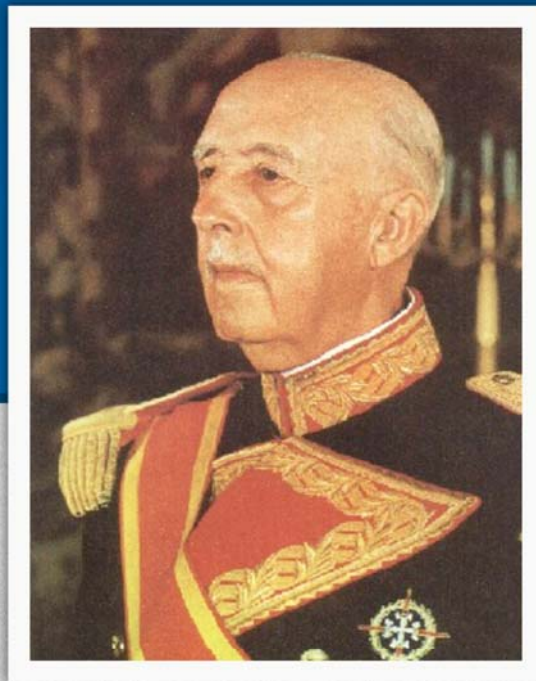




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**REMEMBERING FRANCO...
AND THE SEVEN THINGS HE DID WELL**

BY

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Introduction

November 20, 2015, was the fortieth anniversary of Franco's death. An event that many of those under fifty today, will imagine was welcome with enormous joy by the majority of Spaniards, who were at last rid of the tyrant, that as Spanish and international media like to remind us, oppressed and tortured his people, his opponents in particular, during his terrible dictatorship.

Surprisingly perhaps for many, this was not the case. No joyous celebrations, no burning of effigies, no tearing down of statues. Instead, *hundreds of thousands* of Spaniards queued silently for hours, in order to file past his funeral cask in a demonstration of grief.

Another fact that might surprise those that only know Franco and Franquism from the media, is that when Spaniards recovered their political freedom and exercised their right to vote, they did not vote massively for the political parties that supposedly lead the struggle against the dictator, the socialist PSOE, or the communist PCE, but instead preferred an option which might be described as *evolutionist*, the centrist party UCD, led by Adolfo Suarez.

These two facts tell us that Franco did not leave such bad memories among many Spaniards. In fact, I think I can assert without risking the truth, that the great majority of Spaniards that lived under his regime, admit that the overall result of his administration, save in respect of political freedoms, was very positive.

Why? How is it possible that such an abominable dictator did not leave a fearful memory? Readers under fifty may well ask.

Well, because Franco, during his 39 year rule did a few things, the fundamental ones, well. And unbiased recognition of this is long due.

-The first thing he did well was to win the Spanish Civil War, freeing Spaniards from a communist dictatorship, which with absolute certainty, would have befallen Spain, had Franco lost. Yes, I repeat, with absolute certainty, for since 1938, the Popular Front was dominated by Moscow, increasingly with an iron hand. Had this Popular Front won the war, it would have been unable to stop Hitler, who in all probability would have invaded Spain, turning it once more into a battlefield, this time bloodier even than the Civil War. In the unlikely event that Spain escaped Hitler's invasion, Spain's unavoidable destiny would have been a communist dictatorship. The communist dictatorships that sprung across East Europe after WWII make those of us that lived under Franco's regime feel very fortunate.

-The second thing he did well was to take control of all tolerated political parties early during the civil war, unifying the *Falangist* party, (with close similarities to Mussolini's fascists), with the *Carlist* or *Tradionalist* party (a romantic leftover from the 19th century succession wars, still deeply rooted in the north of Spain), and other rightist minority parties, into a single political party he called the *Movimiento Nacional*,

the National Movement, thus disabling the Falange from dominating the new regime; although this party would retain a significant amount of power, which Franco ensured would be eroded with time.

Franco sat on top of a pressure cooker for forty years, thus allowing for the brew of a new Spain. He didn't seek his role, and neither was he responsible for the Civil War, as the media likes to insist, and is taught in many schools. The Civil War had several causes, but the fundamental one was the decision made, several years before the war by the radical left, to boycott the Republic, it considered bourgeois, and use all possible means, including force, to install the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, (a slogan then omnipresent, today fortunately just a bad memory), trampling over the laws of the Republic and staging a coup in 1934, which the Republic's government narrowly succeeded to defeat. From then on however, the government became increasingly hostage of the radical left, which united under a popular front, the *Frente Popular*, let loose a rampage of arson and violence against the bourgeoisie and the church, terrorising the military into submission. When Franco rose, the Republic was but an empty lambskin covering a savage wolf, the Populists, who having destroyed it, had the gall to call themselves "republicans".

-The third thing Franco did well was to contain the inevitable repression which followed his victory. It is a fact that in Spain post war repression was far less extensive than that of totalitarian regimes such as the USSR. It is also a fact that it was less even than that carried out by democracies such as France and Italy against collaborationists with their Nazi invaders. The Spanish State respected private property, and promoted private investment both Spanish and foreign, avoiding the nationalization of the banking system.

On the other hand, had the populists won the war, by then totally dominated by Moscow, would have repression been more moderate? The well documented carnage that the communists inflicted on their comrades in arms during the civil war, and the wanton murder of over 8,000 priests and nuns, do not suggest that they would have shown much moderation in their repression had the Popular Front won the war.

-The fourth thing Franco did well was to avoid entering into WWII, something hugely difficult given his indebtedness to Hitler and Mussolini. A feat, which if partly due to luck, was also no doubt due to his cunning and caution.

-The fifth thing he did well was to use his image of staunch anticommunist to obtain an alliance with the United States, key to extract Spain from the international isolation it suffered at the time, opening the door to the development of Spain's economy. Economy, which in 1975, on Franco's death, was in *absolute* terms, greater than Russia's or China's, not to speak of communist countries more akin to Spain in terms of demography and resources.

-The sixth thing he did well was to declare Spain a Kingdom, preparing Juan Carlos de Borbon as King. During the 40 years of Franquism, the country changed radically, and Spaniards left hate behind, as shown by the exemplary Transition which gave birth to the Constitution of 1978. The foresight that Franco showed in selecting, preparing and finally appointing Juan Carlos as his successor as Chief of State, invested as King, was the key factor in his strategy for a gradual transition to a democratic regime.

-The seventh thing he did well was to live an austere and honest life, dedicated to the administration of his nation according to his best criteria. Criteria generally deemed, paternalistic and prudish, but governed by his sincere interest in the welfare of his countrymen. This dedication over the years won him a degree of approval among Spaniards, which many of today's politicians would only wish they could have; in large part no doubt, because many Spaniards then coincided with Franco in preferring his government to having to repeat the experience of the Republic.

The seven things Franco did well I list above, illustrate why a great majority of Spaniards sincerely felt his loss. This is not incompatible with a feeling of liberation and of coming of age after so many years of deprivation of political freedoms. A feeling of liberation coloured by fear of the unknown, or better said perhaps, of the "remembered".

In any event, I remember well the excitement with which Spaniards received the end of the Franco regime; but I don't remember rancour or calls for revenge. Would the end of his "soft" dictatorship, mean a return to the anarchism of the days of the Republic?

History tells us it was not the case, and Spain's transition process, allowed for the instauration of a modern monarchy, which, with all its defects, has allowed for decades of political stability and recognition of Spain as a modern and respected democracy.

This was made possible because Spaniards had reconciled themselves with each other after 40 years of political inaction. During those years Spain, and the world, had changed forever, and time mitigated the pains caused by the war and helped bury the hates it caused. But the regime's oppression which although with time had become latent rather than active, occasionally emerged, underlying the anachronism of a dictatorial regime in a country increasingly open and closer to Europe. Hence a future without Franco and indeed without "*Franquists*" was seen as promising and desirable.

The undeniable fact is that Franco and his regime, his "*blasted dictatorship*", bestowed a prosperous country, free of tensions that could not be resolved in democratic debates, with a society at peace with itself ruled by widely respected institutions. On the other hand, the curtailment of political freedoms, which so offends today's media and "progressive" intellectuals, was considered a lesser evil by the majority of Spaniards. These realities, that today many have forgotten, facilitated the peaceful transition process towards a full democracy which took place in an exemplary climate of reconciliation.

Before I finish this introduction I must point out that one thing is that Franco did some things well and another that he was a person gifted with extraordinary qualities, (other than his demonstrated bravery and his considerable strategic abilities), that would make him especially remarkable. Actually his lack of brilliance forged his character, cautious and mistrustful.

Franco was a lucky man, a very lucky man. He was lucky in the African war, in which he risked his life with doubtless bravery on many occasions. He was lucky during the Civil War when he could have been crushed by an enemy initially a dozen times stronger; and he was particularly lucky during his long mandate, framed first by WWII and later by the Cold War, circumstances which represented very serious threats to him

and his regime; threats that were deactivated by events far from his capacity to influence in any way. As the Moorish troops he commandeered used to say, "*Franco had Barraka*"; lots of Barraka.

A devoted catholic, Franco interpreted his luck as a divine gift, and concluded that God had chosen him to save Spain, a conclusion of which he took to the grave. Hence the mantle of "*National Catholicism*" with which he coloured his regime since he became Spain's Head of State. This "National Catholicism", was in fact his only ideology, and explains his attitude towards communism and masonry. "*Heresies*" which he felt was his divine mission to destroy, and which justified his imposition of a prudish "moral" code.

