

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

The story of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) has been told (and retold) many times. History changes as historians uncover new facts and re-interpret the historical record. Perspectives shift over time. In this unit, we want to offer a new approach: the material legacy (material culture) of the Spanish Civil War. **Thirty objects dating back to 1936-39**, ranging from the ordinary to the extraordinary, will help us with this journey. What was the material legacy of the SCW? How did the objects of the conflict embody an individual's experience and collective attitudes?

1. Republican pin and cufflinks. Author's collection. The small republican pin depicts a young woman (a Marianne-style figure) wearing a Phrygian cap, a symbol of liberty used in Revolutionary France (1790). The cufflinks (tools for fastening shirt cuffs closed) are painted in the Spanish Republican colours: red, yellow, and murrey (or purple). The birth of the Second Spanish Republic was celebrated by enthusiastic public rejoicing across the country.



"The republic was proclaimed shortly before May Day, on 14 April 1931; the king had left the country only two weeks before 1 May. The change of the regime had occurred, according to eye-witnesses' testimonies, amidst a joyous atmosphere: people took to the streets waving flags and peacefully singing republican songs. Indeed, one of the defining elements of the republic was a change in the relationship between the state and civil society, which was now based on the generalization of social and political rights, including the right to demonstrate (Cruz

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
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2014, p. 14). Two weeks later, when the first day of May arrived, the optimism had not yet subsided. Mobilization and a 'passionate exaltation' predominated in a succession of 'civil celebrations, popular rallies, and impressive parades' (Gaziel 1931). That year, therefore, was the first since 1923 in which workers could openly and legally demonstrate on May Day, and it also involved a huge 'magical' celebration".

Eduardo Romanos and José Luis Ledesma, "May Day in Spain: Socialist and Anarchist Traditions", Abby Peterson and Herbert Reiter (Eds), *The Ritual of May Day in Western Europe: Past, Present and Future*, London – New York, Routledge, 2016, page 119.

- Was the Second Spanish Republic overwhelmingly welcomed by the people? Why?

2. People's Olympiad badge. Author's collection. The "Olimpiada Popular" in Barcelona was an alternative sporting event to protest against the 1936 Summer Olympics being held in Berlin under the Third Reich. 6,000 athletes from 22 nations registered for the People's Olympiad. The "Olimpiada" was to be held between 19 and 26 July, a few weeks before the official Summer Olympics. However, due to the outbreak of the SCW, the games were cancelled. At least 200 of the athletes joined antifascist militias and fought for the Republic. They were the embryo of the future International Brigades.



 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
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“In Spain there were already several hundred foreign volunteers. Most had just arrived in Barcelona for the People’s Olympiad when the rising took place. A number of them volunteered to form the first nucleus of the International Brigades, the *centuria* Thaelmann, then attached to the PSUC in Catalonia. This unit was led by Hans Beimler, a member of the central committee of the German Communist Party and a deputy in the Reichstag. After Hitler’s seizure of power, Beimler had been locked up in Dachau¹, from where he had managed to escape, reaching Barcelona on 5 August 1936. During the course of the whole civil war between 32,000 and 35,000 men from 53 different countries served in the ranks of the International Brigades. Another 5,000 foreigners served outside, mostly attached to the CNT or the POUM”.

Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006, ch. 16.

“A number of these [British] volunteers are now widely known, in particular George Orwell, though he actually fought with a militia unit rather than with the brigades themselves. In addition to the trade unionist Jack Jones, prominent Britons who joined the International Brigades included poet and writer Laurie Lee; Tom Wintringham, founder of the Home Guard and the Common Wealth Party; Winston Churchill’s two nephews Esmond and Giles Romilly; (Sir) Alfred Sherman, later and ideologue and speechwriter for Margaret Thatcher; speedway motorcyclist Clem Beckett; and actor James Robertson Justice, who came to prominence in the 'Doctor in the House' films.

However, most Britons who went to Spain were neither celebrated nor famous. Rather they were ordinary men and women from modest working-class backgrounds, hailing from great smokestack cities such as London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Despite claims to the contrary, only a few of them were jobless when they left for Spain, with a large proportion employed in industrial occupations, including construction, ship-building and mining. Most were politically active –perhaps as many as three-quarters were members of the Communist Party– but those with an alternative political stance or who hailed from the trade union movement were also accepted”.

¹ Dachau Concentration Camp (Bavaria), the first Nazi concentration camp opened in Germany (1933).

