

The Spanish Civil War as seen through children's drawings of the time¹

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Introduction

This article presents the results of a piece of research entitled “Documentation, Interpretation and Digital Diffusion of the Educational Patrimony produced in the period 1936-1939 in the schools of Barcelona: Children’s drawings”². This research set out to analyse the drawings produced by the children of the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives³ that reflect their everyday lives both inside and outside school during the period of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

Much research has been done on drawings done by children caught up in the midst of wars⁴, particularly the Spanish Civil War (Roith, 2009; Gallardo, 2012; Roberts, 2013)⁵. Unlike other collections of children’s drawings from the Civil War, which were

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² Research and Development Project *Documentación, interpretación and difusión digital del patrimonio educativo producido entre 1936-1939 en las escuelas de Barcelona. Los dibujos de la infancia*. EDU2010-20280. The drawings analysed can be accessed at www.uvic.cat/muvip.

³ In the early 1930s, public sector primary education was clearly deficient in terms of the number of places available (the private sector was three times larger), the poor quality of education offered, and the very old-fashioned type of teaching. In order to address this situation, the Barcelona City Council gave special priority to public education and, through its *Patronat Escolar*, opened a number of new schools – the so-called *Grups Escolars*. One of these was the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives.

⁴ Some examples might include: GUYVARCH, Didier, *Moi. Marie Rocher. Écolière en Guerre. Dessins d'enfants – 1914-1919*. Rennes: Apogée, 1993; BRAUNER, A., BRAUNER, F., *Ho disegnato la guerra. I disegni dei bambini dalla Prima guerra mondiale a Desert Storm*. Trento: Erickson, 1991; BRAUNER, F.; BRAUNER, A., *L'expression dramatique chez l'enfant: pris dans une guerre, handicapé mental*, Paris: Groupement de Recherches Pratiques pour l'Enfance, 2001; PIGNOT, M.; *La guerre des crayons: quand les petits Parisiens dessinaient la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Parigramme, 2004; AUDOIN-ROUZEU, S., “Enfances en Guerre au 20^e Siècle: Un Sujet?” *Presses de Sciences Po | Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 2006/1 - no 89. pp. 3-7. DOI: 10.3917/ving.089.0003. We might also cite the study of drawings by children in the concentration camps: STARGARDT, Nicholas. “Children’s Art of the Holocaust”, *Past & Present*, vol. 161/1, 1998

⁵ See: Christian Roith (2009) *Trotz allem zeichnen sie: Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg mit Kinderaugen gesehen*, *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, 45:1-2, 191-214;

produced for political reasons – to raise awareness and garner support internationally, the collection analysed here is made up of drawings that were produced as part of the normal school activity at the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives. It is a collection that was not known of outside the school during the war and one that offers a glimpse of the pupils' everyday life in a city that was still far from the battlefield. The war is present in many aspects – bombardments, queues for food, etc. – but the drawings also depict many other activities and occupations that reflect childhood in general, something that marks this collection out as being different from other collections of children's drawings produced during the Spanish Civil War and other wars.

The contents have been organised to give an overall view of the research done and, at the same time, to make clear the central axes of our analysis, including significant examples of the results obtained with references to the relevant drawings.

This article begins by describing the methodology employed in our multidisciplinary study. This methodology, together with the analytical categories used in the research, represents, in our opinion, one of the valuable contributions of our work. In addition, the database created as part of the research has enabled us to date and conserve this element of educational patrimony while simultaneously creating a documentary basis for further research.

1. Methodological contextualisation

The Barcelona municipal schools were planned to be the materialisation of a new kind of education that, within the second Spanish Republic, was being promoted by the Generalitat de Catalunya⁶ with the aim of making high quality education available to all children.

GALLARDO, José Antonio. *El dibujo infantil de la evacuación durante la guerra civil española (1936-1939)*, Malaga: Publications Service, University of Malaga, 2012. Also, Siân Roberts (2013) Activism, agency and archive: British activists and the representation of educational colonies in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War, *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, 49:6, 796-812.

10.1080/00309230.2013.848911. Mention should also be made of the archive: "Dibujos de los niños de la Guerra" held by the *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica* of the Spanish National Library:

http://bdh.bne.es/bnearch/Search.do;jsessionid=D161F0563B593AAA00B00014ECD5180B?destacada_s1=Drawings+de+los+ni%C3%B1os+de+la+Guerra&home=true

⁶ The 'Generalitat de Catalunya' is the name given to the autonomous government of Catalonia.

