

Fighting for Spain through the Media: Visual Propaganda as a Political Tool in the Spanish Civil War

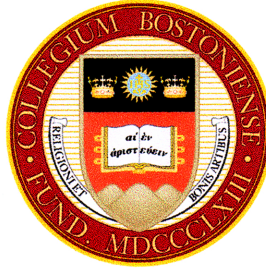
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FIGHTING FOR SPAIN THROUGH THE MEDIA:
VISUAL PROPAGANDA AS A POLITICAL TOOL IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of graduation requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

Boston College

International Studies Program; Arts & Sciences Honors Program

May 2013

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Abstract

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) possesses an historical identity distinct from other national conflicts because of its chronological position between World War I and World War II. International ideological interests came to the forefront of the Spanish conflict and foreign powers became involved in the Republican and Nationalist political factions with the hopes of furthering their respective agendas. The Spanish Civil War extended the aftermath of World War I, as well as provided a staging ground for World War II. Therefore, the Spanish Civil War transformed into a 'proxy war' in which foreign powers utilized the national conflict to further their ideological interests. In order to unite these diverse international socio-political campaigns, governments and rebel groups turned to modern visual propaganda to rally the public masses and move them to actively support one side over the other. Propaganda film and poster art supplied those involved in the Spanish Civil War with an invaluable political tool to issue a call to action and unite various political factions around one ideological movement.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor John Michalczyk for his unwavering guidance and support throughout the entire thesis process. His academic and personal accompaniment has been invaluable to me and his enthusiasm for Spanish Civil War propaganda is contagious to all of those in his presence. Without him, I would never have discovered my strong interest for visual propaganda and its intersection with my passion for Spanish politics. I would also like to thank Professor Hiroshi Nakazato for providing additional assistance in teaching me the foundations of research and advising me on my thesis. The support of my family, friends and roommates, especially of Natalia Peña and Patrick Nevins, has provided me with consistent motivation and encouragement in all stages of my thesis. Thank you to all who played a part, no matter how big or small, in making this senior thesis possible!

Author's Note

In this thesis, I do not endorse the cause of one political faction over the other, but instead attempt to show the international and national propaganda campaigns for each major socio-political faction. For this reason, I will refer to the conservative, rebel actors as “Nationalists,” the “Right” and as the “National front.” Similarly, I will refer to the Spanish government as the “Republicans,” the “Left” or the “Popular front.” These terms are also intended to improve the readability and consistency of the thesis.

Additionally, all translations in this thesis are the author's own unless otherwise specified in the footnotes. The text of the quote is cited in the footnotes in its original language if it is one other than English.

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Chronology of Events in the Spanish Civil War¹

1936

- 16 February – Popular Front government, supported by the political parties of the Left, wins a majority in the Cortes (Spanish Parliament) as a result of democratic elections
- 19 February – Republican ‘Popular Front’ government is officially formed and Manuel Azaña assumes the position of Prime Minister
- 7 April – Niceto Alcalá Zamora is removed as the President of the Spanish Republic
- 10 May – Manuel Azaña replaces Zamora as the President of the Spanish Republic
- 13 May – Santiago Casares Quiroga takes over the position of Prime Minister
- 17-18 July – Military uprisings in Spanish Morocco and some parts of mainland Spain marking the beginning of the Spanish Civil War
- 19-20 July – Republican forces suppress the military uprising in Madrid and Barcelona, however the Nationalists successfully take control of Morocco, Galicia, Navarre, Old Castile and Seville
- 21 July – 27 September – Members of the Civil Guard and military cadets are blockaded in the Alcazar citadel in Toledo by Republican supporters. After more than two months, Nationalist troops led by General Franco freed the hostages from the siege, an event representing a significant symbolic victory for the Right used in anti-Republican propaganda campaigns.
- Late July – Germany and Italy begin to support the Nationalists with military supplies and aircraft; the Soviet Union, through the International Communist Organization in Moscow, backs the Republicans
- 1 August – France, Britain, Italy, Portugal, Germany and the Soviet Union verbally agree to not intervene in the Spanish conflict and will not supply either side with military aid
- 13 September – Aid from the Soviet Union arrives for the Republicans in return for Spanish gold reserves

¹ “Illustrated Timeline of the Spanish Civil War (in-depth),” Modern Records Centre, University Library of the University of Warwick, last updated on September 19, 2012. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/explorefurther/digital/scw/more/timeline>

2.

- 21 September – Leaders of the National Front appoint General Franco as the commander-in-chief (Generalissimo) of the Nationalist forces.
- 28 September – Franco is named Head of State (Caudillo) and takes over the Nationalist government in Burgos
- October – First International Brigade volunteers arrive in Spain
- 6 October – Soviet Union renounces its verbal commitment to non-intervention and send tanks and fighter planes to fight in support of the Republicans
- 18 October – Republican government announces creation of ‘Popular Army’ consisting of regular army units and militia group
- 25 October – Italy and Germany sign a treaty of friendship, serving as the predecessor to the Rome-Berlin Axis
- 4 November – Anarchist groups CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) and FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica) join the Republican cause to fight against the Nationalists
- 18 November – Germany and Italy recognize Franco as the head of the Spanish government

1937

- 8 March – Battle of Guadalajara, a town located near Madrid, as a part of the Nationalist offensive
- 19 April – Franco integrates the political groups of the Right, such as the Falange, the Carlists (monarchists) and the Renovación Española, into one united political party known as the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista. Franco appoints himself as the supreme leader.
- 26 April – German planes destroy the city of Guernica, located in the Basque region, by aerial bombing. This attack served as the subject of countless Republican propaganda campaigns.
- 30 May – Germany and Italy officially renounce their participation in the Non-Intervention Committee.
- 1 July – Spanish Catholic Bishops collectively announce their support for Franco as the legitimate ruler of Spain.

28 August – The Vatican recognizes Franco as the head of the Spanish government

Late October – Republican government relocates from Valencia to Barcelona

12 November – The CNT (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) withdraws support for the Republican government.

1938

16-18 March – Italian aircrafts bombard Barcelona

1 May – Juan Negrín, the Republican Prime Minister, proposes a 13-point declaration that serves as a foundation for peace negotiations

4 October – Withdrawal of the International Brigades

1939

10 February – Catalonia falls to the Nationalists

27 February – Britain and France recognize Franco's government. Azaña vacates his position as President of the Spanish Republic

5 March – Nationalists execute a successful overthrow of the Republican government of Juan Negrín in Madrid. The Popular Front begins to crumble amidst internal tension.

15 March – Germany invades Czechoslovakia

28 March – Nationalist forces take control of Madrid

1 April – Republican forces officially surrender. Franco declares the end of the war.

September – Outbreak of World War II

INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGINS OF VISUAL PROPAGANDA AND THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ROOTS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Major global conflicts define the first half of the twentieth century as an era of destructive war and suffering for the entirety of the international community. Few states were left unaffected by the countless civil and international conflicts that spanned the globe and touched each and every continent. This era of war and violence simultaneously ushered in a time of technological advancement not just for the military, but also for mass communication and the media. Governments recognized the importance of propaganda as a psychological instrument deployed within their own borders to mobilize citizens to action through whatever means possible. With the increasing widespread use of posters and film, governments began to utilize advertising techniques to promote national ideology to the local masses and develop diplomatic relationships with foreign powers. “By working with the government, the advertising trade gained a respectability and legitimacy it had previously lacked.”¹ Although propaganda was not considered a modern phenomenon, film and posters provided states with the political and psychological tools to unite people around a particular ideology or cause in ways that they had never before employed.

Lenin remarked that, “of all the arts, for us cinema is the most important.” Stalin described it as “the greatest means of mass agitation” and Trotsky called it “the best instrument for propaganda.” Goebbels echoed these sentiments when he

¹ James Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007) 8.

called cinema “one of the most modern and far-reaching media that there is for influencing the masses.”²

The political tension of the early twentieth century, in conjunction with developments in the media and the preceding era of industrialization, offered the ideal environment for the cultivation of visual propaganda and the inspiration of the public masses. As the first global conflict engulfed the world, governments recognized the ability of film and poster art to unite factions of people around a specific ideology and against the identified ‘enemy’, whether it was a national or international force.

Propagandistic art is often defined as “art with an overt message determined by political allegiance or the needs of the moment.”³ This art includes a variety of mediums such as paintings, theatre and film productions, and most recently, posters. Although widespread use of propaganda art became popular at the turn of the twentieth century, this political tool was not a modern phenomenon.⁴ The relationship between art and war is propagandistic by nature, regardless of an artist’s purposeful intentions. The Catholic Church first popularized the term ‘propaganda’ throughout Europe to define missionary activities.⁵ Originally, ‘propaganda’ referred to religious activities that commanded the respectful honor and devotion of humanity.⁶ In Rome in 1622, Pope Gregory XV created the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*propaganda fidej*), which was the

² Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1998), 15-16.

³ Nigel Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” in *No Pasarán!: Art, Literature, and the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Stephen M. Hart (London: Tamesis Books, 1988), 21.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ “What is Propaganda?” *Constructing a Postwar World: The G.I. Roundtable Series in Context*, American Historical Association, accessed January 5, 2013.

<http://www.historians.org/projects/GIRoundtable/propaganda/Propaganda4.htm>.

⁶ Ibid.

commission of cardinals charged with spreading the faith and regulating church affairs in heathen lands.⁷ Additionally, Pope Urban VII established a College of Propaganda to train priests for these missions of the Catholic Church.⁸ It was not until the following centuries that ‘propaganda’ assumed a selfish, dishonest and subversive connotation.⁹

Spain, in particular, possesses an extensive and rich tradition of artistic depictions of war produced for political and ideological purposes. As exhibited by artwork hanging in the Hall of Realms in the Buen Retiro palace in Spain, monarchs often commissioned artists to glorify victories in battle and commemorate soldiers as national heroes. This art also served to illustrate the strength, power and success of the monarch’s reign. The themes of collective unity and suffering as well as the soldier as a heroic martyr pervaded this war art and spanned the centuries. Furthermore, the region of Catalonia, located in the northeastern part of Spain, enjoyed a dynamic tradition of poster art during the nineteenth century, which served as a foundation for the propaganda posters produced in the twentieth century.¹⁰ The poster served as a “persuasive and positive educational force that provided social and aesthetic frameworks, much as religious art had done in the past.”¹¹ As industrialization transformed the Spanish landscape in the 1800s and early 1900s, citizens began to flock to major cities such as Madrid and Barcelona with the hopes of finding a job to improve their living conditions in the bustling economic centers. Different classes of people began to intermix like never before with urban advancements

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 23.

¹¹ Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication*, 11.

such as public transportation. The urban masses assumed their own unique identity and were transformed into the target audience for propaganda initiatives during times of crisis.

Posters were in the commercial hearts, industrial centers, public squares and transport hubs of cities around the world. They adorned the trams, buses, and taxis in order to catch the average four-second gaze of the traveller. Modern man and woman were their targets: shoppers, office workers, managers, artisans, and laborers.¹²

These revolutions in lifestyle exemplify why propaganda posters played such a major role in uniting different ideological factions during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), particularly for the Republican front.

As modern warfare and conflict began to take on different characteristics and employ the latest technology at the beginning of the twentieth century, propaganda also expanded to new horizons by utilizing innovative art forms for political means, especially the mediums of the poster and the film. Whereas pamphlets and other written propaganda could only influence the literate public, poster art and film broke down these barriers by catching the attention not only of the illiterate, but also of the urban masses. “Governments first adopted the techniques of advertising during the First World War, establishing shifting and symbiotic relationships with both commercial culture and the media industry.”¹³ Governments started incorporating posters with eye-catching colors and images as well as easy-to-remember slogans to reach the public at large. Propaganda posters, specifically, embody the most modern form of media because of the fundamental connection to the urban environment and the appeal to the most modern phenomena – the

¹² Ibid, 12.

¹³ Ibid, 8.

masses.¹⁴ Brightly colored and dynamic posters plastered across public spaces, such as buildings and street corners, convey images that intend to stimulate activity and inspire action for a particular cause.¹⁵ “The public information poster will struggle for hearts and minds... [and] will warn of duplicitous counter-propaganda from the enemy in order to stir the nation to action.”¹⁶ Visual propaganda possesses the ability to adapt to a variety of environments as well as communicate diverse causes and ideologies from both the positive and negative point of view.

As a source of information and a form of communication, entertainment and culture, posters play a part in everyday life and contribute to a popular visual landscape: they function as landmarks and diversions to commuters; they are the topics of conversation and can introduce difficult subjects, such as the ... duty to King and Country; and they help shape attitudes to everything from the latest style accessory to religious and ethnic stereotyping.¹⁷

Traditionally, posters underline the positive and/or accentuate the negative of a particular cause. Due to the development of modern artistic techniques in the 1920s and 1930s, the poster gained a powerful influence in national and international conflicts.¹⁸

Additionally, state officials began commissioning filmmakers to produce feature films both of the fiction and documentary genres that would convey a call to action and a specific ideology to the mass public. These genres typically overlapped on several levels as government officials portrayed films as ‘documentaries’ despite the various fictional

¹⁴ Ibid, 11-12.

¹⁵ Ibid, 8.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 12.

¹⁸ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 23.

elements that had been included as a fundamental part of the trajectories.¹⁹ Filmmakers started employing the term ‘documentary’ in the late 1920s.²⁰ Considered to be a revolutionary genre for film at the time, the documentary was never viewed as a pure escape or a form of simple entertainment by filmmakers, but rather as a vehicle for communicating socio-political undertones to a collective audience.²¹

Films had seldom been contentious [until the 1920s]. Economic collapse brought tension and strife. Ideological combat began to dominate all media. Documentary film, acquiring the spoken word at this precise moment, was inevitably called on to join the battle. In the documentary field, the word-film became an instrument of the struggle.²²

Along with posters, these new genres of film became revolutionary tools for political indoctrination and persuasion by the state. Shortly after the Nationalists declared victory in the Spanish Civil War, General Francisco Franco commissioned director José Luis Sáenz de Heredia to produce an ‘official’ film version of the civil war. In 1941, the Consejo de la Hispanidad, a newly created division of the fascist government responsible for promulgating Hispanic culture and identity, released *Raza*, a ‘documentary’ film depicting the story of a Galician family during the Spanish Civil War.²³ The screenplay for *Raza* was based on a novel published by Franco under the pseudonym “Jamie de Andrade.”²⁴ The story of the Churruca family parallels General Franco’s real life,

¹⁹ Daniel Kowalsky, “The Soviet cinematic offensive in the Spanish Civil War,” *Film History: An International Journal* 19, no. 1 (2007): 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²² Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 81.

