**Spanish Civil War – revision summary notes**

The nature of the Spanish Civil War

* For foreign powers it was limited, for the Spanish it was total civil war.
* Propaganda was used to dehumanise the enemy.
* Atrocities were common.
* The targeting of civilians was a premonition of what was to come in WWII - no lines drawn between civilian and combatant.
* Some cases, cavalry charges proved effective, such as in Teruel in February 1938.
* Other case, such as the crushing of Republican offensives in 1938 to 1938 with combined arms and air strikes showed the importance of technology.
* Neither side could consistently gain air control.
* Control of sea was important especially for supply routes.
* Battles on land were similar to that of WWI with defense remained easier than attack.
* Casualties were high, with attackers gaining little hand.
* Blitzkrieg was evolving with application of tanks, artillery, and air bombardment.
* International Brigade involvement in both conventional and guerrilla warfare
* **It was not an overall guerrilla war because, from Antony Beevor, "the conditions for a universal guerrilla war simply did not exist." – people too divided….**

The course of the Spanish Civil War

* With assistance of Nazi Germany, Franco airlifed 24,000 Spanish troops from Africa to Spain, using a policy of terror has the main force against Madrid.
* Coup aimed to crush the 'left revolution,' but actually politicised and radicalised many Spaniards towards the left.
* Supporters of the Republican regime (1936) were 'Loyalists,' and rebels called themselves 'Nationalists.'
* Workers supported Republic, and middle, upper class and the church supported Nationalists.
* Nationalists did make some progress, but the Republicans controlled major cities, key industrial areas, Spain's gold reserves, and important elements of the military (air force and navy).
* Nationalists, slowly, pushed back the Republic.

Was the Spanish Civil War a cause 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 pushed the USA further into isolation.
* If fostered a new direction for Soviet foreign policy, meaning that there could be no broad alliance in Europe to contain Hitler.
* **A. J. P. Taylor: The Spanish Civil War was "without significant effect" in causing WWII.**

Long-term causes of the Spanish Civil War: political instability (1920−1931)[

* Struggle between conservatism and liberalism.

**Weakness of government**

* 1871 onwards Spain was a constitutional monarchy with a parliament that retained little power.
* Political control shifted between the wealthy oligarchs and their various cliques.
* Two main parties, Conservatives and Liberals, with very little difference between them.
* Elections were rigged or decided in private.

**The role of the Spanish Army**

* Army had powerful political position due to imperial past.
* It intervened in politics if a crisis occurred to defend its interests.
* It was unpopular, had a reputation for brutality, and was expensive and required heavy taxes.
* It was ineffective, as proven by the loss of the Spanish Empire during the 19th century, the American war in 1898, and the struggle to keep Morocco between 1906 to 1926.
* It was too big with too many officers and overly middle class.
* Army was conservationist, traditional, nationalistic and 'Africanistas.'

**The role of the church**

* Catholic church was rich and powerful, with guaranteed role in education and the economy.
* Its wealth was used to gain political and social influence!
* It used its power for economic conservatism and to oppose modernising and liberal forces.
* Defended the upper class as many of the clergy were aristocrats, who helped fund.
* In many urban areas and rural areas, there were protests against the church.

**Economic causes**

* Spain was mainly an agricultural economy, and it was inefficient, thus not providing sufficient food and its work was seasonal.
* Most lived in abject poverty, with an enormous gap between rich and poor.
* Rioting and disorder often broke out in the countryside, with the Civil Guard deployed to ruthlessly repress.
* No support from churches made some groups support the anarchists who argued for land redistribution.
* Many small landholders were conservative, resisted socialist/anarchist ideas, and were exploited by the Catholic Agrarian Federation who provided support for their beliefs, only to later support Franco.
* There was a need for modernisation and reform, and was limited by endemic poverty.
* Workers in towns faced low wages, long hours, unregulated working conditions, poor housing, and little welfare provision.
* This situation led to a growth in trade unionism, which, however, failed to achieve anything substantial.
* The workers' political parties had no real political power, with no legal means and violent uprisings.
* Spain's neutrality during WWI facilitated a short period of economic boom, however the increase in exports only increased inflation and shortages.
* By 1920s, there were major economic problems.

