

**GUERNICA AND AFTER:
Australian War Correspondents and the Spanish Civil War**

Richard Trembath
*School of Historical Studies,
University of Melbourne, Australia*

Abstract

*The bombing of Guernica (26 April 1937) during the Spanish Civil War is one of modern history's great atrocity stories. International outrage at the time over the mass death of civilians, the historical significance of the Spanish Civil War and the enduring fame of Picasso's painting have ensured that Guernica is a continuing symbol of the horrors of industrialised warfare. The wider world was alerted to the bombing by George Steer's famous article in the *The Times*. Another prominent observer of events at Guernica was the Australian war correspondent, Noel Monks, who covered the war for the *Daily Express* of London. The destruction of the Basque town changed the course of Monks' life and confirmed him in his career as a war correspondent, one of the longest serving Australians in that field.*

*In this paper look at the role played by Monks in reporting the Spanish Civil War and also those played by Ronald Monson and Alan Moorehead, two other Australian correspondents working in Spain for Fleet St newspapers. I shall show how their coverage of events in Spain between 1936 and 1939 established their careers as "professional" war correspondents, further enhanced the reputations of Australian journalists working in London and laid the ground for the achievements of such famous reporters in the Second World War as Alan Moorehead and Chester Wilmot. I shall also examine Phillip Knightley's analysis of the media coverage of Guernica in his seminal history of war reporting, *The First Casualty*. As this year, the 70th anniversary of the bombing, has seen considerable attention paid to the consequences of the outrage, it is fitting to look at the part played by Australians in drawing the attention of the world to the Spanish conflict.*

Introduction

On 26 April 1937 Noel Monks, war correspondent for the London *Daily Express*, attended early morning mass in Bilbao, the capital of the autonomous Basque region of Spain. Tasmanian born Monks was covering the Spanish Civil War from the Basque point of view as that people defended themselves against a military offensive recently launched by the Nationalist forces under General Franco (Monks 1955, pp. 93-94). The Nationalists – or “insurgents” as they were often called in the Anglo-Saxon press – had rebelled against the left-wing coalition Republican government of Spain in July 1936, initiating almost three years of violence and misery on that bitterly divided country. By the time of Franco's final triumph in April 1939 approximately 500,000 to 800,000 people had been killed in battle or had been executed - with or without any pretence of a trial - had died of malnutrition or had emigrated as a result of the war (Graham 2002; Salvadó 2005; Thomas 2003, pp. 900-901).

The Basques were an anomaly in the arena of competing ideologies that was Spain in the 1930s. Conscious of their cultural and linguistic differences from the rest of Spain – their language, Euskara, has stubbornly resisted all attempts by linguistics experts to link it with any other language, living or dead – the Basques supported the beleaguered Republican government for one major reason. This was because the Left, desperate to secure allies within and without Spain, had granted the Basques autonomy. This was something which the right wing Nationalist forces under Franco had no intention of honouring. So in the spring of 1937 the Basques – ardently Catholic, determinedly independent – were drawn into a final battle with the forces of their equally Catholic Nationalist opponents.

Monks was one of a small handful of foreign correspondents with the Basque forces, three of whom were described as “British” or even more specifically in Monks’ case as “English” (Thomas 2003, p. 1060). The journalist who would become the best known of these three for his reporting from the Basque front, George Steer of *The Times*, was actually South African in origin (Rankin 2004). During the day of 26 April 1937 Monks attempted to make his way to the front, a mere two hours from Bilbao, and passed in the afternoon through Guernica or Gernika as it is spelt in Euskara. Guernica had special historical and cultural significance for the Basques being seen as the birthplace of their liberties. For example, under the town’s sacred oak tree Spanish monarchs had customarily agreed to the *fueros* or laws guaranteeing Basque autonomy. When Monks passed through the town in the mid-afternoon all was sunny and peaceful although refugees from areas closer to the fighting had increased the population to something around 10,000 from the normal 6,000 or 7,000. Monks did not reach the front for beyond Guernica his car was attacked by Heinkel 52 fighters which were escorting bombers flying towards the town he had just left. Surviving the fusillade of machine-gun bullets, Monks and his driver returned by a different route to Bilbao (Monks 1955, pp. 94-96).

Not until 9.30pm that night when Monks, Steer and the third British journalist, Christopher Holme of Reuters, were dining did a weeping Basque government official inform them that the German aircraft they had seen earlier in the day had destroyed

Guernica. Monks, Steer, Holme and Mathieu Corman, a Belgian journalist working for *Ce Soir*, a French newspaper, now drove once more to the site of the bombing raid. Their accounts of the effects of that raid would quickly establish Guernica as “the most controversial war incident of our time” (Monks 1955, pp. 89, 96).

Australian war correspondents and the Spanish Civil War

In this paper I shall examine the role played by Noel Monks in reporting the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. I shall also examine the work in Spain of two other Australian journalists employed by Fleet Street newspapers: Ronald Monson of the London *Daily Telegraph* and Alan Moorehead of the *Daily Express*. I argue that their coverage of events in Spain established their careers as full-time war correspondents, further enhanced the reputation of Australian journalists working in London and prepared the ground for the achievements of Australian reporters in the Second World War. The bombing of Guernica was critical in defining attitudes abroad to the Spanish conflict and to the threat of fascism in Europe. The war as a whole was crucial to the careers of these two Australian reporters. Although Monks and Monson have not enjoyed the fame of some of their Australian colleagues an examination of their work in Spain increases our understanding of this country’s contribution to war journalism, a subject which has attracted much attention recently and which is the subject of an ongoing Australian Research Council linkage project (McDonald 2004; Moyal 2005; Hutchinson 2005; *Focus* 2006-2007; *Eyewitness* 2007).

Noel Monks came to the United Kingdom in 1935, fresh from working for the Melbourne *Sun* (Trembath 2006). His initial assignment as a foreign correspondent had been the Italian conquest of Abyssinia (October 1935-May 1936). There in the Ogaden desert he had first encountered war’s victims – pulped and torn bodies. Despite this experience, tight control over journalists’ movements in Abyssinia resulted in Monks seeing very little of the action in East Africa. “Still no war for this correspondent” he wrote ruefully twenty years later in his self-deprecatory account of his time in Abyssinia (Monks 1955, pp. 34-61).

Spain was very different. Monks reported firstly from the Nationalist camp, outside Madrid in the winter of 1936-1937. Prior to going to Spain, Monks, as a practising Catholic, was, perhaps not surprisingly, favourable to the Nationalist cause. At that time Monks believed that:

The revolution had become almost as much 'religious' as 'political'. From what I read, Franco was fighting for the Faith in Spain, the Faith in which I had been brought up; and my sympathies, I found, sitting in London, were with his forces (Monks 1955, p 66).

In Australia the reverberations of the Spanish Civil War were sometimes faint. The United Australia Party government of Joseph Lyons proclaimed its indifference to the outcome of the struggle in Spain (Inglis 1987). For example, in September 1936, the Federal Attorney-General, Robert Menzies, addressed a Melbourne meeting of the Australian Women's National League. Menzies rejected the proposition that "the essential conflict" in the world was between communism and fascism. Rather he saw it as a contest between "democracy on the one hand" and "fascism, plus communism on the other". As for the possible outcome of the war in Spain:

We have no very great concern whether communism defeats fascism in Spain, or vice versa. Each system of government, while it may be admirable for Spain, is, I believe, of no possible value in a British community. (Applause) (*Argus*, 23 September 1936).

The majority of Australians, far from the fighting, were dependent for the most part on an uneven news coverage of the war (in the case of the mainstream media) or a slanted partisan coverage in the case of the Communist or Catholic press. Spain was something dreadful to contemplate but of little direct relevance to their lives (Inglis 1987).

Two groups within the Australian community were exceptions to this widespread attitude of indifference - Communists and Catholics. The effect of Spain on the political attitudes of Australian Catholics has been discussed by several historians. Kneipp, for example, has argued that most of the Australian Catholic laity was probably in favour of a Franco victory on the grounds that he was representative of the Church. However, this attitude

did not translate into active support for the Spanish Nationalists nor did it lead to major clashes with other segments of Australian society. Only the church hierarchy and some Catholic organisations and political activists, such as B. A. Santamaria, were galvanised by the conflict (Santamaria 1981, pp. 33-38; Duncan 2005; Strangio and Costar 2005; Woodhouse 2007). For them the Franco rebellion “was the legitimate uprising of true Spanish patriots against a Communist minority which had usurped complete powers against the will of the mass of the people” (Kneipp 1998, p. 47). As we have seen this was the social and religious context out of which Noel Monks formed his initial ideas about the struggle in Spain; the evidence of his own eyes was to amend these first impressions considerably.

Much of his original sympathy for Franco had already eroded by the time that Monks was booted at very short notice from Nationalist Spain for attempting to defy censorship and tell the world about atrocities committed by the Right as well as the Left. Monks’ identification with violence undertaken in the name of the Catholic Church had waned. “I began to get strange qualms”, Monks wrote, “about this great Catholic country fighting for the Faith”. After his expulsion (when he had been informed by Franco’s representative that he was “a disgrace to the Church”) Monks was relieved to be rid of the company of “unctuous people who thought only of killing their countrymen to achieve their political ends, but who cloaked their ambitions in religion”. Six months in Nationalist Spain had “deeply shocked” Monks’ “religious sensibilities”. So, by way of Gibraltar, Monks was reassigned to the north-west of the country. On 26 April 1937 he journeyed to Guernica (Monks 1955, pp. 79-84).

Ten miles from the town Monks “saw the reflection of Guernica’s flames in the sky”. Shocked townspeople and the refugees who had sought shelter in Guernica as the Basque front contracted were on the roadside. Reaching the town itself Monks wrote:

In the good “I” tradition of the day I was the first correspondent to reach Guernica, and was immediately pressed into service by some Basque soldiers collecting charred bodies that the flames had passed over. Some of the soldiers were sobbing like children. There were flames and smoke and

grit, and the smell of burning human flesh was nauseating. Houses were collapsing into the inferno . . . The only things left standing were a church, a sacred Tree, symbol of the Basque people, and, just outside the town, a small munitions factory. There hadn't been a single anti-aircraft gun in the town. It had been mainly a fire raid (Monks 1955, p. 97).

Such were the essential elements of what one major historian of war journalism, Phillip Knightley, has called "the legend of Guernica" (Knightley 2000, p. 226). Monks' account, and those of his colleagues, especially Steer, were to shock the world outside Spain, elevate the strategic significance of aerial bombing of urban centres, inspire the creation of one of the twentieth century's most famous works of art and result in Guernica becoming a lasting symbol of the horrors of innocence exposed to industrialised warfare.

In his original articles in the *Daily Express* Monks claimed that at least 1,000 people were killed in Guernica and that he had seen at least 600 bodies (*Daily Express*, 1 May 1937). In the version of the bombing which appeared in his autobiography eighteen years later Monks did not provide casualty figures (Monks 1955, pp. 97-99). George Steer of *The Times* wrote that it was "impossible to state yet the number of victims" though the town was "completely destroyed", or "wiped out" as the heading on the New York version of his article expressed it (*The Times*, 28 April 1937; *New York Times*, 28 April 1937). Basque government figures from the time fixed upon a very precise 1,654 dead and 889 wounded (Fraser 1986, p. 401). Philip Knightley argued that the death toll had never been finally established with "estimates ranging from 1,000 to 2,000" (Knightley 2000, p. 220). The latest edition of Thomas' history of the Spanish Civil War stated that it was difficult to determine the final figure and settled for "perhaps as many as a thousand" being killed (Thomas 2003, p. 607). Recent histories such as those by Graham and Salvadó rely on the Basque government figures cited above (Graham 2002, p. 308; Salvadó 2005, p.148). On the other hand, Antony Beevor has claimed that the figure for deaths might be as low as two hundred (Beevor 2006, p. 232). By the standards of the Second World War even the highest estimates for Guernica pale against the London Blitz of 1940-1941, where by May 1941 over 43,000 civilians had been killed, or the even greater figures for the incineration of Hamburg or the fire-bombing of Tokyo. Yet

Guernica occurred before the world had become immune to such events and, crucially, was seen by many as the deliberate targeting of a civilian population rather than a military objective. We shall return to that point below for on it Guernica's "reputation" rests.

For Ronald Monson Spain was his first wartime job though his period of service in Spain was much shorter than Monks'. Originally from Western Australia he had worked as a journalist in that state before travelling through Africa from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo, an adventure he recounted in his book, *Across Africa On Foot* (Monson 1931). He worked in London from 1934 with the *Daily Telegraph* (Griffen-Foley 2000). In 1937 he was posted hastily to the crumbling Basque front, probably because of the worldwide attention which Guernica had drawn to a hitherto neglected area of the war. He arrived in thrilling circumstances in early May 1937, approximately a fortnight after the destruction of Guernica. His civilian flight from France to Bilbao was so menaced by Nationalist planes that it took five attempts to land in the Basque capital (*Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 1937). Bilbao fell to the Nationalists on 19 June, with the Basque forces finally capitulating at Santander on 26 August. By that time Monson was in Valencia in the main part of Republican Spain, having left doomed Bilbao for France shortly before the city surrendered. On his trip to Valencia he was accompanied by Monks and as their plane was buffeted terribly by a storm over the Pyrenees, Monks, who had almost been killed in aircraft disasters previously, clutched hopefully to a lucky mascot. Monson was sceptical of the mascot's value: "Don't believe in 'em," Monson replied in that bluff way of his. "If you are for it – then you are for it" (Monks 1955, p.100).

This laconic acceptance of danger seems to have been typical of Monson's career and evidence of an understated, perhaps dour, character – a contrast to the genial, open-handed Monks. Monson's personal courage was most famously displayed when he was mentioned in dispatches in 1941 for swimming across the Euphrates to rescue a wounded British soldier under Iraqi gunfire (*London Gazette* 1941; Griffen-Foley 2000).¹ The key

¹ I have preferred her account to that of Monks who stated in *Eyewitness* on p. 77 that Monson should have received a Victoria Cross for rescuing a wounded Australian soldier in Syria "amid a hail of Vichy French

features of Monson's journalism in Spain were his emphasis on eyewitness accounts, or interviews with eyewitnesses shortly after the event, and a preference for describing front-line activity over strategic or political news. (This may have been part of his brief from the *Daily Telegraph* though it is also typical of Monson's reporting throughout his career as a war correspondent). Monson laid great stress on the plight of innocents, such as women and children, caught up in a pitiless war. Like Monks he considered that the Nationalists' German allies deliberately pursued a programme of terror by seeking out civilian targets to kill. The following passage is typical:

Bombing 'planes harried the departure of the inhabitants and also raided districts beyond the war zone. At Galdacano, near Amorebieta, where there was no fighting to-day a bomb was dropped on a house where ten men, women and children were sheltering. They were all killed. A chaser' plane came low over Baracaldo, and machine-gunned the streets. In the same district a bomb killed a man and his oxen as they were ploughing a field (*Daily Telegraph*, 20 May 1937).

Many of these journalistic traits were shared with Monks. As I have described it in an earlier article Monks was present "wherever there was a battle", somebody at his journalistic best when describing the action in short, punchy sentences, such as his descriptions of the effect of aerial bombing in Spain or later with the RAF in the Second World War (Trembath 2006). Aviation seemed to bring the best out of Monks.

While Monks and Monson were reporting on the last days of Basque autonomy another Australian reporter was getting his first – if more limited – contact with war. This journalist was Alan Moorehead who had arrived in London after Monson and Monks and whose experience as a war correspondent would be much less than either of theirs, restricted largely as it was to the Second World War. However, his subsequent fame as a war reporter would be greater than either of his predecessors. In his memoir, *A Late Education*, Moorehead was self-deprecatory about his tedious employment, based at Gibraltar where "the war in Spain might have been a thousand miles away for all the information we were able to get about it" (Moorehead 2000, p. 77). He described himself

machine-gun bullets". I would also like to thank Dr Griffen-Foley for making her original draft of the ADB entry on Monson with its complete citations and references available to me.

as “a very minor employee” in Spain of the *Daily Express* with minor tasks to perform (Moorehead 2000, p. 116). Moorehead’s first encounter with the war was witnessing the aftermath of another notorious incident – the bombing of the German battleship *Deutschland* by the Republican air force on 29 May 1937 and the subsequent revenge taken by Hitler in ordering the shelling of the town of Almeria by another German battleship two days later (Salvadó 2005, pp.154-155). Moorehead arrived in the shelled town after a week’s interval and gained some impression of the trauma suffered by the inhabitants who, of course, had had nothing to do with the attack on the German ship. Moorehead later wrote that “Spain became . . . a place of forbidden exhilaration, and I never went down there on one of my flying visits without thinking, ‘Please God let something happen to make it possible for me to stay’” (Moorehead 2000, p. 116). He had to wait several years before the North African campaign made him world-famous but Spain had whetted his appetite for war reporting, a hunger that he had entirely lost by the end of the Second World War.

The ground work for the achievements of Moorehead and other Australian war correspondents between 1939 and 1945 was laid by Monks and Monson in Spain. Monson’s relatively brief period in that country was sufficient to attract the attention of his employers. Monson was not the chief *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Spain, nor even the only correspondent of that newspaper covering the Basque front in the spring and summer of 1937. The position of senior correspondent was occupied by Pembroke Stephens, a correspondent much admired by Monks, partly because of his physical courage (Monks 1955, p. 77).² When Stephens was killed in Shanghai later in 1937, covering fighting between the Japanese and the Chinese near the International Settlement, it was a sign that Monson’s star was in the ascendant that he was sent immediately to replace his former colleague in Spain (Monson).

As noted above, Monk’s articles in Spain attracted the ire of Fascist authorities, testimony to the reporter’s honesty and objectivity. Although George Steer’s account of the bombing of Guernica was the most influential Monks’ work in Spain has also endured.

² Not “Stevens” as Monks has it, not the only example of editorial carelessness in *Eyewitness*.

Lord Beaverbrook, the proprietor of the *Daily Express*, praised Monks' reporting from the civil war and it laid the basis for a career covering conflict that lasted two decades (*The Journalist*, 31 March 1937, p.10; 30 June 1937, pp. 9-11). Monks' account of the bombing of Guernica has been much used by subsequent historians (Southworth 1977; Rankin 2004) and has been reprinted at least once in collections of the best war reportage (Lewis 2001).

In the case of Guernica Monks' account, while in some ways as vivid as Steer's, is different in at least one highly significant way. Both were clear in attributing the attack to German aircraft, both emphasised the death toll amongst civilians, though it was not until Monks' second dispatch on the bombing that he mentioned the German and Italian part in the event (*Daily Express*, 29 April 1937). Two days later Monks wrote that he would "swear to it that Franco's German aviators bombed Guernica" (*Daily Express*, 1 May 1937). But from the outset Steer went further than Monks in arguing that in targeting a civilian rather than a military objective the Fascist air forces were initiating a new style of warfare:

In the form of its execution and the scale of destruction it wrought, no less than the selection of its objective, the raid on Guernica is unparalleled in military history. Guernica was not a military objective . . . The object of the bombardment was seemingly the demoralization of the civil population and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race (*The Times*, 28 April 1937).

In his 1938 book, *The Tree of Gernica*, a strongly pro-Basque account of the civil war in the north, Steer expanded at length on this argument (Steer 1938).

In *The First Casualty* Philip Knightley uses Guernica to drive home his major argument about the conscious and unconscious distortions of fact and interpretation committed by journalists in Spain. Knightley argues that Guernica was a "legitimate" military target in the sense of being a place "where the Republican-Basque forces could regroup" and if it had not been for the presence of the foreign journalists, especially Steer, who first reported the bombing, then it would have been simply "just another incident in a brutal civil war" (Knightley 2000, pp. 219-227).

Spain was a notoriously partisan war for the press as it was for almost all other participants and observers. As a series of commentators have pointed out Spain often provoked newspapers outside that country into adopting subjective positions where their “news” was often slanted, whether by editors or by the journalist on the spot, to best represent the political viewpoint they favoured. As a result critics have been severe on much of the journalism associated with the war. For Murray A. Sperber, for example, though the “journalists brought a wider, often more cynical perspective to the war than did the volunteers”, they also “became immersed in the war’s apocalyptic horror.” Ultimately “reporters agree[d] to the journalistic and/or sensational demands of their newspapers” (Sperber 1974, pp. 73-74; Royle 1987, pp. 116-141).

Knightley is correct in emphasising the mediating role of the journalists in “publicising” the attack on Guernica. He also is correct in stressing how the attacks on Guernica and other Spanish towns and cities significantly influenced civilian and military expectations of the future devastating role of aerial bombardment in warfare. However, I consider that Knightley overlooks how Steer, Monks and the other journalists had to make sense of a relative novelty in warfare; Guernica still had the nature of an experiment about it. Although the death toll has been much disputed, the journalists’ accounts of the damage and the shock were accurate, and stood up to a prolonged campaign by the Nationalists and their international supporters, including the Roman Catholic Church, to lay the blame upon anybody but the German pilots (Southworth 1977). Monks, a teetotaler to that stage in his life, was even accused of being a chronic drunk by the Nationalist media (*Daily Express*, 1 May 1937). Monks did not go quite as far as Steer in arguing that Guernica represented ravaged innocence but his accounts, at the time and in *Eyewitness*, clearly show how the distinction between civilians and the military was hopelessly blurred. These reports are undoubtedly amongst his finest writing.

Guernica’s status as a symbol of the horrors of modern war was secured by the appearance of Pablo Picasso’s painting in the Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Exhibition in Paris. The newspapers reports by Steer and Monks had already secured the attention of

the world, especially in the United States where, for example, a number of major journals and magazines switched their editorial allegiances to the Republicans. But it was the appearance of Picasso's painting which ensured that the journalists' stories lasted beyond the even greater crimes of the Second World War (Martin 2002). The barbarism of National Socialism between 1939 and 1945 ensured that events in Spain received retrospectively an additional overlay of meaning. Spain was now more than a civil war in an impoverished part of Europe: it was the precursor to *the* military struggle of the twentieth century and events such as Guernica were read as portents of what was to come in an age of total war.

Monson's career as a war correspondent was launched by Spain and then the Sino-Japanese War. His last war was also approximately twenty years later with the Suez crisis "and the revolt in the Lebanon that followed" (Monson; Griffen-Foley 2000). In Korea fifteen years later Noel Monks, wearied by the protracted peace talks at Panmunjom, was delighted at the thought that he was returning to London and that there would only be one more war mission to cover on the way home – in the jungle with British troops as they encountered Communist guerrillas in Malaya. He "felt suddenly tired of war and violence, and of being scared and of narrow escapes and of being away from my family". The last line of his memoirs describes the trip back to home in Britain and away from Singapore and Malaya when he suddenly "felt as old as the hills" (Monks 1955, pp. 332, 334).

