

# Identities In Conflict: New York Irish-Catholics' Response to the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939

By Julie K. Wood

In March 1993, the NYIHR presented Julie K. Wood with \$250 on behalf of the James T. McHugh Undergraduate Award. Ms. Wood's essay was written for her senior thesis in history at Princeton University. She currently works in Los Angeles. Our undergraduate award for scholarship on the New York Irish is named after the late James T. McHugh, a past president of the NYIHR.

## INTRODUCTION

The 1930s was a decade polarized by conflicting ideologies worldwide. Hitler and Mussolini had created fascist dictatorships in Germany and Italy which were not content to stay within their own borders. The Germans remilitarized the Rhineland. The Italians invaded Ethiopia. On the other end of the political spectrum, while Stalin carried out his purges in the Soviet Union, his troops forceably annexed areas in central Asia, the Ukraine, and Transcaucasia. The world waited anxiously for the inevitable conflict between the two political spheres into which Europe was dividing.

Some would say this conflict began with the outbreak of World War II; others might place the date earlier—with the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. General Francisco Franco's military revolt against the Spanish Republican Government, a Popular Front of Communists, Socialists, and other left-wing groups, was supported clandestinely by Hitler, Mussolini, and the fascist government of Portugal. Moscow sent war material to the Republic, and Communists worldwide helped organize the International Brigades, a group of volunteers who joined the Republican Army.

While the United States declared its neutrality, American citizens quickly chose sides. Those sympathetic to the Republican Loyalists viewed the struggle as one between fascism and democracy. Some believed so strongly that Spanish democracy had to be defended that they volunteered for the Lincoln Battalion of the International Brigades. An ardently pro-Franco element led by the Catholic Church,<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, saw Spain as the battlefield for the war against world communism.

Hundreds of histories have been written on the Spanish Civil War—its causes, its military campaigns, International Brigaders' memoirs, international repercussions of the war, and the United States' reaction to it. When studying the U.S. response, historians often discuss American activities in favor of one side or the other. The scholarship on pro-Franco propaganda has concentrated on the role of the Catholic Church hierarchy which led the pro-Franco drive in the United States throughout the war.<sup>2</sup>

An intriguing question raised by this scholarship is why the Catholic establishment failed to persuade a majority of the laity of the rectitude of Franco's cause.<sup>3</sup> The Pope, the American hierarchy, the majority of the clergy, the Catholic press, and Catholic lay organizations all endorsed Franco. Most Catholics, however, remained unconvinced—a fact of which Catholics were painfully aware. "As a body," the Catholic journal *Ave Maria* lamented in 1938 with the Spanish situation in mind, "we seem dismally incapable of unified action for a worthy objective."<sup>4</sup> Historians have noted this discrepancy between the views of Catholic leaders and those of the Catholic masses with regard to the Spanish war. Much like the priests and bishops of the

1930s, however, they have been at a loss to account for it. As J. David Valaik, one of the leading scholars of American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War, has written: "The record of failure is clear, but the reasons for the 'dismal' lack of unified action, although a matter of conjecture, have never been discussed."<sup>5</sup>

Through a case study of New York Irish Catholics, this paper will attempt to explain "the record of failure" of the Catholic hierarchy and will discuss why the laity was not unified behind it regarding the Spanish Civil War. While Irish Americans were more sympathetic to Franco than were some other ethnic groups [Figure 1], fully half of them were neutral or pro-Loyalist.<sup>6</sup>

**FIGURE 1**

Attitudes toward Spanish Civil War, by Ethnic Group  
February 1939

Ethnic group <sup>a</sup>	Pro-Loyalist	Pro-Franco	Neither	No Opinion
Irish	28	49	18	5
German	35	27	30	8
Italian	20	55	15	10
Russian <sup>b</sup>	53	17	21	9

Source: American Institute of Public Opinion [Gallup] Poll 147 (February 2, 1939) cited in Ronald Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 91.

<sup>a</sup>By country of birth of father

<sup>b</sup>Many Jews would be expected to be found among this group.

In addition to the hope that this paper will make a contribution to what Sean Wilentz has called "so undeveloped a field as Irish-American history,"<sup>7</sup> I have chosen to study Irish-Catholic Americans because, as a group, in the 1930s they identified with three distinct communities: religious, ethnic, and social. Irish Americans are typically perceived as devoutly Catholic, proud of their Irishness, and as members of the working class. Yet even for them, the importance of these three identities fluctuated over time. This study will discuss the Catholic hierarchy's loss of influence over Irish Americans, specifically those in New York City, in terms of the relative importance of religious identity in the 1930s when compared to ethnic and social identity.

Religion was just one aspect, albeit an important one, of the identity of Irish-Catholic Americans. When millions of Irish Catholics began migrating to New York and other United States cities in the nineteenth century, they took their religion with them. For these early immigrants, as for the three-quarters of a million Irish who came to the U.S. between 1900 and 1930, the Church was both a connection to the past and a source of strength.<sup>8</sup> In America, Irish Catholics attended church together, joined the same church-sponsored organizations, and sent their children to Catholic schools. The Irish soon took over the American Catholic Church. They dominated the lower clergy and the hierarchy, providing an intimate bond between the Church and Irish Americans.

Ethnicity was another important aspect of identity for both newly arrived Irish immigrants and for Irish Americans whose families had been in the United States for generations. Throughout the nineteenth century, the connection with Ireland was constantly reinforced by the arrival of new immigrants. Even in 1930, when almost a million foreign-born Irish were living in the U.S., the bond with Ireland remained strong.<sup>9</sup> Irish Americans also remained tied to their native country through their devotion to Irish independence. Many of them were unhappy with their position in the United States and blamed their misfortune on British oppression that forced them into "exile." This sentiment transformed them into passionate Irish nationalists.<sup>10</sup>

Such devotion to Ireland's independence helped maintain Irish group identity, as did a strong Irish-American community. The Irish community in New York—and nationwide—cultivated a sense of ethnic pride through its press and Irish fraternal organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. The continuing importance of ethnicity in the Irish-American community is demonstrated in marriage statistics which reveal that in 1930, Irish in-marriage was seventy-four percent, almost the same as the 1900 level.<sup>11</sup>

A third source of identity—class identity—also was consistent among Irish Americans, the majority of whom were members of the working class from the 1800s through the mid-1900s. With the exception of a minority of skilled workers who came from Ireland's cities, upon their arrival in New York and other cities, most Irish immigrants were employed in unskilled, poorly paid industries such as trucking, construction, utilities, the docks, supermarkets, some city government jobs, and transit. By the second and third generations, many Irish Catholics had moved to skilled and semi-skilled jobs, yet they often advanced no farther. Most were still closer to the bottom than the top of the social and economic ladder.<sup>12</sup>

Given their position in the working class, Irish Americans were decisive pioneers in trade unionism. By the late nineteenth century, Irish immigrants and Irish Americans held leadership positions within local and national trade unions, including the Knights of Labor. The American Federation of Labor was largely Irish, both in membership and leadership. Until the Great Depression, Irish Americans dominated unionization. There were unions in the trades in which the Irish were entrenched and numerically important; where they were not an important factor, unionization was weak.<sup>13</sup> Because so many workers were hard hit by the Great Depression, however, unionization became widespread in all trades. The economic collapse had altered the psychology of the working class, including its Irish American members, making them much more aware of their identity as workers.

As I will argue in this paper, the New York Irish-Catholic reaction to the Spanish Civil War demonstrates the increasing importance of class identity in the 1930s. Despite almost unanimous support for Franco among Catholic leaders and equally strong support in the Irish-American press, which was the voice of the community, half of Irish Americans were either neutral or pro-Loyalist. Significantly, a movement founded in New York City in the 1930s which fully supported and aided labor unions, the Catholic Worker Movement, and the unions themselves, loudly advocated neutrality and pro-Loyalism, respectively.

### **THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: IDEOLOGIES IN CONFLICT**

The Spanish Civil War started on July 17, 1936 when General Francisco Franco, declaring that the time had come to restore

order and religion to Spain, led a right-wing military revolt against a popularly elected republican government. The country had been wracked by political and domestic turmoil since the 1936 February elections, when a Popular Front coalition of various left-wing groups came to power.<sup>14</sup> The military coup, which Franco expected to succeed within three days, led instead to a bloody civil war which ground on for three years, ending only with the victory of Franco and his Nationalist forces on March 28, 1939.

Gross atrocities were committed by both sides throughout the course of the war. By the end of August 1936, after just six weeks of fighting, almost a hundred thousand people had been killed. The Loyalists, fighting for the government, lashed out at representatives of the Catholic Church, which they regarded as the ally of the upper classes. In Asturias during the first months of the war, for example, several churches and convents were burned. The Loyalists destroyed the bishop's palace and shot several priests. Middle-class women were raped and killed.<sup>15</sup>

The Nationalists, fighting under Franco, were equally inhumane. Men were shot, and sometimes tortured, in front of their families. Wives, sisters, and daughters of these men often shared the same fate. Their heads were shaved and they were raped before the Nationalists killed them. In order to terrify citizens of newly conquered cities, Franco's army left bodies unburied and exposed to the public.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, neither side could rightfully claim the moral highground, although both did in their appeals for international aid.

It was apparent from the start that this war would have international repercussions. The Spanish Republican Government immediately sought aid from its allies. An isolationist Europe, however, feared involvement in a conflict which could escalate into another general European War. On July 19, 1936, French Prime Minister Leon Blum received an urgent telegram from the Spanish Republican Government asking for arms and equipment to help put down Franco's revolt. Since the Republic was Spain's legally recognized government, the appeal was legitimate under international law, and Blum initially replied in the affirmative. Within six days, however, he bowed to domestic pressure to stay out of foreign conflicts and announced that France would refuse the Spanish request. Two weeks later, the French government made known that it expected that France's initiative would serve to facilitate a general agreement regarding non-intervention in Spain. By the end of August, following France's lead, two dozen countries including Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy had pledged not to intervene in the Spanish Civil War. A Non-Intervention Committee which first met on September 9, 1936, was established in London to supervise the workings of the agreement. Delegates from all twenty-four countries were represented in the commission until it dissolved at the war's end.

The pledge not to intervene, however, meant different things to different countries; to some, apparently, it meant nothing at all. By the fall of 1936, Adolf Hitler had already sent 10,000 fully-equipped soldiers to aid Franco's Nationalists; about 16,000 Germans in total fought against the Republic throughout the war. Italian intervention was even more pronounced. At their maximum, in mid-1937, Italian forces in Spain numbered about 50,000. Benito Mussolini also sent aircraft, bombs, ammunition, cannon, and other war material to aid Franco. While the Salazar regime in Portugal could not send as much military aid to Franco, it did enable a great part of German aid to pass through to Spain, and a significant number of Portuguese soldiers (20,000) joined the Nationalists.<sup>17</sup>

TO ALL IRISHMEN AND WOMEN WHO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY AGAINST FASCISM, THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY WILL ALWAYS BE HELD SACRED. IT WAS ON THE 12TH DAY OF THIS MONTH IN 1937 THAT A GROUP OF IRISHMEN PLAYED A HEROIC PART IN THE BATTLE OF JARAMA TO HOLD OPEN THE MADRID-VALENCIA ROAD.

The Fascist attack on Madrid's life-line was beaten back, and once again Franco's Fascists suffered defeat—just as they were driven from Teruel on January 7th this year.

In the battle at Jarama many Irishmen were killed, outstanding amongst them being "Kit" Conway, building worker, trade-unionist and soldier in our own fight for independence. He, along with the other Irishmen who joined forces with the Democratic Government, saw in the Fascist Italian and German attack on Spain a threat to World Democracy which should not only be answered by Spaniards, but by all who stand for Liberty and Democracy.

Irishmen are still in the ranks of Spain's Republican Army, and in this month of February we join with them in paying tribute to those brave men of our Nation who have fallen in the battle to save Republican Liberty.

Demonstrate your loyalty to the cause of Democracy by demanding that our Government establishes proper diplomatic relations with the Spanish Republican Government and declares its support for that Government's right to buy arms to defend Spain against foreign Fascism.

**With the Spanish People let  
our Answer to Fascism be:  
NO PASARAN**

Help for the Spanish Republican Government, while not as decisive as aid to Franco, arrived from the Soviet Union and Mexico. In addition, an international coalition of volunteers called the International Brigades was formed to aid the Republic. The Soviets sent arms and financial aid to Spain, but no more than 2,000 Russian soldiers fought there during the course of the entire war. About two million dollars' worth of military aid was sent to the Spanish Government from Mexico, but no Mexican soldiers were sent to Spain. The International Brigades supplied a more substantial amount of manpower to the Republic. A total of about 40,000 foreigners from France, Germany, Austria, Italy, the United States, Britain, Canada, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Scandinavia, and fifty-three other nations fought with the Republican Army. The Brigades never numbered more than 18,000 at one time, however, and by November 1938, none remained in Spain. At the request of the Republic, the League of Nations supervised their withdrawal.<sup>18</sup>

That there was so much international involvement in the Spanish Civil War despite the existence of the Non-Intervention Agreement is an indication of the ideological passions it provoked. To the international Left, the coup was, in the words of a 1936 editorial, an illegal conspiracy of generals and Monarchists "aided by the conservative influence of the church and the landowners, and by the backwardness of the Spanish masses" against a duly elected government. They saw the war as part of an international struggle against fascism. As a British Battalion veteran explained in 1937, volunteers in the International Brigades were especially motivated by the belief "that there are things worth fighting for and things that must be fought against. . . [I]ssues of this struggle are of significance for ourselves and the whole world."<sup>19</sup>

Conservatives also viewed the Spanish War in international terms, as part of the struggle against communism. They dismissed the International Brigades as a group recruited, organized, and equipped by Communists to defend a "Red" government which was incapable of preserving order and which was in danger of becoming a Russian satellite.<sup>20</sup> The intensity of this debate gave the Spanish Civil War a mythic aura as a great struggle between fascism and communism. In retrospect it has often been called a prelude to the Second World War.

