

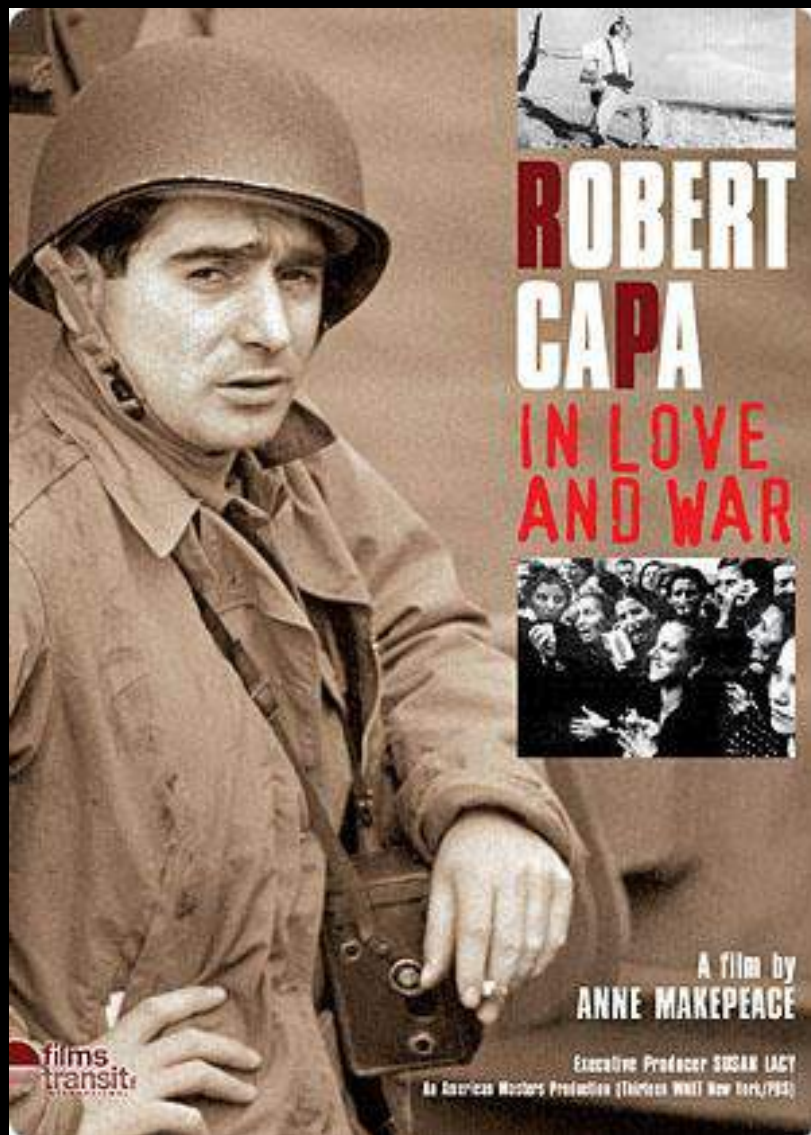
# Robert Capa

1913-1954

*Corso di Storia e Critica della Fotografia*  
*2015/2016*

a cura di [Eleonora Vasco](#)

# Robert Capa, in love and war (2003)



ROBERT CAPA IN LOVE AND WAR Purchase DVD

*"A riveting portrait, robust and powerful."*  
Peter Stack, San Francisco Chronicle

Robert Capa, the world's preeminent documentarian of 20th century war, photographed five epic conflicts on three different continents. A handsome, dashing figure, he played poker with Ernest Hemingway, photographed Pablo Picasso, and had an affair with Ingrid Bergman. Capa was a life-long pacifist who wore military uniforms, rode in tanks, jumped out of planes, dodged bullets and marched in the front lines. His images have affected the lives of those who may not even know his name. The only photographer to land with soldiers in the first wave at Omaha Beach on D-Day, his shocking pictures inspired Steven Spielberg's Saving Private Ryan more than 50 years later. As John Steinbeck once said, "he could photograph thought...and capture worlds." With the full access to his brother Cornell's amazing personal archive, and to every image Capa ever photographed, this is the first film devoted entirely to Robert Capa's mythic life - it is beautifully told with the help of his vast legacy of photographs and writings, with archival footage from over twenty-five countries, and with a stunning array of interviews with people connected to Capa's life, from Isabella Rossellini to the very last interview with Capa's great friend and colleague, Henri Cartier Bresson.

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A film by:  
**Anne Makepeace**



“Il migliore fotoreporter di guerra  
al mondo”

*(Picture Post, 1938)*



# Gli inizi

- Nasce con il nome di Endre Ernő Friedmann a Budapest nel 1913, da una famiglia di origine ebraica.
- A causa della sua dissidenza verso il dittatore ungherese Miklós Horthy, nel 1930 si trasferisce a Berlino, dove trova lavoro presso l'agenzia Dephot.



E' la sua cara amica Eva Besnyö ad introdurlo nel mondo della fotografia, presentandolo a Simon Guttman e Alfred Marx che gestivano l'agenzia fotogiornalistica Dephot (Deutscher Photodienst).

Eva Besnyö  
*Self Portrait*  
1932



Il 27 novembre 1932 Endre realizza la sua prima foto celebre, ritraendo Leon Trotsky (che si autodefiniva “il profeta disarmato”), appena esiliato dall'URSS, durante un comizio a Copenaghen.





„Ich will nicht leugnen, dass mein Leben in nicht ganz geregelter Weise verlief. Die Gründe dafür sind jedoch eher in den Zeitverhältnissen zu suchen als in mir.“

„Die Gesetzmäßigkeit der Ereignisse erkennen und in dieser Gesetzmäßigkeit seinen Platz finden, ist die erste Pflicht des Revolutionärs.“



„Jeder echte Redner kennt Augenblicke, wo aus seinem Munde etwas Stärkeres spricht, als er selbst in seinen gewöhnlichen Stunden ist. Das ist „Inspiration“. Sie entsteht aus der höchsten schöpferischen Anspannung aller Kräfte. Das Unbewusste erhebt sich aus tiefen Höhlen und unterwirft sich die bewusste Gedankenarbeit, verbindet sich mit ihr zu einer höheren Einheit.“

Die Texte sind Leo Trotzki's Autobiographie „Mein Leben“ (erschienen im S. Fischer Verlag, Berlin) entnommen.  
Aufnahmen: Friedmann, Deggpaal

# Trotzki betritt das Rednerpult

Photographische Ausdrucksstudien von seinem Vortrag auf einer sozialistischen Studentenversammlung in Kopenhagen

- Nel 1933 Hitler diventa Cancelliere e Friedmann, ebreo, si trasferisce a Parigi, dove nel '34 incontra e inizia una storia d'amore (e di collaborazione professionale) con Gerda Pohorylles, anche lei esule ebrea.
- Nel 1936 Erne e Gerda fanno coppia nel lavoro: lui fotografa, lei promuove le sue foto ai clienti spacciandole per quelle di un immaginario fotografo americano, Robert Capa, nome che i due pensavano potesse fare più effetto sulle agenzie. In seguito anche Gerda comincia a fotografare: inizialmente entrambi si firmano Robert Capa, poi lei sceglierà il nome d'arte di Gerda Taro.







Le ispirazioni dei nomi di Robert Capa (Frank Capra) e Gerda Taro (Greta Garbo).



# La Guerra Civile spagnola (1936-1939)

- Nel 1931 in Spagna viene instaurata una Repubblica di stampo marxista.
- Nel 1936 vince le elezioni il “Fronte popolare”.
- Pochi mesi dopo inizia una guerra civile tra i sostenitori del governo (i “lealisti”) e i nazionalisti, capeggiati dal generale Francisco Franco.
- I nazionalisti vengono sostenuti militarmente da Hitler e Mussolini, mentre l’URSS appoggia i repubblicani.



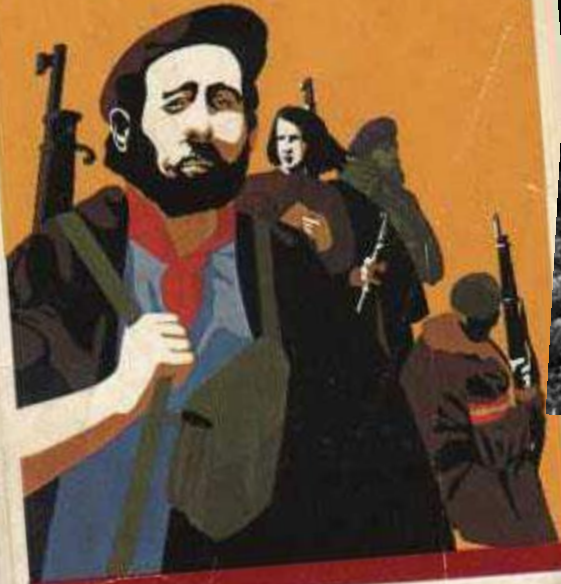
Sono inoltre molti i volontari stranieri che si arruolano nelle Brigate Internazionali per dare sostegno ai Repubblicani. La Spagna è il centro del mondo e diversi intellettuali partono per documentare la guerra o addirittura combatterla in prima persona.



