



¡ SPANISH NUTS!
by Angela J. Davis:
a reading

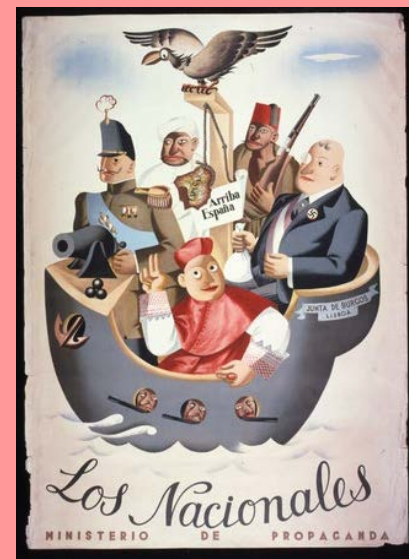
Questors Theatre
April 25, 2024



A quick guide to the background
of this play

¡Spanish Nuts!

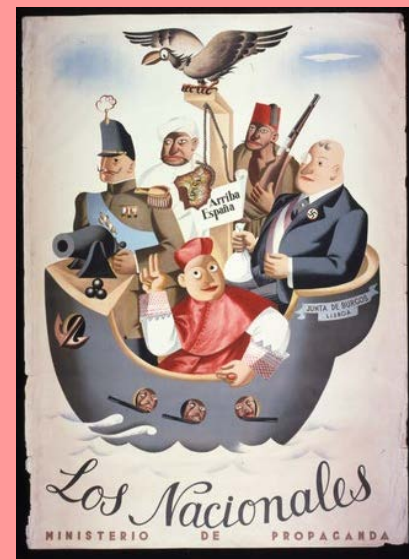
Synopsis



Barcelona, 1939. In a strangely familiar country, ravaged by brutal civil war, a narcissistic, misogynist, and propaganda-loving dictator rules with an iron fist while unseen 1930s-style propaganda rockets fill the air with his twittery, self-serving fictions.

... continued

¡Spanish Nuts! Synopsis

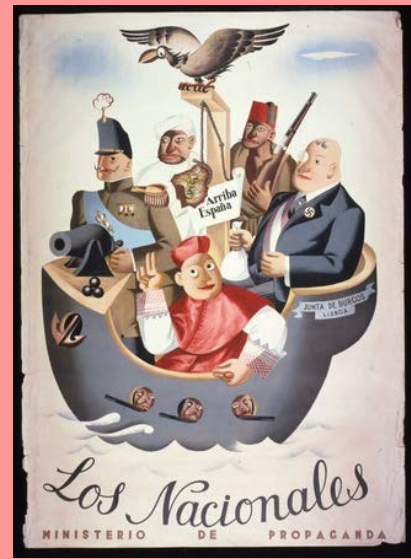


In desperation, two loyalists for the overthrown democracy feign insanity and seek refuge in a medieval mental hospital.

... continued

¡Spanish Nuts!

Synopsis

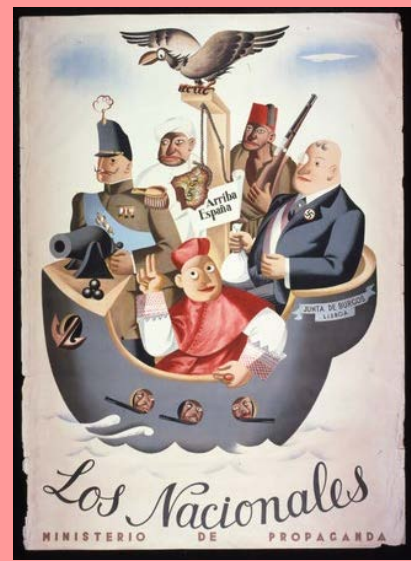


... Once at the asylum, events both tragic and comedic unfold, in very loose parallel to Lope de Vega's sixteenth-century masterpiece, "**Locos de Valencia.**"

... continued

¡Spanish Nuts!

Synopsis



Through interlocking love triangles, hallucinations of the recent war, and close encounters with the forces of oppression, the play mines the elusive meaning of sanity during times of madness.

Angela J. Davis ~ playwright



Angela J. Davis is an award-winning playwright, with works which include *The Spanish Prayer Book*, *Griswold*, (showcased by Playhouse Creatures Theatre Company in New York with Annette Bening, and at the Playground Theatre in London with Martha Plimpton), *Clara and Serra and the Talking Bear* (commissioned and produced by Antaeus in Los Angeles), and *Agathe* (currently at the Playground Theatre, London).

