

ART AND MASS COMMUNICATION AS POLITICAL ACTIVISM DURING THE  
SPANISH CIVIL WAR

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## ABSTRACT

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This research explores paintings, documentaries, and journalism as political activism during the Spanish Civil War. This research focuses on George Steer, Ernest Hemingway, and Pablo Picasso's reactions to the bombing of Guernica, and the impact of their respective media to spread news and influence public opinion. The bombing of Guernica was the first time that civilians were the intended and sole target of an air raid. Francisco Franco denied the responsibility for the bombing and used censorship as a means to cover up the truth. Steer, Hemingway, and Picasso used art to inform people around the world about Guernica and the Spanish Civil War. Finally, this research compares Picasso's painting to modern day art as the ultimate manifestation of thought during turbulent times. Steer's article "The Tragedy of Guernica," Picasso's *Guernica*, and Hemingway's documentary *The Spanish Earth*, were all political activism in the moment during the Spanish Civil War, but these works also transcend time and speak to the human capacity to empathize with suffering.

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## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

### **CHAPTER 1: BRIEF HISTORY OF SPAIN**

The Spanish Civil War began in 1936, during a time of political turbulence, technological advances, and changing international relations. The conflict was between the Republicans (also called the loyalists, left-wing, popular front and reds), who supported the democratically elected Spanish Republic, and the Nationalists (also called the rebels, fascists, and right-wing), who supported the military coup led by General Francisco Franco, which attempted to overthrow the government.

I am writing a thesis about painting, journalism, photojournalism, and film as political activism during the Spanish Civil War by analyzing the work of George Steer, Pablo Picasso, and Ernest Hemingway. Specifically, I plan to discuss the reactions of George Steer and Pablo Picasso to the bombing of Guernica, and the impact of their newspaper article and painting, respectively. The bombing of Guernica in 1937 was the first time that civilians were the intended and sole target of an air raid. Furthermore, Franco initially denied the responsibility for the bombing and used censorship as a means to try and cover up the truth. Both Steer and Picasso used journalism and art as a means to communicate the truth about Guernica and the Spanish Civil War, and to share and inform people around the world. Additionally, I will also discuss Ernest Hemingway and his involvement in a documentary film about the war. The goal of the film was to portray what was happening in Spain in hopes of rallying support for the Spanish Republic. I will use Steer, Picasso, and Hemingway to exemplify how art is the ultimate manifestation of thought during turbulent times.

At the end of my study I answer the following questions: How does one define art and what is the purpose of art? How did the bombing of Guernica change the war and the mindset of

the Spaniards? Why does political art, such as Picasso's *Guernica*, cause so much controversy? How is communication, specifically art and newspaper, the ultimate manifestation of thought during war? How did the Spanish Civil war impact the media and communication culture in Spain? How were sociopolitical aspects of society impacted by these events, and what impacts can be felt today?

The advances in technology, including journalism, photography, film, and painting, allowed art to play a critical role in inspiring, educating, and responding to the Spanish Civil War. The turn of the twentieth century served as the starting point for a century filled with wars. World War I was the first time that photography and documentaries were employed to try and influence or manipulate the public on a large scale. In addition, propaganda posters<sup>1</sup> were meant to attract attention with their bright colors and size, and ultimately stimulate a response to serve political ends. At this point in time, Spanish art and art across the world had already responded to the political aspect of war. However, prior to the Spanish Civil War art had not yet responded to war in terms of moral or human aspects.

In the April 2015 National Geographic article *First Artists*, author Chip Walter said, "The greatest innovation in the history of humankind was neither the stone tool nor the steel sword, but the invention of symbolic expression by the first artists." The article describes cave art and how these expressions of consciousness have and always will represent our society; the article said, "a species awash in symbols, from the signs that guide your progress down the highway to the wedding ring on your finger and the icons on your iPhone." The article explains cave drawings found in El Castillo Cave in northern Spain, which dates back 41,000 years ago,

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<sup>1</sup> See *Propaganda* by Edward Berynays for more information

explaining that symbolic expression has always been apart of the Spanish culture as well as the human race.<sup>2</sup>

This section will provide a brief background to understand the political radicalism and social polarization up until the end of the Second Spanish Republic. Thus, it is critical to understand the events in Europe that led up to 1936.

The events that led up to the Spanish Civil War originated in the second half of the nineteenth century. After the Glorious Revolution of 1868 threw out Isabel II, Spain embarked on a series of political experiments with different forms of government. The *sexenio democrático* was a period from the revolution of 1868 until 1874 when the government in Spain changed numerous times. First, Spain had a provisional government from 1868 until 1871. Then, King Amadeo, an Italian who was brought in to rule, held power from 1871 until 1873, and lastly, the First Spanish Republic lasted from 1873 until 1874. The monarchy was restored in 1874 with the proclamation of Isabel's son, Alfonso XII, as king. Alfonso XII, ruled from 1874 until his death in 1885. At that point, Alfonso XIII, born three months after his father died, became king.

The Restoration Monarchy (1874-1931) attempted to return to a Spanish conservative government with the monarchy and bourgeoisie ruling over the rural working class. This was achieved by the *caciques* (political bosses) through manipulation of the votes during the election in favor of the conservatives. The Conservatives and Liberals enjoyed this monopoly alternating in office, which was known as the *turno pacífico*. The first blow to the restoration was Spain's loss of its strongholds, Cuba and Puerto Rico, during the Spanish American War in 1898, which showed the Spanish government to be weak and incompetent. The second blow to the restoration

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<sup>2</sup> Chip Walter, "First Artists." *National Geographic* (Jan, 2015).

was the disaster of Annual. In 1921 the Spanish army was defeated in the battle of Annual when thousands of troops died, which unsettled the military due to the huge losses suffered.

In 1923 the Captain General of Catalonia, Miguel Primo de Rivera, organized a coup d'état blaming the military failure and discontent on the parliamentary system. King Alfonso XIII appointed him Prime Minister. Primo de Rivera wanted to eliminate corruption and suspended the constitution. Additionally, he wanted to change Spain because he believed that the old government had ruined the country's nationalism and patriotism. Primo de Rivera increased the spending on business and public services, which caused his government to go bankrupt. At this point there was much opposition to his regime and the king eventually forced him to resign in 1930. The Primo de Rivera dictatorship fell in 1931 and then shortly after, following elections in which the Popular Front won, Alfonso XIII fled the country and the Second Republic was proclaimed.

Niceto Alcalá Zamora became the first prime minister of the Second Republic. The Second Republic separated church and state, and made divorce legal for the first time in Spanish history. The politics of the Republic are explained in the three general elections that took place during its lifetime. In 1931 a Cortes, or a legislative assembly of Spain, was elected and created a constitution with reforms meant to challenge the pre-1931 order through legislation. The second general election in 1933 elected a right-wing government that tried to reverse many of the reforms. The last election in 1936 elected a government that tried to undo the previous work of the right wing.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of how efficiently the governments introduced reforms or reneged on them, there was always going to be backlash from those who wanted more change and those who wanted no progressive change.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Forrest, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Routledge, 2000), 19.



The failure of the Restoration Monarchy led to the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931. During the first half of the Second Republic the government, run by Socialists and Republicans, attempted to make changes to the traditional control exercised by the churches and the military and increase the power of the people. The Republic allowed the province of Catalonia its own regional autonomy. It also separated Church and state, and made divorce legal for the first time in Spain. The reaction to these reforms was widespread support for the Nationalist ideals, which was evident in the Socialists defeat in the 1933 elections. The Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing group (CEDA) won the election supporting traditional Spanish values and Catholicism. Ultimately, what caused the Second Republic to be so short-lived was that it was attacked from all sides. The Republic lacked funds, due to excess spending during the previous dictatorship, to follow through with its projects to help the disadvantaged groups. Thus, there was widespread discontent among the lower class. The same projects and proposals were seen as unacceptable to the upper class because they would threaten their economic and social dominance. Additionally, the top-down system isolated and alienated the middle class. The Spanish Republic was not the first choice of most Spaniards, it was just the government that divided them the least.

However, the Spanish Republic did not take root in Spain due to two main reasons: the problem of landless peasants in Spain and the rise of fascism in Europe. First, in southern Spain about three million landless peasants, or twelve percent of the Spanish population, depended on seasonal labor to try and make a living. They dreamed of a revolution that would create a voluntary, collectivist type society. In 1932 the Constituent Cortes of the Republic passed an agrarian reform law, something prominent political party leaders had been saying was important for the last 30 years, but was completely inadequate. The second reason the Republic failed was

the continuous rise of fascism in Europe. In 1933 Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany and the Catholic Center Party abandoned its parliament by supporting the vote that gave Hitler the emergency powers he needed to establish his dictatorship. Shortly after, the Vatican signed an agreement with the Nazi régime thus dissolving the Center party.

If the world, and particularly Spain, had been a stable and untroubled world in the 1930s the Spanish Republic of 1931 could have stabilized itself and the social reforms could have become established. However, the rise of Fascism hindered this opportunity. In 1930, Hitler made it clear that if he gained power he would plan a war of revenge against the powers that defeated Germany in World War I as well as destroy all political and intellectual property within Germany. Additionally, the same fear about the rise of fascism that was occurring in Spain was beginning to spread across the rest of Europe and the world.

## CHAPTER 2: ART AND WAR

Due to advances in technology, many new forms of communication and expression were open to artists and writers. In the 1930's photography and film were "new" while painting and journalism were both established art forms, however artists and writers were experimenting with new ways of representing the world. Prior to the creation of the telegraph, information was limited to traveling via a human or animal. However, with the telegraph the exchange of information for news reporting was able to spread much further and faster. Additionally film and photography allowed for the practice of capturing images or videos by recording via photographic film.

Many people from around the world showed their support for Spain in one way or another. Artists and writers near and far began employing these new methods to document, express their reactions, and inform others about the war. For example, Miró, Picasso, and Dalí were all working at a distance from Spain, yet still shared their reactions from afar. Their work coincided with the 1937 Paris International exhibition. The Spanish government wanted to promote the cause of the Republic abroad and therefore approached various Spanish artists to create works of art to be displayed at the Spanish Pavilion. Later on I will address Guernica by Pablo Picasso as a work of art that stood out as responding to moral and human concerns about the war. The art at the Spanish Pavilion showed the response to the war in terms of human aspects and how people from other countries became involved in the cause.

The role of journalists during the Spanish Civil War was to employ the new techniques of communication, such as photography and film, and allow people outside of Spain to understand the details of the war. Although few journalists went there, those who did made a big impact. Journalists proved to be even more critical when Francisco Franco and the fascists denied the

responsibility for much devastation and destruction, and subjected all cultural activities to censorship. Photojournalism also helped to provide a cultural background and a greater understanding of the state of affairs during the Spanish Civil War, which was also critical at the time.

The telegraph titled “The Tragedy of Guernica” by George Steer helped to spread the world about what had happened in the Basque town of Guernica to people around the world. This news was so important that many newspapers published his eyewitness account regardless of political affiliation. Newspapers had a significant impact during the Spanish Civil War in the United States and other countries because people were able to know what was going on during the war sooner as a result of advanced technology such as the telegram. Before the bombing of Guernica, people in the United States had not concerned themselves with the Spanish Civil War because they were preoccupied with the lasting effects of the First World War; however, after George Steer’s article people began to care more about the fear of rising fascism.

During the 1930s the United States was struggling with the Great Depression and the consequences of World War I. These circumstances created a difficult time in the United States and were the reasons why the government believed that a plan of nonintervention was the best decision for U.S. foreign policy. However, this plan was threatened by the arrival of the Spanish Civil War because there was a conflict between the preservation of the non-intervention plan and the people who supported the idealistic cause of the war. The 1930s were a time of instability with many changes in policy and international relations and this war represented the beginning of a movement in the United States showing foreign intervention motivated by ideology.

