

AN OLD ART FOR A NEW CULTURE: THE POPULAR AND THE
AVANT-GARDE IN JOSEP RENAU'S *NUEVA CULTURA*

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Art History
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

June 2012

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Title: An Old Art for a New Culture: The Popular and the Avant-Garde in Josep Renau's *Nueva Cultura*

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Degree awarded June 2012

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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June 2012

Title: An Old Art for a New Culture: The Popular and the Avant-Garde in Josep Renau's *Nueva Cultura*

The Spanish artist Josep Renau (1907-1982) published the propaganda periodical *Nueva cultura* from 1935 to 1937. Although richly illustrated with cutting-edge graphic design and photomontage, it made use of popular culture with more frequency than might be expected in a left-wing, vanguard publication. This is seen most notably in the March 1937 special edition, published to coincide with a local, popular festival. In the special edition, Renau primarily utilized popular forms of illustration in the layout. Further, by publishing it in the regional language rather than Castilian Spanish, he attested to the importance of addressing people in their own language, both linguistically and formally. This thesis examines the periodical in relation to philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's writings on folk culture and James V. Wertsch's research on collective remembering.

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Aleksandra Globig and June Irene Koehler. “Lithography.” In *The Making of David McCosb: Early Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*. Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 2011.

Aleksandra Globig and June Irene Koehler. “Watercolors.” In *The Making of David McCosb: Early Paintings, Drawings, and Prints*. Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 2011.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must first thank my advisor, Professor Sherwin Simmons, for his invaluable contributions to this manuscript. I am grateful for his constant and genuine encouragement, his patience, and his remarkable example as both an educator and a scholar. I am also grateful to Professor Joyce Cheng, who, when I approached her with a slue of possible thesis topics during my first year of graduate school, advised me to study what I love. I have let that wisdom guide my research ever since. Very special thanks are due to Professor Cecilia Enjuto Rangel in the Department of Romance Languages, for whose class on the poetics of the Spanish civil war I wrote the first iteration of this work. Her enthusiasm is boundless and contagious and I have been privileged to learn from her.

The research for this thesis was supported by funds from the Department of Art History, which facilitated travel to Madrid and València. I am very grateful to Isabel Ortega at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid and to Eloísa García at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern in València for their assistance. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Professor David Prats of Oregon State University, who has been teaching me to read and (very timidly) speak *valencià*. His assistance in translating the texts of *Nova cultura* was much appreciated; additionally, he has been a wonderful sounding board for my research as it has developed and for that I am very grateful. A huge debt of gratitude is also owed to two dear friends and colleagues in the Department of Art History, Aleksandra Globig and Anne Taylor, who read several drafts of this thesis. I am deeply touched by their interest in my work and thankful for their insightful suggestions, which have improved this final version.

Anyone who has ever produced a text of any length knows there are many individuals who, though they may not have directly assisted in the preparation or execution of the work, nonetheless deserve recognition. For me, those individuals are my colleagues at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, most notably Lawrence Fong, Jill Hartz, Anne Rose Kitagawa, and Danielle Knapp; my colleagues at the Center for Latino/a & Latin American Studies, particularly Kate Faris, Eli Meyer, and Heather

Wolford; and my colleagues in the Department of Arts & Administration, especially Lisa Hewitt, Jessica Hodgdon, and Megan Lallier-Barron. Additionally, I can hardly express my deep gratitude to my family at University Fellowship Church for their prayers throughout this long process. I am equally thankful to the sixth grade class at O'Hara Catholic School, with whom I worked as an ArtsBridge scholar this year, for their prayers regarding my "very long essay." Warm thanks are due to my house-mates and dear friends, Joy Anna Huether and Kelly Whitford, who have very patiently listened to me talk about propaganda periodicals and popular festivals for the last few years. I am so very grateful for their friendship and support.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, Diedre and Gene Koehler, and my grandparents, Elizabeth and Gregory Evans, and Shirley Mee, for always encouraging me to ask questions and look for the answers, wherever I might find them.

A Amalia, por compartir conmigo la maravillosa historia de España.

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CHAPTER I

THE STRUGGLE: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON ART AND POLITICS IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Josep Renau (València, Spain, 1907—Berlin, German Democratic Republic, 1982) has been recognized in recent decades as Spain's leading practitioner of photomontage. The medium became central to politically-committed art in the late 1920s and 1930s because it was both formally avant-garde and modern in its production and distribution. Viewed as the most effective means of raising the consciousness of the masses about the nature of reality, photomontages were widely disseminated in cultural journals throughout Europe and Russia.

Renau regularly contributed photomontages to a number of journals in Spain during the 1930s. Between 1935 and 1937, he edited the monthly periodical *Nueva cultura: Información, crítica y orientación intelectual* [New Culture: Information, Criticism, and Intellectual Orientation].¹ As its title suggests, the journal was a culturally-driven production, which featured contributions by a number of Spain's leading artists and intellectuals, such as José Bergamín (1895-1983), Luis Cernuda (1902-1963), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Alberto Sánchez (1895-1962), and María Zambrano (1904-1991). The text of the publication primarily consisted of essays and poems, ranging from topics as diverse as philosophy, economics, and art history.² Although the journal made use of photomontage somewhat more extensively than other Spanish publications of the period, it continued to employ traditional genres,

¹ Renau remarked in the facsimile version of *Nueva cultura*, published in the German Democratic Republic in 1977, "el título mismo de la revista es la expresión literal de toda una cadena de decepciones juveniles." ["The title of the magazine itself is the literal expression of a chain of juvenile deceptions." (Translation mine.)] He perhaps referred here to the magazine's ultimate failure to produce a 'new culture' in Spain.

² For philosophical essays, see, for example, María Zambrano, "El nuevo realismo," *Nueva cultura*, no. 6 (August-September-October 1937): 28. For articles on the economy, see, for example, José Bueno's three part series "El problema agrario en España a través de la historia: Teoría, historia, doctrina," *Nueva cultura*, nos. 11, 12, and 13 (March-April, May-June, and July 1936): 4-5. For articles on art history, see, for example, Max Raphael's three part series "Arte y Mitología: Sobre el método de la crítica en el arte," *Nueva cultura* nos. 1, 2, and 3 (January, February, and March 1935): 6-7, 15, 3-4, respectively.

such as satirical drawings and popular prints, with more frequency than might be expected in a vanguard publication. A particularly striking example of this is found in *Nueva cultura*'s March 1937 special issue, of which Renau dedicated a substantial portion to a type of popular print dating to the early seventeenth century.

This consistent integration of traditional idioms in a publication espousing a new approach to culture may have been due to Renau's extensive academic training. His father, José Renau Montoro, worked as a restoration artist and teacher at the School of Fine Arts in València and was a member of the city's Royal Academy. Renau attended the School of Fine Arts and completed apprenticeships at two printworks studios before opening his first solo exhibition in Madrid in 1928 to tremendous popular and critical success. Despite his promising beginnings in the world of fine art, Renau renounced that life in favor of producing politically-committed art. He later commented, "One of the constant concerns in my work has always been to find the shortest path for communication with the public through the most effective medium."³ This philosophy pervades his entire oeuvre, from his propagandistic photomontages and posters produced during the Spanish civil war, to his collaborative mural paintings with David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974) during his exile in Mexico, and finally to his critique of capitalist culture in his most famous photomontage series, *The American Way of Life*, produced in the German Democratic Republic in the 1950s.

Prior to Renau's long exile, however, the most compelling means of communicating with the Spanish public was through propaganda posters and periodicals, which were especially potent given the turbulent political climate of the country. Seventeen years after Russia's Red October (1917), Spain witnessed its own October revolution. Though the uprising was supposed to rage throughout the country, disorganization and ineffectual distribution of weapons, along with swift governmental suppression, thwarted the efforts of Spanish leftists in such industrial centers as Madrid and Barcelona, where it might have proven most effective. Results

³ Manuel García, "Conversaciones con el maestro de fotomontaje: Josep Renau. El arte debe integrarse en la vida cotidiana," *Informaciones de las Artes y las Letras*, no. 460 (1971): 7. Quoted in Albert Forment, ed., *Josep Renau: Catálogo razonado* (València: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, 2003), 404.

were achieved only in the province of Asturias, where worker militias largely composed of miners controlled the provincial capital of Oviedo, the province's largest city of Gijón, the city of Avilés, and a number of smaller towns from 4–18 October 1934.⁴

Though short-lived, the damage caused by the revolt was considerable. The official government report published in 1935 declared the combined revolutionary and governmental death toll to be just under 1,400, though recent scholarship suggests that the figure was closer to 1,650.⁵ In addition, at least 15,000 arrests were made and hundreds of prisoners were subjected to beatings and torture.⁶ However, the weightiest fallout of the insurrection may have been in its commemoration. Verifiable reports of the damage ceased to be important as partisans of both sides sought to swing popular opinion in their favor, the left seeking to vilify the leaders of the repression as the right simultaneously sought to delegitimize the causes of the worker uprising.⁷

When asked in an interview some decades later what he remembered of the October insurrection, Renau recalled that he had been responsible for organizing a strike in València and that he and his fellow protestors had planted a red flag atop the

⁴ Most of the revolutionary leaders had evacuated Oviedo by 12 October; however, the official surrender took place on 18 October after a meeting between the rebel leader Belarmino Tomás and General López Ochoa. López Ochoa had commanded a column of troops from Galicia in the northwest corner of the country. Two additional columns had marched towards Oviedo from the captured city of Gijón in the north and from the south through the large city of León. These were commanded by Colonel Juan Yagüe Blanco and General Carlos Bosch respectively. The repression in Madrid was coordinated by General Francisco Franco.

⁵ Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Civil War; the Soviet Union, and Communism*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 55.

⁶ This number was initially inflated to 30,000 prisoners by the left, who included another 15,000 non-revolutionary detainees in their tally. See Payne, 55-56. For a general history of the October revolution in Spain, see Adrian Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain: The Coal Miners of Asturias, 1860–1934* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

⁷ Historian Brian D. Bunk suggests that the inflammatory images representing the events of the revolution in Asturias made political moderation in the months leading up to the civil war increasingly difficult. Thus, the afterlife of the revolt in popular imagery functioned as a catalyst for the start of the war. See Brian D. Bunk, *Ghosts of Passion: Martyrdom, Gender, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

Post Office building. He was arrested for his involvement in the strike, but acquitted at trial.⁸

It was in this climate of political upheaval and social unrest that Renau founded *Nueva cultura*. In January 1935, a mere two and a half months after the dissolution of the revolt in Asturias and Renau's arrest, the first issue of *Nueva cultura* went to press. Its editorial proclaimed,

Outside of the musings of the formal snobbism, which motivates the emptiness of today's bourgeois culture, . . . NUEVA CULTURA intends the formation of a Spanish culture that contributes to the intellectual and social realization of the idea of universal collaboration and solidarity.⁹

Such unapologetic ideological posturing is unsurprising from an editor who had recently been imprisoned for his politics; nor is the periodical's aggressively leftist rhetoric shocking given that many of its contributors were associated with the Popular Front.¹⁰ Much to the joy of the left, and most certainly to the collaborators of *Nueva cultura*, the Popular Front won the 1936 elections in Spain. However, the economy remained crippled and tensions persisted between conservatives and liberals. The assassination of a conservative member of parliament provided sufficient provocation for a group of generals in Spanish Morocco to stage an

⁸ See Manuel García, ed. "Interview with the Artist Josep Renau" in *Josep Renau: Fotomontador* (València: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, in association with the Instituto Cervantes and the Generalitat Valenciana, 2006), 279.

⁹ "Al margen de las elucubraciones del snobismo formal que anima el vacío de la cultura burguesa de hoy, . . . NUEVA CULTURA intenta la formación de una cultura de raíz española, que contribuya a la realización intelectual y social de la idea de colaboración y solidaridad universales." (Translation mine.) See Anonymous, "Editorial," *Nueva Cultura*, January 1935, 2; quoted in Manuel Aznar Soler, "La revista *Nueva cultura* y la construcción del Frente Popular cultural de la revolución española, 1935-1937," Alfonso Moreira, ed., *Nueva cultura: Información, crítica y orientación intelectual* (València: Faximil Edicions Digitals, 2007), 3, CD-ROM.

¹⁰ The idea of all-left "Popular Fronts" was introduced in Moscow at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern between 25 July and 21 August 1935. These coalitions sought to unite disparate leftist groups for the eventual establishment of a worldwide dictatorship of the proletariat. The only instances of Popular Fronts in Europe were seen in France and Spain. For more information on the Spanish Popular Front, see Stanley G. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 140-169.

overthrow of the fledgling Republican government on 17 July 1936. Thus, just eighteen months after *Nueva cultura*'s first issue, the Spanish civil war began.¹¹

Nearly three years of war ended on 1 April 1939 only to be followed by more than three decades of the dictatorial regime of Francisco Franco. It was not until his death in 1975 that a form of government was established that even remotely resembled the “new culture” Renau and his collaborators envisaged in the 1930s. One of the most significant and long-awaited pieces of legislation to be passed after Spain's transition to democracy is the *Ley de la memoria histórica* [Law of Historical Memory], passed on 26 December 2007. Conceived in the “spirit of reconciliation and harmony,” the law is intended to give victims of ideological, political, or religious violence associated with the civil war or with Franco's regime some belated recognition. The law has opened up the proverbial floodgates of writing on the memory of the war and the dictatorship.¹² Indeed, it is nearly impossible to open a copy of *El País*, Spain's leading daily newspaper, and not read an article connected to the law. While it has stirred up controversy in some camps, it has also brought healing. This has been undertaken in large part through a new body of scholarship concerning the memory of the war, often with a particular focus on trauma.¹³

¹¹ For a succinct yet thorough examination of the Spanish civil war see Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For a more detailed analysis see Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); and Ann Mackenzie and Paul Preston, eds., *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996); and Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, and Revenge* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).

¹² The Spanish Ministry of Justice has made the full text of the law available on their website. See Ministerio de Justicia, Gobierno de España, “Ley de la memoria histórica (Ley 52/2007 de 26 de diciembre),” Gobierno de España, <http://leymemoria.mjusticia.gob.es/cs/Satellite/LeyMemoria/es/ley-de-la-memoria-historica->, (accessed 4 February 2012).

¹³ See Francisco Ferrándiz, “Fosas comunes, paisajes del terror,” *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares*, LXIV, no. 1 (2009): 61-94; Mary Vincent, “Breaking the Silence? Memory and Oblivion Since the Spanish Civil War,” in *War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century*, Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio, and Jay Winter, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 47-67. Although the law has brought more public attention to the memory of the war and the dictatorship, many scholars began writing on the subject before it was passed. See Juanjo Igartua and Dario Paez, “Art and Remembering Traumatic Collective Events: The Case of the Spanish Civil War,” in *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), 79-101. See also Helen Graham, “The Spanish Civil War, 1936-2003: The Return of Republican Memory,” *Science and Society* 68, no. 3 (2004): 313-328.

What is curious, however, is that there is relatively little scholarship concerning the uses of memory *during* the civil war. Where this task has been undertaken, it has chiefly been to demonstrate the links Franco's propagandists tried to establish between the general and the *Reyes Católicos* [Catholic Monarchs], framing the civil war as a religious crusade.¹⁴ However, the Nationalists were not alone in using historical precedent in their propaganda campaigns.¹⁵ The Republicans exploited collective memory as well, a notable example being the March 1937 special issue of *Nueva cultura*, the subject of this thesis.

There has been, however, little scholarly study of the journal, despite what Renau has described as its "massive dissemination" in València.¹⁶ The first mention of the series in recent scholarship appeared in a two volume work dating to 1986 by artist Rafael Pérez Contel. Titled *Artistas en Valencia, 1936-1939* and divided into sections that address individual artists and artist collectives, the book gives a voice to the "forgotten and marginalized," as up until Franco's death frank discussion of the civil war had been virtually impossible inside Spain.¹⁷ *Nueva cultura* is mentioned primarily in conjunction with Josep Renau and his brother Juan Renau. Additionally, Pérez Contel gives some attention to the antifascist festival of March 1937, which will

¹⁴ The Catholic Monarchs, Fernando and Isabel, were responsible for the (re)conquest of Spain in the fifteenth century. For further reading on pro-Franco propaganda, see Miriam M. Basilio, "Catalans! Catalonia! Catalan Nationalism and Spanish Civil War Propaganda Posters," in *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí*, Carmen Belen Lord, Jordi Falgàs, and William H. Robinson, eds. (New Haven: Cleveland Museum of Art in Association with Yale University Press, 2007), 436-449; and Miriam Basilio, "Genealogies for a New State: Painting and Propaganda in Franco's Spain, 1936-1940," *Discourse* 24, no. 3 (2002): 67-94.

¹⁵ The use of the word 'propaganda' to describe the propagation of particular beliefs or values originated with Pope Gregory XV, who in 1622 established the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* [Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith]. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term was employed with impartiality. It was not until the twentieth century that the neutrality of the term was lost as it became equated with totalitarian regimes. See Toby Clark, *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: The Political Image in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 7-8.

¹⁶ See Josep Renau, "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," in *Nueva cultura* (Vaduz, Lichtenstein: Topos Verlag, 1977), section 12.

¹⁷ Rafael Pérez Contel, *Artistas en Valencia, 1936-1939*, (València: Conselleria de Cultura, Educació i Ciència de la Generalitat Valenciana, 1986), 60.

also be addressed in this thesis.¹⁸ Again, in connection with this festival, *Nueva cultura* is briefly referenced in a monograph about another Valencian artist, Regino Más.¹⁹

The periodical is also mentioned in the artist's catalogue raisonné, compiled by Albert Forment, and the catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition *Josep Renau: Fotomontador* [Josep Renau: Photomonteur].²⁰ Where it is addressed in these volumes, however, it is a cursory examination; *Nueva cultura* is mentioned in passing without analyzing either the art or the texts.

The scholar who has perhaps written the most on *Nueva cultura* is Manuel Aznar Soler. His introduction to the 2007 digital facsimile version of the periodical discusses its relationship to two organizations, the Popular Front and the Aliança d'Intel·lectuals per a Defensa de la Cultura València [Alliance of Intellectuals for the Defense of Valencian Culture (AIDCV)].²¹ In addition, he identifies two distinct periods of production in *Nueva cultura*. During the first, from January 1935 to July 1936, the editorial team attempted to organize the Spanish branch of the Popular Front. This goal was not abandoned during the second phase of production, between March and October 1937; however, the contributors' energies were redirected to promoting AIDCV. Aznar Soler further suggests a correlation between the focus on popular culture from March to October of 1937 and the publication's association with AIDCV. Although to this end he provides a very thorough examination of *Nueva cultura's* politically and theoretically oriented texts, he devotes little attention to the visual components of the publication. Where he does take note of the art, it is in

¹⁸ For references to *Nueva cultura* in Pérez Contel's work, see "José Renau Berenguer," 267-282; "Juan Renau Berenguer," 283-284; and "Fallas antifascistas," 527-542.

¹⁹ See Antonio Ariño et al., *Regino Más: Historia de una época* (València: Albatros, 1999), 52.

²⁰ See Albert Forment, ed., *Josep Renau: Catálogo razonado* (València: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, 2003). See also Manuel García, ed. *Josep Renau: Fotomontador* (València: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, in association with the Instituto Cervantes and the Generalitat Valenciana, 2006).

²¹ See Manuel Aznar Soler, "La revista *Nueva Cultura* y la construcción del Frente Popular cultural de la revolución española, 1935-1937," in Alfonso Moreira, ed., *Nueva Cultura: Información, Crítica y Orientación Intelectual* (València: Faximil Edicions Digitals, 2007), 1-29, CD-ROM. This article is a synthesis of an earlier article and a section of a book by the same author. See Aznar Soler, "*Nueva cultura*, revista de crítica cultural (1935-1937)," *Debats* 11 (May 1985): 6-29; Aznar Soler, *Valencia, capital literaria y cultural de la República (1936-1937)* (València: Universitat de València, 2007).

reference to Picasso's *Guernica* and *Sueño y mentira de Franco* [Dream and Lie of Franco].²²

The most extensive treatments of the art historical aspects of *Nueva cultura* have been written by Jordana Mendelson. In her first reference to the periodical, she addresses its commitment to the masses and popular art, its hostility towards Catholicism, capitalism, and fascism, and its frequent criticism of other publications of the period. Further, she draws attention to Renau's series of photomontages, generally published each month, called "Testigos negros de nuestros tiempos" [Black Witnesses of Our Times].²³ However, her descriptions are necessarily brief as she addresses *Nueva cultura* in relation to at least a dozen other publications. This thesis will further contextualize the periodical by comparing it to contemporaneous journals in Spain and other European countries, addressing issues of both form and content.

In Mendelson's second examination of the periodical, she comments, "More than just a magazine that included photography and photomontage, *Nueva cultura* was a multipage serialized photomontage driven by Renau's caustic evaluations of the Republic and his militant antifascism."²⁴ While the photomontages included in the periodical are commanding, the general layout of the publication does not support this characterization. Mendelson's description is imprecise and builds more on Renau's artistic legacy rather than the empirical evidence in the journal itself. In fact, a photomontage does not appear in *Nueva cultura* until the third issue, published in March 1935, and a photomontage is not featured on the cover until the fifth issue,

²² Here it is worth noting, however, that *Nueva cultura* published, for the first time in the world, Dora Maar's photographs depicting the nine successive "states" of *Guernica*. See *Nueva cultura*, year III, nos. 4-5 (June-July 1937). See also Renau, "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," section 19.

