

PLATFORM

ANTONISEGURA i MAS

Lies and deceit are no substitute for peace

The investigation into the identification process used for the victims of Yakolev-2 has clearly revealed the anti-democratic attitude of a government - Aznar's government, especially Aznar himself and Trillo, pictured - which scorn on public opinion and their obligation to provide any explanations to parliament.

"Let the dead rest in peace!" This was the blunt response that José María Aznar gave last March in answer to a question about the doubts that had arisen over the identification of the Yakolev-42 victims. During this same meeting - a press conference with Óscar Berger, the president of Guatemala - Aznar went on to strongly criticise the PSOE, claiming that "elections can justify many things, but there is one thing that I believe to be unjustifiable, and that is preventing the dead from resting in peace. Please, let the dead rest in peace."

At the height of the pre-electoral frenzy, the then-president chose to ignore the fact that the doubts and misgivings over how the transport and identification of the victims had been managed, as well as the investigation into the causes of the accident, were not just an electoral manoeuvre on the part of the Socialists, they were actually demands from the victims' families. Bloated with arrogance and scorn, Aznar also added (referring once again to the PSOE), "certain people are bent on stirring up the



dead, while other people are talking about the future of Spain".

Fortunately, this future has now become the past, and never came to be a reality, though the consequences of the poor administration and bad government of Aznar's party still represent a dead weight which we must get rid of as soon as possible. The re-checking (using DNA tests) of the original identification process of the bodies (mistakes had been made with 22 out of 39 corpses), as well as the way the government tried to cover up the errors that had taken place in the operation to bring back the Spanish troops from Afghanistan all serve to emphasise the mean-spiritedness and sheer lack of humanity of these politicians. They did not consider that they were under

any obligation to provide explanations for their actions, neither to parliament, nor to the families of the victims. They were the power and they were always right. That was the way they always behaved, the way they dealt with all the crises of recent years: mad cow disease, "Bosnia syndrome", the Prestige disaster, the isle of Perejil and the government's support for the war in Iraq. And, last but not least, the manipulation of information with respect to the brutal massacre of 11 March in Madrid.

In contradiction to Aznar's words regarding letting the dead rest in peace, the fact is that the Aznar administration has always used victims for electoral and party political purposes, whether they were the victims of Eta's terrorism or those of Yako-

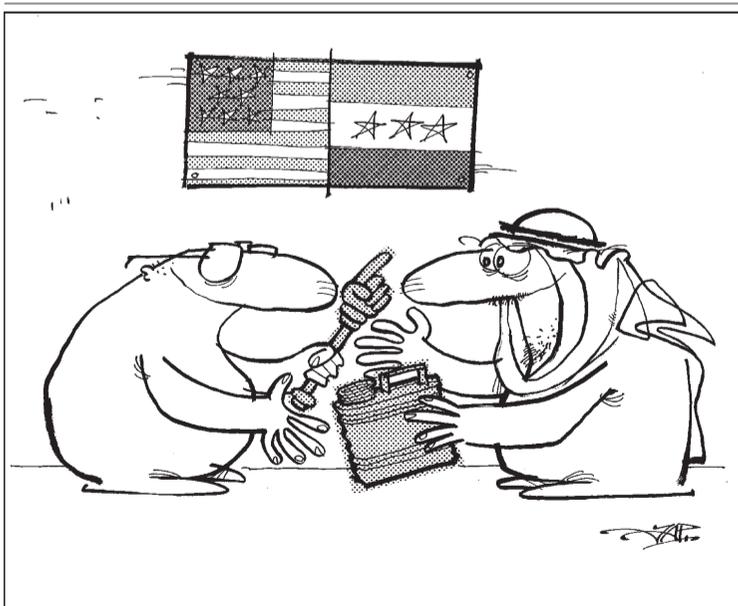
lev-42. On one hand they would invent an argument by which Eta and democratic Basque nationalism were tarred with the same brush, while on the other they tried to silence the reasonable demands of the victims' families with patriotic speeches.

Aznar's was a government which thought that it was destined to perpetuate itself indefinitely and which, therefore, did not hesitate to give its support to an illegal war and occupation and to ignore the majority opinion of Spanish citizens. Purely from a need for democratic hygiene, as well as a desire to repair the harm caused to the victims and their families, we simply cannot leave the dead to rest in peace, as long as the lying remains unmasked.

There are still too many unanswered questions for us to simply turn the page: what were the real reasons for Spain's support for the Iraq war? What were the members of CNI doing in Iraq, before the Spanish military forces had even arrived on their humanitarian mission? How, why and who really made the decisions in the mismanaged Prestige crisis? What was the so-called "Bosnia syndrome" in fact? What were the true reasons that led to the diplomatic crisis with Morocco, and which caused such an over-the-top response by Spain to the occupation of Perejil by the Moroccan police?

Antoni Segura i Mas is professor of contemporary history at the University of Barcelona

THE STING BY JAP



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONGRATULATIONS

Sir, Having just visited Barcelona for the sixth time over the last few years, we found it a refreshing change to see your newspaper on the stands. We were very impressed with your first two weeks' publications. In fact we bought some issues back to the UK as mementoes and to show our friends. The content was, we found, well presented and very informative and we wish you continued success in your venture.

We don't know whether it is your intention or not, but as you are an English publication in Barcelona, if as well as the comprehensive "What's on in and around Bcn", you might consider offering the occa-

sional tips for the new visitor to the city. As I have said our visit was not our first but we were amazed at the amount of people who were conned by the tic tack toe villains on La Rambla, both old and young, just as an example.

We were also interested in your article about the Forum, it fact it was this (the Forum) that sealed our decision to visit again this year. We have been in receipt of regular updates since last year on the progress that was being made on the Forum via email. We were in Bcn last November and were intrigued at the building progress at that time. We immediately purchased four days tickets on our arrival this year.

Sadly we only used three days'

worth. Actually one full day and two four-hour sessions. We felt that while the whole concept was in itself very good, the Warriors of Xian were absolutely awesome. The actual on-site event information for the overseas visitor very poor. We felt that some events could be repeated more often. It was more by luck than judgment that we actually caught some events at all. Also we were surprised at the lack of advertising in the UK press, as it is an international and multicultural event we didn't, see any at all. Some other visitors in our Hotel from the UK and New Zealand hadn't even heard of it.

Trevor Machin, Stephen Brooke
Co Durham



CATALONIATODAY

Published by Catalonia Today SL. Tàpies, 2. Barcelona 08001. Tel +34 932 276 620 / Fax +34 932 276 621. email: contact@cataloniatoday.info.

Diposit Number GI-322-2004

ADVERTISING: +34 932 276 620. advertising@cataloniatoday.info SUBSCRIPTION: +34 932 276 620. subscription@cataloniatoday.info
Managing Editor: Carles Puigdemont. Editor: Stephen Burgen. Sub Editor: Rebecca Warden. Editorial Staff: Alex Leff, Richard McCrann, Robert Kimpleton, Marcela Topor. Editorial Consultant: Miquel Berga. Printed by IMPRINTSA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Letters to the editor must not be longer than 30 lines long and must include your name and telephone number. We can only accept letters written in English and delivered by email. Catalonia Today reserves the right to publish and edit readers' letters. Catalonia Today, C/Tàpies, 2, 08001 Barcelona. Email: letters@cataloniatoday.info