

“Let me recite what  
history teaches.  
History teaches.”

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Gertrude Stein



The  
Economist

Espresso

*¡No Pasarán!*  
*The Spanish Civil War*  
*(1936-1939)*



# Opening Comments

- ▶ Focus will be on Politics, Military Strategy, & internal and external relationships.
- ▶ We will touch on tactics, weapons, and economics only as needed.
- ▶ We will not discuss the cultural aspects of the war. (Almost no Hemingway, Orwell, or Picasso)
- ▶ Ask questions!!!
- ▶ Facts vs. Opinions

# What We'll Do

1. Provide some background
2. Review Spanish history up to the war
3. How the war started
4. Conduct of the war itself
5. How it ended
6. Spain after the war
7. Conclusions and final thoughts

# Background

- ▶ Nationalists vs. 2d Republic
- ▶ Testing ground for World War II (???)
- ▶ Deeply rooted in Spanish history.
- ▶ Vastly more complex than often realized.
  - ▶ Wars within wars
  - ▶ Simultaneous rebellion (from the right) & revolution(s) from the left
  - ▶ All subsumed within a vicious & bloody civil war.
  - ▶ 88 known battles of which we'll look at only 19.

# Who Fought?

- ▶ Some 20 different groups can be lumped as follows:
  - ▶ Republicans vs. Nationalists (official war)
  - ▶ Fascists vs. Communists (Foreign press)
  - ▶ Catholics vs. Secularists
  - ▶ Separatists vs. Centralists
  - ▶ Anarchists vs. governments in general
  - ▶ Urban vs. Agrarian
  - ▶ Socialists vs. Communists
  - ▶ Stalinists vs. Trotskyites

# Players

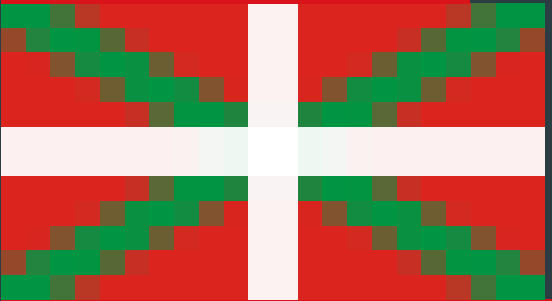
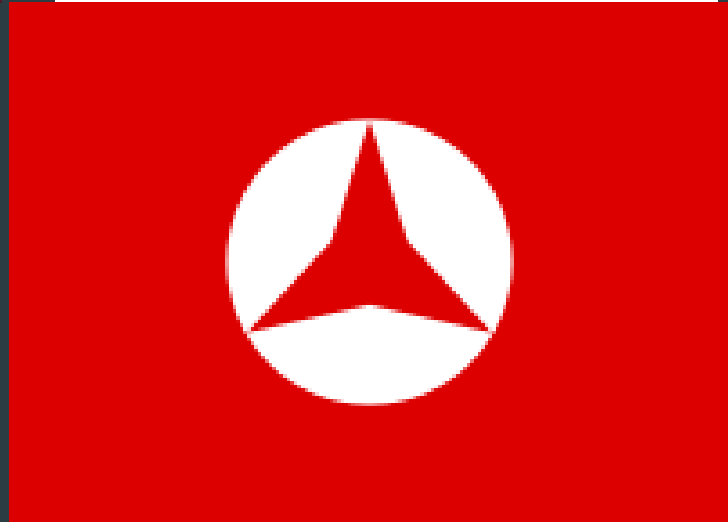
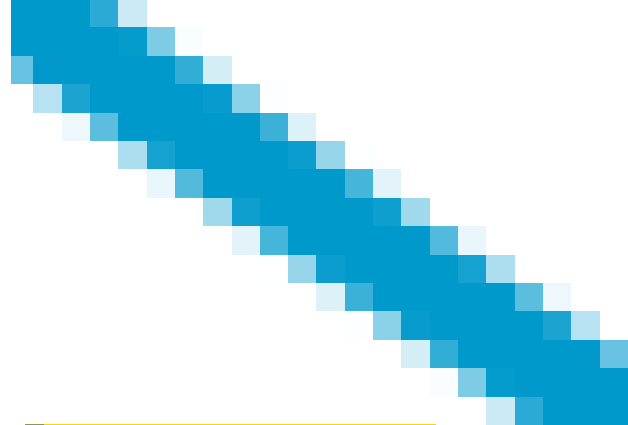
## ▶ Republicans

- ▶ Popular Front (left-wing government party)
- ▶ Elements of the Spanish Army
- ▶ CNT/FAI (Syndicalist/Anarchist)
- ▶ UGT(Socialist)
- ▶ ERC/EC (Catalonists)
- ▶ EG (Basques)
- ▶ PG (Galicians)
- ▶ POUM (“Pure” Communists)
- ▶ Stalinist Communist
- ▶ International Brigades
  - ▶ ≈ 53 countries
- ▶ Soviet Union
- ▶ Mexico

## ▶ Nationalists

- ▶ CEDA (Right-wing Catholic party)\*
- ▶ UME (Military Union)\*
- ▶ Falange (Spanish Fascists)\*
- ▶ Carlists (Bourbon Monarchists)\*
- ▶ Elements of the Spanish Army
- ▶ Alfonsists (Monarchists)\*
- ▶ Army of Africa
- ▶ Italy
- ▶ Germany
- ▶ Portugal
- ▶ Foreign Volunteers

\* Combined into one party under Franco in 1937 (Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS)



AIT



# The Underlying Cause

“The defenders of property, religion, and tradition took up arms against a Republican government committed to social reform, devolution, and secularization.”

Frances Lannon



# Spanish Geography



# Spanish Political Geography

# Spanish History



- ▶ 1492
- ▶ The Reconquista
- ▶ Castilian
- ▶ Latifundia
- ▶ Who has the power?
  - ▶ Army
  - ▶ Church
    - ▶ Inquisition
    - ▶ Education
  - ▶ Landowners
  - ▶ Primogeniture
- ▶ The Spanish Empire
- ▶ The Conquistadores





# Empire & Income



- Colonies  $\approx$  25%
- The real cash cows were Aragon and Castile
- Easily the richest Country in Europe
- Spanish Army (RMA)
  - Tercios
- Charles I and V inherits and buys an empire
  - 1516 (Spain - Trastámara)
  - 1519 (HRE - Hapburgs)
  - 1556 (Abdication)

