Introduction

Being Communist

In a letter marked "urgent" sent in 1937 to Mikhail Kalinin, the nominal head of the Soviet state, Spanish communist Adela Rivera Sánchez told an intimate story of war. A party member since 1930, Rivera Sánchez wrote that she had recently arrived in the Soviet Union from Asturias with three small children, the youngest of whom was two. Because the Spanish party required her "immediate return to work in Spain," she wrote that she was planning "to leave my three children in the Soviet Union and return as soon as possible."[1] Such a decision was not uncommon among international communists, who viewed the Soviet Union as a safe haven for their children.[2] What complicated her return – and the reason for her appeal to Kalinin – was that she was two-and-a-half-months pregnant. The "situation in Spain and the conditions of my work," she explained, "do not permit me to have another child at this time (I am 26 and this is my sixth child)." Thus she asked Kalinin to intervene on her behalf and permit her to have an immediate abortion, "so that I can return to my country and take an active part in the struggle of the Spanish people."[3]

Rivera Sánchez needed special dispensation to terminate her pregnancy because abortion had been prohibited in the Soviet Union in June 1936. (The

[1] "Predsedateliu VTsIK Tov. Kalininu," Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. 531, op. 1, d. 186, l. 3. Her name appears in Cyrillic as Adela Rovira Sanches.

[2] Mariia Minina-Svetlanova, "Two Motherlands Are Mine, and I Hold Both Dear in My Heart: Upbringing and Education in the Ivanovo Interdom," *Russian Studies in History* 48, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 75; Huang Jian, "A Chinese Student in the USSR," in Glennys Young, ed., *The Communist Experience in the Twentieth Century: A Global History through Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 264–9; Immaculada Colomina Limonero, *Dos patrias, tres mil destinos: Vida y exilo de los niños de la Guerra de España refugiados en la Unión Soviética* (Madrid: Ediciones Cinca, 2010); A. V. Elpat'evskii, *Ispanskaia emigratsiia v SSSR: Istorigrafiia i istochniki, popytka interpretatsii* (Tver: Izdatel'stvo "GERS," 2002), 13–37.

[3] RGASPI, f. 531, op. 1, d. 186, l. 3.

Spanish Republic never fully decriminalized abortion.[4]) The Soviet legislation justified the abortion ban as a means of combating "a frivolous attitude toward the family and family responsibility."[5] Rivera Sánchez, however, presented her reasons as anything but frivolous. Rather, she invoked earlier revolutionary norms that called on exemplary communists to subordinate the satisfactions of family life to the needs of the revolution, while also underscoring the fact that she already had five children.[6] In response to her request, she received a note instructing her to report on 13 December 1937 to the Secretariat of the President of the Central Executive Committee to "discuss your matter."[7] The archive contains no information regarding the outcome of that meeting.

Rivera Sánchez's request allows us to see how, for the most committed, international communism was not only a political movement; it was also a way of life. Her appeal dramatizes the personal sacrifices that communists made for the cause. It also suggests how a "good" communist might understand and enact the connection between her political duty and her personal life – indeed she might not consider herself to be making a sacrifice at all as she left her children thousands of miles from home and petitioned to end her pregnancy in order to participate in "the struggle of the Spanish people." Her determination to join the struggle in Spain demanded the perhaps temporary abandonment of her maternal role. At the same time, her individual circumstances encouraged her to challenge, however implicitly, the Stalinist sanctification of the family. Thus her story – and others like it told in this book – illustrates the ways in which communist commitments shaped personal lives and personal relationships influenced political understandings.

