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The Art of Losers: Images of Women, Children, Farmers, Soldiers, and Clergy in Republican Spanish Civil War Propaganda Posters

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The Art of Losers: Images of Women, Children, Farmers, Soldiers, and Clergy in Republican Spanish Civil War Propaganda Posters

by

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Introduction

This is a study of the art of losers. The Republic lost because they were unable to unify militarily, politically, or even artistically. The Republican propaganda posters reflect the complexities of the Republican struggle. They reflect the factionalized world of the Republic, where communists, socialists, and anarchists bickered, argued, and failed to cooperate enough to successfully resist the invasion of Franco's forces. Just as there was no unified political message on the Republican side, there is no unified symbolic message in the Republic's propaganda posters. And just as there was no single political leader of the Republicans, there was no single production center from which the posters came from. This resulted in a wide array of images, messages, and slogans that at times contradicted each other.

The posters tell the people what to do, what to think, whom to hate, and what was important. In this thesis I will examine images of women, soldiers, children, clergy, and farmers in Republican propaganda as Republican war strategy. In chapter one I will present the politics of Spain leading up the civil war and provide a brief overview of the war as well as a description of the importance of the Catalan region to provide context for the propaganda posters. In chapter two I will explain the nature of the arts in Spain including the status of poster art, a description of two important Republican propaganda production centers, and a presentation of the propagandist goals of the Republican Pavilion at the Paris 1937 World's Fair. Chapter three will delve into Republican war strategy by comparing the realities of the specific social group during the war and the images of them in the posters. In chapter four I will explain the nature of the Nationalist propaganda machine as compared to the Republican efforts.

CHAPTER ONE

Politics in Spain during the Second Republic and the Civil War: 1931-1939.

1.1: Political Climate in Spain Leading up to the Civil War

The political climate in Spain leading up to the Spanish Civil war is an extremely complex topic, but we must investigate it briefly for it provided the foundations for the course of events of the war, and the context in which to view the propaganda posters. The Second Republic was established in 1931 following a monarchist dictatorship. The parties supporting the Republic were generally progressive, anti-monarchist, and anti-clerical, but over the course of the Republic the left became increasingly divided over political and ideological issues. The Second Republic saw a rise of reactionary parties on the right who generally opposed the Republicans and their progressive measures. The great amount of splinter parties formed during this period created an extremely complex political landscape that led to bloodshed, not compromise.

In George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, he says that when he first came to Spain he believed that the country was suffering from a plague of initials, meaning that Spain's real problem was that it had way too many political parties. I agree that much of the violence and political conflict that occurred from 1931 to 1936 could have been prevented if there was more cooperation in government between like-minded parties on the right and the left. In my explanation of the political climate I will identify each political group and then explain events that generated conflict between them.¹ I will examine the Republican Party, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the CEDA, the Carlists, and the Falange. Then I will

¹ George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1951), 48.

examine major events that took place during the Second Republic that reflect the political climate, and provide precedents for the July 1936 coup and the resulting Civil War.

Republican Party

To speak of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War is to mean all left-wing parties who opposed fascism. However, narrowly defined, the Republican Party in Spain was a bourgeois intellectual party, which was largely out of touch with the basic needs of the Spanish population. The Republic began in 1931 after municipal elections that soundly defeated the monarchy in favor of the Republican Party. But this Republican Party was already split into two groups, the Radical Republican party led by Alejandro Lerroux, and the Conservative Republicans. Lerroux was notorious for corruption, and over the next few years, transformed from a fierce anti-clerical leader to an ally of the quasi-fascist CEDA in the 1933 government. The Radicals attempted to expand the influence of their party and by doing so they incorporated the Monarchists and *caciques*, or large landowners, of the south. They claimed this was an attempt to incorporate instead of alienate sectors of the old regime, but the Monarchists and *caciques* were resistant to change, and the alliance only served to confuse Radical Republican supporters and foster mistrust in Lerroux's leadership.²

The Conservative Republicans were offended by the anti-clerical zeal of the legislation of the Second Republic and several members quit the party. The Constitution created a secular Spanish state but many Conservatives believed that several of its provisions were too harsh or unnecessary. The Constitution did not attempt to initiate foundations for secular state education, but banished all religious orders from teaching of any kind. It also

² Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War: Origins, Course and Outcomes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 30-32.

forbade religious burials and celebrations. Two leading Conservative Republicans, Alcalá Zamora and Miguel Maura, left the government after their disagreements over this legislation as well as with the agrarian reform, which proved their differences irreconcilable. Lerroux remained in office until 1935 when the corruption and the alliance with the CEDA were exposed, and Lerroux was forced to leave office.³

Socialist Party

The Spanish Socialist party (PSOE) was founded in Spain in 1879, and its trade union the UGT, *Union General de Trabajadores*, the National Worker's Union, was established in 1888. The PSOE emerged as the largest party in the 1931 government under the leadership of Julian Basterio. The Socialist trade union leader Largo Caballero served as labor minister in the cabinet. After 1931 the Socialist party grew to include not just northern dockers, miners, metalworkers, and industrial workers and labor aristocracy in Madrid, but also the rural proletariat. The main goal of the PSOE was to improve working conditions for the ordinary worker, and between 1931 and 1933, real wages for urban workers increased by 16 percent.⁴

Just as in the Republican Party, there was a split in the Socialist Party. This split was over politics. The old-line Socialists under Indalecio Prieto wanted to use democracy and politics to "raise the proletariat out of oppression," but the new, more radical, Socialists under Largo Caballero increasingly advocated non-political actions by the socialist trade union to achieve these goals. Largo Caballero became increasingly radical and there was internal fighting between *Caballeristas*, who were dominant in the UGT and the *Prietistas*, who were dominant in the PSOE. There was also fighting within the *Caballeristas* involving

³ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 52.

⁴ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 8, 29, 36, 30.

Caballero himself. In all this time the Socialists never envisioned an alliance with the anarchists of the CNT, *La Confederación Nacional del Trabajadores*. All of these things only served to weaken the Socialist party and the Republic as well. In 1936, after Azaña made an impassioned appeal to leftist parties in Comilla on the outskirts of Madrid to join together in a Popular Front to defeat the parties on the right. The PCE communists joined the UGT socialists and created a unified youth group, the Unified Socialist Youth, JSU.⁵ This is one alliance that came as a result of Azaña's appeal, but overall the Popular Front was a weak coalition and the left failed to unify into a Popular Front like the leftist parties had in France.

Anarchist Party

Anarchism was stronger in Spain than anywhere else in Europe at the start of the Second Republic. It had been introduced in 1868 and spread to southern agricultural workers and Catalanian factory workers.⁶ The anarchist trade union, the CNT, was founded in Barcelona in 1910. Its traditional head was in Barcelona, and the Anarchists were the first militias to fight the insurgents when the coup broke out on July 18th, 1936. Anarchists opposed the bourgeois Republic, and, like the newer breed of *Caballerista* socialists, encouraged social revolution to achieve liberty and equality for the worker. Opposition between the anarchists and the Republican government became a point of contention among leftist parties during the Spanish Civil war, causing disagreements and infighting which eventually led up to the bloody 1937 May Days in Barcelona between anarchists and

⁵ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 44, 57, 55.

⁶ William H. Robinson, "Barcelona in the Maelstrom," in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 418.

communists. After this event, the anarchists ceased to be a commanding party in the leftist resistance.

During his dictatorship, Primo de Rivera outlawed the CNT; thus, when the Second Republic was established in 1931, the CNT had to reorganize. At the time it was made up of southern anarchists set on revolution, pragmatic trade unionists from Catalonia and Valencia, and those who formed the more radical anarchist organization the FAI (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*), which had its roots in Catalonia and Aragon.⁷ Members of Spanish society likely to be anarchists at this time were militant revolutionary agricultural laborers from the south, trade unionists from Catalonia and Valencia, and those coming in to join the FAI.

The old-line anarchists of the CNT, often called *Cenetistas*, based their politics in libertarian principles, but for them politics meant cooperation with the lawmakers in government to bring about social revolution. The new breed of FAI anarchists favored direct action to bring about social change from the bottom up. These tactics involved members of the lower classes leading violent strikes, eliminating members of the ruling elite, and committing criminal activities. The violence perpetuated by the FAI was not supported by the *Cenetistas* of the CNT.

The anarchists of the FAI used violence as a necessary tool. Joan García Oliver was a leader in the party who explained violence, or “insurrectionary activities” as imperative to accomplishing their goals:

Faced with the surrendering attitude of the old Anarcho-syndicalists, we considered the Republic a bourgeois institution that had to be replaced by libertarian communism. This made imperative a wave of insurrectionary activities that, in turn, would be fought against by the bourgeoisie. This had

⁷ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 37.

to go on until the collapse of the bourgeois republic. We had to create in our militants the habit of revolutionary activities, so as to overcome their fear of the repressive forces of the state. This systematic practice of insurrectionary practices was 'revolutionary gymnastics.'⁸

On September 1, 1931, thirty of the leading CNT members published a statement condemning these acts. Some viewed this statement as a manifesto against the "constant, senseless robberies, killings and bombings practiced by 'those of the daily revolution' who only achieved widespread havoc."⁹ Many anarchists left the CNT and joined other political groups. Angel Petsaña, a member of the CNT's old guard, formed the Syndicalist Party in response to the actions of the FAI.¹⁰ Even though the *Cenetistas* largely disapproved of this viewpoint, the dominance of the FAI caused the CNT to fall in line with the "revolutionary gymnastics" advocated by the FAI, and they were treated as one institution during the Spanish Civil War. Anarchist propaganda produced during the war always contained both sets of initials (CNT FAI) and propagated a coherent message of libertarian revolution.

The Communist Party

The Communist party was founded in Spain in April 1920 by a group of dissident Spanish socialists inspired by the Russian revolution of 1917. The PCE, *Partido Comunista de España*, was a stronger communist group formed in 1921. Their membership and influence was limited in contemporary politics. In trying to form a political base, the Communist party was unable to compete with the Socialist and Anarcho-syndicalist parties except in the Basque country and Asturias, where tensions in the Socialist party allowed the communists entry. The revolts that took place in the coal and iron mines and steel factories in 1922 and 1923 can be attributed to the rise of the Communist party in the area

⁸ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 37-38.

⁹ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 39.

¹⁰ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 39.

and when Miguel Primo de Rivera came to power as the result of a military coup in 1923, he outlawed the PCE as well as the CNT and imprisoned its militants. When the Second Republic was established in 1931, the communists did not embrace it. The socialists were seen as “social fascists,” class collaborators, and enemies of the true interests of the proletariat.¹¹

The Communist party in Spain did not experience real power until the Soviet Comintern came to their aid to organize the Republican resistance. The Comintern created a Communist party militia, the 5th regiment, under trained Soviet officers, which soon became the best-disciplined unit in the resistance militias. It was organized and ready to fight at the outbreak of war. This regiment was soon to become the nucleus of the Popular Army, which was an effort, led by the communists, to unify the fragmented Republican fighting forces to compete against the stronger Nationalist forces.¹²

During the war, the defense of Madrid fell to the communists. The Communist party and the Soviet Comintern apparatus were based in Madrid when in November 1936 the government fled to Valencia for safety against the encroaching armies.¹³ The city itself was under the *de facto* control of the communist apparatus. The communist ranks swelled with international volunteers from around the world. The communists’ success in Madrid and the growing reliance on Soviet aid as the western democracies of England and France continued to practice non-intervention, caused the Communist party to be the main organizer of the Republican resistance. “*Mando Unico*,” the campaign for a centralized army, was the cry of the communists, who began to denounce all groups not eagerly joining

¹¹ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 18-22, 37.

¹² R. Dan Richardson, “The Defense of Madrid: Mysterious Generals, Red Front Fighters, and the International Brigades,” *Military Affairs*, 43 (1979): 178-179.

¹³ Richardson, “The Defense of Madrid,” 179-180.

the ranks of the Popular Army and submitting to discipline and control as traitors and fascists.¹⁴ In his memoir, *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell claims that the communist's emphasis is always on centralism and efficiency, and the anarchist's on liberty and equality.¹⁵ This brought the communists into conflict with the anarchists, a conflict which was to come to a boil in the bloody May Days of 1937, which I will discuss in detail later in section three of this chapter.

The height of the Communist Party's power came when Juan Negrín became Prime Minister in May 1937.¹⁶ Negrín was not a communist but his premiership was heavily influenced by the PCE because at this time in the war Russia was the main provider of military equipment. Negrín was set on winning the war and in doing so he had to keep excellent relations with the PCE, because they had the power to control the Comintern and Russian aid. By then the Republic was entirely dependent on Soviet aid and Negrín was dubbed "the Moscow man."¹⁷

Anti-Leftist Parties

The progressive policies of the Second Republic were extremely unpopular among dominant economic classes and institutions, and a variety of anti-Republican parties emerged in Spain in the 1930s. Many that opposed the Republic were members of the rural oligarchy, who did not want a disruption of the status quo. With the help of the Civil Guard and with the power to appoint people to local governments, the landowners were able to control and exploit the work of thousands of landless peasants. The *latifundias* were large

¹⁴ Raymond Carr, introduction to *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures* edited by Ann Wilson, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1986), 12.

¹⁵ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 64.

¹⁶ Carr, introduction, 13.

¹⁷ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 143-144.

plots of land owned by the rural elite and the peasants worked endless hours for extremely low pay. The progressive Republican government wanted not only to increase wages and regulate working hours for these peasants, but they wanted to redistribute wealth and land throughout rural Spain.¹⁸ Opponents to these reforms needed a political method for protesting this legislation, and they found it in the CEDA.

CEDA

A new anti-Republican party was founded in 1933 by the charismatic secretary of the CNCA (*Confederación Nacional Católica Agraria*), Jose María Gil Robles. In February of 1933 Gil Robles established the CEDA, *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (Spanish Confederation of Right-Wing Autonomous Groups), as a coalition of right-wing Catholic groups. The main slogan of the CEDA was “Defense of religion, fatherland, law, order, and property.” Members came from the professional urban middle classes, small property owners, farmers, and big landowners that had been alienated by the Republic. The CEDA had a more violent youth wing called the JAP, *Juventudes de Acción Popular*. The main goal of the CEDA was to achieve a monopoly of power in the government through parliamentary effort and then to establish a corporate authoritarian state.

The CEDA was successful in winning a majority of seats in the *Cortes*, or Spanish Parliament, in the 1933 elections. Using their alliance with Republican Prime Minister Lerroux, CEDA representatives then proceeded to roll back the progressive measures made by the previous Republican cabinet, because the ideals that were at the basis of the 1931 Constitution were in direct conflict with the goals of the CEDA. It is in 1936 when the CEDA failed to win a majority that a coup was staged and the civil war began. During the war, the

¹⁸ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 35.

CEDA began to decline in power, as there was no part in Franco's camp for Gil Robles.

Instead, the mass political forces in Spain after 1936 were the Carlists and the Falangists.¹⁹

Carlists

The Carlists were a Catholic group that had existed in Spain since the 19th century and opposed the Republic from the start. The Republic was formed by a group of leftist parties whose only common ground was opposition to the monarchy. The Carlists, a historically monarchist and Catholic party, accepted all those who still supported the Monarchy as well as those who opposed the Republic. Throughout the life of the Republic the Carlists received support from Catholic institutions throughout Europe including the Vatican, and from Catholic governments including Mussolini's Fascist Italy, which provided the Carlists with military aid including money and training facilities in March of 1934. When the Spanish Civil War broke out the Carlists in Navarre welcomed the insurrection and formed armed militias called *requetés* to fight for the defense of religion. In the war, these were the most feared and disciplined troops in the Nationalist army behind the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Moors.²⁰

Falangists

The Falange was founded in February of 1934 by several small fascist groups in Spain. It was headed by José Antonio Primo de Rivera and was financed by the *Renovación Española*, a new monarchist party led by José Calvo Sotelo. The Falange was instrumental in the formation of the July 1936 military coup, and its members volunteered in large groups to invade Barcelona. While the Falange was a fascist party, at the outset it was mostly made up of reactionaries, and very few were earnest Fascists. This party was transformed by

¹⁹ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 41-42, 46, 45, 127.

²⁰ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 28, 58, 97.

Franco after the death of Primo de Rivera into a true Fascist party. When Franco was declared *Caudillo*, head of the Spanish state, he unified all Nationalist forces under the single party *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Jons* (FET).²¹

Although he did not lead a political party, José Millán-Astray was a central figure in the anti-Republican movement throughout the Second Republic. He was a one-eyed, one-armed veteran known as “El Glorioso Mutilado,” and he founded the *Tercio*, or Spanish Foreign Legion in 1920. He was Franco’s mentor. Millán-Astray was responsible for the notion of the war as a purifying crusade against the reds. His Foreign Legion troops were made to see their task as a moral crusade. Millán-Astray was to head the press and propaganda organization of the rebels, and his rhetoric and dark visions and images of death would be characteristic of Nationalist propaganda throughout the war.²²

Events leading up to Civil War

The Second Republic was a period of insurrection and violence that precipitated a civil war; the *pronunciamento* of July 18th, 1936 did not come out of nowhere. The events of the Second Republic show a general trend of collective rebellion against supposed oppressors who were not protecting the interests of those in rebellion. The Spanish people began to lose faith in their elected representatives to protect them, and resorted to apolitical means to ensure their voices were heard. These events were major points of conflict between parties on the left and the right and showed the increasing polarization between the working classes and the elites. The events increased membership in the more radical political groups, which contributed to the polarity of Spanish society. By the time of the

²¹ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 41, 128, 130.

²² R. Geoffrey Jensen, “Jose Millan-Astray and the Nationalist ‘Crusade’ in Spain,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27(1992): 426-434.

elections in February of 1936, neither party was willing to concede power to their enemies. The leftist parties won a majority in the *Cortes* and the right was unwilling to step aside. The result was a civil war. The events of the Second Republic had important consequences that provide context for the political climate in Spain at the war's outbreak.

DATE	EVENT
January 1932	Uprising by FAI anarchists in Alto Llobregat in Barcelona
August 1932	General Sanjuro's Rising in Seville
January 1933	Casas Viejas uprising by FAI anarchists in Cádiz
October 1934	Rebellion in Asturias

In January of 1932 a group of FAI Anarchists planned an insurrection in Barcelona as part of their program of "revolutionary gymnastics." The uprising was quickly defeated and in retaliation, about one hundred *Cenetistas* were exiled to Equatorial Guinea.²³ This event is important because it shows that in the eyes of the civil guard and those who suppressed the revolt, there was no difference between the *Cenetistas* and the FAI anarchists, even though the *Cenetistas* attempted to distance themselves from the actions of the FAI. This event precipitated the union of the CNT-FAI during the war.

In August of 1932 General Sanjuro planned an uprising in Seville to take control of Spain for the monarchists. The coup was aborted, but made clear the intent of the Army to take control of Spain through military means if parliamentary means were not satisfactory. The 1933 elections produced a victory for CEDA and gave power to the right, but when the right lost in the 1936 elections, another military coup was organized to take control of

²³ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 39.

Spain. In the short term Sanjuro's rising served to spur Republican enthusiasm and legislative action. The Republic passed the Catalan Statute and the Agrarian reform in September. Parties on the right also changed strategy.²⁴

In January of 1933 the FAI launched another insurrection in Cádiz. The revolt was crushed everywhere but in Casas Viejas, where revolutionaries besieged a house of an anarchist leader and shot at police. The repression was brutal but what made the event distinct is that it was crushed by not by the old hated Civil Guards, but by the new Assault Guards that were created to police the cities. The right used this event to claim that the government could not retain order and was persecuting peasants. The event also showed the FAI's continued use of violence and insurrectionary activities to promote social revolution in the countryside. The repression in the countryside that came after this event showed the landowning classes' unwillingness to concede any power to the rural workforce. After the event 13,000 farmers and landowners marched against the government in Madrid and called for an end to the Law of Municipal Boundaries, which would allow them to hire foreign laborers for cheaper pay. This law was repealed in May of 1934, socialists were banned from arbitration committees and replaced by representatives of the landowners, and salaries were slashed. Representatives of the landowning institutions told those who complained of hunger or who asked how they were supposed to be able to eat to "*Comed República*" or "eat the Republic."²⁵

In October 1934 there was a rebellion in Asturias led by socialist UGT militants from the Asturian mines. Martial law was declared and the army was brought in to put down the rebellion. There are five significant things that happened during or as a result of this

²⁴ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 40.

