

*The European Rescue of the Franco Regime, 1950-1975.* By Fernando Guirao. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 481 pp.

This sophisticated and well-documented study, by the Jean Monnet Professor of European Integration History at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, of relations from 1950 to the death of Franco in 1975 between Franco and the EEC is an important contribution not only to Spanish and EEC history, but also to an understanding of the Cold War. That was the key context for this subject, for Spain, like Portugal, were regarded by the Americans as crucial members of the anti-Communist bloc. To that extent, this is a story in which the EEC is an adjunct of NATO, but this is not a process for which Guirao makes sufficient allowance. American and NATO roles do not mean that the EEC lacked agency, but that again was complex. In particular, Guirao underplays the significance of particular French purposes. As in the 1930s, these purposes owed a lot to French domestic politics. Thus, a withdrawal of French support was very important to the failure of the anti-Franco guerrillas in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This withdrawal reflected the movement of French politics away from Communism. The role of foreign bases was similarly demonstrated by the impact of the Tito breakaway on the Communists in the Greek Civil War.

Although very weak on the broader contexts, Guirao demonstrates the significance of the EEC for the Spanish economy. Ironically, this in part represented a recalibration of the economic relationship developed between Franco and the Third Reich. Again, that would have repaid attention, not least in the case of intermediaries and, more particularly, of the role of France, from 1940 to 1944 Vichy France.

The EEC provided Franco with both export and import markets and related liquidity and credit. The success of this relationship owed much to the general economic boom of the period, which provided markets, capital and new technology. This boom was linked furthermore to the increased role of technocrats in Spanish government from the 1950s. These technocrats and the EEC links were important to the economic stabilisation of the 1950s, to the negotiation of trade preference in the 1960s, and to Spanish exports in the early 1970s. Conversely, as Guirao notes, the global economic crisis of the mid-1970s hit both the Franco regime and the EEC-Spain trade agreement of 1970. IN Spain, state-directed, corporatist economic growth was important, notably with the Stabilisation Plan of 1959. The major role of bureaucrats in governance was aided by the lack of democracy. Moreover, the industrial take-off in the 1960s was in part dependent on the availability of a pliant, cheap workforce with police repression directed at strikes. Increased trade made the autarkic self-sufficiency of the first part of Francoist rule less desirable and less necessary. Yet, due to the isolation that stemmed from Spain's political position, this boom was largely delayed in Spain until the 1960s. The

reactionary stance of the regime became increasingly redundant as Spain became increasingly urban and bourgeois.

An impressive book that works within its somewhat narrow parameters, but that requires contextualisation, not least in terms of comparisons with Portugal.

(507 words)

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