

The Unlikely Alliance between Spain and Germany During World War II: Franco and Hitler's Adverse Relationship Regarding Material Support, Manpower and the Jewish Question

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Franco's arduous rise to power was aided and abetted by the material, financial and physical support of the Axis powers—Germany and Italy. The Nationalists' victory in the Spanish Civil War was due in large part to the generosity of the Germans and Italians (a favor of sorts). The Axis expected this favor to be returned at a later date during the war effort.

This paper is concerned with Franco and Hitler's tenuous relationship throughout World War II. Although Franco owed a debt of gratitude to the Axis, he was not at all interested in becoming involved in the world conflict. Through cunning diplomacy and incessant platitudes, Franco was able to stall Hitler's frequent demands to enter into the Second World War.

Spain at the Start of World War II

Before the start of World War II, Spain was clearly in need of recovery from her own Civil War. The post-war economy endeavored to stabilize and the Spanish people were literally struggling to survive. A shortage of food was causing great hardships on the people (poor harvests compounded the grave situation). Even today, because of the hunger and suffering of post-Civil War Spain, people follow the custom of kissing a piece of bread when it inadvertently falls to the floor. This is a contemporary reminder to the Spaniards of today of how precious the flour used in baking bread was to the people who survived the Spanish Civil War.

Franco was continually consolidating his power, fighting off factions still loyal to the Republican regime. He began his rule as Caudillo with an iron fist; he believed that in order to make Spain the great nation it had been centuries before, certain fundamental steps had to be taken. Roman Catholicism was made the state religion, which in turn paved the way for basic Catholic ordinances to permeate the national consciousness. Thus, divorce was outlawed, as was abortion—following two Catholic dogmas. Franco was regarded as a “super-Catholic,” just as the Catholic monarchs Isabel and Ferdinand had been. The Generalissimo felt strongly that he had a moral, as well as a religious, obligation to restore “the supreme destiny of Spain.”¹

Franco was anticipating the coming world conflict and made conscious efforts to prepare for its outbreak. A shake-up in his cabinet occurred when he retired and transferred key officials, which signaled that Spain might be expected to participate in the war effort. The vice-president of the cabinet was removed from his position and his duties were given to Franco's pro-Nazi brother-in-law, Serrano Suñer. He controlled the Spanish press and “continued with his plan to fashion Spain to his ideal of ‘one leader, one party’, and a mass organization directed by a minority of devout believers.”² Because of Suñer's pro-Nazi feelings, he believed the Axis to be invincible. Thus, he began his campaign to influence public opinion in support of Germany.

The anti-semitic attitudes adopted by some of Franco's government officials would eventually prove to be misleading—not everyone in his government shared in these anti-semitic attitudes.

Early on, however, a distinction was not at all noticeable. Franco's brother-in-law would from time to time make reference to the blood unity of Spain and Germany. While other officials would make vehement remarks against the Jews in speeches and in press releases, Franco himself spoke out against Jewry and after coming to power he made hostile overtures toward the Jews which would continue into the start of World War II. In fact, Franco frequently spoke of the "Jewish-Masonic conspiracy" in his speeches.

Even though his attitude was hostile, Franco's position with regard to the Jews was at times vague, certainly obscure and downright undefined. Although he publicly denounced Jews, grouping them with "Liberals, Masons and Communists,"³ it was done for the sake of convenience. In order to avoid suspicion from the Nazis, it was necessary to show a deep and committed unity with German ideology and policy. Franco had an ambiguous style and a frequent change of mind in his stance toward the Jews; he often contradicted his own policies with his actions. An example of this type of inconsistency is as follows:

During a meeting with Nazi Ambassador Dieckhoff, on December 3, 1943, Franco was even more specific; referring to the Jews he said, "Thank God and clear appreciation of danger of our Catholic kings we have for centuries been relieved of that nauseating burden." Curiously enough, six months earlier, on June 15, Franco had protested energetically to Dieckhoff against religious persecution in Germany, and according to the Independent Jewish News Service, "all discrimination against Jewish religion was ordered stopped in 1943."⁴

The Unlikely Alliance

At the start of World War II, Spain had aligned herself quite closely with the Axis powers. During the Civil War, Spain had signed a series of pacts with Germany and Italy, allowing everything from a coordination of policies in the Mediterranean with Italy, to granting mineral mining and quarrying rights to Germany for her aid in the Civil War. "At the end of the Civil War on March 31, 1939, another pact was signed with Germany, bringing the two countries together in political friendship and the development of close military, economic, and cultural ties; further, each side connected itself, in the event of war, to refrain from any act that would be detrimental to the other." Also, Spain secretly signed the Anti-Comintern Pact that same week in a show of solidarity against communism with the nations of Germany, Italy, and Japan.⁵

All of these actions bound Spain more closely with the nations of the Axis. Although Spain tried to maintain a neutral position during World War II, Franco was encouraged regularly by Germany to change Spain's position to one of "non-belligerency"⁶ as a step toward eventual involvement.

Franco felt Spain had little to gain and much to lose—if she were to become actively involved in the war. Franco, as a neutral, could help revitalize his own economy by selling Spain's raw materials to the highest bidder among those countries involved in the war. By the year 1943, the Allies had "cornered almost the entire Spanish production of woolen goods, blankets, sheepskins, lambskins, and fur-lined gloves—a clean-cut piece of pre-emption to which the freezing of many thousand Germans on the Russian front was directly traceable."⁷ Also, Spain had already

disburdened herself of foreign troops (German and Italian) who were occupying Spain during the Civil War, and Franco was not anxious to have German troops roll in over the Pyrene Mountains en route to Gibraltar. If Spain were to enter the European conflict, Franco would have been expected to immediately declare war on England, in order to gain control of Gibraltar.