Ernest Hemingway was fascinated by war and revolution. After spending so much time in Spain it was inevitable that he would return to support the country and its people. Although he

is extremely well known for his short stories and novels about the Spanish Civil War, few people know about his role in creating a propaganda film during the 1930s. The social and economic upheavals in the 1930s engendered a need for more serious expressions of social, economic, political observations and beliefs, and the genre of documentary film proved to be the perfect approach. *The Spanish Earth*, written by Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos and directed by Joris Ivens, was one of the pieces commissioned for the Spanish Pavilion and was also shown in theatres in the U.S. The intention of the film was to convey to people around the world what was happening in Spain in hopes of rallying support for the Spanish Republic. This support was received through monetary donations that were used to send American ambulances and help the Americans fighting in the International Brigades.

The Spanish Civil War was much more far-reaching than just Spain. On the Nationalist side there was German and Italian involvement, while men from other nations who supported the Republic made up the International Brigades. However, by 1938 the International Brigades had disbanded and left Spain. Additionally, aid the Republic received from the USSR slowed to a trickle. The Republican army could not continue to survive against the large quantities of machinery supplied by the fascist dictatorships. On March 27, 1939, the Republican forces surrendered to the Nationalists. The Spanish Civil War officially ended on April 1st, 1939. General Franco went on to rule Spain for 39 years, until 1975 when he died. During Franco's rule *Guernica* was on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Picasso did not want the painting delivered to Spain until democracy was re-established in the country, therefore *Guernica* did not return to Spain until 44 years after its creation. A tapestry of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* hung outside the UN Security Council Chamber from 1985 until 2009. In 1998 Secretary General of the U.N. Kofi Annan declared, "The world has changed a great deal since

Picasso painted that first political masterpiece, but it has not necessarily grown easier. We are near the end of a tumultuous century that has witnessed both the best and worst of human endeavor. Peace spreads in one region as genocidal fury rages in another.”<sup>4</sup> This powerful statement showed us how far the world has progressed since the bombing in 1937, but also how far there is to go in meeting the UN goal for world peace.

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<sup>4</sup> Gijs Van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* (Great Britain: Bloomsbury, 2004), 1.

## **PART II: ORIGINS OF THE WAR**

### **CHAPTER 1: 1931-1936**

The years 1931-1933 were known as the 'reformist years.' The governments of Niceto Alcalá Zamora and his successor Manuel Azaña created many changes. Alcalá Zamora believed that keeping religion out of the education system was necessary for cultural modernization. The traditional and authoritative role of the Catholic Church as a political power within government was to end. For example, thousands of new primary schools were built, divorce became legal, and there were new innovations like old age pensions and technological advancements such as hydroelectric power.<sup>5</sup> The church opposed the government on divorce and state education, which led to anarchist church-burning and assassinations, and right-wing and separatist assassinations. The government itself became fractured and in October 1931 Alcalá Zamora resigned. Additionally, there was the problem of the landless peasants and the inadequate agrarian land reform law. The landless workers now worked fewer hours and got paid higher wages. The landowners also had to pay their workers overtime if they worked longer workdays, leading to a significant redistribution of wealth. The landowners saw this as a personal attack and a declaration of war. The urban middle class, small property owners, farmers, and landowners all came together to support the right-wing CEDA.

The general elections in 1933 resulted in a right-wing victory over a divided left. The CEDA won the election supporting traditional Spanish values and Catholicism. State education funding was cut significantly and the support of Catholicism allowed the Jesuits to teach once again, since they had been banned during the prior reformist years. Additionally, the Republic lacked funds, due to excess spending during the previous dictatorship, to follow through with

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<sup>5</sup> Forrest, *The Spanish Civil War*, 19.

their projects to help the disadvantaged groups. Thus, there was widespread discontent among the lower class since the projects meant to help them could not be funded. However, Alcalá Zamora refused to allow the CEDA members to be appointed to the cabinet. On one side there were the liberal Republicans, Socialists, and Anarchists who were in opposition, and on the other hand the President did not want to give members of the CEDA more power, despite having the largest single power in the Cortes. During this time the CEDA was encouraging fascist type youth organizations’.

The mounting violence led to the October Revolution in 1934. There were major strikes against the CEDA in Catalonia and Asturias. These strikes served as the dividing point in the Second Republic because the government used a heavy hand and violence to try and end the strikes, and many civilian strikers were killed or imprisoned during this time. This dark time of repression and aggression was known as the dark biennium or “bienio negro.” The rising fascist movement also threatened the Catalan government. In Catalonia there was a regional uprising against the central government because the elections of 1933 created a conservative victory nationally but a leftist victory in Catalonia. In Asturias, revolutionary miners attacked Civil Guard barracks and marched into the provincial capital of Oviedo in hopes of establishing a commune. Franco sent contingents of the Spanish Republican Army, mainly Moorish troops, and the Foreign Legion to suppress the strike.

The President and the Cortes had failed to maintain a parliamentary government and at the same time fascism in Germany and Austria had made substantial advances. The fear of the rise of communism, the red scare, began to take over Spain. In 1935 the violence peaked and the Popular Front won against the National Front with the largest voter turnout in Spanish history. Alcalá-Zamora was ousted as president, indicating the extreme polarization, and Prime Minister



Manuel Azaña was promoted to the Presidency. Right wing generals began to plan for a coup d'état starting in March 1936. However, the deaths of José Castillo and Calvo Sotelo in July served as a catalyst for their coup. Thus Spain would have to be saved by military rather than democratic means. The military uprising, led by General Franco began in Morocco on July 17 and quickly spread to Spain. Ultimately marking the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

## CHAPTER 2: CHANGING POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The different ideologies that were developing during this time can be viewed through the foreign policies of various countries during the Spanish Civil War. Italy, Germany, Portugal, the Soviet Union, and Mexico were all clear about their stance and which side they supported during the war. However, not every country was as explicit; both France and Great Britain claimed to have a foreign policy of non-intervention. As ideologies became more extreme and the war on fascism seemed to be spreading, men from numerous countries volunteered to fight in the International Brigades and to show their support for the Spanish Republic regardless of whether or not their home country shared their beliefs. In 1922 Italy's leader Benito Mussolini was the only fascist leader, and although his actions were brutal they did not threaten world stability. This changed with the aggressive rise of European fascism, and specifically with the rise of Hitler in Germany. It was clear from Hitler's speeches and actions that he was planning to destroy all political and intellectual freedoms and wage a worldwide war of revenge against the countries that had defeated Germany in World War I.<sup>6</sup>

Although called the Spanish Civil War, the conflict spread much farther than the boundaries of Spain. Great Britain and France did not want direct confrontation with the Axis powers. Thus, in August 1936, Great Britain and France declared their decision to refrain from intervening in the Spanish conflict. This decision sparked a chain reaction in the international diplomatic community, influencing 27 other countries to pledge non-intervention. These diplomatic responses came to be known as the Non-Intervention Agreement (NIA). However, the NIA was never a unifying or legally binding document. Unfortunately, it not only failed to stop foreign intervention or assistance to the Spain Republic, but also undermined the underlying idea that international conflicts could be solved through collective negotiation.

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<sup>6</sup> Jackson, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War*, 22.

Although the League of Nations allowed the Spanish Republic a forum to present its case to the world, the League was never used. Instead, an improvised body that had no international status of powers *de jure* called the Committee of Non-Intervention was used. Thus, a Non-Intervention Committee (NIC) was established in London. The NIC's original function was to monitor outside interference in Spanish internal affairs; but, over time the main function was to deal with member nations that were accused of violating terms of the NIA. However, any violators of the NIA were not subject to prosecution because the NIC had no formal means of enforcing its decisions. Ultimately the NIC lacked any powers to stop or control any forms of intervention and hindered the Republican forces from securing weapons and materials from countries that otherwise would have supported the Republican cause.

France was one of the first countries to announce its decision of non-intervention, although it was not a decision that came easily. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War occurred simultaneously with many domestic crises in France. There were labor strikes and riots, economic problems caused by the depression, and growing polarization of public opinion. The French were worried that involvement in the Spanish Civil War would serve as a catalyst to a civil war in France. Additionally, any hopes of a foreign policy that would support the Spanish Republic were lessened once it became clear that Great Britain, France's principal ally, would not support French action beyond its boundaries. A lack of support from a principal ally paired with fear of France being isolated from the rest of Europe influenced the French government to take a non-intervention stance. Thus, the French government reluctantly suspended all exports and support to the Republicans, although some direct aid was delivered across the Spanish border in the end of August, 1936.

Great Britain joined France in supporting a Non-Intervention Agreement. Britain wanted to maintain its historic position in the Mediterranean by securing neutrality for whichever side won, as well as securing its economic investments in Spain. Additionally, many members of the British government were conservative and thus there was some sympathy for the insurgent cause. However, by late 1937 it was evident that the non-intervention agreement was helping the Nationalists. The Trade Union Congress and Labour Party, although still opposed to direct involvement, urged the British government to lift its embargo on arms to the Republican forces. Additionally, the Communist Party of Great Britain made an even larger effort to help Republican Spain by actively recruiting volunteers. After hearing the Communist International's (Comintern) call, many volunteers joined an International Brigade to fight on behalf of the Republic. By decree of the Spanish government the formation of the International Brigades became official on October 22, 1936.

During the War, the Republic received support from the Soviet Union, Mexico, and the International Brigades. Many foreign volunteers believed that the Spanish Republic was critical in fighting the spread of fascism, thus many joined the International Brigades. In total, over 59,000 volunteers came from 53 countries to support the Republicans.<sup>7</sup> The largest number of volunteers came from France, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The International Brigades played a crucial role during the war.

Fearing the idea of isolation, the Soviet Union had signed the non-intervention agreement. By August of 1936 Stalin had to decide whether or not to abide by the rules of the non-intervention pact to support the Republic. As the war waged on and Germany and Italy continued to support the Nationalists with weapons and aid, the Soviet Union decided to do more

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<sup>7</sup> George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context, 1931-1939* (London: Longman, 1995), 154.

to support the Republic. Stalin broke the League of Nations' embargo and began to provide weapons to the Republic. He was concerned about being surrounded by fascist countries and at this point was hoping to create closer ties with western democracies.

Mexico supported the Republicans with over \$2,000,000 in aid. Additionally, Mexico City created a location for Republican refugees, including intellectuals as well as orphaned children. This refugee center was critical because throughout the war it took in over 50,000 refugees. Moreover, Mexico's support of the Republic was important because it was the only country in all of North America to declare its support from the beginning. Mexico sent food and supplies to the Spanish Republic, however its geographic location hindered its ability to play a major role as a supporter although their support was critical.<sup>8</sup> After the war ended, Mexico never recognized the Franco government.

At first, the Republican government was opposed to the idea of foreign intervention, including those foreign nationals coming to Spain by their own choice. However, as the war began the Republican government recognized it would be hard to stop individuals from joining, especially those people already residing in Spain. This became evident as many specifically political affiliated groups and their members, including anarchists, socialists, liberals, and communists came to Spain shortly after the military rising and the beginning of the war. The members of the Communist International Party actively promoted the idea of foreign intervention in the end of 1936. International Brigades or organized groups of foreign fighters first originated in Paris, France. Following this active promotion the Comintern launched a formal campaign to recruit foreign volunteers to go to Spain and fight on behalf of the Republic. The Comintern had a large and well-organized network and through their recruitment they

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<sup>8</sup> "Spanish Civil War," *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, Ed. John Merriman and Jay Winter, Vol. 4 (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006) 2420.

received many volunteers who were originally sailors, shipyard workers, industrial workers, and miners. The volunteers from France, Italy, and Germany were able to cross the border between France and Spain easily via the Pyrenees Mountains. However, volunteers from countries such as Canada, the United States, and Mexico had to move clandestinely. Typically, these volunteers would be accompanied to Paris, given fake documents, and then taken across the border to Spain.

