1998

Ramón Franco, el caballero del aire

Philip H. Gardner
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Gardner, Philip H., "Ramón Franco, el caballero del aire" (1998). *Master's Theses*. 1697.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.zmdj-nbp6>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/1697

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

**A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600**

**RAMÓN FRANCO
EL CABALLERO DEL AIRE
1896 - 1938**

**A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
San José State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts**

**by
Philip H. Gardner
August 1998**

UMI Number: 1391520

**Copyright 1998 by
Gardner, Philip Harold**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 1391520
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

© 1998

Philip H. Gardner

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George Vásquez", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. George Vásquez

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stanley Underdal", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Stanley Underdal

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dwight Messimer", written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Dwight Messimer, MA

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Lou Lewandowski", written over a horizontal line.

ABSTRACT

**RAMÓN FRANCO
EL CABALLERO DEL AIRE
1896-1938**

by Philip H. Gardner

This thesis is an examination of the life and times of Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco, the youngest sibling of Generalísimo Francisco Franco of Spain. It discusses Lieutenant Colonel Franco's exploits as a pilot, as well as his political twists and turns. In addition, a number of events in Spanish history are discussed that were antecedents to the Civil War. The war itself is also covered.

Research reveals a man who at one time or another, found himself at both ends of the political spectrum. Beginning his military career as a Monarchist, Ramón then became a Socialist. He later became an Anarchist, and finally ended his life as a Spanish Nationalist fighting against the Republican government he had worked to install. Throughout, and in part because of, these changes in political philosophy, Ramón Franco was involved in or connected to, several of the major events in the history of Spain during the 1920s and 1930s.

Acknowledgements:

The following biography of the aviator Ramón Franco has been a labor of love to say the least. A trip to Spain, long-distance phone calls, fact-checking and rechecking, along with countless hours of research in two languages, have culminated in this work.

From the very beginning I have been aware that this project was meant for me. What some might see as a string of chance circumstances, or happy coincidences, for me as a person of faith appears to be the guidance of God along the path I am to follow. In 1976 my parents made a brief business trip to Palma de Mallorca, Spain. Two years later this trip resulted in my father being transferred to the Balearic Islands for a two-and-a-half-year assignment for United Airlines. Friendships made during that time have endured, making my return in 1995 to conduct preliminary research for this project much easier and affordable. Since that time, I have met veterans of the Nationalist Air Force and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, been put in contact with former Republican aviators, and received offers of assistance from people whom I have never met. Books have come to me from people I have known only a short time, as well as through diligent searches by long-time friends.

There are many people to whom I owe thanks. If I have missed anyone in the list that follows, it is certainly not because your help and support were not appreciated or that it went unnoticed. To Señor Tirso González, whose assistance with travel arrangements made my 1995 trip back to Mallorca a true possibility; to Hal and Robbie Baker, whose help with that same journey will never be forgotten. To the Glindmeyer family, the Lockners and the Piñas,

whose hospitality and friendship mean so much. You are family, not just friends. To my immediate family who have always been enthusiastic in their support, even if they did not understand this “Spanish thing” I have. To my friends, who have been so supportive of my academic efforts. You are the best friends a man could have. You, too, are extended family, not merely friends. To Christina Gutierrez who has blessed my life with happiness and loving support during my work, and who made me happier than I had ever been when she agreed to be my wife. With all that I am and with all that I have, I love you, Christina. To Rudy and his wife Susana, Joaquin and Eugenio, who were incredibly helpful and willing to answer my questions about the Spanish Civil War more than once. To my anonymous source, I owe the greatest debt of gratitude. This thesis would not be what it is without you. To Dr. George Vásquez, Dr. Stan Underdal, and Prof. Dwight Messimer of San José State University, whose help, counsel, and suggestions have also made this work possible, as well as shaping the thesis you are about to read. Thanks to you all.

Finally, I must acknowledge and thank my parents, Ted and Jean Gardner. My education would not have been possible without them. Their hard work made this thesis possible. Without my parents, I would not be who I am today. Their example of love, hard work, and commitment shaped me and my outlook on the world. From the bottom of my heart, Mom and Dad, thank you and I love you.

Any errors in translation, research or writing are strictly my own. I have attempted to tell the story of the life of Ramón Franco as well as a little of the

history on both sides of the Civil War. I pray that I have done the opposing causes justice, and given an accurate and objective account of their fight.

Philip H. Gardner
Fremont, California
April 1998

Author's Notes

1. *Spanish place names:* In many works dealing with the Spanish Civil War, the Spanish names for cities and regions have been Anglicized. It is the author's preference to retain the original Spanish spelling for those places where appropriate. Catalán names have remained in Catalán. The following is a list of place names that have been translated for clarity sake:

Cabo Formentor - Cape Formentor
Islas Baleares - Balearic Islands

Cabo Verde - Cape Verde
Islas Canarias - Canary Islands

2. *Military Ranks.* The military ranks given in Spanish sources have been translated into English for better comprehension. Therefore, the following list is appropriate to include here:

Capitán - Captain
Comandante - Major
Teniente Coronel - Lieutenant Colonel
Teniente - Lieutenant

Capitán-General - Captain-General
Coronel - Colonel

3. *Political Parties.* The names of all relevant political parties have retained their Spanish spelling. Here is a list of those parties, preceded by their acronyms and followed by their political affiliations.

CEDA - Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas
-Catholic Party

CNT - Confederación Nacional del Trabajo
-Anarchist Trade Union

FAI - Federación Anarquista Ibérica
-Radical Anarchist faction group

Falange Española - Fascist Party

JONS - Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista
-Fascist Party

POUM - Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista
-anti-Stalinist Communists

UGT - Unión General de Trabajadores
-Socialist Trade Union

Preface:

This thesis began as an examination into the use of air power during the Spanish Civil War. It soon became apparent that research into the air war in Spain between 1936 and 1939 would be a daunting task due to lack of primary sources easily available to me in this country or in Spain. Existing resources dealing with this topic primarily focus on foreign involvement by Germany, Italy, France and the Soviet Union. There exists little historical writing on this subject in English or Spanish. Attempts have been made to wade through the labyrinth that this aspect of the Spanish Civil War represents, but no definitive work yet exists. Jesús Salas Larrazabal's Air War Over Spain is not that work, Colonel José Goma's La Guerra en el Aire: Vista, Suerte y al Toro is also not that work, nor is Gerald Howson's Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War. This thesis is not that work either. During the research for the original thesis topic, it was hoped that some forward progress could be made in telling that part of the Spanish war. What developed into the work you are about to read, however, is a biographical account of the aviator Ramón Franco and his involvement in the Civil War.

While Ramón Franco may not have played a significant individual role in the Civil War, he certainly had a global reputation prior to the conflict and his later radical leftist politics brought him further recognition. Ramón's decision to fight for his brother Francisco shocked many in the Republic, while his previous political involvements caused him problems amongst Nationalists as well. This thesis will attempt to solve the mystery of his death, as there was no formal investigation, and resources that deal with Ramón Franco and his demise are limited, especially in English. An anonymous, eyewitness account relayed to

this author has shed light on this mystery and in this author's view, provided more information regarding the question of how Ramón Franco died.

This thesis is also an attempt to tell a Spaniard's story. Stripping away the layers of foreign involvement and historical study weighted to one side or the other has been difficult, but it is hoped that an adequate job has been accomplished. The desire to focus on a Spaniard's life is simple. The Spanish Civil War began as just that: a *Spanish* civil war, not a world war in miniature, or "appeasement's child" as some authors have insisted. The war was an internal conflict that became perverted by external fascist and communist elements into an international battle over ideology. That battle disguised the machinations of Adolf Hitler, resulting in the coming of the Second World War.

The following thesis, therefore, focuses on the life of a Spanish pilot; it is not yet another discussion of the *Legión Condor* or the *Aviazione Legionaria*, or the indiscriminate bombing of Guernica by the German forces sent to aid the Nationalists. It is the story of the life of General Franco's brother Ramón, and how his life paralleled the fortunes of Spain from his birth to his death.

Chronological Table

Feb. 1873:	Proclamation of the First Republic
May 1879:	Socialist Party founded
May 1886:	Birth of Alfonso XIII
May 1888:	Socialist trade union UGT founded
Dec. 1892:	Birth of Francisco Franco
Feb. 1896:	Birth of Ramón Franco
Aug. 1898:	Spanish American War
Feb. 1902:	General strike in Barcelona by UGT
May 1902:	Alfonso XIII comes of age
1903 - 1905:	Wave of Anarchist strikes in Andalucía
Oct. 1910:	Anarchist trade union CNT founded
1913:	<i>Aviación Militar</i> founded
Aug. 1917:	General strike by UGT and CNT
1917 - 1919:	Wave of Anarchist strikes in Andalucía and Levante
June 1921:	Communist Party founded
Sept. 1923:	Military Dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera
Jan. 1926:	Flight of the <i>Plus Ultra</i>
Feb. 1926:	Francisco Franco promoted to General
May 1926:	Moroccan War concluded
Sept. 1927:	FAI founded
Jan. 1930:	Fall of Primo de Rivera
Dec. 1930:	Cuatro Vientos uprising
April 1931:	Exile of Alfonso XIII
14 April 1931:	Proclamation of the Second Republic
Aug. 1932:	General Sanjurjo's rising at Sevilla
Jan. 1933:	Rising of FAI at Barcelona
March 1933:	CEDA founded
Oct. 1933:	Falange Española founded
Dec. 1933:	Rising of CNT in Aragón
Oct. 1934:	Miners' uprising in Asturias
Feb. 1936:	POUM (Marxist party) founded
	Popular Front wins elections
May 1936:	Santiago Cásares Quiroga made President of the Republic
12 July 1936:	José Calvo Sotelo murdered
18 July 1936:	Civil War begins
28 Oct. 1938:	Ramón Franco killed off Cape Formentor, Mallorca
	International Brigades leave Spain
1 April 1939:	Civil War ends

Adapted and Edited from Gerald Brenan's The Spanish Labyrinth, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Prepared and drawn by Philip H. Gardner from maps found in Atlas de Les Illes Balears: Geogràfic, Econòmic, Històric. (Barcelona: Diàfora, S. A.), 1979.

ROUTE OF THE PLUS ULTRA
22 JANUARY - 10 FEBRUARY 1926

Palma de Mallorca

Prepared and drawn by Philip H. Gardner from maps found in Atlas de Les Illes Balears: Geogràfic, Econòmic, Històric. (Barcelona: Diàfora, S. A.), 1979.

Early illustration of the Domier DoJ Wal *Plus Ultra* flown by Ramón Franco across the South Atlantic in 1926. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Drawing provided by Professor Dwight Messimer, San José State University.

Ramón Franco y Bahamonde circa 1930. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by José Terol.

Against this sterile state I am proposing the integrated state, which will bring economic justice, and which will say with due authority: 'no more strikes, ... , no more political salaries gained by a happy accident, no more anarchic liberty ... The national production will be for the benefit of all classes, all parties, all interests. This state may be called fascist; if this be indeed the fascist state, then I, who believe in it, proudly declare myself a fascist!

-José Calvo Sotelo in a speech to the Cortes, 16 June 1936

After your Excellency's words, the responsibility for whatever happens will be yours. You come here today with two aims only: to condemn parliament as impotent, and to inflame the army, trying to detach units from their loyalty to the republic. But I give my assurance. Parliament will work. The army will do its duty.

-Santiago Cásares Quiroga, Prime Minister of Spain, in response to Calvo Sotelo's remarks.¹

INTRODUCTION

The two quotes which begin this introduction, names such as La Pasionaria and Generalísimo Francisco Franco, along with places such as Badajoz and Guernica come to mind when one considers the Civil War in Spain. The conflict (between July 1936 and April 1939) pitted forces loyal to the left-wing Popular Front government of the Republic against insurgent, right-wing conservative forces, later known as the Nationalists.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, Spain was a hotbed of political instability and violence. Numerous factions on both sides vied for power and

¹ Hugh Thomas: The Spanish Civil War (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 8-9.

representation in the *Cortes*.² The Spanish state at this time was a Republic, the second attempt at such a government, which followed the Dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera between 1923 and 1930.³ This period was followed by interim royal governments until the exile of the monarch, King Alfonso XIII, in 1931 and the proclamation of the Second Republic.

The political climate in Spain was representative of the whole of Europe in the inter-war era. Radical groups from across the political spectrum struggled for power, sometimes violently. Mussolini had marched Fascism to the head of government in Italy in 1922, and by 1936, Hitler's Nazis controlled the Reichstag, while the specter of Communism loomed to the east in Russia under Josef Stalin. Parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy still thrived in the United Kingdom with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at the helm, while France touted Leon Blum as Premier of its moderately successful Popular Front Government. The situation in Spain could be most accurately described as fragmented while moving toward polarization.

Political parties of all sorts were represented in Spain at this time. On the Left, the major parties were the Anarchists (along with the Anarcho-Syndicalists), Communists, Socialists, and left-wing workers' unions. The two most important unions were the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), and the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT). The CNT served as an arm of the Anarchists, while the UGT was tied to the Socialist party. On the Right, the major parties included the *Falange Española*, the Carlists, the Monarchists,

² *Cortes*: The Spanish Parliament consisting of 473 members under the Second Republic.

³ The First Republic was proclaimed in 1873 and fell in 1874.

the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), and generals of the Army whose loyalties were scattered throughout the conservative spectrum.

The advent of the Second Republic in April 1931, was only the beginning of political upheaval. By mid-July 1936, the situation had become untenable for both political factions. Gangs of *pistoleros* from both sides of the political aisle roamed the streets and the *ley de fugas* was in full effect.⁴ The events which ignited three years of blood-letting were the murders of two men: one a Socialist militia member, and the other a right-wing politician whose death was the rallying cry for the forces that sought to overthrow the Popular Front. After a bloody civil war resulting in roughly one million casualties, Generalísimo Francisco Franco ruled Spain under a pseudo-fascist military dictatorship for the next thirty-six years. His victory was greeted with parades and cheering crowds by conservatives and the Far Right; while the Left fled Spain, suffered in Franco's prisons, or were shot.

However, Generalísimo Franco was not the first of his siblings to hear the cheers of the crowds. Public accolades came to the Franco family long before Francisco became chief of the Spanish State. Of the five Franco children, Ramón was the first to achieve success, acclaim and world renown.⁵ A decade

⁴ *pistoleros*: gunmen in the employ of the CNT and UGT. *ley de fugas*: A term which literally means "law of the fugitive." Numerous accounts surface in virtually every recounting of the early days of 1936 when members of one political faction or another were taken from their homes in the dead of night, shoved into waiting cars, driven to another location and pushed out the door, only to be met by a firing squad and shot while "trying to escape."

⁵ Paul Preston: *Francisco: A Biography* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 2-3. Ramón and his siblings were born in the following order: Nicolás, 1 July 1891; Francisco, 4 December 1892; Pilar, 27 February 1895; Ramón, 2 February 1896; Paz, 1898. Paz died after a short illness in 1907 at the age of nine, leaving Ramón as the youngest. Multiple sources do not give a date for the death of Paz Franco.

before the outbreak of the Civil War, the Franco name was known the world over because of Ramón's exploits as an aviator, not because of Francisco's success in Spain's long Moroccan wars. Due to his public life prior to the Civil War and his military service during the conflict, Ramón Franco was an interesting figure. He was an expert pilot, in 1926 being the first to cross the South Atlantic in a seaplane. He then became involved in Republican plots against the Primo de Rivera regime and King Alfonso XIII. Elected a deputy to the *Cortes* for Barcelona, he associated with Anarchists including Buenaventura Durruti and became a freemason.⁶ He lived a notoriously decadent life in the 1920s, and divorced his first wife to marry the mother of his illegitimate daughter in the early 1930s, taking advantage of the new divorce law enacted under the Republic.⁷

Despite having conspired against the monarchy for the Republic, then against the Republic for an anarchist-communist revolution, when war erupted in July 1936, Ramón joined the Nationalists.⁸ Under his brother Francisco's orders, Ramón served as a lieutenant colonel in command of Air Force operations on the Balearic Island of Mallorca. On 28 October 1938, Ramón Franco died when his aircraft went down off Cape Formentor near Mallorca. Mystery has surrounded his death for many years due to speculation that Ramón was either murdered, committed suicide, was mistakenly shot down by

⁶ Buenaventura Durruti was a famous Anarchist leader killed during the Civil War.

⁷ Preston, 5.

⁸ Philippe Nourry: Francisco Franco: La conquista del poder (Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1976), 33.

Italian aircraft, was purposely shot down by the Republicans, or simply crashed due to mechanical difficulties.

In a larger sense, Ramón Franco remains an enigma because of his dedicated involvement and agitation to establish a Republic in Spain along radical Socialist lines prior to November 1936 when he was appointed to command the Nationalist air base at Pollença, Mallorca. How this change in sympathy from liberal Republican to conservative Nationalist came about will be explored. The life of Ramón Franco, the “Jackal” of the Moroccan wars, and the famed “Columbus of the Air,” the *caballero del aire*, provides a prism through which one can look at the history of Spain in the 1920s and 1930s, the Civil War, and how the events that caused the war separated two brothers ideologically, yet finally reunited them in defense of a glorified Spain.⁹

⁹ *The New York Times*, 11 February 1926, 2:8.

Chapter One:

Columbus of the Air

Ramón Franco y Bahamonde was born on 2 February 1896 in the city of El Ferrol in the province of Galicia in northwestern Spain. El Ferrol was a naval base where the Franco family had lived and served the Spanish Navy since the early eighteenth century in the *intendencia naval* or pay corps. The *Escuela de Administración Naval* was closed in 1901 as a result of Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War, which also closed the possibility for Francisco and Ramón to follow in the family naval tradition.¹ Francisco and Ramón, therefore, entered the *Academia Militar de Infantería* in Toledo, while Nicolás pursued a naval career.²

Pilar Bahamonde, with two sons studying for military service, prayed that her youngest son would become a priest. As a devout conservative Catholic of the middle class, her faithfulness to tradition saw no other road for Ramón.³ Ramón rebelled, however, following Francisco into military service. During the three years between Francisco's departure for Toledo and his own, Ramón was without male companionship in El Ferrol. This seems to have taught him to

¹ Paul Preston: Franco: A Biography (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 1-6.

² Ibid., 8. Nicolás was accepted to the Naval Engineering School after leaving the Naval Preparatory School at age fourteen. Francisco and Ramón were excluded from naval service due to the closing of the *Escuela de Administración Naval*.

³ Ramón Garriga: Ramón Franco: el hermano maldito (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1978), 13. It was common in Galicia at this time for one or two sons to follow a military career, while a third would be expected to become a priest.

satisfy his own desires without attention to its effects on others.⁴ In this respect Ramón showed the inheritance of his father Nicolás Franco Salgado-Araujo's extroverted personality and his pursuit of personal pleasures. Nicolás's sons, Nicolás and Ramón, tended to take after him, while Francisco took after his mother in temperament and personality. Nicolás's and Ramón's sexual promiscuity and sometimes hedonistic lifestyles clashed with their brother's introspective piety. These differences in personality, displayed in their public and private lives, caused scandal for their mother and embarrassment to Francisco.⁵

The *caballero del aire* began his military career at age fifteen when he entered the *Academia Militar de Infantería* in Toledo, from which he graduated as number 37 of 413 cadets in 1914.⁶ Three years later he was promoted to Second Lieutenant and assigned to the Eighth Regiment of Zamora, garrisoned in his home town of El Ferrol.⁷ Ramón recognized that his passion was flying and he had a keen sense of how aviation could be used in modern warfare. When his transfer was approved to the *Servicio de Aeronáutica Militar* in

⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵ Preston, 4. Nicolás Franco Salgado-Araujo was a Navy paymaster, a gambler and philanderer with a violent temper that expressed itself in domestic violence. He left the family in 1907 to escape the marriage and accept a posting in Madrid. He died there in 1942.

⁶ Garriga, 25. [*caballero del aire*: gentleman of the air.]

⁷ José Gutiérrez-Rave: *Ramón Franco* (Madrid: Figuras de la raza, 1927), 6-7. An early posting to Larache in Spanish Morocco was followed by postings in Extremadura and Málaga. In 1916 Ramón was assigned to the Seventh Battalion of mountain infantrymen of Ciudad-Rodrigo, garrisoned in Larache, and in R'gaia at the limits of the international zone of Morocco. He was transferred to the Larache Regulars in 1917 and in 1920 he entered the *Servicio de Aeronáutica Militar* (Army Air Force), achieving the rank of Captain in August of that year.

February of 1920, he saw his dream of being a pilot come to reality.⁸ His sister Pilar, in her memoirs Nosotros, los Franco, wrote that Ramón had a premonition about his future when he was but a child:

One day he fell from the second floor. ... Fortunately, he was not hurt. Upon getting up, he told us: "God has given me an appointed destiny: I want to be an aviator." And so it was.⁹

Ramón excelled in his studies of aeronautics and flight, received his pilot's wings on 2 November 1920, and remained as an adjutant flight instructor at the *Escuela de Cuatro Vientos* outside Madrid. In June of 1921, he was transferred to the air base at Tetuán, Spanish Morocco.¹⁰

The history of aviation in Spain began when France and the United States were the leading nations in the field. Generally, Spanish aviation was not far behind the pioneers, and was almost equal to that of England, Germany, Italy and Russia. More specifically, Spanish aviation began tragically in 1909 when Antonio Fernández, in a biplane he designed himself, crashed in an attempt to fly from France to Spain. The next year, the first aircraft flew in Spain, and in 1911, an international air route was established between Madrid and Paris.¹¹ Colonel Pedro Vives chose five men to be the first class of pilots at the flight training school at Cuatro Vientos in 1911. This class included Alfredo Kindelán and José Ortiz Echagüe, both of whom would become important

⁸ Garriga, 28, 33.

⁹ Pilar Franco: Nosotros, los Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980), 175.

¹⁰ Gutierrez-Rave, 7.

¹¹ Jesus Salas Larrazabal: Air War Over Spain, trans. Margaret A. Kelley, English trans. ed. David Mondey (London: Ian Allan Ltd., 1974), 14.

figures in Spanish aviation and in the Civil War twenty-five years later. That same year, the first military air field was built at Cuatro Vientos.¹²

The Spanish Air Force began in 1913 as a cavalry unit called the *Servicio de Aviación Militar*, one of the first armed forces in the world to use aircraft in military operations.¹³ Colonel Vives and Captain Kindelán were transferred to Spanish Morocco with Spain's first expeditionary air squadron, equipped with bombing and photographic equipment, and on 5 November 1913, four Farman F.M.7s dropped hand grenades on Moroccan tribesmen.¹⁴ By 1914, the *Servicio de Aviación Militar* had one squadron stationed at Melilla and another at Tetuán. In 1915, a new air base at Los Alcázares was completed and the first seaplanes acquired by the Spanish Army were flown from there. Colonel Vives had chosen the site for this base as well as the one at Tablada, just prior to being replaced by Colonel Rodríguez Mourelo as commander of the *Servicio de Aviación*.¹⁵

The manufacturing of aircraft in Spain began in 1916 with *La Hispano-Suiza, Sección de Aviación*, which was founded by the *Hispano-Suiza* automobile company.¹⁶ The end of the First World War seems to have had a detrimental effect on the Spanish aviation industry which had been making

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Gerald Howson: *Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 5.

¹⁴ Howson, 5. Larrazabal, 14. The Farman F.M.7 was an open-cockpit, single-engine biplane. Unless otherwise specified, all the early aircraft mentioned here were essentially single-engine, open-cockpit biplanes.

¹⁵ Larrazabal, 14-15.

¹⁶ Howson, 9.

steady, if slow progress.¹⁷ The Allies swamped Spain with large amounts of surplus war materials, especially aircraft proven in war operations. This resulted in Spanish designs not being constructed. The overload of surplus aircraft caused *La Hispano* severe financial problems despite being the company that had achieved the greatest technical success.¹⁸ Prior to the Civil War, *La Hispano* produced Nieuport NiD52s under license, as well as its own Hispano E.30 aircraft. In the 1920s and 1930s it produced *Hispano-Suiza* 12HB, 12LB and 12Lbr water-cooled engines for the NiD52s, Dornier Wals and Vickers Vildebeests. Immediately before the war, *La Hispano* was preparing to build fifty Hawker Spanish Fury aircraft.¹⁹ In 1918, Colonel Rodríguez Mourelo called for a national design competition for military aircraft in which *La Hispano* took first prize for fighters and second prize for reconnaissance aircraft in 1919.²⁰ *La Hispano* also built 9Qd radial engines for the Fokker F.VIIb3m/Ms and the Hispano E.30. Before the Civil War broke out, the company was planning to build Wright Cyclone engines for the Martin 139Ws being built by *Construcciones Aeronáuticas, SA (CASA)*.²¹

In 1920, Colonel Echagüe, now the chief of aeronautics (later known as the Director General), established training for 132 pilots and sixty-three of the ninety-five applicants later received their licenses. Additional pilots (including

¹⁷ Larrazabal, 16.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Howson, 9. The NiD52, Hawker, and Vickers aircraft were all single-engine biplanes, while the Dornier Wal was a single-engine, closed-cockpit seaplane.