²³ Rafael de España, “Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish Feature Films, 1939-1985,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 6, no. 2 (1986): 224.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

alluding to the fact that the Spanish dictator desired to glorify his personal history and rise to power through the ‘documentary’ film.²⁵

Clearly, *Raza* simplifies the historical incidents, leaving out the conflict between ideological and material interests. The Civil War is simply a fight between the Army (i.e. the authentic values of the Hispanic race) and international communism (i.e. ‘anti-Spain’).²⁶

As Chapter V will explore in more detail, *Raza* exemplifies the propagandistic use of the genre during the early twentieth century and also confirms Franco’s belief, echoed by many other international leaders of the era, that cinema acted as the most powerful propaganda medium.²⁷

Soon after the rise of the documentary, the war film genre emerged as an additional facet of modern propaganda cinema. The war film was “normally characterized by its spectacular action, during critical battles, where heroic deeds are selflessly performed by a singular hero or unit.”²⁸ Similarly to the war art that influenced modern propaganda posters, war film naturally incorporated propagandistic elements and themes, regardless of the director’s specific intentions. Filmmakers interwove themes such as the glorification of the heroic martyr, collective suffering and the human condition, and unity for the common good in order to evoke a specific emotion for a particular cause from the audience. During the Spanish Civil War, Spanish and foreign filmmakers produced cinematic works with the intention of convincing a particular social

²⁵ Ibid, 225.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ John J. Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message*,” in *Malraux, Hemingway, and Embattled Spain*, vol. 60.2 of *North Dakota Quarterly*, (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota, 1992), 43.

class, group of people or government to take up arms for either the Nationalists or the Republicans. However, because of the embargo against the Nationalists and the Left's occupation of major Spanish cities, the majority of these cinematic works championed the Republican cause. Two films, which will be analyzed further in Chapter V, exemplify the use of the war film genre as propaganda, specifically with the integration of unity for the common good and collective suffering as themes. "By depicting senseless tragedies, horrors of war, from the Republican perspective of 1937 and 1938, *The Spanish Earth* and *Sierra de Teruel* put a human face on war that ideally could move the viewer from ignorance or disinterest to sympathy or commitment."²⁹ *The Spanish Earth* (1937), directed by Joris Ivens and written by Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos, favors the Republican cause and was created in an attempt to convince western democracies to break the embargo to send support to the front lines of the civil war.³⁰ The film was even shown to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in an intimate gathering with the hopes of persuading the United States to reject its Non-Intervention Pact. Although Ivens', Hemingway's, and Dos Passos' efforts proved futile to change the mind of the democratic governments, *The Spanish Earth* still exists as one of the most profound works of propaganda cinema, especially within the genre of war art. Propaganda films, such as *The Spanish Earth*, illustrate the importance of war film as a political tool and the power and impact that it has, especially during times of conflict.

²⁹ Ibid, 43.

³⁰ Ibid.

Two alliances represented the two major political factions during the Spanish Civil War: the National Front and the Popular Front.³¹ During the decades preceding the Spanish Civil War, the Popular Front, also known as the Republicans or the Left, included the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE – *Partido Socialista Obrero Español*), the Communist Party of Spain (PCE – *Partido Comunista de España*), the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM – *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*), as well as other working class groups.³² “Behind the socialist party there was the powerful trade union, the UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores), one of the best organized workers' movements in Europe.”³³ On the other side, the National Front, also known as the Nationalists or the Right, contained the conservative and wealthy elite in addition to those in support of a monarchist government and the centralization of state power. Specific groups making up the National Front included the Catholic Party of Spain (CEDA – *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas*), agrarian landowners, specifically from the Andalusian and central region of the country, and other right-wing parties.³⁴ Although both political alliances were made up of various ideological groups, the Popular Front struggled to unite the diverse causes more so than the National Front.

The socialists were divided. Some were reformists. Some were intellectual fabians. A few were revolutionaries. Some were dazzled by the flatter of communists, some were aghast at the recent rise of communist influence. But all could agree with the accusations leveled at the Right...³⁵

³¹ Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Modern Library, 1989) 5.

³² *Ibid.*, 6.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

For this reason, the Popular Front began to disseminate propaganda campaigns in order to unite the divergent political factions against the Nationalists, which will be examined further in Chapter III.

Interstate conflict began to escalate and reach a climax in 1936 when sociopolitical tension erupted in a military uprising against the democratically elected Second Republic government on July 17th.³⁶ The uprising led by General Francisco Franco began in the city of Melilla, located in Spanish Morocco and quickly spread to the mainland of Spain.³⁷ “The revolutionary officers declared a state of war, occupied all the public buildings of Melilla (including the aerodome), in the name of General Franco as commander-in-chief in Morocco, closed the *casa del pueblo* and left-wing centres, and arrested the leaders of republican or left-wing groups.”

As the war began to engulf the country, the anarchist groups, primarily located in Catalonia and the Basque Country, joined the Republican cause, not necessarily because of ideological agreement but rather as a way to fight against the National Front.

It was particularly unhappy in Spain in 1936, when the [liberal republicans and working-class parties] were already in a perpetual state of revolutionary effervescence; and, apart from those who cooperated with the democratic system so far as to contest seats in the Cortes, there remained, outside, the great army of nearly two million anarchist workers, chiefly in Andalusia or Barcelona, organized in the CNT (Confederación Nacional de Trabajo), and directed by a secret society, the FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica).

Although Hitler and Mussolini were quick to support the Nationalists, the Republicans struggled to rally similar international backing. Many western democracies such as France, the United States, and Britain were adhering to isolationist foreign

³⁶ Ibid., 204.

³⁷ Ibid.

policies to avoid provoking another all-encompassing global war like World War I. The British Foreign Office feared that the Spanish Civil War could escalate beyond a national conflict if the democratic powers were to support the Republicans.³⁸ This involvement, Britain believed, would exacerbate the military involvement of Germany and Italy on the Nationalist side as well as the preexisting tension between the Axis powers and the western democratic states. Heeding these concerns, the French government of Léon Blum drafted a Non-Intervention Agreement in conjunction with the British and United States governments on August 2, 1936 to establish a position of neutrality towards the combatants of the Spanish Civil War.³⁹ Despite the Non-Intervention Agreement, individual volunteers from neutral countries around the world began arriving in Spain on August 12, 1936 to fight for Republican values.⁴⁰ These volunteers comprised the International Brigades and viewed the Spanish Civil War as an opportunity to stop the spread of fascism.⁴¹ With the continuous hopes that the democratic powers would eventually abandon their neutrality agreement, propagandists targeted this international community with film and posters depicting the suffering of the Republicans and the growing threat of fascism. The International Brigades served as a common subject of Republican posters, representing an attempt to evoke solidarity between volunteers and

³⁸ Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006) 132.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Jefferson Hendricks and Cary Nelson, "Chronology of the Spanish Civil War: Emphasizing the Lincoln Battalion Involvement," *Modern American Poetry*, accessed on September 8, 2012. <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/scw/chronology.htm>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

their home countries. This international propaganda produced by the Republicans will be examined further in Chapter V.

After the democratic powers declared neutrality, the Republican forces then had to pursue other diplomatic relationships to help their disjointed front withstand the unified, militaristic Nationalists. “Shunned by the democratic powers and the international business community, the Republic could count only on the support of Mexico and the USSR.”⁴² Soviet aid to the Republicans began arriving on October 12, 1936 in return for a portion of Spanish gold reserves. However, Soviet involvement did not limit itself to weapons and financial sustenance. The Kremlin leadership designed a significant propaganda campaign to be launched in Spain, specifically focusing on the conjunction of warfare and cinema.⁴³ “Soviet leadership, whether in internal or external campaigns, recognized the value of a focused and aggressive effort to mobilize the commitment of the population to the goals set by the regime.”⁴⁴ The Soviet Union’s innovations in propaganda cinema were unparalleled during the early twentieth century and the Spanish Civil War serves as a remarkable turning point in the development of warfare film and visual propaganda.⁴⁵ This subject will also be examined in depth in Chapter IV.

Furthermore, in the midst of a worldwide depression, the Nationalists’ military uprising was seen as an assault against the rights of the working class everywhere, not just in Spain. With the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 still fresh in the minds of the international public, the idea of a ‘workers’ revolution’ translated into a communist

⁴² Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, 138.

⁴³ Kowalsky, “The Soviet cinematic offensive in the Spanish Civil War, 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

threat for democratic powers. Nationalists issued propaganda warning of an “international communist conspiracy” which carried significant international influence, even though Soviet policy was hardly consistent with Republican ideology.⁴⁶ This Nationalist propaganda took advantage of preexisting fears of the ideological dissemination of communism in democratic countries and further solidified these governments’ hesitations to become involved in the conflict.⁴⁷ The multiplicity of propaganda produced and the various political ideologies at the forefront of the conflict drastically changed the nature of the Spanish Civil War. “The Spanish war was no longer simply an internal struggle. Spain’s strategic importance, and the coincidence of the civil war with the Axis powers’ preparations to test their secretly developed weaponry in Europe, ensured that the war lost its amateur character.”⁴⁸ The international character of the Spanish Civil War amplifies its importance in the historical context of the interwar period of the early twentieth century. Therefore, the expansive international reach of the modern media magnified the prominence of visual propaganda as a political tool to unify the Republican and Nationalist fronts respectively.

⁴⁶ Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, 139.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 140.

I. THE INTERSECTION OF WAR AND ART: THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF PROPAGANDA IN SPAIN

The Spanish government has utilized propaganda to commemorate and glorify the nation's history since the Middle Ages. Although the mediums and effects of propaganda have evolved over centuries of conflict and struggle, Spanish press, radio, and visual art have reflected the same underlying themes that have strongly influenced the national and international public. The use of propaganda by both political factions in the Spanish Civil War helped to shape the state's identity under General Francisco Franco and its international position for the remainder of the twentieth century. Through the evocation of overarching themes such as martyrdom, the image of the "Other," and unity for the common good, the Republicans and the Nationalists unified their respective political blocs and mobilized the public to garner financial and political support with the use of propaganda. The Spanish Civil War serves as a distinct example in demonstrating the power of propaganda to unify diverse international and national socio-political ideologies into two distinct conflicting Spanish power blocs.

The glorification of the nation's history served as the primary subject of Spanish war art, the precursor to what would be termed 'propaganda' at the turn of the twentieth century. Paintings of Spanish victories intended to accentuate the power and success of Spain in Europe and beyond, a technique that had been utilized for centuries. "The memories of past heroes could be used to support current political positions, as when patriotic writers in the nineteenth century christened the ninth-century Martyrs of

Cordoba as the first Spanish nationalists.”¹ For example, to commemorate these historical triumphs and inspire continuous success and the advancement of power, Spanish artists of the seventeenth century illustrated victorious generals and soldiers as martyrs who died for the greater good of the Spanish state. The Spanish government proposed hanging this war art in the Hall of the Realms in the Buen Retiro palace in Madrid as reminders of the suffering and sacrifices made by Spaniards to win political freedom from the threat of foreign powers.² Moreover, portraits of victorious generals celebrated them as strong, valiant heroes who represented the king and, in turn, implied the power of the monarchy.³ For example, Friar Juan Bautista Maíno’s *The Recovery of the Bahía in 1625* symbolizes this type of seventeenth century propagandistic artwork. On May 1, 1625, the Spanish recovered the Bahía de Todos los Santos in Brazil from the Dutch. In Maíno’s painting, the Spanish general affirms the state’s political and religious authority to the Dutch through a tapestry depicting Count Duke of Olivares and Minerva crowning King Felipe IV with a laurel wreath of victory.⁴ In addition to this display of heroism, the painting also communicates a dual message about the power of the Spanish monarchy as well as the suffering caused by war.

...[The women who attend a wounded man with children looking on] exemplifies

¹ Brian D. Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion: Martyrdom, Gender, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press Books, 2007), 5.

² Nigel Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” in *¡No Pasarán!: Art, Literature, and the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Stephen M. Hart (London: Tamesis Books, 1988), 21.

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴ “On-line gallery: *The Recovery of the Bahía in 1625*,” Museo Nacional del Prado, accessed February 17, 2013, <http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/the-recovery-of-bahia-in-1625/>.



Friar Juan Bautista Maíno, *The Recovery of the Bahía in 1625* (1634-1635)⁵

the Christian ethic of the Spanish monarchy which encouraged the tending of the sick, and magnanimity in the treatment of enemies... The Christian Prince is helped by God's right hand, and the victory is ultimately His. So the picture illustrates the religious obligations as well as the political power of a Catholic Monarch, waging just wars against Dutch heretics but remembering 'to do good to them that hate him'.⁶

Evoking religion in conjunction with political power exemplifies one of the prominent propagandistic techniques that Spain continued to utilize throughout the following centuries, specifically by the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War. With the strategic placement of this type of war art in the palace, these works serve as a reminder

⁵ Friar Juan Bautista Maíno, *The Recovery of the Bahía in 1625*, oil on canvas, 1634-1635 (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid). <http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/the-recovery-of-bahia-in-1625/>.

⁶ Glendinning, "Art and the Spanish Civil War," 22.

of the position of power that Spain once held and the necessity to maintain and regain this prominence. Spaniards could look to these portrayals of courageous, successful generals as historic examples of how nationalists show their dedication to their homeland.

In addition to the art of the seventeenth century, Francisco de Goya incorporated political themes into his art that depict the martyrdom and collective suffering of the



Francisco de Goya, *The Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes* (1814)⁷

⁷ Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes*, oil on canvas, 1814 (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid).
<http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/the-2nd-of-may-1808-in-madrid-the-charge-of-the-mamelukes/>.



Francisco de Goya, *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Executions on Príncipe Pío Hill* (1814)⁸

Spanish people during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As the staunch divides of social class began to blur, the focus of war art expanded from the heroism of the military and monarchy to include that of the Spanish common people. As a court painter to the Spanish crown, Goya commemorated Spanish history and presented social commentary through his artwork. The transformation of artistic themes highlighted by seventeenth century Spanish war art can be traced through Goya's works such as *The*

⁸ Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Executions on Príncipe Pío Hill*, oil on canvas, 1814 (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid). <http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/the-3rd-of-may-1808-in-madrid-the-executions-on-principe-pio-hill/>.

Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes and *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Executions on Príncipe Pío Hill*. These paintings illustrate the strength of collective struggle and shared suffering of the Spanish people, a theme that the Republican and Nationalist propaganda of the Spanish Civil War would later echo. Goya's art evokes solidarity and how "individual contributions and attitudes unite in a single cause or experience despite differences of class or vocation."⁹ Both of these paintings depict events from the War of Independence, also known as the Peninsular War, which took place from 1808 to 1812 during the Napoleonic Wars with France.¹⁰ Goya created these works after Spanish forces suffered from a tireless war and eventually wore down the French troops. "In 1814, Goya addressed the regent, Cardinal Luis de Bourbon, offering to make works commemorating events from the War of Independence (1808-1812) in order 'to perpetuate, with a paintbrush, the most notable and heroic actions or scenes of our glorious uprising against the tyrant of Europe.'"¹¹ *The Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes* and *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Executions on Príncipe Pío Hill* convey propagandistic undertones, intentionally depicting the Spanish people as triumphant victors even though the many years of war left the country in political ruins. These paintings symbolize the artistic transition of propaganda from the seventeenth-century depiction of gallant, heroic

⁹ Glendinning, "Art and the Spanish Civil War," 23.

¹⁰ "On-line gallery: *The Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes*," Museo Nacional del Prado, accessed February 16, 2013, <http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/the-2nd-of-may-1808-in-madrid-the-charge-of-the-mamelukes/>.

¹¹ Ibid.

soldiers to the modern socio-political commentary of the collective agony and martyrdom of the common people.