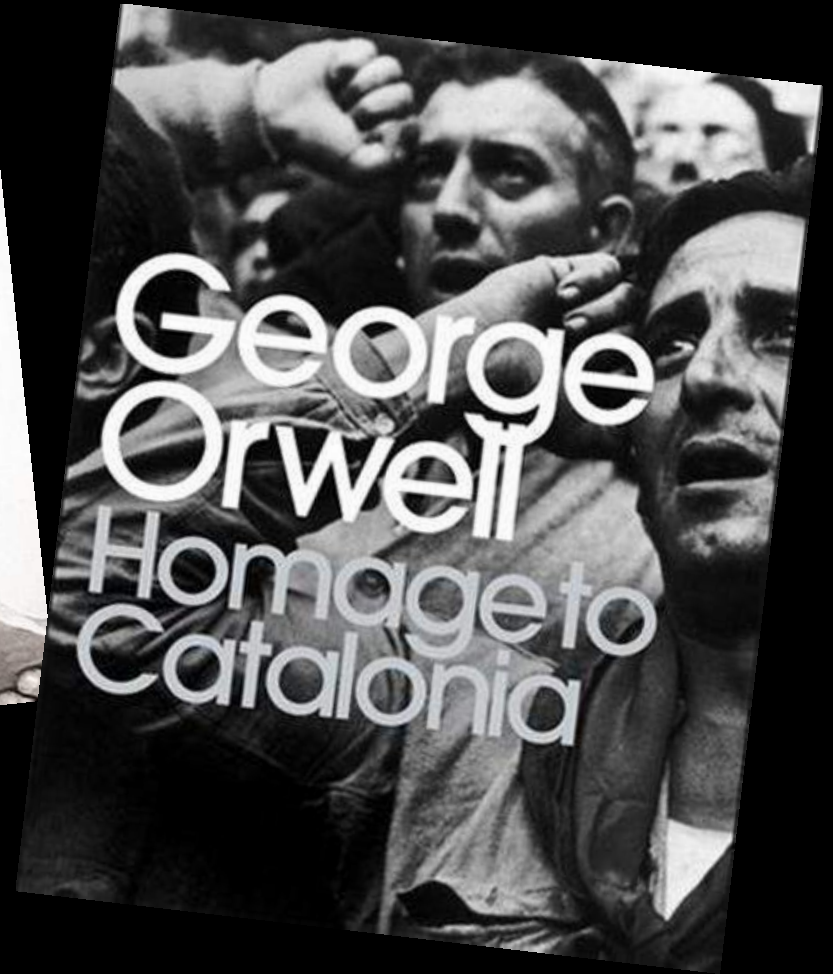
Ernest Hemingway, qui ritratto da Capa, di cui divenne amico, scrisse “Per chi suona la campana” (1939) ispirandosi proprio alla sua esperienza spagnola.

# Hemingway

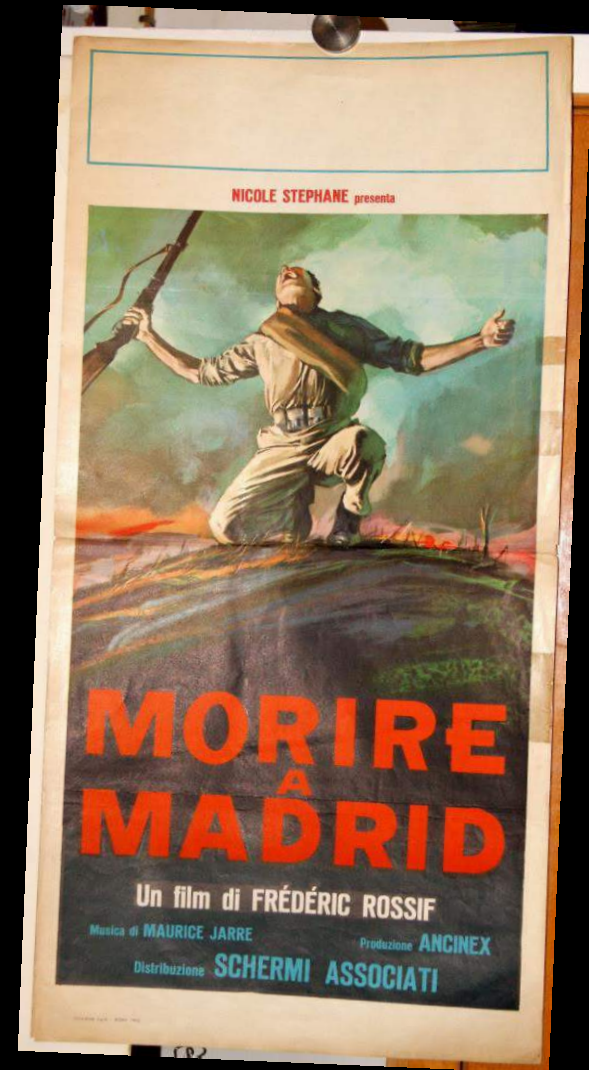
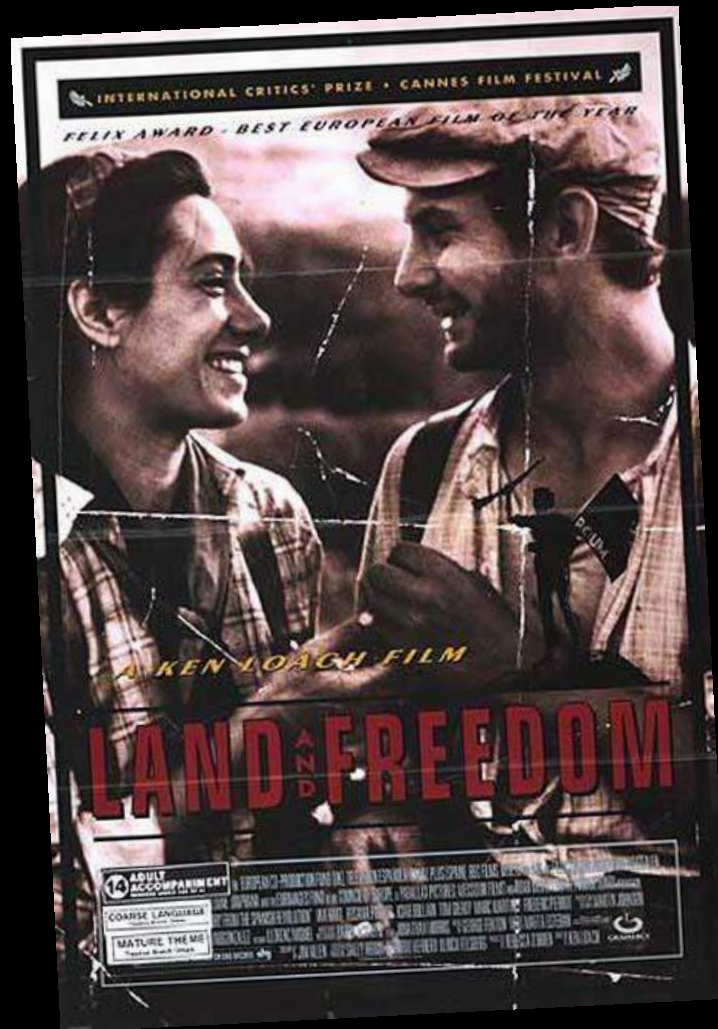
PER CHI SUONA  
LA CAMPANA



