

FRANCO'S DICTATORSHIP AND THE HOLOCAUST

The West Turned a Blind Eye to Franco's Collaboration With the Nazis

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December 13th, 2012

There is not full awareness in the international community of the degree of influence that fascist forces still have over the apparatus of the current Spanish state and related associations. The Spanish Royal Academy of History for example has just published a Historical Dictionary that includes laudatory remarks about General Franco and the dictatorship that he established. There are a lot of myths that continue to be reproduced in the Spanish intellectual life in spite of the historical evidence that exists to question each one of them.

One example of these myths is the perception that the fascist dictatorship (referred to in Spain as Francoist dictatorship) did not persecute the Jews. Actually, it is widely believed that Franco's regime actually helped the Jews who were escaping Nazi occupied France to arrive in Lisbon and from there to the Americas. Several documents have now appeared, however, which show the falsehood of such interested and apologetic perceptions of that regime.

This evidence also shows, incidentally, that the Allies were fully aware of the Holocaust. By July 15th, 1944, Sir Harold MacMichael, top British authority in the Palestinian Protectorate, sent a note to Sir Antony Eden, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, referring to the Holocaust, indicating that several million Jews had been executed, some of them Jews of Spanish origin.

The Franco government fully cooperated in that Holocaust. Hitler gave Franco the chance to take back the Jews of Spanish origin, which Franco refused, knowing that this decision would condemn them to the gas chambers. Franco did request, however, to take possession of the property of those Jews, requesting them to be sent back to Spain.

The recent book, *El Franquismo, Complice del Holocausto (Francoism, Accomplice of the Holocaust)*, written by the Spanish historian Eduardo Martin de Pozuelo, shows plenty of evidence that Franco collaborated in the Holocaust and also demonstrates that the Allied authorities, including the U.S. Federal government, was fully aware of this, which was not an obstacle.

Later on, President Eisenhower, recognizing Franco's dictatorship, defined him as "the great ally in the fight for democracy against Communism." Actually, one of the reasons why the Spanish fascist regime helped in the elimination of the Jews of Spanish origin was not only for the anti-Jewish views of Spanish fascism, closely allied to the Catholic Church (Pius XII defined Franco as the Great Savior of Christianity), but also because of military and security reasons.

According to the documents published by Eduardo Martin de Pozuelo, the fascist regime was afraid that the Spanish Jews, who would have likely sympathized with the Allied forces against Hitler, could have easily become spies and saboteurs.

The evidence also shows that Hitler played a critical role in the fascist coup lead by General Franco against the democratically elected Spanish government in 1936, and Hitler's support for that coup until its victory in 1939. Without such military and economic assistance, Franco would not have resisted the popular mobilization against the coup. As a consequence, Franco's Spain became practically a colony of Nazi Germany.

The Nazi establishment had an enormous influence on the economic and political Spanish establishments. And the Allied Forces were fully aware of this, partially because of the Spanish antifascist resistance that, under extremely repressive conditions, helped the Allied Forces, to be ignored and betrayed later on once the war ended and Franco became the best ally of the so-called democratic governments, lead by the U.S. in their "fight for Democracy against Communism."

The enormous paradox is that the Communist Soviet Union (along with Mexico) had been the only power who had assisted the democratic forces in Spain in their resistance against Fascism.