**The role of regions**

* Tension created by ongoing struggle between the centralist state and Catalonia and Basque provinces, which wanted decentralization and independence.
* The two regions had their own languages, cultures, economies, and churches.
* Primo de Rivera took back the self-governing rights of Catalonia, and separatists forces supported the Republican movement that overthrew Alfonso in 1931

**Political opposition**

* Liberal movement achieved little in opposing conservative forces, though remained a political force and supported the revolution that ousted the King in 1931.
* Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) had grown in rural areas but had minimal impact.
* General Union of Workers (UGT) was more visible in organizing strikes/protests in rural areas.
* Following the Bolshevik revolution, a Communist Party emerged.
* Anarchists demanded land redistribution; popular with peasants.
* Anarchists argued for revolutionary methods and to boycott democratic processes.
* More extreme anarchists (FAI) perpetrated bombings and assassinations.

**The fall of the monarchy and the establishment of the Second Republic**

* Post WWI economic depression and social tensions put pressure on King Alfonso XIII, and after 12 unsuccessful governments, a coup was thrown (1931, General Primo de Rivera).
* De Rivera tried to establish an authoritarian right-wing regime; started infrastructure programmes for railways, roads, electrification, irrigation.
* Ended war in Morocco in 1925.
* All his efforts to satisfy various social groups created massive debt and was not good when Wall Street Crashed in 1929.
* Resigned in 1930, and after municipal elections in April 1931, there was support for San Sebastian Pact (republicans, liberals, socialists, Catalans) coalition.
* 'Velvet revolution' occurred and the Second Republic was established as the King went into voluntary exile.

Short-term causes of the Spanish Civil War: political polarisation (1931-36)

* Between 1931 and 1936 Spain became polarised due to the long-term structural problems and clear divisions.
* **Paul Preston: "no-one, except a tiny minority on the lunatic fringe on the extreme right or left, believe that Spain's problems could be solved only by war."**

**The Left Republic (April 1931−November 1933)**

* When Manuel Azaña became president he declared a "democratic republic of workers of all classes."
* Key issue of tension before 'velvet revolution' in 1931 was the church's power.
* Azaña removed powers from the Church, prevented its control in education, and state payments to the clergy stopped.
* Army also affected; Azaña offered early retirement and closed military academies - this all backfired as those who remained were hard-core conservatives, nationalists, and Africanistas.
* Depression exacerbated the economic problems; agriculture prices were falling, wine and olive exports fell, peasant unemployment was rising, industrial output fell by as much as a half (steel).
* In 1932, law allowed estates to be taken over and redistributed to peasants, however it was expensive and ineffective; only 7,000 families benefited by 1933.
  + Right wing saw all this as a threat and similar to the Soviet-style system.
* Government introduced Assault Guard to increase left-wing military force to deal with civil unrest and violence.
* Both the left and right were rising against the slow pace of change, however these were suppressed as the army were loyal.
* Catalonia given its own parliament, some law-making powers, and dual control over education.
  + Right-wing saw this as a threat and the first step to break-up Spain's integrity.
* Each reform was perceived as an attack on right-wing groups, causing new groups to protect against these changes.
* Political divisions increased under Second Republic.
* **Historians see the land reforms as the central failing of the government in this period, however Paul Preston argues right-wing were never going to give Azaña a choice.**
* Azaña lost left-wing, working-class support and resigned in 1933 after government guards 'smoked out' anarchists, killing 25.

**The Right Republic (November 1933−February 1936**

* Republic swung right wing, members of CEDA (largest party) became war ministers.
* These two years are known as the "black years" as right-wing systematically tried to reverse everything; Church regained power, education, and land programme was halted.
* Catalonia declared itself independent when CEDA joined the government, but autonomy was suspended after Asturian miners' uprising 1934.
* **Historians argued that violent suppression of left uprising created likelihood for civil war.**
* Right lost support from Basques.
* Caballero suggested CEDA was Spanish Nazi party, and seek solution to Soviet-style Spain.
* Gil-Robles demanded shift to an authoritarian approach of control, which led to ...
* **The Popular Front (February−July 1936)**
* February 1936, 'Popular Front' was an anti-fascist pact made up of various left-wing groups including socialists, anarchists and communists.
* Identical front as Stalin's policy in 1935.
* For many, it was final attempt to uphold democracy and peace, others associated it with Stalin and extreme communism.
* Government wanted to restore reforms of 1931-33 regime; political prisoners released.
* Caballero's socialists did not join government and right did not accept restoration of old reforms.
* Increase in violence in the countryside as anarchists encourage peasants to seize land.

