

Jean Watts and the Spanish Civil War: Writing, Politics, and Contexts

A Case Study Collection

Case Study Two: Jean Watts, Ted Allan, and the Daily

Clarion in Spain

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In an interview from the late 1960s, Jean Watts says that she was “dying to go [to Spain] and [she] knew quite well that the Brigade wouldn’t take [her]” (Watts 0:40). Instead of signing up with the Brigades, Watts was officially sent to Spain by the *Daily Clarion*, the newspaper for the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), in February of 1937 at the age of 27. She was “assigned to the Blood Transfusion Institute as a kind of public relations person” (Watts 0:46). The International Brigades were looking for a representative “to report on the Blood Transfusion Unit because of all the stories circulating” (Allan qtd. in Allan, Chap 1), many of which concerned the reputation of the unit’s founder, Canadian physician Norman Bethune. For Watts, the assignment with the *Daily Clarion* afforded legitimacy to her journalism, as the assignment was “really [her] only pretense at being a writer” (0:16), as Watts claims that she was not employed by the *Daily Clarion* before the paper sent her to Spain.¹ From February 1937 to May

¹ Although Watts may not have been employed by the *Clarion*, Nancy E. Butler notes in her unpublished dissertation that Watts “wrote a series of articles on plays she saw [in Moscow], and on the Soviet theatre movement” (374) for the newspaper after she attended the 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival.

1938, Watts was on assignment as Spanish correspondent with the *Daily Clarion*. Watts's writing as a foreign correspondent is in line with international journalistic practices to embed dedicated reporters in situ to cover major world events. She and, by extension, the *Daily Clarion* offer a counter-narrative to the increasing domination of domestic Canadian news media by foreign news agencies like Associated Press (AP) and Reuters.²

This case study focuses on the logistics of appointment, travel, and resources that frame Watts's experiences as a journalist in Spain. It compares each of these aspects of her time in Spain with those of Ted Allan, her fellow journalist for the *Daily Clarion*, and Henning Sorensen, journalist for the *New Commonwealth*. Watts's experiences of the Spanish Civil War were unique, but an ostensibly typical experience for Canadian journalists is difficult to identify. An analysis of the ways in which Canadian journalists were able to access resources at various stages of their tenure in Spain begins to uncover the politics of Canadian leftist journalism during the Spanish Civil War, how those journalists were chosen, supported, and published across Canadian, Spanish, and international contexts. Such an analysis provides nuance to the ongoing recovery of Canadian involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

This case study takes as its starting point Allan's account of his appointment as foreign correspondent to the *Daily Clarion*; this anecdote offers clues as to the circumstances of Watts's appointment and suggests that, in contrast to the account in Allan's biography, Watts was the best

² See Case Study One.

qualified and preferred candidate for the role. Next, the case study contrasts Watts's and Allan's experiences travelling to Spain, shedding light on the various challenges Canadian correspondents and combatants encountered, and providing further evidence of the Canadian newspaper's strong preference for Watts as foreign correspondent over Allan. Finally, the case study draws upon the various means by which Watts, Allan, Sorensen, and American journalists and authors Martha Gellhorn and Ernest Hemingway travelled around Spain. On one hand, it shows that levels of access to transportation varied widely for foreign correspondents. On the other, it demonstrates that, despite the initial support of the Canadian editorial apparatus, Watts would not necessarily have access to the same level of support trying to function as a correspondent in Spain. These aspects of the varied experience of Canadian foreign correspondents—their appointment as correspondents, their travel to Spain, and their navigation in Spain—together elucidate the complex logistics of supporting embedded foreign correspondents. As Case Study One indicates, the *Daily Clarion* operated independently of the large British and American news agencies that had come to dominate Canadian newspapers, and its role as the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) tied it to a committed leftist politics. The *Clarion's* own administrative structures were complex, and the logistics of appointing, sending, and supporting its foreign correspondents contextualizes Watts's contribution to the newspaper in an increasingly convoluted network of news agencies, journalists, combatants, and political organizations.

Watts and Allan: Two Candidates

Both Watts and Allan are the subjects of ongoing recovery for their textual contributions to the Spanish Civil War, and both acted as foreign correspondents in Spain for the *Daily Clarion*. Allan, the eventual author of the novel *This Time a Better Earth* (1939) and the biography of physician Norman Bethune *The Scalpel, The Sword* (1952), has had the benefit of personal and literary relationships with such figures as Hemingway and Bethune and a successful career as a screenwriter. Merrily Weisbord's documentary film, *Ted Allan: Minstrel Boy of the 20th Century*, hails Allan as the "missing man of Canadian letters" (Weisbord qtd. in Kelly). The claims of Weisbord's film lend authority to Allan's own claims (filtered through his son, Norman Allan in his unpublished biography of Ted) that he was the obvious candidate when it came time for the CPC to send a correspondent to Spain. While Allan's contribution to Canadian and international letters over the course of his career was substantial, the contrasts between Watts's and Allan's respective treatment by the *Clarion* suggest that in the moment of the Spanish Civil War the paper regarded Watts's contribution to be more valuable, or at least more marketable, than Allan's.

