

Archives Unbound: The Spanish Civil War Collection



Source: University of California at San Diego

Size: 95,000 images

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was marked by an outpouring of literary energies engaging the interest of the poet, the novelist, the pamphleteer and the historian. Unfortunately, very little material from this fascinating period survived the wartime conditions in Spain and the ravages of World War II.

This collection presents approx. 3,000 rare pamphlets taken from the Herbert Rutledge Southworth Collection on the Spanish Civil War, which resides in the Mandeville Department of Special Collections at the University of California, San Diego. Southworth assembled a substantial number of propaganda pamphlets, short-lived journals and newspapers of extremely limited circulation that appeared during the Spanish Civil War years. His passionate collecting so soon after the War made possible his acquisition of hundreds of titles which are now very rare, and in many cases unique. At the time the pamphlet collections were being catalogued, 40% of the titles had never been reported.

The collection contains a wealth of primary materials documenting the Spanish Republican period (1931-1939), the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and the post-War era of Franco's rule (1939-1975). The collection's greatest strengths are the Civil War itself and the immediate post-War years of the 1940s. Included are publications by Republicans, Falangists, Catholics, anarchists, communists, socialists, agrarian reformers, and regional political parties, as well as Spanish exiles and partisans outside Spain.

Pictorial and written evidence abounds on the atrocities committed by both sides during the bloody four-year conflict, as thousands of civilians and numerous architectural treasures fell victim to the War. More than 150 literary pamphlets record the poetry and prose of Federico García Lorca, Miguel Hernández, Ernest Hemingway, and many others. Patriotic songs and hymns survive in a small collection of sheet music. Dozens of items treat the economic, social, and religious aspects of the War and its effects on Spanish society. The Collection also provides evidence of the largely unsuccessful post-War efforts of Spanish exiles to fight the Franco dictatorship and to maintain a democratic República Española in exile.

Of special interest are publications that were printed in small editions and were threatened with destruction through censorship or war, including political pamphlets and copies of the newspaper published by the Falangists inside the besieged fortress of Alcazar. The pamphlets are of particular significance in reflecting the divisiveness and passion of the opposing factions. Many of these items were printed in small editions, either in Spain or internationally, revealing the world-wide sympathies that the conflict evoked.



The celebrated Spanish writer, Federico García Lorca who, like other liberal intellectuals, was shot by Franco's rebel forces in 1936

Image source: Wikimedia Commons

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Among the most notable pamphlets are the more than 200 items relating to the Falange, Franco's powerful political party, and its sub-organisations, including the Sección Femenina. Many of these items record Franco's efforts to rebuild Spain in the wake of the Civil War. Numerous other publications represent the Republican opposition parties, including the Partido Comunista de España, the Partido Socialista Obrero Español, the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo, and the Unión General de Trabajadores.

The Collection includes more than 100 titles published by the Germans and distributed in Spain, in the Spanish language, during the Civil War and World War II; several titles detail the activities of Hitler's Condor Legion in Spain. The activities of the International Brigades are extensively documented, including numerous eyewitness accounts written by volunteers from the United States, England, France, and other nations.



The British Battalion banner
Image source: Wikimedia Commons

With its inclusion of publications from Spain, Portugal, Latin America, this collection offers researchers an extraordinary tool for understanding the conflict from all sides and from within and beyond Spain. Distributed throughout Europe and North America, the pamphlets in this collection represent the opinions and philosophies of insurgents, anarchists, socialists and communists, providing researchers with a wealth of information on Spanish and international history, ideology, political science, church and state conflicts, nationalism, socialism, fascism and communism.

Archives Unbound :

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