

Spanish Issue in the Global Confrontation of the Great Powers on the Threshold of the Cold War

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In the present article the author examines in detail the so-called Spanish issue which is presently little known but still deserves more attention as it had no analogues in the post-war Europe. In 1945–1947, many countries' newspapers in Europe and America used to write about the situation in the Francoist Spain and around it, the leading politicians and diplomats analyzed it in their notes and memorandums, public figures spoke in support of Spanish democratic forces, against Franco, with anti-Francoist rallies held in major cities. Eventually, a persistent struggle around Spain developed within the just founded United Nations Organization.

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The Cold War, the struggle of the USSR and the USA for the expansion of their influence in the world actually began right after the end of the World War II, with its main epicenters being moved and multiplied; however, one way or another, it actually covered every aspect of the international relations. At the very initial stage of the post-war confrontation between the East and West, one of such aspects – not paramount, but appreciable enough – was the Spanish issue. This subject is presently little known, although in 1945–1947, many countries' newspapers in Europe and America used to write about the situation in Franco's Spain and around it, the leading politicians and diplomats analyzed it in their notes and memorandums, public figures spoke in support of Spanish democratic forces, against Franco, with anti-Francoist rallies held in major cities. Eventually, a persistent struggle around Spain developed within the just founded United Nations Organization.

The so-called Spanish issue was really complex, ambiguous, and had no analogues in the post-war Europe. Spain, on the one hand, was for many years a friendly state of Germany and Italy, assisting them in the period of military operations, whereas the regime itself formed by General Franco after the Civil War, was considered fascist. On the other hand, however, the country formally maintained neutrality, and towards the end of World War II, it showed more and more flexibility in its foreign policy.

A wide interest in the Spanish issue was further determined by the fact that it seemed to revive the theme of the Civil War in Spain, its results and the defeat of the antifascist camp – all that found large response throughout the world at that time; now, however, it cannot but sound in a new way. After the defeat of Germany and Italy, the question of elimination of their 'servant' Franco and the transfer of power to a democratic government

was widely considered to be natural. It was indeed what the majority of activists in the Spanish emigration of many thousands hoped for. Nevertheless, there were no formal reasons for an external force intervention in the Spanish affairs. The USA governments and Great Britain quite persistently rejected such a scenario, although condemning the Franco regime as such, and favoring its 'peaceful modification' (see Edwards 1999: 46–48, 64–66 ff.).

The Soviet Union, whose role during the Spanish Civil War is well-known, and which kept maintaining close ties with the Spanish Communist Party, was in a more resolute mood. The USSR would be rather interested, in fact, in 'the restoration of historical justice' in relation to the defeated and the winners in the Spanish Civil War. Besides, Spanish 'volunteer' 'Blue Division' was fighting on the Eastern front, that is against Moscow, Franco Spain was a war participant and Hitler's ally.¹ (From his part, Franco considered communism, personified by Stalin's empire, to be enemy, while calling on the Western countries to launch a crusade against it).

The problem of the attitude to Franco's Spain and its political future was one of the factors that divided the recent allies-winners; their open and secret antagonism was inflaming around it, as well as in other cases, new behavior models were developed in the post-war struggle between the two systems (see Johnson 2006).

Moscow was well aware of the persisting attempts to unleash a guerrilla war in Spain; moreover, for some time Soviet leaders encouraged leaders of the CPS to intensify actions in this direction. Enrique Lister, one of the leaders of the guerrilla struggle, member of the CPS Central Committee (who was in emigration in the USSR) described in his memoirs that Joseph Stalin had certain ideas about the 'desirable future' for Spain. In mid-October 1944, he had a two-hour conversation on this subject with George Dimitrov, a former head of the Comintern, and then in charge of the International Information Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Central Committee. According to him, Stalin's ideas could be rendered as follows:

- a) 'to upset plans of Western imperialists, wishing to keep Franco at power after the military defeat of fascism';
- b) to force 'leaders of Spanish socialists, anarchists and republicans to abandon their policy of passive waiting' for the help from outside;
- c) 'to form a government ... that could speak on behalf of the Spanish people ... (or Committee of Liberation) ...';
- d) 'and finally, this representation of the Spanish democracy should be supported by the national movement, the basic expression of which could only be – considering the situation in Spain – the guerrilla struggle' (Lister 1983: 28; Arasa 1984: 254–255).

