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SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNIT 6. THE CONTEMPORARY AGE **Spain in the 20th - 21st centuries**

Exam Date: _____

UNIT 6. THE CONTEMPORARY AGE

Spain in the 20th - 21st centuries

In this unit we are going to learn about:

1. Introduction
2. The end of the 19th century: years of political instability.
3. The Restoration: 1875 - 1923
4. From Alfonso XIII to the Second Republic
5. The Civil War and Franco's Dictatorship
6. The transition to democracy
7. The consolidation of democracy
8. Art and Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The Contemporary Age began in 1789 with the French Revolution, and continues up to the present day. In the first half of the 20th century, there were several major conflicts in Europe, including World War I and World War II. In Spain, there was a lot of political unrest and instability during this period, with military coups, dictatorships and a civil war.

2. THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY: POLITICAL INESTABILITY

Isabel II's rule (from 1833 – 1868) was not popular with any of the political parties at the time. Her government was dominated by two military politicians: Ramón María Narváez and Leopoldo O'Donnell. When they died, the government became too weak to continue. General Juan Prim sent the Queen into exile and started looking for a new monarch to take over.

1870 - 1873 KING AMADEO DE SABOYA

- It took two years to find someone who would accept the Spanish throne. The Italian Duke of Acosta, Amadeo, eventually accepted, under pressure from his father. King Amadeo's reign started badly when his main supported General Prim was assassinated. It was an extremely unstable period.
- **King Amadeo** had to deal with violent conflicts between different political parties, the Cuban revolution, rebellions with the Carlists in the Basque and the Catalan regions, Republican uprisings and problems with the army. Unable to cope, he returned to Italy in early 1873.

1873 - 1874 FIRST REPUBLIC

- On the 11th of February 1873, Spain became a republic, but the period of political and social instability continued. The republic lasted only eleven months with four presidents during this period. Three simultaneous civil wars also broke out in Spain during that year.
- On the 3rd of January 1874, **General Manuel Pravia** mounted a coup d'etat which led to the end of the republic. The political parties were unable to work together and support for Alfonso, Isabel II's son, grew. General Martínez Campos restored the monarchy and Alfonso XII became new king of Spain.

3. THE RESTORATION: 1875 - 1923

During Alfonso XII's reign, there were minor conflicts, but there was less violence than in the previous years

1875 - 1885 KING ALFONSO XII



Alfonso XII ruled as a constitutional monarch (not an absolute one) under the Constitution of 1876. Although he was a young and inexperienced king, he was very popular.

Under his reign, there was a new political system: the *turno pacífico*. Only two political parties were permitted: the Liberals and the Conservatives. These parties took turns to hold power. The parties that were excluded from this system opposed it.

In this new system of alternating power, there were two key political figures:

- **Antonio Cánovas del Castillo** who was the Prime Minister six times and leader of the Conservatives.
- **Práxedes Mateo Sagasta** who was Prime Minister eight times and leader of the Liberals.

4. FROM ALFONSO XIII TO THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Alfonso XII's early death left his son, Alfonso, as heir to the throne. His mother Maria Cristina, ruled as regent until the young Alfonso turned sixteen in 1902 and became **King Alfonso XIII**.



During his reign there were serious social and political conflicts in Spain.

- **Strikes:** These were organized by trade unions (labour unions).
- **Nationalism:** Groups in Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia demanded autonomy.
- **The war in Morocco:** Many Spanish soldiers died and Spain lost territories in Northern Africa.
- **Lost of colonies:** Spain lost its remaining colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

THE DICTATORSHIP OF MIGUEL PRIMO DE RIVERA

Taking advantage of the social and political conflict, **Miguel Primo de Rivera** led a coup in 1923. In a coup, a person or a group takes control of a government by force. Primo de Rivera established a military dictatorship and Alfonso XIII supported him. Rivera assumed all the powers of state and abolished the Constitution, banned all political parties and labour unions and limited freedom for citizens. He became a **dictator** from 1923 – 1930.



The population opposed his regime and demanded more freedom. Eventually, even the army stopped supporting him and Alfonso XIII forced him to resign in 1930.

1931 - 1936 SECOND REPUBLIC



Despite his attempts to re-establish a non-dictatorship form of government, people no longer trusted Alfonso XIII. General elections were held in 1931. The political parties that supported the republic won, the monarchy was abolished, and Alfonso XIII went into exile.

In 1931, the **Second Republic** was declared. It lasted until the end of the Civil War in 1939.

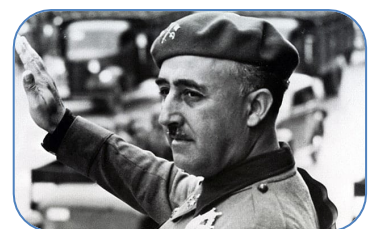
Alcalá Zamora was appointed president of the Republic and a new **Constitution** was approved, which included the **right to vote for women** and the separation of the church and state.

During this period, the first **Statues of Autonomy** for Catalonia and the Basque Country were approved.

The government of the Republic implemented many reforms, including land, education and labour reforms. However, these reforms were not accepted by everyone, and violent conflicts intensified over time.

5. THE CIVIL WAR AND FRANCO'S DICTATORSHIP

On 18 July **1936**, General Francisco Franco lead a military coup against the government of the Republic and the **Spanish Civil War** began. Spain was divided into two sides: the Republicans (supporters of the Republic) and the Nationalists (supporters of General Franco).





The war officially ended on 1 April **1939** with a nationalist victory. The consequences of the war were **devastating**. Hundreds of thousands of people died or went into exile, there were huge economic losses, and society was divided into winners and losers.

LIFE DURING THE FRANCOIST REGIME

When the Civil War ended in 1939, General Franco established a **dictatorship** which lasted until his death in 1975. This period, from 1939 to 1975 is known as **Francoism**.