THE
PLAYGROUND
THEATRE



AGATHE

The true story of the woman who became Rwanda's head of state for less than a day

Written by **Angela J. Davis**



Directed by Mukul Ahmed | with Natasha Bain, Matthew Faucher,
Maria Austin and Jordon Kemp

17 APR - 4 MAY

theplaygroundtheatre.org.uk | Latimer Road | London | W10 6RQ

Supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England

<https://www.theplaygroundtheatre.org.uk/whats-on>

For more on the playwright....



<https://angelajdavis.com/>

<https://pwcenter.org/profile/angela-davis>

<https://angelajdavis.com/biography/>

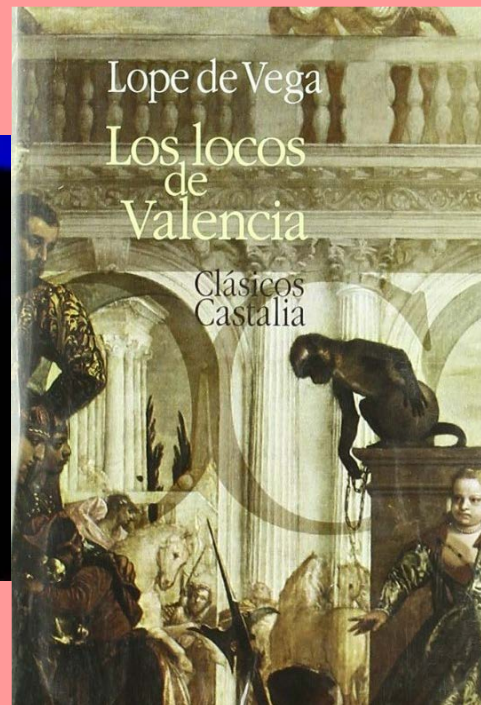
<https://angelajdavis.com/>



What is the background of
¡Spanish Nuts! ?

¡Spanish Nuts! was inspired by Lope de Vega's Golden Age Spanish play “**Los Locos de Valencia**” (written some time in the 1590s).

Los Locos de Valencia



For more on *Los Locos de Valencia* ...

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madness_in_Valencia

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2010/feb/12/madness-in-valencia-review>



Who was Lope de Vega, and why is he such an important playwright?



**Lope de Vega: poet,
playwright, courtier,
adventurer, lover, priest
(1562-1635)**



A contemporary of Shakespeare, **Lope de Vega** is acknowledged to be one of the greatest dramatists of the Spanish Golden age.

Lope de Vega: (1562-1635)

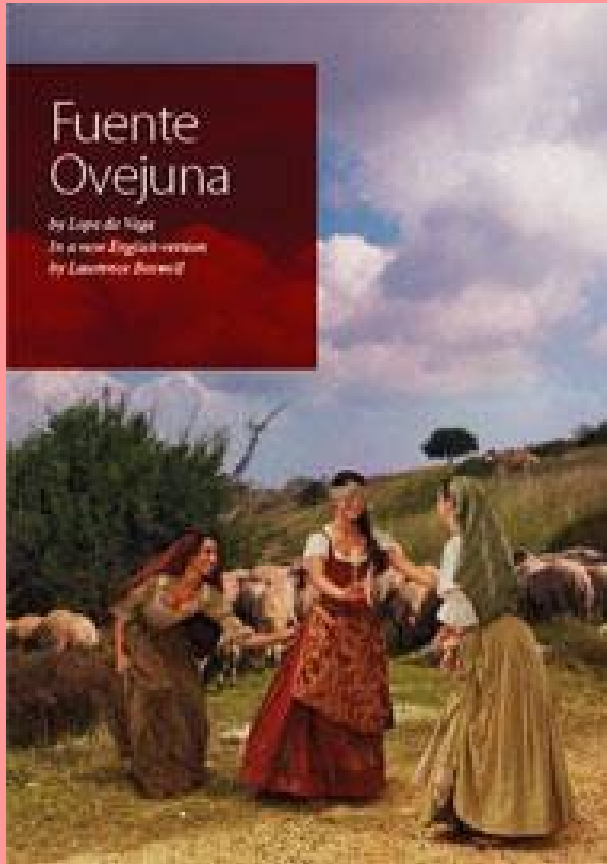


He sailed with the Armada, had a series of tragic love affairs (and a long marriage!) served Philip III at Court, and later became a priest.