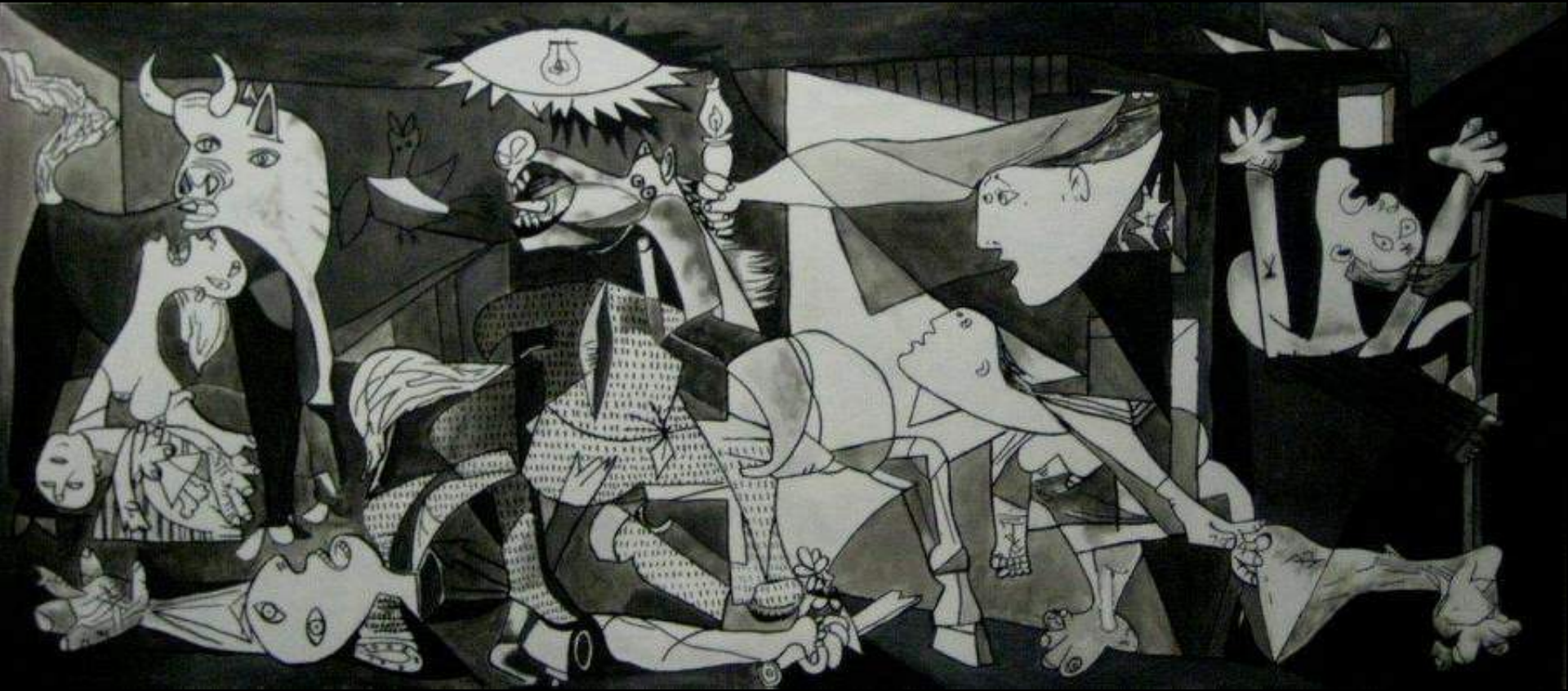
Anche George Orwell (futuro autore di “1984”) combatte al fianco dei lealisti e successivamente scrive “Omaggio alla Catalogna” (1938).



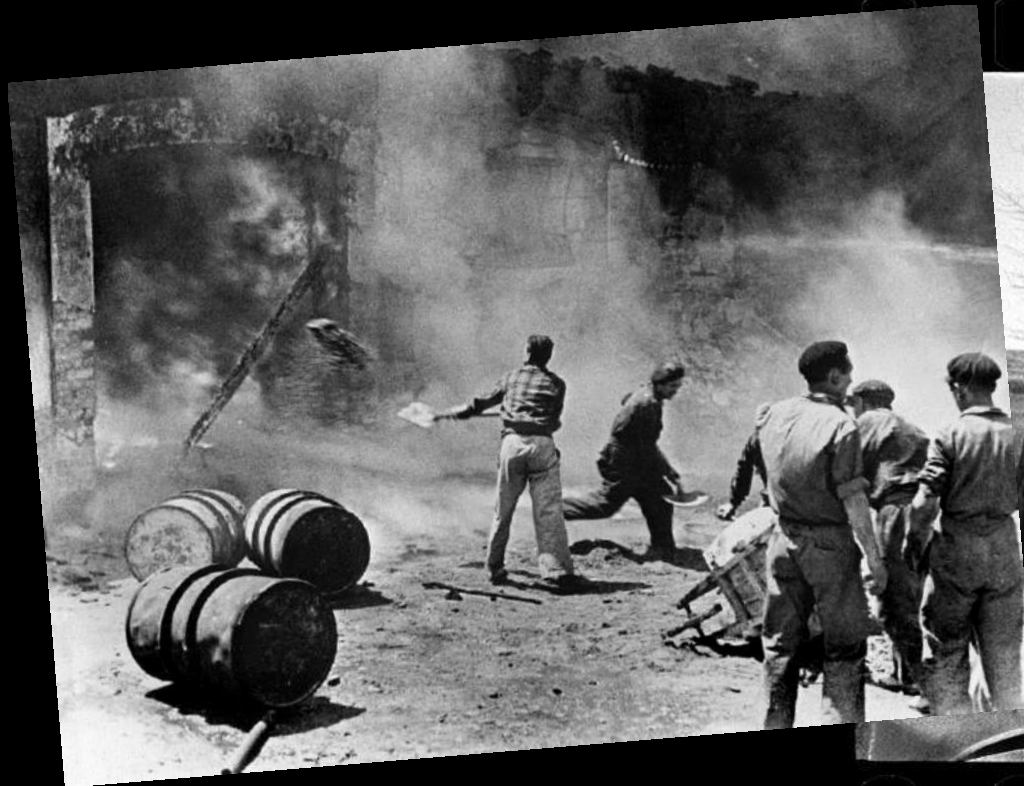
Il cinema si ispirerà diverse volte alla Guerra di Spagna, come nel caso di “Terra e libertà” di Ken Loach (1995), “Morire a Madrid” di Frédéric Rossif (1962) o “The Spanish Earth”, documentario di Joris Ivens del 1937, narrato da Hemingway.



Picasso realizzerà la sua opera più celebre, “Guernica” (1937), proprio ispirandosi a un bombardamento tedesco sull’omonima città.



La guerra è, a livello tecnologico, una “prova generale” della Seconda Guerra Mondiale: carri armati, bombardamenti aerei, autocarri sono per la prima volta usati sistematicamente. E’ anche la prima vera guerra mediatizzata: i fotografi hanno libertà totale, gli apparecchi fotografici sono più leggeri e maneggevoli che in passato. Solo nel 1937 “Life” pubblica 15 servizi sulla guerra.

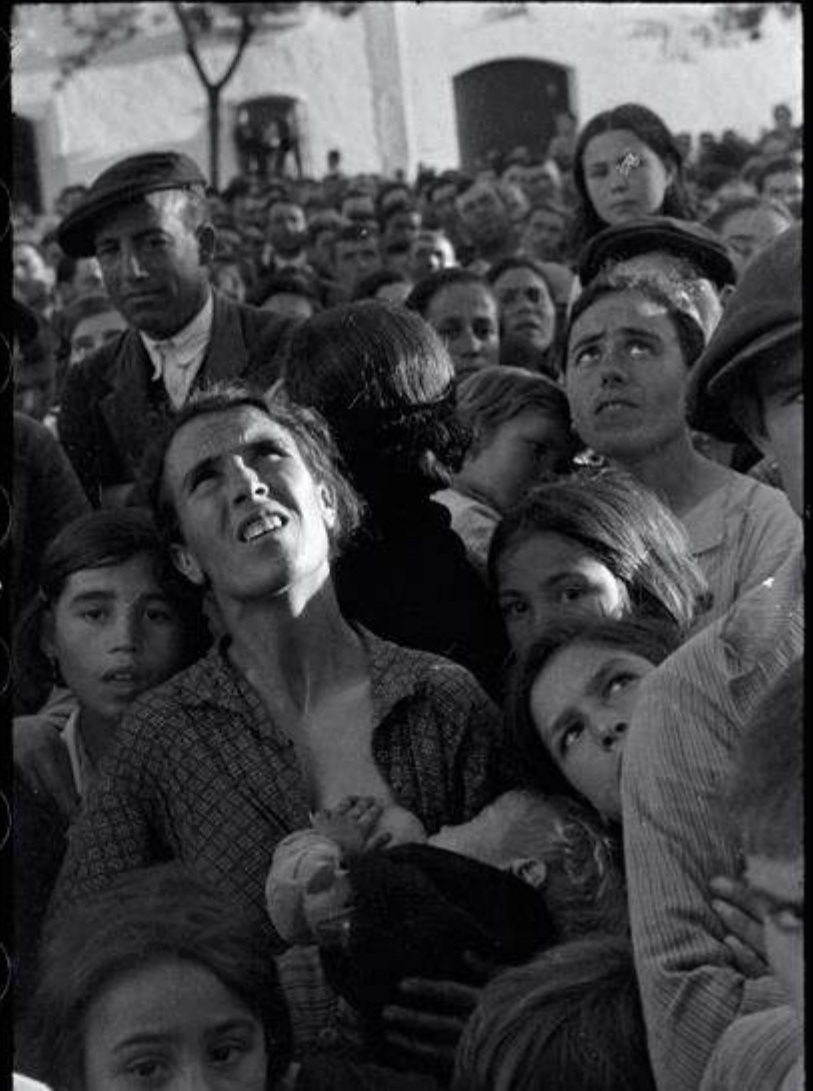








Con loro c'è anche il fotografo  
Chim ([David Seymour](#)).



La Spagna sotto attacco, 1937



Questi alcuni degli scatti che hanno reso celebre Capa e dato al mondo un'immagine della Guerra Civile spagnola.



