

# They Still Draw Pictures: The Spanish Civil War Seen with Children's Eyes

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## **Abstract**

*Seventy years after the insurrection of Spanish military forces against the democratically elected government of the Second Republic, several political, cultural and scientific initiatives have set out to reinforce the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War. An objective historical debate about the war was impossible in Spain under the Franco regime and quite difficult during the transition period to a democratic state because of the ongoing conflict between Francoists and democrats, which led to an attempted military coup against the new Spanish democracy in 1981. The stable democracy Spain now enjoys allows us to revisit the history of the Civil War from a republican and democratic point of view, in able to finally offer a just remembrance of the war's victims on the Republican side, something which has been neglected during decades.*

*This paper explores the representation of the Spanish Civil War in childrens' drawings, which were collected by several institutions, among them the Biblioteca Nacional de España. The existence and preservation of these drawings is the result of unique circumstances. The Spanish Civil War was the first conflict, in which modern arms were intentionally used against the civil population on a large scale, so that children became eyewitnesses of military attacks. The government of the Republic organized the evacuation of the civilian population, especially children, from the war zones, using an existing system of school colonies. Guided by their educators, these children started to reflect on their new experiences - the bombardments, the evacuation, the separation from their parents, but also the games, lessons and other activities in the school colonies - in their drawings. These drawings had a double purpose. On the one hand, they were designed as a therapeutic measure to help the children to overcome the traumas produced by the war. On the other hand, these drawings were used as propaganda in order to convince the Western democracies to support the legitimate Spanish government and to stop their policy of non-intervention, which only favoured the military rebels and their supporters, National-socialist Germany and Fascist Italy.*

*Today, the children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War represent a valuable and direct testimony of different aspects of this conflict: the life before the war, the breakdown of the Lebenswelt of the children, the presence of the war in daily life, humanitarian support and evacuation, organization and life in the school colonies and the politicization of the children. Nowadays, children who suffer the horrors of war continue to draw their experiences. The only difference with the drawings of the children of the Spanish Civil War is that today there is more blood, weapons are more powerful and society is indifferent and has become accustomed to coexisting with injustice.*

## **Introduction: Present political, cultural and scientific initiatives to preserve the memory of the Civil War in Spain**

The beginning of the Spanish Civil War, which started with an insurrection of a part of the armed forces against the legitimate and democratically elected government, celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006. On the occasion of this date, several political, cultural and scientific initiatives were taken in order to preserve the memory of this war. An objective historical debate seems to be possible only now. The Civil War was treated exclusively from the point of view of the victorious alliance of rightist forces during the long dictatorship of Francisco Franco in Spain. Republican fighters in the Civil War produced a considerable amount of literature, including some excellent historical studies, but these works were not well known in Spain itself, because only small quantities were smuggled in from foreign countries<sup>1</sup>. This literature became accessible in Spain in the last years of the dictatorship and especially after the death of Franco, but a public historical debate developed only very slowly. One of the unwritten laws accepted tacitly by all participants in the public discourse in Spain during the “transición”, i.e. the transition period from Franco’s dictatorship to a democratic state, was to avoid debates on the causes, the course and the consequences of the Civil War because this debate could have endangered the consensus between Francoists and their opponents, which was fundamental to establish democracy. The attempt of a military coup against the young Spanish democracy in 1981 showed how easily the violent conflict between the “two Spains” could break out again. The coup was put down with the help of the recently crowned King Juan Carlos. However, it showed how dissatisfied elements of the Armed Forces and the Catholic church were with the loss of their privileged situation under Franco’s regime. Very clear and public demands of historical justice might have endangered the peaceful transition towards democracy, and that is why they were not made. The Spanish democrats were ready to ignore the crimes committed by the followers of Franco and to integrate some important politicians of the dictatorship in the democratic institutions in order to establish a stable democratic state.

Recently, the historical opinion of the democratic majority in Spain has changed, as shown by some proposals, presented in 2006 and 2007 by the parliamentary majority, i.e. the socialist party, the united left and some regional nationalist parties. The dissenting votes against the initiatives in reference to the memory of the Civil War usually proceed from the conservative party, who argues that it is not advisable “to touch a sore spot”<sup>2</sup>. Some radical leftist parties criticized the law projects, because they did not go far enough according to their point of view. The law project dated July 18, 2006<sup>3</sup>, states “that it is time that the Spanish democracy honours and recognizes all those, who suffered directly the injustice and the offences because of different political or ideological reasons in this painful period

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<sup>1</sup> The Spanish translation of one of the most excellent historical studies of the Spanish Civil War, the book of Thomas, Hugh: *The Spanish Civil War*, London, Penguin Books, 2003, could not be published in Madrid in 1961, because the censorship of the information ministry did not allow it. It was then published by a publisher in exile in Paris and smuggled into Spain. The complete Spanish edition was published in Spain in 1976 after the death of the dictator Franco.

<sup>2</sup> See [http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ley\\_de\\_la\\_memoria\\_hist%C3%B3rica\\_de\\_Espa%C3%B1a](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ley_de_la_memoria_hist%C3%B3rica_de_Espa%C3%B1a) [Enquiry dated 21/02/2007]

<sup>3</sup> See “PROYECTO DE LEY POR LA QUE SE RECONOCEN Y AMPLÍAN DERECHOS Y SE ESTABLECEN MEDIDAS EN FAVOR DE QUIENES PADECIERON PERSECUCIÓN O VIOLENCIA DURANTE LA GUERRA CIVIL Y LA DICTADURA” in <http://www.mpr.es/NR/rdonlyres/3834DA97-8D86-4CD0-AE2E-7C8AA123725A/77934/ProyectedeLey> [Enquiry dated 21/02/2007]

of our history”<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, this law project revokes unjust judgments pronounced during the Civil War and the dictatorship and establishes a right to moral, but not economic, reparations for affected people and their relatives. Another proposal of a legal measure is the dismantling of monuments, which were built during the dictatorship and can still be found rather frequently in Spain. Also the names of public streets and places, which commemorate outstanding personalities of Franco’s regime, are to be changed<sup>5</sup>. A part of the conservative party’s followers defy these legal measures, because their feelings towards the former regime and its national-catholic ideology are friendly and they are not willing to ban the memory of this time from public life. Furthermore, the law project establishes centres as archives for documents of historical material proceeding from the Civil War. It proposes a symbolic measure as well. The fighters of the International Brigades, who tried to defend the Republic in the Civil War, are to be granted Spanish citizenship.

The “*Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales*”<sup>6</sup>, founded in 2002, deserves special attention in this context. Recently, this society not only organized high profile exhibitions, as for instance about the last president of the Second Spanish Republic, Juan Negrin, or the Educational Missions<sup>7</sup>, but also a congress on the Spanish Civil War, which the media covered in depth. The exhibition of children’s drawings of the Spanish Civil War, which showed a part of the collection of the Spanish National Library to the public<sup>8</sup> and which constitutes one of the main sources for this study, has to be considered as an event closely linked to the mentioned initiatives. The fundamental intention of these cultural and scientific efforts is the rehabilitation of the Second Republic’s image, which was damaged by the unilateral and partisan historiography of the dictatorship and the silence of the transition period. At the same time, the errors of the Republican side, which favoured the military rebellion against the constitutional order and the triumph of Franco’s followers, should not be ignored.

In the following, I will inform about the origin of different children’s drawings, the history of the collection of the National Library and make some references to other archives. Subsequently, I will try to bring the genealogy of the presented documents in line with the historical context, assuming the following suppositions: the new education policy of the Republic, which was inspired by a certain tradition that never before had been realized with public support, was responsible for educational missions, school colonies and, later during the war, the evacuations and can be considered insofar as one of the most important factors, which explain the origin of the drawings. One has to keep in mind as well, that the Spanish Civil War was the first conflict of a new kind, in which modern arms were intentionally used against the civil population on a large scale, so that children became eyewitnesses of military attacks. The interpretation of some selected drawings will attempt to systematically identify different themes, which the children represented. The works that show the life before the war, the breakdown of the *Lebenswelt* of the children, the presence of war in daily life, humanitarian aid and evacuations as well as the organization and life in school colonies, deserve special attention. Afterwards, the politicization of the children that can be found in some drawings and their use for propagandistic purposes will

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<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> There still are many “Avenidas del Generalísimo”, named after the dictator Francisco Franco, in Spanish cities and villages.

