance translation activities that are not included in the publishing houses' records. Falbo ended up in Italy, where he applied unsuccessfully for translation posts in several international organizations, like the United Nations.

Taken as a whole, these examples of labor solidarity (commissioning translations and translation revision, issuing certificates to be submitted to immigration authorities, etc.) are an indicator that translation was not a professionalized practice at the time. In fact, as I have shown elsewhere (Falcón, 2018, pp. 137-146), an analysis of the cultural press of the time shows the emergence of a discursive community of translators in the public sphere (first meetings of translators in Madrid, associations, and union gazettes, among other actions). One of the central arguments of this professionalizing discourse was that the poor quality of translations was due to an alliance between unscrupulous and disadvantaged translators and publishers who were only interested in profit. In this sense, the cases of “solidarity translation” presented in this article show that, indeed, for many publishers, translating books only required a good level of education and knowledge of foreign languages. However, although doing translations out of necessity is certainly not a novelty for people who are literate in more than one language, commissioning translations out of solidarity is a gesture that strongly contests the narrative of the cultural media of the time, which claimed that publishers' interest in profit was the sole reason behind the alleged poor quality of Spanish translations (Falcón, 2018, pp. 137-146).

3. The other side of solidarity: An untimely debt and discriminatory translation

The 1973 oil crisis halted the cycle of economic growth that had started in the 1950s, bringing about a strong rise in unemployment and an abrupt plunge in living standards in Spain, just like it did in other parts of the world. Within this context, the initially sporadic but eventually massive arrival of Latin Americans did not go unnoticed. There were some who raised their voices to say that, given the economic crisis, Spain was unable to support their “untimely” arrival. The presence of Latin American exiles in the Spanish labor market was not without tension or distress.

The other side of ‘translation solidarity’ can be studied by exploring the discursive effects of these tensions documented by the press and other sources of those years. These tensions entered the public realm when Interior Minister Rodolfo Martín Villa announced a decree expelling all immigrants in October of 1978 (Jensen, 2007).¹ The threat of expulsion laid bare the labor problem Latin American exiles faced and showed the complex web of values and beliefs surrounding the presence of Latin American immigrants in Spain. Due to these decrees, the Spanish press published numerous stories, calls for support, and articles denouncing the situation of Latin Americans: “The long night of political refugees” and “Spanish duties with the American exiles” were some of the more colorful headlines in newspapers like *El País* (Madrid) and *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona) in 1978. The controversy sparked by this threat was

¹ A decree from the Ministry of Interior and a notice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Direction of Cultural Affairs issued on October 10, 1978, repealed Law 118/1969 which guaranteed immigrants equal labor rights, effectively ending the protection for immigrant workers. In 90 days, foreigners who did not have a residency or labor permit would be declared unlawful and expelled from the country.

felt in the publishing and literary sectors. Among intellectuals, writers and translators, the reaction to the decrees found its institutional expression in the creation of the Latin American PEN Conference in Spain. The initiative was made public in the International PEN Conference, held in Barcelona between October 11 and 13, 1978, one day after the decree issued by minister Martín Villa was published. With the backing of then-PEN Club International president, Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa, and PEN's Centre Català, an organization committee was put together formed by Jorge Edwards, Marcelo Covián, Carlos Meneses, Homero Alsina Thevenet, and Carlos M. Rama, who ran the Latin American chapter of PEN and was the public face in the defense of writers, translators, and Latin American intellectuals. This committee published a damning manifest titled "To the PEN Club International and public opinion," where it denounced the "appalling" legal and labor situation of Latin American intellectuals in Spain, mentioning specifically the situation of workers in publishing: "Translators and proofreaders who have no contract to rely on and are thus unable to obtain a labor permit, an indispensable document required to normalize their legal situation" (Rama, 1979: 174), the same type of document Falbo got from the Madrid Culture Fund.

Carlos Rama argued that Spain published 24,000 books a year because Latin America offered a mass of Spanish-speaking readers to the Spanish publishing industry, which in 1978 generated "a billion dollars' worth of foreign currency" for the country. The situation begged the following question: "If the Americas offer the Spanish [publishing] industry readers and resources, then how do the Latin American writers, translators and publishers fit into Spanish cultural life?" (1979: 164). Between October of 1978 and February of 1979, there was a flurry of activity: commissions to defend political refugees were assembled, law bills were filed, and conferences were held to denounce the situation, endorsed by international organizations, intellectuals, and writers from different places who unanimously supported Latin American residents of Spain (Rama, 1979, pp. 169-170; Rama, 1980, p. 66).

Some of those who signed these solidarity requests, however, thought it wise to point out the difference between defending intellectuals who had fled into exile and supporting thousands of guests they considered "undesirable." An article along these lines that has cemented its place in the memory of exile is "Emigration towards Spain. The ill-timed debt," written by publisher Carlos Barral (1978). In it, and despite showing strong support for the most relevant Argentines who were in exile (Catelli, 2015), Barral argued unequivocally in favor of the decrees sanctioned by Martín Villa. Barral said that many Latin American were "fake victims of political persecution" willing to do any kind of work no matter the conditions, thus harming an "already severely restricted labor market" (Barral, 1978). According to Barral, Spain's debt with Latin American exiles, which the country contracted when Latin America generously opened its doors to Republican exiles, should only be paid to the respectable literate members of society with which the left-leaning Catalonian publishing industry could identify.

