

HCCRI XII STUDY GUIDE

JOINT CRISIS CABINET



SPANISH
CIVIL WAR
(REPUBLICANS)



I. COUNCIL INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of WWI heralded a new age of revolution, with the emergence of countless revolutionary cells in Spain, where a multitude of different political ideologies manifested themselves in the formation of polarising parties with individual agendas. Economic ruin expedited the fragmentation of Spanish society as the nation's democratic principles were challenged by separatists, anarchists and socialists.

Looking beyond the troubled Iberian peninsula, we find a Europe clouded with hostility. Fresh off the backs of Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland and Mussolini's successful conquest of Abyssinia, the struggle in Spain has mutated into a contest over the next battleground of Europe. Foreign manipulation and political intrigue has further separated the Spanish people, as the nation now becomes more divided than ever before.

Spain now exists in polarity with the existence of two spheres of influence and two disparate factions: the Republicans and Nationalists, both fighting valiantly for a better future in Spain with drastically different visions for the future of the Spanish Empire. Republicans and Nationalists must navigate the precarious climate of war in their attempts to secure rightful Spanish territory, win the favour of the public and attain absolute victory.

I. COUNCIL INTRODUCTION

The future of Spain lies in your hands. El Que No Arriesga, No Gana.¹

¹ He who does not risk does not gain anything.

II. CRISIS OVERVIEW

The date is 19 July 1936. Council convenes in the immediate aftermath of the military uprising's defeat in Madrid and Barcelona. The Nationalist rebels have gained control of the areas Morocco, Galicia, Navarre, Old Castile and Seville. General Sanjurjo who led the coup is killed during his journey from Portugal to Spain.

The Spanish Civil War began amidst the backdrop of economic depression and slow growth, along with social unrest and issues like high unemployment, poverty and inflation, which led to domestic tensions and civilian discontent. These issues were amplified in the local working class and labourers, which made up much of the Republican fraction in Spain.

Prevailing poor conditions in Spain amounted to the outbreak of the war. In comparison with its European neighbours, Spain was slow in transforming into an industrial economy, where its per capita income in the 1930s were similar to that of Britain's in the mere 1860s. Moreover, Spain had seen a political fragmentation of progressive industrial elites, specifically the Catalan textile sector, and the more conservative group of small farmers.

¹ United Nations (n.d.). United Nations Security Council |. United Nations. Retrieved February 12, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

² United Nations (n.d.). Security Council. United Nations. Retrieved February 12, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/security-council>

II. CRISIS OVERVIEW

Furthermore, the Second Spanish Republic government of 1931 had enacted many political reforms, including the granting of freedom of speech and expression, women's rights to vote, and the deprivation of the privileges enjoyed by the Spanish elites. These extensive changes alienated many Spaniards amongst society, and along with the growing popularity of authoritarian and fascist regimes in Italy and Germany, political tensions in Spain escalated.

Before the outbreak of the war, the country saw a multitude of strikes and uprisings in early 1936, illustrating the extent of social, cultural, and political divisions in society. The election resulted in the victory of the Popular Front coalition made up of various parties including the Communists and Socialists. However, the manifestation of divisions and the inability of the government to address the country's ailing economic and social state generated mistrust of the government and the people's elected representatives.

In July 1936, a group of Nationalist military officers led by General Francisco Franco staged a rebellion against the government. The coup attempt quickly expanded to other parts of the country, marking the start of the Spanish Civil War.

III. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ORIGINS OF REPUBLICANISM IN SPAIN

Republican thought in Spain originated out of the proliferation of liberal thought during the French Revolution, and later manifested during the fight against Napoleon during the Peninsular War. This manifested during the reign of Queen Isabella II, where a clear anti-monarchist, republican movement was illustrated through the Glorious Revolution in 1868. With the founding of the First Spanish Republic in 1873, divisions amongst the federal republicans and unitary republicans emerged amongst the background of tensions and colonial unrest in Spanish Cuba during the Ten Years' War. These divisions within the republican fraction in Spain were apparent with the formation of four presidents in the First Spanish Republic within a mere eleven months after the Cantonal Revolution of 1873 (where a group of pro-confederationists in the Federalist sector sought to establish a Federation without the approval of the Spanish Cortes government) as well as their drafting of the new Constitution. Later on, attempts to fuse these diverse schools of thought were made, with the formation of the Republican Union Party in 1903.

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THE SECOND SPANISH REPUBLIC

The Second Spanish Republic was formed in 1931, with the deposition of King Alfonso XIII. Support for the monarchy had hit an all-time low, resulting in a landslide victory for the Republicans in the 1931 Spanish general election. From an economic standpoint, this can also be viewed as partly a result of the Stock Market Crash of 1929. The working class, who was the hardest hit from the crisis, turned to the Republicans, making up a landslide victory for the Republicans in the 1931 Spanish general election.

