

The republicans did
more to lose the
spanish civil war than
the nationalists did ...



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?? The Republicans did more to lose the Spanish Civil War than the Nationalists did to win it?™ Discuss. During the 1930??™s Spain??™s political divide grew until, to some, there seemed to be no other option than to seize power thus starting the civil war; in 1930 there was high levels of animosity between the left (socialist, communists and Republicans) and the right (Carlists/monarchist, CEDA, Falange) in the lead up to the 1933 election which was won by the National front (right wing) with the Radicals coming second a coalition between the parties did eventually follow in 1934, postponed 3 years as Zamora distrusted Gil Robles, this caused right wing anger however the inclusion of the CEDA was the signal for the Left wing to rebel; the failed 1934 revolution. It failed in Madrid as the Socialist UGT gave Zamora 24 hours notice, so of course the socialist leaders were arrested; in Barcelona the President Companys changed his political stance in order to stop the rebellion, however there was more success in Asturias where the rebellion managed to last for two weeks despite elite forces being called from Morocco. There was a lasting effect from the revolution attempt though; left wing anger increased as many of their supporters had been arrested or shot by the right wing just for supporting them. 1935 saw the collapse of the CEDA/ Radical coalition as a financial scandal was leaked, public distrust was so great that a general election was called for February 1936. The election ended in a left wing majority and immediately left wing prisoners from the 1934 failed revolution were released; this outraged the right wing parties who started to plot against the new government.

The left wing were aware of the plots but thought that sacking and arresting leading generals would be enough to control any radical plans. The hot

summer only mirrored the increasing political atmosphere; street fighting grew and many strikes were held (mainly by left wing groups) as the Left wing parties had failed to work together, despite uniting to win the election. The left wings meagre actions to quell right wing plotting eventually gave way to civil war, helped along by the murder of Calvo Soletto which allowed Franco to convince any hesitant right wingers that a revolution was necessary. So as the revolution turned rapidly into a civil war the positions and territories looked like this; the right wing (Nationalists) control Morocco, Castile and the North, some of the south, their major assets are professional soldiers and foreign help. The Left (Republicans) control big cities (including Madrid), the centre of Spain and Catalonia, they only have trade union militias and fanatics, however their big asset is that they control the navy, meaning the Nationalist cannot transport soldiers from Morocco at the beginning of the war. The major problem for the Republicans is the Non-intervention Pact[™], signed by leading European powers stating that they would not get involved in the war, (the pact was ignored by Italy and Germany even though they had signed it however they went on to help the Nationalists) France and Britain stuck to the pact which meant, even though they could legally buy weapons by international law, the Republicans were badly armed. The Nationalists looked to be in a stronger position at the start of the war and they seemed to maintain it thorough-out; although they failed to capture Madrid in 1936 they did capture the Basques country and Asturias the next year.

This gave them full control of the industrial north of Spain and so provided some way of paying for the help that they received from Hitler. Italy[™]'s

help however was free (Mussolini sought glory in victory). A major advantage that the Nationalist did have was that they were united under one leader; Franco.

This meant they were well organised and had clear aims and strategies. One of these strategies was to wear down the Republicans slowly and force them to suffer unnecessary casualties so that the Nationalist would be in a stronger position towards the end of the war. The main problem for the Republicans was that they were divided; this caused a struggle for power ultimately won by the Communists much to the disapproval of the other left wing groups (they had eliminated any anarchist control by 1937 which of course angered the anarchists), as there was no clear leader there could be no clear tactics or strategies which led to ineffective and wasteful use of soldiers and weaponry. There were however many other problems like the inefficient system of collectivisation which was active at the beginning of the war, the Communist tactic of going out of their way just to kill left wing supporters and the major problem of the afore mentioned Non-intervention Pact. There were some positives for the Republicans though; they controlled some major cities, they had the support of the loyal Navy and there was some foreign help from the USSR (this was paid help however and started to dry up as money got tight in 1938). Although the Republicans could have done more to win the war, the Nationalists could also have. It was foreign intervention that ultimately decided the victor and had the Non-intervention Pact favoured the Republicans they would have won. The Republicans loss was in some way down to the Communists struggle for power and intention

to win the war for their own benefit, and the Nationalist win could perhaps be attributed to the leadership of Franco and his subservient army generals.