

Volume 9

Number 016

The Long Death of Francisco Franco

-I

Lead: For nearly four decades Francisco Bahamonde Franco was a significant if not dominant figure in the life of Spain, but by the early 1970s his resistance to the modern world just as his health was failing.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: A wag once expressed little surprise at the explosive and swift transformation of Spain to democracy and a liberated society after 1975. He said, “Well, if you shake a bottle of champagne for forty

years, you should not be shocked at the eruption when you finally pop the cork.” In the thirty-six years following 1939, the end of the Spanish Civil War, the cork in the Spanish champagne bottle was clearly Francisco Franco. He and his political and religious allies clung to the hope that through repression and control they might prevent Spain from adopting the moral and economic freedom that was proving inevitable course in the modern non-communist world. As long as Franco was alive they might succeed, but increasingly after 1970, as the health of Spain’s last caudillo began to fail, it was clear that their hopes were built on shifting sand.

Franco's nationalist rebels won the bloody three year civil war largely because of military and financial aid from Hitler and Mussolini. As a result, Spain remained neutral in World War II. This plus lingering international resentment about Nationalist atrocities in the civil war, plus the powerful insecurity felt by Franco and his Falangist allies in face modern changes served to isolate Spain for almost a decade after 1945. This produced poverty and retarded economic growth. Finally, Franco, fitful and hesitant began to compromise. Military alliance with the West, a gradual shift to a modified market economy run by technocrats, but continuing political repression and resistance to social

change. Next time: How hard it is to die.

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

- Arango, E. Ramon.** *Spain: From Repression to Renewal.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1985.
- Azzi, Stephan Corrado.** “Historiographical Review: The Historiography of Fascist Foreign Policy.” *The Historiographical Journal* 36 (1993): 187-203.
- Beevor, Antony.** *The Spanish War.* London: Peter Bedrick Press, 1982.
- Bolloton, Burnett.** *The Spanish Revolution.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.
- Corum, James S.** “The Spanish Civil War: Lessons Learned and Not Learned by the Great Powers.” *The Journal of Military History* 62 (1998): 313-334.
- Coverdale, John F.** *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- Holmes, Richard, Ed.** *Oxford Companion of Military History.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Hubbard, John R.** “How Franco Financed His War,” *Journal of Modern History* 25 (December 1953): 390-406.
- Jackson, Gabriel.** *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War.* London: Thames and Hudson Limited, 1974.

Padelford, Norman J. “The International Non-Intervention Agreement and the Spanish Civil War.” *American Journal of International Law* 31 (1937) 578-603.

Preston, Paul. *Franco: A Bibliography*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1993.

Sullivan, Brian R. “Fascist Italy’s Military Involvement in the Spanish Civil War.” *The Journal of Military History* 59 (1995) 697-727.

Thomas, Hugh. *The Spanish Civil War*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Whealey, Robert. “How Franco Financed his War – Reconsidered.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 12 (1977) 133-152.

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.