

Research Paper

The Spanish Civil War

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IGA-220 – THE POLITICS AND THE ETHICS OF THE USE OF FORCE

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Introduction

“The Spanish Civil War was fought from 17 July 1936 to 1 April 1939 between the Republicans, who were loyal to the established Spanish Republic, and the Nationalists, a rebel group led by General Francisco Franco. The Nationalists prevailed and Franco would rule Spain for the next 36 years. The war began after a ‘pronunciamiento’ (declaration of opposition) by a group of generals of the Spanish Republican Armed Forces under the leadership of José Sanjurjo against the elected government of the Second Spanish Republic, at the time under the leadership of President Manuel Azaña. The rebel coup was supported by a number of conservative groups including the Spanish Confederation of the Autonomous Right, monarchists such as the religious conservative Carlists, and the Fascist Falange.”

(Wikipedia, 2013)

This conflict has shaped the recent history of Spain. Today, 75 years later, its footprint still divides the Spanish society in two sides across many dimensions: right wing versus left wing, conservatives versus progressives, religious versus agnostics... The wounds that the Spanish Civil War left in the Spanish society are still open. There is not a consensus on the morality of the conflict and institutions still refrain from making a serious assessment its causes and consequences.

The purpose of this paper is assessing the morality of starting this conflict. That is, the ‘ius ad bellum’ question of the Spanish Civil War.

Scope and structure

Evaluating the ethics of the main players in Spanish Civil War and its post-war is a very interesting intellectual exercise. These players include not only the Nationalist and the Republican sides, but also other countries that intervened in the war or refrained to do so. Several specific questions arise from this exercise. Four groups of them may be identified: ius ad bellum questions, ius in bello questions, intervention questions, and post-war questions.

Ius ad bellum questions judge the reasons to start the Spanish Civil War. In this case, there is only one question: “Was the war started by Nationalists a just war?”. Ius in bello questions involve the behavior of the two sides in the war. Therefore, the questions are “was the in bello policy and actions of Nationalists just?” and “was the in bello policy and actions of Republicans just?”.

Regarding intervention questions, they involve those countries that supported the Nationalist side (Nazi Germany, the Kingdom of Italy and Portugal), those states that supported the Republican side (the Soviet Union and Mexico), and those nations that officially refrained from intervening (United Kingdom and France). Hence, the questions are “were the interventions in support of the Nationalists just or justified?”, “were the interventions in support of the Republicans or justified?”, and “were the non-intervention policies just or justified at the time of the war?”.

Finally, the post-war question evaluates a hypothetical humanitarian intervention by the United States and the United Kingdom during the post-war dictatorship. In this case, the single question is “would a post-war humanitarian intervention have been just or justified?”.

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This paper will focus on the ‘ius ad bellum’ question: “Was the war started by Nationalists a just war?”. Not surprisingly, this is the first and most important one since others derive from this. Unfortunately, length and time limitations prevent from covering the seven questions and doing a more comprehensive analysis of the Spanish Civil War.

In this paper, the question will be answered by applying different philosophical frameworks for war and peace. First, the early Christian and the medieval Christian frameworks will be discussed. Although few people would argue that these frameworks were applicable in the 20th century, the particularities of the Spanish Civil War case makes studying them interesting. Then, the current Westfalian state system ‘ius ad bellum’ framework will be used. This will include a discussion of the case criteria by criteria. Finally, a conclusion will summarize the case and will assess to what extent the Spanish Civil War may be considered a just war.

Ius ad bellum question: Was the war started by Nationalists a just war?

A case of early Christian Holy War

Nationalists tried to make his rebellion a case of early Christian just war. Franco's statements such as "*we are faced with a war that is taking on each day the character of a Crusade*" (Sueiro & Nosty, 1988) intended to justify the Nationalist side according to the Augustinian concept of just war (Russell, 1996). The Bishop of Salamanca during the Spanish Civil War, Enrique Plá y Deniel, supporter Franco and justified the rebellion by defining the war as "*a Crusade against communism in order to save religion*" (Sueiro & Nosty, 1988).

