

## **DIGGING "THE SPANISH EARTH" CURRENT VERSION,** **MARCH 2017**

Narr: The Spanish Civil War - waged from 1936 to 1939 - produced one masterpiece of cinema, *The Spanish Earth*.

The film shows the fields of battle and of death - but also of life-giving cultivation.

Our documentary delves into the people, passions, and politics of *The Spanish Earth*.

TITLE: *Digging "The Spanish Earth".*  
*The archaeology of a classic.*

Narr: In 1936, Europe, still suffering from economic depression, is divided into democracies and totalitarian states, whose power is growing.

America stands apart, not wanting to get involved in the mess of European politics.

The Western democracies seem more wary of international Communism than of a militant Fascism.

One country, Spain, tucked away in the extreme south-west of Europe becomes the crucible of Europe's divisions.

In Spain, in 1936, a Popular Front government is elected, uniting Republicans, Socialists, Communists, and Anarchists.

Text: La Pasionaria

La Pasionaria: Peasant, the revolution will give you land!

Narr: A president had replaced the king.

Spain is still a near feudal society, with landlords owning vast estates worked by an impoverished peasantry. Half of agricultural workers live on the edge of starvation.

Poster: Peasant! The revolution will give you land!

Landowners are now demonised.

The new government invites a revolution in land ownership.

Large estates are broken up, many landlords leave the country - some are murdered.

Land reform, collectives, co-operatives - the countryside is in turmoil.

In reaction, General Francisco Franco leads a rightwing rebellion.

Under his command, troops from Spain's Moroccan colonies invade the Spanish mainland.

Other generals, followed by most of the army soon join this rebellion. It calls itself Nationalist - but its dominant ideology is Fascist.

With the blessing of the Catholic Church, it is presented as a religious and patriotic crusade that will sweep away the scum of society.

Promising a romantic martyrdom in a holy war, the Nationalist battle cry is "Viva la muerte!" - "Long live death!"

Covertly aided by over 60,000 Italian troops and the German Air Force Condor Legion, this is the first combustion of fascist military might in Europe.

ID: Manuel Azaña, President of the Republic

President (Spanish spoken with English subtitles): We, the people of Spain, obtained the land and the right to cultivate it by democratic elections. But fascist landlords try to take our land away. Now we are forced to fight for the defense of the Spanish earth.

Narr: To keep the land he has won, the peasant must become a soldier.

The Popular Front government forms a people's militia to combat the generals' revolt.

The stigmata of the war are felt to this day.

### **Subtitles:**

**Battlefield guide: Republican plans did not include the capture of Villanueva del Pardillo.**

**The Brunete offensive started from that mountain ridge over there, and included two converging attacks, one from the ridge**

and another from Usera, to meet at Alarcón.  
The objective of this Republican maneuver...

Narr: Every year, Spanish republicans and foreigners make a pilgrimage to battlefields of the Civil War.

Among these pilgrims are those researching the war.

ID: Alex Vernon, author, *Hemingway's Second War*

Vernon VO: Hemingway loved Spain, he started coming here in the early 1920s when he was in his early twenties - he started coming here to see the bull-fights mostly, he came for several seasons in a row - and of course that led to *The Sun Also Rises*, his first novel.

He came back in the early 'Thirties to work on his bull-fighting book, *Death in the Afternoon*, and so was here in the early 'Thirties, when things started heating up, leading towards the war that broke out in 1936.

ID: Almudena Cros, flag-bearer of the lost Republic

ID: AABI: Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales

Narr: Almudena Cros is President of AABI, an organization dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the International Brigade - foreigners who fought for the Republican side. At its height, 50,000 brigadistas offered their lives to the Republic.

Almu VO: So here I am with Juan Antonio Mayoral (?spelling), he is one of the very few veterans of the Spanish Civil War. He was underage, he was 16 at the time, and he took part in some of the battles.

Almu: Mira, municiones ??? war - Yeah, this is a lid from a ammunition box - it would be great for *The Spanish Earth*, OK, the moment when they kind of like, um, they come ??? and they open the ammunition boxes, and we actually ???.

Narr: The Western Powers - Britain, France and the United States - with the horrors of the First World War still in mind, and not wanting to upset Hitler and Mussolini, close their eyes to the fascist intervention, and maintain a veneer of neutrality.

ID: President Roosevelt

Roosevelt: America hates war, America -

Seldes: FDR was chiefly I think to blame, because he could have broken the Neutrality Pact.

ID: George Seldes, independent journalist, 1983

Narr: George Seldes was one of the first American journalists to recognize the Spanish war for what it was - the first expression of fascist aggression on the European continent.

Seldes: Oh, I wasn't neutral at all, you see.

Text on film: American Institute of Public Opinion.

Film Narr: November 1936, the American Institute of Public Opinion, known as the Gallup Poll, asked a representative cross-section of American people (text also) If another war develops in Europe, should American take part again?

Text on film: No.

Film Narr: No. 95%.

Seldes: The falsehoods, you know - the whole United States press said that, said that the Spanish Republic was Communist, was run by Russia, and the hell with it.

ID Father Coughlin, Catholic radio priest

Coughlin: Text: The name of Franco! The Christian front of Spain against the invasion of the international popular Bolshevik front - Reds and Radicals fight for the cause of the Hammer and Sickle!