Fuente Ovejuna

(1614)

a play about ordinary people in a Spanish village who work together to challenge authority is one of his most famous plays.





Like other dramatists of the era (such as Calderon de la Barca and Cervantes) Lope de Vega was fascinated by **the tragicomic twists and turns of political power** – war, romance, loss and the **knife-edge division between illusion and reality, wisdom and insanity, life and death and the sacred and profane.**



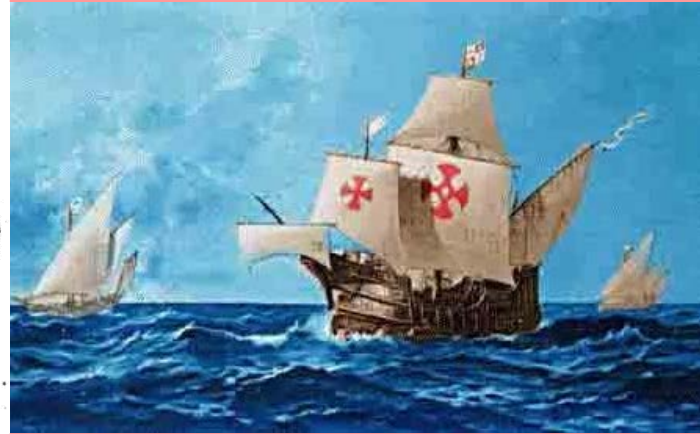
For more on Lope de Vega ...

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lope-de-Vega/Works>

<https://poets.org/poet/lope-de-vega>

Why was theatre such a powerful medium in the Spanish Golden Age?

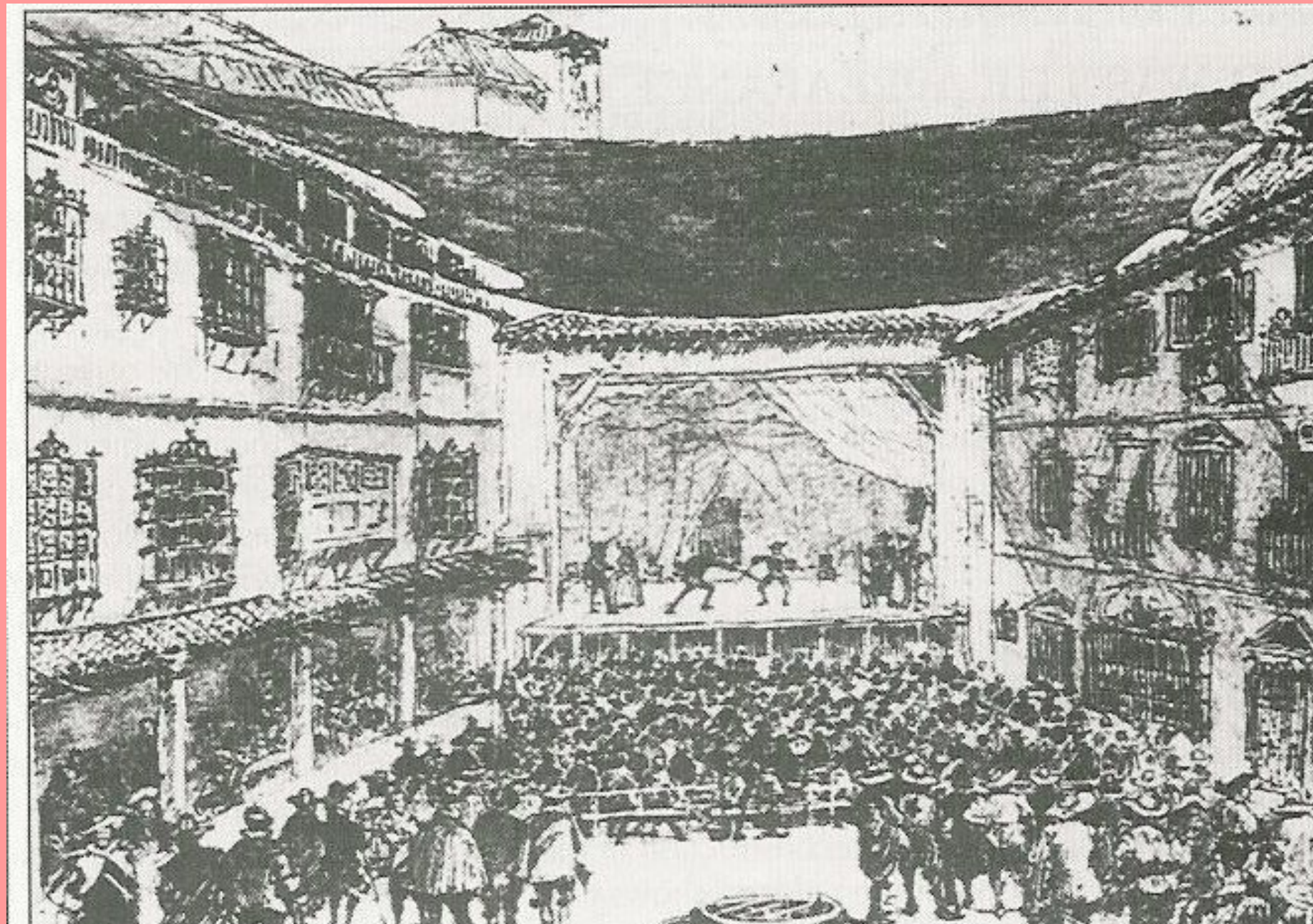
Why was it OBSESSED with issues of power and justice???