In December, a new constitution was drafted and introduced. Following which, the provisional government, which was supposed to carry out elections, put the issue on the backburner, fearing increasing popular opposition.

Those fears were eventually realised in the general elections of 1933, where the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (CEDA), a right-wing, Nationalist party, won a majority vote. President Niceto Alcalá-Zamora, a staunch Republican, refused to allow the CEDA leader, José María Gil-Robles, to form a government, further denying CEDA presence in the government for close to a year. When CEDA was

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finally allowed into government, the Socialists and Communists launched an insurrection, marked by strikes across Spain. In particular, Asturia and Catalonia were key focal points where the uprisings turned violent. While generally unsuccessful, it sent the message that the Socialists did not believe in the leadership of CEDA, and drove another wedge between the two rapidly polarising sides.

Alcalá-Zamora, alarmed by Gil-Robles' swift expansion of CEDA into government, dissolved the Cortes Generales (Parliament) on 7 January 1936, also fearing that Gil-Robles would soon push to become Prime Minister. Elections took place on 16 February, with the left-wing Frente Popular (Popular Front) narrowly gaining a majority in government. Left-wing extremists ran riot on the streets of Spain, causing chaos. The Frente Popular, however, faced difficulties in forming a government as some socialist groups within the left were unwilling to collaborate with republicans to form the government. On the other hand, the right had given up on attempting to take control through parliamentary means, and began planning for a use of force instead. In preparation for a coup d'état, individuals loyal to the right were stationed within each military district.

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Relative government inaction against the growing threat of insurgency was soon punished. On 12 July, a member of the Falange shot Lieutenant José Castillo, a member of an important anti-Fascist group. In response, leftist militiamen, having received approval to illegally arrest some Members of Parliament, arrested right-wing opposition leader José Calvo Sotelo and assassinated him. This series of events convinced the Nationalists that it was time to launch their coup. Under the leadership of Francisco Franco, Emilio Mola, Manuel Llopi and José Sanjurjo, the gears began to turn. On 18 July, the uprising in Spanish Morocco and the Canary Islands was carried out to great success. Mainland Spain saw less favourable outcomes; the Nationalists could only capture Galicia, Navarre, Old Castile, León, and Seville.

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THE QUESTION OF MILITARY INFERIORITY

Prior to the conflict, the Spanish military had endured rounds of budget cuts under the Azaña government, ostensibly to trim the top-heavy officer corps, with multiple unintended consequences.² Firstly, the air force was unable to accrue sufficient flight hours. Secondly, the pay of the troops was cut, diminishing their motivation. This sordid state of affairs, coupled with the fact that the bulk of experienced officers and troops had turned traitor, meant that the Republicans faced an unenviable military position, retaining only a minority of professional soldiers, second-line troops and civil guards. The Republican militias and inexperienced raw recruits would fare poorly against elite Nationalists troops led by a cabal of military generals, including Emilio Mola and Francisco Franco; General Franco himself commanded the 34,000-man-strong experienced Army of Africa, battle-hardened from the Rif War.³ In comparison most Republican field commanders were not professional military men, but instead blue-collared workers who had gained leadership positions in unions. In addition, strong Communist influence has ensured that ideological

² Richmond, D. W. (1987). The Politics of Spanish Financial and Economic Policies During the Second Republic, 1931-1933. *The Historian*, 49(3), 348-367. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24446831>

³ Suci, P. (2020, June 25). *How the 'army of africa' helped the nationalist cause in the Spanish Civil War*. The National Interest. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/how-army-africa-helped-nationalist-cause-spanish-civil-war-163458>

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loyalty, not military acumen, was prioritised for promotions and appointments.

On a macro level, the Republicans also face problems regarding organisation and command and control. Republican forces consisted of decentralised militias, all with their own training methods and equipment, which further complicated logistics. In addition, antipathy and distrust soured the relationship between militias and loyal army officers, particularly among anarchist militias. Anarchist soldiers resented military power and authority, while their lack of discipline frustrated and irritated officers, fuelling complications in joint operation.⁴

Compared to the infantry, the difference in experience and firepower was even more stark in the air force. With the previous Azaña government gutting the defence budget, many young pilots were unable to accumulate flight hours and were thus inexperienced in their undertakings; those with much flying experience were typically the upper class who had access to flying clubs. Due to their wealthy economic

⁴ Brown, H. (2022). The Anarchist in Uniform: The Militarisation of Anarchist Culture during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). *Contemporary European History*, 1-18. doi:10.1017/S0960777322000285

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backgrounds, most of these skilled pilots tended to loathe the communists in the Republicans, thus they defected to the Nationalists, resulting in a further reduction in the number of skilled Republican pilots. Compared to the infantry, the difference in experience and firepower was even more stark in the air force. With their ranks bolstered by skilled pilots, the Nationalist Air Force would enjoy a qualitative advantage.⁵ The navy⁷ was the only arm where the Republic could claim to have superior firepower. The failure of Nationalist officers to control their vessels led to pro-Republic soldiers taking control of the warships, providing the Republicans with the capacity to carry out naval operations.⁶

A fractious, disunited amalgamation of militias would face great difficulties in carrying out combined arms operations, as well as create logistical inefficiencies in combat. Furthermore, supplies provided to the Republican military by the Soviet Union were of much lower quality than that of the Nationalist fraction, where almost a quarter of all weapons sent by the Soviet Union were completely obsolete and dated well back into the Tsarist era.⁷ Delegates can consider creating a

⁵ Kowalsky, D. (2004). *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War*. Columbia University Press.