²⁰ Larrazabal, 16.

²¹ Howson, 9.

Ramón Franco) were graduating from the training school at Cuatro Vientos at this time, which quickly enlarged the air force in Spanish Morocco. This also provided a means of transport for important goods from abroad. In 1921 the first Spanish air route from Sevilla to Larache was inaugurated to improve postal service to Morocco.²²

Spain's second aircraft manufacturing company, *Construcciones Aeronáuticas, SA* (CASA), was founded in 1923. It quickly became the largest aircraft manufacturer in Spain, beginning with production under license of the Breguet 19 (also known as the Breguet XIX) for the *Servicio de Aviación Militar* under Director General José Echagüe. As previously mentioned, CASA was preparing to produce Martin 139W bombers as well as ten Hawker Osprey aircraft under British licensing agreements.²³

The advent of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship coincided with an increase in activity in Spanish aviation. CASA moved from its factory at Getafe to Cádiz in 1923, and the Loring company founded a new factory at Carabanchel Alto near Madrid. This company later became *Aeronáutica Industrial, SA* (AISA). It was retooled in the 1930s to produce three Fokker F.VIIb3m/Ms for the *Servicio de Aviación Militar*. The company prospered with an order for one hundred Gonzalez Gil Pazo GP-1 training aircraft as well.²⁴ On 13 February 1926, a decree from Primo de Rivera brought about the first attempt

²² Larrazabal, 16-17.

²³ Howson, 8-9.

²⁴ Howson, 9; Larrazabal, 17. The Gonzalez Gil Pazo GP-1 was a Spanish designed single-engine biplane.

to make the Spanish air force an independent military arm.²⁵ Prior to this, the *Servicio de Aviación* was renamed *Aeronáutica Militar* for the Spanish Army and the *Aeronáutica Naval* was the navy's air arm. Again in 1926, the army's air force was renamed *Aviación Militar*, but in official documents it was also referred to as *Arma de Aviación*, which refers to it still being a branch of the Army, like the cavalry or artillery. This changed again in 1933 under the Second Republic when the air ministry, named the *Dirección General de Aeronáutica*, was formed. It was responsible for all technical, administrative, and supply aspects of civil and military aviation in Spain, and the Director General was always an army officer.²⁶

In addition to *La Hispano*, *CASA* and *AISA*, the Spanish army and navy had workshops and factories of their own. The workshop for naval aviation at Barcelona, *Talleres de la Aeronáutica Naval*, produced Savoia Marchetti S.13, S.16 and S.62, as well as Macchi M.18 flying boats. *Talleres de la Aviación Militar*, on the other hand, had maintenance workshops and produced experimental aircraft in their laboratories at Cuatro Vientos, Tablada near Sevilla, and at León. The smallest of Spain's aircraft manufacturers was *Elizalde, SA*, founded in Barcelona in the 1920s to build Lorraine 12Eb engines for the Breguet 19s built under license by *CASA*. *Elizalde* would later build other Lorraine engines, as well as Walter Juniors and Dragon radial engines designed by the company.²⁷

²⁵ Larrazabal, 17.

²⁶ Howson, 5; Larrazabal, 17.

²⁷ Howson, 9.

In 1926, while campaigns against the Riffians continued in Morocco, Spanish pilots made several epochal flights beginning in January with Ramón Franco and the flight of the *Plus Ultra*; a flight to the Philippines was made by Eduardo González Gallarza later that year. These two flights were followed in 1929 by a direct crossing of the Atlantic from Sevilla to Bahia, Brazil, by Captains Francisco Iglesias and Ignacio Jiménez in the *Jesus del Gran Poder*.²⁸ These long-distance, record-setting events were part of what can be described as aviation's "Golden Age." Early aviators had to have total control of their own faculties to be able to control the aircraft they flew as experienced pilots were few and the technology level low in comparison to modern times.

Pilots in this early era of human flight had to be fearless, especially in combat situations. Many early aviators were killed in training accidents which placed stress and pressure on their surviving comrades. As Ramón Garriga wrote in his biography, Ramón Franco, el hermano maldito:

To forget the thought that tomorrow the same thing could happen to them that happened to their comrades, the cadets looked to drinking, gambling and women to distract themselves and forget the fact that their new profession continually risked their lives.²⁹

Not surprisingly, Ramón had a passion for roulette, bacarrat and frequenting brothels, losing much of his pay the day he received it.

Captain Franco reached Tetuán, Spanish Morocco, just as the Moroccan war reached the so-called "Tragedy of Annual," where the forces of Abd-el-Krim

²⁸ Larrazabal, 17.

²⁹ Garriga, 34.

produced an embarrassing defeat of Spanish forces in the territory.³⁰ During these campaigns against the Riffians, Ramón flew eighty-two hours during fifty-four bombing raids and ten reconnaissance missions. His superiors were pleased with his performance, saying he was a “decisive and enthusiastic officer always willing to go where he (was) ordered.”³¹ His relationship with his brother Francisco was another matter. Various authors report that no one at the air base at Melilla liked Francisco. Spanish aristocrat Hidalgo de Cisneros is quoted as saying, “everyone loathed him, beginning with his brother Ramón - to whom he scarcely said a word.”³² Ricardo de la Cierva is quoted as saying that Francisco always came back from visits to Melilla very upset because of Ramón’s continually scandalous behavior.³³ These early problems between the brothers grew larger as years passed and political ideologies became a factor for both men.

Spain had become embroiled in the colonization of Morocco in the early part of the century at the same time as France. These colonial ambitions were born out of the 1898 defeat by the United States, in which Spain lost Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Officers in the Spanish army saw the expeditions to Morocco as an opportunity to wipe away the shame of that defeat, while

³⁰ Ibid., Prior to departing for Tetuán, in March 1921, Captain Franco achieved his first flying record. He received the first prize given from the *Real Aeroclub* of Spain for reaching an altitude of 5,895 meters in an airplane.

³¹ Ibid., 35.

³² Philippe Nourry: *Francisco Franco: La conquista del poder* (Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1976), 110. Hidalgo de Cisneros later joined the Communist Party and was a pilot for the Republic during the Civil War.

³³ Ibid.

mining companies discovered ore deposits with which to enrich themselves.³⁴ Prior to the involvement of European powers, Morocco was ruled by a Sultan. Early in the century, tribal leaders like Abd-el-Krim rebelled against Sultan Abd-el-Aziz, which attracted the attention of European powers.³⁵ Great Britain allied with France in April 1904 signing the Anglo-French Agreement. Northern Morocco was given to Spain by the French and Tangier was given international status in October of that year.³⁶ Wanting to ensure safe naval passage through the Straits of Gibraltar, Great Britain agreed to Spain's territory being directly across the Strait, due to Spain's now-weakened position as an international power.³⁷

Spanish Morocco was divided into two military zones that were unconnected except by sea. The interior of the colony was roadless, virtually unexplored by Europeans, with unmapped mountain ranges inhabited by fiercely independent tribes.³⁸ Shortly after Spain became entwined in this colonial venture, Alfonso XIII took the throne. He began his reign in 1904 and it

³⁴ Preston, 6-7.

³⁵ These tribes were Berbers living in the areas of Jibala and the Rif. They are usually referred to as Moroccan tribesmen or Riffians.

³⁶ Preston, 15.

³⁷ Spain's foothold in Morocco at Melilla and Tetuán was actually centuries old, the Spaniards having taken territory there after the Reconquest of the Peninsula from the Moors, and pursuing them to North Africa.

³⁸ Raymond Carr, Spain: 1808-1975 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 518.

proved to be anything but spectacular.³⁹ Colonial warfare was a regular occurrence in Morocco. This was due to the perpetuation of myths that the Moroccans wanted the Spaniards there, belief that the French were hindering a Spanish Moroccan empire by dominance of French Morocco to the south, and by the glaring fact that the Moroccans wanted out from under European control.⁴⁰

Early problems with this colonial adventure resulted in 1909 with what is known in Spanish history as the *Semana Trágica*.⁴¹ In July of that year, Moroccan tribesmen had attacked railways leading to Melilla from the mining operations in the interior. The attacks had become so regular that Spanish control of their zone was brought into question. The French threatened to export their ore through Algeria if something was not done to rectify the situation. The government feared the French would use these attacks to absorb Spain's territory due to an inability to control it. The Spanish government was also pressured to take action by mining investors and by the Army which was influential with the king. The Minister of War decided to dispatch a brigade of reservists from Barcelona, despite the fact that it consisted largely of married men with children.⁴²

³⁹ King Juan Carlos I, current King of Spain, is grandson to Alfonso XIII and was hand-picked by Generalísimo Francisco Franco to succeed him, which he did at Franco's death in 1975. He then led the transition to democracy. Spain is currently a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy that has influence but no real power.

⁴⁰ Preston, 16.

⁴¹ [*Semana Trágica*: the Tragic Week.]

⁴² Preston, 11-12.

Public opinion regarding the colonial adventure at the time of the *Semana Trágica*, did not favor a call up of reservists. Republicans and Socialists were adamantly opposed, denouncing the monarchy, as Raymond Carr wrote in his work, *Spain: 1808-1975*, "as a monster full of pus, sending the poor of Spain to defend Moroccan mining concessions; gatherings of mothers at railway stations and counter demonstrations of Catholic ladies distributing crosses to the troops inflamed tempers."⁴³ Anti-war protests broke out all over Spain, primarily in Aragón, Catalunya and Valencia. The poorly trained and supplied Spanish troops were decimated by the Riffians due to the low technology level of the Army. Its poor equipment was due to political concerns over public opinion, and in part because of French domination inhibiting policy making in Madrid. The protests were put down by the Army near the end of the month, after a number of tragic shootings.⁴⁴

The French and Spanish Protectorates in Morocco were established in 1912. The Sultan maintained nominal political control of all Morocco, albeit under French supervision. In the Spanish zone, local authority lay with a Khalifa (the local representative of the Sultan) who was chosen by the Sultan himself from a list of two names provided by the government in Madrid. Despite this political control by Europeans, Moroccan tribesmen continued their attacks. By 1917 the Spanish Army was relegated to protecting the important towns and communication lines between them instead of imposing complete military

⁴³ Carr, 483.

⁴⁴ Preston, 14-15.

occupation as the Army wanted.⁴⁵ During these years of Spanish colonial expedition Francisco Franco was transferred to Morocco. That transfer was made at Francisco's request, due to the rapid promotion available in the Army through service in the protectorate.⁴⁶

As a Major in late August 1920, Francisco Franco, along with Major José Millán Astray formed the Spanish Foreign Legion, or *El Tercio de Extranjeros*, most commonly referred to as *La Legión*, or *el Tercio*. This unit of the Spanish Army stood in stark contrast to the other units serving in Morocco. They were always prepared, despite the Spanish Army's reputation for being inefficient and having lax discipline. The strict discipline imposed by Francisco and Millán Astray was pushed aside, however, when *La Legión* captured villages of rebelling Moroccan tribesmen. Decapitation of prisoners was not uncommon, nor was the display of severed heads as trophies. As Paul Preston recounts in his biography of the Spanish dictator:

The Duquesa de la Victoria, a philanthropist who organized a team of volunteer nurses, would receive in 1922 a tribute from the Legion. She was given a basket of roses in the center of which lay two severed Moorish heads. When the Dictator General Primo de Rivera visited Morocco in 1926, he was appalled to find one battalion of the Legion awaiting inspection with heads stuck on their bayonets.⁴⁷

Francisco Franco's acceptance and encouragement of this brutality would be revealed again when he subdued the miners in Asturias in 1934 and yet again on a grander scale during the Civil War.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 29.

Nearly a year after the formation of *La Legión*, the greatest defeat ever suffered by the Spanish in Morocco occurred. On 22 July 1921, the "Tragedy of Annual" took place. Spanish forces had overextended in an attempt to advance from the city of Melilla to the bay at Alhucemas. The Riffian tribal leader, Abd-el-Krim, attacked the Spaniards at Annual, decimating the troops and forcing them back to Melilla over the course of three weeks. Ramón Franco was stationed in Tetuán at this point and was not involved in the fighting at Annual. During this period he was transferred to seaplane duty, where he again displayed a quick aptitude for this type of aircraft.⁴⁸ Approximately five thousand square kilometers that had been gained over the course of a decade was lost in a matter of hours, with nine thousand Spaniards killed. In the aftermath of the tragedy, an inquiry was convened, led by General Picasso of the Army. This inquiry revealed rampant corruption and a state of unpreparedness on the part of the army in the Protectorate that was impossible to overlook.⁴⁹

The King was widely considered partially responsible for the debacle because of his supposed encouragement of the poorly planned campaign. In its aftermath, Alfonso XIII developed an anti-parliamentary attitude. He tried to become a political leader with policies of his own despite his advisors' desire to relegate him to figurehead status. He spontaneously appealed on one occasion for reform, "with or without the constitution," and the idea of a royal dictatorship supported by a public fed up with the incompetence of politicians

⁴⁸ Garriga, 48-49.

⁴⁹ Hugh Thomas: The Spanish Civil War (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 24-25.

was never far from his mind.⁵⁰ Despite his attempts to show personal strength, both the government and the King were blamed for their handling of Moroccan affairs and by 1923 the monarchy had little public support.

The Captain-General of Catalunya at that time, General Miguel Primo de Rivera, declared that he and a group of generals would take control of the country. Primo de Rivera's *pronunciamiento* was as follows:

We have reason on our side and, therefore, force, though so far we have used force with moderation. ... Neither I, nor the garrisons of Aragón, will agree to anything but a military dictatorship. ... Today we are resolved on moderation, but on the other hand, we shall not shrink from bloodshed.⁵¹

By this point in his reign, Alfonso XIII had become disillusioned by politicians and developed an even greater respect for the military. He accepted the Primo de Rivera dictatorship without argument.

The Dictatorship (*La Dictadura* as it is known in Spanish history) did not have a mass following and was run on military principles as Primo de Rivera demanded. Political parties were banned and those who opposed the Dictatorship were jailed, but there were no political executions during the regime. Primo de Rivera embarked on a massive public works program and brought the Moroccan War to a successful conclusion with the capture of Abd-el-Krim. Primo de Rivera had visited the Protectorate in June 1924 and left with the conviction that Spain should abandon the enterprise because Morocco would be too expensive to pacify. In meetings with military leaders, Lieutenant

⁵⁰ Carr, 523.

⁵¹ Thomas, 25. [*pronunciamiento*: declaration of a *coup d'état*. Literally a pronouncement of assumption of governing authority.]

Colonel Francisco Franco suggested a landing at the bay at Alhucemas and an attack outward from there. Initially, the Dictator rejected the idea, but later that year, Primo de Rivera decided to pursue it.⁵²

Primo de Rivera and Philippe Pétain of France agreed to a joint operation against Abd-el-Krim, with seventy-five thousand Spanish soldiers landing at Alhucemas to commence the attack.⁵³ Joint maneuvers by the French and Spanish troops continued from 7 September 1925 to 26 May 1926, at which point the Riffian leader finally saw the futility of his situation and surrendered to the French.⁵⁴ From this point on, Morocco was under military occupation and the power of the tribal leaders was broken.

Primo de Rivera's decision to pursue Abd-el-Krim, apparently following the advice of Francisco Franco, provided the Dictator with one of the successes he needed to solidify his regime.⁵⁵ Francisco Franco's brother, Ramón, participated in these operations, flying photographic reconnaissance operations against the Riffians, and attacking their troop concentrations.⁵⁶ The second major success of Primo de Rivera's *Dictadura* was a historic flight by Captain Ramón Franco, who had earned the nickname "Jackal" during his time in Morocco, due apparently to his recklessness during military operations.⁵⁷ On 8

⁵² Preston, 44, 46.

⁵³ Philippe Pétain would later become Marshal Pétain, who ran the Vichy French government for the Nazis during World War Two.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 47-48.

⁵⁵ Carr, 523, 574.

⁵⁶ Garriga, 53.

⁵⁷ Pilar Franco, 177.

September 1924, Ramón participated in bombing operations against the Riffians, protecting Spanish troops, including those led by his brother Francisco.⁵⁸ Throughout the invasion at Alhucemas, Ramón flew over the front on numerous bombing missions, totaling twenty-two hours and five minutes flying time.⁵⁹ With so much flying time, and participating in so many attack missions, it can be inferred that Ramón had no moral or ethical inhibitions about bombing the Riffian tribesmen who were impeding Spanish colonial success.

In February 1922, Ramón Franco began training at the air base at Los Alcázares, near Cartagena, for duty as a seaplane pilot. Two years later he began a command course which lasted until February 1925.⁶⁰ On 22 July 1924, Ramón married nineteen-year-old Carmen Díaz Guisasola in Hendaye, France, without King Alfonso XIII's permission, a major breach of protocol that embarrassed his older brother Francisco, the rapidly rising Army officer.⁶¹ None of the Franco family liked Carmen Díaz, nicknamed "Carmenhu" by her husband; because of her former job as a cabaret singer, and because of the bad influence they felt she exerted over Ramón. According to Pilar Franco, "Carmenhu took drugs, drank, and the parties that she organized at Ramón's

⁵⁸ Garriga, 56.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 54. On 13 September 1923, Ramón received the Military Medal at the Moroccan air base at Tauima along with three other pilots.

⁶¹ Pilar Franco, 181. Carmen Díaz, *Viuda de Franco, contada a José Antonio Silva: Mi Vida con Ramón Franco* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981), 25. Military officers were prohibited from marriage without permission from their superiors. According to Pilar Franco, "If their fiancée was not dignified, she would not be accepted." Carmen Díaz writes that it was Ramón who suggested the couple go to France to be married because, "this way no one had to ask any permission."

house were not very edifying. ... Ramón, because of Carmenchu, passed from relationships with the highest aristocracy to rubbing elbows with people of the lowest dregs."⁶² Part of the Franco family's opposition to Ramón's marriage was due to the position of the Spanish military in society. While the Franco family was by all accounts middle-class, military service elevated them to upper-middle-class standing. Carmen Díaz would have been considered beneath Ramón and therefore unacceptable to the family, as well as to Ramón's military superiors. This would not be the first time that Ramón and his family, not to mention the monarch, would fail to see eye to eye.

Throughout his stay in Morocco, Ramón Franco seems to have taken to life in the colony, looking at times almost like the Riffians that he was there fighting against. According to his wife Carmen, he was "brown, darkened by the sun, speaking Arabic with them, dressing like them, ..." ⁶³ Ramón also took the opportunity to expand and enhance his education, learning Arabic so well that he began teaching the language, and reading the Koran for hours, frequently quoting passages to his wife.⁶⁴

In October 1925 Ramón was promoted to infantry commander with battle merits for his actions in operations over Alhucemas in September of that year.⁶⁵ During his command course, Ramón conceived the idea for the flight that would elevate him to celebrity status: a flight from the Iberian Peninsula to the

⁶² Ibid., 181-182.

⁶³ Carmen Díaz, 25.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Gutierrez-Rave, 10. Ramón and other seaplane pilots provided air support for the invasion which included Commander Franco's brother, Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Franco.

continent of South America. Such a flight became an obsession that Ramón could not abandon until he had accomplished it.⁶⁶ The success of his earlier flight from the Iberian Peninsula to the Canary Islands convinced Commander Franco and Captain Mariano Barberán that a flight to South America could be accomplished.

Buying maritime charts, maps and technical books out of his own pocket, Ramón and Captain Barberán spent nearly day and night studying and calculating the best route from Spain to Argentina.⁶⁷ The two men collected extensive data and documentation into a detailed report entitled, *Proyecto de raid a la Argentina en hidroavión*. The report was presented, along with a proposed budget, to General Primo de Rivera who accepted it with orders that work begin immediately for traversing the South Atlantic.⁶⁸ The aircraft selected for Commander Franco's journey was a Dornier DoJ Wal constructed in Italy by *Costruzioni Meccaniche Aeronautiche, S.A.* It was a German design, built under license in Italy and acquired by the Spanish military in 1925.⁶⁹ General Francisco Echagüe Santoyo was the first Spanish military official to see the potential of this particular aircraft when he visited the factory in Marina di Pisa in 1922.⁷⁰ Permission was given for the aircraft to be flown to Pisa, Italy, to have

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Garriga, 59. Preparations included learning to use the telegraph, navigation by radio, and other technical necessities for the voyage.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 60. It was the only seaplane not to see active service during the fighting at Alhucemas that year as well.

⁷⁰ Howson, 115.

the necessary changes made for the transatlantic flight, and Commander Franco left Morocco in October, 1925, to oversee the conversion.⁷¹

The Dornier DoJ Wal (Whale) was a great leap forward in the design of seaplanes. As Gerald Howson describes it in, Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939, "It was a slender all-metal cantilever monoplane with metal skinning, powered by two 'push-pull' tandem engines in a nacelle mounted on the centre-section of the rectangular parasol wing."⁷² Aerofoil-section sponsons hung from the lower hull offered increased stability, reduced drag, and could also be used as fuel tanks, instead of the traditional floats hung from the wingtips.⁷³ With increased stability and a range of 1,000 kilometers, the Dornier DoJ Wal was the perfect aircraft for the proposed flight. Having had experience with the aircraft in Morocco, Commander Franco knew its potential. Three hundred Dornier DoJ Wals were built and their record-breaking achievements were many.

Commander Franco's second in command for the voyage was Captain of Artillery, Julio Ruiz de Alda, of Navarra, who was twenty-eight at the time of the flight, having entered the Air Force as an artillery lieutenant in 1922. The Spanish Navy was represented by Lieutenant Juan Manuel Durán, of Jerez de la Frontera, who at age twenty-six was an instructor at the Aeronautical School. As mechanic for the voyage, Franco chose Pablo Rada, also of Navarra, who

⁷¹ Garriga, 60-61. José Gutiérrez-Rave: El Vuelo del <<Plus Ultra>> (Madrid: 1951), 15. Captain Mariano Barberán transferred to the Engineers Group in 1925 over dissatisfaction with his career, which made him ineligible to make the transatlantic flight.

⁷² Howson, 115.

⁷³ Ibid. Sponsons are winglike parts protruding from the hull of a seaplane to steady it in the water.

was a chauffeur prior to joining the military.⁷⁴ The aircraft, christened the *Plus Ultra*, was transferred from Pisa to Palos de Moguer from which the flight to Buenos Aires would officially begin in late January 1926.⁷⁵ Aside from messages of greeting and friendship from King Alfonso XIII to the Brazilian, Uruguayan and Argentine presidents, the *Plus Ultra* was provisioned with food to last the crew twelve days.⁷⁶

Departing from Palos de Moguer carried a great deal of historical significance for the Spanish people. It was from this port that Christopher Columbus had set sail on his voyage to the New World, some four hundred thirty-four years earlier. Ramón Franco and Julio Ruiz de Alda's book De Palos al Plata discusses the aviators' feelings on beginning their journey from such a historic site:

The departure from the port of Palos signified for us the necessity of triumph, because triumph brought with it the reminder to the entire world that it was Spain that discovered America with its faith ...; that the spirit of that Spain is the same as its men of today, that only need an occasion to manifest the virtues that live within the race.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Gutierrez-Rave, <<Plus Ultra>>, 16. Ruiz de Alda later became an intimate of José Antonio Primo de Rivera and collaborated with him in founding the Falange Española. He was arrested in the Republican zone and executed sometime during the Civil War. Durán was killed some months after the historic flight in a flying accident off the coast of Barcelona. Commander Franco chose Rada as his personal mechanic after the voyage because of his distinguished service. Rada later aligned with leftist extremists, was implicated in church burnings in the early 1930s, and fled to Latin America at the time of the Civil War.