As it did in Europe, the Spanish Civil War would eventually force Americans to choose sides; yet, on the eve of the conflict, the United States was unified by an almost universal isolationist sentiment. Public opinion surveys conducted in 1936 and 1937 revealed that seventy percent of Americans thought that it had been a mistake for the United States to enter the First World War; ninety-five percent answered "no" when asked if America should take part in another such war should one develop in Europe. Reflecting this mood, Congress had passed neutrality acts even before the Spanish war started. The Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1936 compelled the government to place an embargo on shipments of arms, ammunition, and other implements of war to all nations involved in war and banned loans to all belligerents. Neither act made provisions for civil war, but in January 1937, President Roosevelt requested a congressional amendment of the existing legislation which would make it unlawful to export any war material "from any place in the United States . . . to Spain or to any foreign country for transshipment to Spain." In an overwhelmingly affirmative vote, the amendment passed the Senate 81-0 and the House 406-1.<sup>21</sup>

At the beginning of the Spanish war, almost all factions in American politics received the embargo well. Isolationists supported it because it kept the United States out of the conflict. Internationalists were pleased to cooperate with Great Britain and France, whose Non-Intervention Committee the U.S. supported but could not join because of its commitment to neutrality.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the majority of Americans were not very concerned about the war in Spain. A poll taken in February 1937, shortly after the arms embargo passed Congress, showed that fifty-four percent of those surveyed were neutral as to which side won the Spanish war.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, Americans were neither pro-Loyalist nor pro-Franco; rather, they were "pro-stay out of war."<sup>24</sup>

As the war progressed, however, interest in the Spanish situation intensified, and more Americans began to sympathize with one side or the other. The percentage of Americans who were neutral shrunk from fifty-four in February 1937 to forty in December 1938. During that year and a half, due to the propaganda drives of pro-Loyalist organizations, the increasing intervention of Hitler and Mussolini for the Nationalists, and the bombing of civilians by Franco's forces, many previously neutral Americans began to favor the Loyalists.<sup>25</sup> In the December 1938 poll, forty-six percent of all respondents (seventy-six percent of those who expressed a decided preference) said they sympathized with the Loyalists. In the same time frame, Franco sympathizers actually lost supporters.<sup>26</sup>

Numerous Americans had begun to favor the Loyalists because they perceived the conflict in Spain as a war between democracy and fascism; as such, while they did not want the United States to intervene directly, they vehemently criticized the U.S. neutrality policy as unjust and urged Congress to lift the arms embargo. Because the Fascist governments were sending arms and troops to the rebels, they argued, the U.S. embargo, like the European Non-Intervention Agreement, was a "deliberately unfriendly act" toward "a legally constituted government duly elected by a majority of the people." In denying the Spanish government the very resources which the rebels were receiving, the U.S. was, in effect, taking Franco's side and "actively supporting fascism."<sup>27</sup> Roosevelt received these arguments favorably, as he himself was sympathetic to the Loyalist cause, and it was rumored that he would consider proposing to lift the arms embargo.<sup>28</sup>

Franco's supporters in the United States, led by the Roman Catholic Church, however, favored the embargo and were determined to block its removal. The Catholic hierarchy deplored the anticlericalism of the Spanish Republican Government, which it saw as a seedbed of communism.<sup>29</sup> Church officials argued that American Communists were leading the fight to repeal the embargo, that repeal would prolong the war, and that it would in effect ally the U.S. with the Soviet Union and thus provoke German and Italian attacks on American soil.<sup>30</sup>

Aware of the President's Loyalist sympathies, American Catholic leaders began to put direct pressure on the Roosevelt government. One Jesuit priest wrote to warn the administration that lifting the embargo would cause much discontent among Catholic voters: "The Catholic conscience would be wounded deeply by any modification of policy . . . that would spell official sympathy for the Barcelona [Republican] regime. We should realize that our government had associated itself in fact with the most menacing enemies of democracy in the world today." Other Catholics organized petitions and letter-writing drives to encourage the administration to maintain the embargo.<sup>31</sup>

In light of these activities, Roosevelt was legitimately concerned



about losing the Catholic vote. Catholics represented one-sixth of the American population in the 1930s and in 1936, eighty-two percent of all Catholics who voted said they cast ballots for Roosevelt. If all Catholics were alienated from the Democratic Party due to the lifting of the embargo, the Democrats' loss would be nearly a quarter of their popular vote.<sup>32</sup>

In the end, Roosevelt decided not to recommend lifting the embargo. While several factors entered into his final decision—among them reluctance to challenge Britain's desire to keep the war localized, Secretary of State Cordell Hull's support for the embargo, and persistent isolationist sentiment among voters—the impact of Catholic pressure was strong.<sup>33</sup> At the height of the depression, Roosevelt refused to engage in a violent political struggle with Catholic supporters over the embargo.<sup>34</sup>

Roosevelt's fear of alienating the Catholic electorate, however, was unfounded; while the Catholic establishment was clearly pro-Franco, the majority of the laity, it seems, was not. If the President was influenced by fears of losing Catholic support, and there is ample evidence that this was the case, then we can but conclude that he and his Democratic strategists misread the political landscape of American Catholicism.<sup>35</sup> In December 1938, after being barraged by pro-Franco propaganda through the Catholic press and clergy for over two years, only four out of ten Catholics were sympathetic to Franco.<sup>36</sup> This result was certainly not the fault of the Catholic hierarchy; throughout the duration of the war in Spain, the leaders of the American Catholic Church did all they could to present Franco in the best light possible and to convince American Catholics that a Nationalist victory would be a Catholic victory.

### **CATHOLICISM VS. COMMUNISM: THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE**

On June 3, 1933, Pope Pius XI wrote *Dilectissima Nobis*, an encyclical in which he accused the two-year old Spanish Republican government of animosity toward the Catholic Church and warned that the Republic's separation of Church and State was a "serious error."<sup>37</sup> The Vatican's sentiments were echoed by Catholics in America, who at first had been tolerant of the Republic but were increasingly upset by its anti-clerical actions in the early 1930s.<sup>38</sup> With the adoption of the democratic Constitution of 1931, the Spanish government closed Catholic schools, confiscated Church property, legalized divorce by mutual consent, and called for the expulsion of the Jesuits. These measures reminded many Catholics of similar actions in the Soviet Union and Mexico, two countries whose anti-Catholic policies had caused much concern among Catholics world-wide.

The Republic discovered just how disturbed Catholics were by its actions when Franco's July 1936 military revolt received the full support of the international Catholic Church. The official Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, had declared neutrality very early in the war, but after a majority of the Spanish hierarchy sided with Franco, the Pope quickly gave his blessing to the Nationalists. Discussing this support in September 1936, Pius XI explained that the Nationalists had "assumed the difficult and dangerous task of defending and restoring the rights and honor of God and of religion."<sup>39</sup> The Vatican saw Franco's revolt as a means of restoring Christianity to Spain, and it made this message clear to Catholics around the world.

The Pope's announcement of his hopes for a Nationalist victory added fuel to the already strong pro-Franco sentiment within the American Catholic Church. During the fall of 1936, almost the entire Church establishment in the United States—the hierarchy and the majority of the clergy, Catholic lay organizations,

and the Catholic press—endorsed Franco's rebels. In November at an annual meeting, Patrick Cardinal Hayes of New York, Denis Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia, George Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago, eleven archbishops, and 75 bishops issued a joint statement on Spain which reads in part:

*The Catholics of America . . . have been horrified at the savage extremes to which irreligion and inhumanity have been carried. They deplore the horrible carnage the more deeply because of the conviction that the sufferings of the Spanish Church are but the agony of civilization, battling for its spiritual and cultural heritage over the prostrate body of Spain. They know full well that the Spanish Catholics are the victims of studied oppression; and that men like-minded with their oppressors have constantly misrepresented here their struggle.*

*. . . Already in answer to the appeal of our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI . . . our bishops have led their flocks in prayer for that afflicted nation. Again we exhort our people to turn to God in persevering prayer for the liberty of His Church and the deliverance of the Spanish people from the thralldom of forces that are the foes of God as well as of all religion.*<sup>40</sup>

The hierarchy did more than just announce its support. William Cardinal O'Connell and Cardinal Dougherty, for example, headed the Spanish Nationalist Relief Committee, one of several organizations established to raise funds for Franco's cause.<sup>41</sup> Reverend Thomas E. Molloy, bishop of the diocese of Brooklyn, authorized collection of money to aid "persecuted" Catholics in Spain.<sup>42</sup> In addition to these actions on the part of the hierarchy, members of the clergy preached their support of the Nationalists in church on Sundays, and lay organizations announced their pro-Franco sympathies. The National Council of Catholic Women, the Knights of Columbus, and the Catholic Press Association all lined up behind the hierarchy.<sup>43</sup>

The unanimous position of the Catholic establishment was most clearly conveyed to the laity through the Catholic press. Rather than use the Associated Press or the United Press, the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) News Service, controlled by the hierarchy, provided the 134 Catholic newspapers and 198 magazines nationwide with daily news, editorial information, a Washington newsletter, and other services. Through this news service, the hierarchy was in a position to influence the political convictions of the almost seven million Catholic households who subscribed to the Catholic press.<sup>44</sup> As a result, nearly every literate American Catholic adult was exposed to pro-Franco material at some time during the Spanish Civil War, and many were constantly exposed.<sup>45</sup> Any practicing Catholic, one scholar of the subject has written, will pay considerable attention to the opinions of clerical leaders. When a member of the hierarchy "makes a public statement on a controversial political issue the Catholic layman will be aware of it." Members of the laity may not then take this position as official doctrine, but they will "grant it a reverence traditionally due the position and character of its author."<sup>46</sup> The Spanish Civil War certainly qualified as a "controversial political issue" and was constantly discussed in the Catholic press between 1936 and 1939.

Catholic coverage of the Spanish Civil War followed a distinguishable pattern. During the first two months of the war, while most Catholic journals leaned toward supporting Franco, they generally discussed the merits and demerits of both sides

**THE NEW YORK TIMES**

### REBELS AT MUNGUA IN DRIVE ON BILBAO

Take Heights to North in Push Within Five Miles of City Along 15.000

### BRITISH DESTROYER IN BLAST OFF SPAIN

Continued From Page 1

Hunter, the Ad-

### REBUKE BLOCKADE RUNNER

Owners of British Vessel Order the Captain to Leave Gijon

April 19.—Apparently the ship was based on reports of a mine had been laid to the entrance to the Bay of Biscay.

### LOYALISTS DEFIANT ON CONTROL PLAN

Order Fleet and Planes to Aid Ships Asking Protection in Spanish Territorial Waters

### BLOCKADE HELD BLOW TO BRITISH REARMING

Rebel Cordon Off North Spain Is Seen Cutting Off Iron Ore Needed by War Industries

### ASSAIL REICH AND ITALY

International Patrol Is Held 'Unjust'—Leftists Are Ready to Make 'Sacrifice'

### U. S. SHIP AIDS REFUGEES

Cruiser Raleigh Takes 155 From Alicante, Spain, to France

### MADRID HEARS FOES FIGHT AFTER SPLIT

Continued From Page One

### REBEL SHELLS RAKE MADRID FOR HOURS IN FIERCEST ATTACK

Death Toll Mounts as Heart City Is Battered—Both Sides Claim Gains in North

### LOYALISTS NEAR VALENCIA

The Spanish Government tonight defied the coast control of the European Non-Intervention Committee.

### MADRID, POUND

Shells, pounce on the world's capital.



Headlines from The New York Times, April &amp; May 1937

in the conflict. They did not want to fully endorse the "Communists" or the "Fascists" in Spain. In September 1936, after the Pope had blessed Franco's cause, the American Catholic hierarchy quickly lined up behind him; the Catholic press shifted to a full endorsement of Franco's forces with almost no objective reporting whatsoever. They developed a pro-Franco argument based mainly on the portrayal of Franco as a Christian leader and revolutionary hero. During this period, they also tried to reveal the "communistic" tendencies of the Republic and its American supporters. This tactic did not dominate the Catholic press coverage of the war, however, until mid-1937 when pro-Loyalist opinion in the U.S. was growing stronger. For the last two years of the war, rather than laud Franco, article after article denounced the Republic as communist and anti-Catholic. Catholic editors increased their attacks on pro-Loyalists in America and on the "biased" secular press, which they accused of disseminating propaganda in favor of the Republic.