With the growing numbers of volunteers in the International Brigades the Spanish government quickly overcame its original reluctance to allow foreigners to participate in the war. The Spanish people and the Republic received the International Brigades warmly, however they were regarded with caution by the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (POUM) and the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo- Federación Anarquista Ibérica (CNT-FAI), the more radical groups.<sup>9</sup> Despite the large number of volunteers, there were only five international brigades during the war. However, it may have seemed like there were more because each brigade was composed of multiple battalions and army units. Due to the various nationalities represented in the volunteers, it was convenient to divide the groups by language spoken. Thus, the groups were broken up by the most spoken languages, including, French, German, Italian, and English.<sup>10</sup> However, this method of dividing up the volunteers into brigades was not established until June 1937, thus it was not uncommon for an English speaking person, who had joined earlier, to be attached to a German-speaking battalion.

The members of the International Brigades were required to undergo an intensive training and induction process, however the process never lasted long because of the continuous need of strong troops fighting on the fronts for the Republic. Due to the weapons and artillery provided the Soviet Union as well as the efficiency of the Comintern, the foreign volunteers were better

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<sup>9</sup> Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context*, 157.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

trained and had better weapons than their average Spanish counterpart. Shortly after their arrival the International Brigades would be seen as role models for the Spanish military.

The average volunteer was twenty-nine years old, unmarried, and of the working class. In the end, the members of the International Brigade were an invaluable resource for the Republic and even though it was not enough to win the battle, the International Brigades left a lasting influence. The Comintern's call had spread beyond the communist circle to reach the antifascist groups and was sustained by their literary creations such as André Malraux's novel *L'espoir*, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, the international brigades were withdrawn from the front on September 25th, 1938, and then dissolved. The Non-Intervention Committee ordered the disbandment of the International Brigades as part of an effort to get the Nationalists' foreign backers to withdraw their troops and convince other democracies such as Britain to stop their arms embargo on the Republic.

The Nationalists received support from Italy, Germany, Portugal, and various foreign volunteers. Shortly after the war began in July 1936, Hitler sent in many air and land weapons to assist the Nationalists. Hitler's decision to intervene in the Spanish crisis was motivated by his hope to see Franco emerge victorious. Hitler also wanted to see how far the democracies would go to preserve peace in Europe, and he noticed that the two countries that could have stopped Germany's intervention, France and Great Britain, chose not to.<sup>12</sup> Hitler's support for the Nationalists was motivated by his hatred of communism and his hope that the Nazi government would gain access to Spain's mineral resources, specifically iron-ores and copper which could be

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<sup>11</sup> "Spanish Civil War," *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, Ed. John Merriman and Jay Winter, Vol. 4 (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006) 1427.

<sup>12</sup> Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context*, 200.

used for Germany's rearmament industry.<sup>13</sup> German support also included the Condor Legion, composed of members of the German Air Force, and troops from the Germany Army. The Spanish Civil War served as a testing ground for the latest German weapons, which was evident after the bombing of Guernica.

After encouragement from Hitler, Mussolini joined the war in support of the Nationalists. Mussolini's decision to support the Nationalists was motivated by foreign policy as well as his desire to stop the left-wing movement. Italy did not hesitate to send aid as well as military forces to support the Nationalists. Italy supplied artillery, aircraft, machine guns, the Legionary Air Force, and the Royal Italian Navy. The Navy played a critical role in the Mediterranean blockade, which would help establish Italian control of the Mediterranean. Mussolini wanted to establish Italy's political and military presence in the Mediterranean since his annexation of Abyssinia had given him a secure position in northern Africa.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, Portugal's dictator, Antonio Salazar, played a critical role in supplying Franco's army with ammunition as well as coordination and management of various plans. Franco knew that he could rely on support from Salazar. Portugal provided organizational skills and support to the military advisors, Nationalists and their allies. However, most important was Portugal's location in proximity to the battleground because it was a critical location for delivery of foreign aid to the Nationalists.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context*, 200.

<sup>14</sup> Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context*, 197.

<sup>15</sup> "Spanish Civil War," *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, 2421.



### **PART III: CIVIL WAR AND THE BOMBING OF GUERNICA**

#### **CHAPTER 1: THE SPANISH PAVILION**

At first, the Spanish government was too preoccupied with internal problems to focus on the international art exhibition that would take place in Paris 1937. However, with the outbreak of the war the government's opinion about the event's importance changed. The Spanish Pavilion was one of the projects that the Spanish government undertook to promote the cause of the Republic abroad. The Republican government approached numerous Spanish artists including Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró, as well as the American Alexander Calder to create works of art for the pavilion. One significant characteristic of the Spanish Civil War was the number of foreign poets, writers, and artists who volunteered to fight for the Republic. The inclusion of these famous artists would help to ensure that the pavilion would receive the public attention that the Spanish government needed to gain international support in its fight against fascism. The pavilion would include the work of artists from many regions of Spain, thus bringing together the diverse geography, regional cultures and political histories, and emphasizing a national harmony.

The Spanish Pavilion was designed, in collaboration, by Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa. Francisco Largo Caballero, the Prime Minister, saw this pavilion as an opportunity to gain support from abroad. He appointed Luis Araquistáin as Ambassador to France in hopes of proving that the Republic was stable to France and the rest of Europe. Thus, the pavilion was founded upon the Largo Caballero government's diplomatic plans. Originally, Lacasa was appointed by the temporary *Comisario General* of the pavilion in late 1936. Additionally, Lacasa was actively involved in various Communist groups in Madrid. The government was slow to officially appoint an architect; therefore, Araquistáin had already consulted Sert when Lacasa

arrived in Paris.<sup>16</sup> However, in May 1937, Largo Caballero resigned as Prime Minister after growing tension within the Socialists ranks. Juan Negrín, Minister of Finance under Largo Caballero, became the new Prime Minister. Negrín and Araquistáin had a history of disagreement, and Negrín dismissed him from his position as Ambassador to Paris. Sert was a founding member of *Grup d'Arquitectes I Tècnics Catalanas per al Progrés de l'Arquitectura Contemporània* (GATCPAC). The goal of this organization was to emphasize the use of visual material and modern architecture.<sup>17</sup> His interest in this stemmed from his time studying at Escola Superior d'Arquitectura in Barcelona, and working for Le Corbusier, an urban planner and pioneer of modern architecture.

The artists and architects that were originally involved in the construction of the Spanish Pavilion remained throughout the change in governments, thus the elements that were influenced by communism under Araquistáin remained throughout the duration of the construction.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the design reflected the modernity and humanism of the Republic. The artwork within the walls of the pavilion was made with the most advanced technology including photography, film, and large-scale paintings. The use of mass media such as documentaries and photography became a symbol of modernity in Spain. Through the use of advanced technology Spanish writers and artists were able to portray the goals and struggles of the Republic through the arts.

The official theme for the Paris Exposition was modern technology.<sup>19</sup> The overall goal for the design of the Spanish Pavilion, and the artwork within, was to focus on the political needs of Spain. This would be critical in communicating a clear message, especially as the Spanish

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<sup>16</sup> Jordana Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 131.

<sup>17</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 132.

<sup>18</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 131.

<sup>19</sup> "Guernica: Testimony of War," PBS, [http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a\\_nav/guernica\\_nav/main\\_guerfrm.html](http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a_nav/guernica_nav/main_guerfrm.html), (January 11, 2015).

Pavilion was built right next to Germany's. The German Pavilion was designed by Albert Speer to intimidate visitors through its large and towering size.<sup>20</sup> The front of the German Pavilion had a large tower, which was meant to demonstrate a newfound national pride. Thus, Sert and Lacasa's rationalist design and Speer's threatening design both communicated clear political messages to all exhibition visitors. The Spanish Pavilion received national and international attention. By 1937 there was a specific political urgency in the Spanish Civil War that spread across other European countries.<sup>21</sup> There the use of the technologies of film and photography allowed viewers an immediate depiction of Spanish life during the war.

The layout and design of the Spanish Pavilion was intentional and important to the overall impact the architects wanted it to have. Before entering the building there was an external photomural that showed the government's main concerns: educational reform and military organization.<sup>22</sup> For example, there are photographs of a teacher teaching in a classroom and another image of a girl reading a book. Once inside the building, the layout was designed to encourage a single fluid path through the exhibit. The first floor included an open-air patio where poetry and film were on display, including Hemingway's documentary *The Spanish Earth*, as well as the main attraction, Picasso's *Guernica*. Then a spiral ramp brought visitors to the second floor, where a series of photomurals were located. To exit there was a ramp that connected the pavilion to the fair grounds. This exit ramp was filled with examples of street propaganda commonly seen in Madrid and Barcelona. Additionally, various photomurals utilized pictures and text from newspapers, magazines, and personal collections to show the juxtaposition of Spain as progressive or traditional, unified or divided. French photographer and historian Gisèle Freund explained the importance of photomurals saying their "ability to reproduce exactly

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<sup>20</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 132.

<sup>21</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 128.

<sup>22</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 132.

external reality...gives [them] a documentary value of the first order.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, documentaries and photomurals were able to express clearly the goals of the Spanish government in communicating that the Republic was stable, unified, and worth supporting and fighting for against Franco.<sup>24</sup> The hope was that this message would encourage European countries to fund and back the Republic.

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<sup>23</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 143.

<sup>24</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, 147.

## CHAPTER 2: ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND *THE SPANISH EARTH*

Ernest Hemingway is best known for his novels such as *For Whom the Bell Tolls* that promote exotic places, cultures, and experiences. There was a constant struggle between World War I, the Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War, and World War II; thus, his novels also include danger and self-awareness during times of war. He always had a passion for writing, starting in high school with his work on the school's newspaper and literary magazine.

Hemingway was born in Chicago, Illinois, on July 21, 1899. He grew up in a well-respected family that had a strong sense of civic responsibility. He had four sisters and one brother. Before he had turned 30 he had already written *In Our Time* (1925), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). Less than ten years later he was reporting the Spanish Civil War to uninformed Americans. When he was 44 he reported on the invasion at Normandy; he won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction when he was 53, and the next year he won the Nobel Prize for literature.<sup>25</sup> He died in 1961.

In early 1917 President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to help our allies in the European war. Hemingway wanted to participate, but he was 17 and too young for the draft. The idea of a reporter as a crime fighter interested Hemingway; thus, he signed on as a reporter for the *Kansas City Star*. He worked as a journalist for seven months, and there he learned how to write, “short first paragraphs, vigorous language, no superfluous words, few adjectives, no trite phrases.”<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after Hemingway joined the Missouri Home Guard he was called for active duty in Italy. After only one month of active duty in Italy, he was blown up by a trench mortar. After six months of recovery, he returned to the United States and went to the *Toronto Star* to look for

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<sup>25</sup> Linda Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide To Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16.

<sup>26</sup> Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide To Ernest Hemingway*, 22.

work. The editor agreed to buy his stories and use them as they suited the needs of the paper.