Goya elaborates on the theme of collective struggle and shared suffering to convey the heroism of the Spanish people and comment on the monarchy, with which he produced a type of propaganda that was especially effective during Spain's era of political strife. For example, *The Disasters of War* series of etchings also illustrates scenes from the Spanish War of Independence as well as Goya's anti-absolutist and pro-constitutional monarchy stance and the emphasis he puts on freedom and justice.



Francisco de Goya y Lucientes,
And There's Nothing to be Done (Y no hay remedio), (1810-1823)¹²

¹² Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *And There's Nothing to be Done (Y no hay remedio)*, etching and aquatint, 1810-1823, published posthumously in 1863.
<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/32.62.17>.



Francisco de Goya y Lucientes,
One Can't Look (No se puede mirar) (1810-1814)¹³



Francisco de Goya y Lucientes,
With or Without Reason (Con razón o sin ella) (1810-1823)¹⁴

¹³ Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *One Can't Look (No se puede mirar)*, etching and aquatint, 1810-1814, published posthumously in 1863. <http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/arthum2/publicportfolio.cgi?view=2751&columns=2>.

Unlike *The Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes* and *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Executions on Príncipe Pío Hill*, Goya created *The Disasters of War* etchings from his experiential perspective of the conflict while the war was still being fought.¹⁵

[The series of etchings'] images are powerful eye-witness accounts of death and destruction generated by war. In addition to questioning the futility of battle, they also critique the tyranny of monarchy, be it French or Spanish, and the clergy. Because of political complications, Goya did not print these etchings during his lifetime.¹⁶

Goya's political and social commentary as communicated through his artwork exemplifies the themes that would later become cornerstones of the visual propaganda used in the Spanish Civil War. "The use of martyrs and heroes to support a political position continued into the twentieth century as imagery of suffering and death emerged following the [October] revolution of 1934."¹⁷ The Republicans and Nationalists evoked the themes present in historic Spanish war art such as collective struggle, shared suffering and heroism of the Spanish people to actively raise awareness and support for their respective political agendas leading up to and during the civil war. Goya's *The Disasters of War* prints strongly influenced Ernest Hemingway and his artistic work produced

¹⁴ Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *With or Without Reason (Con razón o sin ella)*, etching and aquatint, 1810-1823, published posthumously in 1863. <http://georgiamuseum.org/art/exhibitions/upcoming/selections-from-goyas-disasters-of-war>.

¹⁵ "Francisco de Goya's *Disasters of War*," Georgia Museum of Art, accessed February 16, 2013, <http://georgiamuseum.org/art/exhibitions/upcoming/selections-from-goyas-disasters-of-war>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion: Martyrdom, Gender, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War*, 6.

during the Spanish Civil War.¹⁸ Similarly to Goya, Hemingway communicated his antiwar views through his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, as well as through *The Spanish Earth*, a propagandistic film, which will be studied further in Chapter IV. As exemplified with the relationship between Goya and Hemingway, the influence of pre-twentieth century artwork that depict the victories and suffering of war serve as the foundation for much of the visual propaganda utilized during the Spanish Civil War.

¹⁸ “Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) and the Spanish Enlightenment,” the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, accessed February 16, 2013. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/goya/hd_goya.htm.

II. THE PEOPLE’S PROPAGANDA: POSTER ART IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The political atmosphere in the decades immediately preceding the Spanish Civil War provided a tenuous and volatile environment that fostered polarization both within Spain and throughout Europe. Shortly after the turn of the century, “World War I had shattered the social, cultural, and political status quo that had emerged over the long nineteenth century.”¹ Increasing instability and the existence of diverse political ideologies by the powerful foreign states such as Germany, Italy, and Russia (and later the Soviet Union in 1922) proved to be an increasing threat to the world order. The Russian Revolution of 1917 added to the preexisting political and social unease pervading the world, specifically Europe, which existed as a byproduct of World War I. Opinions in Spain on the Bolshevik seizure of power varied widely from fervent elation to adamant denunciation. The growing use of propaganda, specifically during World War I, further exploited the Spanish people’s reactions to world events and cultivated the instability felt within the nation.

Developments in communications technology combined with improved techniques of mass propaganda meant that the messages of political extremism permeated society in previously unmatched ways. Politics and society across Europe during the interwar years seemed to be more polarizing and more violent than in previous decades.²

The advancements of the use of propaganda and mass communication played a significant role in cultivating the existing political instability in Spain as exemplified by

¹ Bunk, *Ghosts of passion: martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*,

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² Ibid.

the October revolution of 1934. This armed insurrection by leftist groups against the conservative administration in power represents the first legitimate threat to democracy in Spain and acted as the precursor to the civil war conflict that began less than two years later.³ Furthermore, the commemorative imagery of the October revolution served as a crucial element in sparking the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. The impact of these representations is illustrated not only by their effects on the political course during the interim period leading up to the Civil War, but also by their continued significance throughout the conflict.

Using similar techniques as to those of the historical Spanish war artists mentioned previously, conservatives and republicans alike began employing imagery from this failed insurrection to glorify ‘martyrs’ and to denounce their growing political opposition. Both political factions carefully constructed commemorations of the revolution, specifically focusing on martyrdom, collective suffering and the image of the soldier as the strong, valiant hero, which became ubiquitous in the interim period between the insurrection and the start of the Civil War. Similar ideas of redemption through suffering had long played a vital role in Spanish history as a theme of propagandistic art.⁴ The conservative and revolutionary groups painted graphic

³ The revolutionary, or “Leftist” forces of the October revolution of 1934 constitute the political faction that is referred to as the Republicans or Communists in the Spanish Civil War. The conservative administration in power during this armed insurrection would later make up the Nationalists or Fascists during the Civil War. References to the “pro-revolutionary forces” of the October revolution denote the Left political faction (the Republicans), whereas mentions of revolutionary forces within the context of the Civil War signify the conservative faction (the Nationalists).

⁴ Bunk, *Ghosts of passion: martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*, 5.

descriptions of the injustices committed by their opponents in order to clearly expose the ‘intentions’ of the enemy and the consequences should they prevail. This tactic of propaganda created a decision as one between good and evil, which intensified societal divisions and forced the Spanish public to choose and commit to one particular side. Echoing the intentions and purposes of historical Spanish war art, commemorations focusing on the sacrifices and suffering experienced by revolutionary martyrs served as an example and as a stimulus for further military and political actions.

The components of the imagery included visions of defiant glory, but ultimately they focused on the suffering and death incurred [by the Republicans] during the repression that followed the revolt. Pro-revolutionary groups employed the framework of martyrdom to commemorate the insurrection and mobilize political support.⁵

Republicans incorporated this imagery into multiple types of propaganda art such as literature, poster art, and pamphlets, attempting to reach the masses to promote unity of action both after the October revolution and during the Spanish Civil War. “A pamphlet encouraging cooperation between the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo [CNT] and the Unión General de Trabajadores [UGT], for example, invoked the lessons of 1934 to facilitate the merger of the two unions.”⁶ These propaganda initiatives proved successful when the Left and their Republican allies mobilized enough support to win an electoral victory just fifteen months after the failed insurrection in early 1936.⁷ However, the Republicans did not have the opportunity to celebrate this success for very long. Conservatives also took advantage of the same propagandistic themes as the Republicans,

⁵ Bunk, *Ghosts of passion: martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*, 61.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

but employed them in a slightly different manner. With this propaganda campaign, Nationalists were able to rally political support and to use the Republican electoral victory to spark the uprising of July 18, 1936, marking the start of the Spanish Civil War.

After the failed insurrection of October 1934, the conservatives in power glorified the strength of the army and the struggle to save the future of the nation from the revolutionary forces. The focus on martyrdom rapidly became an essential component of Nationalist and later Francoist propaganda, a theme that directly originates from commemorating those who lost their lives fighting against the insurrection. Visions of the determined Nationalist soldier empowered the conservative army to continue to suppress Republican opposition after the failed insurrection and to overthrow the Republican government during the civil war. Unlike the leftist political faction, the conservative group often evoked the power of religion in their propaganda. For example, during the Civil War, Casimiro Cienfuegos, a poet who fused religious piety with political action, compiled *Cancionario de la Guerra*, or Anthology of War.

This book, dedicated to Francisco Franco and General Antonio Aranda Mata, contains reprintings of several poems written following the October revolt, and as such reiterates many of the themes of that early work including the glorification of the military and the linking of the political and religious.⁸

The union of these two elements continued as an essential element of Nationalist propaganda, which will be discussed further in the greater context of visual propaganda produced in the Spanish Civil War. Additionally, this incorporation of the divine strengthened during the Civil War when members of the Catholic Church openly expressed support for the Nationalists. In general, the imagery and propaganda related to

⁸ Ibid., 151.

the October revolution of 1934 played a crucial role in exploiting existing political and social instability in Spain, which eventually culminated in the Spanish Civil War. Nationalist and Republican factions continued to employ themes from the October revolution, such as martyrdom, collective suffering, and the heroism of the soldier in Civil War propaganda to further unify diverse political ideologies.

Both the Nationalist and Republican factions were made up of a range of divergent socio-political groups when the Spanish Civil War broke out on July 18, 1936. The Nationalists presented a more unified front compared to the Republicans because of the preexisting military structure and the organization that had already been established as a result of the political tension that had existed for decades preceding the uprising. The Republicans, on the other hand, struggled to bring unity to the various political and ideological groups that formed the Left in Spain at the time. “Early left-wing posters bring out this variety, either because they were published or commissioned by different entities (political parties, unions), or because individual artists favored particular approaches.”⁹ However, the Republicans, especially the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), recognized the importance and necessity for visual propaganda that would inspire Spanish citizens and workers to unite against fascism and the Nationalists. Union posters consistently illustrate a sense of solidarity among the Republican front and the importance of working together for the common good.¹⁰ Through the consistent use of vibrant imagery and powerful captions, the repeated pattern of the UGT’s propaganda campaign solidified the dynamic of solidarity, equality, and unity among the

⁹ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 23.

¹⁰ Ibid., 24.

Republicans. Without the use of visual propaganda as a political tool, the Republican front would not have been able to inspire the Spanish masses to unite in support of the Left and challenge the military strength exerted by the Nationalists.

The visual propaganda movement by the Left began immediately with the production of the first war posters created by individual artists in their own homes on July 18th and 19th.¹¹ The Trade Union of Professional Artists (*Sindicat de dibuixants professionals* in Catalan), which had been formed prior to the military uprising, quickly banded together to form a collective studio to produce posters for the UGT and the Iberian Anarchist Federation (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI)*).¹² These union posters attempted to unify workers across the country with the Republican movement through slogans evoking the importance of fighting for freedom and working for the common cause.¹³ Both the images and captions of the union propaganda communicate a strong sense of solidarity and “[urge] workers to work for those who fight.”¹⁴ Although the Republicans did not holistically identify with communism, the UGT and FAI propaganda incorporated communist imagery and strong anarchist elements. For example, one FAI poster produced during the beginning of the Spanish Civil War depicts soldiers breaking chains that encircle the Spanish world with the caption: “For free humanity”; “For Anarchy.”¹⁵ Many anarchist and separatist groups did not genuinely

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

identify with the Republican socio-political ideology, but instead decided to support the leftist front because it was anti-Nationalist.

Despite these divergent ideological opinions within the Republican front, union posters depicted a clear sense for a united front, recognizing the importance of the propaganda poster as a political tool. Early Republican posters employ modern art techniques as vehicle for delivering the desired message and call to action.

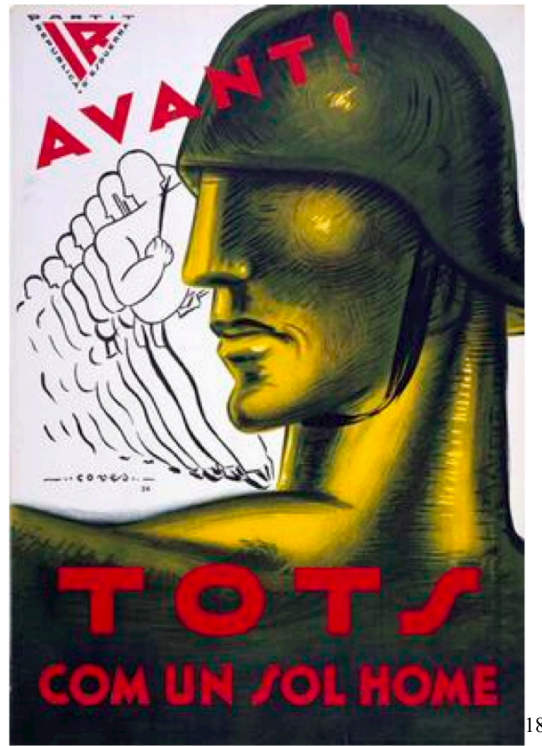
In some [posters], reality is treated schematically or distorted; in most, shading and the definition of physical contour is simplified and humans or objects are flattened to give a strong formal effect. Generally speaking artists seem to have felt that the modern style could appeal to all types and classes of people.¹⁶

Many artists combined these modern art techniques with the image of the soldier in order to psychologically communicate to the Spanish public the need to fight for the common good. The continuous depiction of the soldier in Spanish Civil War propaganda exemplifies a key technique in the political utilization of poster art to unify the greater masses. “Perhaps the most ubiquitous imagery celebrated the soldier – either dedicated Republican or determined Nationalist – as a strong, valiant hero.”¹⁷ In the early stages of the Spanish Civil War, the Republicans relied on visual propaganda as a means to gather military recruitment and support. Because the Popular Front had to quickly and loosely organize local Spanish militias to fight against the Nationalist uprising at the start of the Spanish Civil War, the Republicans sought to convey the soldier as the epitome of a loyal Spanish citizen and hero in order to inspire the masses to join the fight. The poster *Forward! (Avant!* in the original Catalan), produced by the Republican Left of Catalonia

¹⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷ Bunk, *Ghosts of passion: martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*, 151.

(*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*) in 1936, illustrates the heroism of the soldier as well as the unity of the Popular Front.



“A powerful helmeted head and bare-shouldered figure at the right is, when one looks, the first of a line of soldiers whose profiles echo one another, visually underlining a sense of collective solidarity.”¹⁹ The phrase “Forward! All together as one man” invites those in support of the Republican Left to rise up to fight for the collective good of the country. Jaume Solá’s poster *More Men! More Arms! More Provisions!* (*Més homes! Més armes! Més municiones!* in the original Catalan; shown below on the left) demonstrates the use of modern artistic style of simplifying the definition of soldiers’ physical contour to

¹⁸ Coves, *Avant!*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1936. <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73277&sos=0>.

¹⁹ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 25.

evoke a more powerful impact. In the poster below on the right, Lorenzo Goñi illustrates an alternative presentation of the same slogan and similar imagery.



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Solá's poster shows a strong file of identical and faceless men marching in unison with the UGT armband displayed prominently.²² The disciplined line of men shoves their rifles at a red swastika, representing the continued fight against fascism, the imagery of which displays both a positive and negative message simultaneously.²³ The solidarity of the fighters represents the positivity and hope of the Republican cause to destroy the

²⁰ Jaime Solá, *Mes homes! Mes armes! Mes municions!*, The Wolfsonian Florida International University Online Collection, 1936-1939. <http://libimages.wolfsonian.org/XC1994.3042.000.jpg>.