Narr: Voices like that of American priest Father Coughlin often dominate the airwaves.

International newsreels typically favour Franco.

ID American newsreel

American newsreel commentator: Spain in arms! Under the leadership of General Franco, General Queipo de Llano and others, Spain of tradition is rising to repel the Red invaders. They are greeted by exultant crowds seeking liberation from the reign of terror.

Seldes: I mean, I don't know who started it, but it was, whoever it was, it was doing the Fascists a really great service. Because that's what destroyed Spain.

Narr: In 1936, Dutch filmmaker Helen van Dongen is living in New York.

ID: Helen Van Dongen, 1981

Van Dongen: The question of a film about Spain and the Civil War out there became imminent, and Dos Passos wrote the script for me.

Narr: John Dos Passos, an acclaimed American writer with a deep social conscience, as revealed in his most famous trilogy, *USA*, had spent time in Russia, and had close links to the American Communist Party.

Van Dongen: *Spain in Flames* came first, that's the one that I made. That was my film.

I made the film, it was entirely stock material.

*Spain in Flames* was the beginning of making people aware of what was going on.

Poster: *Spain in Flames*

Narr: Van Dongen's film got very limited distribution.

Van Dongen: It turned out very quickly that the material was insufficient, and then it was Lillian Hellman, Archibald MacLeish, John Dos Passos, wanted to make the world know what was going on in Spain, that that was, you know, a real fascist war, they got together and formed Contemporary Historians, and raised some money and asked Joris Ivens to go to Spain and film.

Narr: Ivens and Helen van Dongen had been collaborators since their time in Holland.

ID: Joris Ivens, 1981

Ivens: Before I went to Spain, I was about a year in the United States, so many people I knew already, Dos Passos also, and Lillian Hellman, you see, before I went to Spain.

Narr: Ivens signs on to make a film for Contemporary Historians.

Joris Ivens had an international reputation as a filmmaker of the Left. Before arriving in the United States, he had been working in the Soviet Union.

TEXT: "SONG OF HEROES" "1933"  
"FILM MADE IN SOVIET RUSSIA BY JORIS IVENS"

Narr: But he had felt constricted by its government-run film industry.

In an America deep in an economic Depression, he finds a growing anti-establishment cinema amenable to his influence.

Ivens: Most of the people even that were on the Left at that time were also, were anti-fascist, you know. It was a whole movement, it was only - you must see it as a world movement, it was no wonder that in America many intellectuals, also many people in Hollywood, joined this movement, you know.

Narr: A militant Left recognizes that the Spanish war is a struggle against Fascism. Labour, artists, writers, strive to change public opinion, and ultimately, to move President Roosevelt and Congress away from from what the Left believes to be a false neutrality.

In Spain, the Nazi Condor Legion carries out the new tactic of bombing with the aim of total destruction - including indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets.

Ivens: It was the first time that fascist forces from Germany and from Italy interfered militarily with bombardments and with weapons in the course of a people's war. That's important, you know.

ID: American newsreel

Narr: Loyalist mobs destroy churches. Priests and nuns are murdered.

Narr: Much of the media, encouraged by the Catholic Church, denounces the Republicans as a Communist atheist mob.

Vernon: The propaganda on the Right was already talking about this being a Communist effort, whereas on the Left, they saw this as a Republican cause, a democratic cause, that certainly had influence and ties to the Communists and to the Socialists, but that fundamentally it was about - um - it was anti-Fascist, basically. MacLeish, he talked about how it's not a propaganda film, it's an anti-propaganda film to kind of combat propaganda on the Right.

Hemingway had a reputation for staying out of politics. We know of course that his sympathies would eventually lean towards the Republic, and he was always worried about the Nationalists.

Narr: As one of the Contemporary Historians team, John Dos Passos shares with Hemingway a love of Spain. Dos Passos and Hemingway had met in the First World War, when they were both ambulance drivers. Each holds a deep respect for the other's writings.

Vernon: Dos Passos is part of all of this, he's part of this brainstorming early on, and part of his job is to help recruit Hemingway, they were such good friends.

Hemingway, the first thing he did was throw his support in for the American Friends of Spanish Democracy, for their, for their ambulance group, and he eventually became the chairman of that ambulance committee, to supply ambulances for the Republican cause. So in December, I think it is, he gets contacted by North American Newspaper Alliance to go over as a war correspondent for them.

By the end of January, he is committed to going for the Ambulance Committee, for the North American Newspaper Alliance, NANA, and then also for *The Spanish Earth* project.

Ivens: At this time, before we went there, I said, What are you going to do? He said, I'm going to report and to say that every, every war is bad, and I'm going to say the truth about all this. And I said, Alright, you come.

Narr: Ivens arrives in Spain ahead of Hemingway.

Together with cameraman John Ferno, he immediately seeks the field of battle.

Vernon: So, we are here at the Arganda Bridge. This is an old railway bridge, and in early February, the Nationalists were trying to essentially encircle Madrid, trying to get across the Jarama River, and then cut the road between Madrid and Valencia.

Text: Voice of Hemingway

SE Narr: They've crossed the Jarama River and tried to take the Arganda Bridge.

Vernon: The Nationalists have occupied - you can see the heights on the other side of the river, right there.