Furthermore, The Cardinal Isidro Goma, who was Archbishop of Toledo and the most relevant person in the Spanish Catholic Church during the conflict, not only said that the war was a "*true Crusade in defence of the Catholic religion*" (Sueiro & Nosty, 1988), but also that "*Christ and the Anti-Christ are battling on our soil*" (Sueiro & Nosty, 1988). These statements show a manifest intention of defining the rebels' coup as a Holy War in terms of the early Christian tradition (Russell, 1996). Although the legitimacy of the authority (either Franco or the Christian ministers) is questionable, framing the conflict as an absolute war between the god and the evil provides a strong argument to legitimate the actions of Nationalists.

A case of medieval Crusade

According to the medieval Christian concept of Holy War, the Pope should legitimate the conflict in order to make a case of just war. However, Pope Pius XI did not do so. In his discourse “Your Presence Here”, he *“began with some heartfelt paragraphs in which he lamented the fate of the victims and condemned communism... But instead of drawing from this memorial to the victims the conclusion, so fervently expected, that the Insurgent cause was that of a Holy War or a Crusade, as had already been proclaimed by various bishops and generals, Pius XI immediately went on to express his horror at that fratricidal war”* (Raguer, 2007).

Therefore, it is clear that, in spite of Nationalists efforts, the Spanish Civil War was not a case of just war in medieval Church terms because of its lack of direct authorization by the Pope (Russell, 1996).

Notwithstanding, *“the Francoist propaganda never ceased to quote thereafter, year after year”* (Raguer, 2007), the part of the Pope’s speech that lamented the fate of the victims in an attempt of legitimating its policy.

A case of contemporary just war

The early Christian (Augustinian) and the medieval Church concepts of just war should not be applicable in the 20th century. In order to discuss just war, a holy cause or an infallible authority that justifies *“the requirements of authority, necessity, just cause, right intention, and defense”* (Russell, 1996) are not enough. The Westphalian state system, which comprises *“sovereign state entities possessing the*

monopoly of force within their mutually recognized territories” (Coggins, 2013), requires a more elaborated mechanism.

In order to evaluate whether the Spanish Civil War initiated by the Nationalist rebels was a just war, two frameworks will be used. The first framework will judge whether the war initiated by Nationalists meets the criteria to be a just war. One of these criteria is the ‘just cause’ one. This is about the cause that competes and overrides the prima facie obligation not to kill and injure others. In order to find out whether this cause is serious and weighty enough to initiate a war, the second framework will be used. Basically, this second framework will determine whether there was a moral obligation to go to war.

The first framework is based on Childress approach to the ‘ius ad bellum’ question. He enumerates seven criteria to evaluate just wars (Childress, Just War Theories - Theological Studies, 1978):

1. Legitimate or competent authority
2. Just cause
3. Right intention
4. Announcement of intentions
5. Last resort
6. Reasonable hope of success
7. Proportionality

In this section, these criteria will be evaluated for the case of the Spanish Civil War.

Legitimate and competent authority

Generals Jose Sanjurjo y Sacanell, Emilio Mola y Vidal, and Francisco Franco Bahamonde were the most relevant figures in the rebel coup. However, identifying one of them as the competent authority of the Nationalist side at the time of the war declaration is not an easy task. It looks as if they shared different roles, assuming different aspects of the required leadership to initiate the war. Therefore, the first step in order to evaluate the legitimacy and competency of the authority figure is identifying who represents such a figure.

Franco was a key player in the coup because of its prestige –he was the second youngest general in Europe’s history after Napoleon Bonaparte–, and the eventual dictator after the war. Nevertheless, he does not seem to be the intellectual architect of the rebellion. Payne provides evidence for that through a conversation that he had with the lawyer and writer Jose Maria Iribarren, who was Mola’s private secretary and Military Advocate second lieutenant of the rebels: *“Franco’s vagueness, hesitation and political flirtations came to infuriate Mola and the group of conspirators of Pamplona so much that they ended up privately referring to him with the nickname of ‘Miss Canary Islands 1936’”* (Payne, *Los Militares y la Política en la España Contemporánea*, 1968). Preston confirms Franco’s hesitation and other plotters disappointment in one of his articles (Preston, 1983).