⁷⁵ Garriga, 63. The plane was equipped for a maximum cargo capacity of 3,300 kilos, enabling it to travel at 185 kms. per hour. With 2,500 kilos, the speed increased to 195 kms. per hour at which it could climb to 300 meters above sea level.

⁷⁶ Gutierrez-Rave, Ramón Franco, 38. Five kilos of dried figs, two kilos of ham, two kilos of sugar, one kilo of coffee, one kilo of chocolate, three kilos of biscuits, one bottle of cognac and one bottle of sherry were packed to sustain the crew on the trip.

⁷⁷ Comandante Ramón Franco y Capitán Ruiz de Alda: De Palos al Plata (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1926), 89.

A number of banquets and celebrations preceded the departure of the *Plus Ultra*, and with each one the popularity of the flight, and of the crew, increased. With each passing day, the flight seemed to take on the excitement of those previous adventures of Columbus for which the Spanish were still so very proud.

On 21 January, the *Benemérita Sociedad Colombina Onubense* held a solemn session in honor of the aviators at the monastery of La Rábida.⁷⁸ The crew spent the night at the palace of the Marqués de Valdeata in Palos, but got little rest as the townspeople of nearby Huelva filled the streets, traveling to Palos de Moguer and singing beneath the windows of the palace. At day break, the crowds began to shout:

*Despierta, niño, despierta,
que el día clareando va.*⁷⁹

Traveling through the crowded streets, the crew celebrated mass at the Altar of the Miraculous, as Columbus had done before his voyage. The town recalled with enthusiasm that they had now looked after the *Plus Ultra* as their ancestors had Columbus's caravels, four centuries prior.⁸⁰

Commander Franco started the engines at 7:47 on the morning of 22 January. Circling the monument to Columbus, Franco and his crew could see the enormous crowd that had gathered outside the monastery of La Rábida to

⁷⁸ Gutierrez-Rave, <<Plus Ultra>>, 19.

⁷⁹ Ibid. "Wake up boy, wake up, the daybreak comes."

⁸⁰ Ibid., 20.

wish them a safe and successful voyage.⁸¹ The first leg of the journey was from Palos de Moguer to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands.⁸² Arriving in Las Palmas, Commander Franco and his crew continued to give their flight an historic connection to that of Columbus, celebrating a *Te Déum* in the same church the Admiral had. The flight was delayed in Las Palmas due to heavy winds until 26 January when the *Plus Ultra* took off for the Cape Verde Islands. This second stage of the voyage and subsequent stages set world records for distances traveled in a seaplane.⁸³

At 4:25 on the afternoon of 27 January, the crew of the *Plus Ultra* crossed the equator. The event was celebrated by a glass of cognac that Ruiz de Alda served to his companions in flight.⁸⁴ The *Plus Ultra* arrived in Rio de Janeiro, at 5:25 in the evening on 4 February.⁸⁵ Commander Franco and his comrades stayed in Rio until 8 February, when they traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay, just over 2,000 kilometers away. On this stage of the flight Ramón Franco experienced his first break with General Primo de Rivera. The Dictator ordered that the *Plus Ultra* not touch down in Uruguay but proceed to Buenos Aires. Commander Franco disobeyed that order by landing in the harbor at

⁸¹ Garriga, 73.

⁸² Ibid., 83. Gutierrez-Rave, <<Plus Ultra>>, 20. The flight was 1,300 kilometers, flown at 1,500 meters altitude, at 163 kms. per hour, in 13 hours and 57 minutes.

⁸³ Gutierrez-Rave, Ramón Franco, 42. The Canary Islands-Cape Verde Islands stage of 2,300 kms., Cape Verde-Fernando Noronha stage of 2,040 kms., Pernambuco-Rio de Janeiro stage of 2,100 kms., and Rio de Janeiro-Montevideo stage of 2,060 kms. were the longest distances ever traveled in a seaplane.

⁸⁴ Franco y Ruiz de Alda, 147.

⁸⁵ Garriga, 90.

Montevideo. Uruguay was the one Latin American country not to recognize Primo de Rivera's government. The entire Uruguayan government was at the harbor to meet the *Plus Ultra*, however. While this seemed a resonant slap in the face to the Dictator, it strengthened ties between Uruguayans and Spaniards according to Ramón's sister Pilar.⁸⁶ This incident began a major split between the two men.⁸⁷

The final stage of the transatlantic odyssey took place on 10 February, when Ramón Franco and the crew of the *Plus Ultra* left Montevideo for Buenos Aires. The flight reached its final destination at 12:20 in the afternoon, one hour and eleven minutes after leaving Montevideo, 220 kilometers to the north.⁸⁸ The *New York Times* reported that the "epochal flight ... was made the occasion of demonstrations surpassing any in the history of Argentina," the city being decorated in a manner "greater and more colorful than those accorded to visiting royal Princes."⁸⁹ Spanish and Argentine flags draped buildings throughout the city and business was suspended for the day.⁹⁰

Approaching Buenos Aires, Commander Franco circled the city before landing in the harbor.⁹¹ Upon disembarking from the aircraft, Franco patted the

⁸⁶ Pilar Franco, 178.

⁸⁷ The crew of the *Plus Ultra* was carrying a message of greeting from King Alfonso XIII to the president of Uruguay, despite the Uruguayans' refusal to recognize *La Dictadura*.

⁸⁸ Gutierrez-Rave, <<Plus Ultra>>, 24.

⁸⁹ *The New York Times*, 11 February 1926, 2:8.

⁹⁰ *The London Times*, 11 February 1926, 14:4.

⁹¹ Garriga, 94. The crew of the *Plus Ultra* had covered 10,270 kms. in fifty hours and fifty minutes over 20 days.

Plus Ultra on the nose, smiled and said, "Buen buque!"⁹² The crew was taken to an official reception and afterwards to the cable office where Commander Franco sent a telegram to King Alfonso XIII which read simply, "I have arrived."⁹³ The Spanish monarch replied with the following message:

In remembrance of this day I concede the key of 'Gentilhombre' to you, Ruiz de Alda and Durán, and reserve an evidence of my gratitude toward Rada, the mechanician. ... I am sending my embraces, and exclaim with all of us: 'Long live Spain! Long live the Spanish Air Service!'⁹⁴

In another show of celebration and gratitude for the glory the flight had brought to Spain, Alfonso XIII granted a general remission of prison sentences. Those serving five years had their sentences reduced one-tenth, while all others were reduced by six months.⁹⁵

While in Argentina, indeed at every stop along the voyage, people flocked to the Spaniards and their aircraft. Ramón Franco became especially idolized as the commander of the flight and developed a previously unknown talent for public speaking. Their popularity was such that on their visit to the Argentine interior, the public demanded their presence at the train windows, ripping the buttons and insignias from their uniforms countless times. The crew

⁹² *The New York Times*, 11 February 1926, 2:8. "Good ship!"

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Commander Franco and his crew also received 3,500 telegrams from Madrid, the Royal Palace receiving 10,000 congratulatory messages.

⁹⁵ *The London Times*, 11 February 1926, 14:4.

also signed autographs until their hands ached from exhaustion.⁹⁶ The flight of the *Plus Ultra* was one of many historic flights during this period, including that of Charles Lindbergh in the *Spirit of Saint Louis*, which Ramón preceded by one year. Ramón was not the only member of his family to achieve a high degree of success in his military career, however. Commander Franco's brother Francisco was promoted to Brigadier General on 3 February 1926, a week prior to Ramón's arrival in Buenos Aires.

Francisco's promotion made the front page of newspapers all over Galicia when it was announced on the tenth because at age 33, Francisco was the youngest general in Europe since Napoleon.⁹⁷ A plaque was installed on the wall of the house where they had been born which read:

In this house were born the brothers Francisco and Ramón Franco Baamonde (*sic*), valiant soldiers who, at the head of the Tercio of Africa and crossing the Atlantic in the seaplane 'Plus Ultra', carried out heroic deeds which constitute glorious pages of the nation's history. The town of El Ferrol is honoured by such brilliant sons to whom it dedicates this tribute of admiration and affection.⁹⁸

Francisco's promotion was overshadowed by the fact that Ramón was being treated by the Spanish press and *La Dictadura* as a modern-day Christopher Columbus. This is easily explained by the numerous ceremonies that were historically connected to the voyage of Columbus. The mass at the Altar of the Miraculous, the departure from Palos de Moguer, and the *Te Déum* in Las

⁹⁶ Gutierrez-Rave, *Ramón Franco*, 39, 42-43. Garriga, 68. The flight of the *Plus Ultra* set a velocity record of 170 kms. per hour and another for velocity over a distance of 2,000 kilometers. The cost of the flight came to 415,132 pesetas, which included the aircraft, navigation instruments, the engines, pay for the crew and transportation from Pisa to Spain.

⁹⁷ Preston, 48-49.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

Palmas were all reminders of the Admiral's voyage; therefore, repeating those actions connected the flight to the historic sea voyage, earning Ramón the name "Columbus of the Air."

Numerous tributes in addition to the plaque were paid to the brothers Franco after Ramón's arrival in Buenos Aires and Francisco's promotion. On 12 February a holiday was declared in El Ferrol, a *Te Déum* was sung in the Church of San Julián, and messages of congratulation were received by their mother, Doña Pilar Bahamonde y Pardo de Andrade, from the mayors of El Ferrol, the four provincial capitals of Galicia and from across Spain. Media coverage created propaganda advantage for *La Dictadura* who sought to profit from the success of the flight of the *Plus Ultra*.⁹⁹ Much of the celebration in Spain, however, occurred while Ramón and his crew were still in Buenos Aires enjoying the attention of the population there.

Before returning to Spain, Commander Franco was disappointed by the Spanish government's decision to make the *Plus Ultra* a gift to the Argentine people. The crew would be brought back to Spain aboard an Argentine naval vessel instead of continuing the flight, setting new records and bringing more acclaim to Spain, Franco and his companions.¹⁰⁰ The order to turn over the *Plus Ultra* to Argentina was another cause of friction between Franco and Primo de Rivera. Despite this, Ramón participated in the ceremony that transferred the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁰ Garriga, 98. The route would have taken them across South America, through Central America to Cuba, then to New York and finally across the North Atlantic through the Azores to Spain.

Plus Ultra to Argentina which took place on 11 March, the same day that the Spaniards departed for their homeland.

Upon returning to Spain, the aviators were treated to triumphant receptions everywhere they went.¹⁰¹ Alfonso XIII received the newest heroes of Spain aboard the Argentine cruiser *Buenos Aires* that had transported the men from the Argentine capital, giving handshakes and hugs to Commander Franco and his crew.¹⁰² Ramón Franco was continually thrust into the spotlight, but now that he no longer had to concentrate his energies on his flight, he returned to drinking, gambling and visiting the brothels. It was said that all Ramón Franco had to do in those days was open his hand and whatever he wanted would appear.¹⁰³

Having achieved such a high degree of prestige, Ramón began to desire more. He seems to have been driven by the aspiration of bringing further glory to Spain, as well as himself. Exploring the possibility of circumnavigating the globe in a seaplane, Franco decided on a Dornier Super-Wal as the aircraft for the proposed voyage. To bring more attention to Spanish air accomplishments, negotiations were completed with Dornier for the aircraft to be built in Spain by CASA.¹⁰⁴ The aircraft was christened the *Numancia*, in

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 101-102. On 16 April at Cuatro Vientos, the Laurel Cross was given to General Primo de Rivera, the newly created medal *Plus Ultra* was presented to Commander Franco and the medal of Air Merit was bestowed upon Ruiz de Alda and Durán.

¹⁰² Preston, 63. Ramón's 1924 breach of protocol in marrying without the King's or his superiors permission was forgiven in light of the successful flight of the *Plus Ultra*.

¹⁰³ Garriga, 106-107.

¹⁰⁴ Preston, 63. The Spanish government agreed to support Ramón's proposal in an effort to boost the domestic aircraft industry.

homage to the first Spanish ship to sail around the world. The test flights did not go well, and the crew quickly lost confidence in the aircraft.¹⁰⁵ By late summer of 1928, this aircraft proved unreliable and the flight was postponed.¹⁰⁶ In 1929 the flight was rescheduled, but instead of the Super-Wal, Ramón decided on the Dornier Wal which he felt would be more reliable and better suited to the voyage, since (one can infer) he had succeeded with this model on his first historic flight. Two aircraft were built in Italy, while a third was constructed at Cádiz. One of the two Italian aircraft was flown to Los Alcázares for testing, named the *Dornier-15*.¹⁰⁷ The Spanish-built aircraft was designated *Dornier-16*, but would not be ready when Ramón wanted to embark on his around-the-world odyssey.

Not wanting to delay his second flight, Ramón suggested using the Italian built *Dornier-15* instead, limiting the flight to the United States and back. This was initially rejected.¹⁰⁸ Ramón and his crew later agreed to secretly switch the markings on the two aircraft to make the *Dornier-15* appear to be the *Dornier-16*. Essentially the two aircraft were identical. The only difference was that *Dornier-15* had been built in Italy, while *Dornier-16* had been built in Spain. Receiving authorization for the flight to the United States and back, Ramón and

¹⁰⁵ Garriga, 121-122.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 120. The route was to have been as follows: Cadiz-Azores-Halifax-New York-Havana-Veracruz-La Paz-San Francisco-Prupert-Alaska-Paramuchir-Tokyo-Kagoshima-Manila-Victoria-Colombo-Bombay-Bushire-Alexandria-Palermo-Cadiz, a distance of 40,050 kms.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 127.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. This and another proposal for a flight of twenty-four hours straight to establish a new record were rejected by General Primo de Rivera, further straining relations between the two men.

his crew worked at night in a closed hangar to change the two aircraft.¹⁰⁹ The flight departed on 21 July from Los Alcázares.

Success was not to be found on this flight, however. Problems with navigation equipment and bad weather resulted in the aircraft being blown off course near the Azores with no functional radio equipment to broadcast their emergency. The crew landed in the Atlantic Ocean, fifty nautical miles from the Azores, to try and establish their position. It was clear that the aircraft was not fit for the voyage expected of it, and Ramón's reaction to the problems is quoted as being, "I knew that it would be almost impossible to continue the flight to New York, one of my greatest illusions."¹¹⁰ Ramón quickly established a watch for passing ships that changed every two hours, hoping that his life and the lives of his crew would be saved.¹¹¹

The aircraft was located on 25 July after a massive search by the Spanish, French and British navies. The Dictator Primo de Rivera and General Francisco Franco were brought to tears by the news that Ramón and his crew had been found. Francisco led a demonstration to the British embassy in Madrid to express his thanks for the Royal Navy's role in the rescue.¹¹² After the rescue of the crew and recovery of the aircraft, it was discovered that the markings had been switched. Rumors circulated that Ramón had been offered

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 129-130. These consisted of changing the number 15 into a 16 and the letters M.W.P. on *Dornier-15* to M.W.O. as they appeared on *Dornier-16*.

¹¹⁰ Garriga, 132.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 133.

¹¹² Preston, 63.

a large sum of money to break the world seaplane record by flying a German aircraft, which was an unfounded charge.¹¹³

General Alfredo Kindelán, the head of the *Aviación Militar*, was furious at the fraud perpetuated by Commander Franco, and had him expelled from the Air Force on 31 July 1929. In a meeting between Kindelán and Ramón, the General is quoted as follows: "You know my opinion by now: the sole responsibility for what happened is yours ..."; he went on to say dryly that two days later he would be signing Ramón's discharge from the Air Force.¹¹⁴ The charges against him, combined with his expulsion from the Air Force and his ever-widening split from Primo de Rivera and Alfonso XIII, pushed Ramón toward outright rebellion.¹¹⁵ After being discharged from the Air Force, Ramón quickly wrote a book entitled Águilas y Garras, with the hope of explaining the truth about his actions, and setting the record straight about the false charges that he had been paid a large sum of money to switch the aircraft.¹¹⁶ Ramón's desire to glorify Spanish aviation, as well as himself, led him to view those who stood in his way as enemies, opposed to the glorification of the country he loved.

¹¹³ Garriga, 141. Preston, 63.

¹¹⁴ Garriga, 145, Preston, 63.

¹¹⁵ Garriga, 148. Comandante Ramón Franco, Madrid bajo las bombas, (Madrid: Sociedad Anónima Editorial Alcala, número 106, 1931), 76. Ramón remained a Commander in the Artillery. His discharge was from the Air Force only.

¹¹⁶ Garriga, 147.

Ramón's first move toward the political Left was to join the A.M.R. (*Asociación Militar Revolucionaria*) which was a pro-Republican organization.¹¹⁷ The A.M.R. was a secret group, with ties to constitutionalists as well as Republicans. Ramón felt at this point, according to Ramón Garriga, that, "the monarchy practiced a system of justice that was not in agreement with the concepts of honor and responsibility that he was taught at the academy in Toledo."¹¹⁸ He conspired with this group so openly that the government watched him very closely, and by the end of 1929, Primo de Rivera ordered the *Dirección General de Seguridad* to arrest A.M.R. members.¹¹⁹ At the end of 1929, Ramón Franco became a freemason as well. As a secret organization for centuries accused of conspiracies against various governments, it is no surprise that the virtues of brotherly love, relief, and truth put forward by Masonry were attractive to the youngest Franco. His increasingly Republican politics would naturally have embraced the ideals of Masonry and the freethinkers who joined the secret fraternity.¹²⁰ His decision to join the organization was not well received by his conservative Catholic family. His sister Pilar wrote that she was "indignant, because for me nothing is more disdainful than Masonry."¹²¹

Ramón's involvement with (and more importantly the propaganda he produced

¹¹⁷ Nourry, 188, n. 18. Philippe Nourry writes that the A.M.R. was founded by Ramón Franco, but this author could not substantiate that claim in any other source.

¹¹⁸ Garriga, 150-151.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 152. Ramón and his fellow conspirators were held for about fifty hours and then released at one point.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 153.

¹²¹ Pilar Franco, 187. Pilar also wrote that it was one of the greatest displeasures of her mother's life.

for) the A.M.R. was especially effective for inciting younger officers in the Infantry and Air Force.¹²²

The dictatorship did not have a great public following, and by late 1929 the military did not support Primo de Rivera either. *La Dictadura*, and eventually the King, fell because of a lack of support from the military as well as the public. General Primo de Rivera addressed a telegram to the other Captains-General of Spain, polling them regarding their support for his government, and they responded that they were all loyal to the King, while few mentioned Primo de Rivera at all.¹²³ In conversations between the two men in January, 1930, Alfonso XIII made it clear that General Primo de Rivera served as Prime Minister at his command, not because of wide military support. The King also made it clear that he would like Primo de Rivera to resign.

Famous during his regime for regular communiqués, Primo de Rivera announced his resignation the same way, "And now, ... for a little rest, after 2,326 days in continuous uneasiness, responsibility and labour."¹²⁴ Only a few months later, Primo de Rivera was dead at the age of sixty, a totally broken man.¹²⁵ Now a virtually untested King with no true political experience had to govern a country that was already politically split between Republicans and

¹²² Nourry, 148. Ramón was also allegedly involved in a plot by General Goded, in command of Army troops at Cádiz, to overthrow the Dictatorship. Goded apparently refused Ramón's offer of help because he did not want his coup attempt to turn into a proletarian revolution.

¹²³ Thomas, 29.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Preston, 62.

Conservatives. The next six years would see the declaration of the Second Republic, the formation of a fascist party and the further polarization of Spain.

Chapter Two: The Sinning Brother

Long before the political crises of the 1920s and early 1930s, Spain was a political hotbed of intrigue. Two wars of succession were fought in the nineteenth century, an experiment with federalist republicanism failed and the restored monarchy was now threatened. Political parties of all sorts developed, and by the time that General Primo de Rivera resigned in 1930, all the major political ideologies of the day were represented in Spain. These included the Anarchists; the Carlists; the Communists; the *Confederación Nacional de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA), a Catholic party; the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), an Anarchist trade union; the *Falange Española*, a fascist party; the Monarchists; the Socialists; and the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT), a Socialist trade union. Each of these political factions would be instrumental in Spain's descent toward a bloody civil war.

After Primo de Rivera's resignation and death in 1930, Alfonso XIII governed through a directory of ministers while attempting to take Spain back to the 1876 constitution at a time when his kingdom wanted a Republic. Republican sentiment was growing due to propaganda by organizations such as the A.M.R., of which Ramón Franco was a member. The A.M.R.'s propaganda attempted to incite the military to revolt in support of a Republic. Prime Minister General Damaso Berenguer, General Emilio Mola, director of the *Dirección General de Seguridad*, and General Manuel Goded concluded that to

help reestablish order among the military, Ramón Franco should be transferred to the military attaché post in Washington, D.C.¹ This transfer was to stop Ramón from producing revolutionary propaganda for the A.M.R. Ramón refused to take the post because he was too involved in Republican conspiracies, which made more enemies for him within the government.² To help his brother in his increasing problems with higher ranking officers, General Francisco Franco intervened to stop Ramón, but had little success.

A nearly insurmountable fissure had grown between the two brothers because of their opposing political ideas. Family ties and common bonds prevented a complete burning of bridges, but Francisco's loyalty to the monarchy and the established order clashed with his brother's increasing commitment to Republican ideals.³ Francisco wrote his younger brother on 8 April 1930:

If an illegal situation presented itself within the Dictatorship, ... , in the eyes of the country it would be justified or pardonable for the military to conspire, but it is another thing to conspire against a legal government...⁴

Ramón's letter of 12 April reveals his dedication to the ideals of the Republicans as well as his adoption of their propaganda language:

You have formed a very bad concept of the Republican forces and an excessively good one of the monarchical ones that

¹ General Berenguer became Prime Minister after Primo de Rivera was expelled in 1930.

² Ramón Garriga: Ramón Franco: el hermano maldito (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1978), 171-172.

³ Philippe Nourry: Francisco Franco: La conquista del poder (Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1976), 34.

⁴ Garriga, 174.

represent the throne. ... The army that is supposed to serve the nation, today only serves the throne ... I am profoundly convinced that the ills of Spain cannot be cured by the monarchy, for this reason I am a Republican. ... If you were on the Republican side, you would be aggrandized, on the monarchy's side you will lose the laurels you earned in Morocco.⁵

The growing fissure between the two brothers would become larger as years passed. Ramón's Republicanism, in contrast to Francisco's conservative Catholicism, shows that both wanted a glorious Spain, but differed in how the country could best be served. Eventually Ramón would join his elder brother in rebellion against the legally elected government, but at this time Ramón was too committed to his Republican sympathies to side with the brewing military conspiracy.

Ramón began conspiring with the Catalán Left and this was discovered by Francisco and by General Mola.⁶ He was also found to be making bombs and again Francisco was alerted. On 10 October 1930, Ramón made a statement to the press before dining with his older brother, "The dictatorship has not only ruined the country, it has destroyed the army and elevated inept men. For this I am a Republican and I want to see the implementation of a Republic in Spain."⁷ He was arrested that night on charges of clandestine meetings, dealing in contraband weapons, making bombs and producing revolutionary propaganda.⁸ He was sentenced to jail in Navarra for eight months, but

⁵ Ibid., 174-177.

⁶ Nourry, 34. Mola accused Ramón not only of conspiring against the monarchy, but of being of bad birth. Francisco, in defense of his younger brother despite his left-wing sympathies, went to Mola and demanded an accounting from him.

⁷ Garriga, 186.

⁸ Ibid., 187.

escaped on 24 November. A letter he left in his cell for General Berenguer read that, "Today you are the hammer and I am the anvil ... If I fall, it is not important, my name will pass to the martyrdom of liberty."⁹

The interim governments of Alfonso XIII failed and Republican sentiment spread. "The ease with which the dictator had been brought down encouraged the Liberal middle classes ... to think that Alfonso could be got rid of too."¹⁰

Pronunciamientos for a Republic were being planned and Alfonso could not stop them. Eventually, the King decided to hold municipal elections to gauge the mood of his subjects.

Prior to the elections, an Army garrison at Jaca rose to fight for a Republic, resulting in the execution of its leaders. Ramón Franco resurfaced from the underground less than a month after his escape to force an uprising to install a Republic as well. On 15 November 1930, Ramón appeared at the Cuatro Vientos air base outside Madrid to convince some of the pilots there to follow him on a bombing raid of the capital. Some of the men at the air base joined him and they took off in a borrowed plane. Accompanied on this flight by his mechanic from the *Plus Ultra*, Pablo Rada, Ramón flew over the *Palacio Real* to drop bombs on the object of his ire. Seeing the streets filled with playing children and the normal traffic of innocent bystanders around the palace, Ramón decided against the bombing. He wrote in his account of the events that, "If I had had a precise bombardier with me I could have bombed an

⁹ Nourry, 151.