⁶ Davis, W. H. (2019, February 21). *The naval side of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39*. U.S. Naval Institute. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1940/june/naval-side-spanish-civil-war-1936-39>

⁷ "Why Did the Nationalists Win the Spanish Civil War?" tutor2u. Retrieved April 19, 2023, from <https://www.tutor2u.net/history/reference/why-did-the-nationalists-win-the-spanish-civil-war#:~:text=Republican%20Weaknesses%20%E2%80%93%20Military%20Resources&text=Rifles%20and%20machine%20guns%20were,Soviet%20Union%20was%20also%20important.>

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centralised command, to aid with reorganising, equip and training disparate militias. A possible solution would be to fold several militias into an organic battle group that can provide fire support and conduct combined arms operations on its own. However, this method of organisation is not without its downsides, chief among which would be, paradoxically, a loss of flexibility. Should an element of a battle group suffer comparatively heavy losses, the entire battle group would be combat ineffective.⁸ For example, should the infantry element be attrited in a failed offensive, the BTG would not be able to carry out any more offensive operations, despite the artillery taking relatively few losses.⁹

Above all, delegates must understand that any attempt to make the military efficient is bound to be met with political opposition. Due to ideological reasons, anarchist elements will resent being placed under a central authority, while Communists tend to oppose sharing resources with or serving with units that do not share their ideology. In addition, the age-old problems of individual generals empire-building and glory hounds will also plague the Republicans.

⁸ Grau, L. W., & Bartles, C. K. (2022, April 14). *Getting to know the Russian Battalion Tactical Group*. Royal United Services Institute. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/getting-know-russian-battalion-tactical-group>

⁹ Ibid.

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THE QUESTION OF WAR INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY

In a lengthy war of attrition, a capable war industry is imperative, both to replenish depleted stockpiles and to equip new units. As seen in the World War I shell shortages faced by virtually all major combatants, pre-war stockpiles and peacetime arms manufacturing capability tend to be wholly inadequate to sustain the demand for weaponry in a modern war. In addition, war materiel such as vehicles and artillery will have to be produced to replenish losses to enemy fire or mechanical failure. Equipping fresh soldiers with ammunition, supplies, vehicles and weapons also consume war materiel, therefore the productive capacity of the Republican war industry would directly correlate with the amount of troops the Republic can field.

On the tactical level, a military that enjoys an abundance of war material will have numerous advantages and capabilities on the battlefield as better-equipped troops can easily outlast and overwhelm the enemy. For example, a preponderance of artillery batteries and shells allows soldiers to devastate enemy positions, while the enemy artillery is restricted because of their inability to conduct counter-battery fire. Similarly, an army with more vehicles, spare parts and fuel can carry out flanking manoeuvres and outpace their opponents.

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Should delegates plan to produce military goods, industrial inputs such as energy, steel and labour are needed. Delegates will face difficulties in increasing the supply of industrial labour, as despite advances in technology, agriculture was still a labour-intensive industry owing to failures to raise productivity, hence taking up much of the Spanish workforce. On the eve of the war, 50% of the male population worked in agriculture, while labour productivity was 44% that of France and 39% that of the UK.¹⁰ As agricultural labourers require substantial training before they can be productive in a factory, the Republic lacks spare capacity to expand its manufactories and industry. Therefore, to successfully modernise industry and improve its capabilities, the government has to be able to sustain itself agriculturally while having former agricultural workers produce military goods; delegates can consider the boosting of productivity of workers through state intervention to free up more labour to work in war factories.