Mariano Aguirre, coordinator of the Spanish Commission for Refugee Assistance, published an article in 1981, the same year in which the text *Argentina: how to kill a culture* and its "original" solidarity translation into French were published, showcasing how the ideas put forward by Barral in 1978 were still present in public discourse:

Because saying Spaniards does not mean all Spaniards, there are those who offer subtleties, people who despite the odd pronunciation and the fact that they present a passport and not a National Identity Card, continue trusting in some Argentines and reject those who abuse solidarity [...] There are also others, many

disguised as progressives, who, when faced with the Spanish political and economic crises, do not hesitate in searching for scapegoats and turning all Argentines into new Jews, members of a resurrected Arab invasion, undercover gypsies, bringing out their racism and outdated Spanishness, automatically turning any Argentine — and Latin American — into a thief, a football player kidnapper, a terrorist and violator of the Spanish language (Aguirre, 1981).

This “floating feeling” of rejection, as Martini (1989, p. 141) called it, is present in other exile testimonies and could be seen embodied in several cultural products and publishing material of the time; it can also be considered the non-supportive side of the reception Latin Americans faced in Spain. In the field of translating, that floating sentiment, the difficulty to integrate evident language diversity, manifested itself in the open refusal to allow non-Spaniard language variations in book translations, a topic that evidence shows was strongly debated in the Spanish cultural media of the time (Falcón, 2018, pp. 165-185). Clear evidence of the low prestige associated with Argentinian Spanish can be seen in the televised staging of the play *Pygmalion* by Bernard Shaw, adapted by José Antonio Páramo and translated from English by José Méndez Herrera. This adaptation decided to replace the play’s British slang and cockney dialect with an Argentine Spanish variance littered with Buenos Aires slang, a smart choice according to some critics (Pérez Ornia, 1979). The literary and audiovisual showcasing of the Buenos Aires Spanish variant’s lexicon and phonetics as the language of despicable popular sectors, as the “language of the creek,” would not necessarily be considered a sign of the times — meaning that it was not specifically influenced by the presence of Latin American exiles in Spain — were it not for the fact that the characters whose social degradation is evidenced through language were played by two Argentine actors exiled in Spain, Marilina Ross and Luis Politti, who were forced to perform their own social isolation, the only stellar role apparently fit for them. Not all Spanish critics, however, considered this translation to be a natural linguistic “equivalent” of the social degradation Shaw condemned. In a strong article marked by a tone of denunciation and solidarity, sociologist Armando de Miguel tied the degraded representation of Argentine parlance on Spanish television with the demand they have Spanish citizenship in order to obtain employment in universities, an issue in the spotlight during those years which “directly harmed Hispanic Americans, who are generally very well prepared, and who now come to us as they are experiencing political exile” (De Miguel, 1979):

We have seen a shameful staging of *Pygmalion* on television (although well-acted), in which the lower-class accent that needs correcting is that of Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires parlance is apparently bad Spanish, while Madrilenian is the variance that ought to be imitated. The reality is that the Madrilenian Spanish heard on television is a minority in the Spanish-speaking world. We are provincial (De Miguel, 1979).

As we have already mentioned, this difference in language valuation — “purification” vs. “violation” — was at the center of the problem concerning language variation in translation, a situation that ran parallel to the social situation of exiles in Spain.

This tension surrounding the valuation of Latin Americans in Spain was expressed on different levels and may have some connection to the current difficulty in placing the work of Latin American exiles within the history of Spanish publishing and translation. This difficulty not only obscures these tensions but also the solidarity of many Spanish publishers, who were committed to Latin American struggles and helped exiles obtain means with

which to survive, as well as helping to give international visibility to their denunciation concerning human rights violations in Argentina.

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to contribute to the reflection on the relationship between translation and solidarity based on a case study, that of the Latin American, especially Argentinean, political exiles who put their intellectual labor force at the service of Spanish publishers in the complex social and political context of the democratic transition in Spain in the late 1970s. Having outlined the historical context that explains the presence of Argentinean political exiles in many European countries since the mid-1970s, I highlighted two problems common to several places of exile: lack of recognition of professional qualifications and the language barrier. The case of Latin American exiles working for European publishers demonstrates two forms of what I have elsewhere called ‘solidarity translation’: the first one involved European translators committed to campaigns of international solidarity and denunciation of the dictatorships of the Southern Cone, while the other consisted of numerous exiles receiving translation assignments as a form of solidarity and as a contribution to their economic and legal integration in the host country. While members of the Latin American diaspora offered translation and related services to earn a living, they contributed to the creation of a transnational publishing space, with the help of the solidarity of local publishers. However, this case study also shows that translation practices constitute a suitable platform for exploring xenophobia and Spanish linguistic nationalism, which was the other side of labor solidarity with political exiles.

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