¹⁰ Gerald Brenan: The Spanish Labyrinth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84.

interior patio, but Rada was not qualified."¹¹ Returning to Cuatro Vientos, Ramón decided to flee for Portugal before he was arrested and possibly shot. On his flight away from Madrid, he dropped pro-Republican leaflets instead of bombs.¹² Ramón's actions here are in stark contrast to his behavior while stationed in Morocco. Dropping bombs and grenades on Riffian tribesmen to defend his country's interests did not appear to have bothered Ramón then. Bombing fellow Spaniards, however, was apparently another matter.

Pilar Franco, his only sister, did not believe that Ramón would have actually bombed the *Palacio Real*. In her book, Nosotros, los Franco, she writes that her youngest brother:

was a dreamer from birth. I do not think that he seriously thought of dropping bombs over the *Palacio Real*. ... That was more of ... an adventure of romantics ...¹³

Ten days later, Francisco wrote to Ramón in exile, expressing his concern and sending him 2,000 pesetas to help with living expenses. Ramón, while grateful, seemed surprised that his brother lacked an understanding of the tide of public opinion regarding a Republic.¹⁴ Francisco warned his brother that if he continued along his revolutionary path that, "there is the possibility that you will end your life shot and abandoned by everyone."¹⁵ Due to the plethora of

¹¹ Comandante Ramón Franco: Madrid bajo las bombas (Madrid: Sociedad Anónima Editorial Alcalá, número 106, 1931), 172. Ramón also confessed that if he were put in the same position again, he would act the same way.

¹² Hugh Thomas: The Spanish Civil War (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 142.

¹³ Pilar Franco: Nosotros, los Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980), 100.

¹⁴ Paul Preston: Franco: A Biography (London: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994), 67. Ramón fled from Spain to Portugal and from there moved to Belgium and later Paris.

¹⁵ Garriga, 210.

Republican and left-wing agitation, the April 1931 election results, surprised the monarch and his supporters. At this time, it would be appropriate to examine the different political factions in Spain prior to the proclamation of the Second Republic.

One of the traditional political factions to emerge during the period of the Second Republic (1931-1936) were the Carlists. In addition to being radically Catholic, the movement was made up primarily of "poorer aristocrats, peasants, artisans and shop keepers," and called for a traditional, seventeenth-century style, absolute monarchy.¹⁶ A truly sovereign king would be limited in political power only by his conscience and the "objective norms" of tradition.¹⁷ The Carlists not only wanted to place their own candidate on the throne, but also to expunge Liberalism from Spain. As Gerald Brenan wrote in, The Spanish Labyrinth, "Carlism meant ideological agreement, unity of thought and belief, ... on such a comprehensive scale that it robbed political questions of everything but their immediate and practical content."¹⁸ Just as the Anarchists believed that an encyclopedia and a gun could lead them to create a new world, "the Carlists placed similar faith in a machine-gun and a missal."¹⁹

The rallying cry of the movement, "*Dios, Patria y Rey*," signified the Carlists' rejection of parliamentary monarchy and "universal suffrage as a

¹⁶ Thomas, 97.

¹⁷ Raymond Carr: Spain: 1808-1975 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 645.

¹⁸ Brenan, 205.

¹⁹ Thomas, 98.

heresy."²⁰ Supporters of the movement traced their origins to the Carlist Wars of the nineteenth century over succession to the Spanish throne.²¹ The Carlists' claim was spurious at best, and after the Second Carlist War (1870-1876) the movement seemed doomed. Juan Vázquez de Mella, a Carlist reformer of the 1890s, declared the movement's previous absolutism dead, proposing that their king would rule with the aid of a hand-picked council. A corporative assembly that debated in secret would be formed and "in the country districts the aristocracy were to be restored to their 'ancient functions and privileges.' The middle class would be allowed to control the municipalities. ... The leading principles of the regime would be absolute submission to the Pope and absolute devotion to the King."²²

This was an important shift in Carlist thought. Vázquez de Mella's vision of authoritarian monarchy showed that monarchists by the 1930s were moving away from constitutionalism and back toward absolutism, albeit in a different form. With a stronger, more authoritarian king, aided by a council and assembly, Carlists sought to turn Spain away from Liberal ideas. This shift in thought came when many Spaniards were embracing the Second Republic and its strong left-wing principles. For this very reason the Carlists were willing to be involved in any right-wing revolt against the government. King Alfonso XIII's counterpart in the Carlist camp at this point was Don Jaime de Borbón and later Xavier de Borbón-Parma, after Don Jaime died in 1931.

²⁰ Carr, 645. [*Dios, Patria y Rey*. God, Fatherland, and King.]

²¹ For a more detailed description of the Carlist claim and the Carlist Wars, see Brennan, 203 ff. The First Carlist War was from 1833 to 1840.

²² Brennan, 212-213.

Virtually every provincial capital in the country voted for a Republic in 1931, while both the Army and the *Guardia Civil* withdrew support for the King.²³ As Gerald Brenan wrote, "only when every possible resource had been exhausted, when it was clear that not a general would draw his sword for him, did the King leave."²⁴ The cabinet advised Alfonso to "accept the Republican leaders' advice to leave the capital 'before sunset' to prevent bloodshed."²⁵ During his exile, supporters of King Alfonso XIII plotted his return should they be able to overthrow the new Republic.

Initially, the Alfonsine Monarchists did not have the King's support. Alfonso is quoted as having told the Spanish newspaper *ABC* that:

Monarchists who wish to follow my advice will not only refrain from placing obstacles in the government's path, but will support it in all patriotic policies. High above the formal ideas of the Republic or the monarchy stands Spain.²⁶

It seems clear that King Alfonso XIII (known as Don Alfonso while in exile) did not want to create problems for the new government. Despite his initial desires, however, plots continued on his behalf.

The Alfonsine or orthodox Monarchists signed a cooperation pact with the Carlists in September 1931 to work against the Republic. The orthodox Monarchists, however, had not always been so willing to plot against the government. While the Monarchists supported Alfonso XIII and desired his rule

²³ [*Guardia Civil*: Civil Guard, basically a national guard with regular police powers which still exists to this day.]

²⁴ Brenan, 86.

²⁵ Thomas, 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

over Spain along stricter constitutional lines, they were not absolutists like the more arcane Carlists. As Hugh Thomas points out in The Spanish Civil War, "Spanish Monarchists of the 1930's were influential, rich, more authoritarian than the King whose cause they nominally supported, and certainly showed much more imagination in their efforts to overthrow the Republic than they did in trying to defend their King."²⁷ While the Carlists were seemingly the first political group to oppose the government publicly, the Anarchists were not far behind.

The seeds of Spanish Anarchism were planted in the Spain of the 1860s, a time of political upheaval, prior to the First Republic in 1873. According to Gerald Brenan:

Spanish Anarchism traces its origins to a Russian aristocrat, Michael Bakunin. ... Bakunin is the creator of the peasant Anarchism of Southern and Eastern Europe. This is especially true of Spain, the only country where his ideas took root in a mass movement. It is no exaggeration to say that, ... , everything of importance in Spanish Anarchism goes back to him.²⁸

Bakunin declared that the state was evil because it was based on obedience and authority. Collaboration with parliaments, governments and organized religion was to be condemned. Bakunin believed that self-governing communes drawn from the municipalities, the professions and other societies should be formed and these would make voluntary pacts with each other instead of creating a formal government.²⁹

²⁷ Thomas, 59.

²⁸ Brenan, 131-132.

²⁹ Thomas, 60.

Bakunin desired a return to the peasant life of Russia in the Middle Ages, with a special focus on personal liberty. He came up against resistance when he proposed his ideas at the 1868 International with Marx in attendance. Their differences eventually split the two men forever. In Spain, after 1872, this resulted in the Anarchists following Bakunin and the Socialists following Marx.³⁰

Initially, Anarchism had little success until it reached the province of Andalucía in southern Spain.³¹ There, Anarchism began as an ascetic movement among rural towns. "The Idea", as its followers called it, spread like a religion despite being hampered by persecution.³² The poor of Andalucía were attracted to it because of its vision of social justice. Syndicalism later brought the movement within the reach of moderate leaders.³³ Prior to that, a wave of bombings, committed by those called "terrorists of propaganda by deed" as well as assassinations which peaked in the 1890s, rocked the Iberian Peninsula.³⁴ Syndicalism sparked another movement known as Anarcho-Syndicalism that believed in the "mystique of violence" to promote Anarchist principles.

³⁰ Ibid., 61.

³¹ Normally, in English works on Spain, Andalucía is spelled 'Andalusia'. This author prefers to use the Spanish spelling. See Author's Notes, xiv.

³² Thomas, 63.

³³ Brenan, 170, defines the term as follows: Syndicalism was a movement that aimed at uniting all workers, whatever their political or religious opinions, in one body and in giving to that body a new fighting spirit. They were to reject all corporate political action and to keep entirely to the industrial sphere. ... They would cultivate a strict discipline and their only weapon would be the strike, which would be thorough and violent. The movement began in France and came to Spain in the early twentieth century.

³⁴ Carr, 441.

Spanish Anarchism moderated itself again and found strength in its doctrines and their appeal to the Andaluz peasantry. The Anarchists made the peasant feel that, "With a pistol and an encyclopedia, could not everything be achieved?"³⁵ The movement appeared to die out around 1904, laying dormant for nearly a decade before reviving again. When it did come back, Anarchism had a new appendage: the CNT.

The *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), formed in 1911, was the trade union for the Anarchist movement and was based on Anarcho-Syndicalist principles. The addition of Syndicalism to the CNT did two things: First, its doctrines afforded a bridge to the older unionism that Anarchism lacked. Second, the Anarchist militants now had a place in Syndicalism with its violent tendencies in regard to workers' strikes. The CNT grew rapidly during World War One, as did Anarchism in general, with its ideals of vegetarianism, sexual abstinence, atheism, self-improvement and popular science. While Anarchism was a political movement, it detested organization as a Socialist vice.³⁶ The Anarchists also believed in good sexual education that would bring about eugenic selection; human beings would breed conscientiously to produce healthy and beautiful children. They made no distinction between intellectuals and workers as each would be both.³⁷

Despite wanting to overthrow the state and create self-governing communes, Anarchists were divided as to the nature of the revolution. They felt

³⁵ Thomas, 62.

³⁶ Carr, 445.

³⁷ Thomas, 182.

that bourgeois society was doomed, and thus the CNT did not believe in an inevitable violent revolution. As Raymond Carr points out, the Spanish Anarchists believed that: "Revolution is the spontaneous act of the masses; it cannot be led from above; it can only be sensed and seized by the gifted leader."³⁸ By the 1920s the Anarchists had become used to the idea of organization to effect the revolution, but in a convoluted way. They held that the revolution should come *abajo arriba* and they tried through a complex structure to "reconcile the contrary demands of effective joint action and individual liberty of choice."³⁹

Not only were Anarchists divided over the function of revolution as a movement, they differed from the Socialists over the union's role as well. The CNT held that the union was to serve as the basis for the new society in which the state was replaced by autonomous syndicates. The union would also be the means by which this new society would be born. The CNT leadership felt that to use a syndicate to gain better wages and conditions actually defeated its goals because it weakened the basis for revolutionary solidarity.⁴⁰

While the CNT was the labor union of the Anarchist movement and the chief draw for new members, another group of more militant Anarchists was assembling. The *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (FAI), formed in 1927, was an outgrowth of the CNT and was a purely revolutionary movement. It was founded by Anarchist "purists" responding to persecution during *La Dictadura*.

³⁸ Carr, 452.

³⁹ Ibid., 453-454. [*abajo arriba*: from the bottom to the top.]

⁴⁰ Ibid., 455.

By 1932, the FAI had brought the CNT to a serious crisis as it had infiltrated the latter with militants. Diego Abad de Santillán, a CNT leader, commented on the FAI, "When you ask them (the FAI) where we shall go after we have thrown ourselves in the street, they reply that when we are in the street we shall know where we must go."⁴¹ The FAI relied upon the autonomy of the individual unions to propose revolutionary strikes, which was against the organizational will of the CNT. The CNT denounced the strikes and labeled the FAI as traitors.

During the Second Republic, the Anarchists were, as could be expected, less than enthusiastic. Originally they said that the Republic was not worth a drop of the workers' blood. By 1936, still against joining the government of the popular Front, both the CNT and the FAI were under similar radical leadership, with the Anarchists pushing for a revolution as soon as the people could be armed.

The Anarchists were not the only ones planning a revolution, however. The Socialists were also hard at work. On 2 May 1879, the *Partido Democrático Socialista Obrero* was formed in Madrid. While mainly faithful to standard Socialist theory, Spanish Socialism was heavily influenced from abroad and its founders were all followers of Marx. *El Socialista*, the party's newspaper, began publishing in 1886 and a trade union formed on Socialist principles followed. "Francisco Mora and García Quejido succeeded in founding in 1888 the *Unión General de Trabajadores* or, as it is usually called, the U.G.T."⁴² Generally, the union was moderate and disciplined, holding non-violent strikes

⁴¹ Ibid., 624.

⁴² Brenan, 217.

to force better workers' conditions. The majority of the Socialist and UGT membership was in Madrid. It spread to Bilbao and later to Barcelona and Asturias, eventually becoming a nation-wide party.

Originally, the UGT had a membership of 3,300, and it grew so slowly that it took more than a decade to double in size. Socialists differed from Anarchists over the issue of working within the current political system. "The Socialist party believed that its road to power lay through parliamentary and municipal action. But it could make no progress along this road so long as elections were corrupt and fraudulent."⁴³ The party stood for honest elections, some reforms and improving the administration of the country. Due to rampant political corruption, this stand was shared by Conservatives and Republicans. Numerous strikes, along with combined actions with the Anarchists and other groups, some violent in nature, brought the party a broader membership.

Attempts to move beyond strikes were put down by the Army and while the movement grew, not until 1932 was it a serious political force.⁴⁴ The miners' uprising in Asturias (the so-called "revolution of October 1934") led to the arrest of most of the party's leaders. In the elections of 1936, the Socialist party garnered ninety seats in the *Cortes*, the most it had ever received.⁴⁵ Divisions grew between supporters of Francisco Largo Caballero and Indalecio Prieto who had opposed collaboration with the Dictatorship. Despite Prieto's minor

⁴³ Ibid., 220.

⁴⁴ Brenan uses figures of 42,000 members in 1902 and 220,000 in 1932.

⁴⁵ Thomas, 156.

popularity, the majority of workers saw Largo Caballero as their leader and not Prieto.⁴⁶

Francisco Largo Caballero (later called the “Spanish Lenin”) became a Counselor of State under *La Dictadura* after the party agreed to cooperate with General Primo de Rivera. As a Socialist, “much of Largo Caballero’s early work was devoted to setting up burial societies, sickness insurance and cooperatives” for members.⁴⁷ According to Raymond Carr, Largo Caballero and leaders of the UGT “saw in cooperation the chance to build up their strength as the only effective workers’ organization.”⁴⁸ Largo Caballero differed with Indalecio Prieto over the growing militancy of the Spanish Left, having been greatly disillusioned by his experience with “bourgeois democracy.” He saw Prieto as hesitant and too willing to work within the current system.

The party’s division over support for the Republic was evident in the public feud between Prieto and Largo Caballero. “Prieto believed in the Popular Front. ... He wanted a planned economy, not revolutionary euphoria. Rapid social change would drive the middle classes to fascism ...” This made him willing to cooperate with the Popular Front coalition government.⁴⁹ Despite

⁴⁶ Prieto would also persuade the party to join in conspiracies against Alfonso XIII in 1930.

⁴⁷ Carr, 455.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 571.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 641.

Largo Caballero's and Prieto's involvement with the government, the Popular Front could not depend on Socialist support.⁵⁰

After 1933 Socialist youth had become a force within the party and many were drawn to Largo Caballero. The feud between him and Prieto stretched into the summer of 1936. As Raymond Carr notes: "Prieto was called a collaborationist and a traitor ... Largo Caballero was accused of personal ambition and infantile revolutionism. ... Thus rather than firm revolutionary purpose the world of labour displayed in July 1936, a chaotic incoherence."⁵¹ While factions of the Socialist party fought over participation in the Popular Front government and the Anarchists debated involvement in revolutions against it, the Spanish Right was gathering supporters.

The Catholic Right looked to José María Gil Robles and his *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (CEDA). This conservative party was an amalgamation of small right-wing Catholic groups that had evolved since 1931. Officially formed in March of 1933, the CEDA sought restoration of the monarchy and a Christian democratic Republic. Gil Robles, a lawyer and political agitator, opposed constitutional restrictions on the Church and the Socialist policies of the Second Republic. Politically, his position was described as "accidentalism". "It was 'accidental' whether Spain had a

⁵⁰ Thomas, 123. The name "Popular Front" was adopted from the Comintern policy of establishing united groups of democratic, working-class and bourgeois parties in an alliance against fascism.

⁵¹ Carr, 643.

monarchy or a Republic, but it was 'essential' that the law should not conflict with the Church."⁵²

Some elements of the CEDA were almost fascist in character, which caused uneasiness among the Left, specifically the Socialists. The refusal of Gil Robles publicly to declare support for the Republic in 1934 did nothing to ease those fears. His insistence that the CEDA be better represented in the government led the Socialist trade union, the UGT, to regard them as "the first step towards the establishment of a fascist state in Spain."⁵³ The eventual inclusion of three CEDA members in the government caused violent clashes in the streets between its supporters and the Socialists. Two years later, the CEDA, along with other conservative and right-wing groups, put differences aside to unite against their common enemy, the Republic.

By the time the Second Republic was proclaimed, the Right was developing into conservative, radical right and fascist groupings. Fascist politics as such had come to Spain before 1936 but achieved little success. Prior to that time, "Spanish nationalism was more an expression of peripheral nationalisms," such as those exhibited by the Basques and Catalans.⁵⁴ In the early 1930s, Spanish Fascism began to take root as a student movement.

Ramiro Ledesma Ramos and Onésimo Redondo formed the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (JONS) in 1931 "aiming at a 'national syndicalist

⁵² Thomas, 108.

⁵³ Ibid., 133.

⁵⁴ Stanley Payne: *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 253.

state."⁵⁵ The JONS was not popular, nor did it have any concrete political program. It grew slowly and two years later another more authoritarian group was created that eventually merged with the JONS and took it over.

The *Falange Española* was formed on 29 October 1933 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the eldest son of the former dictator. He was known simply as José Antonio to differentiate himself from the late general. José Antonio began as a conservative authoritarian monarchist, but evolved into a more authoritarian nationalist by the early 1930s. As Stanley Payne notes in: A History of Fascism: 1914-1945, José Antonio differed from Ledesma and the JONS in that "José Antonio was not averse to using the label *fascist*."⁵⁶

The Falange strove to create a regenerated Spain, different from the one then in existence. To rally Spaniards to the Falange's cause, José Antonio brought back the concept of the crusade to save the country from outside forces:

In order to reach its goal, (the Falange) summons to a crusade every Spaniard who wants to see a rebirth of a Spain that is great, free, just and authentic. ... We shall resort to violence in defence of what is just and to defend our fatherland against any violent or insidious attack ... The Spanish Falange, aflame with love, secure in its faith, will conquer Spain for Spain to the sound of military music.⁵⁷

This idea evoked historical recollections of the time of El Cid and the crusade to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors. General Franco would later

⁵⁵ Ibid., 258.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 259.

⁵⁷ José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Selected Writings, ed. Hugh Thomas, trans. Gudie Lawaetz, (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1972), 66-67.

adopt this concept during the Civil War to explain the Nationalist rebellion against the Popular Front.

José Antonio united with Ledesma to form the *Falange Española de las JONS* (*FE de las JONS*).⁵⁸ The primary purpose of the *FE de las JONS* was to convert the Spanish workers to a "nationalistic corporative state."⁵⁹ The movement was based on the Twenty-Seven Points put forward in November 1934, basically a restatement of its previous propaganda, in which the state was seen as an "instrument of totalitarianism" to serve the nation.⁶⁰ To sum up the points, and to clarify the movement's aims, José Antonio proclaimed:

The Spanish Falange of the JONS wants the establishment of a new order ... (and) aims at a national revolution. Its style will be trenchant, ardent and militant. Life is a militia and must be lived in a spirit purified by service and sacrifice.⁶¹

While seeming to promote a military regime, José Antonio did not want to give the movement over to the generals of the Army. He did not feel that they understood the need for proletarian involvement. José Antonio's desire was to exploit the generals' rebellion for his own purposes rather than truly support it.⁶² Despite this, he was in contact with General Emilio Mola, the leader of the conspiracy at that time, after the elections of February 1936. Supporters of the

⁵⁸ After Francisco Franco was proclaimed *Jefe del Estado*, the *FE de las JONS* merged with the Carlist movement into the *Falange Española Tradicionalista de las JONS* or *FET de las JONS*. After the Civil War, this was simply called *El Movimiento* or "the Movement".

⁵⁹ Carr, 647.

⁶⁰ Stanley Payne: *Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961), 69.

⁶¹ Primo de Rivera, 137.

⁶² Carr, 648.

Spanish Right feared one political element above all others, and that was Communism.

The Spanish Socialists decided against joining the Third International in 1921, which angered some members who split from Socialism to found the Spanish Communist Party.⁶³ The party remained relatively obscure until the middle 1930s. It was very close to Moscow, with representatives of the Comintern frequently visiting Spain, writing much of the propaganda and contributing the majority of its newspaper articles. When the Second Republic was proclaimed in 1931, the party numbered perhaps no more than one thousand members.⁶⁴ The Communists caused much more fear and alarm than their numbers might have warranted. Hugh Thomas suggests, "this was partly because of the quantity of communist propaganda and partly, of course, because of the party's relationship with the Soviet Union."⁶⁵

David T. Cattell's detailed work on the influence of the Comintern in the upheaval leading to the war, Communism and the Spanish Civil War, explains how the party was able to gain broader support and influence in Spanish politics. He writes that:

To reverse (the) trend toward fascism (the Third International of the Comintern) concluded that it was necessary to increase the strength and influence of the Communists through cooperation

⁶³ García Quejido and Francisco Mora were among the founders. They had previously founded the UGT.

⁶⁴ David T. Cattell: Communism and the Spanish Civil War (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965), 20. This is a detailed account of the influence of Communism on the events leading up to the war, as well as Communist participation in and influence on the war itself.

⁶⁵ Thomas, 122.

with other proletarian groups, ... by a United Front program of the working class.⁶⁶

This policy of uniting to create a "Popular Front" of Communist, Left and democratic groups increased the prestige of the party as well as its membership.

Membership increased after a much more aggressive recruitment policy following the February 1936 elections. The program called for "the immediate seizure of large estates without compensation, complete separation of Church and State, the end of Church subsidies, and the formation of a people's army under the direction of the people."⁶⁷ When the Popular Front won the elections and the Communists joined the *Cortes*, Dolores Ibarruri (known as *La Pasionaria* or the Passion Flower) commented that, "the forces of the Right did not accept defeat easily. As soon as the election results were known, they began plotting against the Republic."⁶⁸ In support of the Popular Front and in response to José Calvo Sotelo's inflammatory remarks about a possible uprising of generals of the Army, she said:

Neither the attacks of the reactionaries nor the thinly disguised maneuvers of the enemies of democracy will destroy or weaken the faith of the workers in the Popular Front and the government it represents. ... If there exist reactionary generals who ... may rise against the government, there are also heroic soldiers who can keep them in line. ... When the government begins to carry out, ..., the program of the Popular Front ... all Spain's workers will be on its side, determined to crush the forces of reaction ...⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Cattell, 24.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁸ Dolores Ibarruri: They Shall Not Pass: the Autobiography of La Pasionaria, trans. from El unico camino (International Publishers, 1966), 169.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

La Pasionaria was to become the most famous voice of the Republic, a fiery critic of the Azaña government and an even bigger opponent of the forces of the Spanish Right. Her cry of “*¡No Pasarán!*” became a legendary rallying cry of the Republican armed forces.⁷⁰

As this political turmoil was raging in Spain prior to the proclamation of the Second Republic, Ramón Franco was still in exile. In Paris, Ramón came into contact with Buenaventura Durruti, the famous Spanish Anarchist leader, and he also began speaking at Republican gatherings. Ramón's brother Masons also sang his praises while in exile. Ramón and some of his other exiled companions were honored at a dinner hosted by French Masons, with various men presenting speeches about liberty, equality and fraternity, the bulwarks of the Republican philosophy.⁷¹

The Commander wrote another book while in exile titled Madrid bajo las bombas, which he dedicated to two of his comrades who had been executed for their involvement in the Army uprising at Jaca in late 1930. The dedication read in part, “to the martyrs of freedom, Captains Galán and García Hernández , assassinated on Sunday 14 December 1930, by Spanish reaction incarnated in the Monarchy of Alfonso XIII and his government, ...”⁷² These actions resulted in his discharge from the army on 24 February 1931.⁷³

⁷⁰ [*¡No Pasarán!*: They Shall Not Pass!]