According to other sources, Sanjurjo was the leader of the rebellion: *“General José Sanjurjo became the coup’s figurehead, supported by Generals Francisco Franco, Manuel Goded, and Emilio Mola”* (Wikipedia, 2013). *“The war began after a pronunciamiento (declaration of opposition) by a group of generals of the Spanish Republican Armed Forces under the leadership of José Sanjurjo against the elected government of the Second Spanish Republic, at the time under the leadership of President Manuel*

Azaña” (Wikipedia, 2013). However, Sanjurjo is portrayed as a representative figure with little authority in the decision making of the coup.

Furthermore, Mola seems to be the real authority of Nationalists at the time of the rebellion. Several authors believe that Mola was the head of the coup. Casanova thinks that “*the main player in the plot was General Mola, who talked to the leaders of the rebellion and issued, under the pseudonym of ‘El Director’, various reports, instructions and enclosures for the leaders’ eyes only*” (Casanova, 2010). Payne agrees, and states that “*their leader was General Emilio Mola, commander of the garrison in Pamplona*” (Payne, 2007). Hence, Mola was the person that designed the coup.

He also decided when and how it would be executed. Moreover, there is evidence that shows he evaluated other ‘*ius ad bellum*’ criteria. For instance, Thomas wrote that “*Mola’s plans were made clear in a circular in April. The planned rising was to be no pronunciamiento of the old style.*” (Thomas, 1968). This is a clear decision on announcement of intentions. Another example of this is Casanova’s statement on proportionality: “*Mola proclaimed the need for violent repression*” (Casanova, 2010). These and other pieces of information will be analyzed in further sections in order to determine the validity of each ‘*ius ad bellum*’ criteria.

Therefore, General Emilio Mola y Vidal was the authority that made the decision to go to war. Mola was a General and former Director General of Security. However, his conservative ideas and his disagreements with the left-wing government led him to be appointed as military governor of Pamplona in Navarre. This was considered to be a position from which he was unable to articulate his ideas and interfere with the elected government. Therefore, Mola did not hold a position that legitimated him to make decisions on war.

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It is convenient remembering that, at this point, the analysis is focused on the criteria applicable to the Westphalian state system. Potential authorities who might have justified a just ‘early Christian Holy War’ or a just ‘medieval Crusade’ are outside of the scope of this analysis. This is important because at this stage of the research religious authorities may seem far more authorized than Mola to decide on war. Nevertheless, these authorities will not be discussed in this section.

Mola’s authority was not granted by his position. His source of legitimacy should be sought in the popular support of the Nationalist faction. This is, again, very hard to analyze because of the disparity of results attending to different criteria, such as the results of previous elections, the control over the territory and the population, and the demographics of the Spanish society.

The first criterion to be discussed is the direct result of the elections prior to the Spanish Civil War. The coup that initiated the war and the war itself was against the government. It is reasonable to determine whether the government was a legitimate one, and whether the cause defended by the rebellion was legitimate and supported by the Spanish population. The voting in the elections of 1936 had these results:

<i>“ Eligible voters</i>	<i>13,553,710</i>	
<i>Ballots cast</i>	<i>9,864,783</i>	<i>73.0%</i>
<i>Popular Front</i>	<i>4,555,401</i>	
<i>Popular Front with Center (Lugo)</i>	<i>98,715</i>	<i>34.3%</i>
<i>Basque Nationalists</i>	<i>125,714</i>	
<i>Center</i>	<i>400,901</i>	<i>5.4%</i>
<i>Right</i>	<i>1,866,981</i>	
<i>Right with Center</i>	<i>2,636,524</i>	<i>33.2% “</i>

(Gómez, 1971)

According to these figures, left wing parties received a 47.2% of votes, whereas right wing parties received a 45.7% of votes. This is a difference of only 1.5% of votes. In spite of this narrow difference, the Republican electoral system benefited the left wing parties. Furthermore, an important piece of information to confirm the validity of these electoral results is the 73.0% of participation. This represents the highest participation of the Second Spanish Republic, and a similar number to the one achieved in the country nowadays.