Thus, he was paid on a piece-by-piece basis and his stories were featured in the paper frequently over the next year and a half.<sup>27</sup>

He married his first wife, Hadley Richardson, in 1921. They soon moved to Paris, where they would live for the next eight years until 1930. During the summers they would travel around Europe, visiting Madrid various times to see the bullfights. Hemingway worked as a special correspondent for the *Toronto Star*, covering European news events.<sup>28</sup> In less than two years he wrote 88 stories for the *Star*. He was sent to cover four major events: the Genoa Economic Conference, the Greco-Turkish War, the Lausanne Peace Conference and the French military occupation of the German Ruhr. These events educated Hemingway about the post World War I political leaders in Europe.<sup>29</sup> They were expecting their first child, so they returned to Toronto. When Hemingway returned to the *Star* office there was a new editor, who did not particularly like Hemingway. He quit his job at the *Star* and after the child was born they all moved back to Paris.

Hemingway connected with many expatriate American writers in Paris as well as young painters such as Juan Gris, Joan Miro, and Pablo Picasso.<sup>30</sup> Between 1924 and 1927 he became well known as an up and coming writer due to the success of his first published books. However, this fame took a toll on his marriage and his first wife divorced him. Shortly after he remarried and returned to Key West in the United States for the birth of his second and third sons with his new wife. In 1935 Hemingway said that he wanted to report the next war, and less than two years later he was in Madrid covering the war for the North American News Alliance (NANA). The results from his time in Spain included his reports for the NANA, his narration in *The Spanish*

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<sup>27</sup> Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide To Ernest Hemingway*, 23.

<sup>28</sup> Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide To Ernest Hemingway*, 24.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide To Ernest Hemingway*, 28.

*Earth*, and his only play *The Fifth Column* (1938). He also began writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1939).<sup>31</sup> From 1937 to 1938 Hemingway was in Spain writing and volunteering. He joined the American Spanish Aid Committee and raised money to send American ambulances to aid the Spanish Republic.

*Life Magazine* was founded in 1883 as a general interest magazine. In 1936 the owner bought the magazine and transitioned it to a weekly news magazine focusing on photojournalism in November 1936. This coincided with the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. *Life* was the first American photographic news magazine and was extremely successful covering World War II, D-Day, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and political leaders. *Life Magazine* covered the Spanish Civil War from November 1936 through April 1939, posting more than 50 photos and stories throughout the duration of the war. Hemingway also participated in early 1937 in the making of a documentary.

On July 12, 1937, *Life* published “The War in Spain Makes a Movie with Captions by Ernest Hemingway.” The article included a short description about the Spanish Civil War and a brief background about the origins of the documentary called *The Spanish Earth* which Hemingway participated in hopes of gaining support for the Spanish Republic government. The article also includes pictures that are taken from the film in order to show Americans a sneak peak of the film that would be aired in the U.S. shortly after the publication of the article. The article says,

“For LIFE, Mr. Hemingway has written captions for the pictures on these four pages. Mr. Hemingway first made his great reputation with *The Sun Also Rises*, a gloomy tale of American expatriates in Spain. Its Spaniards are probably now all on the Rebel side. But since then Mr. Hemingway’s delight in splendid Spanish poseurs has given way to a humanitarian sympathy for the rising Spanish masses.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide To Ernest Hemingway*, 34.

<sup>32</sup> “The War in Spain Makes a Movie with Captions by Ernest Hemingway,” *Life Magazine*, (1937): 20.

Hemingway captioned the pictures in an informational manner that would allow Americans to understand their pro-Loyalist perspective. At this point, there were not many pictures of the war because it was dangerous for photographers and journalists to get near the battle. In many cases photographers that were successful at taking pictures would have them seized by the military. As the article states *The Spanish Earth* is “practically the first worthwhile picture coverage of the war.”<sup>33</sup> The documentary presented an immediate and powerful tool for social commentary. The goal of the documentary was to portray the suffering of the Spanish people and to serve as a warning of the consequences should Franco be victorious.

Joris Ivens, a Dutch filmmaker, was in the United States at the New York Film Alliance at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. He decided he wanted to create a film with his editor Helen Dongen, and the writer John Dos Passos. They found others who wanted to lend their support to the Loyalist side. Shortly after they created Contemporary Historians Incorporation, a group composed of Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, Archibald MacLeish, Lillian Hellman, Dashiell Hammett, Dorthy Parker and others. *The Spanish Earth* was narrated by Ernest Hemingway, photographed by John Ferno, and composed by Marc Blitzstein and Virgil Thomson.<sup>34</sup> It is important to recognize that Ivens is Dutch and the rest of the members of Contemporary Historians Incorporation were American. This shows that the Spanish Civil War concerned people from all nations, regardless of location.

Originally, Ivens’ wanted to edit footage of the conflict in hopes of explaining the issues and providing information to Americans.<sup>35</sup> His first plan was to tell the story of a small village in Spain from the fall of the monarchy to agricultural reform and the beginning of the war

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Arthur Coleman, “Hemingway’s ‘The Spanish Earth’” *Hemingway Review* 2.1 (1982): 64-67.

<sup>35</sup> Julian Petley, “The Spanish Earth.” *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers*. (Detroit: St. James Press, 2000), 1135.



through the capture of the village by Franco. However, he realized that he could not ask the people of the village to try and reenact what the village had been before the war. He recognized that the people could not possibly imagine anything other than their struggle for survival and so, he changed his plan immediately.<sup>36</sup> Ivens and his team found a village that had only recently been confiscated from landlords where an important irrigation project was underway. This inspired the theme of the documentary ‘working the earth and fighting for the earth.’<sup>37</sup>

*The Spanish Earth* was filmed between March and May of 1937 in Fuentedueña, a village between Valencia and Madrid. The documentary is 53 minutes long and begins with Hemingway’s narration. The lack of a professional narrator helped the viewers believe the story and gave it a more intense and rugged feeling. In the film the civilians, peasants, and workers are the main focus as they struggle with the challenges that face them. The Spanish culture is evident throughout the film and the ethnic and historical factors are more important than the political factors. In his narration, Hemingway reflects on the Nationalists and their allies with an inability to understand their actions, saying, “Before death came when you were old or sick. But now it comes to all this village. High in the sky and shining silver, it comes to all who have no place to run, no place to hide.” This quotation demonstrates that we are all part of “this village” and the influence of the Spanish Civil War will extend far beyond Spain. The film touched on the existing imperial structures in Spain and the dominance of the wealthy classes. The challenge of an unsteady political system is trivial in comparison to the erosion of the Spanish essence and passing of a culture.<sup>38</sup>

The viewers who came from around the world to see the Spanish Pavilion were intrigued by the immediacy that *The Spanish Earth* offered. Documentaries were critical in influencing

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Coleman, “Hemingway’s ‘The Spanish Earth,’” 67.

public policy and disseminating information from cities to rural inhabitants and from bordering countries to across the globe.<sup>39</sup> Ivens avoided overly propagandizing the documentary because he had hoped that would help *The Spanish Earth* gain traction in theatres in the United States and Britain; but, there was no cinema audience for documentaries at the time so his plan was unsuccessful.<sup>40</sup>

Documentaries became a critical tool during the war because of how the moments were framed and the conditions were depicted. Documentaries served as a lens for foreigners and those people not directly involved in the war to learn what was going on. Thus, it was less important who created the documentaries than what the images and messages were. Both government and commercial agencies funded various documentaries to be disseminated to the public through the press and public exhibitions.<sup>41</sup> People were interested in utilizing the transformative technology that would be able to survive multiple decades and show civilians the state of a city or country during a specific period of time.

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<sup>39</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, xxiii.

<sup>40</sup> Petley, "The Spanish Earth." *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers*, 1135.

<sup>41</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, xxv.

### CHAPTER 3: GEORGE STEER AND THE BOMBING OF GUERNICA

There were more than 3,000 incendiary bombs. They saturated the city for three hours and destroyed most of the buildings. Innocent civilians were killed in the street. Most of them were women and children. The shattering of windows echoed in the streets. The bombs continued to destroy the city to ruins even though the city was not near a military base nor did it have any strategic importance. After all of this, the people who were responsible for this destruction denied any responsibility and blamed others. There were feelings of anger, sadness and frustration. This is how the people of the city of Guernica felt after the unanticipated bombing of their city on April 27, 1937. However one journalist, George Steer, was able to send a cable of his testimony to inform the world of the horrible truth about the bombing of Guernica.

George Steer was a British journalist who was born in South Africa and wrote for the *Times of London* as a correspondent during the Spanish Civil War. He was very intelligent and had had a passion for writing since he was a child. When he was 11 years old he went to England on various scholarships to attend public school, and then attended Oxford where he studied art and classical culture. Steer began his work as a journalist in South Africa and then in London, until eventually in 1937 he was sent to report on the Spanish Civil War. In June 1940, he joined the British Army to fight the Italians in Ethiopia. He wrote for the *Telegraph* while he was in the British Army in Africa then in Southeast Asia. He died on active duty in 1944 at the young age of 35.

The Spanish Civil War began in July of 1936, during a time of political and technological changes and tense international relations. The established technology of print along with new technologies such as movies, radio, and photography allowed people outside of Spain to know the details of the war. It was the first war that was covered in the newspapers, and this

was critical because there were few journalists who came to report on the Spanish Civil War and even fewer who were in Guernica. George Steer was in Bilbao and went to Guernica to see the results of the bombing first hand. He then met some refugees in Bilbao the day after. Steer sent his telegram to the *Times of London* and the *New York Times*, the two most popular newspapers in each country and therefore his article had a huge impact. It is especially notable that the two prestigious newspapers, which were also conservative, published this article. Only one French newspaper, *Ce Soir*, a leftist, Communist-oriented journal had a reporter in Bilbao on the day of the bombing.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, it was an era of censorship when Franco and the fascists were denying responsibility and were posting fake photos and stories. Newspapers were crucial during the Spanish Civil War in the United States and elsewhere because through their reporting people in other countries could know what happened in the war sooner and faster as a result of new print technology.

With the era of industrialization was the creation of new technology such as radio and telephones, thus people started using this technology to communicate information during the war. The use of photography increased the amount of people who were able to receive information during war, and as a result, influenced the attitudes and perspectives of people. Before the bombing of Guernica people in the United States and other parts of the world had not thought much of the Spanish Civil War because they were concerned about the effects of the First World War. However, after the article by George Steer, people not directly involved in the Spanish Civil War cared much more about Spain and the issue of aerial bombing and the growth of fascism. People were horrified by the slaughter of innocent civilians, and Steer's article was the reason that in many countries around the world people could understand what had happened

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<sup>42</sup> Herbert Rutledge Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 20.

in Guernica and began to fear the fascists. After the bombing, George Steer continued to help the fight against fascism. Overall he was much more than just a journalist.

George Steer's article about the bombing of Guernica was first published in the United States and London on the morning of April 28, the day after the bombing. Steer returned to Guernica to see the destroyed city and to question the refugees who were in Bilbao before he sent the article to London. The headline read: THE TRAGEDY OF GUERNICA TOWN DESTROYED IN AIR ATTACK EYE- WITNESSES 'S ACCOUNT. Steer's article was on a page of the *Times of London* along with ten other articles. There were no pictures accompanying any of the articles. Most of the articles were in long skinny columns. Steer's article filled the entire column from the top to the bottom of the page. His heading was in a larger font than the other articles, thus his article stood out from the rest of them. His original report was 14 paragraphs long, broken up into three sections, Church Bell Alarm, Rhythm of Death, and A Call to Basques.