A central contrast between Allan and Watts lies in their personal accounts of why they chose to go to Spain as foreign correspondents. On one hand, Watts simply declares in her interview that she "knew quite well the Brigades wouldn't take [her]" (0:40). Her declaration suggests a

gendered bias on the part of the Brigades that is borne out by the gendered work that women tended to take on during the Spanish Civil War: women tended to be nurses and humanitarian workers (Fyrth and Alexander), roles that have been largely, and often erroneously, cast as non-political, meliorist contributions to an international conflict. Watts may have perceived the Brigades' reluctance to take her as a combatant to be an undue bias against her gender. Watts's reputation as a "bluestocking" (Livesay, *Journey With My Selves*, 64), an educated feminist archetype, has fuelled anecdotes about her later insistence on being admitted to the Brigades once in Spain.³ This reputation provides some context and explanation for her desire to seek out a politically committed form of participation in the war—journalism for the newspaper of the CPC—when the combatant role was not available to her. From Watts's perspective, journalism may simply have offered her a politically motivated way of participating in the conflict; in her account of her decision to go to Spain, her appointment seems relatively straightforward.

On the other hand, Allan's account of his decision to go to Spain is complex and contradictory; Allan seems to have had more numerous politically explicit modes of involvement in the war available to him, but his appointment as foreign correspondent was frequently obstructed. Norman Allan's unpublished biography of his father quotes from Allan's autobiographical notes in which he asserts that his previous work with

³ See Conclusion.

the *Daily Clarion* made him the obvious choice. However, some of the contradictions in his unofficial biography throw that claim into question.

Allan had worked for some years as Montreal correspondent for the *Daily Clarion* and was a member of the CPC. Norman Allan quotes from his father's notes:

The Canadian Party, in the persons of Fred Rose had agreed to send me to Spain as correspondent for the party newspaper, the *Daily Clarion*....I traveled first to Toronto to meet with Leslie Morris, the editor of the paper. The Montreal comrades had forgotten to check with Leslie Morris, and in the meanwhile Leslie had made arrangements for Jean Watts to act as the paper's correspondent. Watts had come into their office just the day before I got to Toronto. Embarrassment and apologies all round, but I was screwed. (Allan qtd. in Allan, Chap 1)

In this account, Allan asserts that, despite promises from the CPC, the fact that the editor of the *Daily Clarion* promised the correspondent role to Watts by mistake meant that he was "screwed," and that he would not be able to go to Spain. Allan goes on to threaten that he would join the International Brigades if he was not appointed as correspondent, contravening the orders of the CPC and risking expulsion. According to this biography, the *Clarion* acquiesced and sent Allan as a correspondent to Spain. From Allan's perspective, Watts should not have been sent as correspondent by the paper. The CPC had chosen him as correspondent

in Spain, but the CPC had not relayed the message to the *Clarion* editorship.

It is not clear in Allan's narrative why the CPC did not want him to go to Spain, or why the threat of his enlistment would have contravened CPC orders. In fact, there are multiple puzzling contradictions both in the archival record of Allan's participation in the war and within Norman Allan's biography of his father. In his introduction to the pamphlet *Hello Canada*, Allan is explicit that Watts was the appointed correspondent for the *Clarion*:⁴

When Jean Watts, the *Clarion* correspondent, had to leave for a short while, I pinch-hit of her as well as writing for the Federated Press. Writing distinctly for a Canadian paper of my own countrymen made me prouder than I had ever been in my life. ("Introduction," 5)

In this account, Allan characterizes his time writing for the *Clarion* as "pinch-hitting"—filling in when Watts was suddenly unable to fill the role for a short time.⁵ For Allan, this ad hoc, temporary writing is still a source of pride. His pride at the opportunity to write for a Canadian paper suggests that these opportunities were hard to come by, a suggestion that supports the argument in Case Study One that there were few Canadian journalists producing dedicated material for Canadian

⁴ Many thanks to Kaarina Mikalson for discovering Allan's account in *Hello Canada*.

⁵ In an interview with the *Clarion*, Watts's absence from the paper is described as a vacation: "I talked to Jean Watts in Paris. After five month's hard work in Spain, she has been enjoying a month's holiday in France and England, and was preparing to return to Madrid within a few days" (30 August 1937). After Watts's one-month absence, she wrote few articles for the *Clarion*. The circumstances of her time away from the newspaper and her experiences upon her return are worthy of future study.

publications. For Allan, writing for the *Clarion* was a rare opportunity to write for a Canadian publication that he took over temporarily from Watts.