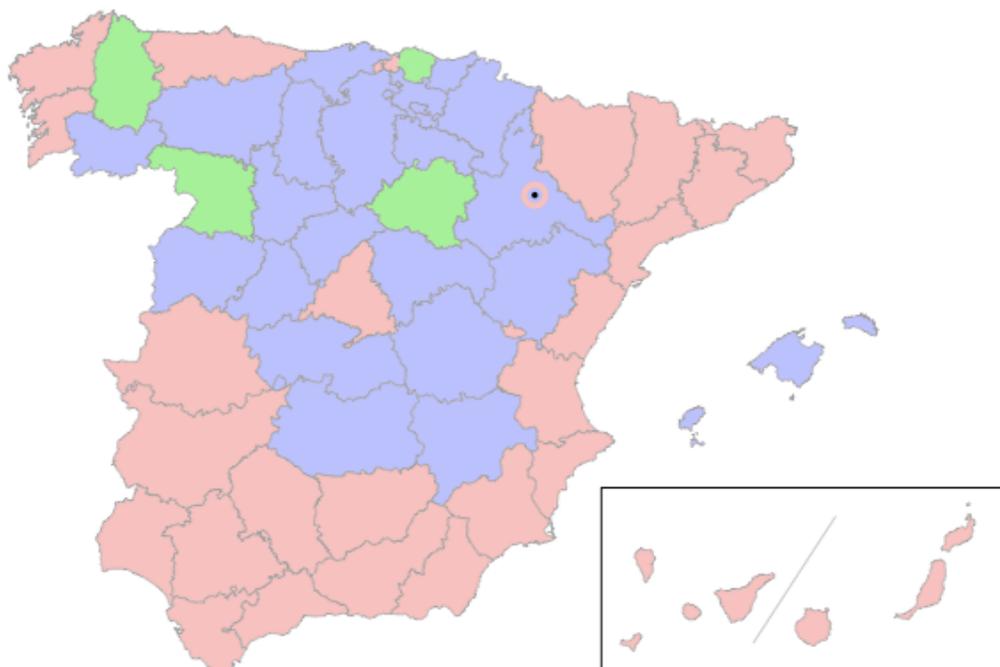
Two contradictory conclusions may be drawn from this analysis. First, the left wing government was legitimate because of its majority. Second, the expression of right wing factions wills was legitimate because of the high support that they receive from the population. Additionally, both sides were legitimate by the high participation rate. Therefore, the perspective of the Nationalists, which was defending the interest of the right wing factions, was legitimate. However, it does not necessarily involve that the means used to defend this perspective –that is, the war– was legitimate. Moreover, the government formed by the left coalition had been democratically elected with the support of almost a 50% of Spanish voters, so it was not illegitimate.

Regarding the control over the territory, the Nationalists controlled a large portion of the Spanish territory ('map showing Spain in September 1936' below). Due to the aggressive nature of the coup and the violence of the repression ordered by Mola (Casanova, 2010), this large portion of the territory may have been controlled due to coercive and, thus, illegitimate means. However, the narrow result of the elections and the territorial distribution of the electoral support ('map of the results of the February 1936 elections by provinces' below) demonstrate that the Nationalist cause was widely supported by the people.

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*“Map showing Spain in September 1936:
[pink] Area under Nationalist control [blue] Area under Republican control” (Wikipedia, 2013)*



*“Map of the results of the February 1936 elections by provinces:
those in which the left won are marked in red, those in which the right won are marked in blue, and
those in which the center won are marked in green” (Wikipedia, 2013)*

This territorial and popular control is important because of the “*qualified version of the self-help test*” (Vincent, 1974) proposed by Vincent. According to Vincent, “*as soon as the insurgents establish control over some substantial portion of the territory and population of the state, they acquire belligerent rights and an equality of status with the government*” (Vincent, 1974). Although this statement was mentioned in a discussion on self-determination and intervention, it is fairly applicable to this case.

