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Spanish Cinema during the Final Year of the Civil War: The Republicans' Last Documentaries and Francoist Triumphalism

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Introduction

Cinema played an important role as a vehicle for propaganda during the Spanish Civil War. The films produced by the Republicans and the Nationalists had two things in common: first, a desire to assert their side's legitimacy and the legality of their actions in defence of the country; and second, a desire to pour scorn on the enemy. Examples of the latter abound in the language used: Republican productions branded the military rebels as 'fascists', 'traitors without honour', 'ferocious beasts', while the Nationalist films called the Republicans 'reds', 'Marxist swine', or 'ragmen of the Popular Front'.

The two most important film companies in the last year of the war, in terms of output and quality, were the Republican Film Popular and the Francoist National Department of Cinematography (Departamento Nacional de Cinematografía, or DNC). The films made by these two institutions offer a faithful reflection of the fortunes of the two sides between the spring of 1938 and the end of the war in early 1939. For the most part, Film Popular produced documentaries that praised the dogged resistance of the Republican forces but said nothing of the territorial losses, so as not to affect morale; no mention is made of the thousands of refugees who poured across the French border as Franco's troops advanced on Catalonia. And on the Nationalist side, the films made by the DNC celebrated the military victories of its troops and looked forward to the successful conclusion of the war; they depicted the Republican exiles as little more than animals, the embodiment of evil fleeing from the forces of

good represented by the rebels, neglecting to mention the fact that Franco's regime was a military dictatorship.

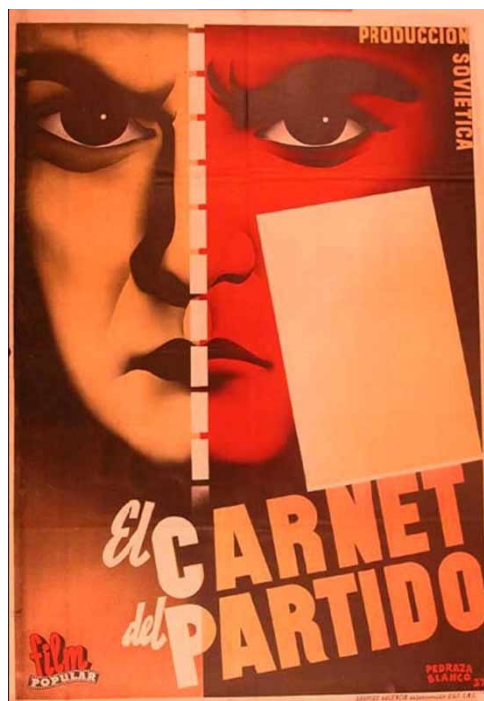
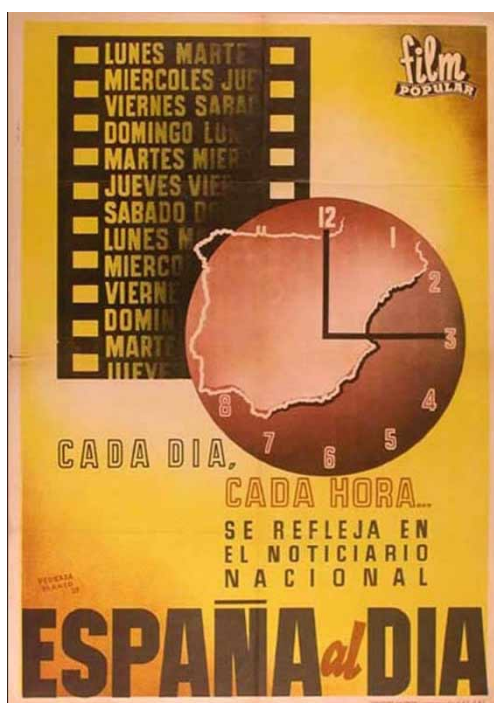
Republican Spain: Film Popular

Film Popular was an enterprise affiliated to the Spanish Communist Party, initially founded in Valencia in 1937. It also had offices in Madrid, at c/. Alcalá, 62 and in Barcelona, at Gran Via, 641. When the government of the Republic announced its retreat to the Catalan capital in October 1937, Film Popular moved to its Barcelona office, where it stayed until the end of January 1939, when the city was taken by Franco.