The same problems were raised during Stalin's meeting (with participation of Georgy Malenkov and Lavrentiy Beria) with Dolores Ibarruri, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Spain, in February 1945, on the eve of her departure from the USSR for France. (After the liberation of France, forces of the Spanish opposition, including the armed groups, began to concentrate in its southern regions, on the border with Spain).

¹ Materials concerning the 'Blue Division' actions were carefully gathered and kept in archives, its commander Munos Grandes was declared a war criminal by the Extraordinary Commission for Investigation of Acts of Atrocity by Fascist Invaders in 1944. See Russian State Military Archive (further on – RGVA). F. 1425 (Documents on Spain, 1923–1945. Op. 2. D. 46. L. 108). Still, the USSR did not declare war on Spain.

The Soviet leaders declared that the USSR was ready to undertake the delivery of arms to the Spanish groups deployed in the south of France and in Spain. The issue of the country's future after the overthrow of the Franco regime was also discussed (Ibarruri 1988: 102–103; Korotkov *et al.* 1996: 94). According to Ibarruri, Stalin firmly promised help, having summarized it as follows: 'You can rely on us. The Spanish antifascist fighters are our allies' (Ibarruri 1988: 102–103). Thus, the Soviet leader expressed interest in the settlement of the 'Spanish issue' according to his scenario, that is in the revision of results of the Civil War in Spain, and, for this purpose, he considered it necessary to use, firstly, his own international authority, and secondly, the armed formations of the republican opposition.

By that time, the Spanish fighting groups, concentrated in the south of France, were already able to show themselves. They were composed of former fighters of the Spanish Republican Army who crossed the French border in 1939, were interned, and later fought on the side of the French Resistance. Their leaders, communists in the first place, encouraged by an atmosphere of general enthusiasm after the liberation of France, decided to carry out a major offensive operation on the territory of Spain. In October 1944, a formation of several thousand people entered the Aran Valley. They were supposed to establish a stable front in the north of Catalonia, to seize a larger city and to set up a government there; after that it would be possible to seek the recognition of that government by the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. The insurgents hoped that their actions would provoke mass actions all over the country, which would grow into a national uprising (Sorel 1970: 56; Carrillo 1975: 123). Those plans were doomed to fail. The operation in the Aran Valley, unprepared both in the military and political aspects, ended up with a complete defeat of the guerrilla corps and the retreat of its remnants to the territory of France.

Victor Alba describes those events as follows:

In autumn of 1944, the Supreme Junta of the National Union founded by communists had put forward the slogan 'Long Live National Uprising!' In order to substantiate this idea, it was claimed that it was inspired by Stalin who gave the order to intrude into Spain. Nobody knows how he conveyed the order and who heard it. Many communists, however, believed it. After long years of Stalin's silence about Spain, they were encouraged by the fact that he had honored them with an order to act (Alba 1979: 273).

Lopez Tovar, a communist, one of the leaders of the operation in the Aran Valley, asserted as follows: 'I believe that Stalin had no relation to it [the operation]. At that time, he was facing such big problems compared to which ours were too little' (Arasa 1984: 253). Indeed, one cannot but agree with this.