Despite this account of the temporary nature of Allan's involvement with the *Clarion*, Allan's biography claims that the CPC granted him an official appointment as correspondent to the *Daily Clarion*. However, as this case study goes on to mention, Allan's behaviour once in Spain suggests that he was not granted this appointment at all and in fact went to Spain expecting to volunteer as part of the Brigades. Allan was reluctant to leave his combatant comrades once he actually reached Spain; he seems to have made his way to Spain with other combatants instead of other journalists; Colonel Peter Kerrigan, Political Commissar of the British Battalion in the International Brigades, sent Allan to the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit despite Allan's protests; and Dr. Norman Bethune appointed Allan political commissar of the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit upon his arrival. Despite the fact that Allan felt he was "screwed" in the confusion over his appointment, his desire "to do some good work broadcasting from Madrid and writing freelance for newspapers and magazines" was strong enough that he and Watts ended up on the same boat across to France, with "[t]wenty odd American volunteers and seven Canadians on our way to Spain" (Allan qtd. in Allan, Chap 1).⁶ Watts and Allan seem to have gotten along well, and

⁶ Within three months, Ted Allan would return from a trip to Jarama and recall the group he travelled with on the boat: "MARCH 5th. 1937. Just came back from Jarama. Photographer Geza Karpathi, and Herbert Kline with me. Can't stand it. John, Dave, Milty and twenty others on the boat with me, dead! All dead. Wiped out in some stupid attack. God" (Allan qtd. in Allan).

were pleased to see each other when they met again in Spain at the Blood Transfusion Unit. No account exists of Watts's perspectives on this apparent glitch. The contrast between the two correspondents' accounts allows for some speculation about the actual circumstances of their respective appointments.

There are at least two possible explanations for Allan's account of this confusion. In one explanation, Watts had impeccable timing. She walked into the office of a newspaper to which she had only contributed occasional articles seeking to go to Spain, and she coincidentally filled a need for the newspaper's leadership, superseding the long-standing Montreal correspondent, Allan, to whom Party leadership had promised a foreign correspondent position. Allan then made his way to Spain confused as to his role once he arrived. Or, a second possibility: Allan's accounts overstate the depth of his connection to the *Daily Clarion* and the promises the Party made to him. In counterpoint to Allan, some of Watts's biographical details could, in fact, have made her the more obvious and suitable candidate: Watts's previous contributions to the newspapers were a series of articles on the 1935 Moscow Theatre Festival (Butler 374), and Watts had been very active in both direction and performance with leftist theatre group, Worker's Theatre. The CPC sought a correspondent to respond to rumours of friction amongst the staff and physicians at Bethune's Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit. This posting, which Watts herself describes as that of a "kind of public relations person" (0:41), may have required the finesse of a cultural reporter and the political commitment of a leftist artist. Watts's artistic

work in the leftist theatre community and her journalistic history with the paper may have fit the bill perfectly.

Furthermore, the contradictions in Allan's account of his appointment to Spain and subsequent experiences in Spain elicit multiple potential explanations. In one explanation, Allan may have convinced the *Clarion* to appoint him as foreign correspondent, and may simply have changed his mind on the way to Spain, preferring to stay with his comrades in arms than participate in the conflict in the individual and singular role of journalist. In another, Allan did not convince the *Clarion* to appoint him. In this explanation, his threat to join the Brigades and risk expulsion rings hollow, and his subsequent appointment as Political Commissar to the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit is merely fluke. In this case, it may be the simpler and more straightforward story that Watts offers that is the more accurate one. The convoluted circumstances of Allan's appointment may be a mischaracterization of his relationship to the *Daily Clarion* and the CPC.

Even the initial appointment of Watts and Allan as foreign correspondents reveals the singular experiences of Canadian journalists in the Spanish Civil War and the complex politics by which either candidate could choose to go to the conflict as a journalist, could assume that he or she were an obvious candidate for the role, or could later chose to narrativize their relationship to the newspaper. Scholarship and biography on Allan has maintained that he was the *Clarion* correspondent, but a close look at Allan's own accounts of his time in Spain reveals that he had a more complex—if not tenuous—relationship

to the newspaper. In the recovery of both writers' legacies, the likelihood that Watts was sent to Spain as the preferred candidate adds nuance to Allan's experiences as foreign correspondent and suggests that contemporaneous journalistic outlets may have perceived a female writer to be the most qualified and obvious candidate for reporting on the Spanish Civil War.

Getting to Spain

Watts's and Allan's respective experiences travelling to Spain offer a particular point of contrast between the two writers. Although they were both ostensibly appointed as foreign correspondents, their passages to Spain were remarkably different. This contrast in experience bolsters my claim that Watts may have been the preferred candidate to be correspondent.

Watts had a much easier journey to Spain than many of her colleagues, including Allan. This difference is most readily attributable to the contrast between how the passage of combatants and journalists were differently facilitated in the conflict. Watts notes that, even though she spent all of the social aspects of the voyage to Spain with the "a group of Americans, mostly" (2:15), "for some reason [she] went tourist and they went third" (2:15). Watts does not mention whether this group was made up of journalists or combatants, but Allan's notes corroborate the difference between how the majority of the group travelled and how Watts travelled. Allan writes that he and the other passengers

“travel[led] third-class, bunked four to a cabin without a porthole, next to the kitchens, deep in the hold, all of us seasick, but still on fire with our cause. We spent as much time as we could on deck, day and night, singing songs, because our cabins were ill-smelling, sick-making” (Allan qtd. in Allan, Chap. 1). If Watts found her passage to Spain more comfortable than Allan found his, this difference may also bolster the possibility that Allan was not sent as a correspondent at all.

When Watts and Allan arrived in France, Watts entered Spain with the assistance of the small French news agency, Agence Espagne,⁷ and went directly to her posting at the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit. By contrast, Allan and his comrades would make their way over the Pyrenees and report to the International Brigades in Madrid. Allan describes how the party “took a train to Marseilles, and a truck to Perpignan and over the Pyrenees,” one of the last groups of volunteers who did not have to “climb through the mountainous border on foot in secret in the dead of night” due to the “Non-Intervention Committee” (Allan qtd. in Allan, Chap. 1).⁸ Watts acknowledges that they went over the Pyrenees (2:16), and seems to have assumed that she, too, would have to enter Spain the same way. Instead, Otto Katz at the Agence Espagne in Paris informed Watts that she could fly into Valencia. While

⁷ There is some ambiguity in Watts’s interview whether she was advised to fly into Spain by the International Brigade office in New York or by Otto Katz at the Agence Espagne. Her diction seems to suggest that it was more likely Agence Espagne.

⁸ Under the Non-Intervention Agreement, many passports of citizens from Western countries were stamped “Not Valid For Travel to Spain” in order to stem newly illegal volunteerism for foreign conflicts. Many combatants would travel to Spain under false passports, but journalists, in addition to humanitarian workers like nurses and ambulance drivers, would have been exempt from this travel ban. Allan and his comrades seem to have travelled to Spain before this travel ban was enforced.

Allan and his male travelling companions took more difficult routes into Spain—first seasick in third class, and then a series of trucks and trains across France and the Pyrenees—Watts seems surprised that her passage was so comfortably facilitated—first in a tourist class cabin to cross the Atlantic, and then a flight directly from Paris to Valencia. Watts may have been surprised due to the contrast of her treatment with that of her fellow travellers. However, neither Watts nor Allan mentions any of the other travellers departing from the group to visit a news agency. If Watts was the only journalistic appointee on the journey over, as her immediate visit to Agence Espagne suggests, then the difference between journalist and combatant roles may account for the relative ease by which Watts travelled to Spain.

This differential treatment does not seem to be based on either Watts's gender or her privileged class background. Watts had gone on a "hiking tour through Spain shortly after the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in April 1931" (Butler 337) with fellow Canadian leftists Otto Van der Sprenkel and Stanley Ryerson. Watts notes that this hiking tour included going over the Pyrenees (Watts 1:32), so she was demonstrably physically capable of making the trip. Neither does Watts's wealthy background seem to have facilitated her more comfortable travels: Watts seems mystified that "for some reason" (2:15) she was able to travel tourist class while Allan and his travelling companions travelled third class. Unlike her later experiences attempting to leave Spain via France, during which time she had no money and had to ask her family to wire funds, Watts does not mention having to pay

for this trip. It seems that the *Clarion* paid for her passage. Once Watts arrived in France, she seems to have followed Otto Katz's lead in deciding to fly into Valencia, guided by those in an official capacity to facilitate the travel of journalists. Allan likewise took others' lead in his journey to Spain, albeit in a different direction. As Allan's retrospective account of the war displays an unwillingness to be separated from his comrades, and as he was travelling with volunteers who were not journalists, he may have chosen to cross over to Spain from France through the Pyrenees rather than seek out other travel options or those options may not have been available to him as a Brigadier.

Although Watts did not have to travel over the Pyrenees, her flight into Valencia and her subsequent travel down to Madrid were not luxurious. Her entry into Spain was legal but still dangerous: Watts recalls that "[she] flew over [to Valencia] the day after the plane the day before had been shot down. And so it was quite an interesting flight" (3:45). Once Watts arrived in Spain, travelling down to Madrid was difficult, as Watts described the city as "almost surrounded" (3:49). It seems to have been normal practice for correspondents to find their own transportation through Spain: Colonel Kerrigan told Ted Allan to find his own transportation down to Madrid (Allan, Chap. 1, n.p.), and American journalists like Hemingway would bring private cars for their personal transportation, while fellow journalists Herbert Matthews and Gellhorn would depend on this private form of transportation. Watts did eventually find transportation with the Scottish ambulance unit thanks to a correspondent from the *Daily Worker*. Although correspondents had

support from news agencies like Agence Espagne, navigating around Spain was difficult and dangerous.