# THIS IS WAR!

The pictures on these and the following pages were taken during the great battle of the Ebro. They tell the whole story of a counter-attack by Government troops. But they are not presented as propaganda for, or against, either side. They are simply a record of modern war from the inside.

ON a dark and cold October night, between Lerida and Requesens, there came up from invisible Segre river a succession of flashes, like fish rising. Fifteen hundred Spanish Government troops crossed the river. They took less than an hour to get over and immediately spread themselves up and down the farther bank for a distance of six miles.

For a few hundred yards in front of them the country was flat; sparse bushes and some poplar trees offered a little cover. Beyond, in succeeding parallel waves, the bare, rocky downs stretched over upward towards the distant hills. The storming attack advanced to the outskirts of the flats and crested beneath the stars over which behind them could already be heard hammer blows upon wood.

As the light grew coming each company gathered about its political commissar to hear once more why they went there, for what they were fighting, how they were to reach out for new objectives. By the help of maps each detail of coming events was made clear. Most of what the commissars had

to say was already known; but Spanish Government military orders lay down that each soldier must have explained not merely his own duties, but the meaning of the action as a whole, and its importance to the ends for which he is asked to fight. He must never go into battle like an automaton moved by words of command. He must think for himself and accept necessary because he knows



**THE STAFF PLANS THE ATTACK**

Back behind the front a group of officers of the Spanish Government forces plan the final details of their counter-attack on Franco's men. As they work with their maps and telephones, search-lights beam down on them from patrol sent out the night before.



**2 ON THE PHONE TO H.Q.**

Before going forward the officer has a last talk to army headquarters. Here, how matters are going in other sectors.



**3 THE COMMISSAR SPEAKS**

The political commissar, an Aragonese sailor, addresses the men. Besides him is the officer-in-charge, a former politician.



**4 PREPARING FOR THE ATTACK**

A few more cartridges, tighten the pouch, a last transmission and farewell. . . . They must go.



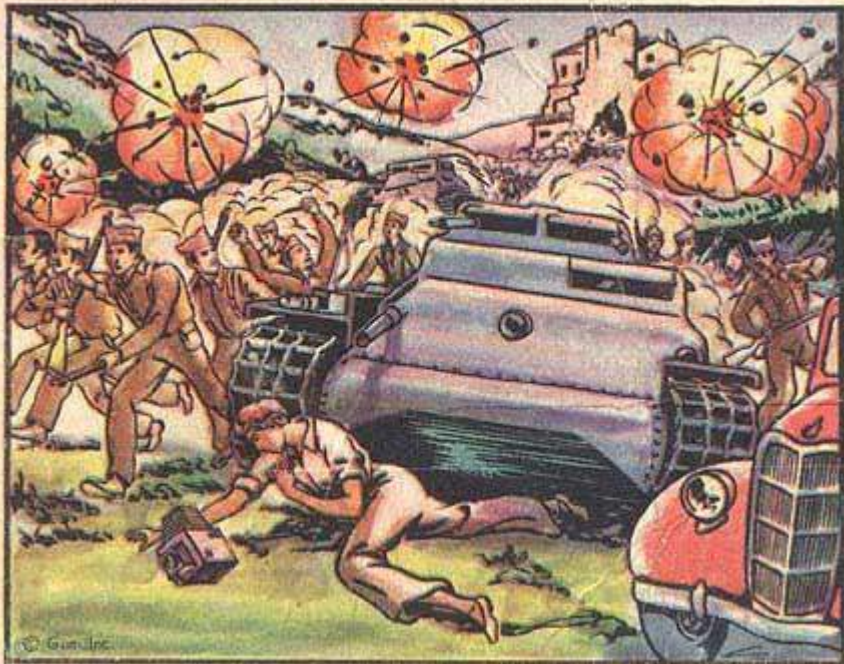
**5 ON THEIR WAY UP TO THE FIGHTING LINE**

The men fight to the forward. Aid has been whittled down to a bare minimum—their weapons, a water-bottle and a few cigarettes, and all of them take with them. Food will come up to them later on the hill.



Il 26 luglio 1937, dopo aver realizzato tanti bellissimi scatti durante i mesi di permanenza in Spagna, Gerda viene uccisa per errore dalla manovra di un carro armato lealista.





## 89 Woman Photographer Crushed by Loyalist Tank

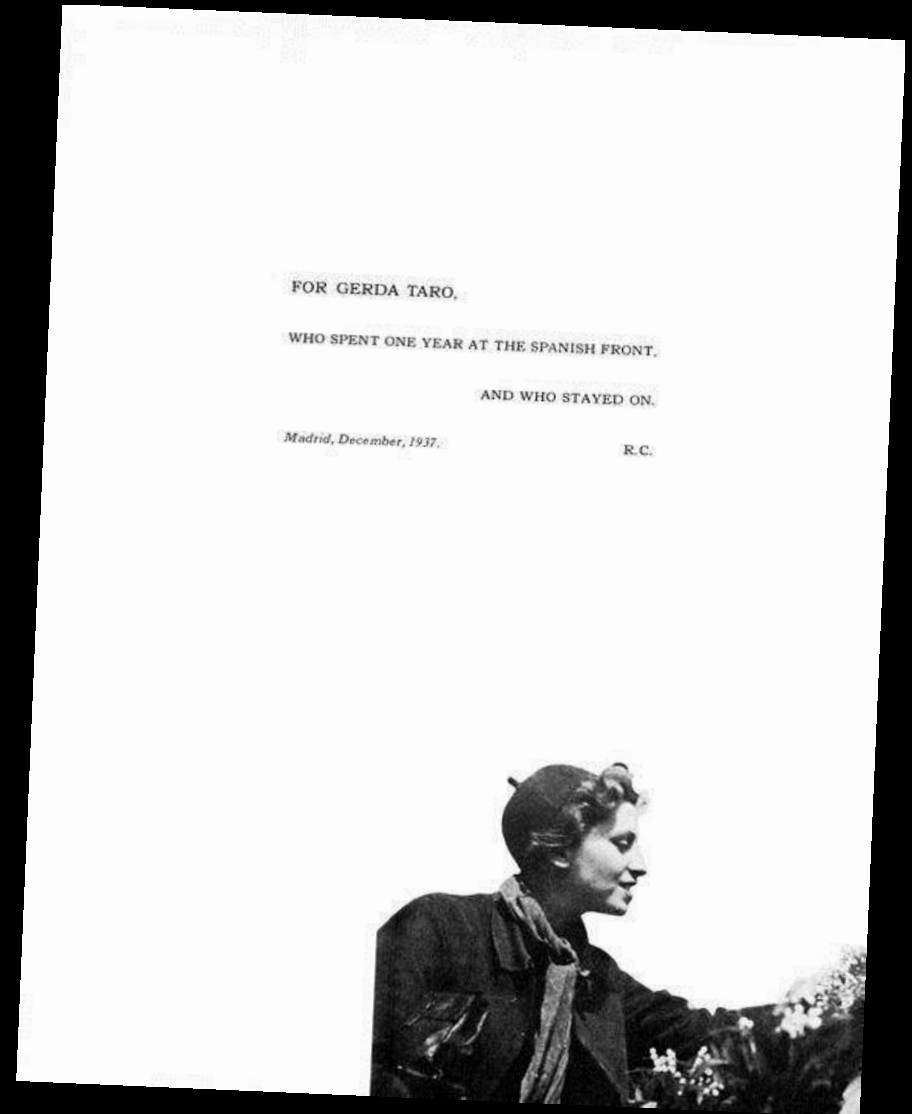
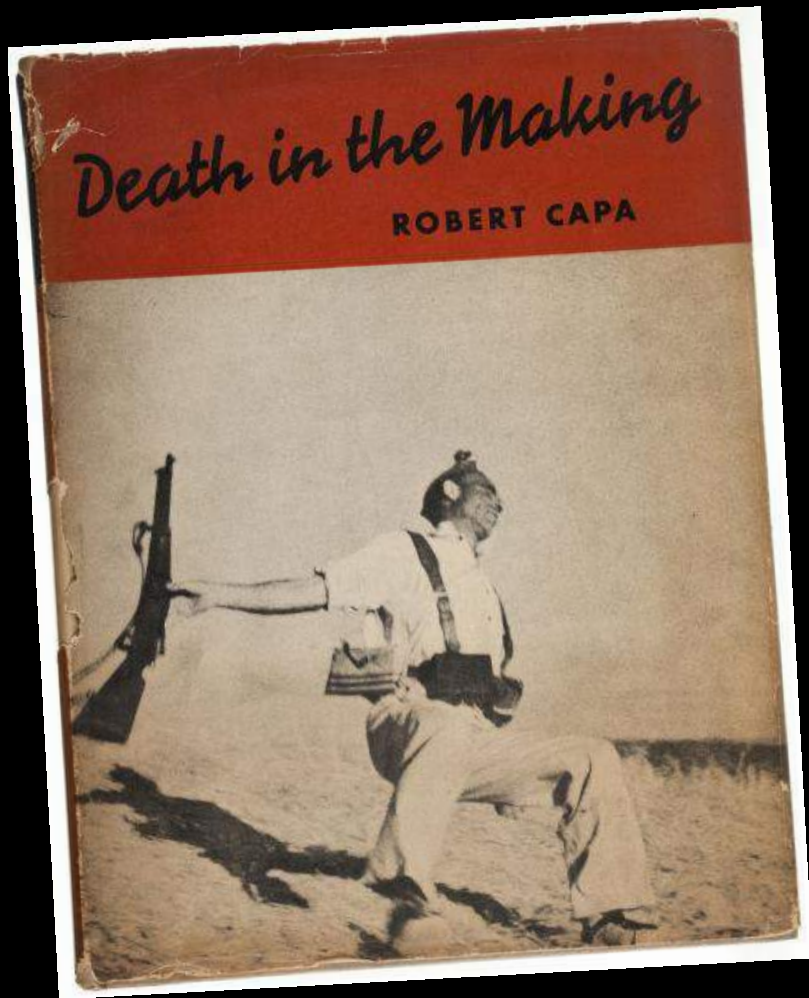
Probably the first woman photographer ever killed in action, pretty Gerda Taro covering the Spanish Civil War for the Paris "Ce Soir," was crushed by a Loyalist tank during the great battle of Brunete on July 26, 1937. The Loyalists had taken Brunete, lost it, taken it again, and then lost it. Gerda Taro had left Brunete once in the retreat, and then decided to join the Loyalist rear guard in the city. For almost an hour she had crouched with a remaining battalion under Rebel bombardment. Finally she hopped on the running board of a press car. Suddenly, as part of a Loyalist counter attack, a tank, cruising blind, careened into view. With an unexpected swerve the creeping, shell-spitting monster bumped the daring young woman from her perch and crushed her beneath the revolving lugs! She died the following morning in the Escorial Hospital her husband-photographer, Robert Capa, at her side.