The Republicans are on this side of the river, and in the film you see a lot of shots of Republicans underneath the bridge, over here, in their defensive positions, and to repel, to repel the attack.

Ivens and Ferno were doing all the shooting, this was in February. Hemingway would not arrive in the country until the second half of March.

Ivens: He saw the people that were fighting for the Republican cause, most of them were also old friends of his. Were also bull-fighters and barmen and other people he knew before the war, which were his friends, and they were now with, the the democratic side, the Republican side.

There was really here, you know, another kind of war going on, on the people's side there was justice, you know. So he really saw there - you couldn't say he really became an ardent anti-fascist, but he really took a side ideologically in this, in this time.

Vernon: Both Ivens and Hemingway were prone to self-aggrandizing, and also were clearly very fond of each other, so they spoke very well of each other in their memoirs and any kind of time they referred to one another. Hemingway certainly believed that he helped Ivens understand the military situation, and where to position the camera in advance of certain events unfolding.



Ivens: He really developed an anti-fascist thinking, because he saw, he saw what happened there, and the reality, you know, it was not theory, Hemingway was not a man of theories.

Vernon: Ivens perhaps felt he was helping educate Hemingway politically, I think, Hemingway thought he was, thought he was educating Ivens and Ferno um militarily and strategically.

Typewriter text: Because you had seen a little war when you were young you knew that Ivens and Ferno would be killed if they kept on because they took too many chances...

Ivens: You know that Hemingway was a reporter for the American press, his articles were very popular in the United States at that moment. But he had an advantage on the other journalists because I had the papers and the connections with, direct with the general staff of the Republican army and with the International Brigade.

Narr: The International Brigade was made up primarily of volunteers from Europe and the Americas.

Vernon: Ivens, as a filmmaker, he trained in the Soviet film industry, and so, since the International Brigades was essentially a Communist International-organized effort, many of the people who were in the International Brigades were Communist, right, were leaders in the Communist International, and so someone like Gustav Regler, **who (seems to be cut a bit)** was one of the commanders in the International Brigade, he like had made a film with Ivens years before, um, and so Ivens had these connections which really helped Hemingway as a journalist when he got there, because he just instantly had those connections.

Hemingway got along famously with the Brigaders, certainly with the officers - he was one of the guys.

SE Narr: This is the true face of men going into action. It is a little different from any other face that you will ever see.

Ivens: I could get much closer to the front, even to the first lines, which the other correspondents couldn't, so Hemingway liked to go with us, and we

used him very well, because he was strong, he took the cameras, also helped us, and was really a good friend and helpful at that moment, you know. Sometimes also about the story line, sometimes I had to ask him, you see.

ID: voice of Hemingway

SE Narr: Six men go forward into death, walk across a stretch of land and by their presence on it prove, "This earth is ours".

ID: Madrid, 2013

Narr: In a greatly transformed Madrid, Alex and Almudena track down sites that appear in *The Spanish Earth*.

Almu: If you turn back, you can see the building with the two pine cones as they call it, that features in *Spanish Earth*...

Vernon: So behind me is the location of where the Hotel Florida was, and basically this big red brick building that says "Gourmet Experience".

Narr: An upscale department store has replaced the historically important Hotel Florida, which was torn down in 1964. It was in the old Hotel Florida that a number of journalists elected to stay.

Ivens: Hotel Florida, when we started, was not too many people living there. Hemingway came there. There came also for, some people, especially from the, as Hemingway was there, from the Lincoln Battalion. They came from the front, they were tired, they stayed the night there, you see, and talked and I must say that Hemingway did a very good job with helping the morale of the Lincoln Battalion men.

Also it was a dangerous hotel because it was also bombarded, you know. I think er even the Fascist side knew that there were some people living there that er were making some reporting of films, you know.

Alex: In the film, there's one point where you see a dead body in front of a building

I'm guessing this is where the street was - ??? the body was in front of here...

SE Narr: This is a man who had nothing to do with war. A book-keeper on his way to his office at 8 o'clock in the morning. So now they take the book-keeper away, but neither to his home nor to his office.

Vernon: That scene is essentially next door to the Hotel Florida, and so that gives you a sense of just how dangerous it was, just stepping outside of the hotel could get you killed, basically.

ID: General Franco

Seldes: Franco was shelling the Telefonica, it was fourteen stories high, and was the tallest skyscraper in Spain. (Laugh)  
And the shells would fall short, they would hit the hotel, which was eight stories high, the only high building on the way.

So they knocked out the eighth and the seventh floors, Hemingway still lived on the sixth.

Matthews and Hemingway, they worked together. Matthews of *The Times*, you see.

Matthews was the most important of the newspapermen ??? there, there's no question.

Narr: Ivens sets up their camera on the balcony, which has a view over the distant battle lines.

But they need to get closer.

Seldes: University City was the University of Madrid. It was on the immediate north-west, outside the city limits. And every building had been destroyed by shell-fire, by Franco.

(Laugh) You could take a street-car, which went into the subway, to Moncloa. And that was the nearest you could get to University City. Then you could walk into University City, and Matthews did that with Hemingway, and they would - half the time they had to crawl on their stomachs. But they found a wrecked house, you see, which had a smashed window, and they would crawl up one flight of stairs and peep through that hole, you know. And they could see the Loyalist trenches in University City, and at a certain distance, the Franco trenches.