Focusing on the everyday lives of international communists, this book offers a grassroots history of international communism. Transnational interactions among communists occurred, as Rivera Sánchez's story illustrates, in the context of norms and institutions largely established by the Soviet party. But although such interactions were unequal, they were also messy, unpredictable, emotionally charged, and ultimately productive. This book thus explores the transnational exchanges that occurred in Soviet-structured spaces – from clandestine schools for training international revolutionaries in Moscow to the International Brigades in Spain – as a means of tracing the everyday practices of being communist. It analyzes the appeal of communism, specifically Soviet

[4] Richard Cleminson, "Beyond Tradition and 'Modernity': The Cultural and Sexual Politics of Spanish Anarchism," in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, eds., *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction: The Struggle for Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 121–2.

[5] Cited in Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 331.

[6] Jeffrey Brooks, "Revolutionary Lives: Public Identities in *Pravda* during the 1920s," in Stephen White, ed., *New Directions in Soviet History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 34; Elizabeth A Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 47.

[7] RGASPI, f. 531, op. 1, d. 186, l. 5.

communism for those outside of the Soviet Union, by taking it seriously not only as a revolutionary political creed but also as a way of understanding (and remaking) both the world and the self, the self in the world.

International Communism and Individual Lives

When the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd in October 1917, they aimed not only, or even primarily, to remake the Russian empire and the Russian people. They intended to shake the world: to spark a global transformation of political and human relations. This Bolshevik sense of world historical mission took the institutional form of the Third or Communist International (Comintern), founded in Moscow in 1919 as the headquarters of world revolution.[8] Even now, from the vantage of our thoroughly globalized world, the breadth of the Comintern's revolutionary ambition is impressive; by 1935, it operated on six continents and had sixty-five member parties. Working in well over a dozen languages, Comintern agents and functionaries collected information and issued directives on topics as diverse as strike activity, the agrarian question, women's activism, youth mobilization, regional party organizations, the labor press, clandestine operations, the celebration of communist holidays, and the training of new cadres – to provide only a very partial list.[9] The Comintern, in short, can be understood as an enormous fact-finding and policy-making operation run out of Moscow, structured largely by the shifting needs and interests of the Soviet leadership.

Thus histories of international communism are often organized around the important question of the extent to which "central authorities in Moscow" controlled "national communist parties."[10] The so-called traditionalists in this debate focus on local parties' subservience to Moscow. In this vein, some

[8] "Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World," *Communist International*, no. 1 (May 1919): 5–10. There is a vast literature on the institutional history of the Comintern. See for example, Aleksandr Vatlin, *Komintern: idei, resheniia, sud'by* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009); Norman LaPorte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley, eds., *Bolshevism, Stalinism, and the Comintern: Perspectives on Stalinization, 1917–53* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Carlos Díaz, *Tercera Internacional (Comunista): De la Revolución Rusa a la dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Fundación Emmanuel Mounier, 2003); A. O. Chubarin, ed., *Istoriia kommunisticheskogo internatsionala, 1919–1943: Dokumental'nye ocherki* (Moscow: Nauka, 2002); Tim Rees and Andrew Thorpe, eds., *International Communism and the Communist International, 1919–43* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Pierre Broué, *Histoire de l'Internationale communiste: 1919–1943* (Paris: Fayard, 1997); Kevin McDermott and Jeremy Agnew, *The Comintern: A History of International Communism from Lenin to Stalin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); E. H. Carr, *The Twilight of the Comintern* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Fernando Claudín, *The Communist Movement from Comintern to Cominform*, trans. Brian Pearce and Francis MacDonagh (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).

[9] An inventory of the Comintern archive was available at http://www.comintern-online.com/ (accessed 11 April 2013).