Immediate causes of the Spanish Civil War

* Military officers began planning a coup as soon as Popular Front gained power
* Catalyst of the coup was the murder of popular anti-republican, right-wing leading figure Calvo Sotelo on 13 July 1936.
* Azaña knew about the coup and moved key military figures to remote posts.
* When details about the coup were discovered, it was made a day earlier on the 17th of July, from Morocco.
* Spread to mainland, took northern Spain and parts of Andalusia.
* Rising failed to take main industrial areas, or Madrid.
* Half of the army remained loyal to Republic, coup technically unsuccessful.

Why did the Nationalists win the Spanish Civil War?

**Republican weaknesses**

**Political disunity**

* Republicans were politically divided and subscribed to different ideologies; between the Communists and Socialists who both believed the 'revolution' should be postponed until after the war and the Anarchists who argued the war can only be won through a revolution.
* Historians argue that the Anarchists' 'revolution from below' added a crucial hurdle for the Republic to regain centralised control, with more influence in Madrid and Valencia.
* War increased in popularity with communists; July 1936 40,000 members, October 1937 400,000 members.
* Republic had clear foreign support from USSR.
* Communists wanted victory in war, anarchists wanted revolutionary regime.
* Communists used 'terror' tactics.
* Four days of street fighting in Barcelona 1937 - communists and socialists versus the anarchists illustrated the lack of unity.
* After May Days (see above), the Worker's Party of Marxist Revolution took up a authoritarian regime.

**Military problems**

* Lacked strong military and no unified command.
* Anarchists and communists would not work together.
* Basques refused to be led by a central command structure and would not permit their forces outside of their own territory.
* Loyal army forces were not trusted by the Republic.
* Military fought series of local battles instead of overall campaign and this meant they could not be supported by the airforces, or to sustain an offensive campaign.
* Only until end of 1939 that Republicans started to replace militias with 'Popular Army'.

**Economic problems**

* Areas under the anarchists were the industries, public utilities and transport - these were taken over by workers' committees, however they were unable to meet the demands of the war.
* **Historians argue that this was not due to a badly run government but due to the war, however the government is partially to blame.**
* Production fell by two-thirds between 1936 to 1939, with many food and raw material shortages.
* Inflation was a problem; rose 300% during the war.
* The Non-Intervention Committee (NIC) was set up by France and Britain in 1936.
  + Prevented an influx of support for warring parties in Spain, making the Republic lose all credit and USSR was the only willing trader.
* **Paul Preston: communist control ultimately improved the situation by centralising control, but too late to save Republic.**

**Foreign assistance**

* Role of foreign aid was exaggerated, but aid given to Republic was far less than that of the Nationalists.
* Republic's main ally was USSR, who saved them and enabled it to fight the civil war by supplying aircraft (1,000) and tanks (750), but the Republic had to pay for this.
* No Soviet troops were sent.
* International Brigades were another ally, organised by Soviet Comintern, with 35,000 volunteers sent to fight in Spain.
  + Had very little overall impact, only in Madrid.
* 1938, Soviets withdrew support and International Brigades went home, major blow for Republic.
* France sent aid initially, but stopped when it joined the NIC - this was driven by anti-communist sentiments.
* **Francisco J .Romero Salvadó (on NIC): "preserved consensus [in France] and [avoided] confrontation with Germany and Italy."**

**Nationalist strengths**

**Political unity**

* 1936, Nationalists almost dived as Republics; but had a common aim of overthrowing the government.
* Franco assumed political and military control and became head of government and head of state.
  + Due to his position in command of the Army of Africa because important German aid came through him.
* Merged two parties into the Spanish Traditionalist Phalanax (FET).
* Franco used a mixture of propaganda and terror in areas under his control.
  + Historians argue that Soviet involvemenet led to this, however others suggest it was power and authority gained during the war.
* Supported by the church which denounced atheist communism and called for a crusade to protect Christian civilisation.
* Nationalistic politics of Franco were not undermined by foreign support from Germany or Italy.

**Military unity**

* Nationalists had similar problems to the Republicans with regard to 'columns' of militias, however these were quickly put into a regular army unit.
* The Army of Africa fought for the Nationalists and were the most effective force in the Civil War.
* Had unified command and Franco's leadership was accepted by other generals and right-wing parties.
* Italian forces under Nationalist command.
* Successful in pushing on and winning offensives, and adopted effective defensive tactics.
* Had sound communications, and equipped the growing army.
* Franco's concern for his troops ensured the majority were obedient.
* Franco was a sound military and political leader.