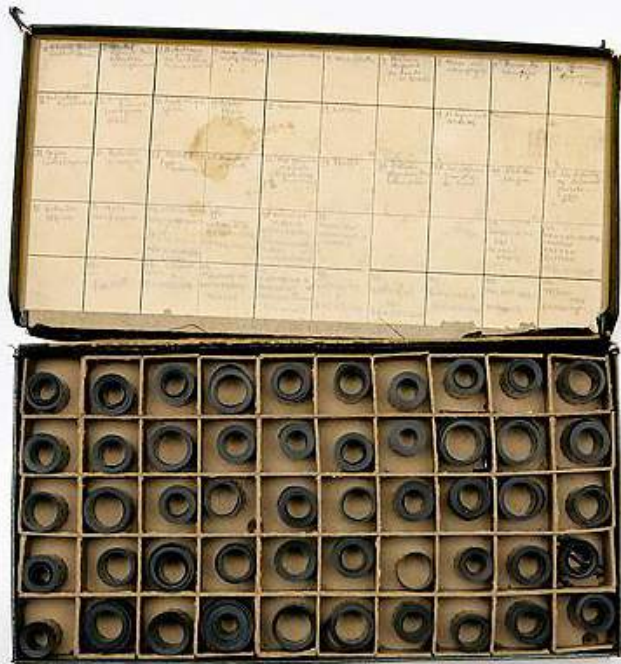
**To know the HORRORS OF WAR is to want PEACE**

This is one of a series of 240 True Stories of Modern Warfare. Save to get them all. Copyright 1938, GUM, INC., Phila., Pa.



Capa è distrutto dal dolore, ma resta in Spagna fino alla primavera del '37.  
Nel 1938 esce la raccolta "Death in the Making", che contiene foto di entrambi, aggiunte a quelle di Chim.





La «valigia messicana»:  
4.500 negativi ritrovati  
nel 2007, ad oltre  
cinquant'anni dalla morte  
di Robert Capa.

Una delle sequenze  
della Guerra  
Spagnola  
recuperate:  
**The Battle of Rio  
Segre,**  
1938



# La “valigia messicana”

La storia della “valigia messicana” comincia nel 1939, a Parigi. Preoccupato per l'avvicinarsi delle truppe naziste, Robert Capa decide di fuggire dalla città e di abbandonare il suo studio al 37 di rue Froidevaux, nei pressi del cimitero di Montparnasse. Capa raccoglie in una valigia alcuni dei più importanti negativi scattati da lui, Gerda e Chim durante il conflitto spagnolo e decide di partire per New York, lasciando la valigia in custodia al suo aiutante e amico, il fotografo Csiki Weiss. Weiss si dirige a Bordeaux, dove spera di partire per l'estero, ma le forze naziste rendono sempre più difficoltoso lasciare la Francia. L'amico di Capa decide quindi di lasciare la valigia ad un misterioso cileno, con la raccomandazione di custodire i negativi e lasciarli presso il consolato del suo Paese. È da questo momento che le tracce dei negativi cominciano a perdersi. In maniera ancora del tutto sconosciuta, la valigia entra in possesso di Francisco Aguilar Gonzales, generale e ambasciatore del Messico in Francia durante il governo di Vichy. Nel 1942 Gonzales li porta con sé in Messico e rimangono nascosti per mezzo secolo. Intorno alla metà degli anni novanta, il cineasta messicano Benjamin Tarver li eredita da una zia, stretta amica di Gonzales, e viene convinto nel 2007 dall'autrice di documentari Trisha Ziff a donarli all'ICP di New York. Il contenuto della valigia è così tornato alla luce e la straordinaria storia dei negativi è divenuta il soggetto di un documentario della stessa Ziff.

La storia della valigia è narrata in un'apposita [pagina](#) del sito dell'ICP, International Center of Photography di New York (fondato nel 1974 da Cornell Capa, fratello minore di Robert Capa), dove è ora depositata la valigia.



Buste di negativi

Attraverso gli scatti dei tre fotografi è possibile ripercorre alcuni degli scontri cruciali avvenuti durante la guerra civile spagnola, ma anche momenti di vita quotidiana della popolazione assediata o di minoranze culturali e sociali della Spagna franchista. All'interno della valigia, inoltre, sono state trovate anche fotografie di Fred Stein, che ritraggono Gerda Taro e a cui Capa teneva in maniera particolare. [Le fotografie sono ora disponibili online.](#)



# THE MEXICAN SUITCASE

A FILM BY TRISHA ZIFF

THE MEXICAN SUITCASE  
AVAILABLE NOW  
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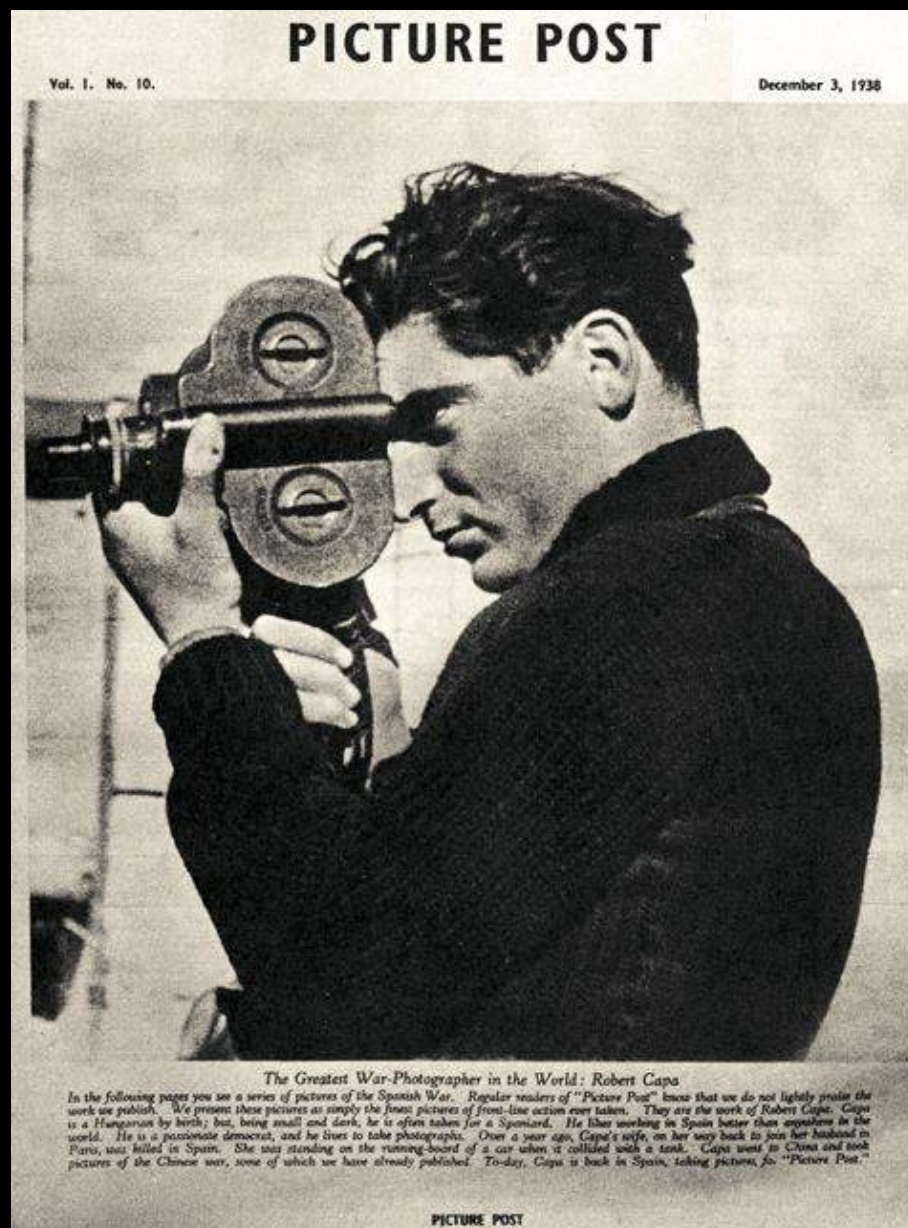
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E' però una la foto che più di tutte è rimasta nell'immaginario collettivo come LA foto di Capa e LA foto della Guerra Civile, nonché una delle immagini più potenti mai realizzate: "Death of a Republican Militiaman", o "The Falling Soldier". La foto rappresenta un miliziano repubblicano ferito a morte, probabilmente a Cerro Muriano presso Cordoba. E' il 5 settembre 1936.