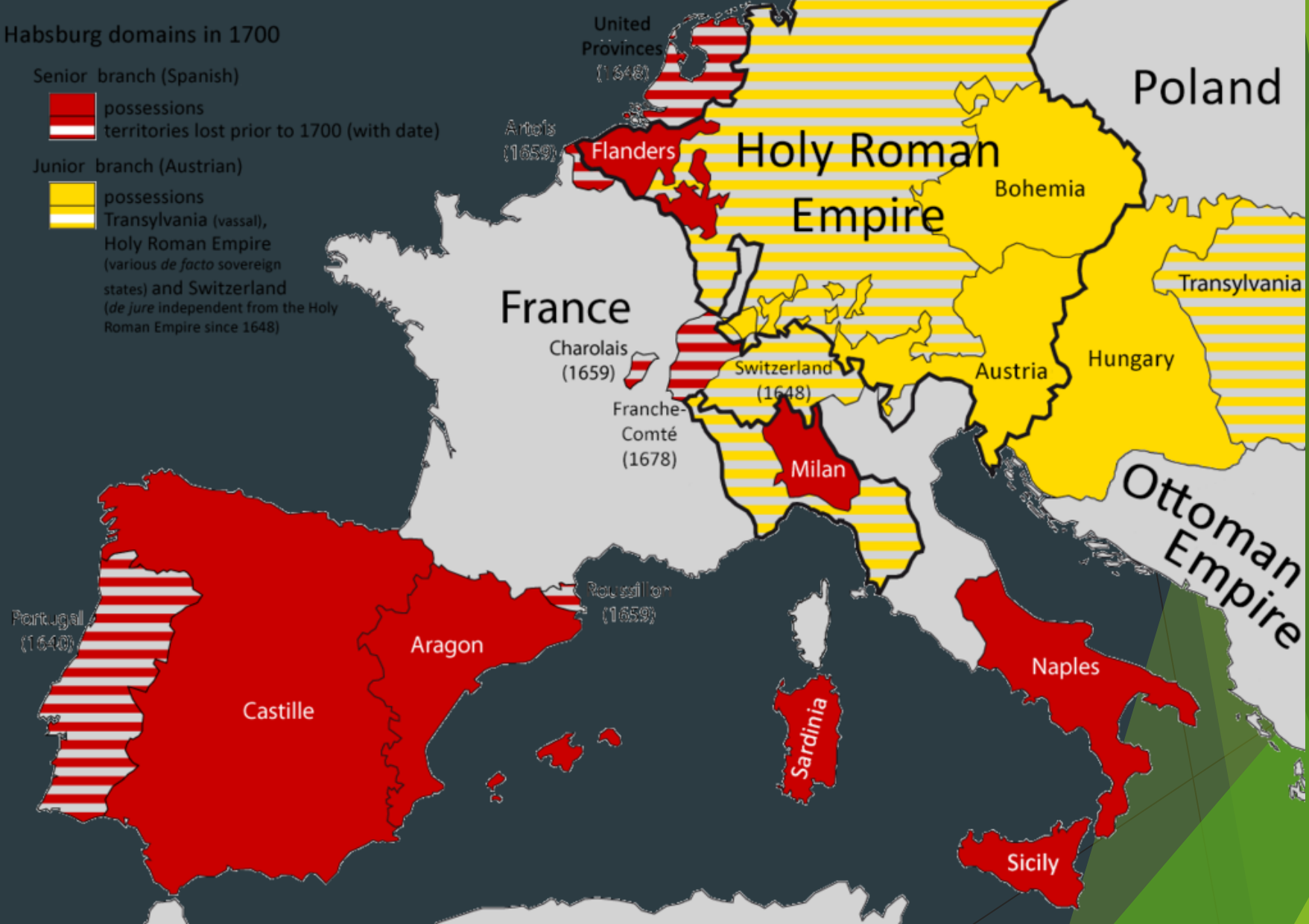
## Habsburg domains in 1700

Senior branch (Spanish)

 possessions  
 territories lost prior to 1700 (with date)

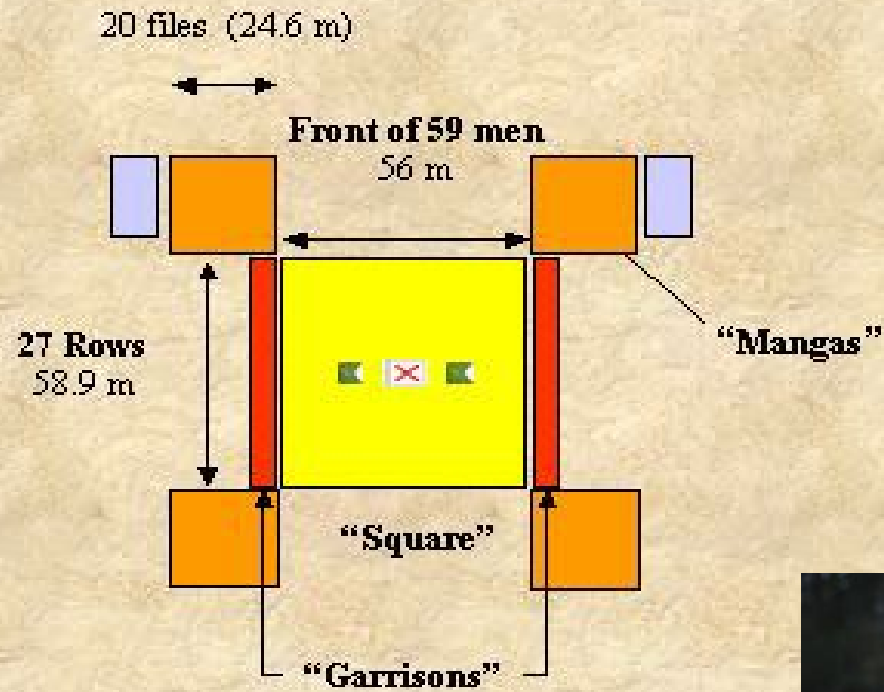
Junior branch (Austrian)

 possessions  
 Transylvania (vassal),  
Holy Roman Empire  
(various *de facto* sovereign  
states) and Switzerland  
(*de jure* independent from the Holy  
Roman Empire since 1648)



# The Spanish & Habsburg Empires

## Field Square type Squadron for a Tercio of 3 000 men



- 1500 Pikemen
- 2 x 135 Harquebusiers
- 4 x 240 Harquebusiers
- 2 x 90 Musketeers



# Tercios

# The Disastrous Three Philips

(1556 - 1665)

In 109 years, Spain goes from the strongest power in the world to a second-rate player. This decline would continue.