Film Popular's most important work was the newsreel *España al día*, which was created in conjunction with Laya Films.¹ It was dependent on the Generalitat de Catalunya Propaganda Commissariat, and co-edited by the Communists. *España al día* was shown outside Catalonia in early 1937. The cooperation with Laya Films lasted no more than a few months, because in late April of that year Film Popular produced its own version of the newsreel, which contained different news items. Around a hundred editions of *España al día* appear to have been made, carrying around a thousand news stories—a rate of production which, in the context of Spanish cinematography, is comparable only to the NO-DO, the Spanish official newsreel produced by Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975). English and French versions of *España al día* were made—*Spain Today* and *Nouvelles d'Espagne*, respectively, and Film Popular also produced the international news programme *Por todo el mundo*.

In 1938, Film Popular made a variety of documentaries that reflected events both on the battlefield and on the home front. *La mujer y la guerra* (Mauricio A. Sollin) told how women were contributing to the war effort by substituting for men in the factories and workshops. The film entitled *Con la 43 División* (1938) follows this military unit, led by Antonio Beltrán, 'El Esquinazau', holding out in a remote area in the Pyrenees in Huesca near the French border, surrounded by snow at a height of 1,500 metres, as Franco's troops advanced in the spring of that year.

1 At the beginning of September 1936, the Generalitat de Catalunya Propaganda Commissariat created a cinema division called Laya Films—a reference to the Pre-Roman Layetania, a Catalanian territory inhabited at the time by the tribe of layetanos. Laya Films' most important achievements were the production of a regular series of newsreels and documentaries, and in 1938 it collaborated in the logistics of the film *L'Espoir*, shot by André Malraux on locations near Barcelona. See Magí Crusells and Josep-Maria Caparrós, *Cinema en temps de guerra, exili i repressió* (Barcelona: Memorial Democràtic de la Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010), 20–28.



Poster of the Spanish newsreel *España al día* and the Soviet fiction film *El carnet del partido* Reproduced courtesy of Ministerio de Cultura, Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica

Film Popular also distributed several Soviet films that glorified the Russian Revolution. In 1938 a number of films were shown in Madrid and Barcelona: *Hijo de Mongolia* (Ilya Trauberg [1936], released in the USA as *Son of Mongolia*) tells the adventures of a shepherd in Manchuria occupied by the Japanese; *La última noche* (Yuli Raizman [1937], released in the USA as *The Last Night*) depicts the moments immediately prior to the Revolution and the Bolsheviks' ascent to power; *El carnet del partido* (Ivan Pyryev [1936], released in the USA as *Anna*) describes the actions of saboteurs who infiltrated revolutionary organizations; *El diputado del Báltico* (Aleksandr Zarkhi and Josif Heifits [1936], released in the USA as *Baltic Deputy*) tells the story of a scientist who is a firm defender of Leninist ideals; *Marinos del Báltico* (Aleksandr Faintsimmer [1937], released in the USA as *Men of the Sea*) depicts members of the Soviet Navy during the Russian Civil War heroically defending a vital position close to Petrograd; *Guerrilleros* (Sergei and Georgi Vasiliev [1938], known in the USA as *The Defense of Volotchayevsk* or *Volochayev Days*) relates an episode in which Soviet soldiers fight against foreign invaders, in this case Japanese troops helping the White Army; and the protagonist of *El profesor Mamlock* (Adolf Minkin and Gerbert Rappaport [1938], released in the USA as *Professor Mamlock*) is a German Jewish surgeon who suffers persecution by the Nazis. But these films were unpopular with cinemagoers; few lasted more than a couple of weeks in the big cities before being shipped on to other cinemas. Often they returned some time later, but only because distributors in the US halted the dispatch of American films to Spain, on the grounds that their bills had not been paid.

