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H-Diplo Review Essay on **Joan Maria Thomàs. *Roosevelt, Franco and the End of the Second World War***. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-230-10217-0 (hardcover, \$95.00).

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/essays/PDF/Bowen-Thomas.pdf>

Reviewed for H-Diplo by **Wayne H. Bowen**, Southeast Missouri State University

This work successfully examines the relationship between the United States and Spain during World War II, arguing convincingly that there were significant disconnects between the Roosevelt Administration and its ambassador in Spain, differences that prevented an accommodation between Spain and the United States, despite the interests of both governments to conclude a strategic understanding.

The argument of the work challenges much scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic, beginning as early as the wartime diaries of US Ambassador to Spain Carlton Hayes.¹ As a Catholic with some sympathies for the Franco Regime, Hayes argued for a softer line by the U.S. in relation to Spain during World War II, and highlighted areas of cooperation between the two states. His argument – that Spain was after 1942 increasingly neutral or even pro-American, seemed particularly salient in the midst of the Cold War. What Thomàs has added to this debate is evidence from U.S. archives that Hayes was increasingly at odds with American foreign policy and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's perspective on Spain.

Hayes is, in many ways, the central figure, along with Roosevelt in this account. The author avoids two common temptations in relation to Hayes: accepting his interpretation of Spain during World War II, or denouncing him as pro-Franco or oblivious to the pro-Axis activities of wartime Spain. Instead, Thomàs presents a nuanced perspective of the conflicted nature of Hayes's time in Spain, as a diplomat torn between his own increasing sympathy for the Franco Regime, and the growing antipathy toward that same government by the Roosevelt Administration. Hayes even entertained the possibility of bringing Spain into the Allied fold, an unrealistic ambition at best, given that as late as 1944 Spanish soldiers were openly fighting against the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front.

¹ Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Wartime mission in Spain, 1942-1945* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1946).

Thomàs's use of American archival materials is solid and unusual for a Spanish historian. While most of what he employs – such as the *Foreign Relations of the United States* – has been publicly available for some time, few American historians have used these records. His incorporation, as well, of contemporary newspaper and magazine articles, and his examination of public discourse on American policy toward Spain, also helps to explain why Roosevelt felt able to take a harder line toward Spain. His evidence – that Secretary State Cordell Hull and Hayes used public opinion in their debates about Spanish policy – is particularly innovative. The conflict between Hayes and the U.S. State Department was intense, as the Ambassador argued for open commerce and friendly relations with Franco, while Hull, supported by Roosevelt, looked to impose increasing restrictions on a Spain he viewed as pro-Nazi in words, deeds and inclinations. While it may have been necessary to appease Franco earlier in the war, when the position of the Allies was less strong, by 1943-44 this was no longer the consensus in Washington and London, as Thomàs ably demonstrates.

While other historians, such as Christian Leitz, have examined the struggles over wolfram/tungsten and oil, in the context of World War II and the history of the Franco Regime, Thomàs has moved the debate along with his broader analysis of arguments within the U.S. government over these policies.² Increasingly, his implicit case is that the consensus among the American foreign policy establishment left Hayes as an outlier, which makes his survival as U.S. Ambassador until January 1945 even more remarkable, and a tribute to his political skills and contacts.

Hayes's attempts to argue for an accommodating policy toward Spain, according to Thomàs, were undermined by the actions of the Franco Regime, including the continued service of Spanish soldiers in the German army, the 1943 recognition of a Japanese-controlled puppet regime in the Philippines, the ongoing pro-German bent of the Spanish press and political classes, and continued sales of important commodities to Nazi Germany, as late as D-Day. As a result of these events, at several points Hayes was prohibited from entering any discussions with the Spanish government on any issues, which so inflamed the US government and public opinion.

The author is particularly adept at examining the negotiations, in early 1944, for an accord over Spanish sales of wolfram/tungsten. Angered at Spain's ongoing shipments of the product to Germany, which desperately needed it for war production; the U.S. withheld oil shipments and threatened an embargo on this and other essential commodities. Despite protests by Hayes, the U.S. adopted a hard line in the negotiations, and only through British intervention was the U.S. persuaded to end the oil embargo and negotiate a broad political settlement with Spain, forcing Franco in May 1944 to adopt positions more favorable to the Allies.

The failure of the U.S. and Spain to conclude satisfactory agreements at war's end was the result, therefore, from disagreements within the U.S. government as much as any irreconcilable differences of state between Madrid and Washington. This book, another useful

² Christian Leitz, *Sympathy for the devil : Neutral Europe and Nazi Germany in World War II* (New York : New York University Press, 2001).

contribution by the leading Spanish historian of Hispano-US diplomatic history, should find a home in college libraries, as well as in the collections of readers interested in the history of Spain, the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, as well as World War II.

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