- Catholic Champions
- Repeated bankruptcies
  - 1557, 1560, 1575, & 1596 plus 5 more times up to 1666.
- Plague (1596-1602) (-10%)
- 91 continuous years of War
  - Netherlands (1568-1648)
  - Anglo-Spanish (1585-1604)
  - Iberian Union (1580-1640)
  - Thirty Years War (1618-1648)
  - French-Spanish (1635-1659)
  - Portuguese Restoration War (1640 - 1668)



Philip II  
(1556-1598)



Philip III  
(1598-1621)



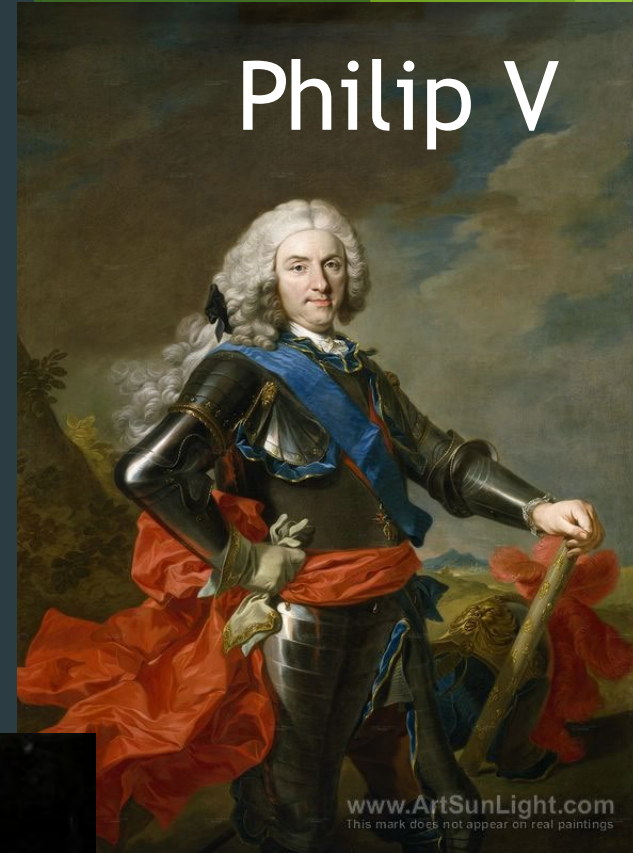
Philip IV  
(1621-1665)



# The Long 18<sup>th</sup> Century

- ▶ A string of incompetent or at least very unlucky kings
- ▶ Ever increasing financial problems
- ▶ War of Reunions (1683 - 1684) (Treaty of Ratisbon)
- ▶ The ‘Long Century’ (1688 - 1815)
  - ▶ Nine Years War (1688 - 1697) (Peace of Ryswick)
- ▶ War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714)
  - ▶ Charles II (Hapsburg) (1665 - 1700)
  - ▶ Philip V (Bourbon) (1700 - 1746)
  - ▶ Spain is now a French “Caboose”

Philip V



Charles II



# The Long 18th Century (2)

- ▶ 42 years of somewhat enlightened kingship at least by Spanish standards.
  - ▶ Ferdinand VI (1746 - 1759) Bankruptcy in 1759
  - ▶ Charles III (1759 - 1788) “..was probably the most successful European ruler of his generation”
- ▶ But...the “big three” kept real progress at bay.
- ▶ Charles IV - 1788 - 1808 Not ready for prime time.
- ▶ The French Revolution
- ▶ Spain becomes part of the Napoleonic Empire

# The Long 18th Century (3)



Ferdinand VI



Charles III



Charles IV

# The Napoleonic War

- ▶ The Continental System
- ▶ The War of Spanish Independence (1808-1814)
- ▶ Bourbon Restoration
  - ▶ The Constitution of 1812

Ferdinand VII  
(1814-1833)



# Portuguese History

- ▶ 1385: The Battle of Aljubarrota establishes Portuguese independence.
- ▶ 1580-1640: Portugal is united with Spain under Hapsburg rule
- ▶ 1640-1807: Portugal is again independent until the French invasion.
- ▶ 1820-1826: Liberal Revolution leads to Portuguese independence under a constitutional monarchy.
- ▶ 1910: Monarchy is overthrown and replaced by a republic.
- ▶ 1926: The Estado Novo, a dictatorship under Salazar is established
- ▶ 1974: The Carnation Revolution leads to democracy.

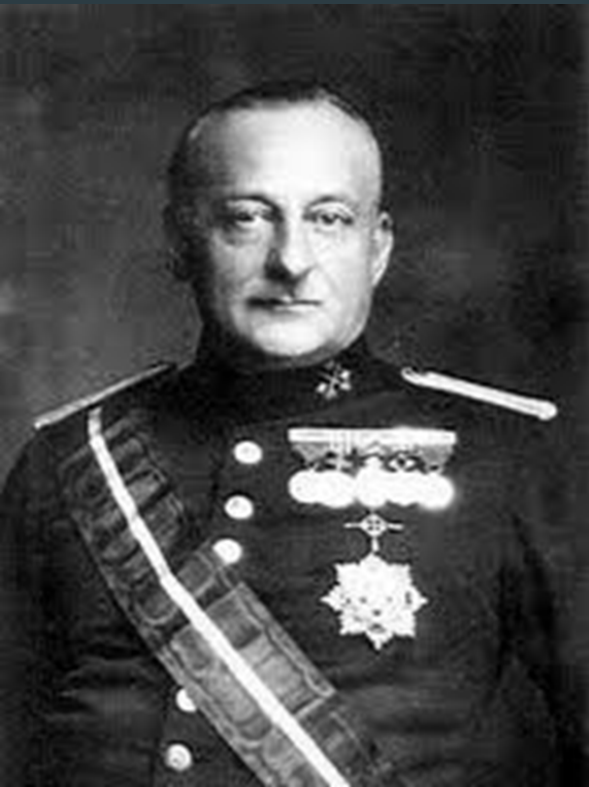
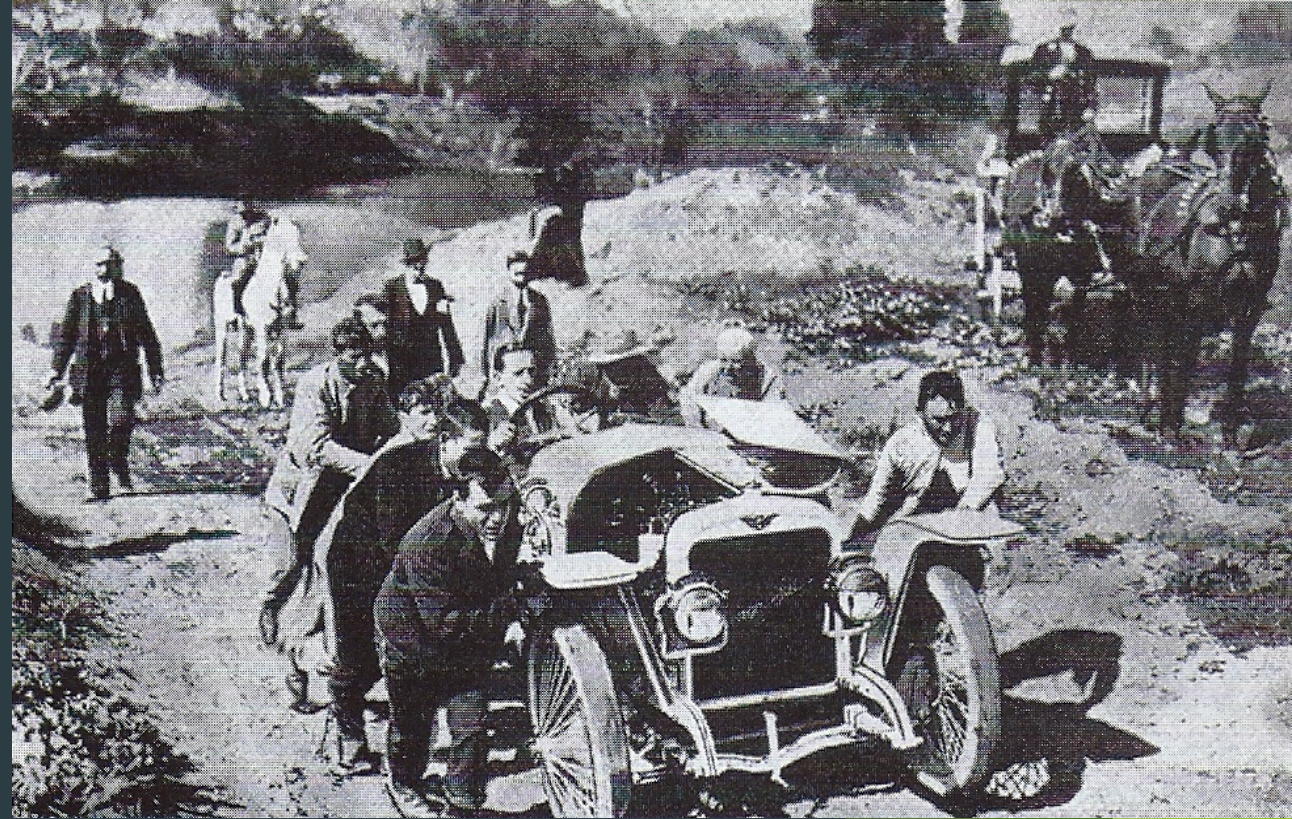
# 19<sup>th</sup> Century