The critic Domènec Guansé mildly chided those who found the Soviet films excessively political:

El retret que fins avui ha pogut ésser fet als films russos, és el de la limitació de llurs temes, reduïts a escenes de la revolució i propaganda comunistes, a base d'exhibició de tot el que hi hauria de bestial en l'antic règim. Aquells que fan aquesta objecció obliden, però, massa la importància de l'enorme experiència que ha viscut el poblerus, la magnitud de la seva gesta, una experiència i una gesta que per força haurien de deixar marcats per sempre llurs artistes'.²

Film Popular also distributed foreign films of other kinds, such as *The Spanish Earth* (1937), directed by Joris Ivens and with a screenplay by

2 'The criticism made of the Russian films is that the subject matter is extremely limited, reduced to scenes of the Revolution and Communist propaganda, and the depiction of the brutality of the previous regime. However, those who make this objection forget the enormous significance of the experience of the Russian people, the magnitude of their achievement, which must, of necessity, have marked their artists forever' (Domènec Guansé, 'Les estrenes. *El carnet del partit*', *Meridià*, 19, 20 May 1938, p. 7.

Ernest Hemingway, shown for the first time on 25 April 1938 under the title *Tierra española* at the Cinema Catalonia in Barcelona, where it ran for two weeks. On the previous day it was presented in a special premiere organized by the Casa de la Cultura with the support of the Subsecretariat of Propaganda and Film Popular, at the Cinema Astoria. The *première* was attended by Hemingway himself, who was greeted with applause by the audience, leading military and political figures, the Diplomatic Corps, and the press. The writer Corpus Barga presented the film and informed the audience that it had already been shown to President Roosevelt at the White House, and that Roosevelt had expressed his support.³

The Battle of the Ebro, which began on 25 July 1938 with the fate of the Republic in the balance, was the most bitterly fought encounter of the entire war. On the left bank of the river a large number of troops had gathered. The first men crossed the river in boats, and soon after bridges of various kinds were put in place. The crossing was successful and initially had an enormous impact on morale on both sides. The documentary *El paso del Ebro*, produced by the Propaganda Section of the 46th Division 'El Campesino', was edited and distributed by Film Popular, which also added the sound (although the sound has not survived in the copies we have today). The film re-enacts the battle, with footage that was recorded later, but the editing work of the director Antonio del Amo was so professional that the scenes are astonishingly realistic. During the Second Republic he wrote for newspapers and film magazines and organized the film society 'Nuestro Cinema'. During the Civil War, Amo, a member of the Spanish Communist Party, made a series of documentaries using an editing style clearly influenced by the classics of Soviet cinema. *El paso del Ebro* shows the Republican troops reaching the other bank and cutting through barbed wire fencing. After the bridge has been built over the river, we see trucks carrying military equipment and the Republican units entering several towns, including Miravet. There are also close-ups of the Republican military leaders who took part in the battle: Valentín González 'El Campesino', Enrique Lister, Juan Modesto and Manuel Tagüeña. The river crossing was successful, but the Republican advance was soon blocked by the Nationalist troops. *El paso del Ebro* was the last made by Antonio del Amo. He was imprisoned and purged at the end of the War, and did not resume his artistic career until the mid-1940s.

After its defeat at the Ebro, the Republican army was destroyed and the government could no longer defend Catalonia. When the Nationalists launched their assault on Catalonia on 23 December 1938, the Republican front broke at various points. *Celestino García Moreno*, a documentary lasting three minutes and forty-seven seconds, was one of the last films to be

3 Anon., 'Una gran *première* de *Tierra española* en Barcelona', *Boletín Film Popular*, 2 (May 1938), 4.

made. The protagonist was an infantry corporal of the Fifth Army Corps, who won acclaim on 17 January 1939 for destroying three Italian tanks, capturing their crew, and putting thirteen more tanks to flight. The event took place near Santa Coloma de Queralt (Tarragona), where the units of Enrique Lister were trying to halt the advance of the Italian troops sent by Mussolini. García Moreno returned to the Republican lines with four prisoners: Captain Osvaldo Arpaia, Lieutenant Mario Ricci, and Sergeants Narino Rogioni and Nello Mangiacapra, of the Tank Corps of the Armoured Division Littorio which was attacking the sector.

The protagonist of this short film speaks with great modesty and spontaneity. His speech is reproduced without interruptions. After describing the capture, García Moreno encourages the combatants to fight against the invader. With a striking naturalness, the hero says: '¡Camaradas! Aquí sabéis [...] que defendemos el pan nuestro; nosotros defendemos nuestra tierra, nosotros defendemos lo que hay que defender los hombres y no esos invasores que nos quieren destruir nuestra España y todo el mundo entero. Cuando acabarán con España, irían con Francia, irían con todas [...] del mundo entero. ¡Camaradas! Hay que ser como el camarada Celestino García para tirar muchos tanques. Y ¡Salud y República!'



