

**Adam Hochschild. *Spain in Our Hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2016. Pp. 438. \$15.99.**

In October 1938, over 300,000 Spaniards lined the streets of Barcelona to honor two hundred Americans and other survivors of the International Brigades who had fought in the Spanish Civil War. The soldiers and nurses were part of the roughly 2,800 Americans who, in the midst of the Great Depression, defied the U.S. government and volunteered to support the Republican struggle against the military uprising of General Francisco Franco and the Nationalists. In *Spain in Our Hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*, Adam Hochschild chronicles the experiences of American volunteers and journalists in Spain on the eve of the Second World War. Combined with leftists from countries such as Canada, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, the Americans faced inadequate training and supplies as well as a savage civil war in which the Nationalists relied on significant military support from Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. The result was Franco's victory in 1939, unprecedented casualty rates for American soldiers, and, despite the cheering crowds in Barcelona and cries that the "crusaders for freedom" would never be forgotten, a poignant anti-fascist effort by Americans that remains largely missing from dominant historical accounts centered on World War II (337).

Hochschild's engaging narrative includes familiar characters such as Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, and Pablo Picasso, whose role in the Spanish Civil War often blurred the line between journalism, art, and combatant. However, the strength of *Spain in Our Hearts* is the author's account of a diverse group of unknown American men and women—communists, socialists, anarchists, workers, students, Jews, and African Americans—whose commitment to economic and social justice during the Depression made Spain's brutal civil war "a moral and political

touchstone” (xv). Hochschild provides little background on either American society during the Great Depression or the larger context of Spanish history, but his narrative excels in exploring the motivations and perspectives of Americans encountering the unique decision of how to fight fascism in Spain while the United States remained committed to an official policy of neutrality. For socialists Charles and Lois Orr, a recently married couple from Kentucky, the potential of the Republican government in Catalonia to create an unprecedented egalitarian and just society was an experience impossible to find amid the limitations of the New Deal in the United States. As Lois later recalled, “We were living the revolution instead of our own personal lives, an incredible expansion of consciousness... a new heaven and a new earth were being formed” (59).

Hochschild’s depiction of American journalists in Spain during the war serves as a revealing proxy for the conflicted views of American leaders and the general public. In no place was this clearer than the rivalry between journalists Herbert Matthews and William Carney within *The New York Times*. Matthews celebrated the ideals of Republican Spain and its American adherents, and his reporting often emphasized the brutality of the Nationalist uprising. On the other side of a nation split in two, Carney was “an open Franco enthusiast” who was actively involved in promoting the Nationalist cause in the United States (154). Along with such vivid characters, Hochschild adds Norwegian-born Torkild Rieber. An admirer of Adolf Hitler and a staunch opponent of the New Deal, Rieber worked for Texaco Oil Company and almost single-handedly guaranteed that Franco’s forces, including large numbers of German planes and tanks, received plenty of vital American oil on credit.

The public and, in terms of Rieber, much more secretive efforts of such individuals provide instructors and students with powerful evidence of the conflicted nature of American thought toward fascism in the 1930s. Polls in the United States

revealed larger support for Republicans, yet entrenched hostility to communism and a fervent commitment among Americans toward neutrality in the thirties led to inaction in Washington and, in terms of the American volunteers in Spain, harassment and hostility once they returned. Their story, however, remains a powerful vehicle for globalizing American history and for helping students evaluate the ideological complexities of the era on both sides of the Atlantic. Furthermore, *Spain in Our Hearts* provides students with an engaging opportunity to explore the relationship between Americans, U.S. foreign policy, and the Spanish Civil War that transcends the more familiar story of the rise of European fascism. Hochschild's accessible and tragic narrative ultimately raises important questions about what sorts of intellectual developments and historical conflicts deserve attention as historians and students craft narratives of the American Century.

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