Summarizing, the authority figure that initiated the Spanish Civil War was the General Emilio Mola y Vidal. His competence relied on his role as active architect and decision maker of the coup that started the rebellion against the Republican government. However, his authority did not emanate from his position, but from the popular support of his cause. This cause did not confront an illegitimate authority, but a democratically elected government with the support of almost a 50% of the Spanish voters. This adds complexity to this case, but it is fair to consider Mola a competent authority.

Just cause

Childress bases the just cause of going to war on Frankena’s principle of beneficence (Childress, Moral Discussion About War in the Early Church, 1986). According to Frankena, the principle of beneficence involves four items:

- “ 1. *One ought not to inflict evil or harm (what is bad).*
2. *One ought to prevent evil or harm.*
3. *One ought to remove evil.*
4. *One ought to do or promote good.*”

(Frankena, 1973)

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This section will try to determine whether the Spanish Civil War was an opportunity to “*prevent evil or harm*”, “*remove evil*” or “*do or promote good*” in an extent enough to override the “*not to inflict evil or harm*” prima facie obligation. In order to narrow the scope of this section, the research will try to identify sources of evil that deserved to be either prevented or removed and, hence, would justify the war.

Some sources stress that political decisions of the left wing coalition in the Government generated a high level of discontent among conservatives. Examples of this are “*a number of controversial reforms..., such as the Agrarian Law of 1932, distributing land among poor peasants [and] anti-clericalist acts of the Government*” (FriendFeed, 2011). Although undesirable for the right wing and the Catholic community, these policies were supported by a large portion of the Spanish population. Therefore, they cannot be considered a clear example of evil.

Westwell provides additional insight on the sources of distress that the Spanish society suffered during the last days of the Second Spanish Republic:

“Despite the worsening situation on the streets, the government did not act decisively to quell the disorder and in mid-July its inability to control matters was highlighted by the murder of monarchist leader José Calvo Sotelo. Formerly a finance minister in the late 1920s and recently a vocal critic of the Popular Front with links to the military conspiracy, he fell victim to one of the increasingly frequent tit-for-tat killings after Lieutenant José Castillo, an officer in the Assault Guards and Member of Anti-Fascist Military Union, was murdered by Falangists”.

(Westwell, 2004)

Here we are an example of escalation of violence, but also the proof that the right wing was participating in that situation. It is unreasonable to claim that Nationalists intended to prevent or remove the evil that their allies –Falangists among others– were contributing to generate.

Furthermore, Payne writes about Azaña that “*in the spring of 1936 he found the power of the left being used to bypass the Republic and its constitutional system*” (Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, 2007). Moreover, “*the revolutionary parties had control of the streets and insisted on a constantly accelerating program of radical changes.*” (Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, 2007). There was a situation of violation of the institutional system (maybe an evil to be removed), and the menace of violent actions (maybe an evil to be prevented).

There is not enough available information to make a strong assessment of the ‘just cause’ of the Spanish Civil War. As Walzer questions whether “*the destruction of Melos was necessary (indispensable) for the preservation of the empire*” (Walzer, 1977), in this case it is questionable whether the destruction of the Second Spanish Republic was necessary (indispensable) for the preservation of a specific set of conservative values. Some potential evils were not considered so for a large portion of Spanish citizens. The rebellion “*evades the moral question of whether the preservation of the empire [those values in this case] was itself necessary*” (Walzer, 1977). In addition, Nationalists’ fear of a potential chaos “*exaggerates the knowledge and foresight of the generals*” (Walzer, 1977) involved in the rebellion.

Other evils were partially generated by allies of Nationalists. Moreover, there were evils that may be considered singular acts or temporary situations, and should not be addressed in the context of a war. Notwithstanding, it is also reasonable to believe that the lost of order and values, and the escalation of violence may have justified the use of force to prevent further evils.