[10] McDermott and Agnew, *Comintern*, xx.

scholars of the British party emphasize the degree to which study at the International Lenin School, the Comintern's most prestigious institution devoted to training foreign communists, forged strong bonds between British communists and the Soviet regime – in some cases ties so close that British communists became Soviet spies.[11] So-called revisionists, by contrast, emphasize the social histories of local parties and the dynamism and at least partial autonomy of the communist grassroots.[12] From this perspective another study of British students at the Lenin School emphasizes the "limited and ephemeral" influence of the school and the "resilience" of "prior cultural formations" even in the face of "intense conditioning."[13]

Recent transnational and cultural studies of international communism have complicated this traditionalist-revisionist dichotomy. In an essay collection on *Bolshevism, Stalinism, and the Comintern*, editors Norman LaPorte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley propose expanding the "centre-periphery debate" via transnational comparisons of the extent to which the Soviets controlled a range of national parties.[14] Brigitte Studer and Heiko Haumann's multilingual collection on Stalinist subjects emphasizes that Soviet control was as much cultural and subjective as political.[15] In his contribution to a collection of essays on British communists, Kevin Morgan emphasizes the variety of communists' relationships with Moscow. He suggests that exploring the diversity and idiosyncrasy of communist biographies – paying attention to "personal centres" rather than institutional ones – offers a "possible route out of the recent impasse of the centre-periphery dichotomy" and what he calls the "fixation" on questions of control.[16]

[11] John McIlroy et al., "Forging the Faithful: The British at the International Lenin School," *Labour History Review* 68, no. 1 (April 2003): 99, 113; see also Harvey Klehr, John Earl Haynes, and Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov, *The Secret World of American Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 18; Ronald Radosh, Mary R. Habeck, and Grigory Sevostianov, eds., *Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), xviii; John McIlroy and Alan Campbell, "A Peripheral Vision: Communist Historiography in Britain," *American Communist History* 4, no. 2 (2005): 125–57.

[12] Fraser M. Orttanelli, *The Communist Party of the United States from the Depression to World War II* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 4; Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism at its Grassroots, 1928–35* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 296, 287.

[13] Gidon Cohen and Kevin Morgan, "Stalin's Sausage Machine: British Students at the International Lenin School, 1926–1937," *Twentieth Century British History* 13, no. 4 (2002): 330, 328–9.

[14] Norman LaPorte, Kevin Morgan, and Matthew Worley, "Introduction: Stalinization and Communist Historiography," in *Bolshevism, Stalinism and the Comintern*, 1–21.

[15] Brigitte Studer and Heiko Haumann, "Introduction," in Studer and Haumann, eds., *Stalinistische Subjekte: Indivduum und System in der Sowjetunion und der Komintern, 1929–1953* (Zurich: Chronos, 2006), 39–64.

[16] Kevin Morgan, "Parts of People and Communist Lives," in John McIlroy, Kevin Morgan, and Alan Campbell, eds., *Party People, Communist Lives: Explorations in Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2001), 23, 24.

Drawing on the cultural and biographical strands of this recent work, this book focuses on the everyday work of creating a transnational revolutionary network. Looking at sites of transnational exchange it emphasizes the complex webs of interaction, at once personal and political, that linked international communists not only to Moscow but also to one another. Part I (Chapters 1–2) focuses on Americans and Spaniards who studied and worked in Moscow in the 1930s and introduces several individuals whose trajectories I follow throughout the book. Places like the International Lenin School functioned as points of connection between center and periphery, sites of everyday interactions among communists, both international and Soviet. As they interacted in institutions structured by the "center," mobile communists from the "periphery" lived and made international communism, although never just as they pleased.

Part II (Chapters 3–5) follows to Spain a number of Lenin School alumni and others who worked or studied in the Soviet Union and explores the transnational contacts central to the experiences of so many who participated in the International Brigades. Initiated in Moscow and managed on a day-to-day basis largely by Western European communists, many of whom were trained in the Soviet Union, the International Brigades brought about thirty-five thousand volunteers to Spain: It constituted the largest and most ambitious, although ultimately unsuccessful, international operation orchestrated by the Comintern. I pay particular attention to the American volunteers in Spain (widely known as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade), who included large numbers of foreign-born or first-generation Americans and were thus a notably transnational and multilingual contingent.