The drawings we have studied form part of the documentary archive of the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives, which contains more than 4000 pictures. Of these, we have studied 595, classified into series by the IMEB, the institution that had been charged with the custody of the archive⁷. In our research, we have respected this pre-existing classification. Specifically, we have analysed 78 series of drawings, dealing with a diverse range of themes, using a system developed from a multidisciplinary perspective which covers both formal/technical aspects as well as the content of the drawings.

One of the categories analysed, that referring to the social and military aspects reflected in the drawings, studies the representation of the impact of the war in terms of battle scenes, the bombardment of the civilian population, the presence of soldiers in the city and the food shortages. Given that in Catalonia the Civil War set in train a revolutionary process, other indicators have also been used, including the collectivisation of the economy, the presence of members of the militias, the initials of political parties and syndicates, graffiti, and flags and posters.

The educational policy category has in turn been broken down into two sub-categories: pedagogical principles and the axiological dimension.

The first of these sub-categories, that relating to pedagogical principles, covers those elements which were supposed to be incorporated into the Catalan Republican schools, defined as being unified schools that worked to ensure equality between all children; that is, schools that were to be secular as opposed to religious, coeducational – with mixed classes of boys and girls, and bilingual in that they recognised Catalan as the language of Catalonia. This kind of school, though never becoming the general norm, was promoted and sustained throughout the Civil War. The indicators used in our analysis are: secular schooling; coeducation; bilingualism; and political and socio-economic equality.

The axiological dimension subcategory refers to the values promoted by the European models of innovative pedagogy and 'New Education'. These values were

⁷ The archive was under the custody of the Library of the Museums of Art of Barcelona and, subsequently of the *Institut Municipal de Barcelona* (IMEB) – the Municipal Institute of Barcelona. The Pedagogical Documentation Centre of the IMEB recuperated the archive as an element of the educational patrimony of Catalonia and made it available to the *Museu Virtual de Pedagogia* of the University of Vic and its Educational Research Group (GREUV) for study and digitalisation.

considered to be important in forming democratic citizens and hence should be promoted through moral and civic education, and the very organisation and educational practices of the schools themselves. The indicators used in our research are: democratic political model; civic values; solidarity; violence; and peace.

The design of the classification system responded to two distinct objectives. On one hand, it enabled us to gain an overview of the sample as a whole, as well as providing a quantitative analysis of each of the series studied. However, the information is incomplete. We know that the drawings were produced by both boys and girls, since the majority are signed with both the name and surname of the child concerned. However, this is not always the case. Some of the drawings contain no information whatsoever about who produced them, while others are identified only by the initial letter of the first name plus the surname, which means we are unable to identify whether they were the work of a boy or a girl. The same thing happens with the age of the pupils, which is not recorded on all of the drawings. In some cases it is possible to identify the year group, but in others this is not so since most of the classes were named after regions of Catalonia without making any reference to the age of the children. Nevertheless, the classification system did enable us to make a fairly detailed analysis of the material, and group and classify the characteristics and themes that appeared.

On the other hand, the method employed also allowed us to make a qualitative analysis of the stories the drawings tell – whether individually, in series, or taken as a whole. An example of this might be drawing 306, which depicts playground games: a boy is shown playing with a ball, a girl (though the figure may be a boy too) is playing with a hoop and stick, while three girls are also shown skipping. This particular drawing depicts some of the games played in the city streets. The series it forms part of, ‘Children’s Games’ (drawings 306 to 317), provides further information about childhood, games, and toys played with by girls and by boys. When taken as part of the sample as a whole, each of the drawings, and each of the series, provides information about the everyday lives and activities of children during the Civil War and hence allow us to develop a more nuanced and complex vision of life in Barcelona at that time.

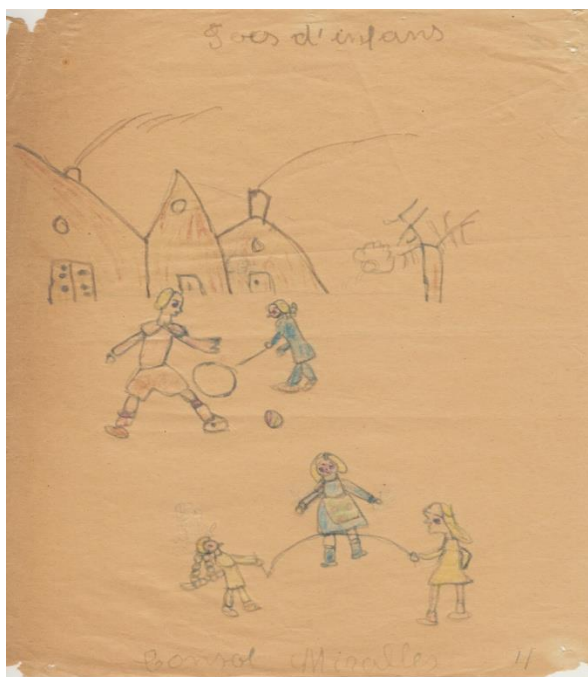


Figure 1. Ref. 306. Fons: IMEB

2. Pupils' drawings: everyday life and social change away from the battlefield

In terms of our analysis of both the social and military aspects present in the series of drawings from the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives, the first point to highlight is that we found hardly any images that explicitly extol the Republican forces in the struggle against Franco's rebels. The neutrality of schools, that is, the need to keep the ideological battle out of the classroom, was the subject of intense discussion and debates among the various organisations and political parties that formed the CENU, the *Consejo de la Escuela Nueva Unificada* (Council of the New Unified Schools), the body that controlled the Catalan education system during the years of the Civil War⁸.

It should be remarked that the Head of the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives, Pere Blasi, was a geographer and member of *ERC-Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (The Catalan Republican Left), the dominant political party in Catalonia up until the

⁸ By Decree, published on 27 June 1936, the government of the Generalitat de Catalunya constituted the *Comité de la Escuela Nueva Unificada* (CENU) – the Committee for the New Unified School. Article 1 established its aims as being: a) To organise a new teaching regime for the Unified Schools – which were to take the place of the confessional schools; b) To act to ensure that this new teaching regime was on rationalist principles of work and that any worker would be able to progress, without hindrance, from primary school to higher educational studies. See: Ramon Navarro, *L'educació a Catalunya durant la Generalitat*. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1979).

outbreak of the war. With its republican liberal ideology, ERC, together with the Anarchist movement, strongly defended the idea of school neutrality, which was opposed by the smaller Socialist and Communist parties. The latter argued for a more confrontational position, with the aim of mobilising teachers and schools in favour of the war effort.

The notion of school neutrality that can be perceived in the children's drawings does not contradict the fact that there are many references to the political situation. The drawings reflect the revolutionary atmosphere that permeated everyday life in Catalonia during the early months of the Civil War, but there are no indications of indoctrination, propaganda or of a particular position being adopted.

The most significant aspect of the war that appears in the drawings is that of the aerial bombardments of the civilian population of the city, though the social consequences of the conflict are also depicted in the shortages of food and other products. However, the drawings also depict members of the militias in the streets, the initials of the political parties and syndicalist organisations, their flags and posters, all of which illustrate the social and political changes of the time. This was the everyday life of the city of Barcelona, where the walls of many buildings were plastered with propaganda posters or daubed with the slogans and initials of the political parties and syndicates – a use of political posters as propaganda in Catalonia that today enjoys world-renown for its quality and originality⁹.

Amongst the initials that appear in the street scenes, predominant are those of the Anarchist syndicate CNT-FAI (the National Confederation of Labour-Iberian Anarchist Federation), which played a leading role in the early months of the war and pushed forward a revolutionary process in Catalonia¹⁰. Its dominance was even more apparent in the working class area of Sants, where the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives was. In contrast, there are practically no representations of slogans that refer to governmental institutions, whether of the Generalitat de Catalunya or those of the government of the Spanish Republic. The children's drawings clearly demonstrate the power on the

⁹ Daniel Giralt-Miracle, "Cartells que han fet història" in *Cartells de la col·lecció Fornàs. Producció gràfica de la Segona República i la Guerra Civil*. (Barcelona: Departament d'Edicions del Parlament de Catalunya, 2006).

¹⁰ The initials of Anarchist organisations appear in drawings 41, 42, 54, 61, 66, 74, 100, 128, 170, 208, 213 and 410.

ground of the Anarchist syndicate to the exclusion of that of the political institutions. The Anarchist revolution is depicted as an ordered reality, with collectivised businesses run by the workers and operating normally¹¹. This revolutionary order is also seen in the presence of members of the militias in the streets, maintaining order in a very relaxed way. The call to solidarity with those affected by the war is also portrayed in, for example, drawing 57 in the series 'Chestnut Sellers' (drawings 54-58), in which a woman who seems to have just bought some chestnuts is offering them to another woman who has a child with her.

This image of a friendly revolution, one that does not contemplate the persecution of owners or members of the religious orders, coincides with the idealism of many members of the International Brigades who travelled to Spain to fight against fascism, as portrayed by George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*.¹² This vision naturally stands in marked contrast to the propaganda put out by Franco's forces that portrayed the revolution as a time of disorder and absolute chaos.

Shortages, especially of everyday foodstuffs, are one of the most widespread problems faced by civilian populations in wartime. Numerous oral testimonies and personal recollections reflect the difficulties people experienced in finding enough to eat at that time, difficulties that were particularly acute in the large industrial cities like Barcelona. As a result, many people went out into the rural areas to try to obtain food, where it was more plentiful. The drawings in the series 'Train' (drawings 410 to 414) depict railway stations where the platforms and trains were crammed with people carrying baskets and sacks, presumably with food brought from the surrounding countryside as evidence of the impact of the war.

The Barcelona city council prioritised the organisation of school canteens, including one at the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives, in an attempt to ward off the problem of child malnutrition¹³. In addition, the council distributed foodstuffs, such as milk, in the schools, supplies that were often donated by international organisations. The pupils' drawings make no reference to meals in school but do, in contrast, highlight the

¹¹ Albert Pérez Baró, *Trenta mesos de col·lectivisme a Catalunya, cinquanta anys després*. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1986).

¹² George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*. (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1938).

¹³ Enriqueta Fontquerni and Mariona Ribalta, *L'ensenyament a Catalunya durant la guerra civil. El CENU*. (Barcelona: Barcanova, 1982).

difficulties the ordinary people of the city had in obtaining provisions. Of particular relevance are the drawings that show long queues in front of bakeries and grocer's shops, the market stalls with little food to sell, the astronomical prices, or the signs that indicate that there is no food for sale, like the one that says "No eggs", a product that was very difficult to obtain.

The nearest battlefield to Barcelona was in neighbouring Aragon, a relatively distant and stable front that was not directly affected by the large-scale military offensives of the first two years of the war. Barcelona was, then, a city in which the war was experienced mainly through the general mobilisation required to create and sustain an army. With the war far away, the children's representations of battlefields owed more to clichés than to any direct experience.

What the children did experience, however, were the air raids by the aviation of the fascist Italian government. In support of the rebel troops of General Franco, Italian planes repeatedly bombed Catalonia, especially Barcelona, killing 2428 people and injuring 2150 more.¹⁴ The Spanish Civil War was the first time that the aerial bombardment of civilian populations was used as a strategy to weaken the Republican rear, a practice that became much more widespread during the Second World War.

The air raids became part of the everyday life on the people of Barcelona; the fear of being killed by a bomb dropped from the air was generalised, but was particularly present among the children. This is reflected in a diary written by a girl who was a pupil at another Barcelona school, the Grup Escolar Ramon Llull, in which the aerial bombardments ranked alongside the food shortages as the main source of worry¹⁵. This is also reflected in the drawings of the children of the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives.

To protect the population from the deadly air-raids, numerous underground shelters were built in Barcelona, and even the metro stations and tunnels were used.¹⁶ The presence of air-raid shelters in numerous drawings, particularly in the series

¹⁴ Joan Villarroya, *Els bombardeigs de Barcelona durant la guerra civil (1936-1939)*. (Barcelona: Ed. L'Abadia de Montserrat, 1999).

¹⁵ Encarnació Martorell, *Amb ulls de nena. El dietari de la guerra a la rera guarda*. (Barcelona: Ara Llibres, 2009).

¹⁶ The designer of the air-raid shelters was the engineer Ramón Perera, recruited by the British Secret Services during World War II. See: Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis, *Ramon Perera: l'home dels refugis*. (Barcelona: Rosa dels Vents, 2008).

'Refugees, refuges', indicates the extent to which they formed part of the everyday reality of the children, a familiar element of the urban landscape in Barcelona. The drawings depict the entrances to the shelters or posters indicating the location of the nearest one. Among the drawings analysed there appear scenes that depict people gathered at the entrance to a shelter, scanning the sky, as in drawing 127. In the same series, we also find images of women, children and old people huddled together in metro stations waiting for the 'All Clear' siren.

There are fewer depictions of the bomber aircraft than there are of the air-raid shelters, and the images that are present seem more to reflect the constant threat the air-raids represented rather than a particular bombardment. The fear they generated is clearly represented in drawing 80, by an 11-year-old girl, which depicts planes dropping huge bombs, almost as big as the planes themselves, while a girl standing at the entrance to an air-raid shelter exclaims in Catalan: "*Ai que estan a sobre*" (Look out! They are right overhead!).

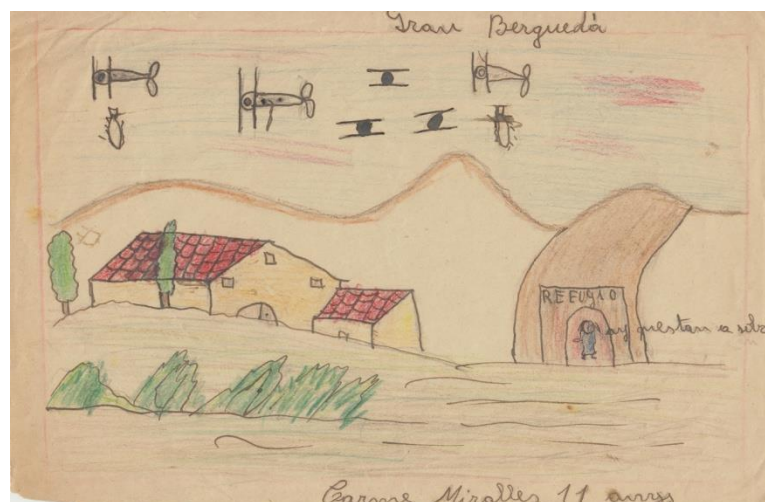


Figure 2. Ref. 80. Fons: IMEB

3. The drawings and the new educational policies

The education policy of the Second Republic aimed to create an innovative form of schooling that would play its part in the construction of a new society in a Europe that was still scarred by the destruction, both material and moral, of the First World War. This idea was enshrined in the 7th principle of International League for

New Education which declared that education should prepare children to become “not only future citizens capable of fulfilling their duties to those around them, to their nation and to Humanity as a whole, but also human beings who are aware of the dignity of mankind”. Similarly, the 1st principle of the International Office of New Schools set out the need to “prepare children for modern life, with all its material and moral demands”.¹⁷

The pedagogical discourses which were being developed in Europe at that time, and the innovative measures introduced throughout the period of the Second Republic (from extension study grants for practising teachers to the ‘Educational Missions’¹⁸), were very present in the educational policies and the reality of schools in Catalonia, and ultimately led to the creation of the CENU.

This was an ambitious political project which aimed to make high quality education available to all. To achieve this it was necessary, amongst other measures, to create more schools in new buildings and to ensure that there were sufficient numbers of new teachers. The aim was clear – to expand the new unified schools of the Republic in order to guarantee education for all, both children and adults. In the series entitled ‘Book Fair’ (drawings 210 to 214) the titles of the books reproduced include “*El niño republicano*” (The Republican Child) and “*Soy republicano*” (I am a Republican), while drawing 214 contains the message “*Treballador instrueix-te*” (Worker educate yourself!).

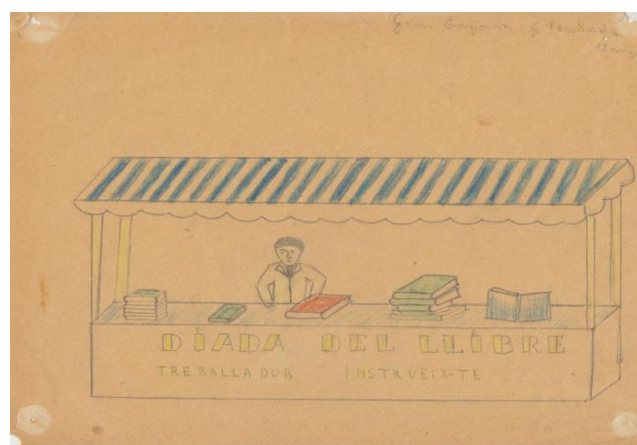


Figure 3. Ref. 214. Fons: IMEB

¹⁷ Adolphe Ferrière, *L'École nouvelle et le Bureau International des Écoles Nouvelles*. 3^e ed. (Les Pléiades sur Blonay (Vaud) : chez l'auteur, 1919).

¹⁸ See: Eugenio Otero-Urtaza, “The Educational Missions under the Second Republic in Spain (1931–1936): a framework for popular education”, *Paedagogica Historica*, 47, n. 1-2, (2011): 207-220.

It should be remembered that the CENU, created on 27 July 1936, just 11 days after the military coup, played a key role in implementing the Republic's educational programme in which education was seen as a basic public service. The Decree that set up the CENU affirmed that the time was ripe for the development of a 'new school', one based on the rationalist principle of work and on the principle of human brotherhood. In the same series of drawings ('Book Fair') a call is issued to solidarity with those who had been affected by the war. Thus, the drawings depict placards in the streets or on the bookstalls urging people to "*Acordaros de los niños refugiados*" (Remember the Refugee Children) – drawing 211 or "*Ayudad a los hospitales de sangre*" (Help the Blood Hospitals) – drawing 213.

The studies carried out on the period all agree that in Catalonia the Grups Escolars constituted the best example of Republican schools, and also that they were the source of the best memories of those times in many of their pupils.¹⁹ They represented a real example of municipal autonomy in educational matters, which allowed the effective coordination of primary schools. This model of democratic management succeeded in creating one of the most important networks of publicly run schools in Europe, and one in which new teaching techniques were widely adopted.²⁰

The children's drawings depict elements that are redolent of a public, active and secular education, with examples of vitality, individuality, and collective spirit, all characteristics of a new form of education that aimed to form its pupils both morally and socially.²¹

The drawings depict the city, its squares, streets and buildings, but also marine landscapes (in the series 'Sea' – drawings 637 to 641) and rural settings far from the urban sprawl (for example, in the series 'Farmhouse' – drawings 565 and 566). Particular attention is paid to the beauty of the school architecture and the care with which it was treated, as can be seen in the series 'Coming out of school' (drawings 378

¹⁹ Marta Mata, "Un segle de relació entre ciutat, administració educativa i Ajuntament de Barcelona" in *Un segle d'escola a Barcelona. Acció municipal i popular. 1900-2003*. Jaume Carbonell et al. (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Edicions Octaedro, 2003).

²⁰ Jaume Carbonell, "Control i canvi en l'ensenyament" in *Un segle d'escola a Barcelona. Acció municipal i popular. 1900-2003*. Jaume Carbonell et al. (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona i Edicions Octaedro, 2003).

²¹ Lorenzo Luzuriaga, *La educación nueva*. (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1964).

to 380). The playground is also shown as an important space that allowed some activities to be done outside the classroom (for example, the series 'Gymnastics' – drawings 193 to 196). It should be noted that the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives was an excellent example of the new school architecture. The designer of the building, and also of other Grups Escolars, Josep Goday, was a highly renowned architect²².

The drawings depict pupils doing activities inside and outside the classroom. They play, work in groups, talk to each other, leave school individually or in groups, and walk down the streets and back into the life of the city: shopping in the market (the series 'Market Stall' – drawings 37 to 48), families eating together (for example, drawing 218 from the series 'Dining Room'), or the collection of rubbish (in the series 'Dustman' – drawings 470 to 473), etc. They also offer glimpses of high days and holidays (in the series 'The Day of the Kings' (Epiphany) – drawings 458 to 461), entertainments (in the series 'Clowns' – drawings 225 and 226), or sports championships (in the series 'Sports' – drawings 415 to 417), etc.



Figure 4 . Ref. 218. Fons: IMEB

Taken as a whole the children's drawings offer a glimpse of the social and educational project that was being developed at a time when the aim was to shape a democratic society by extending the concepts of freedom, justice and solidarity to the whole population.²³ It might also be suggested that the drawings that depict the aerial

²² Albert Cubeles and Marc Cuixart (eds.) *Josep Goday Casals. Arquitectura escolar a Barcelona de la Mancomunitat a la República*. (Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona i Institut d'Educació, 2008).

²³ Isabel Carrillo, "La educación nueva: imágenes de una pedagogía para la democracia and la libertad" in *Historia de la Educación en Valores*. Vol.2. Eulàlia Collelldemont and Conrad Vilanou (Bilbao: Desclée

bombing raids, the food shortages or the air-raid shelters are examples that express, indirectly and certainly unintentionally, the dangers associated with such a democratic project.

The principles of this new democratic society, and of the educational system that was to contribute to its development, are evident in the various educational laws that were passed. Our research has focussed particularly on the educational legislation enacted by the Generalitat de Catalunya. When read through the drawings, elements of this new political, social and pedagogical identity of the Republican schools can be perceived. Particularly significant are the indications of a secular, bilingual and coeducational schooling.

The educational legislation aimed, amongst other things, to promote respect for the mother tongue of the pupils, whether Catalan or Spanish. This is reflected in the Decree passed on 29 April 1931²⁴ that regulated the use of Catalan in schools, but without prejudicing the use of Castilian Spanish. Article 2 established that kindergartens and pre-school education in Catalonia should use the mother tongue of the children, be it Catalan or Castilian; Article 3 set out the same principle for primary schools, with the express indication that Catalan-speaking pupils should be taught Castilian from the age of 8 onwards. Subsequently, another Decree (28 September, 1936) on the use of mother tongues in school²⁵ declared that nothing could violate the rights of the child, including the right to use their own language.

Thus the adoption of bilingualism as an educational principle of the schools was strongly promoted, as the drawings analysed here indicate. From studying the drawings, we know that each year group at the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives was identified by the name of a Catalan *comarca* (an administrative division), and this name appears in Catalan on the drawings. Catalan seems to have been the normal language of the school since the children, apart from indicating the year group they belonged to, also normally wrote their name and age on the drawings, and the age was typically written in Catalan.

de Brower, 2001). See also: Sian Roberts, "Activism, agency and archive: British activists and the representation of educational colonies in Spain during and after the Spanish Civil War", *Paedagogica Historica*, 49, n. 6 (2013): 796-812

²⁴ Gaceta de Madrid, 30/4/1931.