- ▶ Bourgeois Revolution, 1820-1823
- ▶ Colonies spotted the weakness.
- ▶ Isabella II (1833 - 1868)
- ▶ Coups & coup attempts
  - ▶ Carlist War (1833-1839)
  - ▶ 1843, 1849, 1854, 1866.
  - ▶ Glorious Revolution of 1868
  - ▶ Amadeus of Savoy (1870-1873)
  - ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> republic, 1873-1874
  - ▶ Restoration, 1874 - 1885 (Alfonso XII)



# 1898 - 1931

- ▶ Alfonso XIII, 1886-1931
  - ▶ Spanish-American War
  - ▶ Industrialization
  - ▶ First World War



- DeRivera; 1923 - 1931
- Elections of 1931
  - Alfonso leaves Spain
  - 2d Republic declared

470



# The Slide to War

- ▶ Poisonous Spanish Politics
  - ▶ Class, Church & Army
  - ▶ Regions
- ▶ The 2d Republic does terrible things (as seen by the big three):
  - ▶ Guardia de Asalto
  - ▶ New Constitution
  - ▶ Legalizes divorce
  - ▶ Army reforms
  - ▶ Basque & Catalonia devolution
  - ▶ Educational reforms
  - ▶ Women vote (!)



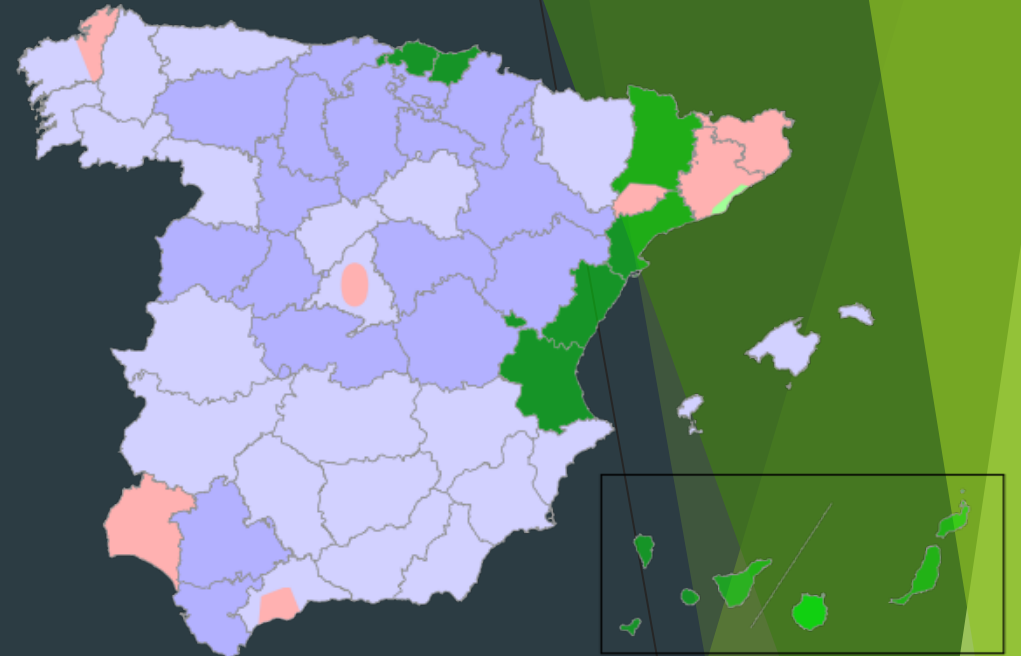
## The Slide to War (2)

### ▶ Sanjurjo revolt -1932

- ▶ Led to many left-wing militia groups
- ▶ CNT/FAI, UGT, ERC, POUM, Stalinists

### ▶ 1933 - “The Black Two Years”

- ▶ Radical Party/CEDA wins power (Anarchists/Women)
- ▶ Tries to roll back reforms
- ▶ The Army crushes several armed uprisings
- ▶ Politics has completely polarized