Right intention

The right intention criterion involves two principles: the pursuit of a just cause, and the pursuit of peace. The pursuit of a just cause has already been defined as controversial. Regarding the pursuit of peace, it may be discussed at two levels: whether there was a need to restore peace, and whether the actions after the war would eventually lead to peace restoration. Again, the analysis of the just cause criteria shows that there was not a situation of severe lack of peace and, hence, there was no peace to be restored through the war.

With respect to the actions after the war, they do not show restoring peace as a priority. From an empirical point of view, the eventual outcome of the Spanish Civil War was a postwar cruel repression and a 40 years long dictatorship in which political oppression, privation of freedoms, and violation of human rights was common.

Focusing on the very few years after the war ended provides a clear idea of the intentions of Nationalists and whether they pursued peace. According to Payne, the regime “*recognized the figure of 40,000 executions during the five years following the Civil War, and the true figure may be higher than that*” (Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, 2007). In addition, the purge after the war “*was directed at all those who had held positions of leadership, initiative, and responsibility of any kind*” (Payne, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, 2007). This does not look like pursuing peace, at least in terms different from the ones in the quote attributed to Calgacus: “*where they make a desert, they call it peace*” (Tacitus, 2005). Indeed, the intentions of Nationalists were aligned with the extermination of any agent contrary to their position. This is very far from meeting the right intention criteria.

Announcement of intentions

During the 19th century, a particular form of military rebellion was frequently used in Spain, the ‘pronunciamiento’, in which rebels publicly declared their opposition to the government (Wikipedia, 2013). Regardless other considerations, this procedure seems more legitimate than a traditional coup d’état, and may be considered that meets the criteria of proper announcement.

However, in the case of the Spanish Civil War there was no ‘pronunciamiento’ from the Nationalist side. Indeed, according to the British historian Hugh Thomas, “*Mola's plans were made clear in a circular in April. The planned rising was to be no pronunciamiento of the old style.*” (Thomas, 1968). It seems obvious that this behavior violates the criterion of proper announcement, aggravated by the fact that at these times the Spanish tradition had tools to declare military rebellions.

Last resort

The existence of a democratic republican political system, and the narrow difference between results obtained by left wing and right wing parties, are strong arguments against the last resort criteria. In addition, Manuel Azaña Diaz, the President of the Second Spanish Republic when the Nationalists’ rebellion started, was a moderate leftist and governed under a weak coalition of left wing parties.

These facts show that the war was not the last resort for achieving the hypothetical just aim. However, Payne provides an interesting perspective on the lack of alternatives of Spanish conservatives:

“The middle class left parties behind Azaña were too weak to govern by themselves, the center had been eliminated, and all bridges to the conservatives burnt. Azaña found himself the virtual prisoner of the extreme left, and disheartened by the situation, withdrew to the less active role of president. He was replaced as prime minister by a close associate, Casares Quiroga, who completely lacked the balance, tact, and insight for governing a country undergoing a process of civic dissolution.

Much of the Spanish middle class was benumbed by the experiences of the spring of 1936. The conservative groups were impotent, their leaders barely allowed to speak in parliament. The government and the leftist parties made it clear that they did not intend to permit conservative groups to regain a major voice in Spanish affairs. Given the complete leftist control of civic processes, the weakness of the organized right, and the incipient collapse of the political system, a purely political reaction was impossible.”

(Payne, A History of Spain and Portugal, 2007)

This statement is not strong enough to support the last resort criteria. Events happened very quickly. It seems as if they generated a temporary feeling of despair among conservatives, instead of a real hopeless situation. However, this piece of information makes arguments against and in favor of the last resort criteria to be admissible. Westwell provides more insights on the thought process of rebels:

“From the 13th, news spread rapidly that Sotelo had been formerly arrested by the Assault Guards and then shot out of hand with no regard to legal procedure. To the right wing it confirmed that the government was wholly incapable of exerting control over the state apparatus and the murder hardened the resolve of the plotters to implement their rebellion.”