Hitler pushed for Spain's entrance into the war for three reasons: 1) England would no longer have the privilege to trade with Spain to acquire the necessary ore and pyrite to make war materials, which Spain had in abundance, and was willing to sell to Great Britain; 2) Spain's participation would "severely" demoralize England, Hitler's arch enemy at the time; and 3) with Spain securely on the side of the Axis as a full partner, an Axis attack on Gibraltar was very feasible (something Hitler strongly desired).⁸

Franco stood firm in his decision to remain neutral, rejecting all of Hitler's requests, until June 12, 1940, when Spain announced its position of "neutrality" was changed to one of "non-belligerence."⁹ Still cautious, Franco was making use of all of his opportunities; believing that an Axis victory in the conflict was possible, Franco wanted to fend off Hitler's pressures by suggesting (non-verbally, but through this action) that Spain was readying for full-scale participation in the Second World War. In a letter to Mussolini, Franco also wrote of the need for Spain to take a "clearer stand, one of alertness," thus changing his position to that of non-belligerency.¹⁰

Still sensitive to the feelings of the Spanish people, Franco was apprehensive about negotiating their involvement in a conflict that would once again thrust Spain into a bloody war. Because Spain was still licking her wounds from the Spanish Civil War (i.e. food shortages, bad harvests, unemployment, a debilitated economy), Franco wanted to make absolutely certain the conditions for Spain's entrance into the war were economically advantageous, historically promising (an Axis victory, for instance) and militarily feasible. Thus, Spain constantly stated her three basic demands: French colonies,¹¹ modern military equipment, and supplies of oil and food. Franco was preparing for a battle of wits with Hitler in an arranged meeting where Franco would have to use every type of ploy available to him to stall Hitler's demands.

The Great Hendaye Meeting

At Hendaye, on 23 October [1940], Franco allowed Hitler to talk at great length without interruption. Then, after a pause, he replied at great length, seeing to it that he also was not interrupted. He agreed with each point Hitler had made, except that he qualified the accuracy of each point. Of course, he would come into the war whenever Hitler wanted him to do so, that is to say when Spain thought the moment opportune and she was economically in a position to do so. He went on to make demands on Hitler which he knew Hitler either would not or could not meet—among them one million tons of wheat... He was most grateful to Germany for the help given in the Civil War, but could a friend extort payment from a friend not in a position to repay? ('He made me feel like a Jew', Hitler complained after hours of talk of which in retrospect the Führer was to say: 'I would rather have three or four molars out than meet that man again.')

¹²

The meeting at Hendaye prefaced a long series of letters and diplomatic correspondence between Spain, Germany, and Italy. Through keen diplomatic maneuvering and intellectual savvy, the Generalissimo was able to avoid Hitler's persistent requests for Spain's entrance in the Second World War by increasing Spain's demands for her participation, citing economic hardship, moral

opposition, and poor timing as reasons for not declaring war on the side of the Axis.

Before arriving at Hendaye, Franco cleverly delayed his train an hour. "This is the most important meeting of my life," Franco told a delegate in his entourage. "I'll have to use every trick I can—and this is one of them. If I make Hitler wait, he will be at a psychological disadvantage from the start."¹³ In newsreel of the event, Hitler is seen pacing impatiently at the meeting place, obviously flustered at Franco's lack of punctuality.¹⁴ It is worth noting that Franco's reaction to Hitler's impatience was simply, "My train was late and the Führer was ill at ease with waiting."¹⁵

Hitler's primary goal in meeting with Franco was to secure from Franco a firm commitment as to the date of Spain's active involvement in the war. The fact that Hitler agreed to a personal meeting is a clear indication that he attached a certain amount of importance to the meeting. Because a Nazi victory seemed feasible, Hitler assumed Franco would jump at the chance of being the junior partner in a triumvirate of dictators.¹⁶ In order to convince Franco, Hitler felt it imperative to personally meet and talk with the Spanish dictator. What ensued, however, was an exchange of platitudes between the two leaders that in the end accomplished nothing for Hitler but allowed Franco to avoid entering the war indefinitely.

Spain had previously set her price for entering the war in August of 1940. The German ambassador in Madrid, Eberhard von Stroher, sent a list of demands to Berlin. Within these demands, Franco repeatedly asked for a large portion of territory in North Africa (this demand had historical significance to Spain because of the colony status French Morocco and Gibraltar had to Spain), the use of military hardware, the granting of supplies, food rations and oil.¹⁷

In a letter dated September 22, 1940 from Franco to Hitler, Franco meticulously covers each point that Hitler had mentioned in a previous letter to him. Artfully, Franco avoids Hitler's suggestions to Spain, by pledging unyielding support to the Axis, then denying all requests with reasons why they were not feasible from Spain's point of view. This letter was a preamble to the Great Hendaye meeting, only one month away.¹⁸

Hitler met with the Italian envoy headed by Count Ciano on September 28, 1940 to discuss a proposed meeting between the Führer and Benito Mussolini. During his interview, Hitler and Ciano discussed Spain's price for entering the war. The Spanish proposal was as follows:

1. Germany is to deliver for the coming year 400,000-700,000 tons of grain;
2. Germany is to deliver all the fuel;
3. Germany is to deliver the lacking equipment for the army;
4. Germany is to put up artillery, airplanes, as well as special weapons and special troops for the conquest of Gibraltar;
5. Germany is to hand over all of Morocco and besides that, Oran, and is to help her get a border revision in the west of Rio de Oro;
6. Spain is to promise to Germany, in return, her friendship.¹⁹

Also, during this meeting, the Führer mentioned Franco's invitation to meet at Hendaye and at this time was still trying to decide if a meeting would be needed. At this point, Hitler had already begun to question the Generalissimo's sincerity. After reviewing Franco's demands, Hitler was not at all convinced that Spain had "the same intensity of will for giving as for taking."²⁰

Economically Germany had given out many hundreds of millions for Spain. He [the Führer] had taken the stand that the payment of this debt should be left alone during the war, however that it would have to be taken up again after the victory of Franco. Whenever the Germans demand the payment of the 400 million debt incurred during the Spanish Civil War, this is often interpreted by the Spanish as a tactless confusing of economic and idealistic considerations, and as a German, one feels toward the Spanish almost like a Jew, who wants to make business out of the holiest possessions of mankind. Therefore in all agreements with the Spanish one must to begin with clearly stipulate the terms [sic], and if Germany is to furnish grain, the question of compensation must be settled now already.²¹

Clearly, Hitler learned a valuable lesson during the Spanish Civil War, and was very cautious as not to make the same mistake twice. The Nationalist victory was in large part due to Germany and Italy's help, and the Axis pressured for some type of compensation, at the very least a verbal commitment from Spain to enter World War II.

The Axis powers were becoming rather suspicious of Franco's undying "loyalty," which finally prompted Hitler to grant Franco a personal meeting at Hendaye. It was Hitler's inexhaustible desire to persuade Franco by enticing him with the advantages in store for Spain if Franco would align himself with the Axis; Hitler promised Franco a place in history by being an active part of the winning side. Franco, however, remained stoic and prudent. First, after the meeting finally was underway, Franco made his usual *lieu commun* by hailing the Axis and Hitler personally, thanking him for the right to a personal meeting. These trivialities aside, Franco thus began voicing all of his concerns why Spain was not actually in any position economically, politically, or militarily to proceed into a world conflict.²² Hitler, of course, refuted Franco's apprehensions and began an extensive, detailed analysis of the global situation.

Franco pointed out to Hitler that Britain had a lot of fight left in her, and would do so at all costs (even continuing the war from Canada if the need should have arisen). Also, Franco reminded the Führer that the United States was not about to allow England to be defeated, and would enter the war before it appeared dangerous to Great Britain.²³ Acquiring artillery was another problem Spain would have to overcome if she were to enter the war; transporting artillery from Germany was out of the question due to bad roads in the Pyrenees.

Bringing his argument to a close, Franco once again raised the price for Spain's entry into the war. A declaration of war by Spain, Franco maintained, could cause Britain to attack her. Spain would need artillery, arms, and men to defend her western frontier. Was Hitler prepared to provide them? Franco then submitted a request for grain that was several hundred thousand tons higher than his previous request. Little wonder that Hitler became enraged, and at one point even jumped up and threatened to break off the meeting.²⁴

Needless to say, the meeting ended without any concrete agreement. Germany was to send the necessary material to Spain, and Franco was to consider entering the war.

In November, Hitler asked Serrano Suñer to come to Germany to discuss Spain's role in the war. Franco, knowing his brother-in-law, and believing strongly that Hitler was going to pressure Suñer into committing Spain to a date of entry into the conflict, gave the strictest of orders not to

agree to anything. In Franco's words, "Spain cannot and must not take part in the war."²⁵

Because Serrano Suñer was an avid anti-semite and supporter of the Axis, Hitler most likely thought that he could influence the Caudillo's brother-in-law through pressure to make a commitment. Suñer, on the other hand, was very clever in his dealings with Hitler.

One thing was plain to Serrano [Suñer]: had he said 'No', categorically, to Hitler's demands, the Führer would have developed an irresistible urge to violate Spain's neutrality. In fact, as a delaying tactic, Serrano Suñer convinced Hitler to send a German expert to Spain to assess Spain's needs and determine precisely when Spain would be properly prepared for war.²⁶

Suñer's countermove falls directly in line with the diplomacy Franco had been using with Hitler. By giving a pittance of assurance and expressing a desire to involve themselves in the war, the Spaniards quite knowingly outmaneuvered the advance of Germany into Spain, and any involvement in the actual war effort. In 1941, Franco did agree to allow a battalion of Spanish troops to fight "Communism" on the Russian Front.

