

Propaganda on Two Wheels: the Spanish Republican Team in the 1937 Tour de France¹

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Abstract

In July 1937, as the Spanish Civil War raged on several fronts, including the battle for international prestige and legitimacy, six Spanish cyclists were racing along the French roads in the Tour de France, clad in purple-red-yellow jerseys, the colours of the endangered Spanish Republic. This sporting episode, laden with political significance, is one of the first (if not the very first) instances of a government attempting to use international sport for propaganda purposes at a time of war. The sporting success of the team (two stage wins) was poorly exploited by the Republican authorities for its propaganda potential, due to flaws that affected the propaganda strategies of the Republicans throughout the war: improvisation, dispersion of initiatives and lack of coordination.

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Two seemingly independent phenomena, the Tour de France and the Spanish Civil War, in fact have a close relationship. The role played by professional cycling in this armed conflict, although minor, is worth exploring, given that the Tour at this time was ridden by national rather than commercial teams, therefore providing an international showcase for national athletic prestige which could be used for propaganda purposes.

In the last couple of decades, both Spanish and non-Spanish scholars have increasingly paid attention to propaganda during the Spanish Civil War, filling a gap in what is otherwise a lavish historiography.¹ This academic scrutiny has been mostly focussed on mass-mediated, ‘mainstream’ propaganda activities in a war that was pioneering in this field. Other aspects of the propaganda war, including sport and its exploitation by both sides on domestic and international levels, remain far less explored.

Professional cycling played a minor but worth exploring role in the battle fought between loyalists and rebels for international prestige, sympathy and legitimacy between the summer of 1936 and the end of the war on April 1, 1939. Civil authorities, who were ahead of their time in wishing to exploit an international sporting competition for its propaganda opportunities in a war context, were intimately involved with the Spanish national (Republican) team sent to the 1937 Tour de France.

Historical Context: Republican Propaganda and Sport in the Spanish Civil War

A broad agreement exists among historians on the pioneering and anticipatory nature of the Spanish Civil War, not only in strictly military aspects (the central role of aviation, rehearsal of blitzkrieg tactics, motorized offensives and new weapons, mass bombing of towns, etc.), but also in many collateral issues such as international relations, diplomacy and internal and international propaganda strategies.² The Spanish Civil War opened up

a new era in war propaganda, including the use of sport as a tool to gain international prominence and legitimacy.

Concerning the use of mass media and popular culture for propaganda purposes, it has been pointed out, for instance, that the Spanish war served as a laboratory for tactics and practices that would be implemented on a large scale during the Second World War.³ Radio broadcasting, newsreels, documentary cinema and photojournalism, as well as loudspeakers on the frontline and the extensive dissemination of pamphlets were first systematically and massively used in Spain by both sides. In the words of Alejandro Pizarroso, 'the Spanish Civil War, as the antecedent of WWII in the politic-ideologic as well as military arena, is also its antecedent in the field of propaganda'.⁴

There is one simple and prevailing reason for this: the Spanish Civil War was the first armed conflict to break out in a (reasonably developed) Western country since the First World War. In 1914 modern media and communications technology (and also aviation, involved in pamphlet dissemination) had not yet reached the level of development required for propagandistic usage on a grand scale. Radio broadcasting was still at an experimental stage and lacked an audience; photojournalism was in its infancy and was restricted by camera and photoengraving limitations; the newsreel industry was incipient and fledgling.⁵

In contrast, by 1936 these technologies and media had reached technical maturity and mass implementation, including in relatively backward Spain. A national radio network, Unión Radio, operated through powerful stations broadcasting in the major Spanish cities, alongside a growing number of regional and local stations, and listening to the radio had become a popular activity among urban middle and upper classes. Collective radio listening was often organized in rural areas or urban working class neighbourhoods.⁶ Photojournalism had invaded newspapers, not only weeklies or

monthly magazines of mass appeal such as *Blanco y Negro*, *Crónica*, *Estampa* and *Nuevo Mundo*, but also dailies like Barcelona's *La Vanguardia* or Madrid's *ABC* and *Ahora*, which featured separate photographic pages printed in rotogravure for better image quality.⁷ Newsreels were also popular among urban middle class cinema goers, although a national newsreel industry had failed to develop and the market was in the hands of French, British and American studios. During the war both sides intensively exploited the new media for propaganda purposes, together with the more traditional public meetings and speeches, wall posters, pamphlets and newspapers.

Propaganda structures and activities were slowly assembled by both factions following the first chaotic months of the war. On the Republican side, although an *Oficina de Propaganda e Información* had been set up as early as late August 1936, embedded in the *Subsecretaría de la Presidencia del Gobierno*,⁸ these activities did not acquire real momentum until early 1937. The Largo Caballero government had settled down in Valencia in November 1936 after fleeing the siege of Madrid and reorganized its propaganda services around the new *Ministerio de Propaganda*, set up on November 4, 1936.⁹

Paris immediately became the foreign headquarters of Republican propaganda activity abroad, overseen by the Spanish embassy and its *Office de Tourisme Espagnol*.¹⁰ France was the main potential western ally of the Republic¹¹ and the country where the Spanish Civil War had the greatest impact on public opinion and politics.¹² Furthermore, Paris was central to European and global politics at this time.

The new Negrín Government appointed in May 1937 discontinued the *Ministerio de Propaganda* and created a *Subsecretaría de Propaganda* embedded in the *Ministerio de Estado* (in charge of foreign affairs), which reorganized the propaganda services in Paris under a new *Delegación de Propaganda* dependent on both the embassy and

ministry.¹³ The new *Subsecretaría*, operating in Valencia,¹⁴ undertook the task of coordinating, centralizing and boosting the foreign propaganda strategy, but with limited success, according to Hugo García, who stresses the ‘Inability of the republicans to resolve the initial flaw of their propaganda services ... the proliferation of uncoordinated initiatives. The centralization policy adopted by Negrín since his arrival in office ... did not prevent the system’s tendency to anarchy’.¹⁵

Other scholars have argued that the main problems of the Republican propaganda strategy throughout the war were the ‘lack of a unified communication policy on the Republican side’;¹⁶ ‘contradictions’ and ‘lack of coordination’ between domestic and foreign services;¹⁷ or ‘between different agencies of the central government (*Junta de Defensa de Madrid, Ministerio de Propaganda, Comisariado General de Guerra, Ministerio de Instrucción Pública...*); between governmental propaganda services and those of political parties and trade unions’;¹⁸ or between services and activities of the central government, the Generalitat or Catalan autonomous government¹⁹, and the Basque autonomous government exiled in Barcelona.

Among this conglomeration of offices and services, the role of the Generalitat’s *Comissariat de Propaganda* during the war stands out as particularly active and influential, parallel to and independently of the propaganda policies and structures of the national Republican government. Set up on October 5, 1936, it was directly subordinated to the Generalitat’s Prime Minister’s Office and led by Jaume Miravittles, a politician belonging to the governing party in Catalonia, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya. Several scholars have highlighted the overarching, pioneering and avant-garde nature of the propaganda activity of Miravittles and the *Comissariat*,²⁰ supported by a lavish budget, some 10 million pesetas for the whole of its duration until early 1939, which meant it could afford a substantial staff, of around 300 people at its peak.²¹

It has been pointed out that the *Comissariat* was the first of this kind of governmental propaganda office in the western world outside of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, as it predated the *Ministerio de Propaganda* of the Spanish Republican Government²² and similar governmental structures in Britain and France. It is interesting to note for the purposes of this article that Miravittles, prior to becoming head of this office, had been very actively involved in international labour sport as the vice-president of the organizing committee for the 1936 Barcelona People's Olympiad (see below).

July 1937, when the Tour de France was taking place, 'was one of the most frantic months' for foreign Republican propaganda:²³ the International Exposition held in the French capital city had triggered a massive governmental investment of 1.2 million francs to set up the Pabellón de la República, featuring the famous Guernica painting by Picasso; the Republican government also generously sponsored the itinerant II Congreso Internacional de Escritores en Defensa de la Cultura, held in Valencia, Madrid, Barcelona and París and gathering star writers such as André Malraux, Ilya Ehrenburg, Julien Benda, Stephen Spender and Malcolm Cowley; and a campaign was launched to gain the support of the Jewish French community for the Republic.²⁴ This peak in foreign propaganda activities lasted until late 1937; by the spring of 1938, they were severely restricted by the increasing military and financial difficulties of the Republican government. The Paris *Delegación de Propaganda*, for instance, underwent considerable budgetary and staff cuts,²⁵ in anticipation of the final collapse of the Republican propaganda apparatus, and the Republic itself, in March 1939.

To sum up, the Republican side deployed massive efforts in the propaganda war, both in the home and the international front, which achieved some outstanding successes, but the former were undermined by the dispersion and lack of coordination of services, strategies and activities. The Generalitat (Catalan autonomous government)

set up what has been considered as the most modern, efficient and clever Republican propaganda structure during the war, the *Comissariat de Propaganda*, which pioneered the usage of sport for internal and international propaganda activities, as explained below, including the participation of the Republican team in the Tour de France. However, it acted in almost total disconnection with the propaganda services of the central Republican government and even with other propaganda services of the Generalitat.