Within the same period, Santiago Carrillo, the head of the CPS youth organization, who moved to Oran (Northern Africa), a territory occupied by the Americans, was preparing a group of sixty men for landing in Malaga where they intended to set up a guerrilla base. Although the tactics of Carrillo's group were different, the same goal was pursued: to aggravate the situation in order to make allies interfere. Dolores Ibarruri who was still staying in the USSR, resolutely opposed to the planned operation since the risk was too great, whereas the success was doubtful.² Apparently, Moscow already drafted its own

² See Ibarruri 1988: 97–98; Carrillo 1976: 91–92; Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (further on – RGASPI). F. 495 (Comintern). Op. 74. D. 240. L. 124.

program of actions. Carrillo was ordered to move to the south of France, to Toulouse, where he joined the leading group of the Communist Party (having, nevertheless, sent 'prepared comrades' to Spain before it).³

In his report submitted to the International Information Department of the CPSU(B) Central Committee in February 1945, Carrillo told that about eight thousand people participated in the operation in the Aran Valley (in fact, it was a series of operations). They carried out 'the order conveyed by the delegation in Spain to party comrades, signed by M.' (Jesús Monson. – *A. S.*). The order set the following tasks:

... to establish a jumping-off place of the greatest possible extent on the Spanish territory and to gain a footing on it ... In the course of the implementation of this action ... to direct our reserves there, while organizing and arming all new Spanish divisions which will hold this front. This jumping-off place ... should be provided with sufficient quantities of arms, ammunition, foodstuffs and equipment from the other side of the border.⁴

It was envisaged to develop a whole series of 'supporting acts of sabotage and terrorism throughout the Spanish territory at the greatest possible scale.

Carrillo saw the main negative impact of this operation in the fact that 'months of September, October, and a part of November were practically lost due to it, when it was possible to penetrate into Spain for conducting a real guerrilla struggle, while engaging plenty of people and military materials' (my emphasis. – *A. S.*).⁵ It seemed that particularly the tactics of 'classical' guerrilla actions were also supported by Moscow, since the last quoted formulation of the report was doubtlessly meant to be understood and approved by the addressee. Some facts testify that the Soviet leadership was actually ready to support the expansion of the guerrilla struggle in Spain, but only after the end of war against Germany, after respective financial and political preparations, and, as the most favorable alternative, relying on the at least indirectly shown consent by the allies (Stalin probably tried to achieve it in Potsdam).

Soon it was decided that all Spanish communist leaders should leave Moscow for France. At that time, Georgi Dimitrov informed Stalin that, on Ibarri's request, he submitted an inquiry to Joseph Broz Tito:

regarding an eventual sending of Spanish comrades Modesto (Russian surname is Morozov Georgi Georgievich), Lister (Russian surname is Lisitsyn Eduard Eduardovich), and Cordon (Russian surname is Kuznetsov Anton Antonovich) to Yugoslavia and their temporary engagement in the People's Liberation Army. Comrade Tito responded with consent. ... In that case Comrades Modesto, Lister and Cordon will have an opportunity to move closer to Spain after a while to work for the Spanish Communist Party.⁶

Having stayed for several months with Tito, Lister and Modesto arrived in Paris in February 1945 (Cordon stayed in Yugoslavia for one more year).

After that, the CPS started to move small guerrilla groups to Spain (from France and Northern Africa) which dispersed all over the country's territory with an assignment to

³ Russian State Archive for Social and Political History. F. 495. Op. 74. D. 240. L. 132.

⁴ RGASPI. F. 17 (Department for Foreign Policy CC CPSU(B)). Op. 128. D. 41. L. 14–15.

⁵ RGASPI. F. 17 (Department for Foreign Policy CC CPSU(B)). Op. 128. D. 41. L. 16.

⁶ RGASPI. F. 495. Op. 74. D. 243. L. 3.

consolidate all active anti-Franco elements. The transfer of those groups was continuing throughout 1945. They carried out minor actions, but those actions were counted in hundreds. The report on the organization of guerrilla activities during that period was also submitted to the CPSU Central Committee.⁷

Accordingly, a wave of reprisals was also growing all over the country. Communists, for good reason, began calling themselves ‘a party of the shot and the guerrillas’. Objectively, at that time, there were no conditions in Spain for the development of a mass insurgent struggle. In fact, the main guarantee of its success was the support by the population, the rural in particular, but the people of the country, exhausted by the recent Civil War and terror, were weary for peace at any cost.

