
Spanish women of the Popular Front faced uncertain circumstances.¹ In 1936, the Spanish government and various political bodies were locked in an intense battle that rose to the level of civil war. Society split along ideological lines, calling into question social structures, especially those regarding women.² Although many women and their various political organizations fervently aided the Republican cause during the war and received initial praise from the Republican government, the women of the Popular Front were nevertheless not free of gendered societal norms.³ Leftist political organizations of the Popular Front rejected in rhetoric the subservient roles women occupied relative to men, but inequality and the persistence of traditional gender norms continued to affect Republican women. These traditional gender roles ascribed to women were especially evident in propaganda images. Although women had different experiences regionally and temporally, most contended with the traditional feminine norms deeply ingrained within Spanish society, even in the Republican zones.⁴ These female norms and roles primarily encompassed those associated with the home and the rearing of children. Women of the Popular Front battled to maintain the civic rights and gains made during the Second Republic. However, they faced both articulated and silent opposition from their deeply conservative society. This societal opposition to change is evident in examination of the ways women were treated by male-dominated political affiliates, regardless of political ideology and, more important in terms of the present research, the manner in which images of women were manipulated and defined in propaganda.

As the war dragged on, images of women in leftist propaganda reflected public opinion in

¹ Popular Front forces consisted of leftist political bodies, including communists, socialists, republicans, anarchists, and socialist/anarchist trade unions.
⁴ George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, Spain at War, 129.
relation to women’s more visible position in society and the war. At the beginning of the war, women commanded more freedoms in the public sphere, but by the middle to end of the war experienced a near-complete reversal back into the private and domestic sphere as a result of the conservative nature of Spanish society. This shift from a radical depiction of women as fighters or participants in revolutionary activities at the beginning of the war to images portraying them in traditional gendered roles such as nurses, mothers, and farmers (conservative figures in the domestic sphere) demonstrates the difficulty, and perhaps inability, to legislate social change. The change in imagery and the persistence in some leftist propaganda of traditional female roles also can be viewed as demonstrating the confusion that men and women themselves had over the position of females in Spanish culture. Popular Front political parties in theory supported women’s equality and sometimes displayed this notion proudly in propaganda materials as the war broke out. However, women were still treated and overwhelmingly depicted in traditional roles, or as dependent figures. Moreover, propaganda demonstrated the confusion over women’s place in Spanish culture and, perhaps more importantly, the conservative current of Spanish society, regardless of political tenets.

The primary sources used in this paper are principally visual—specifically leftist propaganda images and some photographs, although buttressed by some written accounts, other documents, and information related to various women’s organizations within the Popular Front. These visual sources allowed me to analyze potential readings of the images—principally to examine the intended meaning that political organizations ascribed to the position of women through their depiction in propaganda. By exploring the plethora of visual depictions of women, we can better understand the way political organizations and even Spanish society defined and manipulated women’s position. These visual sources encapsulate, with both detail and vivid imagery, the attitudes toward women and the deeply

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5 Images used during this research are located in the appendixes at the end. Appendix A includes posters from before the civil war (Figures 1-5), Appendix B includes posters from 1936-1937 (Figures 6-43), Appendix C includes posters from 1938-1939 (Figures 44-49), and Appendix D includes posters of unknown dates/artists (Figures 50-70).
divergent, but overwhelmingly traditional, perceptions of women during the Spanish Civil War. The paper is divided into four primary sections: (1) a brief background, (2) women’s organizations during the conflict, (3) representations and activities at the beginning of the war (roughly 1936-1937) as both radical and traditional, and (4) the nearly full shift toward more traditional female representation by the end of the war. The final two sections, which focus on primary sources, rely primarily on images to support assertions.

The history of the Spanish Civil War, and specifically that of women in the conflict, remains a relatively new topic in historical scholarship. Although the war occurred from 1936 to 1939, only after the death of Dictator Francisco Franco in 1975 did most primary sources become available. Also a new historical topic and in need of further analysis, this work aims to fill some of the gap in scholarship by specifically examining the complex and often contradictory portrayals of women in propaganda, rhetoric, and reality. Historians, while first examining the war in terms of political focus, have switched to favoring cultural and social emphases in correlation with overall historical trends. Although the cultural implications involved in this study are important, this emphasis at times overlooks the political considerations of the topic. Researchers have examined a broad range of primary sources, but few have fully explored the significant number of propaganda-related images available. My paper contributes to this field of study because I specifically examine women’s portrayal and manipulation in propaganda and how these depictions changed and reflected societal sentiments, political rhetoric and confusion over women’s place in society. Moreover, this work points to broader issues of how social movements may not correspond with their own stated purposes or expectations. Especially helpful in thinking about women’s portrayal and interpretation is Stuart Hall’s article “Encoding, Decoding,” in which Hall discusses the processes of encoding visual sources as well as

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6 The most notable scholars and sources on the subject include Shirley Mangini’s research on memoirs and oral testimonies, Mary Nash’s *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* that examines the conflict as rooted in social and cultural history and combats the political and “heroic” approach many took in the 1970s.
decoding the meaning and associations within the source. Hall points out that the level of connotation in a visual image, “its contextual reference and positioning in different discursive fields of meaning and association, is the point where already coded signs intersect with the deep semantic codes of a culture and take on addition, more active ideological dimensions.”

SPAIN DURING THE SECOND REPUBLIC AND THE PRELUDE TO WAR

The position of women in Spanish society during the early twentieth century was both uncertain and in a phase of transformation. Liberal and feminist ideas had begun to take root in Europe, and an increasing number of women had gained a heightened awareness of the societal differences between themselves and men. This nascent cultural change existed in Spain in 1931, when the liberal Second Republic was elected into power. This new government issued numerous rights to women for the first time in Spanish history, including the right to divorce as well as legally to obtain an abortion. In the midst of the early twentieth century, one of Europe’s most conservative, agrarian, and least-developed countries made a volte-face and attempted to effectuate social change through legislation. These civil rights, however, were curtailed by the 1936 military uprising that led Spain into brutal turmoil and challenged the legitimacy and laws of the Second Republic.

Traditionally, women in Spain were held to orthodox gender roles. As Mary Nash describes in her book, Defying Male Civilization, “The predominant discourse on women…was based on the ideology of domesticity, evoking a female prototype of the perfecta casada (perfect married lady),

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7 In addition, Hall’s discussion on the dominant meaning of a visual source helped me examine propaganda images in context with their institutional/political/ideological/social codes.
9 Liberal in this context relates to modern conceptions, including freedom of speech and the press, separation of church and state, and universal suffrage
whose primordial gender role was that of caring for home and family.” Women in Spain had long been associated with the home and the rearing of children, in accordance with societal norms and Catholic teachings. In spite of some liberal resistance by women in the late nineteenth century during the first-wave of feminism, women continued through the outbreak of the civil war to be subordinate to their husbands in terms of legal standing, social expectations, and opportunities. As an example, the education of women was so limited that in 1920, sixteen years before the outbreak of the war, only two percent of the Spanish university student population was female. As noted, it was not until enactment of the liberal constitution of the Second Republic that women began to gain some level of legal equality, breaking from the civil and penal codes of previous generations that had all but ensured women’s subservience to men. This move toward gender equality represented a fundamental change in Spain’s social structure, a change many groups such as the Catholic Church and right-wing political bodies found objectionable and arguably regarded as against nature. This alteration of norms shifted society in a new direction, far from the deeply conservative and conventional social values to which both men and women in Spain were accustomed. When tensions became evident within the Second Republic and the civil war erupted, a substantial number of women stood against fascism in an attempt to preserve their newfound freedoms.

