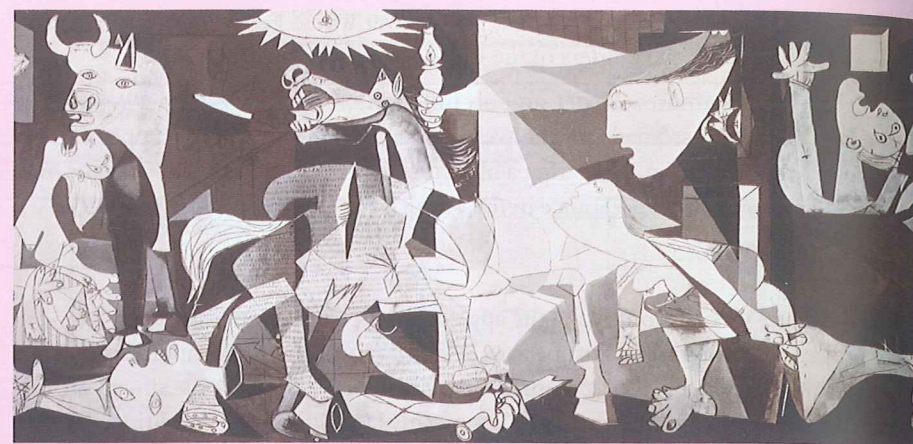


Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* has become the iconic image of the Spanish Civil War.



ToK Time

Document work – case study: Guernica



One of the most notorious events of the Spanish Civil War was the German bombing of the defenceless Basque town of Guernica. The Condor Legion were the perpetrators of the raid, in which 1,600 people were killed. Pablo Picasso's painting *Guernica* is not only the iconic image of the Spanish Civil War, but it has become one of the most powerful anti-war paintings in the history of art. Its powerful and terrifying image of the carnage wreaked by the bombing of civilians is recognized across the world. Indeed, its impact was considered so powerful that a copy of *Guernica* hanging in the UN was covered up when the war against Iraq was announced to the world's press.

Discuss how and why a piece of art can convey such a powerful and cross-cultural message. Consider the relative role of the different ways of knowing in your discussion.

To access worksheet 12.2 on the photographic depictions of the war, please visit www.pearsonbacconline.com and follow the on-screen instructions.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Read the following sources and answer the questions:

Document A

The Nationalists maintained that Guernica had been blown up by the Basques themselves, in order to discredit the blameless Nationalists. A later version said that Republican planes dropped bombs to detonate charges of dynamite placed in the sewers. Twenty years later it was still a crime in Franco's Spain to say that Guernica had been destroyed by the Nationalists.

From David Mitchell, *The Spanish Civil War*, 1971

Document B

Our consciences were uneasy about it. After living through the raid we knew only too well that the destruction had come from the air. The Reds had hardly any planes, we knew that too. Amongst our own, we'd admit the truth: our side had bombed the town and it was a bad thing. 'But what can we do about it now?' we'd say. It was simply better to keep quiet.

From a statement by Juan Sangroniz, a Nationalist, quoted in Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain*, 1994

Document C

The Germans said the wind caused the bombs to drift eastwards [the target had been a bridge over the river]. In fact Guernica was a military target, being a communications centre close to the battle line. Retreating republican soldiers could only escape with any ease through Guernica because the bridge over the river was the last one before the sea. But if the aim of the Condor Legion was to destroy the bridge why did they not use their supremely accurate Stuka bombers? At least part of the aim must have been to cause maximum panic and confusion among civilians as well as soldiers. The use of incendiary bombs proves that some destruction of buildings and people other than the bridge must have been intended.

From Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 1977

Questions

- 1 In what ways are the views expressed in Document A supported by the views in Document B?
- 2 What reasons are identified in Document C for the bombing of Guernica?

IBLP link – Communicators

As effective communicators, you should be able to express ideas and information confidently and creatively in a variety of ways – not just in your written work. Divide the class into groups. Within each group, someone should take on one of the following roles:

- Spanish socialist from Barcelona
- Spanish Nationalist from Madrid
- French supporter of the Republican government
- German supporter of the Nationalist government
- Italian supporter of the Nationalist government
- Russian Stalinist supporter of the Republican government
- British non-interventionist
- American supporter of the Lincoln Brigade.

You must now write a speech, which should last around one minute, rallying people to join your forces fighting 'for freedom' in Spain. You must include details of why you believe your perspective to be right, and why people should fight or not intervene. Present your speech to your group, or to the whole class.

The nature of the Spanish Civil War

Although for the foreign powers the war was 'limited', for the Spanish it was a 'total' war as well as a civil war. Propaganda was used on both sides to 'dehumanize' the enemy, even though that enemy was from the same country. Atrocities were common. Meanwhile, the targeting of civilians in bombing raids, symbolized in the attack on Guernica, offered a chilling premonition of what was to come in World War II. There were no lines drawn between civilian and combatant.