¹⁰ Simpson, J. (1997). Economic development in Spain, 1850-1936 - UC3M. Economic development in Spain, 1850-1936. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://e-archivo.uc3m.es/bitstream/handle/10016/815/simpson-EHR-1997%282%29-postprint.pdf>

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As a vital industrial input, energy production is imperative should delegates desire to ramp up the production of military goods. However, a serious impediment to energy production is the poor quality of Spanish coal, resulting in high energy costs, which was a significant reason for Spain's low per head consumption of coal per annum of 300 kilos in 1900, compared to Britain's 4 tonnes.¹¹ Before the war, imported coal accounted for half of consumption, while hydroelectricity and petroleum accounted for a third.¹² However, the wartime situation would be vastly different. For starters, the Nationalists already control the oil refineries in the Canaries. In addition, American oil companies like Texas Oil unilaterally terminated oil contracts with the Republicans and began supplying the nationalists, presumably because they judged the left-wing ideologies espoused to be a greater threat to their interests. Large hydroelectric dams would also be a prominent and high value target for sabotage or bombing. Should the Republican navy be unable to prevent Nationalist warships from sinking coal imports, Republican industry would thus be saddled with high energy costs, limiting production.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Swyngedouw, E. (2014). "Not A Drop of Water...": State, Modernity and the Production of Nature in Spain, 1898-2010. *Environment and History*, 20(1), 67-92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43298530>

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On paper, the Republicans enjoy advantages in industry, with 70% of the 2 million industrial workers living in Republican-held territory. The Republic also has access to the industry in Catalonia and the Basque country. However, it would be specious to assume that transitioning civilian industry to military use would be smooth sailing. An efficient war economy would inevitably curtail worker's rights by limiting or banning strikes, and increasing working hours. This could cause anarchist elements to be disenfranchised, a problem made more severe as Catalonia, the heart of Republican industry, is under strong anarchist influence.

When debating policies to increase production, delegates must be cognisant of the local context. Particularly, delegates who wish to nationalise industry should be aware of the relatively high degree of government protection and intervention which had been the case since World War I. This had the unintended consequences of raising barriers to entry and increasing monopolisation. For example, in the steel industry, four companies accounted for 96% of capital investment in the 1930s.¹³ Other than government policies, geography also contributed to the monopolisation. Due to the lack of navigable rivers, and high cost of railway transportation due to the paucity of high

¹¹³ Ibid.

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quality coal, most industry was located near ore deposits, mainly in the Basque country.¹⁴ Thus, although it may be ideologically repugnant for far-left communists, pragmatic centre-left leaders could work with such companies to leverage their experience and expertise in producing military goods.

When delegates decide which weapons to manufacture, they ought to also look at domestically producing armaments which they could manufacture at scale in order for such equipment to be manufactured at a lower cost and with greater efficiency. A 1930s study of aeroplane factories by an American aeronautical engineer, TP Wright, concluded that the more often a particular aeroplane was built, the quicker and cheaper the next plane became. Wright found that every time accumulated production doubled, unit cost would fall by 15%.¹⁵ As workers became more experienced, they made micro adjustments to how they worked, and developed special tools to assist with particular tasks, a process called the learning curve.¹⁶ Delegates would do well to consider this phenomenon when deciding on industry strategy. On the flip side, should the number of units built be low, per unit costs would

¹⁴ Simpson, J. (1997). Economic Development in Spain, 1850-1936. *The Economic History Review*, 50(2), 348-359. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2599064>

¹⁵ Smunt, T. L. (1970, January 1). *Learning curve analysis*. SpringerLink. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/1-4020-0612-8_504

¹⁶ Hirschmann, W. B. (2014, August 1). *Profit from the learning curve*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://hbr.org/1964/O1/profit-from-the-learning-curve>

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be high, putting a large financial strain on the Republic which delegates can ill afford.

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THE QUESTION OF FINANCING THE WAR

In a drawn-out war where neither side is able to gain an early decisive military advantage, a state's economic endurance to continue financing the war will be tested. There are several factors that could result in the Republic being unable to finance the war. In the short term, foreign investment, personnel and companies pulling out of a war zone would be economically problematic. Foreign experts and workers in Republican Spain, mostly from Western Europe, will tend to be higher skilled than local workers. Their exodus would lead to a lack of skilled labour that would be difficult to quickly replace. Withdrawal of foreign capital would result in many workers being unemployed and foreign factories shutting down. The government could step in to subsidise defunct factories and pay their workers, but this would require capital outflows, and compete with military procurements and expenditure for funding.

Should the war drag on, financial outlays on the military would inevitably increase. Other costs, such as repairing damaged infrastructure, would also pile up, culminating in a situation where the government is unable to fund its expenditure, with disastrous consequences, examples of which include a government shutdown and sovereign risk. In the event of a government shutdown, delegates

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would be unable to pay government employees and soldiers, rendering civil and military delegates powerless. In addition, defaulting on the sovereign debt of the Spanish Republic would have disastrous consequences. International lenders and investors would balk at any further diplomatic, economic and military support to the Republic, resulting in a loss of recognition and legitimacy. Delegates should note that financial superiority may not translate to military superiority; military defeats can also prevent the Republic from converting their economic superiority to victory.