Part III (Chapters 6–7) tracks the personal and institutional connections among those who participated in the Spanish war through World War II and the early years of the cold war. I focus on both Spanish exiles in the Soviet Union, who saw the Soviet war against Germany as an extension of "our war," and on American communists, who unlike many of their European comrades, had no later story of local resistance to Nazism to overshadow or compete with the (often mythologized) memory of the Spanish war. The book concludes with a discussion of the impact of the cold war and of de-Stalinization on international communists' connections to one another and the cause.

The Spanish Civil War and the Culture of International Communism

The conflict that came to be known as the Spanish civil war began as a military coup on 17–18 July 1936. Deeply rooted in the social, economic, and political upheavals that shook Spain in the early twentieth century and that in 1931 gave rise to the Spanish Republic, the insurgency aimed to halt change and to overturn Republican reforms that challenged the traditional authority of large landowners, the Catholic Church, and the army.[17] Initiated by

[17] For introductions to very different assessments of the origins of the war, see Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War, A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005),

soldiers in Spain's Army of Africa, the coup achieved rapid success in the Protectorate of Morocco. However, on the peninsula supporters of the Popular Front government that had been elected in February 1936 offered strong, if not always well-coordinated, resistance. Thus "despite the support of many officers, the uprising in Spain" was "largely unsuccessful," taking control of only about one-third of the country.[18] The situation initially seemed to favor the Republic.

What turned the attempted coup into a civil war and an international cause célèbre on the left was the provision of German and Italian military aid to the rebels. By the end of July, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler were dispatching weapons, planes, and troops to Spain. In August 1936 German and Italian planes ferried General Francisco Franco and some fourteen thousand Spanish and Moroccan troops across the Straits of Gibraltar to Spain. On the mainland the Army of Africa launched a ruthless campaign through western Andalusia and Extremadura to Madrid, employing the tactics that colonial officers had developed as a response to guerrilla warfare in the Rif: "sporadic, mobile warfare, executed on a number of fronts" coupled with "systematic ethnic cleansing as a means of ensuring order."[19] Ultimately, Italy contributed more than seventy thousand troops, and both Germany and Italy sent hundreds of artillery pieces, tanks, planes, and pilots, including the infamous German Condor Legion responsible for the April 1937 destruction of Guernica.[20] In August 1936, the French government, hoping to undercut aid to the insurgents, proposed a ban on all intervention in Spain that won the support of Britain and the Soviet Union, as well as of Italy and Germany, even as the latter two violated it.[21] Thus as the rebels built their forces, the nonintervention agreement denied arms to the Republic.

1–19, and Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5–81. Graham argues that the Republic's "failure was a quite specific one: It proved unable to prevent sectors of the officer corps from making a coup" and that it was the insurgents' "original act of violence" that "killed off the possibility of other forms of peaceful political evolution" (18); Payne argues that "political violence was initiated primarily by the left" (45) and that the insurgents acted only "when they judged that it literally would be more dangerous not to rebel than to rebel" (68).

[18] Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 271. See also María Rosa de Madariaga, "The Intervention of Moroccan Troops in the Spanish Civil War: A Reconsideration," *European History Quarterly* 22 (1992): 67, 78.

[19] Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 290–1, and more generally 286–96; Madariaga, "Intervention," 80; Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012).

[20] Michael Alpert, "The Clash of Spanish Armies: Contrasting Ways of War in Spain, 1936–1939," *War in History* 6, no. 3 (July 1999): 331–51; Robert H. Whealey, *Hitler and Spain: The Nazi Role in the Spanish Civil War* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989), 44–51; Brian R. Sullivan, "Fascist Italy's Military Involvement in the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Military History* 59, no. 4 (October 1995): 697–727.