²³ See Jordana Mendelson with Estrella de Diego, "Political Practice and the Arts in Spain, 1927-1936" in *Art and Journals on the Political Front, 1910-1940*, ed. Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 183-214. An earlier version of this article had appeared previously in *Art Journal*. See Estrella de Diego and Jaime Brihuega, "Art and Politics in Spain, 1928-1936," *Art Journal* 52, no. 1 (1993): 55-60.

²⁴ See Jordana Mendelson, "Josep Renau and the 1937 Spanish Pavilion in Paris," in *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 148.

published three months later. Further, when photomontages did begin to appear regularly in the periodical, they were most often included in the “Testigos negros de nuestros tiempos” section, which never exceeded five pages in length. As such, were Mendelson’s interpretation of the periodical adopted, the March 1937 special edition might seem like a stylistic anomaly. (The issue was printed in the regional language of the province of València, *valencià*; due to the language change, it was published under the title *Nova cultura*.)²⁵ Although Mendelson references the special issue, she does not attempt to explain the appearance of a popular art form whose origins date to the seventeenth century in a periodical generally characterized by scholars as avant-garde.

Thus, this thesis contributes to the dialogue begun by Aznar Soler and Mendelson by suggesting first that *Nueva cultura* should not be characterized as a “serialized photomontage” and second that its integration of popular culture was not limited to the second period of production. Rather, it blended both modern and traditional aesthetic strategies throughout its serial run. By focusing on the special issue, this thesis will examine Renau’s exploitation of collective memory in order to understand his formal choices. In other words, it will seek to uncover why an artist who primarily practiced photomontage as an artist would sanction, as an editor, such extensive use of popular art forms in his periodical.

Despite Renau’s extensive contributions to the changing climate of art in 1930s Spain, his early art production, particularly as related to *Nueva cultura*, has not been given sufficient scholarly attention.²⁶ Though for many years his work had been eclipsed in discussions of European political art by figures like John Heartfield (1891-1968) and El Lissitzky (1890-1941) and in histories of the Spanish avant-garde by less political artists like Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), Joan Miró (1893-1983), and Pablo

²⁵ *Valencià* [Valencian] is generally considered by *català*-speaking individuals to be a dialect of *català* [Catalan] and is sometimes referred to as *català-valencià*. However, out of respect for the citizens of the autonomous community of València, this thesis will refer to their language as they do.

²⁶ Although I have chosen to use *Nueva cultura* as a case study for this thesis, it is important to note that Renau contributed to a number of other publications during his time in València, among them *Taula de lletres valencianes* (1927-32), *Estudios* (1931-36), *Orto* (1932-34), *La Revista blanca* (1933-34), *Octubre* (1935-37), *La República de les lletres* (1934-36), and *Crónica* (1936).

Picasso (1881-1973), this gap in the narrative regarding European print culture and Spanish art history has begun to be filled by scholars such as Aznar Soler and Mendelson. Their work has been influential in this thesis, however, it will respond to the existing dialogue by offering a closer examination of the visual components of *Nueva cultura*, examining Renau's contributions to photomontage, while also noting particular instances in which he made use of more traditional genres for the sake of clarifying his ideology. As noted before, one such example is found in *Nova cultura*, the March 1937 special edition, although other instances will be noted as well.

Though the production of *Nueva cultura* was short-lived, it provides valuable insights into Spanish civil war era culture. While scholarly interest in this time period has increased steadily in recent years, this thesis aims to contribute to this ongoing dialogue by analyzing a piece of artistic and literary history that until now has not been thoroughly examined. This thesis intends to raise Renau from his position of relative obscurity and situate him as a politically engaged artist concerned with issues particular to Spain, but also a figure who was nonetheless engaged with the broader network of the European avant-garde. From the beginnings of propagandistic photomontage in the aftermath of the Paris Commune (1871) to its use in *Nueva cultura* (1935-1937), this thesis will examine the importance of the medium for politicized art. Further, it will question why, given the efficacy of photomontage in agitation propaganda, Renau chose not only to utilize a more traditional form of art production in the special edition of *Nova cultura*, but also to make extensive use of popular cultural idioms throughout the serial run of the periodical.

The following chapter will contextualize *Nueva cultura* within the broader framework of contemporary European print culture. It will draw parallels between the publication's employment of vanguard graphic design and photomontage and similar instances in contemporaneous European publications while also exploring instances of what Mendelson has labeled the publication's "less cosmopolitan" approach.

The third chapter will focus on the special edition of *Nova cultura*, examining both the popular festival of *las fallas* and the traditional art form of the *auca*,²⁷ and lead into the fourth and final chapter, which will provide an analysis of the special edition. This will be accomplished by examining it through the lens of both Mikhail Bakhtin's theories regarding folk culture and James V. Wertsch's conception of the "usable past." It will argue that Renau's inclusion of popular art in *Nova cultura* was not a stylistic inconsistency, but rather served a specific propagandistic purpose. Although other leftists had already begun to assert that earlier artistic strategies were no longer effective, Renau and his collaborators appealed to their audience by employing long-standing cultural symbols in newly politicized ways.

²⁷ *Las fallas*, literally meaning "the fires" in *valencià*, is a festival particular to València, Spain, which honors St. Joseph, the patron saint of carpenters. During the festival (15-19 March), large, ephemeral sculptures called *ninots* are created. They are then burnt on the last day of the celebrations. An *auca* is a story told in pictures, often accompanied by couplets. It may be compared to a comic, but its form is more structured and its meanings much more nuanced. Though utilized in other parts of Spain, the genre was primarily developed in Cataluña. These will be discussed in greater length in Chapter III.

CHAPTER II

READ ALL ABOUT IT: *NUEVA CULTURA*'S PLACE IN THE WORLD OF EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY PRINT CULTURE

*"[Photomontage] is the only form of art so far that has succeeded in giving a truthful representation of the absurd, paradoxical nature of this society . . . ; in other words, of its contradictory essence, which cannot be visualized or photographed in real, physical space, as a real relationship. And making that relationship with the powerful media of suggestion and persuasion of photographic testimony evident in people's consciousness is the most effective artistic way of contributing to its transformation."*¹

Josep Renau received rigorous technical training and a substantial art historical education at the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Carlos [St. Charles School of Fine Arts] in València. However, the school was steeped in a conventional, post-Sorollan aesthetic to which the young Renau never adjusted. Some of his earliest paintings from the program reflect Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida's naturalist style and his inclination towards long, loose brushstrokes and heavy impasto. Nonetheless, unlike Sorolla (1863-1923), also a native of València, Renau had little interest in copying Old Master paintings or working in an academic style.² He was a rebellious student who was expelled after only a few years at the School of Fine Arts, after which his father sent him to apprentice at Ortega Lithographic Works. Although intended as a punishment, this introduction to graphic design and commercial advertising altered the course of Renau's education and career. He moved away from the pure painting of the Academy's school and began to experiment with Art Deco as well as popularized forms of Fauvism and Cubism that appeared in the journals *Jugend*, *Valori*

¹ Josep Renau, "Función del fotomontaje: Homenaje a John Heartfield," *Photovision*, no.1 (July-August 1981). Reprinted in García, 275-278.

² Renau commented that he reacted "violently" [*reacció violentament*] to the particular brand of Impressionism taught at San Carlos. For more information on his experience at the Academy, see Josep Renau, *La batalla per una nova cultura* (València: Eliseu Climent, 1978), 29-30.

Plastici, *Nouvelle Revue Française*, and *The Studio*, to which he had access at the lithographic works.

After some time, his father suggested that he combine his work at Ortega with continued studies in fine art. Renau was readmitted to the School of Fine Arts and succeeded in graduating at the age of twenty. Despite spending a substantial portion of his teens working in commercial advertising, graphic design, and poster design, he was still indebted to the School of Fine Arts for his sound technical preparation and his interest in art history and theory. He even briefly returned to painting during the year following his graduation. In December 1928, Renau exhibited his work for the first time. The exhibition was held at the prestigious *Círculo de Bellas Artes* in Madrid and was supported by the well-respected Spanish art critic, José Francés (1883-1964). The bold swaths of color and fluid, undulating lines of his landscape paintings called to mind the works of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954). At the same time, his sharp, sleek figural works clearly indicated the influence of Art Deco.³ His biographer commented that Renau's "colouristic sensibility, his frivolous, cosmopolitan subjects and his attractive, select, unfussy modernity created a furore."⁴ Indeed, the exhibition was praised by both critics and the public. Despite the immediate success of his artistic debut, Renau was conflicted; while receiving the accolades of the capitol's elite, the artist began to read anarchist pamphlets and, for the first time, carefully consider art's role in society.⁵

³ The works included in this exhibition were the following: *Boceto de paisaje* [Landscape Sketch], 1928, tempera, 17 x 21.8 cm; *Paisaje* [Landscape], 1928, tempera, dimensions unknown; *Barrio extraño* [Strange Neighborhood], 1928, gouache, dimensions unknown; *Tónico Ballester, escultor de Valencia* [Tónico Ballester, Valencian Sculptor], 1928, airbrush, dimensions unknown; *Andaluzas* [Andalusian Women], 1928, lithograph, 30 x 22.5 cm; *Valencianas* [Valencian Women], 1928, gouache, unknown dimensions; *Marinos Britanos* [British Sailors], 1928, gouache, dimensions unknown. For more information, see Forment, 282-283; 413.

⁴ Forment, 413.

⁵ *Ibid.*

With the debate between *arte puro* and *arte social* raging in Spain during the 1920s and 30s, his confusion is unsurprising.⁶ Nonetheless, Renau ultimately turned his back on the scene of dealers, galleries, and museums in Madrid and returned to València shortly after his exhibition. As his artistic (and political) inclinations distilled over the course of the following years, his earlier disinterest in academicism turned to disdain. A few months after his homecoming, he produced a pamphlet that condemned Valencian academicism and critiqued the world of his childhood, to which his father still belonged. Soon his attention turned to more overtly political themes and he began contributing to Valencian nationalist publications. By the end of 1929, only a year after his exhibition at the Círculo de Bellas Artes, he returned to Madrid and became aware of developments in the European avant-garde, notably Dada and the more contemporary Surrealism. Heavily influenced by the latter, he created his first photomontage in 1929 (fig. 1).⁷ In *El hombre ártico* [The ArcticMan], a figure composed of large blocks of ice floats above a lunar landscape and points to a constellation. Although not overtly political, this experimentation with photomontage represented his introduction to the medium in which he would work most often throughout his life.

In 1931, he discovered *Art and Social Life* by Georgy Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1918).⁸ Although Plekhanov was primarily concerned with literature, he briefly addressed the visual arts and criticized the Impressionists for their emphasis on what he referred to as the ‘husk of appearances.’ He went on to suggest that art ought rather to be concerned with ‘idea content.’

⁶ *Arte puro* [pure art] was often understood as abstract art while *arte social* [social art] was associated with more representational art. José Ortega y Gasset was one of the main proponents of the so-called pure art. Josep Renau and his collaborators obviously advocated politically-committed art (or social art), although this did not always manifest itself in strictly representational works. For more on these conflicting schools of thought, see Mendelson with de Diego, 183-214.

⁷ Renau created *El hombre ártico* [The Arctic Man] in 1929. It was first published two years later in the Valencian magazine *Murta*. See García, 281.

⁸ Plekhanov is known as the ‘father of Russian Marxism’ and worked with Lenin to found the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party in 1898. Plekhanov first presented the content of *Art and Social Life* as a series of lectures delivered in Liège and Paris in 1912. It was later published in parts in the Russian journal *Sovremennik* between November 1912 and January 1913.

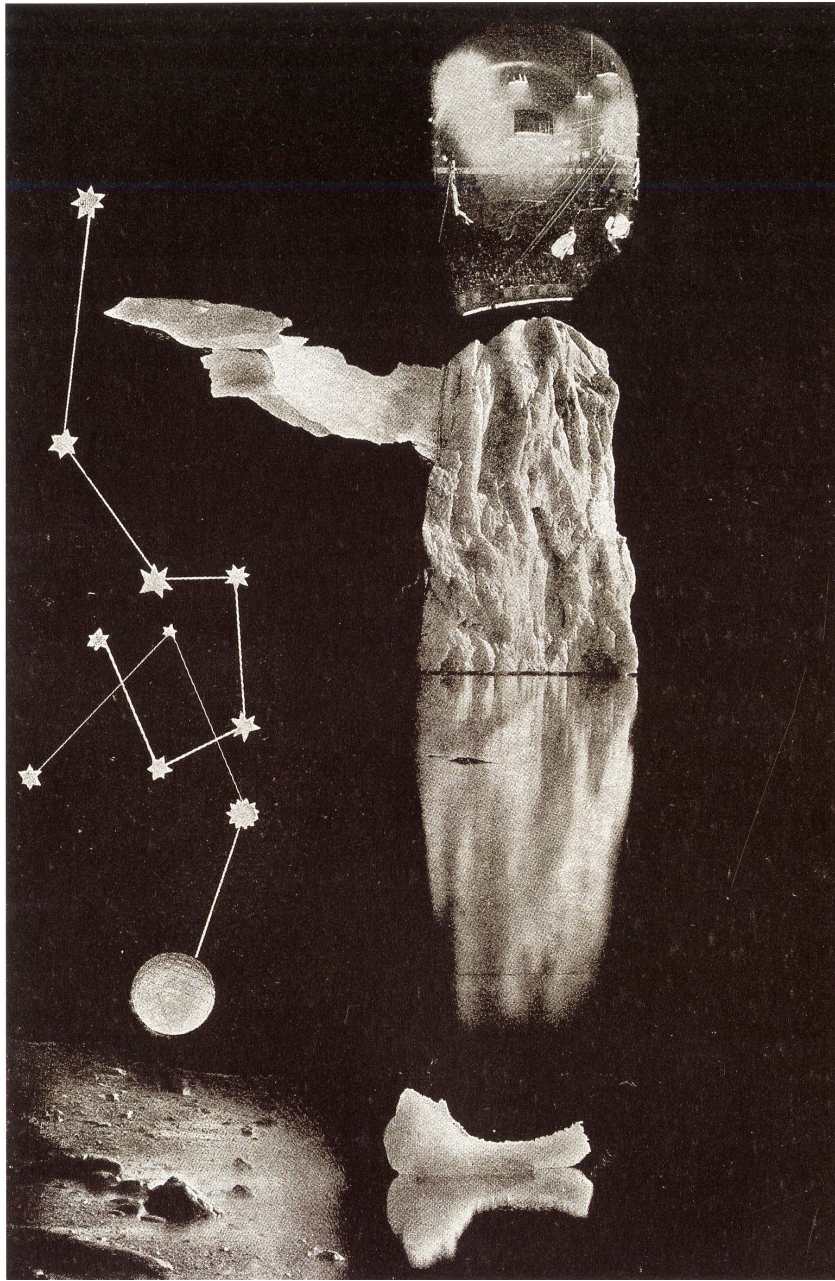


Figure 1
Josep Renau, *El hombre ártico* [The Arctic Man],
photomontage, 1931

The present “innovators” in art are not satisfied with what their predecessors created. There is nothing wrong in this. On the contrary, the urge for something new is very often a source of progress. But not everybody who searches for something new, really finds it. One must know how to look for it. He who is blind to the new teaching of social life, he to whom there is no reality save his own ego, will find in his search for something ‘new’ nothing but a new absurdity. . . . It appears, then, that in present-day social conditions the fruits of art for art’s sake are far from delectable. The extreme individualism of the era of bourgeois decay cuts off artists from all sources of true inspiration. It makes them completely blind to what is going on in social life, and condemns them to sterile preoccupation with personal emotional experiences that are entirely without significance and with the phantasies of a morbid imagination.⁹

After reading Plekhanov, and joining the Communist Party within the same year, Renau abandoned his Surrealist-inspired style and began creating photomontages with a decidedly political turn, thus situating himself within a growing group of artists who utilized the medium for propagandistic purposes.¹⁰

Although the conservative artists André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri (1819-1889) and Eugène Appert (1830-1891) ushered in the development of photomontage as propaganda in the wake of the Paris Commune in the 1870s, the use of photomontage spread throughout Europe in the years between World Wars I and II.¹¹ Photomontage became a favored technique for political agitation, growing largely from the efforts of Gustav Klucis (1895-1938) and the artists of Berlin Dada.¹²

⁹ Georgy Valentinovich Plekhanov, *Art and Social Life*, trans. A. Fineberg (London: Lawrence and Wishart, n.d.), 57-62. Reprinted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 157-158.

¹⁰ Plekhanov’s critique of art extended to other more recent movements in addition to Impressionism. However, his assault was primarily directed at Cubism and he wrote nothing of photomontage.

¹¹ Disdéri’s images of the buildings destroyed by the Communards were published as *Ruines de Paris et ses Environs* [Ruins of Paris and its Environs]. Appert also published a best-selling series titled *Les crimes de la Commune* [The Crimes of the Commune], in which the images were manipulated in various ways to deliberately exaggerate the chaos and violence of Commune culture.

¹² While some authors point to the combined printing techniques of Oscar Gustav Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson as the first ‘photomontages,’ (see Dino A. Brugioni, *Photo Fakery: The History and Techniques of Photographic Deception and Manipulation*. (Dulles: Brassey’s, 1999), 25-36), the term itself was not introduced until after WWI when the Berlin Dadaists coined it in reference to the technique of introducing photography into their works. *Montage* means ‘fitting’ or ‘assembly line’ in German. See Dawn Ades, *Photomontage* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976).

Klucis claimed there were two strains of photomontage; the first originated in American advertising and was adopted by the Dadaists, while the second developed independently in Soviet Russia.¹³ Alternatively, George Grosz (1893-1959) suggested that he and John Heartfield (1891-1968) invented the technique in May 1916 by pasting an assortment of advertisements, labels, magazine photographs, and children's school materials onto a piece of cardboard. This method, he claimed, allowed them to sneak inflammatory political commentary in the form of images past the censors to their friends on the front.¹⁴

Regardless of the often-debated origin of photomontage, the medium flourished throughout the 1920s and 30s, particularly in cultural and political journals. While many artists continued to make use of caricatures and satirical drawings, photography and photomontage quickly became the preferred tools for politically-motivated art production. The most influential satirist of Weimar Germany, Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935), suggested in 1925 that the standard humor magazine format of text accompanied by drawings or prints had grown outdated, and proposed that photography would be a more appropriate tool for political commentary.¹⁵ Klucis, in an essay from 1931, went so far as to suggest that more traditional forms of visual art such as drawing, engraving, and painting were “backward technique[s]” and “inadequate” for mass agitation.¹⁶

¹³ See Gustav Klucis, “The Photomontage as a New Kind of Agitation Art” in *Izofront: Klassovaia bor'ba na fronte prostanstvennykh iskusstv. Sbornik statei ob'edineniia Oktiabr'* (Izofront: Class Struggle on the Front of Spatial Arts. Publication of October Association) (Leningrad: Izofront, 1931). Reprinted in Margarita Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina: Photography and Montage after Constructivism*. (New York: International Center of Photography, 2004), 237-240. See also Maria Gough, “Back in the USSR: John Heartfield, Gustavs Klucis, and the Medium of Soviet Propaganda,” *New German Critique* 107, vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 133-182.

¹⁴ Ades, 10.

¹⁵ Sherwin Simmons notes that this method of design had emerged after the 1848 revolution and in the years leading up to WWI was the accepted standard. However, by the 1920s, it was no longer able to keep up with the biting satire of the era. See Sherwin Simmons, “Picture as Weapon in the German Mass Media, 1914-1930,” in *Art and Journals on the Political Front, 1910-1940*, ed. Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 142-182.

¹⁶ See Klucis, reprinted in Tupitsyn, 237-240.

In keeping with these ideas, socialist publications such as *Die freie Welt* [The Free World], *Der Knüppel* [The Cudgel], and *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* [Worker's Illustrated Paper (AIZ)] began to employ photomontage in addition to satirical drawings. Conservative publications in Europe, however, continued to rely largely on drawn caricatures and press photographs to critique the left. Publications such as *Illustrierter Beobachter* [Illustrated Observer], for example, took advantage of the public's trust in the supposed objective stance of documentary photography. Both the rhetoric and the documentary images of the right were utilized in such a way as to present a distorted vision of the political situation in Germany.¹⁷ In contrast, the revolutionary photomontage of the left brought "photographic details . . . into a dialectical relationship, both formally and thematically: therefore [photomontage] contains the actual relationship and contradictions of social reality."¹⁸ Thus, by avoiding pretensions to present factual imagery, artists like John Heartfield constructed images that dealt with politics in a frank manner without seeking to deceive their viewers. Instead, they were meant to critique and provoke thought. As opposed to the subtly altered photographs supposedly espousing an objective point of view, photomontages were conceived of by their creators as less manipulative than other photographic constructs.

Politically oriented illustrated journals developed in a similar fashion in Spain, where aesthetic innovations were closely associated with left-wing politics.¹⁹ Thus, conservative magazines such as *Revista de occidente* [Magazine of the West],²⁰ which openly condemned politically motivated avant-garde movements as deformations of artistic practice, utilized a more sober aesthetic approach than radically leftist

¹⁷ Simmons, 168-170.

¹⁸ Durus [pseudonym of Alfréd Kemény], "Fotomontage, Fotogramm" (Photomontage, Photogram), *Der Arbeiter-Fotograf* (The worker photographer) 5, no. 7 (1931): 166-68, as translated in *Photography in the Modern Era*, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Aperture, 1989), 183-84; quoted in Simmons, 175.