The Spanish Blue Division was realized through temporary good relations between Germany and Spain during the summer of 1941. On June 22, Hitler invaded Russia, and by the middle of July the Spanish volunteers were en route to the Russian Front.²⁷ After a short training period in Germany, the Spanish soldiers donned German uniforms, affixed an insignia of Spain on the sleeve, and "swore allegiance to the Nazi Führer for whom they set out to do battle."²⁸

The improved relations could be attributed to two main reasons:

...one was that Germany was now fighting Bolshevism, which Franco had always considered the main enemy of the West, and the other that, while the Germans were otherwise engaged on the eastern front, their pressure on the Spaniards diminished, at first to vanishing point. Serrano [Suñer] told Strohrer²⁹ on the day of the invasion, after consulting Franco, that the "Spanish government had noted with the greatest satisfaction the beginning of the struggle against Bolshevik Russia", and offered volunteers to fight on the Russian Front "in memory of Germany's fraternal assistance during the Civil War."³⁰

Franco and his officials referred to "fraternal" ties and a common hatred of communism to detract from the central issue of Spain's entry into World War II. The invasion of Russia by the Germans was beneficial to Franco because it did buy him some time to procrastinate further Spain's full participation in the war effort. By sending a battalion of volunteers to aid the Axis subtly reassured Hitler that Spain was coming around. More than aiding Hitler and the Axis, Spain's "Blue Division" was a retaliatory attempt against Russia for her assistance to the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War.

An interesting question facing the world in the early forties was this: Why had Franco allowed himself to become so aligned with the Axis, if in fact he was going to resist association with great perseverance? One possible answer was ably given by Serrano Suñer, according to author Chaim Lipschitz; it was an act of more or less self-preservation. "Had Spain flagrantly defied Hitler, Germany would soon have launched an attack against her."³¹ It is more likely that Franco had

actually believed an Axis victory likely early in the war. This would explain his non-committal policies and actions, not to mention his desire to appear loyal in the eyes of Hitler. Had an Axis victory transpired, Franco would want to be more ingratiated to the Axis in order to fare well in post-war claims.

Early in 1941, Hitler and Franco exchanged a series of letters. Hitler further pressured Spain to declare war on England and thus enter the world conflict.³² [See Appendix A] By this time, Hitler was convinced Franco would not enter the war, and he attempted to have an organized coup to remove Franco from power: Also in the plans was an invasion of Spain. “By November 13 of that year, ‘a top secret directive from Berlin strictly forbade the German Ambassador in Madrid even to discuss Spain’s possible entry into the war or any joint operations’.”³³ In July of 1942, Hitler began another mass build-up of forces and hardware (including tanks, planes and artillery) on the French-Spanish border in the Pyrenees. Hitler wanted to occupy Spain because he thought the Allies would try to gain control of the Gibraltar Straits by occupying Spain themselves, believing that “Germany must be ready to seize Spain and Portugal by force and integrate them into the economic life of Europe at the very moment when the danger of an enemy seizure of the Peninsula is imminent, even if such a step should entail great economic sacrifices for the rest of Continental Europe.” Franco, however, discovered Hitler’s plans and fortified the Pyrenees to withstand a German attack. Hitler was thus deterred from going through with his plans, at least for the time being.³⁴

Franco returned to the position of “neutral” once again in the summer of 1943.³⁵ By this time, it was apparent that Hitler was not going to win the war. Franco had said after the meeting at Hendaye that he believed the Führer to be “an affected man, with nothing sincere about him... an actor on a stage, and one could see the mechanics of his acting.”³⁶ By 1943, Franco had resisted Hitler’s advances quite cunningly; now he was more concerned with ingratiating himself with the Allies and the world in general.

As the year 1943 was coming to a close, the Generalissimo met with German Ambassador Dieckhoff on December 3rd to discuss Spain’s changing foreign policy which was perceived by the Nazi government as being pro-Allied and contrary to German policy. Ambassador Dieckhoff detailed the meeting with a memorandum:

I explained to the Chief of State [Franco] that I had now been in Madrid more than seven months and had attempted to secure for myself a picture of the Spanish foreign policy. I had the feeling, and the Reich government was under the same impression, that the foreign policy of Spain was recently beginning to change. We observed in a number of spheres little of a positive attitude of the Spanish Government with respect to Germany and we especially had the feeling that this change in the Spanish attitude was to be traced to English and American pressure.³⁷

Of course Franco followed with a lengthy rebuttal, reassuring the Ambassador that Spain was not bowing to Anglo-Saxon pressures and by no means was Spanish policy changing—Spain was still committed to the idea that Germany wanted a strong Nationalist Spain; without a German victory in the war, the Franco regime would cease to be in existence. However, Franco gently reminded Dieckhoff that Spain was still recovering from her civil war and Spain could only recover if it

imported certain products (gasoline, cotton, etc.) from the United States. Germany could not spare such items, thus Franco opted to trade with the Allies; in return, Spain was to tone down her pro-Axis statements, and would discontinue actions that were undisputably unneutral.³⁸ Ambassador Dieckoff continued:

I then mentioned in detail those points to which we *especially* [italics added] objected (concession by the Spanish Government in the question of passage of French fugitives through Spain to North Africa, compliant conduct of the Spanish Government in the question of Italian merchant ships in Spanish harbors, unjustified internment of various German U-boat crews, withdrawal of the Blue Division,³⁹ action against German ships in Vigo and in the Canary Islands, and so forth).⁴⁰

The “fugitives” referred to above, are of course Jewish refugees that the Franco government was permitting to enter through the Pyrenees Mountains. Franco, in order to pacify his Nazi counterpart mentioned the attitude the Spanish Government had against Bolshevism and Communism, and reassured the Ambassador that this attitude was aligned with the attitude Spain fostered against Jewry and Freemasonry.⁴¹ According to Dieckoff, Franco stated with concern that the passage of French refugees through Spain to North Africa was a “problem which has for a long time been causing the Spanish Government annoyance and inconveniences.” Franco continued:

It was a matter of several thousand people, almost all of them bad, undesirable elements, who had in some way succeeded in getting into Spain across the border of the Pyrenees, and who could not be turned over to the German authorities since this would provoke a frightful outcry on the part of the Anglo-Saxons, and who therefore must either be retained in Spain or thrust out over the other borders [to North Africa]. The retention of these people meant not only a great financial burden but also a certain internal political danger since it was a matter predominantly of Communistic riff-raff.⁴²

The Ambassador protested this action as favoring the enemy by reminding the Caudillo that these people were most likely being armed and trained to fight Germans, by the former French president, General Charles de Gaulle. Franco offered the following dialogue to Dieckoff to counterstep his objections:

...the Caudillo answered by saying that this was not to be feared, since it was a matter of people so inferior and so undesirous of fighting, who had actually fled from France only to avoid work, and that their entry into the DeGaulle army would mean no strengthening of the enemy fighting power worth mentioning at all.⁴³

Franco clearly was dancing around Dieckoff’s points and stood strong as not to admit that in fact, Spain’s policies were changing to favor the Allies.⁴⁴ Franco offered legal implications and an ongoing investigation to satisfy the German Ambassador’s questions about the incidents concerning the Italian ships and the merchant ships. The internment of the crew of the German U-boat was answered: “...the Caudillo was of the opinion that on this point the English had been extraordinarily sharp in insisting that their crews be interned.”⁴⁵

In summarizing, the Caudillo said that he believed that this cautious policy of Spain was not only in the interest of Spain but also in the interest of Germany.... The Caudillo therefore urgently requested that if possible we should send more weapons than we had already sent and more than we had in mind. The Chief of State concluded the conversation in a cordial fashion, by emphasizing again his hope for the German victory and his friendship for Germany and very warmly requested me to greet the Führer most cordially on his behalf.⁴⁶

Franco, through a certain finesse and with obvious success, bumped his Spanish bull's horns with Nazi Germany and won yet another round in the battle of wits. His avoidance of certain subjects (i.e. Blue Division withdrawal) and his constant flattery, coupled with his simplistic explanations of questions, allowed Franco to elude German pressures. Contrary to his comments to Ambassador Dieckhoff, Franco did become more willing to allow the Allies certain privileges, one of which was the establishment of a Jewish refugee headquarters to help establish locations for asylum for the many homeless people that had already begun to enter Spain. The year 1943 was in fact a milestone in the humanitarian cooperation of Franco's Spain with regard to the salvation of thousands of Jews.

参考文献

1. George Hills, *Spain*, p. 239.
2. Ibid.
3. Hills, *Franco: The Man and His Nation* (New York: Macmillan, 1967) p. 17.
4. Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, p. 19. Citing *Jewish News*, October 17, 1944; José María Dausinaque, *España Tenzia Razón*, Madrid, 1950, pp. 212-223; and Independent Jewish News Service, December 24, 1943.
5. Haim Avni, *Spain, the Jews, and Franco*, p. 56.
6. At the beginning of World War II, Italy had declared itself non-belligerent rather than neutral due to pressure from Germany. In a meeting with Mussolini in 1940, Franco asked him: "Duce, if you could get out of the war, would you? Mussolini cried out, 'You bet I would'." (Hills, *Spain*, p. 244.)
7. Ernest K. Lindley and Edward Weintal, "How We Dealt with Spain," *Harper's*, December, 1944, p. 25.
8. Department of State Documents, *The Spanish Government and the Axis* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 4. (Hereafter DOSD)
9. A time table of events suggests that Franco needed to make some type of overture to Hitler to pacify the Führer's aggressive tendencies. Earlier in 1940, on April 9th, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway; on May 10th Hitler's troops invaded Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg. On May 17th, Germany invaded France and on May 27th the British were forced to evacuate from Dunkirk, in France. Italy then declared war on Britain and France on June 10th, and shortly, on June 14th, the Germans were occupying Paris, causing France to surrender. Thus, Franco's change in position on June 12th was most likely prompted by the apparent successes of the Axis, and the fear of Hitler continuing his sweep on through the Pyrenees to invade Spain (if Franco had not shown some positive, outward support). Jeane Cooke, Ann Kramer, and Theodore Rowland-Entwistle, *History's Timeline* (New York: Crescent Books, 1981), p. 209.
10. DOSD, p. 6.
11. Franco was deeply affected by Spain's poor faring in the 1898 Spanish-American War. He envisioned Spain expanding her territories once again to incorporate lost colonies and to gain new ones. (Avni, p. 58-59).
12. Hills, *Spain*, p. 243, citing Count Galeazzo Ciano, *L'Europa Verso la Catastrofe* (Milan, 1948), pp. 603-604.
13. George Hills, *Franco: The Man and His Nation*, p. 363.
14. Speaking in terms of Spanish culture, an hour's delay does not necessarily constitute tardiness; it is often considered customary to be a half-hour or hour late for meetings and informal functions. However, Franco clearly was aware of the punctuality of his German counterpart and chose to frustrate the Führer to gain an immediate edge.
15. Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, p. 26, citing from Paul Schmitt, *Hitler's Interpreter*