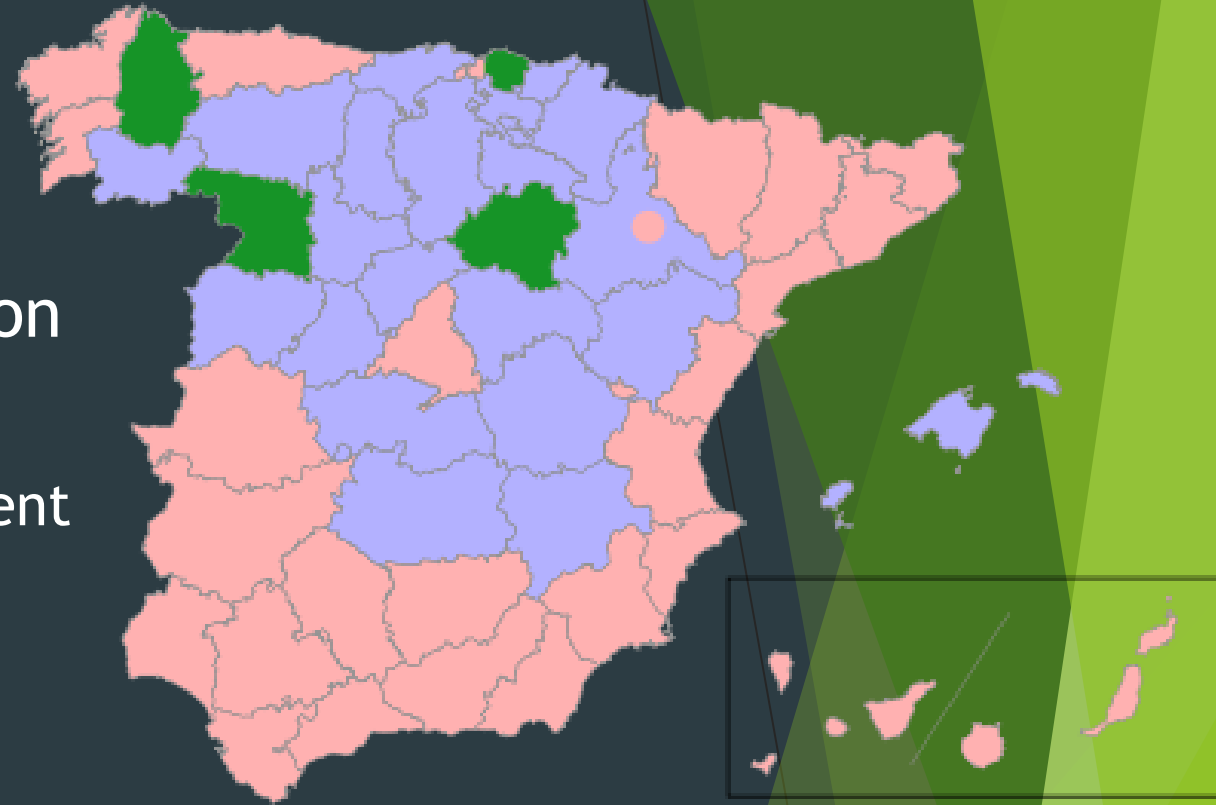


“Vatican Fascism offered you work and brought hunger; it offered you peace and brought five thousand tombs; it offered you order and raised a gallows. The Popular Front offers no more and no less than it will bring: Bread, Peace and Liberty!”

—Popular Front Election Poster

# The Slide to War (3)

- ▶ Feb. 1936 - Popular Front wins election
  - ▶ Many (mostly true) charges of fraud
  - ▶ Forms a progressive center left government
- ▶ Army (UME) decides to take over to “save” Spain (Feb 1936)
  - ▶ November coup is planned
  - ▶ Over 200 political assassinations
  - ▶ July 13 - Calvo Sotelo’s assassination
- ▶ 17 July 1936, Army coup commences



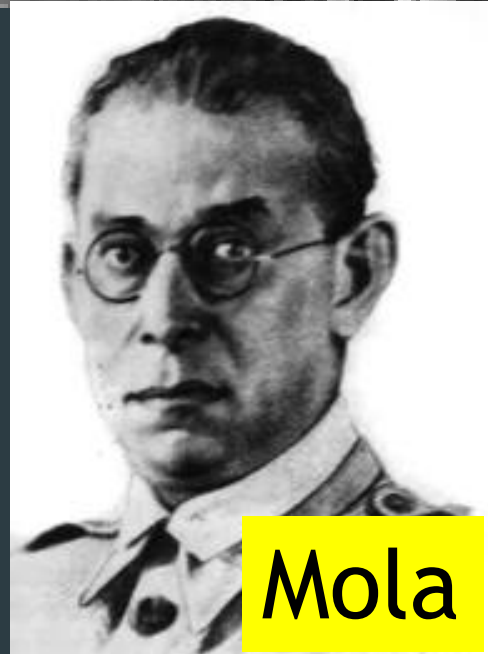
Sotelo



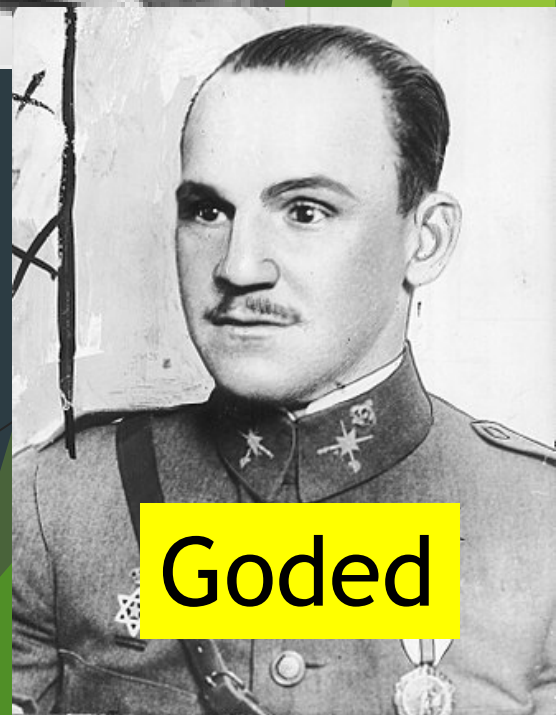
Sanjurjo



Franco



Mola



Goded

The  
Conspirators

# Army Coup

- ▶ The plan was to take control of all major cities and towns
- ▶ Much depended on the local mayor and army commander.
- ▶ Three different results:
  - ▶ Declared for the government
  - ▶ Declared for the rebels
  - ▶ Watched and waited



# Army Coup (2)

- ▶ Result: “2000 Spains instead of one”
- ▶ Revolution breaks out in Republican Spain
  - ▶ Communist Soviets
  - ▶ Anarchists
  - ▶ Regional governments
- ▶ These divisions would plague the Second Republic for the entire war.
- ▶ Red Terror causes international revulsion





Azara (President)

**The  
Republicans**

Giral (1<sup>st</sup>  
Prime  
Minister)



Caballero (2d  
Prime Minister)

Negrin (Prime  
Minister for the  
last 3 years)





KEY POINT - Although the Army coup was successful in many places, it failed in Barcelona, Valencia, Catalonia, Basque, and most crucially Madrid. THAT failure caused the civil war.



# Questions and Comments



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# *¡No Pasarán!* The Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939)

## Part 2



# The Military Situation

- ▶ The Spanish Military
  - ▶ The Army (60,000)
    - ▶ The Army of Africa (30,000)
  - ▶ The Navy (44 ships)
  - ▶ The Air Force
- ▶ Militias (? - 10's of 1000's; mostly republican)
- ▶ International Brigades (50,000/18,000)
- ▶ Telephones (Bell Telephone Inc.)
- ▶ The one thing everyone agreed on was that Madrid was the strategic goal.

# The International Situation

- ▶ Hitler intervenes
  - ▶ Arms, advisors, & “The Condor Legion”
  - ▶ Trained 56,000 Nationalist troops
  - ▶ Provided 16,000 combat troops (lost 300)
  - ▶ Completely unknown amount of equipment
- ▶ Mussolini intervenes (Corpo Truppe Volotarie)
  - ▶ 7 warships
  - ▶ 763 aircraft
  - ▶ 75,000 troops (lost 6000)
  - ▶ 1800 guns, 6800 trucks, 157 tanks
  - ▶ Huge amounts of arms and ammunition



# The International Situation (2)

## ▶ Stalin intervenes

- ▶ Arms & advisors (3000 plus 1000 pilots)
  - ▶ 250 planes, 731 tanks, 300 armored cars and significant arms & ammunition
- ▶ International Brigades
- ▶ SIM (NKVD trained about 14,000)
- ▶ Spanish Treasury

## ▶ Portugal intervenes

- ▶ Estado Novo (Salazar)
- ▶ 8000 troops (Viriatos)
- ▶ Porous border



# The International Brigades

- Organized by the Comintern and controlled from Moscow
- Came from > 50 different countries
- Most were communists
- About 50,000 total volunteers fought as brigadiers
- About 18,000 died in combat.
- Highly enthusiastic and dedicated but lack of training, equipment, and poor coordination limited their effectiveness.