Narr: Ivens and Ferno join Hemingway and Matthews in this outpost, and film from there.

SE: Fuego!

Text on university wall: Long live the Republic! No to the Monarchy!

Narr: The university campus is still a battleground.

Ivens: We were going back from the front in the evening, and Hemingway said to me, You know, one of these days will come a very nice girl I know very well, you know. Blonde, blue eyes, and you know that her legs start at her shoulder, he said.

So we were all very excited, and Martha came, you see, and she really responded at the description Hemingway had given, you know.

Narr: Martha Gellhorn was a young woman from a well-connected family. She was a close friend of American First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Talented and glamorous, she had attracted Hemingway's attention. They had known each other for some months. Although Hemingway was married, he planned a rendezvous with Martha in Madrid.

Gellhorn: I went in with a knapsack, and I had I think fifty dollars. My idea was, I would just go and join these people and do whatever I can do.

Seldes: She'd gone to Spain to "get Hemingway", as she put it. And she did.

Gellhorn: I got up to Madrid and then and then from the minute one was in Madrid then one was at war, because it was shelled. The artillery was so near that you could hear the shell leaving the gun, it made a cough.

I used to drive a station-wagon, carrying blood, to a, to a battalion aid station. And I sauntered around the hospitals and chattered with the wounded, and wherever I could, I wrote letters for them.

Never thought of writing anything until Herbert Matthews and er Hemingway said to me, Well, write about it. I said, What can I write, I don't know anything about war. And they said, Well write about Madrid, and I said, Why, you know, it's just daily life. And they said, Well, it isn't everybody's daily life, which indeed it wasn't, because if you lived in a hotel which was hit by shell-fire regularly, whole town was hit by shell-fire, it wasn't indeed everybody's

daily life. So really, just to stop being nagged, I wrote a piece which was just that, what it was like living in Madrid. And I sent it to a friend, to somebody I knew on *Collier's*. It got into the magazine, and the next thing I knew I was on the masthead, and from then on I was *Collier's* war correspondent. Entirely fortuitous. It was not my intention to go and be a war correspondent.

Ivens: Her first war, she was er in the beginning a little hesitating, and then like some people in the war she was kind of innocent, you know, she took the things like it was, you know.

ID Hemingway

Narr: She accompanied Hemingway into zones of battle.

Gellhorn: The er siege of Madrid, which went on from August, I think, of 1936 until the very end of the war, it's unbelievable that a great city that people lived in it and starved and froze and were subjected to appalling shell-fire, and still they stayed, and there it was - I never saw anything like real panic, real hysteria in all that time.

Ivens: She was er very close to Hemingway, a companion of Hemingway, she really there was growing as a person, I think, she had learned a lot of things of life and of what happened in the world, in this war, you know. She matured, you could say, and as a reporter and as a person. I admire her very much. It's a very great woman.

Narr: Hemingway above all admired her bravery.

Gellhorn: The democracies did nothing to help the Republic, and Mussolini and Hitler did everything to help Franco. And that was the way it worked. The bombing was entirely done by Germans, the artillery was German. The Fascists

ID Italian dead

had troops, a whole army was defeated there. And they used it as a proving ground, oh, it was perfectly obvious.

SE Narr: The government pursuit plane shot one Junker down. I can't read German either.

Vernon: Hemingway says, I can't read German either. And the significance of that line of course is that what would be the Allied powers in World War II, France, the US, Great Britain, um, had signed a non-alli - a non-intervention treaty with Germany and Italy, saying we will not get involved with the Spanish Civil War, we are not going to get involved at all, um and a lot of people suspected that in fact Germany and Italy were violating that, were in fact providing arms and aircraft and personnel, and so forth. Hemingway and the crew, this is evidence, right, "Look, there is evidence that the Germans are here, and so this non-intervention pact is a sham". And on the other side, the democracies should in fact come in on the side the Republic and help out.

Vernon: Ivens just wants to just do the combat footage, get it out there, because he's worried time is passing, the Republicans need help.

Narr: Hemingway's close friend, writer John Dos Passos, one of the prime movers of the film, arrives in Spain shortly after Hemingway.

ID Ferno, Ivens, Dos Passos

He joins the film crew, and insists on the portrait of the village of Fuentidueña as counterpoint to the field of battle.

In the village, his fluency in Spanish is essential for success.

Hemingway is not present at the filming in Fuentidueña.

Ferno's camera catches the daily life of the village - the unionised bakery, the attempt to build a communal irrigation system. Unlike the battle sequences, many of the village scenes are clearly staged.

In his description of Fuentidueña from this time, Dos Passos outlines a society experiencing radical social change. The ten families who had owned the land had been driven away or murdered, and the land collectivised. An equitable wage-rate was established for everyone in the village.

The crew returns to a Madrid under siege, constantly bombarded by Franco's forces.

ID La Pasionaria: (not translated)

Although Ivens protests that he is anti-fascist, not pro-Communist, his political contacts in Spain are mainly with the Communist Party. The Popular Front is coming more and more under the domination of the Communist faction.