Before the war, women were overwhelmingly depicted as representations of the Spanish state (See Figures 2-4). Women’s usage in propaganda as symbols of the Spanish Republic correlates with the notion of women being the mothers of the nation, a sentiment that imbues women with the domestic and maternal tone that characterized Spanish females for hundreds of years. In fact, this metaphor of the Republic as being female corresponded with the notion that the revolution was a

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14 Shirley Mangini, Memories of Resistance: Women’s Voices from the Spanish Civil War, 5.
15 Mary Nash, Defying Male Civilization, 15.
mother. Women also were drawn with a sort of ethereal quality—as representations of theoretical ideals such as peace and justice (See Figures 21-24, 47, 62-63). Despite more radical depictions of women at certain points, these two trends in the imagery of women nevertheless remained consistent throughout the entire conflict, demonstrating both the conservative social tendencies of society as well as the confusion that existed even within leftist propaganda.

As a result of the war, women gained societal liberties they previously had not possessed. Women’s presence in the workplace was tolerated, as the demand for females in the economic sector grew more pronounced with the exodus of men to the warfront. Some women even achieved managerial positions, producing a small but significant change in the workplace. In addition, the legalization of divorce and abortion and increased opportunity for education instilled many women with a sense of liberty and self-worth they had, for the most part, not experienced before. Various social spheres also were suddenly open to women, who were free to fraternize with others in a variety of public places such as restaurants and pubs, although custom still prevented many from going to these places without a chaperone. One of the most visible ascents of women in society was the political role a number of them began to play. One example was the prominent Dolores Ibárruri, known as La Pasionaria, who served as a crucial figure in the anti-fascist resistance.

However, even Ibárruri was thought of by some as a mother figure for Republican Spain, demonstrating that even politically prominent and advocacy women were thought of in line with traditional female gender norms. Aware of such roles, Ibárruri herself may have constructed her figure to reflect that of motherhood. Kristine Byron elaborates on this concept of Ibárruri as a mother,

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17 George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, Spain at War, 128.
19 George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, Spain at War, 128.
arguing that “by setting up the revolution as mother, Ibárruri could more easily claim her place in it, thus deflecting potential criticism based on her sex rather than on her politics. She appropriates the iconic mother—the Virgin Mary—exchanging a religion that oppresses women (Catholicism) for one that is potentially liberating (Marxism).”

Other prominent women such as Frederica Montseny, who was the first woman in Spain to be a member of a government cabinet, and Teresa Pàmies advanced in public life through their importance to political processes. These women, and the examples they set through their achievements and independence, served as models to many Republican women, although very few experienced the same level of success. Regardless of their political gains, these prominent women also faced traditional gender norms.

Women of the Popular Front had various reasons for joining the anti-fascist cause. A desire to protect the civic freedoms gained during the liberal Second Republic was the principle cause for many, especially rural and city-dwelling working-class women. In fact, there was widespread female mobilization throughout Spain during the war, and a high number of ordinary women actively contributed to the war effort. Not simply the political elite moved against the nationalists; thousands of middle-class women committed to the anti-fascist cause formed organizations to lend their talents to the Popular Front war effort.

WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONS OF THE POPULAR FRONT

Before examining women’s portrayal and experiences at the beginning of the war, a differentiation should be made among the various women’s organizations. Despite the disunity arising from differing goals over women’s position in society, Republican women’s groups all sought to

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22 Kristine Byron, “Writing the Female Revolutionary Self: Dolores Ibárruri and the Spanish Civil War,” 149-150.
23 George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, Spain at War, 127.
25 Mary Nash, Defying Male Civilization, 61.
challenge, in some manner, the limited opportunities and rights available to females.\textsuperscript{26} Women in various Popular Front organizations had varying objectives in relation to gender roles and women’s position in society; they nevertheless banded together to confront the threat of a fascist government.\textsuperscript{27} Women of the \textit{Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas} (AMA) and the similar organization from Catalonia, \textit{Unió de Dones de Catalunya}, focused on assembling women for the antifascist cause and paid little attention to feminist rhetoric. The Marxist Female Secretariat of \textit{the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista} (POUM) viewed the liberation of women as viable only within a communist nation. This view contrasted with the most extreme outlook adopted by the \textit{Mujeres Libres}, the anarcho-syndicalist association that rejected feminism and fought to topple capitalism and infuse society with libertarian tenets.\textsuperscript{28} All subscribed to a belief that social gains would be lost under a Franco dictatorship, causing them to band together under the Popular Front, even if they disagreed on several issues.

The most radical female organization of the Spanish Civil War, the \textit{Mujeres Libres}, or Free Women, undoubtedly held the view most challenging to traditional Spanish ideas about women. \textit{Mujeres Libres} emphasized the necessity of social and cultural changes in terms of sex and gender roles. This radical and potentially abrasive position informs Figure 51, with the female depiction centered and in an authoritative pose, with arms upraised, combined with the message translated, “Women! Your family is constituted by all the freedom fighters.”\textsuperscript{29} Even in this poster, one of the most radical examined by this research, the text seems to appeal to women by employing the concept of family. Interestingly, the guns in the lower-left corner appear to be pointed at her, potentially illustrating the contempt many in society held for the group’s members for their obviously

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\textsuperscript{26} Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 63.
\textsuperscript{27} José Alvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert, \textit{Spanish History Since 1808} (London: A Hodder Arnold Publicaton, 2000), 248.
\textsuperscript{28} Martha A. Ackelsberg, \textit{Mujeres Libres: El Anarquismo y la Lucha por la Emancipacion de las Mujeres} (Madrid: Virus, 2002), 41.
\textsuperscript{29} “Mujeres Libres,” (artist unknown), Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores, http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Anonimos/Anon.htm
\end{flushright}
unconventional stance, although the weapons may also be viewed as resting on soldiers’ shoulders as the fighters leave her behind. Historian Frances Lannon cites one specific incident of men laughing at a poster promoting a speech to be given by a member of Mujeres Libres. These men found the concept of a woman giving a lecture in public so unrealistic as to be humorous.30

Another issue women of the Mujeres Libres faced was the assumption by many men within the Republican movement that a liberal and free woman was therefore a “loose” one.31 In such circumstances, Mujeres Libres attempted to spread a message of absolute equality and other libertarian ideals. In its anthem, the organization declares that ‘afirmando promesas de vida/ desafiamos la tradición/ modelemos la arcilla caliente/ de un mundo que nace del dolor.’32 Explicitly radical in its language and tone, the anthem of the Mujeres Libres matches the revolutionary message of the organization, visible in the line “we defy tradition.” In addition, the line “we model the warm clay” may be read as implying that the women of Mujeres Libres believed they would have to achieve gender equality with their own hands.

Despite such goals and rhetoric, as well as those held by their contemporary anarchist organizations, women of the Mujeres Libres and the CNT faced the same perceptions related to domestic responsibilities and inequality as members of other Popular Front organizations.33 Helen Graham elaborates on this difference between political rhetoric and women’s actual experiences:

When urban working women did join unions, they faced incomprehension, when not downright hostility, from the male-dominated bureaucracy and/or membership… In spite of anarcho-syndicalism’s abstract espousal of female equality the daily practice of the vast majority…was as patriarchal as their non-libertarian counterparts.34

Though they may not have practiced equality, membership in the anarchist organizations grew

32 “Spanish Civil War: Song, Women’s Anthem,” Women in World History (Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University), http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/p/245.html
33 CNT stands for the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, the anarcho-syndicalist federation of labor unions, commonly associated with the FAI, Federación Anarquista Ibérica, the Iberian Anarchist Federation.
34 Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, Spanish Cultural Studies, 101-102.
significantly during the war, even among women. Interestingly, Mujeres Libres was the most radical female organization in terms of concepts related to social change, but its members did not identify with feminism (though the beliefs of Mujeres Libres was the most aligned with typical feminist ideology).\textsuperscript{35} The various political parties and unions to which women’s organizations belonged often manipulated the groups as a way to entice women to join their coalition. Women’s organizations continued to be subordinate and dependent to their overarching political body, a situation that might be viewed as an ironic parallel to the way women continued to be subservient to men in society. Mujeres Libres was an exception to this trend, as it attempted to remain autonomous from the anarchist organizations and maintained its goals and messages with much more resilience than other female-representing organizations.\textsuperscript{36}