- (Heinemann, 1951), pp. 194-197.
16. Samuel Hoare, *Complacent Dictator* (New York: Knopf, 1947), pp. 78-79.
 17. For a complete listing see, Department of State Documents, *The Spanish Government and the Axis* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 3.
 18. For an English translation of the complete text, see DOSD, pp. 14-16.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19. This quote is taken from the meeting notes between Hitler and Ciano, September 22, 1940.
 22. For a complete synopsis of Franco's comments at the Hendaye meeting, see DOSD, pp. 21-25.
 23. Crozier, *Franco*, p. 330.
 24. Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, p. 27, citing DOSD, p. 21-25; Hills, *Franco*, p. 347; Crozier, *Franco*, p. 330; and Ciano's Diplomatic Papers, p. 402.
 25. Hills, *Franco*, p. 348.
 26. Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, p. 27, citing Ramón Serrano Suñer, *Entre Hendaya y Gibraltar* (Madrid, 1947, p. 181).
 27. Crozier, *Franco*, p. 343.
 28. Avni, *Spain, the Jews, and Franco*, p. 60.
 29. Eberhardt von Strohrer was Nazi Germany's second ambassador to Nationalist Spain, and later was appointed as the German envoy to Franco's regime (August 1937).
 30. Crozier, *Franco*, p. 343.
 31. Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, p. 28.
 32. See Appendix A, No. 12-13. Hitler demands Franco to commit himself to assist in the war effort, and Franco, after praising Hitler and saying allegiance to the Axis, flatly denies Hitler any help, and again raises the price for entry into the war. It is interesting to note that in all of the published documentation from DOSD, *The Spanish Government and the Axis*, the Jewish question is only mentioned twice.
 33. Lipschitz, *Franco, Spain, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, p. 35, citing German Documents, vol. XIII, no. 467, p. 774.
 34. *Ibid.*, quoting in part, Hitler from the Fuehrer Naval Conferences (Washington, 1942), pp. 126-127.
 35. Crozier, *Franco*, pp. 379-380. Franco realized that as a neutral he could help Spain more by selling minerals and ores found in Spain to the highest bidder. Franco knew the Allies were prepared and in a position to bid Germany out of the market. Also, on July 29 Franco directed the Spanish press to show no partiality between the Axis and the Allies, further strengthening his neutral position. (*Ibid.*, pp. 378-380.)
 36. Hills, *Franco: The Man and His Nation* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 363.
 37. DOSD, *The Spanish Government and the Axis*, p. 36.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
 39. On October 12, 1943 Franco put into action the process of removing the Blue Division from the Russian Front. Earlier on October 1st, Franco formally reaffirmed Spain's neutrality. (Crozier, *Franco*, pp. 378-379.)
 40. DOSD, p. 37.
 41. In the published documentation between Spain and Germany, the Department of State pamphlet, *The Spanish Government and the Axis*, the Jewish question is only mentioned twice. This is a curious observation since Hitler was fanatically obsessed with his hatred against the Jewish people. It seems peculiar that Hitler did not illicit Franco's support more enthusiastically in combatting the so called "Jewish Problem."
 42. DOSD, p. 37.
 43. *Ibid.*
 44. Crozier, *Franco*, p. 375-380.
 45. DOSD, p. 37.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Appendix A: Diplomatic Correspondence

Department of State Documents, *The Spanish Government and the Axis* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 17.

No. 12. Letter From Hitler to Franco, February 6, 1941

February 6, 1941

DEAR CAUDILLO !

If I write this letter it is done in order to determine once again with extreme clarity the individual phases of the development of a situation which is not only important for Germany and Italy but could have been of decisive importance to Spain.

When we had our meeting, it was my aim to convince you, Caudillo, of the necessity of common action of those states whose interests in the final analysis are certainly tied up indissolubly with each other. For centuries, Spain has been persecuted by the same enemies against whom today Germany and Italy are forced to fight. In addition to the earlier imperial strivings inimical to our three nations there now arose, moreover, antitheses conditioned by world-outlook: The Jewish-international democracy, which reigns in these states, will not excuse any of us for having followed a course which seeks to secure the future of our peoples in accordance with fundametal principles determined by the people and not those imposed by capital. As concerns the German determination to follow this fight through to the final consequence, I need waste no word. The Duce thinks no differently. On the basis of this analysis, the Japanese people as well will not in the long run get by, unless it be by a submission sacrificing the future of the Japanese people. I am now convinced that Spain faces the same fate. Caudillo, if your struggle against the elements of destruction in Spain was successful, it was only because of the democratic opponents forced to be cautious by attitude of Germany and Italy. *You will be forgiven, Caudillo, but never for this victory!* Just as little does England think of letting you remain for a long period in North Africa opposite Gibraltar—as soon as she is once again in a position of power. The Spanish seizure if the Tangier zone would in such a case—and this is my deepest conviction, Caudillo—only be a passing intermezzo. England, and probably America too, will do everthing to render this entry into the Mediterranean in the future even more secure under their dominion than up to now. It is my most heartfelt conviction that the battle which Germany and Italy are now fighting out is thus determining the future destiny of Spain as well. Only in the case of our victory will the present regime continue to exist. Should Germany and Italy lose this war, however, then any future for a really national and independent Spain would be impossible.

I have thus been striving to convince you, Caudillo, of the necessity in the interests of your own country and the future of the Spanish people, of uniting yourself with those countries who formerly sent soldiers to support you, and who today of necessity, are also battling not only for their own existence, but indirectly for the national future of Spain as well.

Now at our meeting we agreed that Spain declare its readiness to sign the Three-Power Pact and to enter the war. In setting the date, periods in the far future were never considered or even mentioned, but instead the conversation always was concerned with a very short time-limit within which you, Caudillo, still believed that you could carry out various economic measures favorable for your country.