Sport and the Propaganda War

Historians have argued that sport also had a non-negligible propagandistic function during the Civil War, mainly on the Republican side. Xavier Pujadas, for instance, claims that sport during the war ‘played a propagandistic, strategic and socially unifying role similar to that of other expressions of mass culture’,²⁶ and that the propagandistic and institutional exploitation of sport in a war context was something almost unheard of in Europe until the Civil War.

Sporting events were actively promoted by the Republican authorities to boost civilian morale and solidarity, and to raise funds for the war effort and mitigate its effects on the civil population. Charitable sporting activities in particular flourished during the first six months of the war, continued to be held in 1937, though with far less momentum, and petered out in 1938.²⁷ Even professional, mass-spectatorship sports (chiefly football) managed to survive on a low-profile basis until late 1937, when ‘the progressive militarization and casualties among athletes proved lethal for the professional calendar’.²⁸ Most of this sporting activity took place in Catalonia, the Spanish region where professional sport was most developed, and where the only Spanish sports daily newspaper, *El Mundo Deportivo*, was published.

The aforementioned *Comissariat de Propaganda* played a central role in promoting domestic sporting events for propaganda and mobilization purposes. In the case of cycling, in addition to several charity races held in Barcelona, the *Comissariat* co-organized the only cycling stage race held in Spain during the war: the Frente de Aragón-Barcelona, also called Pedal Antifascista, which took the riders from Siétamo, on the frontline itself, to Barcelona between April 14 and 18, 1937.²⁹ It is worth noting that the headquarters of the *Comissariat de Propaganda* and the *Comissariat d'Educació Física i Esports* were located side-by-side on Diagonal Avenue in Barcelona and the two departments entertained a very close relationship.³⁰

The Republican side were also interested in the role sport could play in its international propaganda and diplomatic effort, 'as a tool for foreign publicity, as a way to garner support and sympathy for the cause, and ... because it was an arena for international representation and homologation'.³¹ Nonetheless, the aforementioned flaws of the Republican propaganda strategy (improvisation, dispersion and lack of coordination) also surfaced in their approach to international sports activity. Here, non-governmental and semi-official entities, both Spanish and international³², as well as the Catalan autonomous government through its *Comissariat d'Educació Física i Esports* and *Comissariat de Propaganda*, and the Basque government with the Euzkadi soccer team, were far more active than the national Republican government, which only managed to set up a rather token *Consejo Nacional de Cultura Física y Deportes* (CNCFD) in late May 1937.³³

1936 was poor in terms of Republican international sporting activity: no Spanish team took part in the Berlin Olympics due to lack of support by the Frente Popular government for the Comité Olímpico Español (Spanish Olympic Committee) and the Olympic movement more broadly, which was deemed by the leftist parties to be an

essentially conservative and aristocratic endeavour.³⁴ On the other hand, the Barcelona People's Olympiad, promoted by the Spanish leftist parties and the Generalitat as a reaction against the 'Nazi' Berlin Olympics, was cancelled when the Civil War broke out on the same day the People's Olympiad was scheduled to start (July 19, 1936).³⁵

The Republican propagandistic effort in international sport intensified in 1937, with several outings of official or semi-official Republican teams: to a pedestrian race organized by the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* and the cyclocross event organized by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), both held in Paris (February); a soccer match between a 'popular Catalan team' and a French trade union team, also in Paris (March); the Antwerp Workers Olympiad and the Tour de France (July); as well as the UCI World Championships road race in Copenhagen (August). In addition, international tours were undertaken by the FC Barcelona and the Euzkadi Basque team, the latter sponsored by the Basque autonomous government exiled in Barcelona.

In contrast, in 1938 the only Republican international sports activity, other than the ongoing Euzkadi football team tour, was the participation of two women's teams in the pedestrian races organized in Paris by the leftist newspapers *L'Humanité* and *Le Populaire*.³⁶ As pointed out above, all of these initiatives were organized and promoted by Catalan or Catalonia-based institutions/entities: the Generalitat's *Comitè Català Pro Esport Popular* and *Comissariat de Propaganda*, the Unión Velocipédica Española, the Basque government, FC Barcelona and *El Mundo Deportivo*.³⁷

What all these Republican efforts in sport propaganda had in common was a lack of coordination and central direction. They were isolated, disconnected activities led by a range of Catalan entities, political parties and government offices, who often ignored each other. With the dismantling of the Spanish Olympic Committee³⁸, and the dispersion of authorities and initiatives, little was achieved in exploiting these events to

make an impact in either the domestic or foreign media or on public opinion, let alone on the officials of the countries directly or indirectly involved in the war. In fact, ‘the sports international front was won by the Francoist authorities at the end of 1937 when they won recognition from the International Olympic Committee for the official status of a new Comité Olímpico Español (COE) reorganized in rebellious territory ... The new COE was set up in February 1938 in Saragossa’.³⁹ The participation of the Spanish team in the 1937 Tour de France was no exception to this rule of dispersion and lack of coordination.

Antecedents: the Spanish ‘National Team’ in the Tour, 1930-1935

The 1930 edition of the Tour de France marked a new era for the race. The late twenties had seen a decline in public interest in the Tour, which its patron, Henri Desgrange, blamed on the commercial teams’ conservative racing strategies. To remedy this threat to his business, Desgrange revolutionized the race rules by replacing commercial with national teams, ‘representing’ the main European countries where cycle sport was popular, with an additional category of individual riders or ‘touristes-routiers’.⁴⁰ For the 1930 race, teams of eight riders were invited from France, Italy, Belgium, Germany and Spain. In subsequent years, up to 1939, teams or half-teams from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Romania, United Kingdom and Australia took part in all or some of the race editions.

Despite the alleged national representative nature of these teams, as reflected for instance by their jerseys, which bore the colours of the corresponding national flags,⁴¹ it was Desgrange who selected the riders, both the team members and the ‘touristes-routiers’. He did so by following mainly show-business criteria: the final mix should provide exciting and entertaining racing throughout the competition. The national

cycling authorities (much less the civil ones) of the designated countries had little impact on the selection process, which was in the hands of Desgrange, personally or through his newspaper's reporters and correspondents in the respective countries, who in 1935 were 'Naas in Germany, [José] Gervais in Spain, [Fabio] Orlandini for Italy or his friends like [Karel] Steyaert in Belgium'.⁴²

In 1930 the entire Spanish team was selected by Desgrange, helped by two of his journalists at *L'Auto*, Gaston Bénac and Lucien Avocat.⁴³ In 1931 Desgrange delegated the selection of the Spanish team to Narciso Masferrer, *L'Auto*'s correspondent in Spain since 1903,⁴⁴ although eventually only two 'touristes-routiers' rode the race.⁴⁵ The Spanish participants in the Tour of 1932 and 1933 (one and two 'touristes-routiers', respectively) were again appointed by Desgrange, while the selection for the 1934 and 1935 Tours (half-Spanish teams) was undertaken by José Gervais, a Frenchman settled in San Sebastián who was the president of the UVE's Basque regional committee.⁴⁶

Some controversy had already surfaced in late 1930 over the lack of involvement of the Spanish federation in the selection process. Masferrer, a historical leader of Spanish cycling, claimed this responsibility should be his, on the grounds of being Desgrange's long-standing representative in Spain. On the other hand, he had tried to secure the federation's involvement, in order to solemnize and legitimize the selection, but the UVE had stepped aside, alleging that the Tour was not an official race but a private endeavour, unlike the World Championships; it was therefore the organizer's business to select and negotiate the contracts with would-be participants, not theirs.⁴⁷

In 1930, 1934 and 1935, therefore, a team of Spaniards (or a half-team in 1934) rode the Tour, allegedly representing Spain, but without official recognition from the Spanish federation, let alone the Spanish government, whose involvement with international sport was limited to offering hesitant and rather token support to the

Spanish Olympic Committee's participation in the 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1932 Olympic Games.⁴⁸ This lack of official representation was well known and publicly acknowledged by journalists and the riders themselves, as in the case of Federico Ezquerro, who admitted in 1935: 'We appeared as [Spain's] legitimate representatives, but this was not official, as the UVE had allowed us to participate in the Tour de France, but they had not awarded us an official representation. Mr. Desgrange, on his own behalf, is the one who awards us this representation'.⁴⁹

Following the scandal surrounding the Spanish team in the 1935 Tour de France, where its three leaders, Cañardo, Ezquerro and Vicente Trueba, abandoned during the fifth stage in the midst of accusations of quarrelling and division in the team, Desgrange switched tactics. In December 1935 he wrote the following to the president of the Spanish federation, Santiago Jaumandreu: 'For the next Tour de France in 1936 I intend to ask you to set up a four (maybe five) man team, and I will ask you to make the selection'.⁵⁰ After some bargaining, as Desgrange was not keen on relinquishing his influence on the selection process, the federation accepted his proposition and undertook to appoint the 1936 five-man team with full freedom. For the first time, the Spanish team in the Tour would embody some sort of official representation.

