The ‘Red Terror’ and the Spanish Civil War

This book deals with one of the most controversial issues of the Spanish Civil War (1936–9): the ‘Red Terror’. Approximately 50,000 Spaniards were extrajudicially executed in Republican Spain following the failure of the military rebellion in July 1936. This mass killing of fascists seriously undermined attempts by the legally constituted Republican government to present itself in foreign quarters as fighting a war for democracy. This study, based on a wealth of scholarship and archival sources, challenges the common view that executions were the work of criminal or anarchist ‘uncontrollables’. Its focus is on Madrid, which witnessed at least 8,000 executions in 1936. It shows that the terror was organized and carried out with the complicity of the police and argues that terror was seen as integral to the antifascist war effort. Indeed, the elimination of the internal enemy – the ‘fifth column’ – was regarded as important as the war on the front line.

Julius Ruiz has written widely on the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. His first book, Franco’s Justice: Repression in Madrid after the Spanish Civil War, was published in 2005 and in Spanish translation in 2012. His second book, El terror rojo: Madrid 1936, was published in 2012 and is currently in its third printing. It won the 2012 Hislibris Prize for the best nonfiction title published in Spain and was widely reviewed in the Spanish press. Ruiz has published articles in British, American, and Spanish journals such as Contemporary European History, Journal of Contemporary History, and Historia y Política. He has reviewed books for a large number of titles, including English Historical Review and La Revista de Libros. He is a member of the British Royal Historical Society.
The ‘Red Terror’ and the Spanish Civil War

Revolutionary Violence in Madrid

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIT</td>
<td>Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Acción Popular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASM</td>
<td>Agrupación Socialista Madrileña</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avenida</td>
<td>Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caball Jersta</td>
<td>Supporter of Francisco Largo Caballero/Left-wing Socialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calle</td>
<td>Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDA</td>
<td>Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEP</td>
<td>Comisión de Información Electoral Permanente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIV</td>
<td>Cuerpo de Investigación y Vigilancia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNT</td>
<td>Confederación Nacional de Trabajo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONS</td>
<td>Centrales Obreras Nacional Sindicalistas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPIP</td>
<td>Comité Provincial de Investigación Pública</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDIDE</td>
<td>Departamento Especial de Información del Estado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGS</td>
<td>Dirección General de Seguridad/Director General de Seguridad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duque</td>
<td>Duke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duquesa</td>
<td>Duchess</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAI</td>
<td>Federación Anarquista Ibérica</td>
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<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Falange Española</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLOE</td>
<td>Federación Local de Obreros de la Edificación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNTT</td>
<td>Federación Nacional de Trabajadores de la Tierra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUE</td>
<td>Federación Universitaria Escolar</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNR</td>
<td>Guardia Nacional Republicana</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGM</td>
<td>Inspección General de Milicias</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>Izquierda Republicana</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAP</td>
<td>Juventudes de Acción Popular</td>
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<tr>
<td>JDM</td>
<td>Junta de Defensa de Madrid</td>
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<tr>
<td>JJLL</td>
<td>Juventudes Libertarias</td>
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Abbreviations and Spanish Terms

JONS  Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista
JSU   Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas
MAOC  Milicias Antifascistas Obreras y Campesinas
Marqués Marquis
MVR   Milicias de Vigilancia de la Retaguardia
NKVD  Narodny Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
paco  Sniper
paseo  Gangster-style execution
PCE   Partido Comunista de España
Plaza Square
PNV   Partido Nacionalista Vasco
POUM  Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista
prietista  Supporter of Socialist Indalecio Prieto/Right-wing Socialist
PSOE  Partido Socialista Obrero Español
PSUC  Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya
saca  Illegal extractions of prisoners for execution
SEU   Sindicato Español Universitario
SIM   Servicio de Investigación Militar
SUC   Sindicato Único de la Construcción
TYRE  Tradicionalistas y Renovación Española
UGT   Unión General de Trabajadores
UHP   Unión de Hermanos Proletarios
UME   Unión Militar Española
UR    Unión Republicana
Preface

This monograph was originally published in Spain in January 2012. I am enormously grateful to those readers who took the time and effort to contact me with their stories of the terror in Madrid. I would also like to thank those who sent me documents and pointed out errors. The writing of this book would not have been possible without the assistance of many institutions and people. Financial support was provided by the AHRC, the British Academy, and the Carneigie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. The intellectual support of friends and colleagues within the School of History, Classics and Archaeology is also much appreciated. Gordon Pentland, Ewen Cameron, Jill Stephenson, and David Kaufman deserve special mention. However, this book would not have been possible without Jim McMillan, my first head of school, who died at the peak of his powers as a historian in 2010.

I am indebted to Stanley Payne, Frances Lannon, Tom Buchanan, Pedro Barruso, Fernando del Rey, Manuel Álvarez Tardío, Roberto Villa García, and Emilio Sáenz-Francés for countless discussions on the Spanish Civil War. Particular thanks for Julio de la Cueva, Nigel Townson, and above all Rob Stradling for reading parts of the manuscript. I am also grateful to my editors at Espasa and Cambridge University Press for making this book available to both a Spanish- and an English-speaking readership. Espasa has also kindly given permission to reproduce maps that originally appeared in the Spanish version of the book. Some archival material in this study has previously appeared in my articles “Incontrolables” en la zona republicana durante la guerra civil: el caso de Luis Bonilla Echevarría,’ in Historia y Política 21 (2009) and “Work and don’t lose hope”: Republican Forced Labour Camps during the Spanish Civil War,’ in Contemporary European History 18 (4) (2009).
It goes without saying that this book would never have been completed without the love of my wife, Cheryl, and our children, Oliver, Nicholas, and Laura. It is dedicated to the memory of my great-grandfather, grandmother, and father who suffered the Civil War and its consequences.

J. R.
Edinburgh, 2013.