²¹ Lorenzo Goñi, *Mes Homes, Mes Armes, Mes Municions Per Al Front*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73256&sos=2>.

²² Glendinning, "Art and the Spanish Civil War," 25.

²³ Ibid.

negative fascist ideology. Goñi's propaganda illustrates four soldiers of varying ranks who are also faceless and are holding their rifles against their shoulders in a militaristic stance. These fighters are depicted as regal, determined and heroic, a common artistic theme among the propaganda posters of the Civil War. Furthermore, Jacint Bofarull Foraster, a Catalan artist, created a poster entitled *We shall smash them with the People's Army* (*Els Aixafarem!!!...amb l'Exercit Popular* in the original Catalan) with the same symbolism illustrated in those of Solá and Goñi.²⁴



However, in Bofarull's poster, the poster not only evokes unity against fascism, but also support in favor of communism. The prominent use of the color red, which is often associated with the international communist movement, colors the path that leads the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Jacint Bofarull Foraster, *Els Aixafarem!!!...amb l'Exercit Popular*, Memòria Digital de Catalunya de la Universitat de Barcelona, lithograph color print, 1937. <http://mdc.cbuc.cat/cdm/singleitem/collection/pavellorepu/id/682/rec/1>.

charging soldiers towards the smashing of the swastika. This imagery symbolizes the strength of the Republican fight against the fascist forces. The countless soldiers are even more shapeless and anonymous than those in *More Men! More Arms! More Provisions!* posters. By simplifying the soldiers' faces in each of these posters, the artists psychologically encourage Spaniards to self-identify with these Republican fighters. If facial characteristics were more detailed, some men who may not resemble the figures would subconsciously feel alienated and turned off from joining the cause. In the early 20th century, "the masses [were] susceptible to contagious and irrational suggestion through the subconscious and by the affirmation and repetition of appealing statements."²⁶ Therefore, These repeated patterns of the heroic image of the soldier and of modern poster art techniques effectively communicate the Republican front's themes of solidarity, equality and unity and offer a call to the mass public to join in the collective fight for the common good.²⁷

The Spanish land, its wealth, and the people struggling for it served as major catalysts of the Spanish Civil War, and therefore, as another significant theme of Civil War propaganda.²⁸ Both the Nationalists and the Republicans repeat this theme throughout their visual propaganda, especially in poster art. Each political faction attempted to unify its supporters to fight for the common good of the land, whether that meant inspiring landless peasants to take up arms against the Nationalists or calling upon

²⁶ James Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007) 11.

²⁷ Glendinning, "Art and the Spanish Civil War," 25.

²⁸ John J. Michalczyk, "The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message," in *Malraux, Hemingway, and Embattled Spain*, vol. 60.2 of *North Dakota Quarterly*, (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota, 1992), 46.

the wealthy landowners to financially support the fight against the Republicans. Socio-political tension had existed during the decades leading up to the Nationalist uprising, especially during the Second Republic when Manuel Azaña advocated for agrarian reforms.²⁹

Theft of agrarian products, among other valuables, was a significant problem at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, and the problem became worse as the war progressed. The food scarcity was exacerbated by constant warfare, and the rapid advances of the Nationalist army forced soldiers and refugees to help themselves to farmland foods.³⁰

During the Spanish Civil War, the upper class and conservative landowners controlled the fertile land and all of its wealth, while the farmers and landless peasants suffered from severe poverty.³¹ Republican poster art, as in the propaganda films, depicts human suffering as “a struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor,” in order to evoke emotional attachment and garner support from the Spanish masses for the Left’s cause.³² The poster below on the left by J. Huertas depicts a positive message to the Spanish public through the slogan, “Peasant! The fruit [of the land] can be yours with victory,” (*¡Campesino! El fruto sera tuyo con la victoria* in the original Spanish). A large sheaf of wheat sits against a blue sky, which acts as a background to the image of a peasant plowing the land with horses. This poster, produced by the Socialist Workers Party of Spain, serves as a call to action for peasants to join in solidarity with the Republican

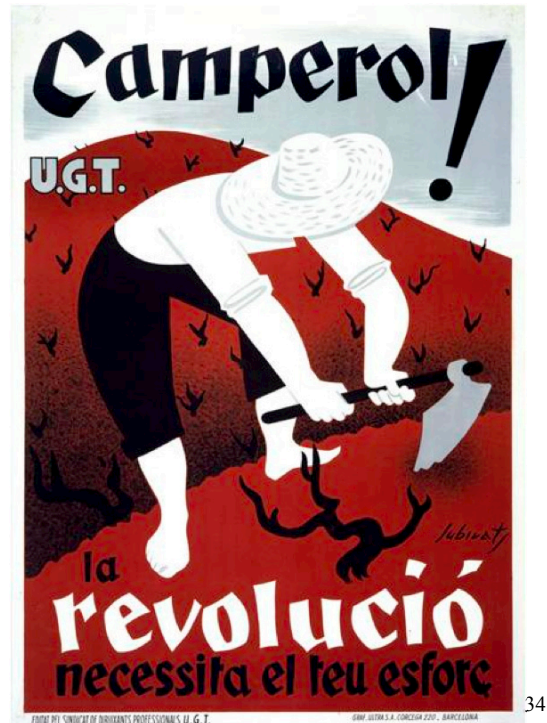
²⁹ “The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection,” University of California, San Diego, last updated in 1998, accessed on March 25, 2013, <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/vizindex.html>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message*,” 44.

³² Ibid.

cause to fight for the ownership and production of the farmland. *Camperol!*, the poster pictured below on the right, conveys a similar message to that of the *¡Campesino!* poster, but in Catalan.



Whereas the poster by Huertas incorporates bright, striking colors, the other, designed by Subirats and published by the UGT, solely focuses on the color of the land, which is a reddish brown hue, and leaves every other aspect of the poster as black or pale gray. The faceless peasant is bent over tending to the land, which catches the attention of the viewer because of its color. This technique implicitly emphasizes the importance of the land and

³³ J. Huertas, *¡Campesino!*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1937. [http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73235& sos=0](http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73235&sos=0).

³⁴ Subirats, *Camperol! La revolució necessita el teu esforç*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1936-1939. [http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73242& sos=6](http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73242&sos=6).

invites all peasants to join the revolution by cultivating the land together for the common good: “Peasant! The revolution needs your effort!” (“*Camperol! La revolució necessita el teu esforç*” in its original Catalan). Through empowering language and dynamic imagery, the posters designed by Huertas and Subirats demonstrate one method of how the Republicans utilized poster art as a political tool to inspire the Spanish masses, specifically the peasants, to fight for the collective benefits offered by the land.

Furthermore, the second stage of Republican war posters often evokes a different thematic method in communicating a propagandistic message. This transition consisted of defensive posters with oftentimes-negative messages directed towards the “enemy.”³⁵ Despite the difference in rhetoric, these posters dealt with similar themes as to those in the first stage, specifically the theme of the land and its wealth and for fighting in support of the common good. *Defend small property*, (“*Defiende la pequeña propiedad*” in the original Spanish), the poster pictured on the right, conveys a more negative message compared to the *¡Campesino!* discussed above, while still urging the masses to rise up against the Nationalists. The imagery of the poster illustrates a robust peasant standing in a field full of wheat and blowing a conch shell. He also waves a Republican flag and the words “Republican Left” (“*Izquierda Republicana*” in the original Spanish) are emblazoned above. The conch shell symbolizes an alarm sounding to notify the peasants in the field of the thieves stealing wheat, the scene of which is pictured on the right side of the poster.³⁶ A few peasants point their arms at the thieves, illustrating the slogan of

³⁵ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 25-26.

³⁶ “The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection.”

the poster, “death penalty to the thief,” (“*Pena de muerte al ladrón*” in the original Spanish). This poster directly demonstrates how “... the Republican Left Party, led by Manuel Azaña, had become frustrated with the problem of theft and joined others in the loyalist zone in calling for more severe punishments against those who stole foodstuffs or disrupted Republican trade.”³⁷



While the conch shell serves as an alarm for the peasants working in the wheat fields, it also represents a call to action for the Spanish public to begin fighting against those who

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jesús Lozano, *¡Campesino! Tus enemigos te hicieron trabajar...*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73219&sos=5>.

³⁹ V. Petit Alandi, *Defiende la pequeña propiedad*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73209&sos=5>.

both metaphorically and literally steal wheat and produce from the land. The combination of the conch shell and the Spanish Republican flag implicitly emphasizes the significance and symbolic association of the sounding alarm to the appeal to the masses to protect the land. In a similar manner, the poster pictured above on the left, illustrated by Jesús Lozano, positions the oppressed against the oppressor by stating: “Peasant! Your enemies make you work from sunup to sundown to feed them. Now that the land is yours, work from sunup to sundown to annihilate them.” Also, a large image of a sickle in the hand of a peasant spans the length of the poster and emphasizes the socialist ideology of the Republican faction. This poster conveys a negative and defensive message similar to that of the poster illustrated by V. Petit Alandi in which the peasants are encouraged to take up arms in the fight against the elite landowners. Even though this series of posters uses different methods and rhetorical techniques to convey a seemingly negative message, it still attempts to gather the local, rural masses to fight to defend the common good of the land.

On the other hand, the Nationalists posters addressing the land and its wealth demonstrate the Right’s focus on the financial stability that would ultimately come as a result of their victory. Rather than appealing to the Spanish masses like the Republicans, the Nationalists focused on the image of unity and the “cult of individual leaders,” which represents the greatest contrast of propaganda techniques between the two factions.⁴⁰ To emphasize this image of unity, the yoke and the arrows served as a meaningful symbol for the Falangists and the Nationalists. The yoke and the arrows originally originate from

⁴⁰ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 30.

the ‘fasces,’ or bundles, of ancient Rome, which were displayed as the insignia of official authority and penal power.⁴¹ The ‘fasces’ symbol was characterized by a bundle of elm or birch rods tied together with a red strap with an ax protruding from it.⁴² More specifically, the emblem in the Spanish context possesses historical significance and relevance that dates back to the time of Ferdinand and Isabel, the powerful Spanish monarchs who ruled in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁴³

The first letters of the names of the two parts of the symbol, Y and F [for *el yugo y las flechas*] correspond to first names of the two monarchs with Isabel spelled in the older style of Ysabel. In Spanish history, the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabel represented the unification of the two kingdoms of Castile and Aragon in which Spain as a whole was created. Thus, the overtones of monarchism and unity contained in this symbol would have resonated well with the Nationalist goals of repairing a divided Spain and returning to a more traditional form of governance.⁴⁴

The overarching symbolic significance of the yoke and arrows represents the fundamental ideology of the Nationalist party to emphasize traditional, conservative values and unity among all Spaniards so that Spain may return to its former position as a strong, international power. This central belief transcends all Nationalist propaganda, no matter what the subject of the poster or film may be.

The Nationalists used propaganda as a political tool that strengthened the preexisting unity of the party and emphasized two major themes, in addition to the fundamental idea of the return to a traditional and united Spain. “After those issued by

⁴¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "fasces," accessed May 4, 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/202174/fasces>.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ “The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

the army exalting religious views, there are some [propaganda posters] concerned with Social Assistance schemes which were particularly strongly developed from 1937.”⁴⁵ The posters displaying “Social Assistance schemes” echo a similar theme to that of certain Republican posters that emphasize protecting and maintaining ownership of the land as the key for economic prosperity. Artist Teodoro Delgado designed the poster pictured below on the left, which positively communicates the importance of the land and its connection to the Nationalist party. This poster also exhibits the Nationalists’ emphasis on the “cult of individual leaders” by incorporating Franco’s name into the rhyming scheme of the poster’s slogan. This slogan has a natural rhythm to it that could be easily chanted and remembered, which psychologically encourages landowners and farmers to defend their land in support of Franco. A Spanish worker carries sacks of wheat, implicitly drawing attention to the strength and provisions that these people offer. Furthermore, the poster depicts land workers as strong and statuesque, similar to the depiction of the figures in Republican propaganda. “Representations promoting both the Nationalists and Republicans as true exemplars of masculine virtue also continued to be produced [throughout the Spanish Civil War].”⁴⁶ By producing images of heroic, virtuous, and masculine figures, propaganda posters psychologically communicate that, by joining the Republican or Nationalist cause, one would be viewed in the same way as these men are depicted in the posters that cover the Spanish cities and towns. Through the positive rhetoric and imagery of Delgado’s poster, the Nationalists underline the

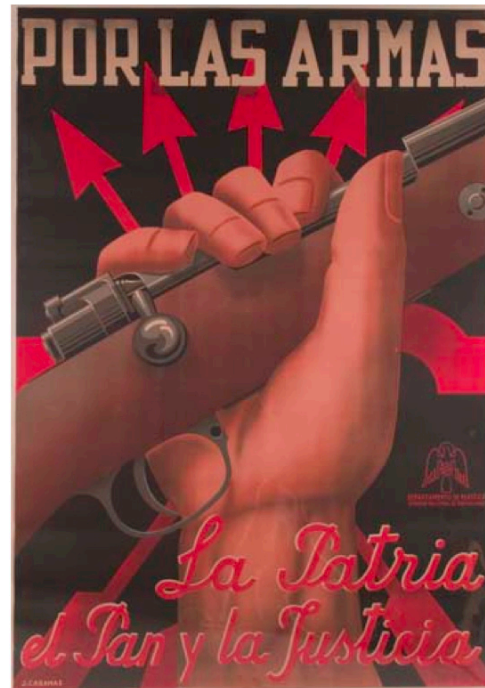
⁴⁵ Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 30.

⁴⁶ Bunk, *Ghosts of passion: martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*, 151.

importance of unity under Franco and of the control of the land as the key to achieving economic prosperity in Spain.



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Conversely, the poster positioned above on the right, designed by Juan Cabanas, conveys a negative message to Nationalist supporters to rise up against the Republicans for economic and socio-political prosperity. “A hand clutching a rifle occupies the center of the poster as the message endorses military action in order to reach the goals of a secure fatherland, food for its citizens, and justice.”⁴⁹ The symbol of the Nationalist Front, the yoke and arrows, fills the background of the poster in a strong red. The combination of

⁴⁷ Teodoro Delgado, *Franco, Franco, Franco ¡Arriba el campo!*, Bibiloteca de Cataluña, lithograph color print, 1940. http://cataleg.bnc.cat/record=b1025980~S13*cat.

⁴⁸ Juan Cabanas, *Por las armas – la patria, el pan, y la justicia*, The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection, lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/swposter-43.html>.

⁴⁹ “The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection.”

imagery presented in the poster emphasizes the unity of the military in the Nationalists' fight in defense of the fatherland and against the Republicans.

Furthermore, the Nationalists often produced posters with the phrase, "Spain: One, Great, Free," ("*España: Una, grande, libre,*" in the original Spanish), to convey the unity of the country and of the National Front as well as the return to a powerful position in the international order. The poster pictured below on the left illustrates a triumphant hooded figure that has violently murdered another hooded figure that holds a sickle and hammer and represents the CNT, FAI, and other parties of the Republican faction. The



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⁵⁰ *España – Una Grande Libre*, Imperial War Museum: London, lithograph color print, 1937. <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/29281>.