Vernon: A longtime Spanish friend of Dos Passos is Jose Robles, they've been friends for a long time, and he has disappeared. And Dos Passos when he's in Madrid, he's looking for signs of him, and it turns out he's been executed, um, it's not clear exactly by whom, but certainly by the Communist influence, dimension, right? of the Republican side.

Narr: Within the Popular Front, the different factions begin to split. Dissenters are disappeared. Communist discipline is what prevails.

Vernon: Hemingway does not believe that Robles was executed unjustly. What he tells Dos Passos is, Certainly, that if, if he was killed, there must have been cause for it.

Narr: In Madrid, Hemingway begins writing a play based on events in the Hotel Florida. He will call it *The Fifth Column* - the name given to Franco's spies and traitors inside Madrid.

Some time later, Hemingway would make what seems to be an oblique reference to the Robles affair.

Hemingway (from *The Fifth Column*): Members of the Fifth Column, when were captured inside the city, in the early days of the war, they were shot.

They deserved to be, under the rules of war, and they expected to be.

Vernon: Whatever the case, this of course upsets Dos Passos, and he's very upset that his friend was killed, that he does not have the support of his other friends, he starts asking questions, and his asking questions really, really bothers Ivens, he and Dos Passos are associates on this film, and he knows that anything Dos Passos does is going to affect his ability, affect his friendship, affect his professional associations, so he really wants Dos Passos out of the picture at this point.

Narr: From then on, Ivens would refer to Dos Passos as "the enemy".

Vernon: Maybe first of May the two of them fly out, and leave, and um essentially go their separate ways. Hemingway stays for another few days before he and Martha leave Spain.

Narr: Hemingway's close friendship with Dos Passos is broken, and will never be repaired.

For Dos Passos, the Robles affair is traumatic. A year later he will write of a "slowgrowing terror" felt by some under Communist witch-hunting. He will become an ardent anti-Communist.

At New York's May Day Parade in 1937, Spain is not forgotten. As Van Dongen edits *The Spanish Earth*, speeches supporting the Spanish Republic with strains of *The Internationale* fill the air.

Narr: Hemingway writes the narration, with Ivens insisting on a terse style that will prove ideally suited to his film.

Van Dongen: VO Then, by the time that the filming itself had finished, they came back to the United States, when I had most of the film edited up to a certain point.

Narr: Van Dongen is credited with the structure that deftly interweaves the field of battle with the field of agricultural production. It presents Ivens' depiction of the brutality of total war. With it, he wants to influence world - and especially American - public opinion.

Van Dongen: No, I had not been involved with any of the political activities on it, I kept my nose to the film. There was barely time enough to make the film, I had two other films going on at the same time, and that was more than I could handle.  
I had to finish the reels of the film as they came along.

Narr: The first screening of the film is on June fourth, 1937, in New York City.

Vernon: So the Writers' Congress that occurred at Carnegie Hall, it was basically put on by the Communist Party of the United States of America, essentially.



Narr: Gellhorn speaks at the Congress. Her luxurious Spanish fox-fur coat raises some eyebrows.

Gellhorn: The Congress? Well, it was anti-fascist, that's what it was about. I mean, all of them were passionately in favour of the Republic, they were all anti-fascist. There were two positions in the world, pro- and anti-fascist, and the place that was fighting fascism was in Spain.

Vernon: They had not really finished the film, they had sort of a rough-cut, they had not attached the narration to it, they had not attached sound effects to it, so Ivens was there kind of talking through the film as it's being shown, in an extremely rough form.

Narr: After the screening, Hemingway delivers his first public speech, to a packed house - an audience of thirty-five hundred.

Text: "Fascism is a lie..."

Vernon: Hemingway spoke, he was by all accounts incredibly nervous.

It was his first public speaking appearance really.

Loud applause for his speech, and it was a week later that really the first draft of the film on July 8 was shown in the White House, to the President and his wife.

Gellhorn: They were my friends, the Roosevelts, so I laid that on, that, that showing in the White House. And was there.

Ivens: It was the very first showing of the film, the print was still hot, you could say, you know. And we went for dinner, and after dinner we were in one of the central rooms of the White House, and the film was shown. And I would say with very much interest of President Roosevelt, he was sitting next to me, and said, "I want to ask questions, if I want to know something of Mr. Ivens, he will inform me".

*SE* Narr (Welles' voice): This Spanish earth is dry and hard. And the faces of the men who work that earth are hard and dry from the sun.

Ivens: In a documentary, you go to the human side, to the determining factors of the truth and of reality, in the daily life.

*SE* Narr (with Welles' voice): Living in the cellars of that ruined building are the enemy. They are professional soldiers fighting against a people in arms, trying to impose the will of the military on the will of the people, and the people hate them. But without their tenacity, and the constant aid of Italy and Germany, the Spanish revolt would have ended six weeks after it began.

Ivens: At the end, he said that, that he really did not realize that there a whole people was fighting against a force that came from Franco to attack the democracy in Spain, you know, he was very happy that he had seen this. And there some very important questions came up, which was, If the Spanish Republic could really win? And Hemingway and I and also Martha said, Yes, if they get arms, they could win, you know. Which we really believed. And, but we said, With this embargo that existed on the arms from America, from France, and so on, they are just cut off, you know, and and and the the the groups of of Hitler and Mussolini are selling as many arms as they can to the Franco side, you know. So they have a very hard time, and I said that should be broken, but, you know, Roosevelt, he he he laughed a little, and so on, and said, Yes, I know, but he was up there to a big political decision which couldn't be changed, unfortunately, which has changed maybe also some of the history of the world, you know.

