

Emilio Grandío Seoane, *A Balancing Act: British Intelligence in Spain During the Second World War* Brighton, Portland, Toronto: Sussex Academic Press, 2017. 182pp. + xiii.

Emilio Grandío Seoane of the University of Santiago de Compostela has studied the Civil War and Second World War era in Galicia for numerous years, the fruits of which are here, in his first book published in English. Grandío places intelligence activity in Spain within the framework of broader British and Allied policy towards Spain since the Civil War, stressing how British anti-Communism, Spain's strategic supply of wolfram for war economies, and overall control of the Atlantic shipping lanes shaped British responses there, including on the intelligence front. The status of Gibraltar, too, was of particular concern for the British Government. The result is a study that nicely combines an assessment of overall British policy toward the Franco regime with the details of its effort through intelligence agencies to work with the regime of General Francisco Franco and forestall Nazi inroads into Spain.

The British, first and foremost, always accepted Franco as the legitimate ruler of Spain, and the best option of many poor ones. Certainly a fear of the left, and of Communism especially, led Britain to want Franco to emerge from the Civil War as a stabilizing force. The immediate impact of this direction once the Second World War began, however, was an extensive and well developed espionage network in place for Nazi Germany and almost nothing in place on the part of the British. Thus when German trade in wolfram and other goods took off, German submarines were re-supplied in Spain, and Nazis established extensive spy stations along Spain's Atlantic coast to monitor Allied shipping, the British had to play catch up. This was the task given to Naval Attaché Alan Hillgarth, appointed in 1939 to organize the entirety of Britain's espionage work in Spain.

Hillgarth used all the resources available to him to develop British intelligence in Spain, not only the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), but also those of the newly created Special Operations Executive (SOE), designed to provoke and coordinate sabotage through active resistance to Nazi occupations on continental Europe. While outright sabotage was not permissible in a state that was either neutral or non-belligerent throughout the war, networks with Communist and other anti-Francoist resisters were developed by SOE agents in the chance that they could be mobilized if a German occupation or invasion of Iberia occurred. As those chances lessened into 1942, the British largely abandoned further development of such contacts, a point reinforced by Ambassador Samuel Hoare

who feared that news of Britain's working with 'reds' could do more harm than good (p. 42). Nevertheless, contacts and networks were made, and some of them proved fruitful for the gathering of intelligence related to Nazi integration in the Spanish economy, in Spanish politics and military life and for information about trade across the border with France and towards the Reich. One of the strongest networks established by the British in northwest Spain was that of Lorenzo Sannmiguel Martinez, who ran almost three dozen agents collecting all kinds of information. Sannmiguel was a former Communist who began working for the SOE in March 1941. The discovery of this network by the Spanish, with Nazi assistance, and the Spanish murder of Sannmiguel in October 1943 was a stunning setback to the work the British in establishing such effective networks of agents in such a short time. This story, and the Spanish use of this discovery in negotiations with the British over demands to curtail their economic relationship with Nazi Germany, plays a major part in the book and demonstrates the pressures that Allied intelligence had in such an open and awkward space such as wartime Spain. The Spanish accusation that working with Communists was interfering in Spain's internal affairs was the last thing the British wanted to hear and indeed, for the most part, the British tried to limit or avoid using Spanish agents like Sannmiguel for this reason, preferring British ones instead. (p. 113)

In Grandío's account, 1943 emerges as the most intense year of the war for the British in Spain, because now their intelligence networks were well established, German demands for Spanish wolfram and other materials was growing, and the political and espionage worlds were aligned in a common push to force Franco to move away from Hitler. While the Sannmiguel episode was a setback, Grandío argues that a major success was the meeting Ambassador Hoare had with Franco on August 2, 1943, at Franco's summer retreat at Pazo de Meirás. Using intelligence data and other materials, Hoare pressured Franco to change direction, abandon his ties to Nazi Germany, and truly become neutral. He emphasized that the role of the Falange in the regime, and its closeness to Nazis in Spain, the status of non-belligerency in Spain, and the role of the Blue Division of the Spanish military fighting alongside the German Army in the Soviet Union, were significant issues preventing further rapprochement between Spain and the Allies (p. 83). Hoare believed this meeting to be an important turning point, even if Franco would never quickly break off ties with Germany.

As a result, British intelligence turned more and more towards the discovery of Nazi intelligence agents and Hoare's successors in the British Embassy focused on forcing Spain to remove them. This was even more the case after the Spanish economic agreement with Britain and the United States in May 1944 that promised limits on trade with Germany. As the war wound down, British intelligence was largely withdrawn, having fulfilled its role in helping Britain achieve significant goals and shape a relationship with General Franco that would continue as the Cold War developed.

This is a clearly written and extensively researched book that makes an important contribution to our understanding of how espionage fit into the complicated picture of negotiation neutrality and non-belligerency in a space such as wartime Spain. By integrating British intelligence archival materials with those from the Spanish military, the Foreign Office and Hoare's personal papers, Grandío fits the intelligence picture into the

broader scope of British foreign policy and Spain's response during these years, and shows us how vital intelligence was to the entire Anglo-Spanish relationship.

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