⁵¹ *Por la España Una Grande y Libre*, Imperial War Museum: The Spanish Civil War Poster Collection, lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://www.vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=73205&sos=9>.

symbol of the yoke and arrows is placed off to the side of the poster, but is still visible enough to catch the eye of the viewer. This poster explicitly endorses violence, specifically against Republicans, as the manner in which to secure a united and free Spain.

Additionally, the poster above on the right underlines the strength of the Nationalist Falangist soldier as a hero and symbol of masculine virtue, a prominent artistic technique aforementioned in reference to other Nationalist propaganda posters. The use of classic primary colors in the poster – the hue of the Nationalist Falangist blue shirt, the red and yellow of the Spanish flag – catch the attention of the viewer and convey the traditional values of the National Front. “A good deal of Nationalist work is, as one might expect, traditionalist in its artistic as well as political, social and religious values.”⁵² Once again, the soldier’s faceless features are somewhat shadowed and nondescript, thereby allowing the Spanish people to psychologically associate themselves with the figure in the poster. The yoke and arrows are displayed prominently on this poster in two different locations, emphasizing the significance of the Nationalists and their ideology. The soldier’s gaze looks beyond and upwards as if he is looking to a hopeful future where Spain has returned to its status as “one, great, free” country. Propaganda posters that communicate the theme of “Spain: one, great, free” call for the unification of Spain to rebuild its empire and reemphasize its conservative values to the rest of the world.

⁵² Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 30.

Lastly, the natural conjunction of religion and propaganda proved essential to Nationalists' efforts throughout the Civil War, more so than for the Republicans.⁵³ The National Front promulgated ideology underscoring the need for Spain's return to power as an international religious leader and strong ally of the Catholic Church. In the poster *Crusade*, pictured below, a large cross looms over the world, casting a shadow over Spain with the proclamation: "Crusade: Spain the spiritual leader of the world," ("*Cruzada: España orientadora espiritual del mundo*" in the original Spanish). By terming the Civil War as a "crusade," the Nationalists associate their fight against the



⁵³Ibid., 28.

⁵⁴ *Crusada*, Durham University, School of Modern Languages & Cultures, Department of Hispanic Studies: Introduction to Hispanic Studies, lithograph color print, 1937. <http://www.dur.ac.uk/m.p.thompson/civwar/cruzada.htm>.

Republicans as a military expedition against the Spain's infidels. Attempting to further unite the conservative religious leaders, the Nationalists leveraged the support of the Catholic Church to take advantage of the high number of Spanish citizens who considered themselves devout, faithful followers. Through propaganda posters such as *Crusade*, the Nationalists' categorized the Spanish Civil War as a divine and holy mission with religious implications. With this type of propagandistic message, the Nationalists were able to sway conservative Spaniards to show their support and join them in the fight against the infidel Republicans.

Once the National Front started capturing strategic cities during the end of the Spanish Civil War, Franco and his forces conveyed an attitude of confidence and determination through the evocation of religion in propaganda. The poster designed by Josep Morell, pictured below on the left, depicts triumphant Nationalist Falangists in their traditional blue shirts in front of the Spanish flag. "This poster was produced following the occupation of Barcelona by Nationalist forces in January 1939. The lion in the foreground depicts one of the statues around the monument to Columbus at the end of the Ramblas in Barcelona."⁵⁵ The poster utilizes traditional images of masculine virtue to convey the Nationalist heroes and the conservative forces as the exemplars of moral, dedicated Spanish patriots.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the woman on the right of the poster carries a basket of bread and produce, symbolizing the economic prosperity and wealth from the

⁵⁵ M.P. Thompson, "Spanish Civil War Posters: Nationalists," Durham University, School of Modern Languages & Cultures, Department of Hispanic Studies: Introduction to Hispanic Studies, last updated in February 2011, accessed on September 20, 2013, <http://www.dur.ac.uk/m.p.thompson/civwar/ha-llegado.htm>.

⁵⁶ Bunk, *Ghosts of passion: martyrdom, gender, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War*, 151.

land that will come as a result of a Nationalist victory. This representation, once again, underlines the importance of the land and the poverty that plagued Spain as a crucial issue during the Spanish Civil War.

I will rein in Spain (“*Reinaré en España*” in its original Spanish) fuses the Nationalist slogan, “one, great, free,” with traditional religious elements as represented by the Franco regime’s national coat of arms. The combination technique of the Nationalist slogan communicating unity with the phrase, “I will rein in Spain,” around the coat of arms establishes a foundation for unity behind Franco that would enable his long dictatorial rule.

The image is the national coat of arms used by the Franco regime (essentially the arms of the Reyes Católicos with the addition of the imperial pillars of Hercules introduced by Carlos I and the new motto ‘Una, Grande, Libre’), but with a Catholic Sacred Heart in the centre (where the Bourbon royal arms had, and have now, a blue oval containing three gold fleur de lys).⁵⁷

Similarly to Morell’s poster art, *I will rein in Spain* asserts the future victory of the Nationalist regime and the conservative and righteous values that will rebuild the country into the powerful and moral international empire that it once was. Through the combination of traditional religious values and an attitude of confidence and determination, the Nationalists asserted their success and eventual victory with the use of propaganda posters during the end of the war. These posters served to weaken the Popular Fronts basis of support, as well as establish the Nationalist party as a regime that would lead Spain to unity and power under Franco.

⁵⁷ Thompson, “Spanish Civil War Posters: Nationalists.”



Despite divergent ideological agendas, the Nationalists and Republicans exploited similar propagandistic techniques and imagery that enabled poster art to function as an essential political tool to cultivate unity and garner support. Dynamic imagery with bold colors articulated the heroism of the (faceless) soldier, solidarity and the fight for the common good in relation to the National and Popular Front, respectively. Both political factions also emphasized the need for economic prosperity and the control of the Spanish land. Although the two major ideological factions in the Spanish Civil War employed similar themes and imagery, each developed propaganda posters in order to achieve

⁵⁸ Josep Morell, *Ha llegado España*, Durham University, School of Modern Languages & Cultures, Department of Hispanic Studies: Introduction to Hispanic Studies, lithograph color print, 1939. <http://www.dur.ac.uk/m.p.thompson/civwar/ha-llegado.htm>.

⁵⁹ *Reinaré en España*, Durham University, School of Modern Languages & Cultures, Department of Hispanic Studies: Introduction to Hispanic Studies, lithograph color print, 1939. <http://www.dur.ac.uk/m.p.thompson/civwar/reinare.htm>.

slightly different outcomes. On one side, the Republicans desired to issue a call to action to the landless peasants and supporters of the Left so that they may be inspired to join together for the common good and fight for the just liberal cause. On the other, the Nationalists sought to unify the Spanish masses under one, all-knowing and all-powerful leader: Francisco Franco. To most effectively achieve this unification, the Nationalists interwove religion and traditional values with strong primary colors and an air of confidence to solidify their victory and provide the foundation for Franco's future dictatorship. These artistic propaganda practices would not only survive throughout the duration of Franco's dictatorial rule, but would also single-handedly influence the modern phenomena of propaganda as a political tool to effectively unite public opinion in today's world.

III. PROXY WAR PROPAGANDA: THE CLASH OF INTERNATIONAL IDEOLOGIES IN SPAIN

The Spanish Civil War, as previously mentioned, possesses a unique character, and many scholars have termed it a ‘proxy war’ due to the nature of international involvement on both sides. In the context of twentieth century history, the impact and importance of the Spanish Civil War are often overshadowed by all-consuming global conflicts such as World War I, World War II and the Cold War. However, the Spanish conflict embodies important turning points in the history of international politics and ideologies:

[The Spanish Civil War signified] the first conflict that developed into a war between democratic values and fascist ideologies; the time during which proper men of all countries joined together for the last time to fight, not for their own countries, but rather for the salvation of values that they consider universal; the first victory that foretold what the German or Italian political machinery could achieve... the importance that the Spanish war had for Italians, Germans, Americans, and British, for example, was significant.^{1,2}

Through contributions ranging from financial and military support to the production of propaganda films, International Brigades and foreign powers such as the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy changed the nature of the Spanish Civil War and placed it at the forefront of global politics. The propagandistic contributions of these state actors helped

¹ Inmaculada Sánchez Alarcón, *La Guerra Civil Española y el Cine Francés* (Barcelona: Los Libros de la Frontera, 2005), 10.

² The original text of the quote is as follows: “[La guerra civil de España significa] la primera ocasión en la que cristalizaba la lucha entre los valores democráticos y las ideologías fascistas; el tiempo en el que hombres procedentes de todos los países acudieron por última vez para luchar, no por sus propias patrias, sino por la salvación de valores que consideraban universales; la primera victoria que auguraba lo que la maquinaria alemana o italiana podía conseguir... los significados que la guerra de España tuvo para italianos, alemanes, estadounidenses o británicos, por ejemplo fueron muchos.”

to unify a wide, disjointed range of ideologically based confederations into two specific political factions, further exemplifying the Spanish Civil War's identity as a 'proxy war.'

Non-Spanish volunteers began to flock to Spain to join militias and fight against fascism. The first of these volunteers travelled from France, Poland, Germany and Italy to join the Republican cause, many of whom were living in France at the outbreak of the civil war as political refugees and exiles.³

Simultaneously, and without organized recruiting and direction (at least in the beginning), volunteers of every left-of-center political persuasion migrated to Republican Spain from all over Western Europe – and in some cases from certain parts of Eastern Europe as well – slipping over the French border to join the militia columns.⁴

The creation of the International Brigades in September of 1936 signifies an important development for propaganda poster production and the movement for international support as a whole.⁵ Posters produced in Spain spanned a variety of European languages to effectively solicit foreign aid. Echoing similar themes to those used in previous centuries, these international propaganda posters manufactured by the Republicans evoked the need for solidarity with the Spanish workmen, who were banding together to fight for the common good of their homeland. Additionally, Spanish posters glorified the participation of the International Brigades and emphasized the implications of the civil war for the rest of the world. Common slogans such as “From the Popular Front of

³ Verle B. Johnston, *Legions of Babel: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1967), 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁵ Nigel Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” in *¡No Pasarán!: Art, Literature, and the Spanish Civil War*, ed. Stephen M. Hart (London: Tamesis Books, 1988), 26.

Madrid to the Popular Front of the world. Homage to the International Brigades,”⁶ attempted to create a more united Popular Front and link the Spanish Civil War to the ideological tension that plagued other parts of the world at the time. The three-pointed star that appears on these posters served as the symbol of the International Brigades often coupled with the colors of the Spanish Republic flag.



⁶ The original text of the slogan is as follows: “Del frente popular de Madrid al frente popular del mundo. Homenaje a las brigadas internacionales.”

⁷ Tom Cohn, “The Foreboding Propaganda Posters of the Spanish Civil War,” Cartridge Save Blog, accessed August 16, 2012, <http://www.cartridgesave.co.uk/news/the-foreboding-propaganda-posters-o-the-spanish-civil-war/>.

⁸ Ibid.



Furthermore, although there was a strong anti-fascism sentiment in Moscow, the concept of a movement against the rise of this political ideology in Spain originated in the West.¹⁰ Republican posters also attacked the anti-fascist ideology not only of the National Front, but also of Nazi Germany and of fascist Italy. For example, the poster below reads: “The claw of the Italian invader tries to enslave us.” This slogan, along with images of soldiers against the backdrop of the Italian flag jointly clawing at the country of Spain, uses powerful imagery to convey the anti-fascist message to the Spanish masses, many of whom were illiterate and more susceptible to poster art.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Johnston, *Legions of Babel: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War*, 28.



Republicans attempted to justify foreign involvement in the Spanish conflict by creating negative anti-Fascist posters to play off of the preexisting political unease of the Western hemisphere.

Under [the Propaganda and Press Delegation of the Delegate Junta for the Defense of Madrid (*Delegación de Propaganda y Prensa de la junta delegada de Defensa de Madrid*)] Republican propaganda posters in multiple languages were produced late in 1936 and 1937 to emphasize the suffering of the civilian population in Madrid and elsewhere as a result of the air attacks by the Nationalists on non-military targets.¹²

Republican posters targeted the emotions of the foreign public by coupling images of distressed women and children with controversial statements and questions such as, “If you tolerate this your children will be next” and “What are you doing to prevent this?”¹³

¹¹ Tom Cohn, “The Foreboding Propaganda Posters of the Spanish Civil War,” Cartridge Save Blog, accessed August 16, 2012, <http://www.cartridgesave.co.uk/news/the-foreboding-propaganda-posters-o-the-spanish-civil-war/>.

¹² Glendinning, “Art and the Spanish Civil War,” 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 27.



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By posing these questions as a strict choice between good and evil, propaganda posters did not present neutrality as a viable option for the international public.

On the Left, the Soviet Union demonstrated the most invested foreign interest in the liberal cause. Even though the Soviet Union and Spain possessed no diplomatic or commercial relations before July 1936, the Kremlin leadership rapidly mobilized a domestic campaign for solidarity with the Spanish Republicans, recognizing the influence that a possible Leftist victory would have on the Western hemisphere in favor of the

¹⁴ Junta Delegada de Defensa de Madrid, Ministerio de Propaganda, *If you tolerate this, your children will be next*, offset lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/99615791/>.

¹⁵ Junta Delegada de Defensa de Madrid, Ministerio de Propaganda, *What are you doing to prevent this?*, offset lithograph color print, 1936-1939. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/99615700/>.

Soviet political ideology.¹⁶ “Wide dissemination of the films [in this campaign] indicates that whatever other geo-strategic or economic promise the Spanish Civil War may have held for the Soviet regime, the potential propaganda advantages at home and abroad were understood by the Kremlin as equally significant.”¹⁷ By late October 1936, the Soviet Union began to continuously send assistance that consisted of tanks and planes, along with military support staff and humanitarian relief.¹⁸ Most notably, the Kremlin leadership began dispatching filmmakers to compile newsreels and footage of the Spanish conflict to produce propaganda cinema that would further rally support both at home in the Soviet Union and abroad.

...Spain was nothing if not a watershed in the evolution of the Soviet film industry. Moscow’s cinematic offensive in Spain was a dual carriageway that reflected the two-front war the Soviets were waging vis-à-vis the Iberian imbroglio: the military effort in defense of the Republic, and a domestic mobilization campaign to rally the Soviet populace around the Loyalist cause.¹⁹

The Kremlin took advantage of the state-run media to consistently inundate the Soviet population with coverage of the conflict occurring in Spain. For example, civil war events such as the Nationalists’ aerial bombing of the Basque town of Guernica on April 26, 1937 sparked a Soviet propaganda campaign which specifically exploited the fact that many women and children from the attacked northern region of Spain became refugees in the USSR.²⁰ Because of the high value that Stalin placed on the cinematic opportunity and exploitation of the civil war, in less than three weeks his regime successfully

¹⁶ Daniel Kowalsky, “The Soviet cinematic offensive in the Spanish Civil War,” *Film History: An International Journal* 19, no. 1 (2007): 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

designed a variety of domestic propaganda campaigns to be distributed to the Soviet masses, which included edited newsreels of the conflict in support of the Leftist cause.²¹ This impressive speed of production continued for approximately a year, generating countless newsreel episodes and documentary films.