The title Church Bell Alarm is relevant because Steer explains that the church bell rang the alarm to signify approaching planes. At this point the citizens of Guernica tried to seek refuge in the cellars and dugouts that had been prepared after the bombing of Durango. The first plane arrived at 4:30 PM and the bombing did not cease until 7:45 PM. "In the night [the farmhouses] burned like little candles in the hills." <sup>43</sup>

The Rhythm of Death section begins by stating that it was impossible to identify the number of victims after the bombing. This section also discusses the new war tactics saying, "the tactics of the bombers, which may be of interest to students of the new military science." <sup>44</sup> The article details the destruction beginning with the airplanes dropping bombs and grenades, as well

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<sup>43</sup> Steer, George, "The Tragedy of Guernica." *London Times* (1937): 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

as the planes that flew low to machine gun the civilians. Finally, incendiary bombs were dropped to burn the farmhouses and people.

The last section, A Call to Basques, discusses the impact of the bombing on the city of Guernica. This last section includes a statement from the Basque Press by President Aguirre, he said, "We cannot hide the gravity of the moment; but victory can never be won by the invader if, raising our spirits to heights of strength and determination, we steel ourselves to his defeat."<sup>45</sup>

However, Steer was not the only journalist in Bilbao on the night of the bombing. Overall there were eight British, one Belgian, and four Spanish reporters. Steer's article was critical in establishing world public opinion about the bombing because it was published in two prestigious publications. According to the book by Herbert Rutledge Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History*, Steer's dispatch was "certainly one of the most significant reports of the Spanish Civil War, was subdued in tone, unsensational, and certainly did not exaggerate either the material damage or the number of victims."<sup>46</sup> Steer was able to send his cable because the censorship in Bilbao was not strictly monitored, although this was not the case in all places.

According to Southworth, Steer wrote in his article, "In the form of its execution and the scale of the destruction it wrought, no less than in the selection of its objective, the raid on Guernica is unparalleled in military history. Guernica was not a military objective."<sup>47</sup> This was the first time that the destruction of a target was not a military objective. This created a new fear in everyone because no one knew what kind of destruction was possible with the new technology of weapons and bombs. Steer continues, "The object of the bombardment was seemingly the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History*, 13.

demoralization of the civil population and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race." <sup>48</sup>

Guernica was the oldest town in the Basque country and was the center of culture and tradition in the community. This statement had a great impact because it revealed the truth about the motives of the bombing, and as a result the people were angry and disgusted. Steer's article marked a change in the general opinion of the war by providing information via the press. Ultimately, the bombing of Guernica became a symbol of the horrors of war and fascism.

Before World War II the press in Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal was under control of the new fascist rulers who had the power to decide what was or was not published. It was difficult for journalists to share their stories because the fascist censorship intervened in the distribution of news and they could not publish their work. Censorship was a tactic to cover the truth and was a coercive and restrictive function.

After the bombing of Guernica, Franco reacted by denying the facts. On April 30, *Le Journal* published Franco's statement:

Basque fugitives passing through our lines told of the terrible tragedy of cities like Guernica which were totally destroyed by the Reds when our troops were still 15 kilometers distant. The indignation of the Nationalist troops could not have been greater because of the lies of the enemy who, after having destroyed by fire the largest villages of the region, accused the Nationalist air force. <sup>49</sup>

Franco published articles and false pictures arguing the fascists were not to blame for the bombing. During this time it was common to publish altered images of the bombing of Guernica, and this facilitated the manipulation of the people as a means of propaganda. As a result, the work of journalists was very important during the Spanish Civil War because the fascist censorship imposed an official control of information and the work of journalists allowed people around the world to know with certainty the details about the war that the censorship hid.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Herschel Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations, Meanings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 41.

## CHAPTER 4: PABLO PICASSO AND *GUERNICA*

At the beginning of 1937 the Spanish government approached Picasso to paint a mural for the Spanish Pavilion. Picasso was originally born in Andalusia and at the time he was living in Paris. He agreed to paint a mural despite his dislike for politicians and political parties. However, his dislike for politics did not make him indifferent to the events around him. At first he was not sure what he was going to paint. Five years earlier Picasso said, “I will never make art with the preconceived idea of serving the interests of the political, religious or military art of a country.”<sup>50</sup> Once news reached Paris about the bombing in Guernica, Picasso was thrust into action because he now had the meaningful theme and substance he previously lacked. He painted a 3.5 by 7.75 meter canvas with monochromic images of suffering and human loss.

Picasso’s painting did not solely respond to war, it addressed the human suffering and loss. The Basque country was one of the first regions of democracy in Europe. There were no military bases or factories or obvious targets in Guernica. The civilians were the targets. Picasso was not one to paint about politics or war just because they were happening, he said, “I have not painted the war because I am not the kind of painter who goes out like a photographer for something to depict. But I have no doubt that the war is in these paintings I have done.”<sup>51</sup> Picasso responded with outrage and disgust at the current state of the world and the ruthless violence against civilians because he could empathize with the human suffering and loss. Picasso was not from Guernica, nor did he have family there, but upon first hearing the news he knew the bombing of Guernica was significant.

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<sup>50</sup> Steve Hurst, *Famous Faces of the Spanish Civil War: Writers and Artists in the Conflict 1936-1939* (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2009), 164.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Rosenblum, *Picasso and the War Years: 1937-1945* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 13.



On Saturday, May 1st, five days after the bombing, Paris had the largest turnout for the May Day demonstration. Over one million people crowded the historic route from the Place de la République to the Bastille to show their outrage over the bombing in Guernica and demand aid for the victims. That afternoon, filled with the same shock and indignation, Picasso began his first sketches for the mural drawing a bull, a horse, and a woman.

It can be difficult to identify the meaning behind some of the main figures because Picasso has utilized both the bull and horse in many other contexts. Picasso said, "...this bull is a bull and this horse is a horse... If you give a meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it is not my idea to give this meaning. What ideas and conclusions you have got I obtained too, but instinctively, unconsciously. I make the painting for the painting. I paint the objects for what they are."<sup>52</sup> Although he may not have painted the bull, horse, and woman to be symbolic, it is evident that these elements unconsciously or subconsciously have symbolic meaning.

Both the bull and the horse are important in the Spanish culture. The horse represented the people of the Basque country. In the *corrida* the horses represented the innocent victim because prior to 1955 they were not allowed to wear padding for protection, therefore they almost always died from injuries.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, the inclusion of the woman is important because Guernica was bombed on Monday, which was a market day. Therefore, many people, mainly women and children, came to Guernica from surrounding areas to buy and sell crops and produce. According to Picasso, the bull represented brutality and darkness, which can be interpreted as his perspective of fascism. The bull represents fascism, which tries to overpower

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<sup>52</sup> "Treasures of the world," PBS, [http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a\\_nav/guernica\\_nav/main\\_guerfrm.html](http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a_nav/guernica_nav/main_guerfrm.html), (April 8, 2015).

<sup>53</sup> Van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon*, 48.

Europe.<sup>54</sup> The animals depersonalize and intensify the human properties that they represent. The horse represents agony, the bull represents pride, and the mother represents lament and imploration.<sup>55</sup>

Picasso first learned about the bombing from Steer's report. On the first day he drew sketches 1 to 6: four different versions of *Composition Study* and two versions of *Horse*. He clearly numbered and dated each sketch to show the sequence of his work. Picasso said, "I never do a painting as a work of art. All of them are researches. I search constantly and there is a logical sequence in all this research. That is why I number them. It's an experiment in time. I number them and date them."<sup>56</sup> Thus, each individual sketch can be seen as another step towards the overall goal or solution. The first sketches of *Composition Study* are variations of the total composition composed of the main protagonists, but in different arrangements and directions.

On May 2nd Picasso continued his sketches, however rather than working on the whole composition again he focused on detail. Picasso said, "When I paint my object is to show what I have found and not what I am looking for. In art intentions are not sufficient and, as we say in Spanish: love must be proved by facts and not by reasons. What one does is what counts and not what one had the intention of doing."<sup>57</sup> On the second day he completed sketches 7 to 11. His next three sketches were titled *Head of horse* where he focuses on the neck and head of the horse in the middle of an aggressive outcry. Then he also sketched another version of *Composition Study* at the end of the day, just like he did the day before. However, the last sketch of this day was neither dated nor numbered. It was a sketch of a bull and a horse on an irregular sized scrap piece of paper. His drawing style looks different from his previous sketches. Thus, after only two days of work he had already created 11 sketches, including three of the most important figures

<sup>54</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, *The Genesis of a Painting: Picasso's Guernica* (London: University of California Press, 1962), 23.

<sup>55</sup> Arnheim, *The Genesis of a Painting: Picasso's Guernica*, 29.

<sup>56</sup> Arnheim, *The Genesis of a Painting: Picasso's Guernica*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Pablo Picasso, *Picasso on art: a selection of views* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 3.

that would appear in the final painting: the bull, the horse, and the woman holding a light.

Having achieved so much work in only two days he took a break from his sketches for the rest of the week.

On May 8th Picasso resumed his work. He began on sketch 12, another *Composition Study* although not utilizing all of the figures from the previous sketches. Additionally, there is a new figure of a woman carrying a dead child. This becomes the focus for his next detailed sketch, like he did when he focused specifically on the horse, thus they become the two figures he focused on for sketch 13. These sketches were the closest Picasso came to a realistic depiction of the tragedy and the images that were printed in the newspapers.

On the fourth day, Picasso completed sketches 14 to 16. He isolated the mother and child, similar to how he had done with the horse. This isolation allowed him to focus on the features, such as the agony and fear. Additionally he drew another version of the composition that was reflective of the bombing, utilizing sharp angles and black and white flames.<sup>58</sup> The addition of the four dead victims and three terrified survivors unified the sketches into a singular image that depicted death and fear. Picasso continued to work on May 10th, his fifth day sketching images for the mural. He completed five sketches, although none of the sketches were new. Except for one, the sketches were individuals of the horse, bull, and woman. In sketches 20 and 21 Picasso decided to add color, a radical change to his previous sketches. He laid collage like strips of bright red and orange colors over the agonized horse, screaming mother, and the weeping woman.<sup>59</sup> However, soon he abandoned the use of color and kept with the black and white for his final sketch.

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<sup>58</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, 96.

<sup>59</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, 105.

On the sixth day, Picasso sketched a bull with a human face. This was his last sketch before he began laying out the composition on the full sized canvas. Dora Maar, a Croatian photographer and one of his many lovers, photographed the process and the transformations that the canvas underwent during its production. Although all of the photographs are not dated, the canvas underwent at least ten stages. By the tenth and final stage Picasso told Sert that although he wasn't sure if the painting was completely finished yet, Sert should come and pick it up.<sup>60</sup>

The bombing created a new fear around the world because no one knew what kind of destruction was possible with the new weapons technology Germany obviously possessed. Nothing in the painting specifies the bombing in Guernica, although the two lamps break up the black setting of the photo, as though the painting is only visible because of the light.<sup>61</sup> One lamp is positioned at the center of the painting and is held by the woman leaning out of a window. The lamp is also at the apex of the compositional triangle, composed of the horse, woman, and warrior.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, there is another light to the left of the woman holding the light. This other lamp serves as a giver of light and uncovers the events that have transpired. Picasso painted images of objects and human suffering that people around the world could relate to on a more basic and universal level. Picasso said, "How could it be possible to feel no interest in other people, and with a cool indifference to detach yourself from the very life which they bring to you so abundantly? No, painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war."<sup>63</sup> Without painting specific references to Guernica, his painting is able to transcend cultures, countries, and languages because human suffering, fear, and loss are all basic emotions that people can identify with and relate to.

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<sup>60</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, 135.

<sup>61</sup> Arnheim, *The Genesis of a Painting: Picasso's Guernica*, 20.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Russell Martin, *Picasso's War: The Destruction of Guernica, and the Masterpiece That Changed the World* (New York: Penguin Group, 2002), prologue.