Among the central contradictions of Allan's account of his appointment to Spain are the orders he received from Colonel Kerrigan of the International Brigades upon arriving in Spain to write about the Blood Transfusion Unit. If Allan had already been appointed as foreign correspondent, his orders to travel to Madrid are redundant. While Watts seems to have known that she would be sent directly to the Blood Transfusion Unit, Allan, despite his deep admiration for Bethune, does not seem to have known that he would work with the physician until he reached the International Brigade staging post in Albacete. Upon his arrival in Albacete, Kerrigan discovered that Allan, like Bethune, was from Montreal. Allan relays his conversation with Kerrigan: "Fine. I want you to see Bethune in Madrid. Place yourself at his disposal. You're to investigate what's going on in the Blood Transfusion Unit and report back to the Brigade" (Allan qtd. in Allan n.p.). According to Allan, he was initially reluctant to leave his comrades, but eventually conceded to travel down to Madrid to the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit. Although Allan was able to argue for his appointment as a foreign correspondent, he traveled in a different class to Watts and seems both surprised to be posted to the Blood Transfusion Unit and reluctant to take up that post once he arrived in Spain. Allan's interactions with Kerrigan again suggest that Watts was the more obvious candidate for the foreign correspondent role, and that Allan may not have been

appointed at all.⁹ Allan may have been sent down to the Blood Transfusion Unit by Party leadership once he arrived in Spain, in a decision seemingly divorced from the considerations of the *Daily Clarion* leadership or the appointments made by Party leadership still in Canada.

Watts's and Allan's journeys to Spain together demonstrate two aspects of the Spanish Civil War and the experiences of its Canadian participants. First, the experiences travelling to Spain could be vastly heterogeneous, even for participants ostensibly sent with the same organization. Second, there may have been a disjuncture in the perceived needs of the Brigades, whether needs for combatants or for journalists, amongst leadership in Canada, leadership in Spain, and leadership of the *Daily Clarion* as Party publication. Allan's account of being posted to Spain may echo some of these disjunctures. His experience evinces, at the very least, a miscommunication over Watts's and Allan's simultaneous appointment as foreign correspondent for the *Daily Clarion*. It may further evince conflicting desires and priorities of leadership in Canada, Spain, and in the *Daily Clarion*.

Journalists' Mobility in Spain

The journalistic output of Canadians in the Spanish Civil War depended on complex causal factors including transportation, personal and political conviction, and length of tenure with a given journal. In the

⁹ See Case Study One.

accounts that survive of these journalists' experiences in Spain, their access to transportation coloured how they would describe their ability to act as journalists during the conflict. Watts, Allan, and Sorensen, the Danish-Canadian journalist for *New Commonwealth* and eventual operator of the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit, offer perhaps the only three accounts of Canadian journalists' mobility in Spain.¹⁰ Sorensen seems to have had access to support from a professional "Press Office" in Spain, but left his posting for personal and political reasons. Watts, by contrast, cites her lack of transportation in Spain as the factor that would make it "impossible...to really function as a correspondent" (12:55), prompting her to leave her journalistic posting, first for the Censorship Bureau, and then to work as an ambulance driver with the International Brigades.¹¹ In further contrast to Watts and Sorensen, Allan's account concentrates on his relationship to Hemingway instead of any mobility problems he may have faced. His experience was likely comparable to that of Martha Gellhorn, American journalist for *Collier's*, and Herbert Matthews, both of whom depended to different extents on Hemingway's generosity in order to travel in Spain.

Each of these journalists' accounts communicates the stark differences in their experiences in Spain. Paradoxically, the ease by which they accessed transportation did not necessarily correlate with increased journalistic output. Sorensen, who seems to have easily accessed professional support in the form of transportation had the

¹⁰ See Case Study One.

¹¹ See Conclusion.

shortest tenure with *New Commonwealth* and therefore the lowest journalistic output. Watts, who explicitly cites her lack of mobility as a deciding factor when she gave up journalism, worked with a newspaper for longer than both Allan and Sorensen, and produced the largest body of journalistic work. Allan concentrates the least on the barriers to his journalistic output, but had a shorter tenure and smaller body of work with the *Clarion* than Watts; instead, Allan's account concentrates on the quasi-mythical status of writers like Hemingway with whom he was able to socialize. For Allan, his interaction with a literary network takes precedent over the logistics of travel and journalistic output.

Sorensen seems to have had the easiest access to professional resources, including transportation, of any Canadian journalist working for an independent Canadian newspaper. When Sorensen arrived in Spain, having seemingly had no trouble securing a visa as a journalist for the *New Commonwealth*, he went directly to a "Press Office" where he was given a car, a chauffeur, and an armed guard (Gerassi 104). Sorensen "just went around writing stories about what [he] saw" around Madrid (qtd. in Gerassi 104). In fact Sorensen had so much freedom that upon receiving the car he was told "Go wherever you want" (qtd. in Gerassi 104). Following a suggestion from Montreal, he would eventually act as a chauffeur to Bethune, whom he picked up from the Madrid airport and drove around the surrounding area to visit hospitals. Contrasting the humanitarian work he observed Bethune undertaking with the perceived dishonesty of his fellow journalists, Sorensen would

leave journalism to work with Bethune.¹² Despite the fact that he was well supported as a journalist, his personal politics prompted him to take up work he perceived to be more honest and noble.