⁷¹ Garriga, 215.

⁷² Franco, Madrid bajo las bombas, v. Preston, 84.

⁷³ Garriga, 213, 216.

The Second Republic was proclaimed on 14 April 1931 and Ramón returned to Spain the very next day. He received triumphant receptions, was reinstated into the military, and immediately named *Director-General de Aeronáutica*.⁷⁴ While seen politically as a radical Socialist, he released a statement to the press that, "The socialists want a revolution without revolution."⁷⁵ Members of the Republican government also thought he was a Communist. He may have been a radical Socialist or even an Anarchist, but Ramón Franco was not a Communist. Pablo Rada, however, gave the Commander's enemies cause to condemn him as such.

On 11 May 1931, when the new Republic was but a month old, Pablo Rada and other radical left-wing activists set fire to a number of churches with aircraft fuel stolen from the Cuatro Vientos air base. When asked to comment on the event, Ramón replied, "I contemplated with joy those magnificent flames as the expression of a people which wanted to free itself from clerical obscurantism."⁷⁶ With a close associate named as the prime suspect in the arsons, and comments from Ramón that did nothing to clear him of radical sentiment, it is no wonder that some in the Republican government saw Ramón as a possible Communist.

After his appointment as *Director-General de Aeronáutica*, Ramón abused his post to bring about what he viewed as the "true revolution" in

⁷⁴ Ibid., 222.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 224.

⁷⁶ Preston, 79. Some of the fires were even falsely attributed to Ramón. Francisco Franco wrote in notes for his own memoirs thirty years later, that the church burnings were the event which defined the Republic.

the Republic along Anarchist lines. He lost this post due to his activities and was only able to stay out of prison by being elected a deputy to the *Cortes* for Barcelona.⁷⁷ On his first appearance in the *Cortes*, Ramón stood to read a lengthy speech which was reported to be difficult to hear or understand because of Ramón's low and quiet voice. This is interesting, since after his transatlantic flight and during his exile in Paris, he had reportedly developed a fine talent for public speaking. Manuel Azaña would later recall that, "no one paid the smallest attention to Ramón Franco."⁷⁸ This poor initial showing drew attacks from some of the other deputies who questioned Ramón's revolutionary sentiment.⁷⁹ By the end of July 1931, Ramón had only the support of the ultra-left, having been abandoned by his few other supporters.

Ramón achieved some success by taking on the issue of citizens deported as "enemies of the Republic." After visiting a group in exile in Africa, he returned to the *Cortes* and presented a well-received speech in support of the deportees, some of whom were personal friends. Cásares Quiroga announced the return of eighteen deportees shortly thereafter.⁸⁰ Ramón further distinguished himself when General José Sanjurjo's uprising failed. This uprising was put down quickly by the Republican government, but raised

⁷⁷ Garriga, 226, 230, 238. Preston, 84. Ramón was also a candidate on the ballots in Madrid and Sevilla. He won both the Barcelona and Sevilla seats, but renounced the latter in favor of the former.

⁷⁸ Nourry, 33. Azaña also recalled that during a twenty course dinner the famous aviator shouted at his wife, "Shut up imbecile, or I'll give you a beating like the one the other day!" which petrified the assembled guests.

⁷⁹ Garriga, 240-241.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 255-256.

serious questions. While Sanjurjo was a Carlist, "his aim was in all probability not a restoration of the King, but a Conservative Republic in which the army would have the lion's share."⁸¹ Sanjurjo was exiled to Portugal where he would remain in contact with members of the Army who were plotting as well.

Ramón exposed the fact that officers appointed after his dismissal as *Director-General de Aeronáutica* had been complicit in Sanjurjo's coup attempt. This proved problematic for Manuel Azaña, the President of the Republic and the man responsible for Ramón's removal from that post.⁸² This embarrassment showed Azaña that Ramón was correct that the Air Force was the principal military branch that could defend the Republican regime.⁸³ It also gave Azaña a reason to ostracize Commander Franco as soon as he could.

By 1936, Monarchist ideologies covered a wide area. During the period known as the *Bienio Negro* (the Black Biennium) of the Second Republic (November 1933 to December 1935), Monarchists explored a number of options with regard to how they wanted the Spanish state to be governed once the Republic was overthrown and the King restored. Most Monarchists swung between Fascism and traditionalism. A number of Alfonsine Monarchists leaned heavily toward Fascism, coming under the influence of José Calvo Sotelo, who, along with José María Gil Robles and others, was rapidly gathering the authoritarian Right of Spain.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Brennan, 242.

⁸² Garriga, 258-259.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Thomas, 151-152.

The right wing of Spanish politics and the more conservative elements of society were appalled when the Second Republic made divorce legal throughout the country. Ramón Franco was overjoyed and voted for it as a deputy to the *Cortes*. He did have an ulterior and selfish motive, however. The aviator's marriage to Carmen Díaz was a shambles and Ramón had begun a new relationship with a woman named Engracia Moreno, having a daughter out of wedlock named Angeles Franco Moreno by her in 1928.⁸⁵ After the institution of the divorce law, Ramón and Engracia were married.⁸⁶ Their marriage lasted until Ramón was killed near Cape Formentor off the coast of Mallorca in 1938.

On 27 September 1933, Ramón was recommissioned into the Air Force with the rank of Commander and the Ministry of War sent him on a three-month study tour of the Americas. Before leaving, Ramón was asked about his political views:

I firmly believe that the revolutionary period has now passed and to firmly consolidate and give credibility to the Republic, Spain needs a period of eight years, or perhaps two legislatures of conservative government, ...⁸⁷

After this political statement, his first in over a year, Commander Ramón Franco left for Mexico.⁸⁸ Ramón lost his seat in the *Cortes* in 1934, when the CEDA and other right-wing parties gained seats in the government.

⁸⁵ Pilar Franco, 193. Pilar Franco believed that Angeles was not her brother Ramón's daughter at all. First, Pilar did not see their marriage as valid, since all divorces during the Republic were declared void by the Caudillo's government after the war. Second, according to Pilar, Engracia Moreno had Angeles prior to beginning her relationship with Ramón.

⁸⁶ Garriga, 260-261.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 264-265.

⁸⁸ Ibid. His initial mission was to pay tribute to two Spanish pilots who had been lost near Mexico on a flight similar to his disastrous 1929 flight in the *Dornier-15*.

Ramón had by then become disinterested in politics. His new marriage, reinstatement into the Air Force, and then his appointment as Air Force attaché to the Spanish embassy in Washington, D.C. were the focus of his life. His previous fame from the *Plus Ultra* flight returned while in the United States, and his passion for left-wing activities seems to have dissipated. He may have retained some pro-Republican sympathies, but his drive to act appears to have disappeared completely. One can even see a turning away from radical leftist thought in his comments prior to departing for the United States. One committed to Anarchist or radical leftist politics would certainly not countenance an eight-year period of conservative government, nor that the “revolutionary period has now passed.”⁸⁹

Ramón's first wife, Carmen Díaz, commented that this time in the United States proved very important in changing Ramón's sympathies away from radical leftist views and back toward the more conservative views of his family. Franco apparently spent most of his time with his family when not occupied with embassy business. As he spoke almost no English, he spent much of his time close to home, “did not have many friendships with his companions at the Legation and shrank away from obligations demanded by protocol.”⁹⁰ This virtual solitude, almost self-imposed exile, seems to have solidified Ramón and Engracia's relationship, turning him back toward the conservatism of his upbringing.

⁸⁹ Garriga, 264-265.

⁹⁰ Díaz, 187.

When the miners rose in Asturias in 1934, Ramón saw that his brother Francisco's popularity in Spain had risen while his had fallen. He also noted that Francisco was the architect of the repression of that uprising. He did not, however, rush back to Spain to join Anarchist demonstrations against the handling of the miners' attempted revolution. Ramón stayed in the United States, as Air Force attaché, negotiating with the Glenn L. Martin company in 1935 for a license to build its aircraft on the Iberian Peninsula. He also negotiated the purchase of three of the company's planes, which never arrived in Spain due to American neutrality.⁹¹ While Ramón negotiated these purchases, he conducted them in a manner contrary to the government's orders.⁹² American military opinion at this time was not sympathetic toward the Republic's increasing turn to the far Left, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was operating under a policy of neutrality regarding the internal affairs of other countries. This led to the United States prohibiting the sale of the Martin aircraft to the Spanish government.⁹³

His apparent friendship with General Douglas MacArthur of the United States Army also may have prompted a change in Ramón Franco's political sympathies.⁹⁴ If ever a man could turn a wavering leftist away from the fold, it

⁹¹ Garriga, 268. Ramón's efforts could have aided the Republic in the initial days of the Civil War in that the contacts he made in the North American aircraft industry were used by the Republican government to try to purchase aircraft and supplies for their battle against the Nationalists.

⁹² Díaz, 190.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Gerald Howson: Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 72.

was General MacArthur. The two met on 10 September 1935, with the *New York Times* giving the event nominal coverage.⁹⁵ Through this meeting, according to his first wife, "the door was opened for Ramón to meet the most influential political figures of the moment."⁹⁶

With Ramón Franco's sympathies changing and the political situation in Spain becoming increasingly more fluid, the elections of 1936 took on new importance. The results would trigger a plot by army generals, a clandestine flight from the Canary Islands by Ramón's brother Francisco, and the outbreak of the Civil War.

⁹⁵ *The New York Times*, 11 September 1935, 21:3.

⁹⁶ Díaz, 186. Carmen Díaz also writes that, "The encounter with American democracy ... is sure to have ignited in Ramón the light that permitted him to see his own errors. For the first time in many years, the heroic halo of this hero of aviation was more than that of his political mistakes." This is interesting commentary coming from the woman whom Ramón's family blamed for turning him to the Left.

Chapter Three

The Family Reunited

The 1936 election campaign between early January and 16 February saw the CEDA try to arrange commonality with other right-wing groups. As Hugh Thomas points out, "the Alphonsine Monarchists and Carlists, together with the 'agrarians' and 'independents', stood in alliance in most places with the CEDA in the 'National Front.'"¹ The National Front sought to increase its numbers in the *Cortes* and thus decrease the power of the Popular Front supported by the parties of the Left. The Popular Front won the elections by less than one percent, but received 267 deputies to the 132 of the National Front. Seventy-seven seats went to groups that were mainly centrist in political outlook. The National Front parties had virtually no hope of curtailing the Socialist policies of the Popular Front and its Communist influence.

By 1936 Spain was under the direction of Prime Minister Manuel Portela Valladares, and the newly elected Popular Front government faced the daunting task of ruling a society that was up in arms and poised for civil war. The election results from 16 February show an almost equal division of the population. The Popular Front received 4,700,000 votes to the Right's 3,997,000, with the Center forces gaining only 449,000 and the Basque Nationalists only 130,000. The victory of the Popular Front produced great

¹ Hugh Thomas: The Spanish Civil War (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 151.

expectations among working-class supporters of the Left and corresponding consternation on the Right and Center.²

Portela Valladares resigned soon after the election and Manuel Azaña, who had been elected President in 1931, was asked to form a new government. Until he replaced Valladares with Alcalá Zamora, Azaña served as Prime Minister and in May 1936 Santiago Cásares Quiroga (former War Minister) was named President of the Republic. During the ensuing months the struggle for power shifted from the Chamber of the *Cortes* to the street, the club, and the officers' mess.³ The government (as previously mentioned) lacked the important support of the Socialists due to internal divisions over whether to support the Republic. This lack of support left the government in disarray.

The forces of the Right, however, while not developing into one cohesive unit, were becoming more organized. The Carlists, Falangists, Monarchists, and the generals of the Army held one ideological principle in common: A mythic, historical Spain was being ruled over by Liberal, Socialist ministers who lacked the ability to maintain order. The only way to reestablish that order was for the Republic to give the military more authority, for the government to be overthrown, or for there to be a counter-revolution against the Popular Front. The government was aware of the unrest among the generals and transferred those it thought most dangerous to places it felt they would not be able to plan a revolt. General Manuel Goded was sent to the Balearic Islands, General Emilio Mola from Morocco to Pamplona, and General Francisco Franco to the

² Gerald Brenan: The Spanish Labyrinth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 300.

³ Raymond Carr: Spain: 1808-1975 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 640.

Canary Islands. Each served as the Captain-General for the province to which he was transferred. By doing this, the Popular Front government made a fatal error. Each general was now in a position to consolidate his power and influence against the government they felt was jeopardizing the *Patria*. Discontent now changed into a plan for revolt.⁴

A group of generals met in Madrid prior to the transfers and developed the strategy for the revolt. The Captains-General of each province would declare a state of siege and the rebellion would be supported by the Army of Africa if necessary.⁵ The leader of the uprising would be General José Sanjurjo, who was living in Duero, Portugal.⁶ His second in command was General Emilio Mola. Under the coup plans, Mola would lead the uprising within Spain until Sanjurjo could be transported back from Portugal. Francisco Franco would make his way to Spanish Morocco and move across the Straits of Gibraltar with the Army of Africa. The generals who eventually led the rebellion were divided over the type of state to impose. Some favored a military dictatorship along the lines of General Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Others were Carlists and wanted the monarchy reestablished, with their candidate on the throne. A few were Monarchists, while some drifted toward the Falange and its Fascist ideas of Spanish nationalism.

Francisco Franco, later the leader of the Nationalists and Caudillo of all Spain, desired a regime of order as he felt Spain was threatened by Socialist

⁴ Ibid., 649.

⁵ Ibid., 650.

⁶ Coronel José Goma: La Guerra en el Aire: Vista, Suerte y al Toro, (Barcelona: Editorial AHR, 1958), 56.

violence.⁷ While an ardent Catholic and a supporter of Alfonso XIII, Franco's seeming lack of political views and involvements prior to the uprising served to his advantage. No one outside the conspiracy could pin down which side he was on, and even some of the other conspirators were unsure. He was dubbed "Miss Canary Islands 1936" by fellow plotters due to his hesitation.⁸ By mid-July 1936 however, Franco was on board and the deaths of two men not only set the Army's rebellious plans into motion, but also those of the Left.

On 12 July, Lieutenant José Castillo had just left his new bride and was on the way to his duty post when he was attacked and murdered by four suspected members of the Falange.⁹ After demanding government action against the Falange, a group of Socialist soldiers, including Fernando Condes who was a friend of Castillo's, were authorized to arrest certain Falangists whose names appeared on a government list under the condition that they would be handed over to appropriate authorities. After going to the home of one reported Falangist and finding the address incorrect, the men tried the house of José María Gil Robles, leader of the CEDA, who was out of town. One suggested they go to the home of José Calvo Sotelo, leader of the Monarchists and not a Falangist at all.

At about three o'clock in the morning on 13 July, Condes and his friends entered the apartment of Calvo Sotelo and roused him from slumber. Being a deputy of the *Cortes*, he was immune from arrest, but consented to go with the

⁷ Carr, 649.

⁸ Paul Preston: Franco: A Biography (London: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994), 134.

⁹ The following description of these events is drawn from Thomas, 206-208.

men anyway. He assured his family that he would call soon, "unless these gentlemen are going to blow out my brains."¹⁰ After a short drive, that very thing occurred and Calvo Sotelo's body was dumped with the attendant of the East Cemetery of Madrid. The murder sent shock waves through the middle and upper classes of Spain, while the murder of Lieutenant Castillo outraged the working classes and the Left. Both men were buried the next day, 14 July, in the East Cemetery, with clenched fist salutes for the lieutenant and straight-armed fascist salutes for the late deputy.¹¹

The death of Calvo Sotelo at the hands of the Socialists was the event that the Army conspirators needed to prove that the Popular Front had no control over society. The rebellion was set for 18 July, as soon as Francisco Franco could travel to Tetuán, Spanish Morocco, from Tenerife in the Canary Islands where he was serving as Captain-General. General Franco a month before had written a letter to the Spanish War Minister, Santiago Cásares Quiroga, making it clear that if the Spanish Government could not maintain the normal securities of daily life, the Army would have to intervene.¹²

Francisco's journey to Morocco was made through a series of deceptions that began in Britain. The head of Olley Air Service Company Limited was contacted by Luís Bolín, a representative of the generals, who acquired the services of a pilot named Captain William Henry Bebb. The proposed purpose of the flight was to be a tourist voyage. A man named Hugh Pollard, his

¹⁰ Thomas, 208.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Winston S. Churchill: The Second World War. Volume One: The Gathering Storm (London: Reprint Society, 1951), 213.

daughter Diana and her friend Dorothy Watson were engaged as passengers on the flight from Croydon on 11 July.¹³

Apparently, Bolín walked into the Olley Air Service Company offices, asked to see the head of the company and inquired, "Would you accept, with the utmost secrecy, a flight to the Canary Islands?" He is also reported to have stated that, "It is indispensable that our itinerary avoid passing through Spanish territory, we cannot land there under any pretext."¹⁴ The aircraft was hired with funds provided by the Mallorquín businessman Juan March and the ABC newspaper owner, the Marqués de Luca de Tena.¹⁵ The D.H.89M Dragon Rapide flown by Captain Bebb was designated G-ACYR, call number 6261. It was powered by two two-hundred horsepower Gipsy Six engines, had two tapered wings, and the cabin sat six to eight passengers. With a range of only 520 miles and a flight ceiling of 16,000 feet, the aircraft had to make a number of stops along the way to Morocco for refueling.¹⁶

The Dragon Rapide flew from Croydon to Casablanca, via Portugal on 12 July. During this voyage, its intended passenger in the Canary Islands, Francisco Franco, informed the other conspirators that he would not join the uprising. He sent a telegram to General Mola that said simply, "*geografía poco extensa*," meaning that he felt the circumstances were not favorable enough for

¹³ Goma, 50.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Preston, 135.

¹⁶ Gerald Howson: Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 104, 108. G-ACYR 6261 continued flying until 1953 and in the 1960s was restored and presented to the Spanish government. The aircraft was placed on display at the Museo del Aire, Cuatro Vientos, Madrid.

success.¹⁷ Mola was furious and ordered Major Juan Antonio Ansaldo to fly to Portugal to retrieve General Sanjurjo to take Franco's place in Morocco. Upon hearing of the murder of José Calvo Sotelo, however, Franco dispatched word that he would play his assigned part in the rebellion.¹⁸

Franco made his way to Las Palmas from Tenerife where he would meet his aircraft, due to the unfortunate, yet incredibly timely death of General Amado Balmes in a pistol range accident.¹⁹ Franco waited in Tenerife after the funeral of General Balmes for the aircraft, designated D-H Rapide G-ACYR, to arrive. The moment it landed he boarded, and upon reaching Casablanca, received orders from General Mola via Luís Bolín. His reaction is reported to have been as follows, according to Colonel José Goma: " 'Tetuán,' exclaimed the General, and his face expressed an immense joy."²⁰ Upon arriving in Tetuán, Franco stepped out of the aircraft with his arm raised in the straight-arm salute to the *Legionarios* who had gathered to welcome their one-time leader.²¹ Franco believed that he was rebelling to save the *Patria* from Communist

¹⁷ Preston, 136. [*geografía poco extensa*: geography inextensive.]

¹⁸ Ibid. Francisco Franco is reported to have exclaimed upon receiving the news of Calvo Sotelo's murder, "The *Patria* has another martyr. We can wait no longer. This is the signal!"

¹⁹ Allegedly Balmes shot himself in the stomach by mistake while trying to clear a jammed pistol. It is unclear which side Balmes was on, so speculation exists that he either shot himself accidentally, was murdered, or shot himself on purpose. Franco had been ordered by the Republican government not to leave Tenerife without an excuse, which Balmes's death provided.

²⁰ Goma, 52.

²¹ Ibid.

infiltration, and any means to do so were licit, just as he had done against Moorish tribesmen in the early 1920s.²²

He now had to move his forces from Morocco across the Straits of Gibraltar to the peninsula to join the rest of the generals in rebellion. Republican naval crews had mutinied against officers who had ordered them to join the revolt, which effectively closed the Straits of Gibraltar to Franco's troops unless they were transported by air. Few aircraft were available to the rebels in Morocco as a majority of the Spanish Air Force had remained loyal to the Republic. Three Fokker F.VIIb3m/Ms, one Douglas DC-2, two Dornier Wal seaplanes and one Fokker F.VIIa were all that General Franco had to move his troops across the Straits.²³ Transport flights began on 19 July, during which time Franco dispatched emissaries to Germany and Italy pleading for aid. This was the first major military airlift in history.

Franco's emissaries to Germany returned happily with the Führer's promise to assist Franco over the objections of Hermann Goering who pointed out that Germany lacked a large arsenal and aid to Franco could bring international backlash. Hitler apparently responded that he was willing to risk international complications to help the rebels in Spain. Franco did not need men, he argued, but equipment and aircraft to move his troops from Africa.²⁴ With this decision by Hitler, German aid to Spain began.

²² Preston, 145. [*Patria*: the Fatherland.]

²³ Howson, 12.

²⁴ Raymond L. Proctor: Hitler's Luftwaffe in the Spanish Civil War (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press), 1983, 18-19.

Representatives of the rebels were also sent to Italy to request aid from Mussolini. Luís Bolín, after reaching Morocco with Franco, had flown to Lisbon to get General Sanjurjo's counter signature on a request from Franco for aircraft. Bolín arrived in Rome on 21 July. Franco also sent a cable to Rome which arrived before Bolín. Mussolini's reply was one word scribbled on the bottom of the telegram: "No."²⁵ On 25 July, another representative of the rebels, Antonio Goicochea, met with Mussolini's son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano, and convinced him to help stop a Communist take-over of Spain. This meeting resulted in twelve Savoia S-81 bombers being promised to the rebels by early August.²⁶

Twelve aircraft actually embarked prior to August to help the Nationalists. John F. Coverdale writes in his detailed account of the Italian part in the war, Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War, that:

On the morning of July 29, 1936, eleven days after the military revolt ... , a group of twelve Savoia-Marchetti S81 bombers of the Italian air force assembled at Elmas airport in Sardinia and were hastily repainted to cover over their military markings and numbers. Their crews were made up of members of the air force who had volunteered for a special assignment outside the country.²⁷

These men were briefed by Italian Air Force chief of staff General Giuseppe Valle. They were to fly to Spanish Morocco, obtain uniforms of the Spanish Foreign Legion and place themselves at the orders of General Franco.²⁸ This

²⁵ John F. Coverdale: Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1975, 11.

²⁶ Thomas, 130.

²⁷ Coverdale, 3.

²⁸ Ibid.

initial involvement of Italian pilots was ill-conceived and resulted in the crash of one bomber at sea and two in French territory; only nine of the original twelve arrived at their intended destination.

During the first eight days of the airlift, approximately 1,200 troops were transported from Tetuán to Sevilla, and by the end of the second week, nearly 1,300 troops had made the one-hour flight across the Straits of Gibraltar. Air sickness was a problem for some of the soldiers as the first German planes, Junkers Ju-52s, were stripped of their interior and left with only bare floors for the troops to sit on with all of their equipment. Some of the troops became quite ill, exacerbating an already difficult situation, the flights having to rise to between 2,500 and 3,500 meters to avoid Republican anti-aircraft fire.²⁹ From the beginning of the airlift until 11 October 13,000 troops and 270,199 kilos of military equipment were transported from Tetuán to Sevilla or Jerez de la Frontera.³⁰

Foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil War would increase, The Non-Intervention Committee would be formed to keep the conflict from becoming a wider, European war; while Germany, Italy, France and Russia, either clandestinely or openly, poured aid into the country to support their ideological Spanish cousins.³¹

As previously mentioned, Major Juan Antonio Ansaldo was dispatched to retrieve General Sanjurjo from Portuguese exile. Flying in a small Puss-Moth

²⁹ Proctor, 22, 25.