¹⁹ See Mendelson with de Diego, 188.

²⁰ *Revista de occidente* was founded in 1923 by the Spanish philosopher and writer José Ortega y Gasset and continues to be published today. Interestingly, Renau had subscribed to this magazine as a young man. See Renau, "La batalla per una nova cultura," 30.

publications, such as *Orto* [Sunrise], in which Renau published his first three political photomontages in March 1932 (figs. 2-4).²¹

While photomontage had not gained the same degree of popularity in Spain in the early 1930s that it had in the rest of Europe and Russia, Renau was not alone in his efforts to use the medium as agitational propaganda there. Part of his interest may have been fueled by the fact that extraordinary developments in the Spanish propaganda poster were made in the 1930s. In a memoir chronicling his experiences during the Spanish civil war, George Orwell commented on the quantity of posters, noting that “the revolutionary posters were everywhere, flaming from the walls in clean reds and blues that made the few remaining advertisements look like daubs of mud.”²² Shortly after the civil war broke out in 1936, Agustí Bartra wrote in the Barcelona newspaper *Mirador* that

image and phrase impose themselves on us in an obsessive manner. Never had their influence had such efficient penetration—so much so that it is cruel—until now. Today the walls not only have ears—as the cliché goes—but they have also learned to reason and to scream.²³

Early in his explorations of photographic manipulation, Renau was given powerful support by the Catalanian artist Pere Català-Pic (1889-1971), who produced one of the most famous propaganda posters of the 1930s, *Aixafem el feixisme* [Smash Fascism] (fig. 5), and published extensively on the subject. The Catalan government’s Institut d’Orientació Professional [Institute of Professional Orientation] published a journal called the *Butlletí del Seminari de Publicitat*. [Bulletin of the Publicity Seminar], in which one of Català-Pic’s most important articles, “Technique of Publicity

²¹ The primary perceptible influences of these early photomontages are from Dada, Constructivism, and Soviet cinema (specifically, Pudovkin’s theory of film editing). Pudovkin’s theory consists of five principles: 1) contrast, 2) parallelism, 3) symbolism, 4) simultaneity, and 5) leitmotif. See Vsevolod Illarionovich Pudovkin, *Film Technique and Film Acting* (London: Vision Press, 1958). See also Forment, 414.

²² George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1952), 5.

²³ Agustí Bartra, “Les parets parlen,” *Mirador*, 3 December 1936, 6; quoted in Miriam M. Basilio “Catalans! Catalonia!: Catalan Nationalism and Spanish Civil War Propaganda Posters” in *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2006), 440. Translation by Basilio. For a reprint of the original text, see Miguel Ángel Gamonal Torres, *Arte y política en la guerra civil española: El caso republicano* (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1987), 165-66.



Figure 2
Josep Renau, *sin título* [untitled], photomontage, 1932



Figure 3
Josep Renau, *La guerra es bella* [War Is Beautiful],
photomontage, 1932

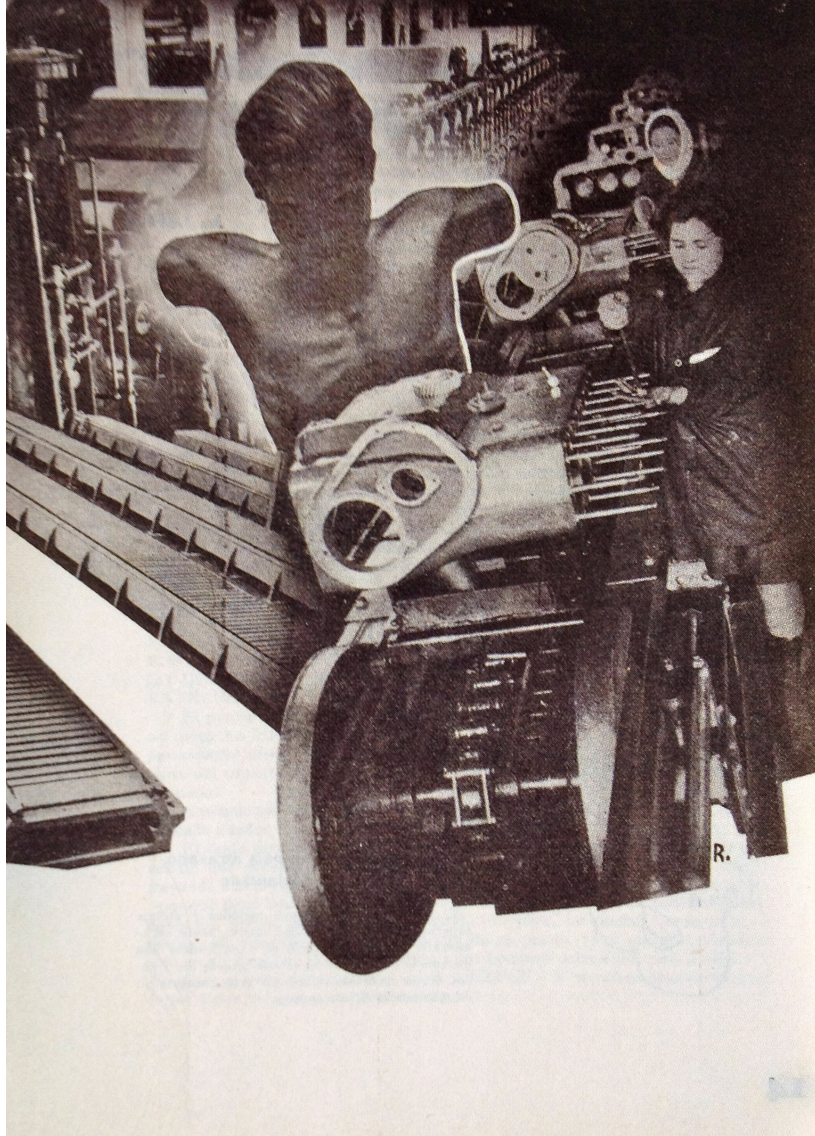


Figure 4
Josep Renau, *sin título* [untitled], photomontage, 1932



Figure 5
Pere Català-Pic, *Aixafem el feixisme* [Smash Fascism],
lithograph, 1936

Photography,' appeared in 1933.²⁴ After an introduction on drawing and painting as used in publicity, he turned his attention to photography. Similar to other avant-garde perceptions of photography throughout Europe, Català-Pic focused less on photography's ability to record reality and more on its potential to appeal to the viewer's emotions through manipulation. He argued that the more experimental types of photography, including photocollage, photomontage, and photograms, were more applicable to advertisers, and by extension propagandists.²⁵

Another important artist using photographic manipulation was Manuel Monleón (1904-1976), a fellow Valencian who was invited along with Renau to publish his photomontages in *Orto* and *Estudios* [Studies]. Monleón and Renau were the only two artists who presented political photomontages in the *I Exposición de Arte Revolucionario* [First Exhibition of Revolutionary Art] at the Ateneo in Madrid in December 1933.²⁶ Thus, Renau, Català-Pic, and Monleón formed the base of the photographic avant-garde in Spain.

Again, the contentious climate of the arts community in Spain left little room for indecision as artists and intellectuals either came down on the side of art for art's sake or politically-committed art. Renau's first-hand exposure to the works of Spanish contemporaries such as Català-Pic and Monleón and his second-hand knowledge of international artists such as Heartfield and Klucis through the press made him aware of the notion of art employed as a weapon. By the mid-1930s, it is clear that his mind had been made up regarding the role of art in society. In addition to his contributions to other periodicals, he founded his own in 1935, *Nueva cultura*, and served as its editor. While many notable figures of the period continued to question whether politics should enter the realm of the arts, the editorial team of

²⁴ The institute was later named the Institut Psicotècnic. (*Psicotècnica* [psychotechnology] is the use of psychology to study labor, technology, and perception.) Català-Pic and many of his Barcelona contemporaries embraced the use of psychology and photographic experimentation in propaganda and publicity.

²⁵ See Jordana Mendelson, *Revistas y guerra*, (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2007), 379-380.

²⁶ Juan Naranjo "Josep Renau: Photomontage, Between Political Agitation and Artistic Production" in *Fotomontador*, page 260.

Nueva cultura intended to make explicit their commitment to politically-engaged art. Renau felt so strongly about the matter as to identify himself on a number of occasions as a *comunista pintor* [communist painter] rather than a *pintor comunista* [painter who was a communist], indicating that his primary interest was the effective communication of political content.²⁷ Given the convictions of its contributors, political overtones in both the illustrations and text were overt, despite the work being billed as a cultural magazine.

Of course, this commitment to politics was not disinterested. As evidenced by the subtitle of the work, its editorial staff sought to provide intellectual *orientation* for its readers, thus situating it in a realm apart from more culturally driven productions such as *Revista de occidente* and *Gaceta de arte* [Art Gazette].²⁸ Just over a year after the publication of the first issue of *Nueva cultura*, the contributors of *Gaceta de arte* felt it necessary to publicly distance themselves from it and published a critique of the journal insisting they could no longer “move together” with it. They noted, “There already appears a confusion, which we consider noxious, between the proper course of art in general . . . and its service in a definite political form.”²⁹

While his contemporaries continued to question the merit of an alliance between art and politics, Renau and his collaborators systematically used art as a means to incite action from their readers. Literary historian Manuel Aznar Soler has identified two distinct periods of production within *Nueva cultura*, the first from January 1935 to July 1936, during which the editorial team attempted to organize the Spanish branch of the Popular Front; and the second between March and October 1937, during which the journal functioned as the official organ of the Aliança d’Intel·lectuals per a Defensa de la Cultura València [Alliance of Intellectuals for the

²⁷ See Forment, 412.

²⁸ Although Renau had held a subscription to *Revista de occidente* as a youth in Valencia, he eventually became highly critical of its content. See Renau “Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*,” section 1. See also Mendelson, *Documenting Spain*, 149.

²⁹ Domingo Pérez-Minik, “Revistas: Diálogo con *Nueva cultura*,” *Gaceta de arte*, March 1936, 95; quoted in Mendelson with de Diego, 201. (Translation Mendelson and de Diego.)

Defense of Valencian Culture (AIDCV)].³⁰ Although *Nueva cultura* was not strictly a political journal, its clear disdain of capitalism and fascism in general and support of the Popular Front in particular positioned it within the realm of propaganda production in interwar Europe.

Although the periodical was rather unique in the Spanish press, it merits comparison to *AIZ* in Germany and *Regards* [Views] in France. *AIZ* was published in Germany by Willi Münzenberg between 1924 and 1938 and was the second-largest German magazine of the period, with a circulation of roughly half a million. As mentioned previously, John Heartfield was a regular contributor and produced 237 photomontages for the publication between 1930 and 1938. Most of these were biting satirical commentaries on contemporary politics. Heartfield's work was so popular that the magazine is now best remembered for his contributions. His first photomontage for *AIZ* was *Wer Bürgerblätter liest wird blind und taub. Weg mit den Verdummungsbandagen!* [Whoever Reads Bourgeois Newspapers Becomes Blind and Deaf. Away with the Stultifying Bandages!] (fig. 6). As the title suggests, Heartfield critiqued the Social Democratic press in general and the newspapers *Tempo* [Pace] and *Vorwärts* [Forward] specifically by wrapping the central figure's head in copies of these newspapers. In doing so, the artist created a visual play on the word *Blätter*, which means both "newspapers" and "cabbage leaves." The accompanying text is a parody of a Prussian nationalist song and begins with "Ich bin ein Kohlkopf" ["I am a cabbagehead"] in place of "Ich bin ein Preuße" ["I am a Prussian"].

For the creators of *AIZ*, the manipulation of photographs for partisan purposes was understood as an integral part of contributing to the political enlightenment of the masses. Instead of dry commentary accompanied by press photographs, they used humorous captions and dynamic photomontages to appeal to a broad audience.³¹ This approach was also adopted in France's *Nos Regards: Illustré*

³⁰ Aznar Soler, 1. See also Renau, "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," in *Nueva cultura* (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Topos Verlag, 1977), section 17.

³¹ Rudolf Stumberger, "AIZ and the German Worker Photographers" in *The Worker Photography Movement, 1926-1939: Essays and Documents* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in association with T. F. Editores, 2011), 80-93.

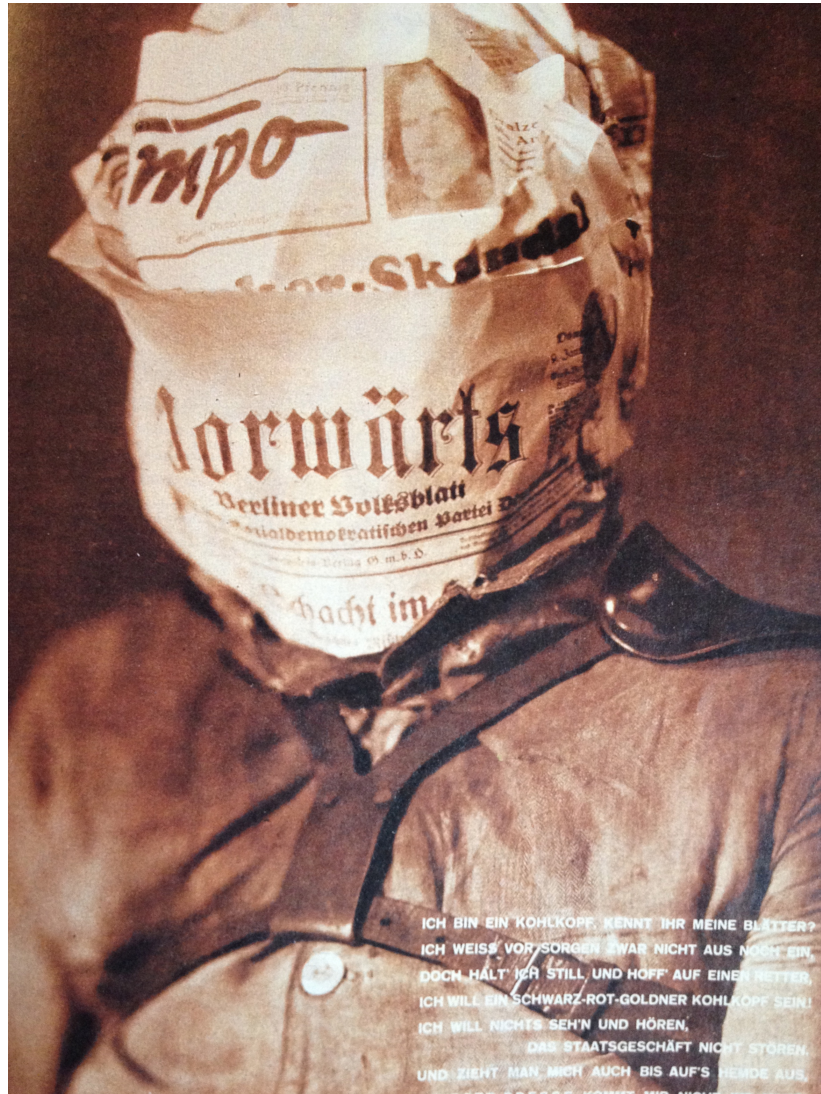


Figure 6
John Heartfield, *Wer Bürgerblätter liest wird blind und taub. Weg mit den Verdummungsbandagen!*, photomontage, 1930 (AIZ 9, no.6)

mondiale du travail [Our View: World of Work Illustrated], whose eighteen issues were published between May 1928 and October 1929. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this project was launched by Müzenberg's wife, Babette Gross, and her associate Lily Corpus. The two traveled to Paris in 1928, where they attempted with *Nos Regards* to recreate the success of *AIZ*. Their first effort failed to achieve the same kind of results in France; however, when the magazine was relaunched as *Regards sur le monde du travail* [Views on the World of Work] in January 1932, it held more popular appeal and was able to sustain a weekly readership until September 1939.³² In this later iteration of the magazine, whose title was eventually shortened to *Regards*, it consciously modeled itself after *AIZ*. This is evidenced implicitly in the layout and attention given to photography and photographic manipulation, but is also addressed explicitly in an editorial called "Un *AIZ* en France?" The author praises *AIZ*'s innovative approach to publishing for the proletariat and asks "Will the French working-class be denied a similar propaganda tool forevermore?" His answer is a resounding "No, certainly not!"³³

Just as the creators of *AIZ* and *Regards* recognized the potential power of utilizing photography and photomontage in propaganda publications, so too did Renau and his team of contributors. Similarly, while many Spanish publications of the period were more international in approach, the content of *Nueva cultura* tended to focus on issues that would be of more immediate concern to its readers, which was a technique utilized in *AIZ* and *Regards* as well.

This emphasis on national content is seen in an eight-page supplemental electoral manifesto in defense of the Popular Front, published by *Nueva cultura* in February of 1936, during its first period of production. It stated,

In today's Spain, in the midst of the noble bloodshed in her fields, her ravines and through the cobblestones or asphalt of her streets; in the midst of the public immorality, the official cynicism and impunity, which perch on the hierarchies responsible for the Republic, we intellectuals go out fighting in

³² Simon Dell, "The Difficult Conjunction of 'Worker' and 'Photographer' in France" in *The Worker Photography Movement*, 354-362.

³³ See E. Dutilleul, "Un *AIZ* en France?" *Regards* 11 (November 1932):2. Reprinted in *The Worker Photography Movement*, 363-364.

Defense of the Culture and of her ethical values, for a New Culture, which is to say a new Spain, for a new humanity which rises above borders.³⁴

Even as it sought to endorse the Popular Front, essentially an international organization for the benefit of the proletariat, the focus was on Spain. This appeal to Spanish nationalism is further evidenced by the taurine cover of the publication (fig. 7) and its interior photomontages (fig. 8), both designed by Renau. These photomontages are part of a larger series of works called “Testigos negros de nuestros tiempos” [Black Witnesses of Our Times], which appeared in many issues of *Nueva cultura*. The series was preceded by Renau’s 1933 political narrative accompanied by black and white images titled “Páginas negras de la guerra (Lo que se ocultó al pueblo)” [Black Pages of the War (What Was Hidden from the People)] in the Valencian magazine *Estudios*.³⁵ The later series, which grew from it, served as an ideological, political, and social criticism of Spain as well as of the international development of fascism.³⁶

The specifically local interest is seen in the middle image of the right side of the two-page spread (fig. 9). Pieced together from various sources, the image is composed of an immense peasant striding to the left, pestered by a group of fussy women asking for money. Towering over their miniature bodies, whose original faces have been replaced by those of contemporary Spanish political figures, the peasant carries a hoe and is dressed in the traditional garb of an agricultural worker. He points over the heads of the crowd to an arrangement of objects on the picture’s

³⁴ “En la España de hoy, en medio de la noble sangre sin tasa derramada por sus campos, sus barrancadas y por el empedrado o asfalto de sus calles; en medio de la inmoralidad pública, del cinismo e impunismo oficiales que se encaraman en las jerarquías responsables de la República, los intelectuales salimos luchando en Defensa de la Cultura y de sus valores éticos, por una Nueva Cultura, que es tanto como decir por una nueva España, por una nueva humanidad por encima de las fronteras.” (Translation mine.) Quoted in Aznar Soler, 7-8. The capitalized ‘Defensa de la Cultura’ here refers to the Congreso de los Escritores en Defensa de la Cultura, which had been held in Paris in 1935. The capitalized ‘Nueva Cultura’ obviously refers to the magazine.

³⁵ See García, “Josep Renau: Teoría y práctica de un artista,” in *Josep Renau: Fotomontador*, 19-20. See also the chronology of the same catalogue, 188.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.



Figure 7
Josep Renau, *Nueva cultura por el frente popular*, lithograph,
1936 (*Nueva cultura* 10 bis, February 1936)

right edge that at first attract little attention. Below this area of the photomontage, however, the verbal exchange between the peasant and his beseechers is printed:

- Give me your vote, sir.
- Get away, you brazen mob!
- But it's for Spain!
- I don't want to; after sucking me dry, you have her crucified.³⁷

After reading the caption, the viewers' eyes are drawn back to the photomontage, where it becomes clear that the peasant points to a crucifix above which is written ESPAÑA. On the next page, a somber poem by Jorge Nopal titled "Historia de España," where Spain's "sad fate" is likened to "a perpetual, pompous funeral," is accompanied by a disturbing caricature of Spanish archetypal figures. Instances such as these confirm Mendelson and de Diego's observation that in comparison with other journals of the period, *Nueva cultura* focused less on international affairs and more on issues particular to Spain.³⁸ While it often featured excerpts from international publications and articles about artists, writers, and political figures in foreign countries (particularly the Soviet Union), in general, it presented a decidedly Spanish point of view. Mendelson and de Diego note the marked difference between *Nueva cultura* and another revolutionary Spanish publication, *Octubre: Escritores y artistas revolucionarios* [October: Revolutionary Writers and Artists], which is described as "ideologically international."³⁹

Although the content of *Nueva cultura* may have had a different focus than that of *Octubre*, its layout was inspired by this earlier publication. While the majority of journals in early 1930s Spain continued to utilize drawn illustrations for visual interest, this began to change with the introduction of photomontage in *Octubre*. As indicated by its title, many of the magazine's editorial staff were affiliated with the Communist Party. Notably, the husband and wife duo of Rafael Alberti and María

³⁷ "Deme el voto, caballero." / "¡Fuera, chusma descocada!" / "¡Es por España!" / "No quiero; que tras chuparme el dinero, la tenéis crucificada." See Josep Renau, "Testigos negros de nuestros tiempos," in *Nueva Cultura*, February 1936, 3.

