

<b>Institution:</b> London School of Economics and Political Science		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28B – International History		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Reinterpreting Spain's twentieth century		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2000-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Sir Paul Preston	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2000 to present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Professor Sir Paul Preston's research has had significant impact on Spain's public discourse and national understanding of the Civil War, helping its people come to terms with the nation's history, and altering popular perception of some of its prominent figures. Preston's work has informed educational initiatives in Catalonia and been honoured for its contributions to peace and reconciliation. Beyond Spain, his scholarship has been used to design an innovative professional development initiative for the British Army, and improved understanding and informed reporting of Spanish history among international audiences. During the REF assessment period Preston also received a knighthood for his services to UK/Spain relations.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>The core of Professor Sir Paul Preston's research is a succession of single-authored monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles, based on critical scrutiny of the primary source materials available (particularly) in Spain and the UK. Working originally on the social origins of the Civil War during the Second Republic, Preston subsequently broadened his investigation to the Civil War itself and the Franco dictatorship, and then to the restoration of democracy and the entirety of modern Spanish history. Relevant previous publications include a history of the Spanish Civil War (updated across regular subsequent editions) and authoritative biographies of General Franco and King Juan Carlos. The underpinning research described here builds upon those foundations.</p> <p><i>A People Betrayed</i> [1] provides a new, comprehensive, and authoritative political history of Spain from the monarchical restoration in 1876 to the abdication of King Juan Carlos in 2014. Copiously referenced, it took more than six years to prepare and draws on a lifetime of work. It highlights the contrast between the Spanish people and their ruling authorities, as traced through successive cycles of political corruption and incompetence and the dire consequences for social cohesion. A central theme is the conflict between the political centre and regional separatism, including the Madrid-Catalonia relationship.</p> <p><i>The Last Days of the Spanish Republic</i> [2] reinterprets the closing phase of the Civil War, focusing on the military coup against the Republican Government led by Colonel Segismundo Casado. It corrects the prevailing interpretation, based on Casado's memoirs, that the coup was justified and necessary to prevent futile slaughter. It absolves Prime Minister Juan Negrín from responsibility for the coup, which, in reality, closed off opportunities for a negotiated solution and thereby contributed to tens of thousands of deaths.</p> <p><i>The Last Stalinist</i> [3] reappraises Santiago Carrillo, who led the Spanish Communist Party between 1960 and 1982. It corrects many myths that Carrillo himself propagated. It shows that he was partly responsible for the mass executions of political prisoners as the rebel armies approached Madrid in late 1936: the worst Republican atrocity during the Civil War. Far from being blameless for the Madrid atrocities, Carrillo helped to organise them, as well as being complicit in the deaths of numerous Communist Party rivals during the Franco dictatorship.</p> <p><i>The Spanish Holocaust</i> [4] recounts in chilling and authoritative detail the summary and extra-judicial killings of some 200,000 people by both sides (though three times more by the Nationalists than the Republicans) during and after the Civil War. The book also covers the cursory military trials, torture, systematic abuse of women and children, sweeping imprisonment, and horrors of exile. Those culpable for crimes committed on both sides of the Civil War are named; their victims</p>		

identified. The culmination of more than a decade of research, Preston's analysis is supported by 120 pages of endnotes.

*The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, Revenge* [5] vividly recounts the political ideals and military horrors of the Spanish Civil War (including the controversial bombing of Guernica), analyses the wider implications of the revolution in the Republican zone, tracks the emergence of Franco's brutal (and, ultimately, extraordinarily durable) fascist dictatorship, and assesses the ways in which the Spanish Civil War was a portent of the Second World War that ensued so rapidly after it.

In research also underpinning impacts described here, Preston reappraises the veracity of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* [6], arguing it demonstrates little understanding of Spanish or Catalan politics and does not present a reliable analysis of the broader politics of the war and its international determinants. Its underlying notion that the crushing of revolution in Barcelona would contribute to the eventual Republican defeat makes it too easy to forget the contributions to that defeat made by Franco, Hitler, Mussolini, and the self-interest of the British, French, and American governments.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[1] Preston, P. (2020). *A People Betrayed: A History of Corruption, Political Incompetence, and Social Division in Modern Spain, 1874-2018*. William Collins. Spanish edition (2019): *Un Pueblo traicionado: España de 1876 a nuestros días. Corrupción, incompetencia política y división social*. Madrid: Debate. ISBN: 9780007558377.