# The Big Questions

????

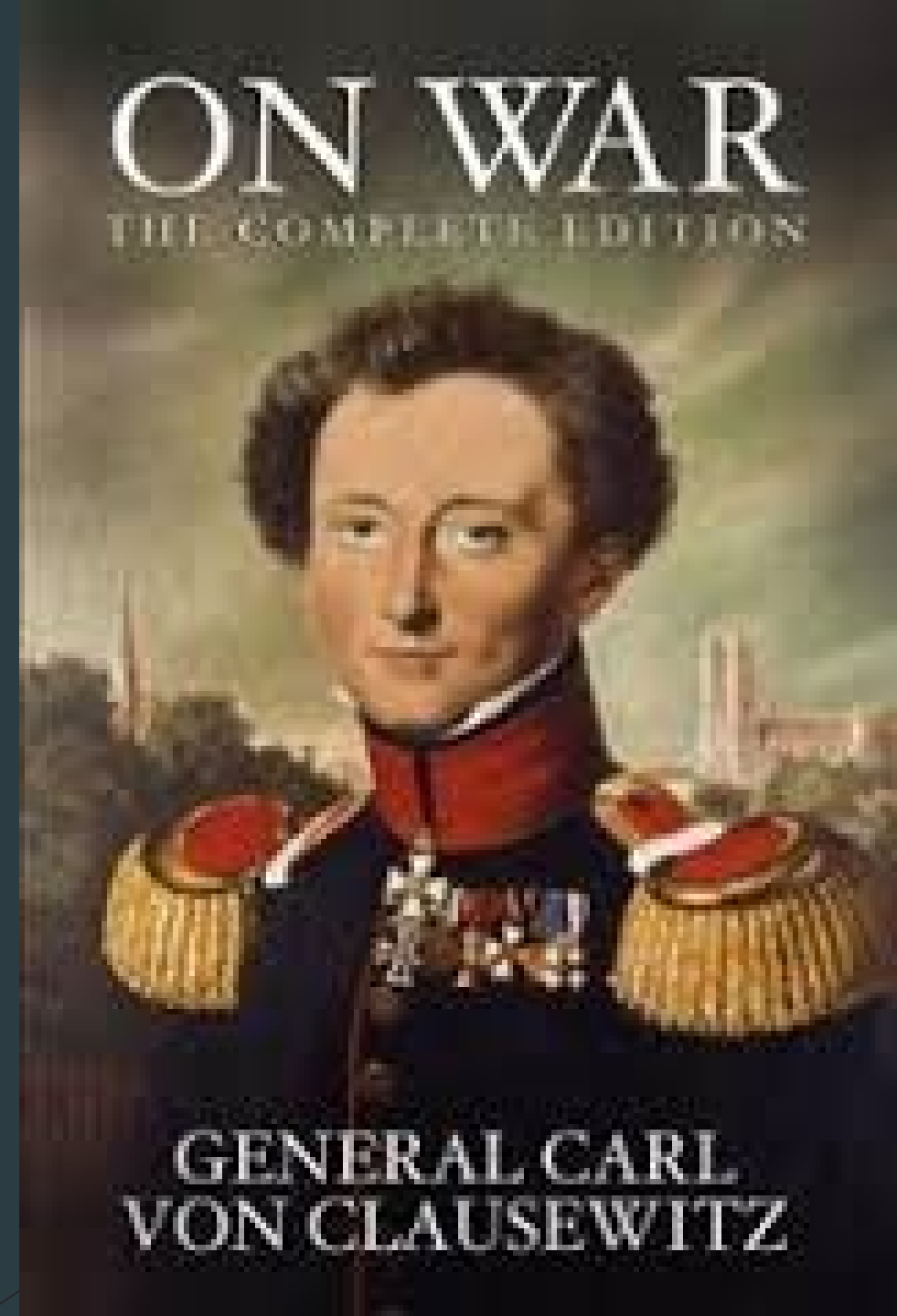
#1

- ▶ As the war starts, the Government:
  - ▶ Has > half the land and people
  - ▶ Has all of the manufacturing areas
  - ▶ Has almost all the major cities
  - ▶ Has equal size army & >half the navy
  - ▶ Has almost the entire air force
  - ▶ Has the entire treasury
  - ▶ Has international law on its side
  - ▶ Has significant outside help from the USSR.

□ So, the question becomes, why did it lose?

# Strategic Thinking

- ▶ Nationalists
  - ▶ Positive strategy
    - ▶ “Center of Gravity” (Clausewitz)
  - ▶ Unified Operations
- ▶ Government
  - ▶ Negative strategy (Caballero)
    - ▶ Fight not to lose
    - ▶ General European War
  - ▶ Operationally offensive (Negrin)
    - ▶ Active War policy
  - ▶ “Culminating Point” (Clausewitz again)



# Initial Republican Response

- ▶ Anzara three steps
  - ▶ Arm the left-wing civilian militias
  - ▶ Request help from France
  - ▶ Disband the Army
- ▶ Some responses did not align with the government
  - ▶ Anarchist three NO's - No God, No Master, No State
  - ▶ Several separatist declared independence.
  - ▶ Murder of church leaders
    - ▶ 4184 Priests
    - ▶ 283 Nuns
    - ▶ 2365 other lay leaders



# The Big Question #2

- ▶ Why did Hitler & Mussolini choose to support the rebels &
- ▶ Why did Stalin choose to support the government?