(Westwell, 2004)

Reasonable hope of success

The conspiracy prior to the coup was cautiously elaborated. *“The plotters were backed by a larger number of lower-ranking officers who had joined the Spanish Military Union and also enjoyed the tacit support of various leaders of right-wing factions”* (Westwell, 2004). When chances of success were not clear, *“the rebel generals held back from openly declaring against the Popular Front government but as matters deteriorated they continued to prepare for rebellion”* (Westwell, 2004).

Once the rebellion started, Nationalists failed to control several major cities, the navy and the air forces. However, they controlled a large portion of territory, population, military and weapons after the rising. The hopes of success were reasonable. According to Westwell, rebels controlled *“11 million Spaniards out of a total population of 25 million”* (Westwell, 2004) and the following forces:

- 30,000 men out of a 60,000 men of the Spanish Army
- 50,000 members of Spain's various militarized police forces
- 30,000 policemen
- 25,000 men of Franco's Army of Africa

Finally, the Nationalist side won the Spanish Civil War. This outcome is the best proof that there was a reasonable hope of success.

Proportionality

The Spanish Civil War did not meet the criteria of proportionality. “Mola proclaimed the need for violent repression” (Casanova, 2010). He said “bear in mind that the action will need to be uncommonly violent in order to bring down the enemy, who is strong and well organized, as soon as possible” (Casanova, 2010). Mola continued, “naturally, all leader of political parties, companies or unions that are not sympathetic to the ‘Movimiento’ will be imprisoned, and they will be dealt exemplary punishments to stifle any rebellious or strike movements” (Casanova, 2010).

Considering that the Second Spanish Republic was a democracy with a governing coalition that enjoyed the support of almost 50% of voters, the terms that plotters used to design the war were not proportional. On the contrary, the proportionality would be arguable if Nationalists would not have showed such an aggressive policy. A scenario in which the military limits its actions to restoring social peace would have been reasonable.

Furthermore, it is important to note that these considerations are included in the ‘ius ad bellum’ discussion, and not in the ‘ius in bello’ one, because they belong to the design of the rebellion that started the war. That is, these decisions were made in the ‘ad bellum’ context, instead of ‘in bello’ scenarios. Therefore, they should be assessed as ‘ad bello’ items.

Violence escalated in both factions during the conflict, sometimes turning victims into aggressors as Ragner shows: “In Republican Spain, people were killed as a result of personal initiatives and by means of the savage form called ‘paseo’ (‘taken for a walk’). On the Nationalist side, the military tribunals nearly always intervened. In a war, a tribunal is always under pressure from the political and technical

directors of the war itself. There has to be justice, but at the same time one has to make examples.”

(Raguer, 2007). However, these facts belong to the ‘ius in bello’ domain. The truth is that the

Nationalists’ conception of war, involving extreme violence and repression, was disproportionate.

Conclusion

This is the result of the application of Childress just war criteria to the case of the Spanish Civil War:

<u>CRITERIA</u>	<u>MET</u>
1. Legitimate or competent authority	Yes
2. Just cause	Maybe
3. Right intention	No
4. Announcement of intentions	No
5. Last resort	Maybe
6. Reasonable hope of success	Yes
7. Proportionality	No
TOTAL	4 / 7

A generous assessment of the case shows that only four of the seven just war criteria would be met.

Although some approaches that consider a just war “*must... approximate the criteria*” (Childress, Just War Theories - Theological Studies, 1978), or that these criteria are just “*rules of thumb*” (Childress, Just War Theories - Theological Studies, 1978), the Spanish Civil War is hard to consider a just war. The ‘just cause’ criteria, which is “*indispensable and fundamental*” (Childress, Just War Theories - Theological Studies, 1978) according to some approaches, is questionable. In addition, “*many classic and contemporary theorists have constructed ‘just cause’ to include last resort, reasonable chances of success, and proportionality*” (Childress, Just War Theories - Theological Studies, 1978). The proportionality criterion is not met, and the last resort one is highly debatable. Therefore, the final assessment of this research is that **the Spanish Civil War was not a just war.**

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