

Wayne H. Bowen. *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the New Order.* Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000. xii + 250 pp. \$34.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8262-1300-6.



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"Pragmatic Enthusiasm": Interpreting Collaboration in Franco's Spain

The complex relations engaged in by Francisco Franco's Spanish dictatorship before, during and after the Second World War continue to fascinate historians. Franco guided his regime, brought to power in the Spanish Civil War with German and Italian assistance, from a position as a pro-Axis "non-belligerent", then a neutral, and then, after the war, as a friend of the West. How did various states approach Spain? What did Franco do to manage such a feat of survival? What international and other conditions existed at the time? Why did Spain not join the Axis in war? Such questions have been asked anew, as a recent spate of edited volumes on Spain and its diplomacy demonstrate.[1] Wayne H. Bowen, an Assistant Professor of History at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, approaches the question of Franco's Spain from two perspectives, both of which differ from the works cited above. Focusing on those who wanted Spain to join the Axis, "Naziphiles," as he calls them, Bowen asks what their attitudes and actions were,

and why they failed to convince Franco to fully commit Spain to a role in the construction of a New Order. He also uses the Spanish case to re-examine the general question of collaboration in Hitler's Europe, arguing that we must understand the "genuine enthusiasm" for the Nazi New Order that existed through to the end of the war, enthusiasm that was motivated by both ideological affinity and political pragmatism working hand-in-hand (p. 9).

Drawing on evidence from a number of archives in Spain and on interviews with "Naziphile" Spaniards, as well as German and Anglo-American sources, Bowen traces the history of Spanish Naziphiles from 1933-45, with a particular focus on the Spanish fascist movement, the Falange, and on the volunteers who fought and worked for the German side. He argues that historians of Franco's Spain have placed too much emphasis on the role of Franco himself, and that the Falange, as a result, has been too often dismissed as "a well-organized band of yes-men" (p. 7). Rather than dismiss the Falange, or the thousands who joined Spain's "Blue Division" on the Eastern

front or worked in German factories, Bowen sees those who succumbed to the "Nazi temptation" (p. 6) as important contributors to the Spanish regime.

After outlining the creation of the Falange and the history of Hispano-German relations during the Spanish Civil War, Bowen consistently develops his argument with reference to a number of specific groups or individuals: within the Falange, those members based in Berlin; the syndicalist movement led by Gerardo Salvador Merino, who desired to reorganize Spanish labor on the model of the German Labor Front (DAF); General Austin Munoz Grandes, the commander of the Blue Division, and the troops sent to Spain with the Blue Division; those who organized and volunteered for work in German factories; and various Falangist leaders, such as Ramon Serrano Suner or Pilar Primo de Rivera, head of the women's section. He argues that what led these individuals to become Naziphiles, at various times and to various degrees, was not so much anti-Communism, which existed throughout the Franco regime, but rather the goals of social revolution and territorial expansion. In both cases, Hitler's Germany served as an inspiration for regime development and as a potential ally for a resurgent Spain (p. 58).

As a history of one particular group within the Falange "family" of Franco's Spain [2], Bowen's book provides considerable insight into the intellectual and pragmatic ties between Falangists and Nazis. A typical example is the case of Pedro Lain Entralgo, a press official in the Spanish Interior Ministry who traveled three times to Berlin in 1939-40, supported by former German Ambassador to Spain Wilhelm Faupel's Hispano-German Cultural Institute. In his writings and speeches, Lain Entralgo called for Spanish colonial expansion as well as spiritual engagement with the battle between the "New Order" and a corrupt "Old Regime" (pp. 74, 79). Of course, Hitler was unwilling to grant General Franco colo-

onial concessions in North Africa and military assistance at their meeting in Hendaye, France, in October 1940, a fact that kept Spain officially out of the Axis camp. Nonetheless, as Bowen demonstrates, the idea of collaboration should not be dismissed in the case of Spain. Even after Hendaye, the merger of practicality and ideology drew Falangists and others to the idea of collaboration.