It is unlikely that organizers of the struggle would make such sacrifices unless they relied on a wide international response and support from the outside, on intensifying the global public opinion, on the unacceptability of the existing regime in Spain for the emerging world community.

The Soviet leadership was the first to make an attempt to formulate and raise the Spanish issue before the leaders of world powers. At the Potsdam Conference, Stalin proposed to consider ‘the issue of the regime in Spain’. The Soviet draft resolution on this issue claimed that the Franco regime posed ‘the most serious threat to the freedom-loving nations in Europe’, recommended to break off any relations with the government of Franco, as well as ‘to support democratic forces of Spain and to enable Spanish people to establish a regime that would correspond to its will’. This draft, however, was not adopted. Churchill, in no circumstances, agreed even to discuss the Soviet proposal. In the Anglo-American camp, there was no doubt that the issue was a procommunist government and the attempts to establish it in the power in Spain would lead to the resuming of the Civil War.

Nevertheless, the following wording was incorporated in the final document of the conference: ‘...three governments ... will not support the application for affiliation [with the United Nations], submitted by the present Spanish government which, being established with support of the Axis powers, does not possess, in view of its origin, its character, its activities, and its close ties with aggressor states, the qualities required for such membership’ (Gromyko *et al.* 1984: 334). Certainly, it was not the question of any intervention in the Spanish affairs, or actions against Franco, though the unequivocal condemnation of his regime infused hopes into the Spanish opposition. But the main thing was that the resolution, while declaring Franco an ‘outlaw’, installed a certain political and moral barrier on the way of the eventual normalization of relations between his government and Western democracies. For the Soviet side, it was a step, a small one though, toward the promotion of its policy in the Spanish direction.

Franco, from his part, began to declare even more often that his friendship with the ‘Axis’ countries had been forced by necessity to resist communism. He undertook some cosmetic renewal of the facade of his regime, while waiting for the moment when the ‘monstrous anomaly’ – an alliance of Western democracies with the Soviet Union – would be ended. The Spanish dictator claimed that the international criticism of his regime were intrigues of communists directed at the destruction of the country, and pressure of the

⁷ RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 128. D. 932. L. 9–28.

republican emigration. In Western capitals, they more and more tended to believe that the Soviet Union were rather interested in 'detonating' the Civil War in Spain which would bring communists to power.

The CPS really persisted in the expansion of the guerrilla movement in the country, however, it is impossible to assert, that it did it, exclusively following the will of Moscow. Among Spanish republicans, not just communists, there were thousands of people set irreconcilably towards Francoism and ready to devote themselves to the armed struggle against it. At present, no specific data are available concerning the scale of the Soviet help to insurgents. According to indirect data, it was not too large. It is known that Spanish communists regularly submitted reports on their activities to the CPSU Central Committee and that financial assets were allocated to them, as well as to other 'fraternal parties' (Sagomonyan 1996: 230–234).

According to the practice developed at the final stage of the war, it was necessary to present quite an authoritative and legitimate body to the world community – 'a government in exile' which could take the power after the elimination of the dictatorial regime. And in the autumn of 1945, a coalition republican government led by Jose Giral was actually established in Mexico, where there were many Spanish political emigrants. In early 1946, it arrived to Europe where it tried to strengthen its positions amidst a political situation getting more and more complicated. Having failed to achieve support from both the USA and Great Britain, it started to make radical statements – having, probably, decided that it could only rely on the USSR. And soon, Santiago Carrillo, a CPS representative, became the member of that government.

The weakness of that government was obvious. Firstly, it represented only the republican camp, while excluding the cooperation with much more authoritative figures of the monarchic spectrum. And secondly, it was confronted by the most influential part of the republican opposition as such which backed the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (SSWP) and its leader Indalecio Prieto. He was reluctant to support a government that was prepared to cooperate with communists in any way, thus having no chances to be recognized by Western democracies.