³⁸ Mendelson with de Diego, 196.

³⁹ Ibid.

Teresa León, both poets, had just returned to Madrid from Berlin and Moscow. As they sought to distribute the publication to a largely illiterate population, Soviet-inspired photomontage became the foremost design component. Although the works published in the magazine were often anonymous, one notable exception was the October–November 1933 cover by Renau (fig. 10).⁴⁰ Renau obviously concurred with the editorial board of *Octubre* with regard to the best means of organizing a magazine as *Nueva cultura* includes many photomontages.

Still, Renau was much more influenced by Heartfield in terms of politically-motivated art and considered Heartfield his master.⁴¹ In his essay titled “Función del fotomontaje, homenaje a John Heartfield” [Function of the Photomontage, Homage to John Heartfield], Renau commented,

If we add the term *political* to that of *photomontage* the matter takes on a very different aspect and *significance*. Because *political photomontage* is not simply a nuance or just another variation on the use of photomontage in general: it assumes the *differential quality* of photomontage as a form of art. Moreover, it is the only form of art so far that has succeeded in giving a *truthful* representation of the absurd, paradoxical nature of this society divided into antagonistic classes in which we live.⁴²

In his memoirs, written in exile in the 1970s, Renau remarked on the struggle that began in his early twenties to understand the relationship between art and the people. The content of *Nueva cultura*, suggests that Renau found an answer to his questions in the work of other avant-garde artists. His own efforts, like those of Heartfield, sought not only to inform the public, but to incite them to action.

⁴⁰ Mendelson with de Diego, 194.

⁴¹ See Joan Naranjo, “Josep Renau: El fotomontaje entre la agitación política y la producción artística,” in *Josep Renau: Fotomontador*, 42. See also García, 248. Renau was particularly influenced by Heartfield, whom he identified as the only significant successor to Goya and Daumier. He remarked, “Heartfield breaks down all the barriers and traditional concepts of art history, even more than Picasso or Mondrian, more than Kandinsky or Klee. Precisely in contrast to those great masters of modern art—which has already become history—he is the artist who shows a path that . . . goes beyond the path that they pursued . . . He is the most powerful antithesis of yesteryear and at the same time the new thesis of tomorrow.” See Renau, “The Function of Photomontage,” reprinted in *Josep Renau: Fotomontador*, 276.

⁴² Josep Renau, “Función del fotomontaje, homenaje a John Heartfield,” quoted in García, 41.



Figure 10
 Josep Renau, *Octubre*, photomontage, 1933 (*Octubre* 4 and 5, October-November 1933)

Aware of the impact *Nueva cultura* would have on Spanish society, an anonymous contributor remarked in the first issue,

The enormous social force of the press in modern life is evident. If some success of the intellectual technique could signal the new situation of our time, it is this advent of the press (together with cinema) on the forefront of cultural life. In reality, it is almost shared between both—the cinema and the press—the total pedagogical action of the masses.⁴³

In short, while the defeat of the Republic in 1939 would ruin the dreams of many who sought to bring about a new culture in Spain, the revolutionary press of the 1930s served, while it lasted, as a pedagogical tool for rural and urban worker populations and as a means of emboldening both the Republican army and the general population to stand up against oppression. Recall the Spanish October revolution of 1934 mentioned in the previous chapter. In a single-sheet edition of *Nueva cultura* published in 1937 for soldiers on the front lines, the revolt in Asturias was likened to both the Paris Commune (1871) and the Soviet October Revolution (1917). This connection served to inspire those fighting for the Spanish Republic, establishing a revolutionary heritage from which to draw courage and strength. In this instance, the editorial board of *Nueva cultura* utilized the collective memory of an international proletariat. However, as already noted, their approach usually tended towards a Spanish point-of view. During the course of the same year, they would make use of the collective memory of the province of València, inciting the people to symbolically burn and thus defeat their fascist aggressors in a popular festival known as *las fallas*. The March 1937 special edition of *Nueva cultura*, published in conjunction with the antifascist *fallas* will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

⁴³ “La enorme fuerza social de la prensa en la vida moderna es evidente. Si algún suceso de la técnica intelectual puede señalar la nueva situación de nuestro tiempo, es este advenimiento de la prensa (junto con el cinema) al primer plano de la vida cultural. En realidad casi se reparten entre ambos—cine y prensa— la total acción pedagógica sobre las masas.” (Translation mine.) See Anonymous, “Índice de la prensa española,” *Nueva cultura*, January 1935, 1. For an interesting discussion of the use of the word ‘masas’ as opposed to ‘pueblo,’ see Jo Labanyi, “Propaganda Art: Culture by the People or for the People?” in *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction, The Struggle for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 162.

CHAPTER III

CONSUMING FIRE: JOSEP RENAU AND THE 1937 FESTIVAL OF *LAS FALLAS*

Nueva cultura's first thirteen issues, published between January of 1935 and July of 1936, represented the editorial team's efforts to consolidate support for the Popular Front. When the civil war broke out, the series could no longer sustain publication in its regular format; however, three issues of *Nueva cultura: Para el campo* [New Culture: For the Country] and four issues of *Nueva cultura: Para los que luchan en el frente* [New Culture: For Those Who Fight at the Front] were published (figs. 11 and 12).

Of the three examples of *Nueva cultura: Para el campo*, two are dated to 31 December 1936 and 31 January 1937, respectively, and the last is undated. All are eight pages in length; however, the issue dated to December 1936 contains a supplementary insert called an *aleluya*.¹ *Aleluyas* are very similar to *aucas*, the traditional art form utilized in *Nova cultura*, which will be discussed momentarily.² Renau wrote that five thousand copies were printed of each issue of *Nueva cultura: Para el campo*.³ He is not listed as a contributor to any of the issues, but given his description of the work in his essay "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," he may still have served as editor. Many of the other regular artists and writers continued to contribute, such as Antonio Ballester (Renau's brother-in-law), Manuela Ballester (Renau's wife), José Bueno, Francisco Carreño, Juan Gil-Albert, and Gori Muñoz.

The four issues for soldiers on the front lines are single-sheet publications, printed on both sides. Of the two extant examples, one is dated 1 September 1936.

¹ See Renau, "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," section 16.

² Originally, *aleluyas* were small, religiously-themed prints thrown to parishioners when the Alleluia was sung on Holy Saturday. Eventually *aleluyas* began to incorporate secular themes. Some featured biographies, while others detailed regional customs or festivals. See Vicente Ribes Iborra, "Popular Prints: A Reflection of Society" in *Folk Art of Spain and the Americas: El Alma del Pueblo*, ed. Marion Oettinger, Jr., trans. Marvyn Samuel (New York: Abbeville Press, 1997), 38.

³ See Renau, "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," section 16.



La guerra que, para mantener la integridad del suelo español, sostuvo nuestro pueblo contra Napoleón Bonaparte, fue también una lucha contra los Grandes de España, en tonces, como ahora, contra la nación. Carlos Marz estudió aquellas hechas en unos artículos publicados en 1884. Extrañamos de ellos este fragmento, que tiene, al cabo de un siglo, una sorprendente actualidad.

Tanto las autoridades superiores como las militares, eclesiástica, judiciales y administrativa, exhortaban al pueblo a someterse al usurpador extranjero.

Napoleón invitó a los hombres públicos más eminentes de España a tener una entrevista con él en Bayona, donde debían recibir de sus manos un rey y una Constitución. Todos con contadas excepciones, acudieron a la cita. El 7 de julio de 1808 el rey José recibió en Bayona a una diputación de los Grandes de España, en nombre de los cuales se dirigió a él con las siguientes palabras el duque del Infantado, que era el amigo más íntimo de Fernando VII: «Señor, los Grandes de España fueron siempre conocidos por su lealtad hacia sus soberanos, y V. M. hallará en ellos la misma fidelidad y afectión.»

El día 8 de julio de 1808 la nueva Constitución era firmada por 81 españoles pertenecientes a las esferas más elevadas: había entre ellos, duques, condes, marqueses y muchos superiores de las Ordenes religiosas. Durante la discusión de la Constitución no hallaron otro motivo para la protesta que la abolición de sus antiguos privilegios y ventajas.

Desde los comienzos mismos de la guerra de la Independencia, la aristocracia y la burocracia se vieron privadas de toda autoridad sobre la burguesía y el pueblo, pues desde el principio mismo de la lucha ley habían librado a su propio destino. A un lado se hallaban los afrancesados, al otro la nación. En Valladolid, Cartagena, Granada, Jaén, Ciudad Rodrigo, Cádiz y Valencia los miembros más influyentes de los ayuntamientos, los gobernadores, generales y otras personalidades de relieve, que se convirtieron en agentes franceses y adversarios del movimiento nacional, cayeron víctimas de la cólera popular.

(Carlos Marz: «La revolución española» Editorial Centi. Madrid, 1929. Páginas 89 y 91.)



Luchadores antifascistas: La Historia ha puesto en vuestras manos el destino de Europa. Vuestro seguro triunfo es el hundimiento del fascismo internacional. Vuestra responsabilidad, salvadores de la cultura contra la barbarie fascista, es inmensa. Pero vuestro heroísmo os ha hecho dignos de esa responsabilidad histórica.



Jóvenes milicianos: ¿Sabéis que vuestros fusiles están abriendo para nuestro país una etapa de cultura que tendrá por lema el máximo respeto del hombre? Acabada la contienda bélica regresaréis a vuestros hogares. Las ciudades y los pueblos de la retaguardia tendrán la misma fisonomía, pero habrán cambiado su signo. Porque al abatir con las armas al fascismo, en el frente, se habrá derrumbado detrás todo el aparato opresor del Estado burgués semi-fendal. Una auténtica democracia será la garantía para el pueblo, que habrá retreadado con su sangre, su apatencia de paz y su derecho a la cultura.



Hombres de España que lucháis por una vida mejor, dentro de la continuidad de nuestra historia: Los falsosregonadores de la tradición, los que llamándose patriotas, han tomado las armas contra su misma patria, desprecian con los ricos, todo lo que de sagrado resume y califica al suelo de la patria. Han hipotecado sus tierras al extranjero; han hecho de las catedrales, fortalezas; de la Alhambra un cuartel. No los imitéis. Respetad el trabajo de los campos, que han pasado a ser vuestros. Respetad, mientras os sea posible, las obras de arte del genio español, que han salido del pueblo, y que hoy como nunca son del pueblo.



Siglo XVI. Año 1519.

En Valencia se declara una epidemia. Los nobles y las autoridades abandonan la ciudad para ponerse a salvo de la muerte. Sólo las casas de los humildes serán desamadas en adelante. Desde el púlpito, un monje franciscano increpa a los fugitivos, por el abandono en que dejan a los pobres, en manos de la peste. El pueblo se enardece, guiado por la palabra fogosa del fraile, y el entusiasmo patriótico se desborda. Un tejedor es nombrado jefe de la revolución popular. Asaltan las fincas de los ricos, y toda la extensión de la huerta conoce el dominio de los agermanados —de germa, hermano—. El movimiento popular, tiene para la época un sentido comunista. Los nobles, huidos, se indignan ante las justas expropiaciones. Reclutan un ejército para aplastar a los huertanos, y los que se llamaban apasionados defensores del orden, no dudaban en recurrir a los sinfeales moriscos, lanzándose con ellos a la destrucción de las cosechas y al exterminio de los valencianos.

Siglo XX. Año 1936.

La hermandad se ha extendido hoy por todas las regiones de la península ibérica. Unos mismos fines, un mismo aliento de paz, de concordia y de felicidad, movía las peticiones del pueblo español, desde el advenimiento de la República. No estaban en rebelión contra los ricos; pedían legalmente el mejoramiento de sus vidas. Los ricos, los nobles terratenientes, abandonaron la ciudad a comienzos del estío para ocultarse en sus fincas, o huir al extranjero. Habían tramado contra el pueblo la peste de la guerra, y acorralados en donde creían ganar la batalla sin pérdida de esa sangre, han visto erguirse violentamente contra ellos a los mineros asturianos, a los curas vascos, a los obreros madrileños y catalanes, a los huertanos de Valencia y Murcia, a los pescadores de Málaga, a los campesinos de Extremadura y Andalucía. Entonces la raza pura de los generales, los obispos, los aristócratas y los banqueros, como sus antepasados, han llamado otra vez a los moros. Porque el espíritu feudal de esta gente sigue siendo el mismo, y su desprecio hacia su tierra y sus hombres, manifiesto. Sólo que el tiempo ha madurado, y las viejas germanías de Valencia habían triunfado con nuestra victoria.

Auca del fascismo español (Continuación)



Después de enterrado Calvo los fascistas emboscados en África se han alzado con moros y con sicarios.



Ese Queipo sanguinario a los hombres de Triana manda ametrallar con sea por moros y legionarios.



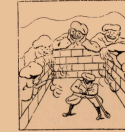
En Zaragoza cerrado Cabanellas está preso. El bútorro que olió el queso ya la tranca ha preparado.



Del Cuartel de la Montaña a Madrid llegan dispersos los vences sus hombres bravos para la honra de España.



En Valencia los cuarteles han tenido que asaltar pues no querían sembrar para ellos sus vergelaz.



Allá en los montes de Otiedo Avenda se ha refugiado los mineros le han copado con dinamita su miedo.

Por último y para acabar mirad aquí los retratos de unos cuantos garabatos



los cuales hay que arrastrar

El señorito fascista que anda hecho un maniquí ametralla por aquí desde el coche al comunista.



El cura gordo y cebón ministro de dios se erige y apoda en todo el cacique hasta venderle el copón.



La beata flatulenta se mete en la sacerstia para decir a Lucía ¡Oh dios! estoy perturbante.



Este militar moruoco con medallas de hospital bañado en sangre decanta su rancia ante un espejo.



El chacal terrateniente drama por salir su tierra y a sus polveas extranjera pide asesine la gente.

Editado en Impresos Cosmos. - Valencia, 1 de Septiembre de 1936.

Figure 11
Unknown artist, *Nueva cultura para los que luchan en el frente* [New Culture: For Those Who Fight at the Front], September 1936

NUEVA CULTURA

PARA EL CAMPO

¡Campesinos, trabajadores de la tierra, Salud!

A vosotros, constructores de la futura España, va dirigida esta publicación. En el gran esfuerzo que realiza el pueblo español por aniquilar la brutal invasión del fascismo armado, todas las actividades de nuestro país adquieren el mismo rango bélico; la distribución de todos nuestros recursos, el aprovechamiento de todas nuestras energías, la organización de nuestras actividades, son hoy actividades y problemas de guerra. Vamos a ganar la guerra para hacer perdurable nuestra paz, y dentro de ella lograr que sea indestructible y fecundo el nuevo orden democrático.

En este gran empeño, vosotros, trabajadores de la tierra, cultivadores conscientes del campo generoso de nuestra comarca, sois una gran fuerza de combate. Si a vuestras tareas sabéis imprimir, además del generoso ímpetu de vuestro entusiasmo patriótico y revolucionario, la disciplina de tareas realizadas bajo las consignas que ordenen una dirección confiante y responsable, ocuparéis en la vanguardia de nuestra victoria popular una primera línea de honor.

Campesinos, con el mismo valor que se lucha en los campos de batalla, vosotros habéis de luchar en los surcos, en las huertas, en todos los campos. El gobierno revolucionario pone en vuestras manos las tierras de los que antes habíais sido esclavos y ahora sois dueños. Es preciso que sepáis defenderlas y que hagéis multiplicar sus frutos. La tierra, que con el rocío cuya luz alumbraba vuestras almas, es vuestro pan y vuestra patria, exige de vosotros un valeroso esfuerzo. Vosotros sois los hijos de esa tierra, pero sois, además, sus dueños y creadores. A vosotros os está reservada la tarea de crear la nueva riqueza de la Revolución. Intensificad todos los cultivos. Es preciso que sepáis respetar la propia propiedad de vuestros hermanos campesinos. Sabed que si un fusil gema palmo a palmo la tierra nuestra en el frente, las hoces y los azadones están en la retaguardia defendiendo en el campo de batalla de los milicianos que luchan. La tierra os exige todos los sacrificios, Redoblad vuestros esfuerzos. Haced que todas vuestras energías obedezcan a una dirección y a consignas concretas. Os pedimos más trigo, más patatas, más fruta. Os pedimos todo esto en vuestro propio interés, como si os dijéramos: más alimentos para los campos, trabajadores de la tierra, nuevos dueños del campo, como un poderoso ejército de trabajadores, ayudados y dirigidos por todos: ganar la guerra para defender las vidas de todos. ¡Camaradas campesinos, salud!

"El Campesino ha recibido la tierra de la República para que la pueda trabajar individual o colectivamente, según su propia voluntad, y nadie puede ir contra esa voluntad."

"Nada ni nadie puede arrogarse derechos para cobrar rentas o impuestos a los campesinos, que no estén establecidos por la ley. El campesino y el trabajador de la tierra en general tienen derecho a disponer libremente de su producción, y nadie tiene derecho a confiscarla. Si las necesidades de la guerra lo exigen, las incautaciones de los productos podrán hacerse, solamente, a través del Estado, y mediante el pago correspondiente de su valor."

(Del discurso pronunciado en la sesión de Cortes el día 1.º, por José Díaz, Secretario General del Partido Comunista).



Figure 12
Unknown artist, *Nueva cultura para el campo* [New Culture: For the Country], n.d.

The other, published in *Valencià* as *Nova cultura: Per a els que lluiten en lo front*, is undated. Neither of these issues identify contributors, but Renau reported that four thousand examples of each of the four issues were printed.

After a seven-month absence of the regular edition of the publication, *Nueva cultura* reemerged in March 1937. In this second period of production, it served as the official organ of the AIDCV [Alliance of Intellectuals for the Defense of Valencian Culture] and bore the organization's emblem on the bottom left corner of each of its back covers.⁴

In the first issue published during its second stage of production, Renau wrote an article titled "Sentido popular y revolucionario de la fiesta de las fallas" [Popular and Revolutionary Meaning of the Fire Festival], in which he asserted that the festival of *las fallas* had become overrun by the bourgeoisie and urged his readers to reclaim it for the people. He opened with a poetic description of the beginning of the burnings, which he situated in March 1538, when the carpenters guilds of València lit the year's scraps on fire.⁵ In addition to their scraps, they also burned their *parots*, which were crossed planks of wood used to support their candles as they worked through the dim winter nights. The burnings were done in conjunction with the feast day of Saint Joseph, patron saint of carpenters, in celebration of the death of winter and the birth of spring.

Renau explained that the carpenters eventually began dressing their discarded *parots* before burning them. These effigies represented people of immediate concern to the carpenters, such as "the thieving tradesman, the despotic bailiff, [or] the opportunistic town councilor."⁶ As the festival gained popularity with the people, it

⁴ Aznar Soler, I. See also Renau, "Notas al margen de *Nueva cultura*," in *Nueva cultura* (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Topos Verlag, 1977), section 17.

⁵ Although this interpretation may be supported, contemporary scholars suggest the festival began to evolve from its religious origins and adopt its contemporary characteristics of cultural and political satire at the end of the eighteenth century. See Antonio Ariño Villarroya, *La ciudad ritual* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1992), 55-60 and E. Soler i Godes, "Teorías sobre el origen de las Fallas" in *Historia de las Fallas* (València: Levante, 1990), 61-70. Another scholar points specifically to the year 1784. See Gil-Manuel Hernández i Martí, *Falles i Franquisme a València* (Barcelona: Editorial Afers, 1996), 59.

⁶ Josep Renau, "Sentido popular y revolucionario de la fiesta de las fallas," *Nueva cultura* (March 1937): 14, 23.

outlived the guilds that had initiated it. Renau wrote that it became part of the soul of the people and, over the years, as it separated itself from the “Catholic myth,” it developed a critical social voice and took root as a revolutionary tool. The festival moved from directing its political satire at the municipality to critiquing national social and political affairs. Eventually, as the festival continued to attract participants, the people stopped repurposing their *parots* and created ephemeral sculptures called *ninots*, which were built specifically to be burned.

However, Renau suggested that over the course of the last fifteen years, the critical base of the festival had dissolved into a pretext to attract tourists and enhance the wealth of the upper social strata.⁷ He blamed the bourgeoisie and the town council for this dilution of meaning and further criticized their highjacking of the festival because of its formal repercussions. He cited these as

a tendency to exacerbate the grotesque, arriving at a hypertrophy so monstrous in its forms that it smothers all the humor and vigor of its original burlesque realism; the other [tendency is] toward a sort of cold and banal decorativism, which, excluding all critical form, [moves] toward deriving from *la falla* the purely plastic and monumental, toward the very antithesis of its functional purpose.⁸

Still, he argued, this poisoning had not completely ruined the festival and it could still be ripped from the clutches of the bourgeoisie. He wrote that the Valencian people needed *las fallas* more than ever. “In her fight for a better life she is supported in her traditional history, in the salvation of her ancestral values.”⁹ He further

⁷ Renau’s assertion that the festival had become particularly compromised during “the last fifteen years” may have been a somewhat general remark; however, the beginning of the decline, according to his characterization, would have begun in 1922. This date coincides with a period of political unrest, namely the end of the Spanish monarchy and the beginning of General Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship in 1923.