Celestino García Moreno
 Reproduced by courtesy of the Filmoteca Española

According to the Director of the Department of Restoration at the Spanish Film Archive, Alfonso del Amo, the producers of this film ‘vieron con absoluta claridad que aquí imagen y sonido eran indisociables; nada se podía hacer y nada hicieron; filmaron la imagen, registraron el sonido, sincronizaron, colocaron unas cuantas consignas delante y detrás y dejaron que el cine hablara. La emoción que despierta esta película es totalmente imposible de transcribir’.⁴

Celestino García Moreno closes with some words of encouragement and hope from the Prime Minister of the Republic, Juan Negrín, who believed that if, in spite of its inferiority, the Republic survived, the Western democracies—which had remained neutral by setting up the Non-Intervention Committee—would soon have no alternative but to support it in the context of a much broader international conflict. The Prime Minister was backed by the Spanish Communist Party, the group that most enthusiastically shared this ideal.

An agricultural worker from Morata de Tajuña (Madrid), Celestino García Moreno, was promoted to sergeant and awarded fifteen days’ leave to visit his family and fiancée. On 22 January he was accompanied by the commissioner of the Thirteenth Division to the Escuela de Sargentos, where he explained how he had knocked out the tanks. He also expressed his wish to rejoin his company.⁵ But at the end of the war he was captured by the Francoist authorities; he was tried, condemned to death, and shot, along with other Republican ex-combatants, in the East Cemetery in Madrid on 14 June 1939. The Spanish General Administration Archive preserves an inventory, dated January 1943, of the films that had been shown in the Republican zone during the war and were now in the possession of the Francoist Department of Cinematography. On the list is this documentary entitled the *Antitanquista Celestino García*.

With Catalonia now occupied by Franco’s army, Film Popular continued to produce its newsreel *España al día* until Colonel Casado’s coup, which brought down Negrín’s government. The Communists were defeated after a series of battles and several people with links to Film Popular who had declined to go into exile were imprisoned. Some of them suffered heavily under the repression: for example, Florentino Hernández Girbal, a member of Film Popular’s board of directors, was taken prisoner by Casado’s supporters and sentenced to thirty years of prison by the new authorities, a punishment later commuted to twelve years.

4 Alfonso del Amo, ‘Fragmentos seleccionados de la Guerra Civil española’, *Nickel Odeon*, 19 (2000), 161–74 (p. 173).

5 Anon., ‘El antitanquista García Moreno en Madrid’, *La Vanguardia*, 24 January 1939, p. 3.

Franco's Side: The National Department of Cinematography

On 30 January 1938, General Franco dissolved the Junta Técnica and established his first government, which comprised eleven ministries. On 1 April of the same year the Departamento Nacional de Cinematografía (DNC) was founded and affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior's Directorate-General of Propaganda, under the leadership of Manuel Augusto García Viñolas. In 1937, the Cinema Section of Delegación del Estado para Prensa y Propaganda had been created, but its functions were administrative and it did not produce any films. García Viñolas worked in Rome before the war as the correspondent of *El Debate*. When the war broke out, he joined the Legion, obtaining a special permit from the General Jefe del Tercio at the request of the Ministry of the Interior to take charge of the DNC. For his work as a writer and head of film production, he was soon awarded the Encomienda de la Orden Imperial de las Flechas by Franco.⁶

The creation of the DNC brought film production in the Nationalist zone under stricter control. A ministerial order of 2 November 1938 established a series of norms for censorship, specifying that 'siendo innegable la gran influencia que el cinematógrafo tiene en la difusión del pensamiento y en la educación de las masas, es indispensable que el Estado lo vigile, en todos los órdenes en que haya riesgo de que se desvíe de su misión'.⁷

