

# **Back to the Future? Why the Spanish Civil War Still Matters**

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The Spanish Civil War played out in what one distinguished historian called a backwater of Europe. The war was the last chapter in a century and a half-long civil conflict between the forces of reform and those of reaction; between antithetical ideas of the nation, one forward looking, one anchored in the past. Like all civil conflicts the war's effects in Spain were significant and the wounds opened by it remain deep to this day.

The Spanish conflict would become much more than a war pitting brother and brother. It became, freedom's battle, the first great confrontation between democracy and a nascent fascism that was sweeping over Europe. The European Axis powers who lavished support on General Franco's rebellion used the Spanish Civil War as a training ground for tactics that would become prevalent in the impending Second World War. From Brooklyn to Berlin, from Detroit to Dublin, from San Francisco to Santiago de Chile, volunteers from all over the world, men and women of all races would flock to Spain to fight the good fight in support of democracy.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Santayana's observation holds true today and an examination of the Spanish Civil War will allow us to scrutinize issues that surfaced in that conflict and that continue to plague our society and, find answers to today and tomorrow's pressing issues there as well.

## Tentative Syllabus

### **Week 1**

- Insufficient Enlightenment: The Historical Origins of the War:
- The Modern Dilemma: Politics, Economics, Geographic Inequality

### **Week 2**

- The Second Spanish Republic and the Outbreak of the Civil War

### **Week 3**

- Franco's Ascension and the Prosecution of the War
- The Non-Intervention Pact and Its Effects
- **Read ROUSE**

### **Week 4**

- The Internationalization of the War
- Premature Anti-Fascists: ALB and the International Brigades

### **Week 5**

- War Within the War: The Anarchist Rebellion
- The Chomsky Jackson debate

### **READ Chomsky and Jackson**

### **Week 6**

- From Pariah to Centinel of the West
- The End of the War and its Effects
- The Diaspora
- Digging up the Past
- Does the Spanish Civil War Still Matter?

## **READINGS**

The following recommended readings will be available on the HSP Learning Portal

Graham, Helen. *The Spanish Civil War. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Jackson, Gabriel. "The Fall of Largo Caballero." In *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War 1931- 1939*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1965

Chomsky, Noah. "Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship." In *American Power and the New Mandarins*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969

Rouse, A.L. *Appeasement. A Study in Political Decline 1933-1039*. New York: Norton, 1961