# Nationalist Aircraft

CR-32



HE-111



JU-52



ME-109



HE-51



SM-79



# Republican Aircraft

I-15 Mosca



I-16 Chato



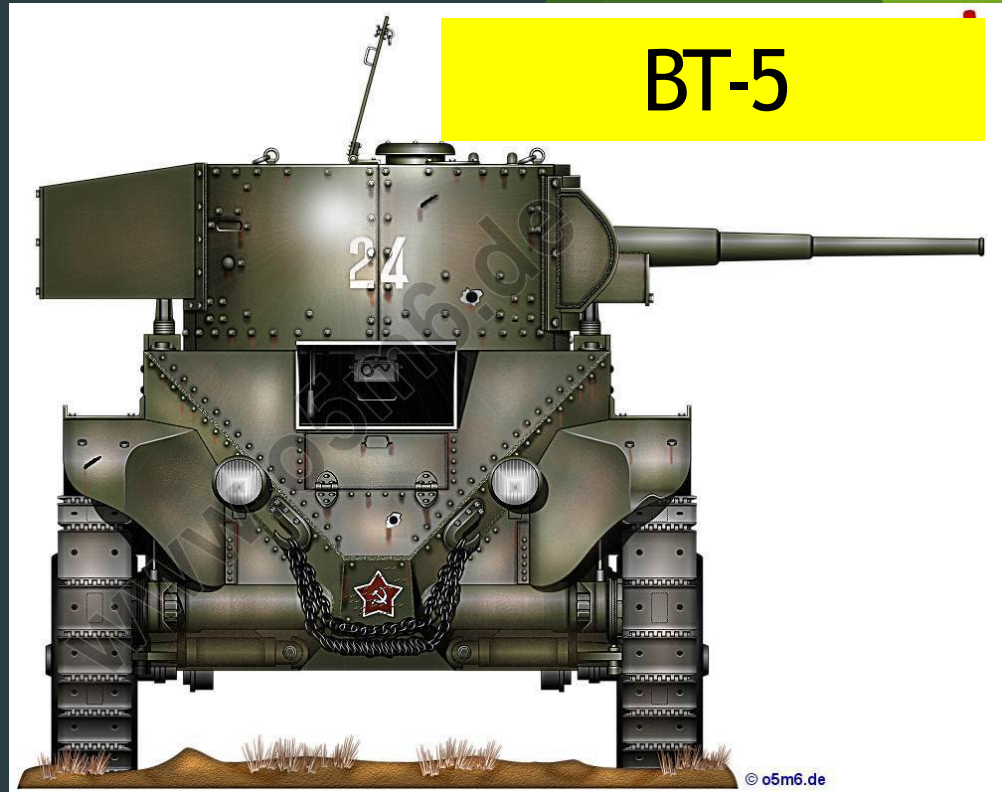
Tupelov SB

# Tanks

T-26



BT-5



Ansaldos



Panzer Mk 1

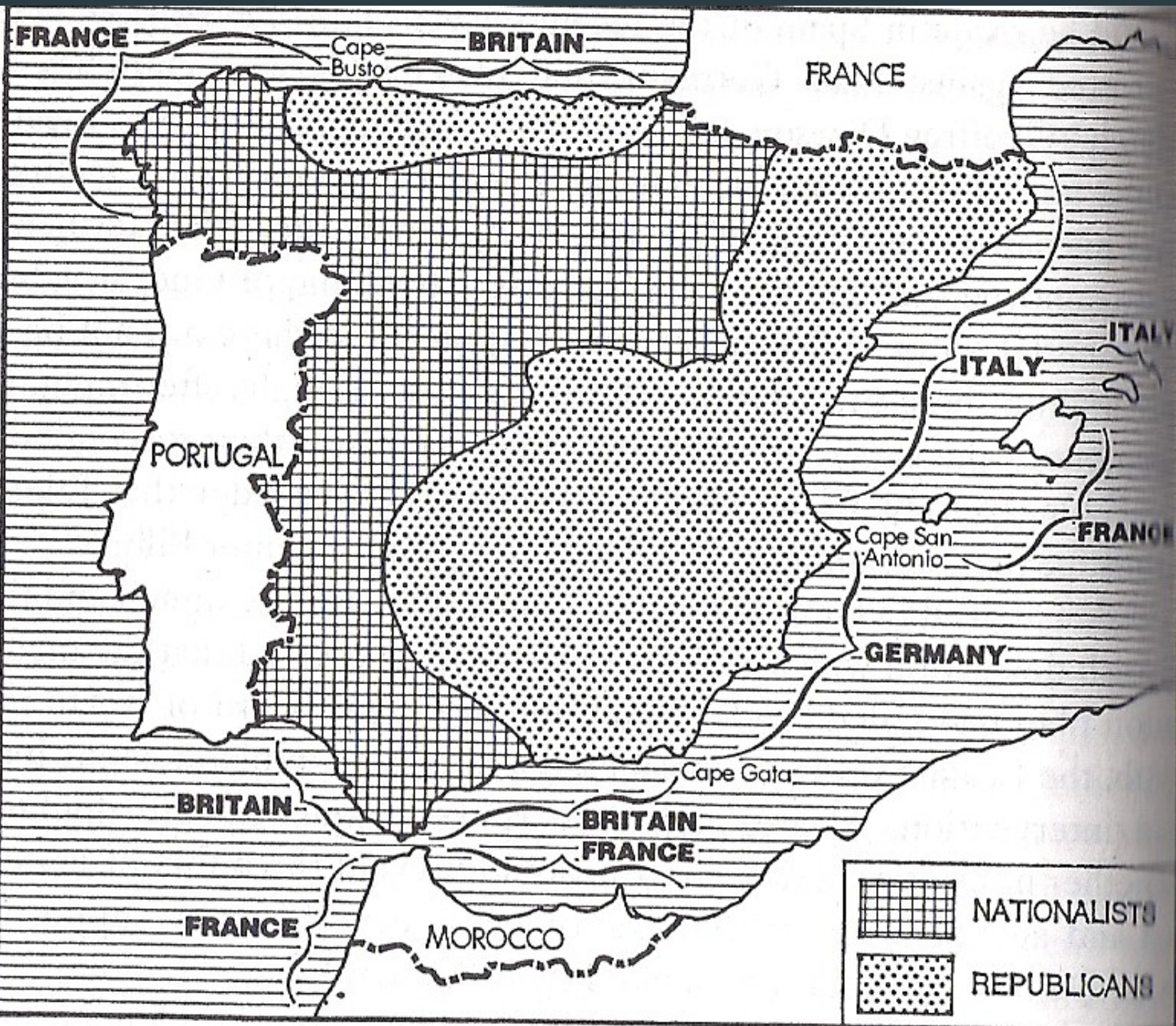


# Non-Intervention

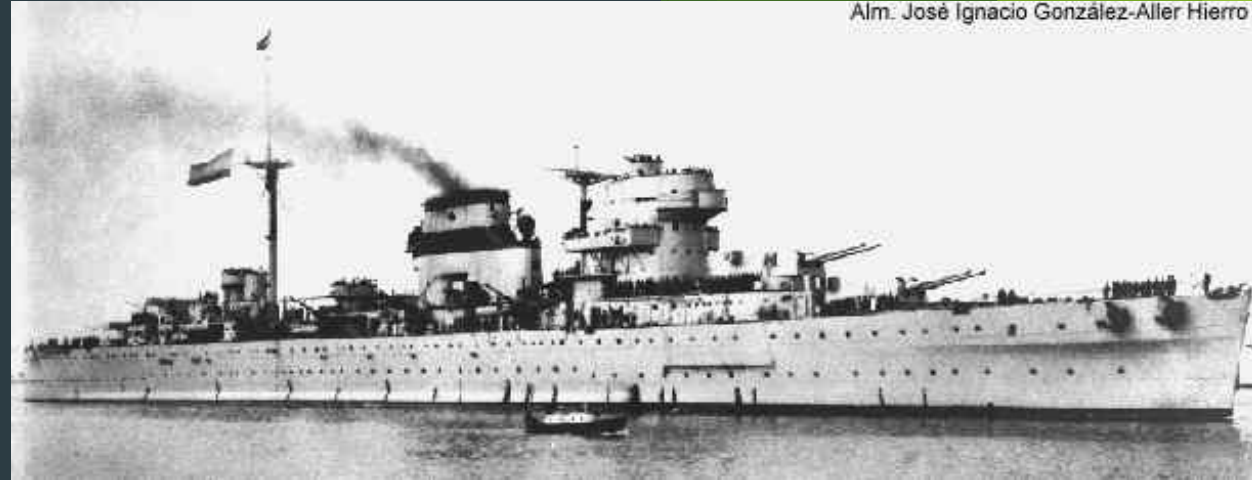
- ▶ Signed August 1936.
  - ▶ England, France, Soviet Union, Germany, Italy, + 22 others
- ▶ Naval patrols until 27 August 1937; thereafter port observers.
- ▶ Operation Ursula; Winter of 36-37
- ▶ Italian submarines Aug '37 - Feb '38. (58 units)
- ▶ Patently unfair to the Spanish government.
- ▶ 'a gross betrayal... two and a half years of hypocritical pretense of non-intervention' (Atlee)