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THE QUESTION OF CIVILIAN ENDURANCE

In war, civilian morale can fluctuate, depending on the standard of living at that time, the use of propaganda, and the results of battles and sieges. Keeping civilian morale up is essential in ensuring high responsiveness towards the Republic's civil initiatives and policies, and preventing revolutions and uprisings against the government. In addition, a supportive civil population would also be more willing to work more shifts and participate in activities such as war rationing and the purchase of war bonds, resulting in the Republic being able to allocate more resources towards the production of military goods. Conversely, an apathetic populace would not only result in voluntary, opt-in policies being futile, but also cause dissent and unrest should delegates attempt to force through harsher measures to mobilise their civil population. Given that conscription schemes will likely be implemented, civilian morale would be correlated with the morale of the troops. If soldiers are already convinced that they are fighting for a just cause, it is expected that they would generally perform better in battle and follow orders. In contrast, unmotivated and demoralised soldiers rout easily, and are generally unable to perform complex manoeuvres and tactics.

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Given that the Republic has just managed to foil a coup attempt by the Nationalists, civilian morale at the onset of the war is relatively high. However, during a war, the standard of living will inevitably decrease, resulting in civilian morale falling as the war takes a greater toll on their comfort and health. A major reason for poorer living conditions would be funding being diverted from social welfare and maintenance of infrastructure to the military, hence harming the interests of the common people. Hence, infrastructure would degrade over time, leading to more frequent power outages and blackouts. In addition, enemy action, such as strategic bombing, could further depreciate infrastructure, as well as cause significant casualties, further lowering morale and the standard of living.¹⁷ With limited funds and national reserves available, delegates will have to choose between allocating resources to repair infrastructure or to spend on the military.

¹⁷ Higham, R., & MacIsaac, D. (1978). Strategic bombing in World War Two: The story of the united states strategic bombing survey. *The Journal of American History*, 65(1), 233. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1888254>

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Standards of living would also decrease as less nonessential goods are produced because the factories have pivoted to producing war materiel. When the economy is shifted to a war footing, factories producing luxury and nonessential goods will likely be forced by delegates to instead produce military goods.¹⁸ Thus, the standard of living would decrease for civilians, resulting in an increasingly war-weary population that desires peace rather than continuing to fight on.

Should news of delegates committing atrocities leak out, war weariness among civilians would also likely increase, especially among the timid moderate majority as they are less convinced that these immoral actions are a necessary means to accomplish victory.¹⁹ In addition, news of military defeats can also decrease morale; authoritarian delegates can consider responding to this by implementing heavy censorship and propaganda to suppress unfavourable news, and whip up fervour among the population; notwithstanding the costs of such a decision.

¹⁸ Vergun, D. (2020). *During WWII, industries transitioned from peacetime to wartime production*. U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2128446/during-wwii-industries-transitioned-from-peacetime-to-wartime-production/>

¹⁹ Summerfield, D. (1996). *The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations: ETH Zurich*.

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THE QUESTION OF INTERNAL IDEOLOGICAL FRACTIONS

Contrary to the Nationalist faction, the Republican faction is composed of various, sometimes even conflicting stakeholders. It is made up of a multitude of groups, including moderate liberals, moderate socialists, more radical socialists, communists loyal to Stalin (Communist Party of Spain), communists loyal to Leon Trotsky (the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) as well as anarchists who opposed centralised state control. Therefore, tensions will invariably arise due to the ideological differences and divisions in purpose. Furthermore, the Republican fraction lacked a clear leader to be at the forefront of decision-making processes.²⁰

Misalignment of incentives happens when an action involves the sacrifice of benefits for a delegate or their allies to ultimately enrich the Republicans as a collective. An ideal military would consist of a centralised command, with all military units using shared facilities and equipment, so as to reduce wastage, unnecessary duplication and inefficiency. However, an ambitious state governor may not want to give up his or her armed wing, trained in their own facilities, although

²⁰ "Why Did the Nationalists Win the Spanish Civil War?" tutor2u. Retrieved April 19, 2023, from <https://www.tutor2u.net/history/reference/why-did-the-nationalists-win-the-spanish-civil-war#:~:text=Republican%20Weaknesses%20%E2%80%93%20Military%20Resources&text=Rifles%20and%20machine%20guns%20were,Soviet%20Union%20was%20also%20important.>

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using resources in such a manner is wasteful. In addition, empire building may take place, where delegates deliberately make themselves indispensable by withholding resources, skills or knowledge, allowing them to grow their personal power but hurting the organisation as a whole.²¹ The Communist delegates could, as was done historically, prohibit non-communist soldiers and mechanics from working on or crewing the Soviet T-26 tank, even when the non-communist candidates had qualifications and experience in mechanical engineering.²²

All these problems are exacerbated by the aforementioned ideological divisions among the Republicans, most notably among anarchists, communists and POUM Trotskyists, with the assortment of anarchist militias already creating much wastage, inefficiency and disorder.^{23 24} A bitter ideological struggle, particularly in the industrial and anarchist stronghold of Catalonia, seems to be on the horizon.