Otherwise Franco was an excellent army officer, recognized as such by the Monarchy and the Republic, totally dedicated to his work and without any outside interests. He mistrusted the cultural world because of its generally leftist inclinations, as well as any type of political ideology, including fascism, as proven by his treatment of the Falange. His lack of charisma was legendary, as can be recalled by anyone that endured his speeches; and those who had dealings with him can bear witness to his permanently cautionary and defensive stance. Had it not been for the Civil War, however, few would remember Franco today.

In this essay I analyze those seven things that Franco did well, reviewing his role as Head of State from the end of the Civil War to his death, not with a laudatory intent, but simply in order to give him his due. Which I feel is much needed; for Franco, whether we like it or not, laid the foundations of the democracy Spain enjoys today; and he led them very well.

To close, I hope I may be forgiven for referring to the irony that I, grandson of General Alfredo Kindelan, (possibly Franco's main collaborator during the Civil War and recognized political adversary afterwards), should break a literary spear on behalf of Franco's memory; but I hope this modest work will allow truth seekers everywhere the light that global media and "progressive" intellectuals have historically denied Franco and his regime.

Madrid, January 2016

CHAPTER 1. - Franco did well winning the Civil War

There is no question that by leading the military uprising of July 1936 Franco staged a coup d'état. But he wasn't the first to do so as Largo Caballero's socialist party the PSOE, staged one in 1934 and continued since then to show in no uncertain terms his disregard for the Republic's laws and government, having his followers ransack the country in murderous pursuit of the so called bourgeois which he maintained unjustly controlled the Republic. Largo Caballero never hid his plans to install a totalitarian regime, (see his speech of February 16 1936, calling for the "*destruction of this bourgeois Republic*"), blessed by the mandate of "*the proletariat*", which provided his actions with total impunity. A goal which justified the daily torching of churches, bourgeois newspaper offices and party seats; and the purchase and delivery in 1934 of arms to miners in the Asturias coal region whose revolt was coordinated with similar actions in Catalonia and the south. A revolt in which the miners murdered thousands of innocent civilians and burned down churches and private property before being put down by the Republican army, led by General Franco

No, Largo Caballeros PSOE was not a bastion of the Republic, quite the contrary. As mentioned, Largo Caballero saw the Republic as a bourgeois invention that should either accept the leadership of the proletariat (exclusively represented by Largo of course; the Spanish communist party the PCE, was still in an embryonic stage), or give way to its dictatorship.

I don't need to dwell in justifications of these assertions which can be easily verified. Enough said to insist that the State against which Franco revolted, that of Spain's second Republic, was nothing but the gutskin of a beautiful dream used as a disguise by Largo Caballero's Popular Front, who considered democracy a bourgeois fiction and was totally decide to press his rule by force.

On the other hand Franco, although a declared monarchist, actually was a loyal defender of that Republic before it was overrun by the populists, serving it in various key positions and raising to Chief of Staff in the army. His letter to Azaña, then President of the Republic, of June 26 1936, demanding immediate action to stop violence and arson in the streets, was never answered; it represents Franco's last hope that the Republic would take hold of the situation, saving the military from intervening.

Having been commissioned to quell the miners revolt in 1934, Franco did so efficiently, minimising loss of life. However the Popular Front, led by the PSOE now seconded by a rapidly growing communist party, loudly denounced the Republic's defence as a "ferocious repression" of innocent miners, while exonerating these of their crimes on the grounds that they were oppressed workers.

Although the courts of the Republic issued several death sentences to the heads of the revolt, including Largo Caballero, the government revoked them in the hopes of calming down the violent populists. Thus Largo Caballero and others those responsible for the revolt, a fragrant intent of a Coup d'Etat if there ever was one, went unpunished and free to continue plotting against the Republic as representatives of the "Proletariat", whose supreme interests the Republic was unable and unwilling to protect as shown by its quelling of the "revolution" of 1934.

The more moderate leaders of the PSOE, such as its founder, Julian Besteiro, and Indalecio Prieto saw themselves totally overrun by anarchists, communists, and above all by the revolutionary elements of their own party, led by Largo Caballero. Since the 1934 revolt the confrontation between Prieto and Largo Caballero had been increasing in intensity and by early 1936 it sparked several murder attempts between their respective gangs.

These events caused a loyalty crisis in the armed forces, which gathered in two groups; those who felt bound to serve the government, and those who felt the government no longer wielded any power, so that loyalty to their country had become primordial. At the start of the civil war the majority of officers and troops, (over 80%), remained loyal to the government. (*These men must of faced agonising decisions; for example Colonel Vicente Rojo, brave defender of Madrid against Franco, a staunch catholic and father of eight, had his heart closer to the rebels; but joining them would have meant leaving his family in the hands of the “reds”, without his monthly income, and facing all sorts of potential retaliations*).

Positioning after the 1934 revolt and the increasingly violent radicalization of the Popular Front coalesced quickly, and by early 1936 the rebel generals led by Emilio Mola, had agreed on a strategy and a timetable for revolt. They set up a National Defence Board, made up of generals Mola, Cabanellas, Saliquet, Ponte and Dávila, and colonels Montaner and Moreno.

The murder of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, leader of the opposition and of the monarchist party, on July 14, 1936, triggered the military rebellion. Calvo had delivered a strong speech in Parliament requesting government action to quell unbridled violence in the streets, after which Dolores Ibarruri the communist leader, threatened him by saying, “*Those will be your last words*”. The first “pronouncement” came on July 17 from the Melilla garrison in Spanish Morocco, and the next day many other garrisons followed suit, spreading the military rebellion throughout Spain. The government, or rather the populists, quickly put down the revolts in Madrid Barcelona and most other large cities, except Seville.

Franco had actively participated in the planning of the rebellion, but he only definitely joined it in its final phase, flying from his post in the Canary Islands to Melilla in Morocco on the 18th of July. Once there, as historian Luis Suarez explains in his “*Franco, the Decisive Years*”, Franco immediately sent representatives to Italy and Germany to negotiate the purchase of arms. He soon started to receive them, and proceeded to strengthen his army during the month of August. During that month Franco managed to have 15.000 troops cross over to the peninsula, mostly by air, as the navy, controlled by the loyalists, actively patrolled the strait of Gibraltar. His forces joined those of General Queipo de Llano who had secured Seville to the rebels cause. (*From here on, the rebels will be “the nationals”, and the loyalists, “the populists”*).

By mid August Franco’s army was advancing north close to the Portuguese border, while Mola led an advance to Madrid from Pamplona in the North. The first major battle fought was that of Badajoz, which general Yagüe, Franco’s deputy, with an army of 3,000 won after a fierce battle against a defending army of 10,000, thus opening the road to Madrid. Toledo fell in late September, and by early November Franco had an

army ready to attack Madrid from the south, west, and northwest. Upon taking Toledo, Franco liberated the Alcazar, a military school which remained the only rebel enclave in the city, and which never surrendered having been bombed, mined, and shot at night and day for two months; a saga widely reported in the international media at the time.

The Battle of Madrid fought during the month of November 1936 was critical for both sides. During those weeks the Largo Caballero and his Government fled to Valencia, leaving the defence of Madrid in the hands of General Miaja and Colonel Rojo. These men had to rebuild their army, in shreds following many government purges, and harness the populists militia, a rag tag undisciplined lot, which included anarchist gangs, viscerally anti military.

But they managed to stop Franco's fierce attack (while the international press claimed this was due to the contribution of the International Brigades, undoubtedly a generous and brave lot, their overall contribution to the defence of Madrid was relatively insignificant). By early December the battle was over, with Franco giving up Madrid and, pressing north with another army, leaving an army blockading Madrid. But attacks on Madrid ceased, while Rojo bolstered its defences with new armament received from Russia.

During the month of October 1936, the leading national generals met in Salamanca and chose Franco as Supreme Commander of the Army, although the decree published next day showed elected also as Head of State. The same decree extinguished the *National Defence Board* that had masterminded the rebellion, its members now integrating a new *National Political Board*, a legislative body, while its former functions were taken up by new military and civil structures created by Franco's government. A government which Germany and Italy recognised before the end of 1936.

An Italian army arrived in early 1937, which Franco merged with several Spanish brigades and entrusted with taking over Malaga. This combined army under Colonel Borbon, took Malaga in February of 1937, so that most of the south of Spain fell under control of the nationals. Later that year, in June, the national army took over Bilbao and gained control of the north coast of Spain.

During the rest of 1937 it was the populists that took most initiatives with now well equipped and better trained armies under the competent command of generals Miaja and Rojo. The populists defeated the nationals in the battles of Guadalajara, routing the Italian expeditionary army and Teruel. The nationalists counterattacked and retook Teruel in February of 1938, in one of the wars fiercest battles.

These victories, while hugely costly for the nationals, meant the beginning of the end of the Popular Front. Soon after losing Teruel, the populists made a last big effort and launched an attack from the northeast across the river Ebro with a well equipped army of 70.000 which surprised the nationals whose forces had to retreat and regroup. The national armies then counterattacked and the largest battle of the war followed, which according to historian Ramon Salas, resulted in over 4.000 dead and 38.000 wounded. By mid August 1938, the national army led by General Yagüe and supported from the air by the Air Force, led by General Kindelan, had roundly defeated the populists, who fled towards Catalonia.