**Economic advantage**

* Business communist supported Nationalists; could buy supplies.
* By September 1936, Nationalists in control of main food-producing areas.
* 1937, in control of main industrial areas.
* Benefited from International trade, with the USA giving about $700 million credit to Nationalists.

**Foreign assistance**

* **Hugh Thomas: conflict 'became an international crisis whose solution was decided by external circumstances.'**
* Rebels benefited from more aid, which were better quality than those of the Republicans, and had continuous supply.
* German's airlifted Moroccan soldiers and sent 10,000 troops, 800 aircraft, 200 tanks.
* Italians sent 70,000+ troops, 750 planes, 800 aircraft, 200 tanks.
* Portuguese sent 20,000 troops.
* All aid allowed Nationalists to fight, and gave them air dominance.
* Most of Nationalist army was Spanish, and was modern and equipped.

Foreign intervention

* Foreign intervention lengthened and intensified the war.
* It meant Spanish issues were submerged by wider ideological battles taking place in Europe.

**Britain**

* Feared the war would become a general European conflict so set up the NIC.
* However, 3 key members of the NIC ignored the NIC.
* Britain's not interventionist policies were limited and generally supported the Nationalists.
* December 1936, signed a trade agreement with Nationalists to allow for trade.
* Britain did not want to damage relations with Italy or Portugal.
* Spain was sacrificed to the policy of appeasement like Czechoslovakia.

**France**

* Support for Republic was inconsistent, and reflected complexity of its position towards the war.
* French did not want a right-wing border (joining Italy and Germany), but French politics were also polarised, fearing a revolt if it fully supported Spain.
* France was reliant on Britain, which was anti-Republic for its foreign policies.
* France restricted themselves to humanitarian assistance.
* Republic would have benefited from France as it was on its border.
* The Republic's reliance on the Soviet polarised politics and associated it with 'Soviet communism.'
* France did not stop citizens joining the International Brigades, which was organised in France, just like the coordination of Soviet aid.

**USSR**

* Support not just because of ideological reasons.
* Emergence of another fascist state in Europe would strengthen Hitler's position - threat to Stalin.
* Republic victory could panic Britain and France into an alliance with Hitler.
  + Wanted to form an alliance with Britain and France to *contain* Hitler.
* Stalin originally welcomed the NIC, but Germany and Italy's treatment of NIC, Stalin withdrew in October 1936.
* **Some historians argue that Franco protracted the war to enhance his power, but Stalin also had a plan to drag fighting out.**
* Drained resources from Germany, making it less likely to turn into a general war.
* Stalin withdrew support in June 1938, as the Republic seemed to be losing and Western democracies were appeasing fascist dictaros.
* Stalin wanted to create a block to resist Hitler ended with Czechoslovakia being blocked at Munich agreement, September 1938.

**Germany**

* Germany not ready for general European war and was cautious when rebels appealed for help.
* Hermann Göring decided to support rebels, as he and Hitler wanted to stop the spread of communism, and wanted to test out the Luftwaffe.
* Economic and strategic benefits; raw materials (iron) could be gained, and could hamper Anglo-French maritime communications.
* Hitler thought the war would not last long, committed limited aid.
* Ignored NIC, even though it was a member.
* Germany played a crucial military role at critical times and other governments deterred from getting involved due to its presence.

**Italy**

* Gave most assistance as Mussolini was anti-comminist/-socialist and democratic outlook, he wanted to enhance his influence in Mediterranean, and a fascist victory would weaken France and prevent French left-wing influence.
* Another fascist power would encircle France, pressurising French colonies in North Africa.
* Contributed many planes, tanks, weapons, bombers, and submarines.
  + **Historians argue that despite massive troop support, its most effective support was air and naval.**
* Italy ignored membership of NIC.
* Relationship between Italy and Germany were cemented in Spain.

**Portugal**

* Only foreign force not compromised by membership of NIC.
* Sent 20,000 troops and fundamental supplier of rebels in the south-west.
* Provided a base for communications.
* Britain's long-term alliance with Portugal made the British reluctant to count its support for Nationalists.