²¹ Atkine, N. B. D. (2000). *Why arabs lose wars*. Middle East Forum. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.meforum.org/441/why-arabs-lose-wars>

²² Candil, A. (2021). *Tank combat in Spain: Armored Warfare during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*. GRUB STREET.

²³ Payne, S. G. (1989). Spanish marxism versus Soviet communism: A history of the P.O.U.M. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 69(3), 567-568. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-69.3.567>

²⁴ Bookchin, M. (1998). *The Spanish anarchists: The heroic years 1868-1936*. (p.162) AK Press.

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THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL AID

A major difficulty faced by delegates in procuring aid would be the ineffective response of the democracies of Europe. Britain and France supported non-intervention in Spain, and largely followed the agreement. This disadvantaged the Republicans as the Nationalists could receive aid from the Italians and Germans largely uninhibited whereby the Republicans lacked direct foreign support, resulting in the Republican's clear inferiority in firepower and personnel.

Due to Spain's scarcity of heavy military industry, foreign military supplies would be paramount to a military victory. Complex weapon systems like tanks and warplanes would require significant lead time before they can be used effectively in battle. Building the weapon itself, ensuring that a sufficient supply of spare parts and ammunition are available, equipping mechanics and repairmen with the ability to make quick field repairs and training troops to use modern weaponry are all necessary steps that take long amounts of time. Foreign aid, both in providing weapons systems and skilled advisors and combat troops, significantly expedites this process, thereby enhancing the capabilities of a military significantly in a relatively short period of time. Without sufficient aid, the Republic risks being overrun by the novel tactics of mechanised warfare and close air support invariably used by the

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Nationalists. Delegates could also look at acquiring financial and other non-military assistance such as credit from the democracies of Europe. In addition, attracting international brigades to fight for the Republicans would be advantageous.

Delegates could consider petitioning the Soviet Union for military support, as many of the liberal democracies of Europe are likely to sign and abide by a Non-Intervention agreement. However, there are some drawbacks to this. The first is logistical and geographical.²⁵ The vast distance from the Soviet Union to Spain would result in arms and personnel deliveries taking a longer time to arrive. In addition, teething issues such as a lack of spare parts would take longer to rectify, hampering the Republican military. When arms finally arrive in the Spanish port of Cartagena, delegates will still face issues with logistics and the security of ports. Soviet naval attaché Kuznetsov noted heavy espionage by Nationalist agents, and lax security; which allowed anarchist-syndicalist members to steal the weapons.²⁶ Secondly, Stalin would only accept payments in gold. Historically, the Republicans had sent 510 tonnes of gold to Moscow to pay for arms deliveries.²⁷ Such high costs would give even the most hardcore Communist pause, and will definitely encourage civil delegates to

²⁵ Kowalsky, D. (2004). *Stalin and the Spanish Civil War*. Columbia University Press.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Morales, F. O. (2004). *El Expolio de la República*. Belacqua.

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explore producing arms domestically. Lastly, Communist aid is likely to come with many strings attached, foremost among them greater Communist influence in the Republican government.²⁸ Of course, the Communist delegates will welcome this, but the anarchists and moderates will have to strike a balance between procuring military supplies and limiting foreign Communist influence.

²⁸ Ibid.

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

MILITARY REFORM

Ideally, a centralised, efficient and united military would prosecute a war most effectively. Delegates could align incentives between different branches of the military, ensuring that doing the right thing for the Republic would deliver a positive personal outcome, while doing otherwise would lead to a negative outcome.²⁹ Particularly, overtures that meet the needs of the more restive groups like the anarchists could be made to these factions. In addition, delegates with much soft power and influence could recognise and reward the success of other military branches, which would increase camaraderie and inter-service ties, preventing the sort of acrimonious inter-service rivalry and duplication that plagued other divisive and authoritarian organisations like the IJA and IJN.³⁰ Militarily, this will also aid in combined arms operations, and give delegates the option to implement Walter Model's "Kampfgruppe" tactics.³¹

²⁹ Marr, B. (2021, September 16). *Successful strategy implementation: How to align your initiatives with strategic priorities*. Bernard Marr. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://bernardmarr.com/successful-strategy-implementation-how-to-align-your-initiatives-with-strategic-priorities/>

³⁰ Hiroyuki, S. (2009). *Chapter 8 from the offensive to the defensive: Japanese strategy ... - mod*. National Institute for Defense Studies . Retrieved March 21, 2023, from http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/joint_research/series19/pdf/chapter08.pdf

³¹ Dankers, W. (2020, March 18). *Model, walter*. *TracesOfWar.com*. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.tracesofwar.com/articles/5447/Model-Walter.htm>

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

ESPIONAGE

With Nationalist agents lurking around the Republic, particularly in strategic locations like the port of Cartagena, the possibility of spies leaking sensitive information and infiltrating important government and military positions has never been higher.³² Any information leaked could be used by the Nationalists to either intensify attacks, request for additional aid or reorganise their military to counter the Republicans. Nationalist agents could also act as a possible “fifth column”, sowing dissent and undermining government propaganda and initiatives.