[21] Michael Alpert, *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 40–64; Enrique Moradiellos, "The Allies and the Spanish Civil War," in Sebastian

Airlifted across the strait, the brutally effective Army of Africa saved the insurgency from defeat, while the arrival of German and Italian bombers and tanks firmly linked it to fascism and Nazism, not least of all in the Soviet media. Less than two weeks after the rebellion began, *Izvestiia* carried reports of German and Italian military aid to the rebels and, like Comintern propaganda, characterized the struggle in Spain as a link in the chain of international fascist aggression. A photo that ran in *Pravda* of a downed rebel airplane with a swastika on its tail made the connection between German fascism and the war in Spain unmistakable.[22] By contrast, the Soviet press emphasized that the Loyalist cause was the "cause of all advanced and progressive humanity" (*delo vsego peredovogo i progressivnogo chelovechestva*), as Stalin declared in a telegram to the Spanish communist leader José Díaz that appeared in the 16 October 1936 issue of *Pravda*.

From the beginning, this image of the Soviet Union as committed to defending democracy against fascism was both pervasive and contested. Soviet antifascism galvanized many international volunteers, but others saw it as a smokescreen. Among the earliest and certainly best-known critics of Soviet propaganda and actions in Spain was George Orwell, who in *Homage to Catalonia* documented his military service in Spain as a member of a militia affiliated with the POUM (Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista), an anti-Stalinist Marxist party. For Orwell, vociferous Soviet antifascism effectively obscured the fact that the "whole Comintern policy is now subordinated (excusably, considering the world situation) to the defense of the USSR." Concerned only about ensuring their own security via cooperation with France, the Soviets, he argued, were more interested in quashing the revolution in Spain than in winning the war.[23] On the other side, the rebels represented communists – Francoist shorthand for all who supported the Republic – as irredeemable infidels, foreign agents of Moscow against whom it was reasonable and necessary to employ "Nationalist" Moroccan troops and German bombs.[24]

The opening of the Soviet archives after 1991 has done little to resolve or substantially reframe debates on the sincerity of Soviet antifascism. Ronald Radosh, Mary R. Habeck, and Grigory Sevostianov, the editors of *Spain Betrayed*, a collection of Soviet military and Comintern documents published in English translation in 2001, argue that the newly accessible materials verify the "duplicitous maneuvers of the Soviet Union in the Spanish Republic."[25] Particularly controversial is their claim that the archives demonstrate that the

Balfour and Paul Preston, eds., *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1999), 105–7.

[22] On early coverage in *Izvestiia* of German and Italian intervention see David E. Allen, "The Soviet Union and the Spanish Civil War" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1952), 431. "Samolet fashistskikh miatezhnikov," *Pravda,* 29 August 1936; Mikhail Kol'tsov, "Germanskaia pomoshch' ispanskim miatezhnikam," *Pravda,* 31 August 1936.

[23] George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (1938; reprint, San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1980), 56.

[24] Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, 286.

[25] Radosh et al., *Spain Betrayed*, xxii.

real Soviet mission was not to save the Republic or combat fascism but rather "to 'Sovietize' Spain and to turn it into what would have been one of the first 'People's Republics,' with a Stalinist-style economy, army, and political structure."[26] From their perspective, the documents indisputably debunk the "compelling legend" that the Soviet effort to stop fascism in Spain constituted "one of the noblest and most selfless undertakings of the international communist movement."[27] They thus raise what historian Tony Judt called "the most delicate question" of whether "the International Brigades and their supporters were duped." Judt for one was ready to agree that the international volunteers "*were* duped," dismissing the communist rhetoric of antifascism and defense of democracy as a "fairy tale."[28]