The DNC had two functions: a) the production of documentaries and newsreels; and b) the control and regulation of other films made in Nationalist Spain and those imported from abroad. In this way, privately made productions now came under political control. Broadly speaking, the priority of the DNC was to produce and disseminate war propaganda: in June 1938 the first edition of the *Noticiero español* was shown, under the guidance of García Viñolas at the Directorate-General of Propaganda, which was affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior under Ramón Serrano Suñer. Each edition of this newsreel (a precursor of the NO-DO of the Franco era) included a number of news stories, among which military themes predominated.⁸ During the Civil War, nineteen editions of the *Noticiero español* were made, with an average length of ten minutes. The first eleven editions were processed and the sound added in

6 Anon., 'Augusto García Viñolas', *Hoja Oficial del Lunes de Sevilla*, 3 October 1938, p. 4.

7 Article nine of the order on 2 November 1938, published in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* on 5 November.

8 For more information about the DNC, see Rafael R. Tranche and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *El pasado es el destino. Propaganda y cine del bando nacional en la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Cátedra/Filmoteca, 2011), 519.

Germany—reflecting the dependence of the film production of the Nationalist zone on foreign assistance—and the rest in Spain. Franco's government had not created a news service before this time because the Nationalists lacked the necessary materials and human expertise; in fact, in a report dated 30 November 1937, sent to General Staff Headquarters, the heads of Nationalist propaganda regretted the fact that 'el proyecto de hacer un noticiario semanal exclusivamente en español no pasa de ser una idea, pues además de carecer de medios para ello, no existen en España, actualmente, ni talleres, ni personal especializado en este trabajo'.⁹

The headquarters of the DNC during the Civil War were in Burgos. The department was badly understaffed: in May 1938 it had fifteen employees, counting administrative staff and film technicians. The work produced by the department was distributed in Francoist Spain by the German firm Hispania Tobis, and Tobis of Berlin distributed the material in other countries. In a burst of rash optimism, Manuel Augusto García claimed in an interview: 'Nuestras películas son distribuidas íntegras por la España nacional, nuestras posesiones y la América española. Luego, parcialmente, según conviene a nuestra propaganda, por medio de consignas rigurosas, estas noticias son distribuidas por todo el mundo. Como dato rigurosamente exacto puedo asegurar que unos 500 millones de habitantes de todos los países presencian semanalmente la proyección de un noticiario sobre nuestra campaña'.¹⁰

The first documentary made by the DNC was entitled *Prisioneros de guerra*, which praised the humane treatment given to the prisoners—mainly members of the International Brigades—held by Franco's forces. *Prisioneros de guerra* was filmed principally in the monastery of San Pedro de Cardeña in Burgos (which had been turned into a concentration camp in March 1938), the sanatorium of Liérganes (Santander) and in the old palace of Lerma (Burgos). Most of the prisoners appear with their hair cut short and dressed in military uniform, because, as the film was at pains to stress, they were treated as military personnel and were subject to the Code of Military Justice. The prisoners were filmed carrying out a variety of activities, to bear witness to the good treatment they received: eating in the camp, shaving, smoking, playing *pelota*, singing songs or receiving medical care.

9 Marta Bizcarrondo, 'Cuando España era un desfile: el Noticiario Español', in *Catálogo general del cine de la Guerra Civil*, ed. Alfonso del Amo, in collaboration with M^a Luisa Ibáñez (Madrid: Cátedra/Filmoteca Española, 1996), 73–90 (p. 80).

10 Tizor, 'Quinientos millones de espectadores contemplan semanalmente en la pantalla mundial escenas de nuestra campaña', *Falange Española* (Burgos) (August 1938), 1.



Prisioneros de guerra

Reproduced by courtesy of the Filmoteca Española

The film begins with footage of prisoners walking through a wood and crossing a bridge, while the commentary stresses the magnanimity of Franco's army: 'Vais a presenciar, no ya la vida que les conservó nuestra justicia, sino la vida que les rehace nuestra hermandad. Vais a ver sus trabajos, sus recreos, su existencia. La piedad que ellos negaban en nosotros, es poco todavía para las nuevas leyes del Estado. España ofrece más aún. España les ofrece a estos hombres la revalidación, la dignidad que tenían perdida. Si volaron un puente, ahora lo reconstruyen; si derribaron una casa, la levantan ahora. Estos son sus trabajos. De cerca de 200.000 prisioneros hechos por las tropas nacionales, sólo 45.000 permanecen aún en los campos de concentración; los demás han sido reintegrados a sus labores, a sus casas. Incorporados noblemente a España, Franco les da también a ellos la Patria, el Pan y la Justicia'.

