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# Travelling Journalists and Textual Migrations in Buenos Aires' *La Nueva España* Newspaper: María L. Carnelli and Raúl G. Tuñón, 1937

Geraldine Rogers<sup>1</sup>

Translated by Tim Gutteridge

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Newspapers and magazines in Buenos Aires covered the Spanish Civil War in some detail. Readers geographically far removed from the conflict followed events closely from across the Atlantic.<sup>2</sup> The immigrant background of many Argentines was one reason for such interest, but so too were the cultural ties and political affinities formed by the process that had begun with the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931.

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<sup>1</sup> Professor of Argentine Literature, Universidad Nacional de La Plata. Researcher, Universidad Nacional de La Plata (IdIHCS) and UNLP/CONICET, Argentina.

<sup>2</sup> Andrés Bisso, *El antifascismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: CeDInCI, 2007).

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The July 1936 coup interrupted the democratic course that had led to the victory of the Popular Front in the February elections, triggering a confrontation whose effects were felt across the globe: “News of the civil war shocked the whole of Argentina. The many pages dedicated to the conflict by Argentine newspapers are testimony to the scale of this shock, which would continue throughout the almost three years that the conflict lasted.”<sup>3</sup>

In August 1936, the first issue of the “official organ of the committee to support the Spanish Popular Front government,” *La Nueva España* [*The New Spain*], was published in Buenos Aires. It featured numerous writers from the daily newspaper *Crítica* [*Critique*] under the Communist editorship of Ricardo Setaro. Its news articles and chronicles by special envoys were vectors for the intercontinental transmission of texts and images. This was in part a reflection of the nature of reportage, based on putting journalists on the ground to provide access to experiences and information gathered *in situ*. The editorial practices of selecting, adapting and reusing material led to the migration of texts and images. This article considers a dual itinerance: the journey of the reporters and the migrations of the texts themselves.<sup>4</sup>

## *La Nueva España*

One protagonist of this period, Fanny Edelman, recorded the intense collective labor at the paper in a time of political persecution:

Early 1936 saw the appearance of the weekly paper, *La Voz de España* [*The Voice of Spain*], which would subsequently be renamed *La Nueva España*. Its administrator was comrade Renato Arnould, secretary of the public entertainment workers union, who had just been released by the sinister anti-communism police unit [...]. In our talks with Renato [...] we recalled the work of the entire newspaper team, whose director, Ricardo Setaro, was one

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<sup>3</sup> Niall Binns, *Argentina y la guerra civil española. La voz de los intelectuales* (Madrid: Calambur, 2012), 23.

<sup>4</sup> *La Nueva España* is not available in digital form. The newspaper collection at the National Library of Argentina does not hold every issue, while some of the copies at the library are not available for consultation due to their poor state of conservation. This work was completed under restrictions due to the Covid19 pandemic, based on a partial archive assembled in 2019.

of the brilliant journalists at *Crítica*, whose pages were at the service of the Spanish Republic [...]. *La Nueva España* was always published under difficult conditions, but the solidarity effort was such that it overcame all the problems arising from the precarious legal situation at the time. Musical shows, bicycle races, and football matches with the best players of the time were held to support the Spanish Republic. The island of Los Pinos on the Carapachay River became a permanent destination for picnics attended by thousands of workers, which raised funds to support the paper. *La Nueva España*, initially weekly and later fortnightly, reached a circulation of 60,000 copies, and played a key role in the solidarity movement [...] Dozens of events were held at Luna Park with well-known performers such as Fernando Ochoa and Libertad Lamarque. The newspaper organized a movie program which took Republican films all over the country.<sup>5</sup>



Image 1. Cover of *La Nueva España*, 1937

<sup>5</sup> Fanny Edelmann, *Banderas, pasiones, camaradas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Dirple, 1996), 43-44.