Militarily, the Spanish Civil War seems to have been fought at a 'crossroads' in the evolution of modern warfare. For example, in some cases cavalry charges proved effective, as in the Nationalist attack north of Teruel in February 1938. However, the importance of new technology – particularly the dominance of airpower – in future wars became clear in Spain, shown by the crushing of the major Republican offensives of 1937 and 1938 by the combined arms of the Condor Legion. Indeed, one of the reasons that the war lasted so long was due to the fact that neither side managed consistently to gain control of the air. Control of the sea was also important, and the Italians played a significant role in maintaining supply routes for the Nationalists.

The war on land was at times similar to the attrition and stalemate battles of World War I. Defence remained easier than attack. In repeated attacks by both sides around Madrid, casualties were high, with attackers taking little ground. In other battles, the changing nature of land warfare could be seen; the tactics of *Blitzkrieg* were evolving, with the application of tanks, artillery and air bombardment to prepare an advance.

The Spanish Civil War did not develop into a guerrilla war because, as Antony Beevor writes in *The Battle for Spain*:

The conditions for a universal guerrilla war simply did not exist. The best-suited regions, with the right terrain, were insufficient to have stretched nationalist forces beyond capacity. But on thinly held fronts, many more nationalist troops could have been held down by commando actions ... Franco did not so much win the war: the republican commanders, with the odds already stacked against them, squandered the courage and sacrifice of their troops and lost it.

From Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936–1939*, 2006

Effects and results of the Spanish Civil War – Spain

Scene from the film *Land & Freedom*, the story of a British communist who fights for the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War.



Human cost

The civil war had brought great human and material destruction to Spain. Around 100,000 Republicans were killed during the war, and about 70,000 Nationalists. Moreover, the killing continued after the war, as Franco launched a terror campaign to eradicate opposition. It is estimated that a further 40,000–200,000 were killed during this period, known as the ‘White Terror’.

Thousands of Republicans and their sympathizers were held for years in concentration camps and prisons. Often Republican children were taken from their parents to be ‘re-educated’. Some were placed with reliable Nationalist/Catholic families, while others were sent to orphanages where they were indoctrinated against the views and actions of their own parents. Divisions and hatred remained in Spanish society for decades.

A female combatant during the Spanish Civil War.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Research activity



Research the part played by women in the Spanish Civil War, and how the war affected their role in society.

Economic cost

Spain’s economy was devastated by the war. Some 10–15 per cent of its wealth was destroyed, and per capita income was 28 per cent lower in 1939 than in 1935. Seventy per cent of Madrid’s factory machinery needed to be replaced, and its communications systems, including the city’s tram network, had to be rebuilt. Around a third of its merchant shipping was out of action. There was high inflation due to the cost of fighting the war, and the method used to attempt to pay for it – printing money. The Republican land reform was reversed by Franco, and Spain’s agricultural economy remained inefficient and ineffective. Labourers had to tolerate periodic unemployment, and landowners were not interested in modernization. In addition, Spain had massive debts to pay. Due to the human cost of the war, there was a corresponding lack of skilled workers, and an overriding general labour shortage. Spain attempted to find foreign loans for investment, but the British demanded that debt was paid back first, and the Germans also wanted the Spanish to repay the cost of the aid sent to them before further investment was made.

The economy may have improved due to the outbreak of World War II. Franco seems to have attempted to gain leverage over Spain’s debt to Britain and France in August 1939, by offering to remain neutral and not ally Spain with Nazi Germany. He also had discussions with the Germans, presumably offering a similar exchange, in November and December. Once war broke out, Britain and France relented, and signed trade agreements with Spain (France in January, and then Britain in March 1940). But the German exploitation of Spain’s resources during World War II may also have weakened the economy. The original debt remained after the war, and this gave Britain, France and the USA influence in Franco’s Spain. Spain was in isolation after World War II, and suffered famine in 1946. With industrial output at a level below that of 1918, Spain’s economy may have been saved by aid from the right-wing Argentine dictator, Perón.

Nevertheless, in the longer term, as the Cold War took hold, Spain became less isolated, and with some reforms in the 1950s and 1960s it developed a powerful capitalist economy. Spain industrialized and also developed a strong service industry.

Political effects

Franco emerged from the war as Spain’s dictator. He remained in power until his death in 1975, ruling, as Paul Preston writes, ‘as if it were a country occupied by a victorious foreign army’. Franco’s regime declared that they had to save the country from communism. The White Terror that ensued led to the killing of thousands of Republicans and the exodus of half a million Spaniards, who fled to neighbouring countries. They included most of the intellectuals of Spain – teachers, lawyers, researchers, doctors and famous writers, poets, artists and musicians. Those that remained had to conform to Franco’s authoritarian, Catholic and conservative views.