⁸ Renau’s mention of “burlesque realism” calls to mind Bakhtin’s writings on “grotesque realism.” This connection will be addressed in the following chapter. “Una tendencia a exacerbar lo grotesco, llegando a una hipertrofia tan monstruosa en las formas, que ahogaba toda la gracia y vigor del realismo burlesco original; la otra [tendencia] hacia una especie de decorativismo frío y banal, que, excluyendo todo forma crítica, hacía (sic) derivar a la falla a lo puramente plástico y monumental, hacia la antítesis misma de su razón funcional.” (Translation mine.) See Renau, “Sentido popular y revolucionario de la fiesta de las fallas,” 14, 23.

⁹ “En su lucha por una vida mejor se apoya en su tradición histórica, en la salvación de sus valores ancestrales.” (Translation mine.) Ibid.

described *las fallas* as a sign or a glyph of the Valencian people, an expression of their “intense impulse to create—and destroy.”¹⁰ At the end of the article, Renau announced that a special edition of *Nueva cultura* would subsequently be published to coincide with the festival.

The following circumstances contributed to the creation of the March 1937 special issue. On 11 February 1937 the *Gaceta de la República* [Gazette of the Republic] published information about the granting of forty thousand pesetas by the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública [Ministry of Public Instruction] to AIDCV for the creation of four antifascist *fallas*. AIDCV entrusted the design and construction of the *fallas* primarily to the Sindicat d’Art Popular [Popular Art Syndicate], a section of the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo [National Confederation of Labor (CNT)], with some components handled by the Unión General de Trabajadores [General Union of Workers (UGT)].¹¹ Renau was granted artistic control of the project and well-known *fallas* artist Regino Más supervised the construction of the *ninots*. Thus, the special edition of *Nova cultura* was conceived as a means of creating publicity for the festival.

The project’s core concepts, already outlined in Renau’s article in the March 1937 regular issue, were made explicit on the cover of the March 1937 special edition, which featured a photomontage of Hitler and Mussolini, identified in the title as the “enemies of the people” (fig. 13). They have been rendered as *ninots*, and are being burned in the purifying flames of *las fallas*.

In the introduction of the special issue, Emili Gómez Nadal further developed the intent of the publication, writing,

The central and constant preoccupation of the war and of our fight against the invasion of fascism in Spain, has disturbed many things; among them, our private and public customs, all of that which, until now, was our normal life, made of work and play . . . This year *las fallas* of St. Joseph will be the purifying

¹⁰ “De ahí las fallas como signo de la condición—o de formación—glíptica del pueblo valenciano, como expresión del impulso intenso de crear—y destruir—cuando termina la finalidad, saciada la necesidad fugaz.” (Translation mine.) Ibid.

¹¹ See Manuel Sanchis, “Regino Más: Historia de una época” in *Regino Más: Historia de una época* (València: Albatros, 1999), 52.



Figure 13
Josep Renau, *Els enemics del poble a l'infern*, photomontage,
1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special
falles edition] March 1937)

fire where fascism is burned and destroyed, and together with it, all the cohort of misery, injustice, and barbarity that have accompanied it as inalienable 'attributes.'¹²

The introduction is followed by a suite of four *fallas*, each with a drawing and a poem. Gori Muñoz was responsible for the drawings and F. Almela y Vives for the verses.¹³ The first *falla*, “Coses d’ara” [Present Things], critiques wartime society, suggesting that its privileged members belong to a host of political organizations, but do not actually put their lives on the line for their politics. This is demonstrated in the accompanying drawing by two well-dressed young men who hold cards to various political parties in their hands (fig. 14). One rich woman in the *falla* cries that she is poor and destitute while holding a full basket of food. In front of her, a group of women with empty baskets stand in a bread line. At the end of the poem, Quiquet writes these are things that the people can no longer tolerate and the *ninots* created in their image must be burned.¹⁴

In the second *falla*, “La catedral” [The Cathedral], the Burgos Cathedral towers in the background of the composition.¹⁵ The foreground shows a militia man treating the cathedral as a building infested with pests by dousing it in poison and thus routing out a Moor, a nationalist officer, a German soldier, and a Catholic priest

¹² “La preocupació central de la guerra i de la nostra lluita sense respir contra el feixisme invasor de les terres espanyoles, he trastocat un munt de coses; entre elles, les nostres costums privades i públiques, tot el que fins ara fón la nostra vida normal, feta de treballs i de lleures . . . Enguany les falles de Sant Josep seran ja la foguera purificadora on creme i es destrüixca el feixisme i amb ell tota la cohort de misèria, injustícia i barbàrie que l’acompanyen com ‘atributs’ intransferibles.” (Translation mine.) See Emili Gómez Nadal, “Les falles d’enguany,” *Nova cultura*, número extraordinari, (1937), 2.

¹³ Although Jordana Mendelson has attributed the verses of the *fallas* to Carles Salvador (see Mendelson, *Documenting Spain*, 170), Manuel Sanchis suggests they were written by F. Almela y Vives, who is also listed as one of the contributors to the publication. The verses are signed by “Quiquet,” a common nickname for men named Francisco. Since Almela y Vives’ first name was Francisco, it can be inferred that he was the true author. Furthermore, Carles Salvador contributed a poem which appears on a later page of the publication and signed it with his full name, indicating he did not use nicknames or pseudonyms to authenticate his work.

¹⁴ See Appendix A (pages 71-72 of this thesis) for a translation of the text of the first *falla*.

¹⁵ The rebel leaders set up a provisional government in Burgos after the war began.

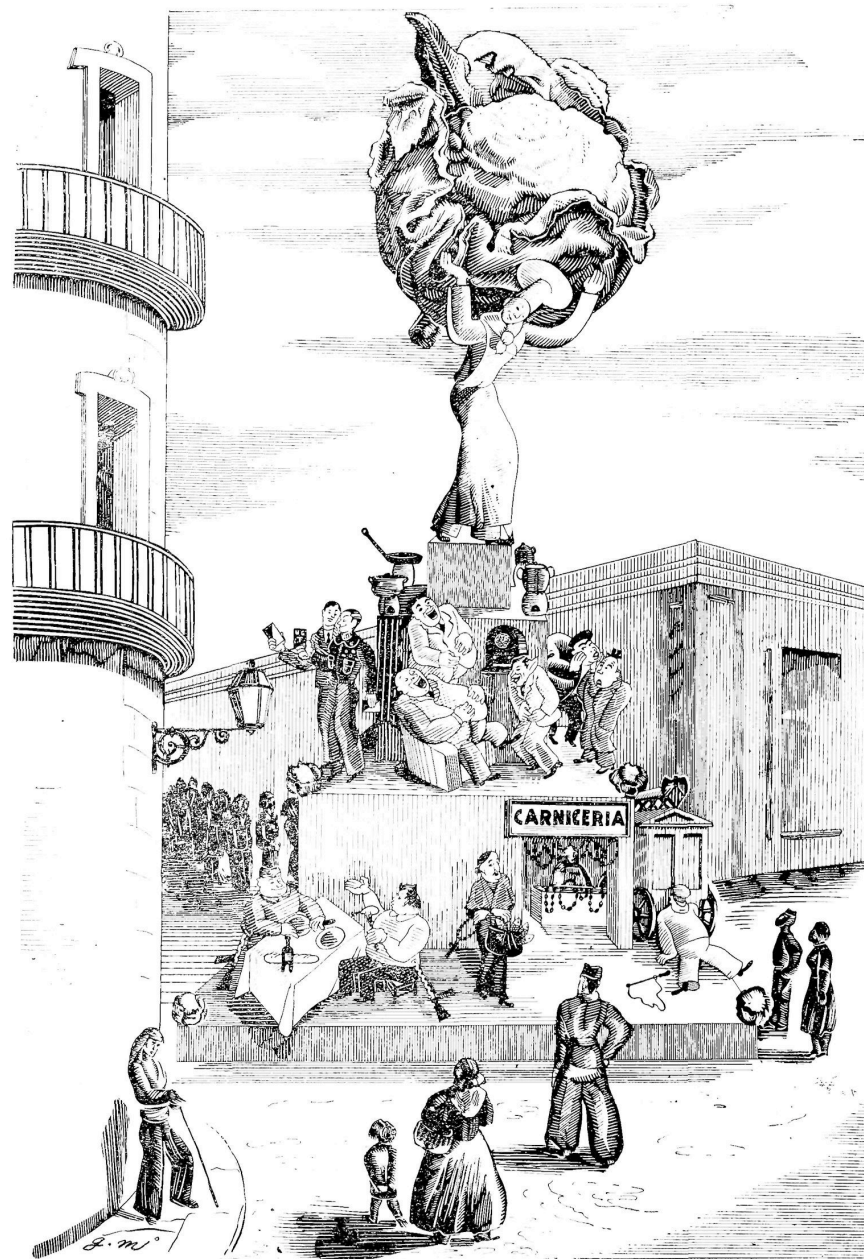


Figure 14
Gori Muñoz, *Falla primera: Coses d'ara* [First Falla: Present Things],
print, 1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special
fallas edition] March 1937)

who has a blunderbuss slung over his shoulder (fig. 15).¹⁶ The accompanying verses indicate the militia man is “disinfecting” the cathedral. In a dialogue between the militia man and the narrator, the militia man says he admires art greatly (here indicating the cathedral), but he cannot let it be a shelter for those who want to hinder progress and peace.¹⁷

The third *falla*, “El belem d’enguany” [This Year’s Nativity], appropriates the familiar narrative of the birth of Christ, substituting traditional religious iconography for contemporary figures in order to tell the history of fascism’s rise in Spain (fig. 16). At the bottom of the *falla*, Franco assumes the role of the Christ Child, while General Gonzalo Queipo de Llano plays the role of the Holy Virgin. Putti hold a scroll written in Arabic script (or the “language of Mohammed,” as Quiquet puts it) over the Holy Family. In place of the Three Magi, Hitler, Mussolini, and a Moroccan mercenary come to present themselves to Franco. Rather than the traditional gold, frankincense, and myrrh, these twentieth-century kings bring gifts of a tank, an airplane, and a soldier. These figures populate the structure’s base. Above them, on a hill, sheep with ecclesiastical headwear follow a member of the clergy with their faces down. Above them, God the Father sits atop a windmill capping the entire structure and raises his left hand in blessing while pointing with his right to a ragged flag flying on an adjacent building bearing the letters UHP (Unidos Hermanos Proletarios [United Brothers of the Proletariat]).¹⁸

¹⁶ The “Moors” in the drawings and verses of the *fallas* reference the soldiers of the Army of Africa, which was composed of Moroccan *regulares* and the Foreign Legion. The majority of the *regulares* were Riffian tribesman under the command of Spanish officers. Because they had been especially recruited and promised a higher wage than the French colonial authorities could pay, they are often thought of as mercenaries and were particularly feared for their ferocity. The Foreign Legion was a more elite force, composed largely of criminals and fugitives whose battle cry was “¡Viva la muerte!” [Long live death!]. See Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 55-57.

¹⁷ See Appendix B (pages 73-74 of this thesis) for a translation of the text of the second *falla*.

¹⁸ UHP was the Popular Front’s rallying cry. The Rebels altered the acronym, however, and used it to refer to the Republicans as “Unidos Hijos de Puta” [United Sons of Bitches]. See John Langdon-Davies, *Behind the Spanish Barricades: Reports from the Spanish Civil War* (London: M. Secker & Warburg, 1936), 18. See Appendix C (pages 75-76 of this thesis) for a full translation of the text of the third *falla*.

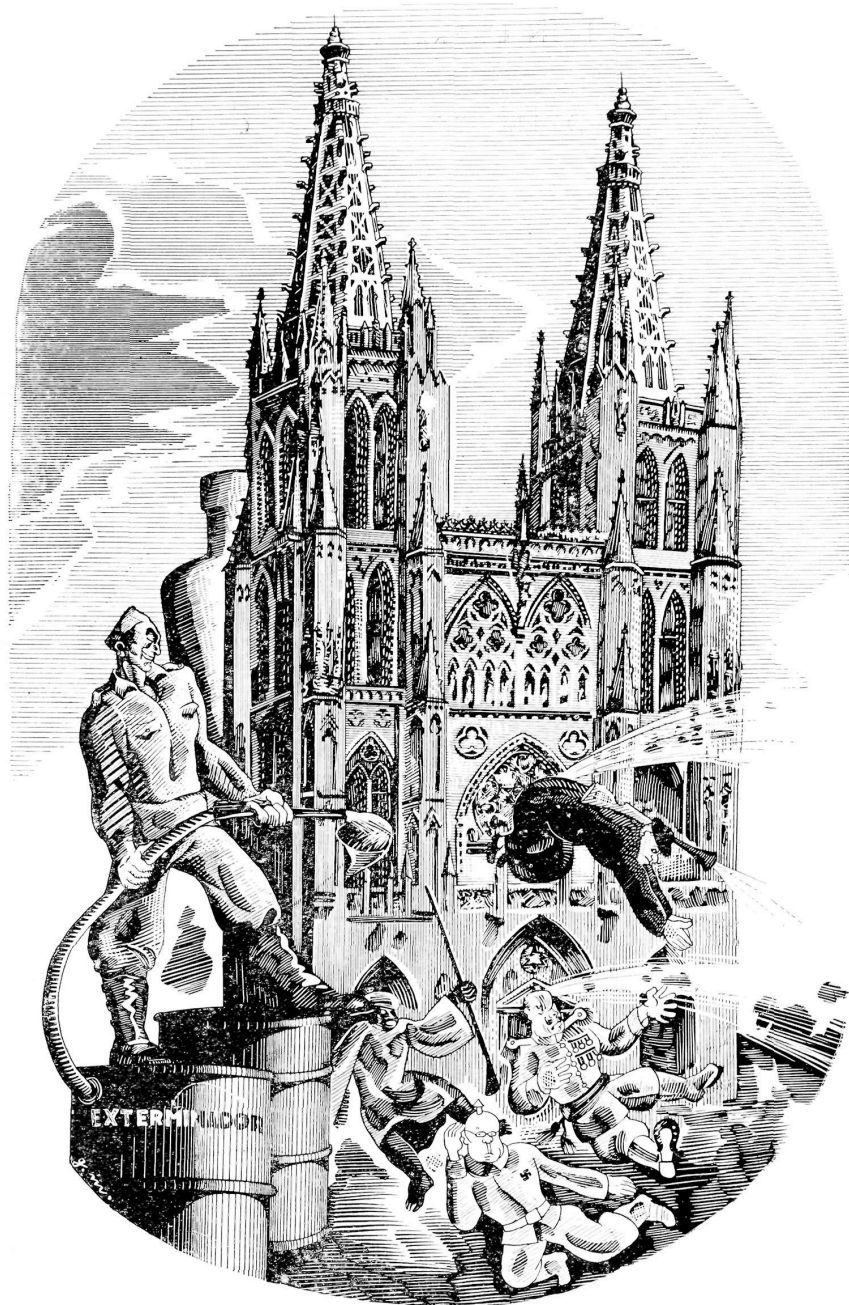


Figure 15
Gori Muñoz, *Falla segona: La catedral* [Second *Falla*: The Cathedral],
print, 1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special
fallas edition] March 1937)

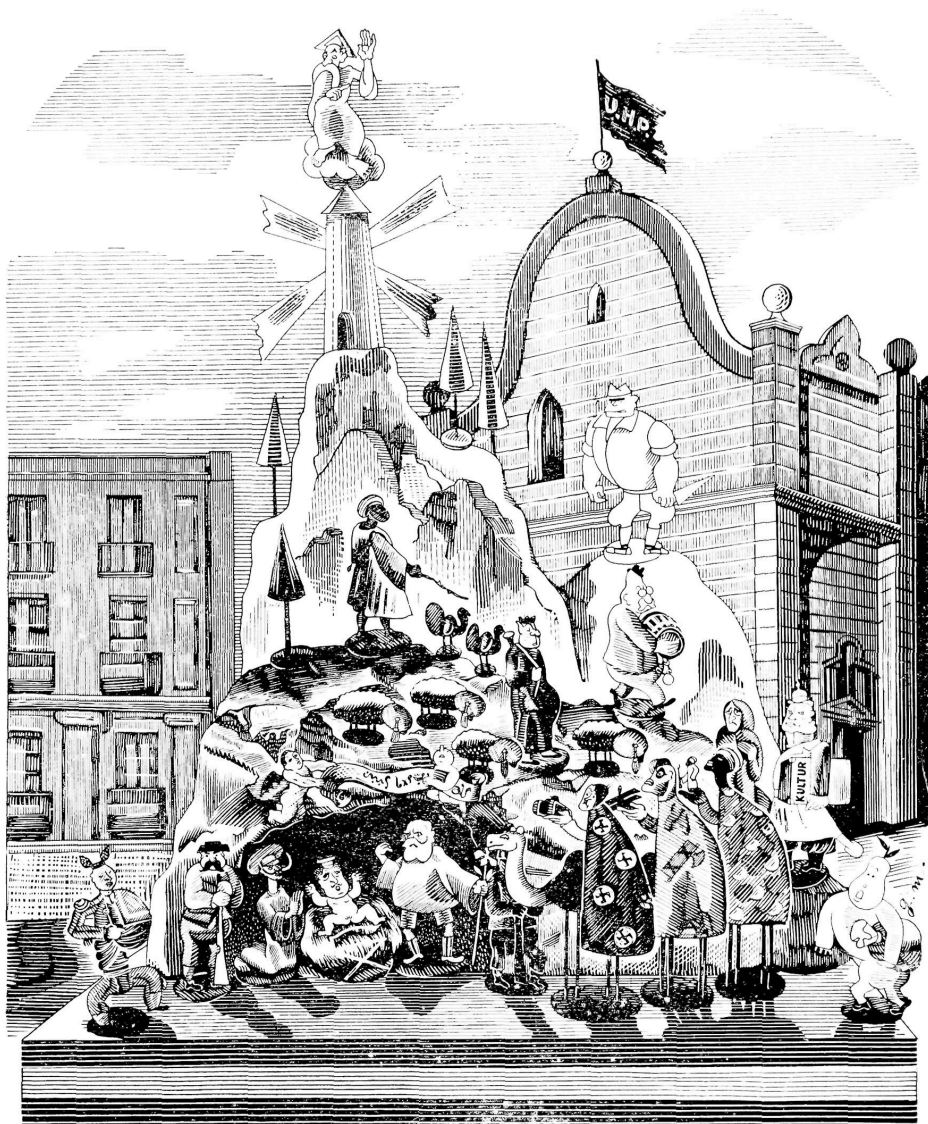


Figure 16
Gori Muñoz, *Falla tercera: El belem d'enguany* [Third Falla: This Year's Nativity], print, 1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special *falles* edition] March 1937)

The fourth and final *falla*, “La balança del mon” [The Balance of the World], is another tall, multi-level structure (fig. 17). At the base of the scale, Franco is portrayed as a dog faithfully retrieving pieces of Spain for his masters, Hitler and Mussolini. Above them, in the towering scale, tanks, airplanes, cannons, and bags of gold weigh down the right side. Members of the clergy and the military desperately cling to the bowl of the scale. Still, they cannot outweigh the world’s proletariat, who triumphantly occupy the left side of the scale, brandishing a flag that reads, “Proletariat of the world, unite!”¹⁹

After the eight pages occupied by the suite of poems and drawings, one finds a full-page photograph of a burning *falla* (fig. 18). The caption at the bottom of its frame reads,

May the popular flames of València claim the right to their revolutionary spirit of long ago. May the symbolic fire annihilate the enemies of the people, those whom popular criticism condemns with its unappealable sentence. And if the ashes of our *fallas* contribute to the acceleration of Spain’s antifascist victory, [to the burning] of the heap of all the negative and anti-popular, the miracle of our consolidated liberty will rise, the triumphant reality of our national culture saved forever.²⁰

This is followed by *l’auca de les falles* (fig. 19). It is printed on mint green paper and its forty-eight numbered and captioned boxes take up eight pages, with two columns and three rows on each page. Many of the same characters introduced in the four political *fallas* reappear in the *auca*.²¹

An *auca*, as known today, is generally printed on a large sheet of paper and composed of independent but related drawings, which are individually outlined. These drawings, usually related to a particular theme, are arranged in a symmetrical

¹⁹ See Appendix D (pages 77-78 of this thesis) for a full translation of the text of the fourth *falla*.

²⁰ “Que les flames populars de València reivindiquen el seu sentit revolucionari d’antany. Que el foc simbòlic aniquile als enemics del poble, als que la crítica popular condemna amb la seua sentència inapelable. I si les cendres de les nostres falles contribuïxen a accelerar la victòria de l’Espanya antifeixista, del munt de tot lo negatiu i antipopular, abrasit, sorgirà el miracle de la nostra llibertat consolidada, la realitat triomfant de la nostra cultura nacional salvada per a sempre.” (Translation mine.)

²¹ See Appendix E (79-85 of this thesis) for a full translation of the text of *l’auca de les falles*.



Figure 17
Gori Muñoz, *Falla quarta: La balança del mon*. [Fourth *Falla*: The Balance of the World], print, 1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special *fallas* edition] March 1937)



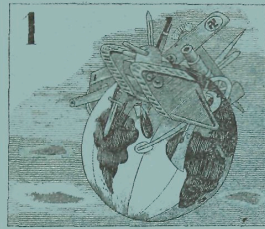
Figure 18
Josep Renau, "Que les flames populares de València reivindiquen el sue sentit revolucionari d'antany . . .", photograph, 1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special *fallas* edition] March 1937)

AUCA

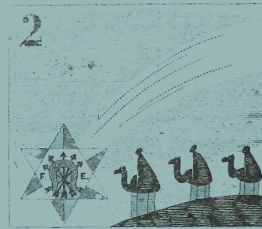
ESTOS VERSOS I ESTES RALLES FORMEN L'AUCA DE LES FALLES

DIBUIXOS DE GORI.