The publication raised the profile of the international struggle against fascism and the local solidarity movement. It provided written accounts of events in Spain, circulated ideas and opinions, described forms of organization, and promoted collaboration with the Republican cause.<sup>6</sup> It described the stage and populated it with voices from different spheres of the political arena and from the battlefield itself. It showed images of the combatants, naming them and presenting their ‘direct’ speech in its reports. Its correspondents, like those of so many other newspapers of the time, played a leading role in documenting the war from the battlefield, at times exposing themselves to great personal risk. The 1930s saw a rise in reportage, a hybrid genre combining biography, interviews, travel writing, factual reports, fiction, anecdotes and news. Its attraction and impact derived from sending correspondents to gather news and experiences and the texts in which these were then presented.<sup>7</sup> The inclusion of diverse voices and realism were characteristic features of the genre, typically combined with a range of creative practices that could even extend to inventing trips. A well-known case is that of Alberto Casal Castel who, from his desk in Buenos Aires, filed pseudonymous war reports supposedly dispatched from Gibraltar for the newspaper *El Mundo* [*The World*]. *La Nueva España* exposed the fraud in a cartoon set in the newsroom of “*El Globito* [*The Small Globe*], doyen of the country’s serious press”:

THE DIRECTOR: Send this article back to our special correspondent in Malaga. Tell him to send another one with more descriptions of atrocities committed by the militias.

EMPLOYEE: Where can I find him?

THE DIRECTOR: He’s upstairs.

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<sup>6</sup> “*La Nueva España* also produced a series of books on national revolutionary war, as did other publishers. Print runs of 5,000 to 10,000 copies sold out easily and there was no anti-fascist home without a bust of the Pasionaria and another of General Miaja, produced and distributed by FOLARE, along with badges, posters and other propaganda items to raise funds.” Edelmann, *Banderas, pasiones, camaradas*, 48-49.

<sup>7</sup> In 1934 the Académie Française defined reportage both as the “action of gathering news” and “the article where this news is reported.” Myriam Boucharenc, *L’écrivain-reporter au cœur des années trente* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2004), 71.

These faked chronicles – the products of invention and editorial montage – contrasted with accounts by *La Nueva España* correspondents on the ground, who gradually acquired the status of heroes and adventurers. In direct contact with the theater of war, they gave discursive form to their experiences, combining documentary resources and fictional procedures to bring audiences in Argentina scenes and voices from distant Spain.

The new approach migrated words and images: alongside reports by its “special correspondents,” *La Nueva España* reprinted excerpts from letters, public speeches and items from Madrid newspapers, creating a new montage to promote their reception in a different context. The network of personal, intellectual and political relationships and the system of anti-fascist and communist publications of which the paper was a part promoted the exchange of resources across national borders. Writers and journalists worked towards the same goals and it was not uncommon for their texts to reappear in different places, modified accordingly. At the same time, editorial practices also generated connections and movement, expanding and transforming the information available. The press cutting as a modern object activated processes of the material circulation and globalization of culture.<sup>8</sup>

In 1937, *La Nueva España* published contributions from two correspondents in Spain, María Luisa Carnelli and Raúl González Tuñón.<sup>9</sup> The paper stressed the value of these sections and gave pride of place to their author images, foregrounding their crucial role as agents providing access to distant events and experiences, through texts that migrated between the private and public spheres, orality and the written word, and across the Atlantic.

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<sup>8</sup> Antonia Viu, *Materialidades de lo impreso. Revistas latinoamericanas 1910–1950* (Santiago de Chile: Metales pesados, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Geraldine Rogers, *Raúl G. Tuñón, poesía y reportaje* (Mérida: UNAM, 2020).

## Raúl González Tuñón: The Route of Courage

On 1 April 1937, the paper published the second in a series of exclusive reports for *La Nueva España* by the well-known Argentine poet-reporter Raúl G. Tuñón, whose picture appeared in a box with the simple word, “Escribe” [Writes], over a text written in Port Bou twenty days earlier. A full-length photograph of Tuñón was used in another piece to the right on the same page, showing him in the company of two other men. It was captioned “The commander of the ‘Battalion of Death’, Cándido Testa, accompanied by our special correspondent in Spain, Raúl González Tuñón, and the special correspondent for *Crítica*, Córdova Iturburu, in front of one of the barracks in Barcelona.”



Image 2. *La Nueva España*, 1 April 1937

Raúl G. Tuñón had left Buenos Aires in mid-February 1937 on board the steamship Florida with his fellow journalist Cayetano Córdova Iturburu, both also traveling as delegates to the Second Congress of Writers in Defense of Culture, to be held in Valencia, Madrid and Paris. Upon reaching Catalonia, he wrote from Port Bou: “Suddenly there is

light, more light, it is morning. We are on the other side, in the other world, Spain.”<sup>10</sup> It was his third visit to the country: he would remain there until late August, experiencing “one of the most intense and interesting stages of my life and one of the most important and decisive in the history of the world.”<sup>11</sup> He spent six months traveling to report on events ignored or misrepresented in the mainstream press. He wrote to his partner Amparo Mom back in Buenos Aires, “In Valencia I am going to write lots of pieces for *La Nueva España* and two or three reportages for *El Diario* [*The Daily*] [...] both Córdova [Iturburu] and I will gather more than enough material to organize intensive propaganda to counter the fascist lies.”<sup>12</sup> Throughout this visit, he shared experiences with other correspondents, including his fellow Argentine María Luisa Carnelli, who lived in Spain and wrote for several Communist publications.