Unlike the Mujeres Libres and its independent status from the anarchist organizations, the Female Secretariat was an established branch of the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, or POUM. As a communist organization, the POUM in rhetoric proclaimed an inherent belief in liberation for women. The Female Secretariat, however, experienced the same resistance against gender equality within society as did the Mujeres Libres. With the Female Secretariat, this resistance originated directly within its parent organization and the dominant POUM. Recognizing their treatment based on traditional gender norms, the Female Secretariat took to publishing a newspaper entitled Emancipación in which members focused on the role of women in the revolutionary process as well as promotion of gender equality.\textsuperscript{37} These women were aware of the failure of many men in the POUM to acknowledge the equality of sexes that the party rhetoric emphasized, and often published sections of the newspaper lamenting the negligence of men in accepting these ideals and putting them into

\textsuperscript{35} Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 84.
\textsuperscript{36} Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 87.
\textsuperscript{37} Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 220.
practice. Although the goals of the *Mujeres Libres* and the Female Secretariat of the POUM varied substantially, women in both nevertheless experienced the same gender discrimination by members of their own or peer organizations.

The women’s organization least concerned with gender issues was the communist-inspired *Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas* (AMA). The AMA was a unique organization, with its constituency including members of a variety of political parties—Republican, communist, socialist, and notably Basque Republicans—but also a large group of women who held no political affiliation. Being the least radical of the women’s organizations and the only one officially supported by the government, the AMA strongly appealed to and attracted many traditional women in Spain, especially because the AMA focused on providing women with activities related to the home front and did not espouse radical notions of gender equality and roles. By appealing to women with activities that were more readily feasible and typically not outside gender norms, the AMA was able to consolidate a large body of women in support of the Popular Front war effort.

Focused on preparing women to assume factory jobs earlier held by men, the AMA also helped women to gain work in public transit, other industries related to the war effort, and hospitals. As its name suggests, the AMA was more concerned with halting the spread of fascism than with promoting women’s rights. Therefore, the AMA provided a common ground through which women could associate with other women and work against the fascist cause, but did not stand for the same gender equality that other Popular Front women’s organizations did. Promoting women’s aid to the home front, the organization did not give much consideration to gender equality and was more traditionalist in its notions of women’s activities during war. This traditional orientation may be a reason why the

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41 Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 76.
organization appealed so greatly to non-politicized women, who were like many others still uncomfortable with the radical rhetoric of other Popular Front organizations representing women.

REVOLUTION AND THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, CIRCA 1936-1937

Women’s radical depiction during the beginning of the war existed in three main fields—political rhetoric, the miliciana, and the economic sector, or a combination thereof. During the elections of the Second Republic as well as at the beginning of the war, women were used to express party rhetoric.  

This intent is especially visible in Figure 5, which reads “Woman! The Republican Left will break your bonds. Respond to the rally.”  

On her knees, the woman is bound by the wrists, reinforcing the rhetorical notion that the Republican Left will liberate women from their traditional domestic and legal bonds. Another example of women’s portrayal used to further party rhetoric is found in Figure 14, a CNT-FAI poster that features a battle scene.  

Women fighters in this image are displayed almost in equal numbers to and alongside men, not surrounded or alone as is the case with other propaganda featuring the miliciana. While the miliciana was a radical figure in the Popular Front, she was only present at the very beginning of the war in some locations. The image, suggesting that women fought in equal numbers with men, is misleading and a clear example of the use of the miliciana to support party rhetoric.

As noted, the greatest challenge to women’s traditional gender norms during the war arose through the miliciana, or militiawoman, that burst into Spanish society at the outbreak of the war in 1936. Clad in revolutionary and masculine blue overalls, totting a gun, and marching among men, the

42 Also see Figure 17.
43 Martín. “Woman! The Republican Left will break your bonds,” From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores, http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Partidos/Partidos.htm
46 See Figures 7-15; 68.
miliciana was a staunch and powerful figure of the antifascist resistance at the beginning of the war.\textsuperscript{47} For men and women alike, the image was mesmerizing and a near-complete representation of the radical rhetoric of many Popular Front organizations concerning the role of women. An example of this depiction can be found in Figure 7, a 1936 poster from the Barcelona CNT, reading “for the militias.”\textsuperscript{48} Although this woman serves as the focal point of the image, she is surrounded completely by men, a very common trait of posters featuring milicianas\textsuperscript{49} In addition, the miliciana is holding a flag to rally support (another common theme, discussed more fully below) from her fellow soldiers, male counterparts who hold guns. Although this depiction of women may have been radical, the representation nevertheless has traditional undertones. Moreover, in contrast with the early use of the miliciana as a symbol of the Republican cause, very few women actually became fighters for the Republic.

Although exact statistics are unknown, some historians suggest that there were fewer than 1,000 milicianas serving on the frontlines.\textsuperscript{50} And despite such enthusiastic portrayals of the miliciana by the antifascist resistance at the start of the war, the female soldier was completely absent on the frontlines by 1937.\textsuperscript{51} In fact, the image of the miliciana is associated only with the initial period of the conflict and the early ardor toward liberated women created by antifascist and revolutionary fervor.\textsuperscript{52} Perhaps surprisingly, the withdrawal of the miliciana from active combat was supported by the various antifascist women’s organizations so that women could fill the depleted workforce as well as handle supportive duties on the home front.\textsuperscript{53} Of potentially more surprise than the fact the miliciana came into existence at the outbreak of the war was the speed with which the previously supportive

\textsuperscript{47} Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 50.
\textsuperscript{48} Ricard Obiols, “For the Militias,” From \textit{Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores}. \url{http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Obiols/Obiols.htm}
\textsuperscript{49} Evident in Figure 8 and Figure 12.
\textsuperscript{50} Shirley Mangini, \textit{Memories of Resistance: Women’s Voices from the Spanish Civil War}, 80.
\textsuperscript{52} Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 53.
\textsuperscript{53} Gina Herrmann, “Voices of the Vanquished: Leftist Women and the Spanish Civil War,” 15.
Republican government withdrew her, only months after her deployment to the front. Again, women were relegated to specific supportive home-front roles during the war, despite the egalitarian tenets of the majority of Popular Front organizations. Robert Low captures this succinctly in his biography on Dolores Ibárruri, “La Pasionaria,” writing that “For all the social revolution going on around them, Spanish men’s attitudes had not changed much.”

Despite the initial enthusiasm displayed by the various Republican groups over this radical representation of women, appearance was far from reality. Nash elaborates on this by describing the social position and political configuration of the milicianas:

The innovative imagery of the miliciana appeared to be a break with former models of norms and social roles for women. Nonetheless…the model projected is not that of a “new woman” who arises from the socio-political context but one created to fill the needs of the war… Despite the strong female protagonism depicted, they are not necessarily mirrors of reality or a sign of female incorporation into the war effort at the front.

While the milicianas were supported in practice only for a few months, the idea of the miliciana continued to be used in images and propaganda as a way to mobilize support for the war effort, as seen in Figure 8, which reads, “The Militia needs you!” This piece of propaganda from 1936 depicts a miliciana front and center, wielding a gun, but her outstretched hand may have been more of a gesture offering the weapon to men viewing the poster—that is, soldiers—than for her own use or simply a symbol of battle. Although she is certainly drawn as a miliciana, she stands out from the line of men marching behind her, suggesting perhaps that milicianas served more as rallying forces than actual fighters (a concept to be discussed further in the next section). In many propaganda pieces featuring milicianas, artists drew the women as figures prominent from the male figures, emphasizing the women’s radical and unconventional position in the context of Spanish culture. In such ways, the images on posters and in other propaganda were used not only to appeal to women, but also to men.