Desgrange's new attitude was not a case of sudden submission to the powers of the national federations, which he actually despised and feared, as they were a potential threat to his stranglehold on his beloved and lucrative race. Instead, what he was looking for was another mechanism for controlling the riders and to avoid episodes like the retirement of the three Spanish stars in the early stages of the 1935 Tour, a rebellious act he was anxious to prevent in the future by recruiting the official involvement of the Spanish federation in the team selection: 'Desgrange wants to avoid a repetition of the [1935 Tour] story ... This is the reason why ... [he awarded the

riders'] selection to the UVE, to guarantee discipline among the riders and to be able to wield the threat of disqualification against anyone who tried to repeat last year's dirty trick'.⁵¹

From 1930, when participation in the Tour was organized around 'national' rather than commercial teams, to 1935, therefore, there was no proper and real Spanish national team in the Tour; instead, teams or half teams called 'Spain' or 'Spanish team' performed there with riders clad in jerseys with the colours of the national flag (be it monarchical or republican), representing only themselves and Desgrange's sense of spectacularity and show business. This changed in 1936, when Desgrange convinced the Spanish federation to select the team for the Tour.

The 1936 Race

'There is no doubt that the performance of Cañardo, Berrendero and Ezquerria in the Tour de France is the biggest international success of Spanish cycling', stated the highly influential sports daily newspaper *El Mundo Deportivo* in late July 1936.⁵² It was indeed the case. Julián Berrendero and Federico Ezquerria had earned international praise and fame thanks to their *mano a mano* fight for the mountains competition, in which the former eventually prevailed; in addition, Ezquerria had won the hilly Nice-Cannes stage, solo and in style, and Mariano Cañardo had achieved a solid sixth in the final general classification, despite working throughout the race as a *domestique*, more or less undercover, for the French star Antonin Magne.⁵³

Although they had been awarded official representation, the riders sent to the Tour as part of a combined Spanish-Luxembourger team were left to their own devices, without any kind of direction or technical support. The race organizer was in charge of catering for all basic needs (accommodation, baggage transportation, food on and off

the race, even bicycles and all kinds of spares), and also provided the Spaniards with a soigneur called Lahitou.⁵⁴ Lack of resources may also account for the Spanish federation's lack of support for the team. An indication of the UVE's financial limitations is that it resorted to public subscriptions to send a team to the road race at the 1930 and 1932 World Championships in Liege and Rome.⁵⁵

It is no minor irony that the huge international sporting success of the Spanish riders (at least by Spanish standards of the time) had occurred against the tragic backdrop of the outbreak of the Civil War. In fact, at the very moment that Ezquerra was forging his victory on the road to Cannes on July 19, rebels and loyalists were fighting to the death in Spanish cities, notably in Barcelona and Madrid.⁵⁶ The feats of the Spaniards in the Tour therefore went almost unnoticed in their own country. *El Mundo Deportivo*, for instance, suspended its publication from July 20 to 24, and the news of Ezquerra's triumph reached its readers only on July 25.

Despite claims made much later concerning pro-Republican political statements of the Spanish riders during that year's Tour de France, none have been found after a thorough search of both Spanish and French newspapers of the time. A much-circulated story in recent accounts of the race, published both in popular outlets and academic sources, deals with Julián Berrendero's outspoken defence of the Republic and condemnation of the military uprising.⁵⁷ What instead is in the French press are reports of the rider's bewilderment and dismay at the confusing news emerging from Spain from July 19 onwards, mixed with casual and often funny anecdotes of how were they coping with their sudden popularity. A report published in the July 21 edition (three days after the coup d'état) of the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* portrays Berrendero and Ezquerra at the end of the Cannes-Marseille stage as 'the only ones [in

the team who] do not utter a single word, lost in their dreams'.⁵⁸ This makes perfect sense, since at that time neither of them spoke any French.

The envoy of *Le Petit Parisien* depicts a similar scene: 'Sitting on a sofa, Berrendero reads a Spanish newspaper and is amused when reading about his own exploits. Ezquerro is rapt in concentration as he writes to his fiancée [his wife, actually since he got married in early 1936, according to his son Federico]'.⁵⁹ When the race reached Perpignan, on the evening of July 23, very close to the Spanish border, French journalists reported the Spanish riders became increasingly nervous: 'Cañardo wanted to reach Barcelona to embrace his wife, of whom he has been without news for ten days now. He was dissuaded, as it was not sure he could make it back for the start of the stage to Luchon. Ezquerro is also very agitated, as is Berrendero, while Álvarez, who lives in France, tries to calm his comrades down'.⁶⁰

Another journalist commenting on this scene in the same newspaper simply mentions that 'a bit of melancholy darkens their smiles'.⁶¹ Yet another testimony of their state of mind comes from the special envoy of *El Mundo Deportivo* at the Nice-Cannes stage, Ramon Torres. His report conveys the same mix of glee at their racing successes and concern because of the news coming from Spain. Torres arrived at the hotel where the Spanish riders were staying on the morning of July 19:

[The riders] show us a copy of *Paris-Soir* with headlines similar to those we had already read in *L'Éclairneur* [related to the coup d'état and the ensuing political violence in Spain], and the four of them look at me with the same expression of concern: what is happening in Spain? 'Boys, I only know what you can read in the French newspapers. When I left Barcelona [the day before] everything was quiet⁶² ... 'Look', says Cañardo, 'put a note in *El Mundo Deportivo* asking fans not to write me such long letters... I don't have time to read them'.⁶³

The closest to a political statement by the riders that one can read in the Parisian press was not from Berrendero or Cañardo but Federico Ezquerra, who one year later, while competing in the Tour for the Spanish Republican team, openly showed his support for the rebels and returned to Bilbao only once it was occupied by Franco's forces. And his words in 1936 are not precisely in support of the Republic: 'Ezquerra ... clearly expresses insurrectionary opinions which will certainly get him into trouble with his country's government. He stated in an interview that, in the Tour de France, he would fight "for royalty ...". In short, if I understood well, Ezquerra is a determined Carlist'.⁶⁴

None of the four members of the team who finished the 1936 Tour went to Spain afterwards.⁶⁵ Álvarez and Cañardo returned to their respective homes in Pau and Amélie-les-Bains, while Berrendero moved to Álvarez, where he stayed for the rest of the war; Ezquerra also settled in Pau until his return to Bilbao after the 1937 Tour; her wife moved to stay with him during this period, according to their son Federico Ezquerra.⁶⁶ *El Mundo Deportivo* explained the obvious reasons for this behaviour: '[The] Spanish [riders] ... have been offered many contracts to ride in French and Belgian track events, which will mostly be accepted, as circumstances prevent them from attending Spanish meetings, which they would have preferred'.⁶⁷ There is little or nothing in the way of any kind of open political commitment to Republican Spain in the Spanish representatives at the 1936 Tour de France.

It is likely that Berrendero would have stayed in France even if war had not broken out in Spain. Since the late twenties, most of the top Spanish riders of the time had moved to France to develop a lucrative professional career, thanks to the huge number of road and track races organized there and in Belgium, and the much higher prize money on offer compared to Spain, with its far smaller professional cycling

market. In fact, many of these riders had migrated to France with their families as children, and had become professional cyclists there as French citizens, *de facto* if not in passport.⁶⁸ Berrendero, who had started racing in 1935, was 24 in 1936 and single. In contrast, Ezquerro had often raced in France since 1934 while living in Bilbao. His settlement in France during the period of July 1936 to August 1937 could have been for political reasons, in addition to sporting ones; as seen, he sympathised with the rebels and may have felt unsafe in Republican Bilbao in the early months of the war.

The Spanish Team in the 1937 Tour

By the end of the 1936 Tour, after the uneven results of the military coup, war was breaking out across Spain. Barcelona, where the Spanish cycling federation had its headquarters, had resisted the coup and remained loyalist, although the authority of the civilian institutions, both the central government and the Generalitat, was in tatters due to the revolution unleashed by the military uprising. The effective power was in the hands of the revolutionary forces, led by the anarchist trade union CNT-FAI, who forced the creation of a sort of parallel Catalan government called the *Comité Central de Milicias Antifascistas*, where all the antifascist parties and unions were represented under the leadership of the anarchists.

In a context of extreme violence and uncontrolled repression against those suspected of supporting the coup or simply known for their conservative ideas, the president of the Spanish federation stated to *El Mundo Deportivo* that the federation intended to consolidate the status of the Spanish team in the Tour as ‘a team representative of Spain, not like the Spanish selections of other years’. Jaumandreu announced that ‘all “outings” will be controlled and anyone not demonstrating sufficient class will not be allowed to ride, to avoid embarrassment.’⁶⁹ It is difficult to know for

certain whether the new political situation pushed the federation towards toughening its control over the cyclists riding abroad as members of a team ‘representing’ Spain, but one can suppose this was the case.