On 21 March, *La Nueva España* in Buenos Aires launched a special section that within a few days was renamed *La ruta del coraje* [*The Route of Courage*]. The illustrated header showed a battlefield strewn with barbed wire. On the left was a group of people under attack from tanks or airplanes, advancing from the right toward the victims. To the left, the photo of the poet-reporter was set in a box, his name superimposed on the illustration in large type, as if he were observing events while also looking straight at the reader. *La ruta del coraje* was published for three months, along with other texts signed

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<sup>10</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, “Besar el suelo,” “La ruta del coraje” series, *La Nueva España* (hereafter *LNE*), March 11, 1937.

<sup>11</sup> In Horacio Salas, *Conversaciones con Raúl González Tuñón* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Bastilla, 1975), 118. Tuñón also declared: “We traveled together, Córdova Iturburu, as *Crítica* correspondent, Captain Frontera, who was going to join the International Brigades, and me as correspondent for the Republican newspaper *La Nueva España* [...]. It was a dramatic new experience. Córdova Iturburu wrote the most intense pages. Together, we visited the rearguard of the Jarama and Utrera fronts. At Jarama we met Gustavo Durán, the musician who had been part of Federico’s [i.e. Federico García Lorca’s] crowd and was now head of the brigade that bore his name. Córdova also visited other fronts and witnessed the battle of Brunete, where our friend, the photographer Gerda Taró, died.” In Salas, *Conversaciones*, 106-107.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Tuñón to Amparo Mom dated “Valencia, Monday 29,” in Pedro Orgambide, *El hombre de la rosa blindada. Vida y poesía de Raúl González Tuñón* (Buenos Aires: Ameghino, 1998), 241. In dialogue with Salas (*Conversaciones*, 112), he recalled: “At the time, I sent reports to Buenos Aires and one day I complained because, lacking a typewriter, I had to go and type up my articles at the *La Nación* agency, and their correspondent, Ortiz Echagüe, didn’t approve of me. Gabriela [Mistral] had arranged to meet me in la Closerie [des Lilas] and the next afternoon I saw her arriving, in the drizzle, with her mane of hair like an Araucanian *cacique*, as Amparo Mom used to say, carrying a typewriter she’d brought me as a present.”

by the author that were not part of the series.<sup>13</sup> The first installment – “Raúl González Tuñón writes from Barcelona”<sup>14</sup> – was in fact a private letter that the Buenos Aires paper published as a taster of the reports to come:

It is exactly a month since the poet Raúl González Tuñón departed for Spain, invited by the Alliance of Anti-fascist Intellectuals of Valencia. The popular author of *La rosa blindada* [*The Armored Rose*] has just reached Barcelona. From there he sent by airmail a letter to one of our editors that was so interesting, so free of the artifice that is sometimes found in journalistic accounts, so brimming with sincerity, that we have been unable to resist the temptation to publish it, for the information of our readers about what is happening in Spain. The letter reads:

“Dear friend,

It is impossible to express what I am feeling and experiencing in words. This is incredible, extraordinary, marvelous. A people resisting the onslaught of international fascism [...]. I’m in Barcelona, a great city – the heroic city of the assault on the barracks and the Hotel Colón in July – a great city in a country that is at war against fascism, and I have confirmed what I already knew: absolute normality, serenity, true social justice, regular public services, enthusiasm, bravery, trust, belief in victory and a tireless struggle to overcome everything. We arrived from Port Bou – you’ll see more details in my reports, in the reports I’ll send from Valencia [...] tomorrow or the day after we’ll talk on the radio for Spain and America. [...] I’m gathering great material for a book, which I’ll publish on my return, for revolutionary poems and for reports for *El Diario* and *La Nueva España*. [...] My friend, talk to all your friends, to get them fired up to work for Spain and her cause, to support the