However, it was Soviet cinema that left the greatest impression on Republican troops and the rest of the international community. At the same time, the Spanish Civil War provided the Kremlin leadership with an ideal opportunity to develop its fledgling propaganda tactics. "For the first time, Soviet ideological films found a captive market abroad in the Loyalist zone, while the conflict itself quickly became an image-rich plum ripe for the plucking by Moscow's hastily organized, still inexperienced itinerant documentary cinematographers."²² In the fall of 1936, the Kremlin organized a new production company called Film Popular to facilitate the production of propaganda newsreels and films as well as translate feature-length Soviet films into Spanish.²³ These films served both a propagandistic and commercial function, promoting relations between the Republican Party and the Soviets. The first film widely circulated by Film Popular was Efin Dzigal's *We of Kronstadt*, which premiered in Madrid on October 18, 1936 and was partnered with an expansive propaganda campaign spearheaded by Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria) the principal spokeswoman of the Spanish Communist Party.²⁴ Film Popular specifically chose *We of Kronstadt* for the value that it held for the Republicans. *We of Kronstadt* takes place during the Russian civil war and follows a rebellious group

²¹ Ibid., 10.

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Ibid.

of marines who become the disciplined Red Army unit. The film was shown far and wide across Spain, reaching even small rural towns held by the Republicans, with the hopes of further uniting the Popular Front with Soviet ideology.

The cinema produced by Film Popular that premiered in Spain echoed similar themes that the Spanish had historically utilized in their own art and film. For example, Film Popular chose to disseminate Georgii and Sergei Vasiliev's *Chapayev* to Republican soldiers as propaganda to inspire their cause and unify the political faction. *Chapayev* was originally released in the Soviet Union as a historical commemoration of the seventeenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution.²⁵ The film narrates the fictional life of Vasilii Chapayev, a soldier who fought in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and inspired the peasants to defend the cause of the Red Army. This film frames Chapayev as a martyr and a hero as he is promoted to commander and expertly succeeds in leading his men in an offensive, yet ultimately, he falls in battle.²⁶ *Chapayev* conveys similar themes as to those utilized by the Spanish in their own propaganda campaigns. For these reasons, the Soviet film "became the most frequently viewed film in the Spanish Republic; the Spanish Communist Party believed it held great pedagogical value, and many soldiers saw it repeatedly."²⁷ Not all Soviet films influenced the Republican faction as much as *Chapayev* did; however, other Soviet films were designed for specific functions such as the demonstration of military techniques, unification of the various confederations of the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Left and the demonstration of the most effective methods of political indoctrination.²⁸ “Some of these films turned out to be especially timely, such as the celebrated *Chapayev*, *the red guerrilla*. The analogies between the Russian civil war and the Spanish Civil War enabled the use of the film for indoctrination about the submission of the guerrillas and the centralization and unification of military political power...”^{29,30} Overall, the Soviet Union produced the most notable foreign propaganda in support of the Spanish Republican cause. The physical Soviet presence in Spain did not last long though, as reporters documenting the civil war began to leave Spain in the summer of 1937 to cover political unrest in other countries that related to the impending global conflict of World War II. “Yet though the guns fell silent, in Soviet Russia, as elsewhere, the war would rage on for years, now fought in speeches, demonstrations, conferences, pamphlets, books and (often) on the screen.”³¹ Undoubtedly, the Soviet Union identified the Spanish Civil War as an advantageous opportunity to technologically improve their cinematic offensive tactics that would ultimately be used to disseminate their political ideology during World War II. The Kremlin leadership’s cinematic offensive drastically changed the course of the war for the Popular Front and without their assistance the Spanish Civil War would have had a starkly different trajectory.

²⁸ Ibid., 10.

²⁹ Román Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, (Madrid: Filmoteca Nacional de España, 1986), 37.

³⁰ The original text of the quote is as follows: “Algunos de estos films resultaban especialmente oportunos, como el celebrado *Chapaiev*, *el guerrillo rojo*, pues las analogías de la guerra civil rusa con la guerra de España permitían utilizarlo para adoctrinar acerca de la sumisión de los guerrilleros y del poder militar al poder político centralizado y unificado...”

³¹ Kowalsky, “The Soviet cinematic offensive in the Spanish Civil War,” 15.

Furthermore, films produced in the Soviet Union during the era of the Spanish Civil War depict the ideological confrontation occurring between the Soviets and the Germans. Soviet films, specifically Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), reinforce the proxy war character of the Spanish conflict. Eisenstein clearly outlines the cinematic intentions of his socio-political commentary in *Alexander Nevsky*:

The theme of patriotism and national defence against the aggressor is the subject that suffuses our film. We have taken a historical episode from the thirteenth century, when the ancestors of today's Fascists – the Teutonic and Livonian knights – waged a systematic struggle to conquer and invade the East in order to subjugate the Slav and other nationalities in precisely the same spirit that Fascist Germany is trying to do today, with the same frenzied slogans and same fanaticism.³²

Although Eisenstein's film was not purposefully designed as propaganda cinema for the Spanish Civil War, the director intended for it to be used as a call to action for the international masses to rise up against the oppression occurring in fragile and broken countries such as Spain "The historical precedent was to be used to strengthen the resolve of those inside and outside the Soviet Union who were engaged in the struggle against fascism, to transform their passive opposition into active resistance." Not only did *Alexander Nevsky* propel Eisenstein to the level of respect that he had long deserved, it also represented his significant contribution to the war initiatives of the Soviet Union.³³

Finally, Eisenstein's allegorical film also symbolizes the influential and valuable role that

³² Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1998), 86.

³³ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

film played in the Soviet's international fight against communism, as is embodied in the state's involvement in the Spanish Civil War.³⁴

In addition to the Soviet Union, Mexico, under the leadership of President Lázaro Cárdenas, was the other country that most openly supported the Republican faction in the Spanish Civil War. Cárdenas recognized the value of assisting the Republicans and was keenly aware that their victory would benefit the Mexican regime ideologically and politically. "For President Cárdenas, the Spanish war against fascism signified a kind of continuation and similarity with the Mexican revolution."^{35,36} Mexico provided military and financial assistance to the Left, as well as a crucial diplomatic relationship and international influence. Cárdenas openly rejected the non-intervention pact of France, England and the United States and supplied the Republicans with 20,000 Mauser rifles, 20 million rounds and food, despite Mexico's limited resources.³⁷ What proved qualitatively more valuable for Republicans, however, was the refuge and asylum that Mexico offered for persecuted Republicans, such as Spanish intellectuals and orphaned children. Notable Spanish filmmakers such as Max Aub (*L'Espoir/Sierra de Teruel*, 1945) found refuge in Mexico after being identified as a serious opponent of the Franco regime and continued producing films while in exile.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid., 97.

³⁵ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 67.

³⁶ The original text of the quote is as follows: "Para el presidente Cárdenas, la guerra de España contra el fascismo suponía una especie de continuación o de parangón con la revolución mexicana."

³⁷ Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, 140.

³⁸ *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama*, 2nd. ed., ed. Stanley Hochman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), s.v. "Aub, Max (1903-1972)."

Suspected of being a Communist sympathizer, he was forced to spend three years in prisons and in special internment camps for Spanish Republican refugees which were located in both France and North Africa. In 1942 he managed to escape from a detention center in Casablanca, and, with the aid of friends, boarded a ship bound for Mexico, where he became a naturalized citizen of that country and proceeded to rebuild his life.³⁹

Approximately, 50,000 people were able to flee to Mexico for protection, specifically relocating to Mexico City.⁴⁰ However, despite its strong tie to the anti-fascist cause, Mexico did not produce significant propagandistic contributions during the Spanish Civil War. The Autonomous Department of Press and Propaganda of Mexican-Americans (or in its original Spanish: “*Departamento Autónomo de Prensa y Propaganda de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*”) only produced one full-length film entitled *Llegada de niños españoles a Veracruz* (*The Arrival of Spanish Children in Veracruz*, 1937).⁴¹ Additionally, the private film company Films de Artistas Mexicanos Asociados (FAMA) collaborated with writer and director Alejandro Galindo to produce *Refugiados en Madrid* (*Refugees in Madrid*, 1938), which received significant criticism from all political fronts in Mexico.⁴² Compared to the Soviet Union, Mexico did not possess the resources to develop notable propagandistic campaigns neither nationally nor internationally. However, Mexico’s diplomatic assistance proved crucial at a time when major democratic powers, such as the United States, France, and England, strictly adhered to their Non-Intervention Agreement and refused to come to the aid of the Popular Front.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, 412-413.

⁴¹ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 67.

⁴² Ibid.

The Nationalist Party's primary foreign contributors, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, did not demonstrate as overt of a propagandistic presence as the Soviet Union had throughout the Spanish Civil War. However, since the Republicans possessed control over the majority of Spanish studios in Madrid and Barcelona for the duration of the conflict, the Nationalists were forced to redirect the production of their films to foreign countries. Therefore, a significant portion of Nationalist propaganda cinema was filmed and produced in Germany. At the same time, Italy welcomed the production of the Spanish Nationalist films as it provided them with a foreign outlet for their own cinema as well.⁴³ The German regime specifically took advantage of the military and propagandistic opportunities presented by the Spanish Civil War more for its own benefit than for anything else.

This [military] support and cooperation would continue with growing force and would also reach the field of cinema, even though in this case the support was self-interested, not only to help the common ideological cause, but rather for the expansionistic desires of German cinema, which they identified as an excellent opportunity to penetrate the great markets of Latin America in its industrial collaboration with Spanish cinema.^{44,45}

Additionally, Germany deployed Nazi troops to help the Nationalist army in Spain so that the state could glorify its own successes abroad within its own domestic propaganda

⁴³ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 68.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁵ The original text of the quote is as follows: “Esta ayuda [militar] y cooperación proseguiría con creciente vigor y alcanzaría también al campo del cine, aunque en este caso se trató de una ayuda interesada, no únicamente para apoyar una causa ideológica común, sino por los deseos expansionistas del cine alemán, que veía en su colaboración industrial con el cine español una oportunidad excelente para penetrar en los grandes mercados de América Latina.”

campaigns.⁴⁶ Towards the end of 1937, Norberto Soliño and Johann Ther formed Hispano-Film-Produktion, a private film company that produced both fictional narratives and propaganda films.⁴⁷ Many Hispano-Film-Produktion films were categorized under “...a genre that corresponded to the preindustrial and agrarian ideology of the rebellious military and oligarchy in Spain against industrial modernity and urban investment”⁴⁸ that sought to justify the Nationalist cause.⁴⁹ For example, *Helden in Spanien* (*Hero in Spain*, 1937), a Hispano-Film-Produktion film by director and producer Joaquín Reig, embodied this type of genre. Reig intended for *Helden in Spanien* to be distributed as propaganda cinema that legitimized the military uprising and framed the Nationalists as the answer to solve Spain’s separatist problems.⁵⁰ To effectively construct a ‘historical’ account of the Nationalist efforts in the civil war, Reig compiled documentary footage from both the National and Popular Fronts. He highlighted specific battles and conflicts from the war to then frame them as crucial events on the path to national unity and salvation. “After the establishment of the Second Republic, the assassination of Nationalist José Calvo Sotelo is presented as the spark of the military revolt, the necessary initiative to save Spain from ‘chaos and savagery.’”^{51,52} *Helden in Spanien* invokes the common theme of martyrdom

⁴⁶ Rafael de España, “Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish Feature Films, 1939-1985,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 6, no. 2 (1986): 223-224.

⁴⁷ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 73.

⁴⁸ The original text of the quote is as follows: “...un género que correspondía a la mitología agrarista y preindustrial de los militares y de la oligarquía sublevados en España contra la modernidad industrial y el inverso urbano.”

⁴⁹ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 74.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The original text of the quote is as follows: “Después de la instauración de la Segunda República, el asesinato del diputado derechista José Calvo Sotelo es presentado como el

at the end of the film with a tribute to the fallen Nationalist heroes and Falangist chorale song.⁵³ This Hispano-Film-Produktion film is considered to be the best work of foreign cinematic propaganda in support of the National front and evokes similar themes to those historically incorporated in Spanish war art. As the Spanish Civil War came to an end and the world shifted its focus to the impending global conflict of World War II, "...the importance of the industrial model of German Nazi film would become very influential in the restructuring of Spanish cinema in the first few years of Franco's dictatorship."^{54,55} During a long period of strict cinematic censorship following the war, Franco emulated Nazi cinema in Spanish film production to political indoctrinate the Spanish public and promulgate his regime's ideology.

Unlike the Nazis cinematic intentions, the Italians did not seek to glorify their soldiers' efforts in the Spanish Civil War, but rather intended to evaluate the motivations of the Nationalist Front.⁵⁶ Fascist Italy did not begin to release Spanish films made in Italy until the end of the war in 1939. *Frente de Madrid*, directed by Madrid aristocrat Edgar Neville, was the first Spanish war film to be shot and produced in Italy.⁵⁷ However, the film did not make much of an impact on the Spanish public, and critics noted that there were severe deficiencies in the film's context because it had been filmed

detonante del alzamiento militar, iniciativa necesaria para salvar a España 'del caos y de la barbarie'."

⁵³ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 75.

⁵⁴ Gubern, *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla*, 77.

⁵⁵ The original text of the quote is as follows: "...el peso del modelo industrial de cine alemán nazi sería muy influyente por otra parte, en la remodelación institucional del cine español en los primeros años del franquismo."

⁵⁶ España, "Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish feature films, 1939-1985," 224.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

in its entirety in Italy.⁵⁸ On the other hand, film critics consider *L'assedio dell'Alcázar* (*All Quiet on the Alcázar*, 1939),⁵⁹ directed by Augusto Genina and released at the Venice Film Festival of 1940, to be the best Spanish Civil War film shot from the Nationalist viewpoint. Although *L'assedio dell'Alcázar* does not strongly convey Nationalist political ideology, it incorporates the aforementioned historical themes of Spanish propaganda, such as collective suffering, the heroism of the martyr, and unity for the common good. “We [the viewers] are shown a group of ordinary men who become heroes through the strength of their ideals: religion, family and country are mentioned, but political ideology is neglected. Fundamentally the film exalts the army.”⁶⁰ *L'assedio dell'Alcázar* depicts the defense of the Toledo Alcázar and demonstrates the universality of themes used in cinematic propaganda by the Spanish and their effectiveness both domestically and abroad.

Once the fighting of the Spanish Civil War drew to a close and Franco assumed leadership of the war-torn country, he implemented strict laws of censorship that greatly debilitated the Spanish film industry. The multitude of foreign-produced propaganda films that flowed into the country during the civil war quickly came to an end under the auspices of Franco. Franco confined propaganda films to only those imported by the Nazis, which promulgated the same ideological foundations as his regime.⁶¹ Spanish films never addressed political themes and served more as mental escapes from the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The Spanish title of *L'assedio dell'Alcázar* is listed as *Sin Novedad en el Alcázar*. In English, the film is titled *All Quiet on the Alcázar*.

