

BOMBING OF GUERNICA





The outbreak of the civil war

Causes of the bombing

- ❖ This military conflict opposed the Spanish republic governed by the leftists (popular front) to the insurrectional forces of the right (nationalists)
- ❖ The crisis that precipitated the country in the civil war was triggered by the rise to power of the sinister winners in the February 1936 elections
- ❖ reaction of the rights supported by the leaders of the army, led by generals including Francisco Franco

Effects of the bombing

- ❖ After the coup, the leader of the nationalists had become Franco, an army general who over the following months militarily took control of the far south of Spain and a rather large area in the north-west of the country.
- ❖ there were about 300 dead
- ❖ the intention to kill many civilians, in what was a sort of precursor of carpet bombing
- ❖ prohibited the use of the Basque and Catalan languages
- ❖ dictatorship of 36 years

Small Basque town was destroyed

- ❖ On the afternoon of April 26, 1937, the small Basque town of Guernica was hit by one of the most popular bombings of the twentieth century. The context was that of the Spanish civil war, which began less than a year earlier between the nationalists of General Francisco Franco and the Republicans led by the Popular Front. The bombing of Guernica became the symbol of war. A success with the fame of the bombing was among many things in the very famous and enormous painting by the painter Pablo Picasso, which would become one of the most reproduced anti-militarist works of the twentieth century.





Why Guernica was bombed?

April 26, 1937

- ❖ Guernica is a city that has played a central role in the identity of the Basque Country, the region in northern Spain that has always claimed greater autonomy from the central government. In 1937, Guernica was located a few tens of kilometers from the front that divided the republican and nationalist forces.



Guernica's strategic position

- ❖ The Basque Country had its own military corps, an ally of the Popular Front. The region had become a republican stronghold, surrounded by territories controlled by nationalists. Guernica was a city in a strategic position, because it was on the road to Bilbao, which the nationalist general Franco aimed to conquer, and because it represented the obligatory passage for the eventual withdrawal of the Republicans from Bilbao. However, it was not in itself a military center. The reasons why it was bombed have long been debated, and the most accredited interpretations underline the strategic value of Guernica's position and the willingness of Franco's militias to demonstrate their strength, to inspire fear to the Spanish civilians who supported the Republicans and even to foreign powers.

Allied forces

- ❖ The bombings were carried out by 24 military aircraft of the Luftwaffe, of the German air force and three of the Italian army: both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, in fact, were allies of the nationalist forces. The destruction of the city and the trauma between the inhabitants and the republican forces allowed the nationalists to take control of Guernica and in the following months of the entire Basque Country.





A new concept of art

Surrealism

- ❖ Art is pure and free expression bound from rational, social, moral and political limitations.
- ❖ Two factions of Spanish artist: some of them against Francisco Franco (Picasso), some of them did not denounce Franco's actions (Dalì).
- ❖ Return to realism for the purpose of political propaganda and social control.



Guernica, by Pablo Picasso

Anti-war paintings

- ❖ Is a large oil painting on canvas
- ❖ Painted by Pablo Picasso in Paris in 1937
- ❖ It is exhibited in the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid
- ❖ Requested by the Spanish Nationalists
- ❖ This paint was used to raise funds for Spanish war relief



The meaning and the style of Guernica

- ❖ Guernica is a complaint against the blind violence of the bombing and all wars, which affect women, men, children and animals alike, destroying all forms of life.
- ❖ Picasso uses cubist element in Guernica, such as the representation of figures from several points of view at the same time, and surrealist and expressionist elements.



Another forms of art



“Madrid 1937”

- ❖ He contrasts neo-colonial exploitation and supports the struggle for freedom and equality.



“For whom the bell tolls”

- ❖ The main theme is that.
- ❖ Uses of the images to reproduces atmosphere of violence.
- ❖ Loss of hope.