³⁰ Ibid., 31

³¹ The scope of this thesis is too narrow to discuss the aspects of German, Italian, French, Russian and other international involvement in the war.

monoplane, Ansaldo landed in Portugal and reported to Sanjurjo at his summer home in Estoril.³² The Dragon Rapide that had just carried Franco to Morocco landed in Lisbon at about the same time and would have been a much more suitable aircraft for the journey, but Sanjurjo chose to go with Ansaldo.³³ The young monarchist Ansaldo apparently presented himself to Sanjurjo by stating that he was placing himself, "at the orders of the head of the Spanish state!"³⁴ Touched by this display the General chose to go back to Spain aboard the tiny aircraft. The de Havilland D.H.80A Puss Moth was a high-wing cabin monoplane which in production models had staggered seating to accommodate two passengers in addition to the pilot in a rather cramped space. Powered by the 120 horsepower Gipsy III or 130 horsepower Gipsy IIIA inverted in-line engine, the aircraft had a maximum speed of 128 miles per hour, a ceiling of 17,500 feet, and a range of 300 miles.³⁵

As Portuguese officials did not want trouble with the Madrid government, Ansaldo was obliged to meet the General at another location, Boca do Inferno, at an abandoned race track named La Marinha.³⁶ Fate intervened. At approximately four o'clock in the afternoon on 21 July, Ansaldo prepared for take-off in the Puss Moth designated EC-VAA.³⁷ According to multiple sources,

³² Preston, 151. Sanjurjo was legally in the country as a tourist, having been exiled from Spain after his failed 1933 coup attempt.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Thomas, 254.

³⁵ Howson, 97.

³⁶ Preston, 152. [Boca do Inferno: the mouth of hell.]

³⁷ Howson, 98.

the old field was not long enough, and the wind direction forced Anslado to take off toward a stand of trees at the end of the field. Adding to this unfortunate problem was the overweight Sanjurjo. The General reportedly insisted on bringing a large suitcase with full-dress uniforms and all his medals for a triumphant entrance into Madrid.³⁸ Upon take-off, Anslado feared he had broken a wheel or somehow damaged the fuselage. The little monoplane apparently did not achieve enough lift, clipped the tree tops and crashed, bursting into flames. The rupture of the propeller, not a broken wheel, caused the accident.³⁹ The plane crashed into the rocky hillside, killing Sanjurjo in the ensuing fire while Anslado, thrown free, received only minor injuries. According to Colonel José Goma, in his memoirs, La Guerra en el Aire: Vista, Suerte y al Toro, "With his death, the Spanish Air Force lost one of its best leaders and friends."⁴⁰

The start of the war on 18 July initially placed Francisco and Ramón Franco on opposite sides of the ideological fence. Francisco was committed to reestablishing the order he felt was being destroyed by the increasingly Marxist Republic, while Ramón had to this point consistently opposed reactionary movements. Ramón felt at first that Spain would remain a Republic, no matter who won the war. He was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying:

This is not a rebellion to restore the monarchy. It is a struggle over the social order and over what form of Republic Spain is to

³⁸ Thomas, 254. Preston, 152.

³⁹ Goma, 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 57-8.

have. I am confident that, whatever happens, even if my brother's forces win, they will never consider restoration of a king. ... I have not had any communication from my brother on this subject, ... , but I am sure that he never intends to try to restore the monarchy.⁴¹

He would, "fight for an ideal, and that is all. I am not interested in personal advancement. ... I don't think my country will ever go back to a monarchy."⁴²

Ramón's sister, Pilar, was overjoyed when she learned that her wayward brother had returned to the family fold. In later years she would comment on his previous political involvements:

Ramón changed a lot. He was a monarchist, conspirator against the monarchy, a key person that proclaimed the Republic and when he had the Republic became an Anarchist ... Finally, he was a Nationalist. God listened to our prayer, and the youngest of the Franco children returned to the faith of his elders.⁴³

Pilar claimed that her brother Francisco was responsible for Ramón's eventual turn to the Right. She felt that Ramón had "deposited a blind confidence" in Francisco. If this had not been the case, "he would not have come," she wrote, "he would have stayed in America."⁴⁴

Despite initial reluctance, Ramón first offered his services to the Republican government. Prior to his departure for Washington, D.C., Ramón appears to have had a falling out with President Manuel Azaña over the state of the Republic. According to Pilar Franco, the Republic had not turned out as Ramón had dreamed, and he apparently told Azaña that he felt a fraud had been committed against the Spanish people. Azaña, therefore, sent Ramón to

⁴¹ *The New York Times*, 21 July 1936, 3:1.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Pilar Franco: Nuestros, los Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980), 192.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Washington so that he would leave him in peace.⁴⁵ When the war broke out, however, Ramón offered to support the same government he had previously called a fraud. Perhaps this feeling of being defrauded, increased closeness with his second wife and daughter, friendship with General MacArthur, and his falling out with Azaña turned Ramón's sympathies further toward the Right.

Ramón wrote to a friend asking how Azaña would receive him if he came to the Republican zone. The friend wrote back that he should not come "because it would go badly."⁴⁶ Azaña is reported to have said that Ramón "shouldn't come, he'd have a really hard time."⁴⁷ Turned down by the government of the Republic which he had worked to install, Ramón returned to family loyalties and offered his services as a military pilot to his brother Francisco.⁴⁸ After being elected chief of state by the military junta that had begun the war, General Francisco Franco welcomed back his younger brother despite his previous support for the Republic, his anarchist sympathies, involvements with freemasonry, and other revolutionary activities.⁴⁹ Ramón

⁴⁵ Ibid., 194.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Preston, 197.

⁴⁸ Pilar Franco, 194. Pilar also wrote that she doubted Ramón ever offered to fly for the Republic because if it were true she would have had no other choice but to condemn him with all of her might.

⁴⁹ Preston, 198. General Francisco Franco was elected Commander-in-Chief of all Nationalist forces and Chief of the Spanish State on 21 September 1936 by the *Junta de Defensa Nacional*. Thomas, 689. Francisco Franco's closest rival for leadership of the rebellion was General Emilio Mola. He was killed in a plane crash on 3 June 1937.

resigned his post in Washington, D. C., and set out for Nationalist Spain on 6 October 1936. Now the *hermano pecador* had finally returned to the family.⁵⁰

Why did Ramón not immediately join the Nationalist cause? One explanation has already been given: A desire to preserve the Republic by offering his services to Azaña. Another possible explanation is that his brother Francisco had not yet become head of state. Had Ramón returned prior to November 1936, he likely would have been arrested by the Nationalists and executed due to his previous Republican and Anarchist activities. After General Sanjurjo's death, General Mola was left as the apparent head of the uprising. Not until late September was Francisco elected *Jefe del Estado* and Commander-in-Chief of Nationalist forces.⁵¹ Ramón had no guarantees for his safety until after his brother had taken supreme power. Carmen Díaz states that the eldest Franco brother, Nicolás, was instrumental in Ramón's safe return to Nationalist Spain. Since Francisco and Ramón had been separated by ideology, "there existed the mediation of Nicolás, who always maintained correspondence with Ramón."⁵²

While Francisco and Nicolás were ready to forgive their youngest brother for his previous political foibles and leftist involvements, that is where family loyalty ended. Ricardo de la Puente Bahamonde, a cousin of the Franco brothers, was executed early in the war by the Nationalists due to his support for the Republic. His execution was not stopped by Generalísimo Franco, despite

⁵⁰ Ramón Garriga: Ramón Franco: el hermano maldito (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1978), 278. [*hermano pecador*: the sinning brother.]

⁵¹ [*Jefe del Estado*: Chief of State]

⁵² Díaz, 191.

his having the power to do so, due to fear of charges of nepotism. Nearly forty years later, Enrique de la Puente Bahamonde, Ricardo's brother and then head of the Compañía Telefónica (telephone company), commented, "Franco could not commit the injustice of intervening to save my brother, invoking family ties. Ricardo was resolutely of the other side; he was lost and had to pay. It was the law of war."⁵³ Possible charges of nepotism obviously did not concern Francisco when it came to his brother Ramón. Francisco's indulgence of the *enfant terrible* of the family was in stark contrast to the treatment received by so many other men, according to Philippe Nourry, "infinitely less marked than Ramón," who, "paid with their life for their past 'errors', without the Caudillo manifesting toward them the least compassion."⁵⁴

The differences between Ramón and Francisco Franco are interesting. Ramón, the previously committed leftist, had opposed reactionary movements, had worked to install the Republic, and then felt it did not go far enough in its revolution for the people. Ostracized by the government, then refused when he offered to fight against the rebels, Ramón felt defrauded, used, and unappreciated. The Spain he loved was descending rapidly into chaos. His brother Francisco on the other hand, was a committed conservative, determined to save Spain from disorder and (in his mind) Communist leadership. Both brothers believed in the glory of Spain. This would unite them in 1936 when virtually everything else to this point had separated them.

⁵³ Philippe Nourry: Francisco Franco: La conquista del poder (Madrid: Ediciones Júcar, 1976), 428, n.3.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Ramón was given command of the air base on Palma de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands on 23 November over the objections of some in Francisco's inner circle. Ramón was appointed without consultation with General Alfredo Kindelán whom Francisco selected to head the Nationalist Air Force. In a letter to the Generalísimo dated 26 November, Kindelán revealed his displeasure at the Caudillo's nepotism by saying that, "the decree naming Commander don Ramón Franco, ... , Chief of the Naval Air Base at Palma de Mallorca ... , was decided without consulting with Air Force Headquarters ..." ⁵⁵ Kindelán told Generalísimo Franco that there were Nationalist aviators in Mallorca whose opinions varied between those who wanted him posted outside Spain during the war to those who wanted him shot. Some alleged that Ramón was still a freemason, that he had been a Communist (which he had not), that he had planned a massacre of commanders and officials at the air base at Sevilla (which was also untrue); above all, the men did not want to serve under him because of his previous indiscipline. ⁵⁶

Ramón arrived in Mallorca and went to the *Gran Hotel* in Palma where most of the Spanish and Italian pilots were staying. His entrance stopped conversations in mid-sentence and silence filled the room until a captain came forward and greeted the Lieutenant Colonel with a warm embrace. ⁵⁷ This warm

⁵⁵ General Alfredo Kindelán: La verdad de mis relaciones con Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981), 91.

⁵⁶ Ibid. Preston, 198. Garriga, 282. This letter by General Kindelán was ignored by Francisco Franco during the war, but the Caudillo had his revenge by dropping Kindelán from his inner circle and ostracizing him at the end of the war. Francisco also promoted Ramón to Lieutenant Colonel of the Infantry on 23 December and confirmed his appointment to the Naval Air Base at Pollença at Palma de Mallorca.

⁵⁷ Garriga, 282.

greeting was not the norm, however, and Franco soon moved his family out of the *Gran Hotel* and into a house outside Palma. Ramón was well aware he was distrusted by the Spanish pilots and the Italian forces stationed on the island. The only way to gain their respect and trust was to show his proficiency with an airplane.⁵⁸

His first mission was a joint venture with the Italian forces to bomb fuel dumps at Barcelona. As the weather was bad, the Italian commander suggested postponing the operation. Ramón's response is said to have been, "In war, bad weather does not exist."⁵⁹ Of the four aircraft that took off for Barcelona, only Ramón Franco completed the mission. This incident earned Ramón some of the respect of the Italians and Spaniards alike. Part of the admiration that the men developed for Lieutenant Colonel Franco over time came from his constant participation in the most dangerous missions.⁶⁰

Fully aware of the scrutiny that he was under because of his past, Ramón Franco stayed well away from the Café Formentor and the casino on Mallorca. He did not participate in any of the parties thrown by his fellow aviators, and his days of scandalous affairs, wild drinking and gambling were apparently put behind him. He placed all his energies into commanding of Air Force personnel on the island, especially at the seaplane base at Pollença on the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 283.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 284.

⁶⁰ Pilar Franco, 197. A group of officers had reportedly visited Generalísimo Franco to protest Ramón's appointment and Francisco gave his word that if, after two months, they still were not satisfied with Ramón, he would transfer him to another unit. One month after that visit, two officers returned, representing the rest, who told the Caudillo that everyone was quite happy with the Lieutenant Colonel's service.

northeast point of Mallorca. At his command were two groups of Italian *Savoia* 70s, a German *Legión Condor* squadron of *Heinkel* 50s, and one group each of *Heinkel* 60s and *CANT-Z.501* and *Z.506* seaplanes.⁶¹ Flying one of ten *CANT-Z.501* seaplanes, Ramón completed twenty-seven flights in 1937 with a total of 132 hours and forty-eight minutes of flying time.⁶² These operations included raids on Valencia and other points up and down the Mediterranean coast of Spain.

Bombings of coastal areas was not the only place that Ramón's brother Francisco Franco used air power, however. With the materiel provided by his foreign supporters, aerial combat between Republican and Nationalist aviators were features of the major battles of the Civil War.

When the Spanish Civil War began on 18 July 1936, there were approximately 550 aircraft of all types, both military and civilian throughout Spain and Spanish Morocco. An additional thirty to forty military aircraft were under repair at the time of the uprising. The *Aviación Militar* had just over 280 aircraft, while the *Aeronáutica Naval* had almost ninety planes. Privately owned aircraft, as well as planes owned by state and regional authorities, and LAPE (*Líneas Aéreas Postales Españolas*) the state controlled airline, numbered 171.⁶³ Most of the aircraft in Spain were airworthy, and when the war broke out, the Nationalists captured 127 aircraft while the Republican government had

⁶¹ Goma, 295.

⁶² Garriga, 287.

⁶³ Howson, 20. Thomas, 330. Thomas puts the initial number of aircraft at 400.

nearly 430 planes.⁶⁴ The number of pilots in Spain at this time ranged from 240 to well over 300; Hugh Thomas says that the Republic had 150 pilots, while the Nationalists had ninety. He also points out, that Franco's forces could count on private and retired pilots as well as others who could be quickly trained to fly.⁶⁵

With the overwhelming majority of the aircraft and pilots to fly them in the hands of the Republicans, the government's forces should have been able to establish air superiority; but this was not the case. During the initial months of the war, confusion reigned and Air Force headquarters in Madrid had effective control only over its immediate region. Air Force squadrons in Catalunya took on missions without orders from Madrid, acting mainly on the orders of the independent Catalán *Generalitat* or government. Squadrons in the Basque country and Asturias also acted independently of Madrid, giving the Republic, in effect, three air forces.⁶⁶

Nationalist air forces, small to begin with, were quickly augmented by the addition of German and Italian pilots and aircraft. While Spaniards were trained to fly various foreign aircraft, pilots from those countries participated in a majority of the air operations. It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the decisive nature of German *Legión Condor* and Italian *Aviazione Legionaria* forces on the side of the Nationalists except to say, that without it, Francisco Franco would have faced a much longer and protracted war.

⁶⁴ Howson, 20.

⁶⁵ Thomas, 331.

⁶⁶ Howson, 20.

The first major battle of the Civil War took place in February 1937, when Nationalist forces tried to cross the Jarama River to surround Madrid from the south. The battle began on 6 February, and despite its surprise nature, the Republic was able to establish air superiority.⁶⁷ The Republican Air Force had both numerical superiority and high morale at this time due to the influx of Russian aid. Approximately 100 Russian aircraft, and a number of tanks, made their presence known for the first time in a concrete way during this battle.⁶⁸ By 16 February, the Nationalists had been forced into a defensive position, despite having captured the high ground across the Jarama River.⁶⁹ Eventually, the battle resulted in a stalemate, with each side having become too strong to be attacked because of heavy reinforcements. Nationalist casualties numbered about 7,000, while the Republicans suffered roughly 10,000.⁷⁰

Captain José Larios, the Marquis of Larios and Duke of Lerma, described his experiences in the Jarama River Valley, and what it felt like to go into aerial combat in this way:

Approaching the enemy lines, I could see the sky simply alive with Red fighters. I tried to forget that they were there and to concentrate on the ground and fixing my bombsight accurately, but waves of fear shot through me. Those few minutes just before

⁶⁷ Thomas, 589. German *Legión Condor* anti-aircraft batteries were able to keep the Republican Air Force from truly helping their ground forces in turning the battle into a Republican offensive.

⁶⁸ Captain José Larios: Combat over Spain: Memoirs of a Nationalist Fighter Pilot (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), 100.

⁶⁹ Thomas, 593.

⁷⁰ Preston, 223.

going into action were the worst. Once the fireworks had started, there was no time to think, only act - and act fast.⁷¹

Captain Larios would go on to fight in the third major air battle of the Civil War, over the Ebro River, but was not present at the second battle, near the town of Brunete.

The second major battle involving aircraft in the Spanish Civil War, took place in and around the town of Brunete. It began on 6 July, just six months after the Jarama River offensive by the Nationalists had ground to a halt. Brunete was selected by the Communist-led Republican army due to Francisco Franco's delay in following up the Nationalist victory in Bilbao, in northern Spain. Brunete lies fifteen miles west of Madrid and the attack had been well planned by Republican Chief of Staff, General Vicente Rojo, so that its surprise was nearly successful in cutting off the Nationalist forces surrounding Madrid.⁷² The initial attack sent over 8,000 troops against the weakest point in the Nationalist lines.⁷³ During this battle, the Messerschmitt ME109 fighter plane was seen for the first time in action. By the thirteenth of the month, the offensive stage of the battle was concluded, and the Republic now had to defend the ground it had taken.⁷⁴ Nationalist aircraft at Brunete numbered approximately 150, including more of the planes supplied by the Germans, and Italians.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Larios, 100.

⁷² Preston, 281. Thomas, 711. Hugh Thomas writes: The Nationalists were surprised by the offensive of Brunete, perhaps because it had been discussed in the cafés of the Republic for months.

⁷³ Preston, 281.

⁷⁴ Thomas, 712. This included the villages of Quijorna, Villanueva del Pardillo, Villanueva de la Cañada, as well as Brunete.

⁷⁵ Larios, 120.

Once the surprise of the offensive wore off, Franco sprang into action, sending two brigades to the battle zone from their positions in the north, along with the *Legión Condor* and *Aviazione Legionaria*.⁷⁶ This gave the Nationalist forces the ability to counter-attack on 18 July, taking advantage of Republican confusion brought about by inexperienced junior officers.⁷⁷ According to Captain José Larios, who was not at the battle, but discusses it at some length in his memoirs, "Our air force was hammering away relentlessly, day and night, and the enemy began to show the strain."⁷⁸ Twenty-one Republican aircraft were lost to *Legión Condor* attacks and from this point on, the balance of air strength in the Madrid sector, was held by the Nationalists.⁷⁹ The battle ended on 25 July, the feast day of Santiago (Saint James), with a Nationalist take-over of Brunete.⁸⁰

The Republic did keep Villanueva de la Cañada, Villanueva del Pardillo and Quijorna, but it cost them 100 aircraft and about 20,000 lives. The Nationalists on the other hand, lost only twenty-three planes, and 17,000 casualties in a battle that was one of the bloodiest of the Civil War.⁸¹ Brunete was actually a point of relatively insignificant strategic value, but Franco had been unwilling to let it be taken back by the Republic. This was due to his

⁷⁶ Preston, 282.

⁷⁷ Thomas, 714.

⁷⁸ Larios, 120.

⁷⁹ Thomas, 715.

⁸⁰ Preston, 283. Francisco Franco is reported to have said that, "The Apostle has granted me victory on his feast day."

⁸¹ Thomas, 715.

determination not to lose an inch of territory once it had been captured.⁸² His diversion of forces did delay further attacks in the north by five weeks, but cost the Republic dearly, in that they did not obtain their objective of cutting off the Nationalist forces surrounding Madrid, lost a great deal of valuable equipment, and a large number of veteran soldiers.⁸³

The third and last major battle of the Civil War, both on the ground and in the air, took place on a 1,100 mile long front along the Ebro River, near the town of Gandesa. Prior to this, Republican losses had given the Nationalists an ever-increasing advantage. On 9 March 1938, Franco ordered Nationalist advances toward the Ebro River, throwing his massive military superiority against the increasingly weak and shrinking Republic.⁸⁴

Franco's troops moved forward in an effort to cut Republican Spain in half, separating Barcelona and Valencia, backed by the *Legión Condor* and the *Aviazione Legionaria*. The Italian actions at this time caused problems between Franco and Mussolini, due to the unilateral bombing of Barcelona's residential areas by Italian forces. These attacks outraged Franco, but Count Galeazzo Ciano of Italy blamed the Generalísimo for ordering the attacks in conversations with foreign ambassadors visiting him in Rome.⁸⁵ It was at this point that Franco asked Mussolini to refrain from issuing direct orders to Italian aviators stationed

⁸² Preston, 282.

⁸³ Thomas, 715.

⁸⁴ Preston, 301-302.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 302. Ciano later wrote in his diaries that Franco knew nothing of these raids before they occurred.

in Mallorca.⁸⁶ The constant attacks by Nationalist aircraft served to demoralize the Republicans, set them in a state of confusion, and overwhelm them with the strength of Nationalist forces in the area.

In his continued effort to rid Spain of all Leftist influence, Franco changed directions and moved his forces toward Valencia instead of pushing toward Barcelona and an earlier end to the war. Franco's men reached the Mediterranean Sea on Good Friday, 15 April 1938, cutting Catalunya off from the rest of the Republic.⁸⁷

By late July, Nationalist forces were virtually on the outskirts of Valencia when word reached General Yagüe that a Republican offensive was imminent in the Ebro River valley. The general could not determine when, where or how the attack would come, however. The front was 1,100 miles long and not every rumor could be investigated.⁸⁸ This offensive was a bold move by the Republic, especially since the heat would be oppressive, Russian aid was decreasing, and the French frontier had once again been closed to shipments of Republican aid.⁸⁹

Approximately 80,000 Republican troops began crossing the Ebro River on the night of 24-25 July, which shocked the thin Nationalist lines stationed there. Massive aerial attacks were ordered by Franco to try and counter the Republican advance. He also rushed in reinforcements, abandoning the push

⁸⁶ Ibid., 302-303.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 305.

⁸⁸ Thomas, 840.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 837. Carr, 691.

toward Valencia. Franco made this decision so that he could concentrate massive troop numbers against the Republicans in an attempt to crush them completely. According to Paul Preston, Franco, "preferred to turn the town of Gandesa into the cemetery of the Republican army rather than secure a swift victory."⁹⁰

The small town of Gandesa saw the worst of the fighting. Republican officers and troops were shot for retreating, while sergeants were ordered to kill officers who ordered retreats without written orders from higher-ranking officers.⁹¹ Three hundred Nationalist aircraft were evident at the Ebro front, while Republican pilots trained in Russia flew in support roles for the army advance.⁹² Over the course of the battle, 13,500 artillery rounds were fired from 500 canons everyday for four months.⁹³ The Republic by this time was short of tanks and artillery, but by far their greatest disadvantage was in the air.⁹⁴ Approximately 10,000 pounds of bombs were dropped by Nationalist aircraft everyday. Small targets were the primary reason for this mass of bombs. According to Hugh Thomas, 500 bombs were needed to destroy one pontoon bridge.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Preston, 311.

⁹¹ Thomas, 842.

⁹² Ibid., 835, 842.

⁹³ Preston, 313.

⁹⁴ Carr.

⁹⁵ Thomas, 844.

Prior to the beginning of this momentous battle, Francisco's brother Ramón was flying missions against Republican Spain from his base at Pollença Bay on the island of Mallorca. Just prior to the Nationalist counter-offensive, Ramón would lose his life.

Chapter Four

28 October 1938

When 1938 began, it was clear to all that the end of the war was not far off. Nationalist troops continued their rapid advance toward the Ebro River, pushing the Republic into an increasingly small space. General Franco began a ground assault in conjunction with bombing raids on the city of Barcelona on 16 March and ending on 18 March; bombs dropped at three hour intervals during the three-day time span. Over one thousand people were killed in the bombing raids and the Caudillo only stopped them to avoid "outside complications."¹ Originally, these raids were to be attacks on the port installations only, but as previously mentioned in Chapter Three, the Italian *Aviazione Legionaria* took it upon itself (with orders from Mussolini) to attack the residential areas of Barcelona. Members of the International Brigades were in Barcelona during the bombings, and some of their letters home reflect their reactions to the pounding of the city.