Effects and results of the Spanish Civil War − Spain

**Human cost**

* 100,000 Republicans were killed
* 70,000 Nationalists were killed
* Killing continued after war, as Franco launched terror campaign to eradicate competition (estimated death toll 40,000-200,000).
* Thousands Republicans were held in concentration camps and prisons.
* Republican children were taken from parents to be re-educated. this meant many families were separated
* Divisions and hatred remained in Spanish society for decades.

**Economic cost**

* 10-15% of wealth was destroyed; per capita income declined 28%; 70% of Madrid's factory machinery need to be replaced.
* Madrid's communication systems, tram network needed rebuilding.
* Two-thirds of merchant ships out of action.
* High inflation.
* Republican land reform reversed.
* Agricultural economy was inefficient and ineffective.
* Labourers tolerated periodic unemployment, and landowners not interested in modernisation.
* Massive debts.
* General labour shortage.
* Economy improved due to outbreak of WW2; Franco began trading with Britain and France again.
* Germany's exploitation of Spain's economy during WWII weakened the economy.
* France and Britain's loan to Spain gave it influence in Spanish politics.
* Suffered a famine in 1946, and was fairly isolated during the war.
* During the Cold War, Spain became less isolated with reforms in the 1950s and 1960s developing a capitalist state.
* Spain industralised and developed a strong service industry.

**Political effect**

* **Paul Preston: "as if it were a country occupied by a victorious foreign army."**
* Franco had declared the country safe of Communism and began White Terror in order to destroy all other traces.
  + Exodus of half a million Spaniards and murder of thousands of Republicans.
* Teachers, lawyers, researches, doctors, writers, poets, artists, and musicians fled the country.
* 1939, Law of Political Responsibility made supports of Republic liable to punishment.
* Objective of new regime to restore power to the privileged class and control the working class.
* CNT and UGT destroyed.
* Inequalities of social and working system in rural areas were reversed and preserved by Civil Guard.
* 1950s was an 'era of the national church' as Church reforms were repealed.
* **Frances Lannon: "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."**
* Patricia Knight: Church's creation of links to worker's movements was an attempt to infiltrate and prevent any resurgent communist groups.
* Use of Catalan, Basque, and Galician languages were forbidden.
* All power centralised in Madrid.
* **Paul Preston: "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."**
* Suppression and removal of political opposition created economic stability.
* Army lost its pre-eminence in society after Morocco gained independence in 1946.
* The country became 'frozen in time' as no moderinsation took place for 36 years.

Effects + results of the Spanish Civil War - international

**USSR and communism**

* After the Communist defeat in Spain, international credibility had been lost.
* Stalin's contribution caused divisions within the left wing and disillusioned supporters of the USSR.
* Lost intellectual sympathy from West.
* Pushed foreign policy away from potential western alliances against Germany, only one to appease Germany.
* After NIC, obvious that Britain and France would not ally with Hitler's expansionist ambitions.
* Stalin became closer, possible ally by December 1937.
* Munich Agreement in September 1938 was turning point as Britain sacrificed Czechoslovakia and Spain to appease Germany.

**Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy**

* Importance of air power and effectiveness of applying air cover for ground troops in Blitzkrieg.
* Germans tested bullet-resistant fuel tanks and discovered possible improvements.
* Bombing of civilians was effective.
* All these made differences to Hitler's 1939-40 campaign.
* However, Italians defeated at Guadalajara, Blitzkreig did not work.
* Germany and Italy grew closer.
* The NIC, Britain's pursuit of appeasement, all strengthened Hitler's position.

**Britain and France**

* Spanish civilians who were bombed made it clear that a general European war would witness horrors unlike the scale seen before.
* Polarised political view of appeasement; some thought warring factions should battle it without dragging democracies into conflict.
* "Weakness" of Britain and France over Spain, and their policy of appeasement, led Hitler to change perception of Britain - 1938 lost respect and the NIC made Hitler more aggressive.

**The USA**

* Remained neutral, yet horrified by the atrocities of the Spanish Civil War.
* The civil war strengthened isolationist sentiment.
* Roosevelt, October 1937: "Quarantine the Aggressors."
* Called for economic sanctions against Franco in 1946. All members broke up diplomatic relations.
* Spain excluded from Marshall Aid.
* 1951, Eisenhower agreed to grant aid to Spain in return for using air base.
* Spain became a US ally and permitted to join the UN.