<sup>6</sup> *Public Society for Cultural Commemorations*.

<sup>7</sup> Spanish intellectuals carried out these missions in the years 1931 – 1936 with the intention of bringing culture to the underprivileged population in rural areas. This initiative was supported by public funding. The next chapter presents this enterprise.

<sup>8</sup> The exhibition “*A pesar de todo dibujan ... La Guerra Civil vista por los niños*” was held in Madrid from November 29, 2006, to February 18, 2007 in the Spanish National Library in Madrid.

be a theme of reflection. In this context, I will examine the problem of how infantile perceptions of the war are processed in different forms through the means of expression of drawings. The conclusions will compare the historical situation, in which children created pictorial testimonies of the Civil War, taking into account their impact on the public opinion in different countries, along with the present situation of children in war zones and reflection of their situation in the media.

## **Children's drawings in times of war: the sources**

The Spanish Civil War shows peculiarities in other regards, not only the mentioned new techniques of warfare and their devastating effect on the civil population. It was a very public war, as an exhibition<sup>9</sup> recently demonstrated, and a large number of correspondents who resided in Spain informed the international public opinion about its course. The war appeared on the front pages of the most important newspapers and magazines<sup>10</sup>, and the theme of the suffering of the children in the war was repeatedly used in order to appeal to the readers' consciences and to influence them. Children very often occupied a prominent position on posters created during the war, and famous war photographers used photo spreads to inform about the fates of the children who were evacuated from the combat zones.

At the end of the year 1936, Franco's troops marched towards Madrid and it seemed that their advance could not be stopped. The army of the rebels that originally had been stationed in North Africa was near the Casa de Campo, the large city park of Madrid, on November 5, and the battle for Madrid began. This battle went on until November 23, 1936. Simultaneously with the military movements, a large number of republican refugees flooded into the capital. Therefore, the Republican government felt the need to take measures in order to evacuate non-combatants from the combat zones. The protection of children against the air raids, which German and Italian bombers continuously flew under the command of their national socialist and fascist governments to support Franco, was one of the main issues for the Republican government. In the few years of its peaceful existence, the Second Spanish Republic had concentrated its attention on the care and education of children, which is one of its most outstanding and effective achievements according to the opinion of different authors. This child-friendly attitude of the Republican government continued at the beginning of the Civil War and many children were evacuated, sometimes alone, sometimes with their parents, after the serious deterioration of the living conditions of the civil population due the continuing bombardments and the worsening supplies. The Ministry for Public Education utilized the system of summer school colonies<sup>11</sup>, which had a long tradition. Such school colonies had been organized as early as 1887 on the initiative of the National Education Museum. Numerous international support organizations, which had been founded in the democratic Western countries, participated in the evacuations of the children from the combat zones; help came also from the Soviet Union, whose political leadership, however, was more interested in strengthening the position of the Communist Party than in stabilizing the Republic.

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<sup>9</sup> The exhibition "*Corresponsales en la Guerra de España*" (War Correspondents in the War of Spain) was shown from November 21, 2006, to February 25, 2007, at the *Instituto Cervantes* in Madrid.

<sup>10</sup> "The Spanish Civil War was the first war to be witnessed ('covered') in the modern sense: by a corps of professional photographers at the lines of military engagement and in the towns under bombardment, whose work was immediately seen in newspapers and magazines in Spain and abroad." Susan Sontag, "Looking at War: Photography's View of Devastation and Death," volume 78, issue 38, *The New Yorker*, 82-98, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> See the next chapter for a detailed description.



Giovanni Francesco Caroto:  
*Boy with a drawing*, beginning  
of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Children draw when they have access to paper and pencils. On a painting by Giovanni Francesco Caroto (approximately 1480 - 1546) we can see a boy with long red hair, who with a rather mysterious smile shows a drawing of a human figure to the observer; his drawing does not differ very much from children's drawings made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But there were not any large numbers of children's drawings before the age of industrialization and the emergence of mass schooling. In that manner, children's drawings may be considered as a product of industrial civilisation<sup>12</sup>. For over 100 years, children's drawings have been the object of educational and psychological research<sup>13</sup>. As a therapeutic method, however, closely related to the psychological healing of traumatic war experiences, children's drawings were used for the first time in the Spanish Civil War<sup>14</sup>. Teachers in schools and school colonies of the Republican zone collected these drawings, converting them into historical documents. Furthermore, these drawings were used during the war as propaganda, which informed the international opinion about the situation of the children inside the territories governed by the Republic with the purpose of raising funds in countries that sympathised with Republican ideas in order to finance the school colonies.

Nowadays it is impossible to reconstruct the exact moment, when the use of the drawings with this purpose started. An exhibition of "antifascist children's drawings" was inaugurated in Valencia on May 15, 1937. Some weeks before, the committee of the organization for popular culture in the province of Valencia had asked primary education teachers in this region to have their students draw pictures of the war. The basic idea of this campaign was "the conviction that it would be of great value for the cause that we all defend and, at the same time, of documentary and psychological interest to know the reflection of the horrible events ... in the moral personality of the child".<sup>15</sup> More than 3,000 drawings were sent to the committee and then exhibited, mixing different themes and formats and not observing any special criteria in their organization. The drawings ended up in the Soviet Union and it is not known, whether they were exhibited elsewhere before that.

Similar campaigns were organized in other regions of the Republican zone. At the beginning of 1938, the "International Red Support" collected children's drawings of the war in Catalan schools which were to represent three different themes: Scenes of the children's life before the war, during the war and how the child imagined the life after the war. An exhibition with these drawings was opened in the National Education Museum in

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<sup>12</sup> See Widlöcher, David: *Was eine Kinderzeichnung verrät. Methode und Beispiele psychoanalytischer Deutung*, München, Kindler, 1974, 8.

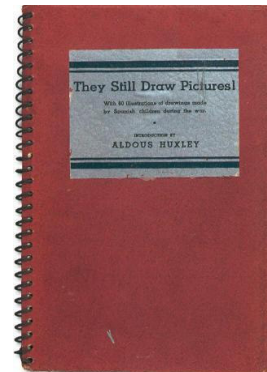
<sup>13</sup> Sully, James: *Studies of childhood*, New York, D. Appleton and company, 1896, contain a classical study of children's drawings.

<sup>14</sup> See Alted, Alicia; González, Roger; Millán, María José: «Dibujos infantiles en tiempos de guerra. La colección de la Biblioteca Nacional» in *A pesar de todo dibujan... La Guerra Civil vista por los niños*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 2006, 31.

<sup>15</sup> *Primera exposición del dibujo infantil antifascista organizada por el Comité Provincial de Valencia. Memoria*. (First exhibition of antifascist children's drawings organized by the Provincial Committee of Valencia. Report), Public Archive of the Russian Federation (Moscow). Collection 5283, Cat. 11., Exh. 458, Page 63-65.

Paris in March 1939, whose commissioner was Regina Lago. Alfred Brauner and Turai<sup>16</sup> collected and published drawings that proceeded from children's colonies maintained by the International Brigades<sup>17</sup>. The art collector and manager of an insurance company J. A. Weissberger collected at the end of 1937 children's drawings of the war in Spain on behalf of the Spanish Child Welfare Association and the American Friends Service Committee in order to exhibit and sell them in the USA. Both organizations had been founded by pacifist Quakers. A selection of 60 drawings was published by the Spanish Child Welfare Association under the title "They Still Draw Pictures!" with an introduction written by Aldous Huxley.