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

Richard Baxell, *Unlikely Warriors: The British in the Spanish Civil War and the Struggle Against Fascism*, London, Aurum Press, 2015, pages 6 and 7.

- "They [the 200 athletes] were the embryo of the future International Brigades". Do you agree?

- The International Brigades: "Freedom fighters or Comintern army?" Before you answer, read Andy Durgan, "Freedom Fighters or Comintern Army? The International Brigades in Spain", *International Socialism Journal*, 84 (Autumn 1999), <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj84/durgan.htm>. Accessed August 19, 2016.

3. Militiaman. "Por la libertad". This insignia was sold at "Magatzems la Fleca" (Reus). Author's collection.



Three belt plates worn by militiamen. Construction is simple and it could be done by small metal working shops. F. Grillet's collection.

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions



After the coup of July 1936, with the Army divided, most of the fighting to defend the Republic was carried out by militia units organized by labor unions and political parties. However, the militias lacked military experience, proper training and discipline. In many militia units there was no hierarchy. Military advisors were not always respected or welcomed. They only had small arms and light weapons. Artillery was scarce. As George Orwell, who served in the POUM militia, wrote in *Homage to Catalonia*:

"'Revolutionary' discipline depends on political consciousness -on an understanding of why orders must be obeyed; it takes time to diffuse this, but it also takes time to drill a man into an automaton on the barrack-square. The journalists who sneered² at the militia-system seldom remembered that the militias had to hold the line while the Popular Army was training in the rear. And it is a tribute to the strength of 'revolutionary' discipline that the militias stayed in the field-at all".

George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1938, ch. 3.

Colonel Stephen O. Fuqua, an American military attaché³ in Madrid, described the equipment of the militias:

² Menysprear.

³ Military attaché: a military expert who is attached to a diplomatic mission.

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

“The uniform of the militia is the *mono* (overalls) of varying shades of blue and brown, however, lacking sufficient number of this garb, many wear civilian attire of non-descript character. The militia of course have no uniform armament or equipment (...) The soldier has practically no individual standard equipment but carries a blanket roll, within which he places whatever he wishes. A belt, pouch⁴ or some form of ammunition carrier is issued to him. His headgear is what we term the 'overseas cap'⁵, and is of many designs, piped with cords of various hues for organizational designation”.

James W. Cortada (ed.), *Modern Warfare in Spain: American Military Observations on the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, Washington, D.C., Potomac Books, 2012, pages 48 and 49.

Later, the militias and columns (“columnas”), such as the Durruti Column, were replaced by the Mixed Brigade (“Brigada mixta”, BM) as the basic military unit of the “Ejército Popular Republicano” (EPR).

- What do the colours of the militiaman (first picture) represent?

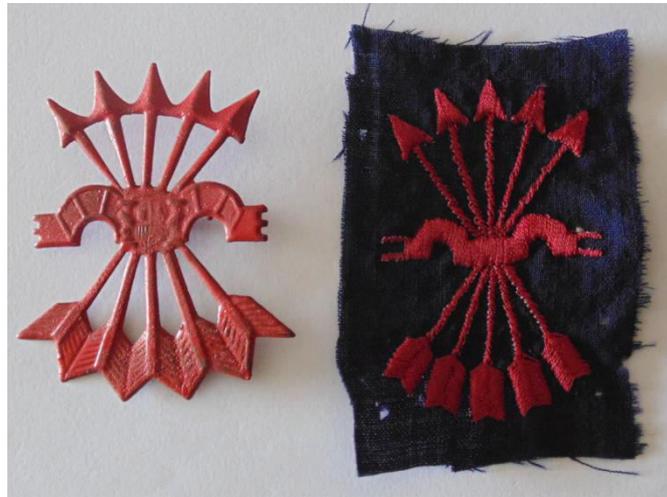
4. Falange (or Falangist) badge (left) **and Falange cloth patch** (right). The Falange yoke-and-arrows⁶ badge / patch was used by Spaniards as a symbol of either ideological adherence to or membership of the fascist organization founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera (1933). During the war, Falangist soldiers and officers usually wore this type of badge or cloth patch on the left breast pocket (Army uniform or Blue shirt).

⁴ Cartutxera.

⁵ Casquet de caserna.

⁶ El jou i les fletxes, el símbol tradicional dels Reis Catòlics Ferran II d'Aragó (1479-1516) i Isabel I de Castella (1474-1504).