Cycle racing almost came to a halt on both sides of the war divide,⁷⁰ with the exception of some competitions staged with charitable aims, such as the one organized by *El Mundo Deportivo* on September 11 in Barcelona to raise funds for the militia hastily set up to fight off the rebellion.⁷¹ Cañardo took part in the race, travelling from Amélie-les-Bains for the occasion, in support of ‘those who fight, to provide them with help and moral support in their heroic endeavour’, as the rider himself stated to *El Mundo Deportivo*.⁷² This would not be Cañardo’s only gesture in support of the loyalists: late that year another newspaper reported that he had refused to race in Germany and Italy ‘in the name of antifascism’.⁷³ This attitude reveals that Cañardo was fully aware of the implications of his sporting performances abroad in terms of international prestige and propaganda. These implications would underlie the controversy that broke out on the Republican side over the participation of the Spanish team in the 1937 Tour.

By the beginning of the new cycling season in early 1937, the Civil War was affecting most of the country, with several military fronts and savage repression within the territories controlled by each side. Outside Spain, the diplomatic and propaganda battle also raged, as both sides strived for international legitimacy and support from the main world powers. In this context, in early March the Spanish cycling federation received the expected invitation from Desgrange to send a national team to that year’s Tour. The UVE accepted ‘in principle, with the same conditions as last year and maintaining the right to designate the team two weeks before the start of the Tour’.⁷⁴ *El Mundo Deportivo* supported this decision, alluding to the importance of such

international events, which ‘despite being of an exclusive sporting nature, have proved to be highly relevant for our country’s present situation’.⁷⁵

Controversy over this official participation in the Tour surfaced in late April. As if in anticipation of the discord on the Republican side, soon to erupt in the bloody May Days of Barcelona, the Catalan regional committee of the UVE met on April 25 and passed the following motion:

As long as the present situation lasts, it would be appreciated if the national committee of the UVE banned the participation of Spanish teams [in events] where teams of the Italian and German federations officially take part. Riders with a racing license granted by the Catalan regional committee will not be allowed to participate in races where the German and Italian federations are taking part officially or informally.⁷⁶

This decision was swiftly and strongly criticized by *El Mundo Deportivo*’s senior cycling writer, Ramon Torres, who pointed out two main flaws: on the one hand, the regional committee had no competence to deny, on political grounds, the participation of Catalan riders in international competitions, as this belonged to the national committee; furthermore, and far more importantly, if the latter decided to heed the regional committee’s ban, it would mean ‘the official forfeit of Spain’s participation in the World Championships, the Tour de France, the Tour of Switzerland and the next Toulouse-Paris’, all of them raced under the formula of national teams,⁷⁷ and the resulting relinquishment of international visibility and legitimacy for the Republican cause. In the first issue of the newspaper after the tragic May Days, its editor, Josep Torrens, took over in rejecting the regional committee’s decision, emphasizing its implications in terms of loss of propaganda opportunities for the loyalists: ‘Sport, which in normal times should be no more than sport, in war times has ... an important remit to fulfil. A remit that, beyond borders and in the international order, must be accomplished through our national federations’.⁷⁸

As the controversy continued to run over the following issues, Torrens bitterly criticized the Spanish sporting federations, all of which had remained in loyalist territory, for failing to acknowledge and put into practice this international remit, including the UVE's 'shameful apathy, utterly distanced from the important mission incumbent on it'.⁷⁹ Torrens rejected claims that sportsmen had a negligible role in international propaganda and insisted they should be engaged in such activities: 'Sportsmen can develop this mission as well as artists, intellectuals, *coblas* [ensembles playing *sardana*, a traditional Catalan dance music], diplomats and lecturers, and with even more efficiency, because one can find few things that connect with the masses more directly than sporting events'.⁸⁰ On the other hand, he demanded the Republican government create a 'Sports Commissary' to coordinate and push the sporting federations towards properly developing their propaganda remit in the official representation of Spanish sportsmen and teams in international competitions.⁸¹ This included 'the need to compel our sportsmen competing abroad to display a visible tricolour emblem, which would identify their nationality and loyalty to the only legitimate Spanish government'.⁸²

This energetic campaign by the sports newspaper triggered a swift reply from the Republican authorities, although regional (Catalan) rather than national. Already on May 19, the paper was informing that the Generalitat's *Comissariat d'Educació Física i Sport* had 'told the UVE's [Catalan] regional committee that ... it considers [the prohibition] inappropriate' and that the *Comissariat de Propaganda* supported this stance:

The *Comissariat de Propaganda* not only believes that the riders from Spain, be they Catalan or from any other region, should not be banned from participating in important international races abroad; it believes that, on the contrary, this participation must be promoted ... Therefore, the Spanish federation will receive, or has already received, a

notification from the *Comissariat de Propaganda* stating that it is not only of interest to take the invitation from *L'Auto* into consideration, but necessary.⁸³

El Mundo Deportivo, of course, welcomed this decision by the Catalan authorities, 'as it would have been foolish for Spain - the only Spain, that which is loyal and Republican - to shun a propaganda opportunity such as the performance of our riders in the universally popular Tour'.⁸⁴ The paper signalled the political relevance of the decision: 'For the first time in the history of Spanish sport, the Spanish representatives in a big sports competition will receive semi-official support stemming from the interest of the responsible and conscious political entities in ensuring a decent representation of loyal and Republican Spain in international [sporting] events'.⁸⁵

A meeting between the Propaganda Commissary, Jaume Miravittles, and the UVE's top officials was announced by the paper, where details of the participation of a Spanish team in the Tour would be discussed.⁸⁶ There is no direct evidence of the agreements reached in this meeting, but the subsequent steps taken by the federation give us some idea. On May 26, an official of the federation, Aureliano Gargalló, travelled to the French town of Perpignan to meet the top Spanish riders living and racing in France who had been preselected for the national team: Mariano Cañardo, Julián Berrendero, Rafael Ramos and Antonio Prior (only Ezquerria failed to show up, while the sixth selected rider, Juan Gimeno, was at that time still in the frontline as a soldier).⁸⁷ During this meeting, Cañardo separately and all the preselected team members collectively signed statements of support for the Spanish Republic, which one can safely suppose was a condition set by the UVE following instructions from the *Comissariat de Propaganda* and inspired by *El Mundo Deportivo*'s campaign. Cañardo was invited to sign a separate statement presumably on grounds of his importance as the leading Spanish cycling star of the time:

Having been selected to take part in the 1937 Tour de France, I look forward to winning for Republican Spain the same prize as in the Tour of Morocco, adding to this my warm greetings to the comrades in Catalonia, the Basque Country and the rest of Spain who are fighting for the freedom of the people and the genuine government of democratic Spain. Perpignan, May 26, 1937.⁸⁸

The preselected team members, including Cañardo, signed the following message: ‘Our most enthusiastic greetings to the comrades who are fighting for Republican Spain and we pass on to them the greetings of friendship gathered during our performances in French territory, which are addressed to the defenders of Spanish freedom and democracy. Hurray for democratic Spain!’⁸⁹

[insert figure 1 around here]

They also agreed that the riders would wear a purple jersey with red and yellow stripes across the chest (the colours of the Spanish Republican flag), which again met the newspaper campaign’s demands. Even the aforementioned suggestion that ‘Spanish federations be overseen by a Sports Commissary representing the Spanish government, which ... could implement governmental criteria on foreign relations into sport’ was heeded.⁹⁰ The May 28, 1937 edition of the *Gaceta de la República* published a decree by the Ministry of Public Education setting up the Consejo Nacional de Cultura Física y Deportes (CNCFD), an advisory board dealing with sports issues, including the participation of athletes in foreign competitions.⁹¹ As will be explained below, the CNCFD did very little in the way of fulfilling its remit.

The national Republican government also reacted to the newspaper’s campaign and the early initiative by the Catalan authorities concerning the participation of a Spanish team in the Tour. The government gave instructions to the Spanish diplomatic

network of embassies and consulates to publicly welcome and support the riders in the towns where the race was stopping. Thus, when the riders arrived in Paris on the eve of the Tour, the Spanish embassy invited them to an official reception, where the ambassador, Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo, gave an address urging them ‘to do their utmost to serve Republican Spain’ and asking that their ‘behaviour ... be an example that may contribute to hastening the collapse of the edifice of slanders directed against our democratic Republican Spain’. Cañardo replied on behalf of the team, ‘dedicating their efforts to Republican Spain with the highest fervour’.⁹² Later, the riders would also be officially welcomed by the Republican consuls in Geneva⁹³ and Perpignan.⁹⁴

During the reception in Paris, the riders made public another symbolic initiative, laden with propagandistic intent, which in fact had also been suggested by *El Mundo Deportivo*:⁹⁵ ‘[following] a short exchange amongst Cañardo, Gimeno, Berrendero, Ramos, Prior and Ezquerro [...] the solemn statement ... came into immediate effect, the Spanish riders are donating 50% of the earnings that may correspond to them in this Tour de France to war orphans’.⁹⁶

This gesture was solemnized with the following statement, signed on June 29, 1937 by the six riders and published in *El Mundo Deportivo* and other newspapers: ‘On the eve of the classic international Tour where we will take part representing Republican Spain, we cordially greet the people of France and vow to our brothers who are fighting for the independence of our country that we will bring them our victory’s prize, to which we add a donation of 50% of our earnings to the war orphans fund’.⁹⁷

[Insert figure 2 around here]

Fine Athletics, Poor Propaganda

Despite all of these gestures and the official nature of the team's participation in the Tour, the riders once again had to make their way without any kind of effective official support, be it from the Republican government, the Generalitat or the UVE. No sports director, manager, UVE representative, supporting vehicle or press officer accompanied them during the race, and they did not seemingly receive any kind of stipend from Spanish governmental or federative authorities. As in 1936, the race organizers provided them with the services of soigneur-mechanic-assistant Lahitou. The main Catalan newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, was harshly critical of this lack of material support by the authorities:

Spain is showing up with a good team, but with scarce support, which our representatives will have to find in their own legs and the stimulus of the antifascist fervour of the French supporters. It seems that the official support this showing deserves, in accordance with its significance as propaganda for Republican Spain, has failed to materialise, despite being called for in the sports-journalism field.⁹⁸

Other than the above, there is little trace in the press of other political/propagandistic gestures by the riders before, during or after the race, barring a couple of episodes. During the stop in Bourg-Madame between the half-stages on July 17, Cañardo shook hands with Republican militiamen at the French-Spanish border⁹⁹ and raised his left fist at some Francoist refugees in the French town who had shouted 'Viva Franco! Arriba España!' at him.¹⁰⁰

[Insert figure 3 around here]

On the other hand, in the afternoon of the last day of the race in Paris (July 25), Cañardo and Berrendero attended a reception organized by the communist newspaper *L'Humanité*. Its editor-in-chief, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, alluded to them this way:

In the name of the newspaper, [the editor] greets the victorious French team, as well as the valiant Spanish team, which, in spite of countless difficulties, finished this ordeal in excellent condition, supported from start to finish by the popular enthusiasm of the French workers ... Addressing our Spanish comrades, he congratulates them for having succeeded in this task and for not being afraid to say out loud what they were and what they remain, the champions of the only Spanish flag, the one of free Spain, the Republican Spain of Madrid and Valence ... The crowd, which is shouting for the Spanish champions, cheers wildly when Berrendero and Cañardo appear at the window and greet the enormous multitude with a raised fist.¹⁰¹

Against the odds, the riders' performance in that year's Tour de France was the most outstanding a Spanish team had achieved so far, with Cañardo and Berrendero both winning a mountain stage each: Cañardo triumphed in the half-stage from Bourg-Madame to Ax-les-Thermes on July 17, and Berrendero won the stretch from Luchon to Pau two days later. Never before had Spanish riders taken two stages in the same edition of the race.

[Insert figure 4 around here]

Yet the Spanish Republican press was not particularly happy with this performance, on account of the low standing of both riders in the final general classification (Berrendero finished 15th and Cañardo 30th), the only two members of the team that made it to the finishing line in Paris.¹⁰² These criticisms triggered a reaction from the newly created CNCFD, which in one of its first public interventions issued a statement supporting the riders' antifascist commitment and the propagandistic value of their performances:

Their clearly antifascist statements, published in the press throughout Europe as handwritten notes recognisably theirs, were a sound rebuke to fascists both here and there. By donating half their prize money to Spanish refugees [in fact, war orphans], they demonstrate a spirit of solidarity which many disparagers should envy ... We are not hiding our gratitude to Cañardo and Berrendero, who despite being highly successful professionals have no reservations when it comes to declaring their antifascist beliefs, risking many contracts and damaging their own private interests.¹⁰³

The Francoist newspapers at best derided, or simply ignored the Republican team's performance. *Diario Vasco*, a paper published in San Sebastián (Francoist territory), even threatened the riders: 'The "Spaniards" that ride the Tour de France wear a three-coloured jersey: red, yellow and purple. It is precisely the latter hue they will turn should their wretched figures turn up anywhere near here...'.¹⁰⁴

El Mundo Deportivo insisted on criticizing the Spanish team's performance and called for the Spanish federation and the CNCFD itself to take over future team selections in order to guarantee a disciplined and united team, mainly through the appointment of a sports director 'with sufficient authority to command full respect from the riders'.¹⁰⁵ This, as mentioned above, had been lacking not only in 1937, but in every previous participation of a Spanish national team in the Tour since 1930, and the situation would be repeated in 1938, resulting in a dearth of team tactics and anarchic riding. Two Spanish riders (Ezquerro and Berrendero), for instance, had fiercely fought each other in the King of the Mountains competition in 1936, and others had openly worked for rivals, like Cañardo when he rode as a *de facto domestique* of Antonin Magne the same year.

Rather than the performance of the Spanish team itself, what failed to live up to expectations was the support they were due from the Republican authorities after so much interest in sending the team to the race. The media coverage of their month-long

foray across France was also poor and failed to capitalize on its propagandistic potential at home or abroad. In fact, no Spanish journalist followed the race, and the Republican press covered it through news agencies and reports taken from the French newspapers. The propagandistic exploitation of the Spanish riders' performance was also restricted by the technical limitations of the press and newsreel industries of the time, which did not publish colour images. This meant the colours of the Republican flag, which the riders wore on their jerseys, could not be seen in the newspapers and newsreels reporting on their sporting feats.

After the race ended in Paris in early August 1937, the scarce attention it had commanded in the Spanish Republican press soon faded away. Five of the six members of the Spanish team remained in France, where they already lived and raced. Although these riders resided in France legally and therefore had no issues with the Spanish civil or military justice, their status as well-paid, well-fed sports stars contrasted starkly with the wartime hardships endured by the vast majority of the population living in Spain. This raised some protests from other athletes, echoed by *El Mundo Deportivo* and other Republican newspapers.¹⁰⁶

The mistrust and envy generated by their status were amplified by the two controversial international tours undertaken by even more popular Spanish sportsmen: those of the Futbol Club Barcelona team, who were sent abroad on a mission that combined propagandistic and commercial goals.¹⁰⁷ When FC Barcelona returned from its European and South American tour in early October, they had left behind some very prominent players who decided to remain abroad to escape the lack of professional opportunities in Spain, as well as the wartime hardships and in some cases political persecutions. This again triggered complaints by *El Mundo Deportivo*, which denounced those sportsmen who had failed to return to Spain, 'eschewing their duties in

the antifascist fight, using and abusing precisely the pretext of obeying one of these duties in order to escape them'.¹⁰⁸ That same day the Catalan newspaper published a list with the names of 32 such sportsmen who were singled out as virtual deserters.

The Republican authorities, apparently paying attention to the newspaper's campaigns, again reacted swiftly. The October 12 issue of the *Gaceta de la República* published an order demanding the Spanish sportsmen living abroad return 'as soon as possible' and made the sports federations responsible for overseeing this return. Although the campaign had been directed at the *fugitive* footballers and the athletes who had remained abroad after the 1937 Workers Olympiad in Antwerp, the Spanish cycling federation 'agreed to communicate this agreement to all the riders belonging to this federation who remain abroad'.¹⁰⁹

In late November, Mariano Cañardo openly confessed to a French journalist in Amélie-les-Bains that he had no intention of returning: 'What am I expected to do in the government's army? I have friends and relatives on both sides ... I live in France, where I am happy and conscientiously do my job as a cyclist while waiting for better days to dawn on my homeland. They can't ask any more of me'.¹¹⁰ Cañardo's attitude was no exception: none of the other expatriate athletes, apparently, complied with the order to return during the war.

In early January 1938, with the war on the verge of tipping definitively towards the side of the rebels, the president of the Spanish cycling federation, Santiago Jaumandreu, admitted that the order was not viable, and the federation had 'temporarily suspended the alluded decision to conduct a case-by-case examination'. Jaumandreu remarked that there were more than 300 riders in France with a Spanish license. As neither the federation nor the Republican government could enforce their return,

complying with the decree would lead to a mass suspension: ‘Just think! How could we at the UVE manage with 300 *duros* less? ... One *duro* [five pesetas] per license’.¹¹¹

The Spanish Team in the 1938 Tour

In the same interview published in *El Mundo Deportivo* where Jaumandreu had made this crudely materialistic assessment of the situation, he mentioned that he had received a letter from Henri Desgrange inviting the Spanish federation to again select a Spanish team for the 1938 Tour de France, and that they had accepted. The team would once more be formed entirely of expatriates, who would be met in Perpignan by a representative of the UVE, as in May 1937, to agree on the terms of the selection and participation of the team. However, the swift deterioration of the Republican government’s position in the war meant the meeting was suspended.¹¹² Sport was becoming the least of worries for officials and the general population alike.¹¹³ This, together with a shortage of basics like paper and ink, forced *El Mundo Deportivo* to switch from daily to weekly publication on March 7, 1938. The following headline published in the March 21 issue speaks volumes about the increasing paralysis of sport activity in loyalist territories: ‘What should have happened yesterday. No start of the Catalan Soccer League, and no *Treball* pedestrian race. No morning boxing session, nor basketball, nor baseball’.¹¹⁴ As explained above, the participation of official or semi-official Republican teams in foreign competitions was almost non-existent in 1938.

The federation eventually relinquished the selection of the Spanish team for the Tour, which instead was set up under Desgrange’s responsibility and the effective authority of Mariano Cañardo, who only recruited expatriates: Cañardo himself, Julián Berrendero, Rafael Ramos, Emiliano Álvarez, Antonio Prior and Jacques Alzine.¹¹⁵ There is no trace of any kind of official intervention, either from the Republican

government or the Generalitat, in the selection. The non-official nature of the team was clearly reflected by the fact that the riders would no longer be wearing the by-then traditional purple-red-yellow jersey, but a *neutral* one, white with red stripes on the cuffs and collar.¹¹⁶ This sparked the (fruitless) anger of a sportswriter at *El Diluvio*, who claimed that ‘this jersey is cowardly, to say the least. And even more cowardly if it covers the backs of deserters.’¹¹⁷

The performance of the Spanish riders in that Tour de France was one of the weakest of the decade, with no stage wins or feats in the mountains. Only three of them managed to finish the race, in discrete positions (Cañardo was 16th, Ramos 17th and Berrendero 28th). The coverage of the race by the Republican Spanish press was perfunctory, and again non-existent in the Francoist newspapers. After the Tour, the Spanish expatriate stars vanished from the Spanish and French press alike, while the new Francoist government decided to create a parallel Unión Velocipédica Española: on August 21, Bilbao hosted a ‘Championship of freed Spain’, won by Fermín Trueba, as well as a preliminary meeting to set up the new Francoist cycling federation.¹¹⁸

The next international showing of a Republican sports team was supposed to be in the UCI World Road Championships in Valkenburg (The Netherlands) on September 4, but of the four selected riders (Cañardo, Ramos, Berrendero and Montero), all expatriates, only Luciano Montero showed up, wearing a commercial jersey instead of the one bearing the Republican colours, which led to his disqualification during the first circuit of the race: ‘Poor Montero, who has paid for the trip out of his own money and has thoroughly trained for this race, weeps at the side of the road’.¹¹⁹

El Mundo Deportivo published its last war period issue on October 12, 1938.¹²⁰ In February 1939 Mariano Cañardo returned to Barcelona, now occupied by the rebels, leaving Amélie-les-Bains forever. He was welcomed by the new Francoist authorities

with no (known) hint of retaliation, despite having been one of the most outspoken pro-Republican expatriate athletes.¹²¹ The other expatriate cycling star, Julián Berrendero, returned in autumn and did not enjoy such a gentle reception by the new authorities, although that is a different story deserving a separate article.

The 1937 Tour de France was therefore the only international sporting competition of massive appeal¹²² where anything close to a deliberate sporting propaganda strategy was rehearsed by the Spanish Republican authorities during the Civil War. This effort failed to happen again in 1938, and even in 1937 was poorly coordinated and exploited, other than with statements of support to the Republic signed by the riders prior to the start of the race, and the latter wearing the red-yellow-purple colours of the Republican flag across the French roads.

A wasted opportunity

The outbreak of the Civil War in July 1936 prompted an attempt by the Spanish cycling federation (Unión Velocipédica Española) to take charge of the national team's participation in the Tour de France, which it had previously only loosely controlled. However, following the hesitation and signs of weakness shown by the UVE in early 1937, the Republican authorities intervened, *forcing* the appearance of an official Republican team in the 1937 Tour with the aim of achieving international exposure for the Republican cause and above all, influencing French public opinion. This amounts to one of the first occasions in history when sport was used for international propaganda purposes by a government in a war context, together with the simultaneous participation of a Spanish team in the July 1937 Workers Olympiad in Antwerp.

The 'civil authorities' involved in the Spanish team's participation in the 1937 Tour de France were not of the Spanish Republic, but the Catalan regional government,

the Generalitat, through its *Comissariat de Propaganda*. The fact that the Spanish cycling federation's headquarters had been located in Barcelona since 1899 and was almost fully directed by Catalans, and that the main Spanish international cycling star of the times, Mariano Cañardo, was an adopted Catalan (he was born in Navarra but moved to Barcelona as a child), helps to explain this rather unusual arrangement. In any case, it is symptomatic of the main flaw of Republican propaganda activity during the war: its dispersion among a multiplicity of uncoordinated governmental offices, both national and Catalan, as well as political parties and trade unions.

To this lack of consistency and centralized direction, one can add the factor of improvisation. Once enrolled under the Republican flag and having signed public statements of support to the loyalists, the riders sent to the Tour were left largely to their own devices. The only help they received from the authorities were the receptions organized by the Republican government in the Paris embassy and the consulates of Geneva and Perpignan to welcome and fête the riders. Hardly any further public statement or action in support of the Republican cause was forthcoming from the riders during the race, other than wearing a purple-red-yellow jersey. Their brilliant performance (two stage wins) went almost unnoticed in Spain amidst the turmoil of the war, and the Republican authorities failed to achieve any sort of significant propagandistic exploitation of this feat, either at home or abroad.

The crisis of the Republican side following successive military defeats starting in early 1938 diverted efforts and attention away from the battle for international sporting prestige. This meant that neither the civil authorities nor the UVE had the ability or interest to send a representation to the Tour de France and they ceased to be involved in the selection of the Spanish team, which that year was no longer 'official'. In late 1937 the International Olympic Committee had already awarded official status to the new

Spanish Olympic Committee set up by the Francoist authorities.¹²³ The battle for international sporting prestige and legitimacy was lost by the Republic by early 1938. The main Spanish cycling stars (Cañardo, Berrendero and Ezquerro) returned to Francoist Spain, publicly accepting the new regime, and a Spanish team failed to show up in the Tour again until 1948.

¹ Gema Iglesias, 'La propaganda política durante la Guerra Civil Española' (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense, 2002) <http://webs.ucm.es/BUCM/tesis/19911996/H/0/AH0016601.pdf> (accessed February 2019).

² Ibid.; Herbert R. Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica!: Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Penguin, 2003); Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007); Alejandro Pizarroso, 'La Guerra Civil española, un hito en la historia de la propaganda', *El argonauta español* 2 (2005), <https://journals.openedition.org/argonauta/1195> (accessed February 2019).

³ Jesús Timoteo-Álvarez, *Historia de los medios de comunicación en España. Periodismo, imagen y publicidad (1900-1990)* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1989); Iglesias, 'La propaganda política'; Pizarroso, 'La Guerra Civil española'.

⁴ Pizarroso, 'La Guerra Civil española'.

⁵ Alejandro Pizarroso, *Historia de la propaganda. Notas para un estudio de la propaganda política y de guerra* (Madrid: Eudema, 1993).

⁶ Armand Balsebre, *Historia de la radio en España*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Cátedra, 2001).

⁷ Juan Francisco Fuentes and Javier Fernández-Sebastián, *Historia del periodismo español* (Madrid: Síntesis, 1998).

⁸ Iglesias, 'La propaganda política'.

⁹ Ibid.; Pizarroso, 'La Guerra Civil española'; Hugo García, 'La propaganda exterior de la República durante la Guerra Civil. Origen, éxitos y miserias de los servicios de París', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 39, no. 1 (2009): 215-240.

¹⁰ Ana Moreno, 'L'Office de Tourisme Espagnol de Paris (1929-1939). Política y turismo en los años treinta', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea* 29 (2017): 199-218.

¹¹ Ricardo Miralles, 'La política exterior de la República española hacia Francia durante la guerra civil', *Historia contemporánea* 10 (1993): 29-50.

¹² Alejandro Pizarroso, 'Intervención extranjera y propaganda. La propaganda exterior de las dos Españas', *Historia y Comunicación Social* 6 (2001): 63-96.

¹³ Pizarroso, 'La Guerra Civil española'; Moreno, 'L'Office de Tourisme Espagnol de Paris'; García, 'La propaganda exterior de la República durante la Guerra Civil'.

¹⁴ The propaganda services of the Republican government moved again to Barcelona in September 1937, following the whole government in its migration from Valencia. Moreno, 'L'Office de Tourisme Espagnol de Paris'.

¹⁵ García, 'La propaganda exterior de la República durante la Guerra Civil', 26.

¹⁶ Ester Boquera, 'Propaganda: la guerra que el Comissariat va guanyar', in *La revolució del bon gust, Jaume Miravittles i el Comissariat de propaganda*, ed. Rafael Pascuet and Enric Pujol (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Figueres, Viena Edicions and Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya, 2006), 124-125.

¹⁷ García, 'La propaganda exterior de la República durante la Guerra Civil', 8.

¹⁸ Iglesias, 'La propaganda política'.

¹⁹ Even within the Generalitat itself there existed duplications and dispersion of propaganda responsibilities between different bodies or entities: the *Comissariat de Propaganda*, the *Secció de Premsa i Propaganda del Departament de Defensa*, the *Comissaria General de Premsa* and the *Direcció General de Radiodifusió*. Daniel Venteo, 'Primera notícia del Comissariat de Propaganda de la Generalitat de Catalunya (1936-1939)', in *La revolució del bon gust, Jaume Miravittles i el Comissariat de propaganda*, ed. Rafael Pascuet and Enric Pujol (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Figueres, Viena Edicions and Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya, 2006), 42-43.