In the meantime, the Spanish issue found an increasing international response. During the last months of 1945, with the end of military actions in the Far East, and of World War II, an international campaign against the Franco regime, the 'last relict of fascism', started developing more widely in many countries of the world, particularly in France. Ministers and members of parliament – representatives of Left-wing parties, Trade Unions, various committees, mass-media, demanded to break off diplomatic relations between their countries and Spain, to declare the economic blockade. Martinez Lillo, a historian, expert on the Spanish-French relations, claimed that at that time the USSR 'intensified its involvement in the Spanish issue, while putting pressure on the French diplomacy through ministers – members of the FCP, insisting that Paris should find its policy in the relation to Franco' (Tusel *et al.* 2000: 331).

And still, only few governments were inclined to take specific measures against Franco. Playing their role here were both the doubts about the efficiency of such measures and the lack of successful experience of their implementation. First of all, however, it was a fear of the eventual 'second edition' of the Civil War in Spain, the rise of a hotbed of international

tension where a collision between Western powers and the Soviet Union might occur. Besides, many states actively opposed the violation of the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, not wishing to set a dangerous precedent of 'interventionism'. It was, however, symptomatic that Armour, the American Ambassador, was recalled from Madrid right in the end of November, with just a diplomat in a rank of the Charge d'Affaires left there.

On February 3, 1946 George Kennan, the Charge d'Affaires of the USA in Moscow (who soon became known as the ideologist of the American policy of 'containment'), sent a message to Burns, the Secretary of State, in which he reviewed the basis of the 'Spanish' policy pursued by the Soviet Union. In his opinion, this policy was a result of events of the Civil War and World War II, and one could hardly disagree with it. The overthrow of the republican government of Spain by the Francoists, sending the 'Blue Division' to the Russian front (involved in the destruction and plunder of the Great Catherine Palace at Tsarskoe Selo, 'possibly, the finest of Russian historical monuments') determined a hostile attitude of Moscow toward the Franco regime and the wish to remove it. The latter seemed to be necessary also by virtue of political and strategic interests. The Soviet Union aspired to the establishment of the procommunist government in Spain in order to support Communist Parties in Italy and in France, penetrations into Latin America and Morocco from this key springboard. (It should be noted that Kennan obviously adds uncompromising stand and 'range' to the position of the USSR). And strategically, Spain maintained control over the western Mediterranean.

Kennan further asserted that in order to achieve its goals, the Kremlin could neither rely on its military power (since it would require the engagement of air and naval forces the USSR was obviously lacking), nor on the weak anti-Francoist opposition inside Spain, not to mention the unpopular CPS. Therefore, its tactics, according to the American diplomat, consisted in the mobilization of the world public opinion, and then using it to influence Western governments. The Soviet influence in such mass organizations as the World Federation of Trade Unions and the International Women's Federation was particularly tangible. The establishment of a moderate West-oriented transition government in Spain would contradict the Soviet interests. Seeking the application of strict sanctions against Franco, Moscow expected that, given the destabilization and disorders in the country, the organization and discipline of the Communist Party would allow it to take the situation under its control. Kennan believed that Russia's interests in Spain would inevitably collide with interests of Great Britain and the USA (US Department of State 1970: 1033–1036). The note circulated for a long time at the Department of State and was also submitted to the Foreign Office.

This document is of particular interest if one recollects that a well-known 'Long Telegram' by Kennan, evaluating the Soviet geopolitical claims in general and putting forward the concept of 'containment', was already sent from Moscow on February 22. It further paid attention to the Iberian Peninsula: 'If Spain gets under the communist control, the author warned, the issue of the Soviet base on Gibraltar could be solved' (Department of State 1970: 678). Having identified in his 'preliminary' message to the State Department the largest possible limits of Soviet interest in the Spanish affairs, the American analyst quasi-paved the way for his far-reaching conclusions concerning the complete lack of prospects of a 'normal' dialogue with Moscow.