The Battle of the Ebro defeat strongly demoralized the Popular Front, and by the end of 1938, a massive exodus of civilians started to cross the French border, terrified by the nationalist propaganda intended to stir panic. Tarragona fell to the nationals in January 1939, who proceeded to take over a defenceless Barcelona a week later.

These events coupled with the flight of Manuel Azaña, the Republic's President to France prompted the takeover of the Government of the Republic by loyalist army. To quote again from Suarez's book,

Azaña's decision to abandon the Presidency of the Republic, and Martinez Barrios refusal to take it over, followed by General Miajas assumption of power, could only be interpreted as an indication of a move towards surrender; it would now be up to the military to put forward and negotiate peace terms, as it was useless to continue to sacrifice human life for a lost cause. The last battles around Peñarroya clearly showed that the half million men still under the command of generals Escobar, Moriones and Menendez, plus those under generals Segismundo Casado in Madrid lacked offensive capabilities. Most republican leaders were of the opinion that the time had come to peon negotiations. Julian Besteiro founder of the PSOE party, shunned and boycotted as excessively moderate by most of his party supported that view.

However Juan Negrín, head of the Republican Government was strongly pressed by Moscow to continue fighting, and this led to disagreements among the populists, disagreements which turned into open warfare in Madrid during the last part of February, while the moderates tried to negotiate with Franco.

But Franco, finding little opposition, advanced towards Madrid, disregarded negotiations and peacefully occupied the city on March 28. On April 1st, the last defenders of the Popular Front surrendered in Alicante, and Franco who was bedridden with flu, radioed his last Battle Front Report;

"Today, having defeated and disarmed the red army, the national army has reached all its objectives. The war is over."

The victory of the national army against an enemy which initially was vastly superior, was due to many factors, but clearly the most important one was Franco's leadership, who conveyed to his officers and these to their troops his total confidence in final victory. While the morale on the nationalist side grew as the war progressed, the opposite was the case with the Frente Popular. The widespread murder of anarchists by communists, and the confrontation between these and the socialists; and the mistrust between politicians and the military, resulted in a climate of permanent internal confrontation, which continuously eroded the morale of the Popular Front Army, whose soldiers gradually lost confidence in their commanders.

Having won the war as a perceived ally of Nazi Germany, Franco could stave off Hitler's invasion in WWII, something that would have been extremely difficult to achieve had the Popular Front won the war. In addition Franco's victory prevented Spain from becoming a communist dictatorship, a regime which would have curtailed

the freedom of Spaniards much more than Franco's, socializing the economy with the dire results we have seen in those countries of Eastern Europe that suffered communism.

Yes, Franco did well winning the Spanish Civil War.

CHAPTER 2.- Franco did well taking all powers into his hands

"*Falange Española*", the political party founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera in October 1933, embraced a national socialist ideology, with similarities with Italian Fascism and German Nazism, and shared with those parties a profound hate of communism.

As Franco lacked a political platform, the Falange, a rapidly growing organization, pretended to fill that vacuum with a view to become hegemonic after the war, capitalizing on their important war effort. Franco, who saw them coming, did not fall in their trap, and although he allowed Falange to set itself up throughout Spain, he ensured that "*a strong collar bound the dog to its owner*", as we shall now see.

Shortly after becoming Head of State, in April 1937, Franco issued a decree, "*The Unification Decree*", which merged all tolerated political parties, (the monarchists were not), namely the Falange the Traditionalists and JONS another far right party, into a political entity called, "*The National Movement*", full name, *Movimiento Nacional Falange Española, Tradicionalista y de las JONS*. (Jokingly soon referred to by that full name with the addition of...*and of the Great European Railways*). The same decree appointed him Head for life of this new entity. Thus he ensured control over politics, a control he exerted with the same discipline as he exerted on the army.

On August 5, 1937, the National Political Board, approved the statutes of the "*The National Movement*", and established three types of active members; *militants*, which were all those affiliated to the parties prior to their merger under the Unification Decree; *full members*, which were all the members of the nationalist armed forces, without regard to rank; and associates, which were those which did not fit into either of the two groups above, but who had requested admission. After the war, and until well into the decade of 1960, Movimiento membership was an essential pre requisite to employment.

On October 1, 1937, Franco signed the decree which defined the ruling body of the Movimiento, that is the *Consejo Nacional del Movimiento*, or National Movement Board, and appointed several bishops, army officers and falangists to the Board under his chairmanship. All cozily bound together in a boiling pot with Franco sitting on its lid, as all powerful Head of State and of the new Movimiento.

A few months later, in January 1938, still in the middle of a full blown war, Franco issued another decree, which created the *Consejo de Ministros*, or Council of Ministers, seated in Burgos, with Franco again as President. It is interesting to note the absence of Falangists in this first Council, with the exception of Fernandez Cuesta, a friend of Jose Antonio disliked by the new falangists.

The Unification Decree ended Falange's aspirations to become the hegemonic power in Spain, to the great disappointment of its leader, Hedilla, and of course of the German Nazis who counted on turning the Falange into their Spanish extension. As Luis Suarez says in his "Decisive Years"

"But Franco in his speech of April 18, 1937, in which he presented the Unification Decree, spoke of a totalitarian state, not of a totalitarian party. This disappointed Hedilla, as Falange was not being invited to assume total political leadership, but only to become a mechanism, however important, of a political process which in addition was declared "open", that is subject to continuous evolution and change."

A few days after the decree was published, Franco appointed the members of the Movimiento's Ruling Board, with himself as chairman, Hedilla representing Falange, and Rodezno the Traditionalists. On April 24, the War Office integrated the falangist militia into the army, under General Monasterio, who was seconded by two colonels, one a falangist, Darío Gazapo, and the other a traditionalist, colonel Ricardo de Rada.

This is how Franco escaped from becoming subject to a political power, a power which in all probability would have fallen into the hands of Nazi Germany. This gave Franco a great advantage over his enemy, whose military command was subordinated to the political command. It is interesting to speculate with what would of happened if the Popular Front had named Rojo Supreme Military commander, and head of the Popular Front. I doubt that in this case Franco would have won the war

Thus, little more than a a year after rising, Franco had taken in his hands all military political power on the National side, turning it into a Totalitarian State, which was not subject to a Totalitarian Party, a key difference with Nazi Germany or Communist Russia. In this case it was a *Personalist Totalitarian State*. Fortunately, Franco's personality was that of an austere army officer, devoted catholic, and averse to any form of utopia including the fascist one.

His objective, as he frequently repeated, was to make Spain "*Una, Grande, y Libre*" that is One Great and Free" as it had been in the past. The man that was to govern Spain for the next forty years was sure of himself although well aware of his limitations; and aware also as a practising catholic that God would be the ultimate judge of his actions, which he always intended to be in the best interests of Spain.

The way Franco "sold" his Unification Decree, temporarily satisfied the monarchists, who remembering Franco's past affiliation with the monarchy, assumed that the announced "openness", of the Movimiento, would eventually lead, after the war, to the reinstatement of King Alphonse XIII or his rightful heirs. Clearly the Falangists were not at all happy with the Decree, and their leader tried to rally the Falange against the Decree, a failed effort which landed him in jail on April 25.

Monarchist expectations were encouraged by several statements made by Franco. He regarded the Monarchy as Spain's legal regime, toppled by a bloodless *Coup d'Etat* in April 1931 which brought in the Republic; so born, he felt the Republic never acquired legitimacy. Clearly, should he win the war he did not intend to restore the Republic, but some form of monarchic state instead. In fact Franco saw himself as defender of the

legitimate Monarchic State, abolished in 1931, although he felt it would be impossible to reinstall it. I quote again from Luis Suarez's excellent book, (P.92);

"In his interview with ABC Sevilla on July 17, 1937, Franco referred forthwith to the restoration of the Monarchy as if this was his plan, but at the same time made some remarks which pure monarchists might find disconcerting;"

"(The Monarchy) Would have to be different to the one that ended in April 1931; different in content, however painful this may be for some of us, but we must be realistic in every respect, even with regards to the person that would embody it."

It is a fact that Franco's plan for the restoration of a monarchy, conceived from the early days of his uprising, was far from the one desired by monarchists. But it is interesting to note that his vision for post war Spain was, already back in 1937, that of a monarchy, that Franco felt called to install anew, rather than restore the old one. He stuck to his plan, in the face of many pressures, having Juan Carlos de Borbon, Alphonse XIII's grandson, named his successor as King in 1969, under the "Law of Succession" passed by his Parliament in 1947, a law which had declared Spain to be a Kingdom, whose King Franco thus became empowered to name to succeed him as Head of State.

The Unification Decree was followed by the publication of the Statutes of the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS*, drafted by Ramon Serrano Suñer, Franco's brother in law, a "new" falangist; and on January 30, 1938, another decree created the Council of Ministers, the basis of the new civil government, with Franco as chairman. This Council was more than the traditional cabinet, as it was empowered to legislate. From then on Franco would no longer issue decrees and formulate laws, as this function was taken over by the Council of Ministers, "where new laws were debated by the different political forces which made up the *"Movimiento...Franco did not wish to have isolated Ministries,ensuring that each Minister needed the support of his colleagues to their policies....All his ministers have recognised that they enjoyed total freedom in formulating their policies."* ("Decisive Years", Suarez, P.99). The Council retained its legislative function until 1941, when the regime's parliament, the "Cortes", where established; from then on the Council only retained executive powers.