Sorensen is not specific about what “Press Office” assigned him a car, and the source of such support is difficult to identify. As Watts visited an Agence Espagne office in Paris on her way to Spain, it is possible that the organization may also have had an office in Madrid. Agence Espagne was a small Spanish Republican news agency established in Paris in October 1936 (Pike 299). Alternately, Allan refers at one point to a request from Constancia de la Mora, director of the Foreign Press Office of the Spanish Republic, that he share a car from Valencia to Madrid with a fellow foreign correspondent. Sorensen’s general “Press Office” may have either been an office of Agence Espagne, the organization that facilitated Watts’s passage to Spain, or of the internal Foreign Press Office, which was aware of Allan’s movements between Spanish cities. It is unlikely that Sorensen would have had access to any of the resources provided by large news agencies like AP or Reuters: *New Commonwealth*, like the *Daily Clarion*, did not source stories from large news agencies the way that mainstream Canadian papers did,¹³ and neither Sorensen, Watts, or Allan worked for AP or Reuters, although Allan did have some affiliation with the Federated Press.¹⁴ Similarly, Sorensen probably does not refer to a dedicated press office of the

¹² See Case Study One.

¹³ See Case Study One.

¹⁴ In his first articles for the the *Daily Clarion*, Ted Allan’s by-line indicated that his articles were specials to both the *Clarion* and the Federated Press.

newspaper he worked for, as *New Commonwealth* was a mouthpiece of the Co-operative Commonwealth Foundation of Canada (CCF), a political party that would later become the New Democratic Party. This domestic Canadian organization is unlikely to have dedicated personnel in Spain to support journalists. The Agence Espagne seems the most likely candidate to have provided this support to Sorensen, and the Spanish Republican news agency's possible remit to support journalists and newspapers sympathetic to the Republican cause is a fruitful area of future research.

Since Watts did not have the same level of support as Sorensen when in Spain, it is likely that resources for journalists dwindled as the war went on. Sorensen arrived in Spain significantly earlier than Watts, Allan, Gellhorn, or Hemingway; by the time Watts and Allan arrived in February of 1937, Sorensen had already left journalism to work with the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit. There may simply have been more resources available to the international press earlier in the war. Agence Espagne did employ its own writers, Hungarian-British journalist Arthur Koestler and American journalist William Forrest were some of the first among them and both writers would become famous for their reportage (Pike 299). The agency's alignment with Republican Spain may have prompted it to provide support for journalists more generally. Future study of the nature and availability of support for foreign correspondents in Spain, particularly how it changed over time, may shed new light on the wide variety of experiences of journalists in the Spanish Civil War.

Similarly to Sorensen and in contrast to Allan, Watts found it relatively easy to travel to Spain. Once in Spain, however, her mobility seems significantly more limited than that of her counterparts. It is this limited mobility that Watts cites as the causal factor in the end of her journalistic career. In the interview from the late 1960s, Watts explains to her interviewer that she eventually had to leave the Blood Transfusion Unit:

Well I moved out, you see, as the war removed itself further from Madrid, it was impossible for me to really function as a correspondent. And I very much wanted to stay. So I moved out to find myself a job in the censorship bureau. I was actually working with the ministry. (13:00)

Watts could not follow the war once it moved further away from Madrid. She did not have access to a car the way that Sorensen did. Given that Watts immediately visited Agence Espagne when she arrived in France, she was clearly willing to seek out support for her work. Likewise, her eventual employment as an ambulance driver demonstrates that she was capable of driving a vehicle in Spain. It seems, then, that the resources to allow her to continue as a journalist, and resources that were granted to Sorensen earlier in the war, were no longer available, or perhaps not available to Watts.

Watts would eventually find her lack of mobility frustrating enough that she would give up journalism, working instead for the censorship bureau where she held a “9 to 5 or longer job censoring the correspondents’ material in English, and also in French” (13:39).

Although this position seems at odds with Watts's history of political commitment and strong desire to go to Spain, the fact that it was "impossible for [her] to really function as a correspondent" communicates that she may have had little other option than to find what employment was available to her. She gives no account of why she then chose to become an ambulance driver, but it may have signified a return to political commitment in her participation in the war. Watts made her initial decision to work as a correspondent for the *Daily Clarion* in light of her knowledge that the Brigades would not allow her to enlist while still in Canada. By contrast, she may have perceived that the Brigades in Spain were more likely to be receptive to women enlisting. At this point, the International Brigades may have offered for Watts a mode of participation true to her original purposes as correspondent. When Watts left Spain in 1938, she had no funds of her own on which to depend, finding herself stranded in Paris and calling her family to wire emergency funds. It seems, then, that when Watts left in 1938 there may not have been resources to repatriate International Brigadiers.¹⁵ If resources for journalists dwindled as the war progressed, resources for Brigadiers may have dwindled as well.

In contrast to Sorensen's and Watts's narratives, Allan's account of Spain concentrates less on the logistics of his work there, and more on his interactions with famous figures like Bethune and Hemingway.

¹⁵ Near the end of the war the International Brigades were repatriated en masse. For this repatriation, the Canadian Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy would have been raising funds for repatriation. Watts may not have qualified for this: she may have left too early, left independently of the mass of volunteers, or may have otherwise chosen not to seek out assistance in leaving. The circumstances of her departure from Spain would be a fruitful area of future research. [Many thanks to Kaarina Mikalson for the content of this footnote.]