- ²⁰ See, for instance, Rafael Pascuet and Enric Pujol, eds., *La revolució del bon gust, Jaume Miravittles i el Comissariat de propaganda* (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Figueres, Viena Edicions and Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya, 2006); Ramon Batalla, 'Jaume Miravittles i Navarra. Intel·lectual, revolucionari i home de govern. Els anys joves, 1906-1939' (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2010).
- ²¹ Venteo, 'Primera notícia del Comissariat de Propaganda'; Batalla, 'Jaume Miravittles i Navarra'.
- ²² Avelina Miquel and Francisca Comas, 'Fotografía, escuela y propaganda durante la Guerra Civil: una aproximación desde *Nova Ibèria*', *Historia y Memoria de la Educación* 8 (2018): 231-269.
- ²³ Moreno, 'L'Office de Tourisme Espagnol de Paris', 215.
- ²⁴ Moreno, 'L'Office de Tourisme Espagnol de Paris'.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Xavier Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres. L'esport i la Guerra Civil a Catalunya (1936-1939)', *Aloma. Revista de Psicologia, Ciències de l'Educació i de l'Esport* 21 (2007): 19-31. See also Andrés Domínguez and Xavier Pujadas, 'Estadios y trincheras: Deporte y retaguardia en la Guerra Civil, 1936-1939', in *Atletas y ciudadanos. Historia social del deporte en España (1870-2010)*, ed. Xavier Pujadas (Madrid: Alianza, 2011), 169-201; Carles Santacana and Xavier Pujadas, *L'altra Olimpíada. Barcelona 1936* (Barcelona: Llibres de l'Índex, 2006).
- ²⁷ Pujadas identified 52 such charitable sports festivals held in Catalonia up to December 1936, eight in 1937, and only two in 1938. Xavier Pujadas, 'Entre l'estadi i la trinxera. Desenvolupament i presència de l'activitat esportiva en la rereguarda catalana (1936-1939)', in *La Guerra Civil a Catalunya*, vol. 2, ed. Josep Maria Solé Sabaté, Joan Villarroja and Eduard Voltas (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2004), 160-168.
- ²⁸ Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres', 27.
- ²⁹ 'La carrera Frente de Aragón-Barcelona', *El Mundo Deportivo*, April 12, 1937, 1; Venteo, 'Primera notícia del Comissariat de Propaganda'.
- ³⁰ Venteo, 'Primera notícia del Comissariat de Propaganda', 62.
- ³¹ Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres', 28.
- ³² For instance, the *Comité Català Pro Esport Popular*, the *Federación Cultural Deportiva Obrera Española*, the *Fédération Sportive et Gymnique du Travail* and the *Sozialistische Arbeitersport Internationale*.
- ³³ Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres'; Pujadas, 'Entre l'estadi i la trinxera'.
- ³⁴ The outbreak of war in July 1936 frustrated the participation of the equestrian team, the only Spanish athletes officially sent to the event. Fernando Arrechea, 'España y los Juegos Olímpicos. Análisis de participación de los deportistas españoles en los JJOO de la Era Moderna e historia del movimiento olímpico internacional' (PhD diss., Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia, 2017); Fernando Arrechea, 'Los deportistas españoles durante la Guerra Civil: exilio y competiciones internacionales (Berlín/Barcelona 1936, Amberes 1937)', *Migraciones y exilios*, 18 (2019, forthcoming).
- ³⁵ Santacana and Pujadas, *L'altra Olimpíada*; Arrechea, 'Los deportistas españoles durante la Guerra Civil'.
- ³⁶ Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres'; Domínguez and Pujadas, 'Estadios y trincheras'.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ The Spanish Olympic Committee was based in Barcelona, which became the capital of the revolution after July 19, 1936. This starkly contrasted with the aristocratic and bourgeois roots of the Olympic movement in Spain and elsewhere. This contradiction led to the dispersion of the (loyalist) Committee and its almost complete lack of activity throughout the war. Arrechea, 'España y los juegos olímpicos'.
- ³⁹ Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres', 29; see also Arrechea, 'Los deportistas españoles durante la Guerra Civil'.
- ⁴⁰ Sandrine Viollet, *Le Tour de France cycliste* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005); Christopher Thompson, *The Tour de France: a Cultural History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).
- ⁴¹ The Spanish team rode the 1930 Tour with a jersey bearing horizontal red-yellow-red stripes across the chest. From 1934 to 1937 the jersey was purple with yellow and red stripes, the colours of the Republican flag. The 1938 team wore a neutral white jersey with red stripes at the cuffs and collar.
- ⁴² Quoted from the French sports weekly *Sporting* in 'La UVE y la Vuelta a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, December 21, 1935, 1.
- ⁴³ Kid, 'Cañardo firmará el próximo sábado el contrato para la Vuelta a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, January 1, 1930, 4.
- ⁴⁴ Narciso Masferrer Sala (Madrid, 1867-Barcelona, 1941) can be considered the founding father of both modern sport and sport journalism in Spain. He inspired, founded and/or led the main sporting organizations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, like the *Federación Gimnástica Española*, the *Unión Velocipédica Española*, FC Barcelona, the *Federación Catalana de Fútbol*, the *Federación Española de Clubs de Foot-ball*, the *Federación Atlética Catalana*, etc. He was a prominent

member of the Comité Olímpico Español and the main inspirer and promoter of the pre-Civil War Barcelona candidatures to host the Olympics. In the field of sports journalism, he founded and/or directed the most influential sports newspapers of his time (*Los Deportes*, *Vida Deportiva*, *El Mundo Deportivo*, *Stadium*), led the Sports section of the main Catalan general newspaper (*La Vanguardia*) and founded the Sindicato de Periodistas Deportivos, the first one of its type to be set up in Spain. See Bernat López, “‘El presidente de las bicicletas’”: Narciso Masferrer, factótum del ciclismo español (1898-1913)”, *Cuadernos de fútbol* 90 (2017), <http://www.cihefe.es/cuadernosdefutbol/2017/09/el-presidente-de-las-bicicletas-narciso-masferrer-factotum-del-ciclismo-espanol-1898-1913/> (accessed May 2019); Bernat López, ‘El joven Narciso Masferrer en su cruzada por la deportización de España’, in *Perfiles de periodistas contemporáneos*, ed. C. Almuíña, R.M. de la Guardia, and J.V. Pelaz (Madrid: Fragua, 2016), 89-110.

⁴⁵ Narciso Masferrer, ‘¿España debe participar en la Vuelta a Francia?’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, December 12, 1930, 4.

⁴⁶ Quoted from the French sports weekly *Sporting* in ‘La UVE y la Vuelta a Francia’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, December 21, 1935, 1.

⁴⁷ Narciso Masferrer, ‘¿España debe participar en la Vuelta a Francia?’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, December 12, 1930, 4.

⁴⁸ Arrechea, ‘España y los Juegos Olímpicos’.

⁴⁹ ‘¿Cómo justifican (?) Ezquerria y Trueba su abandono en la Vuelta a Francia?’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 20, 1935, 4.

⁵⁰ J. T. F., ‘Realmente, M. Desgrange pidió a la UVE que hiciera la selección española’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, December 11, 1935, 5.

⁵¹ S. N. S., ‘En torno a la próxima Vuelta a Francia’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, December 22, 1935, 4.

⁵² R. Torres, ‘La última etapa pirenaica con las cuestras de Peyresourde, Aspin, Tourmalet y Aubisque...’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 27, 1936, 1.

⁵³ R. Torres, ‘Con los 4 españoles en la etapa Niza-Sospel-Cannes’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 25, 1936, 2.

⁵⁴ R. T., ‘Más de la carta famosa’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 9, 1936, 2.

⁵⁵ Santiago Jaumandreu, ‘De cara a los campeonatos del mundo’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 3, 1932, 3.

⁵⁶ Anthony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain. The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (London: Penguin Books, 2006); Luis Romero, *Tres días de julio* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2006).

⁵⁷ See, for instance, José Antonio Díaz, ‘Julián Berrendero: aventuras y desventuras de un escalador en el Tour’, *Ciclismo a Fondo*, July 1993, 66-73; Yves-Marie Evanno, ‘Du cliquetis des pédales au bruit des bottes: un été cycliste perturbé en Bretagne (juillet-septembre 1939)’, *Envor. Revue d’histoire contemporaine en Bretagne* 2 (2013), http://enenvor.fr/eo_revue/numero_2/velo/du_cliquetis_des_p%C3%A9dales_au_bruit_des_bottes.pdf (accessed July 2018); Lucy Fallon and Adrian Bell, *¡Viva la Vuelta! 1935-2017* (Senan: Cultura Ciclista, 2018); Mark, Krieger, *High Spain Drifter* (Sarasota: First Edition Design Publishing, 2017); Omar Naboulsi, ‘El negro de ojos azules que ganó una etapa del Tour pero acabó en un campo de concentración franquista’, *Playground Magazine*, June 26, 2017, https://www.playgroundmag.net/sports/Julian_22606171.html (accessed February 2019).

⁵⁸ René Thuillier, ‘Confidences sur la Croisette’, *L’Humanité*, July 21, 1936, 1.