²⁵ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 42, 43, 28.

insurrection. These included the first instances of terror against the church, the declaration of Catalan autonomy, the imprisonment of many of the instigators, the use of Army of Africa troops to put down the rebellion, and the counter-revolution that followed suit. Grudges and fears developed on each side as a result of this conflict, and it is important to examine these outcomes in greater detail for the great many effects they had on the politics of the Second Republic and the course of the civil war.

The Asturian revolt created a radical leftist identity more so than any political event of the Second Republic. The Asturian revolutionaries used religious persecution and civil disobedience on a higher level than in previous revolts of the 20th century. These are legacies of the event that continued into the civil war. Before being captured by the Army of Africa troops the revolutionaries burned over 58 churches and took hostages among members of the ruling class including businessmen and right-wing sympathizers.²⁶ This is a practice that continued in the terror of the civil war, and was mostly committed by anarchists.²⁷ Lluís Companys, leader of the Catalan Nationalist Party *Esquerra*, took the opportunity in the aftermath of confusion after the revolt to proclaim a Catalan state within a Spanish Federal Republic. Terrified by the declaration of Catalan independence, Companys and his cabinet were captured by the Army and imprisoned. About 40,000 republicans and socialists were in prisons at the end of the revolt, and were not granted amnesty until the Popular Front government won the elections of February 1936.

The right also asserted a new identity in the October 1934 rebellion. Instead of using the civil guards and the assault guards to put down the rebellion, the right used foreign

²⁶ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 50.

²⁷ Julio de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33(1998): 357.

troops. The use of foreign troops in this event was a legacy for the right that would continue into the civil war, when the Nationalists relied heavily on German, Italian, and Moorish troops to fight against the Republicans. General Franco ordered the Army of Africa including both Moroccan mercenaries and the Foreign Legion in to suppress the rebellion. This was the first time these forces were used on Spanish workers. In all, 1,335 were killed and 2,951 were wounded.²⁸ Many of the resentments toward the Nationalist army stemmed from this event. The counter-revolution that took place after this event was significant. In addition to the killing and imprisonment of thousands of rebels, Catalan autonomy was suspended, workers rights were rolled back, peasants were evicted, and a new cabinet was formed with Gil Robles as war minister.

Conclusion

The violent clashes between socialists, anarchists, civil and assault guards, and the Army of Africa in the years leading up to the civil war serves as a prequel to the actual civil war that started in July of 1936. Many of the same tactics were used in the war including the terror and the use of the Army of Africa troops. Also the history of the political struggle in the Second Republic serves as an explanation for why the *pronunciamiento* was ordered in July of 1936. The struggle between parliamentary and military or strike action was already present in Spain and split many political parties in two. The radicals benefitted from disunity and in 1936 the country was completely without a center. Infighting on the left continued throughout the war, eventually resulting in the fall of the anarchist party after the May Days of 1937, and the rise of the Communist party due to the increasing reliance on Soviet military aid. The rise of the Nazi party in Germany in 1933 also

²⁸ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 50.

contributed to the bitterness and divisions between the left and the right from 1933 onwards.

1.2: Brief Overview of the Spanish Civil War

The military rebellion that occurred on July 18th, 1936 was planned by high-level military officers who opposed the results of the 1936 elections. Their aim was to lead a military coup and install a General as the head of government who would rule the country as a dictatorship that would serve the interests of the traditional elites. The war can be divided into three periods as follows: the outbreak of war from July 1936-October 1936, the intensification of the war from October 1936-May 1937, and the fall of the Republicans to Franco from May 1937-April 1939. I will outline each period and then discuss the causes for each period that justifies these divisions.

After the 1936 elections, Army leaders approached President Azaña to not let the leftist cabinet govern. The alliance between the Army and the Republic was uneasy because of the Army's traditional monarchist identity and the Republic's anti-monarchist progressivism. One of the tenants maintaining this alliance was that the Army only allowed the Republic if Largo Caballero was not permitted to be a Prime Minister. The new cabinet would have Largo Caballero as Prime Minister and the Army would not allow this to happen. However, Azaña was a strong believer in democracy and refused to deny a legitimately elected government the right to rule. *Pronunciamientos* were not uncommon in Spanish history, and this situation fit the model as expressed by senior officers

When corrupt politicians in government put party before *patria* (country, fatherland), when they ceased to represent the general will, when they failed to maintain public order and left government 'in the gutter,' then it was the

duty of the army to put the salvation of the *patria* before obedience to the civil government.²⁹

Upon completion of army maneuvers in Morocco on July 17th, the army, under command of high-level conspiratorial officers, revolted and staged a *golpe de estado*, or *coup d'état*, on July 18th.

The first period of the civil war from July 1936-October 1936 started with a somewhat failed military coup, saw the rise of the Republican fighting force, European intervention, non-intervention, and ended with Franco as head of state. The Republican zones had nothing to defend themselves with but hastily formed and untrained trade union militias. The president chose to arm the militias and in Madrid and Barcelona these forces fought against the rebels and were successful in halting their advance. In Seville, Granada, and in other parts of Spain where the trade unions were not as powerful of a force, the cities fell to the combined rebel forces of the Spanish Foreign Legion, Army of Africa troops, and “volunteers” from Italy and Germany. The democracies of Great Britain and France refused aid to the Republicans clinging to a policy of non-intervention. This part of the war saw an explosion of violence between traditionalist rivalries, *paseos*³⁰, and mass executions that took place on both sides. Soviet aid came through for the Republic and the Comintern formed the International Brigades, which proved to be of great assistance for the Republic. In September the Nationalist forces united behind Franco.

The second period of the war from October 1936 to May 1937 saw the formation of the Popular Army and the International Brigades and included the Battle of Madrid, which

²⁹ Carr, introduction, 8-9.

³⁰ “*Dar el paseo*” means “to take someone for a walk, or a (one-way) ride.” A *paseo* is an expression that was used during the Spanish civil war when someone was taken from their home, taken somewhere and interrogated and shot dead.

was a great Republican victory that slowed the Nationalist advance, and the May Days that ravaged on the streets of Barcelona and broke the anarchists' effort to have a revolution. The government created the Popular Army in an effort to remedy the problems with the militias. The core of the Popular Army was the Communist 5th column brigade, which was led by trained Soviet generals who put a great emphasis on discipline. The Comintern also created the International Brigades to organize the international volunteers who came to Spain hoping to fight fascism. The Battle of Madrid in early November was a great victory for the Republicans that showed the importance of Russian aid and the International Brigades. The International Brigades and their role in the Battle of Madrid will be discussed more fully in chapter four, section one. This period also saw an increase in political turmoil between anarchists who were pushing for greater social revolution in addition to the war against Franco, and the socialists and communists who did not want a social revolution and instead pushed for discipline in the Army in order to win the war against Franco. With the turmoil in the Republic, Companys tried for greater autonomy for the *Generalitat*, and fighting erupted in the streets with the police forces of the *Generalitat* and the CNT. Azaña wept for this violence. I will explain the May events in greater detail in section three of this chapter. In May of 1937 the Republicans ousted the lame Largo Caballero for the pragmatist socialist Juan Negrín who was somewhat successful in leading the Republican forces against the Nationalist armies.

The final period of the war from May 1937 to April 1939 saw the decline of anarchist power, the rise of communist power, the steady Nationalist advance and fall of Republican strongholds, and ended in the surrender of the Republic to Franco. The anarchists were excluded from the Catalan government after the May events in Barcelona

and their influence declined significantly as a result of communist power. Negrín was wholly dependent on Soviet aid for all functions of government and the Communist party essentially ran the Republican government. The North fell to the Nationalists by October 1937, and the Nationalists began to bomb Barcelona in December of 1937. Throughout 1938 there was little success and many failures on the battlefield for the Republicans. The Battle of the Ebro began in July 1938 and was the greatest offensive of the war, but was lost in November. The International Brigades were sent home in October as the Nationalists pushed closer and closer to the Republican strongholds of Barcelona and Madrid. Barcelona was bombed in earnest in March of 1938 and the city fell in January of 1939. Due to food shortages and low morale, the government in Madrid surrendered to Franco on April 1, 1939.

After three years of vicious fighting Franco continued his purge of all things Republican so he, with the church at his side, could embark on re-writing history to favor the Nationalists. The fabricated Communist conspiracy was made fact. Meanwhile the whole of Europe became entangled in the Second World War and accepted Franco's non-intervention. The Republicans prolonged the war to three years despite astronomical inequality in arms, organization, and international support, for all their fighting it was the non-intervention of the Democracies, and the refusal of the League of Nations to investigate the Italian and German support for the Nationalists that sealed the Republic's fate.

In my research it became very clear to me that Barcelona was one of the most important Republican strongholds during the war and the city from which a majority of the propaganda posters were printed. This led me to ask why Barcelona and the region of Catalonia were so central to the Republican resistance and the propaganda effort. In order

to understand the messages of Republican propaganda, I must answer this question. This next section will outline the peculiarities of the Catalan region and the reasons for its importance.

1.3: Peculiarities of the Catalan Region

The Catalan region was a bulwark of the Republic because of its industrial strength, its position as the seat of anarchist power, and its artistic infrastructure. Catalans were swift to organize popular resistance to the rebel invasion on July 19-20. The interests of Catalonia were tied to the Republic in a unique way because of the statute of autonomy granted by the Second Republic, and the danger the statute faced in the event of a fascist victory. Regional autonomy was presented to the Army as the beginning of the disintegration of Spain, and the Nationalists urged centralization above all else. Other reasons for the importance of the Catalan region in the Civil War include the bloody May Days of 1937 and the mass exodus of refugees after the fall of Barcelona.

Barcelona was one of the only places that had experienced the Industrial Revolution by the outbreak of the civil war, and its production of textiles and other manufactured goods was vital to the Spanish economy. By the 1930s the industrial revolution had only reached a few areas in the North and was concentrated in the textile factories of Barcelona, the steel mills of Bilbao, and the coal and ore mines of Asturias, while most of Spain remained agricultural.³¹ During the 1920s Barcelona experienced rapid growth as part of a larger trend of urbanization from 1923 to 1930, during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera.³² The work force that emerged in Barcelona was a formidable group whose interests were

³¹Robinson, "Barcelona," 417.

³²Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 24.

represented by the “worker’s rights” campaigns of the Republican, Socialist, and Anarchist parties of the Second Republic.

Another reason for Barcelona’s firmly Republican identity was the long-desired and briefly enjoyed Catalan autonomy. And Catalans realized that this independence would almost certainly be taken away if Franco’s forces won the war. The Republic granted the Catalan region an autonomy statute in September of 1932, allowing for a Catalan regional government, the *Generalitat*, while keeping the armed forces, foreign policy, and tariffs under the control of the central government.³³ The army had always feared Catalan nationalism because it threatened Spanish unity, a belief strengthened by the rhetoric of Millán-Astray. Their fear of and unwillingness to allow Catalan autonomy was evident in the government’s repression of its autonomy twice in 1933 and 1934. Thus for this reason, at stake in the war were not only the fate of the progressive worker’s Republic, but also that of Catalonia’s government, culture, and way of life.³⁴

The rise of the anarchist movement in Spain in the 1880s was rooted in the industrial sectors of Catalonia, and with it came contempt for mass bourgeois society under industrial capitalism and the formation of modern Catalan nationalism. Anarchism developed a method of social disruption in the 1880s called “Propaganda by the deed.”³⁵ The “Tragic Week” in July 1909 showed the extent to which the anarchists were willing to engage in armed conflict with the state. The Anarchists of the union *Solidaridad Obrera* called for a general strike of workers across Catalonia’s textile factories in response to Antonio Maura’s

³³Michael Siedman, *Republic of Egos: A Social History of the Spanish Civil War* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 18-19.

³⁴Miriam B. Basilio, “Catalans! Catalonia! Catalan Nationalism and Spanish Civil War Propaganda Posters,” in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 436.

³⁵Robert S. Lubar, “Art and Anarchism in the City of Bombs,” in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 109.

conscription of many Catalan reservists for action in Morocco. In the midst of the strike workers took over the streets of Barcelona, overturned trams, and burned convents.³⁶ The actions of the anarchists during the “Tragic Week” in 1909 are not unlike the activities of the anarchists during the terror that followed the street fighting in Barcelona in the early days of the revolution.

Barcelona’s swift action against the rebel insurgency made it an example and symbol of Republican resistance. When rebel officers tried to take the Plaça de Catalunya on July 19th, 1936, militias of the CNT, POUM, and volunteers made barricades in the streets and assaulted army positions. During the fighting, the Civil Guard strolled down *La Ramblas*, which is the main central avenue in Barcelona, and with everyone looking on, not knowing which side they were going to fight on, they gave the leftist clenched fist salute and joined the loyalist Spaniards against their invaders. At this sight many Army members left the fascist lines and joined the militias. The next day the militias assaulted the Drassanes and Sant Andreu barracks, and took control of the city by July 20th.³⁷ The anarchists are credited with being the very first to act and form militias against the insurgency.

The dominance of anarchism in Catalonia also meant that the civil war took on a different meaning than it did in places where socialism was more dominant. Anarchist groups saw the war as an opportunity to implement libertarian revolution.³⁸ To the anarchists, the war and the revolution were inseparable. The rise in influence of the PCE brought their interests in direct conflict with this aspect of the anarchist view of the war. The communists’ emphasis was always on centralism and efficiency, while the anarchists

³⁶Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 12.

³⁷Robinson, “Barcelona,” 420.

³⁸Basilio, “Catalans,” 442.

was always on liberty and equality.³⁹ This manifested itself in a dichotomy between those who gave priority to the war effort and those who pushed for greater social revolution.⁴⁰ By early 1937 Republican authorities began to organize fighting forces under a single military command, which meant disarming the militias that resisted in the interest of coordinating resistance and resources. The anarchists resisted strongly because of their hatred for bourgeois democracy; their aim was to create a libertarian, collective form of local governance free from hierarchy and “bourgeois” institutions.⁴¹

The May Days in Barcelona refers to an un-planned confrontation between the *Generalitat* and the supporters of the CNT that resulted in the demoralization of the CNT, and the downfall of Largo Caballero and the POUM. Since the start of the Second Republic, the *Generalitat* and the CNT had an unspoken agreement that the *Esquerra* would control Catalan politics, while the CNT would control the labor movement. Once the war broke out a number of socialist and communist groups formed the PSUC (United Catalan Socialist Party), which was the Catalan branch of the UGT. The CNT contained low-skilled workers and the urban poor, and the PSUC attracted those afraid of anarcho-syndicalist power including artisans, urban white-collar workers, liberal professionals, farmers, and policemen. The *Generalitat* formed an alliance with the PSUC in order to check CNT power, restore state power, and to ensure the defense of private property. The POUM, a Marxist group unaffiliated with the PCE, urged the CNT-FAI to join them in an effort to destroy the democratic Republic.

³⁹Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 63-64.

⁴⁰Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 115.

⁴¹Basilio, “Catalans,” 442-443.

Two events exacerbated these problems: the influx of refugees into Barcelona after the fall of Málaga, and the introduction of rationing in February of 1937. In the midst of all these tensions, violence erupted in May. Violence broke out when the *Generalitat* sent out the Assault Guards to seize the telephone exchange from the CNT. A mini civil war raged for days, with the city divided into the industrial periphery and working class quarters controlled by the CNT and the middle-class center controlled by the Catalan government. Members of the CNT-FAI and POUM fought against the UGT-PSUC, left wing Catalans, and Republicans. Although the CNT forces had the upper hand, the CNT leaders favored the centralization of authority, and ordered their followers to lay down their weapons. This resulted in a demoralization of the CNT, and a rise in centralization and state control of the war effort. Revolutionary rhetoric died out after this event and after a cabinet reshuffle, Largo Caballero was forced to resign.⁴²

1938 saw the fall of Aragon and the isolation of Catalonia, followed by a Nationalist aerial bombardment of Barcelona. Barcelona fell in January of 1939. This sent over 500,000 refugees to France including many artists.⁴³ The path to France from Barcelona was mountainous and snowy in the winter, and conditions were miserable. In his autobiography, *The Forging of a Rebel*, Arturo Barea described the exodus:

The exodus from all the towns and villages along the coast had begun. Women, children, men, beasts, struggling along the roads, through frozen fields, in the deadly snows of the mountains. Pitiless planes over-head, a blood-drunk army pressing from the back, and a small band of soldiers checking its advance, pushed back inexorably and still fighting on, face to the enemy. Poor people with pitiful bundles, fortunate people in overloaded cars

⁴²Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 135-143.

⁴³William H. Robinson, "The Fall of the Republic," in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 419.

cleaving their way through the packed highways, and at the gates of France an endless queue of exhausted fugitives waiting for admission into safety.⁴⁴

The French purposefully kept the refugee camps in poor sanitation conditions to discourage people from coming to them. But the reasons to leave Spain were stronger than the reasons to not live in a squalid refugee camp. Many were compelled to leave Spain because of the almost certain punishment at the hands of Franco for all those who fought against or resisted the Nationalists. Living in exile was the only way to escape death and punishment. In June, France closed the border with Spain.⁴⁵ The people that had once resisted the rebels with revolutionary fervor and militancy in 1936 were completely broken by 1939.

At the outbreak of the civil war, Barcelona contained the most developed graphic arts and design infrastructure in all of Spain, and for this reason its large role in the propaganda movement is not surprising.⁴⁶ Artists in Barcelona energetically threw themselves into organizing collectives and exhibitions in support of the Republic. Organizations that developed after the war include the Syndicate of Catalan Architects, UGT and CNT organized collectives including the SDP, established in April 1936 by Hélios Gómez, film collectives, and new magazines. Photojournalists and trade union artists also produced work in support of the Republic. Propaganda produced in Barcelona during the war stressed the region's commonalities with the rest of Spain instead of highlighting Catalonia's differences.⁴⁷ The *Generalitat* established the *Comissariat de Propaganda*, which coordinated a massive propaganda campaign for the Republican cause. In the next chapter I

⁴⁴Arturo Barea, *The Forging of a Rebel*, trans. Ilsa Barea (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1946), 750.

⁴⁵Robinson, "The Fall," 474.

⁴⁶Basilio, "Catalans," 436.

⁴⁷Robinson, "Barcelona," 415-416.

will move from politics to explain the nature of the arts in Spain before and during the civil war.

CHAPTER TWO

Poster Art in Spain During and Before the Civil War

2.1: Poster Art in Spain

Poster production began in Spain around the turn of the century during the Modernist period, and is said to have ended after the Spanish Civil War.⁴⁸ Lithographic prints were inspired by contemporary movements in France, England, and Austria, and were used in journals as well as poster production. Artists' interest in posters arose after a major exhibition in Barcelona in 1896, and as a result of this exhibition, Spanish artists embraced the poster, particularly in Barcelona, where printing presses proliferated. Posters served a functional use for advertising, but fine artists did not reject them as commercial.⁴⁹ In addition to advertising, graphic art was prevalent in magazines and newspapers. The rise of graphic art journals coincided with the *Noucentista* movement in Spanish art, which is characterized by a greater attention to order and simplicity of form. Artistic journals of the 20's and 30's included *D'Ací D'Allà*, *La Revista*, and *Vell I Nou*.⁵⁰

The poster experienced another expansion in popularity during the Second Republic with the growth of the political poster. In her work, *El Cartel Republica en la Guerra Civil*, Carmen Grimau links the rise of the political poster with the rise of the worker and the progressive Republic.⁵¹ The use of posters during the Second Republic not only politicized the poster but also made it into a tool of propagandist messages and calls to action. In her

⁴⁸ Jordi Carulla and Arnau Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra/The Color of War: Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, (Barcelona, Postermil, S.L., 2000) 9.