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54 Robert Low, La Pasionaria: The Spanish Firebrand, 80.
55 Mary Nash, Defying Male Civilization, 53.
56 Cristóbal Arteche, “The Militia needs you!,” One of the most well known posters, from the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores, http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Arteche/Arteche.htm
The purpose of this usage, then, was to stir up traditional notions of gender roles—the image’s incongruity with tradition attracted, convinced, startled, or shamed men into enlisting in the armed forces and performing military duties.\textsuperscript{57} The Republicans therefore used this radical portrayal of women to reinforce more traditional roles, employing the image to rally support for the war while making certain real women were not directly engaged in fighting on the front.

The \textit{miliciana} also was depicted in a derogatory manner. The sight of women, some with children, going willingly to fight on the frontlines was considered both unnatural and unacceptable to many,\textsuperscript{58} especially with the growing perception of women as heroic through their position as mothers and supporters, not as fighters. Even though there exist tales of heroic feats performed by the \textit{milicianas}, male soldiers who witnessed such feats conveyed a sense of surprise when they described these acts of direct combat and bravery performed by the \textit{milicianas}.\textsuperscript{59} At the outbreak of the conflict, when the militia and army represented a disjointed effort at best, political figures within the Republicans as well as other soldiers accepted women into the militia as a result of the army’s disorganized state. However, after the military forces stabilized, these same figures demanded the quick withdrawal of the \textit{milicianas}.\textsuperscript{60} Women overall did not have consent to join the frontlines as a few did at the onset of the war, despite initial approval from the Republican government.

Those few military women at the front faced traditional gender norms as well, despite the fact their fellow soldiers fought for organizations that, in theory, supported women’s equality.\textsuperscript{61} One \textit{miliciana}, for example, recounted that her fellow soldiers expected her to do their laundry for them.\textsuperscript{62} In addition, the \textit{milicianas} often were not taken seriously, because their image and role were ones never experienced in Spain and were opposite traditional female norms. Further, many dressed in

\begin{itemize}
\item Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 53.
\item See \textbf{Figure 10} for a \textit{miliciana} with her (presumed) child.
\item Mary Nash, \textit{Defying Male Civilization}, 105.
\item Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 222.
\item See \textbf{Figure 13}, in which a \textit{miliciana} is giving a male soldier provisions.
\item Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 222.
\end{itemize}
revolutionary garb, but also flaunted traditional feminine attire, unconventional for frontline purposes, such as cosmetics and high-heels. Naturally, this combination made taking seriously the milicianas difficult, if not nearly impossible. This situation was certainly not the case for all milicianas, but was sufficiently evident that it created a negative impression in relation to her figure, already viewed warily and distastefully by many within the Spanish population. Rumors surrounding the milicianas and prostitution also made achieving recognition difficult, as they (and women in general) often were blamed for outbreaks of venereal diseases on the front. Fearful of this radical change in women’s role, even within as small a group as the milicianas, many soldiers and Republicans maintained traditional notions of gender over those expressed in liberal rhetoric. Despite such adherence to tradition, portrayals of the miliciana continued, at least for a time, to reflect the liberal rhetoric of the Popular Front.

The characterization of milicianas as well as other racial Republican women as prostitutes was a common line of attack by those opposed to women on the frontlines, including members of the Popular Front. Organizations such as the various anarchist bodies that promoted free love troubled the conservative Catholic populace, although the extent to which this philosophy actually was carried out varied greatly. The issue of prostitution became linked with women’s presence on the frontlines and eventually helped to discredit the figure of the miliciana and to turn popular sentiment against their presence in the combat zone. Testimonies from former milicianas confirmed that physical relationships occasionally occurred among fighters on the front, but the milicianas denied they were aware of prostitution on the frontlines. Venereal disease was a problem among soldiers, but this situation does not seem to lie entirely with the frontline milicianas, especially when such accusations

63 Shirley Mangini, *Memories of Resistance: Women’s Voices from the Spanish Civil War*, 82.
64 Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 222.
65 Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, 121-122.
66 Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 112.
67 Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 112.
are examined in light of contemporary oral testimonies, which deny the claim.

The citing of venereal disease was therefore likely a ploy to discredit the *milicianas* and to expedite their removal from the frontlines. Portrayed as radical whores who were infecting soldiers at the front with diseases, the *milicianas* could not remain in the combat zone in the face of such opposition. Propaganda images depicted women as the source of disease, as revealed in Figure 41 and Figure 42, both from 1937. Figure 41 conveys the threat of venereal diseases through images and text, with the warning “Attention! Venereal diseases threaten your health. Guard against them!”68 Notably, the pronoun “them” is the female version of the Spanish term, denoting that women were the cause of venereal disease outbreaks. The woman, with her skeletal arm slung around a male soldier, was portrayed as a threat to the health of Republican soldiers. Again, such portraiture tended not to square with the reality of women’s roles during the civil war.

The images initially showing women as soldiers were inherently radical, yet the females in those posters often were drawn as lone figures among males. Sometimes the women did not even hold guns; rather, they carried flags.69 This sort of “rallying” depiction is especially evident in many other propaganda pieces throughout the war, images in which women are shown cheering, pointing toward battle, and in similar stances. This characterization of women became especially prevalent and dominant by the middle and end of the war. However, similar images also can be found at the beginning of the war, demonstrating an underlying resistance to this radical image and the continuing persistence of traditional female cultural norms.

Another bold change in women’s activities during the war stemmed from their entrance into the economic sector, including within factories. Many of the women’s wartime efforts took place inside industry, where they found a growing demand for their presence following the outbreak of hostilities.

68 “Attention! Venereal diseases threaten your health. Guard against them!” From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores, http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Otros/Otros.htm
69 For pieces specifically featuring *milicianas* as rallying forces see Figures 7, 13, and 66
Until the war, women had few job possibilities, received much lower wages than male coworkers, and often were unambiguously discriminated against because of attitudes about women working outside their domestic responsibilities. However, when the war commenced, men had to abandon the factories for the frontlines. Their exodus left many industries in desperate need of workers, and women willingly filled the empty factory positions to help on the home front, specifically with the encouragement of the communists and anarchists. Posters such as those in Figure 46 and Figure 61 were arguably geared not only toward men—to convince them to welcome women into their workplace and into the economic sphere—but also to women, as a way of encouraging them to take up jobs on the home-front. However, both men and women were very unaccustomed to the idea of women working in factories; through various posters, such as Figure 45, the leftwing organizations attempted to establish a connection between women and the economic sector. This connection is specifically emphasized in Figure 6, a 1937 CNT-FAI advertisement from Valencia for a National Congress on Industry; the advertisement features a woman pouring iron. Mujeres Libres and its larger political colleague organization, CNT-FAI, explicitly advocated for women’s right to equally paid work, linking this right to independence and liberation. Even though such posters were inherently nontraditional in their encouragement of women to join the economic sector, they also tended to portray the women doing traditional female jobs, such as sewing.

Various groups interpreted women’s presence in industry during the war differently; communist and anarchists favored women’s place in the factories as a desired societal alteration and deemed the change necessary for liberation. But for the majority of Spanish society, consisting of conservative Republicans, Nationalists, and simply traditional Spaniards, the presence of women in

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74 See Figures 59-61.
factories was difficult to accept. Evidence of this attitude is present in the continuing wage
discrimination that affected many women, even in the libertarian collectives of the anarchists in the
Republican zone. In half of the libertarian cooperatives, women received lesser wages than men.⁷⁵ In
addition, preferential treatment was commonly given to women related to or closely connected with
men who held an official post. This unequal practice was even made official by government regulation
in late 1937.⁷⁶ And despite the need for women’s labor in factories, women still met with resistance as
the result of their traditional absence within the economy. In addition, men who thought of women’s
emancipation typically correlated it to the economic sector.⁷⁷ Some women worked in factories to aid
the Republican cause and supported economic equality for women, but many others worked out of
necessity. Some leftist organizations specifically modeled women in propaganda as economic figures,
such as in Figure 46, but women still faced opposition from all sectors of Spanish society, even those
same organizations portraying them in propaganda.