Edwin Rolfe of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade lamented in a letter dated 17 March that:

The whole day yesterday, and the whole night too, were the same, only worse. The *avión* came over eight more times ... The moon was full again, and enabled us to see the planes,

¹ Ramón Garriga: Ramón Franco: el hermano maldito (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1978), 290. Garriga also writes that the Generalísimo tried to place the blame for these raids on his brother Ramón later in life. This seems less than credible since Ramón had once been deputy to the *Cortes* for Barcelona, as well as the man who could not drop bombs on the *Palacio Real* because of the people in the streets and children playing in 1930. While he may have been involved in the bombings, it is unlikely that he ordered them. Count Galeazzo Ciano also admitted that Francisco Franco had no prior knowledge of the raids.

thousands of feet high, on one of the raids. Another time they descended so low that we could hear their motors.²

Rolfe and his fellow Brigaders went to the bombing site to help the wounded and his letter describes the scene thus: "They hit a church, ... and we went over and saw them remove a dead body and two women, one with her foot amputated, the other with her thigh ending in a stump of blood at the knee. ... This morning's paper says 400 dead and 600 wounded, and that's only a partial preliminary count."³

Canute Frankson, another Lincoln Brigader, thought he had seen Nationalist air raids at their worst before Barcelona but that, "these three days and nights in this city have completely changed my mind."⁴ Anti-aircraft batteries in the city apparently had kept the Nationalist bombing to a minimum until the morning of 16 March when, "with better visibility they began to set their record of destruction. All through the day before yesterday, then through the night, and through the entire day, yesterday, until between four and five in the afternoon, bombs rained down on Barcelona's population."⁵

Despite his former service as Barcelona's deputy in the *Cortes*, Ramón flew missions against the city and its port out of Mallorca where he was the commander of the *Región Aérea de los Baleares*.⁶ His service record indicates

² Jefferson Hendricks and Cary Nelson, eds. : Madrid 1937: Letters of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War, intr. Cary Nelson, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 428.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 429-430.

⁶ Gerald Howson: Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 72.

that during the twenty-two months he was in Mallorca, Ramón flew fifty-one bombing missions over cities such as Alicante, Valencia and Barcelona.⁷ Eight months after the attacks on Barcelona, Ramón Franco set out to bomb the port of Valencia. On 28 October 1938, he took off from Pollença in a *CANT-Z.506* seaplane and was never seen alive again.

When the war began on 18 July 1936, the Captain-General of the Balearic Islands, Manuel Goded, declared a state of war in favor of the rebels. The next day, the Marqués de Zayas, leader of the Falange on the island of Mallorca took over the capital city of Palma.⁸ General Goded left the island to aid in the uprising in Barcelona, which unknown to him, had remained in Republican hands. Upon his arrival in Barcelona, he was arrested and later shot on 12 October.⁹ The Catalán *Generalitat* decided to attempt to recover the Balearics due to their strategic importance in regard to aid being transported by sea, but the planned invasion did not go well.

Republican air force Captain Alberto Bayo and anarchist *Guardia Civil* Captain Manuel Uribarri organized an expedition to the island of Ibiza that included a requisitioned ocean liner, two destroyers, a submarine and six aircraft.¹⁰ Eight thousand troops went on the expedition, which began on 9 August, including 3,000 Republican troops, the remainder being Russian,

⁷ Garriga, 292.

⁸ Coronel José Goma: La Guerra en el Aire: Vista, Suerte y al Toro (Barcelona: Editorial AHR, 1958), 119.

⁹ Capitán Alberto Bayo: Mi desembarco en Mallorca (de la guerra civil española), Miquel Font, ed., (Palma de Mallorca, Spain, April 1987), 48.

¹⁰ Hugh Thomas: The Spanish Civil War (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 381.

French and Spanish militiamen.¹¹ The island of Ibiza was quickly recovered by Bayo's forces, after which he set out for Mallorca. Arriving on the east coast of Mallorca on 16 August, Bayo and his forces landed near the small town of Porto Cristo, occupying it quickly.

The first motorboat to arrive at the beach included Bayo, who like many other commanders wanted to be the first to disembark. In his memoirs of the invasion, Bayo wrote:

Our motorboat made land and one of my soldiers wanted to disembark first to help me out to the beach, giving me his hand. "No", I told him, "I want the honor, the satisfaction, and the immense joy that my feet be the first ones to touch Mallorquín territory on this invasion," and I jumped into the water, going in waste deep.¹²

Bayo's men were able to establish themselves eight miles inland, but that is where the invasion stalled.

Their swift success seems to have perplexed the invading Republicans, giving the Nationalists time to organize a counter-attack. A shipment of Italian aid was organized by the Mallorquín businessman Juan March, which included three fighters, and a small Italian bomber squadron that called itself the "Dragons of Death". A group of Italian Black Shirts, led by Arconovaldo Bonaccorsi, also known as the "Conti Rossi" came to the aid of Nationalist Mallorca.¹³

¹¹ Goma, 119.

¹² Bayo, 89.

¹³ Thomas, 382-383.

After the arrival of the Italian pilots, the Republican aircraft were unable to bomb Palma. This was because the initial Italian attack on Bayo's seaplanes destroyed all but one. Surprised by the appearance of enemy aircraft, Bayo's pilots had no time to react. Floating tranquilly in the bay at Port de Manacor, the seaplanes were rendered useless in just a few passes by the Italians.¹⁴ On 3 September, a counter-offensive began which included a 1,200 man force, along with 300 carabinieri and *Guardia Civil*, as well as Falangist militiamen led by the Marqués de Zayas, making the total number of Nationalist troops approximately 3,500.¹⁵

The retreat was ordered quickly due to aerial attacks by the Italians and the lack of a field hospital and adequate supplies. Alberto Bayo requested artillery cover for his retreat from the Republican ship *Jaime I*, and the invasion ended in humiliating defeat.¹⁶ The Nationalist command in Mallorca issued the following congratulations to the aviators who had taken part in repulsing the Republican invasion:

With a spirit of justice and impulsive gratitude, we wish to emphasize that your dignified actions were the principal architect of the victory.¹⁷

From this point on, Mallorca would remain in the hands of the Nationalists,

¹⁴ Bayo, 113.

¹⁵ Thomas, 383.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Goma, 121.

protected by the Nationalist air force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco.¹⁸

Prior to Ramón's taking command of the air base at Pollença, the Nationalist Air Force was employing the *CANT-Z.501* Gabbiano (seagull) seaplane. The first of these aircraft to see action in the Civil War was one purchased by the *Aero Club de Cádiz* in mid-September 1936. The name *Cádiz* was painted on its fuselage and given the serial number 62-1.

Lieutenants Ruíz de la Puente and Rodolfo Bay then set out on 22 September in their first war-time mission. Problems with the controls resulted in the aircraft landing on a rough sea and breaking its back. Ruíz de la Puente and Bay hung onto the tail, while the rest of their crew took the dinghy. Passing ships rescued the entire crew after two days at sea.¹⁹

In December 1936, three *CANT-Z.501*'s landed in Palma de Mallorca with Italian crews.²⁰ In early 1937, these planes were handed over to the Nationalists who stationed them at Pollença Bay, forming the 2-G-62 bomber group. These wooden, single-engined parasol monoplanes had a two-step hull which along with the fuselage, floats and fin, was covered with stressed plywood. The wing was covered in fabric. The *CANT-Z.501* Gabbiano was powered by an 835 horsepower Isotta-Fraschini Asso XI R2C15 liquid-cooled

¹⁸ Alberto Bayo would flee Spain late in the war, winding up in Mexico where he became an intimate of Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, participating in the invasion of Cuba and the resulting war which brought Castro to power. He died in Havana, Cuba in 1967.

¹⁹ Howson, 70-71. Interviews by Philip H. Gardner with a former Nationalist Pilot who has requested to remain anonymous. Tape recording. Palma de Mallorca, Spain. June 8, 15, 16, 21, 1995. Hereafter referred to as Anonymous Interviews.

²⁰ Howson, 71.

vee engine mounted above the wing, with a three-blade, variable-pitch metal propeller.²¹

One of the main problems with the *CANT-Z.501* was its tendency to throw up a large amount of spray during take-off which, according to Gerald Howson, "under certain conditions made it impossible for the pilot to see forwards."²² Eventually, ten Gabbianos were delivered to Spain from Italy, but by 1938 only five of the original ten were still in operation, the others having been lost to wear and tear rather than in actions against the enemy. The 2-G-62 bomber group was employed as reconnaissance over the Mediterranean, following ships from France and the Soviet Union with supplies for the Republican forces. Climbing to 4,000 meters, the *CANT-Z.501*'s would quickly dive down to 1,000 meters to attack their targets, then turn back out to sea to escape once they had completed their reconnaissance or dropped their bombs.²³ The inherent danger in such actions resulted in heavy wear on the aircraft as well as losses to Republican fire. For this reason, and the fact that only five of the original ten remained, Ramón Franco reported to General Alfredo Kindelán that the *CANT-Z.501* was inadequate for the missions required of it.²⁴

The failure of its single engine would usually result in the loss of the aircraft and crew. Ramón also complained that the *Z.501* was too slow and

²¹ Ibid., 70.

²² Ibid. This tendency resulted in group 2-G-62 suffering its first casualty in February 1937 when Ruíz de la Puente struck the mast of a tobacco ship on take-off and crashed. He and his copilot, Antonio Meledreras Sierra were killed.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 72.

there were not enough of them left to cover the large area of the Mediterranean assigned to them. Six months of negotiations for aircraft with Germany resulted in nothing, after which Kindelán approached the Italians. In June 1938, the Italians offered the Nationalists eight *CANT-Z.506B* Airone (Heron) tri-motor seaplanes and four were purchased.²⁵

The *Z.506B* was powered by the same engine as the civilian model *Z.506C*, an Alfa Romeo 126 RC34 radial engine (license-built Bristol-Pegasus), with 680 horsepower, 750hp at take-off.²⁶ According to Gerald Howson, the *Z.506B* was different from the civilian models in that it had a:

long underbelly gondola faired into the lower fuselage to house the bomb aimer, bomb bay and ventral gunner, who operated a pair of twin 7.7mm Breda machine guns firing downwards, as well as a manually operated dorsal turret, with twin 12.7mm machine guns.²⁷

Construction of the aircraft was all wood, the covering being made of fabric.

The first two *CANT-Z.506B* Airones were ferried to Pollença, Mallorca on 21 August 1938, with two more following less than a week later. The old 2-G-62-70 group of *Z.501*'s and Dornier Wals was disbanded, and a new group, 2-G-62-73, was formed.²⁸ Their first operation in the war was on 6 October when they dropped sacks of bread into Alicante while it was under Republican siege. Just twenty-two days after this first triumphant flight into battle, Ramón Franco was killed.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

The morning of 28 October was cloudy with the threat of a storm in the air. It had rained the night before and storms were forecast during the day.²⁹ Ramón's mission for the day (in which by some accounts he seemed to take particular interest) was to bomb the Republican port installations at Valencia where the weather was to be cloudy and not much different from Mallorca. Two *CANT-Z.506* aircraft sat prepared for flight in Pollença Bay, awaiting their pilots. As the *CANT-Z.506* seaplanes always flew in pairs for their missions, Lieutenant Colonel Franco chose for his wingman that day a young captain named Rodolfo "Rudy" Bay. Captain Bay would figure in another famous incident in the Civil War nearly a month later. On 20 November he commanded the seaplane that flew over Alicante to drop flowers into the prison there in memory of the assassinated founder of the Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera. In the words of Captain José Larios, Marqués of Larios and Duke of Lerma, "It was a risky mission, for the Reds had a fighter base nearby."³⁰

Captain Bay had flown with Ramón Franco on numerous occasions and the Lieutenant Colonel had complete faith in his abilities.³¹ The crew in Ramón's aircraft consisted of Lieutenant Melchor Sangro, Sergeant Emigio Gómez and Corporal Juan Canales, each experienced at his post. There was nothing on that morning to indicate the tragedy that was to ensue.

²⁹ From this author's personal experience, that type of weather in Mallorca would not be unusual for late October.

³⁰ Captain José Larios: Combat Over Spain: Memoirs of a Nationalist Fighter Pilot, 1936-1939 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), 183.

³¹ Carmen Díaz, Viuda de Franco, contada a José Antonio Silva: Mi Vida con Ramón Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981), 17, 209. Ramón and Captain Bay had flown in the same aircraft together to drop bread into the town of Alicante while it was under Republican siege on 6 October.

Pollença Bay, where the 2-G-62-73 group was stationed, lies in the northeastern part of the Balearic Island of Mallorca, approximately twenty-five miles southwest of Cape Formentor, the northernmost tip of the island. The bay is approximately twelve miles wide at its widest point, making it an ideal base area for seaplanes.

The two aircraft took off from Pollença harbor and headed toward Cape Formentor where they would turn west on a heading of 260 degrees toward Valencia.³² While ascending to their flying altitude of 4,300 meters, both aircraft were forced to fly through a dark cloud bank, at which point Captain Bay briefly lost sight of Lieutenant Colonel Franco.³³ Coming out of the clouds, Captain Bay noticed that Ramón Franco's plane was losing speed and slowly descending back toward the clouds. Reducing his speed, Captain Bay tried to see if there was a problem or if he could communicate with the crew aboard the other aircraft. Lieutenant Colonel Franco's plane continued to lose speed, so that it became unsafe for Captain Bay to stay with him by reducing his own speed. Lieutenant Colonel Franco's aircraft eventually fell out of control back into the cloud bank and disappeared from view.³⁴

Prior to its disappearance, Captain Bay and his crew noticed unusual movement within the cabin on Franco's *CANT-Z.506* but could not distinguish who was moving or what it might be about.³⁵ This was at approximately 6:05 in

³² Ibid., 292.

³³ Pilar Franco: Nosotros, los Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980), 202.

³⁴ Díaz, 18. Anonymous Interviews.

³⁵ Pilar Franco, 203.

the morning.³⁶ Other than the loss of speed and the apparent movement within the cabin, there was no indication of what had gone wrong with Franco's aircraft. When Captain Bay finally got through the clouds himself, Lieutenant Colonel Franco's plane had disappeared.³⁷ Captain Bay immediately returned to Pollença Bay to see if Ramón had recovered and returned to base, but found that he had not.³⁸ An all-out search began immediately with no success. The next day, in the early hours of the morning, the bodies of the crew were found. Among them was Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco.³⁹ The news of Ramón Franco's death spread rapidly throughout the world. The Nationalist newspaper *ABC* wrote of Ramón's death this way:

In service to the Fatherland Lieutenant Colonel don Ramón Franco Bahamonde perished in a seaplane accident with the three other members of his crew.⁴⁰

The Republican edition of *ABC*, published in France, was simply titled, "Ramón Franco died in an aviation accident."⁴¹ The article that followed blasted Ramón for his duality in having once been a defender of the people and a dedicated

³⁶ *The New York Times*, 31 October 1938, 1:7. When the crew was found on 29 October, the watch of one of the men had stopped at this time.

³⁷ Goma, 303.

³⁸ Anonymous Interviews. This source has confirmed for the author all of the above information regarding Ramón Franco's death.

³⁹ Díaz, 19. Anonymous Interviews. The only member of the crew not recovered was the radio operator.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Republican who could not kill innocent bystanders with bombs in 1931, but who just a few years later had been willing to bomb Barcelona mercilessly.⁴²

Incidentally, as the final moments of Ramón Franco's life were being played out in the skies above Cape Formentor, the International Brigades were leaving Spain for good. After the Brigaders marched through the streets of Barcelona, they were addressed by Dolores Ibarruri, *La Pasionaria*, who told the assembled crowds and Brigaders:

They gave up everything; their loves, their countries, home and furniture; fathers, mothers, wives, brothers, sisters and children, and they came and told us: 'We are here. Your cause, Spain's cause, is ours - it is the cause of all advanced and progressive mankind.' Today they are going away. ... Comrades of the International Brigades! Political reasons, ... , are sending you back, some to your own country and others to forced exile. You can go proudly. You are history. You are legend. We shall not forget you, and, when the olive tree of peace puts forth its leaves again, mingled with the laurels of the Spanish Republic's victory - come back!⁴³

Unfortunately for the Republic, the victory that *La Pasionaria* predicted was but a dream. More than 40,000 men from all over the world had volunteered to fight for the Spanish Republic. Some 35,000 fought in the International Brigades, although no more than 18,000 at any one time, and more than 10,000 volunteers were killed during the course of the war.⁴⁴

General Francisco Franco was informed by telegram from Admiral Moreno in Mallorca the day after the tragic accident. It read in part, "we present

⁴² Ibid., 216.

⁴³ Peter N. Carroll: The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), 205. Thomas, 852-3.

⁴⁴ Thomas, 982-984.

to the Generalísimo ... our profoundest sentiment for the loss of such a close person to our Caudillo and whose merits are world renowned ..."⁴⁵ Pilar Franco immediately suspected foul play and blamed elements of the Masonic order for her brother's death saying, "he was murdered by the Masons, because my brother Ramón received death threats from these people."⁴⁶ Despite Pilar's anti-Masonic feelings, there has never been any evidence to support this charge.

Francisco's response to the myriad of sympathy cards and letters was to send a telegram to the Nationalist Air Force which read:

It is nothing to give a life joyfully for the *Patria* and I am proud that the blood of my brother, the aviator Franco, should be united to that of many aviators who have fallen.⁴⁷

Ramón's burial took place in Palma de Mallorca with considerable pomp, his eldest brother Nicolás representing the family along with German, Italian, and Nationalist Air Force officers.

The corpses of the crew were placed in the government chambers in Palma where they were viewed by Nationalist and Italian pilots and authorities stationed there. The funeral procession moved from the La Seo cathedral and

⁴⁵ Teniente Coronel Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo: Mi vida junto a Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976), 380.

⁴⁶ Pilar Franco, 197. Pilar claims that Ramón was writing a book exposing the secret rituals of the fraternity and that the files for this book were stolen before Ramón's house could be sealed by order of his brother Francisco. She also says that an unidentified soldier kept Ramón away from his plane when he was about to leave on his mission, allegedly long enough to plant a bomb aboard, as she suspects that the plane exploded in flight. This charge has also never been proven.

⁴⁷ General Alfredo Kindelán: La verdad de mis relaciones con Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981), 95. Paul Preston: Franco: A Biography (London: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994), 315. General Kindelán's work shows a copy of the telegram.

the Palacio Almudaina to the Paseo Dés Born and finally to the cemetery. Along the route, admirers and mourners crowded the streets, the stiff-armed, fascist salute raised in honor of the fallen aviator. Ramón was buried in the *Cementerio Principal* in Palma de Mallorca in the military area along with other Nationalist and Italian aviators killed during the conflict.⁴⁸ His first grave site was in the Jardín de la Cruz, where he lay buried until 1963, when a mausoleum was built to house the remains of other fallen aviators. Ramón's remains were moved in to a small subterranean crypt where they are to this day. The exact location of the first grave site was lost until a census of the cemetery conducted in 1979 pinpointed the exact location.⁴⁹

Various theories abound regarding what happened on 28 October 1938 in the skies above Cape Formentor. Speculation exists that Ramón Franco was the victim of a murder plot, either for his previous Republican activities or for his having turned to the Nationalists at the start of the war. One theory in connection with this idea states that there was sabotage of his aircraft prior to his taking off that day. Another theory claims that Ramón was either killed by Republican fire or by an Italian pilot who mistook his plane for a Republican aircraft. Still another claims that the crash was the result of Ramón's desire to kill himself in a fit of depression. A final theory is mechanical failure of some sort, and the plane simply crashed in the Mediterranean Sea. A brief examination of these theories is in order here.

⁴⁸ This area of the *Cementerio Principal* is kept extremely well tended even today. Fresh flowers adorn the tomb where Ramón Franco is buried, along with Nationalist and Italian pilots.

⁴⁹ Díaz, 216.

While it is possible Ramón Franco was murdered for his pre-Civil War activities or because he became a Nationalist when war broke out, there is little more than conjecture and hearsay evidence to support the idea. Surely, if the Republic had been out to assassinate the brother of Generalísimo Francisco Franco, the Republican press would have run banner headlines to announce its successful involvement in his death. The Republican *ABC* for 29 October, as previously stated, ran only a short story to report the news of his death and took most of that to attack his actions while in Mallorca. While there is no evidence to support a Republican plot, there is evidence that suggests there may have been a Nationalist plot. One unconfirmed report claims that Ramón Franco's aircraft was sabotaged.⁵⁰

For Ramón Franco's aircraft to have been specifically tampered with, the saboteurs would have been directly connected with higher ranking officers of the Spanish Air Force. According to one source, on 28 October 1938, Captain Bay and Lieutenant Colonel Franco were given orders to switch planes. The crews remained the same, but the pilots exchanged aircraft. Apparently no explanation was given for the change which leads one to believe that Ramón Franco's death was a well organized plot.⁵¹ The question this possibility raises is why? If Ramón Franco had served the Nationalist cause so well (as all sources indicate he had) and had been so dedicated to its success, why would higher ranking officers have wanted him murdered? In addition, why would the remainder of the crew (who would have been Captain Bay's crew had the

⁵⁰ Anonymous Interviews.

⁵¹ Ibid. This individual is convinced that Ramón Franco's death was due to sabotage.

change not been ordered) have been murdered along with Ramón? No further evidence exists to support this theory and it raises more questions than it answers.

Some of Ramón Franco's friends who saw him on his return from a trip to Salamanca shortly before his death claim that he came back thinner and in a heavy depression.⁵² Only one source, consulted for this thesis, discusses this possibility. That author suggests that Ramón may have suffered from some type of delayed stress syndrome malady that resulted in a desire to kill himself. A source close to the events makes no mention of depression or a loss of weight on the part of Ramón Franco, so this theory can also be discounted.

In his epochal work, The Spanish Civil War, Hugh Thomas states in a footnote that Ramón was shot down by Republican fire that day.⁵³ No official government report on either side ever made that statement and individuals familiar with the flight firmly deny that either Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco or Captain Rodolfo Bay received Republican fire that morning. Thus, another answer to the mystery surrounding the death of Ramón Franco is discarded. The bad weather on that morning had kept the Italian aviators from flying, so the idea of Ramón's aircraft being mistaken for a Republican plane and shot down is also invalid. Since Captain Bay was not shot at as well, this theory can be completely disproven.

The only remaining credible theory is one that Ramón Franco died as a result of a mechanical failure. The major problem with this theory is that only a

⁵² Garriga, 297.

⁵³ Thomas, 853.

portion of the plane's tail section has ever been brought out of the Mediterranean. That section is on display at the castle museum of San Felipe in Mahón.⁵⁴ Eyewitnesses report, however, that they saw no smoke or flames coming from the cabin or the engines at the time the aircraft went down.⁵⁵ This leaves the researcher to surmise that some other mechanical problem may have forced the aircraft to lose speed, and altitude, resulting in the fatal crash. As no formal investigation of the crash ever took place, the entire aircraft was never recovered, and no one in the plane survived, the researcher is left with a mystery. A mystery, however, where a majority of the credible evidence points to mechanical failure as the cause of the tragic crash which took the life of the "Jackal" of the Moroccan wars, the "Columbus of the Air" of the late 1920s, and overall the *caballero del aire*.

Ramón's brother Francisco launched a massive counter-offensive on the Ebro front on 30 October, just two days after Ramón's death. Beginning in the early hours of the morning, the Republican forces were constantly bombarded by Nationalist and Italian artillery, as well as over 100 Nationalist aircraft.⁵⁶ By mid-November the Nationalists had pushed the Republicans back across the Ebro River at a cost of 130 to 150 aircraft for the Republic, and 6,500 Nationalist dead, compared to 10,000 to 15,000 Republicans.⁵⁷ This battle, which lasted

⁵⁴ Díaz, 213. Carmen Díaz's work provides a picture of the broken tail section of the aircraft.

⁵⁵ Pilar Franco, 203.

⁵⁶ Thomas, 854.