⁴⁹ Francesc M. Quílez I Corella, "The Art of the Poster," in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 69.

⁵⁰ Francesc M. Quílez I Corella, "Noucentista Graphic Arts and Journals," in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 273-276.

⁵¹ Carmen Grimau, *El Cartel Republicano en la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1979), 11.

essay “Catalans! Catalonia! Catalan Nationalism and Spanish Civil War Posters,” Miriam M. Basilio calls posters a, “vital visual public nexus” for slogans and other such calls to action.⁵²

During the war, poster production was greater in the Republican-controlled areas than in the rebel-held areas because of the strong graphic arts and publicity infrastructure in Barcelona, Madrid, and Valencia.⁵³ Graphic art is different than fine art in that one person, at least at this time, was unable to fully complete a work by himself. Printing presses were extremely large and expensive, and were shared by artists. Also, the majority of artists at this time were left-wing. Artists that embraced the art of the poster during the modernist period were more likely to follow modern trends of progressive ideologies like socialism or anarchism than they were to support the landed elite and monarchy.

Widespread illiteracy in Spain also drove artists to transmit political messages through posters. Because 46% of the population of Spain in 1936 was illiterate, posters served the important function of conditioning the population without the use of words or literary argument. In 1938, as reserves of ink and paper began to become scarce, there was a debate as to whether newspaper and magazine publications were a better use of resources than posters for propaganda purposes.⁵⁴ Although the Republic mounted literacy campaigns during the war, posters were still a more immediate way of reaching the great majority of the public.

The Mobilization of Posters as Propaganda

The posters produced in the days after the invasion played an active role in the resistance effort. In the forward to *El Color de la Guerra*, a collection of Republican and

⁵²Basilio, “Catalans,” 437.

⁵³ Basilio, “Catalans,” 437.

⁵⁴ Carulla and Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra*, 7.

Nationalist propaganda posters, Jordi Carulla calls the civil war “the civil war of ink slinging” and the posters, “paper soldiers which took part in all of the major campaigns of the war.”⁵⁵ These posters would have been plastered on city walls and buildings, where they could be seen by many passersby. Orwell commented on the posters in Barcelona saying that they affected the character of the city.⁵⁶ As we will see, posters contained images and slogans that aimed to unite the people of Republican Spain against the rebels. The propagandists were tasked with trying to connect the interests of the Republic with the interests of the people.

At the outbreak of war in July of 1936, the Republican propaganda industry was completely decentralized. Propaganda posters were created and printed all over Republican Spain by various political parties like the FAI-CNT, POUM, UGT, artists’ groups like the SDP, government ministries like the *Generalitat’s Comissariat de Propaganda*, the *Junta de Defensa de Madrid*, the International Brigades, as well as independent artists. Jordi Carulla claims that there were more than 30 progressive organizations trying to get across revolutionary ideals through propaganda.⁵⁷ Because of this wide variety of sources, Republican propaganda is very diverse. As the subsequent chapters of this thesis will show, these organizations, artists, and political parties made up slogans and images as they saw fit.

In his preface to *The Palette and Flame: Posters of the Spanish Civil War*, edited by John Tisa, Luis Longo describes the messages contained in the Republican posters,

Along with general political slogans urging people on and giving them confidence in victory, there is denunciation of the fascists and Nazi

⁵⁵ Carulla and Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra*, 7.

⁵⁶ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 125.

⁵⁷ Carulla and Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra*, 9.

aggression, of the repressions of the ferocious bombardments. Along with calls to vigilance in the face of the enemy's provocations, sabotage and espionage, there are calls to work and produce as much as possible, or to read newspapers and books, or to show concrete solidarity with the soldiers, the wounded, the families of those who fell in action. There is satire directed against the forces of reaction and social conservatism, who hoped to get their revenge by means of Franco's troops, even more, by the armed intervention of Germany and Italy.⁵⁸

Propaganda posters were mobilized not only to condition the domestic population, but also to affect international opinion concerning the recent events in Spain. With no smoothly functioning central government, public relations campaigns were nearly impossible while the Republic fought for its life. But PR was central to the Republic's interests because of the constant need to secure foreign aid. The Republic wanted to pitch the situation as a legitimate, democratically elected, westernized government being overthrown by a corrupt, elitist, maniacal, Fascist group led by the evil General Franco. The non-intervention of the Western democracies of Britain, France, and the U.S. frustrated the Republic, which had to face the combined power of the majority of the Spanish Army, the Army of Africa, Adolf Hitler's Wehrmacht, artillery and Luftwaffe, and Benito Mussolini's Italian soldiers and supplies. They faced this behemoth of supply and strength with hastily organized militia groups, political disunity on the left, and vastly inferior Soviet supplies. Because of this seemingly hopeless power match-up, the Republic never gave up trying to change the minds of the European democracies to send them aid. But the mentality of appeasement was so strong within the British and French legislatures that expending any money or arms on a civil conflict on the Iberian Peninsula, was to them unwise. It would only expedite

⁵⁸Luigi Longo, foreword to *The Palette and the Flame: Posters of the Spanish Civil War*, edited by John Tisa (New York: International Publishers, 1979), xi.

world war, which was to come to the democracies two to three years later in 1939, after Hitler's invasion of Poland.

During this civil war, both sides committed atrocities. Spanish observers and participants alike were told what to think about these events based on what political party or ideology appealed to them, where they lived and what party or ideology was dominant in that region, and what social class they belonged to. Murders and religious persecution in Republican territory was seen as "red terror" for those living in Nationalist occupied territory because it was condemned as such in Nationalist propaganda. Those who accepted this reality that the Republicans were instituting a reign of terror were more likely to be in rebel held areas, or a member of the traditional landed elite classes, or a capitalist. But these same actions were lauded and praised through Republican propaganda as the workingman's triumph over the evils of capitalism and elitism. Those who believed this side of the story were more likely to be in Republican controlled areas, particularly areas where the anarchist movement was strong, and a member of the working class. Regardless of their personal feelings on the matter at hand, their view of the virtue of these events was more likely to be shaped by larger structures like social class, geographical location, and ideology of the majority. With its large population of workers and presence of strong anarchist ideology, nowhere in Republican territory was Republican identity so strong as it was in Catalonia. Because of its strong Republican identity, the region of Catalonia played an indispensable role in the propaganda effort.

2.2: Sindicato de Dibujantes Profesionales

The Sindicato de Dibujantes Profesionales (SDP), or the Union of Professional Designers, was a small group of artists in Barcelona founded in April 1936 as part of the

UGT. The SDP created posters for a variety of political, union, and *Generalitat* entities, and the majority of the posters made in Barcelona were produced by the SDP.⁵⁹ SDP members were at the forefront of the *cartelista* movement, and many continued to sign their works “del S.D.P” throughout the war.

Members of the SDP included mostly commercial artists and illustrators within the city of Barcelona. Just before the outbreak of war in Barcelona on July 19, 1936, the SDP associated itself with the UGT and the CNT. SDP members Hélios Gómez and Josep Bartolí were members of political organizations and fought in the streets against the rebels. While it would not be fair to say that all of the work produced by the SDP was directly affiliated with the UGT or the CNT, it is true that all of the prints produced by the SDP were leftist in subject matter and supportive of leftist institutions and unions. That is, supported the Republic and those fighting against Fascism, they were anti-clerical, and urged working-class unity, which according to the words of SDP member Carles Fontseré, was, “a romantic altruistic ideal held by many at that historic moment.”⁶⁰

At the outbreak of war, the SDP was caught unprepared to launch any sort of organized propaganda campaign, and the first posters to appear were individual works produced by a few cooperating members of the SDP. This was not an organized publicity campaign, and political parties did not commission the works. Fontseré claims that he, Jaume Solá, and Riba-Rovira, produced the first three posters of the revolution.⁶¹ By July 19th, members of the SDP together with new volunteers had set up a collective studio in an

⁵⁹Basilio, “Catalans,” 438.

⁶⁰ Carles Fontseré, “Catalan Posters of the Spanish Civil War,” in *No Pasaran! Photographs and Posters of the Spanish Civil War*, edited by Robert Hollis (Bristol: Arnolfini Gallery, 1986), 11.

⁶¹ Fontseré, “Catalan Posters,” 11.

old abandoned mansion in Barcelona. Most of the posters produced by the SDP during the war came from this location.

The SDP maintained its party plurality, with many members subscribing to different political ideals and parties. Describing himself as an extreme leftist, Fontseré went on his own accord to produce works for the FAI. Fontseré claims that the members of the SDP genuinely believed that the proletarian forces could work together. The goals of the SDP can be summarized in the words of artist Joan Commeleran, who wrote in the weekly journal *Mirador*, "Today, we artists are proclaiming our open anti-fascism, and our support for the revolutionary movement, offering our services wherever and whenever they are required."⁶² These services were used by political parties who commissioned works from artists in the union.⁶³

The posters produced by the SDP were up on the walls in Barcelona within days after the fighting, Fontseré claimed that this emboldened action because it made resistance more tangible and threatened the successfulness of the coup. The posters were so numerous that they competed for space on city walls; they were often taken down or covered up with newer posters within days. **Figure 2.2.1** shows a chemist shoring his storefront glass window with the wall beside him completely covered in posters. Writing in the *Mirador*, Augustí Bartra commented on the effects of the posters:

The image and phrase impose themselves on us in an obsessive manner. Never had their influence had such an efficient penetration- so much that it is cruel- until now. Today the walls not only have ears- as the cliché goes- but they have also learned to reason and to scream.⁶⁴

⁶² Basilio, "Catalans," 440.

⁶³Fontseré, "Catalan Posters," 12.

⁶⁴Basilio, "Catalans," 440.

The article stated that the posters contributed to the creation of a “*clima psicológic*,” or psychological climate, that affected the entire population. The posters became a weapon that convinced and motivated the people to resist the coup.⁶⁵

However, there were some who disapproved of the wide array of political messages. The same editorial in the *Mirador* quoted above called on the central republican government to control the number of posters issued as a means to thwart factionalism. The weak connection between the leftist parties that made up the Popular Front lent itself to disagreements that proliferated, festered, and erupted during the course of the war. It is because of infighting like this that the central government moved to exercise more control over propagandist images. But Catalonia was special. Here, the local government, the *Generalitat*, created its own Propaganda ministry, the *Comissariat de Propaganda*. The SDP and the *Comissariat* coexisted throughout the war and worked together on propaganda projects. In late February 1937, the SDP was hired by the *Comissariat* and the Communists to design a new uniform for the Popular Army, postcards, pamphlets, and an ephemeral monument in the *Plaça de Catalunya* to promote the benefits of military unification.⁶⁶

2.3: The Comissariat

The Catalan *Generalitat* established the *Comissariat de Propaganda* on October 3, 1936.⁶⁷ The *Comissariat* was the first Republican government propaganda ministry of the war, and it issued propaganda in support of the Republican cause as well as the Catalan cause in a variety of forms. Founder and President, Jaume Miravittles, was a writer for

⁶⁵Basilio, “Catalans,” 440.

⁶⁶Basilio, “Catalans,” 440-443.

⁶⁷Basilio, “Catalans,” 436.

leftist magazines such as *L'Opinió* and *La Humanitat* and was a close friend of artist Salvador Dalí.

The *Comissariat* commissioned and issued posters, postcards, pamphlets, graphic albums, books, and organized performances, rallies, lectures, and exhibitions. The *Comissariat* also issued music, theatre, radio broadcasts, and films. Propaganda produced by the *Comissariat* was to be distributed throughout Spain and worldwide.⁶⁸ It sponsored exhibitions emphasizing ideological messages. One such exhibition was the *Concurs de Cartelles Antifeixistes*, which opened in Barcelona on the day the *Comissariat* was established. A second exhibition opened on October 6; entitled *Exposició de Cartelles contra el Feixisme*, this exhibit was sponsored by the *Comitè de Milíces Antifeixistes*, or Committee of Antifascist Militias. Miravittles delivered a live radio broadcast on the day of the opening. The *Comissariat* was very effective in encouraging literacy among soldiers and spreading and preserving culture as an important part of the revolution. The *Comissariat* distributed cultural materials and books for soldiers at the front through entities like the *Serveis de Cultura al Front* and the *Serveis de Biblioteques al Front*.⁶⁹

Posters produced by the *Comissariat* often contained Catalan national symbols and significant dates in Catalan history. One such date, September 11th, is the date that Catalan armies supporting the Archduke Charles of Austria fought against the Bourbon King Philip V in the war of Spanish Succession. Basilio says that during the civil war people wrote articles comparing the September 11th holiday on which Catalans struggled against the

⁶⁸Basilio, "Catalans," 436.

⁶⁹Robinson, "Barcelona," 415-416.

centralizing reign of Philip V and its current conflict with the authoritarian and anti-Catalanist program of General Franco.⁷⁰

Figure 2.3.1 is a poster produced by the *Comissariat* containing a reference to that holiday. The readers are addressed in Catalan. The text reads: “Always! Catalans: Catalunya!” The central figure is a statue of Rafael Casanova, which is located on Ronda de Sant Pere in Barcelona. In other versions of this poster, the word “*Sempre*” (always) is replaced with the date September 11, making no doubt of the reference.⁷¹ This poster is supposed to stir feelings of nationalism and pride in fighting against invading forces in its Catalan audience. By equating Franco with the forces of the Bourbon King Philip V, the *Comissariat* used history as propaganda.

The *Comissariat* even invented a mascot of the revolution. The figure is a small, child-like boy wearing workman’s overalls, carrying a Catalan flag, with his left fist clenched in the anti-fascist salute and his mouth open in a shout.⁷² **Figure 2.3.2** is an example of a poster produced by the *Comissariat* that used this mascot. The text reads “The Mascot of the Revolution. The Smallest of All,” meaning that Catalonia is the smallest of all anti-fascist groups fighting against Franco.

Although these examples use Catalan national symbols, the propaganda produced by the *Comissariat* was not meant to alienate any political groups or exclude any anti-fascists from the cause of resistance. The *Comissariat* worked with any political group that was recognized by the Republic or the *Generalitat*. The propaganda issued by the *Comissariat* was to be pluralistic to reflect the diversity of the people of Spain and their institutions. The

⁷⁰Basilio, “Catalans,” 439.

⁷¹Basilio, “Catalans,” 439.

⁷²Jaume Miravittles, Josep Termes, and Carles Fontseré, *Carteles de la República y de la Guerra Civil* (Barcelona: Centre d’Estudios d’Història Contemporània, 1978), 282.

Comissariat worked together with the Ministry of Propaganda, when it was created, and also allowed ministries, councils and political parties, unions, and other political entities to use their valuable technical materials. Miravittles claims that this has no other intent other than to execute the commissioned works as best as was possible. The *Comissariat* continued to produce until the very end of the war in January of 1939, but after the fall of Barcelona their office had been moved to Figueras.⁷³

Graphic artists were not the only artists who used their art to support the Republican cause. Famous Spanish artists such as Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró were greatly affected by the war. Both artists lived in exile during the war, but the events of the war were emotionally troublesome for both artists. These emotional struggles were communicated in their art through pieces like Picasso's *Guernica*, and Miró's *The Reaper*, both created for and displayed at the Spanish Republican pavilion at the Paris World's Fair in 1937. These pieces used fine art to communicate the problems and issues of the war for a worldwide viewing audience. The Republican Pavilion itself was a propaganda tool to garner international support.

2.4: Spanish Republican Pavilion as Propaganda

The Spanish Republican pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937 was an international propaganda effort by the suffering Republic using fine art. At a time when the Republican economy was in such peril it seems strange that they would find funds to spend on an elaborate pavilion at a World's Fair. But in the eyes of the Republican government, this was the most intelligent use of resources for propaganda purposes to an international audience

⁷³Jaume Miravittles, introduction to *Carteles de la República y de la Guerra Civil, or Carteles de Guerra en España*, by Jaume Miravittles, Josep Termes, and Carles Fontseré (Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis d'Història Contemporània, 1978), 14.

while the Non-Intervention pact was preventing the Republic from receiving aid. It would require giving an impression of normalcy, government stability, and organizational capacity, making use of the occasion to harvest good publicity for the Republic's achievements in its few years of existence amidst all the rumors and bad publicity caused by the terror. It would also warn of the danger to world stability that a potential fascist victory in Spain would entail.⁷⁴

As ambassador to Paris, Luis Araquistáin was working to gain weapons from the French state, and was trying to find the best way to generate positive public opinions of Republican Spain outside the country, he saw the World's fair as the perfect opportunity to do this. At the ceremony held for the laying of the first stone of the pavilion, Araquistáin commented on why the Pavilion was so important and why the Republic cared about art and culture during the war:

It seems that some have found it strange that in the midst of a war, the Spanish Republic could find the time and the disposition to be present at this exhibition of Culture and Work. It is precisely this that distinguished it from the rebellious armed minority that has neither time nor talent for anything but the destruction of life and human values.

For Republican Spain, the war is only an accident, a transitory evil that has been thrust upon it, but which does not in any way keep it from continuing to create material and spiritual works. It is for precisely this that it wishes to live, for which it is fighting: to be free in intellectual creation, social justice, and material prosperity.

For this reason, it must triumph. Our pavilion will be the best example of its historic continuity, and the best justification for it. We shall see that the Spanish people must win, because like Minerva, they possess all weapons: the weapon of Liberty, Culture, and Work.⁷⁵

Although the pavilion failed in its efforts to secure a pledge of aid from the democratic governments at the World's Fair, the Pavilion contained beautiful pieces of art,

⁷⁴Josefine Alix, "From War to Magic: The Spanish Pavilion, Paris 1937," in *Barcelona and Modernity*, edited by William H. Robinson et al. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 450.

⁷⁵Alix, "From War to Magic," 451.

architecture, textiles, and costume. Like many Republican propaganda posters, the entire pavilion stuck to a color palette of black, white, and red, the colors of the Anarchist party. Artists such as Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Julio Gonzales, Alexander Calder, and Josep Lluís Sert contributed work to the exhibition. Picasso's *Guernica* was arguably the most famous piece of art at the entire exhibition. It was painted specifically for this pavilion and commemorated the Nationalist bombing of the Basque town of Guernica, which claimed almost entirely civilian casualties. Another famous piece at the pavilion was Miró's mural *The Reaper*. Miró, a Catalan native, depicted a Catalan peasant wearing a red *barretina* and holding a sickle in his right hand while crying in pain, representing the suffering of the Catalan people.

With the pavilion, the Republic used fine art to convince international audiences of the Republic's right to win the war based on its commitment to liberty, culture, and work. Inside of Spain, the propaganda poster was used to convince the people of Spain of the Republic's inherent goodness and value. The propaganda posters also attempted to instruct different sections of the population on how they should help the Republic win the war. In the following chapter, we will see how the Republic portrayed images of women, army men, farmers, children, and clergy to instruct them on their role in the Republican war machine.

CHAPTER THREE

Images and Themes of Republican Propaganda Posters

3.1: Realities and Images of the Republican Army in Republican Propaganda

During the war years, three types of propaganda were made to speak to or about members of the Republican Army. One form encouraged enlistment into militias. Another attempted to remedy the problems within the Republican militias. And finally some propaganda was created in the attempt to garner international support. This propaganda was made by just about every political party and political organization throughout Spain, as winning the war was the most important goal of the Republic. A brief overview of the recruitment of resistance forces on the Republican side is needed before turning to an analysis of propaganda posters.

Realities of the Republican Army

In the Spanish Civil War, the Republicans were outnumbered and out-matched from the beginning. The generals who led the coup in July had most of the army on their side, as well as the large landowners and the Catholic Church. By the end of July, the rebels could also count on military support from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. As we have seen, those loyal to the Republic had to organize a resistance, but faced several challenges including changes in leadership, in-fighting between leftist groups, inferior military training and leadership experience, and the lack of support from the governments of France and Britain. The Soviet Comintern helped to organize the formation of the International Brigades, who are credited as the “saviors of Madrid,” and who advanced the rise of the Communist Party in Spain.

The Republic saw four prime ministers throughout the fighting. Diego Martínez Barrio resigned from office on the day of the revolt in favor of José Giral. The next Prime Minister was Socialist leader Largo Caballero, who was forced out of office by his opponents in favor of Juan Negrín, who ruled the Republic until it surrendered to Franco. As soon as he took office, Prime Minister José Giral authorized the arming of people's militias, which had already been forming in the major cities entirely spontaneously.⁷⁶ After the 20th of July, the Minister of the Interior sent a message to all mayors of towns still in Republican territory telling them to cooperate with workers organizations in forming militia units.⁷⁷

In these early days of the resistance in large Republican-held cities like Madrid and Barcelona, there was a great amount of street fighting and mob violence. In Barcelona, the rebellion was put down due to the initiative of the CNT and FAI anarchists, the POUM socialists and the assault and civil guards that had remained loyal to the Republic. Throughout the fighting the *Generalitat* continued to function but real control lay with the CNT who had their own militia. In Madrid, the UGT socialist trade union had effective control of the city, and the rebellion was put down by loyal troops and armed workers.⁷⁸ Once Republican and rebel zones were established in the areas around Catalonia, Aragon, and Castile, both sides conducted raids into enemy territory, called the "Red Terror" when conducted by the Republicans, and "White terror" when conducted by the rebels.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Wilson, Ann, ed., *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1986), 39.

⁷⁷Verle B. Johnston, *Legions of Babel: the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1967), 23.

⁷⁸Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 48-52.

⁷⁹Johnston, *Legions of Babel*, 26.

Once Giral authorized the arming of the militias, volunteers came in from the street under communist, socialist, and anarcho-syndicalist leadership.⁸⁰ The Catalan communists headed for the Aragon front in late July. One of the first all-Spanish militias formed in Barcelona, the Durruti column, was led by Anarchist leader and key figure in Barcelona resistance, Buenaventura Durruti. This was the largest and strongest of the assorted groups fighting on the Aragon front.⁸¹ International volunteers crossed the border into Spain mostly from France at the very beginning of the war. Many were communist, socialist, and anarchist political refugees who had been living in France exiled from Germany, Italy, and Poland, and formed their own columns and joined the militias.⁸² The militias were poorly equipped and largely untrained.

These militias could count on the support of about 12,000 assault guards, most of the air force, a large majority of the navy, but only about 500 out of 15,000 officers of the regular army. Of these 500, only 25 had been to the General Staff College at Saragossa. This lack of experience manifested itself in an operational handicap for the Republicans.⁸³ This was a main reason for the Republic's reliance on Soviet leadership in the communist army and the international brigades. To remedy the defects of these militias, the Republican government created the Popular Army, made up of mixed brigades, on September 30, 1936.⁸⁴

The Soviet Comintern coordinated the Defense of Madrid after Largo Caballero's government fled to Valencia in November as the Nationalists advanced on the city. The

⁸⁰Johnston, *Legions of Babel*, 25.

⁸¹Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 39, 69.

⁸²Johnston, *Legions of Babel*, 28.

⁸³Johnston, *Legions of Babel*, 22.

⁸⁴Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 61.

Junta de Defensa was established to defend the city, but it was largely dominated by the Communist apparatus.⁸⁵ The Comintern organized the Communist Party militia called the 5th regiment, which was recognized as the best organized and disciplined of the Republican fighting forces, and was ready to fight on the 18th of July. The Soviet staff in Madrid saw the need for Soviet aid because the Popular Front militias were not strong enough to combat Franco's well disciplined and supplied armies. Madrid ambassador Rosenberg and General Berzin asked Moscow for aid in the form of military supplies and equipment to be dispatched to Spain immediately and that the Comintern undertake the organization of a military unit to be made up of foreign volunteers and directed by a Comintern political and military staff. To this request, Stalin famously replied, "The cause of Spain is the cause of all advanced and progressive mankind."⁸⁶

Stalin sent Soviet tanks and planes, Red army advisors, technicians, and ultimately what came to be known as the International Brigades. A command base was established at Albacete and these volunteers poured into Spain starting on October 13, 1936.⁸⁷ In all, 4 brigades were made, including the XI, XII, XIII, and IV Brigades, all made up of mixed battalions of French, British, Germans, Italians, Slavs, Poles, and Americans. These brigades were to be crucial in the battle for the University City, the defense of Madrid, the Battle of Jarama, and the Battle of the Ebro. By mid October 1938, the International Brigades began to leave Spain at the urging of Prime Minister Negrín, and after the Munich Pact in October of 1938, Stalin called back the International Brigade members in Spain.⁸⁸

Images of the Republican Army in Republican Propaganda

⁸⁵Johnston, *Legions of Babel*, 179.

⁸⁶ Richardson, "The Defense of Madrid," 179.

⁸⁷Richardson, "The Defense of Madrid," 179-180.

⁸⁸Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War, A History in Pictures*, 161-173.

At the start of the war, one of the main functions of propaganda was to encourage enlistment in militias and to bolster support for the Republican military resistance. These posters were printed in major cities by major Republican groups like the CNT, UGT, POUM, and the FAI, who had their own militia groups, as well as government agencies like the *Generalitat*, the Soviet Comintern, and the *Junta de Defensa de Madrid*. The numerical inferiority of the Republican fighting forces caused these Republican propaganda machines to encourage enlistment.

Figure 3.1.1 is a poster produced by the CNT-FAI that addresses the worker directly and reflects the democratic nature of the anarchist columns. The text reads in Spanish, “Worker! Your entry into the ‘Column of Iron,’ strengthens the revolution!” The Column of Iron was an anarchist militia unit in Valencia that fought in the Teruel offensive. The male figure is dressed in workman’s overalls next to a giant literal column of iron, with his rifle at his side and his arm poised to throw forward as if gesticulating for a great speech. He is perhaps shouting this command to the workers. His identity as a worker represents the democratic nature of the Column of Iron, and of the anarchist philosophy of equality.

Figure 3.1.2 is a poster that encouraged enlistment regardless of political party affiliation. It was designed by S.D.P. member Oliva Perotes and reads in Catalan, “Enlist in the Antifascist Militias. To enlist: at the Hotel Colon, Barcelona.” By calling the militias “Anti-fascist,” the artist is talking about a wider organizational effort, not just separate party militias that were forming. Since the beginning of the war, propaganda produced by the S.D.P. emphasized antifascist unity and not simply party affiliation.⁸⁹

⁸⁹Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 132.

These same unions, the UGT and the CNT, produced propaganda for the Spanish air force and for the Spanish navy. These posters encouraged enlistment in the same manner as those produced for militia enlistment, and cast sailors and pilots as heroes. The revolt was carried out by naval officers was quickly crushed by the majority of navy personnel who remained loyal to the Republic. A Republican Navy official claimed that seventy percent of the Navy's officers, that is those who had supported the rebellion, were killed by their crews who remained loyal to the Madrid government.⁹⁰ However, the Spanish navy was inactive for most of the war due to the lack of experienced officers.⁹¹

Figure 3.1.3 is a poster produced by the CNT that gives credit to the “heroism” of these navy soldiers. The text reads in Spanish, “Our coasts are defended by our brave sailors” and depicts a fascist ship approaching on the horizon and a Spanish Republican sailor pointing cannons at it. **Figure 3.1.4** is another poster produced by the CNT praising the sailors as heroes. It depicts an idealized Spanish sailor and simply reads, “A Sailor: A Hero,” again praising Spanish sailors for their deeds. However, this poster could also be alluding to a similar event that took place on the Russian battleship Potemkin in 1905, when the crew mutinied against their officers of the Tsarist regime. **Figure 3.1.5** is another anarchist poster that likens Spanish air force pilots to Icarus, the flying man from Greek Mythology.⁹² The text reads, “Look at the heroes!”

Besides encouraging enlistment and bolstering support, there was also a great amount of propaganda aimed at addressing the issues that faced the Republican resistance forces. These issues included a lack of unity and supplies, cold weather conditions, and problems

⁹⁰Johnston, *Legions of Babel*, 24.

⁹¹Carr, introduction, 15.

⁹²Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 156.

with drunkenness, venereal disease, cleanliness, and illiteracy. Owing to the way in which the militias were formed and the overall lack of experienced commanders, there was a problem with factionalism in the army. Political rivalries on the battlefield caused costly delays and embarrassing failures.⁹³ Militias were also unwilling to disband and conform into the Popular Army once it was created. Because the Popular Army was dominated by the 5th column communists, many anarchist militiamen did not want to join. The imminence of the Nationalist advance forced the Republicans into a unified resistance, because it was the only way to win the war. A common phrase that was used in propaganda to stress unified command is "*Mando Unico*."

Figure 3.1.6 is a poster produced by the CNT-UGT collaborative entity the Syndicalist Party, and displays the benefits of *mando unico*. In this poster, a group of soldiers have their rifles and bayonets pointed at a man dressed as a stereotypical businessman with his checkered pants and comically small top hat, representing capitalism, standing on top of a broken swastika. This attempts to claim that the capitalists and the fascists are one in the same. While many capitalists were also Republicans, this poster seeks to make an enemy out of the businessman to unify all workers against oppressors. The red and black colors used are the colors of the communists and the anarchists, and their combination in this poster also stresses unity. A red hand points down at the figure with the text "unified command," as if pointing to the enemy. Perhaps the hand is red and not black because of the superiority of the communist fighting forces among the Republican resistance groups. The text above reads, "Discipline," and when coupled with the obvious superiority of the

⁹³Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 115-116.

soldiers against the businessman in this poster, claims what can be achieved through a disciplined Republican fighting force.

The formation of the Popular Army was the crowning achievement of the attempts to organize the Republican militias under a unified command. Some propaganda stressed necessity of joining together. **Figure 3.1.7** is a poster produced by the Junta Delegada de defensa de Madrid that provides a direct visual symbol of unification by organizing the flags of different parties and militias into a patchwork in the shape of a soldier's helmeted profile. The text reads, "All the militias unite in the Popular Army." Any militiaman could look at this poster and recognize his flag alongside the communist party flag, the anarchist flag, the flag of the leftist workers, the flag of Valencia, the Catalan flag, the Basque flag, the Gallegan flag, the Castilian flag, and the Spanish Republican flag, under a slogan that encouraged them to unite with other militias in the Popular Army.⁹⁴

The Republican militias were poorly supplied with guns and ammunition. Russian tanks from Moscow proved decisive in the Battle for Madrid.⁹⁵ But there was much propaganda encouraging the production and mobilization of arms and ammunition. **Figure 3.1.8** is a poster designed by the SDP artist Solá and produced by the UGT. The text reads in Catalan, "More men! More arms! More ammunition!" The poster features a line of men with their bayonets fixed downward towards a swastika.

Figure 3.1.9 is a poster produced by the Ministry of Public Instruction urging supplying the front. The text reads, "Supplying the front should be the war cry of the rear guard," and shows trucks labeled, "supplies" and "munitions" traveling up a large red arrow like a road, that points toward a horizon with fences. We can assume this horizon is the front and

⁹⁴Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 184.

⁹⁵Richardson, "The Defense of Madrid," 184.

perhaps the ground-level cloud with red lines coming out of it is a fire or an explosion. This poster is an unrealistic depiction of the realities of the Republic's abilities to supply the front. In an effort to increase confidence on the home front, the Ministry of Public Instruction made it look as easy as just separating the supplies into one truck and munitions into another and traveling up a road to the battlefield. As we have seen, this was not the reality and the fronts constantly suffered from a lack of food, clothing, other supplies, and most importantly, ammunition.

The winters of 1937 and 1938 were extremely cold, and much propaganda was produced in an attempt to stimulate the rearguard to produce clothing for the soldiers.⁹⁶

Figure 3.1.10 is an anarchist poster that shows a soldier without sufficient clothing. This poster speaks directly to a specific group of workers on the home front calling for them to make clothing. The text reads:

Men and women of the fabric, textile, and clothing syndicate, on the front it is cold! In every workshop, factory, and place of production, you need to organize collectively. We defend the liberty and life of everyone. You have the duty to speak little and give us more help.

This is a very detailed instruction and broadcasts not only the need for clothing for soldiers on the front, but also the need for workers to organize collectively to increase production, and to minimize defeatist talk and the spreading of rumors, which could decrease production. The text attempts to explain to the workers in these industries that they have a role in this war, and that is to help the soldiers who are, "defending the liberty and life of everyone." The image of the poor soldier in short-sleeves in the freezing snow was meant to illicit sympathy and would drive the viewer to produce more out of a sense of responsibility and guilt. The text almost accuses the workers in these industries of not

⁹⁶Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 162.

doing their part. This is a very aggressive form of propaganda in that it speaks directly to a group of people in a very patronizing tone.

By April 13 of 1938, General Rojo, a leader of the Popular Army, reported a “total moral crisis” in the Republican armies.⁹⁷ The problems that have been discussed including lack of experience, training, and communication decreased morale considerably. Desertion, drunkenness, and discipline were widespread and weakened the Popular Army. **Figure 3.1.11** is a poster produced by the Aragon Department of Public Order and denounces drunks as parasites. The text reads, “A drunk is a parasite, eliminate him!” and shows an inactive man smoking a cigarette while leaning on a giant bottle of wine. In his book, *The Spanish Civil War*, Romero Salvadó claims that most militiamen fought on the basis of a working-day schedule. He says that many men were bussed back and forth from the front to Madrid, so that they could eat meals with their families and go to bars and brag about their bravery on the front that day.⁹⁸ By getting drunk on or off the front, discipline suffered as well as morale. By calling these men “parasites,” the Aragon Department of Public Order is trying to decrease this practice.

The contraction of venereal disease was also a problem in the Republican army, and many posters urged soldiers against prostitution, warning of the dangers of venereal disease. **Figure 3.1.12** is a poster produced by the General Inspection of the Military Public Health System that attempts to combat the problem. The text reads, “Avoid venereal diseases. As dangerous as enemy bullets.” This is most likely a reference to a comment made popular, “the presence of prostitutes caused more casualties than enemy bullets.”⁹⁹

⁹⁷Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 154.

⁹⁸Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 116.

⁹⁹Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 53.

The presence of prostitutes in the Republican Army did contribute to the spread of venereal diseases, but as we will see in the discussed in the section on realities and images of women in Republican propaganda, not all women in the military were prostitutes, and not all women had venereal diseases.

In an unorganized army such as the Republican army, hygiene ranked low on the priority list. But by 1937, body lice became a major problem.¹⁰⁰ Propaganda urging soldiers to wash attempted to combat this problem. **Figure 3.1.13** is an army hygiene campaign poster produced by the Office of Army Health. The text reads, “Soldier! Wash yourself! Hygiene conserves your health,” and the poster shows a man leaning over a bucket washing his head with a sponge. These supplies were not always available.

Illiteracy was one of the major reasons for the great amount of Republican propaganda posters, but it was also a problem that propaganda attempted to correct in the Army and public as well. Soldiers were encouraged to read anarchist newspapers like *Solidaridad*, socialist morning papers like *Adelante*, and daily Republican newspapers like *ABC* to stay abreast of the war and to open up communication, which was a problem in the Republican resistance.¹⁰¹

Figure 3.1.14 is an anti-illiteracy campaign poster produced by the Cultural Militia of Propaganda and Press. The text reads, “Illiteracy blinds the spirit. Study soldier,” and the poster shows a soldiers trying to read a book but cannot because of a bright sheet covering his eyes. This poster appeals to the soldier on an ideological and personal level. This poster is not talking about not being able to read the daily news; it is telling the soldier that he cannot have a fully developed spirit until he can read. His soul is blinded by his inability to

¹⁰⁰Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 111.

¹⁰¹Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 134.

read. All he has to do is study, and then his soul can be un-blinded and can participate fully in the revolution.

A third aim of Republican Army propaganda dealt with the international aspect of the war, both attempting to garner more international support through propaganda and praising the international brigades for their support of the Republican resistance. Two organizations in particular produced propaganda to promote international solidarity. These were the SRI, the International Red Aid, which was communist, and the SIA, International Antifascist Solidarity, which was anarchist.¹⁰² The SRI attempted to indoctrinate the international masses with symbols like open arms, doves, and olive branches, which are all represented in **Figure 3.1.15**. The text reads, “SRI, Antifascists! Think of those that fight” and in addition to the arms, the dove, and the olive branch, this poster shows a diverse group of men fighting with their diverse flags flying behind them. Among the flags are the CNT, and URC, the UGT, and the communist flag.

Figure 3.1.16 is a poster produced by the SIA that uses a lot of the same symbols. Two hands reach across from the left and the right to form a handshake in the middle of the upper part of the poster under the words, “International Antifascist Solidarity.” Underneath these hands there is a red globe with the initials “SIA” across it. Beneath the red earth is a woman holding a baby with tears in her eyes. Next to this woman are the words, “Help to the victims of fascism,” implying that defenseless women and children are the victims of fascism. The use of the color red is prevalent in most Republican propaganda, as many Republicans were simply called, “Reds” during the civil war.

¹⁰²Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 218.

One of the most famous graphic artworks of the Spanish Civil war is Joan Miró's *Aidez L'Espagne* stamp (**Figure 3.1.17**). Joan Miró was a prominent Spanish artist who had been culturally involved in the Surrealist movement. Miró was living in Paris at the time and created this stamp to raise funds for the Republican war effort. The text is in French and says, "Help Spain." The text at the bottom reads, "In the current conflict on the Fascist side I see massive forces; on the other side are the people whose immense and creative resourcefulness will give Spain a vitality which will astonish the world." The figure is wearing a red *barretina*, which is the famous hat worn in Catalonia, where Miró was born. This is the same *barretina* depicted in Miró's mural *The Reaper*, debuted at the Spanish Republican Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair of 1937. The figure thrusts his fist into the air and has his mouth open as if shouting the words, "Help Spain!"

The International Brigades were praised in Republican Propaganda as the defenders of Madrid. **Figure 3.1.18** is an homage to the international brigades. The text at the bottom reads, "The Popular Front of Madrid to the Popular Front of the World," and the poster shows a red international soldier holding a giant red flag with the three-pointed star of the International Brigades sitting on a blue globe. This poster is praising the international soldiers as not just the defenders of Madrid but as defenders of the world.

Figure 3.1.19 is another poster praising the International Brigades. This poster shows two soldiers, one with an armband of the flag of the International Brigades and another with a beret and a shirt with the symbol of the International Brigades on them, thrusting their rifles forward while the female figure of the Republic stands behind them. She is wearing a crown that is associated with the crown of Castile, the historic region of Madrid, and is holding a strand of wheat, representing the agricultural heartland of Spain. The text

at the bottom reads, “The Internationals, united for the Spanish, we fight against the invader.” The presence of the personification of the Republic emphasizes the volunteers’ importance to the preservation of freedom and democracy.

The rag-tag Republican Army faced many disadvantages against the professional Nationalist forces, including a lack of experienced officers and supplies, problems with discipline and health, and the constant reliance on international aid to defend the Republic. Republican propaganda aimed to solve these problems by appealing directly to the soldier to make him sure of his responsibilities and to show him what *not* to do, by appealing to the rear guard to help the army, and by appealing to international opinion. The posters either depicted the ideal soldier or the example of a soldier whose actions were hurting the Republican cause. The posters did not reflect the reality of the actual conditions of the Spanish army where soldiers were as young as 11, were ragged, sleep deprived, and hungry, and did not know how to properly use their weapons. The posters deliberately excluded these types of images from propaganda posters so they would not spread the low morale of the armies into the civilian population, including soldiers waiting to be deployed to the front.

3.2: Realities and Images of Farmers in Republican Propaganda

In the Spanish Civil War, farmers faced the reality of collectivization, violence, and the threat of fascism. In Republican civil war propaganda, the Republic represented farmers in a way that urged them to produce as much food as possible for the fronts and the cities and to join actively in the war by either working their fields or joining the Popular Army. By examining the social situation in the countryside during the Second Republic we can see how the plight of the farmer during the war was caused and affected by the

politicization of the farmer, the agricultural reforms of the Republic, the resistance by the rural oligarchy, and the prevalence of riots and violence.

