



PROMISE

The Civil War and Exile

CHRONOLOGY 1936-1939



CAUSES:

- Civil War
- Repression
- Ideological conflict in Spain
- The international situation

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:

1.500.000 approx.

DESCRIPTION:

Between the years 1936 and 1939 Spain went through one of the most difficult periods of its contemporary history, the civil war, with its consequences of death and destruction. A period of dictatorship began after it under the government of Francisco Franco, which wouldn't end until 1975. One of the consequences of the civil war was the so-called republican exile but the main consequence of the Spanish Civil War was large loss of civilian life (perhaps more than half a million). Not all of these deaths were due to warlike action, but many of them were due to the violent repression practised or tolerated by both factions, among them the deaths produced by the bombing of cities. As previously



mentioned another important consequence was the large number of exiled people during the conflict. Some of them were important figures who formed the republican government in exile for many years.

It is difficult to quantify the number of people affected by the republican exile caused by the Civil War since there are many sources with different figures, although it seems we could be talking of about 1.500,000 people. This exile did not happen in one go, but it took place depending on the development of the war. Five waves of refugees related to the different republican defeats are mentioned. The exiled people usually escaped across the French border, because if they

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escaped to Portugal they were returned to Franco's zone. These waves were:

1st.- Summer 1936.

Conquest of the Basque Country. Around 15,000 people left.

2nd.- June 1937.

Campaign of the North. Around 120,000 people left.

3rd.- Spring 1938.

Campaign of the Upper Aragon. Around 100,000 people left.

4th. - January 1939. Conquest of Catalonia. Around 600,000 people left.

5th.- March 1939. Loss of the last republican territories. Escape to France and to the North of Africa. Not quantified.

We have to take into consideration that we are talking about the first exodus as a consequence of a warlike conflict in contemporary European history. The images that are well known today, at

that time were something completely new: whole families escaping, defeated soldiers, etc. Most of these people escaped across the French border where they encountered the incomprehension of the authorities. They were interned in concentration camps where their sufferings continued and even many of them died. In the same way, these refugees found themselves in this situation again a few months after the Second World War began and when France was defeated they were interned

in Nazi concentration camps or returned to Franco's authorities. In other cases, they could escape to different countries, mainly Hispano-American ones. (Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, etc.).

An important aspect to talk about is the one related to personalities of the cultural, scientific and political world who had to go into exile because of their support for the republican cause (Azaña, Machado, etc.).



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