Gellhorn: And they were both very much moved by it, both the President and Mrs. Roosevelt. And I think that they were both on the side of the Republic, but - public opinion wasn't there to support anything.

The position taken then, which was entirely based on all sorts of preconceived notions, notably, the position of the Catholic Church, completely pro-Franco, and the general assumption that the Republic was, you know, a bunch of ravening Reds, those were just, those were just reinforced constantly by propaganda, by a lot of lies, and there was no possible way to change it.

Ivens: There was one other comment of President Roosevelt, he said, Why, why haven't you been on the Franco side also, then it would be a very objective film? I said, If I would have been on the Franquist side, I wouldn't be here, you know. I would be executed.

Narr: A few years later, Roosevelt would admit that American failure to help Republican Spain had been the greatest error of his foreign policy.

Ivens and Hemingway now go to California. For Ivens, Hollywood is "the world's greatest centre of propaganda".

Ivens and Hemingway want to milk this capitalist propaganda factory not for its studios, but for its money.

Among the Hollywood elite, Ivens already has a substantial reputation as an avant-garde filmmaker.

Vernon: I think a lot of the Hollywood, Hollywood people were, they were left-leaning. And they were, they were sort of willing, despite the depths of Ivens' um connections to to the Communist International, I think that was, that was OK.

ID: Robert Mamoulian and John Garfield

Narr: Many of these Hollywood contacts would later be blacklisted in the McCarthy-era witch-hunts of the 'Fifties.

ID: Marlene Dietrich

Gellhorn: Hemingway worked very hard on *Spanish Earth*, the film, and raised a lot of money for ambulances, with that. And I think the fact that he was there, and on the side of the Republic, was of some use, some advantage.

Vernon: One purpose from Hemingway's perspective certainly, was to raise funds for the ambulances. And so as you watch the film, there's a great scene of watching the casualties, they're carrying them on stretchers, you see them being put in ambulances, and this is towards the end of the film, partially because organically it sort of would be the after-battle shots, but also because, as soon as the film ends, Hemingway or Ivens would often stand up and make a pitch to give money for the ambulances. And Hemingway of course was in the Red Cross as an ambulance section leader in World War I, he was wounded, and so had experience riding in an ambulance as a wounded soldier, um - and there's a speech he gives - he or Ivens would give afterwards, after screening of *Spanish Earth* to raise funds would often say things like, "I don't know if you know what it's like to ride in the back of an ambulance when you are in pain, the people around you are screaming and blood is dripping on you - if you are lucky enough to get an ambulance at all". And so that was one of his ways of raising money for the ambulance service.

Narr: At private and public screenings, the film raises enough money for 17 ambulances.

Ivens badly needs to tap into the powerful distribution and publicity networks of the Hollywood studios. But he is turned down. *The Spanish Earth* is too politically sensitive.

He has to turn to a small leftwing distributor, Garrison/Prometheus. The film does not hit the major circuits, but has a healthy distribution nonetheless - largely to sympathetic audiences.

In the Spanish Pavilion at the International Exhibition of Modern Art held in Paris in 1937, clips from *The Spanish Earth* hold pride of place with Picasso's *Guernica* - another denunciation of indiscriminate bombing of civilians.

In the United States, Britain, and Holland, it comes under censorship from authorities that do not want to offend Germany and Italy.

It is shown in Spain, but receives little interest. There, they live the war.

Later in 1937, Hemingway and Gellhorn return to Spain. There, they witness the death throes of the Republic.

Gellhorn: It was a very small, very much do-it-yourself war, it was the side of the poor.

Narr: Thousands of refugees flee into France, leaving behind a triumphant fascist army, and a slaughter of civilians that Ivens's film was powerless to stop.

Gellhorn: And, and those of us who cared about it, cared about it I suppose more than anything before or since.

Text: Great Victory Parade in Madrid!

Narr: On April 1, 1939, Francisco Franco assumes power.

Ivens: On this kind of war, the reporting, there's really only one side, you see. For us, you know, for the kind of people we are, making documentaries, for

reporting maybe it's different. But we really took sides, and openly side. We didn't say, "We are formally objective", no, we thought that the Spanish cause was the real cause of the future of democracy in Spain, you see. And also, what you shouldn't forget, that this film was really a kind of indication that the Second World War is around the corner. It was like a match, showing the match to the fire.

Narr: In September, 1939, the Second World War begins.

In 1940, Generalissimo Franco meets with Hitler at the border of a conquered France.

ID: Spain honours the Condor Legion

Although German and Italian assistance had been essential to the defeat of the Republic, Franco kept his country out of the European conflagration - there would be no Allied invasion of Spanish soil. Instead, thousands of Spanish volunteers die for Hitler on the frozen steppes of Russia.

Hemingway's novel about the Spanish Civil War, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, re-establishes him as a leading writer.

He divorces his wife, and marries Gellhorn in 1940. They both report the Second World War, but separately.

Gellhorn would become a leading war reporter of her generation.

In 1945, Gellhorn and Hemingway divorce.