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<sup>13</sup> See Jesús Cano Reyes, *La imaginación incendiada. Corresponsales hispanoamericanos en la Guerra Civil Española* (Barcelona: Calambur, 2017); *id.*, “Fiebre y épica: Raúl González Tuñón, corresponsal de la Guerra Civil Española,” *Anales de literatura Hispanoamericana* 46 (2017), 239–260. The following is a (probably incomplete) list of the texts published by Tuñón that were not part of this series: “Con España y contra el fascismo. La actitud fascista-clerical argentina ante la insurrección de los asesinos del Tercio” (22 August 1936); “Fusilado por inteligente” (2 January 1937); “Domingo Ferreiro” (poem, 7 January 1937); “Dos poemas de Raúl González Tuñón. La catedral. Para cantar durante la tregua” (14 January 1937); “España y el partido del miedo” (21 January 1937); “Carta a la juventud de Madrid” (1 May 1937).

<sup>14</sup> The sub-heading was “La victoria es un hecho, porque nunca, nunca jamás podrá triunfar el fascismo en España” [“Victory is a Fact Because Fascism Can Never Ever Triumph in Spain”], *LNE*, 21 March 1937.

work of the Relief Committees and *La Nueva España*. Nothing we do is enough, whatever we do is not enough. I'm proud of my Spanish race. See you soon!"

The report was based on a letter from Tuñón to his partner, Amparo Mom, whose name was changed in the report (perhaps by Amparo herself) to make her less identifiable. The original text also included a less indulgent opinion of the paper and its director:

Amparito, My friend, talk to all your friends, to get them fired up to work for Spain and her cause, to organize the Hispano-American Committee, try to get better people on the relief committees and above all *La Nueva España*. Setaro should try to improve it, etc., etc. Nothing we do is enough, whatever we do is not enough. My darling, I send a thousand hugs, I'm proud of my Spanish race. See you soon! Raúl.<sup>15</sup>

The eighth installment, "In Madrid," dated 6 April, was published without the series title but with the same illustrated heading. Again, the report offered readers a text written "without a view to publication":

Raúl González Tuñón is in Madrid. Without time to compile a report, in the feverish atmosphere of wartime, he has still communicated with us and sent, by way of friendship and information, a few hurried lines that it would be wrong of us not to publish. We stress, with this letter, the authenticity of thoughts set down without a view to publication, which will allow the readers of *La Nueva España* to obtain some impression of how the true capital of the Spanish Republic vibrates with energy.

Comrade: I am writing from the house of the Alliance of Anti-fascist Intellectuals, where we are living with Manuel Altolaguirre and Córdova Iturburu. Manolito has come to spend a few days with us. Arturo is traveling, but we will see him tomorrow or the day after. I don't know how to describe what I am experiencing.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Letter from Raúl González Tuñón to Amparo Mom, Barcelona, 12 March, 1937, reproduced by Germán Ferrari, *Raúl González Tuñón periodista* (Buenos Aires: Centro Cultural de la Cooperación Floreal Gorini, 2006), 72. See also Leda Schiavo, "Raúl González Tuñón, caminador por España en guerra," in *Historia Crítica de la literatura argentina 7, Rupturas*, ed. Celina Manzoni (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2009), 444.

<sup>16</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, "En Madrid," "La Ruta del coraje" series, *LNE*, 18 April 1937.

This time, the report included excerpts from correspondence dated Madrid 6 April, sent by the author to his partner, whose name was changed to “comrade” in the published version. The letter, with a few differences, said:

My darling Amparito: I am writing from the house of the Alliance, where we are living with Manolito Altolaguirre – Policho and me. Manolito has come to spend a few days with us. Arturo is traveling, but we will see him tomorrow or the day after. I don’t know how to describe what I am experiencing.<sup>17</sup>

Amparo Mom, herself an editor and Communist sympathizer, acted as intermediary between *La Nueva España* and Tuñón, who left an explicit record of this collaboration:

I’ve written you lots of letters with reports from Valencia and Madrid. I’m including this one, which I’ve corrected, because Alberti asked me for it for *El Mono Azul*. Instead of the other one that I sent earlier, give this one to *La Nueva España*. I’ll send you another letter from Valencia with photographs of our visits to the front, cuttings from *Ahora* and *Ayuda* with our reports and poems. We’ll make a new edition of *Mono Azul*.<sup>18</sup>

Another excerpt, published as “Madrid (3)” in *La ruta del coraje* of 25 April, appears to recycle another letter to Amparo, whose name is retained in the newspaper text on this occasion:

Darkness is falling when we arrive. Canillejas. A few kilometers further and we reach Ventas with its masses and its bullring. I’m in Madrid. Do you remember, Amparito? This is where we lived with our friends. Here, we discovered the beauty of the world together. Today, Madrid is the capital of the world. How beautiful she is!<sup>19</sup>

Jesús Cano Reyes notes the heterogeneous character of this material, where “the forms typical of journalism sit side by side with letters, poems and other heterodox writing that is more difficult to classify. Private letters are published as reports and reports

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<sup>17</sup> Letter to Amparo Mom dated Madrid, 6 April, in Orgambide, *El hombre de la rosa blindada*, 242.