Collectivization in the countryside during the war was a failed experiment that had disastrous effects on food supply; Republican propaganda attempted to fix these problems by telling the farmer what to do and what not to do. Farmers were told to produce as much food as possible and send it quickly to the cities. Propaganda did not denounce the farmer for smaller political problems associated with collectivization, but instead focused on food production as the most important way the farmers could help the Republic win the war.

Reality of Farmers in the Spanish Civil War

Social Situation in the Countryside during the Second Republic

When Anarchism began in Spain in the 1880s, its roots were firmly planted both in the Southern agricultural areas of Andalucia as well as the industrial areas of Catalonia. Socialism also took roots in the agricultural highlands around Madrid. These groups became highly politicized during the Second Republic. In 1931 the FNTT, *Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra* (National Federation of Land Workers), was established as the agricultural workers' section of the UGT. The 1931 constitution attempted to redistribute land, but landowners resisted, making the countryside a bitter battleground. Republicans, Socialists, and Catholics quarreled for control of local power. Seville experienced an authentic gang war between communists and anarcho-syndicalists.¹⁰³

The Republicans enacted legislation that provided for fewer working hours, an increase in wages, enforced the payment of overtime, and ensured job security by outlawing the hire

¹⁰³Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 36.

of cheap migrant laborers. In addition to these reforms, the global economic depression after 1929- following the agricultural crisis of the 1920s- caused prices for agricultural products to rise, and Spanish exports fell. The combination of these factors brought wealth to a part of society that had been kept poor for centuries by this land system in the agricultural heartland of Andalucia. However, the land reform legislation issued by the Republic was far too complex and narrow and was not successful in providing long-term improvement of working conditions or stability in the countryside. The Institute of Agrarian Reform, the IRA, was created to carry out the laws. Out of the 60,000 families that were supposed to gain land in the first year, only 10% received it. The IRA failed to meet the expectations of the workers and alienated large landowners, small landowners, and sharecroppers.¹⁰⁴

Rural oligarchs were united against the left because they wanted to restore the social order that existed before 1931. With the help of the Civil Guard and with the power to appoint people to local governments, the landowners were able to control thousands of landless peasants. The status quo was founded upon the exploitation of peasant farmers. The *latifundias* were owned by *caciques* and the peasants worked endless hours for extremely low pay. The progressive Republican government wanted not only to increase wages and regulate working hours for these peasants, but to redistribute wealth and land throughout rural Spain.¹⁰⁵

The staunch resistance of the rural oligarchy to these changes caused a great amount of violence in the countryside during the Republic. The FAI anarchists promoted the use of violence to enact social change in the countryside and in 1933 the FAI launched an

¹⁰⁴Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 35-40.

¹⁰⁵Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 35.

insurrection in Cádiz that had bitter repercussions for farmers throughout Spain. The rural oligarchy had Salazar Alonso as interior minister of the 1933 cabinet, and he was sympathetic to their interests. He slashed wages, allowed landowners to hire foreign labor at lower wages, and placed landowner representatives in the arbitration committees.¹⁰⁶

Collectivization

In the early days of the civil war, idealized urban militant groups of both anarchists and socialists went into the countryside seizing land from “fascists” who had fled the countryside, and went about forming farming collectives. Collectives were set up in Aragon by mostly ideological anarchists, who were trying to impose libertarian communism or socialism. The anarchists believed that collectivizing the means of production and distribution was the best way to feed the troops.¹⁰⁷ Some farmers were coerced into joining collectives while most were indifferent to anarchist ideas and joined out of opportunism.

Peasants did not have utopian views of collectivized farms. They largely joined for personal reasons, hoping to benefit, just as some of their numbers had joined unions simply to receive party ID cards. Some would even become loyal supporters of prominent landowners who could offer long-term contracts to peasants who did not own property. Poorer peasants were more likely to join collectives willingly, because joining a collective was a good way to get out of debt to larger landowners.¹⁰⁸

In many ways collectives were beneficial because they brought small unproductive plots of land together to create large farms where farmers shared tools and machinery

¹⁰⁶Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 48.

¹⁰⁷Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 124-125.

¹⁰⁸Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 124-125, 127, 70.

without having to pay rent or deal with a landowner.¹⁰⁹ Collectives were not communes, and they did not encourage people to live together. Farmers usually worked their own land and raised their own animals.

Problems with collectivization include an overwhelming option for self-sufficiency, hoarding, and an unwillingness to produce products for the markets, as well as conflicts among communists and anarchists. The break up of large estates did not benefit the Republic because most peasants opted for self-sufficiency instead of producing crops for the market. Many turned to subsistence farming because of payment delays. Others turned to self-sufficiency because they were not satisfied with the price of agricultural goods. Peasants resented that the Republic set maximums on agricultural goods but not industrial products. In 1937, the CNT Regional Federation of Peasants of the Center were profoundly disappointed with the lack of success with the collectives and claimed, "It is certain that peasants do not have the revolutionary spirit." They requested that prices for agricultural goods be raised because otherwise they feared that peasants would stop producing for the market all together. The nationalists were aware of the low price offered by the Republic for agricultural goods and offered a much higher price for olive oil.¹¹⁰ The allegiance and cooperation of the farmer was not all together guaranteed then, and thus propaganda was needed to confirm their adherence to the Republican cause.

Collectives functioned well on the local level but poorly on the regional or national level because many peasants were not interested in sharing goods or tools or machines with those outside of their village. Siedman calls their actions selfish. In Cuenca, collectives refused to deliver their wheat. In Aragon, officials refused to ship meat because they

¹⁰⁹Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 70.

¹¹⁰Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 70, 128, 134, 135, 144.

wanted to ensure the region's own supplies. Collectives also refused to share vehicles, which only intensified the already strained transportation shortage. Food destined for the Madrid fronts rotted while waiting for transportation. Police and soldiers took whatever they wanted from villages, and in response, villagers hid knowledge of what they possessed; the Republic was just as likely to take it away as were the militias did. Hoarding was a major problem because of the scarcity of food on the fronts and in the cities.

Resentment rose among those in the cities that the farmers were able to eat meals while those in the cities fared worse and worse.¹¹¹ Republican law declared hoarding a crime, because it was concealing information and goods. President of the Republic Manuel Azaña denounced hoarding, calling the situation in the countryside "every man for himself," and also reprimanded the populace for their refusal to denounce hoarders and speculators.¹¹²

Collectivization was a major source of conflict between communists and anarchists. Libertarian communism and social revolution were goals of the anarchists but were absolutely not in the interests of the communists. In Aragon, The communists accused the CNT of forcing peasants into collectives. In turn, the anarchists charged the communists of disrupting production by illegally jailing antifascist militants. The anarchists used illegal coercion to initiate collectives, and the communists used it to destroy them. With the growth of the Communist Party in Spain during the war, the communists began the closure of collectives as part of a larger attempt to destroy the idea of revolution in favor of winning the war. Siedman argues that this fits into a larger conflict between peasants and military confrontations in the countryside. The Communists aligned themselves with the propertied peasantry. These peasants did not like collectivization because it had destroyed

¹¹¹Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 206.

¹¹²Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 129-31, 136, 132, 131, 145.

the higher status and income that some sharecroppers had enjoyed before the war. However, after the communists shut down collectives they installed restrictions on individual farmers.¹¹³

In the Summer of 1937, the communists tried to destroy collectives in Aragon that had been established at the beginning of the war. The dissolution of collectives August 11, 1937, occurred at the same time as the dissolution of the Aragon council. This was part of the Republic's centralizing drive to reduce regional autonomy. In the end more than 300,000 peasants acquired land during the war, and only 18.5 % of land was collectivized. Overwhelmingly, farmers opted for individualism and worked their own land.¹¹⁴

Images of Farmers in Republican Propaganda

Images of Farmers in Republican Civil War Propaganda held four messages. Propaganda urged farmers to produce as much food as possible, to give their food to the troops and cities, to recognize that they were part of the war effort, and to fight in the Popular Army. The farmer is most often identified by his sickle blade or other farming tools, by bushels of wheat in his arms, or by his dress, especially by his broad-brimmed hat and short sleeves.

Due to the shortages of food in the front lines and then in the cities, propaganda urged farmers to produce as much food as possible. In the collectives, some were reportedly lazy or quit early; some did not take their job very seriously. Propaganda was issued with images of farmers producing a great amount and variety of foods, accompanied by messages that connected the farmer's daily work and crops to the larger goals of the Republic, hoping that this would stir the revolutionary spirit buried deep inside the farmer.

¹¹³Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 124-26, 133, 127.

¹¹⁴Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 124, 134, 69.

Figure 3.2.1 is a poster that encourages food production. It was produced by the Unified Food Industry Syndicate, and was printed in Barcelona by a press controlled by the CNT. The text reads, “Farmers! By increasing production we can crush fascism,” and the poster shows images of wheat, bread, wine, grapes, fish, potatoes, calves, and milk. This is a variety of food that never would have been available to militiamen or city dwellers beyond 1937. The farmer is addressed in this poster with a message that promises that through his work, he can help to crush fascism. Fascism was for the most part entirely opposed to the goals and views of the farmer. The fascists wanted to reinstall a system of repression in the countryside similar to the situation during the monarchy, in which the wealth of the nobility rested on the bitter repression and exploitation of the worker. If the farmer came to believe that all he had to do was work harder and the threat of fascism would be crushed, then the propagandists would have achieved their goal.

Figure 3.2.2 is another poster simply urging farmers to produce more food. This poster was issued by the Propaganda and Press Delegation of the CNT. The text reads, “Intensify poultry production and aid the revolution.” Miravittles calls this campaign the “Battle of eggs.”¹¹⁵ The poster shows a simplified math problem aimed to show the worker just how many eggs can be made if 20 people each produce 20 eggs. And then the math problem goes on to multiply everything by 20, until the numbers fade out behind the image of a large chicken with an egg inside of it, with a chick inside of the egg. This image is meant to show the viewer that not only does one chicken produce an egg, but their eggs contain chicks who can then produce future eggs. Poultry farmers undoubtedly knew this, but it reinforces the math scribbled above to show just how much potential for production there

¹¹⁵Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 204.

is. Also, we can tell that this is an anarchist poster because it specifically cites the revolution as what the farmer should be fighting for.

Another type of Republican propaganda depicting farmers was aimed at urging farmers to give their food to the troops and to the cities. The problems of subsistence farming and hoarding led to food shortages on the fronts and in the cities. Because the farmers were interested in keeping themselves fed, the Republic mounted a propaganda campaign to appeal to farmers to give some of it up. This usually meant that the farmer was presented as a hero.

Figure 3.2.3 is a poster that connected the farmer's product directly to the Republic's success in the war. It was produced by the Ministry of Public Instruction based out of Madrid. The text reads, "To increase the productivity of the farms and factories is to increase the combativeness of the fronts." Soldiers suffered from hunger and sleep deprivation which made them ill prepared to fight when the opportunity for it arose. It also had a profound effect on morale. In his memoir, *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell talks about the acute food shortages and recounts a tactic used by the anarchist columns on the front lines where an anarchist soldier would get on a loudspeaker in the middle of the night and start yelling across no-man's land to the fascists, telling them that they had warm bread and butter, in an attempt to encourage fascist deserters to come to their side. Orwell says that this, coupled with shouts of "don't fight against your own class," got as many as ten deserters every time they did it.¹¹⁶ This poster shows a farmer sticking his sickle into a piece of fruit, with many large pieces of fruit beneath him, flanked by rows of wheat. The

¹¹⁶Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 42-43.

towers of factories are pictured in the upper right hand corner, representing the factories referenced in the text.

Figure 3.2.4 is a famous Republican poster from the Spanish Civil War designed by the SDP artist Fontseré and produced for the CNT by *Propaganda Boix*.¹¹⁷ The text reads, "Industry, Agriculture, Everything for the front!" and shows a farmer riding a tractor past an industrial plant. Tractors were extremely rare in the countryside during this time, and many who had them refused to share them. There are no depictions of men working in the factories but they are billowing smoke, meaning that they are producing.

Another type of propaganda used the depiction of farmers to convince them that they were part of the war effort. For those farmers who did not join the army, the Republic tried to convince them that their work was just as important. Many farmers were apolitical and did not subscribe to ideology, so the reasons behind the war may have been confusing to them. And their role in the war was unclear as is evident in their use of the collectives for subsistence agriculture. Propaganda was issued in an attempt to clarify this role.

Figure 3.2.5 is a poster issued by the Regional Federation of Levante Farmers of the CNT that showed the farmer how he fit into the Republican war machine. The text reads, "Farmer: this is your role," and the image shows a young handsome idealized farmer with a bountiful vine full of oranges, apples, onions, peaches, and grapes. In the background there is a farmer hunched over with his hands in the soil. This poster is a perfect example of the propagandists mission to clarify the farmer's role in the fight.

Figure 3.2.6 is a socialist poster that identifies the countryside as a fighting front in itself. The text reads, "UGT fighting units: Farmers! The farm is a fighting front." In the

¹¹⁷Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 203.

upper half of the poster near the “UGT fighting units” there is a figure of a soldier holding a rifle. Beneath him, somewhat inside his profile is the figure of a farmer tilling the soil. Both figures are hunched forward in the same direction, as if marching together, stressing the similarity between both of their “fights.” There was a lot of tension in the countryside between soldiers and farmers, but his poster aims to highlight their similarities rather than their differences.

The Republic also produced propaganda urging farmers to enlist in the Popular Army and to join in the fight. These posters stress the similarities between workers, militiamen, and farmers to show that they can fight together. Images of the farmer are more common in posters urging enlistment for the Popular Army because the Popular Army was formed for the purpose of uniting different columns of the army together into one army. Columns of socialist workers and anarchist farmers did not always fight together, and the propaganda aims to nullify the reasons for divisions in the Republican army.

Figure 3.2.7 is a poster produced by the *Junta Delegada de Defensa de Madrid*, and stresses the need for unity in the Popular Army. The text reads, “The Popular Army is the Army of the Republic,” and the poster shows a farmer with a wide brimmed hat and a sickle blade shaking hands with a uniformed militiamen in front of a smiling lady liberty figure. The uniform of the militia soldier is very idealized and is not representative of the actual clothing worn by soldiers fighting on the fronts at the time of the creation of the popular army. Similarly, the farmer is extremely muscular, and is only represented in this way because he serves as the ideal model for a farmer-soldier in the Popular Army. This is the viewpoint of the communists, as the *Junta de Defensa de Madrid* was entirely under

communist control. The communists wanted to destroy the revolution in the countryside, and urging farmers to join the Popular Army was one way of doing that.

Figure 3.2.8 is an anarchist poster urging unity in the Popular Army. The text at the bottom is in Catalan and reads, “Workers! Peasants! Unite for Victory!” The composition is split in two, with the left background in black and labeled at the top FAI, and the right background in red and labeled at the top CNT. On the left/FAI side we see the right half of this man’s body dressed in coveralls, which were the standard uniform of Barcelona workers, with a utility belt, and with his arm raised up with a clenched fist. This implies the strength of the FAI and the willingness to use force. We can assume that he is the “*obrer*” being addressed. On the right/CNT side we see the right half of this man’s body dressed in a short-sleeved shirt and short shorts, with no shoes, a hat, and carrying a sickle by his side. These items identify him as the “*caperol*” addressed by the text below. These two sides form one man, giving a direct visual metaphor of unity; these two people can fight as one for Victory.

The Republican artists expended a great effort in urging peasant farmers to join the Republic in their fight against fascism and to aid the Republic with its wealth of agricultural reserves. Food shortages in the cities caused a decrease in morale as well as a growth of resentment for the farmer who was able to grow and eat his own food, while those in the cities and on the fronts starved. The peasants were not as politicized as the workers, and it took more effort to mobilize the peasant for the war effort than it did for the industrial workers of Madrid or Barcelona. In these posters we see clear instructions for the farmer on how he should help the Republic. The farmer was instructed to help the Republic win the war by feeding the Republic with the food that he grew or by joining the Army and

fighting for the future of a Republican Spain that would protect his interests as well as the interests of workers.

3.3: Reality and Images of Women in Republican Propaganda

Women were a very important part of the Republican war machine, and the Republic issued propaganda attempting to define strict gender-specific roles for women in the war effort. Military action was not encouraged and the home front was presented as the proper and most useful place for women during the war. Women worked a variety of jobs and public welfare programs on the home front that allowed the cities to continue functioning while most of the wage earning men were fighting in the army. Women were also encouraged lead the charge in keeping morale high by encouraging enlistment and denouncing desertion or inaction.

Reality of Women in the Spanish Civil War

Women played numerous roles in the civil war. They were mobilized on the home front to become more politically active and to work a variety of jobs for the war effort, and some women even joined militias and fought on the fronts in the early months of the war. Republican women's groups like the *Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas* (AMA, or Association of Anti-Fascist Women) and the *Mujeres Libres*, ("Free Women", an anarchist women's organization) helped to mobilize women to drive production on the home front. These groups supported military resistance and served as a meeting place for women.

The *Mujeres Libres* was founded in May 1936 by a group of Anarchist women who felt that the mainstream anarchist movement, the CNT, was not sufficiently mobilizing women to participate actively in the social revolutionary struggle. Their goals were to overcome inexperience and ignorance among women, and to confront the dominance of

men within the anarchist movement. The *Mujeres Libres* were a unique organization with a unique perspective on women's experience during the war. They urged women to join the paid work force to end the subordination of women as a result of division of labor by sex. The *Mujeres Libres* focused on health care. They trained nurses to work in hospitals, they organized and sponsored educational and hygiene programs in maternity hospitals, and also provided much needed sexual education for women. In a sample of *Mujeres Libres* literature, readers were reminded that, "In the midst of all the sacrifices, with the ultimate will and persistence, we are working to *find ourselves*, and to situate ourselves in an atmosphere which, until today, has been denied us: social action."¹¹⁸

Dolores Ibárruri was an important female leader in 20th century Spain and especially during the Spanish Civil War. Known as "*La Pasionaria*," Ibárruri was a leader of the Communist party, a great orator, vice-president of the Cortes during the war, unofficial minister of war propaganda, and ambassador of the Republic abroad. Until her death she remained a committed Marxist and served as the embodiment of resistance to fascism. Her speeches were riddled with the language of propaganda, and many of her words found their way into slogans and posters. Among these slogans was the famous "¡No Pasaran!" concerning the defense of Madrid.¹¹⁹ Ibárruri spoke on maternal sacrifice, as this was one of the biggest issues facing women at the time. Her motto, "Better be the widows of heroes than the wives of cowards" became a slogan.¹²⁰ Another female leader spoke on the topic of maternal sacrifice. Well-known anarchist and Minister of Health Federica Montseny spoke

¹¹⁸Martha A. Acklesberg, "'Separate and Equal'? Mujeres Libres and Anarchist Strategy for Women's Emancipation," *Feminist Studies*, 11 (1985): 64-66, 72-73.

¹¹⁹Kristine Byron, "Writing the Female Revolutionary Self: Dolores Ibárruri and the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 28(2004): 138-141.

¹²⁰Mary Nash, "Women in War: Milicianas and Armed Combat in Revolutionary Spain: 1936-1939," *The International History Review*, 15(1993): 270.

about the importance of maternal sacrifice for the war effort in a speech to the *Mujeres Libres*,

As women and mothers, we have to carry out our human, individual, and collective duty by fighting against oppression, for freedom and justice, and think that the children we give to the war fronts and home front today, tomorrow will have a more dignified life, peace and culture, school and well-being which all great Spaniards dream of for the children of others and out own.¹²¹

While the majority of female activity for the Republican war effort took place on the home front, there were a small number of women who joined the Republican militias in the first few months of the war, and fought alongside militiamen on the front lines. There was no recruitment policy for women, and their enlistment was largely spontaneous. These *milicianas* as they came to be called were young women without homes or families to be responsible for, who wanted to take part in the fight. They were praised as symbols of generosity, bravery, and popular anti-fascist resistance by their male comrades, and by foreign correspondents and members of the international brigades. Many *milicianas* fought as soldiers, and some served as political advisors, but most worked culinary, laundry, sanitary, and administrative assignments. In the 5th regiment women took care of auxiliary tasks and armed combat reserved for males with few exceptions. One *miliciiana* who was dissatisfied with the kind of work that she was made to do went to a POUM column and said to a commanding officer, "I have heard that in your column the *milicianas* have the same rights as the men, that they do not wash the clothes and the dishes. I have not come to the front in order to die for the revolution with a kitchen cloth in my hand." She was

¹²¹Nash, "Women in War," 272.

applauded by those militiamen who overheard her.¹²² But the good reputation of the *milicianas* was not to last but a few months into the war.