In 1939, the Law of Political Responsibility made supporters of the Republicans (either before or during the war) liable to punishment, including confiscation of land, large fines or even the death sentence. The law allowed for the transfer of vast amounts of land from Republicans to the state.

The key objectives of the new regime were to restore the power of the privileged class and to control the working class. Wages were cut and all industrial political activism was outlawed. The CNT and the UGT were destroyed. Employment for those Republicans who had escaped imprisonment was almost impossible. In rural areas, the inequalities and iniquities of the social and working system, described earlier in this chapter, were preserved and maintained by the Civil Guard.

All of the Republic's reforms concerning the church were repealed, and indeed the 1950s have been termed the 'era of the national church.' The historian Frances Lannon writes, 'The Catholic Church enjoyed a degree of state support that was much greater than at any time since the 18th century. Government and church combined to preach order, hierarchy and discipline. The counter-revolution had triumphed.' The church took up the cause of the workers, and created links with their movements; Patricia Knight argues this was an attempt to infiltrate and prevent any resurgent communist groups. The aspirations of the Basques and Catalans for autonomy were also ended. Use of Catalan, Basque and Galician languages was forbidden and all power was centralized in Madrid. As Preston writes, 'behind the rhetoric of national and social unity, until the death of Franco every effort was made to maintain the division between the victors and the vanquished'.

The suppression and removal of all political opposition led to a period of political stability in Spain. Fear of state repression meant that Spain appeared more unified than it had been for decades. Nevertheless, the defeat of the fascist powers in World War II made Franco more vulnerable. Under pressure from the monarchists, Franco agreed to restore the King, but kept himself as head of state. The army also lost its pre-eminence in society after Spain's last colony, Morocco, gained its independence in 1956. Without an empire to run, and with no real external or internal threat, the old-style Spanish Army became defunct.

Franco increasingly delegated control from the 1960s, and following his death a democracy was restored in 1977. But the results of the war and the Nationalist victory for Spain had meant that it was a country 'frozen in time'. No modernization took place for 36 years. The rest of Europe shunned Spain until Franco died.

Effects and results of the Spanish Civil War – international

USSR and communism

The communists had been defeated in Spain, and this undermined their international credibility. In addition, Stalin's cynical contribution to the Republican cause, and the divisions it fostered within the left wing, disillusioned many former supporters of the USSR. Thus, the Soviets lost a lot of intellectual sympathy in the West.

Although the war accentuated the hostility between the Soviets and the Germans, it also pushed Soviet foreign policy away from attempting to build an alliance with the Western powers in order to contain Germany, to one based on appeasement of Nazi Germany. It had become clear to Stalin, through their actions in the NIC, that neither Britain nor France would be a sound ally against Hitler's expansionist ambitions. Stalin began to show his interest in a possible deal with Nazi Germany as early as December 1937. His viewpoint was strengthened when Britain decided to sacrifice both Czechoslovakia and Spain in September 1938; the Munich Agreement was the turning point.

Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy

Hitler was able to gain valuable military lessons from the war. The importance of air power was highlighted in the initial transport of Franco's forces to the mainland, as was the effectiveness of applying air cover for ground troops in *Blitzkrieg*. The Germans were also able to test their bullet-resistant fuel tanks, and they discovered that their armoured vehicles needed to be able to use radio contact. The bombing of civilians also seemed, to some extent, effective. These were all important factors in the success of Hitler's campaign in Europe in 1939–40. However, some drew the conclusion in March 1937, when the Italians were defeated at Guadalajara, that *Blitzkrieg* would not work.

The war brought Germany and Italy together, as it further prevented a reconciliation between the members of the Stresa Front (see p.116). Britain's and France's non-intervention policies, and pursuit of appeasement, strengthened Hitler's position. Germany also seemed to be the principal country 'defending the world from communism'.

Cooperation between Italy and Germany had far-reaching consequences, the most important of which was the removal of Italian constraint on Hitler's policy of expansion in Central Europe. Although he had clearly indicated in Mein Kampf that he intended to construct a Greater Germany, Hitler had been impeded by Mussolini's own interest in Austria. Military involvement in Spain, however, absorbed Mussolini's attention, allowing Hitler to carry out, without Italian opposition, the annexation of Austria in 1938.

From Stephen Lee, *Aspects of European History 1789–1980*, 1984

Britain and France

The military lesson taken by Britain, that the 'bomber will always get through', seemed to give more credibility to their policy of appeasement. The suffering and terror of Spanish civilians who had endured the bombing of their towns and cities made it clear that another general European war would witness horrors on a scale never seen before. The polarized political nature of the foreign intervention forces also led to more support for appeasement – it seemed that the warring factions would and should battle it out and exhaust one another without the democracies being dragged into the conflict. The spread of communism, as it manifested itself in Spain, still appeared the greater threat. However, the apparent 'weakness' of Britain and France over Spain, and their wider policy of appeasement, led Hitler to change his perception of Britain. Although he had initially intended to avoid a war and attempt to ally himself with the British, by 1938 he was losing his respect for Britain. Therefore, Britain's attempts to avert war by non-intervention actually encouraged Hitler to be more aggressive.