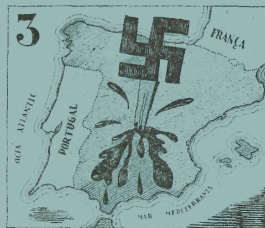
VERSOS DE QUIQUET.



1
La bola del món o Terra
porta el castic de la guerra.



2
Apareix a nostra vista
una estrel·la negra i trista.



3
I eixa estrel·la tan estranya
es clava en el cor d'Espanya.



4
Uns antipàtics pardals
arriben en tres «regals».



5
Li'ls entreguen al xiquet,
que vol ser un homenet.



6
I la mare s'agenolla
més tendra que una païolla

Figure 19
F. Almela i Vives and Gori Muñoz, *L'auca de les falles*, print, 1937 (*Nova cultura*, número extraordinari de les falles [special *fallas* edition] March 1937)

pattern and fill the entire sheet. Often the drawings are accompanied by rhymed verses, although this is not always the case. While the modern form of the *auca* emerged in the eighteenth century, it originated as a *joc d'atzar* or game of chance. Official decrees denouncing the game as wicked and treacherous date back to 1604, indicating it may have gained popularity as early as the late 1500s.²² Regardless of its specific date of origin, it had a long history in the provinces of Catalunya and València.

This eight-page *auca* is followed by a series of seven photographs taken by Renau and Manuel Edo of the actual *nimots* created for the antifascist celebrations under the supervision of the famous *fallas* artist, Regino Más.²³ Next appears a poem, “La falla gran” [The Great *Falla*], by Carles Salvador, leading to the issue’s final section, which describes how to make a *falla* in the form of a five-page narrative poem, accompanied by photographs by Renau and Edo. Written by Más and titled “Tècnica i creació al servei del poble” [Technique and Creation at the Service of the People], its structure mirrors the verses of the *auca*, as does the layout of the photographs, although here there are three columns and two rows of images per page. This linking of the traditional and the contemporary is an important part of what Renau and his collaborators sought to accomplish in *Nova cultura*. The following chapter will examine why the use of popular festival and traditional art forms, blended with present day events, would be an effective means of creating propaganda.

²² See Joan Amades, Josep Golomina, and Pau Vila, *Les Auques: Imatgeria Popular Catalana* (Barcelona: Editorial Orbis, 1931), 3-6. To my knowledge, this is the only monograph written on the origins, evolution, and stylistic development of the *auca*. There is also a brief description of the *auca* in Ribes Iborra, 37-51.

²³ For a detailed account of this artist’s life and work, see Antonio Ariño et al., *Regino Más: Historia de una época* (València: Albatros, 1999).

CHAPTER IV

CONSECRATED BY TRADITION: JOSEP RENAU'S EMPLOYMENT OF FOLK CULTURE IN *NOVA CULTURA*

The art of persuasion is a difficult one, which must strike a delicate balance. Propaganda artists must appeal to their readers or viewers at a very deep level. One approach is to present a negative representation of the opposing ideology. This approach is often used in the context of violent conflict and the propaganda of the Spanish civil war was no exception. One of the war's most recognizable images, created by the Republican Ministry of Propaganda, represents this way of thinking (fig. 20). The open mouth and barely closed eyes of a dead child immediately confront the viewer. Though the corpse was obviously photographed on the ground, it vertically occupies the picture plane. The placement of her body (she almost appears as if she is gazing into the sky) upsets the viewer's perception of space. Behind her, planes fly in straight, diagonal lines across the sky. They are toy-like, yet threatening. This black and white photomontage occupies the center of a solid blue-green background. Above and below the photomontage, the text reads, "MADRID: THE "MILITARY" PRACTICE OF THE REBELS. IF YOU TOLERATE THIS YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE NEXT."¹

Renau often employed the same kind of villainizing tactics in his own work; he even appropriated the same documentary photograph of the dead child in the poster mentioned above for one of his own photomontages (fig. 21). This appeared in the "Testigos negros" section of the March 1937 regular edition of *Nueva cultura*.² The work is composed of fifteen individual photomontages that have been stacked vertically within a common border to resemble a roll of film. The photomontages occupy several pages and bisect Renau's article on the popular and revolutionary meaning of *las fallas*. The opening page reads as an advertisement for the film, which

¹ The "Rebels" or the "Nationalists" were the forces lead by Franco.

² Recall the description of the monthly "Testigos negros" series on page 29 of this thesis.



Figure 20
Unknown artist (Republican Ministry of Propaganda), *Madrid: The "Military" Practice of the Rebels. If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next*, lithograph, 1936-1939

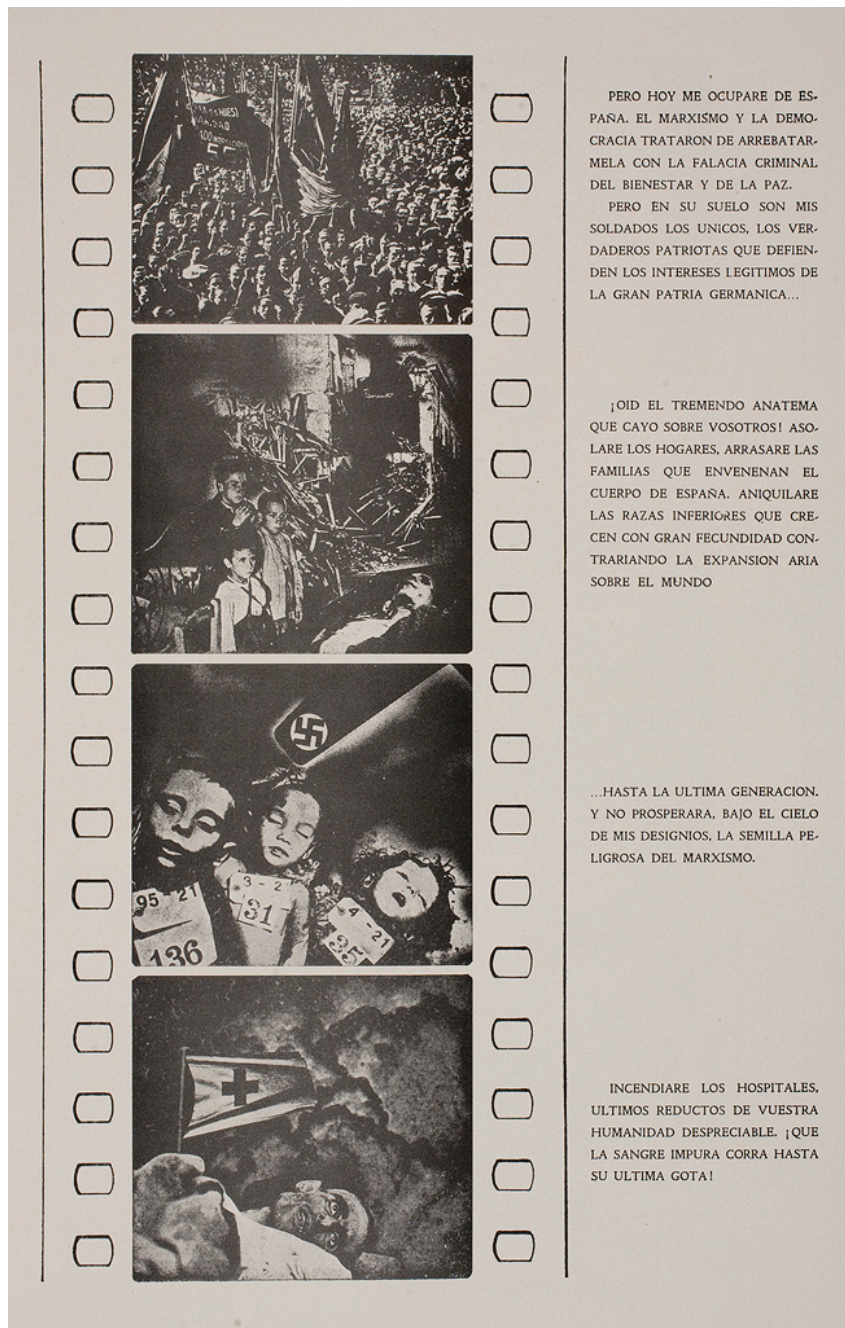


Figure 21
 Josep Renau, "Testigos negros de nuestros tiempos" [Black Witnesses of Our Times], photomontage, 1937 (*Nueva cultura* III, no. 1)

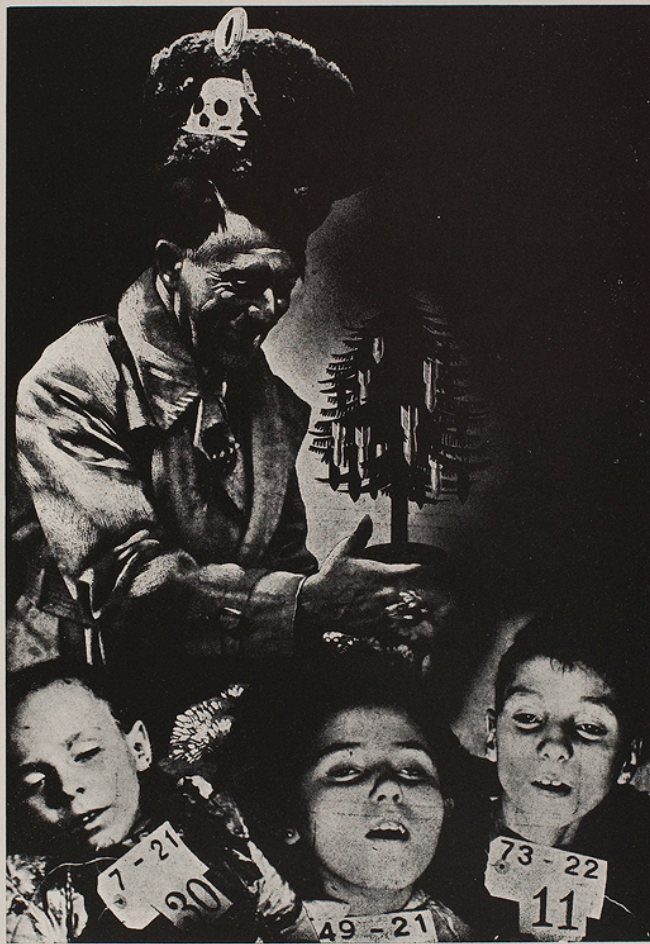
tells the story of Papa Noel and the presents he brings to the children of Spain (fig. 22). “Papa Noel” is, of course, not the jolly character of popular culture, but rather Hitler, and the Christmas tree he brings for the children is decorated with bombs. Below the tree lie three fellow victims of the girl seen on the famous Madrid poster.

This kind of propaganda effectively communicates the artist’s views about fascism, using emotionally charged imagery to strengthen his position. Ultimately, however, this approach is unsustainable. Viewers need not only to believe that what they are fighting against is wrong, but also that the cause they are fighting for is worthy. Thus, another approach to propaganda is to couch partisan views in positive associations. This is what Renau and his collaborators did in the special edition of *Nova cultura*. They presented their readers with an aspect of folk culture with which they would be immediately and intimately familiar, something representative of their culture, namely the festival of *las fallas*. Further, although contemporary photographs do appear in the special edition, the majority of pages contain line drawings, an *auca*, and verses written in a popular style. *L’auca de les falles* functions as a type of folk art in and of itself, but it also depicts the folk art of the festival. As such, the artists and writers of *Nova cultura* embedded revolutionary culture within folk culture, creating a rich and multi-layered work of propaganda.

By extensively employing such forms of popular expression, *Nova cultura* lends itself well to interpretation through the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories on folk culture, particularly as related to carnival. Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) was a near contemporary of Renau’s in Russia. Like Renau in Spain, Bakhtin was actively involved in the group of artists and intellectuals responsible for shaping much of early twentieth-century Russian culture.³

³ This group has even come to be known as “The Bakhtin Circle.” See Craig Brandist, *The Bakhtin Circle: Philosophy, Culture, and Politics* (London: Pluto, 2002). The group lived and worked primarily in the provincial city of Vitebsk, Marc Chagall’s birthplace. For more information on the cultural climate of the city (including chapters on Chagall, El Lissitzsky, and Kazimir Malevich), see Aleksandra Shatskikh, *Vitebsk: The Art of Life*, trans. Katherine Foshko Tsan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

testigos negros de nuestros tiempos:
UN GRAN FILM DOCUMENTAL



a cargo del **PAPA NOEL** *de los niños españoles*

[259]

Figure 22
Josep Renau, "Testigos negros de nuestros tiempos" [Black Witnesses of Our Times], photomontage, 1937 (*Nueva cultura* III, no. 1)

Bakhtin's ideas about folk culture, with the carnival as its most significant manifestation, were integral to his understanding of art more broadly. In his book *Rabelais and His World*, he suggested that materializations of folk culture were essentially humorous and could be divided into three distinct forms. He identified the first as ritual spectacles, which included carnivals, pageants, and marketplace comedies. The second was represented in comic verbal compositions, such as parodies. Finally, curses, oaths, and popular blazons composed the third group.⁴ All three of these representations of folk culture are present in *Nova cultura*, where the festival of *las fallas* functions as a ritual spectacle; the verses of the *auca*, written in *valencià*, are comic verbal compositions in the vernacular; and the kind of coarse language that appears in the *auca* functions as the kind of billingsgate Bakhtin identified.

Another striking parallel between Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque and Renau's work is the importance of grotesque realism. Bakhtin writes,

The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity . . . Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better . . . Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a regenerating one. To degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and a new birth take place. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving.⁵

Renau and his collaborators mirror Bakhtin's sentiments in both the regular and special issues of March 1937. Recall Renau's criticism of the perceived decline of *las*

⁴ See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 4-5. This work had its origin as a doctoral dissertation presented to the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow during World War II. Although it was not accepted and did not earn Bakhtin a Ph.D., it was finally published as *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable* in Moscow in 1965.

⁵ Ibid., 19-21.

fallas. He attacked what he saw as the bourgeois corruption of the “humor and vigor of [the festival’s] original burlesque realism.”⁶

Just as Bakhtin’s carnival renewed, so too did Renau’s *fallas*. Recall Emili Gómez Nadal’s wish that *las fallas* would act as the “purifying flames where fascism is burned and destroyed.”⁷ This destruction implied the subsequent renewal of the people’s “normal life, made of work and play.”⁸ Likewise, the narrative of the *auca* does not end with the destruction of the fascist oppressors, but rather the victorious rebirth of the worker. Death and life, destruction and renewal are continually intertwined.

In the context of carnival, however, such festive changes are temporary. Bakhtin suggested that the spatial and temporal realm of the carnival allow for

the peculiar logic of the ‘inside out’ (*à l’envers*), of the ‘turnabout,’ of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings. A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed; it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a ‘world inside out.’⁹

Coincidentally, this conception of the upside-down, inside-out world is found not only in the festival culture of Spain, but also in its popular print culture. One of the most popular types of *auca* prints (particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) featured images of fish floating through the clouds, while horses, lions, and other land animals plodded through the sea (fig. 23). In this world, *El mundo al revés* [The World Upside-Down], horses rode in carriages pulled by humans, bears made boys dance, and turkeys served up platters full of people.¹⁰

⁶ The term grotesque was often replaced by arabesque or burlesque. As such, Bakhtin and Renau are referring to the same tendencies.

⁷ See page 41 of this thesis. See also Nadal, “Les falles d’enguany,” 2.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bakhtin, 11.

¹⁰ There were many and varied iterations of *El mundo al revés* throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See Amades, Golomina, and Vila, 122. See also Marion Oettinger, *Folk Art of Spain and the Americas: El Alma del Pueblo* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1997), 37-51.



Figure 23
Unknown artist, *El mundo al revés* [The World Upside-Down],
relief print, nineteenth century

The reader/viewer of the *auca*, as well as the carnival participant, is invited into an alternative reality, rich with comic possibility. This festive incarnation of the world lends itself to an interminable comic aspect, full of laughter. Bakhtin argued that the laughter of carnival is a universal laughter directed at everyone and everything, including the carnival participants.¹¹ It is a laughter that laughs at itself.

It is here, however, that the threads binding Bakhtin and Renau begin to fray. While comedy and humor are employed in *Nova cultura*, Renau's purpose in producing the work went beyond entertainment. If Bakhtin's carnival inhabits the "borderline between art and life,"¹² Renau's *fallas* occupies the battleground where art and life converge. Quiquet's drawings and Muñoz's verses are more critical and urgent manifestations of folk art than those described by Bakhtin. They move away, ultimately, from laughter and demand societal reform.¹³ They do not seek the topsy-

¹¹Bakhtin, 11-12.

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ The idea of festivals and rituals as activities able to transport their participants to an alternate reality was one that consumed many intellectuals during the 1930s. Roger Caillois, a member of the College of Sociology, delivered an important lecture titled "Festival" on 2 May 1939, in which he addressed the mystical (as opposed to comic) aspect of ritual festival. (The College of Sociology was formed in the wake of the dissolution of France's Popular Front. It lasted from 1937-1939.) While he, like Bakhtin, addressed the social implications of particular festivals, he focused more on their spiritual significance for totemic societies, where intercalary days function as a sort of planned disorder. He described these festive occasions as "the periodic and exhilarating interlude of sacred life" (298). He further suggested that festivals serve as the actualization of primordial chaos or the *Urzeit*. Whereas extrafestival life is defined by the negative, i.e. societal restrictions, festival life is governed by the positive, which manifests itself most often in unruly debauchery and ribaldry. Caillois asserted in his lecture and subsequent writings on the subject that such displays of excess are seen by festival participants as "the conditions for their festival's effective magic. They are the early evidence of the ritual's success, and consequently, they promise indirectly that the women will be fertile, harvests rich, warriors brave, game plentiful, and fish abundant" (283). Thus, the return to normal, reserved life at the end of the festival represents the shift from chaos to the creation of the cosmos. See Roger Caillois, "Festival" in *The College of Sociology, 1937-1939*, ed. Denis Hollier, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 279-303. See also "Power," 125-136 of the same volume. Delivered on 19 February 1938 by Georges Bataille in Caillois's place, it was the precursor to the later lecture on festival. Bataille's essay on sacrifice is also relevant in this discussion, particularly as the *ninots* created for the festival of *las fallas* are essentially sacrificial objects. Further, the 1937 festival itself functions as a kind of sacrifice as it was ultimately given up for the war effort. For more reading on sacrifice, see Georges Bataille, "Sacrifices" in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 130-136. Here it is important to note, however, that just as Renau rejected the comic aspect of carnival, he also rejected the spiritual aspect of festival. His conception of *las fallas* was primarily political.

turvy world of carnival, with its temporary role reversals and ephemeral order; rather, they insist on concrete and lasting change for the people. In an ultimate dismissal of the kind of laughter Bakhtin describes, the death and rebirth of *las fallas* are segregated by ideology; death visits the capitalist, the cleric, and the fascist, while rebirth is reserved for the worker. The sense of degradation, so central to Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque, is abandoned as Renau and his collaborators seek to elevate the masses.¹⁴

Thus, while thinking of *Nova cultura* in terms of Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque answers some questions of interpretation, it does not completely satisfy the problem of Renau's consistent invocation of traditional and folk idioms. In order to better understand the aesthetic strategy of the special issue, the remainder of this chapter will explore the concept of collective memory.¹⁵

No examination of this subfield of sociology would be complete without mention of the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), a student of David Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) and the father of collective memory studies.¹⁶ In the work for which he is best known, *On Collective Memory*, Halbwachs suggested that memory is dependent on the social environment, for only there can individuals "acquire . . . recall, recognize, and localize their memories."¹⁷ He further asserted that "the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present."¹⁸

¹⁴ Bakhtin suggested that this abandonment of laughter is a distinctly modern trend reserved for pure satire. See Bakhtin, 12, 45.

¹⁵ Mendelson briefly addresses the concept of collective memory; however, her references to *Nueva cultura* address the problem of photography in the 1937 Spanish Pavilion at the World's Fair in Paris, rather than discuss the periodical in its own right. As the focus of her book is on the importance of documents and documenting, she does not attempt to define "collective memory," which is a term fraught with difficulty. She directs little attention to the use of memory in general and even less to its particular application in *Nueva cultura*. See Mendelson, *Documenting Spain*, 125-183.

¹⁶ Durkheim's writings, particularly as related to the sacred and the profane, were also influential to the members of the College of Sociology mentioned in footnote 13 of this chapter.

¹⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

¹⁸ Halbwachs, 40.

Since Halbwachs' initial examination of collective memory, a number of writers from different disciplines have elaborated on the concept. This has led to great elasticity of meaning within the field of memory studies. Historian John R. Gillis has gone so far as to suggest that the term may be "losing precise meaning in proportion to its growing rhetorical power."¹⁹ Given the fluidity of the term, it is necessary to start with some clarifications. Sociocultural anthropologist James V. Wertsch, in his book *Voices of Collective Remembering*, has made some useful distinctions between history and memory; individual and collective memory; and memory as used to provide either an "accuracy criterion" or conversely a "useable past."²⁰ As these criteria are important in understanding the March 1937 special edition of *Nueva cultura*, it will be helpful to define them.