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions



The Falange was a fascist political party founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the oldest son of Dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera, in 1933. A year later, the “Spanish Phalanx” absorbed the “Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista” (JONS), a small syndicalist movement (Ramiro Ledesma - Onésimo Redondo). José Antonio was executed by a Republican firing squad in Alicante prison on 20th November 1936. He was succeeded by the leader of the “Old Shirts”, Manuel Hedilla, who was arrested and imprisoned in Nationalist Spain. The death of the founder of Falange rid Franco of a formidable (and hated) rival and accomplished orator. On 19 April 1937, the “Caudillo” united Falange with the Carlist “Comunión Tradicionalista”: “Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS” (FET y de las JONS) was born. It was the sole “political party” of the “Movimiento Nacional” until its dissolution in 1977, a more conservative than fascist organization. “Franco used the cult of the *ausente* (the absent one) to take over the Falange. All its external symbols and paraphernalia were used to mask its real ideological disarmament”.⁷

- Do you know the symbols of Falange?

Visit <http://www.spanishcivilwar1936.com/falange.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2016).

<http://spartacus-educational.com/SPfalange.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2016).

⁷ P. Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* [updated 80th anniversary edition], London, William Collins, 2016, page 189.

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

5. Sweet wrapper. Left-facing swastika (“sauwastika”). The swastika or gammadion cross is an ancient religious symbol of good fortune (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism). It has been known since prehistory, but Nazism tainted its symbolism with hate, especially in Western culture.⁸ Due to Hitler's support of Franco, objects such as lapel badges, postcards, bracelets, etc. bearing a Nazi swastika were common in Nationalist Spain.



Red star. “Casquet de caserna” (overseas cap) star. A red star, five-pointed and filled, is a symbol of Communism. It appeared during the Russian Civil War (1917-1922). This example is known as the “Catalan type” among collectors.



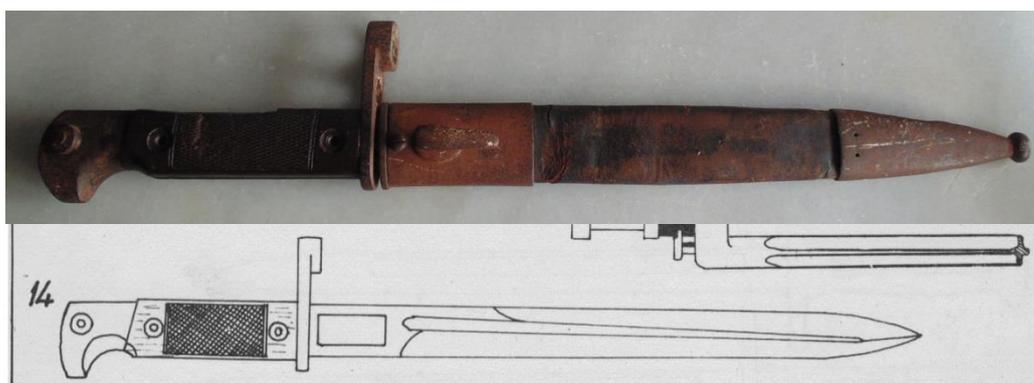
⁸ Mukti Jain Campion, “How the world loved the swastika - until Hitler stole it”, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29644591>. Accessed August 19, 2016.

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
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Soviet Mosin Nagant socket bayonet⁹. A socket bayonet for use with the 7.62 mm M1891 Mosin-Nagant rifle. Russia did not supply a leather / metal scabbard¹⁰, preferring that soldiers keep the bayonet fixed all of the time. Thousands of rifles with bayonets, machine-guns, artillery, aircraft, tanks, millions of cartridges, etc. were sent from the Soviet Union to Republican Spain. In our country, many bayonet blades were shortened by soldiers. In the post-war years, this type of bayonet was (re)used by blacksmiths.



Soviet Simonov knife bayonet with Spanish scabbard. A very rare bayonet for use on the "1936 Simonov Trial Rifles" (an improved version of the Mosin Nagant M91/30).¹¹ "It could be argued that the Soviets send these rifles [and bayonets] to Spain in order to gain further data on the effects of the changes made to the M91/30 design via actual combat. How this data would have been collected is not known. The other possibility is that these rifles were sent as aid simply because it was found the changes made had no real effect on the overall effectiveness of the rifles" (Conrad Daniel Hilsdorf).¹²



⁹ Baioneta: "1 f. [LC] [DE] Fulla d'acer amb punxa que s'ajusta per un extrem al fusell, el qual pot així utilitzar-se com a arma blanca. Armar la baioneta. Una càrrega a la baioneta", DIEC2.