⁵⁷ Thomas, 855. Preston, 314. Preston puts the casualty figures at over 6,500 Nationalist dead, with approximately 30,000 wounded. Republican figures are fixed by Preston at a similar number of wounded, but nearly 30,000 dead as well.

four months, saw the heaviest casualties of the war by far. It had also served to prolong the war by six months. Francisco Franco had now achieved the decisive victory, the annihilation of the enemies forces, that assured him there would be no negotiated peace and no conditions, only a complete Nationalist victory.⁵⁸

Captain José Larios participated in the Nationalist attacks in the Ebro battle. With overwhelming air superiority, the Republican air force, according to Larios, was reluctant to take on Nationalist fighters:

On several occasions we came across large packs of them, but the moment they sighted us in the distance they turned and faded out. They were elusive, and we were longing to come to grips with them, for the fighter pilot's mission is to destroy the enemy and master the sky. The hunt, and the thrill of it, is heady, like strong wine.⁵⁹

This situation would present itself numerous times until the end of the battle on 18 November with the retreat of the Republican forces back across the Ebro.

The Spanish Civil War would continue after the Battle of the Ebro for another four and a half months, but at this point, the Republic was basically defeated. All that Francisco Franco and his forces had to do now was take Valencia and move on to finally conquer Madrid.

Due to bad weather, Franco was not immediately able to follow up the success at the Battle of the Ebro with another rapid offensive against Barcelona. The planned attack was delayed from November to late December. While waiting for the weather to clear, Franco assembled his best divisions along the

⁵⁸ Preston, 315.

⁵⁹ Larios, 224.

front that stretched from the Pyrenees to the Ebro River and from there to the Mediterranean Sea. The Nationalist air force, which consisted of 500 aircraft at this point, gave Franco total control of the skies, not only in Catalunya, but all over Spain.⁶⁰ The Republican air force at this time had only eighty planes (with more expected from Russia), but only inexperienced pilots to fly them. What was left of the Republican army had a shortage of ammunition, and little or no faith in a victory.⁶¹

The Nationalist offensive in Catalunya finally began on 23 December 1938. Nationalist and Italian forces attacked the Republican army, easily breaking through the lines when Republican officers deserted their troops at the moment of contact.⁶² Some Republican units fled the battle after only light artillery bombardment, such was their despair and defeatism.⁶³ By 4 January 1939, the front was wide open to Nationalist movements. Air raids on Barcelona began again in mid-January, especially targeting the ports to destroy vessels that could be used by those wanting to escape.⁶⁴ According to Raymond Carr, "On 26 January 1939 the Nationalists entered Barcelona and all attempts to organize further resistance in the east broke in the atmosphere of

⁶⁰ Thomas, 867-868.

⁶¹ Ibid., 868-869. Another 250 aircraft were purchased from the Soviet Union, but they, along with 250 tanks, 650 artillery pieces, and 4,000 machine guns arrived late to France, with little of the shipment reaching Barcelona by January of 1939.

⁶² Ibid., 869.

⁶³ Raymond Carr: Spain: 1808-1975 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 692.

⁶⁴ Thomas, 871-872.

collective rout."⁶⁵ Persecutions and executions of the remaining supporters of the Republic began immediately.

The rapid Nationalist advance caused a panic in Catalunya that clogged the roads heading toward the French border.⁶⁶ Like the Italians, who had attacked urban areas in Barcelona in 1938 without permission, the Germans now attacked fleeing refugees on the roads using the *Legión Condor*, against Franco's orders.⁶⁷ Thousands of refugees who crossed the border into France were placed in camps and forced to live in horrible conditions until they could be moved elsewhere after the war was finally over.

Town after town fell to the Nationalists throughout the end of January and the entire month of February. Catalunya was completely in Nationalist hands by 10 February and by that time as well, the majority of the world could see that the Spanish Civil War was over.⁶⁸ As calls for negotiations for an end to the war came from many different directions, it was clear that Franco would accept no peace conditions other than the complete and total surrender of the Republic. Nationalist Spain received official recognition from France and Britain on 27 February.⁶⁹

In Madrid at this point, a Republican colonel named Casado had finally had enough of the Communist domination of the military. He, along with other

⁶⁵ Carr, 693.

⁶⁶ Thomas, 876.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 883. The Republican government had fled by this time to France as well.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 896.

professional soldiers, whose political sympathies ranged from disillusioned anarchists to committed Socialists, resented the Communists' censorship of the press also, which caused a decline in army morale.⁷⁰ Casado hatched a plot that paralleled that of the rebel generals in 1936 to such an extent as to be frightening. He declared a *pronunciamiento* against the Republican government, declaring that the army was the only legitimate power, and that only it respected the people's desire for peace.⁷¹ Casado also felt that Franco's reluctance to negotiate was due to the Communists that dominated the government, and he actually contacted Franco to try and negotiate peace terms.⁷²

Declaring that he was revolting to save Spain from Communism (just as Franco had in 1936), Casado had only forty aircraft and very little else in the way of armaments. He may also have felt that by characterizing his revolt in the same terms as Franco, he could perhaps gain more favorable peace terms.⁷³ The Nationalists had amassed thirty-two divisions, huge numbers of artillery, tanks and 600 aircraft around Madrid when Casado launched his rebellion on the night of 5-6 March.⁷⁴ Casado's revolt caused a civil war within the Civil War, with Communist forces battling those loyal to the Defense Committee established by the rebelling colonel. Once the smoke cleared on 12 March,

⁷⁰ Carr, 692. Preston, 320.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Thomas, 886-887.

⁷³ Thomas, 890. Preston, 320.

⁷⁴ Carr, 693, Thomas, 890, 902.

there were 230 dead, 560 wounded, the Republican army had dissolved, and the war, for all intents and purposes, was truly over.⁷⁵

Casado contacted Franco on 26 March to inform him that the Republican air force would surrender on 27 March, the same day that the Nationalists attacked Toledo, easily taking the city.⁷⁶ Over the next four days, Nationalist advances would be even more rapid throughout formerly Republican territory, and according to Hugh Thomas:

General Franco, suffering from a cold in Burgos, was at last informed by an aide that the Nationalist troops had occupied their final objectives in the early evening of 31 March. 'Very good,' he replied without looking up from his desk, 'many thanks.'⁷⁷

Franco officially declared the war over on 1 April, with the following short communiqué: "Today, with the Red Army captive and disarmed, our victorious troops have achieved their final military objectives. The war is over."⁷⁸ The first Nationalist troops to enter Madrid had done so on 28 March, and were "met by thousands of the population madly waving the red and yellow flag of Nationalist Spain."⁷⁹ The Nationalist victory parade was held on 19 May, and Francisco Franco then set about developing his thirty-nine year dictatorship of Spain.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Carr, 693-694. Thomas, 908-909.

⁷⁶ Thomas, 912.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 915.

⁷⁸ Larios, 262. Preston, 322.

⁷⁹ Larios, 262.

⁸⁰ Thomas, 920.

Nicolás Franco prepares to lead the funeral procession for his brother, Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco, in Palma de Mallorca, 30 October 1938. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

Nicolás Franco reviews troops during the funeral procession. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

Crowds give the fascist salute to Nicolás Franco during the funeral procession. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

The casket containing the remains of Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco begins its procession to the fascist salutes of onlookers and mourners. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

Funeral procession of Lieutenant Colonel Franco as it proceeds up the Paseo Dés Bom, Palma de Mallorca. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

Nationalist and Luftwaffe officers at the grave site of Lieutenant Colonel Franco in the *Cementerio Principal*. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

Bouquet's and wreaths of flowers adorn the grave of Lieutenant Colonel Franco. Note the swastika and ribbons indicating flowers from the Germans and Italians. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph provided by a former Nationalist pilot who requested to remain anonymous.

Views of the monument erected to Nationalist and Italian aviation casualties. *Cementerio Principal*, Palma de Mallorca, Spain. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photographs taken by Philip H. Gardner.

Further views of the monument to Nationalist and Italian aviation casualties. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photographs taken by Philip H. Gardner.

Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Franco y Bahamonde's body is buried in this tomb along with other Nationalist and Italian pilots killed off the coast of Mallorca during the Civil War. Philip H. Gardner's private collection. Photograph taken by Philip H. Gardner.

CONCLUSION

Ramón Franco's siblings would survive the war and go on to long and successful lives. The oldest of the Franco children, Nicolás, would serve by Francisco's side throughout the war, and then become ambassador to Portugal. He would suffer a stroke in 1972, which forced him to retire to Madrid. Spending the remaining five years of his life in a wheelchair, Nicolás died in 1977 after a brain hemorrhage left him bedridden. According to his sister, Pilar, Nicolás died, "without demonstrating any fear, without protest ... While he had a painful end that was similar to the Generalísimo, he suffered much less than he (Francisco) did."¹

Pilar Franco would go on to marry and become the mother of ten children. After the deaths of her brothers Francisco and Nicolás, she would write three books in the early 1980s, entitled Nosotros, los Franco in 1980, Cinco años después: crónica de un largo bostezo, and Historia de una disidencia: Pilar Jaráiz Franco in 1981. She was critical of the transition to democracy, and vocal in her desire to see Spain return to the authoritarian rule of her late brother Francisco. Pilar Franco died in 1989 at age ninety-four of heart failure following a cerebral hemorrhage.²

Francisco Franco, "Generalísimo", "Jefe del Estado", and "Caudillo of all Spain by the grace of God", would rule Spain until November 1975 when his

¹ Pilar Franco: Nosotros, los Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980), 64.

² *The Washington Post*, 9 January 1989, D6.

body could finally take no more. Having suffered for many years with Parkinson's disease, Franco finally met his death when his body could no longer defend itself against "endotoxic shock brought about by acute bacterial peritonitis, renal failure, bronchopneumonia, cardiac arrest, stomach ulcers, thrombophlebitis, and Parkinson's disease".³ He died on 20 November 1975, at 5:25 a.m., after having been disconnected from all the life supporting machines then available, with the mantle of the Virgin of Pilar and the mummified arm of Saint Teresa of Avila by his bedside.⁴ Spain would make a successful transition to democracy and join the European Economic Community in the years following the death of the Caudillo.

Ramón's first wife, Carmen Díaz, would also survive the war, remarry and go on to a very private and secluded life until 1981, when at the age of seventy-four, she published her own account of life with the fallen aviator, Mi vida con Ramón Franco. Her decision to break her silence was motivated by what she called her "surprise, disgust and desolation" at the biographies she read about her former husband.⁵ She was equally appalled at how her personal character was attacked, but throughout her manuscript she does not deny, nor does she affirm, any charges made against her in the various biographies on Ramón. Apparently, Carmen Díaz was never consulted when Ramón Garriga wrote his book, Ramón Franco: el hermano maldito, nor did Pilar Franco talk with her

³ Paul Preston: Franco: A Biography (London: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994), 778.

⁴ Raymond Carr: Spain: 1808-1975 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 769. Preston, 778.

⁵ Carmen Díaz, Viuda de Franco, contada a José Antonio Silva: Mi Vida con Ramón Franco (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981), 15.

before publishing Nosotros, los Franco. As Carmen Díaz had led such a silent, secluded life following her divorce from Ramón, many had assumed she was dead.⁶ Ramón's second wife, Engracia Moreno, and his daughter Angeles Franco Moreno, continued their private life after the aviator's death, wrote no books and faded quietly into obscurity.

After Ramón's death, a profound silence arose, regarding his life and all aspects of it.⁷ The multitude of biographies that have been printed about Francisco Franco, say very little about Ramón, except to mention his historic flight across the South Atlantic aboard the *Plus Ultra*, totally ignoring the subject of his leftist political involvements and support for the Republic. In 1942, Francisco Franco wrote a movie script, which was eventually produced, entitled *Raza*, which was very loosely autobiographical. The character that represented Ramón had no fame, no recognition, and no leftist leanings whatsoever.⁸ Literally, silence was all that Francisco would express about his brother Ramón. Ramón's widow, Engracia Moreno, and his daughter Angeles Franco Moreno, were not totally abandoned when the aviator died, however.

Engracia and Angeles did receive his military pension, despite Carmen Díaz being declared the legal widow of the aviator.⁹ In August 1939, General Alfredo Kindelán awarded Ramón two red military merit crosses, two war

⁶ It cannot be determined at this time if Carmen Díaz is still living.

⁷ Garriga, 299.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Carmen Díaz and Ramón had been married in a church ceremony, while Ramón and Engracia were married in a civil ceremony. All divorces granted during the Republican regime were declared void once Francisco Franco came to power.

crosses and the Campaign Medal of the Spanish Air Force. Ramón would also posthumously be awarded the Medal of the city of Palma de Mallorca in 1947, and a monument was erected to the famous aviator and his companions of the *Plus Ultra* flight, at the monastery of La Rábida.¹⁰ At all of these honors, Engracia and Angeles were not even invited.

At the end of the war, Engracia and Angeles moved to Barcelona where they opened a small shop where their main clientel was the Air Force.¹¹ Engracia worked hard to put Angeles through school in Switzerland, where she studied music, developing a talent for organ playing. When Nicolás Franco Salgado-Araujo (Ramón's father) died in 1942, he listed Angeles as his granddaughter in his will, leaving her some personal items. As the rest of the Franco family did not want to acknowledge Ramón or his family after his death, Engracia and Angeles were not invited to Francisco's daughter Carmencita's wedding in 1950. Shortly thereafter, Angeles was married at the age of twenty-two, also without the presence of her father's family. The marriage was short-lived, with no children, and the mother and daughter moved back to Mallorca, opening a souvenir shop in Palma.¹² Angeles was frustrated by not having had a child during her marriage, so she traveled to France where she was apparently artificially inseminated, returning to Spain with the story that she had adopted the daughter she brought back with her, whose name is unknown.¹³

¹⁰ Garriga, 300-301.

¹¹ Ibid., 302.

¹² Ibid., 304.

¹³ Díaz, 229. Garriga, 304.

In 1968 the *Feria Internacional del Campo* was held in Madrid, with Argentina displaying the *Plus Ultra* as part of their exhibit. Francisco Franco opened the exhibition and was reported to have been “visibly emotional” at viewing the aircraft that his younger brother had used to cross the South Atlantic, while no mention is made of whether or not Ramón’s wife and daughter ever viewed the aircraft.¹⁴ In 1971, Angeles fell victim to an undescribed illness, and after an operation in 1975, the disease returned in March 1976, causing her death on 30 April of that year, at the age of thirty-six. One of her final requests was that Antonio Puigvert, a family friend, deliver the sextant that her father had used on the flight of the *Plus Ultra* to Luján, Argentina, where the aircraft is on display, but that he do so without any assistance from the Franco regime. Engracia later tried to adopt Angeles’s daughter, but the child was given to another family with whom Engracia remained in contact.¹⁵ Engracia is reported to have spent time in New York, Paris, and Mexico, but her whereabouts today are unknown, but it can be presumed that she is also deceased. The whereabouts of her granddaughter are also not known.¹⁶

The life of Ramón Franco presents an interesting contrast of ideas, dreams and outcomes. His early childhood brought forth a vision of his destiny as an aviator. The closure of the *Escuela de Administración Naval* when Ramón was but five years old, set his future military career on a path which

¹⁴ Pablo Rada, also of *Plus Ultra* fame, asked permission from Franco’s regime to be able to return to Spain before his death. This request was granted despite Rada’s having been a radical communist and responsible for some of the church burnings of 1931. He was the only crew member of the *Plus Ultra* not to die violently.

¹⁵ Díaz, 230.

¹⁶ Díaz, 230. Garriga, 305-306.

would lead to the realization of that childhood vision. Entering the *Servicio de Aeronáutica Militar* in 1920, Franco took to his aeronautical studies rabidly, receiving his pilot's wings after only ten months training. His reputation for daring exploits in Spain's Moroccan Wars earned him the nickname "Jackal", which he wore proudly in his service in support of the monarchy. This early recognition for wildness and bravery gave Ramón a taste of fame and celebrity. He continued to pursue that fame and was successful when he reached Buenos Aires, Argentina, in February 1926 aboard the *Plus Ultra*, one year before Charles Lindbergh and the *Spirit of Saint Louis* crossed the Atlantic from New York to Paris. This event brought him world-wide acclaim, placing his name among other aviation legends such as Lindbergh; it also drew attention to and respect for Spanish aviation. It also earned him the second nickname of "Columbus of the Air".

Ramón's pursuit of fame and glory for himself and for Spanish aviation led to failure aboard the *Dornier-15* in 1929. His desire to follow-up his first epochal flight with another three years later failed because of Ramón's impatience to achieve another aviation milestone, bad judgment, bad luck, and faulty equipment. Opposition from General Miguel Primo de Rivera angered Ramón, who may have seen those who opposed his desires to make record-setting flights in the name of Spain as people who stood in the way of progress in the Spanish aviation industry, not to mention harming his own celebrity.

A free spirit from birth, joining the freemasons and swinging Left politically were moves that Ramón Franco may have felt would associate him with forward-thinking political ideals. These ideals, if carried into the seat of

government, would bring Spain out of the seventeenth century and into the twentieth. Ramón's political views clashed with his brother Francisco's vision of Spain needing to return to the glory days of the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella. Conservative values and strict Catholic faith, along with strong law and order principles enforced by the military, would save Spain in Francisco's eyes. In contrast, sweeping land reform, an end to the monarchy, and a less influential military were Ramón's dream of a new and glorified Spain. His sympathies and his actions in the late 1920s and early 1930s earned him the nicknames *el hermano pecador* and *el hermano maldito*.¹⁷

Ramón supported the Republic wholeheartedly, having worked diligently after his escape from prison in 1930 to see it proclaimed. In fact, he flew over the *Palacio Real* in Madrid with the intention of dropping bombs to further that aim. Having gone as far as he could to the Left with his comments in support of the church burnings of 1931, Ramón began to feel defrauded by the Republic's lack of progress and continued social disorder. This led to Ramón switching sides after being rejected by Manuel Azaña at the start of the war. After having spent time in the United States as Military Air Attaché, and coming into contact with such rabid anti-communists as General Douglas MacArthur, in addition to the American climate against the Left-leaning Republic, Ramón's sympathies gradually changed. Ramón's comments at the beginning of the war indicate he felt that Spain would remain a Republic even if Franco's forces were victorious. Knowing he could not return to Republican Spain, Ramón waited for an opportunity to help save Spain from chaos. That opportunity afforded itself when his older brother Francisco was elected Chief of the Spanish State for

¹⁷ [*el hermano pecador*: the sinning brother. *el hermano maldito*: the bad little brother.]

Nationalist Spain. At this point, Ramón returned to fight for his family's conservative Catholic values. Feeling that Ramón had come to his senses after so many years of radical involvement, Francisco agreed to Ramón's return, giving him command of the air base at Palma de Mallorca.

All evidence indicates that Ramón had no moral difficulties in carrying out his missions against fellow Spaniards, any more than he had opposed attacking Riffian tribesmen in Morocco. Despite his reluctance in 1930 to bomb the *Palacio Real* in Madrid because of the innocent bystanders in the area, tragically, Ramón Franco lost his life while on a similar mission against his countrymen. For Ramón, one can infer that the air raids he participated in against Barcelona and Valencia, were a necessary function of the crusade to save Spain for future glory.

A source intimately acquainted with the events of 28 October 1938 confirms that Ramón Franco y Bahamonde was killed when his aircraft was sabotaged. The majority of the confirmable evidence however, points to an undetermined mechanical failure as the cause which sent Franco's *CANT-Z.506B* Airone seaplane plunging into the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Mallorca. Through the resulting end of the Civil War with a Nationalist victory in March 1939, the life of Ramón Franco yet again paralleled the life of Spain. From Monarchist, to radical Leftist, to Nationalist, Spain and Ramón Franco followed the same path, soaring to great heights aboard the *Plus Ultra*, then plunging into the hell of political polarization, chaos, death and Civil War. Ramón Franco y Bahamonde was a man who, to people on both sides of the

Civil War, distinguished himself by his valor, his audacity, intelligence, and persistence, truly earning his final nickname, *el caballero del aire*.¹⁸

¹⁸ Coronel José Goma: La Guerra en el Aire: Vista, Suerte y al Toro (Barcelona: Editorial AHR, 1958), 303. [*el caballero del aire*: the gentleman of the air]

Appendix One

Air Raid Over Barcelona

“...the number of houses hit and of people
killed ... is not very great”:-

Article in *The Times*, April 29th, 1938

800 Killed, 1,000 Wounded:- Official Report

A sudden scream: the wailing sirens' sentry.

Eastward, out of the bay,

Through the bright air Death has made his entry,

Murder its get-away.

While incense smokes, mass-bells in Burgos tinkle,

These mercenary flies

Roar on God's helpless creatures here, and sprinkle

Death from His morning skies;

The vultures swerve: back to their base the airmen

Return, and the cries cease;

Somnolent over meetings capitalist chairmen

Urge us to keep the peace.

We'll keep the peace; we shall not fight their battle
When German bombers fly
To rain down loads of poison-gas and metal
Dark over London's sky.

My friends, shall you and I forget that morning,
And save them in their fear,
Who know that when Spain's freedom cried our warning
They would not have us hear?

Never forget, my friends, the victims lying
On the red earth of Spain;
Never forget they charge us, in their dying,
Their sacrifice in vain.

Never forget that when in the world's wreckage
Their suffering eyelids closed,
Some one wrote to *The Times* saying the damage
Was less than we supposed.

Stanley Richardson¹

¹ Stanley Richardson, Air Raid Over Barcelona (Woodbridge, Connecticut: Research Publications, 1987).

Bibliography

I. Primary Works

i. Diaries and Memoirs

Bayo, Alberto. Mi desembarco en Mallorca (de la guerra civil española). Palma de Mallorca: Miquel Font, 1987.

Churchill, Winston S. The Second World War. Volume One: The Gathering Storm. London: Reprint Society, 1951.

Díaz, Carmen. Mi Vida con Ramón Franco. Contada a José Antonio Silva. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981.

Franco, Pilar. Nosotros, los Franco. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1980.

Franco, Comandante Ramón. Madrid bajo las bombas. Madrid: Sociedad Anónima Editorial Alcalá, número 106, 1931.

Franco, Comandante Ramón y Capitán Ruiz de Alda. De Palos al Plata. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1926.

Goma, Coronel José. La Guerra en el Aire: Vista, Suerte y al Toro. Barcelona: Editorial AHR, 1958.

Gutierrez-Rave, José. Ramón Franco. Madrid: Figuras de la raza, 1927.

Ibarruri, Dolores. They Shall Not Pass: The Autobiography of La Pasionaria. Translated from El único camino, International Publishers, 1966.

Interviews by Philip H. Gardner with a former Nationalist pilot who has requested to remain anonymous. Tape recording. Palma de Mallorca, Spain. June 8, 15, 16, 21, 1995.

Kindelán, General Alfredo. La verdad de mis relaciones con Franco. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1981.

Larios, Captain José. Combat Over Spain: Memoirs of a Nationalist Fighter Pilot, 1936-1939. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966.

Richardson, Stanely. Air Raid Over Barcelona. Woodbridge, Connecticut: Research Publications, 1987.

Salgado-Araujo, Teniente Coronel Francisco Franco. Mi vida junto a Franco. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976.

ii. Periodical Literature

The London Times, 11 February 1926.

The New York Times, 11 February 1926. 11 September 1935. 21 July 1936. 31 October 1938.

The Washington Post, 9 January 1989.

II. Secondary Works

i. Monographs

Brenan, Gerald. The Spanish Labyrinth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Carr, Raymond. Spain: 1808 - 1975. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Carroll, Peter N. The Odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994.

Cattell, David T. Communism and the Spanish Civil War. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965.

Coverdale, John F. Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Gutierrez-Rave, José. El Vuelo del <<Plus Ultra>>. Madrid: np., 1951.

Hendricks, Jefferson and Cary Nelson, eds. Madrid 1937: Letters of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War. intr. Cary Nelson, New York: Routledge, 1996.

Howson, Gerald. Aircraft of the Spanish Civil War. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990.

Larrazabal, Jesus Salas. Air War Over Spain. Trans. Margaret A. Kelley, English trans. ed. David Mondey, London: Ian Allan Ltd., 1974.

Payne, Stanley. Falange: A History of Spanish Fascism. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961.

_____. A History of Fascism, 1914 - 1945. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Proctor, Raymond L.,. Hitler's Luftwaffe in the Spanish Civil War. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Thomas, Hugh, ed.,. José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Selected Writings. Trans. Gudie Lawaetz, London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1972.

_____. The Spanish Civil War. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

ii. Biographies

Garriga, Ramón. Ramón Franco: el hermano maldito. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1978.

Nourry, Philippe. Francisco Franco: La conquista del poder. Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1976.

Preston, Paul. Franco: A Biography. London: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved