

# Spanish Civil War 1936-1939

In July 1936, a right-wing nationalist revolt by the army against the left-wing Republican government led to civil war. The conflict became an ideological battleground for individuals and governments beyond Spain, and introduced a new and brutal form of warfare that would come to define the 20th century



**General Francisco Franco: Leader of Nationalist forces**

## COMBATANTS

### REPUBLICANS

Government, led by Socialist premiers **Largo Caballero** and **Juan Negrín**, and liberal president **Manuel Azaña** (left). Supported by urban workers, majority of educated middle class, and militant communists and anarchists

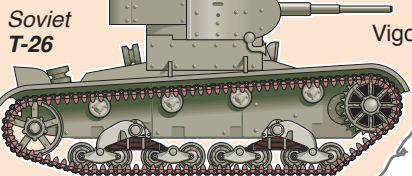
### NATIONALISTS

Led by rebel army and supported by conservative clergy and landowners as well as fascist **Falange**

**FOREIGN AID:** Both Fascist Italy under **Benito Mussolini** and Nazi Germany under **Adolf Hitler** sent troops, tanks, and planes, using Spain as testing ground for new methods of warfare

**FOREIGN AID:** Due to arms embargo by France and Britain, government could receive aid and purchase arms only from Soviet Union.

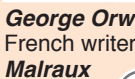
Aid included planes, trained pilots, tanks and crew



**International Brigades:** Up to 60,000 volunteers from 50 countries fought in Spain against Fascism, including U.S. **Abraham Lincoln Brigade** (below)



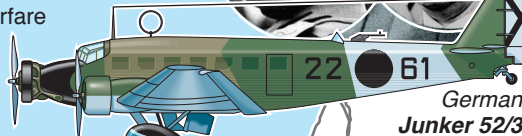
Prominent intellectuals on Republican side included American novelist **Ernest Hemingway**, British author **George Orwell** (left), and French writer **André Malraux**



## KEY EVENTS

- 1931: Second Spanish Republic** proclaimed. **Alfonso XIII** abdicates
- 1936, Feb:** Left-wing party coalition regains power from right in elections
- Jul 17-18:** Army uprising – rebels gain control over about one third of Spain
- Jul 28:** Italian and German planes airlift **Franco's** army from **Spanish Morocco** to mainland in first significant military airlift in history
- Nov:** Republican forces withstand major Nationalist offensive on **Madrid** following arrival of aid from Soviet Union and International Brigades
- 1937, Jan-Mar:** Despite support from Italian troops, Franco fails to capture Madrid in two separate offensives

- Apr:** **Guernica** destroyed
- May:** Infighting among Republican groups in **Barcelona** weakens city
- Jun:** **Bilbao** falls to Nationalists
- Jul:** Nationalists repulse Republican counter-offensive at **Brunete**
- Oct:** **Gijón** falls – war in North ends
- 1938, Feb-Apr:** After battle for **Teruel**, Nationalists reach Mediterranean, cutting Republican zone in two
- Jul-Nov: Battle of Ebro** – Republican forces launch all-out, but unsuccessful, campaign to reconnect territory
- 1939, Jan-Feb:** Nationalists conquer **Catalonia** in whirlwind campaign
- Mar 27:** Madrid falls to Nationalists
- Apr 1:** Nationalist victory proclaimed



**German Junker 52/3**

**Guernica, Apr 26, 1937:** First town in history to have been entirely destroyed by aerial bombing. City attacked by unit of German air force's **Condor Legion**



## Area conquered by Nationalists

- July 1936
- Aug 1936-Oct 1937
- 1938
- Jan-Feb 1939

- Main battles**
- Main Nationalist offensives**
- Main bombings of civilians**



Up to one million people thought to have died – many as result of mass killings perpetrated by both sides