⁵⁹ Herman Gregoire, ‘Journée de repos à cannes’, *Le Petit Parisien*, July 21, 1936, 7. He was probably reading *El Mundo Deportivo*, since its senior cycling sportswriter, Ramón Torres, had visited the riders on the morning of July 19 and had brought them some copies of the paper (see *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 25, 1936).

⁶⁰ Gaston Benac, ‘Discussion sur l’Espagne sous les platanes...’, *Paris-Soir*, July 25, 1936, 6.

⁶¹ Stéphane Manier, ‘Le roman du Tour’, *Paris-Soir*, July 25, 1936, 6.

⁶² This was indeed the case, as the coup started in Barcelona when troops left their quarters on July 19 before dawn and headed to the city centre. Beevor, *The Battle for Spain*; Romero, *Tres días de julio*.

⁶³ Ramon Torres, ‘Con los 4 españoles en la etapa Niza-Sospel-Cannes’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 25, 1936, 2.

⁶⁴ O. Van Godtsenhoven, ‘Ici, l’on tourne’, *L’Auto*, July 27, 1936, 2.

⁶⁵ Salvador Molina had retired after the 7th stage and returned to his hometown of Villanueva de Castellón, south of Valencia, where he volunteered in the Republican army.

⁶⁶ Personal interview, March 13, 2019.

⁶⁷ Vilaregut, ‘Todo es júbilo en el equipo de españoles y luxemburgueses’, *El Mundo Deportivo*, August 5, 1936, 2.

⁶⁸ Bernat López, ‘Ciclistas españoles en Francia durante la Guerra Civil: ¿exilio o migración?’. *Migraciones y exilios*, 18 (2019, forthcoming).

- ⁶⁹ Alberto Durán, 'El presidente de la UCI dice...', *El Mundo Deportivo*, August 9, 1936, 1.
- ⁷⁰ Julián García-Candau, *El deporte en la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2007).
- ⁷¹ R. T., 'El éxito formidable de público fue, con la valentía y brío de todos los corredores, la nota fuerte de una inolvidable jornada ciclista', *El Mundo Deportivo*, September 12, 1936, 1-2.
- ⁷² 'Mariano Cañardo se presentó ya anoche en nuestra redacción y, de refilón, nos contó su impresión del Campeonato del Mundo', *El Mundo Deportivo*, September 10, 1936, 1.
- ⁷³ 'Mariano Cañardo, en nombre del antifascismo...', *Ahora*, December 18, 1936, 7.
- ⁷⁴ 'La participación de España en la Vuelta a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, March 12, 1937, 1.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ 'Nota del comité regional de Cataluña de la UVE', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 1, 1937, 3.
- ⁷⁷ 'Comentando una absurda asamblea del comité regional de la Unión Velocipédica', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 2, 1937, 2.
- ⁷⁸ J. Torrens, 'Las federaciones deportivas españolas tienen una importante misión a cumplir... que no cumplen en su mayoría', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 8, 1937, 1.
- ⁷⁹ J. Torrens, 'El simplismo integral es mala cosa para tomar acuerdos y para entablar polémicas', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 12, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁸¹ Torrens, 'Las federaciones deportivas españolas tienen una importante misión a cumplir... que no cumplen en su mayoría', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 8, 1937, 1.
- ⁸² J. Torrens, 'Para regular la actuación de los deportistas profesionales españoles en el extranjero', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 16, 1937, 1.
- ⁸³ 'Y el Comisariado de Propaganda anuncia al comité nacional de la UVE que debe ser debidamente atendida la invitación para la Vuelta a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 19, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁴ J. T. F., 'La participación de España en la Vuelta Ciclista a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 22, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁵ 'España concurrirá a la Vuelta a Francia...', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 21, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁶ J. T. F., 'La participación de España en la Vuelta Ciclista a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 22, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁷ 'La delegación de la UVE ya se ha entrevistado con los seleccionados para la Vuelta a Francia', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 29, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁸ 'Los ciclistas españoles que actúan en carreteras francesas se manifiestan', *El Mundo Deportivo*, June 8, 1937, 1.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁰ Torrens, 'Las federaciones deportivas españolas tienen una importante misión a cumplir... que no cumplen en su mayoría', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 8, 1937, 1.
- ⁹¹ 'Decreto creando, bajo la dependencia de este departamento, un Consejo Nacional de Cultura Física y Deporte, con la atribuciones y fines que se determinan', *Gaceta de la República*, May 28, 1937, no. 148: 960-961.
- ⁹² 'Ceden el cincuenta por ciento de sus posibles ganancias para los huérfanos de la guerra', *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 3, 1937, 2.
- ⁹³ 'Los corredores españoles en la Vuelta a Francia', *ABC*, July 10, 1937, 9.
- ⁹⁴ Vilaregut, 'Bajo los pirineos' *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 17, 1937, 1.
- ⁹⁵ J. Torrens, 'Para regular la actuación de los deportistas profesionales españoles en el extranjero', *El Mundo Deportivo*, May 16, 1937, 1.
- ⁹⁶ 'Ceden el cincuenta por ciento de sus posibles ganancias para los huérfanos de la guerra', *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 3, 1937, 2.
- ⁹⁷ *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 10, 1937, 2.
- ⁹⁸ 'Ciclismo. La Vuelta a Francia', *La Vanguardia*, July 1, 1937, 2.
- ⁹⁹ 'De Perpignan à Luchon en trois bonds', *Ce Soir*, July 18, 1937, 1.
- ¹⁰⁰ 'La Vuelta a Francia', *ABC*, July 27, 1937, 8.
- ¹⁰¹ 'L'Humanité reçoit Roger Lapébie, l'équipe de France et les coureurs espagnols', *L'Humanité*, July 26, 1937, 4.
- ¹⁰² Mariano Vives, 'De una Vuelta a Francia sensacional. La actuación del equipo español', *El Mundo Deportivo*, August 8, 1937, 2.
- ¹⁰³ 'La actitud antifascista de los ciclistas españoles en la Vuelta a Francia', *El Sol*, August 3, 1937, 2.
- ¹⁰⁴ 'Morado' ('purple') also means 'bruise' or 'contusion' in Spanish. 'Paul Chocque gana la etapa La Rochelle-Rennes', *Diario Vasco*, July 25, 1937, 4.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mariano Vives, 'De una Vuelta a Francia sensacional', *El Mundo Deportivo*, August 15, 1937, 1.
- ¹⁰⁶ See, for instance, *El Mundo Deportivo*, June 4, 8 and 11, 1937.

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- ¹⁰⁷ Efraín Navarro, 'Fútbol y españoles en la Ciudad de México durante la Guerra Civil (1937-1939)'. *Migraciones y exilios*, 18 (2019, forthcoming).
- ¹⁰⁸ 'En total, son treinta y dos los que aprovechando las tres misiones deportivo-sociales no han regresado', *El Mundo Deportivo*, October 10, 1937, 1.
- ¹⁰⁹ 'La UVE cursa el aviso de regreso a sus deportistas controlados...', *El Mundo Deportivo*, October 22, 1937, 1.
- ¹¹⁰ Lucien Avocat, 'De l'Atlantique à la Méditerranée', *Paris-Soir*, November 27, 1937, 9.
- ¹¹¹ Phil de Escocia, 'El ciclismo y los ciclistas de España, vistos por su presidente Sr. Jaumandreu', *El Mundo Deportivo*, January 24, 1938, 1.
- ¹¹² '¿El equipo de España en la Vuelta a Francia lo hará Desgrange?', *El Mundo deportivo*, May 2, 1938, 1.
- ¹¹³ Pujadas, 'Entre estadis i trinxeres'; Domínguez and Pujadas, 'Estadios y trincheras'.
- ¹¹⁴ *El Mundo Deportivo*, March 21, 1938, 1. 'Labour', a daily political paper published by the *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya*.
- ¹¹⁵ 'Va a empezar la Vuelta a Francia que, también este año, tiene participación española', *El Mundo Deportivo*, June 27, 1938, 1.
- ¹¹⁶ 'Los participantes en la Vuelta a Francia por equipos y por colores', *El Mundo Deportivo*, July 4, 1938, 1.
- ¹¹⁷ '¿Por qué ese color "indefinido" de los corredores que forman el llamado equipo español?', *El Diluvio*, July 10, 1938, 4.
- ¹¹⁸ 'Fermín Trueba, campeón de España'. *Diario Vasco*, August 23, 1938, 5.
- ¹¹⁹ Gaston Benac, 'Le belge Kint champion', *Paris-Soir*, September 5, 1938, 9.
- ¹²⁰ It resumed publication after the war on December 31, 1939.
- ¹²¹ In fact, Cañardo was selected by the new regime in June 1939 to ride the Großdeutschlandfahrt, or Tour of Great Germany, and that year rode and won the major races organized by the Francoist authorities: Madrid-Lisboa, Circuito del Norte and Volta a Catalunya.
- ¹²² The 1937 Antwerp Workers Olympiad, where a Spanish Republican team also participated, could hardly be considered a sporting event with massive appeal.
- ¹²³ Arrechea, 'Los deportistas españoles durante la Guerra Civil'; Arrechea, 'España y los Juegos Olímpicos'.