The information gained via espionage could help delegates to make more informed choices with regard to military deployment, which allows them to make the most out of scarce troops and equipment. In addition, reactive counter strategies could be developed if delegates have early warning of new tactics and capabilities possessed by their enemy.

³² Davis, W. H. (2019, February 21). *The naval side of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39*. U.S. Naval Institute. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1940/june/naval-side-spanish-civil-war-1936-39>

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

One possible solution would be to utilise the intelligence and police capabilities of the Republic to monitor and root out suspicious individuals. Delegates could then either execute the spies, or convert them to the Republic's side. However, delegates will have to bear a hefty political cost, should news leak that the Republic is surveilling its own citizens without due process.

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

PROCUREMENT AND PRODUCTION

When given the opportunity to procure modern equipment like the SB-2 bomber, I-15 and I-16 fighters and the T-26 tanks, delegates will have to make a decision whether to buy such equipment or make them domestically in Spain, with each choice having its pros and cons.^{33 34}

Should delegates attempt to domestically produce modern heavy equipment, they would face various difficulties in doing so. Firstly, they would have to get a licence to do so from other countries, which would require diplomatic acumen and possibly the transaction of gold and other resources to convince other countries. Next, industry would have to adapt to building new equipment, which would inevitably require time, and there would be a temporary dip in productivity. If enemy forces hear of this, renewed operational and strategic offensives would likely commence.

³³ Sharov, V. B. (1978). *История Конструкций Самолетов в СССР, 1938-1950 Г.* (*The history of designs of planes in the USSR 1938-1950*) (in Russian). AbeBooks.

³⁴ Kolomiets, Maxim (2007). *T-26. Tyazhelaya sud'ba legkogo tanka* (*T-26. The Heavy Fate of the Light Tank*) (in Russian). Moscow: Yauza, Strategiya KM, EKSMO.

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

If instead, delegates choose to produce equipment locally, they would reap multiple benefits: Delegates would have more flexibility, and industry workers would gain expertise. However, these benefits tend to only materialise in the medium-to-long term, while the disadvantages of initial production being less efficient and of lower quality are mostly short-term. Thus, delegates should look to producing locally if they enjoy a tactical advantage and are confident of weathering enemy attacks until they can reap the benefits of in-house production, though they should also note the limitations and constraints of such a strategy.

¹ United Nations (n.d.). United Nations Security Council |. United Nations. Retrieved February 12, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

² United Nations (n.d.). Security Council. United Nations. Retrieved February 12, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/security-council>

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

FINANCIALLY SUSTAINING THE WAR EFFORT

When war breaks out, it is expected that spooked investors and fearful locals leave the country, pulling out their investments and selling the local currency for foreign ones. One measure that delegates could implement would be capital controls, preventing capital, such as foreign currencies, from flowing out of the country.³⁵ Specifically, they could tax transactions of currency, which would reduce the amount of pesetas being sold. Companies could also be ordered to convert the vast majority of their foreign currency reserves into pesetas, and Spanish brokers could be banned from selling securities held by foreigners. All these measures would limit capital outflow and therefore mitigate the impact on the Spanish economy.

However, this would jeopardise relations with other countries and decrease trust in their government, impeding diplomatic efforts. In addition, it would be virtually impossible for the government to attract future investments. Such measures could also make Spanish locals fear that they would be unable to withdraw their deposits from banks in the future, prompting a bank run.

³⁵ Sommerlad, J. (2022, May 3). *What are capital controls and how is Russia using them in response to sanctions?* The Independent. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/russia-capital-controls-sanctions-ukraine-b2070433.html>

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

With regards to raising funds, delegates could, as the Republicans did historically, spend Spain's gold reserves which they controlled, with the obvious caveat that this resource is scarce and limited.³⁶ Another point to note is that, as most countries at that time were still using the gold standard, a rapid depletion of Spanish gold reserves would cause confidence in the Spanish peseta to decline. Alternatively, delegates could start selling war bonds as the major combatants of World War I had done.³⁷ This would be a less economically damaging method of raising funds, while getting common citizens to participate in the war effort which also has the welcome side effect of increasing patriotism. Delegates can choose whether to make the purchase of war bonds completely voluntary or mandatory, as a deduction from the people's salaries and bank accounts. The effectiveness of the former method would largely depend on propaganda and the willingness of the population, potentially leading delegates to push for victories, even symbolic ones, to be achieved, so as to increase sales of war bonds. On the other hand, mandatory war bonds will reliably bring in funding, but at the cost of increased revolt risk and thus decreased political endurance.