⁶⁰ España, “Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish feature films, 1939-1985,” 224.

⁶¹ Ibid.

everyday suffering that the Spanish people experienced. The multitude of foreign-produced propaganda films that flowed into the country during the civil war quickly came to an end under the auspices of Franco. “Franco preferred to encourage the production of escapist movies that avoided controversial subjects like class struggle and exalted conservative values of family, religion, and country.”⁶² With the incorporation of these conservative values, Franco continued to utilize propaganda to unify the Spanish population under his rule and to project the identity of Spain as one of strength and power to the rest of the international community. Despite the substantial foreign involvement in the Spanish Civil War, Franco maintained very limited diplomatic relationships only when he felt it absolutely necessary and beneficial to the promulgation of Spain’s political ideology and its position in world affairs.

⁶² Ibid.

IV. PROPAGANDA IN MOTION: THE IMPACT OF FILM IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Film rapidly became one of the most effective modern propaganda techniques of the early twentieth century. The large-scale citizen involvement necessary for victory in all-encompassing global conflicts such as World War I, the Spanish Civil War, and World War II forced governments to turn to cinematic propaganda to unify the mass public around a specific ideological cause. “The significance of propaganda in the politics of the twentieth century continues to be underestimated, and the importance of cinema in that propaganda has until recently been similarly undervalued.”¹ Film propaganda enables governments and political parties to quickly disseminate their ideological message to large groups of people, regardless of their level of literacy, making it a valuable political tool to create unity and garner support in times of conflict. “Cinema...attracted its audience from all classes and social groupings. It therefore had a capacity for binding a nation together, or for strengthening a national political movement that was unique at that time.”² During the Spanish Civil War, both the National and Popular Fronts employed film propaganda that integrated the elements of documentary and fiction film as a political tool to unite the international and national masses around their respective ideological causes of the conflict.

This chapter will explore documentary films that interweave elements of fiction to effectively communicate the intended propagandistic message. For the Republican

¹ Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1998), 3.

² *Ibid.*, 17.

fiction, *The Spanish Earth* directed by Joris Ivens exists as one of the most notable documentaries from the Spanish Civil War period and still exemplifies the use of human dimension as a vehicle for ideology. Despite the fact that *The Spanish Earth* was created with the intention to influence the national and international public, its artistic value still symbolizes its significance in the evolution of cinema. On the other side, the National Front was restricted in propaganda film production because the Republicans still held control over the studios and resources in major cities. For this reason, *Raza* directed by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia signifies the first documentary and propaganda film produced in Spain in support of the Nationalists. Although Franco's government categorized *Raza* as a documentary film, the screenplay incorporated fictional elements to glorify the Spanish military as well as Franco's personal history in his ascent to power. The dictator and his government promoted *Raza* to the Spanish masses as a political tool to further the regime's ideology.

The Spanish Civil War demonstrates the ability of film propaganda to transcend societal divisions and unite various classes of people around socio-political movements. The 1920s represented an era of experimentation in the film industry as characterized by the cinema transition to sound and the rise of the documentary film.³ "The film of advocacy produced an especially striking example [of the revolution of cinema in the 1920s], in a single career linking nations, genres, and eras."⁴ Joris Ivens, the leading filmmaker of Holland at the time, had served as a key player in the experimental progress

³ Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

of film design and the incorporation of social issues in cinema.⁵ Just as Joris Ivens was gaining notoriety for his cinematic masterpieces, Contemporary Historians, Inc. invited him to the United States so that the corporation could pitch a film – *The Spanish Earth* – depicting the anti-fascist struggle in Spain to him.⁶ A group of notable writers and artists including Herman Shumlin, Lillian Hellman and Dorothy Parker formed the corporation Contemporary Historians, Inc. to provide financial support for the Spanish Civil War documentary film that could potentially save Spain from collapsing under the stronghold of fascism.⁷ The commissioning of this film held significant importance during a time when Germany and Italy were becoming more involved on the Nationalist side and Republicans struggled to rally similar international support.⁸ Ivens recruited a variety of notable artists and filmmakers, including Americans John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway and John Ferno as well as Russian filmmaker, Roman Karmen, to aid him on the creation of the documentary on the Popular Front.⁹ Ivens and his team sought to create a “narrative that would inform and motivate the viewer to look anew at Spain in flames.”¹⁰ Through fictional reenactments with real Spanish citizens and the use of actual battle footage from the Popular Front, “Ivens could physically document the harsh

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 135.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John J. Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message*,” in *Malraux, Hemingway, and Embattled Spain*, vol. 60.2 of *North Dakota Quarterly*, (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota, 1992), 43.

⁹ Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 135.

¹⁰ Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message*,” 43.

realities of war with a sense of immediacy.”¹¹ *The Spanish Earth* combined documentary and propagandistic techniques to create a film that brought international attention to the Republican cause and a country facing the threat of fascism. Ivens’ propaganda documentary, created to garner national and international support for the Republican cause, premiered in 1937 and was shown to both the Spanish masses and to key government officials in western isolationist democracies.¹²



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¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 136.

¹³ “*The Spanish Earth: Cinema Program*,” Ernest Hemingway: Speiser and Easterling-Hallman Foundation Collection, University of South Carolina, accessed April 22, 2013. <http://library.sc.edu/spcoll/amlit/hemingway/hem6.html>.

Joris Ivens, along with Hemingway and Dos Passos, employs a triple narrative to offer diverse perspectives of the participants collectively fighting in support of the Republican cause. *The Spanish Earth* focuses on “people in their righteous struggle for noble causes – their land, their liberty, and their lives.”¹⁴ Although Ivens incorporates authentic war footage of the Spanish Civil War, this narrative structure glorifies the Popular Front in a mythic way to effectively link agricultural issues and the struggle for the land to the political issue of the oppressed fighting against the oppressor.¹⁵ The beginning of the film links the people to the earth, highlighting the first principal theme – the dire struggle to survive with the earth as the only source of sustenance.¹⁶ The farmers of Fuentedueña, a strategic town during the Civil War located twenty-five miles southeast of Madrid, undertake the challenge of constructing an irrigation system that will nourish the dried, cracked earth with water, which, in turn, will provide crops to sustain the Popular Front.¹⁷ Hemingway’s narration subsequently relates the town’s collective struggle and agricultural undertaking to the political oppression of the Nationalist troops. “For fifty years we’ve wanted to irrigate, but *they* held us back [emphasis added].”¹⁸ This political commentary directed towards the aristocratic government and wealth landowners transitions the first part of the triple narrative to the central panel of the film, which traces the story of a young man named Julian and his brief three-day return to

¹⁴ Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth* and *Sierra de Teruel*: The Human Condition as Political Message,” 43.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth* and *Sierra de Teruel*: The Human Condition as Political Message,” 43.

¹⁸ Hemingway and Dos Passos, *The Spanish Earth*.

Fuentedueña from fighting on the Popular Front.¹⁹ The second part of the narrative concretizes the association of the collective struggle of the Spanish people and the Civil War, as young men alternate between training to fight for the Republicans and returning to work on the land.²⁰ With the focus on the protagonist Julian, Ivens gives a human face to the Spanish Civil War to intimately capture the suffering and challenges faced by the Spanish citizens during the national conflict. For the last segment of the triple narrative, Ivens deepens the intimacy of the relationship between the viewer and the people depicted in the film by incorporating actual war footage from the Popular Front. This footage depicts the Republicans' struggle to defend the strategic bridge that links the road from Fuentedueña to Madrid, which the Nationalists seek to capture as the necessary step to secure their ultimate taking of the capital city.

With the use of genuine battle scenes from the Civil War, the third part of the film continuously integrates images of death with shots of contorted bodies of children and dismembered Republican soldiers to denounce war and communicate that, "only through death, such as in this type of battle, can there be victory."²¹ Additionally, imagery incorporated throughout the film highlights the theme of collective struggle and the suffering of humanity through the hunger, violence, and poverty experienced by the Spanish people, as illustrated by the long lines of civilians waiting for a loaf of bread and

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Michalczyk, "*The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message*," 44.

²¹ Michalczyk, "*The Spanish Earth and Sierra de Teruel: The Human Condition as Political Message*," 45.

the constant threat faced by civilians of air attacks by the National Front.²² Furthermore, *The Spanish Earth* accentuates one of the fundamental issues of the Spanish Civil War – “the fertile land and its wealth lay in the hands of the rich upper classes.”²³ The disparity among the socio-political divisions of the country comprise the key injustices in considering the issue of land reform with the wealthy landowners fighting against the poor, suffering farmers.²⁴ These scenes fully integrate the various underlying themes and story lines with the overall socio-political message that depicts the struggle of the oppressed Republicans against the oppressive Nationalists.

By depicting senseless tragedies, horrors of war, from the Republican perspective of 1937 and 1938, *The Spanish Earth*... put[s] a human face on war that ideally could move the viewer from ignorance or disinterest to sympathy or commitment.²⁵

Ivens allows the viewer to form his or her own conclusions about the ideological issues of the Spanish Civil War with heavy emphasis on the creation of sympathy for the Republican plight.²⁶

The Spanish Earth functioned as a national and international propaganda film through its attempt to establish a concrete, universal and personal dimension to the Spanish Civil War that would transform the conflict into one that seemed less abstract and more intimately connected to the ideological interests of the Spanish masses as well as other foreign powers.²⁷ Fundraisers supporting the Republican cause screened *The*

²² Ibid., 44.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 43.

²⁶ Ibid., 45.

²⁷ Ibid., 43.

Spanish Earth with the intention of convincing isolationist countries such as France, England and the United States to reverse their non-interference stance.²⁸ On July 8, 1937, Contemporary Historians, Inc. and Ivens presented President Franklin D. Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt with a preview of *The Spanish Earth* at the White House, hoping to convince President Roosevelt of the dire needs of the Popular Front.²⁹ “Attempting to preserve the status quo, the President noted his respect for the work but declined to offer any American assistance on behalf of the Republic.”³⁰ Although Ivens’ film was not able to convince western democracies to break their Non-Intervention Pact, it still held notable value in calling the Spanish masses of different classes and socio-political backgrounds to join the fight for the Republican cause.

The construction of the irrigation system in *The Spanish Earth* illustrates the broader sense of solidarity and collective struggle that countless Spanish towns demonstrated throughout the Spanish Civil War while fighting for the Republican cause. As highlighted in Ivens’ film, small Spanish communities recognized the need to unite and work together in order to defeat fascism and stop the Nationalists from seizing key cities such as Madrid. “It is here that propaganda plays an important part in placing individual events and actions in a broader political framework, and that the films...played an important role in that propaganda process.”³¹ *The Spanish Earth* combined documentary reenactments and fictional elements to act as a socio-political instrument

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 136.

³⁰ Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth* and *Sierra de Teruel*: The Human Condition as Political Message,” 43.

³¹ Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, 4-5.

that stressed the importance of the collective struggle and the necessity to unite and fight against the Nationalist forces.

Unlike the Republicans' cinematic productions such as *The Spanish Earth*, the Nationalists most effectively employed propaganda film at the end of the Spanish Civil War and at the beginning of General Francisco Franco's dictatorship. Throughout the war, Spanish studios remained in Republican hands, which seriously hindered Nationalists' propaganda film production and forced the party to outsource their production and editing to other countries such as Germany and Italy.³² However, cinematic contributions by the Italian and German regimes, as previously outlined, were minimal at best and only centered on exalting the achievements of Nazi troops in their support of the Nationalist army.³³ Once the Nationalists had assumed control of Spanish studios at the end of the conflict, Franco began utilizing propaganda film to unite the Spanish masses under his leadership in the hopes of creating one, unified international power: "Censorship and economic protection encouraged native filmmakers to propagate the official ideology of the 'Movimiento Nacional'."³⁴ In order to disseminate Spanish culture, especially to former colonies in the Philippines and Central and South America, Franco commissioned the Hispanic Council ("*Consejo de la Hispanidad*") in November 1940.³⁵ Shortly after its creation, the Hispanic Council produced *Raza* in 1941, which was labeled as the 'official' film version of the Spanish Civil War and was directed by

³² Ibid., 223.

³³ Ibid., 224.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kathleen Vernon, "Re-viewing the Spanish Civil War: Franco's Film *Raza*," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 16, no. 2 (May 1986): 27

José Luis Sáenz de Heredia.³⁶ *Raza*, written by Francisco Franco under the pseudonym Jamie de Andrade, establishes parallels between the story of a Galician family, the Churrucas, during the Spanish Civil War and the Generalísimo's real life and ascent to power.³⁷

Clearly *Raza* brutally simplifies the historical incidents, leaving out conflict between ideological and material interests. The Civil War is simply a fight between the Army (i.e. the authentic values of the Hispanic race) and international communism (i.e. 'anti-Spain'). The film emphasises foreign participation on the enemy side, defining the International Brigades as 'rubbish from the European revolutions' and at one point noting that 'Madrid is full of Russians'.³⁸

Raza never specifically refers to the Falange in an attempt to erase the socio-political divisions of the Civil War and to create a united Spain around Francoism rather than fascism. On the other hand, the film solely associates the Popular Front with international enemies, rather than a division of the Spanish public. Franco produced and circulated *Raza* as a vehicle of propaganda to unite Spanish citizens of different socio-political backgrounds, to promulgate his official ideology, and to expunge national divisions that existed as a result of the Spanish Civil War.

Raza begins with the story of the Churruca family in Galicia in 1898 during the Spanish-American War. The father of the four Churruca children serves as a naval officer and ultimately dies as a heroic martyr in the conflict against the United States.³⁹ The film

³⁶ Rafael de España, "Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish Feature Films, 1939-1985," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 6, no. 2 (1986): 224.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 224-225.

focuses on sons José and Pedro, who represent Franco and his brother Ramón, respectively.⁴⁰

[One] son, José, was also a military man enraged against the crooked Republican politicians he blamed for Spain's economic and moral bankruptcy. His brother Pedro epitomized these politicians and is portrayed as a materialistic lawyer with progressive ideas who offends his mother by straying away from the family's traditional conservatism.⁴¹

The story of the fictional protagonist, José, parallels and glorifies Franco's childhood and ascent to power as a military general, the leader of the Nationalists, and, ultimately, the dictator of Spain. The second part of the film highlights events of the Spanish Civil War and illustrates the 'heroic' stories of various military men who fought for the National Front. The mythic vision of the Spanish conflict continues with the depictions of the Nationalists and the Republicans. "The members of the [National Front] are handsome, courageous and self-sacrificing, but the [Republicans] are portrayed as disgusting murderers of women and priests." Similar to the poster art techniques outlined in Chapter III, *Raza* employs heroic imagery to glorify the Nationalist fighters and psychologically convince the viewer of his or her desire to appear and act as the attractive hero regardless of ideological beliefs. Furthermore, as in Nationalist poster art, *Raza* incorporates the theme of religion into the depiction of the dictator.

The film's visual dimension also points up more strongly another telling aspect of Francisco Franco's mythic projection in *Raza*. Román Gubern, in his studies of the novel/film, calls attention to Franco's double presence in the work, in the heroic but entirely mortal character of José, as well as in the references to the Generalísimo as a kind of divinity...⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., 225

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Vernon, "Re-viewing the Spanish Civil War: Franco's Film *Raza*," 29.