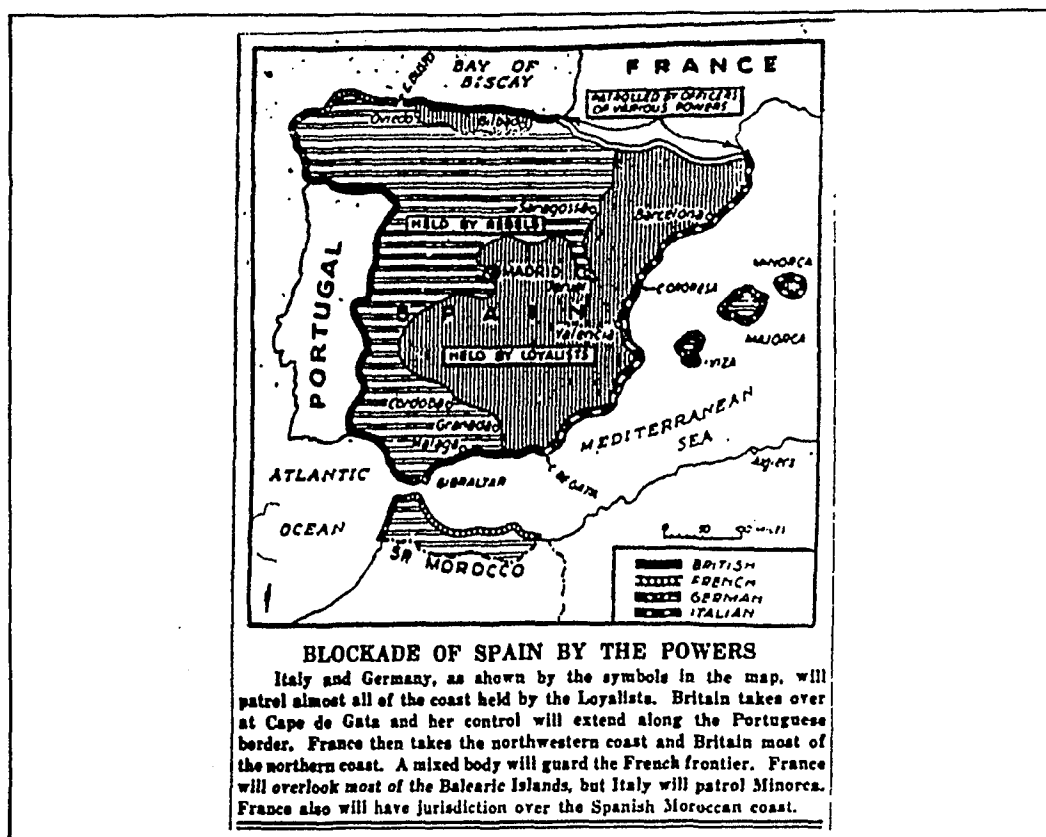
In the first days directly following the revolt of July 1936, the Catholic hierarchy was not certain if it should fully endorse Franco's cause. As in any civil war, atrocities were committed on both sides. Furthermore, most Americans were well aware that in the previous year, Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia and Hitler had broken the Locarno Pact with France by remilitarizing the Rhineland. A victory by Spanish Nationalist forces supported by two expansionist Fascist powers, therefore, was far from ideal for Catholics or any other group of Americans. On the other hand, while Soviet aid to the Republic was not as apparent in the first months of the war as was fascist aid to Franco, Moscow's sympathy for the Loyalists was well known from the start of the con-

flict. The spread of communism was something few Americans desired, least of all Catholics.

Even some of the more conservative Catholic periodicals and newspapers initially recognized the dilemma involved in choosing sides. Two weeks after war broke out, an article appeared in *America*, a conservative Catholic journal, bemoaning the inevitable fact that either "the triumphant Right will establish a military dictatorship along the lines of Italian Fascism, or the victorious Left will turn Spain into a Soviet Republic, like the Russian." Despite the undesirability of a dictatorship led by people characterized by "narrowness and greed," *America* leaned toward supporting the Right because it represented "ardent Faith." A Nationalist victory was desirable to save Spain from communism, but *America* still feared that such a victory would not necessarily be a victory for democracy. "[M]ay the Right use its triumph wisely and with justice," it pleaded: "Reforms must succeed repression."<sup>47</sup> An editorial in the same issue also supported Franco but inserted a disclaimer that "opposition to the present Communist Government in Spain does not mean a wholehearted approval of a future Fascist Government."<sup>48</sup> This initial reaction was not uncommon in the Catholic press in the weeks immediately following the coup of July 1936.<sup>49</sup>

By the end of September, the Catholic hierarchy had united behind the Pope in support of Franco. Under the leadership of the NCWC News Service, *America* and all other Catholic periodicals controlled by the hierarchy abandoned any pretense of factual reporting about Franco's connection to fascism and embarked upon an all-out pro-Nationalist campaign. Catholic papers

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The New York Times, 20 April 1937

*Identities in Conflict (Continued from page 10)*

lauded Franco as the Christian savior of Spain. While a Government victory would only "result in the bloody sovietization of Spain," they assured their readers, "we are confident that General Franco will deal with his former enemies in a generous Christian manner." Franco was idealized as a crusader for Christianity leading "the last Reconquista."<sup>50</sup>

The Catholic press furthered their case for Franco by likening him to "other" great leaders throughout history. *Catholic Digest*, for example, compared Franco to Gandhi and stated that "[i]ntegrity and reasonableness are words that well describe him . . . The sheep have found a shepherd and they trust him."<sup>51</sup> Other articles led Catholics to believe that Franco's movement was in the liberal, democratic tradition of the American Revolution.<sup>52</sup> *Ave Maria*, for example, rejected the term "Nationalist" and insisted upon referring to Franco as a rebel because "it has the sanction of George Washington, Toussaint L'Overture, and the Irishmen of Easter, 1916."<sup>53</sup> *Our Sunday Visitor*, a weekly paper with a circulation of 408,000, declared that "Franco's program for Spain is one that every American can approve" especially because of its similarity to Abraham Lincoln's plan during the American Civil War.<sup>54</sup> The Catholic press tried to convince its readers that Franco was the model of Christian virtue and a man whom every American should admire.

In mid-1937, as Franco's connection with Hitler and Mussolini became more obvious and as reports of his bombings of civilians reached the United States, however, the Catholic press found it increasingly difficult to defend Franco. The hero they had described was not the type of man who sent German pilots to bomb and kill 800 noncombatants (mostly Catholic) in the Basque city of Guernica in April 1937. This was not a man who would lead 18 air raids on Barcelona within two days in March 1938, leaving a reported one thousand people killed and twice that number wounded. Such actions, wrote a *New York Times* editor, "aroused world-wide indignation against the Rebel leadership."<sup>55</sup>

With pro-Loyalist opinion growing stronger, the Catholic press could no longer concentrate on praising Franco. Instead, it shifted to the defense.<sup>56</sup> "There are simply hundreds of Guernicas," insisted one article. "Ninety-five percent of the churches in Asturias [under Loyalist control] bear the same imprint as Guernica."<sup>57</sup> In addition to justifying Franco's bombings, the Catholic press excused the German and Italian interventions and tried to play down the activities of the Fascist powers. "National Spain refused at the beginning of the war all the offers to her of foreign volunteers," claimed the *Catholic Digest*. Only when the "Reds" recruited volunteers, it continued, did Franco allow "6,000 Irishmen" and "some Italian volunteers" to fight.<sup>58</sup> *Catholic Digest* neglected to mention the presence of German soldiers in Franco's army and severely misrepresented the numbers of Irish and Italian volunteers.<sup>59</sup> Other newspapers and periodicals also insisted that the Fascist countries did not get involved until they "had reason to fear that Spain would go Communist."<sup>60</sup>

The Catholic shift to the defensive also entailed attacking the Loyalists as disciples of Stalin and insisting on the need to defend America against the threat of international communism. In a 1937 encyclical, *Divini Redemptoris*, the Pope had declared that communism was the greatest evil facing modern society and had called for a world-wide Catholic crusade against it. The American Catholic hierarchy used the Spanish Civil War as a chance to heed his call. The Catholic press presented the situation in Spain as "a continuation of that in Mexico and directly similar to what happened some years ago in Russia." Therefore, the press warned its Catholic readers,

*we must be forewarned here by what we see in other countries and do all we can to prevent such conditions coming into being in the United States. The real civil war in Spain is between Christianity and communism. That same civil war is being fought in the United States, although it has*

*not reached the same proportions as it has in some other countries.*

Communism was nothing less than "the arch-enemy of the Catholic Church of the twentieth century," they said. As such, it had to be opposed wherever it reared its ugly head.<sup>61</sup>

To reinforce the urgency of the situation and the anti-Catholicism of the Loyalists, the Catholic press printed countless articles decrying the atrocities committed in areas controlled by the government forces. The Church had legitimate cause for concern about the great number of clerical victims, which has been estimated at 8,291.<sup>62</sup> The Catholic press, however, generally printed unconfirmed and exaggerated reports of killings. A Catholic could read weekly about the exhuming of nun's bodies, the torturing of priests, "the burnings of churches and the murder and imprisonment of priests and religious teachers." The NCWC News Service, for example, notified the press that the "Reds had thrown approximately 2,000 persons into the kilns of the cement factory of Moncada where they were burned alive."<sup>63</sup> The primary purpose of such reports was not to inform; rather, they were used to arouse hatred against the Loyalists.

If the Catholic press was hostile to the Spanish Republic, it was almost equally critical of the secular press in America, which was almost unanimously neutral or pro-Loyalist. Catholic editors accused their pro-Loyalist counterparts of being anti-Catholic. Franco and his rebels were equated with Catholicism. Therefore, anyone who opposed them was an enemy of the Church. This perception was exemplified in 1938 when the American Jesuits sponsored a "bias contest" with fifty-dollar prizes to the readers who found the worst examples of anti-Catholic bias in the secular press.<sup>64</sup> In the course of their secular press-bashing campaign, Catholic newspapers and magazines also implied that anyone who was pro-Loyalist was also quite likely a Communist. The Catholic press charged that "the barrage of propagandist support for a manifestly unworthy army" demonstrated that "a large number of American writers and editors . . . have been skillfully led astray by their stronger-headed Communist associates." As a result, the American press was "blindly spreading the poison of sympathy for Communism in Spain."<sup>65</sup>

These Catholic-press rantings notwithstanding, many secular newspapers and magazines had leaned toward supporting Franco early in the war. *Newsweek* and *Time*, for example, originally referred to the two sides as "Reds" and "Whites." Like the majority of the secular press, however, both of these journals soon became disenchanted with Franco. Reacting to the Barcelona and Guernica bombings and to fear about Hitler's rising ambitions, these two popular magazines became progressively more pro-Loyalist. In addition, the financial press, which one might expect to have been pro-Franco, also failed to support the Nationalists. Despite the Republic's poor treatment of American businesses, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, *Barron's*, and *Fortune* all took a neutral or anti-Franco stance.<sup>66</sup>

The Catholic hierarchy, therefore, had reason to fear that its pro-Franco efforts were being undercut by other sources. Catholic leaders worried that the laity was exposed daily to the "untruths" published in the secular press, particularly since most laymen read a Catholic paper only once a week and went to Church with equal frequency. To counteract the secular influence, Catholics were told to become regular readers of one or more Catholic papers. During "Catholic Press Month," one newspaper devoted its front page to telling its readers that it was the duty of all Catholic people to do the following:

*to patronize the Catholic press and to read it in order that they may learn the truth of what's happening in the*

*Kingdom of Christ, co-extensive with the world. It is certainly unpardonable for one to read, with avidity every day happenings of a secular nature, and to be indifferent about learning what is happening in the world of religion.*

For the Catholic who did not heed this advice, the dangerous lies of the non-Catholic press would remain unrefuted.<sup>67</sup>

The Catholic Church and press supported Franco throughout the entire Spanish Civil War and rejoiced at his victory in March 1939. When news of the Nationalist victory arrived, Pius XI sent Spanish Catholics his expressions of "immense joy" and "fatherly congratulations for the gift of peace and victory with which God has deigned to crown the Christian heroism of your faith and charity, proved through such great and generous sufferings."<sup>68</sup>

Reflecting the Pope's sentiments, the American Catholic leadership had spoken with one voice—one powerful voice—on the issue of the Spanish Civil War. Any account of Catholic attitudes which listens only to this dominant voice could but expect pro-Franco echos from the laity. Yet, the Church's idealization of Franco's cause, its dismissal of Leftist propaganda of anything reflecting poorly on the Nationalists, and its attack on the secular press won few converts and could not even prevent a decline in the number of Franco sympathizers. Even many Irish laymen, whose fellow Irish Americans were involved in all levels of the hierarchy, remained unconvinced.

The Church clearly attempted to portray the Nationalist side in a light most attractive to its Irish Catholic members. They appealed to Irish nationalism by comparing Franco's troops to the "Irishmen of Easter, 1916" who rebelled against the British. They also exaggerated the number of Irishmen who fought for Franco—claiming six-thousand had fought instead of the actual six-hundred—and neglected to mention that these volunteers were members of a semi-Fascist movement in Ireland. Irish American Catholics who doubted these reports may have turned to their Irish-American leaders to find a different response to the Spanish Civil War. If so, they were looking in the wrong place.

### IRISH-AMERICANS FOR FRANCO

On March 27, 1937, the following front-page description of the annual St. Patrick's Day celebration appeared in an Irish-American newspaper:

*The universal observance of the Feast of St. Patrick last week was undoubtedly the greatest recognition of the day that has been known for many years . . . The address of Mr. de Valera from Ireland . . . was one of the feature highlights of the occasion . . . The annual parade up Fifth Avenue, New York, was one of the largest ever held.*

*It was a most colorful spectacle, and unstinted admiration was expressed by the million people watching it for all of the Irish societies, Holy Name groups and military bodies taking part in it. It was led by the old "69th" Regiment—the famous Irish regiment . . .*

*In addresses delivered in the evening many of the past contributions of the Irish race to the United States were recalled . . . President Roosevelt . . . said that it would be good if our nation could recapture some of the generous spirit of St. Patrick . . . Of Irish love of full liberty he said: "The same devotion and steadfastness to the cause of liberty within the homeland itself has accompanied the Irish wherever they have gone . . . even to the far corners of the earth".<sup>69</sup>*

Irish Americans were Catholic, it is true; but they were first and



foremost Irish. Ethnic identity was extremely important to them, and it was reinforced in various ways, such as St. Patrick's Day parades, Ancient Order of Hibernian clubs, Clan na Gael activities, and the Irish-American press.

Two weeklies, *The Irish World* and *American Industrial Liberator* and *The Gaelic American*, spoke both for and to the Irish-American community. Both papers were published in New York and circulated nationwide. The latter paper was the official organ of the Clan na Gael, the American arm of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Both papers expressed similar opinions regarding Irish and American issues.