Proprio con i suoi reportages dalla guerra spagnola Capa diventa un fotografo celebre. Nel 1938 è definito “Il miglior fotoreporter di guerra al mondo”. Ha solo 25 anni.



La foto è di Gerda Taro

# Seconda guerra sino-giapponese (1938)





# America (1940-42)



Durante la seconda guerra mondiale Capa è inviato al fronte dal 1942 al 45.

Tunisia (1942)





TUNISIA. 1943. Members of an American armored division pose with a captured German tank. Per approfondire: l'archivio [MAGNUM](#).

# Sicilia (1943)



# Palermo (1943)

LIFE

NEW YORK

August 12, 1943



## THE SURRENDER OF PALERMO

LIFE PHOTOGRAPHER ROBERT CAPA ENTERS CITY WITH THE AMERICAN TROOPS

The Troops had made their capture according to the American War Department. With a general average of 200,000 men they were breaking through the lines of the enemy, the general idea of the capture of the city had been made up and the troops had been ordered to move on the city.

Behind the main attacking force, the rest of the troops were ordered to move on the city. The troops were ordered to move on the city. The troops were ordered to move on the city. The troops were ordered to move on the city.

But Palermo was a special case. It had been the main American base in Sicily. The city was the main American base in Sicily. The city was the main American base in Sicily. The city was the main American base in Sicily.

and provided by a U. S. Army unit. The city was the main American base in Sicily. The city was the main American base in Sicily. The city was the main American base in Sicily.



ARRIVAL OF THE JEeps IN PALERMO







Capa fotografa anche qualche breve momento di riposo per i soldati...





FROM A HILLTOP OVERLOOKING THE LIRI VALLEY THREE INFANTRYMEN OF THE U. S.-CANADIAN MOUNTAIN TROOPS PROTECT AN ADVANCING PATROL WITH THEIR MACHINE GUN

## IT'S A TOUGH WAR

Photographs for LIFE by Robert Capa

For months the Fifth Army has inched ahead in Italy. Through mud and mountains it has ground nearer Cassino, chief bastion of the German winter defense line. On Jan. 22, in an amphibious attempt to outflank this line, it landed troops near Anzio northwest of the town of Cassino and only 32 miles short of Rome.

With the troops of the Fifth Army during the battle for the Liri valley on the approaches to Cassino was LIFE Photographer Robert Capa. His pictures, printed here, are grim and unsentimental, but they tell something of what war is like in Italy. They prove that it is a tough war.

When the pictures were taken, the Fifth Army was advancing at the rate of about three miles a week. In terms of the thousands of miles still to go on the roads to Berlin and Tokyo, three miles were insignificant. But for the men who fought for those three

miles they were no mean distance. In the fight some of them died and their bodies lay in the stony mountain passes near their foxholes. Others were wounded and were brought down steep mountain paths on stretchers to front-line hospitals. But most of them, British and French and American alike, lived somehow through the week. They were the ones who, in spite of their weariness, would fight this week's battles, and next week's, and the weeks' after that.

To these men it seems years ago that they were home. Now all they know and feel is the grinding monotony of war. Day and night they hear the roll of guns, the explosion of mortars, the whine of machine-gun bullets. Their home is among the rocks and snows of the Italian mountains. They are usually wet and hungry, always tired. Most of them have not had a bath or slept in a bed for months. They grumble and they curse, and their only dream is of the day

when they will be finished with this chore on the front.

They worry, too, about the home they will return to. They want it to be the same home they left. Last week Secretary of War Stimson reported that these soldiers on the front line in Italy and the South Pacific were worried and unhappy and even angry about what was going on at home. In urging adoption of a national service act, he said: "I can tell you today that the industrial unrest and lack of a sense of patriotic responsibility . . . has aroused a strong feeling of resentment and injustice among the men of the armed forces. If it continues it will surely affect the morale of the Army. It is likely to poison the war and endanger our ultimate success. Unless we set forth boldly to stamp it out, the hot flame will destroy some of the great love of country which alone can make a man endure the hardship, the pain, and the death which service above self has offered him."

Nel 1944 il bilancio di LIFE è disastroso: fin ora, tanti soldati americani hanno trovato la morte in territorio italiano.

Robert Capa continua a fotografare gli scontri principali della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, fino al D-Day.



# Lo sbarco in Normandia (D-Day, 6 giugno 1944)





# BEACHHEADS OF NORMANDY

THE FATEFUL BATTLE FOR EUROPE IS JOINED BY SEA AND AIR

The weather was not good for invasion, but sailing along the coast of Normandy, the Allies used the strength of the navy and the air to clear the way for the landing operation and to support the ground forces of the American, British and Canadian troops. The landing operation was a complex one, involving the use of the sea and the air to support the ground forces. The Allies used the strength of the navy and the air to clear the way for the landing operation and to support the ground forces. The landing operation was a complex one, involving the use of the sea and the air to support the ground forces.

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Il soldato qui ritratto è stato identificato: si tratta di Edward Regan.

# OF A SOLDIER, FACE OF BATTLE



Robert Capa / Magnum Photo

**SOLDIER, SYMBOL.** Edward Regan struggles to reach shore on D-Day.

Capa himself felt that to convey good war shots, photographers should shake the camera a little.

At Omaha, Regan got his second wind and crawled to land. During the Allied push to Germany, he won a Silver Star, a Purple Heart and the French Croix de Guerre.

Regan contacted *Life* magazine to get a copy of the Capa photo before D-Day's 40th anniversary. Soon after, *Life* magazine flew Regan to France for another set of photos on the beach. He remains unimpressed with his fame and says Capa could have focused on anyone that day.

"We were all drenched and sick as dogs," he said.

Cornell Capa, brother of Robert and director of the International Center of Photography in Manhattan, made Regan a guest of honor at an exhibit of his brother's works at the center this month. "His picture was used millions of times without a name," says Cornell Capa. "Now he has a face and a name." The exhibition opened on Wednesday, 40 years after Robert Capa died on a combat photo mission in Indochina.