In tandem with the initial revolutionary images of women as fighters and equal participants in
the struggle, especially in the early stages of the war in 1936 and 1937, women also continued to be
portrayed in traditional roles. Often depicted as ethereal beings, symbols of virtue or the Spanish State,
as encouraging and rallying forces, or as victims,⁷⁸ women were drawn to fit traditional and
conservative notions related to the role of females in society. Thus, while some Republican
organizations manipulated women to coincide with the radical rhetoric proposed by Popular Front
political bodies, a traditional depiction of women existed alongside these revolutionary images, and
became increasingly more widespread as the war continued. Women went from fighting alongside men
on the frontlines to being the rallying forces and maternal occupants of the home front for their male
counterparts. This transition is especially visible in Figure 25, in which a woman is cheering on and

⁷⁵ George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, Spain at War, 129.
⁷⁶ Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 221.
⁷⁷ Martha Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain, 76.
⁷⁸ See Figures 21-24.
pointing the male soldiers in the right direction (in this case to help the Basque Country). Figure 30
through Figure 33 exemplify the use of women as victims, often as religiously clad figures with children. In a potential and more subtle sense, women as victims also symbolized the Spanish state. These women embodied the traditional Catholic features that epitomized Spanish society for centuries. The depiction of women as suffering represented in a way the distress of the Spanish state. From roughly 1937 on, the representation of women in propaganda, while still radically oriented at times, became much more focused on locating women on the home front.

BACK HOME: ADJUSTING WOMEN’S IMAGE, CIRCA 1938-1939

As the war moved into its later years, and Nationalist forces under General Franco won more territory, the Popular Front fought a losing battle. By 1938, President of the Republic Juan Negrín continued with a defensive resistance against the Nationalists, but the fate of the Republic was uncertain with policy differences and confusion running rife within the Popular Front. Nationalist forces gradually eroded the amount of land possessed by Republican forces, and women’s place within the Popular Front became increasingly focused on the home front. Especially important was women’s continued role in the economic sector. Though still treating them unfairly in terms of wages, leftist organizations depended on women working in factories to maintain operations of the military forces and modeled them as sustainers of the home front, specifically emphasizing women in the textile industry. Women’s portrayal in industrial factories also demonstrated the continued inequality they faced, especially visible in Figure 46. In the poster, a male worker supervises the woman; moreover, the image with its message, “The women want to win the war, too. We should help them,” is

81 “The women want to win the war, too. We should help them,” from Women in World History, project by the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University, http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/p/241.html
specifically geared toward men as a way to persuade them to treat women more equally. Male trade unionists were especially hostile toward women in “male” industries, such as munitions and transportation. Despite the Popular Front political rhetoric and imagery, women overwhelmingly earned less than men and faced discrimination in the workplace.

During the latter half of the war, five depictions or characterizations are overwhelmingly prevalent in propaganda and related posters: women as home-front workers (in traditional industries), farmers, nurses, mothers, and rallying forces. These emphases are readily apparent in Figure 49 from 1938, which depicts women helping war efforts as nurses, industrial workers, farmers, and mothers, all in one poster. Moreover, the propaganda calls on women to raise their hands to help the Republic, signifying and illustrating the complete reversal in women’s activities back to auxiliary roles.

The focus on industry was a significant one. Women were featured in propaganda as workers in home-front industries and in other jobs that paralleled traditional female roles. This trend was especially ubiquitous during the middle and end of the war, when Popular Front political organizations compelled women to work and help conditions on the home front. Women experienced a shift toward and pressure to work within industries and take on home-front activities in accord with traditional female cultural norms. This is not to suggest, however, that all women were upset with their place in the war effort being shifted more solidly back to the home front—undoubtedly a large portion of the female population felt more comfortable with or preferred maintaining their traditional cultural place in Spanish society. In line with this argument, the Popular Front and various political organizations may have shifted women’s portrayal toward a more traditional and conservative depiction to draw more support from women in the Republic. The fact that most female activists were thought of as

82 Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 221.
84 Frances Lannon, “Women and Images of Women in the Spanish Civil War,” 221-222.
85 See Figures 19, 35, 49, 58, 59, 60, and 61.
86 Mary Nash, Defying Male Civilization, 54.
“whores” by others likely discouraged other women within the Popular Front from pursuing activities considered radical. In essence, by seeming less extreme, the Popular Front may have been able to attract or draw more support from the predominantly conservative Spanish society.

A second traditional role found within propaganda at this time reflected women as farmers on the home front, gathering crops to sustain the soldiers on the frontlines. Figure 44 from 1938 demonstrates the growing dichotomy between men and women’s activities by the middle to the end of the war. The woman, shown in a field, smiles and holds a farming tool, while the text reads “farmer! [female noun] Your work in the fields strengthens the spirit of those who fight.” Her shadow, moreover, is that of a male soldier, demonstrating the link between the home-front activities (female) and the frontline (male). The traditional cultural idea of women as sustainers of the family, as well as the domesticity carried by that idea, made farming an appropriate job for women to fulfill on the home front. Figures 55-57 specifically call on women to help gather the harvest, encouraging them to sustain those who are fighting.

Another very traditional vocation assigned to women was nursing and helping within medical facilities such as blood banks. Propaganda for various hospitals and blood banks commonly depicted very feminine women providing comfort to wounded male soldiers. This female role of the healer also has a very strong association with motherhood. As noted, the concept of motherhood within Popular Front propaganda goes beyond that of the bearer and raiser of children to establish women in the much broader context of mothers to the nation. Several propaganda pieces evoke the concept of motherhood to rally women to help on the home front. Figure 36 demonstrates both this depiction of women as mothers and also the nurturing quality ascribed to women as they offer medical help. The text,

88 See Figures 19-20.
90 See Figures 36-40, 49, 50.
91 “You, who gave life to child. Save a man from death” by unknown artist. Originated in 1937 in Valencia, from the
encouraging women to donate blood, reads: “You, who gave life to a child. Save a man from death.” A woman in the forefront of the poster is donating blood directly to an injured male soldier, while a shadowy female in the upper left corner is nursing a small child. This piece simultaneously establishes women’s place in the home front as caretakers, nurses, and nurturing figures while also appealing to a traditional motherhood role to encourage women to aid the war effort.

Motherhood was one of the most, if not the most, common association with women during the civil war. While, as noted, motherhood was employed in a variety of ways within propaganda, the vast majority of maternally oriented propaganda also depicts women as the victims of the war. Figure 29 is especially helpful in understanding this portrayal. The propaganda reads “Asturias, October 1934-1937. Today, like Yesterday, the Spanish Red Aid Takes Care of your Families.” The woman in the poster, clutching two children in the background, is directly tied to family and motherhood, yet also portrayed as a victim of the war. The portrayal of women as victims of the war, as previously discussed, can be viewed as representing the devastation of the Spanish state itself. Because women are, fundamentally, the “mothers of the nation,” a portrayal of women as victims would resonate deeply with all components of Spanish society. Such images called on men to fight and protect women and families and on women to perform well their responsibilities as mothers. These responsibilities were not on the frontlines—they rested in the home front.

Another ever-present characterization appearing in propaganda in the latter half of the war featured women as the rallying forces for the soldiers. Commonly clutching flags or pointing in the direction of battle, women represented a driving force and motivation for male soldiers on the

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Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Penagos/Penagos.htm
92 See Figures 26, 29-34, 36, 49, 54.
94 See Figures 24-28, 47-48, 65, 69, 70
frontlines. **Figure 47**, with the text “Listen! The country calls you,” shows a taut woman shouting.\(^9\)

The image, from 1938 in Madrid, depicts women not only as the victims of the conflict, but also shows them as an embodiment of the Spanish nation. It was this characterization of women as the state, though, that may have fostered the rallying nature of the image. As the mothers of the nation and of families, women served as a crucial motivational force for male soldiers. By portraying women as motivators on the home front, the Popular Front government and political organizations constructed an image of women that coincided with traditional gender norms and encouraged women to stay at home.