I personally have been skeptical from the beginning about the hope of receiving very soon more real economic benefits for Spain.

1. England indeed has no thought at all of really helping Spain! England is only endeavoring

to postpone the Spanish entry into the war, to put it off in order in this way continually to increase her distress and thus to be able finally to overthrow the Spanish Government of that time.

2. But even if England were about to think otherwise, in an impulse toward some kind of sentimentality never present in British history up to now, she could not really help Spain under any conditions. She is absolutely not in the condition even in transportation alone to aid another country in a time in which she herself has already been forced to the most rigorous retrenchments in her standard of living. And the need for transport space will as the months go by not decrease but instead will get more and more serious.

In spite of the fact that I, therefore—as stated—have been thoroughly skeptical about this from the beginning, I nonetheless brought to bear every bit of appreciation for your efforts in at least trying, even before entering the war, to get shipments of foodstuffs into Spain from countries overseas as well.

Germany, however, has for her part, declared herself ready to deliver to Spain, immediately after undertaking entrance into the war, food, that is—grain—to as great an extent as possible ! Furthermore, Germany has declared herself prepared to replace the 100,000 tons of grain which was waiting in Portugal destined for Switzerland in order that it might benefit Spain immediately. This of course remains contingent upon the final decision for Spain's entry into the war. For about one thing, Caudillo, there must be clarity: We are fighting a battle of life and death and cannot at this time make any gifts. If it should later be asserted that Spain could not enter the war because she received no supplies, that would not be true ! For immediately after settling the entry into the war, a fixed date of which there has as yet been no outward indication at all, Spain would receive the first supplies, that is, 100,000 tons of grain. I doubt whether 100,000 tons of grain could really have reached Spain from abroad within the same period of time, even if such an inclination had existed. Thus, I also doubt that this is going to happen. The assertion, however, that—if our grain had been delivered immediately—the Spanish people could thus by propaganda have been prepared for entry into the war is self-contradictory for another reason.

You, yourself, Caudillo, have indeed personally indicated to me the importance of not yet consummating publicly the entrance into the Three-Power Pact, because you feared that this would have hurt your other efforts, for example in obtaining more grain, indeed would perhaps have wrecked them. How much less possible would it then have been to carry on open propaganda for entering the war? No, I am taking the liberty once more to confirm that:

1. During our conversation, it was never considered that Spain's entry into the war would perchance not take place until autumn or the coming winter, and that—

2. *Germany was ready to furnish supplies to the Spanish Government at the moment when the final date for entering the war was determined.*

When I had the request made to you, Caudillo, with the impression of urgency to bring relief to the Italian ally and to set this date in the middle or the end of January, that is, to permit the German march against Gibraltar to begin on or after January 10, in order to start attacking at the end of January, then for the first time our negotiators were unequivocally informed that such an early date could absolutely not be considered and this was again motivated by economic factors. However, when I thereupon let it be known again that Germany was indeed ready to begin at once with deliveries of grain, Admiral Canaris received the conclusive information that this delivery of grain would not be decisive at all, for via railway, it certainly could accomplish no practical effect. It was now further declared that since we had already made available batteries for the Canary Islands and moreover intended also to provide dive-bombers for additional security—even that was not decisive, since the Canary Islands from the point of view of food could no longer be held after six months.

That it is absolutely not a matter of economic factors but rather of others is apparent from the last statement in which it is stated that for climatic reasons to march in this season could not succeed, but on the contrary should only be considered at the earliest in the autumn or winter.

Under these conditions, of course, I do not understand why one should first want to declare an event impossible on economic grounds, which is now said to be impossible simply for climatic reasons. Now I do not believe that the German Army would be disturbed during its march in January by a climate which in itself is nothing out of the ordinary for us. In any case, we solved our problems in the Norwegian campaign under varied conditions and with severe climatic hindrances in the form of snow and ice, not to mention the fact that, from the participation of German soldiers and officers in your campaign, Caudillo, the climatic conditions of Spain are nothing unfamiliar to us. I regret most profoundly, Caudillo, this your opinion and your stand since:

1. I feel it my duty to bring relief to my Italian friend and ally and thus be of help to him indeed be of help at the moment when he experienced an unfortunate mishap. The attack on Gibraltar and the closing of the Straits would have changed the Mediterranean situation in one stroke.

2. I am of the conviction that in war, time is one of the most important factors. Months which one lets slip by are often never regained again!

3. Finally however it is clear that, on January 10 if we had been able to cross the Spanish border with the first formations, Gibraltar would today be in our hands. That means: Two months have been lost, which otherwise would have helped to decide world history.

4. I am further of the convictions that Spain's economic condition would have improved and not become worse because of what would in any case have come to Spain through us and that on the other hand the deliveries which since then actually came to Spain from abroad during this time can only amount to a fraction compared to that which would in any case have been delivered at once by us.

But quite aside from this, Caudillo, I should like now to mention the following:

The entrance of Spain into this struggle has certainly not been conceived of as exclusively to the benefit of the interests of Germany and Italy. Spain herself has advanced very great territorial claims for the fulfilment of which the Duce and I had declared ourselves ready in every degree which could at all be reconciled with an acceptable new arrangement of the African colonial possession for Europe and its countries. And I may point out in this regard that in this struggle up to now first Germany and then Italy, have suffered the most prodigious blood sacrifice, and that both, in spite of this, themselves made very modest claims.