Two of the most important collections of children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War are stored in the USA. One of these collections consists of 617 drawings which are kept in the Southworth Spanish Civil War Collection – Mandeville Special Collections Library of the University of California in San Diego. Originally, the drawings of this collection were compiled by Herbert Southworth, a journalist closely connected with the Republic. Another collection of 153 drawings is preserved in the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library of the University of Columbia. The lawyer Martin Vogel donated the drawings, which he had acquired after an exhibition in New York, to the library.



The drawings of the collection of the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* were bought from a Catalan bookseller in 1986<sup>18</sup>. The majority of the drawings proceed from the same campaigns as those of the collections mentioned before. These drawings were kept in the department for drawings and engravings of the Spanish National Library before the exhibition in 2006 /2007. During the indexing of the 1,172 drawings<sup>19</sup> it was found out that most of them are still marked with the stamp of the Spanish Child Welfare Association of America. Most drawings were made by children aged between 5 and 15 in the school year 1937 – 1938 in school colonies of Republican Spain and Southern France. The boys and girls used coloured pencils to draw in their exercise books, whose paper is now slightly yellowed. The prevailing themes were the life before the war, the evacuations and humanitarian support, war experiences and the life in the colonies, as I will explain with more details in the next chapter.

Today, we have the resource of these special documents, the children's drawings, when we reconstruct historically a certain aspect of the Spanish Civil War, i.e. the infantile perception of the war, thanks to the efforts of the mentioned institutions and personalities, as much as of unknown partisans of the republican ideals and the protection of the children. The deep impression that the modern war machine and the devastating and deadly effects caused in children is painfully present in nearly all drawings.

<sup>16</sup> Pseudonym of the Hungarian photographer Dezvo Revai.

<sup>17</sup> Comité pro-Niños Españoles de las Brigadas Internacionales: *Los niños españoles y las Brigadas Internacionales*, Barcelona, Tipografía Catalana E.C., 1938.

<sup>18</sup> This information is given in the article by Alted, A. et. al., *op. cit.*, 2006, p.37ff.

<sup>19</sup> All these drawings are digitalized and accessible on the webpage of the National Library, but not easy to find. A large number of drawings can be found on the following page:

<http://www.bne.es/cgi-bin/wsirtex?FOR=WBNFRED4&VIS=W05BINP&FMT=WBNARIA4&ISN=00776151&TOT=886&DES=001&ISN-FOR=00776151&TOT-FOR=886>. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the head of the department for drawings and engravings of the Spanish National Library, Ms. Isabel García-Taraño, for her kind support during the search of sources for this article.

## The Second Republic and the Children: Educational Missions, School Colonies and Evacuations

The Spanish Civil War was also the virulent expression of a social division which characterized the Spanish society for decades, even centuries. The “two Spains”, i.e. on the one hand, the progressive, enlightened and educated bourgeoisie, as well as workers and farmers, who slowly developed organizations that represented their interests, and, on the other hand, the aristocracy, the upper-class and the big landowners, whose interests were defended by the Catholic Church, also a big landowner itself, had irreconcilable differences long before the outbreak of the Civil War. This short description only reflects a fundamental tendency and cannot explain all nuances of this conflict. Regional and nationalist interests also were quite important and occasionally led to very complex confrontations. The Catalan upper class, for instance, was very much interested in being able to decide its own affairs without the intervention of the Spanish central government, and therefore got involved with the Republic; it was not particularly interested in conceding ample rights to the Catalan workers. Priests in the Basque country identified themselves frequently in the first place as Basques, and as such, they fought for Basque independence and not for the Spanish Catholic Church, who sided with the military coup of Franco. The bloody repression of these pious fighters by Franco’s followers is still today quite an unknown chapter in the cruel history of the Civil War<sup>20</sup>.

One of the major failings of the young Second Republic was its inability to pacify the Spanish society. According to Hugh Thomas’ opinion: “The Republic really fell for the same reason that upset both the dictatorship and the restoration monarchy: the inability of the politicians then active to resolve the problems of the country within a generally acceptable framework, and a willingness, supported by tradition, of some to put matters to the test of force<sup>21</sup>.” Continuous violent conflicts happened on a daily basis during the short existence of the Republic before the war. According to one estimate, 330 people were killed in political unrest and 1,511 wounded; there were 213 politically motivated attempts of murder, 113 general strikes and 160 religious buildings were destroyed<sup>22</sup>. The Republic clearly failed in general political affairs, as the agricultural reform or the reform of the political structure of the state, which was to compensate central and regional interests. On the other hand, the achievements of the Republic were excellent in a field that had been neglected until then, educational, cultural and health care policy<sup>23</sup>. Still in 1931, the year of the proclamation of the Republic, there was a “chasm<sup>24</sup>” between urban and rural life. Whereas the cities enjoyed the inventions of modern technology, life on the country had not changed considerably since the Middle Ages.

Progressive Spanish intellectuals, who frequently belonged to the circle of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*<sup>25</sup>, were aware that the enduring disregard for the rural population was

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<sup>20</sup> Goñi Galagarra, Joseba M.: *La guerra civil en el País Vasco: una guerra entre católicos*, Vitoria, Eset, 1989, offers a detailed history of these events.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas, Hugh: *The Spanish Civil War*, London, Penguin Books, 2003, 184.

<sup>22</sup> See Carroll, Warren: *The Last Crusade: Spain: 1936*, Christendom Press, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Molero refers to “concrete and valuable aspects [of education policy, C.R.], which involved a profound transformation”, Molero Pintado, Antonio: *La reforma educativa de la Segunda República Española. Primer bienio.*, Madrid, Santillana, 1977, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Ortero Urtaza, Eugenio: «Los marineros del entusiasmo en las Misiones Pedagógicas» in: Sociedad de Conmemoraciones Estatales/Residencia de Estudiantes: *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931 – 1936*, Madrid, 2006, 67.

<sup>25</sup> This institution was founded in 1876 by Francisco Giner de los Ríos and a group of university professors, who had been laid off, with the intention to create an organization exclusively committed to



one of the main reasons for Spain's backwardness as compared to other nations. The pedagogue Manuel Bartolomé Cossío meditated intensively on the problem of how it was possible to grant the same high quality teaching to children in rural environments as to urban children. In the first place, Cossío proposed that only the best qualified teachers were to take over positions in rural areas<sup>26</sup>. Travelling missions should support those teachers, who were working in the villages, with the aim of enhancing the quality of teaching. The basic idea to send educational missions to the villages in order to fight the illiteracy and lack of cultural education of the rural population was frequently discussed in the following years, but never realized on a larger scale. Another idea, which came from the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* suffered a similar fate. The *Education Museum*, which the Institution had founded and Cossío managed, had organized the first school colony in July 1887 in San Vicente de la Barquera, an idyllic fishing village on the Spanish Atlantic coast<sup>27</sup>. It was the prevailing intention of the Institution's teachers during the first enterprise of this kind to offer the possibility of aesthetical learning experiences<sup>28</sup> to the students of their school, who mostly came from the liberal and wealthy bourgeoisie of Madrid. Social aspects were more important for later school colonies, i.e. the goal of offering students from poor families the possibility to know other parts of the country, the mountains or the sea, to which they never could have travelled with their families due to their economic situation.

Both initiatives, i.e. the idea of educational missions and of school colonies, were frequently debated in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but were never realized on a large scale. Some "test missions" were realized in 1912. There was an entry for educational missions in the budget for the Instruction Ministry in 1912. Dr. Gregorio Marañón, physician and intellectual, travelled to Las Hurdes, a poor region of Extremadura, in 1922 and drew the public attention to the unsustainable situation of the rural population. However, all these initiatives were merely individual enterprises, which came to an end with the coup d'état of General Primo de Rivera in 1923. Only the Second Spanish Republic, proclaimed on April 14, 1931, recurred systematically to the educational ideas that proceeded from the circle of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* and tried to put them into practice in order to improve the situation of the neglected social classes and to work against the backwardness of the country. The *Patronage of the Educational Missions* was established with a decree dated May 29, 1931, and Cossío was appointed its director. The decree defined the objectives of the missions as follows: "The objective is to take the breath of progress and the means to participate in this progress to the people, especially to those who live in rural communities ... so that all villages in Spain, even the remote ones, can participate in the noble advantages and pleasures which are reserved for the cities nowadays."<sup>29</sup>

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scientific principles, which was to teach and introduce educational innovations. The institution became a symbol for intellectual freedom and had a strong influence on Spanish intellectual life during the 60 years of its existence. An excellent summary of its history can be found in Molero Pintado, Antonio: *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza. Un proyecto de reforma pedagógica*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> "... let us send only the best teachers there (i.e. into the village schools), not only those with the best knowledge, but those, whose vocation is teaching, because this is even more important for the issue." Cossío, Manuel Bartolomé in *Congreso Nacional Pedagógico. Actas de las sesiones celebradas*, Madrid, Sociedad El Fomento de las Artes iniciadora del Congreso, Madrid, Imprenta de don Gregorio Hernando, 1882, 85.