Even at the beginning of the war, women took part in many activities on the home front.\(^6\) But it was only by the middle to end of the war that women were nearly entirely depicted in traditional roles, such as nurses and nurturers, mothers, farmers, and other workers on the home front. In addition, women were overwhelmingly depicted as victims of the war, arguably representing the destruction of the Spanish state. With some constancy, images and propaganda of women during the war reflected the traditional and conservative gender norms that pervaded Spanish culture. At the beginning of the war, however, these traditional images coexisted with much more radically oriented images of women fighting on the front lines, demonstrating a split and confusion over what women’s role should be in Republican Spain and during the war. Over time, the propagandistic images of women metamorphosed into only those solidly in line with the traditional gender norms that pervaded Spanish society; however, the leftist rhetoric of the Popular Front, extolling equality, never changed.

**CONCLUSION: A MUDDLED YET FETTERED REALITY**

Women in the Popular Front faced a very different reality from what one would assume in examining party rhetoric. Popular Front posters revealed the hopefulness among leftist forces in their

\(^{9\text{a}}\) Emeterio Melendreras, “Listen! The country calls you,” from the *Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores*. http://www.sbhc.net/Republica/Carteles/Melendreras/Melendreras.htm

attempt to make female liberation a critical part of Republican Spain. Despite that effort, traditional
gender roles remained an integral part of the deeply ingrained Spanish culture and society. This divide
between leftist political rhetoric and reality tends to demonstrate the underlying power of the
nationalist and traditional, or conservative, ideas, especially in light of the fact the leftist propaganda
posters were used to convince Spanish men and women to support the Republican cause. An example
of this dichotomy is apparent in a pamphlet from 1936, in which a member of the International Youth
Commission, Joseph Cadden, remarks on the status of women in the Spanish Civil War, noting that:

In spite of tradition, in spite of rigid, age-old custom, Spanish women rushed to the
defense of their government beside their men when the revolt was begun… In
addition to forming battalions of nurses and domestic workers to take care of the
immediate needs of the militia, women were enrolled with the fighting troops on an
equal basis with men. In many companies they had been the inspiration, had
actually led the charge, and many of them became officers.  

Blatantly misleading and used to further the leftist agenda, this pamphlet and its contents are a near-
perfect representation of party rhetoric. The tone of the pamphlet provides the reader with the
impression that Spanish women were able to defy centuries of tradition and establish themselves as
equals to men in only a few years. Although it is true that many women rose up and undertook
whatever activities they could to aid the Popular Front war effort, breaking their traditional isolation
from public and political action, they by no means held equal standing with their male counterparts,
despite the political tenets of the various Republican parties. Blatantly titling the section on women,
“The Weaker Sex,” Cadden’s pamphlet reflects the gender bias that continued as an undercurrent
within the liberal fronts, despite stated principles and rhetoric.

Its continuing rhetoric to the contrary, the Popular Front could maintain transformational imagery
related to women’s stance in society only during that radical first year of the war, though even then
such images coexisted with those depicting women in more traditional roles. By the end of that first

98 Mary Nash, Defying Male Civilization, 177.
year, most portrayals of women had shifted to reflect popular conservative or traditional female gender roles, underscoring the dichotomy between rhetoric and reality.

When the war against the Nationalists was lost in 1939, the status of women of the Popular Front reverted to what existed before the election of the Second Republic. At the beginning of the war, they had few rights. During the Second Republic and Civil War they gained a number of previously unknown rights and freedoms. Nearly all of these freedoms were lost under the repressive dictatorship of Francisco Franco. In her research, Frances Lannon succinctly describes women’s circumstances at the end of the war:

It would be hard, and wrong, to evade the conclusion that one of the important issues at stake in the Spanish Civil War was the future position—legal, economic, and cultural—of women. By the summer of 1939 they found themselves, some with relief, others with repugnance, returned to the status that had obtained before the attempted New Deal of the early Republic of 1931-3. Those women who had been most active in resisting the reimposition of the traditional order had to face exile or imprisonment in appalling conditions and in many cases execution. There was no honourable or safe place for them in the new dictatorship.  

Leftist political organizations of the Popular Front rejected in rhetoric and initial propaganda the subservient roles women occupied relative to men, but inequality and the persistence of traditional gender norms continued to affect Republican women. This persistence of conservative and traditional norms was especially evident in propaganda images as the war continued, despite rhetoric to the contrary. Moreover, the coexistence of traditional and radical—and often shifting—images of women demonstrates the confusion within Spanish society and women themselves over the position of females in Spanish culture.

Women’s equality in the various sectors of Spanish society was never achieved. Although many women enthusiastically supported the Popular Front in whatever ways they could, whether on the frontlines as the milicianas attempted to do at the beginning of the war, in factories replacing male labor, or by fulfilling more auxiliary roles such as nurses, women did not gain equal rights and civil

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freedoms. The political messages of the various parties of the Popular Front, whether anarchist, socialist, or communist, never equated with the continuing and conservative manner in which women of the Popular Front were treated, reflecting an underlying confusion over women’s rightful place in Spanish culture. The conservative values that had dominated Spanish society for centuries remained firmly in place for many people, regardless of their stated political orientations to the contrary. To many others, complete equality for women was simply too difficult to accept, even in the presence of sympathy over reduced rights and opportunities for women. Although women of the Popular Front gained rights in several areas, evident in their widespread contribution to the war effort through factory and other home front work, they never achieved the equality or republic for which they fought. Despite any hopes they may have placed in the rhetoric and initial propaganda of the Popular Front, in the end a position of equality remained essentially that—an image divorced from reality.
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Miliciana with her child. Image taken from ‘Voices of the Vanquished: Leftist Women and the Spanish

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101 Images included in the Primary Sources section represent those specifically discussed in the paper. All images used in researching this paper are listed in Appendixes A through D, including citations.


Secondary Sources:


**Appendix A** – Images before 1936
Figure 1 – “Future Vision,” by Herreros. Originated in 1934 in Barcelona. Expresses anti-capitalist sentiment. The woman and man appear together, but the woman remains a secondary figure to the more prominent male. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Caroles/Herreros/Herreros.htm
Figure 2 – “Republican Spain,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1931 in Madrid. Republican Spain was consistently personified as a dignified woman. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Anonimos/Anon.htm
Figure 3 – No title, by Opisso. Originated in 1931 in Barcelona. As in Figure 2, the woman represents Republican Spain. In this figure, men surround her and the scale suggests that she also represents justice. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. 
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Otros/Otros.htm
Figure 4 – “The Spanish Republic,” by Gamonel. Originated in 1931 in Madrid. Similar to Figure 2-3, the poster demonstrates how women were used as representations of the Spanish state. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Partidos/Partidos.htm
Figure 5 – “Woman! The Republican Left will break your bonds. Respond to the rally,” by Martín. Originated in 1935. Reinforces the rhetorical notion that the Republican Left will liberate women from their traditional domestic and legal bonds. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
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Appendix B – Images from 1936/1937
Figure 6 - “National Congress of Unions of Health and Industry” by Vicente Ballester, an artist for the Republic and CNT. Originated in 1937 in Valencia for the CNT-FAI. Interesting because a woman is depicted as the industrial worker, pouring hot metal. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.

http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/BallesterVicente/BallesterVicente.htm
Figure 7- “For the Militias,” by Ricard Obiols. Originated in 1936 from the Barcelona CNT-AIT. The woman, while front and center, carries a flag, not a gun. In addition, she is surrounded by men and appears more as a rallying figure than as a fighter. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Obiols/Obiols.htm
Figure 8 – “The Militia needs you,” by Cristóbal Arteche, a member of el Sindicato de Dibujantes Profesionales (SDP - UGT) de Barcelona. Originated in 1936 in Barcelona. This is one of the most well-known posters from the war. The woman, while front and center, stands apart from the marching soldiers, and appears to be shaming men into enlisting in the armed forces, rather than participating herself. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Arteche/Arteche.htm
Figure 9 - Miliciana with her child. Image taken from ‘Voices of the Vanquished: Leftist Women and the Spanish Civil War,’ by Gina Herrmann, found in *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 1 (March 2003), 22. The image is a pleasant one, but undoubtedly shocking to many in Spain, because women were heavily associated with maternity; that is, for a woman to be a soldier and have a newborn baby would be a very abrasive image to many Spaniards.
Figure 10 – Milicianas. While the women featured in this photograph appear much more like real soldiers, the image appears staged and somewhat unrealistic. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Imagenes/FotoRep/FotoRep.htm
Figure 11 – Miliciana helping soldier. Notice that the miliciana is the person supplying her fellow male soldier with provisions. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Imagenes/Mujeres/Mujeres.htm
Figure 12 – “They shall not pass!” by unknown artist, but from the CNT. Originated in 1936. As with many other posters featuring *milicianas*, her figure is the focal point of the image, but she is completely surrounded by men. The tone of this poster is slightly more radical, as the miliciana is actually firing a gun, not just holding one or carrying a flag. From the *Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores*.  
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Anonimos/Anon.htm
Figure 13 – “Reservists! Enlist in the volunteer army,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1936 in Murcia. The figure on the right appears to be a woman, but also resembles a lion (see Figure 4)—perhaps the illustration is a combination of the two figures. Notably, the “woman” holds a flag while her male counterpart carries a gun. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Cartelaes/Anonimos/Anon.htm
Figure 14 – “CNT-FAI, July 19, 1936,” by Toni Vidal. Originated in 1936 through the Barcelona CNT-FAI. The image is a good example of the miliciana being used to support party rhetoric. Women are displayed almost as often as men, and alongside men, not surrounded or alone. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.

http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=150&page=3&from=catalogo
Figure 15 – “The Barricade,” by Calsina. Created in 1936 depicting CNT-FAI soldiers. Only one woman is present and she is tending to a fallen soldier—emphasizing woman’s role as a care provider/healer and not soldier. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.

http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Otros/Otros.htm
Figure 16 – “Love and Hate: The heroism of the women in the rearguard,” by Pedraza Blanco. Appeared in 1937 in Valencia for the “Film Popular.” Plays up the heroism of women, but also places them in the rearguard. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/PedrazaBlanco/Pedraza.htm
Figure 17 - “The Ten Demands of the Youth,” by Bardasano. Originated in 1937 by the Juventud Socialista Unificada (United Socialist Youth). Poster indicates that women have the same rights as men—thus a clear illustration of leftist political rhetoric. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.
http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=125&page=3&from=catalogo
Figure 19 – “Second National Conference of Anti-fascist Women: 29-31 of October, 1937,” by Luis. Originated in 1937. Demonstrates the traditional activities of women during the war, mainly as factory workers (in sewing/textile industries) and as farmers. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.
Figure 20 – “Farmers give life to the land,” by Horacio. Originated in 1936 in Asturias. Provides a representation of women as farmers. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Partidos/Partidos.htm
Figure 21 – “Your Best Men in the Defense of the Republic,” by Josep Espert. Originated in 1936 in Madrid. The woman in this piece is representative of the Republic, as seen in the pieces before the outbreak of the war (Figures 2-4). From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Espert/Espert.htm
Figure 22 – International Brigades Poster, by Parrilla. Originated in 1937 in Madrid. The woman in this piece is representative of the Republic, as seen in the pieces before the outbreak of the war (Figures 2-4, 21), but may also represent qualities and ideals such as peace and prosperity. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. 
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Parrilla/Parrilla.htm
Figure 23 – “The Internationals,” by Parrilla. Originated in 1937 in Madrid. The woman in this piece is symbolic of the Republic (Figures 2-4, 21, 22), but may also represent a source of divine guidance, as demonstrated by the placement of her arm on the soldier’s weapon. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Parrilla/Parrilla.htm
Figure 24 – “Unite in the Rearguard like those in the Vanguard to Win the War,” by Parrilla. Originated in 1937 in Madrid. The woman is representative of the Republic, as seen in the pieces before the outbreak of the war (e.g., Figures 2-4, 21, 22, 23), and seems to be imbuing the soldiers with a mission on behalf of the nation. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture. http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=322&page=7&from=catalogo
Figure 26 – “Liberate Granada,” by Gallur. Originated in approximately 1936-1937. Simultaneously portrays the woman as a rallying force, mother, and a victim. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.
http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=1658&page=34&from=catalogo
Figure 27 – “No tolerance for those who hide” [rough translation from Catalan], by Bofarull. Originated in 1937 in Barcelona. The woman represents (this time forcefully) a rallying force for soldiers and against men who ignored or hid from military duty. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Partidos/Partidos.htm
Figure 28 – “The Popular Front,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1936. The two women in the image that act as focal points demonstrate the rallying nature ascribed to women (especially seen in the carrying of the flag). From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Partidos/Partidos.htm
Figure 29 – “Asturias, October 1934-1937. Today, like Yesterday, the Spanish Red Aid Takes Care of your Families,” by Tomás. Originated late 1937. The woman in the poster is directly tied to the family, motherhood, and portrayed as a victim of the war. From The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection.
http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/asturias2.html
Figure 30 – “Your family cannot live in the drama of the war—Evacuate Madrid. Evacuation will help for a final victory,” by Girón. Originated in 1937 in Madrid. Both female figures in the poster are portrayed as victims. The adult woman reflects the religious norms attached to women (as a nun), while the text ties women directly to the family. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. 
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Giron/Giron.htm
Figure 31 – “Evacuate Madrid,” by Antonio Cañavate. Originated in 1937 in Madrid. The women, holding babies, may be viewed as representing the Madonna-and-child archetype traditionally ascribed to Spanish women. In addition, the women function as victims of the war. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Canavate/Canavate.htm
Figure 32 – “What are you doing to prevent this?” by unknown artist. Originated in 1937 about the Madrid bombings. Portrays women and children (the family) as victims of war. The text also calls on men (perhaps resonating with their gender norms as protectors of their families) to prevent these atrocities from continuing. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Sociedad/Sociedad.htm
Figure 33 – “Help the victims of fascism,” by Vicente. Originated in 1937. Mother and child, as in Figures 29, 31-32, are portrayed as the victims of war (and fascism). From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Sociedad/Sociedad.htm
Figure 34 – “Mothers! We Fight for a Happy Future for Your Children. Help us!” by Cristóbal Mariano. Originated in 1937. Calls on women to contribute to the war efforts by tying the result of the war to security for their children. The woman is portrayed in a very traditional and maternal representation. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture. http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=1773&page=36&from=catalogo
Figure 35 – “Women! Work” by Fontseré. Originated 1937 in Barcelona. Image contrasts male/female duties during the war. For men—to serve on the front lines—for women, to contribute to the war effort on the home front through traditional female activities. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.

http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=236&page=5&from=catalogo
Figure 36 – “You, who gave life to a child. Save a man from death,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1937 in Valencia. Poster places women within the realm of nurses/hospital aid and therefore on the home front. It also calls to women’s maternal nature to donate blood, with a woman nursing in the background. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carneles/Penagos/Penagos.htm
Figure 37 – “Aid Blood Banks,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1936 in Valencia. The woman in the poster is portrayed in the traditional realm as a nurse and nurturer to soldiers. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.

http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=1558&page=32&from=catalogo
Figure 38 – “How Can you Help the Blood Banks?” by unknown artist. Most likely originated between 1936-1937. Portrays the woman as a nurse aiding a male soldier. From The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection.