Thus, in early 1946, the issue of Spain's future started taking a broad international sounding: it was a controversial transition period in history, when other problems of the post-war world order did not yet grow ripe completely and were not brought to the forefront.

And in February 1946, against that particular background, the execution of Cristino Garcia, a guerrilla commander, in the recent past a hero of the French Resistance, and of his nine comrades was announced in Spain. Soon after that, 37 socialists were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for an attempt to revive party structures inside the country. Executions and reprisals were the usual practice by the Francoist regime; however, when expecting looks of the world community were chained to it, it was an undisguised challenge.

The execution of guerrillas found a wide and quite long response in many countries, in the USSR in the first place. For the Soviet press, that event became an excuse for new sharp accusations of the Spanish dictatorship and those *circles* in 'some countries' which aspired 'to maintain the last fascist hotbed in Europe' (the matter did not yet concern *governments* of those countries). During the subsequent few weeks, the *Pravda* newspaper published *daily* the news about various protest actions (mainly organized by Trade Unions) all over the world against the 'fascist terror' and 'bloody regime' in Spain, as well as articles, sketches and feuilletons on the Spanish theme.

The French government, under the pressure of the Left-wing parties which hugely gained in influence, as well as of Trade Unions, made the decision to close border with Spain and to terminate any economic relations with it. It also proposed to discuss the Spanish issue at the UN Security Council.

The USA and Great Britain were, however, not interested in the involvement of the Soviet Union, as a member of the Security Council, in such discussions. It would surely manage to gain political and propagandistic benefits. In London they came to a conclusion that the French initiative was in many respects inspired by 'Soviet agents' who counted on eventual incidents on the French-Spanish border which would provoke a military conflict and force the great powers to interfere (Portero 1989: 147–148). British politicians argued that the situation in Spain was an internal affair of the sovereign state, and did not want to set a precedent of its discussion at the Security Council: it contained neither such an aspect as a controversial problem between two countries, nor an obvious threat to peace and security, as required by the UN Charter.

The solution was that three Western powers came up with their own declaration condemning the policy of Francoism and confirming their unwillingness to maintain 'full-scale and heartfelt relations with it' (March 4, 1946). It contained the following cautious clause: 'There is no intention to interfere in internal affairs of Spain. The Spanish people should eventually determine their destiny'. The hope was expressed that the 'leading patriotic and liberally minded forces of Spain would soon find means to achieve a peaceful retirement of Franco' with the consequent establishment of some 'provisional government'.⁸ The document guaranteed the recognition and help to the future government on the part of Western powers; however, there was no mentioning regarding their assistance of any kind in terms of the overthrow of dictatorship.

⁸ UN. Security Council. Subcommittee for Spanish Issue. New York, 1946. P. 8–9.

Thus, the Tripartite declaration pursued, not in the last instance, the goal to block the involvement of the USSR in Spanish affairs, to prevent possible strengthening of the Soviet influence. Symptomatically, it turned up a day prior to Winston Churchill's well-known speech in Fulton from which Franco could realize that his prospects in the emerging new world order were not too bad.

Soon after that, on March 9, a big program article (unsigned) was published in the *Pravda* newspaper, titled 'On Liquidation of Fascist Regime in Spain' with both, a comprehensive evaluation of the last Anglo-American-French declaration by the Kremlin, and the vision of the Spanish issue as a whole by the Soviet leadership. The Archive of Russian Federation Foreign Policy contains a documentary proof that the author of that article was Vyacheslav Molotov. His note (in handwriting) addressed to Stalin, read as follows: 'I have sent the enclosed article about Spain to *Pravda* for publishing ... Are there any objections or amendments?' And a brief decision by the leader: 'Possible. St.'⁹