<sup>27</sup> See Sociedad de Conmemoraciones Estatales/Residencia de Estudiantes, *op. cit.*, 35.

<sup>28</sup> See Molero, Antonio, *op. cit.*, 108.

<sup>29</sup> Ortero Urtaza, Eugenio, *op. cit.*, 80.



The missions set goals in three areas. They were to establish popular libraries in the country in order to *promote general culture*, organize courses and lectures, inform the rural population through movies about the life and the customs of other peoples, scientific progress, etc. Furthermore, concerts with choirs or small orchestras would be organized and music broadcast over the radio or played on the gramophone. They would visit the largest possible number of village schools and organize courses for the teachers in order to realize the objective of *educational orientation*. The democratic principles of modern states would be presented in public meetings, and lectures about the structure of the state and the possibilities of the citizens to participate in public life should be held in order to promote *citizenship education*. The support of the Republic made it possible to carry out many educational missions from December 1931 on. More than 400 missions, which covered practically all rural areas of Spain, are documented, but it is impossible to give an exact number, because official reports were not published about the last two years because of the Civil War<sup>30</sup>. Some available reports state that the movies and the music from the gramophone attracted the attention of the rural population, most of whom had not seen these products of modern technology before<sup>31</sup>.

The educational missions came to an end with the outbreak of the Civil War. On the one hand, the Republican government was no longer interested in the distribution of general culture in neglected regions, and subordinated its culture policy to the needs of the war against Franco's troops, and, on the other hand, the protagonists of the missions, voluntary, idealistic students, went to the front and fought with arms for the Republic. The missions should be mentioned in a history of the children's drawings of the Civil War, because they show the efforts of the educational and cultural policy of the young Republic to stimulate social progress. This motivation may seem a little bit naïve from a contemporary point of view – educated city dwellers voluntarily take culture to the primitive rural population – but this attitude is quite different from the contempt that a large part of the urban bourgeoisie and the class of the landowners showed for the farmers at that time. The desire for social reform that characterized the early Republic is also the main motive for the establishment of the school colonies where the drawings were made.

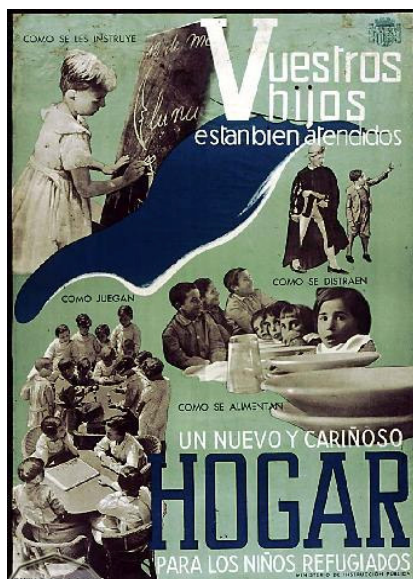
The Republic expanded the system of summer school colonies considerably for working class children during the years before the war, so that the Republican administration could recur to these institutions after the outbreak of the war in order to organize the evacuation of the children from the endangered zones. In addition to the institutions in Spain, there were also school colonies in countries, in which the government or at least parts of the population sympathized with the Spanish Republic. In September 1936, Madrid had become a battlefield due to the advance of the rebel troops, and the Republican government wished to evacuate all non-combatants as soon as possible. The government really worried about the children's welfare, as the measures to reform the educational and cultural policy in the years before had shown, but there was also a certain propagandistic interest. The Republic demonstrated with the evacuations and the excellent care for the children, on the one hand, its humanitarian image and, on the other hand, showed the horrors that the civil population had confronted because of the illegal military rebellion. The first evacuations from Madrid were badly coordinated and organized, but the foundation of a central department for colonies in the Ministry for Public Instruction in February 1937 considerably improved the transport of the children to the colonies and

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<sup>30</sup> See Sociedad de Conmemoraciones Estatales/Residencia de Estudiantes, *op. cit.*, 507.

<sup>31</sup> "The cinema and the gramophone were totally unknown to them, even so unknown that they even did not feel the curiosity to know them. It was a revelation for them ..." *Report of the Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas, Septiembre de 1931 – diciembre de 1933*, Madrid, S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934, 32.

their supply. The collective colonies under the strong influence of the Communist Party – of which the Minister for public instruction, Jesús Hernández, was a member – were preferred to other models, such as the lodging of the children with families.



Anonymous author (20<sup>th</sup> century):  
*A new and loving home for the refugee children: your children are cared for very well.* Valencia, Ministry for Public Instruction (between 1936 and 1937), Poster; 96 x 67 cm  
 Archivo General de la Guerra Civil Española, PS-CARTELES,18

According to a report that the Spanish delegation submitted to the International Coordination and Support Committee for Republican Spain, the Republican administration cared for 8,652 children in 160 colonies in Spanish territory and 15,133 children in foreign colonies at the end of 1937<sup>32</sup>. The school colonies in regions held by the Republic very often shared a similar structure. Teachers that knew the children in their hometowns accompanied their pupils into the school colonies, where two teachers were responsible for 25 children, or three teachers for 50 students. They tried to maintain the usual school routines. In the morning, lessons were taught in different classes according to the age of the children, and in the afternoon they organized their daily life. A cook and an assistant usually were assigned to a colony of 25 children; the bigger colonies had an additional helper and a tailor. The children were obliged to participate in all activities of daily life, but they also had some time off. Although the colonies were far away from the fronts, the children were indoctrinated as to the antifascist ideology of the Republican authorities, as some of the drawings, which I will present, show.

The school colonies, which were organized in foreign countries with the participation of the Spanish Republican authorities, had quite different characteristics depending on the host country. The 3,000 children, who were evacuated to the USSR, formed a collective, which was maintained for a long time and strictly educated under the Stalinist dictatorship, whereas the cohesiveness of the approximately 5,000 children taken to Belgium disappeared, because they were lodged with families. The 4,000 Basque children evacuated to the United Kingdom were not only accompanied by their teachers, but also joined by Basque nationalist priests, who taught them lessons according to the principles of the Catholic religion. The children's drawings, which will be interpreted with regard to general themes in the following chapter, were created in the organisational framework of these school colonies in Republican Spain and friendly foreign countries, but with different motives. Some drawings were made without any specific requirements, whereas others were produced according to a general theme dictated by the teachers. A considerable number of these drawings were created according to ideological instructions in order to defend the Republican cause and to criticize the enemy.

<sup>32</sup> Cruz, José Ignacio: «Colonias escolares y guerra civil. Un ejemplo de evacuación infantil.» in *A pesar de todo dibujan... La Guerra Civil vista por los niños*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 2006, 47.

More than 70 years later it is impossible to reconstruct, in each case, the concrete experiences of the children, reflected in their drawings. There is no doubt that modern weapons were intentionally used against the civil population for the first time in the Spanish Civil War. All big and medium-sized Spanish cities were systematically attacked by air. The German *Legion Condor* and the Italian *Aviazione Legionaria* became notorious for their merciless bombardments<sup>33</sup>. Barcelona alone was exposed to 385 air attacks. In that context, we may suppose that at least some drawings reflect the real perceptions of the effects of the bombs by the children, whereas other drawings could be the result of reading magazines, viewing movies or listening to the stories of adults, who took part in the war.



January 30, 1938; Children, who died after an air raid. Arxiu Fotogràfic del Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat, Barcelona.

The children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War presented in the following chapters are the result of a historically unique situation. Amidst the political tensions in the surrounding confrontation between totalitarian dictatorships and democratic states, a brutal war broke out because of the long existing division between competing social classes in a medium-sized European country. Interested foreign powers intervened in this conflict with modern weapons and used them ruthlessly, also against the civil population, and children became witnesses of their terrible effects. One of the parties of the conflict tried to protect the children with the support of foreign sympathizers and to care for them as best as possible according to its reformist education ideology, and evacuated the children into a partially existing system of school colonies, on its own territory as well as in foreign countries. The teachers in these institutions encouraged the children to draw their experiences, in order to help them overcome their traumatic experiences – and this therapeutic purpose of drawings is innovative – and also used the drawings propagandistically in order to gain support for their cause in foreign countries. The outcome is the creation of a considerable number of documents which allow contemporary historians to take a look at the Spanish Civil War with children's eyes and thereby completes the existing traditional historical studies in the sense of a history of private life.

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<sup>33</sup> The reproduced photo is extracted from the catalogue of the exhibition „*Quan plovien bombes. Els bombardeigs i la ciutat de Barcelona durant la Guerra Civil.*” shown from February 13 until May 13, 2007, in the *Museu d'Història de Catalunya*.

## Interpretation of children's drawings according to the represented themes

In the following chapter, I will try to offer an interpretation and an overview of the more than 1,000 children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War, which are stored in the archive of the *Biblioteca Nacional de España*. The presentation of the drawings is inspired by the criteria of specific themes, which the commissioners of the exhibition *A pesar de todo dibujan ... La guerra civil vista por los niños* had developed. The interpretation will take into account aspects that derive from developmental psychology and psychotherapy, as much as artistic criteria, but the most important point is the understanding of these drawings as historical documents, which reflect the experiences of their protagonists in a dramatic time. It is quite difficult to relate exactly the infantile perception of a specific occurrence in the war as the motive of a drawing in particular cases. Only some of the drawings contain written explanations, which may be understood as references to certain events. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that children are inclined to represent conflicts and fights in their drawings and that they like to draw modern and fascinating weapons – i.e. fighter planes – independently from their own experiences. The interpretation of many drawings according to the represented themes offers the advantage that it can give a sketch of a collective experience, which shaped the life of a certain group, i.e. Spanish children aged between five and fifteen during the Civil War.

The interpretations owe a debt to the sociological approach of Norbert Elias who based his research on the thesis that the historical experiences of a group, to which an individual belongs, shape his personality just as much as his individual relationship with his parents as examined by psychoanalysts and considered decisive for the development of human personality<sup>34</sup>. My analogical assumption is that the repetition of certain motives in the children's drawings of the Civil War allows us to identify patterns of experiences of the children that may be classified as fundamental for that generation. The breakdown of the *Lebenswelt* of the children can be considered as one of their most traumatic experiences, which surges as a subconscious narration, when putting together drawings with different subjects. Nearly all drawings that are kept in the *Biblioteca Nacional* proceed from children, who had been evacuated from their homes, because this environment had become a battlefield. They create their drawings in a school colony, a new and strange situation, where they live with other children, but without their parents and with their teachers as caretakers. These often naive, but always expressive small works of art are the result of their viewpoint, which is not influenced by mass media. They reach out to us over time transmitting the despair they felt.

In the following sections I will comment on several drawings that represent a certain theme and reproduce some very impressive examples, because the pictures of the drawings, more than any written analysis, convey the infantile perception of the Civil War, which brought so much suffering to the Spaniards.

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<sup>34</sup> “Die Kernfrage ... ist, wie sich das Schicksal eines Volkes im Lauf der Jahrhunderte im Habitus seiner einzelnen Angehörigen niederschlägt. Soziologen stellt sich hier eine Aufgabe, die von ferne an die Aufgabe erinnert, die Freud in Angriff nahm. Er suchte den Zusammenhang zwischen dem individuellen und besonders dem Tribschicksal eines Menschen und dessen persönlichem Habitus aufzudecken. Aber analoge Zusammenhänge gibt es auch zwischen den langfristigen Schicksalen und Erfahrungen eines Volkes und seinem jeweils gegenwärtigen sozialen Habitus.“ Elias, Norbert: *Studien über die Deutschen: Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1990, 27.

## Life before the war

The drawings of life before the war are not the result of themes of free choice, but were done according to the instructions of teachers to do something on *International Red Support*. It is striking that only a few drawings represent this subject, whereas an overwhelming majority of the works reflect war experiences. The reason might be that the children in the school colonies urgently felt the need to reflect recent traumatic experiences in their works and did not want so much to remember the peaceful situation, in which they lived



Barrio, Jaime. 12 Jahre. *A Street in Madrid: Scene of the Child before the War*. 171 x 232 mm. Alicante. Residencia Infantil n° 6, San Juan. BNE Dib/19/1/82.

before the war. Furthermore, drawing a picture of such a theme would have implied a very much developed sense of time, which younger children usually do not have.

The motives taken up by the children in order to represent the theme of life before the war are quite diverse and do not follow a common pattern. There are some peaceful scenes of city life, like the one reproduced on this page, in which a radiant sun shines on colourful city houses and a street, where unworried people pass by occupied with their own affairs. A



Inés Millán Romeo. 13 Jahre. 172 x 224 mm. France. School colony Bayonne. BNE Dib/19/1/874. Description: This scene represents the happiness that we felt / when my father (sales representative) came back home. My bro- / ther and I ran to him to embrace him and search / his pockets in order to see what presents he brought us from the other town.

symbol of modern times, a trolley car, is in the centre of the drawing; in front of it, a car drives by, whereas in the background, on the left, a traditional vehicle in Spanish cities in the thirties can be seen: a cart. Other drawings represent children playing, sometimes together with adults, during excursions to the country. Scenes of everyday life are quite popular, but they do not often show the daily work routine, like the drawing that a young seamstress made of herself in her workshop<sup>35</sup>. They usually depict the families at home. Most drawings of this kind show a harmonious graphic representation of traditional family structures. The foreground of 13 year old Inés Millán's drawing shows the living room of her home; the female and the male sphere are divided. Her mother is carrying the stockpot from the kitchen to the table, which is set for dinner. The father, a

<sup>35</sup> See the drawing of 16 year old Manolita Gurruchaga, BNE Dib/19/1/660

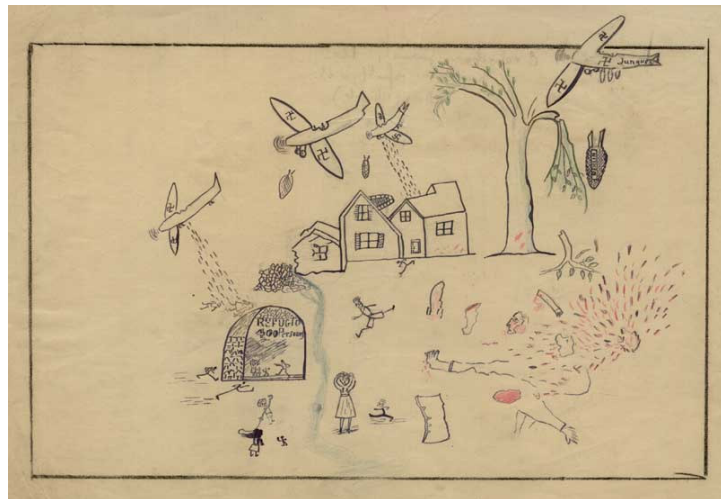


salesman, according to the author's description, stands on the right side before the open door and two of his children run towards him. A third child, a girl, is talking on the phone, observed by a black cat in the foreground of the drawing. We may conclude that the family is economically well off, because there were not many telephones in private homes in Spain in the thirties.

Basically, all children's drawings of the life before the war represent a peaceful daily *Lebenswelt* in a mostly urban environment; and consequently they would not attract the attention of historians. Their significance as historical documents proceeds from the contrast with the drawings that show war experiences. They are, so to speak, the starting point of the narration of the horrors of war with pictures.

### The breakdown of the *Lebenswelt* of the children and the presence of war in daily life

A large majority of the children's drawings in the collection of the *Biblioteca Nacional* and in other collections<sup>36</sup> reflect war experiences, and most of them represent the theme of the bombings. The *Lebenswelt* of the children, the daily life, in which they felt safe and at home, broke down gradually with the advance of the rebelling army. Many families fell apart, when the fathers and older brothers were drafted, and the mothers had to work in order to feed the families. Some children experienced the destruction of their houses in the bombings and sometimes witnessed the violent deaths of victims and the mutilation of their bodies. If they stayed in the combat zones, they themselves soon became victims of the meagre food supplies, the lack of hygiene and the diseases that were rampant.



García, Evangelina. 12 years. [Bombardment] 220 x 323 mm.  
Alicante, Residencia Infantil n° 23, Biar. BNE Dib/19/1/51.

It is striking that two themes, above all, are represented in the drawings with special care. Even quite young children without any extraordinary artistic talent execute very careful and detailed drawings of airplanes. The fascination they seem to have felt for these weapons of destruction of modern technology can be seen in many works. The children frequently reflect the shapes of the airplanes with great accuracy, possibly the result of having studied them carefully.

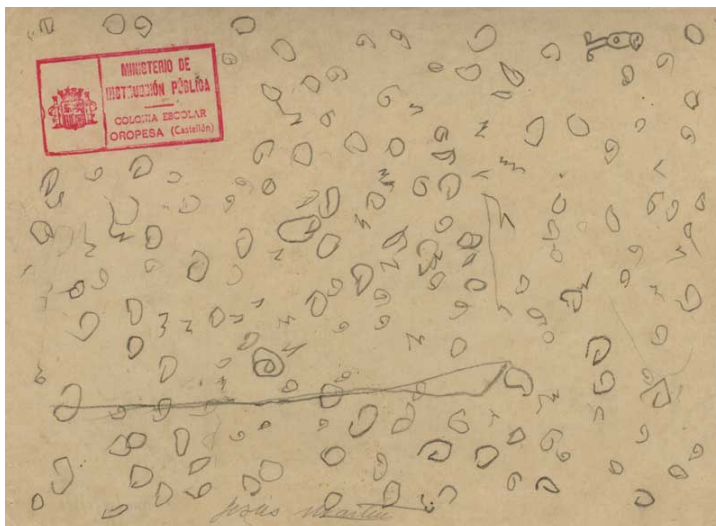
<sup>36</sup> The collections of the *Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library*, accessible at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/web/eresources/exhibitions/children/> and the *Archives publiques de l'Ontario*, accessible at <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/french/exhibits/spain/drawings.htm> have to be mentioned in this context.

Twelve year old Evangelina García's drawing not only shows the contours of the bombers exactly, but also the emblems on the wings, the swastikas. One of the wings even breaks through the framework that the young artist had established for her work, probably insinuating how removed the air raids were from the framework of her previous life and how much they had destroyed it. Like many other children, young Evangelina offers a quite impressive representation of a further theme: the destruction of a human body by a bomb. The head of a man and other parts of his body fly away from the centre of the explosion in a fountain of dirt and blood; the young artist uses her red colour pencil in this nearly monochrome picture exclusively to represent the blood that had been shed. Even if it is impossible today to know what the circumstances of Evangelina's life were, her drawing makes a good case for the theory that it reflects her personal experiences of a bombing raid.



Cerillo, Rafael. 13 years. *Bombardment of the queue for milk.* 172 x 238 mm. Teruel. Colonia Escolar Germán de Araujo. Alcañiz. BNE Dib/19/1-524.

Other drawings clearly show the presence of war in daily life. We can see on the right side of Rafael Cerillo's drawing a queue of people who are waiting in front of a milk shop, some of them with milk bottles in their hands. At the same time, bombs are falling out of a bomber squadron, which flies through the blue and cloudless sky. A tree and a man next to it already had become victims of the bombs; Rafael did not draw blood, he expressed the death of the man by making his head and arms fly away. This drawing also allows suggests that the young artist was depicting a real personal experience.



Jesús Martín. [Scribbles with a man]. 156 x 217 mm. Castellón. Colonia Escolar Oropesa. BNE Dib/19/1/151.

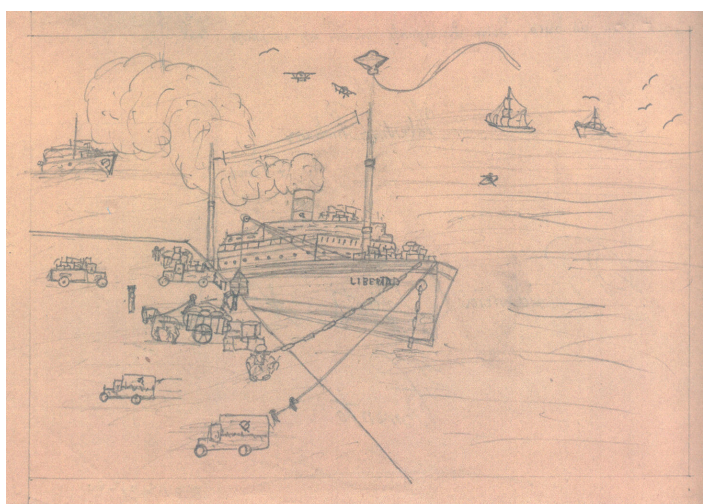
Some drawings of the younger children require a second look in order to find the reflection of the horrors of war that they contain. A drawing by the five years old Jesús Martín has been conserved, in which a superficial observer detects only nervous scribbles without any sense. Only a closer look at the drawing reveals the schematic representation of a man without arms who is lying on the floor on the upper right side. The discovery of this figure creates a new perspective on the content of the drawing. Is it possible



that the scribbles are not meaningless, but represent flying bullets or dirt that flies away after a bombardment? Could the longish figure in the foreground possibly be the representation of a human body that was destroyed in a bombardment? What were the boy's experiences of war that made him draw such a picture? Not only the expressive drawings of the older children illustrate the breakdown of the *Lebenswelt*, but also the traumatic effect of war on a child's soul very often becomes clear in the simple art work of the youngest, which do not seem so important at first sight.

## Humanitarian aid and evacuations

The children's drawings of the Civil War frequently deal with themes that refer to events, which are indirectly related to it. Older children, especially, who were aware that the situation had generally worsened, were able to recognize the importance of the international aid for the Republic. We may suppose that the teachers in the republican school colonies promoted this point of view, because education in the republican area became increasingly an instrument of an ideological fight<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, the ideological content of this kind of drawings is not very predominant; at the exhibitions of children's drawings in foreign



Valentín Chicharro. 14 years. *A Swiss vessel unloading food in a port that is loyal to the Republic.* 154 x 219 mm. Valencia. Colonia Escolar n° 2, Torrente. BNE Dib/19/1/780.

countries, they only could have been used as evidence that showed the existence of measures, which supported the Republican cause. A small group of drawings with this topic mainly shows merchant vessels, which bring urgently needed goods. The commentaries on these pictures very often emphasize that the ships come from countries, i.e. the Soviet Union and Mexico, which sympathize with the Republic. Some drawings show a certain technical perfection; the vessels are represented with correct perspective and the unloading of the goods is drawn with nearly photographic precision, as seen for instance, in Valentín Chicharro's work. The name of the ship is also significant: Libertad – Liberty.

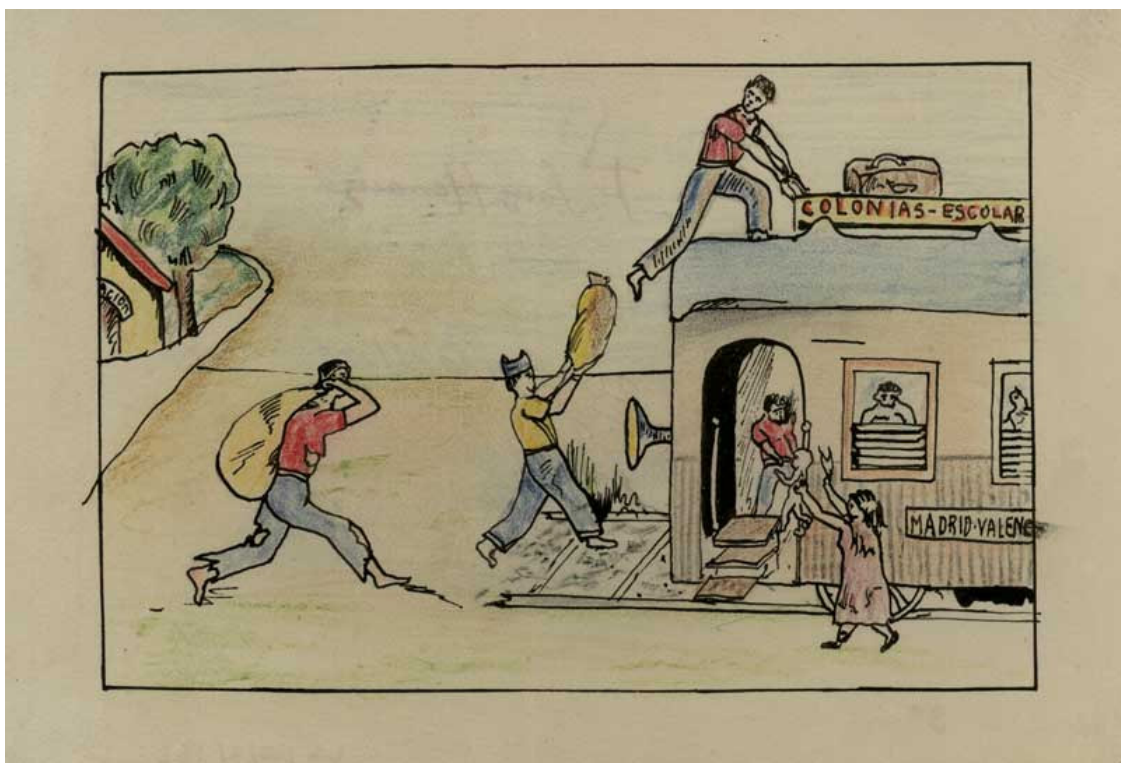
The evacuations are another theme which is often represented in the drawings. Buses and trains full of children and their guardians, who travel from the endangered areas to the regions, where peace still reigns, are seen in these drawings. The convoys with evacuated children advanced very slowly, because they had to make detours or stop because of the war. Sometimes, the buses and trains with children suffered air attacks. Possibly, the children chose this subject so frequently, because the evacuation was a traumatic

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<sup>37</sup> "Education totally becomes an ideological instrument, as soon as the war breaks out. There is a great leap: a reformist education policy is changed for a policy, in which education acquires a revolutionary character." Puelles Benítez, Manuel de: *Educación e ideología en la España contemporánea*. Barcelona, Editorial Labor, 1991, 348.

experience in their lives, which they confronted with conflicting feelings. On the one hand, they may have felt happy to leave the dangerous, badly supplied combat zone, and experienced the evacuation as an exiting adventure. On the other hand, very often they were separated from their parents for the first time and apart from the grief of separation, were afraid of the new and unknown situation that awaited them in the school colony.

A certain propagandistic value of those drawings, which took up the topic of the evacuations and were exhibited outside Spain, cannot be denied. They were used to show that the administration of the Republic was well organized and knew how to evacuate the weakest members of society from the endangered zones. The Republic proved with these drawings that the aid proceeding from foreign countries was spent meaningfully, and at the same time, served as an implied request for further donations.



F. Sanz Herranz. [Evacuation]. 160 x 231 mm. Valencia. Colonia escolar madrileña Balneario de Bellús. BNE Dib/19/1/562.

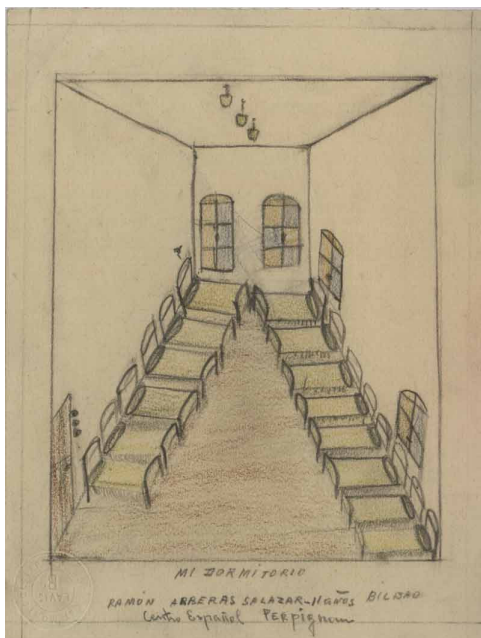
## Life in school colonies

The Republican administration utilized existing school colonies in the safe hinterland, as well as new colonies, which were established in buildings abandoned by their owners or expropriated. They also organized colonies in friendly foreign countries in order to accommodate the evacuated children. The internal organization of each of the school colonies was quite different and depended on their location and the institutions, which controlled and administered them. Nevertheless, all school colonies implemented educational reform

projects. The most important aspect was the attempt to offer the children a new and loving home, to replace the home that they had lost because of the war. We can observe the daily life in the school colonies through the drawings. Topics of the drawings are the daily personal hygiene, the community meals, the lessons, the outdoor activities, and the housework, excursions to the country or the sea. The drawings preserved show daily life in a very positive light, and this might be the reason why they were selected for exhibitions in foreign countries.



Francisco García. 14 years. [Playing in the colony]. 172 x 236 mm. Valencia. Colonia Escolar nº 1, Torrente. BNE Dib/19/1/76.



Ramón Arreras Salazar. 11 years. *My dormitory*. 160 x 122 mm. France. Centro Español de Perpignan. BNE Dib/19/1/982.

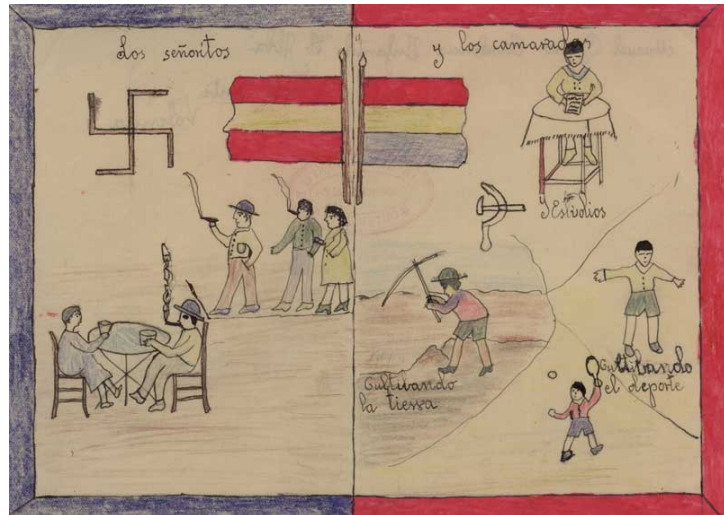
We may suppose that these drawings largely express the feelings of the children, who came from a dangerous and depressing situation into a well-equipped school colony. Many of them had never left their town before and experienced the evacuation as an exiting adventure. However, it is difficult to imagine that the children did not ever feel homesickness and a desire to see their parents. The lack of the open expression of these feelings in the drawings may be due to the fact that only those works in particular were selected for the exhibitions as they served the propagandistic interests of the Republic. Nevertheless, certain drawings of the collection leave a margin for the interpretation that the child artists sometimes felt lonely. Eleven year old Ramón Arreras' picture shows a very spartan and bare dormitory in a school colony in Perpignan. The empty beds are arranged in a 'V' and oriented towards an imaginary vanishing point; their Cartesian order gives an impression of acute loneliness. There are more drawings of the school colonies, showing for



example, children walking alone down long walkways in front of big buildings, giving the same impression of loneliness that the young artists have subconsciously expressed in their works.

### Political indoctrination of the children

All children's drawings that were collected in the Republic and exhibited in Spain and foreign countries had propagandistic purposes. They were intended to show the spectators the peaceful life before the military coup, the destruction of the Lebenswelt of the children by the inhumane air raids, and the merits of the Republic, which evacuated the children, educated and fed them well in safe areas. The visitors were asked to donate money for the Republican cause and to urge their governments to



Manuel Bravo. *The gentlemen and the comrades*. 160 x 221 mm. Valencia. Residencia Infantil Colonia El Albal, Onteniente. BNE Dib/19/1/681.

intervene officially in the conflict to help the Spanish Republic. Apart from the drawings presented in the preceding pages, works of children have been preserved that reflect the ideological battle between the warring parties. The children were the object of educational efforts on both sides: the Republic wanted them to assure the triumph of the Socialist Revolution, and the Nationalists aspired to convert them into defenders of the national-catholic counterrevolution. Politicised teachers presented a Manichean idea of the Spanish society in the sense of the Marxist social analysis, which occasionally was reproduced in children's drawings. These works very often show symbols and mottos, under which the parents of the children fought at the front. It may be understandable in the context of the



Carmen Rivas. *The two Spains*. 227 x 320 mm. Alicante. Residencia Infantil nº 23, Bihar. BNE Dib/19/1/58.

historical situation that both sides carried on their ideological and military confrontation in the area of cultural and educational policies. However, the indoctrination of the children by some Republican teachers teaching them class hatred, has to be criticized from a contemporary point of view. This kind of education was definitely not compatible with the Republican goal to represent a political ideal, which offered a better and more equal life for all Spaniards, not exclusively for the followers of the revolutionary parties.

## Conclusions

The existence and preservation of the children's drawings of the Spanish Civil War, herein presented, is due to a unique combination of historical circumstances. The Spanish Civil War was the first conflict, in which modern arms were intentionally used against the civil population on a large scale, so that children became eyewitnesses of military attacks. The government of the Republic tried to protect the weakest members of the society against the consequences of the war and organized the evacuation of the non-combatant population, especially the children, from the war zones, resorting to an existing system of school colonies. Under the guidance of their educators, the children began to reflect their experiences in drawings: the bombardments, the separation from their parents, as well as the games, the lessons and other activities in the school colonies. These drawings had a double purpose. On the one hand, they were designed as a therapeutic measure, which would help the children to overcome the traumas produced by the war. On the other hand, these drawings were used as propaganda in order to raise funds from the sympathizers of the Republic and to convince the Western democracies to support the legitimate Spanish government and to stop their policy of non-intervention, which only favoured the military rebels and their supporters, National-Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy.

Today, the children's drawings of the Civil War are valuable direct historical documents, whose examination with the perspective of different scientific disciplines promises interesting insights. Developmental psychologists can research what influence traumatic experiences have on the development of the infantile personality and to what extent this influence is present in the preserved drawings. Child psychiatrists may examine the therapeutic effects of drawing as a means to overcome psychological traumas. In the previous pages, the drawings were analysed as historical testimonies, whose interpretation can compliment the traditional historiography in the sense of being a history of private life according to Norbert Elias' approach to historical sociology. The historical patterns of the experiences of a certain generation, the Spanish children in the Republic aged five to fifteen, in the tumultuous times of violent conflict, which formed their personalities, are present in the drawings. The drawings as a whole offer a pictorial narration of the events, which allow perception of the conflict through children's eyes. Some drawings show life before the war and become important as the origin of the narration, when compared to later drawings of the war. The topic of most drawings is the breakdown of the Lebenswelt of the children during the frequent bombardments and the presence of the war in daily life. Other drawings representing the humanitarian aid, the evacuation and life in the school colonies are probably the result of the ensuing political awareness of the children or of the indoctrination by politicised teachers. A certain number of drawings reflect the ideological battle between the two warring parties and are the result of the indoctrination of class hatred by partisan teachers.

Children have become victims of war on countless occasions since the Spanish Civil War. Nowadays, the air raids, which continue to occur – for instance, in the Lebanon war, where cluster bombs were used – are no longer the worst threat for children. The availability of cheap small weapons, which make it possible to utilize children as soldiers and which create a climate of predisposition towards violence in the affected societies after the end of the conflict, is even more terrible.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See the UNICEF report on child protection at: [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child\\_Protection\\_Information\\_Sheets.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Protection_Information_Sheets.pdf) [Enquiry dated 28/05/2007], 7.

Furthermore, “an estimated 90 per cent of global conflict-related deaths since 1990 have been civilians, and 80 per cent of these have been women and children.”<sup>39</sup> The surviving children frequently represent their experiences in drawings, just as their unfortunate predecessors did during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference



between the representation of contemporary wars in the mass media of the Western world and their public perception today and the social reactions of the Western

democracies to the events of the Spanish Civil War at the end of the thirties. Then, broad social circles in many countries, such as France, Great Britain, Mexico, the USA and the Soviet Union for example, considered it scandalous to expose children to the systematic use of modern weapons. Therefore, the exhibitions of children’s drawings of the Civil War, for example, could raise funds in these countries for the Republican evacuations of the children and their education in school colonies in Republican Spain and elsewhere. Today, the public opinion in the Western countries barely takes into account the contemporary violent conflicts, whose number of victims is far more than those of the Spanish Civil War. “In Darfur (Sudan), around 2 million people have been forced from their land and live in displacement camps. More than 1 million of them are children under 18, with 320,000 aged five and under.”<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the information given by the Western mass media about this conflict and the related humanitarian catastrophe, which may be called genocide, is very scarce.

“This boy was 8 when his village in Darfur was attacked in 2004. His drawing describes this attack, where Janjaweed forces (drawn on horse backs) and Sudanese forces (in vehicles and tanks) worked together to burn his village, kill many civilians (shown lying on the ground) and lead to the displacement of the survivors).” <http://www.wagingpeace.info:80/?q> [Enquiry dated 27/08/2007] The drawings collected by the NGO *Waging Peace* will be used as evidence at the International Criminal Court, which is investigating crimes taking place in Darfur.

democracies to the events of the Spanish Civil War at the end of the thirties. Then, broad social circles in many countries, such as France, Great Britain, Mexico, the USA and the Soviet Union for example, considered it scandalous to expose children to the systematic use of modern weapons. Therefore, the exhibitions of children’s drawings of the Civil War, for example, could raise funds in these countries for the Republican evacuations of the children and their education in school colonies in Republican Spain and elsewhere. Today, the public opinion in the Western countries barely takes into account the contemporary violent conflicts, whose number of victims is far more than those of the Spanish Civil War. “In Darfur (Sudan), around 2 million people have been forced from their land and live in displacement camps. More than 1 million of them are children under 18, with 320,000 aged five and under.”<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the information given by the Western mass media about this conflict and the related humanitarian catastrophe, which may be called genocide, is very scarce.

The basic difference between the children’s drawings of the Spanish Civil War and the drawings proceeding from contemporary conflicts is that today there is more blood and weapons are more powerful. The main difference in regard to the social perception of contemporary violent conflicts is that today’s developed societies have become accustomed to the existence of lots of bloody and extremely unjust wars in many parts of the world and feel indifferent about them.

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF, *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, the exhibition *I have drawn the war*, which shows drawings of Françoise and Alfred Brauner’s collection. This particular exhibition was held in many cities and forms part of a series of exhibitions with the title *Children’s drawings of the war*. Detailed information about this exhibition is given at <http://www.culturcooperation.de/site/Fset1.htm> [Enquiry dated 28/05/2007].

<sup>41</sup> UNICEF, *op. cit.*, 7.