As a result of establishing a dictatorship:

- **The Constitution was abolished.** New laws that restricted individual liberties were passed.
- **All power was concentrated in one person.** Franco was head of state and government, and commander-in-chief of the military.
- **Political parties and labour unions were banned.** There was only one political party and one labour union, both controlled by the government.
- **The Statutes of Autonomy were revoked.** Spanish was imposed as the official language.
- **Censorship was put into place.** Books, films, plays and anything against the ideas of the dictatorship were banned.

People who supported the Republic faced harsh **repression**. Many were arrested or killed, and others went into exile.

During these years, Spain became **internationally isolated**. As a result of the Spanish dictatorship, many countries broke off diplomatic and commercial relations with Spain. This isolation and the destruction of infrastructure and industries during the war led to an **economic crisis**.

As a result, the **population was impoverished** and often did not have access to food and other basic products.

Franco embarked on a policy based on **economic self-sufficiency**. In other words, he cut off almost all international trade. In the 1960s, with the economy on the verge of bankruptcy, Franco lifted the ban. Spain was prosperous again and tourism became an important part of the economy.



REPRESSION

Around 26.000 people were sent to prison for their political beliefs.



STARVATION

People had ration books which specified the quantity of first necessity goods they could buy.



LACK OF FREEDOM

The press was restricted, trade unions were banned and protests were repressed.



CULTURAL RESTRICTIONS

Many regional traditions were repressed except for Flamenco.

THE END OF FRANCO'S DICTATORSHIP

Between 1970 and 1975, opposition to the Franco regime increased.

Labour unions were still banned, but they started to organize underground, which means they met in secret.

In addition, students participated in demonstrations that demanded a democratic form of government.

On the 20th November, 1975, General Franco died and the dictatorship ended. It was the beginning of a new era in which democracy was established.



6. THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY



The **transition** was the period of political changes that were made to move from the dictatorship of the General Franco towards democracy.

As Franco had declared Spain a monarchy, he needed a successor. In 1969 he chose Prince Juan Carlos – Alfonso XIII's grandson. Franco thought that the regime would continue under Juan Carlos. However, as soon as he became king, Juan Carlos took steps to make Spain a constitutional monarchy. In 1975, General Franco died and the transition from a dictatorship to democracy began.

STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

King Juan Carlos I appointed **Adolfo Suárez** as president in 1976. Suárez began the difficult process of **political reform** that would lead to free elections and a **democratic** state.



Some of the actions that **Adolfo Suárez** took:

- Release political prisoners.
- People in exile returned to Spain.
- Dissolution of the secret police.
- Legalisation of the right to strike and form labour unions.
- Legalisation of all political parties.
- Introduction of a new electoral law (Ley electoral) which led to free **elections** in **1977**. In this electoral process the Central Democratic Union (**UCD**) was elected, the party led by Adolfo Suárez.

In 1978, the **Spanish Constitution** was approved by Parliament and then the Spanish people in a **referendum**.

7. THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

New elections were held in 1979 and the party of Adolfo Suárez UCD, won again. During his mandate, Spain suffered a serious economic crisis, and terrorist attacks by ETA were frequent. For these reasons, Adolfo Suárez resigned as president.

In 1981, while Parliament was voting to elect Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo as the new president, a small group of military officers led by Colonel Antonio Tejero attempted a coup. However, Tejero did not have support from political parties, the people or the king, and the coup failed.

THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS

Since 1981, several presidents have headed the Spanish government.

- 1981: **Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo**, UCD. Spain became a member of NATO, a military alliance.

- 1982 to 1996: **Felipe González**, PSOE (Spanish Socialist Labour Party). González carried out reforms to modernize the country. In 1986, Spain joined the European Community (EC).
- 1996 to 2004: **Jose María Aznar**, PP (Popular Party). Economic stability was achieved. In 2002, Spain adopted the euro as its currency, replacing the peseta.
- 2004 to 2011: **José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero**, PSOE. Laws that extended the rights of citizens were passed. In the last years of his mandate, the economic crisis caused unemployment to rise sharply.
- 2011 to 2018: **Mariano Rajoy** from PP. Very strict measures were taken to fight the serious economic crisis. IN 2014, King Juan Carlos I abdicated in favour of his son, Felipe VI.

9. ART AND CULTURE

1. PAINTING

During the 20th century, the main Spanish artists were Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró.

- **Pablo Ruiz Picasso** was born in Málaga. He invented Cubism. In this innovative painting style, three-dimensional human figures and objects are represented with different geometrical shapes.
- **Salvador Dalí** was born in Figueras (Girona). He used light, colour and drawings to express the world of dreams.
- **Joan Miró** was born in Barcelona. He used bright colours and geometrical shapes to create a fantasy world similar to the world of a child.

Other well-known painters include Antoni Tàpies, Antonio López and Miguel Barceló.

2. SCULPTURE

During the 20th century and in the present day, sculptors have worked with materials such as iron, steel, plastic or even recycled materials to create distorted human sculptures or abstract sculptures.

The main Spanish sculptors include Eduardo Chillida and Juan Muñoz.

3. ARCHITECTURE

From the 20th century, architects have created multi-shaped buildings using a variety of materials, such as reinforced concrete, steel, glass, aluminium and titanium.

4. LITERATURE

Since the 20th century, Spain has produced great writers, such as:

- **Playwrights.** Jacinto Benavente, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature; and Fernando Fernán Gómez.
- **Poets:** Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti, who were part of the group of poets known as the Generation of '27.
- **Novelists.** Miguel Delibes; Camilo José Cela, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature; Javier Marías and Arturo Pérez-Reverte.

UNIT VOCABULARY

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