Regan, 71, moved his family 27 years



Photo by Ruth Orkin

**COMBAT CHRONICLER.** Robert Capa in 1951.

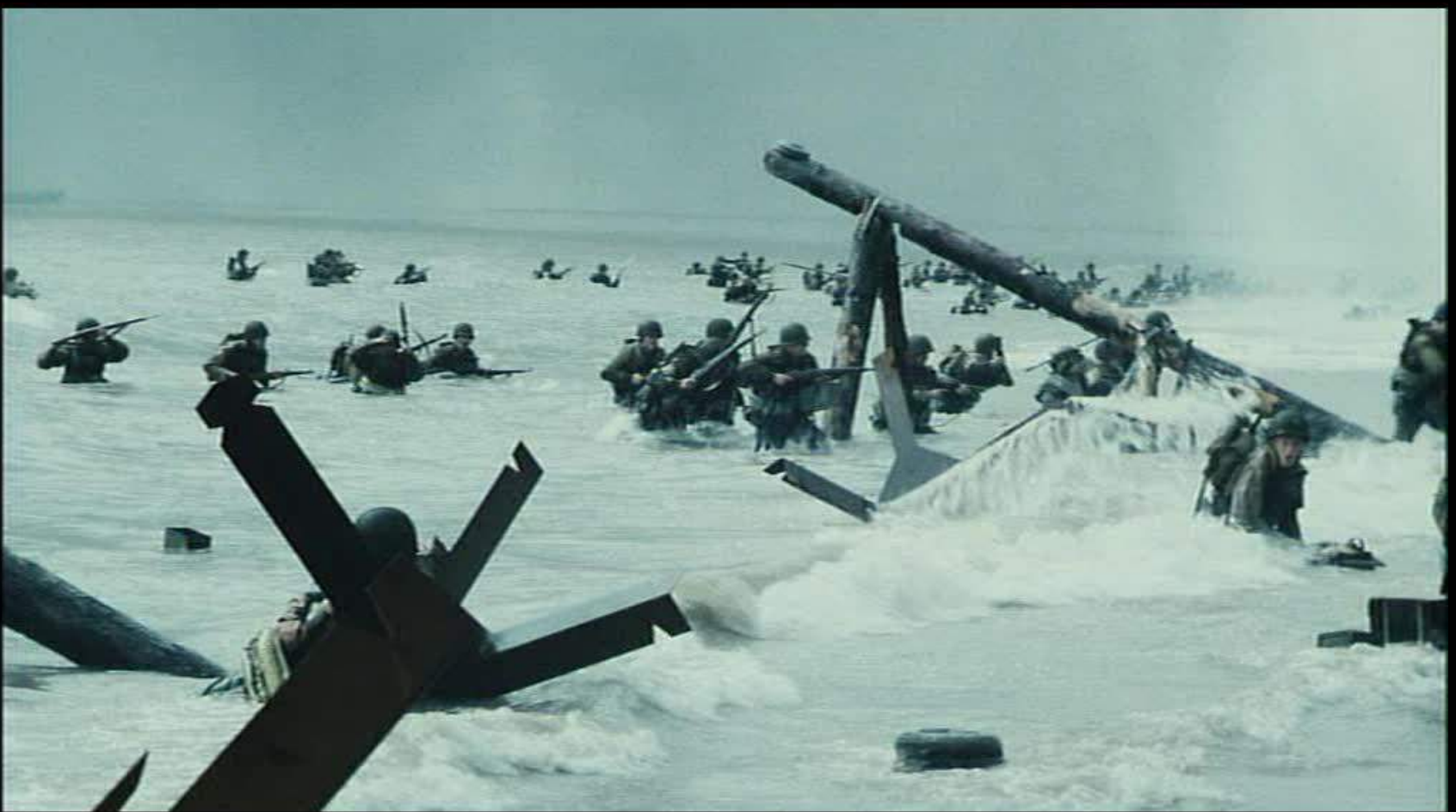
ago to Atlanta, where he served as a social services administrator. During the 40th anniversary celebration, he appeared on NBC's "Today" show along with a German veteran. Afterward, his former enemy asked him about Germany's exclusion from the commemoration in France. Didn't he think Germany should have been invited?

Regan told him no. "I wouldn't have made a very good diplomat," he says.



Monday / Dick Kruse

**THEN AND NOW.** In Atlanta, Regan displays the famous picture of him on D-Day, autographed by photographer Robert Capa's brother, Cornell.



**Salvate il soldato Ryan**  
per la regia di Steven Spielberg, 1998

Spielberg si ispirò agli scatti di Robert Capa per la sequenza di apertura de *Salvate il soldato Ryan*, la sequenza dello sbarco.

# La liberazione di Parigi, 25 agosto 1944









# Germania (1945), anche Capa si paracaduta sul Reno

## PARATROOPERS' VICTORY JUMP INTO GERMANY

Robert Capa, jumping with the Seventeenth U.S. Airborne Division east of the Rhine, immediately found himself right in the thick of a tough, grim struggle hand to hand. Here are the historic pictures he took.



Capa, the greatest chronicler of a century past, during these years, made a total of four combat assignments. He was in Normandy, he jumped with the British and the Americans into Germany, Italy and Sicily.

There was the great moment, the historic battle for which we had been waiting, the dramatic crossing of the Rhine which decided the issue, which was the war.

And when the history of this great, decisive battle comes to be written, Robert Capa's pictures will present contemporaries evidence for experts and for all the world.

There again, Capa has returned to a setting which has given us the most dramatic and historically important scenes of the war. The fighting, the shooting, the noise, the smoke, the chaos, the horror, the tragedy, the heroism, the sacrifice, the death, the suffering, the pain.

There were the days of the great battle, the "Crossed the Rhine," Robert Capa has been a witness to it. "We have had the most important of this war which is the end of the war, the end of the fighting, the end of the war."

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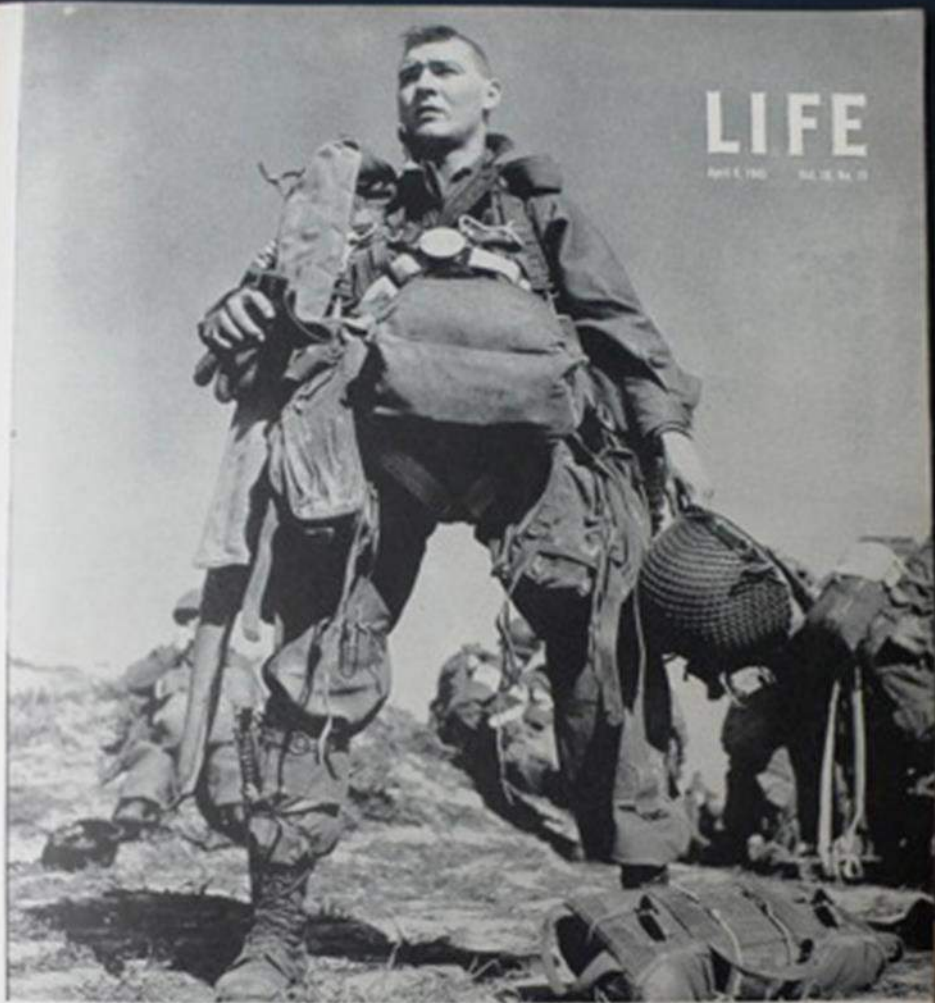


Paratroopers in the first jump east of the Rhine. They take the ground and after an hour the ground is theirs. They are the first to land in the area of the Rhine. They are the first to land in the area of the Rhine. They are the first to land in the area of the Rhine.





THIS PAIR BELONGS TO THE FIRST BOMBERS OF THE 98TH AIRBORNE DIVISION. THEY WERE IN THE AIR AT THE TIME THE JAPANESE BOMBERS WERE DOWN IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC. THE AIRBORNE DIVISION WAS A PART OF THE 98TH AIRBORNE DIVISION. ALL THE BOMBERS, BRADLEY AIRBORNE



LIFE  
APRIL 1945

IN FRANCE AN AMERICAN PARATROOPER, CARRYING EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO LAND IN GREAT TROUBLES, PREPARED FOR AIRBORNE LANDING OF THE BOMB

# THE LAST ROUND

AIRBORNE LANDINGS EAST OF THE RHINE HELPED START THE GERMAN COLLAPSE ON WESTERN FRONT

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR LIFE BY ROBERT CAPA

On the Western Front last week the German army seemed to have lost the possibility of a tactical retreat. In places the front had simply dissolved. Allied tanks were rolling down the roads east of the Rhine toward one of their most devastating weapons in the portable and self-contained system, in which the Germans surrendered by the thousands. Said Marshal Montgomery, "The last round."

Although the night operations of the Western Front had been dragging for weeks, one sharp blow brought it crashing down. When the Allies crossed the Rhine in strength they quickly broke through the thin crust of German resistance.

Adding power to the Allied blow was the skilled use of airborne troops to gain the way for the ground armies. Airborne troops dropped across the Rhine behind the main high ground in front of Montgomery's headquarters. When they joined the assaulting headquarters they went about with the drive across the German plain.