[2] Preston, P. (2016). *The Last Days of the Spanish Republic*. Harper Collins. ISBN: 9780008163402.

[3] Preston, P. (2014). *The Last Stalinist. A Life of Santiago Carrillo*. Harper Collins. ISBN: 9780007558407.

[4] Preston, P. (2012). *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain*. Harper Collins. ISBN: 9780393064766.

[5] Preston, P. (2006). *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, Revenge*. Harper Collins. ISBN: 9780007232079.

[6] Preston, P. (2017). Lights and shadows in George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14753820.2018.1388550.

*The Spanish Holocaust* [4] was *The Sunday Times* History Book of the Year in 2012 and was described by *The New York Times* as "magisterial...an essential reference for anything written on the subject for years to come". It has sold more than 110,000 copies (English and Spanish-language editions; across all formats), formed the subject for special issues of the *Journal of Genocide Research* in 2014 and the *Journal of Contemporary History* in 2016-17, while *The Independent* has likened it to South Africa's truth and reconciliation commission. *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution, Revenge* [5] has sold more than 115,000 copies (English and Spanish-language editions; all formats). Spanish-language versions of all listed outputs have also been published, with further translations into Catalan, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Following the death of General Franco in 1975, Spain's political elites agreed to *el pacto del olvido* ("the pact of forgetting"), a conscious decision not to address the legacy of Francoism as a way of smoothening the transition to democracy. While this pact served a useful purpose at the time, conversation surrounding the Civil War and the regime subsequently became inhibited, preventing Spain and its people from confronting and accepting its past. It is in this context that Preston's research, particularly the monographs described above, has made significant contributions to processes of reconciliation and commemoration in Spain. Findings from Preston's work have challenged previous national understandings of events and personalities, correcting misapprehensions and outright falsehoods, while his research has also informed an award-winning educational initiative in Catalonia. Internationally, his work has improved understanding and informed discussion of Spain's recent history, and been used to design an innovative professional development initiative for British Army staff.

### Contributions to reconciliation and commemoration in Spain

During the current REF assessment period, Preston has been recognised not only for the rigour and authority of his research on the Spanish Civil War and modern Spanish history, but also for his influence beyond academia. This is evidenced by a succession of honours and awards.

In 2019, Preston was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Universidad de Cantabria. Endorsing the decision to bestow this award, Professor Julián Casanova of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, paid tribute to Preston's wider cultural and social impact: *"your labour is also outstanding for your contribution to the construction of a critical and democratic consciousness that has guided the actions of numerous politicians, disciples, academic colleagues and the tens of thousands of readers of your extensive oeuvre. Your work had academic consequences and a social and human influence that is very rare among university teachers"* [A].

Indeed, as outlined above, Preston's research has been particularly important in its contributions to a nation which had previously struggled to confront its difficult past. Citing *A People Betrayed* [1] specifically, Antoni Bassas Onieva, the Catalan broadcaster and a recipient of the National Prize for Journalism, has attested to how *"the works of Sir Paul Preston have succeeded in breaking the so-called 'pact of forgetting'"* [B], while economist and historian Ángel Viñas celebrates the book [1] for having *"opened up new ways of exploring the Spanish past"* [C]. On the same theme but this time citing *The Spanish Holocaust* [4] and its charting of Francoists' distortions of history, Viñas says Preston's research has gone *"some way towards filling the gap left by the failure of successive governments to initiate a truth and reconciliation process"* [C]. About the same book [4], former Spanish Ambassador to the UK (2008-12), Carles Casajuana has described it as *"a key instrument for all Spaniards wishing to come to terms with one of the darkest aspects of our history"* [D].

A more illustrative and intimate example is in the 2019 letter Preston received from a Spanish psychologist and psychotherapist. This letter described a family whose grandfather had been murdered by Francoist forces during the Civil War. After reading *The Spanish Holocaust* [4], his granddaughter persuaded the family to break its silence, discuss the murder, and commemorate the victim. The letter goes on to note *"the beneficial effect that reading [4] had in a Spanish family that, like so many others, suffered the effects of the collective trauma constituted by the war. Thank you for your extraordinary work in helping to illuminate the complex history of Spain"* [E].