Determining how Allan managed to navigate in Spain, then, requires some speculation. Allan does not express a comparable frustration to Watts about his ability to navigate in Spain, despite the fact that his contributions to the *Daily Clarion* and *New Frontier* would all be published within a two-month timeframe, the latest of which appeared in December 1937. Allan had a significantly shorter tenure with the *Clarion* than Watts's term of almost one year. At first glance, this shortened tenure suggests that Allan may have experienced some barriers to his journalistic output. However, he may have had alternate sources of support: either private transportation through the community of writers built up around Hemingway, or support offered through the International Brigades.

It seems that Allan, much like journalists Gellhorn and Matthews, sometimes made use of the private transportation offered by Hemingway. Privately owned vehicles offered a consistent source of transportation, and fuelled the careers of Gellhorn, Matthew, and Hemingway. All three were part of a coterie of writers that reached a legendary status. Hemingway and the group of writers he would gather around him became famous in Spain, and Hemingway was particularly well known for his collegiality; Allan would be one of the writers who benefitted from Hemingway's generosity. Sorensen describes Hemingway's collegiality in negative terms:

I found my journalist colleagues, frankly, to be bastards. They would sit drinking whiskey during the day, playing poker at night, then visiting the press office at four o'clock to

get their handout, from which they would cook up a story, most of it false, and send it off....[They], by and large, were cynical and liars, and that goes for such giants as Hemingway and Dos Passos who were basically cowards and whose experience and history in Spain has been falsified by history. (qtd. in Gerassi 104)

What Sorensen viewed as the negative qualities of the journalist community that developed around Hemingway—drunkenness that accompanied laziness, falsification, and, implicitly, a political and moral failure on the part of these journalists—contrasts with the narratives of those journalists who enjoyed Hemingway’s company and generosity. For example, James Benet, an American combatant and occasional contributor to the *New Republic*, describes the reputation that Hemingway gained for generosity and camaraderie with other writers. Benet notes that he and other writers “used to visit Hemingway fairly regularly” (qtd. in Gerassi 175) at the Hotel Florida on Hemingway’s invitation, where Hemingway would provide alcohol for his visitors. Benet recalls,

I liked Hemingway. I thought he was a genuine fellow. But perhaps, looking back, I liked him more because I felt he liked us, the American volunteers....Anyway, it was perhaps because I was a journalist myself that my affinity with Hemingway was better than most. (qtd. in Gerassi 175)

In contrast to Sorensen’s disdain, Benet provides a perspective from within that community: Benet responds positively to Hemingway’s

fame, generosity, and collegiality in Spain, feeling a particular “affinity” with the famous writer as one journalist to another.

Like Benet, Allan would spend considerable amount of time in Hemingway’s company and hospitality. Norman Allan’s account of Allan’s experience as foreign correspondent alludes to a “who’s who” of literary personalities associated with the Spanish Civil War. According to Norman Allan, his father “split his time between working with Bethune at the Blood Transfusion Unit, and living the life of a war correspondent in the besieged city. Madrid, the centre of the world. Rubbing shoulders with Hemingway, Dos Passos: ‘everyone but Shakespeare’” (Allan, Chap. 1). Sorensen’s, Benet’s, and Allan’s narratives corroborate on some major points: that Hemingway was particularly generous with other writers, and that his generosity built a community of journalists near Madrid. Allan’s unofficial biography does not mention how he travelled between the Blood Transfusion Unit and Madrid, but it is possible that Allan may either have benefitted from his acquaintance with Hemingway or may have built up a community of other writers upon whom he could depend.

Allan’s interactions with Gellhorn give some clues as to some of his other means of transportation in Spain. Gellhorn, one of only a handful of female journalists reporting on the conflict in Spain,¹⁶ provides an example of a journalist whose developing career depended in part on Hemingway’s willingness to drive her around Spain.¹⁷ In their accounts

¹⁶ See Case Study Four.

¹⁷ Although Hemingway’s material support would prove key to Gellhorn’s early career, the pair were sometimes in direct competition for writing jobs.

of Gellhorn's time in Spain, neither Gellhorn nor her biographer, Caroline Moorehead, mention any material support from *Collier's*, the magazine to which she contributed, but Moorehead does relate that Gellhorn would drive around Spain with such other journalists as Hemingway and Matthews. In late March 1937, Allan was travelling from Valencia to Madrid in a car, which Constanca de la Mora, who was "in charge of the government press bureau" (Allan, Chap 1), requested that Allan share with Gellhorn and famed American bull fighter Sidney Franklin. According to Allan, de la Mora told him that Gellhorn "had just arrived and didn't know too much about the war, so Constanca asked [him] to brief her on policy matters" (Allan qtd. in Allan, Chap. 1). When Allan, Gellhorn, and Franklin arrived in Madrid, Allan would meet Hemingway for the first time, and would rarely see Hemingway without Gellhorn. Allan's interactions with Gellhorn, his journey with her in a shared car that may have been organized by the Foreign Press Office, and her constant presence during his interactions with Hemingway and the community of writers built up around him suggest that, like Gellhorn, Allan may have sometimes depended on Hemingway's private transportation. A model of access to transportation and support emerges here: journalists without means are transported, and possibly materially supported, by literary writers or journalists who did have resources. Further, journalists may have had to cobble together their resources. This model of access could expose some of the underlying economics of journalism in Spain.