For other historians, however, the claim that the newly opened archives clearly and incontrovertibly demolish the supposed "legend" of the Spanish civil war is itself a fairy tale. Historian Peter Carroll, best known for his work on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, argues that two recent document collections including *Spain Betrayed* willfully misuse historical evidence to replace the "honorable legend of the Lincoln Brigade" with "the myths of the Moscow archives."[29] Helen Graham, a prominent British historian of the war, characterizes *Spain Betrayed* as an exemplar of "the new historical McCarthyism."[30] She finds "nothing" in the documents presented to sustain the editors' assumption that "all Soviet actions in Spain were designed to achieve" – and in fact did achieve – "total control of the Republican government and army."[31] To make their case, she argues, the editors left "entirely out of account the broader picture of Republican Spain at war."[32] Historians attending to the "broader historical context" often understand the Soviets as opportunistic – but not necessarily insincere – antifascists: Providing military aid to the Republic served Soviet efforts to prevent "German aggression from turning eastward."[33] Historian Daniel Kowalsky notes that for its part the Republic accepted the Soviet aid only "grudgingly," recognizing that "Communist participation and assistance,

[26] Ibid., xxiii. See also Stanley Payne, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 137–8.
[27] Radosh et al., *Spain Betrayed*, xvi.
[28] Emphasis in original. Tony Judt, "Rehearsal for Evil," *New Republic* 225, no. 11 (10 September 2001): 33, 34.
[29] Carroll also reviews Klehr et al., *The Secret World of American Communism*; Peter Carroll, "The Myth of the Moscow Archives," *Science and Society* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 337, 338.
[30] Helen Graham, "Spain Betrayed? The New Historical McCarthyism," *Science and Society* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 364–9.
[31] Ibid., 366. Judt makes a similar point, "Rehearsal," 32.
[32] Graham, "Spain Betrayed?" 367.
[33] Ibid., 367, 365. See for example Ángel Viñas, *La soledad de la República: El abandono de los democracias y el viraje hacia la Unión Soviética* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2006), 282–3; Geoffrey Roberts, "Soviet Foreign Policy and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939," in Christain Leitz and David J. Dunthorn, eds., *Spain in an International Context, 1936–1959* (New York; Berghahn, 1999), 81–103.

which could not reasonably be refused, was as likely to doom the Loyalist cause as save it," by "completing its alienation from the West."[34] He also emphasizes that Soviet control of "events on the ground in Spain was always severely limited."[35] From this perspective, the argument that the Soviets were working effectively to transform Spain into a "people's democracy" on the (later) East European model seems at best "questionable."[36]

If the war in Spain is no longer, as Christopher Hitchens claimed in 2001, "probably the one argument from the age of twentieth-century ideology that is still alive," its historiography remains polarized, a high-stakes "take no prisoners" affair.[37] Thus it is worth emphasizing that this book puts the Spanish civil war at the center of a history of international communism in order to understand the importance of Spain as a personal and political point of reference for individual communists, not to argue that the Republic was dominated by communists.[38] The emphasis here is less on high politics than on understanding the meanings and political and emotional appeal of communism for individuals. Indeed the book does not intervene directly in the polemics over alleged Soviet manipulation or control of the Spanish Popular Front government and the international volunteers.[39] It does not assess Soviet motives or track the impacts of Soviet military and political intervention.[40]

[34] Daniel Kowalsky, "The Soviet Union and the International Brigades, 1936–1939," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 19 (2006): 681, 682.

[35] Ibid., 703.

[36] Mike Gonzalez, "Review of *Spain Betrayed*,"*European Legacy* 8, no. 5 (October 2003): 666. See also Ruth MacKay, "History on the Line: The Good Fight and Good History in the Spanish Civil War," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 70 (2010): 203.

[37] Christopher Hitchens, "Who Lost Spain?" *Wilson Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 106–7; Ichiro Takayoshi, "The Wages of War: Liberal Gullibility, Soviet Intervention, and the End of the Popular Front," *Representations* 115, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 106. See also George Esenwein, "The Persistence of Politics: The Impact of the Cold War on Anglo-American Writings on the Spanish Civil War," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal and Latin America* 91, no. 1–2 (2014): 115–35.

[38] The case for Soviet domination is made by Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Civil War: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Viñas, *Soledad*, challenges this interpretation. Daniel Kowalsky emphasizes the limits of communist control, "Operation X: Soviet Russia and the Spanish Civil War," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies: Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain, Portugal and Latin America* 91, no. 1–2 (2014): 174.