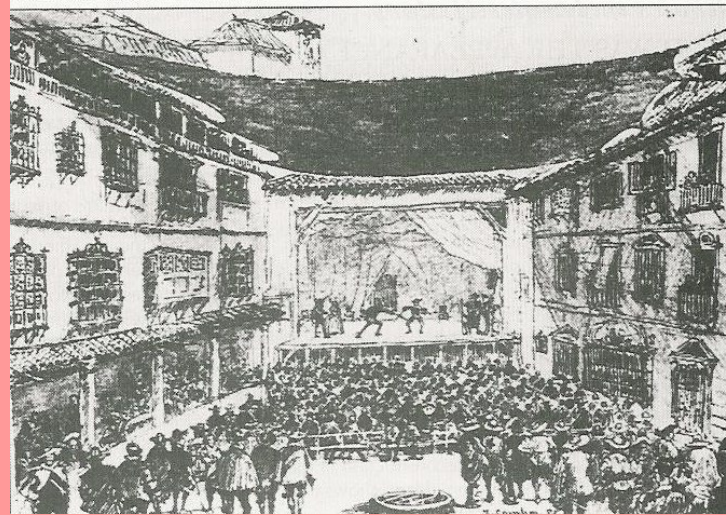


The Spanish Golden Age

A time of colonialization, exploration of the New World, conquest and oppression, religious turmoil, military glory (and defeat) at home and abroad... **and an EXPLOSION of popular theatre!**







Spanish Golden Age theatre could be described as **an extended meditation on the nature of power:**

...Is it a force for good or evil? How much power should any one person have over another?



Some of the questions asked in Spanish Golden Age theatre

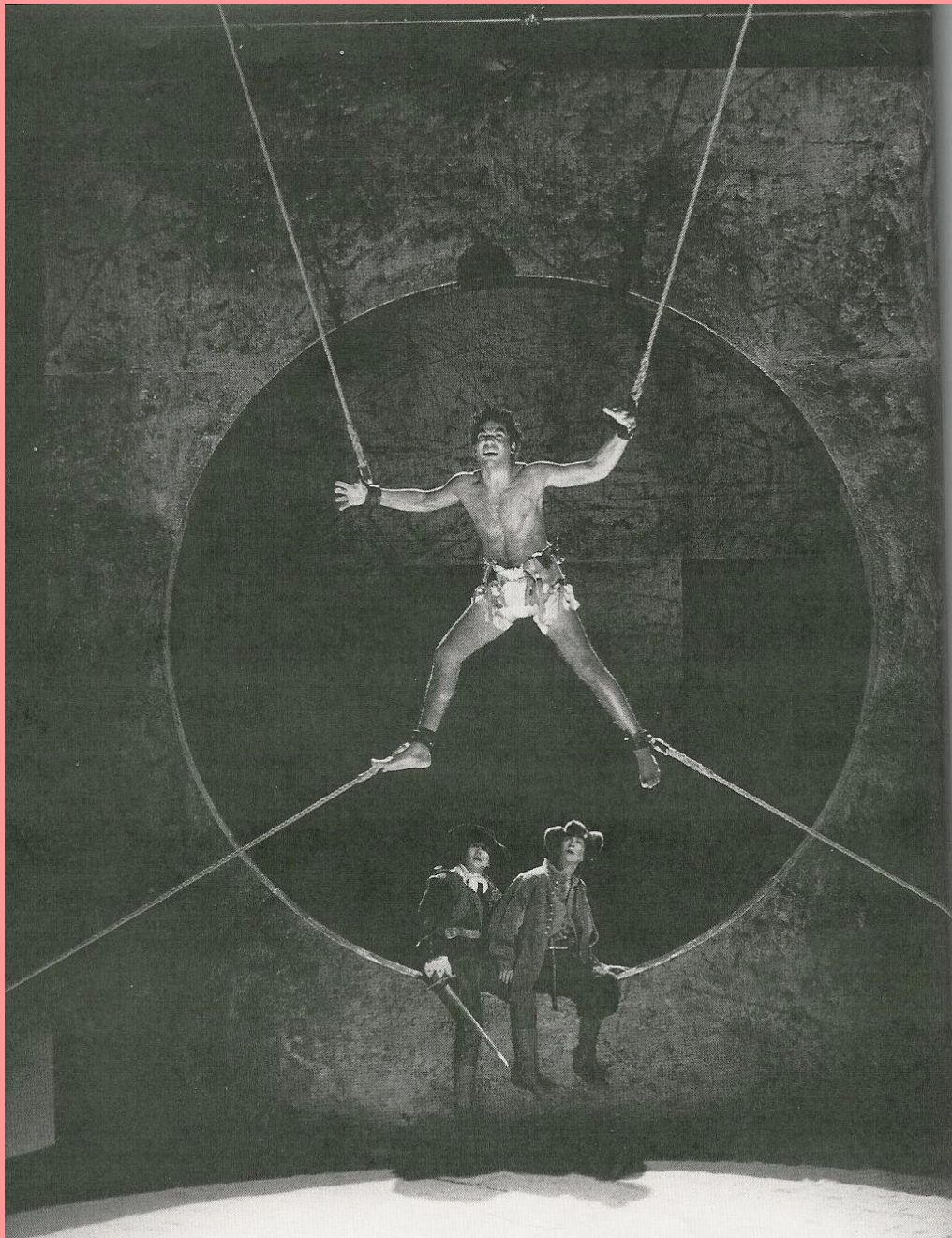
- What is love? What is honour?
- Is life merely a dream?
- What makes a good ruler?
- Is earthly power an illusion?
- Are humans inherently good or bad?

... to be or not to be (*yes, there ARE parallels to Shakespeare!!)





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**How does
anyone
survive in a
world
turned
upside
down?????**

What is reality?

What is power but a performance?

Can appearances be trusted?



Recurring characters in Spanish Golden Age dramas:

- Holy fools and tragic clowns
- Pilgrims, penitents, lost souls
- Spies, vagabonds, thieves, warriors
- Corrupt rulers
- People who have fallen from power
- Heroic working class men and women





Spanish Nuts:
from the Spanish Golden Age to
the Spanish Civil War (1936-39)



A time of political turmoil,
oppression, heroism, death, and
survival



Artists and social justice warriors
from US and UK joined in the fight
against fascism in Spain.



Ernest Hemingway~International Brigade



The Spanish Civil War:

- Franco won – and the world lived with the result for decades. Are circumstances so different for us now in the global arena?



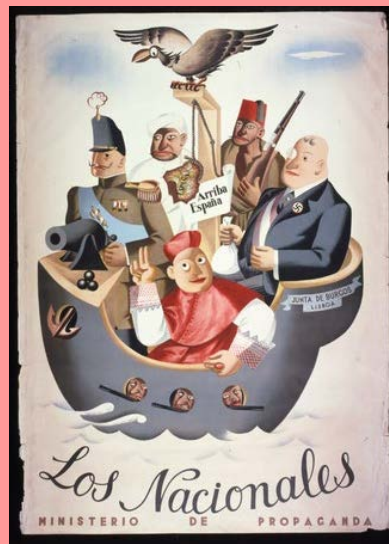
A tragic loss or a moral triumph?



For more on the Spanish Civil War...

<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/spanish-civil-war/>





What is justice? What can any of us do?

Do we laugh or cry about it?

In *¡Spanish Nuts!* the questions continue....



Thanks for your interest!

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<https://playhousecreatures.org/>



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