²⁵ Diari Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya, 22/9/1936.

In other drawings which reflect life in the city, both languages are present – a reflection of the way in which Catalan and Castilian coexisted in people’s everyday lives. For example, the series ‘shoe-maker/cobbler’ – drawings 90-98, contains images of shoe shops with posters proclaiming the products they sold and the services they offered. In some of the drawings, part of the text is written in Catalan and part in Castilian.

In terms of coeducation in Catalan schools, this was laid down in a Decree of 28 September 1936 to be the general norm for all schools and all ages of children. The access of girls to school education was also encouraged by the role played by the many woman teachers. For example, in her work *Diana o l’educació d’una nena*, the teacher and school inspector Leonor Serrano made an impassioned plea for the education of girls: “Your daughters and protégés, under the protection of the Republic, will have a future that is more splendid than either the present or the past, than that which you will have enjoyed or endured. Today’s girls, the women of tomorrow, will be educated, will work, will progress and will live more intensely than you have. They shall take their place in the workshops, the factories, the streets, and earn their own living. (...) They must be prepared, then, for this better life.”²⁶

In addition, the policy of coeducation was to help transform separate boys’ and girls’ schools into new mixed institutions. In this way, from primary school onwards, as laid down by the Decree, the normality of boys and girls living and learning together was to be established with the aim of setting a pattern that would carry over into the children’s future adult lives. The drawings give us evidence that the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives was a mixed school, not only at the primary stage but also in pre-schooling.

This is demonstrated by the names of the children who produced the drawings on the pictures. It is thus clear that the school was attended by both boys and girls. An example of this can be seen in the series ‘School Class’ – 4 drawings signed by Matias Costa (633), Antonia Guitart (634), Ramon Berbis (635), and Teresa L (636). The names on the drawings reflect that the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives was a mixed school, and that girls and boys made up a single school community, even though they sometimes occupied separate spaces. In this series, drawing 633 depicts a class where all the

²⁶ Leonor Serrano, *Diana o l’educació d’una nena*. *Grau I La naturalesa i la família*, 2nd Ed. (Barcelona: Impremta Elezeviriana i Llibreria Camí S.A., 1936), 5.

pupils appear to be boys and the teacher is a man. On the other hand, drawing 593 shows a classroom scene with a woman teacher and girls pupils.



Figure 5a Ref. 633. Fons: IMEB



Figure 5b . Ref. 593. Fons: IMEB

The separation was however flexible, since there are other drawings in which both boys and girls are depicted doing the same activities in the same space and at the same time. An example of this can be seen in the series “Gymnastics” (drawings 193-196) where both boys and girls are shown doing physical education at the same time in the open air. In other drawings of sports and games, it is apparent that on occasion boys and girls played together, though here too gender roles appear to have been clearly marked. This can be seen, for example, in the series ‘Children’s Games’ (drawings 306-317).

The school does not appear to have made any attempt to censor the children’s representations of the war and its impact on life in the city. In fact it seems that on occasions teachers suggested the war as a subject for the children to draw about. The children’s pictures were not simply free drawings but were often produced in response to suggestions from the teachers. This is made evident in the series ‘War Scenes’ (drawings 59-64) where four of the drawings are headed with the same title. Even though, as mentioned earlier, efforts were made to ensure that the war did not overly affect the school life of the pupils, it is no less true that this was almost impossible, especially as the war went on, as Portell and Marqués (2006) make clear:

“At school, they never knew what they would find. Some children were absent because they had been sent to queue for food. Other disappeared overnight, with no explanation. Their parents would take them to their home village, outside the range of

the bombers. Teachers too would disappear. Some left, others were sent to other schools. Nothing was permanent. From time to time, the air-raid sirens would sound and the teachers would have to grab the children and rush to the nearest shelter[...]. And yet, despite the difficulties, school life went on.”

The war scenes are drawn by boys and girls of different ages and year groups. A war that, we reiterate, was gradually eating away at civilian life and the democratic principles that the Second Republic was trying to put into practice. However, when taken as a whole, the drawings also reflect a certain duality of messages that allow us a glimpse of the complex relationship between the kind of citizenship that was desired and the model that was inherited from the past²⁷.

4. Concluding notes on education in wartime

The results of our research allow us, then, to offer the following considerations about the education provided at the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives, Barcelona, during the Spanish Civil War.