In any case, however, the moment of military operations above all can only be proposed by the one who therewith assumes the main burden of the struggle and who must therefore calculate it into the total program of a military analysis which is after all of world-wide extent. That I myself have no other goal in mind than the common success is certainly understandable. Indeed in this case, Caudillo, my urging in and of itself only proves the strength of my consciousness of responsibility toward my ally as well. For wheresoever in the course of this war difficulties should arise, it will be my unbending will to help out with them; and my decision to make good in the final settlement whatever during one or another stage of this war can perhaps at first have miscarried. This affects Spain as well. *Spain will never get other friends than those given [her] in the Germany and Italy of today, unless it becomes a different Spain. This different Spain however would only be the Spain of decline and of final collapse. Even for this reason alone, Caudillo, I believe that we three men, the Duce, you, and I, are bound to one another by the most rigorous compulsion of history that is*

possible, and that thus we in this historical analysis ought to obey as the supreme commandment the realization that in such difficult times, not so much an apparently wise caution as the bold heart, rather, can save nations.

Moreover, Caudillo, this war is decided regardless of what ephemeral successes the British believe they can achieve anywhere on the periphery. For independently thereof, the fact remains that the British power in Europe is broken and that the mightiest military machine in the world stands ready for every additional task which may be put to it to solve. And how good and reliable this instrument is, the future will prove.

Accept my cordial and comradely greetings.

Your

ADOLF HITLER

No. 13. Letter From General Franco to Hitler

EL PARDO, 26 February 1941

DEAR FÜHRER:

Your letter of the 6th makes me wish to send you my reply promptly, since I consider it necessary to make certain clarifications and confirmation of my loyalty.

I consider as you yourself do that the destiny of history has united you with myself and with the Duce in an indissoluble way. I have never needed to be convinced of this and as I have told you more than once, our Civil War since its very inception and during its entire course is more than proof. I also share your opinion that the fact that Spain is situated on both shores of the Strait forces her to the utmost enmity toward England, who aspires to maintain control of it.

We stand today where we have always stood, in a resolute manner and with the firmest conviction. You must have no doubt about my absolute loyalty to this political concept and to the realization of the union of our national destinies with those of Germany and Italy. With the same loyalty, I have made clear to you since the beginning of these negotiations the conditions of our economic situation, the only reasons why it has not been possible up to now to determine the date of Spain's participation.

Having in mind our own post-war difficulties, you will recall that I have never fixed too short a period for our entry into the war. Permit me, Führer, to say that the time elapsed until this moment has not been completely lost, since we have been obtaining not certainly great enough quantities of grain to permit us to build stocks, but certainly for some of the bread necessary for daily sustenance of the people who otherwise would have perished of starvation in considerable numbers.

Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that in this question of the supply of foodstuffs, Germany has not fulfilled her offers of effective support until very recently. We are now beginning to move in the realm of concrete facts and within this field there is nothing I desire more than to hasten the negotiations as much as possible. With this end in view several days ago I sent to you information on our needs as to foodstuffs and in general economic and military fields. These data are open to new examination, clarification, verification, and discussion in order to reach quickly the solution which interests us both equally. However, you will understand that at a time when the Spanish people is suffering the greatest starvation and enduring all sorts of privations and sacrifices, it is not certainly propitious for me to ask further sacrifices of them if my appeal is not

preceded by an alleviation of this situation, which at the same time may permit us to carry out beforehand an intelligent propaganda on the constant friendship and effective support of the German people, which will reawaken in the Spaniard the sentiments of sincere friendship and admiration which he has always had for your Nation.

My remarks about our climate were simply an answer to your suggestions, and were not in any way a pretext to postpone indefinitely that which at the right moment it will be our duty to do.

During the recent Bordighera conference I gave proof to the world of the nature of my resolute attitude; this conference also served as a call to the Spanish people marking the direction in which lie their national obligations and the preservation of their existence as a free nation.

One observation I must repeat to your Excellency; the closing of the Strait of Gibraltar is not only a prerequisite for the immediate amelioration of the situation of Italy but also perhaps for the end of the war. However, in order that the closing of Gibraltar may have a decisive value it is also necessary that the Suez Canal be closed at the same time. If this last circumstance should not take place, we who are making the actual contribution of our military effort have the duty sincerely to say that the situation of Spain in the event of an inordinately prolonged war would then become extremely difficult.

You speak of our demands and you compare them with yours and those of Italy. I do not believe that one could describe the Spanish demands as excessive, still less, when one considers the tremendous sacrifice of the Spanish people in a battle which was a worthy forerunner of the present one. Concerning this point the necessary preciseness does not exist in our agreement as well. The protocol of Hendaye—permit me to express it—is in this respect extremely vague and Your Excellency remembers the conditions (today so changed) of this vagueness and lack of preciseness. The facts in their logical development have today left far behind the circumstances which in the month of October had to be taken into consideration with respect to the prevailing situation, and the protocol then existing must at the present be considered outmoded.

These are my answers, dear Führer, to your observations. I want to dispel with them all shadow of doubt and declare that I stand ready at your side, entirely and decidedly at your disposal, united in a common historical destiny, desertion from which would mean my suicide and that of the Cause which I have led and represent in Spain. I need no confirmation of my faith in the triumph of your Cause and I repeat that I shall always be a loyal follower of it.

Believe me your sincere friend, with my cordial greetings,

F. FRANCO

To:

His Excellency ADOLF HITLER
Führer of the German People

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