Not only did the Irish-American newspapers resemble one another in opinion, however, they also consistently endorsed the views of the Catholic press. The Spanish Civil War was no exception. An Irish New Yorker subscribing to *The Gaelic American* or *The Irish World* was unlikely to read anything about the war that contradicted what he or she read in a Catholic newspaper. The editorial pages of the supposedly secular Irish papers presented as little debate on the subject as did the most conservative of Catholic papers.

The Irish newspapers mirrored their Catholic counterparts both in their glorification of Franco and in their unwavering support for him. From the beginning of the war, *The Irish World* endorsed "Franco and his valiant soldiers" who were fighting in Spain for "Faith, Freedom, and Traditions" against the Republic's "squirming armies of Godlessness." The paper informed its readers that this support was not confined to the Irish community, as the "feeling towards the Patriot Army of Spain throughout the world has grown to one of the greatest admiration without parallel in the history of modern Europe." The Irish press seemed unconcerned that Franco's forces were supported by Fascists. "Fascism is not our problem today," explained *The Irish World*, "but communism is." What mattered most was that the Nationalists would fight against the dangers of communist internationalism.<sup>70</sup>

This concern about the spread of communism was very evident in the Irish-American community, along with the belief that the Catholic Church was the only organization that had the power or will to stop it. *The Irish World* described the Spanish conflict in black and white terms: civilization versus barbarism. The Reds were attacking the Catholic Church, it explained, because they knew "that the Universality of the Catholic Church is the greatest bulwark against the devilish machinations of the godless Reds and anarchists, who are turning Spain into a huge mass of debris and blood."<sup>71</sup>

To support this "Catholic versus communism" position, Irish editors, like their Catholic counterparts, filled the pages of their papers with stories of atrocities committed against the Spanish faithful by the "Reds." *The Gaelic American*, for example, printed a letter from an Irish priest residing in Lisbon who described the Loyalists as "monsters, who are more like demons let loose from Hell than mortal men." The letter went on to describe the "unspeakable torments" to which Catholics were subjected:

*Never before, my friends, in the long ages that have passed were venerable bishops, aged priests, holy nuns who had spent their lives working for the poor, in visiting the sick, in caring for the aged, in guarding the insane outraged, butchered, hewn to pieces with hatchets, soaked in petrol and burned alive.*

*The Irish World* also printed such reports and assured its readers that "no matter how apparently exaggerated the stories of the cruelties in Spain may seem . . . there is [sic] absolutely no falsehoods being issued."<sup>72</sup> Perhaps these accounts were not false,

but they most certainly were exaggerated. They were also one-sided. The Irish press, like the Catholic press, did not print one report of the torture and killing inflicted by Franco's forces.

The views of the Irish-American leaders also resembled those of the Catholic hierarchy in their defense of German and Italian involvement in the war and in their support of the U.S. arms embargo, which prevented the Republic from buying American weapons. *The Gaelic American*, for example, complained that most of the secular press reported daily on the German and Italian interventions in Spain while France and England were reportedly working sincerely for non-intervention. The paper countered that, in reality, "in the first months of the war there was a constant stream of 'volunteers,' ammunition and guns pouring into Spain" from France. This, of course, would explain why the Fascist countries were compelled to aid Franco. It also demonstrated that a repeal of the U.S. arms embargo was completely unnecessary; both belligerents were already receiving plenty of war material. Therefore, anyone who wanted to lift the embargo so that the Republic could "receive more arms with which to kill Christians" was clearly "Anti-Christian" in the eyes of many Irish Americans.<sup>73</sup>

*The Irish World* and *The Gaelic American* expressed strong support for the arms embargo not only because U.S. arms would be used against Franco but also because Irish Americans were advocates of American neutrality. Regardless of who else intervened in Spain, the Irish press believed that American policy "should be strict neutrality in word and deed." Further exhibiting Irish American isolationism, the newspapers, which usually strongly supported Roosevelt, criticized the President whenever his actions seemed to draw the United States closer to war in Spain or elsewhere. "Who Authorized Chief Executive to Make His Country World's Policeman? Will America's Young Men Be Sacrificed On Altar of Imperialism?" demanded one *Gaelic American* headline.<sup>74</sup> This concern was fueled in a large part by the perpetual hatred the Irish felt for Great Britain. Irish Americans had not wanted to get involved in World War I, and in 1936 the press reminded its readers that American "participation in the last war did us no good but an incalculable amount of harm." The Irish press hoped that Americans would remember that they "can remain neutral when the British Empire goes to war," and that the United States should "keep out of the never-ending hates and jealousies which plague the Old World."<sup>75</sup>

The message which readers of *The Irish World* and *The Gaelic American* received was that to support Franco was not only to be a faithful Catholic, it was also to be a good Irishman. Ireland was one of the signers of the Non-Intervention Agreement, but its Catholic hierarchy strongly supported Franco. The Irish-American press repeatedly quoted pro-Franco Irish clergymen and covered pro-Franco activities in Ireland. Irish Americans who read *The Gaelic American* learned that an Irish Bishop from Killaloe concurred with everything that the American hierarchy said about the Spanish Civil War—in other words, that the war was "a titanic struggle on the part of a noble nation against the red dragonism of Communism." Irish Americans could also learn about the twelve-thousand people who assembled in Dublin to show their support for Franco, or they could read an article entitled "Huge Crowd in Cork City Sympathize with Spanish Catholics."<sup>76</sup> The Irish-American press made no mention of pro-Loyalist actions in Ireland.

Not only were Irish citizens holding rallies for Franco, the Irish-American papers reported, some had even gone to join the Nationalist army. All but ignoring the fact that Ireland had made

volunteering for the war in Spain illegal, *The Gaelic American* praised the six-hundred Irishmen who fought with the Spanish rebels under General Eoin O'Duffy on a "crusade against Communism."<sup>77</sup> The paper reported how the Irish volunteers left for Spain with papal flags prominently displayed; if they returned dead, they returned as martyrs. A mother of one fallen Irish soldier reportedly said: "Although there is a load on my heart, I offer him to Christ for whom he fought."<sup>78</sup> Both *The Gaelic American* and *The Irish World* neglected to mention, however, that O'Duffy was the leader of the Blue Shirts, a semi-Fascist movement in Ireland. Of his group in Spain, almost all the officers were Blue Shirts, and about half of the rest were members.<sup>79</sup> The Irish papers did not report on those Irishmen who fought with the Republic until early in 1937, when they began to print casualty lists of Irishmen fighting for both sides in Spain.<sup>80</sup>

Judging from the many pressures that Irish Catholics in New York and the rest of the country faced, one would expect that all of them would have hoped fervently for a Franco victory. Both the Catholic press and the Irish-American press bombarded their readers with pro-Franco propaganda, and neither offered much, if any, debate or discussion on the topic.

About half of Irish Americans surveyed in early 1939 reported that they were pro-Franco. The Catholic hierarchy and press and Irish-American leaders, of course, can take most of the credit for either convincing Irish-Catholic Americans to support the Nationalists or for reinforcing this tendency. Yet there remained a large number of Irish Americans who were not convinced.

The Irish Americans who were neutral or pro-Loyalist were every bit as Catholic and as Irish as their pro-Franco neighbors. They too were exposed to the views of the Catholic establishment and Irish-American opinion leaders; yet, they listened most carefully to the views of the leaders of another community—the unionized working-class community.

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY: LABOR'S RESPONSE

*"There's an Irish Section in the Lincoln Battalion, you know. It's called the James Connolly section. Paul, Frank, Eddie and I are in it. With us are some swell fighting men from the old country, most of whom are I.R.A. men."*

—Charles O'Flaherty

In March 1937, Charles O'Flaherty was far away from his home in Boston, Massachusetts. He had left for Spain with his two brothers and several others to join the Abraham Lincoln Battalion of the International Brigades. In the numerous letters that the O'Flaherty brothers wrote home, they expressed their pride in fighting with a group of Irish and Irish Americans against the "fascists" in Spain. They wrote about an "Easter week-James Connolly commemoration meeting" at which "Ed was the song leader and we had Irish songs galore." The letter continued: "Our Battalion commander is an Irish-American. Knows his Irish history, too. . . I told you before, didn't I, that we had quite a few I.R.A. men with us? They're the best soldiers."<sup>81</sup> The O'Flahertys clearly did not feel they were betraying their "Irishness" by joining the International Brigades. They fought alongside members of the Irish Republican Army, the most nationalistic of all Irishmen. In addition, they were in the James Connolly Brigade, named after the man whose Citizen Army had fought in the Irish Easter Rebellion of 1916 against the British. Connolly had lived and died for Irish nationalism. He was a great Irish

hero, respected in both Ireland and America.

The O'Flahertys not only retained their ethnic pride, they continued to practice their religion in Spain as well. They celebrated Easter. They also most likely believed Spanish Republicans who told them that they "were not anti-God" but anti-fascist and anti-priest. They surely spoke to Spaniards who "proclaim themselves Catholics and expect to be able to practice their religion when the war is over."<sup>82</sup>

Despite the pro-Franco propaganda to which they were constantly exposed in the United States, the O'Flaherty brothers defied not only the authority of the Church hierarchy and pressure within the Irish community, but they also defied the United States prohibition on travel to Spain in order to join the Spanish Republican Army. A letter written by Ed O'Flaherty to the "Girls" which asked them to "continue your good work in raising food and clothing for Spain" reveals that his sisters likewise supported the Loyalists through activities at home.<sup>83</sup>

Joining the Spanish Republic's fight against Franco was the most radical step any group of Americans could take in demonstrating their pro-Loyalism. A very small number of Irish Americans took such a drastic step. Yet, almost one-third of those surveyed identified themselves as sympathetic to the Loyalists in a February 1939 poll, and nearly a quarter of Irish Americans were either neutral or without an opinion on the question.<sup>84</sup> A fraction of this dissenting group might have been Irish Protestant; yet, since the overwhelming majority of Irish Americans were Catholic, most of this pro-Loyalist/neutral group must have been Catholic. This much is clear.

The difficulty lies in discovering how so many Irish Catholics could hear their priests telling them to support the Spanish Nationalists, read Catholic and Irish newspapers bashing the Loyalists as representatives of all things evil, and still remain unconvinced. With the exception of a few letters written by men like the O'Flaherty brothers, they leave no paper trail. No debate over the Spanish Civil War appeared in the Irish press. No "Irish Americans for Spanish Democracy" organization as formed. Yet many Irish Americans were pro-Spanish Democracy. Why? The answer lies in another influential voice to which many Irish-Catholic Americans were exposed—that of labor union leaders. While religious and ethnic identities remained important, with the market crash of 1929, class identity began to dominate. Religious and ethnic leaders did not actively help solve the problems of working-class Irish Catholics, while labor leaders did. The views of these labor leaders, therefore, took on a new importance.

Several historians have noted that while the Catholic hierarchy presented a unified pro-Franco position during the Spanish Civil War, the laity was divided on the issue; few, however, have suggested reasons for this discrepancy. An inquiry into the sources which influenced the Irish and other Catholics to reject pro-Francoism might begin with the secular press and the writings of anti-Franco lay Catholics.

The most consistent source contradicting pro-Franco propaganda was the secular press, the majority of which, as noted previously, leaned toward supporting the Spanish Republic. The *New York Times* and other newspapers and periodicals covered not only the atrocities committed by the Loyalist troops, but also those committed by the Nationalists. Irish Catholics certainly read about air-raids on Madrid in which "hundreds of men, women, and children" were killed and about how the Nationalists "had

placed bombs under wheatsheaves [in the farming region of Spain] . . . to blow up innocent peasants." The *Times* reported how, after capturing a town, Franco's forces would round up those who were suspected of having supported the Loyalist cause. These people were then "led to cemeteries, where they are shot in groups of about twenty throughout several days and nights."<sup>85</sup> The *Times* also reported on the April 1937 bombing of Guernica in the Basque region of Spain.<sup>86</sup>

The plight of the Basques was likely a large factor in causing Catholics to doubt the validity of the pro-Franco praises sung by the hierarchy. The Basques were staunch Loyalists but also devout Catholics. After surviving intense bombing by the Germans, the survivors were tortured and murdered by the Nationalists. The Basque president, Aguirre Cerda, reported that Franco's troops had murdered numerous priests in the region.<sup>87</sup> Such reports demonstrated that the civil war in Spain was not a religious one; Catholics fought on both sides.

Another pro-Loyalist/neutral influence to which American Irish were likely exposed were the writings of American lay Catholics who dissented from the hierarchy's position.<sup>88</sup> Under George Shuster's direction, *The Commonwealth* presented, for a short time, an alternative position on the Spanish Civil War. After *The Commonwealth* shifted its stance to endorse Franco, some individual Catholics continued to speak out against the stand taken by the hierarchy.<sup>89</sup> Syndicated columnist Westbrook Pegler, for example, submitted a scathing attack against Franco to two popular magazines, *Time* and the *New Republic*. Many other papers refused to carry the article. Pegler blamed the "slaughter of the priests and nuns" on "those members of the Spanish clergy and the well born Spaniards of the Catholic faith" who had exploited the poor and driven working-class Catholics to hate the Church. Pegler agreed that Franco would re-establish the Catholic religion in Spain, yet this was a religion

*whose Church so neglected its duty to the Spaniards that they were driven to hate it, driven into a bloody war, massacred in vastly greater numbers than they massacred the clergy, and conquered by the aid of foreigners representing a political system hideous to them.*

Pegler concluded: "If I were a Spaniard who had seen Franco's missionary work among the children I might see him in hell but never in Church."<sup>90</sup>

Other, anonymous lay Catholics also expressed their reservations about the hierarchy's position on the Spanish Civil War. One woman submitted an article entitled "A Catholic Speaks Her Mind" to *The Nation* criticizing the hierarchy for supporting Franco and the forces of fascism. She reminded her readers that the political views of the hierarchy, or even of the Pope, were not binding on individual Catholics. Non-Catholics, therefore, should not assume "that all Catholics have lined up with Franco at the snap of the ecclesiastical whip." According to the writer, thousands of Catholics were openly for the Loyalists. Others were afraid to be. She herself would not sign her name because to do so would be "to commit economic suicide."<sup>91</sup>

Some Spanish Civil War scholars suggest that such articles influenced other Catholics to assume a neutral or pro-Loyalist stance regarding the war in Spain.<sup>92</sup> The arguments advanced against Franco are also useful in indicating why so much of the Catholic laity, both Irish and non-Irish, did not fall into line with the hierarchy regarding the Spanish Civil War. Many of them—working class Catholics in particular—had become somewhat alienated from the Church and found that the interests of the clergy did not always coincide with their own.

In "A Catholic Speaks Her Mind," the anonymous author denounced the Church hierarchy not only for its position on the Spanish Civil War but also for its lack of commitment to social progress. She believed that the Church was being attacked in Spain because it "had regrettably neglected social action on behalf of the working class" and because it sought friendship with the wealthy. It seemed to the author that the American Church was following in the footsteps of its Spanish counterpart. She found the Church's anti-communist crusade utterly unproductive and a hindrance to social progress. She likewise criticized the Catholic press for displaying "more interest in the preservation of existing social values than in the rooting out of evil ones."<sup>93</sup>

An April 1937 article in *Forum and Century* by a Catholic priest who wrote under the pen name Peter Whiffin concurred. Disturbed by the growing antagonism he encountered as a priest, Whiffin believed that, as in Spain, the Church was losing popularity in the United States. He blamed this on no one but priests themselves. He warned the hierarchy, "today we priests as a class are discredited men, men who have lost the trust and confidence of the great masses of our people simply because we have proved ourselves insincere." He advised fellow clergymen to be less selfish and to devote themselves to the poor.<sup>94</sup>

Letters written by Catholic laborers and sent to the *Labor Leader*, organ of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU), between 1936 and 1938 reveal that many working-class Catholics were in fact dissatisfied with the Church's commitment to their problems—labor problems.<sup>95</sup> Alexander Balch, for example, attacked the Catholic press for its anti-Communist crusade. "I am sick and tired of Catholic publications attacking Communists in vague, general terms," he wrote. A Catholic seaman agreed with Balch, writing, "Resorting to red-baiting and aggressive [sic] attacks solves no problems, adds to confusion, and educates no one. Many of our Catholic papers do this to the detriment of the Union." Such complaints were voiced frequently enough to convince a concerned member of ACTU to write: "Attacks on the hierarchy are becoming an important heresy among the young and vigorous . . . We would like to stop criticism of priests. Few priests will work for what we believe to be the Church's social teachings because we criticize them."<sup>96</sup>

Irish Catholics were as critical of the Church as any ethnic group. Joshua Freeman, who completed a detailed study of Irish Catholics in New York's Transport Workers Union (TWU), discussed anticlerical attitudes among this ethnic group in the 1930s. During the Irish "troubles" in Great Britain, the Church had condemned the use of force against the government, and in 1931, forbade membership in the IRA. The resulting anticlerical reaction in Ireland spread to active republicans in the U.S. and to much of the rest of the Irish-American community. A Jesuit priest who worked with the Irish in the TWU during the late 1930s noted that "very many of the men bitterly resent the actions taken by the Irish Bishops and the Irish Clergy during the trouble with England." This ill feeling intensified among those who resented the Church for its lack of interest in the plight of workers. One Irish Catholic motorman commented: "What the hell did the Church do for us? Not a god damn thing." The priest did remain a respected figure for many Irish, but, as Freeman notes, there was a general feeling that his authority, though appropriate in matters of religion, was out of place in political and social affairs.<sup>97</sup>

Apparently, the priorities of the Catholic hierarchy did not correspond with those of much of the laity. Social progress and aid to the working man suffering through the Great Depression—this was what concerned working-class Catholics of all ethnic groups. The Church was well aware that the majority of the laity were laborers; two Popes even wrote encyclicals in 1891 and in 1931 on the state of the working-class. Yet by the 1930s, when many Catholics were joining trade unions, the Catholic Church's commitment to social reform struck much of the laity as being insufficient.

The waning support for important social issues like unionization did not pass unnoticed by the Catholic laity. A member of the Worcester printers union, for example, wrote a letter to the editor of a Catholic paper complaining about the clergy's refusal to send their printing to union printing offices. In twenty-four Jesuit colleges in the U.S., he wrote, students mainly patronized "non-union shops, and without a word of protest from the Fathers." He concluded with the observation that, "particularly among the Catholic clergy," there were many who did not think Catholics should be union members.<sup>98</sup> If the Catholic Church would not support unions and, as in the case of the Irish, if their ethnic community also would not lobby for social reform, then Catholics would turn to organizations that did—the Catholic Worker Movement and labor unions.

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The newspaper to which the above letter was written, the *Catholic Worker*, was the official organ of the Catholic Worker Movement, an organization founded in 1933 to address social issues including the concerns of labor. Peter Maurin, a former unskilled laborer turned French teacher, and Dorothy Day, a former Communist converted to Catholicism, combined their radical visions of reform to create the movement. They hoped to create an option to the Communist Party that did not promote atheism. "Is it not possible to be radical and not atheist?" Day wrote. Unlike the Party, the Catholic Worker Movement did not advance a specific doctrine. Rather, Maurin and Day based the movement on an attempt "to combine Catholic reform thought with communitarian perfectionism." The movement set up various programs to help achieve a more just, Christian society. The Catholic Workers ran "houses of hospitality," urban refuges in which the poor were housed, clothed, and fed, and they created a system of self-supporting agricultural communes throughout the country. They also founded the Catholic Union of the Unemployed, "a program of self help and mutual help." The movement itself mainly attracted young intellectuals and workers; the movement's newspaper reached a much wider audience.<sup>99</sup>

First published in May 1933, the *Catholic Worker* discussed topics of concern to working-class Catholics. The paper covered general Catholic labor activity, child labor, exploitation of black and women workers, wages, working conditions, politics, and other topics. While eschewing the hysterical tone used by the Catholic hierarchy, the editors expressed solidarity with Catholics being persecuted in Mexico, Russia, and Germany.<sup>100</sup> The *Catholic Worker* also took a firmly anti-Communist position. While it disapproved of instances in which "charges of Communism were hurled at the strikers to confuse the issue," the paper organized anti-Communist activities and encouraged Catholics to replace Communists as union leaders.<sup>101</sup>

The Catholic Worker Movement and its newspaper lent their full support to the labor movement, endorsing unions and their

methods. Day stated the paper's position in a February 1936 editorial in which she wrote that, while the *Catholic Worker* did not believe that unions "as they exist today in the United States, are an ideal solution for social problems, . . . [w]e do believe that they are the only efficient weapon which workers have to defend their rights as individuals."<sup>102</sup> Quoting a priest who declared that "Christ would be a labor leader if he were alive today," the paper encouraged Catholics to follow in Christ's footsteps by working against violence in union activities. Such work, however, would not preclude taking part in picketing or sitdown strikes. The *Catholic Worker* believed that: "When men are striking they are following . . . a good impulse—one could even say an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They are trying to uphold their rights to be treated not as slaves, but as men." While some Catholic leaders dismissed sit-down strikes as a threat to private property rights, the *Catholic Worker* endorsed the technique, putting the moral rights of workers above the legal rights of owners.<sup>103</sup>

Reflecting their support of unions and their methods, representatives from the Catholic Worker Movement helped unions organize and engaged in picketing with them. They provided moral support and meals to strikers in addition to press coverage. Strikes against Borden Milk, Heinz Corporation, National Biscuit Company, American Stores of Philadelphia, and a large number of other companies were sympathetically covered in the pages of the *Catholic Worker* during the 1930s. The paper also asked readers not to patronize stores or buy products made by "unjust" companies.<sup>104</sup> And it threw its full support behind the C.I.O., encouraging unions to join the organization and declaring, "the future of the American labor movement lies with the C.I.O."<sup>105</sup>

Many laborers were exposed to the *Catholic Worker's* views since Catholic workers were active within the working-class movement and because the paper had reached a circulation of 35,000. A year later, the number of subscribers had more than tripled; by 1937, circulation had reached 110,000. In addition to subscriptions, the paper was also distributed at some churches and by volunteers to laborers as they left work. In Jersey City, for example, copies of the *Catholic Worker* were handed out "at five strategic points just as workers were leaving office buildings and factories and issuing from the Hudson tubes." Copies of the paper were also distributed to various trade unions.<sup>106</sup>

Irish Catholic trade unionists, clergymen, and other individuals supported the *Catholic Worker* and read it regularly. Representatives from unions such as the Automobile Workers of America periodically wrote to the editor sending their best wishes. Individual Irish Catholics such as Mrs. G. D'Allessio, an "Irish Catholic girl married to Italo-American boy" on relief, also wrote friendly letters to the editor. People like the secretary of the Catholic Guidance Guild, John J. O'Connor, wrote to thank the paper for trying "to teach the Christian stand on social and economic matters," as did Michael O'Shaughnessy, an organizer of the League for Social Justice. A number of Irish Catholic priests such as Reverend Patrick O'Connor from Nebraska, Reverend J. O'Loughlin from South Carolina, Reverend Thomas J. Farrell from Dublin, and others expressed their support of the paper. There were a number of Irish-Catholic Americans on the managing board of the *Catholic Worker* and in leadership roles within the movement. William M. Callahan was a managing editor and Martin F. O'Donnell was in charge of circulation of the paper. Finally, Tom O'Brien covered the Catholic Union of the Unemployed for the *Catholic Worker*.<sup>107</sup>

Irish Catholics were not the only group to greet the new

Catholic labor paper with open arms; Catholic clergymen and spokesmen did, too. In its first few issues, the paper printed letters of congratulations from Patrick Scanlan, editor of the *Brooklyn Tablet*, from Wildred Parsons, editor of *America*, and from other conservative Catholic spokesmen.<sup>108</sup>

Praise from the hierarchy turned to criticism, however, as the *Catholic Worker's* radical position on many prominent issues isolated it from the rest of the Catholic press and the hierarchy. In 1935, for example, Day and the other editors endorsed the child labor amendment to the Constitution at a time when most of the Catholic hierarchy and Catholic press characterized it as a threat to parental prerogatives.<sup>109</sup> In addition, while most of the hierarchy considered communism a greater evil than fascism, the *Catholic Worker* believed the opposite. The paper printed numerous articles about the disturbing fascist trend in America and lamented that "innumerable organizations . . . pledged to nationalism, racial hatred and religious intolerance" had formed and included "a goodly number of Catholics on their membership lists." Although it was founded in part to halt the spread of communism, the Catholic Worker Movement did picket and attend meetings with Communists.

Reflecting its toleration, the *Catholic Worker* distanced itself from the "red baiting" mainstream Catholic press. It accused *Our Sunday Visitor*, for example, of making unproven charges of communism against labor leaders which would "do serious harm to the cause of Catholic Social Justice." The *Catholic Worker* editors were so disgusted with the "Communist haters" that they accused the Catholic press of printing "flocks and flocks of bunk . . . against Communism. Some Catholic papers appear bent on rivaling the imbecilic inveighings of William Randolph Hearst."<sup>110</sup>

This growing disintegration of consensus between the *Catholic Worker* and the hierarchy was evidenced in a series of articles in *America* in which the Jesuit John LaFarge summarized the Church's objections to the Catholic Worker Movement. LaFarge had previously taught at the movement's labor school and continued to support its promotion of racial justice. He left the movement, however, when he came to believe that it had changed from an advocate of "Christian charity" into a group marked by "dangerously naive political involvements." He charged that the paper was using Catholic doctrine to justify "its own extreme views on matters of industrialism, international relations, and the state." Finally, while it was fine for a "free-lance layman" to disagree with the hierarchy on social and economic issues, for a "widespread movement bearing the Catholic name to do so" was unacceptable.<sup>111</sup>

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A primary source of the disintegration of relations between the newspaper and the hierarchy was the *Catholic Worker's* stand on the Spanish Civil War; it presented an adamantly pacifistic, neutral position. A month after the fighting broke out in Spain, the paper announced this stance with unmistakable clarity:

*We are inclined to believe that the issue is not so clear cut as to enable either side to condemn the other justifiably. There is much right and much wrong on both sides. . . Spain doesn't need favorable publicity for the rebels. She doesn't need condemnation of the loyalists. What she needs is the prayers of the rest of the Mystical Body.*"<sup>112</sup>

A principal reason for the *Catholic Worker's* neutrality was Day's

firm belief that violence and Christianity were incompatible. "As long as men trust to force," explained Day during the Spanish war, "only a more savage and brutal force will overcome the enemy." She suggested trying to "overcome an adversary by love" instead.<sup>113</sup> This pacifistic stance led the paper to lobby for the maintenance of U.S. neutrality laws and the Spanish arms embargo—the only reaction to the Spanish Civil War that it shared with the Catholic hierarchy. Two years into the war, despite the fact that its views made the *Catholic Worker* an outcast from the "official" Catholic policy, the paper reiterated its neutral stance—one which it maintained through Franco's final victory in 1939.<sup>114</sup>

Day and the other editors of *The Catholic Worker* refused to endorse Franco in part because they protested against his violence and in part because of his association with the anti-Christian, fascist governments in Italy and Germany. Early in the war, the paper warned that Catholics who thought that "Fascism is a good thing because Spanish Fascists are fighting for the Church against Communist persecution" should look at the persecution of Catholics under the fascist government in Germany. In a September 1938 editorial, Day expressed her concern about the "frightful persecution of religion in Spain" under the Spanish Republican forces. Nonetheless, she wrote,

*We are not praying for victory for Franco in Spain, a victory won with the aid of Mussolini's son who gets a thrill out of bombing; with the aid of Mussolini who is opposing the Holy Father in his pronouncements on "racism"; with the aid of Hitler who persecutes the church in Germany. Nor are we praying for victory for the loyalists whose Anarchist, Communist and anti-God leaders are trying to destroy religion. We are praying for the Spanish people.*

The *Catholic Worker* clearly was concerned about the treatment of the faithful in Spain and joined the rest of the Catholic press in condemning the Loyalists.<sup>115</sup> Its editors refused, however, to take the next step and condone the atrocities committed by Franco's forces. Refusing to make a choice between two evils, they instead appealed for neutrality.