First, history, Wertsch argues, is made up of objective representations of the past, while collective memory consists of subjective representations of the past that reflect the committed perspective of a particular group. He cites Halbwachs' conception of history as a "record of changes" and collective memory as a system based on continuity. Halbwachs wrote, "What strikes us about [collective] memory . . . is that resemblances are paramount. When it considers its own past, the group feels strongly that it has remained the same and becomes conscious of its identity through time."²¹

Second, the differentiation between individual and collective memory is particularly important. Wertsch notes that researchers investigating individual memory often approach it as an "accuracy criterion," or how it can provide an accurate account of the past. Conversely, scholars interested in collective memory

¹⁹ John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship" in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3. Quoted in James V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 30.

²⁰ For Wertsch's discussion of history vs. memory, see *Voices of Collective Remembering* 40-46; for individual vs. collective memory, see 35-40; for "accuracy criterion" vs. "usable past," see 31-33.

²¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Didier and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 85. Quoted in Wertsch, 41.

often approach the past as a contested, negotiable site. In other words, collective memory can be harnessed for a particular purpose and provide a “usable past.”²²

Although history, individual memory, and memory as an “accuracy criterion” may seem opposed to collective memory and the idea of a “usable past,” Wertsch proposes that researchers interested in memory ought to approach it in terms of its “functional dualism,” meaning that an account of the past may be at once history and memory, accurate and usable.²³ Recognition of this duality is essential in discussions of material that might pejoratively be labeled “propaganda.”

After introducing these clarifying concepts, Wertsch shifts to his particular research interest, which focuses on narratives as cultural tools. He makes two further distinctions that are relevant in this discussion of *Nova cultura* given Renau’s essay on the revolutionary meaning of *las fallas* and the narrative poems in the special edition. First, Wertsch identifies two functions of narratives, the referential and the dialogic. The referential function involves their potential to refer to characters, events, and settings. The basic relationship of the referential function, in both fictional and nonfictional accounts, is between the narrative and the objects it represents. The dialogic function relates to the relationship one narrative has to another. In this view, narratives are seen as responding to one another.²⁴ In *Nova cultura*, the narrative poems and drawings fulfill both the referential and dialogic functions by referencing specific people, places, and events of the civil war and by responding to each other.

Second, Wertsch identifies two communities who use narratives as cultural tools, the implicit and the imagined. The implicit community is a group of individuals who use a common set of cultural tools, though they may be unaware of the fact and may make no effort to create or reproduce their collectivity. Imagined

²² Wertsch borrowed this conceptual framework from literary scholar L. P. Zamora. See L. P. Zamora, *The Usable Past: The Imagination of History in Recent Fiction of the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²³ Wertsch borrowed this term from semiotician Yu. M. Lotman. See Yu. M. Lotman, “Text within a Text,” *Soviet Psychology* XXVI, no. 3 (1988): 32-51.

²⁴ Wertsch, 57-60.

communities, on the other hand, emphasize the recognition or reproduction of their collectivity.²⁵ Political scientist Benedict Anderson has conceived of the nation as an imagined political community. “It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”²⁶ In contrast to Halbwachs, who began with the assumption that memory necessitated a social framework, Wertsch suggests that the existence of a social group presupposes a collective memory. In Wertsch’s words, “collective remembering typically provides an essential basis for the creation and maintenance of groups—specifically, imagined communities.”²⁷

Returning to Renau’s article on the revolutionary meaning of *las fallas*, one can see that the artist was framing the reception of the special issue for his audience by recalling a usable past through which to understand the historical character of the popular festival. While he may have conceived of what he was producing as history, his language clearly communicates the committed perspective of a particular group, namely the imagined community of the Republican intelligentsia.²⁸ As such, he drew on the collective memory of the Valencian community and established a link between guild members of the sixteenth century and the Republican loyalists of the twentieth century, both those on the front lines and those at the rear guard.

²⁵ Wertsch., 62-65.

²⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: Verso, 2006), 6. Quoted in Wertsch, 64. (Emphasis in original.)

²⁷ Wertsch, 67.

²⁸ Here it is important to note that the imagined community of Spain is, and has been for centuries, a contentious concept. It is, on the one hand, the Castilian, Catholic image of Spain as forged by Ferdinand and Isabel in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On the other hand, it is composed of a plurality of nationalities, each with their own customs, histories, and languages, which have been folded (sometimes forcibly) into the Spanish State. Aznar Soler alludes to this multiplicity in relation to *Nueva cultura*’s involvement in the “defense of culture.” See Aznar Soler, 13. For a more detailed analysis of the problems related to Spanish nationalism, see Sandie Eleanor Holguín, *Creating Spaniards: Culture and National Identity in Republican Spain*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

What is perhaps most significant is that Renau himself recognized this when he remarked that *las fallas* were not the end, but the means.²⁹ He wrote,

The functional power of *las fallas* . . . is of the first order in the revolutionary fight of these times. More effective than any other medium of graphic propaganda, because it speaks to the people in the language of their own temperament, with plastic words that leave a familiar aftertaste of authentic tradition, laden with reason . . . For this, now, precisely now and not any later, in the tragic juncture of these moments in which Spain fights with more cause than ever in defense of her destinies, threatened by the eternal highwaymen of our history, the Valencian people ought to mobilize their best powers, their most effective weapons, to aid in the realization of the victory against fascism.³⁰

Perhaps it is here that the distinction between Bakhtin and Wertsch's frameworks are best seen. Renau does not ask his readers to laugh at themselves or their enemies. He does not expect them to suspend reality and turn the world on its head for the duration of the festival, separated by space and time from the reality of war. With word choices like "fight," "mobilize," "weapons," and "victory," his rhetoric is overtly militaristic. At the same time, he has ideologically linked the "authentic tradition" of València to her continuing "destinies." Thus, Renau has crafted a usable account of the past in order to stress the importance of the people's present resistance of fascism.

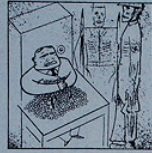
Significantly, the references to folk art and culture in *Nova cultura* are neither the first nor the last instances of employing this type of aesthetic strategy throughout the serial run. The first direct reference to popular art appears in the March 1935 issue of *Nueva cultura* in the form of an *aleluya* (fig. 24). Additionally,

²⁹ See Renau, "Sentido popular y revolucionario de la fiesta de las fallas," 22.

³⁰ "La potencia funcional de las fallas . . . es de primer orden en la lucha revolucionaria de estos tiempos. Mayormente eficaz que cualquier otro medio de propaganda gráfica, porque habla a un pueblo con lengua de su propio temperamento, con palabras plásticas de regusto familiar, de tradición auténtica, cargadas de razón . . . Por eso ahora, precisamente ahora y no más tarde, en la coyuntura trágica de estos momentos en que España lucha con más razón que nunca en defensa de sus destinos, amenazados por los eternos salteadores de nuestra historia, el pueblo valenciano debe movilizar sus mejores potencias, sus más eficaces armas de lucha para ayudar a la realización de la victoria antifascista." (Translation mine.) See Renau, "Sentido popular y revolucionario de la fiesta de las fallas," 22.

Historial breve y sincero
del Don Fascismo de España
y también del extranjero

Aleluyas de NUEVA CULTURA número 1



1 El señor Capitalismo
—que ya no come ni bebe
pensando en su vida breve—
ha inventado el fascismo.



2 En Italia fue primero
cuando harto ya de guerra,
hambriento de pan y tierra,
se subleva el pueblo entero.



3 Nunca así ha podido ser:
cogen el taller, la fábrica,
pero sin conciencia práctica,
dejan intacto el Poder.



4 Mussolini, que no es drama,
vi— y servicial en su puesto—
de «salvador» finge el gesto
para marchar sobre Roma.



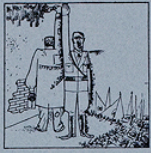
5 ¡Revolución contra todo!—dice—
contra el Papa y contra el rey,
contra el marxismo y su grey
y contra el capital maldice.



6 Mientras es todo, señores,
la realidad es esta:
solo sus golpes asesta
contra los trabajadores.



7 Pero en Rusia es otra cosa
y jamás habrá fascismo
pues lo impidió el bolchevismo
con su lucha victoriosa.



8 Alto el brazo, de pintar,
a Charlot roba el bigote,
lo pinta bien, tira el bote
y se pone a predicar.



9 Yo para «führer» nací,
comigo Alemania está
y nadie me detendrá:
«millones» hay tras de mí.



10 Los comunistas, con tino
luchan con tenacidad
en el campo y la ciudad
por impedirle el camino.



11 No quieren los socialistas
nada en breve comen
para más que al fascismo, aún
temen a los comunistas



12 Y a Hindenburg votan, ¡a ver!,
que es hombre independiente,
y luego que ya es presidente
«Hitler entrega el Poder.



13 Goering, con muy poca vista
al Reichstag le prende fuego
para culpar—desde luego—
al partido comunista



14 «Bajo el régimen fascista
vibra bien el obrero,
el empleado, el tendero,
¡abajo el capitalista!»



15 No un solo capitalista:
solo caen bajo el hacha
hombres burcosos, sin tacha,
del ideal socialista.



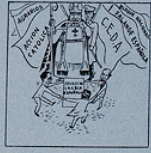
16 Se queman los libros buenos,
antigueros, marxistas,
científicos y humanistas.
La cultura «es lo de menos».



17 «¡Viva Dios!», dice Dollfus,
¡no más revolucionarios!
y mata a los proletarios,
bajo el signo de la cruz.



18 Y el Papa su bendición
dió al hombre sacrificado
por el orden y el papado,
por la santa religión.



19 «En España no hay fascismo,
eso es para el extranjero»,
dice Domingo y Bastero
y la F. A. L. dice lo mismo.



20 Desde el 14 de Abril
ningún fascista, ¡mirad!,
abatido la autoridad,
pero obreros, más de mil.



21 En este país tan genial
hay fascistas, «os extraña»,
que intentan hundir a España
de nuevo en la «aurora» ferial.



22 A la cruz nazi adversión
fingen tener. El burgués
nunca dice lo que es
¡leído en «su corazón!»



23 En cada pueblo o rincón
se organiza el partidario
y cada confesionario
es ilegal reunión.



24 Quieren ir al Escorial,
que a historia negra apesta,
y el trabajador contesta
con la huelga general.



25 Y esta historia original
se pone ya muy oscura.
Cuando quite la censura
pondremos punto final.

Imp. COSMOS—AY. 14 ABE—Valencia

Figure 24
Unknown artist, *Historial breve y sincero del Don Fascismo de España y también del extranjero* [Brief and Sincere History of Sir Fascism of Spain and Also of the Foreigner], *aleluya*, 1935 (*Nueva cultura* 3, March 1935)

though they are never as long as *l'auca de les falles*, other *aleluyas* and *aucas* appear periodically throughout the pages of *Nueva cultura*. Picasso's famous *Sueño y mentira de Franco* [Dream and Lie of Franco], published for the first time in the world in *Nueva cultura*, even formally invokes the tradition of the *auca*. Further, beginning with the issues printed for farmworkers and soldiers on the front, references to popular culture are strengthened with the frequent inclusion of text in *valencià*. In addition to creating such links, Renau also consistently referenced the revolutionary history of the international proletariat in *Nueva cultura*. There are frequent mentions of the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian revolution of 1917, and the Asturian revolt of 1934. The March 1935 edition, for instance, featured reproductions of a series of prints depicting the Paris Commune accompanied by quotes from Marx, Engels, and Lenin (fig. 25). Such reminders of previous revolutionary action added weight to Renau's assertion in the March 1937 special edition that victory was possible.

As previously mentioned, images of a powerful proletariat were popular in the print culture of leftist Spain. Recall Català-Pic's poster *Aixafem el feixisme*. There the image of a foot shod in traditional Catalan footwear treading on a swastika visually represents the victory of the Catalan proletariat over both the centralist Nationalists and the foreign extension of fascism.³¹ In *Nova cultura*, Renau and his collaborators extended Català-Pic's line of thinking even farther. Their utilization of folk art was double-pronged. By presenting their politics in the form of a popular art whose subject matter treated a popular festival, they created a multidimensional work. The layers of popular association in *Nova cultura* would have appealed to viewers in a way that the avant-garde perhaps could not.

In conclusion, by analyzing *Nueva cultura* through the lens of collective memory, it becomes apparent that not only the March 1937 special edition in particular, but also the serial run of the publication more broadly represent a struggle. The tension between conservative and liberal politics in 1930s Spain is immediately obvious in even a cursory glance of the periodical; however,

³¹ See Figure 5 on page 23 of this thesis.

MOJONES DEL CAMINO HISTORICO ANIVERSARIO DE LA COMMUNE 18 DE MARZO DE 1871

Al amanecer del 18 de Marzo, París fué despertado por esta voz de trueno: «¡Vive la Commune!» (MARX).



Transporte a Montmartre, y a Belleville de los cañones y ametralladoras de la Guardia Nacional

¡La gloriosa Revolución de los obreros del 18 de Marzo establece su incontestable dominio sobre París. El Comité Central fué su gobierno provisional. (MARX: *La guerra civil en Francia.*)



Grupo de guardias nacionales

La misma autocracia lo ha preparado todo para la lucha. Esta, durante siglos y siglos, ha empujado al pueblo a tomar las armas contra la tropa, y ahora no hace más que recoger lo que sembró: las propias tropas forman los destacamentos del ejército proletario. (LENIN: *El ejército revolucionario.*)



Defensa del Ministerio de Justicia contra los Versalleses.

El verdadero enemigo: En plena guerra franco-alemana (1870-1871), Bismarck devuelve a Thiers 50.000 prisioneros de guerra para aplastar a la Commune, lo mismo que Clemenceau y Foch remitieron, en Enero de 1919, 5.000 ametralladoras a Noske y a Scheldemann para aplastar a los espartaquistas.

El heroico espíritu de sacrificio con que la población de París —hombres, mujeres y niños— combatió durante ocho días después de la entrada de los Versalleses, refleja tanto y tan bien la grandeza de su causa, como los recursos infernales de la soldadesca reflejan el espíritu innato de esta civilización de la cual son los vengadores mercenarios. (MARX: *La guerra civil en Francia.*)



Reuniones obreras en las Iglesias transformadas en clubs.

Los obreros fueron los únicos que permanecieron fieles a la Commune hasta el fin. Los republicanos burgueses y los pequeño-burgueses se descartaron prontamente: los unos asustados por el carácter proletario, revolucionario y socialista del movimiento; los otros, porque lo vieron abocado a una derrota segura. Únicamente los proletarios franceses mantuvieron sin temor ni desfallecimiento su propio gobierno, sólo ellos combatieron y murieron por él, es decir, por la causa de la emancipación de la clase obrera, por un mejor porvenir de todos los trabajadores. (LENIN: *A la memoria de la Commune.*)



¡Quienes tengan las manos encallecidas serán fusilados!

Sólo después de ocho días de lucha, los últimos defensores de la Commune sucumbieron en las alturas de Belleville y de Menilmontant, y fué entonces cuando la masacre de hombres, de mujeres y de niños desarmados alcanzó su punto culminante. El fusil no mataba bastante de prisa. Los vencidos fueron ejecutados a centenares con ametralladoras. El Muro de los Federados, en el cementerio del «Père Lachaise», donde se cumplió la última masacre en masa, está de pie aún hoy, como testimonio de muda elocuencia, de la furia de que las clases dirigentes son capaces cuando el Proletariado osa levantarse en defensa de sus propios derechos. (ENGELS: Introducción a *La guerra Civil en Francia.*)

Figure 25
Josep Renau, *Aniversario de la Commune*, photomontage, 1935
(*Nueva cultura* 3, March 1935)

understanding the struggle between Renau's desire to create formally innovative art while attempting to reach an audience deeply rooted in tradition requires a more nuanced reading. Although he frequently critiqued the Catholic church, the language of *Nova cultura* is rooted in the rhetoric of atonement. Words like "salvation" and "victory" indicate his deep affection for his community and his desire to see her freed from servitude to the bourgeoisie, capitalism, and the Church, among other perceived evils. Thus, the blending of the avant-garde with the popular in *Nueva cultura* does not represent stylistic indecision in Renau's artistic output, but rather an embrace of the fundamental multiplicity of folk culture, which, in this instance provided "the shortest path for communication with the public through the most effective medium."³² By folding folk art into the pages of his periodical, he urged his readers to engage in remembering the power inherent in their culture. In short, although in his own art practice both before and after *Nueva cultura* he was committed to an avant-garde aesthetic, during its production, he mobilized an established, popular art to reach out to a new, fractious culture.

³² See page 2 of this thesis.

APPENDIX A

FALLA PRIMERA: COSES D'ARA

[FIRST FALLA: PRESENT THINGS]

Valencià

Com voreu, en esta falla
hi ha abundància de ninots.
Els mirarem ú per ú
i parlarem d'ells un poc.
Eixos senyorets tan . . . guapos
que mai han pegat un colp
tenen ara tants carnets
que comptar-los no se pot.
Eixe jove tan «pifiente»
no el deixa viure la por;
du papers en les ulleres
per si les bombes fan clot.
Eixe ciutadà tan ric,
tan satisfet i tan gros,
oïnt a Radio-Sevilla
se pasa uns ratets molt bons.
Eixa parella de tipos
sòn els que escampen rumors
parlant sempre a cau d'orella
i en aire molt misterios.
En eixa carneria
no queda de carn ni un tros,
però venen llonganices
i botifarres a tots.
En canvi, els pobres perreros
no poden fer-ne ni un brot

English

As you will see, in this *falla*
there are an abundance *ninots*.
We will look at them one by one
and talk about them a little bit.
These rich kids so . . . handsome
who have never done anything
now have all sorts of cards
that can't be counted.
This young man so "pifiente"¹
cannot even live for fear;
he has blinders on
just in case the bombs make a hole.
This citizen so rich
so satisfied and fat,
listens to Radio-Sevilla²
having a good time.
This couple of guys
are the ones that spread rumors
always speaking close to your ear
in a mysterious way.
In this butcher shop
not even a piece of meat is left,
but they sell *llonganices*³
and sausages for everyone.
Instead, the poor animal control officers
they cannot do anything

¹ The meaning of this word is unclear, but it could refer to the Castilian word *pudiente*, which means a wealthy or well-off person.

² General Gonzalo Queipo de Llano was notorious for his threatening broadcasts from Sevilla. In one such broadcast, he warned that the Nationalist troops would execute ten Republicans for every one of their own men killed. Renau and the collaborators of *Nueva cultura* often attacked his brutal tactics. Interestingly, John Heartfield even created a photomontage about the 'radio general,' as he is sometimes called. See David Evans, *John Heartfield: Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung Volks Illustrierte, 1930-38* (New York: Kent Fine Art, Inc., 1992), 402.

³ *Longanizas* in Castilian. These sausages are similar to *chorizo*, but substitute black pepper for paprika.

perquè va no encontren gossos
ni buscant-los en cresol.
Eixos que estan en la taula
donant-se el gran banquetot,
diuen que sòn *comi té*,
però sòn *comi* de tot.
I eixa, fent-se la pobreta
i ploricant sentse to,
du la cistella ben plena
de menjar caret í bo.
En canvi, eixes pobres dones
fan cua a l'anar al forn,
davant de la botigueta
i en la tenda del sabó.
I per damunt de tots s'alça
eixe cuiner como un sol
pregonant als quatre vents
la victòria de les cols
com a base del menú
en companyia d'arròs
Í tenint com a remat
la taronja, fruita d'or.

because they cannot find any dogs
even if they look for them.⁴
These who are at the table
are having a big banquet,⁵
they say they are eating tea,⁶
but they are eating everything.
And this one, posing as poor
and crying a lot⁷
carries a basket full
of good and expensive food.
On the other hand, these poor women
are in the bread line
in front of the little shop
and at the soap shop.
And above all of them stands
this cook like a sun
shouting to the four winds
the victory of the cabbages
because they are the base of the menu
in the company of rice
And [together] like a herd
the orange, fruit of gold.

Com voreu, en esta falla
hi ha abundància de ninots.
Els que representen euses
que el poble passar no pot,
deuen anar sense llàstimes
ít consumir-se en el foc.

As you will see, in this *falla*
there are an abundance *ninots*.⁸
Those that represent things
the people cannot tolerate,
they must go without sorrow
to be consumed in the fire.

⁴ This discussion of the butcher and the animal control officer is further elaborated in the *auca*. See footnote 23 on page 82.

⁵ Diminutives are used frequently in *valencià*. *Banquetot* translates literally to “little banquet.”

⁶ The conjugation of the verb here does not agree with the subject. The author was most likely playing with the Spanish *comité* or “committee.” However, in *valencià*, *comi té* literally means “he or she eats tea” and does not translate well to English.

⁷ Literally “sobbing without tone.”

⁸ It is common in these types of popular poems for the beginning to be repeated at the end.

APPENDIX B

FALLA SEGONA: LA CATEDRAL

[SECOND *FALLA*: THE CATHEDRAL]

Valencià

¡Vingau ací, forasters!
¡Vingau ací, valencians!
I pareu-vos enfront d'esta
magnífica catedral.
Es la catedral de Burgos,
construïda fa molts anys
i que ha vist va moltes coses,
tant xicotetes com grans;
però mai ninguna cosa
com la que ara està passant.
Es la catedral de Burgos,
aquella antiga ciutat
que, per l'ambició dels hòmens,
aspira a ser capital
d'un tros de la pobra Espanya
plena de suor i sang,
plena de fam i misèria,
plena de pols o de fang...