Elsewhere I have suggested some possible reasons why Monks and Monson have not achieved the reputations of Chester Wilmot, Alan Moorehead or George Johnston (Trembath 2006). Perhaps reflecting his taciturn, restrained personality Monson did not write books about his war experiences though his battlefield experiences were second to none. He was content to cast his war writing in the form of the more fleeting newspaper article and dispatch. Monks did write an autobiography but *Eyewitness* is an overview of his career, more detailed in some parts than others, and is thin on material on his life outside journalism while being typically generous in its praise of other war correspondents – except Wilfred Burchett whom he described as a traitor in Korea

(Monks 1955, p. 330). It is not an intense account or history of a campaign such as Moorehead's *African Trilogy*, much less an interweaving of personal observation and military strategy such as Chester Wilmot's best-selling, *Struggle in Europe*. Monks account of the early air fighting in the Second World War, *Squadrons Up!*, is interesting and of use to a military historian though his successor as aviation correspondent at the *Daily Mail* Colin Bednall may have written even better accounts of air combat (Monks 1940). In Monks' writing, as in Monson's, there is an emphasis on those close to the action with little or no contemplation of the wider political and strategic situations. They were the men on the spot; their colleagues and rivals would perhaps broaden the perspective.

For both journalists it was a long journey from Spain to the Cold War. Despite the Second World War occupying the central period of their careers their time in Spain was significant for several reasons: Firstly, they had established reputations for themselves as intrepid reporters, on the spot, close to the fighting. This, perhaps, limited their ability to analyse the strategic significance of events and their political implications. For example, the reporting of both Monks and Monson in the Korean War, whilst often vivid, lacks much subtlety. Their style of reporting does mean that they provided insights into the experiences of those most directly affected by the violence, soldiers and civilians alike. Secondly, their acceptance as regular war correspondents prior to the Second World War confirmed the solid reputation of Australian journalists on Fleet Street and smoothed the path for the many Australians who worked out of London between 1939 and 1945. Finally, their lengthy careers as "professional" war reporters inspired a later generation of Australians who worked for the international media such as Murray Sayle and Tony Clifton whose careers covering conflicts commenced in the 1960s. Monks and Monson were not the first Australians to report war, or the first to secure a niche outside their country of birth, but they were the crucial elements in maintaining a tradition in journalism that lasts until the present day.

Coda:

In 2007 the power of Guernica to provoke such sentiments has not diminished. Prints of the mural are ubiquitous, a huge copy of the work stands in the foyer of the United Nations building in New York and it has been used in anti-Vietnam war placards and Amnesty International banners. As one historian notes “Picasso’s images mean more to current audiences than does the scarred Spanish town”. (Whale 2002, p. 74). However here I shall refer to one particular example where art and chronicle are combined. An art exhibition entitled *Humanist Art – Symbolic Sites Tour 2005-2007* commenced touring the world in April 2005, opening in the Basque town. The flyer for the Australian leg of the tour reads: “The works in this exhibition speak of love, family, war, peace, environment, human rights and reconciliation with conviction . . . it was first presented at the symbolic site of Guernica, Spain, and has since traveled to sites on four continents”. (Humanist Art 2007). Two works in the exhibition, which I saw at a small suburban gallery in Melbourne, are directly based on the bombing. One features the Minotaur of Picasso’s painting. The other incorporates photographs from the day of the bombing and text from George Steer’s article proclaiming to the world what had happened in the Basque country on a market day in April 1937. Reportage and image continue to resonate until this day.³

³ See Ricardo Abaunza, Gernika-Lumo, acrylic and photo-image, no date, *Bombas incendiarias procedientes de la fabrica alemana R. H. S. recogides por G. L. Steer en Gernika*.

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