It more properly should have been called the Intervention Treaty





# The Naval War



Nationalist Heavy Cruiser Baleares

- ▶ In 1936, a modern prepared force.
- ▶ The effect of the rebellion.
  - ▶ Ferrol, Cádiz, and Cartagena
- ▶ As with the land forces, Nationalists were better organized with clearer objectives.
- ▶ Missions for both sides were shore bombardment, blockade and counter-blockade, and convoy protection.
- ▶ The Nationalists were more successful in keeping supplies from getting to the other side.

# The Naval War (2)

- ▶ The Republican Gibraltar Blockade (bypassed by air transport)
- ▶ Nationalists gain control of the Straits
  - ▶ They then move on to blockade the Republican coast backed up by Italian and German sea & air power.
- ▶ Battle of Cape Spartel (Sept. 1936) - ended Republican efforts to break the Nationalist blockade of the Straits allowing unencumbered access to their naval supply lines.
- ▶ From this point on, the Nationalists steadily gain the upper hand at sea.

# Naval Composition

	Nationalists	Republican
Battleships (old)	1	1
Heavy Cruisers	(2*)	0
Light Cruisers	1(1**)	3
Destroyers	1(4**)	14(2*)
Torpedo boats	5	7
Sloops (Gunboats)	4(1*)	1
Minelayers	(3*)	0
Coast Guard ships	4	5
Submarines	(2**)	12
Men	7000	13000



## Battleship España (Nationalist)

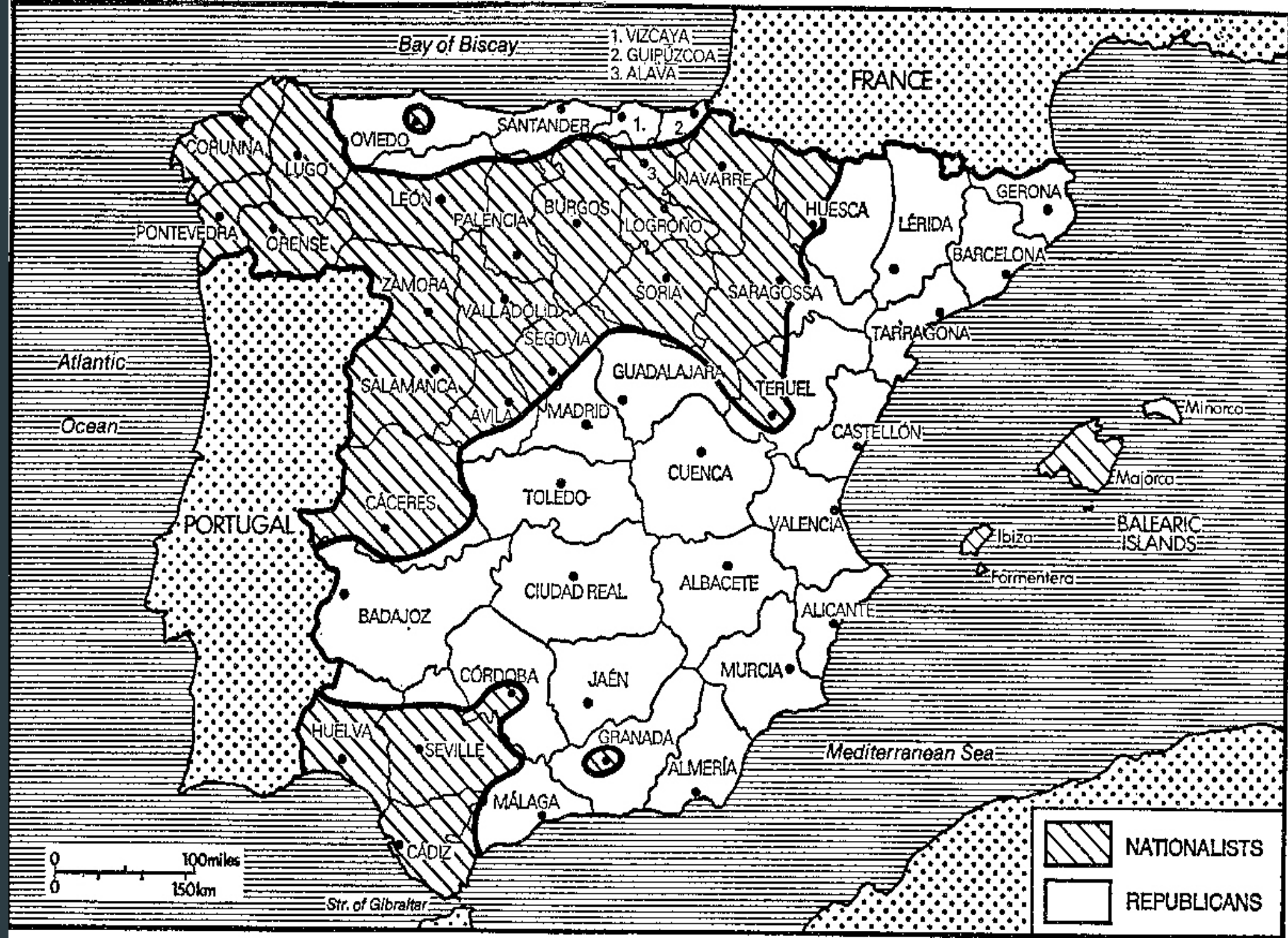
Sunk by a mine - April 1937

# Shipping Losses

- ▶ 92 ships were lost trying to supply one side or the other. (89 Republican and 3 Nationalists)
- ▶ Operation Ursula (1936/7) - Sank the C-3
- ▶ The Italian submarine campaign (58 subs) sank a total of 5 ships. (1937)
- ▶ The rest were air attacks or surface intercepts
- ▶ Bottom line: the Nationalists ran a blockade that was
  - ▶ Illegal
  - ▶ Quite effective



# Spain in July 1936



# Spain in September 1936

