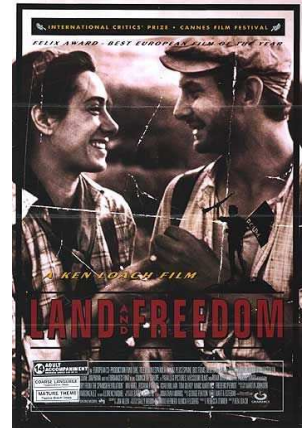


Land and Freedom

Director: Ken Loach
1995 (109')



David, a young, unemployed man from Liverpool believes he can do something worthwhile by going to Spain and fighting for the land-working population in their struggle against Franco's military dictatorship which has usurped the power of the democratically elected Socialist government. Unable to get international support for their struggle against the Fascist dictatorship which is supported by Hitler and Mussolini and even tacitly by the British government, many men, like David, make the secret crossing into Spain – Americans, Irish, Italians, French, Germans – young idealists all willing to fight for the cause. Together with Spanish workers, they form a Republican militia unit and set about liberating towns in the Aragon region from Fascist control. But more than that, the militia and the people want revolution – to impose the communist ideal, collectivising land, improving productivity and sharing it with those fighting for the Republican cause. "Loach's film is amongst the finest films of the decade" The Observer

THE FORGOTTEN WAR, REMEMBERED.

By Eugene W. Plawiuk



The Spanish Civil War, was not only a battle against fascism, but a social revolution. It involved all of Europe and the political forces of the left and the right, in the struggle to defend socialism and democracy from the forces of reaction.

In 1931 Spain had held its first ever democratic elections, after King Alfonso abdicated, which a united front of socialists, and liberals won. The government declared Spain a Republic bringing an end 300 years of feudalistic rule by the aristocracy and the Catholic church. The republic declared itself in favour of land reform, breaking up the big haciendas and for union recognition for workers.

In 1936 with the support of Hitler, Mussolini and the Catholic Church the right wing in Spain led a counter revolution against the Republican government. They used the army under General Franco to attack the government. Civil War was declared, and the call: NO PASARAN! (they shall not pass), went out around the world for workers to defend the Republic.

England and France refused to supply the Republican side, though they knew that Franco was getting all out support from Germany and Italy. Rather they blockaded Spain's ports. This in turn forced the Republican Government in Madrid to turn to Stalin and Russia for support.

The anarchists and members of POUM saw the Civil War as a chance at creating a social revolution. The war was seen as a defense of the communes and factory occupations that were going on in Northern Spain. Communist party commissars and military advisors from Moscow, seized control of the army and attacked the anarchists and POUMists.

Vocabulary and Expressions :

POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*): The **Workers' Party of Marxist Unification**

To keep your fingers crossed: An expression used to describe a situation where one hopes that something will happen

Let's keep our fingers crossed

Trade Unionist: Someone who works for a Trades Union

On the dole: An expression used to describe someone who is unemployed

To hitch a lift: To travel by getting lifts from passing vehicles without paying; to hitchhike

I hitched a lift

To be scared stiff: To be very frightened or terrified

I was scared stiff

Fags: Cigarettes (in British English)

We got a packet of fags a day

To turn your back on someone: To ignore, reject or have nothing to do with someone

The rest of the world has turned its back on you

Ta: Thank you (an informal expression in British English)