“The War in Spain Makes a Movie with Captions by Ernest Hemingway” was not the last piece that *Life* published about the Spanish Civil War. After the bombing of Guernica it was inevitable that they would have another piece about the aftermath and reactions to the bombing. Thus, on July 26, 1937, *Life* published “Spain’s Picasso Paints Bombing of Guernica for Paris Exposition,” an article that included a brief description of the bombing and short summary about the symbolism in the painting. The article says, “The Basque Town of Guernica, seat of the oldest parliament on the Continent, was bombed by Spanish Rebels April 27.”<sup>64</sup> The article includes a photograph of the painting in its final stage. There are paintbrushes and cans evident in the bottom right of the photograph to show that Picasso was finishing his final touches.

The Spanish Pavilion opened about seven weeks late, thus it was not on any of the official maps or in any of the publicity for the fair. Additionally, since the Spanish Pavilion opened so much later than the rest of the pavilions, *L’Humanité* was the only journal that mentioned the opening, and mainly to feature the people present.<sup>65</sup> *L’Humanité* did not even mention *Guernica*, despite being one of the only politically polarized journals to have been covering the horrors of the terror bombing that had been the inspiration for Picasso’s painting. However, there was controversy over the painting. The Munich exhibit at the German Pavilion opened one week after the Spanish Pavilion. The German guidebook dismissed the Spanish Pavilion as nothing of importance, and did not even mention *Guernica*.<sup>66</sup> However, a powerful defense of the Spanish Pavilion and *Guernica* “...was almost immediately marshaled by the artists, writers, and poets of the *Cahiers d’Art* circle, who devoted almost an entire double issue of the summer of 1937 to Picasso’s mural. It is an exhaustive publication, heralding a painting

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<sup>64</sup> “Spain’s Picasso Paints Bombing of Guernica for Paris Exposition.” *Life Magazine*, (1937): 64.

<sup>65</sup> Chipp, *Picasso’s Guernica: History, Transformations*, 151.

<sup>66</sup> Chipp, *Picasso’s Guernica: History, Transformations*, 152.

virtually unknown except to Picasso's friends.”<sup>67</sup> These writers and authors were critics and leaders on the art scene in Paris. Many of the writers who discussed *Guernica* were supporters of the Spanish Republic and provided important insight into the ideologies of Picasso and his painting.

*Guernica* was Picasso's only painting motivated directly by a specific event that he knew almost nothing about firsthand. This painting represents the search for peace, dignity, and freedom of all human beings. Gijs van Hensbergen, author of *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* said, “If the picture by Picasso has any defect it is that it is too real, too terribly true, atrociously true.”<sup>68</sup> The painting fits into the historical, political, and personal context to show its opposition to war and terrorism, and “took its place on the world's stage at once because of its politicized title and the anticipation of atrocities to come.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Van Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon*, 71.

<sup>69</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, 192.

## **PART IV: ART AND WAR CONTINUE**

### **CHAPTER 1: LASTING INFLUENCE OF WORKS STUDIED**

The Spanish Republic wanted to show that it was not on the brink of loss at the end of 1938. The Republic started discussing plans for an offensive attack on the Nationalists. After Franco and his troops isolated Catalonia from the rest of Spain, he decided to head towards Valencia. This was what the Republicans were hoping for, thus they decided that at the end of July they would attack the Nationalists at the Ebro River. At first the Republican troops gained ground quickly and weakened the Nationalist forces. However, before they were able to advance too far onto the Nationalist side they were weakened by air raid attacks. The Republican troops were badly in need of weapons and fresh fighters, but they were able to hold their ground until November when the Nationalists pushed them back across the river. The Republican forces were low on resources thus the failure at the Ebro River was a large setback in terms of the war and morale.

After the Battle of Ebro River ended, the International Brigades disbanded and left Spain. The disbandment was part of an effort to cut the foreign aid to the Nationalists and convince France and Great Britain to end the arms embargo on the Republic. Assistance from the Soviet Union diminished significantly and the Republican troops could not continue to fight against the Nationalists and their overpowering amounts of weapons and machinery provided by the fascist dictators. One month after the Battle of Ebro River, Franco rallied his troops to prepare to march to Barcelona. The Republican troops were overcome after three weeks of defending the city. In January 1939, Franco captured Barcelona. Then, in late February, the British and French governments publicly recognized Franco and the Nationalist government, and shortly after President Azaña resigned his office. Additionally the lack of food and fuel caused the last of the

Republican troops to become isolated and desperate. Between March 28 and 31 the Republican troops in major cities around Spain surrendered. The Civil War officially ended on April 1, 1939 with the complete victory of General Franco and the Nationalists. Franco proclaimed that the war had ended because he had achieved his final military objective of exterminating his enemies.<sup>70</sup>

After the conclusion of the war Franco set out to achieve a countrywide national revisionism.<sup>71</sup> He used the Catholic Church, rather than teachers or academics, to legitimize his new regime and the past in which it was grounded. The church claimed that the Spanish Civil War was a war of national liberation. Franco believed he was the new successor needed after a long period of decline due to enlightenment and liberalism. With the end of the Spanish Civil War came the beginning of a Spain ruled by Franco. He held power over Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975. During the Franco dictatorship *Guernica* was on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York because Picasso did not want the painting delivered to Spain until it was a democracy again. Picasso wanted *Guernica* to be returned to Spain “when the Republic shall be restored.”<sup>72</sup> Therefore, *Guernica* was not returned to Spain until 44 years after its creation, and sadly Picasso passed away two years before it was returned. In honor of the artist, on the centenary of Picasso’s birth, October 25th 1981, *Guernica* was returned to its native land to commemorate the national reconciliation, which was taking place as part of the transition to democracy.

When *Guernica* was returned to Spain it was initially on display behind bulletproof glass at the Casón del Buen Retiro, an annex of the Prado Museum, which now is used as a library and study center. In his will Picasso stated that he wanted *Guernica* at the Museo del Prado, however it along with other 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century art was moved to the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte

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<sup>70</sup> Esenwein and Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context*, 261.

<sup>71</sup> Francisco Romero Salvadó, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2005), 184.

<sup>72</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, 171.



Reina Sofía for reasons of space. *Guernica* arrived at the Reina Sofía in 1992, and its presence made it the most visited museum in all of Spain.<sup>73</sup> Currently it has roughly the same amount of protection and security as any other work in the Reina Sofía.

Picasso succeeded in creating a painting that would not become irrelevant shortly after the bombing or even the Spanish Civil War. His painting would not only reflect past horrors, but has also been able to capture future atrocities regardless of language or culture. Simon Schama, author of *The Power of Art* summarizes this best when he says, “*Guernica* has always been bigger than Art, uncontainable by the museum, one of those rare works that gets into the bloodstream of the common culture.”<sup>74</sup> After finishing the mural Picasso continued to support the Spanish Republic. After the bombing of Guernica Picasso knew that the need to fight Franco and fascism was more important than his personal opinion of not getting involved in politics. He became involved in various refugee relief organizations and art auctions to benefit Spanish refugees.<sup>75</sup>

However, it was not only Spaniards that were reacting from afar to this war. Picasso was originally born in Spain, thus the Spanish Civil War had an impact on him personally due to his family and friends that were being affected in the cities of Madrid and Barcelona. However, many non-Spaniards were involved both near and far. Hemingway was born in the United States and had traveled and spent much time in Spain during his lifetime, thus he wanted to support the culture and society that he loved by creating a documentary to raise money for the Republic. Additionally, Steer was a South African born British. He had never been to Spain before he went as a journalist reporting on war crimes. The influence of these foreigners allowed for a far-

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<sup>73</sup> Martin, *Picasso's War: The Destruction of Guernica, and the Masterpiece That Changed the World*, 253.

<sup>74</sup> Simon Schama, *The Power of Art* (New York: Ecco, 2006), 394.

<sup>75</sup> Rosenblum, *Picasso and the War Years: 1937-1945*, 72.

reaching affect that spread true knowledge and history. These people risked their lives during a turbulent time of opposing ideologies to support a cause that was bigger than themselves.

George Steer was the reason that the world, and Picasso, knew what actually occurred in Guernica. Without Steer's article it is possible that the world would not have known the truth about Guernica due to press censorship and the lies propagated by the Nationalist side.

Journalists such as Steer were critical at this time because their articles and photographs showed people what had truly taken place. George Steer died young, but his legacy and determination to explain and expose the truth about the bombing of Guernica will never be forgotten.

Compared to other works Hemingway created during this time, especially his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Spanish Earth* is not well known, however it should be. His narration in this documentary creates a parallel between the peasants creating an irrigation system in the village of Fuentidueña and the Spanish people fighting to defend the Republic in Spain. The ultimate goal of the documentary was to depict the struggle occurring throughout Spain via the experiences within a single village to explain to people in the United States what was happening during the war. This documentary was chosen as one of the works of art to be displayed in the Spanish Pavilion in Paris in 1937, putting it on display with the others works that were deemed worthy to represent the Spanish struggle during this specific time period. Both professional artists and amateurs were placed side by side to represent broader social and political issues.<sup>76</sup>

Picasso's work continues to resonate today, almost 80 years later, because as Simon Schama said, "Instead of a laboured literal commentary on German warplanes, Basque civilians and incendiary bombs, Picasso connects with our worst nightmares. He's saying here's where the

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<sup>76</sup> Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, xxv.

world's horror comes from; the dark pit of our psyche." <sup>77</sup> Steer helped us to understand what happened at Guernica in an objective manner, Hemingway helped us to visualize the suffering with a political intent to mobilize people to support the Republic, and Picasso helped us to understand and respond on a deeper, emotional level.

Steer, Hemingway, and Picasso all became political activists at different times during the Spanish Civil War. For Picasso the bombing was the catalyst and *Guernica* shows this transformation. Schama says, "The work of art, Picasso came to believe, was to resist the presumption that this was the way the world was, and would ever be. And this turning of Pablo Picasso, from amoral aesthete to moralist, is perhaps the most unlikely conversion story in the entire history of art." <sup>78</sup> Hemingway had been going to Spain for many years by the outbreak of the war, thus the beginning of the war served as his catalyst, which propelled him to raise money for the Republic and this transformation can be seen through his documentary. Steer became a political activist after the bombing and his later novels, including *The Tree of Gernika: A Field Study of Modern War*, show this transformation.

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<sup>77</sup> Schama, Simon. *The Power of Art*. New York: Ecco, 2006.

<sup>78</sup> Schama, *The Power of Art*, 354.

## CHAPTER 2: PRESENT DAY- HOW DOES ART RESPOND TO WAR TODAY?

The works studied continue to have an influence on us today. Picasso's *Guernica* serves as a modern painting that is able to bring us back to those tragic times during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>79</sup> The painting is historical but also timeless. Schama explains the lasting influence of *Guernica* during the 21st century when he says,

And just when you think it's a magnificent relic, stupendous in its time but not what's needed in our 24/7 digitally enhanced, globally interconnected world, something comes along to remind us that it is precisely the video saturation, the routinization of carnage, that makes the painting a reminder of what art can do that the news can't. And since the popularity of slaughtering innocent civilians in the name of a righteous cause is growing apace, we can always depend on murderous moments that will awaken from the old black and white creatures the tempestuous force of their original creation.<sup>80</sup>

Although it has been more than half a century since the creation of this painting, it is still relevant. The technological innovations and advancements of the 21st century cannot change or erase the past. Picasso added the most basic human values and thus he was able to create a modern adaptation of a history painting.<sup>81</sup>

Picasso was able to take images of suffering and death combined with political conviction and empathy with human pain, which ultimately created a universal image. In *Picasso's War*, the author Russell Martin says, "Japanese visitors, of whom there were many, paid the painting a particularly long and thoughtful attention, and one of their guides explained to me that for them, the painting's true title perhaps was *Hiroshima*; for the Japanese, she said, *Guernica* had become a 'cultural habitat'."<sup>82</sup> Although it is a Spanish painting, countless groups of people have come to identify with and relate to the feeling of human pain and loss, which it expresses. This painting seems to be able to transcend time and place.