Despite his skill in documentary, Ivens plays a minimal role in America's massive propaganda machine of the Second World War.

Moving to Canada, he makes one film.

Text on film: *The National Film Board of Canada presents Action Stations*

Narr: Ever since his arrival in the United States in 1936, Joris Ivens had been under FBI surveillance as a "dangerous Communist".

When he leaves the United States in 1945, it is made clear he will not be welcomed back.

Gellhorn: There was a wonderful phrase which developed later, as soon as World War II started, that it was absolutely correct to be anti-fascist, not only correct, but obligatory. But all of us who had been anti-fascist for a good long time before were known as "premature anti-fascists", and that was a very dubious thing to be. "A premature anti-fascist". It was correct to be anti-fascist from Pearl Harbor on, maybe even when, after the war started in Europe, but the previous ones - it was in our dossiers, you know, those wonderful things that are mopped up about anybody who happens to be ahead of its time: "premature anti-Fascist". We used to call each other that, rocking with laughter.

Narr: The Spanish dictator Franco ruled over the Spanish earth until his death in 1975.

Text: Back to Fuentidueña

Narr: In 2013, Almudena Cros and Alex Vernon travel back to Fuentidueña to excavate buried memories.

(ID Bus driver) Victor Manuel de Blas Maria: in mirror

Almu: We are looking for people who remember those war years in your town.

Because there are very few people left.

Tell us your feelings about the War.

In your town, is the war still a very sensitive subject?

Driver: People of our age talk about it for the grandchildren -

Almu: The grandchildren, of course.

Why do people not want to know about the War? Do they get sad, or angry? They do not want to talk about it, just bury it?

Driver: yes, bury it. Just push it aside.

Driver: During the war, there were more people on the Left than on the Right.

Almu: Yes, after the war, there was a lot of repression.

Driver: Now, if you saw someone with the Falangist flag, it would not seem right.

Almu: Yes, that's understandable.

Driver: Today, it's not relevant to their daily lives, they just want to move on.

Almu (English): I think it's here, see.

SE Narr (Hemingway): The village of Fuentidueña, where fifteen hundred people live and work the land for the common good.

Narr: After Franco's death, Spain's earth remained in the hands of the large landowners.

Peasants left the land to seek jobs in industry.

Fuentidueña became a dormitory community for people who work elsewhere, and for retirees.

SE Narr: Julian catches a ride on an empty truck, and comes home sooner than he expected.

Almudena Cros and Alex Vernon search for traces of Julian, the Republican soldier, who in the film returns home on leave.

Man: That one, Julian, was into politics.

Almudena: He was into politics.

Man: Because Julian was at the front and came here and was liked amongst 16, 17, 18 year olds, and gave them military training here.

SE Narr: Julian drills the village boys in the evening, when they come back from the fields.

Almu: And Julian, what happened to Julian?

Man: Julian, I don't know exactly. When the war ended they arrested Julian.

Almu: He was arrested.

Man: He was in prison but I don't know for how many years. Many...

Almu: He was in prison... for many years.

Man: Later, he was lucky because they let him go and I've heard that he started to work as a waiter.

Almu: Apparently, he worked as a waiter.

Man: And he worked there until he retired. He was working in Madrid.

Almu: In Madrid.

### **FIRST BAKERY**

Almu: His name is Julian. He is on the front lines. Then he sees the town is OK, and his mother, and so on. And his house is very close to the church.

Store clerk: So, think about it, we're talking about..

Almudena: About '37.

Customer: Of course.

Almu: About people that are -

Customer: The movie is *El Mundo Español*.

Almu: Yes, yes, *The Spanish Earth*!

Customer: And the text is in English, by Hemingway.

Almu: Exactly!

Customer: I have the movie, and I have the translation into Spanish.

The text is by Hemingway in English, but Ivens filmed the movie -

Almu: Ivens! And you spoke with him?

Customer: Yes, I spoke with him and he was - he knew a person from here that was in the film.

Store Clerk: The woman who was buried here yesterday was from that time.

Customer: Yes.

### **(MAYOR'S HOUSE)**

ID: Pedro Mora Camara

Mayor: Mayor: The film - the documentary, about -

Almu: He was born here.

Narr: It was the newly elected alcalde of Fuentidueña, the first Socialist mayor after the death of Franco, who facilitated Joris Ivens' return to Fuentidueña in 1985.

Mayor: When I was mayor, my main concern was to recover that documentary.



Almu: Because up until '75 when Franco died, you couldn't watch that documentary.

Mayor: Of course, with all the censorship. I was trying to do it when the Socialist Party came to power in 1983, so then I applied to the Minister of Culture, and I was very surprised when a few days later they awarded Joris Ivens the Gold Medal for the Arts.

Mayor: Yes, then when when Joris Ivens arrives in Spain he tells me that he wants to visit Fuentidueña.

ID: TOWN HALL

Almu: And have you had any screenings in the cultural centre? Because that film puts Fuentidueña on the map.

Francisco Gonzales: It's a movie that I have watched with all of my friends, and we all love it.

INSERT: In fact, in the early 'Eighties they played the film in the movie theatre here.

Almu (English, but not clear, so need subtitles even though she translates): In 1982, they played the film in the local cinema for the whole village.