¹⁰ Funda, beina.

¹¹ Juan L. Calvó indicates that this bayonet (picture No 14) was probably a modified version for the Simonov AVS-36 automatic rifle: "Número 14. Cuchillo bayoneta similar al modelo destinado al fusil semiautomático Simonov Modelo 1936, quizás destinado a una versión modificada de aquel". It could be, but we think that this model was intended for the "1936 Simonov Trial Rifles". Its serial number starts with the number "0".

¹² <http://scwmosin.weebly.com/>. Accessed August 28, 2016."

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
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Italian machine gun insignia (without cloth backing), 2.2 cm. The machine gun depicted is the Fiat-Revelli Model 1914, a water-cooled design. It fired the 6.5x52mm Carcano at a rate of 400-500 rounds per minute (RPM). The gun weighed 17 kg and its solid tripod with tubular legs 22 kg. It was used by the "Corpo Truppe Volontarie" (CTV). The Fiat-Revelli M1914 was developed into the Fiat-Revelli Model 1935.



Nationalist military decorations, awards and commemorative medals. From left to right: Spanish Cross of Military Merit with Red Decoration, Italian Cross for War Merit (reverse showing the cypher and crown of King Victor Emanuel III), SCW Campaign Medal (Vanguard), Province of Biscay Victory Medal 1936-1939, National Uprising and Victory Medal (Bronze), German Wound Badge (black)¹³, Regional Day of León (commemorative piece distributed at the farewell of the Condor Legion).



¹³ A gift of Mr F. Grillet. It was probably denazified after 1945. Strangely enough, it belonged once to a Republican political commissar (a war trophy?).

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

Despite the Non-Intervention Agreement (August 1936) and the Non-Intervention Committee (September), foreign intervention decisively altered the balance of power and the outcome of the SCW. Non-intervention was ignored from the outset by the Third Reich and Italy and, later, by the USSR. Germany and Italy supported Franco, and the USSR and Mexico the Second Spanish Republic. The SCW was also a testing ground for new weapons (tanks, fighter aircraft, bombers, artillery, etc.) and tactics (the Italian “guerra celere” or “lightning war”, German carpet bombing, close air support for ground troops¹⁴, etc.). France occasionally broke the Non-Intervention policy and Britain remained largely (and hypocritically) faithful to it. US “President Roosevelt continued to maintain a studied neutrality toward the Spanish Civil War that he would later regret. Texaco, on the other hand, went to war”: Texaco supplied oil on credit to Francoist Spain.¹⁵

Foreign involvement in the SCW

Republicans	Nationalists
<p>Mexico:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20,000 rifles and 20 million rounds of ammunition (7mm) - Food - A small amount of American-made aircraft <p>USSR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2,000 personnel, mainly instructors, tank crews and pilots - Between 379,000 and 500,000 rifles 	<p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Condor Legion (between 13,500 - 19,000 men including technicians and military advisers) - 600 aircraft (He 51 and Me 109 fighters, He 111 bombers, Stukas, etc.) - 122 tanks (Panzer I) - Artillery (including the 8.8 cm Flak) <p>Italy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CTV, 80,000 men

¹⁴ S. W. Mitchman, Jr., *Eagles of the Third Reich: Men of the Luftwaffe in WWII*, Mechanicsburg, PA, Stackpoole Books, 2007, pages 31-50.

¹⁵ A. Hochschild, “How Texaco Helped Franco Win the Spanish Civil War: The lost history of a dictator-loving, Nationalist-supporting American oilman” [Torkild Rieber], *Mother Jones*, March 29, 2016. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/03/texaco-franco-spanish-civil-war-rieber>. Accessed August 30, 2016.