—¿Oué arruixes en la manguera,
milicià, bon milicià?
—Foraster, bon foraster,
valencià, bon valencià,
no arruixe en esta manguera,
és que estic desinfectant.
Perque yo, naixcut del poble,
sé admirar les obres d'art,
sobre tot quan es formaren
per un esforç popular.
Pero no puc consentir
que sigueu les obres d'art
un cau per als enemics
del progrés i de la pau.

English

Come here, strangers!
Come here, Valencians!
And stop in front of this
magnificent cathedral
This is the cathedral of Burgos,
constructed many years ago
and which has seen many things,
little ones as well as big;
but never anything
like what is happening now.
This is the cathedral of Burgos,
that old city that,
because of the ambition of the people
aspires to be the capital
of a piece of poor Spain
full of sweat and blood,
full of famine and misery,
full of dust of mud...

—What do you sprinkle with the hose,
militia man, good militia man?¹
—Stranger, good stranger,
Valencian, good Valencian,
don't sprinkle that way,
It's just that I'm disinfecting.
Because I, born of the people,
I admire works of art,
above all when they are formed
by a popular force.
But I can't tolerate
that the works of art are
a shelter for the enemies
of progress and peace.

¹ Here the author introduces a dialogue between the narrator and the militia man.

Per a ixò estic expulsant-los
fora de la catedral.
I va tinc ben fora al moro
que vingué a «civilisar»
la terra d'aon el tiraren
els reis catòlics d'abans;
i al militar que fa mesos
contra llei es sublevà
provocant la gran tragèdia
que a Espanya està desangrant;
i a eixe de la «creu gamada»
que és cent per cent alemà,
que és cent per cent «ario puro»,
que és cent per cent protestant.

I fa volantins per l'aire
tot el que, sent capellà,
no cuniplix en el seu deure
de germanor i bondat
i agafa les armes contra
els que anomena germans.
Encara ne queden atres
a dins de la catedral.
Jo promet que, poc a poc,
els aniré eliminant.

Aixina parla en veu forta
mentres obra, el milicià.
¡Vingan ací, forasters!
¡Vingan ací, valencians!

That is why I am throwing them
out of the cathedral.
And I have already kicked out the moro
who came to “civilize”
the land he was thrown out of before by
the Catholic Kings;
and now the military man that a few
months ago went against the law
provoking the great tragedy
that is bleeding Spain;
and this one with the “swastika”²
which is one hundred percent German,
which is one hundred percent “pure
Arian,”
which is one hundred percent
protestant.
And flying through the air
all the priests,
who don’t fulfill their duty
of brotherhood and goodness
and take arms against
the ones they call brothers.
There are still some left
inside the cathedral.
But I promise, little by little,
I will eliminate them all.

So the strong voice speaks
while working, the militia man.
Come here, outsiders!
Come here, Valencians!

² *Creu gamada* translates literally to “rotten cross,” but refers to the swastika on the soldier’s chest.

APPENDIX C

FALLA TERCERA: EL BELEM D'ENGUANY

[THIRD FALLA: THIS YEAR'S NATIVITY]

Valencià

Enguany, en la nostra Espanya,
han armat el gran «belem»,
un belem extraordinari
que sempre està ple de gent.
En un estable inestable
instal·lat en un quartel,
va nàixer, en un mal part,
allà en l'estiu, un xiquet.
Son pare duia barbotès;
sa mare, bigot molt ties.
I, per a celebrar l'acte,
cantaven uns angelets,
cantaven la lletania
en llengua de Mojamed.
No faltaren els monarques
que portaren els presents:
un tanc, un aeroplà
i un moro «regular».
Ni tampoc manca el pastor
que duguera els borreguets.
També acudiren uns atres
per a fer-li acatament:
el viatjant de «kultura»,
l'home que té molts diners,
el torero matarife,
el matarife . . . de gent,

English

This year, in our Spain,
they have built a great “nativity,”¹
an extraordinary nativity
that is always full of people.
In an unstable stable
installed in a barrack,
was born, in a bad delivery,
there in the summer, a boy.
His father wore a beard;
his mother, a manicured mustache.
And, to celebrate this act,
there were angels singing,
they sang the litany
in the language of Mohammed.
The three kings came also
bringing gifts:
a tank, an airplane,
and a Moorish “regular.”
Neither did the shepherd
who brought the lambs miss it.²
Others went, too,
to bow in front of him:
the “Kultura”³ salesman,
the man who has a lot of money,
the *torero matarife*,⁴
the *matarife* . . . of men,

¹ The phrase *han armat el gran «belem»* literally refers to the construction of a nativity, but also suggests the dawning of a great crisis. The double entendre in *valencià* is lost in English. Also, *belem* is the early twentieth-century word for “nativity.” Current usage is *betlem*.

² *Borreguets*, which I have translated as “lambs,” also refers to people who follow others without questioning.

³ The meaning of this is unclear, but may refer to German (read: Nazi) culture in Spain.

⁴ The *torero matarife* is the individual who finally kills the bull in a bullfight. *Matarife* literally means “butcher” or “slaughterer.”

l'autòmata que no pensa,
el moro que «esta cristiano»,
els «macarronis» desfets,
una pila d'estrangers,
la bruixa que mira al moro
plena de mals pensaments . . .
Enguany en la nostra Espanya
han armat el gran belem,
un belem extraordinari
que sempre està ple de gent.

Allà dalt d'una montanya
aon roda un molí de vent,
està el Pare Etern que escolta
l'estrafalari concert
i que diu, ple de relamps,
de tronades i masclets:
—Che, per ficar-se en camisa
d'once vares, fillets meus,
quin desori, quin tiberi,
i quin empastre m'hau fet.

the automaton who doesn't think,
the Moor who “is Christian,”
the melted “macaronis,”⁵
a pile of strangers,
the witch who looks at the Moor
full of obscene thoughts . . .
This year, in our Spain
they have built a great “nativity,”
an extraordinary nativity
that is always full of people.

There on the top of the mountain
where a windmill is turning,
there the Eternal Father who listens
to the weird concert
and says, full of lightning,⁶
of thunder, and *masclets*:⁷
—Well, in attempting something you
are incapable of, my sons,⁸
what disorder, what mess,
and what chaos you have made me.

⁵ The meaning of this is unclear, but a similar expression is used in *l'auca de les fallas*. The accompanying image shows a caricature of an Italian. Thus, it could be a somewhat derogatory reference to Italians.

⁶ *Llamps* is the word for “lightning.” The prefix *re-* converts the word into a curse.

⁷ *Masclets* are exceptionally loud fireworks used during *las fallas*.

⁸ This expression literally means “by putting on a shirt of eleven rods,” but refers to trying to do something impossible.

APPENDIX D

FALLA CUARTA: LA BALANÇA DEL MON

[FOURTH FALLA: THE BALANCE OF THE WORLD]

Valencià

—¿Qué significa esta falla
que nos han plantat ací?
—Puix la balança del món
aon peleen dos partits.
Un dels partits el componen
els que jamai han patit,
capellans, i militars,
i tics que són molt rics . . .
—¿I qui son els que componen
o integren l'atre partit?
—Els hòmens que mai gojaren
plenament de l'esperit,
els que treballen de dia,
els que sufrixen de nit,
els que sempre produïxen
per uns salaris mesquins . . .
—¿I quin partit pesa més
per al final decidir?
—Cada plat de la balança
claríssimament ho diu.
Lo que pesa en estos temps,
lo que del tot decidix,
és el poble que treballa,
és el poble que patix.
—¿I tú creus que eixe lletrero
que han posat era precís?
—Tan precís que, sense ell,
no hi haurà res de lo dit.
Els obrers, siguen d'aon signen,
vagen com vagen vestits,
pensen com pensen en coses
que es presten a discutir . . .
deuen presentar-se sempre
ben estretament units

English

—What does this mean, this *falla*,
that we have built here?
—Well, the balance of the world
where two sides fight.
One of these sides is composed
of those who have never suffered,
priests, and military men,
and guys who are very rich . . .
—And who are those that compose
or make up the other side?
—Those men who never plainly
enjoy the spirit,
those who work by day,
those who suffer by night,
those who always produce
for a mean salary . . .
—And which side weighs more
to finally decide?
—Every plate on the balance
clearly shows it.
What weighs more in these times,
what will decide everything,
is the people who work,
is the people who suffer.
—And do you believe that this sign¹
that has been placed is true?
—So precise that, without it,
nothing we have said will happen.
The workers, wherever they are from,
however they dress,
however they think
about matters that can be discussed . . .
they must always present themselves
as well united

¹ This refers to something like a road sign.

si volen que la victòria
il·lumine el seu camí.
—Tú tens raó, camarada.
—Ya hu crec, company, que la tinc.
I la prova, si fa falta,
és lo que passa ací dins.
L'obrer guanyarà la guerra
si al final seguix unit,
encara que no l'ajudeu
com a germans, com a amics,
eixe anglès del violó
i eixe francès adormit;
encara que alguns països
.actuen com a enemics;
encara que hi ha qui ven
la pàtria com un pastís . . .
—Així serú, camarada.
—Espere que siga axí
i prosseguisca l'eixemple
que a tots nos dona Madrid

D'esta manera parlaven
dos hòmens este matí
plantats davant de la falla
que ya no cal aclarir.

if they want victory
lighting their path.
—You're right, comrade.
—You bet I am, comrade.
And the proof, if it's needed,
is what happens here.
The workers will win the war
if they stay united to the end,
even though they do not help
as brothers, as friends,
this Englishman with the viola
and this sleeping Frenchman;
even if some countries
act like enemies;
even if there is someone who sees
the homeland like a pie . . .²
—So be it, comrade.
—I hope it continues like this
and progresses like the example
that Madrid is giving us.

In this way they talked
two men this morning
sitting in front of the *falla*
that no longer needs explanation.

² That is, to be cut and split up like a pie.

APPENDIX E

L'AUCA DE LES FALLES

[THE *AUCA* OF *LAS FALLAS*]

Valencià	English
Estos versos i estes ralles formen l'auca de les falles	These verses and these lines form the <i>auca</i> of <i>las fallas</i>
Dibuixos de Gori	Drawings by Gori ²
Versos de Quiquet	Verses by Quiquet ³
1 La bola del mon o Terra porta el castic de la guerra. ¹	1 The globe of the world or the earth bears the punishment of the war.
2 Apareix a nostra vista una estrellla negra i trista.	2 There appears in our view A black, sad star. ⁴
3 I eisa estrellla tan estranya es clava en el cor d'Espanya.	3 This star, so strange, is stabbed into the heart of Spain.
4 Uns antipàtics pardals arriben en tres «regals».	4 Some unfriendly sparrows arrive with three “gifts.” ⁵

¹ Gori Muñoz

² Francesc Almela i Vives

³ The verses of the *auca* are arranged in couplets, with seven or eight syllables in each line, which was a common format for popular poetry. Each of the lines are intended to rhyme, although the author forced some rhymes in this composition. I did not attempt to recreate the rhythm of the original here, but rather transcribed it literally.

⁴ The “star” is a swastika.

⁵ The “sparrows” are Hitler, Mussolini, and a Moroccan and they carry, respectively, a tank, an airplane, and a soldier.

5
Li'ls entreguen al xiquet,
que vol ser un homenet.

5
They give them to the boy,
who wants to be a man.⁶

6
I la mare s'agenolla
més tendra que una panolla.

6
And the mother kneels
as tender as a stalk of corn.⁷

7
El pare bufa i escarba
mentres li augmenta la barba.

7
The father blows and hoofs
while his beard grows.

8
Este va portant dinés,
pero li'n demanen més . . .

8
This one brings money,
but they demand more . . .⁸

9
Fa el tonto del panerot,
pero s'endú lo que pot.

9
This one looks distracted,
but he takes away all he can.⁹

10
El pastor du borreguets
a que els facen a trossets.

10
The shepherd brings the sheep
to cut them in pieces.¹⁰

11
En lloc d'Angel de la Guarda,
¿qué vos pareix la moscarda?

11
Instead of a Guardian Angel,
what do you think of this mosquito?¹¹

12
Hi ha qui porta, en lloc de pà

12
This one brings, instead of bread,

⁶ *Homenet*. literally means “little man” and refers to a child of a wealthy family or a person who puts on airs.

⁷ The “mother” in this nativity scene is represented by a caricature of General Queipo de Llano.

⁸ The character referred to here is the same pear-headed individual who appears in the third *falla*. “Pear head” translates to *Capdepera*, which is the name of a city in Mallorca and could also be a last name. The character probably represents a capitalist; however, the exact meaning in this context is unclear.

⁹ This character wears a suite and also has a head vaguely shaped like a pear.

¹⁰ The “shepherd” is the blunderbuss-carrying priest from the second *falla*.

¹¹ This is a play on words. The “Guardian Angel” is a member of the *Guardia Civil* or Civil Guard.

la «kultura» escrita en k.

“kulture” written with a k.¹²

13
També acudixen toreros
poregoso i embusteros.

13
Bullfighters come, too,
cowards and liars.

14
I no falta el legionari
que és un tipo estrafalari.

14
And do not forget the legionnaire,
who is a weird guy.¹³

15
El que menja “macarroni”
aspira a fer el butoni.

15
The one who eats macaroni
wants to be a boogie man.¹⁴

16
El moro, en un gran cinisme
vol demostrar misticisme.

16
The Moor, with great cynicism,
demonstrates deep mysticism.¹⁵

17
I Brígida mira al moro
com la vaca mira al toro.

17
And Bridget looks at the moor
as a cow looks at the bull.¹⁶

18
Envien a este ninot
a que faça el borinot.

18
They send this puppet
to entertain them.¹⁷

19
Clar que, passe los que passe
el que és ase sempre és ase.

19
Of course, whatever happens,
the one who is an ass will always be.¹⁸

¹² The character in this drawing holds a book with “kulture” written on it, but the exact association is unclear. The figure also appears in the third *falla*. See footnote 3 on page 75.

¹³ Although referred to as a “weird guy” in the poem, the character in the drawing is more sinister, holding a blade dripping with blood.

¹⁴ This character also appears in the third *falla*. See footnote 5 on page 76.

¹⁵ The Moor in the accompanying image holds a rosary. Likewise, this character is referred to as “the Moor who ‘is Christian’” in the third *falla*.

¹⁶ The same character is referred to as a *bruixa* or “witch” in the third *falla*.

¹⁷ The “puppet,” who is rendered rather mechanically and more closely resembles a robot or an automaton, wears a swastika armband.

¹⁸ The “ass” wears a top hat and morning jacket and carries a large bag, presumably full of money.

20

Duen armes a muntó
com medicina o sabó.

20

They bring a lot of arms,
like medicine and soap.

21

Mentresant, corre que vola
la trola i la mentirola.

21

Meanwhile, they fly like the wind,
the lies and tall tales.¹⁹

22

Hi han . . . digam-los «fadrinets»

que tenen trenta carnets.

22

There are . . . let's call them "wealthy
bachelors"
who have thirty cards.²⁰

23

Don Procopio es destornilla
oint a Radio-Sevilla.

23

Don Procopio is cracking up
listening to Radio-Sevilla.²¹

24

¡Vaja un poregós de veres!
Du papers en les ulleres.

24

What a coward!
He has blinders on.²²

25

De carn no es troba un esguit,
pero abunda l'embotit.

25

You cannot find a slab of meat,
but there is an abundance of cased
meats.

26

En canvi no es troba un gos
ni tan sols un gat rabiós.

26

But you cannot find any dogs,
not even a rabid cat.²³

¹⁹ The drawing associated with these verses features two figures who stand on a corner whispering to one another. The pair are also seen in the first *falla* behind the group of men laughing and listening to Radio-Sevilla.

²⁰ The young man pictured in the accompanying drawing is the same one pictured in the first *falla*, who belongs to a host of political organizations, but shows no genuine conviction.

²¹ See footnote 2 on page 71 for information on Radio-Sevilla.

²² The literal translation indicates that the character has pieces of paper on his glasses.

²³ This and the preceding couplet hint at the economic fallout of the civil war, suggesting that the only meat available is made from stray cats and dogs. On Saturday, 10 December 1938, the Melbourne newspaper "The Age" specifically reported on the shortage of meat in Spain, noting, "Food was scarce, the diet consisting mainly of rice, beans, and peas, with a little meat. Most of the meat was sent to the troops." See "Spanish Civil War: Air Raids and Food Shortage" *The Age*, 10 December 1938.

27
Pero hi ha qui menja y beu
en més frescor que la neu.

28
Per fer una incautació
s'agafa hasta un gafarró.

29
Diu que no menja ni alena,
pero du la bossa plena.

30
En canvi, la dona pobra,
no té prou en lo que cobra.

31
La col brilla com un sol
i ibi ha que fer-se la col!

32
Encara que algú se riu,
en el món hi ha un explosiu.

33
¿A qui criden estos dos?
Pareix que criden a un gos.

34
I el gos acudix de presa
duent una bona peça.

27
But there are those who eat and drink
fresher than the snow.

28
When they seize [property],
they even take the bird.

29
She says she cannot eat or breathe,
but her bag is full.²⁴

30
On the other hand, the poor woman,
does not have enough with her pay.²⁵

31
The cabbage shines like the sun
and we must do something surprising!²⁶

32
Even if some are laughing,
there is in the world a bomb.²⁷

33
Who are they yelling at?
It looks like they are yelling at a dog.²⁸

34
And the dog quickly
retrieves a good piece.²⁹

²⁴ The artist has included a speech bubble in the drawing, in which the figure laments, "Oh my God! If we keep going like this we are going to die of starvation!" Meanwhile, her basket is full of fresh fish and meats. This character appears in the first political *falla* as well.

²⁵ This drawing shows four women in a bread line. They also appear in the first *falla*.

²⁶ This idiomatic expression is lost in English, but *ibi ha que fer-se la col!* or "we must make the cabbage" means to do something surprising. The significance of the cabbage is unclear, but it figures prominently in the first *falla*, capping the entire structure.

²⁷ The bomb is labeled as Spain in the drawing. This grouping also appears in the fourth *falla*.

²⁸ "They" are Hitler and Mussolini.

²⁹ Just as seen in the fourth *falla*, the dog has "Franco" written across his body. In his mouth he holds one of the Balearic Islands to present to his masters.

35
Mentrestant, s'adorm la França
en la bonaventurança.

36
I l'anglés, molt comodó,
toca i toca el violó.

37
En cadira d'“oliveira,”
esperant es “desespeira.”

38
Pero día arribará
en que el pobleparlará.

39
El militar del Japó
aguaita des d'un cantó.

40
I este grandot es fa el brau
contra el colom de la pau.

41
Pero hi ha que diu claret
en quina part està el dret.

42
Per molt que es fixa en el mapa

35
Meanwhile, France is very sleepy
in the good times.

36
And the Englishman, very comfortable,
plays and plays the violin.³⁰

37
In an “olive” chair,
waiting is despair.³¹

38
But they will come
when the people talk.

39
The soldier from Japan
is watching from the corner.³²

40
And this big guy is bullying
the dove of peace.³³

41
But there is one who clearly says
what is right.³⁴

42
As much as he stares at the map

³⁰ Couplets thirty-five and thirty-six refer to France and England's failure to aid the Republic. The Englishman playing the violin also appears in the fourth *falla*.

³¹ This is another play on words. *Oliva* [olive] has been altered to “oliveira,” which refers to the Portuguese Prime Minister (1932-1968) António de Oliveira Salazar. The word for “despair” has been altered to rhyme with “oliveira.”

³² “The soldier from Japan” probably refers to one of Emperor Hirohito's military officials or perhaps Japan's military forces more broadly.

³³ In this image, a well-built man wearing animal skins raises a sling shot armed with a large swastika at the dove of peace. He is barely visible behind the center shaft of the scale in the fourth *falla*.

³⁴ It is not entirely clear from either the text or the image who this character is, but it might be Trotsky given his hair and suit. Nonetheless, the figure stands at a podium with a hammer and sickle prominently displayed. Behind him is a factory scape.

allò que vol no hu atrapa.

he cannot have what he wants.³⁵

43
I això que des del matí
es calfa el carabací.

43
And so, since the morning,
he is warming his zucchini.³⁶

44
Pero de la furia intensa
hi ha qui en valor es defensa.

44
But in the intense fury
some defend with valor.³⁷

45
Lo que es pensava un terró:
ha resultat ser un és.

45
What seemed to be a sugar cube:
turned out to be a bone.³⁸

46
I la Pau, per estes coses,
té que acaminar en closes.

46
And Peace, because of all these things,
must walk with crutches.³⁹

47
Indignat, el Pare Etern
diu que el món és un infern.

47
Indignant, the Eternal Father
says that the world is the inferno.⁴⁰

48
I el poble treballador
produirà un món millor.

48
And the working people
will produce a better world.

³⁵ In this image, a soldier (whose helmet indicates he is a rebel) looks at a map of Madrid.

³⁶ This is clearly another idiomatic expression, although the meaning is unknown.

³⁷ This image shows the bear, the symbol of Madrid, standing behind a machine gun, defending the city.

³⁸ This refers to the fact that the rebels thought taking Madrid would be easy, but it ended up being quite difficult.

³⁹ In this image, an allegory of Peace hobbles about on crutches. Her head is bandaged and one of her eyes is blackened.

⁴⁰ The “Eternal Father” is the same figure who sits atop the windmill in the third *falla*.

APPENDIX F

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