[39] On Spanish relations with the Comintern and Soviet Union, see Antonio Elorza and Marta Bizcarrondo, *Queridos camaradas: La Internacional Comunista y España, 1919–1939* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1999); M.T. Meshcheriakov, *Ispanskaia respublika i Komintern: Natsional'no-revoliutsionnaia voina ispanskogo naroda i politika kommunisticheskogo internatsionala, 1936–1939 gg.* (Moscow: Mysl', 1981); Denis Smyth, "'We Are with You': Solidarity and Self-Interest in Soviet Policy towards Republican Spain," in Paul Preston and Ann L. Mackenzie, eds., *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain, 1936–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 53–86.

[40] On Soviet intervention, see Kowalsky, "Operation X,"159–78; Ángel Viñas, *El escudo de la República: El oro de España, la apuesta soviética y los hechos de mayo de 1937* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2007); Daniel Kowalsky, *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War* [electronic resource]

Nor does it raise the "delicate question" of whether the volunteers were duped.[41]

The book links international communism to the Spanish civil war because so many communists reported, then and later, that in Spain they lived their ideals more intensely, passionately, and fully than they had anywhere else. Even for those who eventually left the party, the Spanish civil war often remained a defining moment of their own life stories and personal networks – something that they often separated (or tried to separate) from the larger Stalinist context. Thus the focus is on Spain as a critical, but not isolated, moment in the history of international communism and international communist lives.

To get at the role of Spain in communists' life histories and communist culture, the book sets the International Brigades in the context of the understandings, experiences, and identities that communists brought with them to Spain. It begins in Moscow with an examination of everyday life at the Lenin School and in the offices of the English-language *Moscow News*. In both places, remarkably transnational groups of communists worked to define and live lives of Bolshevik "virtue," not only in politics but also in the realms of gender and

(New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), http://www.gutenberg-e.org/kodo1/index.html (accessed 6 November 2014); Iurii E. Ribalkin, *Operatsiia "X": Sovetskaia voennaia pomoshch' respublikanskoi Ispanii (1936–1939)* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2000); Pierre, Broué, *Staline et la révolution: le cas espagnol* (Paris: Fayard, 1993); Juan García Durán, "La intervención soviética en la guerra civil," *Historia 16*, no. 103 (November 1984): 11–22; David Cattell, *Soviet Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

[41] For an introduction to the contentious historiography see George Esenwein, "Freedom Fighters or Comintern Soldiers? Writing about the 'Good Fight' during the Spanish Civil War," *Civil Wars* 12, no. 1–2 (March-June 2010): 156–66. Many accounts focus on particular national contingents: Michael Petrou, *Renegades: Canadians in the Spanish Civil War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008); Peter Carroll, *The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); John Gerassi, *The Premature Anti-Fascists: North American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939* (New York: Praeger 1986); Cecil Eby, *Between the Bullet and the Lie: American Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Rhinehart, 1969); Richard Baxell, *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War: The British Battalion in the International Brigades, 1936–1939* (London: Routledge 2004); James K. Hopkins, *Into the Heart of Fire: The British in the Spanish Civil War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998); R. A. Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1999); Hywel Francis, *Miners against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War* (London: Lawrence & Wishart 1984); Rémi Skoutelsky, *L'espoir guidait leurs pas: les volontaires française dans les Brigades internationales, 1936–1939* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1998). On the brigades as a whole, see Manuel Requena Gallego, ed., *Las Brigadas Internacionales* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2004); Ricardo de la Cierva, *Brigadas Internacionales, 1936–1996: La verdadera historia: Mentira histórica y error de Estado* (Madrid: Editorial Fénix, 1997); Michael Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows: The International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society 1994); Dan Richardson, *Comintern Army: The International Brigades and the Spanish Civil War* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press 1982); Verle Johnston, *Legions of Babel: The International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1967).