<sup>18</sup> Letter to Amparo Mom dated Monday 19 April, Madrid, in Orgambide, *El hombre de la rosa blindada*, 245.

<sup>19</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, “Madrid (3),” “La ruta del coraje” series, *LNE*, 25 April 1937.

incorporate features of private correspondence. The verses and poetic prose are interspersed quite naturally with the narrative pieces.”<sup>20</sup> The hybrid effect of combining different forms and textures is a feature of the modern press that had permeated Tuñón’s prose and verse since the 1920s, intensifying over the following decade. The practice of recycling, which was frequent in newspapers and magazines, was also applied in the books *El otro lado de la Estrella* [*The Other Side of the Star*] (1934),<sup>21</sup> *Las puertas del fuego. Documentos de la guerra de España* [*The Doors of Fire. Documents of the War in Spain*] (1938), and *La muerte en Madrid* [*Death in Madrid*] (1939), all of which included fragments that had already appeared in other places.<sup>22</sup>

*La Nueva España* also included material that had previously appeared in newspapers published in the Spanish capital. “Carta a la juventud de Madrid” [“Letter to the Youth of Madrid”], published on 1 May 1937 in Buenos Aires, was an exact copy of Tuñón’s text printed a few days earlier, illustrated and with the title “Entusiasmo y fuego” [“Enthusiasm and Fire”], in *Ahora. Diario de la Juventud* [*Now. Youth Daily*].<sup>23</sup> The combined letter and chronicle expressed certainty in the triumph over fascism, due to the virtues of the Spanish people and the discipline of an army that had recently come under Communist command. The struggle should also be won in Argentina, where reactionary minorities supported “the bloodthirsty puppets of Burgos” while hundreds of relief committees demonstrated the South American solidarity with the Spanish Republic, as they did in Uruguay, Chile and Brazil.

“Cuando los soldados cantan” [“When the Soldiers Sing”], printed in *La ruta del coraje* on 13 May, was an almost exact copy of the report of the same title published two weeks earlier with the sub-heading “(Visita al sector del Jarama)” [“(Visit to the Jarama

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<sup>20</sup> Cano Reyes, *La imaginación incendiada*, 296.

<sup>21</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, *El otro lado de la estrella. Historia de trotacamino. Relatos, poesía de cuento* (Montevideo and Buenos Aires: Sociedad Amigos del Libro Rioplatense, 1934).

<sup>22</sup> The last two books were republished together in Raúl González Tuñón, *La muerte en Madrid. Las puertas del fuego. 8 documentos de hoy* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, “Entusiasmo y fuego,” *Ahora. Diario de la Juventud*, 25 April 1937.

Sector)”.<sup>24</sup> In this report, which Tuñón would further adapt the following year for his book *Las puertas del fuego*, he narrates his transfer to the front line, his experience among the militiamen, and his fear on the battlefield: “I throw myself onto the stones. Down there, the automobile is waiting for us. The road, which we have already traveled, seems different. To the ground once again. And this time I start to worry. The bullets have passed over our heads, have struck next to us. To the ground again. We continue walking in the midst of the roar.” The version published in Buenos Aires left out just one phrase – “a weeping willow by way of a backcloth (because landscapes sometimes need a bit of sentimental literature)” – and removed the Madrid version’s illustrations by the graphic artist Ramón Peinador Checa, who produced numerous wartime posters and illustrations for Republican newspapers.

Two further reports in the series printed excerpts from radio speeches. On 1 April, the paper published a written version of Tuñón’s radio piece “To the Catalans of Argentina (On the Association radio station, on the evening of 15 March)”<sup>25</sup> urging Catalans to take up activism in support of the Republican cause. The next report, on 4 April, included the speech “We too are Spain (Words before the microphone of the Generalitat of Catalonia, 15 March),”<sup>26</sup> addressed to the Republican people in the name of the Association of Anti-fascist Intellectuals of Argentina. During these months, various correspondents took part in Youth Front radio programs, designed to help establish a reliable information network about the war and the Spanish Revolution. One of the programs published in *Ahora* included activities over several days, with the participation of María Teresa León, Rafael Alberti, Gregorio Bermann, Córdova Iturburu, Raúl González Tuñón (who was to recite several of his poems) and María Luisa Carnelli, the “well-known writer and journalist, who will talk about ‘the youth in the shock brigades’ on Radio E.A.R.

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<sup>24</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, “Cuando los soldados cantan. (Visita al sector del Jarama),” *Ahora. Diario de la Juventud*, 1 May 1937.

<sup>25</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, “A los catalanes de la Argentina (Por la radio de la Asociación en la noche del 15 de Marzo),” “La ruta del coraje” series, *LNE*, 1 April 1937.

<sup>26</sup> Raúl González Tuñón, “También nosotros somos España (Palabras ante el micrófono de la Generalidad de Cataluña, el 15 de marzo),” “La ruta del coraje” series, *LNE*, 4 April 1937.

wavelength 31.68, 20 Kw, “La voz de España,” broadcast on Mondays and Saturdays between 2 and 2.15 a.m. (10 and 10.15 p.m. in South America).”<sup>27</sup>

On Thursday 13 May, *La Nueva España's* front page featured a close-up image of its two war correspondents at the front: “The correspondents of *La Nueva España* at the Madrid front, comrades María Luisa Carnelli and Raúl González Tuñón, are shown in this photo close to one of the central fronts, watching a new battalion marching up to the front line” (Image 3).



Image 3. M. L. Carnelli and R. G. Tuñón on the cover of *La Nueva España* (top left corner), 13 May 1937.



Image 4. Detail of image 3.

<sup>27</sup> “El Frente de la Juventud organiza transmisiones por radio a Sudamérica,” *Ahora. Diario de la Juventud*, 29 April 1937.

For several months, Tuñón's itinerary coincided with Carnelli's. The pair shared emotional ties<sup>28</sup> and political convictions and worked for the same publications in the anti-fascist struggle.

## María Luisa Carnelli, Reporter

María Luisa Carnelli was almost completely overlooked as a historical figure for the best part of a century. Recent work has begun to recover her achievements as a poet, writer of tango lyrics, and storyteller.<sup>29</sup> One neglected aspect of her career is her work as a journalist in Spain between 1935 and 1938, when she witnessed the interruption of a proletarian revolution, the electoral victory of the left, and the coup d'état of July 1936 that led to the outbreak of civil war.

These years saw Carnelli undergo a personal transformation shaped by three major factors: her involvement in the Communist Party, the transatlantic trip that took her away from her home country and placed her in the midst of social upheaval, and her work as a journalist. As a result, she explicitly set aside those aspects typically assigned to female writers, such as interiority, dissatisfaction, and doubt, and identified with qualities usually attributed to the male sphere. She published a book, *U.H.P. Mineros de Asturias [Unite Proletarian Brothers. Miners of Asturias]* (1936), based on her coverage of the 1934 revolution and its subsequent repression.

In the international context of the anti-fascist struggle, women became visible as political subjects, participating directly in events. The Popular Front policy, adopted in 1935 as a strategy of forming alliances between Communists, sectors of the left and progressives to halt the advance of fascism in Europe, gave rise to forms of organization

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<sup>28</sup> Nicolás Olivari, a friend of Raúl G. Tuñón, dedicated the poetry collection *El gato escaldado* (1929) to Raúl's older brother and to Carnelli: "To Enrique González Tuñón, to María Luisa Carnelli, the best, the most faithful, the most loyal."

<sup>29</sup> Tania Diz, "Transgresión y revolución en María Luisa Carnelli," in *¡Quiero trabajo!*, María Luisa Carnelli (Villa María: Eduvim, 2018); Florencia Abbate, "María Luisa Carnelli. Una pionera en la estela de los años 20," *Hispanamérica* 141 (2018), 3–14; *id.*, "María Luisa Carnelli: La primera letrista de tango-canción," *El jardín de los poetas. Revista de teoría y crítica de poesía latinoamericana*, 8 (2019), 19–43.

in which women played a leading role. In Argentina, the Agrupación Femenina Comunista [Communist Women's Grouping] counted Alfonsina Storni, Berta Singerman, Nydia Lamarque and María Luisa Carnelli among its members.<sup>30</sup> This situation encouraged female writers seeking to gain access to spaces traditionally reserved for men and questioning exclusionary practices and discourses. The struggle for professionalization and the shift from the intimate, subjective domestic sphere to the public domain were key elements in this process.<sup>31</sup>

In radical journalism, Carnelli found a space where she could show her texts, her image and her name, like a woman who was sure of herself and of her political convictions. Newspapers and magazines enabled her to build her profile as a reporter and as a woman of courage, capable of taking risks on behalf of a collective cause. The subordination entailed by her commitment to anti-fascist militancy, observing the lines established in advance by the Communist Party, appears to have allowed her to affirm herself publicly and to demand equal treatment with men.

In mid-April 1937, *La Nueva España* published a note by Carnelli titled "Episodios de la guerra Española" ["Episodes from the Spanish War"] in the section "Film de la guerra" ["War Film"], with a picture of her and an introduction that announced further contributions to a column that was shared between numerous writers:

Today, we launch a series of articles on a range of aspects of the struggle against fascism, dispatched to us by our contributor María Luisa Carnelli, currently resident in Spain. The author of *Mineros de Asturias* has followed the course of the struggle, from a position of danger, since the very first moment hostilities began.<sup>32</sup>

*Miners of Asturias*, published the previous year, was a guarantee of her expertise as a chronicler. This was a role she performed in various Spanish publications, where her

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<sup>30</sup> Adriana Valobra, "Formación de cuadros y frentes populares: Relaciones de clase y género en el Partido Comunista de Argentina, 1935–1951," *Izquierdas* 23 (2015), 127–156.

<sup>31</sup> Paula Bertúa, "'Si me quieres escribir...' Mujeres en la prensa cultural antifascista (Argentina, 1930–1940)," *Arenal* 22 (2015), 5–30.

<sup>32</sup> Carnelli, María Luisa. "Episodios de la guerra Española," "Film de la guerra" section, *LNE*, 15 April 1937.

signature and her image were a considerable draw. Until September 1938, when she returned to Buenos Aires, Carnelli acted as a war reporter for Communist publications that played a major role in the struggle against fascism, including *Ahora* and *El Sol* [*The Sun*] in Madrid and *La Nueva España* in Buenos Aires. She wrote a genre of journalism, reportage, that was fundamentally men's business.<sup>33</sup> Female journalists were a tiny minority of the profession and in general were confined to the "women's pages." The role of reporter meant she could escape those spheres that were conventionally assigned to women and instead appear in uncomfortable or risky settings, putting her body and soul into the mission of collecting testimonies on the battlefield and transmitting the experience and the voices of the combatants.

In her chronicles, Carnelli appears as a woman of courage, assuming one of the virtues transmitted by anti-fascist culture in the print matter that circulated during the civil war. The values of those who fought in the trenches were extended to journalists close to the lines of combat, and upheld by one of them, Córdova Iturburu, in an article about the death of Gerda Taro, "the little *Ce Soir* [*Tonight*] photographer, the daring friend of the Spanish soldiers" who "had not gone to the front to evade danger but to document the war to serve our cause. And had stayed in her post."<sup>34</sup>

Carnelli includes herself in the experiences she reports.<sup>35</sup> The reportage genre encouraged journalists in general to refer to their own experiences in their articles, but in Carnelli's case, her ideological commitment also led her to report on events and give voice to the protagonists as a member of the anti-fascist movement.

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<sup>33</sup> Marie-Ève Thérenty, "Maryse Chisy chez les filles: sur le reportage d' immersion," *Médias* 19 (2014).

<sup>34</sup> Cayetano Córdova Iturburu, "Adiós a Gerda Taro," *Unidad. Por la defensa de la cultura*, II, no. 2, September 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Based on a partial selection of Carnelli's texts for *La Nueva España*: "Episodios de la guerra española" (15 April 1937), "El pueblo español quiere y debe ser libre" (18 April 1937), "Madrid" (22 April 1937), "Qué nadie hable de armisticios" (25 April 1937), "Aspectos de la lucha contra el fascismo" (2 May 1937), "Los antitanquistas" (6 June 1937), "Comisarios: alma y nervio del ejército popular" (17 June 1937).



Image 5. *La Nueva España*, Buenos Aires, 6 June 1937.

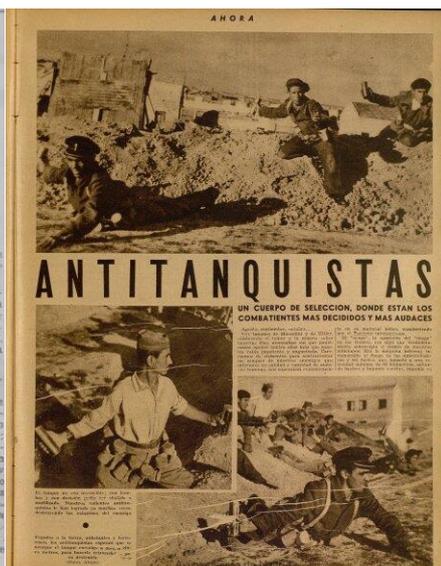


Image 6. *Ahora. Diario de la Juventud*, Madrid, 23 April 1937.

On 6 June 1937, in the “Film de la guerra” section, *La Nueva España* published “Los antitanquistas” [“The Anti-Tankists”], written from the first-person plural perspective of fighters repelling Mussolini and Hitler's advancing war machine. The report, a tribute to the bravest militia fighters who risked their lives by coming to within a few meters of the tanks, was taken from “Antitanquistas,”<sup>36</sup> published two months previously in *Ahora*. Some changes were made to the layout. In *Ahora*, the piece was illustrated by large close-up photographs of the fighters in action, their extreme heroism – hurling munitions at tanks to force them to retreat – stressed in a sub-heading omitted by *La Nueva España*: “a select corps, containing the bravest and most determined fighters.”

Days before this report appeared in *La Nueva España*, *Ahora* published another piece by Carnelli, illustrated with a photograph captioned “The commander of the sub-sector, Division Commissar Daniel Pool Gómez and the writers and journalists M. L. Carnelli and R. González Tuñón” (Image 7). The piece reported on a front-line visit by the two Argentine reporters: “Accompanied by Major Rodríguez and by Argentine poet and writer, Raúl González Tuñón, we leave the broken line of the trenches in single file. A magnificent spectacle awaits us. The second battalion of Andalusians of the 36th Brigade

<sup>36</sup> “Antitanquistas,” *Ahora. Diario de la juventud*, 23 April 1937.

has just received new equipment [...]. Good health to the young peasants of the South who are fighting here, in Madrid, to reconquer their beloved land...!"<sup>37</sup> Weeks later, another photograph of both reporters illustrated the cover of *La Nueva España* "in a location close to one of the central fronts, watching a new battalion marching up to the front line"<sup>38</sup> (see above, image 4).



Image 7. María Luisa Carnelli and Raúl G. Tuñón, *Ahora. Diario de la juventud*. Madrid, 18 April 1937.

*La Nueva España* described the anti-fascist struggle and those who took part in it, reserving a special place for the correspondents who helped make the magazine a vector for the transatlantic transfer of texts and images. This reportage had a dual dimension, involving both the journey of the reporters and the presentation of the material they gathered, and was aimed at readers who wanted to keep abreast of events in Spain and to learn about the forms of local solidarity with the anti-fascist struggle and its impact. As a heterogeneous genre, it drew on a wide range of procedures and textures which combined both documentary and fiction within its reports.

*La Nueva España* was produced on a shoestring and to the tightest of deadlines. While press cuttings and recycling were common practice in print culture in general, the network of anti-fascist and Communist publications promoted the exchange of resources between sympathetic newspapers, based on professional, political, and intellectual ties

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<sup>37</sup> "Primera línea," *Ahora. Diario de la juventud*, 18 April 1937.

<sup>38</sup> "Corresponsales de guerra," *LNE*, 13 May 1937.

between their contributors. The practices of selection, montage and republication were the cause of both material and symbolic journeys. The journey of the correspondents and the mobility of textual forms led in turn to a dynamic circulation of words and images, favoring their reception in Argentina. These twin strands of itinerancy provided local access to fragments of a shared international reality.

Studying the materiality of print culture allows us to observe the way in which certain elements were assembled within a time frame that reflected the practices of which they formed a part.<sup>39</sup> Thinking about texts (*texere*) on the mobile frames on which they were composed and recomposed is to think of them as textiles, dynamically and variably interwoven.<sup>40</sup> This perspective illuminates the processes of transmission, which are always collective, and enables us to read meanings at the intersection between the cultural and historical contexts which gave rise to the graphic and discursive practices and devices that organized and reorganized the ways people wrote and read.

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<sup>39</sup> Antonia Viu, *Materialidades de lo impreso*.

<sup>40</sup> Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).