### Challenges to conventional wisdom and changing popular perception of historical figures

A feature of Preston's research on Spanish modern history and the Civil War is how it has challenged conventional national understandings, prompting debate amongst the people of Spain. Casajuana says that in *The Last Days of the Spanish Republic* [2], Preston *"has shed light on essential aspects of our recent past and rectified long-held assumptions"* [D]. Similarly, the rigour and novelty of the Preston research [6] has led to a reappraisal of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, the most-sold and most-read book on the Civil War. As covered by Carles Geli in Spanish daily newspaper *El País*, the research finds Orwell's account to be deeply flawed as a historical record, influenced by his acceptance of the partisan views of anarchist and POUM comrades as well as his ignorance of the wider context [F]. Biographies of Santiago Carrillo [3] and King Juan Carlos I (2004) have proven similarly instrumental in correcting long-held misinformation about their subjects, as attested to by Vinas: *"[these biographies] have significantly altered popular perception of those figures"* [C].

### Contributions to Catalan culture

Preston's research has had particularly notable cultural impacts in Catalonia. Bassas Onieva has observed how his influence extends beyond the (Castilian) Spanish-speaking population, *"but also to that expressed in the country's other official languages, such as Catalan, the language of Gaudi, Miro, Dali and which Picasso also spoke"* [B]. In 2016, as part of the City of Barcelona Awards of 2015, Preston was awarded the Premi de Projectió Internacional de la Ciutat de Barcelona - the City of Barcelona Prize for International Projection. Reporting on this award for *El País*, Blanca Cia paid tribute to Preston's *"commitment [to] the recovery of the historical memory [of] the city"* [G]. In the same year, Preston was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Barcelona. Reporting for Catalan newspaper *El Nacional*, Albert Acín hailed the importance of recognising Preston in this way *"because he has always been characterised by the defence of Catalonia and its language and culture"*, also citing his support for Catalonia's right to self-determination [H].

**Contributions to educational initiatives**

In 2016, Preston collaborated with best-selling Spanish cartoonist José Pablo García to adapt *The Spanish Civil War* [5] into a graphic novel for publication in Spain. The objective of García's illustrative history was to offer new generations, or those who have no idea about or previously had much interest in it, an accurate portrait of what happened during the Civil War years [I]. Preston reviewed the proofs ahead of publication to ensure their accuracy and advised on minor corrections. The graphic history was published in 2016, rising to number three in the Spanish bestseller list. More than 15,000 copies have been sold and an eighth edition is in preparation [J]. Copies have been distributed to every library in the Valencia province to which children have access, while the book has received a communal library award and was also featured in an exhibition of the Provincial Historical Archive of Alicante, entitled "Images of democratic memory: the comic as a teaching resource". *Público* paid tribute to García's work as "a common account of the tragedy that serves to preserve the true memory of those days" [K].

In 2017, Preston and García renewed their collaboration on *The Destruction of Guernica* (*La Muerte de Guernica*), also adapted from [5] and again with the intention of raising children's historical awareness. Preston contributed additional new passages and original material from his research [L]. In 2019, Preston was one of three historians to receive the prestigious Guernica Award for Peace and Reconciliation, "for their work to bring to light the truth of the bombing of Guernica" [M].

The research made further contributions to teaching when, in 2018, an interview with Preston about Catalonia was included in a new distance-learning module on Modern Political Ideas developed by the Open University. This module will run from 2019 to 2029, with 181 and 229 students having enrolled over its first two years. The Preston interview will also appear on the Open University's public learning platform, Open Learn.

**Contributions to continuing professional development – the British Army**

This research has also been used to inform military training programmes. In 2017, the British Army commissioned Preston to prepare historical background briefs ahead of the Headquarters Army Recruitment and Training Division (ARTD) strategic Battlefield Training Study to the Ebro and Barcelona. This study was to form part of a "staff ride", a common ARTD exercise, in which officers visited the terrain of the 1938 Battle of the Ebro, the largest of the Spanish conflict. Drawing on his history of the Civil War [5], Preston met with representatives of the ARTD and provided briefings on the political context, the military strategy of both sides, and the international dimension. Major Caroline Way, writing on behalf of the ARTD, noted how Preston's "expert guidance [and] recommendations" helped her to design the study and were "essential to set the context for the historical outcomes of the Spanish Civil War" [N]. All resources and advice provided by Preston were captured in a post-exercise report, which has been shared across the Army, with Way further commenting that "this will therefore be of benefit to many more British Army personnel in the future" [N].