At the same time Franco constructed the new State, he sought recognition for it from the Catholic Church, headed in Spain by Cardinal Goma. After several months of negotiations, this recognition materialized in the form of a collective letter, signed by all Spanish Cardinals and Bishops, published July 1937 in the national press, and co signed later by over 900 Cardinals and Bishops from many countries. A few days after the publication of this letter Cardinal Antoniutti was appointed the Vatican's permanent representative before Franco's government, thus confirming the Church's backing of the Franco regime.

From then on the Church, through catholic politicians, such as Joaquin Ruiz Jimenez and Jose Larraz counterbalanced the Falange in debates at the Council of Ministers. The Law of Education, and the Workers Bill of Rights, issued in 1940 were the results of extensive and sometimes bitter proceedings at the Council of Ministers chaired by Franco.

The internal alliances and confrontations within the regime, moderated over the first twenty years by Franco, gave the regime its characteristic personality. A regime of relative freedom as to the economy, little freedom as to politics, and zero cultural orientation, save in respect of anything that smelt of communism, which was quickly censored, or anything that promoted Catholicism, which was encouraged and supported.

Thus one cannot speak of a *Franquist Culture*, but rather of *Culture under Franco*. From the early 1950's, some excellent and original artists started to emerge, few of them sympathetic with the regime.

By controlling the only legal political entity, the *Movimiento*, Franco held a tight hand on the Falange, from the very beginning, balancing its strength, first with that of the Church and the Army, and later with the so called Technocrats. This allowed him to gradually erode Falange's power.

To summarize, it is fair to say that Franco did well overpowering the political forces that supported his war effort, thus limiting the reach of fascism in Spain.

CHAPTER 3. - Franco did well containing the repression

Both sides committed horrendous crimes during the Civil War. Some of those committed by the victors (not many relatively speaking), escaped justice, but these victims ensured that this would not be the case with their defeated foes.

According to reliable sources some 100.000 persons were executed (not killed in combat), by the Popular Front, "*An estimate reached at by modern historians, which is far from the inflated figure aired at the end of the war by the regime's press*" ("*Años Decisivos*", L. Suárez, Pág. 135). The systematic execution of thousands of innocent civilians by the Frente Popular in Madrid's Paracuellos, (over 3,000 in October 1936 week), were not an exceptional event.

The built up hate on the nationalist side resulting from the civil war, made repression inevitable. However actual executions by Franco's repression are far less than the estimates of some less than rigorous historians, such as Ramon Tamames who at one time put such executions at 200.000.

Ramon Salas Larrazabal published in 1984, (*Tiempo de Silencio, Cárcel y Muerte, Cambio 16, 1984*), a detailed analysis of Franco's post war repression, which many historians consider the most reliable study of this matter to date. From there I extract the following quotes:

"The defeated were considered "rebels", and as such appeared before war tribunals, which issued sentences, inscribed in the tribunals records..."

As to the number of prisoners, Salas Larrazabal points out,

,

“On that date (April 1st 1939) the number of prisoners, both war prisoners and political prisoners, was 100.262, a number which would grow to 270.719 by the end of that year, on the capture of the troops under General Miaja...”

Salas Larrazabal goes on to question the figure of 192.706, executions carried out by the Franco repression claimed by Charles Foltz in his widely circulated *“The Masquerade in Spain”*, which Foltz derived from the *“Court Registry”* (*“Inscripciones Judiciales”*), published by the Ministry of Justice in 1942, which covers deaths from 1939 to 1942. Salas analyzes the data and proves that the numbers claimed by Foltz are radically wrong,

“It is not then Charles Foltz who reveals to the world the extent of the repression, notwithstanding the great impact of his revelations. His source are the statistics of the Court Registry, which include many more deaths than those attributable to the repression...”

Salas also discusses another widely publicised analysis, that of Elena de la Souchere, who catalogues as repression the 107.988 deaths due to violence inscribed in the above mentioned registry, and remarks that *“the author has overlooked the fact that many of those deaths had nothing to do with the war...”*

Salas then goes on to painstakingly analyze the inscriptions of deceased persons in the Civil Registry of Spain’s 9.262 municipalities, an analysis summarized in his article, which concludes,

“The minimum number, of which we can be certain, of executions by post war repression is 22.641. To this number we must add.....Hence we arrive to a maximum figure of 29.131, a a minimum of 23.500, and a probable one of some 28.000 deaths from the Franquist repression”.

Sentences and executions carried out quickly and without mercy, were concluded by 1943. By that time the jail population had dropped to 74.095 persons and continued to gradually fall, so that by the mid fifties it attained today’s (1984, ten years after Franco’s death) levels.

In addition to those deaths 300.000 persons suffered imprisonment, many of them sentenced to death or long terms death, although most such death sentences were later waived and the terms shortened, through successive amnesties”

The fact is that according to the article *“Victims of the Civil War”*, published in Wikipedia,

“In 1941, on the second anniversary of the end of the Civil War an amnesty was decreed which benefited all those sentenced to under 12 year terms, and a second amnesty decreed on December 17 1943, conditionally freed all those sentenced to terms of less than 20 years. Another decree reduced by a third prison terms of those willing to redeem their terms through “voluntary work” in the reconstruction of the nation. The most important task carried out by these “volunteers” was the gigantic cross at the Valley of the Fallen near Madrid, where Franco intended to bury those killed in action from both sides of the civil war.”

Salas Larrazabal in his article, refers to the Decree of April 13, 1945, which eliminates the laws of “Political Responsibilities” of 1939 and 1942, and the Decree of December 1963 which abolished the “Court for the Repression of Masonry and Communism”, adding,

“By then penal liabilities from the war had been extinguished by other amnesties decreed on December 9, 1949 and May 10, 1952. Further amnesties were decreed on June 24 1963 and April 1, 1964; but these no longer benefited, with some very few exceptions, participants in the civil war.”

Salas Larrazabal ends his article by saying,

“Such hard and prolonged effects of a Civil War, can only be explained in a world in which executions of “collaborators”, during the two years 1944 and 1945, reached 72.000 in France, and 70.000 in Italy, not to speak of the horrors of Nazi Germany.”

In his analysis Salas Larrazábal, shows that Franco’s repression was very moderate, in comparison to the post war repressions applied by the democratic governments of France and Italy. That this was the case was due to the control exercised by Franco on the repression, inevitable, given the crimes of the Popular Front.

The table below, (source Wikipedia, “*Victims of the Spanish Civil War*”), shows the evolution of the reclusive population in Spain after the Civil War),

Recluse Population after the Civil War

(As to December 31st)

1939 ----	270.719
1940 ----	233.373
1941 ----	159.392
1942 ----	124.423
1943 ----	74.095
1944 ----	54.072
1945 ----	43.812
1946 ----	36.379
1947 ----	38.139
1948 ----	37.451
1949 ----	36.127
1950 ----	30.610

Non “penal” repression continued to weigh on the defeated, as described by the already quoted article from Wikipedia, “*Victims of the Spanish Civil War*”,

“Another form of repression was administrative and economic. In its obsession to fight “the enemy within”, franquism purged all official institutions of suspects, with special attention on the world of education as teachers and professors were generically “suspects”; and favoured the regime’s closest affiliates in economic matters.”

“Every town and city had informers entrusted to report on those suspect of having belonged to the republican side during the war, and such collaboration could result in serious penalties. Often sanctions applied not only to those condemned, but even whole families, and sometimes whole even provinces were punished in some form or other for having remained faithful to the Republic, or for being considered leftists.

The repression reached not only those considered the Regime’s opponents, but also some which were considered “in disagreement”.”

Thus Franco purged the country of any form of “leftism”, which he considered immoral, given its intention, declared or not, to impose the “*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*” through whatever means, and given that such utopia led to the annulment of humanity and the imposition of an all powerful state, frequently genocidal. He imposed a “christian-falangist” education, which taught unquestionable values, including respect of mankind and love of country, that is Spain.

To conclude my own analysis of the repression, I emphasize again that this was in large part due to the murders committed by the Popular Front, many of which were wanton and irrational which made them more cruel. Many of those even less justifiable than the murder of more than 8.000 nuns and priests; for if such murders in some way might be seen as revenge for the Church’s crimes, what is the justification for murdering a judge?.

I offer below a list of magistrates murdered by the populists, again courtesy of Wikipedia;

“During the Spanish Civil War 128 public servants of the Department of Justice were murdered in the Republican zone. The list below was prepared as per the Decree of April 26 1940, in order to assess responsibilities for criminal actions, and is an official document of the Spanish Justice Department.”

Attorney General of the Republic

-Marcelino Valentín Gamazo, who as Attorney General of the Republic waged the accusation against Largo Caballero for his involvement during the 1934 revolution against the Republic’s Institutions.

Magistrates of the Republic’s Supreme Court

Salvador Alarcón Horcas, appointed special judge in the proceedings against Manuel Azaña, (later President of the Republic), for his involvement during the 1934 revolution against the Republic’s Institutions.

- Magistrado del Tribunal Supremo de España, Juez especial en el sumario seguido contra Manuel Azaña Díaz, por su participación en el movimiento subversivo de 1934.
- Jesús Arias de Velasco, President of the Supreme Court.

Provincial Court’s Magistrates

- José María Olalde Sastrustegui.
- Eugenio de Arizcún Carreras.
- Pedro Fernández Cavada y López de la Calle.
- Leandro Martínez López.
- Ángel Martínez de Mendivil y Ondarra.
- Ángel de Torres Cobo.
- Mariano Avilés Zapater.
- José Ogando Stolle.
- Rogelio Ruiz Cuevas.
- José Paniagua Porras.
- Antonio Bruyel Martínez.