There was a major transition in public opinion concerning the *milicianas* after venereal disease became a serious problem in the Republican Army. Allegations of spreading venereal disease and of prostitution discredited the *milicianas*. It became clear that idealist 17-year-olds were not the only women at the fronts; some women went to the fronts as sexual opportunists, hoping to sell sex to the militiamen. The 5th regiment was a regiment of superior morale and morality, but within a few months it was reporting a serious problem with venereal disease.¹²³ This received a great deal of coverage in the Nationalist press. It became a major health hazard by 1937, and the central and Catalan governments developed health policies to control it. In autumn of 1936, Largo Caballero ordered women to withdraw from the militias, on the basis that the home front was the natural place for women during combat. The Catalan Communist Party was using the slogan “Men to the war fronts, women to the home front.”¹²⁴ In his *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell described this transition as in a few months changing from eulogy to ridicule and discredit.¹²⁵

The victims in this scandal were the young women who joined the militias because they wanted to defend the Republic. Their stories of heroism were never told. They were slandered as prostitutes. Martí Ibañez, the anarchist director general of Health and Social Assistance of the Generalitat, gave a “Eugenical Message to Women,” in which he reflects the propaganda of the period by assuming every woman had venereal disease and had no

¹²²Nash, “Women in War,” 273-276, 281.

¹²³Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 75.

¹²⁴Nash, “Women in War,” 276-280.

¹²⁵ Nash, “Women in War,” 276.

motivations to join the military other than that of having sex with militiamen and spreading disease:

And you, mercenaries or half-virtuous women...who in the midst of a revolution tried to convert the sacred land of the war-front covered with proletarian blood, into a garden of pleasure, go back! If the militiaman looks for you, let it be in his free time, and under his own moral responsibility, helping by existing hygienic resources. But do not make him deviate from his route and put the softness of erotic fatigue in the steel of his muscles...you cannot give up your former life by sowing the battle front with venereal diseases...venereal diseased must be extirpated from the front, and in order to do so, women must be previously eliminated.¹²⁶

The home front was the arena where female dedication to the war effort was mostly exercised. The image of the “home front heroine” was more representative of the Spanish Republican woman than political activists or *milicianas*. The home front efforts were crucial to the maintenance of the country at war. Women worked in munitions factories or served as volunteers in social services, educational drives, cultural projects, and support activities for the combatants at the front. Nash says that it was women's domestic work that enabled the civilian population and the refugees to survive in the face of war, unemployment, shortages, restrictions, and hunger.¹²⁷ Small numbers of female activists joined party or union militias and even fewer fought on the front. Most women did their part at home, working a variety of non-military jobs geared towards the war effort. In *A Social History of the Spanish Civil War*, Michael Siedman says that the war broadened female agency and opened up new fields of activity where women were un-chaperoned while engaging in activities like building barricades, nursing the wounded, and organizing relief work sewing clothing for soldiers.¹²⁸ However, in her article, *Women in War: Milicianas and*

¹²⁶Nash, “Women in War,” 280.

¹²⁷Nash, “Women in War,” 273.

¹²⁸Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 34-35.

Armed Combat in Revolutionary Spain, 1936-1939, Mary Nash claims that although women did play a larger role in society than before the war, the war did not have a great effect on gender roles or on relationships between men and women.¹²⁹

Images of Women in Republican Propaganda

Women were portrayed as three things in Republican propaganda. They were portrayed and addressed as mothers and wives who needed a push to give up their sons and husbands for the war effort; they were portrayed as diligent and productive workers on the home front; and they were portrayed as prostitutes with venereal disease. Through the images and slogans of the propaganda posters, the Republic attempted to show women that their proper role in the war effort was at home doing various jobs and increasing morale, not on the front lines fighting with the male soldiers.

Women's groups produced propaganda that is very revealing of what was expected of Spanish Republican women in this war, the issues facing women, and how women organized themselves. For example, the AMA produced propaganda posters urging women to join the AMA and work specific jobs on the home front. **Figure 3.3.1** is a poster produced in Barcelona by the *Sociedad General de Publicaciones* (General Publications Society) and designed by the AMA, which addresses women directly: "Tú, mujer." The text beneath reads,

You, woman...we, women, need to do much. The anti-fascist women fight and work on the front and on the homefront. Come with us. It doesn't matter if you are a communist, socialist, anarchist, republican, or without a party, we unite under one common denominator: Hatred for fascism! Workers, farmers, intellectuals, simply women! Mothers! Joined the Association of Antifascist women that fight without rest for the Spain of tomorrow, for a bright future for our children!

¹²⁹Nash, "Women in War," 269.

In this poster, the AMA worked hard to diminish differences between women and tried to unite women of different professions and political leanings for the war effort. The poster aimed to unite anarchists, socialists, and those without a political party as haters of fascism. It sought to unite industrial working women, farming women, intellectual women, as women first and foremost, who shared more common goals than dividing characteristics. The poster shows women doing a variety of tasks including mending clothing (top left), and from left to right working together tilling the soil, carrying bundles of straw, sewing, nursing wounded soldiers, and teaching. The wide variety of activities seeks to appeal to all women. It is interesting that although the text claims that female members of the AMA fight on the fronts, there is no image of a militia woman represented here.

Figure 3.3.2 is a pamphlet produced by the AMA that deals with the theme of maternal sacrifice and the woman's role in the war effort. The pamphlet separates different messages into different quadrants. The left-most block contains a list titled, "Why Spanish women are anti-fascists." The intent is to make readers identify as anti-fascists, a large group which shares the principles outlined. These principles include: "Fascism is war and we want peace", "Because fascism is the denial of liberty", "Because fascism is crime and barbarism," and other sentiments with mass appeal. The middle block addresses women, showing a woman crying over a dead man, pictured above. The final block addresses mothers, showing a woman crying over a dead child, pictured above. The text in both these blocks commiserates with those who have suffered the pain of losing men and boys, but tries to explain why this sacrifice is necessary to fight fascism. Once unfolded the pamphlet shows an armed militia woman, an image of communist leader Dolores Ibárruri, and communist Lina Odena. The text beside them explains the function of the pamphlet: "The

Society of Antifascist Women signals to the woman her role in the fight.” As anti-fascist women, their role was to encourage the Army despite the deaths of loved ones.

After venereal disease became a problem, the government began to mount propaganda campaigns urging soldiers to not sleep with prostitutes because of the danger of contracting venereal disease, and reinforcing the gender role of women to work behind the lines. **Figure 3.3.3** is an example of this type of propaganda. It was produced by the *Jefatura de Sanidad del Ejercito* (Army Health Headquarters). It reads: “Attention! The venereal diseases threaten your health. Prevent against them!” The poster pictures a nude woman seducing a weakened soldier. In this image it is the woman who is predatory, and the man is the victim, with his head hanging low in shame. The woman’s forearm across the man’s back is a skeleton. It shows that although she appears to be healthy and clean, she can make you sick and even kill you. The placement of the skeletal arm in the man’s body shows that it is the man who is threatened with death, not the female.

Figure 3.3.4 is a propaganda poster produced by the SDP artist Fontseré that depicts a woman sewing clothes for soldiers. The text is in Catalan and reads, “For brothers at the front. Women! Work.” The male soldier at the top is depicted on a night watch holding a rifle. We can assume that the night air is cold because he is wearing such a large coat. The woman at the bottom of the poster is knitting a piece of clothing, presumably the coat that the soldier is wearing to keep him warm on his night watch. By showing exactly how these products are put to use by the soldiers would convince women of the importance of their work.

Figure 3.3.5 is a propaganda poster produced by the *Jefatura de Sanidad del Ejercito de Tierra* (Land Army Health Office) and is part of the propaganda urging women to work

as nurses. The text reads, “You, that gave life to your child, save the man from death.” At the top we see a sketchy rendering of a woman breast-feeding a small child, and below a woman in a white dress, presumably a nurses uniform, giving blood directly to this unconscious man. Perhaps this is just propaganda urging women to give blood by giving the same sort of visual connection between the woman and the wounded man as between the sewing woman and the soldier on night watch. What is interesting is that women are portrayed as the givers of life. In this way they serve an active, not passive role in the war effort. This portrayal of women contrasts starkly to the portrayal of women in Nationalist propaganda as passive people in the background often performing menial tasks behind men. This shows the Republican view of women as contributing members to society.

Nash argues that the great amount of propaganda urging women to promote male enlistment implies that many women were reluctant to provide soldiers for the war, but that this does not mean that they challenged the call entirely.¹³⁰ In fact, throughout the war, to help fuel enlistment and discourage desertion, women set up vigilante commissions to detect draft dodgers and denounce them to authorities. Strict gender roles meant men needed to fight for their country. **Figure 3.3.6** is a poster printed in Valencia, produced by the *Vigilancia a la Retaguardia*, (Vigilance on the home front) that also portrays a woman in an active, not passive role. A woman wearing espadrilles is clutching the arm of a little green man who is trying to hide behind her and avoid his military duty. The text reads in Catalan, “Don’t tolerate any spying or infiltration.” The woman gives the little green man a fierce gaze as she points to the marching Republican army. Slackers were seen as traitors. **Figure 3.3.7** is a poster produced by the Department of Public Order of Aragon that says,

¹³⁰Nash, “Women in War,” 271.

“An idle person is a fascist”, implying that those men who were not fighting were probably fascist spies, and should be reported or made to fight for the Republic.

Figure 3.3.8 is a poster issued by the *Comissariat* that shows various jobs that women did on the home front. The poster reads in Catalan “Antifascist Women, The woman at the rear guard wait for you.” At the top left, a woman is reading to a hospitalized woman. This is a domestic hospital and not a military hospital. Perhaps this woman is taking the place of either a nurse or a doctor who went to war. At the top right women are pinning sheets on a clothesline, perhaps in a factory that is making clothes or blankets for the war. In the center women are caring for orphans, of which the civil war made many, or sick children. At the bottom right women are making clothes and at the left handling fabric. These are all very maternal roles, where gender is reinforced. These are traditional, non-controversial jobs that women could feel safe in doing. They were not challenging the role of women in society.

Propaganda depicting women during the Spanish Civil war aimed to answer this question: If women were not allowed to fight, how could they be sure that they were part of the Republican war effort? How can a woman be a Republican national hero? Images of women working on the home front were supposed to instill confidence in the viewer that they were helping to fight fascism by working, and that they could take pride in their work because it had such a noble cause. The posters made the woman responsible for morale by encouraging them to police the home front and encourage enlistment.

3.4: Realities and Images of Children in Republican Propaganda

The reality that children in the Republican zones faced during the war included Nationalist air bombardments, government efforts to ensure their safety, and evacuation to

refugee camps outside of Spain. In propaganda, children were used as symbols of the innocence as well as the future of the Republic. Children were represented in three ways in Republican propaganda: they were shown dead to incriminate the Nationalists as Nazi baby killers; they were presented as innocent victims in the war who should not be politicized; and they were presented as a future workforce and fighting force who should be politicized.

Reality of Children in the Spanish Civil War

Children were innocent victims of the civil war, and suffered both from Nationalist violence as well as political pressure from the various youth groups of the trade unions. Children were caught up in the conflict through politicization, conscription and encouragement to join the military. They received aid from government programs and international aid, they were victims of bombings and raids, and they were refugees.

Amid the massive campaign to mobilize the population to fight for the Republican cause, children were not immune. The JSU, United Socialist Youth, was a Communist organization that encouraged political involvement and eventual military action for children. In the Spring of 1938, 17-year-olds were conscripted in what was called the “Quinta del Biberon” (“the Diaper Levy”), which incited great resistance from mothers.¹³¹ Another way that children were politicized in the Spanish Civil War was through groups like the Pioneers. The Pioneers were a group similar to the boy scouts who supported Republican army divisions fighting on the front lines. The trade unions gave these children party ID cards and showed them the difference between the world of games and books and

¹³¹Nash, “Women in War,” 272.

that of destruction, fire and hunger.¹³² **Figure 3.4.1** is a tribute to the 43rd division fighting on the Aragon Front. It is a very childish and cartoonish drawing but there is a lot of military imagery in it. There is a rifle, helmet, red star, and ammunition showing the military focus of the pioneers.

Not everyone thought the politicization of children was right, and significant efforts were taken by the Republican government and various leftist groups to get children out of harm's way. In January of 1937 the Ministry of Economy of the *Generalitat* organized the *Setmana de L'Infant* (Children's Week) with the CNT, UGT, and the SIA to give toys and games to children affected by the war.¹³³ These toys were not entirely without politics though. **Figures 3.4.2 and 3.4.3** are examples of toys that were given out at this event. **Figure 3.4.2** is a children's book to celebrate the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, and **figure 3.4.3** is a Republican board game. This "Children's Week" was copied in other parts of the Republican zone including Madrid. The Republican government also took steps to get children out of harm's way. The Ministry of Public Instruction established *Colonias Escolares* for the children of fighters. Abandoned homes and properties in war free zones were also used as *Colonias de Infancia*, or Children's Colonies, which parents sent their children to live in during the war.

The reality of Spanish civil warfare included civilian casualties. Children were killed in bombings and raids like the bombings of Madrid, Barcelona, and Guernica. In 1938 the Spanish Child Association of America published a collection of Spanish refugee children's drawings called, *They Still Draw Pictures*. In his introduction to this book, Aldous Huxley comments on the prevalence of airplanes in children's drawings. Huxley claims that the

¹³²Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 298.

¹³³Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 295.

military plane represented the symbol of contemporary civilization to these children, many of who witnessed bombings and the use of machine guns from enemy aircraft. They also depict raids and evacuation.¹³⁴

Spanish children who were sent out of the country were a significant part of a greater population of Spanish refugees. Refugees started to leave en masse from Catalonia after Barcelona fell to Franco on January 26th, 1939. Refugees went to France, Britain, and Russia. In France, nearly half a million refugees were taken in, with scarce resources of food, shelter, and a lack of proper sanitation. Standards were kept in these poor conditions in an effort to encourage the refugees to return to Spain.¹³⁵ The Aid Spain movement in Britain took Basque refugee children.¹³⁶ Soviets took a great amount of refugee children (about 5,000), as well as communist adults (about 2,000).¹³⁷

Images of Children in Republican Propaganda

Images of Children are very common in Republican Propaganda. They were presented as victims of fascism, as potential combatants, as victims of politicization, and as reminders of the future. There was Republican propaganda that presented the politicization of children as good and propaganda that presented the politicization of children as bad. They are generally adorable and sweet looking or dead.

There is a great amount of Republican propaganda showing images of dead children to demonize the Nationalists as baby killers. **Figure 3.4.4** is an incrimination of the rebels' practice of indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Madrid. The poster shows a dead child

¹³⁴Aldous Huxley, *The Still Draw Pictures! A collection of 60 drawings made by Spanish children during the war*, (New York: Spanish Child Welfare Association of America for the American Friends service committee, 1938), 7.

¹³⁵Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 157, 188.

¹³⁶Jim Fyrth, "The Aid Spain Movement in Britain, 1936-39," *History Workshop*, 35(1993): 153.

¹³⁷Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 181.

with a number tag, with a squadron of planes flying behind, a clear reference to the Nationalists' aerial bombardment of Madrid in 1937. The text reads, "Madrid, the 'military' practice of the rebels. If you tolerate this your children will be next." It was produced in 1937 by the Ministry of Propaganda in English, with another edition in French.¹³⁸ The use of quotation marks around the word "military" is criticizing the bombing techniques of the rebels on civilian populations to decrease morale, a practice that would become much more commonplace in the Second World War. The phrase, "your children will be next" is warning the world that this is not just happening in Madrid, and the viewer should think about their child and if they want to allow their children to be killed in this way. The solution that the poster implies is that the viewer has to take action against the rebels now and not "tolerate" their "'military' practices", so that they can save the lives of their children.

Figure 3.4.5 is another poster featuring dead children that implies that the fascists threaten the lives of European babies. It was issued by the CNT.¹³⁹ Adolf Hitler and a squadron of Nazi planes are the symbols of fascism in this poster. Hitler stands on the northern border of the Iberian peninsula and points his finger and his planes directly to a cute smiling baby next to a dot labeled the city of Paris, the way it would appear on a military planning map. Beneath the figure of Hitler is a letter from a German to a Nationalist Colonel Souza with regards to the commitment of German planes to the Nationalist insurgency.¹⁴⁰ Surrounding this letter are 6 dead children with number tags, just like the one in **figure 3.4.4**. The text reads, "Today Spain, tomorrow the world," clearly

¹³⁸John Tisa, ed., *The Palette and the Flame: Posters of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: International Publishers, 1979), 12.

¹³⁹Tisa, *Palette*, 128.

¹⁴⁰"Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD's Southworth Collection," UCSD, accessed April 6, 2011, <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/newadd27.html>.

alluding to the spread of fascism across Europe after the fall of Spain. The character of fascism and the fall of Spain are accomplished by killing children, according to this poster.

There is also a large amount of Republican propaganda that presents children as potential combatants, and implies that the politicization of children is a good thing. Youth organizations like the JSU produced propaganda encouraging Socialists youths to fight fascism, and to publicize meetings of the well organized group. **Figure 3.4.6** is a JSU poster advertising the National Youth Exposition to be held in Valencia in August of 1937.¹⁴¹ The poster shows a muscular man holding a red flag with the symbol of the JSU on it. This “youth” is much older than the youths in **figures 3.4.4 through 3.4.5**, which could mean that the politicization of youth was seen as a good thing by some but only for those above a certain age.

Figure 3.4.7 however, is another poster produced by the JSU that shows a much younger child, but contains the same politicizing message.¹⁴² The text reads, “Children today, adults tomorrow,” in direct reference to the politicization of children being a necessary task so that they can become a part of the Republican future. The poster shows a large head of a child laughing over a landscape of industrial towers and factories, implying that the child is of the industrial working class.

On the other side of the argument, there was a lot of Republican propaganda produced that presented children as the victims of politicization, and largely encouraged the separation of children from the responsibilities and destructiveness of war. The Ministry of Public Instruction issued a great amount of propaganda about children. The Ministry of Public Instruction and Health established a Commission for the “*Semana del Niño*.” **Figure**

¹⁴¹Tisa, *Palette*, 137.

¹⁴²Tisa, *Palette*, 142.

3.4.8 is a poster produced by that commission that shouts, “Toys for our tots!,” and shows a boy and a girl playing with a doll, a drum, and a horn, while standing on Republican coins. The words “Subscription,” and, “Donation,” appear in the background and the entire poster is splattered in blood. This grim detail highlights the innocence of the boy and the girl (the tots for whom the commission is calling for toys). The faces of the children are cartoonish and de-individualized to represent all Spanish children. These idealized children are playing with toys oblivious to the shower of blood. The point of the *Semana del Niño* is to help distance the children from the bloody and dangerous war by making them happy and giving them toys. They are asking the viewer to buy subscriptions and make donations so the commission can accomplish this.

Figure 3.4.9 is a poster produced by the Sanitation and Social Assistance Council in Barcelona, for the Children’s week in Barcelona.¹⁴³ The text claims in Catalan that the Fascists give bombs while Catalonia offers toys, and the image shows the hand of an adult handing a young girl a toy, with a scene of an aerial bombardment at the top. This poster has an underlying political tone. Amid all the desertion in the army and the struggle to create a unified resistance, this poster seems to convince the child of her Republican identity. The Republicans are the good guys, and the fascists are the bad guys.