For the paratroopers, the airborne landing was a bold stroke of tactics. For the same reason, it was a great and dangerous adventure. Having the task with the first airborne troops was a U.S. Paratrooper Robert Capa, who parachuted into the enemy and, in the nick of death, took the photographs on the following two pages.



Lipsia,  
18 aprile  
1945.

La sequenza della  
morte del giovane  
soldato  
Raymond Bowman



“The picture of the last man to die”



Negli USA: fotografo di scena per *Notorious* (1946) di A. Hitchcock con la bellissima Ingrid Bergman, con la quale ha una relazione.

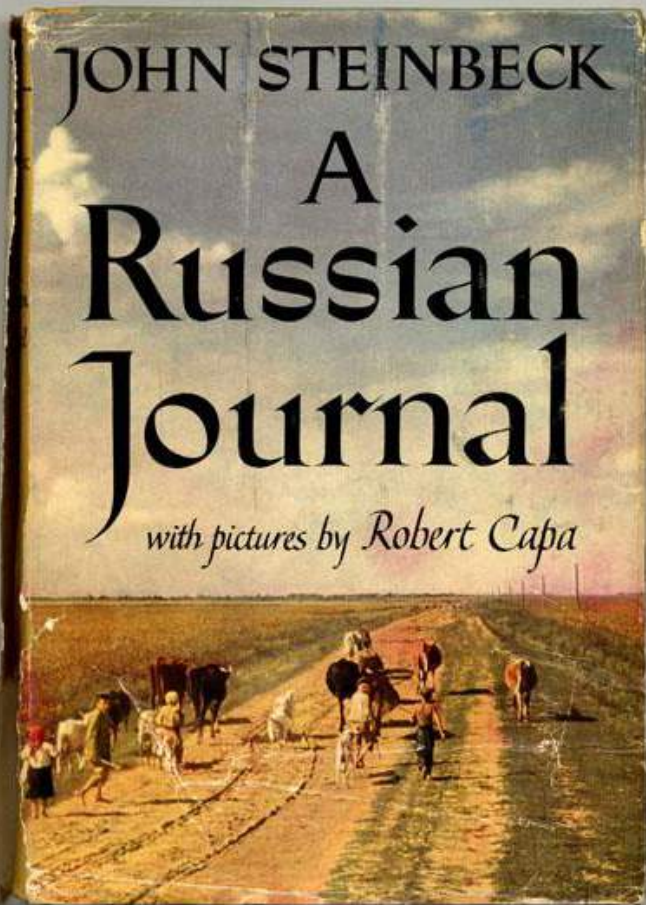




Si dice che A. Hitchcock si ispirò alla liaison fra Robert Capa e Ingrid Bergman per ricavarne il primo spunto de *La finestra sul cortile* (1954).

# Reportage in URSS

con testi di John Steinbeck (1947)



Nel 1947 a New York nasce l'agenzia fotografica cooperativa

# MAGNUM PHOTOS





# Fondatori:



Robert Capa

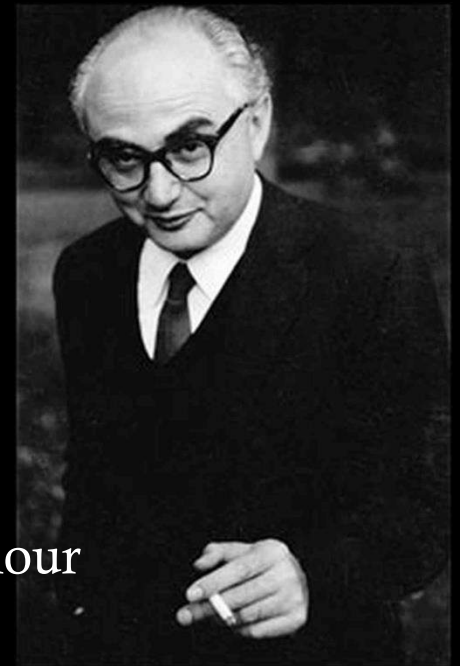
George Rodger



Henri Cartier-Bresson



David (Chim) Seymour





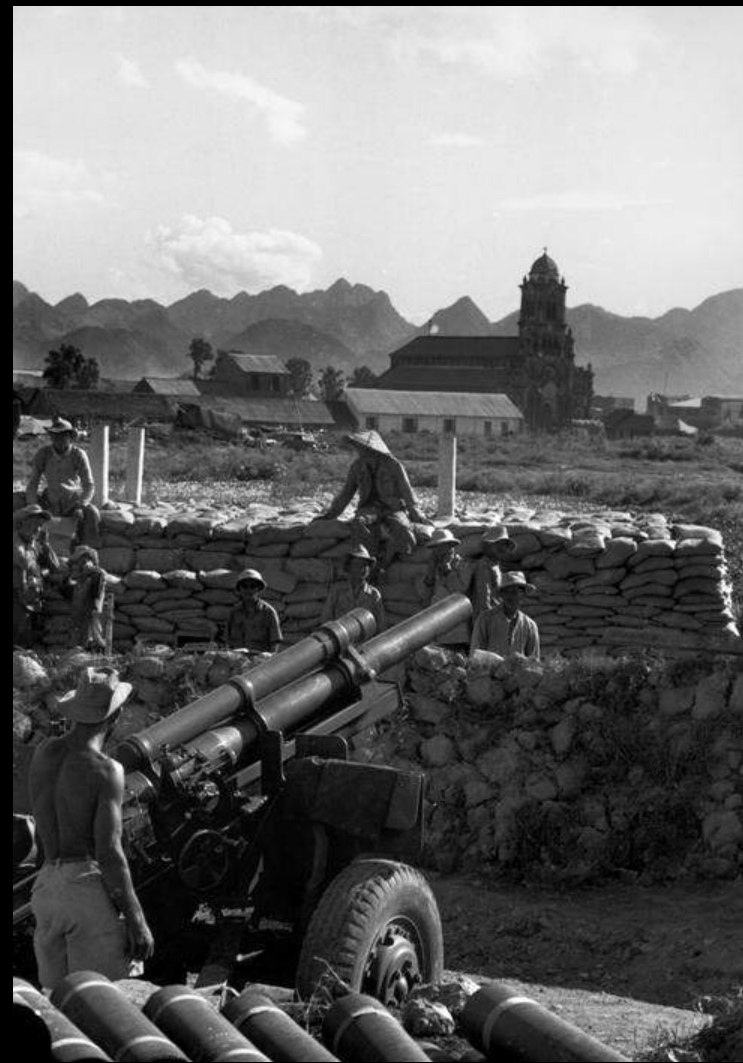
I fotografi di MAGNUM

La novità dei fotografi di MAGNUM era essere totalmente indipendenti. Bob Capa creò l'idea di un fotografo proprietario dei suoi negativi, che vendeva i suoi scatti a più giornali. Avendo il controllo dei proprio lavori, non si era più strumenti nelle mani dei giornali. Dopo la fondazione, molti altri si aggiunsero e si aggiungono ancora oggi.

# Guerra arabo-israeliana (1948)



# Indocina (maggio 1954)



25 maggio 1954,  
uno degli ultimi scatti



Robert Capa muore su una mina antiuomo.  
L'ultimo scatto, che gli costò la vita



# A GREAT WAR REPORTER AND HIS LAST BATTLE

Although the Red River Delta of Vietnam is 7,500 miles from American shores the bitter meaning of no-quarter war in the paddy fields came close to Americans last week. As outnumbered French Union troops continued a desperate struggle to defend the rice-rich delta, U.S. Navy Chief Admiral Robert B. Carney warned the U.S. it must soon decide which road to take: the highway that looks smooth but ends in quick oblivion, or the rough road that offers the hope of some decent destiny.

In Indochina one American had been feeling out how imminent that decision might be, Robert Capa, most famous war photographer of his generation, flew into Indochina four weeks ago to report the war for LIFE, first at Luang Prabang, then in the Red River Delta. On May 25 in the delta's fluid front line he stepped on a land mine. And so, on an operation so routine that it rated only three lines in a communique, Robert Capa—who had been

killed in Indochina and the first LIFE war photographer ever killed in line of duty.

Born Andreé Friedmann in Budapest 40 years ago, he invented the name of Capa shortly after he left Hungary at 18. He soon was wrapped in a legendary mantle of bohemianism. He scorned possessions and was devoted to the ideals of freedom; he frequently lacked cash and always loved good living; he poured mock insults on his friends—and unexpected kindnesses. In World War II the brass came to respect him for his knowledge of tactics (the late Brig. General Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Bob knows more about the art of war than many four-star generals"). Combat soldiers revered him for his relaxed, wisecracking, unbelievable bravery in desperate situations.

As Capa's last war pictures were flown to LIFE for publication on these pages, his flag-draped coffin awaited its journey from Hanoi back to his chosen land, and a distinguished



*“If your pictures aren't good, you aren't close enough”.*

*Robert Capa*