If the figure of 200,000 men is meant to refer to the Brigades alone, it is a gross exaggeration. Most modern historians estimate that between 40,000 and 60,000 foreign volunteers enlisted in the International Brigades and, probably, there were never more than 20,000 in combat at the same time on the battlefield. And in fact this figure is considerably lower than the number of troops sent by Fascist Italy: nearly 73,000 men. What is more, the claim that the prisoners returned home on completing their penance

is hard to believe in the case of some of the members of the Brigades. For example, it is barely conceivable that the Italian and German anti-Fascists would have returned to their countries without suffering reprisals. The narrator also claimed that the Brigades were brought to Spain by the lure of the gold sent to the Soviet Union by the Republican government. For the Nationalists, the members of the Brigades were clear proof of the *Sovietization* of the Civil War; they saw them as the shock troops of the Communist International, the forerunners of a Communist invasion of Spain.

The documentary *La Ciudad Universitaria* is dedicated to 'la juventud heroica de España, a los estudiantes, a los campesinos, a los obreros que han venido a esta Ciudad Universitaria para doctorarse en la muerte'. The documentary reflects on the situation in Madrid after two years of war. The narrator claims that the city was being defended by the International Brigades, '40.000 hombres reclutados en los suburbios de Europa, por el Gobierno rojo que inicia así con ellos la intervención extranjera'. For obvious reasons, no mention is made of the aid provided to the Nationalists by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in summer 1936, several months before the arrival of the Brigades at the Madrid front in November 1936. In fact, when the documentary was made in 1938, the Brigades were actually fighting elsewhere and were not involved in the defence of Madrid.

In spite of the commentator's triumphalist tone—'nuestros soldados pasan el río y la flecha triunfal de nuestro avance se clava en Madrid. La Ciudad Universitaria es nuestra'—Franco's troops failed in their initial aim of taking the capital swiftly, and after two years of war the situation was one of stalemate. The commentator reports that the city has been bombarded relentlessly during this period; we see footage of the aftermath of the fighting in the Hospital Clínico, the Faculties of Pharmacy and Medicine, the University School, the park in the west of the city, and the Palace of La Moncloa.

According to the commentary, thirty-seven of the country's fifty provincial capitals were in the hands of the Nationalists, in addition to the territories in Africa and, with the exception of Menorca, the offshore islands. A map shows the territory held by the Republicans, graphically adorned with a hammer and sickle. The film contains scenes of the events held in Ceuta and Valladolid to celebrate the Day of Africa, on 17 July 1938. The acts in Ceuta were presided over by Colonel Juan Beigbeder, Spain's High Commissioner in Morocco, and by Ramón Serrano Suñer, the Minister of Governance. In Valladolid, the narrator describes the event as 'verdadera grandiosidad', with a large Fascist-style parade attended by General José Millán Astray and the minister Raimundo Fernández Cuesta. Finally, the film includes images from a parade in Salamanca, with a sound recording of Franco reaffirming his faith in victory thanks to the impetus of the Army and the spirit of the Spanish youth.

The film *La batalla del Ebro* describes the Nationalists' counter-offensive to push back the advance of the Republican troops. It stresses

that the Nationalist victory was due to four things: first, the superiority of numbers; second, their fighting morale; third, their contempt for danger; and finally, the superiority of their military preparation. In spite of everything, ‘azuzados por la propaganda de las Internacionales, miles y miles de hombres (republicanos) dejan su vida en las trincheras enemigas. Lejos de la guerra, los verdaderos responsables de la tremenda tragedia afilan sus uñas y lanzan proclamas inflamadas que alimentan una resistencia inútil’. At the end of October, the Nationalists launched their counteroffensive and the Republicans retreated. *La batalla del Ebro* states that the Nationalist army issued a statement on 17 November 1938 announcing the end of the battle. The documentary finishes with the affirmation that General Franco is invincible; we see shots of the Generalísimo at a military parade in the Plaza Mayor in Salamanca, to the sound of *La Marcha Granadera*, the official anthem of Nationalist Spain by decree on 27 February 1937.