The USA

The USA remained ostensibly neutral, and although horrified by the atrocities on both sides in the Spanish Civil War, offered no tangible assistance. Indeed, the war strengthened the country's isolationist sentiment. President Roosevelt did make the 'Quarantine the Aggressors' speech in October 1937, but words meant little to the dictators in Europe and the military regime in Japan.

The UN called for economic sanctions against Franco in 1946, and all its member states broke off diplomatic relations. In addition, Spain was excluded from the USA's massive economic recovery package for post-war Europe, Marshall Aid. The initial plan in the West was to wait for a crisis in Spain to bring about the overthrow of Franco. Yet the Americans changed their perspective on Franco's Spain as the Cold War developed with the USSR. Franco was clearly a strong anti-communist force and, therefore, the 'enemy of my enemy is my friend'. This philosophy transformed into direct economic aid when the Cold War became global in 1950. In 1951, President Eisenhower agreed to the first American grant to Spain, and in return the Americans were permitted to use air bases in Spain. Spain became an ally of the USA and was permitted to join the UN.

Was the Spanish Civil War a cause of World War II?

A number of key factors suggest that the Spanish Civil War played a significant part in the causes of World War II:

- It emboldened Hitler by increasing his popularity at home and abroad.
- Hitler drew closer to his former enemy, Italy.
- Hitler gained practical military lessons that he would later apply in the campaigns of 1940. It was a distraction for Britain and France and pushed the USA further into isolation.
- It fostered a new direction for Soviet foreign policy, meaning that there could be no broad alliance in Europe to contain Hitler.

Alternatively, A.J.P. Taylor, in *The Origins of the Second World War*, concludes that the Spanish Civil War was ‘without significant effect’ in causing World War II.

● Examiner's hint

Here are some questions that you should consider while planning your essays:

Does the essay specify dates? How do these affect your choice of information to be included?

Does the essay title give clues as to the structure you should follow?

Is there a quote that you need to refer to/explain/come back to in your conclusion?

Does the question require you to make a judgement?

Where can you include historiography?

Note that IB examiners comment in their reports that the best essays are where candidates have spent 5–10 minutes of their time planning the essay before they actually start writing.

STUDENT STUDY SECTION

Essay work

Planning essays is an essential way to revise topics as you approach examinations. In pairs or groups, plan out the essays below. Your plan should include:

- An introduction written out in full
- The opening sentence for each paragraph setting out your ‘topic’
- Bullet points setting out the evidence to go in each paragraph
- A conclusion written out in full.

Each group should present its essay plan to the rest of the class. How much overlap of content is there between the different essay plans? Some hints are given for your planning in the first three essays.

Essay 1

Analyze the causes of the Spanish Civil War.

You could structure this essay thematically, and consider the key issues in the long term and the short term. Your analysis should then explain why there were tensions that intensified over time. Remember to include the ‘trigger’ of the civil war, as this explains why the war broke out when it did.

- Themes: 1898–1931 – Economic/Social/Political/Empire
- Themes: 1931–36 – Land reforms/Church reforms/Social unrest/Reaction of right/Popular Front
- Trigger: 1936 – The attempted coup.

Essay 2

What were the key effects of the Spanish Civil War?

You might want to include material from this chapter on the ‘nature’ of the war in this essay, as well as focusing on the more general results. It might be helpful for you to structure your essay in two parts: effects of the war internally on Spain, and then effects of the war externally on other countries. Remember to attempt to adopt a thematic approach.

Essay 3

What was the impact of foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil War?

You could discuss this question in terms of how the ‘nature’ of the war was affected by foreign intervention:

- Polarizing the complex political divisions in Spain
- Increasing the brutality and casualty rate
- Protracting the war.

You could then discuss this question in terms of how the ‘outcome’ of the war was affected by foreign intervention:

- Germany / Italy / Portugal: Strengthening the military capabilities of the Nationalists
- USSR: Weakening the political unity of the Republic, and then undermining its ability to wage war by withdrawing support
- NIC and Neutrals benefited the Nationalists.

Now attempt to make detailed plans for the following essay questions:

- In what ways, and to what extent, did social and religious divisions lead to war in Spain in 1936? © IBO 2007
- To what extent was the Spanish Civil War caused by divisions in Spain and in Spanish society? © IBO 2005
- Assess the impact of political and constitutional developments in Spain between 1930 and 1939. © IBO M01
- Why did the Constitutional Monarchy in Spain collapse in 1931? © IBO N00