Not only did the *Catholic Worker* choose neutrality, it admonished the rest of the Catholic press for failing to do likewise and alerted its readers to the shortcomings of other Catholic papers. An article by Reverend F. H. Drinkwater detailed seven reasons "For Regretting the Attitude of Our Catholic Newspapers in Regard to the Spanish War." First, he wrote, other Catholic papers suppressed the truth by abandoning themselves "to war-time propaganda" for the Nationalists. Second, while they should keep religion out of and above war, they misrepresented the war as a "Crusade for God which every Catholic has to support." Thirdly, instead of printing the "proven facts" about atrocities committed in the war, the Catholic press printed the "more lurid and insufficiently-evidenced kind, such as usually are circulated in wars . . . to stir up hatred." Drinkwater continued by indicting the Catholic press for attacking Spanish priests who did not support the rebels and for concealing from their readers the fact that Catholic groups and periodicals existed which did not support Franco. Finally, he castigated the press for denying or whitewashing facts of the "deliberate air-raid massacre of civilians at Guernica" while any "civilized newspaper" should express "condemnation or regret."<sup>116</sup>

The *Catholic Worker's* plea for neutrality and its condemnation of misleading pro-Franco propaganda were read by thousands of American Catholics throughout the course of the Spanish Civil War. Some readers wrote back to express their



opinions on the subject. One radical reader was shocked that the *Catholic Worker* would not endorse the Loyalists. Estimating that "at least 80% of the [Spanish] Catholics, probably over 90%, are on the side of the government they elected," he expressed great "astonishment" that "in their hour of massacre" the newspaper refused them its support. Another reader of the *Catholic Worker*, Leo S. Sys, explained his position: "As a working man I naturally side with the Leftist or Loyalist Government of Spain. I believe in rule by the ballot, not by bullets as Franco and the Fascists, and [I] am sorry to say, the Leaders of the Catholic Church do."<sup>117</sup> Sys was not the only "working man" who rejected the pro-Franco stance of the Church (and of the Irish-American press). He saw the Spanish Civil War as a struggle between workers and wealthy landowners. While the *Catholic Worker* did not advocate such a view of the events, many Catholic workers did. Many American trade unions did, too.

While trade unions tended to concern themselves with domestic issues much more than foreign affairs, they were generally pro-Loyalist. Rather than perceiving the Spanish Civil War as a contest between Christianity and communism, they saw it as a struggle pitting democracy against fascism, laborers against landowners. At the 1936 convention of the AFL, delegates expressed strong sentiment in favor of the Spanish Republic. A resolution was introduced by the Cleaners, Dryers, and Pressers Union No. 19989 of Los Angeles stating that Spanish Fascists were attempting to overthrow the legally constituted government and attempting to destroy the trade union movement. The resolution concluded that a victory by Franco with support from Germany and Italy would increase and encourage fascism. The delegates also discussed how false propaganda portrayed the war as a struggle between the Catholic Church and anti-Christians. To demonstrate that this propaganda truly was misleading, Señora Isabela Palencia, a representative of the Spanish trade union movement, was invited to speak.<sup>118</sup>

Some unions formed organizations to aid the Republic; others took pro-Loyalist actions on their own. In November 1936, a committee of trade union representatives was appointed at a conference of trade union leaders to promote financial support in American labor organizations for the Spanish Government. The committee included representatives from the United Textile Workers of America, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Millinery Workers Union, and the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. In a 1938 convention, the American Communications Association, a C.I.O. union, submitted a resolution favoring aid to Loyalist Spain. The American Newspaper Guild had adopted a similar resolution a year earlier. As the war progressed, delegates of forty-eight New York unions voted to establish a permanent trade union committee to assist in the rehabilitation of Abraham Lincoln Brigade members who had been injured while fighting for the Republican Army. By October 1937, the C.I.O. had raised \$75,000 for this cause and had sent over 110 tons of materiel to Spain for the Loyalist forces.<sup>119</sup>

Not only did union members raise money for the Spanish Republic, they engaged in other pro-Loyalist activities as well. In December 1936, more than forty striking men from the International Seamen's Union paraded in front of the German Embassy in Washington, DC to protest against Germany's policy in Spain. Organized labor also exerted pressure on Roosevelt to alter his Spanish policy. The League for Peace and Democracy, which campaigned to lift the arms embargo, claimed to represent

sixteen international unions, 311 labor unions, and a total of 2,500,000 union members.<sup>120</sup>

The large number of trade unionists who volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War reveals the strong sense of solidarity they felt with Spanish workers fighting for the Republic. An estimated sixty percent of American volunteers in the Spanish Civil War were from working-class backgrounds.<sup>121</sup> A large proportion of them were also members of or leaders of trade unions. Bill Bailey of New Jersey, for example, was a member of both the National Maritime Union and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) before going to Spain. Irving Fajans helped organize the Department Store Workers' Union in Brooklyn before deciding to volunteer in Spain. John C. Blair likewise had been both a member of the International Association of Machinists and an organizer of the United Electrical Worker. Don Macleod returned from Spain to work in the leadership of the ILWU. The list of International Brigaders involved in unions continues.<sup>122</sup> Before, during, and after their involvement in the Spanish Civil War, these working-class volunteers shared their views on the issues, spreading the word that the Americans workers should oppose Franco.

How did Irish-Catholic workers react to this pro-Loyalist sentiment within the working-class? An examination of a union which was principally composed of Irish Catholics, the Transport Workers Union of America, reveals the importance of the union to its members and the loyalty its leaders commanded. This loyalty was so strong that Irish-Catholic members not only tolerated communist and pro-Loyalist leaders, they often accepted their union leaders' views over those of religious and ethnic leaders.

## 20,000 ARE EXPECTED AT SPANISH PAGEANT

'Democracy Imperiled' Will Be  
Presented Tonight at Garden  
by Relief Committee

A mass meeting and a pageant entitled "Democracy Imperiled" will be held in Madison Square Garden tonight under the auspices of the American Committee for Spanish Relief, headquarters of which are in the Vanderbilt Hotel. In the pageant will be 500 players from the Union City (N. J.) Passion Play, "Veronica's Veil," and 1,000 other persons from Catholic parishes of the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Long Island. Pedro de Cordoba, actor and screen star, as the "Voice of Spain," will accompany the pageant with a recitation of Spanish triumphs and

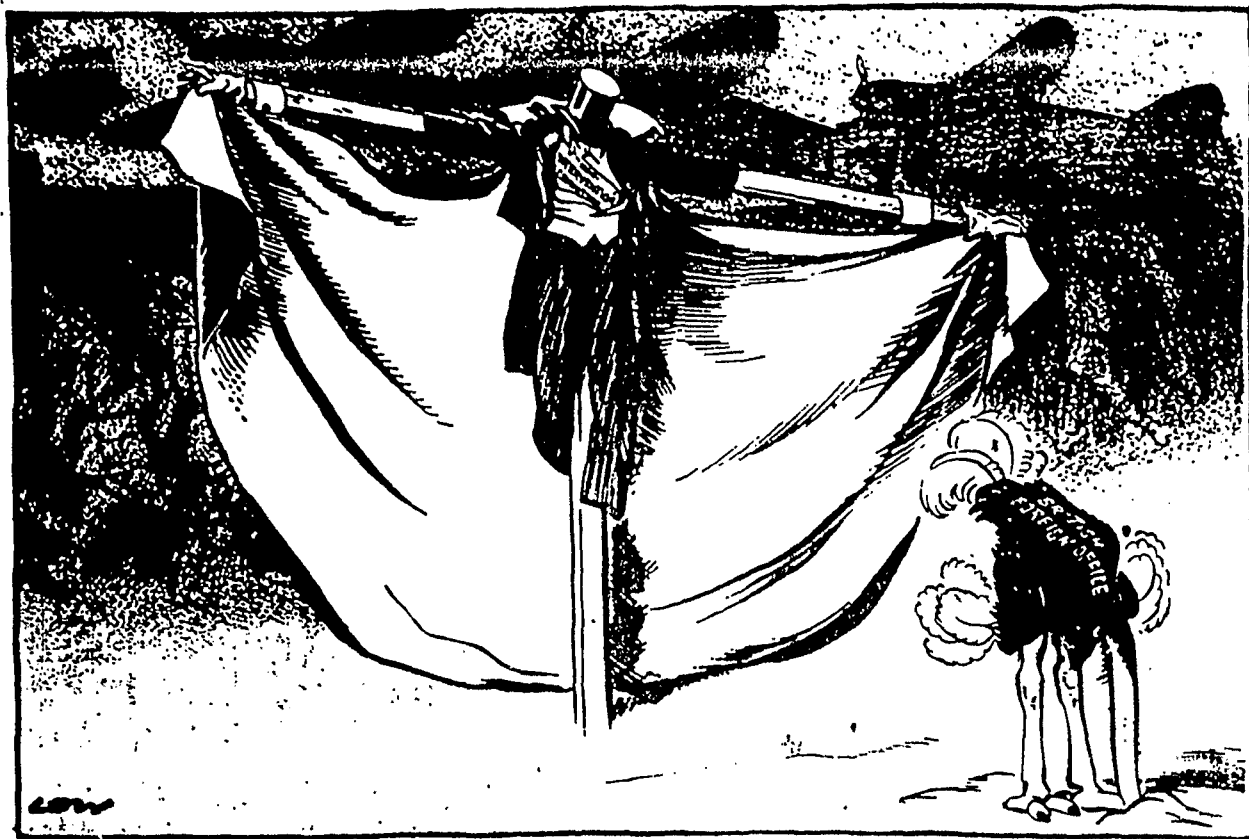
martyrdoms. Mrs. S. Stanwood Menken, whose son, Arthur, was wounded while taking news-reel pictures on a Spanish battlefield last October, will represent "The Spirit of Spain." Mrs. Charles E. Proctor will act "The Spirit of Rebellion." A chorus of 1,000, under the direction of Father Finn of the Paulist Choristers, accompanied by a fifty-piece symphony orchestra, will give a musical program featuring Basque airs.

The speakers will include E. Allison Peers, Professor of Spanish at the University of Liverpool; Judge Pierre Crabites, former chief judge of the Mixed International Tribunal at Cairo, Egypt; the Rev. Dr. Bernard Grimley, editor of *The Catholic Times* of London; the Rev. Edward Lodge Curran of Brooklyn, and Michael Williams, editor of *The Commonwealth*, who is secretary general of the committee. Basil Harris, chairman of the committee, will preside. Ogden H. Hammond, former Ambassador to Spain, is the committee's treasurer.

The committee said yesterday that 20,000 reservations have been made.

The New York Times, 19 May 1937.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1937.

**"THE CLOAK"—ONE ENGLISH VIEW OF NON-INTERVENTION**

Low © Intercontinental Press.

With the 1929 market collapse, conditions declined rapidly for transit workers in New York City. The decrease in ridership led to shorter work hours, elimination of benefits, lay offs, and salary cuts.<sup>123</sup> In the early 1930s, when transit workers usually earned less than fifty cents an hour working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, a group of Irish Republicans joined ranks with some communists and worked toward forming the Transport Workers Union.<sup>124</sup>

When the TWU was established in 1934, it quickly became popular; by the time it affiliated with the CIO in 1937, it had achieved recognition on all but one of New York City's major rapid transit, trolley, and bus lines. At this point, it was about eighty percent Catholic, most of whom were Irish or of Irish descent.<sup>125</sup>

The TWU greatly improved the standard of living of Irish Catholics. The union negotiated its first contract in 1936 without any strikes or stoppage and won a paid vacation period for its members. When it renegotiated in December 1938, the TWU won the restoration of seniority rights for members involved in a 1926 strike in addition to sick benefits and paid holidays for all members.

Union members were justifiably grateful for these gains. The union's paper, the *Transport Bulletin*, described an incident in which an Irish-American wife came to the union leadership to ask if her husband would get vacation, as he had been sick. He had worked for the company for 25 years and "always dreamed of getting a two weeks' vacation." The woman expressed her pleasure with the TWU, saying, "Well, God bless the Union for getting the vacation and 10 per cent raise. . . I think the greatest concession they [the members] got was when they were given back their freedom of mind." Since her husband no longer had to fear "someone watching and turning him in even for his silent

thoughts, let alone the spoken word," he had gained much peace of mind.<sup>126</sup> A Bronx conductor expressed similar sentiments in a note to TWU president Michael Quill that said: "Thanks Michael for your enlightened honest leadership. We are free men now."<sup>127</sup> Having liberated thousands of members from low wages, poor working conditions, and the fear to speak out against these conditions, the leaders of the TWU had earned a great amount of respect.