Ordinary Court Judges

- Juan González Royano.
- Felipe Ballesteros Pérez.
- Filiberto Carrillo de Albornoz.
- Mariano Antonio Yébenes García.
- Francisco González Conejero.
- Vicente Lafuente Polo.
- Manuel Cabezudo Astrain.
- Juan Antonio Cabezas Romero.
- Mariano Iscla Rovira.
- Julián de Cámara Cailhau.
- Tomás Bordera Martínez.
- Baldomero Abia Arthaud.
- José Tomás Angós Granen.
- Mario Jiménez Laá.
- Benigno Rueda Blanco.
- Ignacio de Larra Córdoba.
- Pascual Farled Bandín.
- Bonifacio Strada Arnal.
- Fernando Garralda Valcárcel.
- Luis Mosquera Caramelo.
- José James Llamazares
- Luis Fuentes Jiménez.
- Rufino Caruana Navarrete.
- Joaquín Serrano Rodríguez.
- Francisco del Prado y García del Prado.
- Rafael del Río Luna.
- Alejandro Royo Fernández Cavada.
- Juan Martínez de la Cueva

Public Servants of the Office of Republic's General Attorney

- Gabriel de la Escosura Ballarín.
- Francisco Delgado Iribarren.
- Fernando González Prieto.
- Juan José Barrenechea Laverón.
- Francisco Checa Guerrero.
- Ezequiel Cuevas Pinto.
- José Luis de Prat y de Lezcano.
- Dionisio Martínez Martínez.
- Juan María
- Diego José Gómez del Campillo.
- Vicente Henche Yagüe.
- Fernando Cortés Gálvez.
- Graciano Guijarro García de la Rosa.
- José Palma Campos.
- Luis Porras Salazar.
- Enrique Barber Grondona.
- José de Castro Fernández.

- Pablo Callejo de la Cuesta.
- López de Carvajal y de Angulo.
- Julio Fernández Divar.

Court Secretaries

- Antonio Aguilar Mora.
- Manuel López Cañas.
- Rafael López Pando.
- Esteban Villa Moreno.
- Antonio Cardona López.
- Pablo Gómez Francés.
- Juan López Zafra.
- Enrique Fagoaga Gil.
- Alfredo Bárcena Llorente.
- Andrés Conde Gómez.
- Jeremías Pastor Pérez.
- Juan Alcón García.
- Rafael Siles Benavides
- Salvador de la Cámara García.
- Julio Nieto de la Fuente.
- Enrique Cuber Martínez.
- Cándido Pesquera Seriola.
- Arturo Aznar Calixto.
- José Benavides Vargas
- Felipe Ibáñez Cabanna.
- José Antonio Aparicio Domínguez.
- Plácido Lumbreras Cancho.
- Eduardo de la Loma Marín.
- Miguel Polaino Gil.
- Manuel Pumpido Esperante.

Legal Counsellors to the Republic, and Members of the Republic's Parliament

Lawyers privileged to act for the State (“*Abogados del Estado*”) in the republican zone, murdered by populists, as per the list prepared by the Spanish Treasury in August of 1939.

- **José Calvo Sotelo**, Minister of Finance.MP
Leader of the Monarchists
- Juan de Isasa y del Valle,
- Porfirio Silván González,
- Juan Manuel de Estrada y Soler
- José Gómez de la Serna y Favre
- Leandro González Reviriego
- **Manuel Gómez-Acebo y Modet**, MP
- Pedro Redondo Sanz
- Wenceslao Manzaneque y Fraile
- Antonio María Acuña
- **Daniel Mondéjar Funez**, MP
- Santiago Alonso de Villapadierna y Gallego
- José Colomer y Vidal
- **Federico Salmón Amorín**, Labour Minister of the Republic
- Luis Belda y Soriano de Montoya
- **Dimas Adanez Horcajuelo** ,MP
- Jesús Yébenes G.
- **Teodoro Pascual Cordero**, diputado MP.
- **Fermín Daza y Díaz del Castillo**, MP
- Luis Ruiz-Valdepeñas y Utrilla
- **Juan Rovira Roure**, Mayor of Lleida.
- Juan F. Gómez Molleda
- Celestino Lázaro Fernández
- Ángel Aguado Serrano
- Ángel Castro Menéndez
- Juan R. Godínez y Sánchez

In the light of Salas Larrazabal's analysis and the complementary data I provide herewith, Franco's repression does not appear to be especially rigorous, given the circumstances; and there is no evidence that he took particular pleasure in applying it. Quite on the contrary the relatively moderate figures of the repression following a civil war which left the winners glowing with hate, can only be explained by Franco's own will to curtail it to the utmost.

The above mentioned far reaching amnesties of 1941 and 1943, also support my view that Franco contained the penal repression. The non penal repression would gradually decrease, so that by the decade of 1960 it had practically disappeared.

Ramón Pérez-Maura in his article of November 21, 2013 published in Madrid's ABC, points out that on April 1st 1969, five years before Franco's death the Official Gazette published a Decree with Franco's last amnesty, in which Article 1 states

"Article One; All offenses committed prior to April 1st 1939 (the date of the end of the Civil War), are hereby deemed extinguished, and by virtue of this decree such offenses whether or not under judgement, of all types, declared or not, committed by whoever, and whatever their seriousness or their consequences.....(are permanently extinguished)."

This decree, signed by Franco and enacted 20 years before the fall of the Berlin wall, liberated Santiago Carrillo, (a key figure of Spanish Communism, widely held responsible for the murder at Paracuellos of over 4,000 innocent civilians), from all his criminal responsibilities, and allowed him to return to Spain with a clean slate: which reinforces the evidence that Franco was not excessively vindictive with the losers of the Civil War. To conclude, I quote from Jose Maria Carrascal's "*Franco, 25 years later*", (Page 134); but before, I would insist that *Franco did well by curtailing the post war repression;*

"Historians most benevolent with Franquism put at 23.000 the deaths by the post war repression. Those most hostile, double that figure. But even if only 23.000, this is a terrifying number; not to say that, had the other side won, things would have been different. This is sinister picture, in fairness needs to be paired off with another feature of Franco's regime; otherwise it would remain lopsided.

"The deep, pitiless, post war repression, did not stall the regime from establishing the foundations for a social environment new to Spain. This was the other face of the regime"

"The Old Age Insurance Law was promulgated on September 1, 1939. That of Sunday Rest, in July 1940. The law that created the Navy's Social Security Institute was approved in October of that year. The Labour Relations Law in October of 1942. The Mandatory Health Insurance Law was also approved that year. The Labour Contracts Law in January of 1944 and the Labour Courts Law in October of that year."

A significant part of this legislation was more theory than practice, given the dire conditions of the country at the time. But there it was on paper, for the workers benefit,

as soon as circumstances allowed. This legislation remains, from the advantageous perspective provided by time, Franquism's most durable legacy."

CHAPTER 4. - Franco did well saving Spain from entering into WWII

Hitler and to a lesser degree Mussolini, clearly expected Franco, whose war effort they had generously helped with arms and men would take part on their side in the impending World War. But at the end of the Civil War, Spain was in ruins, and neither Franco nor his generals had the least desire to join in another fight. They considered their mission, saving Spain from Communism, complete and were well conscious of its frightful cost.

On the other hand, although the United States, the United Kingdom and France, recognized Franco's regime and sent ambassadors to Madrid, the democratic powers perceived Franco as rebel general, friendly with Hitler and Mussolini, who had toppled a legally elected government. Thus those democracies attached little value to Franco's defeat of communism.

Such extended opinion put Franco in an extremely difficult position. On the one hand, Germany demanded Franco's support in the upcoming war, an effort which Franco regarded totally out of reach given the ruinous state of the country, and a menacing risk of extended famine. On the other hand he could expect little sympathy from the world's democracies who saw him as a potential enemy.

Luis Suarez, in his "*The decisive Years*" "*Los Años Decisivos*", (Pág. 119), describes this predicament;

"A resounding victory, reached without resorting to negotiations, was followed by the pressing need to restore international relations. This led to dealing with the foreign debt. The providers of the Popular Front, (leaving aside the Soviet Union, with which Franco would never negotiate), would not consider establishing trade relations or respecting Spanish property in their countries, without first settling their credits to Spain. Franco's government agreed to pay the debts of both sides, so that France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, in that order, became Spain's main creditors."

According to the data used by Suarez in his book, Spain's debt with Germany at the end of the Civil War was 498 million Deutsche Marks, approximately equivalent to 3.000 million Euros today. This was a huge figure whose production facilities had been badly damaged or destroyed by the war and that the 1939 harvest had been extremely poor. But the government's first priority was feeding its population and it first concentrated its efforts on the procurement of food and machinery.

The first international agreement signed by the new government was the Friendship Agreement with Portugal, signed in March of 1939. Relations with France remained ambiguous, as France's leftist government was clearly hostile, but its military

establishment, led by Field Marshall Petain, friendly with Franco, was favourable to Franco. As to the UK, the first interchanges focused mainly on the demand for Spain's neutrality in the event of war.