³⁶ MARTÍN-ACEÑA, P., RUIZ, E. M., & PONS, M. A. (2012). War and economics: Spanish civil war finances revisited. *European Review of Economic History*, 16(2), 144–165. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41708654>

³⁷ Bruendel, S. (2015). War bonds. *New Articles RSS*. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war_bonds

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Another method of raising funds, and one that might be ideologically appealing to hardcore Communists, would be asset forfeiture. Communist leaders and governors can push for the confiscation of assets and the outputs of industry. However, this would exacerbate brain drain and capital flight, leading to a loss of industrial and managerial expertise. Ironically, this would both shrink the tax base and reduce taxation efficiency, possibly leading to a lower net tax revenue. In addition, this would draw the ire of liberal democracies, and alienate centre-left elements of the Republicans.

Delegates could consider raising taxes, a method that conveys the real cost of war to the public and also reduces inflation.^{38 39} However, they would have to contend with significant organisational and logistical difficulties, due to initial dysfunction in the Republican fiscal administration. This can be seen by how tax income dropped from 2000 million pesetas in the second semester of 1935 to 420 million in the second semester of 1936, after the war broke out.⁴⁰ Revolutionary delegates may want to introduce taxes targeting the “rich”, but any such measure will have to be preceded by improvements in tax administration, both to minimise unrest and maximise efficiency.

³⁸ Smith, A. (1776). *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Cannan ed.), vol. 1. Methuen.

³⁹ Jeffries, J. W., Tuttle, W. M., Liechenstein, N., & Sitkoff, H. (2007). *WORLD WAR II & THE AMERICAN HOME FRONT*. National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior National Historic Landmarks Program.

⁴⁰ Baubeau, P., & Ogren, A. (2015). *Index-convergence and divergence of National Financial Systems*. Cambridge Core. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/convergence-and-divergence-of-national-financial-systems/index/438D5B90EA144CF902110BE142F38C67>

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

If costs continue to run up, delegates can consider localising costs to keep the Republican war machine running. This can be done by making regional governors pay for the raising and training of soldiers in their province, thus decreasing income outflow.⁴¹ However, this would lead to a decrease in central authority, and would empower ambitious regional governors, as troops tend to be more loyal to whoever is paying them.

Finally, should all other methods of extending Republican economic endurance fail, delegates can consider printing money, as Spain had already moved away from the gold standard. This was also done historically, with the Republicans raising 24,000 million pesetas from the Bank of Spain, accounting for 60% of a 40,000 million pesetas expenditure. Initially, this should not be a major issue, as the Republicans control 635 tons of fine gold, equivalent to 715 million USD at that time, which should inspire some confidence in the currency.⁴² However, should the government expend the gold reserves or print money excessively, hyperinflation can take hold and confidence in the Spanish peseta will decline. In addition, inflation would drive up prices, leading to a vicious cycle as it becomes increasingly costly to finance the war.

⁴¹ Klyszcz, I. U. (2022, December 7). *The new boyars? how Russia's governors facilitate mobilisation*. Royal United Services Institute. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/new-boyars-how-russias-governors-facilitate-mobilisation>

⁴² Vinas, A. (1979, January). *Gold, the Soviet Union, and the Spanish Civil War* - Sage journals. SAGE Journals. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/026569147900900106>

V. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

INTERNATIONAL AID

To overcome the reluctance of the liberal democracies of Europe in providing aid, delegates can attempt to court the liberal democracies of Europe for non-military aid, such as food, medical supplies, funds and volunteers. This can be done either through diplomatic negotiations with foreign governments, discussions with workers' unions, or fundraising and donation campaigns.⁴³ Delegates could look at methods such as backfilling, where the West replenishes the arsenals of countries willing to send aid to Spain.⁴⁴ This would increase the arms supply to the Republic, while allowing other countries to technically claim “non-intervention” as they would not be supplying arms to Spain.

⁴³ Richardson, R. D. (1976). Foreign Fighters in Spanish Militias: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939. *Military Affairs*, 40(1), 7-11. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1986842>

⁴⁴ Judson, J., & Gould, J. (2022, August 18). US Army signs deal to backfill Stingers sent to Ukraine. *Defense News*. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2022/05/27/us-army-signs-deal-to-backfill-stingers-sent-to-ukraine/>

V. CONCLUSION

The Spanish Republic at the beginning of this crisis is a state torn in two, and one that is in dire need of reform, centralisation and leadership. Delegates are reminded to be cognisant of the limitations of their own forces, and possible enemy actions and retaliation, when carrying out any military actions, including those outlined above. Coordination between civil and military portfolios will be imperative, as the Republic gears its considerable domestic industry towards war production. While issues at home may be pressing, international recognition and aid are also key sources of power, both politically and militarily. Delegates can then look forward to an stimulating and riveting debate, with the challenge of considering military, economic and political issues simultaneously in this committee. Make your decisions wisely, for the future of Spain lies in your hands.

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