If initial enthusiasm for collaboration peaked after the fall of France in 1940 and the Hendaye meeting, the Nazi war against the Soviet Union launched in June 1941 provided Naziphiles with another opportunity to rally to the German cause. Indeed, in this they were granted the support of the Caudillo, beginning a period of "official collaboration" between Spain and Nazi Germany that lasted for eighteen months (p. 103). Most notable in this effort, of course, was the Blue Division, the Spanish volunteer regiment sent to fight in Russia, which consisted of a considerable number of Falange members but was also created amidst an atmosphere of popular anti-Communist and anti-Soviet sentiment across Spain. Bowen's most significant contribution to the study of official collaboration is his analysis of Spanish workers in Germany. Drawing on documents of the Comision Interministerial para el Envio de Trabajadores a Alemania (CIPETA), Bowen outlines the extent of cooperation envisaged by Naziphiles in the Franco government and details the great difficulty in achieving it. An initial goal of sending some 100,000 workers to Germany resulted in a final total of only a few thousand.

The main criticism to be made about this book is the sense that the author is overstating the case when it comes to assessing the importance of the Naziphile element to influencing the decisions of the Franco regime. It is clear that Bowen has made an important contribution to our understanding of the Falange and the Naziphile element within wartime Spain, and he has added to our understanding of the regime's complexity by asserting that Franco and Naziphiles, while both

tempted by Hitler's success, nonetheless differed in their level of commitment to the Nazi New Order (p. 228). Yet he does not convince the reader that there was, in Spain, a fascist threat to Franco's position comparable to the Arrow Cross, which replaced the collaborationist Horthy regime in Hungary in 1944 with Nazi assistance (p. 5). Talks between Munoz Grandes and Hitler about removing Franco were really nothing more than frustrated musings, not real plans (p. 122). The author only seems to concede this reality in the conclusion, where he admits that the conflicts in Spain were amongst allies, and that significant differences of opinion were only tolerated on issues "about which Franco had not entirely decided, and only when the discussions did not threaten his leadership" (p. 227). While Bowen provides the reader with a new appreciation for Naziphilia within Spain, he does not achieve his goal of "de-emphasizing" the role of Franco in the history of the regime's dealings with Nazi Germany. Indeed, Franco remains front and center as the arbiter who granted or denied the desires of Naziphiles.

If anything, Wayne Bowen demonstrates in this work not only the potential of collaboration for the Spanish Falange, but also its limitations. These were apparent not only to the Caudillo, but also to committed Naziphiles. The case of Spanish workers is a good example. Here was an episode in which the Naziphile element had been granted a victory by Franco, and allowed to extend cooperation with Berlin. Yet the target of 100,000 Spanish workers in Germany was never realized in large part because the Germans refused to honor significant aspects of the agreements made, and the Spanish response was to limit the supply of workers. As Bowen argues, despite agreements made, the Germans had no desire to treat Spanish workers any better than Italians or others who were coming to work in much larger numbers (p. 139). The Spanish Falange sought a special relationship with Germany, to profit their country and because of ideological affinity. Yet the very concept of collaboration for the Nazi regime, whether

with Spain or with any other state in Europe, was not grounded in the principle of equality. Bowen adds immeasurably to the analysis of Hispano-German relations during the war by demonstrating that the German Nazi and Spanish Naziphile view of the "New Order" were quite different, not only on racial and religious questions, but in terms of national interest. Combined with the attentions that other states, most notably Britain [3], paid to Spain, the limits of collaboration frustrated Naziphiles as well as Franco, and arguably this played a role in making the move toward collaboration more and more difficult even after the dispatch of the first workers and soldiers east.

Undoubtedly Franco's position as the arbiter of conflicts amongst the regime's "families" was the prime factor in the denial of a more Naziphile Spain. Despite his efforts to downplay the role of the Caudillo, Bowen's book does not change this reviewer's opinion on that question. Yet the value of this study is in its account of what motivated, and what frustrated, those who desired a Spanish role in the creation of a New Order. Bowen concludes the book with a description of the last Spanish workers leaving Germany, returning not as heroes but merely as refugees (p. 220). For a variety of reasons, what was desired for ideological and pragmatic goals turned out to be, in actuality, often less than was imagined.

Notes

[1]. See, for example, Christian Leitz and David J. Dunthorn, eds., *Spain in an International Context, 1936-1959* (New York, 1999); Sebastian Balfour and Paul Preston, eds., *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1999); Raanan Rein, ed., *Spain and the Mediterranean since 1898* (London, 1999).

[2]. For a discussion of the "families" concept in analyzing Franco's Spain, see Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain, 1923-1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 312.

[3]. See Denis Smyth, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Survival: British Policy and Franco's Spain*,

1940-1941 (Cambridge, 1986) and particularly his article on British payment to Spanish generals to encourage neutrality, "Les chevaliers de Saint-George: la Grande-Bretagne et la corruption des generaux espagnols (1940-1942)" *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 162 (1991).

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