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 300 tanks (T-26, BT-5) - 620 - 800 aircraft (I-15, I-16, SB, etc.) - 862,000,000 rounds - Artillery, machine guns, etc. <p>International Brigades (35,000 antifascist volunteers from "53 nations"), and 5,000 volunteers (mostly attached to the anarchists or the POUM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 155 tanks ("Carro Veloce" CV-33 or L3/33) - 730-800 aircraft, "Aviazione Legionaria" (Fiat CR.32, G.50, SM.79, etc.) - More than 800 guns <p>Portugal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portuguese volunteers ("Os Viriatos", 8,000 men) - Logistical support <p>Irish Brigade (Eoin O'Duffy's unit, 700 men), and 1,000 volunteers from countries as diverse as Australia, Belgium, Brazil, etc.</p>
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Sources: G. Howson, *Arms For Spain: The Untold Story of the Spanish Civil War*, London, John Murray, 1998; G. Howson, "Los armamentos: Asuntos ocultos a tratar", Paul Preston (ed.), *La República asediada. Hostilidad internacional y conflictos internos durante la Guerra Civil*, Barcelona, Península, 2001, pp. 375-415; L. Molina y J. M. Manrique, *Armas y uniformes de la Guerra Civil Española*, Madrid, Tikal [2011?]; M. Ojeda Revah, *México y la Guerra Civil Española*, Madrid, Turner, 2005; B. Schmitt et al. (eds.), *Documents on German foreign policy, 1918-1945. Series D (1937-1945)*, vol. III: *Germany and the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1950; R. H. Whealey, *Hitler and Spain: The Nazi Role in the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 2005 (especially page 103); S. J. Zaloga, *Spanish Civil War Tanks: The Proving Ground for Blitzkrieg*, Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 2010.

- Read the following article and summarize it:

Adam Hochschild, "How Texaco Helped Franco Win the Spanish Civil War: The lost history of a dictator-loving, Nationalist-supporting American oilman" [Torkild Rieber], *Mother Jones*, March 29, 2016.

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/03/texaco-franco-spanish-civil-war-rieber>. Accessed August 30, 2016

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

6. Spanish M26 helmet. An iconic symbol of the SCW, the Spanish model 1926 helmet was developed by the National Arsenal of Artillery in Trubia (near Oviedo, Asturias). It was distributed in 1930. This model was used by both sides during the SCW along with other models: Spanish M21 and M34, French M15 and M26, Czechoslovakian vz.30, Soviet Ssh.36, German M35, Italian M15-16 and M1933, Portuguese M16, etc. However, there were not enough helmets for all of the soldiers. In the early stages of the war, helmets were often decorated with political or patriotic slogans and emblems. The first example is a pre-Civil War model identified by the hollow side rivets¹⁶, dark leather liner, and original grey paint. The second one was repainted during the war and it was hit by shrapnel¹⁷: a poignant reminder of the true nature of warfare.

Item name: Spanish M26 helmet "with wing" ("con ala")¹⁸

Materials used: Röchling and Trubia steel, aluminium rivets, leather

Weight: 1,050 grams

Size range: One size

Original colour: Grey

Liner¹⁹: Three leather pads

Leather chinstrap²⁰ with buckle

¹⁶ Reblons.

¹⁷ Metralla.

¹⁸ <http://www.cascoscoleccion.com/espana/es26ca.htm>. Accessed August 23, 2016.

¹⁹ Interior del casc (els elements de contacte amb el crani).

²⁰ Barballera.



Institut
La Garrotxa

Subject: Social Science (History)

A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects

Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat

AICLE / CLIL

Level: 2n de
Batxillerat

Timing: 12
sessions





Institut
La Garrotxa

Subject: Social Science (History)

A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects

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Batxillerat

Timing: 12
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David Seymour (1911-1956), or Chim, Polish photographer and co-founder of Magnum Photos (1947). Picture information: "The poet Miguel Hernández, a rural farmer and adamant²¹ Republican, went to the front lines to read poetry to soldiers, as did many writers who were members of the Alliance des Intellectuels Antifascistes (AIA). Hernández was arrested by the Phalangists and died in prison" (1942).²²



Stamp. Crusade against the cold. Nationalist propaganda. Artilleryman wearing a helmet (a steel helmet or a pith helmet?). Burgos, Hija de B[raulio] Fournier. 10 cents. Author's collection.

²¹ Ferm.

²² <http://pro.magnumphotos.com/Asset/-2K7O3R3ZY1UA.html>. Accessed August 23, 2016.

 Institut La Garrotxa	Subject: Social Science (History)	Level: 2n de Batxillerat
	A History of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in 30 Objects Author: Ricard Expósito i Amagat AICLE / CLIL	Timing: 12 sessions

- Imagine that you are a young soldier, aged 17 or 18. Your helmet is heavy, plus you carry a rifle, a bayonet, three ammunition pouches, hand grenades, a canteen, your personal belongings, etc. The sun scorches the plains. You want to get rid of your helmet, but the enemy is firing at you. What do you do? What are your feelings? Are you afraid? Are you tired?