The TWU leadership maintained the allegiances of its Irish-Catholic American members by portraying the union as patriotic, pro-Irish, and pro-Church. Realizing the Irish were concerned with Americanism, the *Transport Bulletin* commemorated Lincoln's birthday annually and reprinted the Declaration of Independence to celebrate Independence Day. It also advised its Irish members that the union's educational department would assist them with immigration and naturalization matters. The union further appealed to Irish members by printing news about Irish-American associations and sports. In addition, on the anniversary of his execution by British forces in 1936, the *Transport Bulletin* recognized James Connolly as the "greatest labor leader" in Irish history. The paper reminded its readers that Connolly, one of the founders of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in Dublin, emphasized "the necessity and value of industrial unionism as the form of association to be adopted by all classes of workers in their battle for better conditions." Finally, the union appealed to its members by condemning Catholic oppression. The *Transport Bulletin* spoke out against the actions of the American Protective Association and the Ku Klux Klan. Such racist organizations, the paper ensured TWU members, not only discriminated against "Catholics, Negroes, and Jews," they were "Labor-haters" as well.<sup>128</sup> Do not let a feeling of persecution drive

**CARDINAL AIDS PAGEANT**  
**Calls on Catholics of the City to**  
**Support Spectacle in Behalf**  
**of Fund Drive**

...way Mr. Williams announced that Walter Hampden, the actor who had agreed to play in a pageant planned for Madison Square Garden this month had withdrawn. The pageant will be held next Wednesday. Cardinal Hayes, through Mgr. Michael J. Lavelle, Vicar General of the archdiocese, called on the Roman Catholics of New York yesterday to attend it. Mgr. Lavelle wrote to all the pastors in the archdiocese that "the Cardinal Archbishop regards this mass meeting as very useful and in the interests of portraying the truth and drawing correct conclusions therefrom. His Eminence desires that you kindly announce this mass meeting to your people on Sunday next and urge their attendance in goodly numbers."

From The New York Times, 15 May 1937.

you closer to the Church," the paper implied to its Irish Catholic members, "let the TWU be your haven." The union needed the loyalty of the rank and file when its relations with the Catholic Church began to sour because of Church opposition to the communist leadership.

While the *Catholic Worker* and offshoots of the Catholic Worker Movement which were also unaffiliated with the hierarchy endorsed the TWU, the union encountered opposition from the hierarchy beginning in 1936.<sup>129</sup> While Communists made up at most one to two percent of the membership, they made up a much larger percentage of the leadership. Fearing the spread of "red" propaganda, the conservative Brooklyn diocese was hostile to all CIO unions, and the Brooklyn *Tablet* attacked the TWU in particular, calling on Catholics to quit. Father Edward Lodge Curran, chaplain of the Brooklyn branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and a supporter of the anti-Communist Fr. Charles Coughlin, joined forces with the *Tablet* against the TWU. He helped organize the American Association Against Communism (AAAC) which led the most direct Church challenge to the TWU. Curran personally visited transport workers on the job to convince them to oppose the TWU and join the AAAC. In addition, Philip Dobson of the Xavier Labor School wanted to start a campaign to infiltrate the TWU with workers educated in anti-communism at his labor school. In 1938, he recruited 125 Irish and Irish Americans in less-skilled and lower-paid jobs. As a result of these efforts, a small core of activists formed, but mass opposition to the union leadership did not arise. At the October and December 1937 union conventions there was only sporadic opposition to positions taken by the leadership, and little clear political differentiation was evident. What mattered more than politics in the end was personal popularity and skill at handling

grievances.<sup>130</sup> Union members were more interested in material gains than ideologies.

Aware that emphasizing their ideology would only polarize the union, the Communist and Irish Republican leadership tended to publicly support only non-controversial causes, of which, as they soon learned, the Spanish Civil War was not one. The union, however, was overtly anti-Nazi and anti-fascist. The *Transport Bulletin* compared people who accused the CIO of communism to witch-burners and warned that their actions foreshadowed the danger of "the Fascist menace."<sup>131</sup> For many TWU leaders, with the commencement of hostilities in Spain, this anti-fascism evolved into anti-Francoism. Quill was strongly in favor of the Republic. His sentiment must have been widely known, for he received numerous invitations to speak at conferences of various pro-Loyalist organizations.<sup>132</sup> Gerald O'Reilly, a Clan member involved in founding the TWU, helped transfer arms originally obtained for the IRA to Loyalist Spain. These actions were carried out independent of the TWU. Nonetheless, O'Reilly remembered that the transfer of arms issue was one of the few non-union political matters raised by members at section meetings. One rank and file group in the TWU, the taxi section of Local 100 in New York, offered to help pay to bring back the wounded Lincoln Brigade volunteers.<sup>133</sup>

The TWU was not one of those unions that endorsed the Spanish Republic. The Irish Catholic membership of the TWU, however, was surely influenced to reject the pro-Franco propaganda they constantly read and heard. They had come to accept the union as the medium in which political and social issues were discussed and had rejected the opinion of the Church in such matters. The union was so important to Irish Catholics that some who encountered opposition from their priests even switched parishes in order to continue participating in the union.<sup>134</sup> In addition, the respect they had for TWU leaders was undoubtedly at its peak in the late 1930s when so many gains had been won in such a short time. The rank and file had become accustomed to the left-leaning ideas espoused by their leaders on issues of Irish nationalism, unionism, and politics. The much-respected Irish Republicans, of whom there were many in the union, espoused broad ideas about natural rights and individualism. The more progressive Clan na Gael and IRA members saw themselves as heirs of James Connolly, who had preached Irish nationalism, international socialism, and militant industrial unionism. While the majority of Irish workers did not adopt Connolly's views on socialism, they revered the Irish hero nonetheless.<sup>135</sup> That a battalion of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade was named after Connolly suggests that, if alive, he would have been pro-Loyalist. When TWU leaders such as Quill and O'Reilly came out in support of the Loyalists, Irish Catholics listened.

Several sources may have influenced Irish-Catholic New Yorkers to reject Franco's cause, including the secular press and the writings of Catholics who dissented from the hierarchy's pro-Franco position. Looking beyond newspaper debates, however, we discover that in the 1930s, class identity was of utmost importance to Irish Catholic workers. Unions were vital to their hopes of material betterment, which was severely threatened during the Great Depression. When the Church did not support unionization, therefore, Irish Catholics drew away from it and closer to their trade unions and to its supporters, such as the editors of the *Catholic Worker*. During the Spanish Civil War, when the anti-Franco views of labor leaders and the *Catholic*

Worker conflicted with those espoused by the Church establishment and Irish-American leaders, many Irish Catholics accepted the neutral and pro-Loyalist arguments of labor leaders.

## CONCLUSION

This study has tried to demonstrate the relative importance of class identity when compared to religious and ethnic identity in the late 1930s. Even in a typically religious and ethnically proud community such as that of Irish-Catholic New Yorkers, class identity was, for many, the most important factor in determining their response to the Spanish Civil War. The Catholic hierarchy and the Irish-American leadership tried to garner support for Franco. Despite their combined efforts, however, much of their audience was not convinced.

While Catholicism and ethnicity were important in the 1930s, during the economically and emotionally trying times of the Great Depression, many Irish Catholic laborers listened to those who were most sympathetic to their concerns. These concerns, which included job security, decent wages, and an increase in standard of living, were championed primarily by the Catholic Worker Movement and the labor unions it supported. When the Catholic Worker printed criticism of Franco in almost every issue from 1936 through 1939, reprimanded the hierarchy-controlled Catholic press, and repeatedly declared that neutrality was the proper stance for Catholics to take, many Irish-Catholic readers took this position to heart. When numerous CIO unions sent aid to Loyalist Spain and leaders of Irish-Catholic dominated unions did likewise, many union members began to view the war in Spain as a struggle between workers and the wealthy instead of as a Catholic war against communism.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper "the Catholic Church" implies public opinion of the Church hierarchy, the Catholic press, prominent Catholic spokesmen, and various Church-affiliated groups. The definition is used in George Q. Flynn, *American Catholics and the Roosevelt Presidency, 1932-1936* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), x.
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example, Hugh Jones Parry, "The Spanish Civil War: A Study of American Public Opinion Propaganda, and Pressure Groups," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1949); Allen Guttman, *The Wound in the Heart: America and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1962); J. David Valaik, "American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War, 1931-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1964); Valaik, "Catholics, Neutrality, and the Spanish Embargo, 1937-1939," *The Journal of American History*, June 1967, 73-85.
- <sup>3</sup> The term Catholic laity refers to anyone who would answer "Roman Catholic" when asked "To what church do you belong?"
- <sup>4</sup> "Merwin Hart on Spain," *Ave Maria*, 158 (Dec. 17, 1938), quoted in Valaik, op.cit., 793.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 396-97.
- <sup>6</sup> Surely, some of the Irish Americans sympathetic to the Republic were Protestant; yet since approximately ninety percent of Irish Americans were Catholic, the majority of those opposed to Franco also were Catholic. Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 297.
- <sup>7</sup> Robert Sean Wilentz, "Industrializing America and the Irish: Towards the New Departure," *Labor History*, 20 (Fall 1979), 579.
- <sup>8</sup> About 1.9 million Irish emigrated to the U.S. between 1830 and 1860. Another 1.9 million arrived between 1860 and 1900. Joel Perlmann, *Ethnic Differences: Schooling and Social Structure Among the Irish, Italians, Jews, and Blacks in an American City, 1880-1935* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 43.
- <sup>9</sup> Joshua B. Freeman essay in Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowitz (eds.), *Working-Class America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 256.
- <sup>10</sup> Thomas E. Hachey, Joseph M. Hernon, Jr., and Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Experience* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989), 100. William V. Shannon, *The American Irish* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1966), 6-7 also discusses the exile image, yet he applies it to affluent Irish Americans as well as those who were impoverished.
- <sup>11</sup> Irish in-marriage was 93.05% in 1870, 74.75% in 1900, and 74.25% in 1930.

- Will Herberg, "The Triple Melting Pot," *Commentary*, 20 (August 1955), 104.
- <sup>12</sup> Freeman in Frisch and Walkowitz, op.cit., 257; Ronald H. Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews, and Italians of New York City, 1929-1941* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 22; Wilentz, "Industrializing America and the Irish," op.cit., 585.
- <sup>13</sup> Shannon, op.cit., 140-141.
- <sup>14</sup> For a detailed explanation of the origins of the war, see Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., 1961), 3-113.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 142, 35, 81.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 166-167.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 634-635.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 635-638; 231, 557.
- <sup>19</sup> *The Nation*, 142 (February 26, 1936), 234; John Summerfield, *Volunteer in Spain* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 154.
- <sup>20</sup> "Perils of Communistic Victory in Spain," *America*, 55 (August 8, 1936), 420.
- <sup>21</sup> George Gallup and Claude Robinson, "American Institute of Public Opinion Surveys, 1935-38," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2 (July 1938), 387; Valaik, op.cit., 331; Embargo resolution quoted in Guttman, op.cit., 90.
- <sup>22</sup> John E. Wiltz, *From Isolation to War, 1931-1941* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 54.
- <sup>23</sup> The remaining people surveyed were 30% pro-Loyalist and 16% pro-Franco. Parry, op.cit., 163. Parry had access to unpublished records of the National Opinion Research Center in Denver, Colorado.
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street: the Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), 10.
- <sup>25</sup> Parry, op.cit., 163; Jay Taylor, *The United States and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), 137.
- <sup>26</sup> In February 1937, 16% of those polled said they sympathized with Franco; in December 1938, 14% did.
- <sup>27</sup> "Pro-Fascist Neutrality," *The Nation*, 144 (January 9, 1937), 30-32; *The New Republic*, 88 (October 14, 1936), 267.
- <sup>28</sup> Valaik, "Spanish Embargo," op.cit., 76.
- <sup>29</sup> "The Spanish War . . . Last Phase," *Catholic Digest*, 3 (May 1939), 63.
- <sup>30</sup> "The Spanish Embargo," *America*, 59 (May 14, 1938), 132; Valaik, "Spanish Embargo," op.cit., 75.
- <sup>31</sup> Edgar R. Smathers, S.J. to Sumner Welles, April 12, 1938, Department of State Records, File No. 852.00/8685 cited in Valaik, "Spanish Embargo," op.cit., 75, 80.
- <sup>32</sup> Flynn, op.cit., xvi; Parry, op.cit., 371-372.
- <sup>33</sup> Parry, op.cit., 83; Guttman, op.cit., 116.
- <sup>34</sup> Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 159; Roosevelt's concern about the Catholic vote is also asserted by Valaik, Guttman, and Parry.
- <sup>35</sup> Harold Ickes in *The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes*, 1954, wrote that Roosevelt told him lifting the arms embargo "would mean the loss of every Catholic voter next fall." Cited in Wiltz, op.cit., 55.
- <sup>36</sup> Of the remaining sixty percent, half were neutral and half were pro-Loyalist. Parry, op.cit., 373.
- <sup>37</sup> Guttman, op.cit., 31.
- <sup>38</sup> See, for example, Wilfrid Parsons, S.J. "Church and State in Spain," *America*, 46 (October 31, 1931), 81-83.
- <sup>39</sup> Parry, op.cit., 212; Lewy Guenter, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 312.
- <sup>40</sup> *Catholic Action*, 18 (Dec. 1936), 5 quoted in Valaik, op.cit., 121.
- <sup>41</sup> Parry, op.cit., 171-172.
- <sup>42</sup> Taylor, op.cit., 89.
- <sup>43</sup> Valaik, op.cit., 160.
- <sup>44</sup> *The Franciscan Almanac 1937* states that Catholic newspapers had a circulation of 2,396,516 and magazines had a circulation of 4,604,141 in 1936. Cited in Robert Morton Darrow, "Catholic Political Power: A Study of the Activities of the American Catholic Church on Behalf of Franco, 1936-1939" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1953), 34.
- <sup>45</sup> Parry, op.cit., 185.
- <sup>46</sup> Flynn, op.cit., xiv.
- <sup>47</sup> Laurence K. Patterson, "Right and Left Battle for Spain" *America*, 55 (Aug. 8, 1936), 412-413.
- <sup>48</sup> "Perils of a Communistic Victory in Spain," *ibid.*, 55 (Aug. 8, 1936), 420.
- <sup>49</sup> See, for example, "God Help Us" *The New World*, (Aug. 7, 1936), 4 and *The Denver Catholic Register*, Aug. 9, 1936, 4 quoted in Valaik, op.cit., 82.
- <sup>50</sup> James A. Magner, "Alternatives in Spain" *The Commonwealth*, 26 (June 11, 1937), 173; "Spanish Peace Proposals," 26 (July 30, 1937), 334; A. Kelly, S.J., "Crusading Spain," *Catholic Digest*, 2 (July 1938), 5.
- <sup>51</sup> Robert Davis, "Franco the Man," *Catholic Digest*, 3 (May 1939), 85-86.
- <sup>52</sup> See also Guttman, op.cit., 30.
- <sup>53</sup> "America Alone" *Ave Maria*, 47 (April 30, 1938), 556 quoted in Valaik, "American Catholic Dissenters and the Spanish Civil War," *Catholic Historical Review*, 53 (Jan. 1968), 542.