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Franco furthers his emphasis on conservative values and the reassertion of Spain as a powerful, religious and virtuous international power. The dictator frequently associated his leadership as one being chosen and guided by divine power, as illustrated by propaganda film and poster art, with the intention of taking advantage of the strong Catholic beliefs of the Spanish population to unite the country in support of his rule.

Furthermore, *Raza* incorporates a variety of the modern film techniques that had developed during the first half of the twentieth century to effectively emphasize its propagandistic purpose.

...Another characteristic [scholars] mention [about *Raza*] consists in a persistent dependence by this type of historical cinema on genre films: melodrama,

⁴³ “Raza (film),” Wikipedia, last modified March 17, 2013, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Raza1941.gif>

⁴⁴ “Raza,” Movie Poster Shop, accessed March 18, 2013, <http://www.moviepostershop.com/raza-movie-poster-1942>.

adventure film, war film, each of which lend support to the dominant view of history – the melodrama and/or love story stressing the supremacy of personal, psychological motivation; the adventure film with its indulgence of a nostalgic view of the past; and the traditional war film with its espousal of war as a confrontation between individuals and as a privileged setting for heroic acts of self-sacrifice.⁴⁵

As evidenced by *Raza*, the revolution of documentary film with the combination of multiple genres proved to target successfully the emotions of the viewer while simultaneously communicating and exalting a specific political ideology. This mix of genres underlines the value that Franco believed film to have as a means of propaganda for ideological and historical purposes.

In many ways the film was an expression of Franco's personal and political ideas. At the same time, following the examples of Hitler and Stalin, it confirmed his belief in the cinema as the most powerful propaganda medium. In sum, *Raza* was supposed to be a sort of 'Civil War textbook' for the average Spaniard. It was also the only war film officially promoted by the state.⁴⁶

Raza possessed significant propagandistic value immediately following the end of the Spanish Civil War and its legacy as a propaganda film continued after the conclusion of World War II, but the government quickly adapted its ideological connotations to fit the context of the post-war era. The multiplicity of the film *Raza* indicates the inherent value that it possessed in uniting the Spanish masses around the official ideology as promulgated by the state at any given time in history.

In the years following the defeat of the Axis powers and the U.N. sanctions issued against Spain, the film disappeared from circulation only to reappear in 1950 in a redubbed version under the new title *Espíritu de una raza* (*Spirit of a Race*). Resituated in a different historical and political context and destined for another audience, now imbued with a Cold War mentality, the reconstituted *Raza* sought

⁴⁵ Vernon, "Re-viewing the Spanish Civil War: Franco's Film *Raza*," 31-32.

⁴⁶ de España, "Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish Feature Films, 1939-1985," 225.

to disassociate itself from the Nazi-fascistic connotations of the original title by invoking the religious notions of ‘spirit’ and spirituality.⁴⁷

Franco recognized the importance of rallying public support around national ideology in order to maintain his strength as a leader during times of socio-political shifts in the balance of international politics. His regime closely controlled the release of all films, specifically those with any ideological connotations, and consistently encouraged the production of escapist, apolitical movies that glorified conservative values such as family, religion, and country, rather than ones that addressed political issues such as class struggle.⁴⁸ Therefore, *Raza* represents the Nationalists’ most notable cinematic political instrument used to unite the Spanish masses around Francoism and to glorify the ‘heroism’ of the National Front during the Spanish Civil War.

The Spanish Civil War represents one of the first conflicts to effectively utilize propaganda film to rally national and international support for both political factions. With the advent of the documentary film genre and the integration of fictional elements, cinematic propaganda, such as *The Spanish Earth* and *Raza*, created a fictionalized version of the Civil War in order to communicate a specific ideological message that would unite groups of people in support of the respective political factions. “Frequently, certain documentaries would resort to a type of fictionalization or dramatization, causing the viewer to interpret the specific or made-up actions of the characters in front of the camera to be regular aspects of their daily lives, as done by Joris Ivens in *The Spanish*

⁴⁷ Vernon, “Re-viewing the Spanish Civil War: Franco’s Film *Raza*,” 34.

⁴⁸ de España, “Images of the Spanish Civil War in Spanish Feature Films, 1939-1985,” 225.

Earth.”^{49,50} Furthermore, fictionalized documentaries, such as *The Spanish Earth* and *Raza*, glorified the Republican soldiers and Nationalist army, respectively, as heroes and martyrs fighting for the collective good of the people. Through the construction of the irrigation system and the united struggle against the Nationalist forces, *The Spanish Civil Earth* depicts the solidarity of farmers and young soldiers as they fight to survive and bring about a victory for the Popular Front. Through the recurrent images of poverty and death, “republicans become collective heroes willing to sacrifice their lives for their cause.”⁵¹ On the other hand, *Raza* illustrates the Spanish Civil War as a conflict between the Spanish Army and international communist invaders and further simplifies it as a battle between ‘us’ versus ‘them’. The film depicts the Nationalist military as strong and handsome soldiers with righteous values, while the international forces are portrayed as violent, immoral killers. The glorification in each of the aforementioned films psychologically targets the emotions of the viewer and intends to create a call to action to support the fight of ‘good’ versus ‘evil’, or of ‘us’ versus ‘them’. Lastly, propaganda film of the Spanish Civil War interweaves a human dimension that concretizes the conflict and shows the faces of the Spanish people who suffer and fight in defense of their personal socio-political beliefs, all of which “serves as a deliberate vehicle for

⁴⁹ The original text of the quote is as follows: “No fue infrecuente que en algunos documentales se recurriese a cierta ficcionalización o dramatización, haciendo que los personajes ante la cámara interpretaran determinadas acciones de su vida cotidiana o inventadas, como hizo Joris Ivens en *Spanish Earth/Tierra de España*.”

⁵⁰ Román Gubern, *1936-1939: La Guerra de España en la pantalla*, (Madrid: Filmoteca Nacional de España: 1986) 11.

⁵¹ Michalczyk, “*The Spanish Earth* and *Sierra de Teruel*: The Human Condition as Political Message,” 43.

ideology.”⁵² The story of young Julian in *The Spanish Earth* provides the viewer with a personal attachment to the conflict, so that he or she becomes more emotionally invested and sympathetic to the people suffering under the oppressive Nationalists. Similarly, *Raza* traces the story of the Churruca family, specifically of brothers José and Pedro, to illustrate the challenges imposed on the family by the brother who sympathizes with the Republicans and the subsequent redemption brought by the Nationalist brother. “...The fictional *Raza* goes beyond a participant’s review or rehearsal of the war to *re-write* the period within the frame of his own family story and to fuse the two in a glorifying myth of recent Spanish history as the triumph of the raza.”⁵³

These three aforementioned elements fuse together to create a fundamental propaganda medium that was utilized by both political factions to inspire the Spanish masses and foreign powers to unite in support of one side over the other and fight for their ideological beliefs. “All these considerations combined to make cinema the ideal propaganda weapon for the second quarter of the twentieth century.”⁵⁴ The early twentieth century, especially the Spanish Civil War, symbolizes a notable shift in the progression of modern cinema and of propaganda film. In addition to *The Spanish Earth* and *Raza*, many other films of the Civil War era incorporated newsreel footage of the conflict or created fictional stories in the context of the war. For example, *España 1936* (1937) directed by Jean-Paul Le Chanois compiles a series of newsreel footage into a short documentary to capture the heroism of soldiers specifically those fighting in the

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Vernon, “Re-viewing the Spanish Civil War: Franco’s Film *Raza*,” 27.

⁵⁴ Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, 17.

Basque region. Similar to *The Spanish Earth*, the group of people who later came to form Contemporary Historians produced *Spain in Flames* (1937), which was directed by Helen van Dongen. *Spain in Flames* attempts to present both sides of the Spanish Civil War although it favors the Republican side more so than the Nationalists'. Additionally, the Spanish republican government further demonstrated the inherent value in documentary and fiction cinema through the numerous propaganda films it commissioned during the Spanish Civil War.

The republican government subsidized newsreels and propaganda films, such as *España Leal en Armas (Loyalist Spain under Arms)*, on which Luis Buñuel worked, and later when the Republic's own film studios were set up, they made *Madrid*, directed by Manuel Villegas López; *Viva la República*; *Los Trece Puntos de la Victoria (The Thirteen Points of Victory)* and, most famous of all, André Malraux's and Max Aub's *L'Espoir*, which did not appear until after the war was over.⁵⁵

The effect of propaganda film did not cease as the Spanish Civil War came to an end and Franco's dictatorship began in 1939. In World War II, the Axis powers as well as the Soviet Union relied on propaganda film as a key political tool to influence the mass public and garner political, financial, and international support to further their desired ideological and socio-political domination.

⁵⁵ Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006) 249.

CONCLUSION

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR WORLD WAR II

Visual propaganda provided international and national actors in the Spanish Civil War with an invaluable political tool to unite diverse ideological interests in support of national political factions, thereby transforming the conflict into a ‘proxy war.’ As a result of its chronological position in history, the national interests in the Spanish Civil War created an advantageous ideological pipeline through which international parties could assert their respective agendas as relevant to the Spanish cause. To further exploit this pipeline, foreign powers worked in partnership with the national factions to disseminate propaganda films and poster art to the Spanish common people with the intent to rally support and unite the masses around a specific socio-political initiative. Although the Spanish Civil War came to an end in 1939 and Francisco Franco began his thirty-five-year dictatorship, the effects of visual propaganda in the Spanish Civil War lived on both inside and outside of the Spanish borders. Visual propaganda campaigns during the Spanish Civil War laid the groundwork for the major poster art and film initiatives utilized in World War II and throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

War art of the nineteenth century provided the thematic basis for the modern visual propaganda campaigns of the Spanish Civil War. Themes, such as martyrdom, the image of the “Other” and unity for the collective good, have consistently acted as vehicles for ideologically influencing the Spanish public throughout the country’s history. Originally serving as historical glorifications, war art depicted Spanish victories, highlighting the power and success of Spain in Europe and beyond. These paintings

especially those by Francisco de Goya served as the precursor to visual propaganda. In his paintings *The Second of May 1808 in Madrid: the Charge of the Mamelukes* and *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Executions on Principe Pio Hill* as well as *The Disasters of War* etchings, Goya acted as one of the first Spanish artists to utilize art as socio-political commentary. Through the depiction of suffering and death, Goya glorified the Spanish people as martyrs for the good of the state. Drawing on these paintings and history as inspiration, the Nationalists and Republicans fused these themes to create impactful visual propaganda, especially evident in poster art and cinema.

The dynamic imagery and thematic elements of poster art inspired the Spanish masses to unite for the common good of the country by supporting one political faction over the other. Both the Nationalists and Republicans employed similar themes in their propaganda campaigns, such as the heroism of the soldier and fighting for the collective good. On the Republican side especially, the Left also underlined the issue of land reforms in its posters to rally workers and landless peasants to fight against the Nationalist fascists. National Front posters emphasized state unity and Spain's return to the guiding international power in conservative, religious values. The Right sought to take advantage of the importance of religion in Spain, especially in regards to the power of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican. Religion holds particular value in the lives of the Spanish people and for the reason, the National Front interwove religion into its ideological platform as well as its propaganda campaigns.

Furthermore, the mix of documentary and fictional elements transformed propaganda cinema into a powerful ideological weapon necessary for political factions to

garner the support of the general Spanish public. In Joris Ivens' *The Spanish Earth*, the director sought to make viewers believe that, at the end of the film, they had come to their own conclusion about rising up in the fight against fascism instead of being strongly influenced by a propaganda film.

The aftermath of World War I created an international environment of social, economic and political chaos. As a result, many intrastate and civil conflicts developed such as the Russian Revolution of 1917, which directly influenced the propaganda campaigns of the Spanish Civil War. For this reason, foreign powers recognized a crucial opportunity to further their respective socio-political agendas and assert their power on the global stage through participation in the Spanish conflict. This involvement and the proxy war status of the Spanish Civil War signify an important turning point in twentieth century history. The Soviet Union had pursued various war efforts against international fascism, specifically the German state, during the early twentieth century. Soviet war films widely disseminated internationally, such as *Alexander Nevsky* by Sergei Eisenstein, depict the ideological conflict between the Germans and the Soviet Union, thus underlining the proxy war status of the Spanish Civil War. The Kremlin leadership quickly identified the Spanish Civil War as an opportunity to further its political agenda by masking it as support for the Republican cause. Through the repurposing of Soviet films, the USSR created propaganda campaigns with the intention of inspiring the Popular Front in its fight against the Nationalists and of swaying the Spanish masses from passive to active involvement on the side of the Left. Without the aid provided by the Soviet Union, the Republicans would have severely lacked the material and ideological

resources to withstand the Nationalist offensive for as long as it did. Within the context of the intrastate tension between the Soviets and the fascist states, Soviet cinema exemplifies the reasons for which the state involved itself in the Spanish conflict and the significant value that a Republican victory held for the Soviets' socio-political agenda.

On the side of the Nationalists, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy quickly became involved in the Spanish conflict, identifying the Civil War as an opportunity for both states to assert their growing power to the rest of the world. Although Germany and Italy contributed significant military aid to the National Front, their propaganda assistance often simply focused on the achievements of the German and Italian units in the Spanish Civil War, rather than garnering support for the Nationalist cause. The limited propaganda that Germany and Italy did create, however, further indicates the international ideologies and agendas at play within Spanish borders and the weight that the Civil War held for expanding the Nazis' and fascists' world influence. Furthermore, the Germans and Italians groomed Spain and Franco as an ally in World War II, especially because the outbreak rapidly followed the end of the Spanish Civil War. After testing their weapons and military tactics in Spain during the Civil War, the tension between the fascist states with the Soviet Union came to a head in 1939. Despite the signing of a non-aggression treaty in August 1939 with the Soviet Union, Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, forcing Britain and France away from their isolationist foreign policies and into war. In order to win over the masses at home and in territories under German occupation, the Nazis parlayed the propaganda tactics developed in the Spanish Civil War into powerful campaigns that integrated similar

themes such as heroic realism. As a result of the Nazis widespread use of propaganda during World War II, the concept has taken on negative connotations in modern history. As poster art and cinema have demonstrated, visual propaganda increased the significance of the Spanish Civil War by elevating it to a proxy war and by uniting the national and international masses in support of a specific ideology. International actors in World War II employed these advancements in visual propaganda as the groundwork for their campaigns targeted towards the masses.

Because of the strong interest in and availability of Republican propaganda during the Spanish Civil War, scholars have focused on the Left's campaigns rather than those of the Right. There exists substantially less scholarly literature about the propaganda initiatives of the National Front, although propaganda played an equally major role in the success of its war efforts as it did for the Popular Front. Similarly, the propagandistic involvement of the international supporters of both the National and Popular Fronts, such as the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, provide further areas of study related to the visual propaganda in the Spanish Civil War. Academic literature has laid the groundwork for these aspects of propaganda in the Spanish conflict and although I have attempted to expand upon this foundation, there still exists a demand for further analysis.

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