In just about every picture for any Children’s Week the children seem to be sweet, idealized children looking happy and playing with toys. Another type of propaganda that idealized children to make them look very sweet is the stamps that were issued “*Pro Infancia*” (for childhood). The stamps show sweet idyllic faces (**Figure 3.4.10**), hearts

¹⁴³Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 296.

(**Figure 3.4.11**), flowers, and birds (**Figure 3.4.12**).¹⁴⁴ They are little innocent children who should not be affected by war.

The Ministry of Public Instruction created a great number of Republican posters encouraging people to keep children out of the war by advertising their “*Colonias Escolares*” schools. **Figure 3.4.13** is a publication from the Ministry of Public Instruction showing how the children suffer under the fascist air-bombardment and how the Republic takes care of them.¹⁴⁵ “I am well, mother” is the text in red at the bottom, presumably the first words of the letter the smiling small girl in the right corner is writing to her mother. The pictures in the montage above tells the story of children who escape the aerial bombardment by sleeping in the metro and describes how happy they are when they find safety in war-free zones. In the war-free zones they can laugh with other children and live in peace. The last line reads “All of the affection for them, they are the morning,” meaning the future.

Figure 3.4.14 is another poster advertising *Colonias Escolares*, that reads, “The children of our fighters live healthy and happy in the student colonies of the Ministry of Public Instruction.” It was designed by the artist Mauricio Amster and was issued by the UGT. In the center there is a healthy adolescent getting ready to exercise in just his shorts. The photographs flanking the left and right sides show children doing things like engaging in physical activity classes in Picaña, sunbathing in Picaña, and show six different *Colonias Escolares*. These schools were located in Picaña, Antella, Bellús, Villarreal, Alborache, and El Perello.¹⁴⁶ This poster speaks of the “children of our combatants,” because it is speaking directly to the combatants. The poster was produced by the UGT and is encouraging those

¹⁴⁴Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 292.

¹⁴⁵Tisa, *Palette*, 50.

¹⁴⁶Tisa, *Palette*, 123.

who are fighting in the Republican armies to send their children off to these schools, where they can live “healthy and happy” lives.

In addition to advertising for these schools, propaganda condemning the politicization of children dealt with the issue directly, telling the viewer how bad it was to involve children in the war. Unlike the JSU, the FAI youth movement called the Libertarian Youth, FIJL, thought the politicization of children was wrong. The FIJL uses the slogan “Do not poison childhood” in **figure 3.4.15**. The poster shows a child crying in front of a hand that presents him with red, blue and black shirts. The red shirt represents the communist party, the blue shirt represents the anarchists, and the black shirt represents the fascists. These are symbols of the politicization of infancy, which they saw as negative.¹⁴⁷

A final way in which the images of children appeared in Republican propaganda is as symbols of the future. **Figure 3.4.16** is a poster issued by the UGT and shows a republican soldier holding up a small boy and saying, “I am going to fight for your future.”¹⁴⁸ This is a grim reminder that these children did not grow up in the world that their parents fought to ensure for them. If they grew up at all they grew up in Franco’s Spain to see their parents punished or killed.

The Spanish Civil War created a great number of orphans, who were forced to either leave their homes or suffer from the Francoist invasion. If children were to be thought of as part of the Republican population who wanted to resist the Nationalist invasion, then their identity had to be shaped through propaganda. Children and parents saw images of the Republicans as the good guys and the fascists as the bad guys whose military objectives included such horrible attacks on children as killing babies indiscriminately. Unlike the

¹⁴⁷Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 300.

¹⁴⁸Tisa, *Palette*, 125.

Republican propaganda's images of women and army, these posters were not speaking directly to children to mobilize them for the war effort. Instead, propaganda posters containing images of children were addressed to adults, utilizing guilt, morality, and sympathy to show Republican adults how they should conduct the war and gave them more reasons to fight.

3.5: Realities and Images of Clergy in Republican Propaganda

The Catholic Church was not a part of the Republican war machine, and like propaganda using images of children; the Republic did not attempt to mobilize the clergy with propaganda. However images of clergy in Republican propaganda were used to boost morale for the Republican cause. This was accomplished by the defamation of the clergy as corrupt fascists and the actions of the Catholic Church as murderous. By targeting the Church as the perpetrators of violence, the Republic was able to exonerate the religious persecution of the terror.

The Reality of Religion in the Spanish Civil War

Contrary to Nationalist advertisement, in the 1930s Spain was not the Catholic country it had been in the Middle Ages. At the time of the civil war, a smaller part of the population went to mass than in any other Christian nation.¹⁴⁹ President Azaña said in October 1931 that Spain had ceased to be a Catholic country. Judging by the Republic's legislation in the Constitution of 1931 he would be correct, but the Church still held sway over large sectors of the middle classes and rural farmers of Castille, the Basque Country, and Navarre. Geographically, Northerners were more likely to practice Catholicism, property owners

¹⁴⁹Robinson, "Barcelona," 418.

more than manual workers, the better educated rather than the poorly educated, and women rather than men. But generally, church attendance was in decline.¹⁵⁰

The church was detested throughout Spain for favoring the rich, supporting the repressive monarchy, resisting democratic reforms, manipulating education, and controlling more than a third of the national wealth.¹⁵¹ Since the Middle Ages the clergy has been blamed for all of the bad things that happened including war, disease, famine, and natural disasters. There was a theory that the clergy were the epitome of all human vices and wickedness and that they were corrupting Spain. Talk of eliminating the clergy had been common in Spain for more than a century before the outbreak of the civil war.¹⁵² Anticlerical riots had occurred in Spain since the 1860s, most notably in 1909 during the “Tragic Week” in Barcelona, 1931 at the establishment of the Second Republic, and 1936 during the terror that reigned after the outbreak of civil war.¹⁵³

The Republic created its own enemy in the church with its unconcealed hostility and its efforts to create a modern democratic and secular state. Actions taken against the authority of the Church in the 1931 Constitution included the legalization of divorce and civil marriage, the removal of religious symbols from public buildings, the taxation of the clergy, the expulsion of the religious orders from education, and the outlawing of religious burials and celebrations. Some of these measures were naïve and excessive. The Spanish state was unprepared to re-make the education system. Also the outlawing of religious burials and celebrations was not necessary and truly embittered not only the clergy but also a large

¹⁵⁰Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 34.

¹⁵¹Robinson, “Barcelona,” 418.

¹⁵²De la Cueva, “Religious Persecution,” 367-368.

¹⁵³Robinson, “Barcelona,” 418.

part of the population. As a result of these actions the church became a persecuted institution in Spanish society, and used this pity to their benefit.¹⁵⁴

In the Spanish Civil War, the Nationalists saw the war as a crusade to win back the Holy land of Spain and the Republicans saw the war as an opportunity to rid Spain of the Catholic Church forever. The Republicans envisioned a new society without religion where the new creeds would be socialism, communism, and anarchism. For the clergy, this meant that they faced religious persecution perpetuated by the leftist parties, and were led into an alliance with the Nationalist rebellion. In “Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities Against the Clergy During the Spanish Civil War,” Julio de la Cueva claims that the persecution came before the “crusade” rhetoric, but recognized that the tradition existed in Spain that pitted the left against the church’s traditional view of society, specifically the Republic’s legislative actions against the church since the Second Republic’s first Constitution of 1931.¹⁵⁵

The persecution of the leaders of the Catholic Church was one of the main pillars of the Red terror. When the war broke out on July 18, 1936, the first victims of the terror were the clergy.¹⁵⁶ Siedman claims that the Spanish priests suffered the worst massacre since the French Revolution.¹⁵⁷ De la Cueva, whose estimates have been used in many histories of the Spanish civil war since their publication in 1998, estimates that 6832 members of the Catholic clergy were killed, including 13 bishops, 4172 priests, 2364 monks and friars, and 283 nuns. De la Cueva says that 50 percent of these murders were committed during the first month and a half of the war. The numbers of murders steadily decreased throughout

¹⁵⁴Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 33.

¹⁵⁵De la Cueva, “Religious Persecution,” 360-367.

¹⁵⁶De la Cueva, “Religious Persecution,” 361.

¹⁵⁷Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 29.

the war.¹⁵⁸ The sheer lawlessness of mob rule in the early months of the war can explain this trend. Republican officials did not make any efforts to halt the *paseos* during the first months of the war.¹⁵⁹ With no fear of punishment, anarchists and revolutionaries murdered clergy members without mercy. There were mock trials and immediate executions, *paseos*, priests were hanged, drowned, suffocated, burned, buried alive, and tortured with mockery, insults, blasphemy, coercion to blasphemy, they were stripped naked, beaten, cut, skinned, and mutilated. Often the bodies were left out on the street to display. After the May Days in Barcelona in the early days of May in 1937, when the Anarchists and POUM lost control and the PSUC (United Socialist Party of Catalonia) took over, the terror ceased.¹⁶⁰

In addition to the murders, churches were burnt and there was also a general atmosphere of iconoclasm. Like the French revolutionaries, Spanish revolutionaries looted churches to strip religious edifices of brass to be used for the Republican war industry. Siedman claims that the burning of churches provided a public spectacle that regenerated revolutionary feeling at a time when the Nationalists were establishing strongholds in Andalucia.¹⁶¹ In "Revolutionary Anticlericalism and Hegemonic Processes in an Andalusian Town, August 1936," Richard Maddox uses the term *reparto* to discuss why iconoclasm was so important to revolutionaries. In addition to a *reparto* of land (a redistribution of land in Andalusia accomplished by the Revolutionaries), the burning of churches and the desecration of icons served as a *reparto* (redistribution) of meaning that would outlast the

¹⁵⁸De la Cueva, "Religious Persecution," 335, 357.

¹⁵⁹Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 29.

¹⁶⁰De la Cueva, "Religious Persecution," 356-357.

¹⁶¹Siedman, *Republic of Egos*, 30.

reparto of land if and when the Nationalists took their town or won the war.¹⁶² De la Cueva also claims that killing clergy members was a sort of revolutionary obligation, and blasphemy sort of anti-fascist identification code. Iconoclasm was an important method for the Republicans to usurp the power of the church. In Catalonia alone, over 100 villages were renamed to get rid of the words “Sant” or “Santa” in their names.¹⁶³

Images of Church, Religion, and Clergy in Republican Propaganda

I will look at how Republicans dealt with the issue of religion in propaganda. Republican propaganda posters rarely represented violence against the clergy directly; instead they simply portrayed the clergy as evil and corrupted. This could perhaps owe to the fact that while the attacks on the clergy were not forbidden at the beginning of the war, they were not necessarily encouraged as official policy for the CNT or FAI anarchists, who committed most of the atrocities. These church burners and priest killers were labeled as “irresponsible” and “out of control” by these workers’ organizations in an effort to distance the organization from their actions.¹⁶⁴ As the war progressed and the killing decreased, the persecution of the clergy became an issue that was not necessarily broadcasted for the world to see through propaganda. De la Cueva comments that scholarship on the actualities of the religious persecution during the Spanish Civil War is still very recent, and a very sensitive topic. This is why for most of the Republican Propaganda Posters of the period, we see a toned-down version of the workers’ opinion of the church and the clergy. Republican propaganda presented the church as the defender of fascist oppression.

¹⁶² Richard Maddox, “Revolutionary Anticlericalism and Hegemonic Processes in an Andalusian Town, August 1936,” *American Ethnologist*, 22(1995): 134.

¹⁶³ De la Cueva, “Religious Persecution,” 360-365.

¹⁶⁴ De la Cueva, “Religious Persecution,” 358.

Figure 3.5.1 is a poster produced in French by the UGT in Valencia as part of the international propaganda campaign. This poster is an example of the Republican view of the Church's intentions. The text reads, "How the Church has sown its religion in Spain." It depicts a rebel officer wearing a swastika around his neck sprinkling little crosses as if they were seeds into the tilled soil of Spain. The red outline that shapes the fields is the southern border of the Iberian Peninsula. The rebels used religion to conquer and coerce the farmers of southern Spain in places where the rebellion had swift success, like in the areas around Seville and Granada. Granada fell to the rebels on July 24, 1936. General Queipo de Llano seized Seville on the 18th of July and The Army of Africa was airlifted from Morocco to Seville on July 28, 1936.¹⁶⁵ Other elements of this work deserve attention. The golden sword in his trousers places him in an elite officers corps, connecting his actions (literally, the spreading and sowing of religion) with those of the high-ranking rebels and collaborators. Perhaps the very placement of the taller crosses are meant to mark the spot of the Andalusian centers of rebel power in Seville and Granada. The fascist officer would then be walking south down the center of Andalusia, where agriculture was the way of life of most Spanish people. Franco airlifted his Army from Morocco to Seville because he could count on the cooperation of the *caciques*, elites, and the Church in helping the agricultural workers to not resist like the industrial workers would in the North, in Catalonia. In *Carteles de la República y de la Guerra Civil*, Jaume Miravittles describes the imagery of this poster in a very dramatic and morbid way: "We see the Catholic Church as an ally of fascism, sowing a world of crosses...of death."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Wilson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History in Pictures*, 39.

¹⁶⁶Miravittles, *Carteles de la República*, 334.

Figure 3.5.2 is a poster that portrays the church as the bringers of death. This poster was designed by the artist Wolf and was produced in Barcelona. The text reads, “The angel of peace of the fascists! The libertarian youth will learn to destroy,” and the image of the angel of peace looks more like an angel of death. A white skeletal figure with wings is flying through a dark red sky with a gas mask on his head, a cross hanging around his waist, a swastika for a left hand, and bombs dropping from his chest onto a city of rubble. This poster is hardly shy in portraying the church as killers and fascists.

Figure 3.5.3 is a famous poster printed by the Republican Ministry of Propaganda that typifies what the Republicans assumed the rebel forces to consist of: two Moorish traitors, A Capitalist Nazi financier, and a fascist bishop, with a blue-sashed Italian Fascist leading the boat. The sign “*Arriba España*” is a slogan used frequently in Nationalist propaganda. The name of the ship, the *Junta de Burgos y Lisboa* refers to both the city of Burgos, the seat of the rebel government, and references the support given to Nationalist Spain by the authoritarian ruler in Portugal. The three Moors in the bottom of the boat represent what the entire operation rested on, the imperial forces of Morocco. The map of Spain that hangs from the central mast is hung in a noose.

The Republicans depicted the clergy as evil and corrupt, but how would this help them win the war? For those segments of the Spanish peasantry that did not take part in the terror or that were uncomfortable with the Republic’s anticlericalism, needed to be told that the Church was their mortal enemy because they were deadly evil fascists. The Republic needed to demonize the church as its enemy to attract support from these segments of the population who were on the fence. Also, the terror was an ugly aspect of the war that would not help the image of Spain to receive international aid. Modern

democratic governments of France and Britain had also experienced troubles the church in their past, and Republican propaganda attempted to illicit empathy from the democracies by depicting the clergy as evil and corrupt.

CHAPTER 4

Nationalist Propaganda

Nationalist posters were produced by a small number of rebel government institutions and utilized a narrow scope themes and images. Validating the insurrection was the main goal of the deployment of these themes and images. The propaganda produced by the Nationalist propaganda machine reflected the image of brave patriotic soldiers fighting- with God on their side- to restore the glory of Spain. These ideas conformed closely with the ideas of the conspiratorial military officers, most notably those of propaganda minister José Millán-Astray.

Nature of Nationalist Propaganda

The right used propaganda before the war more than they did during the war. Before the outbreak of war, propaganda from parties on the right aimed to win the hearts of the armed forces. In Catholic publications such as *El Debate*, the Republic was presented as an unpatriotic regime dominated by Reds, atheists, Masons, and separatists. The right wing journals used apocalyptic messages when describing the concession of autonomy to Catalonia, calling it the beginning of the break-up of the fatherland. Leading up to the 1933 elections the right-wing parties also mounted a propaganda campaign modeled on Nazi techniques and aesthetic style such as heroic realism.¹⁶⁷

In contrast to the Republicans, Nationalists needed only a small number of production centers for their posters, thanks to the greater centralization of the rebel propaganda machine. The *Servicio Nacional de Propaganda* (Nationalist Propaganda Service) was the main producer of Nationalist Propaganda. The benefit of having a main

¹⁶⁷Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 35, 44.

hub of propaganda was that the campaign was tightly controlled and its images strictly regulated.¹⁶⁸ The negative effect of this was the small number of posters when compared to the myriad Republican posters produced during the war.

Nationalist artists were few and far between. The July coup was instigated by military officers, and they did not have artists at their disposal. The arts were strongest in Catalonia, where a very small minority of artists contributed art for the Nationalist cause. The Nationalists relied instead on radio for the spreading of ideas and propaganda. In Franco-held territory where the revolt had achieved success, the Nationalists immediately took control over all communications. This means that the major newspapers and most importantly radio were used by the Nationalists to get out their message of a “true Spain”. Franco’s first proclamation to the country on July 18 was from the studio of Radio Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. Quiapo de Llano’s radio broadcasts based out of Seville soon became famous for their ferocious biting quality.¹⁶⁹ The Republicans, on the other hand, had very few radios in their control, thus Radio broadcasts were not an element of their propaganda machine.

Themes and Images of Nationalist Propaganda

The Nationalists sought to convey a simple, three-pronged message about their goals in the civil war. In their view, the Spanish Civil war was a religious crusade and a struggle to revive the glory of Spain, which had been lost. They used the “epic” Siege of the Alcazar to present Nationalist soldiers as heroes. Commonly used images included crosses, angels, and disciplined troops of “real” Spaniards. The simplicity of the images reflects a

¹⁶⁸ Jensen, “Jose Millan-Astray,” 425-426.

¹⁶⁹ Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 112.

lack of creativity, artistic talent, and knowledge of contemporary Spanish culture among the Army officers and right-wing elitists of the Nationalist Propaganda Machine.

The Civil War as a religious crusade

Spanish Nationalists did not struggle to find justifications for their right to lead a coup. The Nationalists used religion as a unifying force, as a justification for the rebellion, and as an arm of the Franco regime in the creation of National-Catholicism. The church served as a unifying force for all those who supported the rebellion. It rallied a large group made up of rural farmers, merchants, traders, and religious, middle-class civilians who were afraid of the revolution.¹⁷⁰ As a justification for the rebellion, the Nationalists claimed that they were reconquering Spain for the Catholics. The rebellion was a crusade, and even hailed as a new *Reconquista*.¹⁷¹ In this way, Franco was praised as the savior of a persecuted faith.¹⁷²

Figure 4.1 is a Nationalist Propaganda poster that propagates one of the central views of the Nationalist party, that Spain was the Catholic center of the world. The poster was produced in 1937 by an anonymous artist, and shows a large numeral “1,” crossed with the word, “cross” to signify a cross that casts its shadow onto a globe where only Spain is present. The text beneath reads, “Spain, spiritual guide of the world.” Although the poster means many things, its progression of meaning is quite simple. The cross made up of the word “cross” and the numeral “1,” means that there is only one true church. The fact that it casts its shadow on Spain means that it, the one true church, controls Spain and is a part of

¹⁷⁰Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 122.

¹⁷¹ It is interesting that the Catholic Church seemed to not recognize that a significant portion of the rebel army was made up of the Army of Africa; that is, of Moorish troops. The first Reconquista of the Middle Ages was waged to force the Moors out of Spain.

¹⁷²Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 131.

it. The fact that Spain is the only country depicted on the globe means that it is Spain's responsibility to be the leading Catholic force in the world; to tell everyone of the one true church and make them subject to its rule- or its shadow.

Figure 4.2 is a poster produced in 1939 that depicts religion as a justification for the actions of the nationalist armies. In this poster, we see fascist troops marching in straight lines beneath the figure of a golden angel. The angel is holding a sword over her left shoulder, representing archaic crusade-era warfare, and a grain of wheat in her right hand, representing agricultural abundance. Next to the wheat is the Falangist symbol of the yoke and arrows, the symbol of the Catholic monarchs. The angel is leading the troops, blessing their mission. Also, the reference to the date 18 July, the initial military coup, gives credit to the invaders as those defending "free Spain." With the angel leading the troops, the advance of troops and artillery is not only unstoppable, but noble and holy.

