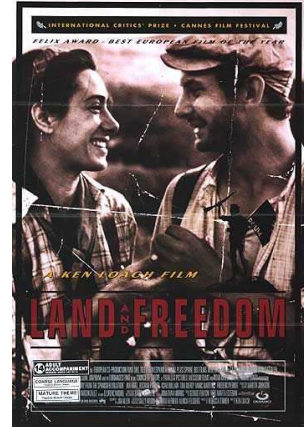


# Land and Freedom

**Director: Ken Loach**  
**1995 (109')**



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

*"Loach's film is amongst the finest films of the decade"*The Observer

## Vocabulary and expressions:

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

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

*Let's keep our fingers crossed*

**Trade Unionist:** Someone who works for a Trades Union

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

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

*I hitched a lift.*

**To be scared stiff:** To be very frightened or terrified

*I was scared stiff*

**Fags:** Cigarettes (in British English)

*We got a packet of fags a day*

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

*The rest of the world has turned its back on you*

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

### **The forgotten war, remembered By Eugene W. Plawiuk**

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

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

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

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

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

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