First: Protecting children from the war

The Republican schools in Barcelona tried, as far as possible, to continue with their normal educational activity and protect the city’s children from the havoc created by the war. In this sense, the collection analysed here differs greatly from others which include drawings that contain far more explicit references to the pain and suffering caused by the war, drawings in which the victims are very present.

Death, so close in wartime, is represented in this collection as something distant. The drawings analysed here do not depict death as either heroic or tragic; the victims are not a part of the children’s reality but rather they are people who die far away at the battlefield. This sense of death as distant does not coincide with the images produced in other conflicts, drawings in which death itself is the subject, like those for example of the “child heroes” or pictures that depict the death by firing squad of civilians.

²⁷ Anna Gómez and Eulàlia Collelldemont, “El arte de enseñar: una práctica pedagógica compartida” in *Arte y Oficio de Enseñar. Dos siglos de perspectiva histórica. XVI Coloquio Nacional de Historia de la Educación*. Pablo Celada, ed. (Burgos de Osma: Sociedad Española de Historia de la Educación, Universidad de Valladolid, 2011).

The collection we have analysed was never exhibited in the way that other groups of drawings were to raise awareness in the rest of the world of the indiscriminate and brutal attacks by Franco's forces against the civilian population. Various organisations, including the Carnegie Institute and the American Friends Service Committee organised showings of pictures drawn by Spanish children that reflected the effects of the war. In 1938, at the height of the Civil War, the exhibition "They Still Draw Pictures" toured the UK and the USA. The catalogue contained an introduction by the British author Aldous Huxley.²⁸

In terms, at least, of the educational activity of the Grup Escolar Lluís Vives, this is depicted in the drawings with apparent normality. Many of the pictures showing the life and work of the classroom carry no hint of the war going on outside. However, this changes when the children turn their attention to the outside world. Then the images are full of references to political activity and propaganda, the presence on the streets of members of the armed militias, or the queues for food, and there are also more explicit depictions of battles or air-raids.

Second: educational activity as an expression of pacifism and resistance

During the war, away from the battlefield there was a clear attempt by all the bodies of the legal Republican government to maintain normal school life and to organise the spaces inhabited by children (schools, school camps, children's hospitals) in such a way as to reduce the impact of the war. This was only possible because of the emphasis placed on education in the public policies of the Republican government.

In the midst of the Civil War, a well-known Barcelona doctor published a book on how to bring up children which also called for steps to be taken at an international level to protect children during times of war: "The castle that shelters children should be inexpugnable and respected as such by all humanitarian consciences (...) An International League for the Protection of Children should be set up to free us from the dreadful responsibility for the deaths of children, of whatever country, whether by arms or by the suffering that war brings".²⁹

²⁸ Juliet Kinchin and Aidan O'Connor, *Century of the Child: Growing by Design, 1900-2000*. (New York: Moma, 2012).

²⁹ Roig Raventós, J. (1937). *El problema de l'infant*. Barcelona: Editorial Higia.

In short, and although it might seem paradoxical, the organisation of the education system in Catalonia during the Civil War was based on a longing for peace: “The old school, the old teachers, the old books have not been able to prevent wars. We solemnly swear, accepting full responsibility for the implications such a declaration involves, that in structuring this new culture we aspire to make war hateful and, thereby, impossible.”³⁰ In any case, school life continued as normal until the air-raids intensified, the battlefield came ever closer to Barcelona and, as the siege by Franco’s forces tightened, the city finally fell. However, at least for a while, it proved possible for school life to coexist with the war.

Third: narrating history as plurality

The coexistence of diverse individual and collective experiences in any given period requires us to understand history as something other than a linear progression through time and space. There is no single chain of events, but rather a multiplicity of processes that historians need to take into account. Time cannot be explained as simply an ordered sequence of happenings, but only as the individual or collective appropriation of particular moments in a process that is far from homogenous.³¹

In this sense, the images, expressions and perceptions glimpsed in the children’s drawings are far from being mere footnotes to history. Since the children themselves were protagonists in the unfolding events, their drawings offer us testimonies that are full of information and interest and, as a result, enable us to gain a broader understanding, and undertake more complex analyses, of the processes involved in what was a crucial period in our history.

³⁰ See: Ramon Navarro, *L’educació a Catalunya durant la Generalitat*. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1979).

³¹ Antonio Nóvoa, “As palavras das imagens. Retratos de professores (séculos XIX-XX)”, *Atlântida-Revista de Cultura*, XLVI (2003), accessed March, 17, 2014, http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/671/1/21231_1646-1002_101-122.pdf