The first step in the restoration of normal relations with the Vatican was a collective letter signed by all Spanish bishops on July 1st, 1937, "*Dissipating any remaining concerns held by Catholics, with regards to the legitimacy of Franco's raising*" (P.92, The Decisive Years). A few days later, 900 bishops from over the world had signed the letter, and three weeks after its publication, Franco received the Papal envoy, Monsignor Antoniutti in Valladolid. Franco sent Yanguas Messia as ambassador to the Vatican, in order to negotiate an agreement that would regulate the relations between Church and State, including the appointment of bishops, in Spain. After, long, and occasionally tense negotiations, an agreement was reached and signed in October 1940. Thus the newly born regime acquired an important ally, who would help it mitigate many of the dangers that would threaten it during WWII.

On the other hand pressures from Germany on Spain to have it join it in the war intensified day by day. In order to satisfy Germany Franco had adhered to the "Anti Komintern Pact" on April 7 1939, a strategic alliance to be enacted in the event of war with the Soviet Union; and next day he fulfilled his promise to Mussolini by having Spain leave the Society of Nations (a precursor of today's UN), in the steps of Germany and Italy. As a result of these moves Franco, soon after winning the Civil War appeared to the world as a staunch ally of Hitler and Mussolini. To quote again from Suarez's book, page 123,

"The fact is that during several weeks following the end of the war, the Spanish government appeared dangerously close to the arrogant positioning of its allies in Europe...The foreign press concluded that Spain was ready to join Hitler and Mussolini in their aggressions. This was not the case. On April 26 the Spanish Ambassador met with Lord Halifax, Foreign Secretary, and delivered a memorandum which insisted on Spain's independence in international affairs."

When some months later Germany invaded Poland, Franco's government again assured France and England of its neutrality, and allowed those countries navies to use Spanish ports. As a result, as Suarez tells us in his much quoted book, "*It was not unusual to see in the Canary Islands ships from different warring countries, berthed side to side with enemy ships.*"

The new government's foreign policy, in such a volatile and dangerous environment, were entrusted to Serrano Súñer, Franco's brother in law, who with Spain's Foreign Secretary, General Beigbeder held several meetings with Hitler and Mussolini. Although Franco wished to avoid entering in the war, he saw in Hitler a staunch bulwark against Soviet expansionism. Once more I quote from Luis Suarez's book,(P.130),

"Francisco Franco, like many of his contemporaries, even in England and the United States, regarded Hitler as the world's champion anticommunist. That's why he joined the Anti-Comintern Pact."

The last thing Franco could imagine when he signed the Antikomintern Pact, is that three months later, (August 22, 1939), Hitler was going to sign a “*Mutual Security Pact*” with Stalin. This was a totally unexpected initiative by Hitler, which left him utterly flabbergasted, and served to strongly prevent him against his powerful ally. From Franco’s view, this Pact freed him of any obligation under the Anti-Comintern Pact, which he considered invalid from this point. This also strengthened his resolve to remain neutral.

On August 30, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, and World War two started. Less than a year after this, his army had conquered most of Western Europe, and reached the Spanish-French border. Franco, who knew the French Army well, and had several friends among its generals, had always trusted French power to fend off Hitler from Spain’s borders. But now he could feel the breath of the tiger on the other side of the Bidasoa river; he had good reasons to be terrified! From that moment until Hitler decided to invade Russia in June of 1941, Spain was permanently in danger of war, either as Hitler’s ally, or if Franco would not yield his neutrality, as his enemy. The bone of contention was Hitler’s ambition to take Gibraltar from the British, under “Operation Felix”, which implied the penetration of Spain by German forces. It is to Franco’s credit that he never gave in to Hitler, and at the same time managed to stave off a German invasion. Today, few people are not aware of the closeness that Spain came to joining the war, nor how much Franco had to manoeuvre to avoid it.

Hitler proposed a meeting there and he met Franco at the border post of Hendaye on October 23, 1940, in order to schedule Spain’s entry into the war. Most historians agree that Franco put forward a number of conditions for this, which Hitler found totally unacceptable. Once again reading from Suarez’s book (P.138),

“The Führer started the discussion by laying out his plans for the new political and economic structure he wished to set up in Europe. He also announced the date for Operation Felix; on January 10, 1941, a contingent of German paratroops would be dropped on Gibraltar, and capture this enclave. When he finished, Franco also gave a long tirade, as witnessed by Serrano; he spoke of Morocco and of supplies, ¿Could Germany provide him immediately with 100.000 tons of wheat?”

Franco refused to give a date for his entry into the war, notwithstanding Germany’s repeated demands. The threat that Operation Felix represented was extremely serious as Germany planned to send troops to cross Spain and consolidated its hold on Gibraltar; if Franco yielded to this Spain’s entry in the war would immediately follow, and if he opposed Hitler was likely to declare war on Spain.

Fortunately Italy’s setbacks in Lybia and North Africa required German involvement in those scenarios, and plans for Gibraltar were temporarily at least abandoned. But they were retaken again and again, always dropped at the last minute due to external factors. Luis Suarez gives a detailed account of those days in his last book, “*Franco and the Third Reich*”, published in 2015.

When Hitler, ignoring the Mutual Security Pact, invaded Russia on June 22, 1941, Franco breathed with relief as Hitler’s attention moved away from the Mediterranean and Gibraltar. He now saw the opportunity to repay Hitler’s favours and offered him an army of 18.000 men, “*The Blue Division*”, exclusively to fight communism that is

Soviet Russia. This raised concerns with the Allies, but the United Kingdom, keen on maintaining the supplies of iron, manganese, sulphur and potassium, provided by Spain, hoped that the Blue Division would be a tolerable exception to Spain's neutrality, and turned a blind eye on the whole thing, as it had over the recent past, on Spain's vocal pro Hitlerism; the British Government and particularly its Premier, Winston Churchill, was convinced of Franco's sincere wish to avoid entering the war.

Hitler's triumphs started to ebb after the invasion of Russia, and with the US entering the war following Japan's attack at Pearl Harbour, he suffered one defeat after another. Franco maintained Spain's neutrality, which in face of the moral and material debt incurred by Franco with Germany, and Hitler's pressing demands, extensively discussed in Suarez's book, was an outstanding achievement; although no doubt that Franco's luck once more saved him from the precipice.

Another fact that reinforced Franco's neutrality was the Japanese invasion of the Philippines on December 10, 1941. This gave him a strong argument against the Falangist hawks, who had been pressing him for two years to enter the war on Hitler's side, using the media they controlled, in particular the "Arriba" newspaper to that effect. The day after the breaking of the news of this attack, the Government made the press publish the following note,

"Spain cannot sympathize with Japan's criminal gesture, as the attacked Philippine nation is its blood sister"

Interested readers may find additional information in the Bibliography included at the end of this essay, but I believe that this summary provides enough proof that Franco did well, sailing Spain through extremely rough and dangerous waters, and safely delivering it from entering into the Second World War

CHAPTER 5.-Franco did well exploiting his image as ardent anticommunist to reach an alliance with the United States, which broke Spain's isolation and endorsed his leadership.

WWII ended in 1945 with the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan. The Soviet Union destroyed its German invaders thanks in no small measure to the huge amount of supplies it received from the United States, and by the end of the war it had "freed" a dozen East European countries, including Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania and Yugoslavia, as well as most of Germany. The "liberators" gradually imposed communist dictatorial governments in those countries, controlled from Moscow with an iron hand. Winston Churchill, the famous English premier, coined the term "Iron Curtain" in his famous speech of March 1946, in which he said that... *"Eastern Europe has fallen behind an immense iron curtain..."*

Soon after the end of WWII, the Soviet Union would successfully test its first atomic bomb and a few years later its first hydrogen bomb. At the same time the USSR openly tried to impose communist regimes wherever it could and actively supported and armed communist parties and governments all over the world, thus extending its global reach and increasing its threats to the world's democracies.

This led to a direct military confrontation between the USSR and non communist countries, which resulted in the accelerated development of armies and armaments, including nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, equipped with extremely precise guidance systems, capable of blowing up whole cities distant thousands of miles.

In this new context of pre bellic confrontation (baptised as the “Cold War”), between the Communist Block, lead by the USSR and China on the one hand and the United States and the United Kingdom on the other, Spain soon acquired strategic value for both sides. The USSR exerted all sorts of pressures through European communist parties, particularly the French PCF, and also through socialist parties such as the UK’s Labour Party, intended to end Franco’s regime. These pressures led to Spain’s expulsion from the United Nations Organization, (founded in June 1945), following a motion presented by Mexico. Once again, let me quote from Luis Suarez’s much mentioned book, (P. 311)

From October 1945 it became clear to everyone that Franco was not going to willingly step down from his position of command. The allies, that in Potsdam and San Francisco, had approved the exclusion of Spain from the community of nations, had to now address the practical question of what to do about it. This issue soon resulted in serious dissensions, as Franco expected, as international politics, always selfish, disallowed any move which could benefit a potential rival...And no cohesive force existed, either inside or outside Spain that could prevent different groups from confronting each other over it. Franco believed this would happen, and hoped for the gradual consolidation of his image as a champion of anticommunism, and also as the leader of the only country who had resisted Hitler, and who had saved thousands of Jews by providing them with Spanish passports. In this respect, the resolution by the Jewish World Congress, (the Zionist Movement’s sister association), to thank Spain for its help in saving thousands of lives, came at a time when Franco needed it most.

The international hounding of Franco and his regime, provoked a wave of solidarity inside the country, and on April 2nd 1946 newspapers all over the world carried pictures of hundreds of thousands of Spaniards applauding Franco as he addressed them from the balcony of the royal palace. “*This highlighted to the world a significant fact; the approval of Franco’s government by a large part of Spain’s population.*” (P.319, “The Decisive Years”).