Francisco Gonzales: The whole village was there, and in fact, Julian was even there to see the movie.

Almu (English): And Julian was there, in 1982.

Almu: And everybody was there - come on!

Francisco Gonzales: What's more, he had (Julian) had never seen the film.

Almu: Of course, exactly.

Almu (English): Because they had never seen the film because obviously under Franco they had never shown it.

Francisco Gonzales: Later they passed out DVD copies. END INSERT

Alm: Where are we on the map?

Francisco Gonzales: We are here right now, and this - OK, we are here.

Almu: There? Oh, we're really close to the river!

Francisco Gonzales: The iron bridge is here.

Almu: The iron bridge.

Francisco Gonzales: OK and this is the old ravine that goes down, and here there is a route that the trucks use.

Almu: Uh - the scene with the trucks going by the road, that's the road.

Francisco Gonzales: Here they go down into the ravine with the mules, the soldiers, and what's more, there is a shot where you can see the bridge.

SE Narr: The village is on the Tajo river, and the main highroad is the lifeline between Valencia and Madrid. All food for Madrid comes on this road.

**(SECOND BAKERY)**

Almu: The bread! The bread - we have the bread!

Almu: Please put the bread on the counter, and we'll take a photo.

Baker: I don't like photos, I don't have any photos of myself, and my husband's not here.

Almu: You don't have any photos, and you so pretty?

Baker: Is this better? Let me find a sprig of wheat.

Narr: The UGT, the Workers' Union, with other leftwing organizations, was forced into exile, and would not return until after the death of Franco in 1975.

Almu: So she's turning 80 next month, OK? And her sister appeared in the film.

Almu: In the bakery, in the bakery scene! Oh my god!

Prudencia:

Almu: She was working in the bakery at the time, she was sixteen or something, and she features in the film.

Almu: And your sister survived the war?

Prudencia: Yes - in jail.

Almu: The one who worked in the bakery ended up being jailed.

Almu: Her sister was in the Madrid jail with these thirteen young girls that they executed in Madrid, they were like thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old. And her mother-in-law was in the same jail.

Prudencia: And that's why I have so many memories - so many, so many, so many. How can I forget that movie?

**(CAFE)**

Almu: One question: do you know if they bombed them there in the village?

Man: Yes.

Almu: OK, so the village was bombed.

Man: ...when they bombed them, that's where they went down to hide.

Almu: Oh, there's a bomb shelter, like a bomb shelter in a cave.

Man: In all of those caves. They hid themselves in the caves, because it went on for a long time. When they bombed them in the fields, they went to the caves to hide.

Almu: They hid underground, in the caves.

SE Narr: The Spanish Earth is dry and hard. The faces of the men who work that earth are hard and dry from the sun. This worthless land with water would yield much. For fifty years we've wanted to irrigate, but they held us back. Now we will bring water to it, and raise food for the defenders of Madrid.

Text in newsreel: "National Wheat Service"

Newsreel commentator: In the presence of the Minister of Agriculture, a ploughing competition takes place.

Narr: A Franco-era newsreel celebrates the restoration of the old feudal system with a fascist salute.

Under Franco, seized and collectivised plots were restored to former landlords.

Peasants who had briefly owned land were once more tenant farmers, owing allegiance to landlord and to dictator Franco.

Narr: Today in Fuentidueña, the land is owned by five families - half the number of before the Republic.

Narr: In the cemetery of Fuentidueña, those who fought for Franco find an honoured plot.

Text "Fallen for God and for Spain" "Present!"

Fascist heroes were said to die "cara al sol" - with their faces towards the sun, towards heaven.

Those considered "Reds" had their land taken away, were imprisoned, often tortured and killed. They find no such memorial.

Thousands of the executed were often buried with their faces down - towards hell.

An estimated 180,000 victims were buried in mass graves, unmarked.

Only in recent years has the Spanish earth started to yield its dead.

Text: Ernest Hemingway, *On the American Dead in Spain*

Hemingway's voice: This spring the dead will feel the earth beginning to live again...

For our dead are a part of the earth of Spain now and the earth of Spain can never die.

Each winter it will seem to die, each spring it will come alive again.

Our dead will live with it forever.

Ivens claps hands.

**CREDITS over Ivens freeze**

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PICTORIAL SOURCES

\*\*The Spanish Earth

\*\*Spain in Flames

\*\*Will of the People

JFK Library

Confederación Nacional del Trabajo,  
Archivo de la Revolución española

Library of Congress

National Archives, Washington

Filmoteca Madrid

Critical Past

Dos Passos Literary Estate

National Film Board of Canada

AABI, Madrid

VAGA, New York

Nederlands Fotomuseum,

\*\* Fernhout Collection

Tamiment, New York University

Villon Films Archive

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\*\*Frank and Mercedes Catala

**FADE OUT. RELAX FREEZE OF IVENS OPEN HANDS, SO THAT HE CLOSES  
HANDS AND RELAXES. BRING UP TEXT BELOW OVER IVENS.**

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

Joris Ivens

Helen van Dongen

Ernest Hemingway

Martha Gellhorn

George Seldes

and all anti-fascists,

premature and present

**\*\* FADE OUT "DEDICATED TO" and IVENS PIX, FADE IN:**

\*\*A production of Peter Davis

VILLON FILMS, 2017

END