Together, these figures represent the aim of the Nationalist forces to make Catholicism synonymous with Spain through war. In **Figure 4.1**, Spain's identity as the Catholic center of the world justifies aggression against any non-Catholic groups in Spain. In **Figure 4.2**, God's support of the Nationalists' advances in war permits its use against godless "Reds," without fear of punishment after death. The Nationalists' war is a religious crusade for which they will be rewarded in heaven.

The Civil War as Rebirth

Another clear message of Nationalist propaganda was that the rebels were fighting to restore Spain to glory, to instigate a kind of national renaissance or rebirth. The nation's golden age, or *Siglo de Oro*, came to a close in the seventeenth century, and afterward, Spain failed to regain its position in European politics. Salvadó claims that most of the rhetoric

and symbols used by the Nationalists in propaganda were largely borrowed from the era of “*El Cid*” and the Catholic Kings, when Spain had been re-conquered from its Muslim invaders.¹⁷³

“Spain has arrived” is the slogan in a 1939 poster (**Figure 4.3**). This poster shows a Castillian flag representing the traditional ruling seat of Spain. There are three figures in this poster, one a smiling Falangist soldier with the Falangist yoke and arrows symbol on his chest, a man in the center giving the Fascist salute, and a woman looking admiringly at the center man with a basket of apples on her shoulder, representing abundance. Across the bottom a lion stands triumphantly facing the right of the poster. The lion is another traditional symbol of Castille. The message of this poster implies that these symbols and these people are the identity of Spain. It was probably printed in the war’s last year, 1939, as the Nationalists advanced on and eventually overran the Republican strongholds of Barcelona and Madrid. If this date is correct, the poster can be interpreted as a message of triumph. “Spain has arrived” meaning the victors represent true Spain. Spain did not die when the Republic lost the war because the Republic was not Spain. The symbols and figures in this poster, including the traditional symbols for Madrid and Falangist soldiers are the real Spain.

Figure 4.4 is a third poster promising that the goal of the war was glory for Spain. This poster was produced by the *Servicio Nacional de Propaganda* during the war and has the word, “Glory” right across the top of the poster. The poster depicts the helmeted head of a soldier with a disembodied hand holding leaves over his brow to shade his eyes from the sun. The head and hand rest on the Iberian Peninsula with a narrow mountainous pass

¹⁷³Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 124.

depicted in the center of Spain with three different flags sticking out of it. Coupled with the text at the bottom, the poster reads, “Glory to those who spill their blood for Spain and for the Caudillo Franco.” Nationalist propaganda minister José Millán-Astray, promoted the idea of the patriotic soldier who sacrificed everything for his fatherland, and often described death in battle as a “holy sacrifice.”¹⁷⁴ This poster was produced by his propaganda ministry, and promised glory to those who sacrificed their lives for the fatherland.

Figure 4.5, produced by the *Servicio Nacional de Propaganda*, reads, “Spain Resuscitated,” as if Spain had died and the rebels were resuscitating it through war. This poster shows a militarized angel holding a sword referencing crusade-era warfare, wearing a helmet, and leading a charge of tanks, missiles, battleships, airplanes, and infantry. This poster clearly shows the Nationalists’ connection between their war against the Republic, as all forces used against the Republic are represented here, with the rebirth or resuscitation of Spain from death.

The Siege of the Alcazar

The Siege of the Alcazar was an event in September of 1936 that the Nationalists used as a symbol of Nationalist struggle and strength against their enemy. A thousand rebel troops and supporters locked themselves inside the Alcazar of Toledo from the start of the rising to September 27, when they were rescued by Nationalist troops. In his comprehensive volume, *The Spanish Civil War*, Romero Salvadó claims that it became part of Nationalist legend, with rumors spreading about the evil violence of the besiegers and the strident Catholicism of the besieged. However the reality of the situation was not quite

¹⁷⁴Jensen, “Jose Millan-Astray,” 431-433.

as epic as the propaganda made it to seem. The besiegers were allowed to write their relatives in Madrid. But the event offered the Nationalists an opportunity to depict themselves as heroes and martyrs. For the chronology of the war, the most important result of the siege was that it gave Madrid precious time to build up its defenses before the Nationalist attack- an attack that they were successful in halting. However, the propaganda value of this event was not lost on Franco, and it was glorified in much of Nationalist propaganda, making living martyrs out of the besieged.¹⁷⁵

Figure 4.6 is a poster for the film, “Alcazar, The War of Spain,” and shows a wounded man holding a flag and a pistol jumping over a dead soldier. The entire poster is in red and the Alcazar behind him is in flames. The Nationalist troops are running from the burning building, looking ragged and tired. This was an event that could be propagandized because the Nationalist troops were heroes, not just killers of the enemy. This poster paints them in that light. The troops appear weakened and suffering but the central figure fights on, leaping over a dead body, a metaphor for conquering death, clutching a flag in his hand, representing patriotism.

The propaganda produced by the Nationalist forces during the Spanish civil war was very different from the propaganda produced by the Republicans. The Nationalist propaganda campaign was everything that the Republican propaganda machine was not: it was centralized, it was tightly controlled, and it was easily understood. Nationalist imagery is simplistic when compared to the complexity of Republican propaganda. This is partly due to the fact that the situation inside of Republican Spain was far more complex. The

¹⁷⁵Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War*, 121.

region of Catalonia by itself had more history and turmoil leading up to this war than the Nationalists had in their existence since the plotting of the military coup in early 1936.

Conclusion

Although there is evidence that Republican posters of the Spanish Civil War were very plentiful, they are relatively scarce now. Reasons for this include the slackening of poster production after 1938 due to lack of paper, ink, resource competition, and weakening revolutionary fervor towards the end of the war, as well as the lack of conservation due to the criminal status of Revolutionary materials during Franco's regime.

Poster production was affected by 1938 budgetary constraints imposed by the Republican government of Juan Negrín. Ink and paper supplies were scarce and prices rose for all stages of poster production. Newspapers contended with posters for these scarce supplies, while both sides claimed they were the most effective means for optimizing these scarce resources. Poster production as well as newspapers then took a backseat to armed conflict in the war effort. The artists who produced these posters also began to be mobilized to the front lines to fight. Poster production had always been closely linked with the rise of revolutionary enthusiasm, which explains why the beginning of the war saw the greatest amount of poster production, which lessened and dipped off as the fate of the Republic became increasingly dreary.¹⁷⁶

Conservation of these posters was nearly impossible in Francoist Spain (1939-1975). Franco's regime is famous for its use of censorship and desire to extinguish any and all remnants of Republican resistance. It was a punishable crime to keep a Republican poster in one's home or place of business. Also removal of the posters from the city walls was

¹⁷⁶Carulla and Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra*, 7-9.

tricky, that is if they were not ripped down or destroyed by rebels upon the capture of the city. Needless to say, Franco's regime saw no need to treat these subversive posters with care so they could be appreciated by future generations. The only posters we are able to see today were not actually able to serve the function for which they were printed.¹⁷⁷ They were either copies or failures.

The Republic produced over 3,500 propaganda posters in a three-year period.¹⁷⁸ These posters are necessary to study the social history of the Spanish Civil War because they provide insight into daily realities faced by different segments of the population. In terms of political history, the posters reflect the efforts of political parties to address individuals and increase their support among the people. Today we can judge the effectiveness of the posters in what specifically it was they were trying to accomplish or suggest to the viewer. But for the woman or the farmer looking at the poster during the war, we cannot tell how they reacted. However, they give us a sense of their material culture. If we can understand the reality of the individuals, then we can attempt to discern how they viewed propaganda. The posters show us how Spanish culture and politics were communicated to the people during the war.

¹⁷⁷ Carulla and Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra*, 9.

¹⁷⁸ Carulla and Carulla, *El Color de la Guerra*, 9.

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Images



Figure 2.2.1

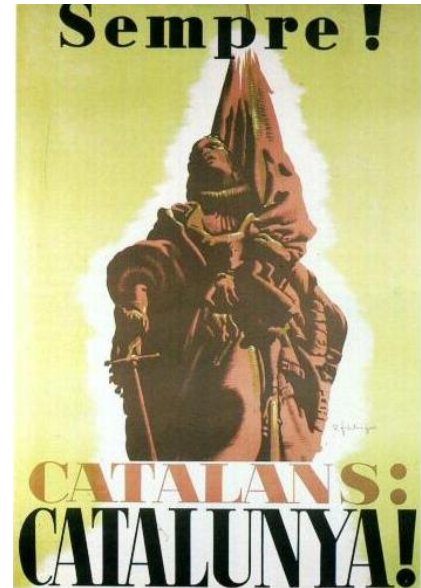


Figure 2.3.1



Figure 2.3.2



Figure 3.1.1



Figure 3.1.2



Figure 3.1.3



Figure 3.1.4



Figure 3.1.5



Figure 3.1.6

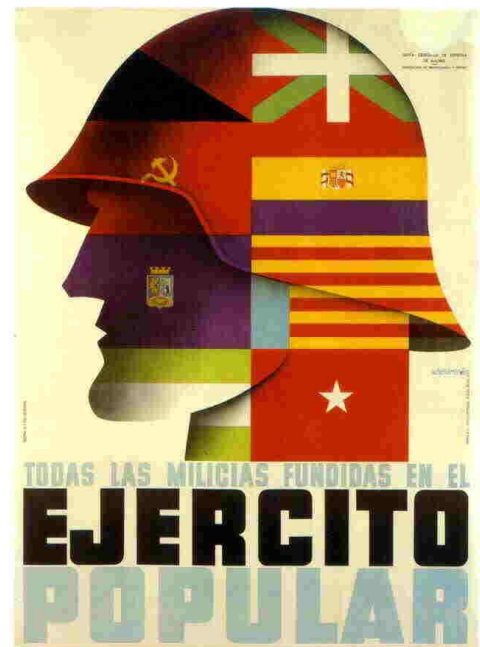


Figure 3.1.7



Figure 3.1.8



Figure 3.1.9



Figure 3.1.10



Figure 3.1.11



Figure 3.1.12



Figure 3.1.13

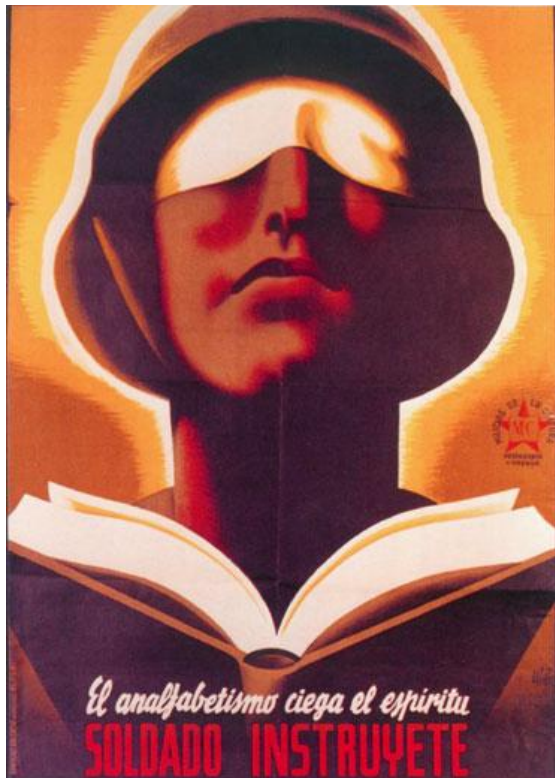


Figure 3.1.14



Figure 3.1.15



Figure 3.1.16



Figure 3.1.17



Figure 3.1.18



Figure 3.1.19



Figure 3.2.1

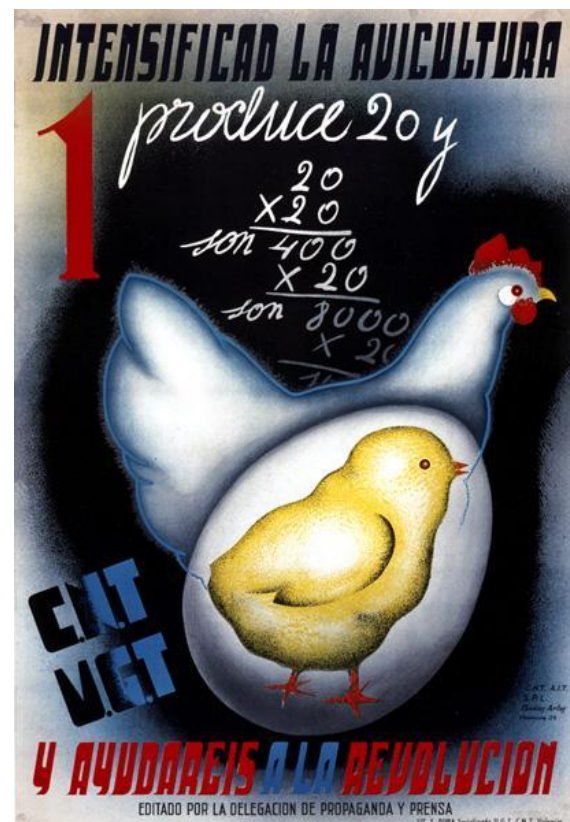


Figure 3.2.2



Figure 3.2.3



Figure 3.2.4



Figure 3.2.5



Figure 3.2.6



Figure 3.2.7



Figure 3.2.8

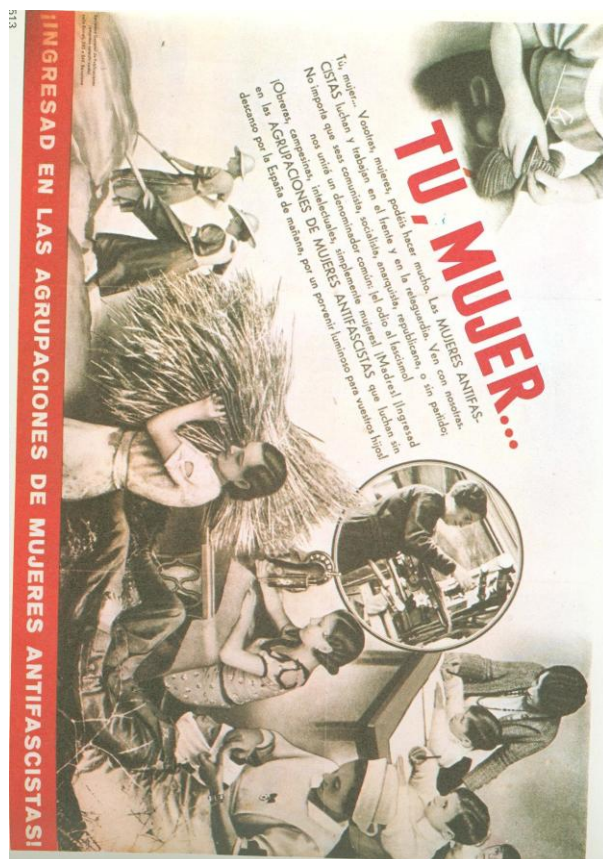


Figure 3.3.1



Figure 3.3.2



Figure 3.3.3



Figure 3.3.4



Figure 3.3.5



Figure 3.3.6

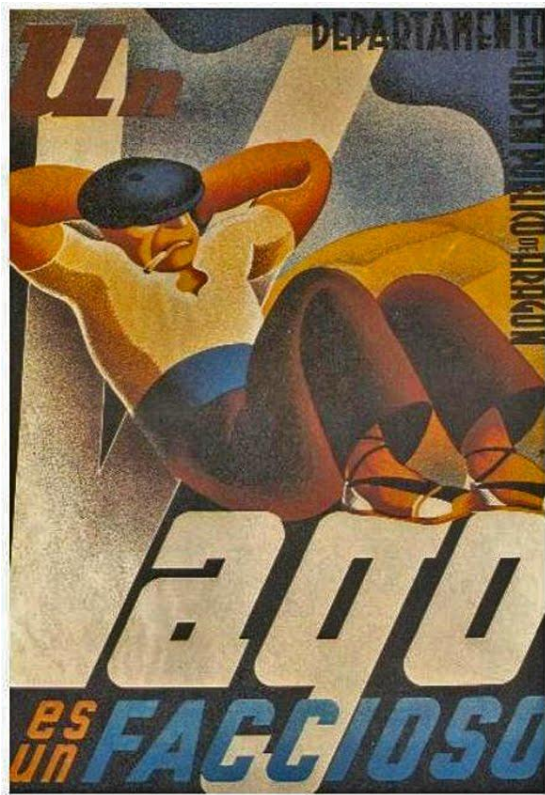


Figure 3.3.7



Figure 3.3.8



Figure 3.4.1



Figure 3.4.2

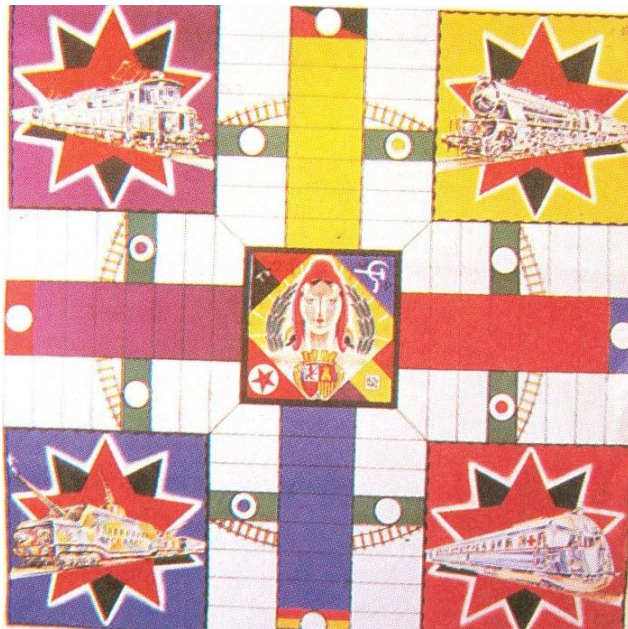


Figure 3.4.3

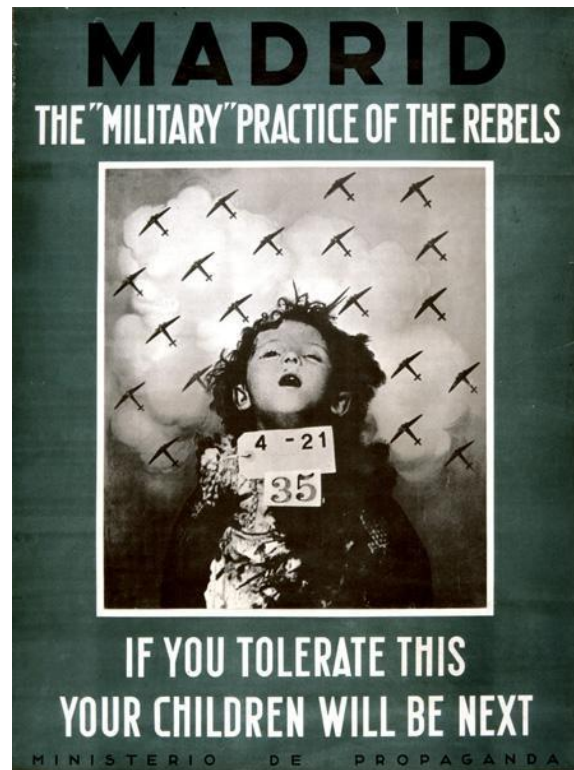


Figure 3.4.4



Figure 3.4.5



Figure 3.4.6



Figure 3.4.7



Figure 3.4.8



Figure 3.4.9



Figure 3.4.10



Figure 3.4.11



Figure 3.4.12



Figure 3.4.13



Figure 3.4.14



Figure 3.4.15



Figure 3.4.16



Figure 3.5.1



Figure 3.5.2



Figure 3.5.3



Figure 4.1



Figure 4.2



Figure 4.3



Figure 4.4



Figure 4.5



Figure 4.6