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<sup>79</sup> Schama, *The Power of Art*, 388.

<sup>80</sup> Schama, *The Power of Art*, 395.

<sup>81</sup> Rosenblum, *Picasso and the War Years: 1937-1945*, 13.

<sup>82</sup> Martin, *Picasso's War: The Destruction of Guernica, and the Masterpiece That Changed the World*, 257.

After the twin towers went down on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, there were similar feelings because “Now, of course, New York City has become a brother to Gernika, hasn’t it? They destroyed Gernika on a market day when it was full of people, and New York was attacked on a day when thousands of people were working.”<sup>83</sup> In both cases innocent human lives were taken without warning in hopes of instilling fear deep within a nation. Picasso said it best when he said, “I have always believed, and still believe, that artists who live and work with spiritual values cannot and should not remain indifferent to a conflict in which the highest values of humanity and civilization are at stake.”<sup>84</sup> As long as there are wars raging throughout the world and conflicts that continue to arise, people will continue to use art to express their thoughts and feelings during war.

Art and mass communication are still used as primary methods of responding to war during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Currently it is much easier for people to share an idea or perspective via the internet, and more specifically social media, that allows others to interact and share their thoughts or feelings. Although the technology now is much more advanced than during the 1930s, the need to communicate and share news is still the same. People still use journalism, art, and documentaries to explain their thoughts and feelings during war or conflict. Today art still responds to war, but through a larger amount of mediums.

On March 11, 2004 bombs exploded on four different trains at the height of the Madrid rush hour at various railroad stations, including the Atocha railway station, which is only a few hundred yards from where *Guernica* hangs in the Reina Sofia Museum. On the one-year anniversary, the Atocha railway station put together a video installation of the aftermath of the bombings and played it at station. After the destruction of the twin towers on September 11th,

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<sup>83</sup> Martin, *Picasso's War: The Destruction of Guernica, and the Masterpiece That Changed the World*, 263.

<sup>84</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, vi.

2001, the people of Russia created a monument in New Jersey to symbolize the struggle against world terrorism. Zurab Tsereteli is the Russian sculptor who came up with the concept of the tear of grief hanging in the middle of a cracked slab of granite, titled “To the Struggle Against World Terrorism.”<sup>85</sup> Tsereteli’s sculpture is an example of empathy across borders, cultures, and countries. Although Russia was not involved in the 9/11 attacks, this monument symbolizes the collective struggle against terrorism around the world. Art and monuments that respond to war and turbulent times are crucial to preserving an accurate portrayal of the emotion and culture during a specific time.

The advances in technology have both propelled us forward and taken us back by giving us new opportunities. The advances have allowed us to document the results of wars and quickly disseminate information. However, the bombing of Guernica was a practice for testing out new weapons and war tactics. *Guernica* would be seen as commemorative and prophetic. As we would shortly learn the aerial bombardment was just a stepping-stone to the German’s Blitzkrieg war tactic. Current day art utilizes artistic expression and technology to reflect on the struggles and problems our world still faces: the ease with which we recur to violence as a solution rather than respecting each other’s differences.

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<sup>85</sup> William Finnegan, "Monument," *The New Yorker* (June 2007).

## PART V: CONCLUSIONS

How does one define art and what is the purpose of art? I believe that art is the creative expression of human thought expressed in a visual and physical manner. Regardless of technological advances art will always have a purpose. Simon Schama's book, *The Power of Art*, describes the purpose of art best. On the one year anniversary of the Madrid train bombing there was a video installation, surrounded with memorial candles. Schama says, "The slides did their thing as best they could. Horror. Click. Horror. Click. But it wasn't enough. The slide show numbed rather than spoke. But *Guernica* still speaks. And when it does, it screams bloody murder."<sup>86</sup> This quotation highlights the difference between technology and the power of art. Technology has given us many advances and benefitted society in many ways, for example disseminating information from the bombing of Guernica to people around the world. However, technology will never replace the power of art and its impact during turbulent times.

How did the bombing of Guernica change the war and the mindset of the Spaniards? The bombing of *Guernica* changed the way people viewed the war and the two sides. It was the first time that innocent civilians were the sole target, Steer's article says, "Guernica, the most ancient town of the Basques and the center of their cultural tradition, was completely destroyed yesterday afternoon by insurgent air raiders."<sup>87</sup> This was an attack on the Spanish culture and political beliefs. The Spanish Civil War was no longer only limited to the confines of Spain, but now was far reaching to the democracies around the world. The day after the attack the Basque President Aguirre said, "the German airmen in the service of the Spanish Rebels...have sought to wound us in the most sensitive of our patriotic sentiments, once more making it entirely clear what [Basque country] may expect of those who do not hesitate to destroy us down to the very

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<sup>86</sup> Schama, *The Power of Art*, 395.

<sup>87</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History*, 14.

sanctuary which records the centuries of our liberty and our democracy.”<sup>88</sup> The bombing of Guernica showed the lengths that the Germans as well as the Nationalists were willing to go to destroy democracy in Spain.

Why does political art, such as Picasso’s *Guernica*, cause so much controversy? Political art, such as Picasso’s *Guernica* causes controversy because it takes images of suffering and death combined with political conviction and empathy with human pain. Ultimately, it creates a universal image that diverse groups of people can identify with. However, not all countries or rulers support such freedom of expression. For example, popular Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei has been arrested and put under house arrest for challenging the Chinese government’s stance on human rights and democracy. Additionally, political art offers public participation due to the grounding in real world events and times. Political art seeks to expose conflicts, resolutions, and the state of the world through displays, media events, and exhibitions. In this case, *Guernica* was on display for the entire world at the exhibition in Paris 1937. Picasso’s horrified reactions to the bombing of Guernica were painted on a huge 11’5” by 25’6” canvas and displayed within the Spanish Pavilion, directly across from the German Pavilion. The German guidebook at the Paris Exhibition described *Guernica* as “...the dream of a madman, a hodgepodge of parts of bodies that a four-year-old child could have painted.”<sup>89</sup> Thus, it is evident that political art can and should cause controversy among differing opinions. This said, art should always aspire for the highest ideals and to search for the moral responsibility of man to care and foster the best possible society. It should cause controversy, but not lead to violence.

How is mass communication, specifically art and newspapers, the ultimate manifestation of thought during war? Newspapers inform immediately. Art and newspaper articles are the

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<sup>88</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History*, 376.

<sup>89</sup> Chipp, *Picasso's Guernica: History, Transformations*, 152.



ultimate manifestation of thought during war because they respond to tragedy during turbulent times in a humanistic form. Schama says, “Picasso knew that *Guernica* might have lost the battle, but also that it had won the war—that the decrepit old fascist would die, and with him would perish his horrible regime. The painting, on the other hand, would endure and, when freedom was reborn in Spain, find its way home.”<sup>90</sup> Although the war would end, the expression of his feelings through art would continue through the end of the turbulent times and throughout time.

How did the Spanish Civil war impact the media and communication culture in Spain? There was disagreement among people within Spain about the details of specific events. For example, the bombing of Guernica was disputed at first and there were questions about who bombed the town: “more than a hundred survivors of the Guernica holocaust had told the journalists that Guernica was indeed bombed on April 26, for more than three hours, by airplanes that dropped explosive and incendiary bombs...these witnesses and their interlocutors between them had compiled an impressive dossier. But it was to be denied and challenged.”<sup>91</sup> At first there was debate, but thanks to the newspaper media and reporters the truth was eventually made known to the public. The communication culture changed with the normalization of newspaper articles and photojournalism because messages were now received more quickly and it allowed for multiple perspectives to ensure a general consensus about an event or topic.

How were sociopolitical aspects of society impacted by these events, and what impacts can be felt today? The Spanish Civil War divided people all over the world. The underlying conflicts of politics and religion are still relevant debates that occur daily around the world. The sociopolitical aspects of the war were still evident after the war ended when Franco took power.

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<sup>90</sup> Schama, *The Power of Art*, 394.

<sup>91</sup> Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History*, 30.

During his rule he enforced a strict censorship as well as only recognizing Castilian as the official language of Spain. Although the bombing of Guernica happened in Spain, people around the world can identify and relate to the feeling of human pain and loss.

Steer's article, Picasso's painting, and Hemingway's documentary were all political activism in the moment during the Spanish Civil War, but these works also transcend time and speak to the capacity to empathize with this suffering. These works compel us to move beyond violence and strive for a more peaceful and just world. The bombing of Guernica and the overall events that happened during the Spanish Civil War are able to transcend time through the painting, documentary, and article, and serve as a call to end this type of suffering where we purposely kill people because of differences and to foster a better society.

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## APPENDIX

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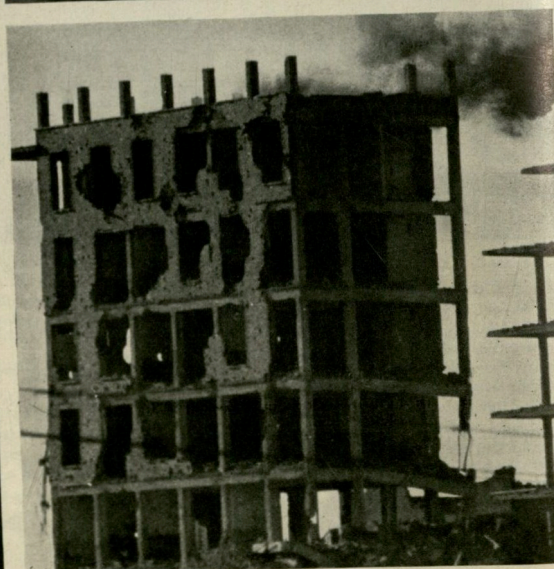
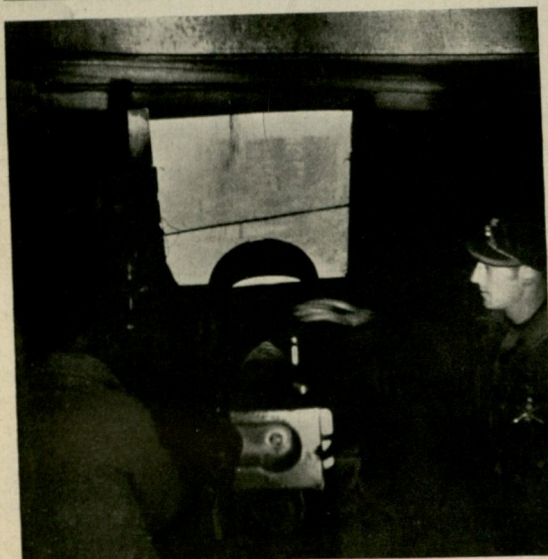
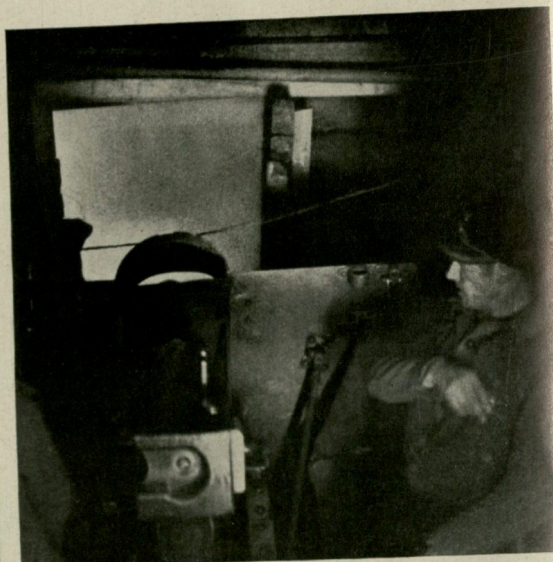
## THE WAR IN SPAIN MAKES A MOVIE WITH CAPTIONS BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The war in Spain has produced few good pictures. Many a cameraman has risked his life for action shots only to have them seized by the military. Both sides have released propaganda pictures of buildings destroyed and civilians killed by the enemy, withheld anything that might give aid and comfort to the other side. Practically the first worthwhile picture coverage of the war is the movie, *The Spanish Earth*, from which are taken the pictures on this and following pages.