Earlier on, in March 1946, in the same speech in which he warned the free world about “*the Iron Curtain which has divided Europe in two*”, Winston Churchill had also cautioned about “*the communist parties which constitute a dangerous threat to Christian civilization*”. But although his popularity at home, and Churchill’s warnings about the communist menace undoubtedly had some positive repercussions, Hitler’s shadow still lingered over the “Caudillo”, as Franco’s propagandists officially referred to him.

Thus after debating Franco, the UN adopted a resolution excluding Spain from all international institutions and requesting member countries to withdraw their ambassadors from Spain. Argentina and five other South American countries voted against this resolution.

The UN resolution translated into a trade blockade which worsened Spain's economic difficulties and this would have most probably led to widespread famine, had it not been for Argentina's generous supplies of grain and other foods. Argentina's support greatly mitigated Spain's hardship, and Spain's gratitude is reflected to this date in the many squares and streets named after Peron, Argentina's President, in Madrid and many other cities and towns.

During this period, pressures to end Franco's regime came from many quarters, but not all had the same "recipe". On the one hand Spanish Republicans in exile had failed in forming a united platform to channel their claims and actions; and on the other the Monarchy, the solution favoured by the United Kingdom and the USA, lacked internal support, as the supporters of King Alphonse's heir were ready to admit. Franco made the most of his opponent's controversies and concentrated over the next few years on the reconstruction of Spain's economy.

The Korean War dealt a serious blow to the international anti Franco crusade. The United States saw in Franco's Spain, a vouched anticommunist, a strategic ally. Pressed by the Pentagon, the American government overcame its reluctance and signed a far reaching collaboration treaty with Spain, known as the "*Pardo Treaty*." Under this Treaty, the US agreed to provide important military assistance to Spain's armed forces, and economic and financial support, in exchange for the installation of several large US military Base's in Spain. This Treaty signified the end of Spain's isolation, and the beginning of a sustained economic recovery.

Franco's resistance to internal pressures, some of them even from some of his closest collaborators, clearly benefited the Spanish people for his permanence as Head of State provide the political stability necessary for the economic and social of a country left in ruins by the Civil War. A change of regime and leadership at that time would have inevitably brought in political instability, turning it into a Cold War battlefield, and perhaps even driving the country into a "Hot War."

Franco did well holding on to his seat. Later, having shaken hands with the US, Hitler's shadow started to dim, and Spain began to acquire the image of a "*Trusted Ally*" before the western democracies, a process which culminated in 1955 with Spain's admission into the United Nations.

Over the next twenty years Spain's economy was completely transformed from a primarily agricultural one to a predominantly industrial one. When Franco died at the end of 1975, Spain was the world's 12th largest economy, with a total GDP (an of course per capita GDP) larger than those of the communist paradises, Russia and China. And as to political freedoms, citizens of those countries would have given an arm and a leg to enjoy Spain's terrible *Franquist* Oppression!

I believe this overwhelming statistical evidence, not widely known, is enough in itself for Spaniards to feel indebted to Franco. A debt which has never been duly recognized.

CHAPTER 6.-Franco did the right thing setting up the Spanish State as a new Monarchy and preparing Juan Carlos de Borbon to succeed him as its first King

Franco was a monarchist, his life and actions leave little doubt about that. Again, from Luis Suarez's much quoted book,

“On July 17, 1937, on the first anniversary of the Alzamiento, (the “Rising”), the ABC newspaper in Seville published an interview with Franco in which he offered some inklings as to his plans for the future. In this interview he refers to the eventual restoration of the monarchy as if this was his plan, but at the same time made some precisions which traditional monarchists probably found puzzling.”

“It would certainly have to be different to that which ended on April 14, 1931; different in its contents even if that may be painful for many of us, but we must be realistic even in respect of the incumbent person.”

Franco meant that this new monarchy would have to accept his newly founded State and its Institutions, which, even in those early days, he saw made up by a single political party, the *Movimiento*, the “vertical” unions, (with management and labour together in the same union), and an “Organic” Parliament, (in which each member represents a given institution). There is no mention of any alternative to monarchism, or of a remittance to the Falange for the provision of the new State's future structure; nor of his intent to set up a Franco “*Dinasty*”, a temptation most dictators, from Napoleon on, have found hard to resist.

Thus the political foundations of this new State would be far from the principles on which modern democracies are founded, and this made it very difficult for Don Juan, the legal heir to Alphonse XIII's throne to accept them. In fact he never accepted them, and this made it impossible for them to reach an agreement, after years of to's and fro's between them.

NOTE

(On the other hand, Don Juan's son, Juan Carlos, did, in a well orchestrated ceremony publicly swear to abide by the Principles of the “Movimiento”, before being appointed Franco's successor as Head of State, as the first Monarch of Spain's Kingdom. The “Movimiento” had a short life after this, as Franco's Parliament, after his death, ruled its own extinction, thus allowing for the transition to the Constitution of 1978, and a democratic regime.

But it remains engraved in History's records, (and those of Spanish TV), that don Juan Carlos swore loyalty to the “Movimiento”, under the old regime; and two years later, the old regime having been legally auto-liquidated, he swore loyalty again, this time to the democratic Constitution. This was the final implementation of the plan Franco had carefully prepared; the making of Juan Carlos as the kingpin of Spain's transition from autocracy into democracy. A smooth and peaceful transition, Spain owes entirely to Franco, although something many in Spain and outside, seem to have forgotten.

With the Allied victories in WWII internal and external pressures for Franco to step down and bring in the Monarchy's rightful heir, Don Juan, increased significantly. The governments of the US and UK then considered Franco a potential enemy, however weak, who should be dealt with for the good of international harmony. But those governments were also conscious of the lack of prestige of the representatives of the Republic in exile, and of the unsolvable differences between them.

Those differences would come to the open at the San Francisco conference of April 1945, participated by 49 countries, which founded the United Nations Organization. Franco's Spain was not invited but the socialist leaders Indalecio Prieto and Juan Negrín assisted as observers. Luis Suarez tells us of the relationship between these two in his "Decisive Years", (P.294)

"Indalecio Prieto's thoughts during that spring of 1945, mostly focused on two issues; to him Juan Negrín was only an instrument of the Soviet Embassy in Paris, and he had no wish to become an agent for Soviet Communism; and he did not trust Aguirre's (the leader of the Basque Nationalist Party), alleged support of the Spanish Republic. Prieto failed to reconcile himself with either of those leaders."

Given these controversies which made the utopic return of the defeated Republic impossible, the traditional monarchy and the crowning of Don Juan, heir to Alphonse XIII, as Spain's Head of State, was the only alternative in the eyes of western democracies, and it became the objective of their governments "Spanish Policy". To quote once again from Suarez's book, (P.253).

"Having obtained total control over the Mediterranean from August 1943, the Allies did not need to show Franco any complacency...In his telegram to Franco of August 2, 1943, Don Juan demanded in strong terms:

"There is only one way to cast away all dangers; the immediate restoration of the Monarchy, which as a bystander over the war of Spain, is providentially enabled to exert a conciliatory and reconstructive mission, within and without our national borders..."

If your Excellency insists on the demands, to me unacceptable, you condition the return of the Monarchy, provoking a definite split (between us)...I will be forced to resort to the only means current circumstances allow me, and that is to inform public opinion of this situation with a detailed exposition of facts."

To which Franco replied soon after, saying among other things,

"The contents of your telegram make it most advisable, in the interests of our Motherland, the exercise of utmost discretion by the Prince, avoiding any acts or statements which could undermine the prestige of the Spanish regime abroad, and the unity of Spaniards within, something which would seriously damage the monarchy and your Highness in particular."

The following month of September the monarchist generals, Orgaz, Dávila, Solchaga, Kindelan, Saliquet, Monasterio and Ponte, signed a letter to Franco in which they said,

"It is now time to delay no longer the return to forms of government which are genuinely Spanish".

And a few days later Gil Robles who had led the major conservative party, the CEDA, during the Republic also wrote Franco, asking him to restore the Monarchy...*"which*

could not be introduced by the Generalissimo. A monarchy that represented a continuation of the Regime would not last three months."

"Franco never replied to either letters and as to the one from the generals he took it as a simple breach of discipline over which he kept silent."(P.253, Suarez). But he took notice and gradually removed those generals from positions of trust.

The only effective opposition to Franco over the next twenty years would be that of the Pretender, Don Juan de Borbon, who counted with the sympathy of the western democracies and of his followers in Spain, although these could do little to support his cause as they could not form a political party.

Franco's early determination to turn Spain into a Kingdom, is proven on the other hand by the Law of Succession passed by his Parliament on March 27, 1947 which granted Franco de right to select his successor as Head of State as a hereditary monarch; and on the other hand by his letter exchanges with Don Juan de Borbon, part of which are quoted above. But Don Juan would never agree to swear loyalty to the Principles of the "Movimiento", as this implied submission to Franco, its leader.

Franco held on steadfastly to his plan to bring in a "new" monarchy, against the western democracies cries for restoration of the "Borbonic" monarchy, in the conviction that such restoration, even if consented to by Franco, would have failed. The great majority of Franco's followers fought the civil war along with him in order to save Spain from becoming a communist satellite of the USSR, not to restore the traditional monarchy. Because of this, Franco needed guarantees that the values and structures of the state he had created would be respected, from the candidate to succeed him as Head of State, as he saw these essential to consolidate the recovery of the country, and to maintain political stability.