http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/como.html
Figure 39 – “They Have Fallen and Are in Need of the Aid of the War Health Counsel” [rough translation from Catalan], by Vicente. Originated in 1937. Reflects trend of women as nurses aiding male soldiers. From The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from UCSD’s Southworth Collection.
http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/newadd33.html
Figure 40 – “Government of Catalonia: War Health Council” [rough translation from Catalan], by Vicente. Originated in 1937 in Catalonia. Like Figures 36-39, the image demonstrates the trend toward portrayal of women as nurses. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture. http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=1499&page=30&from=catalogo
Figure 41 – “Attention! Venereal Diseases Threaten your Health. Guard Against Them!” by Rivero Gil. Originated in 1937 in Valencia. Portrays women as the cause of venereal diseases on the frontlines—perhaps as a way to provoke their withdrawal. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Otros/Otros.htm
Figure 42 – “Guard Your Bodies Against Venereal Disease” [rough translation from Catalan], by unknown artist. Originated in 1937. As in Figure 41, the poster portrays women as the cause of venereal diseases on the frontlines—perhaps as a way to promoting their withdrawal. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Otros/Otros.htm
Figure 43 – “Against the spies! Militia men, do not tell details about the situation on the front,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1936. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Anonimos/Anon.htm

Appendix C – Images from 1938/1939
Figure 44 – “Farmer! Your work in the fields strengthens the spirit of those who fight,” by Fergui. Originated in 1938 for the PCE. Demonstrates the shift toward placing women in auxiliary jobs on the home front. Especially striking is the contrast between the male and female figures, with the male’s role portrayed as a shadow of the woman’s. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Fergui/Fergui.htm
Figure 45 – War Industry Congress, Catalonia Poster, by unknown artist. Originated in 1938 in Catalonia. Reinforces the auxiliary role of women as factory workers. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.

http://www.sbhac.net/Sbhac_3/NoCat/NoCatalogados/NoCatalogado.htm
**Figure 46** - “The women want to win the war, too. We should help them,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1938. Like **Figure 45**, this poster illustrates women as workers, but also demonstrates tones of obedience and inequality in the workplace. From Women in World History, project by the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University.  
http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/p/241.html
Figure 47 – “Listen! The country calls you,” by Emeterio Melendreras. Originated in 1938 in Madrid. In this image, the woman is portrayed both as a representation of the Spanish state, as well as a victim calling for help. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Melendreras/Melendreras.htm
Figure 48 – “Catalans! September 11 1714 • 1938,” by unknown artist. Originated in 1938. Demonstrates women used as both a representation of victims and personifies them as the distressed nation. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Sbhac_3/EdUrbion/Urbion02.htm
Figure 49 – “Woman! Raise your hand in work!” by unknown artist. Originated in 1938 in Catalonia. Shows the encouragement and portrayal of women by leftist political rhetoric. The image places women in nearly all of the traditional auxiliary roles emphasized by the end of the war (nurses, workers, farmers, mothers). From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Anonimos/Anon.htm

Appendix D – Propaganda of Unspecified Dates
Figure 50 – “Syndicate of Hospitals U.G.T. – Post Card,” by unknown artist (but for the UGT-CNT). Portrays two women as nurses, both in auxiliary jobs compared to their male counterparts. From the Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Temas/Sanidad/Sanidad.htm
Figure 51 - “Women, our family constitutes all the fighters for liberty,” by unknown artist for the Mujeres Libres. Text displays the radical nature of the Mujeres Libres and their message, but also the animosity against them (as seen in the guns in the bottom corner), though additional interpretations are possible. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Anonimos/Anon.htm
Figure 52 – “Camp of the Union of Girls,” by Juana Francisca. Originated in Valencia. This specific piece is interesting because it portrays women in such a strong manner. Additionally, the artist Juana Francisca is one of the only female artist encountered during this research. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/JuanaFrancisca/Francisca.htm
Figure 53 - “School for all,” by Vicente Ballester, an artist for the Republic/CNT. Unknown date, but originated in Valencia for the CNT-FAI. Represents the leftist rhetoric of the Republic concerning equal schooling for both sexes. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture. 
Figure 54 – “Asturias,” by J. Briones. Originated in 1937. This image provides another example of women being used as victims (especially in combination with children). From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.
http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=1300&page=26&from=catalogo
Figure 55 – “Women, work for those companions who fight,” by Juan Antonio. Originated sometime between 1936-1939. Poster specifically instructs women to farm for their male companions who fight. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture.
http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=1435&page=29&from=catalogo
Figure 56 – “Collect all of the harvest,” by Vicente Canet. Poster shows a woman farmer and encourages women to collect the entire harvest to sustain those fighting. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Canet/Canet.htm
Figure 57 – “Women, farmers: to the harvest!” by unknown artist. Encourages and portrays women in terms of farm work on the home front. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Sbhac_3/NoCat/NoCatalogado4/NoCatalogado4.htm
Figure 58 – “It’s cold on the front lines! Your hands in the rearguard can avoid this. Women work!” by unknown artist. Propaganda specifically encouraging women to work in the rear guards and away from the frontlines. In addition, the women are depicted as working with textiles, a traditional female industry. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/PostalesP/Postales.htm
Figure 59 – Poster encouraging better work from female garment workers, by unknown artist. Encourages women to continue working on the home front in the traditional garment industries. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Sbhac_3/NoCat/NoCatalogado2/NoCatalogado2.htm
Figure 60 – “Mothers! Work in peace. The Ministry of public instruction protects your children,” by Peris. Calls on women to work while the text and children in the poster appeal to the maternal nature of women and connects them with family. From the Government of Spain, Ministry of Culture. http://pares.mcu.es/cartelesGC/servlets/visorServlet?cartel=187&page=4&from=catalogo
Figure 61 – “100,000 women. It’s necessary to work,” by Fried-Feld. Originated in Barcelona. The text encourages women to work, demonstrating the shift toward placing women in the home front. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/FriedFeld/FriedFeld.htm
Figure 62 – Poster against those trying to sabotage the national economy, by Dubon. Originated in Valencia. The woman in this poster is depicted as a personification of Justice and Prosperity. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Dubon/Dubon.htm
Figure 63 – “A glorious date for our Republic,” by unknown artist. Originated in Madrid. As with the posters before the outbreak of the war, a woman is portrayed as the Spanish state. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Sbhae_3/EdUrbion/Urbion05.htm
Figure 64 – “Silence! Spies await,” by Josep Espert. Originated in Madrid. While uncertain, the spy figure in the poster appears to be a woman. This may have been another attempt to raise popular sentiment against women being on the frontlines with soldiers. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Espert/Espert.htm
Figure 65 – “With the antifascist front, our victory is secure,” by Gallur. Originated in Valencia for the CNT. A clear depiction of women being used as rallying forces for soldiers. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Gallur/Gallur.htm
Figure 66 – P.S.U – U.G.T poster, by unknown artist. The *miliciana* in this image is constructed in a rallying fashion; she is seen with a drum, rather than a gun or weapon. From *Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.*

http://www.sbhac.net/Sbhac_3/NoCat/NoCatalogados/NoCatalogado.htm
Figure 68 – “The New Spain,” a drawing by propaganda artist Ramón Puyol. Reinforces the leftist rhetoric of equality and the new Spain. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores.
http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Puyol/Puyol.htm
Figure 69 – “Pay tribute to the aviation,” by Oliver. Originated in Madrid. The woman represents a rallying force in the war. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficionados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Oliver/Oliver.htm
Figure 70 – “Our arms are yours,” by Josep Bardasano and Juana Francisca. The woman stands apart from the male soldiers. The text suggests that women’s arms, working on the home front, aid the soldiers’ arms on the frontlines. From Sociedad Benéfica de Historiadores Aficianados y Creadores. http://www.sbhac.net/Republica/Carteles/Bardasano/Bardasano.htm