Juventudes de España (The Documentary of the First National Meeting of Youth Organizations in Seville) focuses on these sections of the Falange, showing gymnastics exhibitions, military parades and regional dances. Several well-known members of the Falange were in attendance, such as Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, Miguel and Pilar Primo de Rivera, and Sancho Dávila. Fernández Cuesta—Secretary General of the Falange and Minister of Agriculture—delivered a speech recorded live, praising José Antonio, for dying with bravery and honour, like those ‘elegidos de los dioses, como Sigfrido te enfrentaste con el dragón, como Amadis luchaste por afán por la dama de tus velos’. Fernández Cuesta describes the death of the ex-leader of the Falange grandiloquently and rhetorically: ‘Como Garcilaso hiciste poesía y caíste por el Imperio sin casco ni coraza, a cara descubierta, al asaltar el castillo de tus ilusiones. En tierra de palmeras gallardas cual fuera y cerca del mar Mediterráneo, clásico como tu cultura, luminoso como tu cerebro y azul como tu camisa, reposa por ahora tu cuerpo. Pero tu alma habrá entrado ya en ese paraíso que cantarás y en donde en las gambas de las puertas, junto a los ángeles con espadas, hacen guardia tus escuadras caídas cara al sol por Dios y por España victoriosa de todos tus enemigos, sin pactos ni mediaciones’.

None the less, the Falange’s populist aspirations—characterized (as this film reflects) by the uniform, the blue shirt and the red and black revolutionary flag with the yoke and arrows harking back to the Imperial Spain of the Catholic Monarchs, the ritual patriotic cry of ‘¡Arriba España!’—were more for effect than genuine. It was the military that directed political life. In the film, for example, we see General Queipo de Llano—the leading military authority in the south of the country—and the commandant José Cuesta Monereo in the presidential box.

With the Republican army destroyed, the Nationalist troops marched into Barcelona on 26 January 1939. *La liberación de Barcelona* is a report by the DNC on the first days after the entry of the Nationalist troops. A large

number of people in the streets acclaim Franco; the welfare association Auxilio Social hands out food; the military authorities are cheered on their arrival in Plaça Catalunya, where they attend an outdoor mass; there are parades with a new set of symbols, including the Fascist salute and the intoning of *Cara al Sol*. The enthusiasm shown in these images would have been genuinely felt by some of the city's inhabitants, who had concealed their support for Franco's side; for others, the fall of the city meant the end of the nightmare of hunger, privation and bombardments. But many of these people would have had relatives and acquaintances who had embarked on a long, painful journey into exile. The narrator tells us that the fall of the Catalan capital was particularly important to Franco, because it heralded the end of the war. In this the Generalísimo was right: two months later the war was over. *La gran parada militar en Barcelona, con asistencia de S.E. el Jefe del Estado y Generalísimo de los ejércitos nacionales* is a film produced by the DNC to mark the parade held in the Avenida Diagonal on 21 February, with representations of the army units that had taken part in the Catalan campaign.



El gran desfile de la Victoria en Madrid
Reproduced by courtesy of the Filmoteca Española

In spite of the government's dogged resistance, the Republic eventually fell. The DNC produced two films entitled *La llegada de la Patria* and *¡Vivan los hombres libres!* The first stated that thirty-two provinces were now held by Nationalist forces; the other, a documentary, containing some fictionalized images, of the prisons (known as *checas*) found in Barcelona after the fall of the city, describing the tortures it accused the Republican government of inflicting. According to the credits, this documentary was made only hours after the discovery of several of these prisons, showing cells 'con ladrillos en el suelo que impedían pasear'; rooms with terrifying paintings on the walls 'como los que ven en las pesadillas los que tienen fiebres altas'; 'lechos inclinados para no poder conciliar el sueño' or instruments used for torture. Versions of *¡Vivan los hombres libres!* were made in French and English to be shown at the International Anti-Marxist Congress held shortly afterwards in Geneva.¹¹