In addition to these considerations the fact remained that Don Juan was largely an unknown to the Spanish public, and his father's reign had left bad memories in many Spaniards minds.

This stalemate only started to yield ten years after the publication of Franco's *Law of Succession*, a decade of thwarted negotiations and bitter recriminations between Franco and Don Juan, thanks to the appearance on the negotiation scene of Don Juan's eldest son, Juan Carlos.

The first step towards "*Juan Carlismo*", was the meeting between Franco and Don Juan, exiled in Lisbon, in December of 1954, which took place in a private estate in the west of Spain. There it was agreed that Prince Juan Carlos, then 17 years old, would complete his education in Spain under a team led by Duke de la Torre. Thus, Don Juan, although he would not care to admit it, effectively renounced to his dynastic pretensions, and allowed Juan Carlos to start an integration process into Franco's regime. The reaction of the Falangist leaders was favourable to this integration as shown by the words of Jose Antonio Elola, its delegate on the Board of the Movimiento, in his speech in Barcelona on May 30 of 1955,

“Franco’s long term vision has led him to look after the education of a Prince who may receive the glorious heritage of July 18, 1936.” (The day of the rising by Franco against the Popular Front).

The next step, the *Law of Organization of the State*, was taken eleven years later, in 1966. This Law prepared Spain for Franco’s absence, creating the figure of a Premier to chair the Cabinet, whose weekly meetings Franco had always chaired, and concentrating all legislative powers in Parliament. A referendum to ratify this law was held on December 14 of that year, a highly unusual procedure for Spaniards at the time, and as could be expected the law was endorsed by a wide margin.

The third and last step towards the establishment of the new Monarchy, was the Law of the Successor, passed by Parliament on July 23 1969, (491 votes for, 19 against, and 9 abstentions) which decreed, *“On the vacancy of the office of the Head of State, Don Juan Carlos de Borbon will be crowned as King, following the oath of loyalty and acceptance before Parliament.”*

This Law made Juan Carlos undisputed heir to Franco as Spain’s King within the legitimacy of Franco’s regime. It was poorly received by Don Juan, his father, who maintained he had not abdicated his rights, and therefore maintained his capacity to one day become “King of all Spaniards”.

Juan Carlos was proclaimed King of Spain by the Franquist Parliament, on November 22, 1975 two days after Franco’s death, and would be Head of the Franquist State, until December of 1978, after the Franquist parliament had been dissolved, a new Constitution had been approved by a national referendum, and an elected parliament took Juan Carlos’s oath as King of a new democratic state. Thus, Juan Carlos “transited” from the position of King of an *autocracy*, to King of a *democracy*, with the consent, and to the satisfaction, of all Spanish political parties and the political world in general.

This smooth transition, proves that Franco did well to turn his regime into a new monarchy, which after his death could evolve into a democratic one, which it did exactly as he planned. A transition which witnessed some pretty unexpected events, such as the Spanish Communist Party’s acceptance of the monarchy; as did the PSOE, the socialist party, whose Congress soon after reneged of Marxism as its ideology. These fundamental changes from left wing parties that broke with their radical and antidemocratic pasts, allowed them to fully integrate into Spain’s new born democracy

The end result of all this was that Juan Carlos received a prosperous country, reconciled and at peace with itself and ready to hold the reigns of its own destiny; as it had become impatient with the Franquist anachronism and was aching for democracy. What he clearly did not receive was a country over brimming with hate, and looking for vengeance, whatever Zapatero and his followers may want us to believe.

CHAPTER 7.- Franco did well in living an austere and honest life

Nobody can deny that Franco led an austere life, fully dedicated to governing his nation. His allergy to flatterers, and mistrust of collaborators, (with rare exceptions), made him a man of few words and a cold and distant person, with few friends even in the army. He took up his responsibilities as Head of State at the end of the civil war as a conquering general, but soon became a consummate politician, manoeuvring the different pressure groups with which he had to share his power, so that none of them achieved dominant positions; and, at the same time, enacting policies that would provide economic growth and raise living standards of the Spanish people.

Franco's personality turned him into an exemplary leader. He never caused scandals nor tolerated them from his subordinates. Neither did he accumulate wealth, nor allowed his family members to do so; and he quickly let go of ministers suspect of any sort of corruption. He chaired all his weekly Cabinet meetings during more than thirty years, and demanded a high level of performance from all his Ministers. He deemed increasing the living standards of the Spanish people as his first priority, developing the labour legislation and Social Security system Spain enjoys today; with his support of the Catholic Church and of Christian values another constant priority throughout his life.

José María Carrascal, the well known Spanish journalist, gives his view of Franco's personality in his very interesting book, "Franco, after 25 years", from where come the following quotes,

"Looked at from a historic perspective the first thing that surprises one is how someone so grey, so intellectually limited and so politically vulgar, could be capable of governing for such a long time and win so many battles, overcome so many crisis, and defeat so many rivals, far more brilliant and better prepared than him. As a general he was no Cesar, (Authors Note; He won his generals stars at age 30, under the Monarchy, and like Cesar he proved to be a master of logistics and strategy. No one, not even Carrascal, can maintain he was not a brilliant general), and as a politician he was no Churchill or Bismarck. However he governed for longer than any of them and ended his career in much better terms than them. How is this possible, if he lacked all the attributes that are usually found in leaders of empires, or saviours of nations? Neither charisma, nor brilliancy, nor originality, and no seductive powers of any sort.

His figure, short and plump, and his oratory, full of common places failed to impress....His habits hardly differed from those of millions of his countrymen; a man of routine, religious, and patriotic; more inclined to spend his spare time watching football and bullfights, or shooting and hunting, than reading or listening to music. He was a very ordinary Spaniard.

But at the same time he was patient among the impatient; methodical among the disorganized; level tempered among the irate; grey among the ostentatious; quiet among the chatterers; and economic among the spendrift. Franco was always trying to save, including his own power. Against common belief, he knew how to delegate power, and saw this as one of the best means to save his own. He preferred others to use their own power, thus gradually eroding it."

And later on he adds,

“Although the ultimate secret of his success, probably was the combination of loyalty to his principles, and flexibility in his methods, which allowed him to swim with, and against, the current. If one is to highlight a feature of Franco’s biography it would be that of a survivor. He survived his childhood fears, the humiliations of the Military Academy, the bullets in Africa, the flatterers of the Dictatorship, (General Primo de Rivera’s from 1923 to 1931), the pressures of the Republic, the challenges of the Civil War, Hitler’s offers, the punishment from the Allies, the hounding by the monarchists, the demands from the Falangists, and the schemes of the technocrats; and escaped the temptation of forming his own Dynasty.”

The combination of his personality, so well described by Carrascal, with his experience as a high ranking general under the Monarchy, the Dictatorship and the Republic, would Turn him into the *Caudillo*, the “Boss”, always demanding with himself and his subordinates, and totally committed to his country.

Clearly, Franco did well maintaining those standards of honesty and austerity, and imposing them on his countrymen, thus curtailing the unfortunate inclination of many Spaniards that have accessed public office, to abuse of their positions for their own benefit. A tendency which the democratic governments Spain enjoys since 1978 have been unable to eradicate.

EPILOGUE

From today’s perspective, the years under Franco’s regime, as seen by someone like me that lived under it, were free of many of the black spots that today soil Spain’s political scene. Corruption cases under Franco’s regime were exceptional, and the amounts involved were a small fraction of those involved in any of the many cases discussed today in the Spanish media. The unity of Spain could not be questioned, and Spaniards knew that the Head of State was an honest and responsible person, who never roused any form of scandal (Much to the disappointment of many). Franco gave us a Spain without politics, but otherwise with personal freedoms to work, acquire wealth and prosper; he promoted education for everyone, labour laws and social security; and under him Spain had the lowest criminality in Europe.

Given all of the above, I hope readers will forgive me, if looking back, I can’t help but feel a certain nostalgia for days of “*Don Paco*” ; for Francisco Franco Bahamonde, the man that nurtured Spain for the democracy it enjoys today, and to whom recognition is long overdue.

Franco’s Political Will

(Published the day after his death, November 20, 1975, in the Spanish Press)

Spaniards; Having reached the time to render my life before God, and submit to his final sentencing, I pray to Him, that he may receive me into His presence with benevolence, as I always wished to live and die a catholic. I honour Christ’s name and

it has always been my desire to be a faithful son of the Church, in whose bosom I am about to die.

I ask forgiveness from everyone from the bottom of my heart, and forgive all those that have declared themselves to be my enemies, though I may not have held them as such .I believe and hope that I had no other enemies but those who were Spain's, my lifelong love, whom I swore to serve until the last breath of my life now close to its end.

I wish to thank all those who have collaborated with enthusiasm, commitment and dedication to make Spain, One, Free, and Great. By the love I feel for our country I ask all of you to persevere in peace and unity, and for your support of the incumbent King of Spain Don Juan Carlos de Borbon, so that you bestow on him the same loyalty and affection you bestowed on me, granting him the collaboration you granted me.

Remember that Spain's enemies, and those of Christian civilization are always on the watch. Be watchful yourselves, and surrender before the supreme interests of our Motherland all your personal interests. Do not cease in the procurement of social justice and culture for all Spaniards and make this a key objective. Maintain all its lands united within Spain, promoting the rich variety of its regions as a source of strength for the unity of our Motherland.

I wish in my last moment to unite the names of God and Spain, and embrace you all so that we may cry together at the doorsteps of my death: Long Live Spain!

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