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| The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) |
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| The Spanish Civil War was a major military conflict between right-wing Nationalists and left-wing Republicans, which erupted after a *coup d’état* staged by rebel generals against the democratically elected Republican government. Following the ‘defense of Madrid’ during which Republicans held off a Nationalist siege on the Spanish capital, the conflict settled into a war of attrition, with Spain divided into two radically opposed territories. On the Nationalist side, an authoritarian dictatorship bolstered by the fascistic Carlist and Falange militias under General Frederico Franco (1892–1975) emerged, representing the interests of Spain’s conservative and Catholic elites. Defenders of the Republican government under President Manuel Azaña (1880–1940) organized around radical Anarchist and Socialist trade-unions (CNT, UGT, POUM) and volunteer militias.  As a struggle between opposing ambitions for Spanish modernity, the conflict became a battlefield for the ideological, cultural and political movements within Spain and throughout the world. The international impact of the Spanish Civil War was significant; numerous nation-states, cultural figures and foreign volunteers entered the conflict, which effectively acted as the ‘rehearsal’ for World War II. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy provided arms to the eventually victorious Nationalists, while the Soviet Union aided the Republicans. |
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| Further reading:  (Cunningham)  (Cunningham, Spanish Front: Writers on the Civil War)  (Graham)  (Esenwein)  (Preston, Revolution and War in Spain, 1931–1939)  (P. Preston)  (Vernon) |