Subsidized by U. S. Writers John Dos Passos and Archibald MacLeish, able Dutchmen Joris Ivens and John Ferno followed close in the tracks of Loyalist shock troops. Their film

is inevitably pro-Loyalist. It will be released after July 12 in the U. S. with a running commentary written by Ernest Hemingway, novelist and amateur of war. For *LIFE*, Mr. Hemingway has written captions for the pictures on these four pages.

Mr. Hemingway first made his great reputation with *The Sun Also Rises*, a gloomy tale of American expatriates in Spain. Its Spaniards are probably now all on the Rebel side. But since then Mr. Hemingway's delight in splendid Spanish posers has given way to a humanitarian sympathy for the rising Spanish masses. His book, *Death in the Afternoon*, published long before the war began was about Spanish bullfighting.

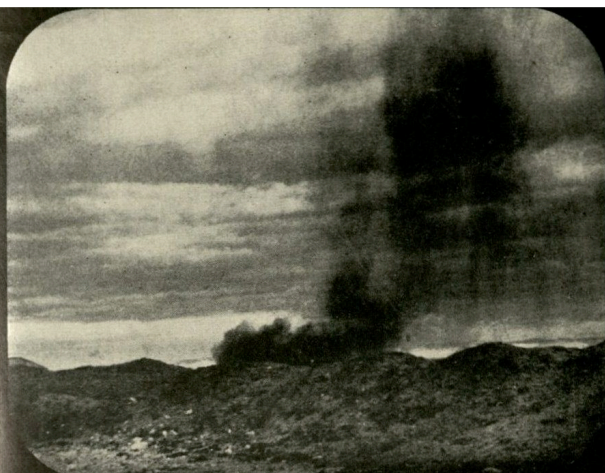


"A direct hit on the clinical hospital in University City northwest of Madrid where, after three months of fighting from building to building, floor to floor and room to

room, there are still some 2,000 Moors and Civil Guards holding out in the almost encircled salient." (The man at the right is closing the breechblock; the man at left

pulling the firing-pin cord. The smoke fills the window in the steel wall for a moment and then the building at the left is seen, by telescopic lens, to have been hit.—ED.)

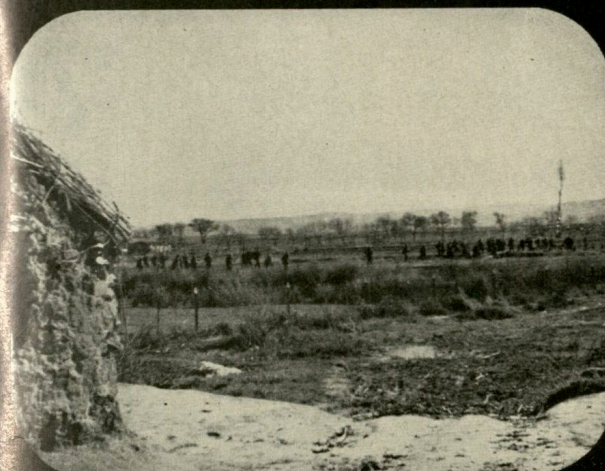




"WE WENT WITH THE TANKS IN THIS ATTACK, FALLING FLAT AS A SHELL BURST, THE METAL ZIFFING AND THE DIRT CLOUDS LOBBING OVER."



"THEY CAME GRINDING AND CLANKING, SUDDENLY TO RISE LIKE SHIPS ON A WAVE, HANGING A MOMENT IN MECHANICAL BALANCE ON THE RIDGE."



"THEY GO FORWARD IN THE ULTIMATE LONELINESS OF WHAT IS KNOWN AS CONTACT." (INFANTRY FIGHTING FOR THE MADRID-VALENCIA ROAD.—ED.)



"THE CLOSE ONES HAVE A ZIPPING WHISPER AND THE REALLY CLOSE ONES CRACK." (REBELS ON HILLS, LOYALISTS ADVANCING TO RIGHT.—ED.)



"SOMETIMES ONE PITCHES FORWARD ON HIS OWN LOADED STRETCHER." (AT BRIHUEGA, WHERE THE LOYALISTS ROUTED THE ITALIAN DIVISIONS.—ED.)



"THE COUNTERATTACK HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL." (DEAD ITALIANS LYING IN BRUSH AFTER THE ITALIAN DEFEAT AT BRIHUEGA IN MARCH.—ED.)

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"AFTER THE SHELLING BOYS HUNT IN THE RUBBLE FOR JAGGED METAL OR STEEL FRAGMENTS AND SO THE NEXT SHELL . . ."

" . . . FINDS THEM. THE GERMAN ARTILLERY HAS INCREASED THEIR ALLOWANCE PER BATTERY TODAY."

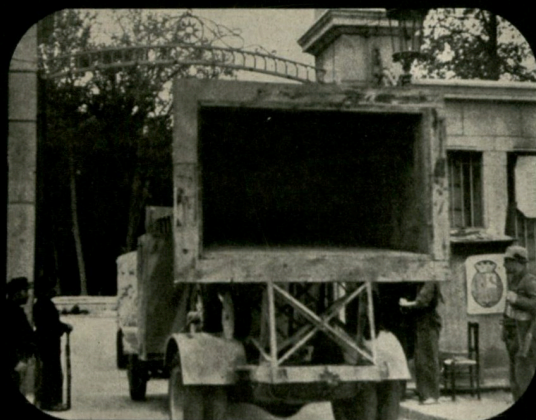


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# SPANISH WAR BY HEMINGWAY (continued)

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"THE LOUD-SPEAKER OPENS THE PROGRAM WITH THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL ANTHEM, GREETED WITH SHOTS FROM REBELS, FOLLOWED BY DANCE MUSIC."



"THEN COMES A SPEECH. IF THIS IS LISTENED TO IN SILENCE BY THE REBELS THERE WILL PROBABLY BE MORE DESERTIONS THAT NIGHT."



"THE VILLAGERS OF FUENTEDUENA ON THE MAIN MADRID-VALENCIA HIGHWAY IRRIGATE THEIR LANDS TO GROW FOOD & WINE FOR THE SOLDIERS."



(GRAPE PLANTING AT FUENTEDUENA. PEASANTS SCRATCH OUT IRRIGATION DITCHES THAT THEIR FUGITIVE LANDLORDS HAD FAILED TO PROVIDE.—ED.)



"THIS IS A MAN WHO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE WAR—A BOOK-KEEPER ON HIS WAY TO HIS OFFICE AT EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING."

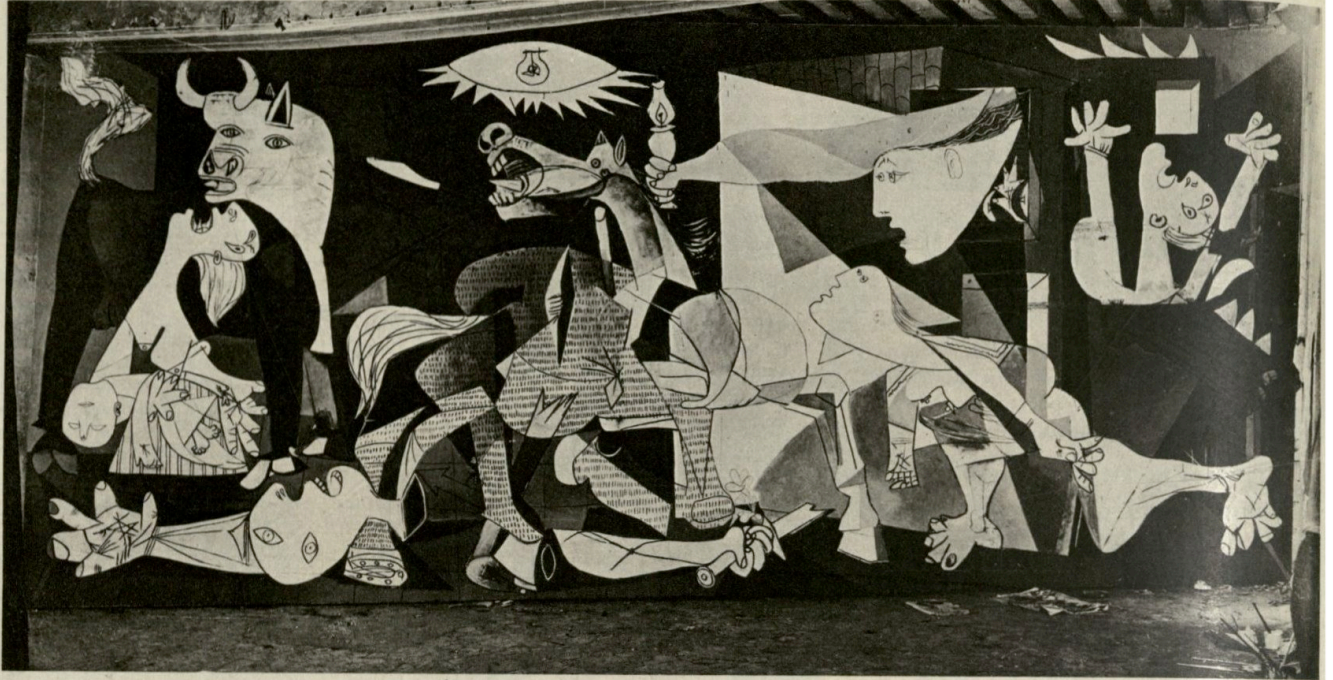


"THE FAMILY IS DEAD. HIGH IN THE SKY AND SHINING SILVER, DEATH CAME TO ALL WHO HAD NO PLACE TO RUN, NO PLACE TO HIDE."

Figure 1. *Life Magazine's* article about Hemingway's documentary included images from the film as well as the accompanying narrative.



## SPAIN'S PICASSO PAINTS BOMBING OF GUERNICA FOR PARIS EXPOSITION



The Basque Town of Guernica, seat of the oldest parliament on the Continent, was bombed by Spanish Rebels April 27. The fresco above, called *Guernica*, portrays that event. It was painted by Pablo Picasso, Spain's greatest living artist whom the Loyalists have

named Director of Madrid's Prado Museum. Picasso has refused to leave Paris to fill the job but he did contribute the painting above to the Spanish Pavilion of the Paris Exposition, opening July 12. The dislocated bull at left, possibly symbolizing the Rebels, really means that

Picasso has lately specialized in bullfights. The head coming down the stairs is adding a kerosene lamp to the electric lighting. The broken sword of Guernica is obvious symbolism. The creature running at lower right suggests the work of James Thurber of the *New Yorker*.

*Advertisement*

Figure 2. *Life Magazine* published this image of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* on July 26, 1937, with the caption "Spain's Picasso Paints Bombing of Guernica for Paris Exposition."