In addition to this ad hoc, private access to support, Allan may have had access to further resources through the Brigades; as the contradictions in his unofficial biography indicate that he may have been a Brigadier, this connection may have provided additional support. The car that de la Mora requested that Allan share with Gellhorn is the only allusion to the logistics of travel that Allan makes and there is very little evidence in Allan's biography of how he accessed resources. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the Foreign Press Office organized the car or whether de la Mora was simply aware that it might carry an extra passenger. What support he may have expected from the International Brigades is also unclear: there are enough contradictions in his narrative to suggest that he may or may not have been a Brigadier, and there is little evidence of the kind of support that the Brigades may have offered its foreign correspondents. However, de la Mora's awareness of transportation resources suggests that there may have been resource sharing amongst organizations during the war, and, as a result, that Allan may have drawn from multiple sources to navigate in Spain.

Allan's, Sorensen's and Watts's accounts of their mobility in Spain differ greatly. But the relationship between that mobility and any of the writers' journalistic output and tenure with their respective newspapers was far from straightforward. In fact, the journalist with the most institutional support, Sorensen, would have the smallest output and the shortest tenure. Ted Allan, the journalist with some institutional support and some private support would have moderate output and equally middling tenure, but would seem to care little in retrospect for the details

and logistics of his time in Spain; the camaraderie of writers in Hemingway's coterie would be an impetus in Allan's recollections of the war to romanticize that literary community, while Sorensen would be disdainful of the community's cliquishness and political irresponsibility. Watts, the most concerned and constrained by a lack of resources, would have the greatest journalistic output and the longest tenure with her newspaper. With the fewest resources, Watts's accomplished the greatest journalistic contribution.

Conclusion

The variety of experiences amongst Hemingway, Gellhorn, Allan, Sorensen, and Watts speaks to the wide range of resources upon which writers of the Spanish Civil War drew, and the uneven and fluctuating access to those resources. Watts and Allan both had short tenures with the *Daily Clarion*, Allan more so than Watts. However, no record exists of whether Allan felt restricted in Spain and whether he felt his writing suffered. When Watts was able to access resources, it seems to have been in order to travel to Spain, and then to work or volunteer in non-journalistic capacities. Sorensen, who seems to have received the most support from press organizations of all three writers, would leave journalism in favour of a form of participation he perceived to be more honestly committed to the Spanish Republican cause. The three Canadian journalists had very different experiences navigating in Spain, and narrated their experiences differently. Sorensen's account

concentrates on his observations in Spain and his decisions based on moral commitment; Watts's account concentrates on her work, citing transportation primarily as a barrier; Allan narrates his interactions with famous journalists and writers rather than his journalistic output, an approach that obscures the source of material support upon which he drew in Spain.

Watts's narrativization of her experience provides another paradox. In her interview, she does not concentrate on the celebrity reputations of other writers she interacted with, nor does she cultivate a romantic journalistic persona, unlike Allan's notes and biography that are actively invested in establishing a journalistic and literary persona for him. Watts instead concentrates on the logistics of her experience. However, as Case Study Three demonstrates, Watts was no stranger to a literary celebrity discourse; the *Daily Clarion* depended on the mechanisms of celebrity in order to advertise and describe her work as a foreign correspondent for the newspaper. There are multiple possible explanations for the paradox that Watts's account offers us. Watts may, on one hand, have simply been responding to the needs of her interviewer, who was looking for factual information about Bethune. On the other hand, Watts in her later years may not have been as invested in the dynamics of celebrity that framed her short writing career. Further still, Watts may not have perceived a place for herself within a discourse of literary and journalistic celebrity, despite how the newspaper may have figured her. In conversation with her interviewer, Watts expressed embarrassment about her writing, "sure they'd be most embarrassingly

inept reading” (33:50). Watts’s retrospective account of her journalism hints at the underlying gendered networks of memory, celebrity, and journalism that she may have felt most painfully in her limited access to material support, transportation, and other resources.

Even if Watts does not see a place for herself within the framework of journalistic celebrity, recent scholarship has demonstrated that women’s journalism and engagement in journalistic celebrity was a distinct cultural force in the twentieth century. Models for female journalistic celebrity exist as early as the nineteenth century “girl-reporter,” Nellie Bly, and the First World War saw several examples of highly public female journalistic voices.¹⁸ However, scholars locate a golden age of female war correspondence in the Second World War, after Watts’s active writing career. However, as the next case study shows, women writers in the Spanish Civil War were an important cultural precedent to this golden age. If Watts did not find a community of female journalists comparable to the journalistic and literary boy’s club that grew up around Hemingway, she was still engaged in the groundbreaking work of becoming one of the first women to occupy the role of war correspondent. And, perhaps more importantly, she was one of the first women to become famous for it in her own time.

¹⁸ See Case Study Three.

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