**Contributions to public discourse in Spain**

Preston's research is well-known to the Spanish public, having been cited in newspapers of all political persuasions and across the country's different regions and languages. Since 2014, Google data shows it has been mentioned in the media more than 1,500 times overall, including 140+ times in *El País*, 150+ times in *La Vanguardia*, 60+ times in *ABC*, and 40+ times in *El Mundo*. His contributions are notable for having been solicited by both the Madrid-leaning and the Catalonia-leaning press, and this acceptance as a non-partisan voice has ensured his interventions are viewed as trusted and authoritative, as noted by Bassas Onieva: "the fact of not being Spanish has given Preston's thesis a distinctive, fresh distance, necessary and appreciated when treating the most painful and recent chapters of the country's history" [B].

Notable contributions to the public discourse since 2013 include his interviews discussing the abdication of King Juan Carlos I; the renewed public focus on former dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera, prompted by publication of [1]; and the contentious debate over the exhumation of General Franco, which was brought into sharper focus by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's 2018 announcement that Franco's remains would be exhumed from the Valle de los Caídos. Interviews with Preston - in which he supported the case for removing Franco's remains from the mausoleum and drew an equivalence of having a monument to Hitler in Berlin - were featured in *El Diario*, *El*



*Nacional*, and *El Confidencial*, publicising his mooted solution that Franco be buried at sea [O]. A further interview was published in *El País* following the order by Spain's High Court to halt the exhumation in 2019 [O].

### Contributions to international understanding of Spanish history

Internationally, Preston is regularly sought for comment on Spanish affairs. In the UK, he was chosen by the BBC to explain Franco's long legacy in post-transition Spain and its continuing influence on modern Spanish politics. Amidst the backdrop of the debate over Catalan independence, including the 2017 referendum and subsequent declaration of independence, he wrote explainers on the issue for *The Times* and again appeared on the BBC, discussing its historical origins and context and drawing on research for [1]. More widely, contributions emanating from his research have featured in *Le Monde* (France), discussing Catalan independence; in *La Tercera* (Chile), the *Irish Times*, and the *New York Times*, and also in broadcasts by ZDF (Germany) and Belarussian television, discussing the continuing legacy of Franco, including the possible exhumation; in *Diário de Notícias* (Portugal), on Santiago Carillo; and in *Folha de S.Paulo* (Brazil), discussing the abdication of King Juan Carlos I [P].

### Services to UK-Spanish relations

Lastly, in 2018, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, Preston was awarded a Knighthood, being recognised in the diplomatic service and overseas list for his services to UK/Spain relations [Q].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] Supporting statement from Professor Julián Casanova, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 27 March 2019.

[B] Supporting statement from Antoni Bassas Onieva, Catalan journalist and broadcaster, 7 November 2020.

[C] Supporting statement from Ángel Viñas, economist and historian, 1 November 2020.

[D] Supporting statement from Carles Casajuana, Spanish Ambassador to the UK 2008-12, 2 November 2020.

[E] Supporting statement from Dr Maria Teresa Miguel, psychotherapist and psychologist, 23 November 2019.

[F] "Orwell, an 'arrogant partisan' for the Spanish Civil War", *El País*, 29 January 2018.

[G] "City of Barcelona rewards social and collective consciousness", *El País*, 3 February 2016.

[H] "Paul Preston, new Honoris Causa by the UB", *El Nacional*, 14 June 2016.

[I] "The Civil War, according to Paul Preston and José Pablo García", *La Opinión de Málaga*, 31 May 2016.

[J] "Cazarabet talks with ...José Pablo García", [www.cazarabet.com/conversacon/fichas/fichas1/gcepablogarcia.htm](http://www.cazarabet.com/conversacon/fichas/fichas1/gcepablogarcia.htm). Retrieved 10 November 2020.

[K] "The comic raises awareness about democratic memory in Spain", *Público*, 11 April 2018.

[L] "José Pablo García 'dibuja' el ensayo 'La muerte de Guernica', de Paul Preston", RTVE, 11 April 2017.

[M] "XV Gernika Awards for Peace and Reconciliation 2019", 15 April 2019.

[N] Supporting statement from Major Caroline Way, British Army.

[O] "Paul Preston proposes that Franco be buried at sea", *El Diario*, 13 September 2018; "The head of state on October 1, 1936: Franco or Azana?", *El País*, 6 June 2019.

[P] International media reports: BBC News, 1 October 2017; *Le Monde*, 19 November 2017 (in French); *La Tercera*, 19 November 2015; *Irish Times*, 26 October 2019; *New York Times*, 7 July 2018; ZDF, 14 November 2017; *Folha de S.Paulo*, 6 April 2014

[Q] "Knights Bachelor: Diplomatic Service and Overseas List", *The London Gazette: Official Public Record*, 9 June 2018.