The Nationalist troops took the rest of the Republican zone without meeting resistance. On 28 March they marched into Madrid, and four days later the war was over. *La liberación de Madrid* (1939) depicts the occupation of the Spanish capital by Franco's army. The narrator refers to the creation of Madrid as the centre of the Spanish Empire by Philip II and relates how on 18 July 1936 'se hundió en poder de las turbas marxistas y Brigadas de asesinos, convirtiéndose en un antro espantoso de suciedad y abyección', but that now 'el corazón de Madrid es ya de Franco'. The film ends with photographs of the dictator and José Antonio, while the narration mentions the last official war bulletin, the one that ends 'la guerra ha terminado'. *El gran desfile de la Victoria en Madrid* is a report of the parade held on 19 May in which troops from all Franco's armies participated, including representations of German and Italian units. Among the guests of honour we see members of the diplomatic corps of these two countries, but also of Portugal, France, Britain, Japan and the Vatican.

Conclusions

After three years of war, the country's entire industry and infrastructure was in tatters. The film industry was no exception. Spain's economy would have to wait several years before it could recover to the levels of July 1936. During the conflict, Republicans and Nationalists alike used the film industry to serve their respective ideological interests, without any thought for consolidating a structure that would allow the industry to survive when the war eventually came to an end. Under the Franco regime, Spain continued to produce documentaries on the Civil War, but always from a single perspective: that of the victors, who showed no mercy towards their old adversaries.

11 España. Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de la Administración. *Memoria de las actividades desarrolladas por el Departamento de Cinematografía* [undated, but probably March 1939]. Sección Cultura, Archivador 273.

Some analysts have noted that the images from the films confiscated by the Francoist authorities were used to identify and punish Republican sympathizers. To quote the Catalan film operator Ramón Biadiu in an interview in 1978: 'Sobre el tema hay más de una versión. Parece que los documentos (cinematográficos) fueron aprovechados por la policía franquista para tareas de documentación'.¹² In fact there is clear proof that this was indeed the case. In a letter (reproduced here) dated 2 December 1939, from the Director General of Security of the Ministry of Governance to the Subsecretary of the Press and Propaganda, we read: 'Recibida por conducto del Excmo. Señor Gobernador Civil de esta Provincia, su Circular telegráfica interesando el envío al Departamento Nacional de Cinematografía de todas las películas recogidas a los "rojos", debo participar a Vuestra Excelencia que en esta Dirección General se encuentran depositadas una colección de ellas que por contener detalles que pudieran ser muy útiles a las correspondientes investigaciones policiales, me permito significárselo así, aunque si V.E. lo estima más oportuno, pudieran ser puestas a disposición del Departamento antes referido'.¹³ So the images from confiscated films were used to identify (and in many cases to arrest) Republican ex-combatants. In this way, film censorship became linked to political repression.

12 Tomàs Delclòs, 'Ramón Biadiu, documentalista de Laya Films', *L'Avenç*, 11 (1978), 40–41 (p. 41).

13 España. Ministerio de Cultura. Archivo General de la Administración. Documento de la Dirección General de Seguridad del Ministerio de la Gobernación al Excmo. Sr. Subsecretario de Prensa y Propaganda del Ministerio de la Gobernación, dated 2 de diciembre de 1939. Sección Cultura, Archivador 273.

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MINISTERIO DEL INTERIOR
SERVICIO NACIONAL DE CINEATOGRAFIA

A.C. MINISTERIO DE LA GOBERNACIÓN
DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE SEGURIDAD

Sección 10306

Recibida por conducto del

Sección ESPECTACULOS.

Excmo. Señor Gobernador Civil de esta Provincia, su Circular telegráfica interesando el envío al Departamento Nacional de Cineatografía de todas las películas recogidas a los "rojos", debo participar a V.E. que en esta Dirección General se encuentran depositadas una colección de ellas que por contener detalles que pudieran ser muy útiles a las correspondientes investigaciones policiales, me permito significárselo así, aunque si V.E. lo estima más oportuno, pudieran ser puestas a disposición del Departamento antes referido.

D I O S -
-guarde siempre a España y a V.E. muchos años.

Madrid, 2 de diciembre de 1939.

Año de la Victoria.
EL DIRECTOR GENERAL,

[Signature]

Excmo. Señor Subsecretario de Prensa y Propaganda del Ministerio de la Gobernación.

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