- <sup>54</sup> "Right or Wrong," *Our Sunday Visitor*, 26 (Aug. 8, 1937), 2; circulation figure in Parry, op.cit., 190.
- <sup>55</sup> Quoted in Taylor, op.cit., 124.
- <sup>56</sup> See Parry, op.cit., 190ff.
- <sup>57</sup> Edward Hawks, "Impressions from Spain," *Catholic Digest*, 2 (Sept. 1938), 7.
- <sup>58</sup> "Franco Talks," *Catholic Digest*, 1 (Oct. 1937), 69.
- <sup>59</sup> "Some" Italians probably numbered 50,000 at the time the article was written. Six hundred Irishmen fought for the Nationalists throughout the course of the war and will be discussed further in the following section.
- <sup>60</sup> "Congressional Victims of Propaganda," *Our Sunday Visitor*, 26 (Feb. 27, 1938), 2.
- <sup>61</sup> "Clerics in the U.S. Assail Spain's War on Church," *Our Sunday Visitor*, 25 (Sept. 6, 1936), 1; "Right or Wrong," 25 (Aug. 26, 1936), 1.
- <sup>62</sup> Hugh Thomas has estimated that 12 bishops, 283 nuns, 5,255 priests, 2,492 monks, and 249 novices were killed. Cited in Flynn, op.cit., 35.
- <sup>63</sup> Editorial, "Perils of a Communistic Victory in Spain," *America*, 55 (Aug. 8, 1936), 420; "Tortures in Red Barcelona," *Catholic Digest*, 3 (April 1939), 9.
- <sup>64</sup> Valaik, op.cit., 82, 284.
- <sup>65</sup> "The Spanish War . . . Last Phase," *Catholic Digest*, 3 (May 1939), 62; Michael Williams, "An Open Letter to Leaders of the American Press, On Spain," *The Commonweal*, 26 (May 7, 1937), 33; "Right or Wrong," *Our Sunday Visitor*, 25 (Sept. 13, 1936), 2.
- <sup>66</sup> Guttman, op.cit., 60-64.
- <sup>67</sup> "Samples of Untruths Published In the Secular Press," *Our Sunday Visitor*, 26 (Feb. 6, 1938), 1.
- <sup>68</sup> In radio address "Con inmenso gozo," *Tablet*, 173 (April 16, 1939), 514 quoted in Guenter, op.cit., 312.
- <sup>69</sup> *The Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*, March 27, 1937, 1.
- <sup>70</sup> *Irish World*, Feb. 18, 1939, 4; Feb. 20, 1937, 1; April 24, 1937, 7; Aug. 15, 1936, 7.
- <sup>71</sup> *Irish World*, Aug. 22, 1936, 7.
- <sup>72</sup> *Gaelic American*, Jan. 9, 1937, 2; *Irish World*, Jan. 9, 1937, 2.
- <sup>73</sup> *Gaelic American*, Jan. 16, 1937, 3; *Irish World*, Dec. 24, 1938, 4.
- <sup>74</sup> *Gaelic American*, Jan. 16, 1937, 2; Jan. 14, 1939, 1. See also May 21, 1938, 1; *Irish World*, June 26, 1937, 4; July 16, 1938, 4.
- <sup>75</sup> Dean R. Esslinger, "American German and Irish Attitudes Toward Neutrality, 1914-1917: A Study of Catholic Minorities," *Catholic Historical Review*, 53 (July 1967), 216; *Gaelic American*, July 18, 1936, 1, 4.
- <sup>76</sup> *Gaelic American*, Sept. 26, 1936, 1; Nov. 14, 1936, 2; Oct. 10, 1936, 3.
- <sup>77</sup> *Irish World* was less enthusiastic about O'Duffy's cause most likely because O'Duffy was a political enemy of Ireland's President De Valera.
- <sup>78</sup> *Gaelic American*, May 8, 1937, 1; Jan. 2, 1937, 3; March 20, 1937, 1.
- <sup>79</sup> Thomas, op.cit., 377.
- <sup>80</sup> See, for example, *Gaelic American*, May 1, 1937, 1; *Irish World*, Feb. 13, 1937, 1.
- <sup>81</sup> Charles, etc. to Phil, March 20, 1937 and Charley to girls, no date, in Marcel Acier, *From Spanish Trenches: Recent Letters from Spain* (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1937), 139, 144, 142.
- <sup>82</sup> Joe Monks, commanding officer of the Fourth Battalion in the Dublin Brigade, to Aunt, Feb. 5, 1937 letter in *ibid.*, 122.
- <sup>83</sup> Ed to Girls, no date, in *ibid.*, 162.
- <sup>84</sup> See Figure 1 on page 5.
- <sup>85</sup> *New York Times*, Aug. 6, 1936, 3; Dec. 3, 1936, 1; Oct. 11, 1936, IV, 5.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, April 28, 1937, 1; May 1, 1937, 18.
- <sup>87</sup> Jones, op.cit., 178-179.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 175 and Taylor, op.cit., 153-154.
- <sup>89</sup> *The Commonweal* was a Catholic journal published by laymen who originally criticized both Franco and the hierarchy's support for him. After the influential clergy-run press continually denounced *The Commonweal*, the paper declared its support for Franco in June 1937.
- <sup>90</sup> Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," *New Republic*, 95 (May 11, 1938), 19. Also appeared in *Time*, 31 (May 16, 1938), 44.
- <sup>91</sup> Mary M—, "A Catholic Speaks Her Mind," *The Nation*, 145 (Dec. 18, 1937), 683-685; Taylor, op.cit., 153.
- <sup>92</sup> See Parry, op.cit., and Taylor, op.cit.
- <sup>93</sup> Mary M—, "Speaks Her Mind," op.cit., 683-684.
- <sup>94</sup> Peter Whiffin, *Forum and Century*, 97 (April 1937), 199. Taylor writes that Whiffin was subjected to much criticism by the Catholic press. In June 1937, he altered many of his views in a political advertisement in *Forum*. He did not, however, change his attitude toward the Spanish Civil War, nor did he retract his indictment of the Catholic hierarchy. See Taylor, op.cit., 154.
- <sup>95</sup> The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) was established in 1937. All members of ACTU had to be Catholic and to belong to a union.
- <sup>96</sup> Balch to editor, *Labor Leader*, June 23, 1938, 4; Joseph M. Hughes to ed., Aug. 8, 1938, 4; P.K. to ed., June 15, 1938, 4.
- <sup>97</sup> Freeman essay in Frisch and Walkowitz, op.cit., 274-275.
- <sup>98</sup> William P. Cantwell to editor, *Catholic Worker*, May 1938, 5.
- <sup>99</sup> Betten, *Catholic Activism*, 48ff; "Catholic Union of the Unemployed," *Catholic Worker*, May 1939, 1. For more information on the Catholic Worker Movement, see Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origins of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).
- <sup>100</sup> See, for example, *Catholic Worker*, Dec. 1934, 1; March 1935, 1; Sept. 1935, 1.
- <sup>101</sup> "The Gadfly," *Catholic Worker*, Feb. 1939, 2, for example, proposed boycotting the Soviet exhibit at the World's Fair or 24-hour a day distribution of Catholic literature in front of the exhibit to counteract Soviet propaganda.
- <sup>102</sup> Quoted in Betten, *Catholic Activism*, 67.
- <sup>103</sup> "Christ Would Be Union Man," *Catholic Worker*, Aug. 1937, 1; "Workers of the World Unite! Under Christ, Light of the World," Oct. 1936, 1; "C.W. States Stand on Strikes," July 1936, 1; "Sit-Down Technique Is Legitimate One," Feb. 1937, 1.
- <sup>104</sup> Betten, *Catholic Activism*, 67-72.
- <sup>105</sup> "Utility Workers Go CIO," *Catholic Worker*, April 1937, 7.
- <sup>106</sup> "Editor of ACTU Paper Badly Hurt," *ibid.*, May 1938, 2; "ACTU in Action," *Labor Leader*, Jan. 3, 1938, 2.
- <sup>107</sup> Steven Jenso to editor, *Catholic Worker*, Sept. 1938, 5; D'Allesio to ed., Sept. 1938, 5; O'Connor to ed., Nov. 1933, 7; O'Connor to ed., Dec. 15, 1933, 4; O'Shaughnessy to ed., July-August 1933, 8; O'Loughlin to ed., April 1, 1934, 4; Farrell to ed., Nov. 1934, 5.
- <sup>108</sup> Scanlan to editor, *ibid.*, June-July 1933, 4; Parsons to ed., June-July 1933, 4; "Letters and Comment," Sept. 1933, 11.
- <sup>109</sup> Piehl, op.cit., 121.
- <sup>110</sup> "Black Legion Rise Indicative of Fascist Trend," *Catholic Worker*, June 1936, 1; "How Not to Fight Communism," May 1937, 6; Donald Powell, "Why I Like the Communist," May 1936, 5.
- <sup>111</sup> Quoted in Piehl, op.cit., 123.
- <sup>112</sup> "The Mystical Body in Spain," *Catholic Worker*, Sept. 1936, 4.
- <sup>113</sup> Quoted in Piehl, op.cit., 193. See also "The Use of Force," *Catholic Worker*, Nov. 1936, 4.
- <sup>114</sup> "Non-Violence Technique by C.W. Pickets," *Catholic Worker*, July 1939, 3.
- <sup>115</sup> "Fascism Revealed in German Persecution," *ibid.*, Nov. 1936, 1; "Catholic Worker
- H. Forest, *A Penny a Copy: Readings from The Catholic Worker*. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1963), 38.
- <sup>116</sup> Drinkwater, "Some Reasons," *Catholic Worker*, July 1937, 1.
- <sup>117</sup> Haven Perkins to editor, *ibid.*, Nov. 1936, 7; Sys to ed., May 1937, 5.
- <sup>118</sup> Taylor, op.cit., 136; *New York Times*, Nov. 25, 1936, 13.
- <sup>119</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 7, 1936, 6; *Labor Leader*, Aug. 1, 1938, 1; *New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1937, 35.
- <sup>120</sup> *New York Times*, Dec. 1, 1936, 1. While the Catholic labor paper *Labor Leader* called this claim "a lot of humbug," a large number of laborers must have been involved in the League. See *Labor Leader*, Jan. 23, 1939, 2.
- <sup>121</sup> John Gerassi, *The Premature Antifascists: North American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, An Oral History* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 2.
- <sup>122</sup> Alvah Bessie and Albert Prago, eds. *Our Fight: Writings by Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Spain 1936-1939* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 53, 65, 249, 168.
- <sup>123</sup> Joshua B. Freeman, *In Transit: The Transport Workers Union in New York City, 1933-1966*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 39-40.
- <sup>124</sup> Preliminary Finding Aid, 2, Transport Workers Union of America Collection, Robert F. Wagner Archives, Tamiment Library, New York University.
- <sup>125</sup> Freeman, op.cit., 58; Jules Weinberg, "Priests, Workers, and Communists," *Harper's Magazine* (November 1948), 50.
- <sup>126</sup> *Labor Leader*, Oct. 31, 1938, 2; Dec. 12, 1938, 3; William Grogan, "Tunnel Echoes," *Transport Bulletin*, May 1938, 7.
- <sup>127</sup> P.K. to Michael Quill, 1937, Quill Papers, Box 10, TWU Collection.
- <sup>128</sup> *Transport Bulletin*, Feb. 1938, 6; July 1939, 6; April 1939, 1; May 1938, 15; June 1938, 5; May 1938, 7; March 1939, 7.
- <sup>129</sup> *The Catholic Worker* advised its readers to join the TWU and ACTU, which was founded by former Catholic Workers, supported the TWU's organizing drives.
- <sup>130</sup> Freeman essay in Frisch and Walkowitz, op.cit., 274; Freeman, op.cit., 105, 111, 135.
- <sup>131</sup> *Transport Bulletin*, May 1938, 16; Aug. 1938, 9.
- <sup>132</sup> See, for example, S.J. Stember, Trade Union Director of Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, to Quill, Oct. 4, 1937, TWU Collection, Box 1; Harry Gersh, Secretary of Joint Spanish-American Committee for July 19, to Quill, June 25, 1937, TWU Collection, Box 1.
- <sup>133</sup> Although heavily communist, this section did contain Irish workers. Freeman, op.cit., 158; telephone interview with Freeman, March 26, 1992.
- <sup>134</sup> Freeman essay in Frisch and Walkowitz, op.cit., 275.
- <sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 264, 268-269.