A controversy with the stance by Western countries began already from the first phrases, namely from the statement that 'the fascist regime actually *maintains the status of the Civil War*' in Spain. Later, this too 'courageous' thesis was not promoted in the Soviet propaganda, but the second essentially important point was literally repeated in the following months in all statements on the Spanish issue by Soviet politicians and diplomats: the Franco regime '*poses a threat to the global peace and security*' (emphasis added. – A. S.). It, certainly, should become the main argument for submitting this issue to the UN Security Council. Concerning the declaration dated March 4, it was pointed out that it 'is a certain step forward from the point of view of criticism and condemnation' of the Francoism, being at the same time 'completely insufficient, as it leaves open the question of liquidating the fascist regime in Spain'.

In the author's view, 'it should be the question of efficient actions aimed at the overthrow of Franco', not of new calls and persuasions. He made quite pointed remarks concerning the principle of 'non-interference' in Spain's affairs which 'both, in the past and at present mostly suits Franco himself. ... It became a common slogan for Franco and his foreign patrons'.

The contents and level of this publication were obviously indicative of the fact that Moscow was about to begin a new, active and decisive round of exploring the situation around Spain. Moreover, in addition to the attempts to build up the international pressure it also intended to act through other channels.

An evidence of the latter was the message by Bonsal, the US Charge d'Affaires in Spain, sent to the Secretary of State on March 8, 1946:

The Soviet military mission led by colonel Lapshin stayed in Paris for some time. In the USSR, they are afraid that the USA and Great Britain seek that the foreign and economic policy of Spain was oriented at them. The Soviet Union aspires to upset plans of Western democracies and with this purpose it engaged powerful means to enter Spain. Among those means is the use of the disciplined French Communist Party and Spanish emigrants in France. Recently, the influence of Moscow on French communists and Spanish refugees

⁹ Archive of RF Foreign Policy (further on – AVP RF). F. 06 (Secretariat of V. M. Molotov). Op. 8. File 34. D. 536. L. 2.

became quite obvious. Captain Novikov and lieutenant Xilitzin (Kislitsyn? – *A. S.*), members of the Soviet military mission in Paris, are in permanent contact with Spanish emigrants. The first operates in the department of Arjezh and tries to organize the shipment of illegal cargoes with weapons and ammunition to Spain. The other is in Nancy where he deals with the transportation of similar cargoes by sea. Passionaria, the leader of Spanish communists who has lived in Russia for several years, constantly visits the Soviet Embassy and sends the received orders to other Spanish groups ... (US Department of State 1969: 1047–1048).

It should, however, be noted that the forces, mentioned by the author as actually engaged by Moscow, were apparently disproportionate to the goal he named – ‘to upset plans of Western democracies’.

Dolores Ibarruri also informed about the interaction between Spanish communists and FCP in her letter to the CPSU Central Committee in February 1946: ‘...I have suggested that the leadership of the French Communist Party should approach other communist parties with a proposal to agree on the coordination of actions in the matter of rendering assistance to the Spanish people. The French comrades have approved my proposal and authorized comrade Marty to deal with the organization of this campaign’. The FCP itself, as Ibarruri emphasized, ‘is presently rendering an appreciable help to the Spanish Communist Party in every respect’.¹⁰

After the Tripartite Declaration, it took France some time to revoke its proposal concerning the submission of the Spanish issue to the Security Council, despite a negative stance by London and Washington. Only the Soviet Union declared its full support: the message of agreement was delivered on March 8, 1946 through Bogomolov, Ambassador in Paris (Rozantseva 1984: 74).

In the Russian Federation Archive of Foreign Policy, there is a letter by Andrei Gromyko to Vyacheslav Molotov, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, sent from Washington on March 11. The Soviet Representative to the United Nations proposed the wording of the possible version of the Security Council's resolution on Spain. ‘At present, it is not quite clear yet whether the French government would raise this issue at one of the next sessions of the Security Council in view of the publication of the known Anglo-French-American Declaration... It should, however, be assumed that the French will raise this issue at the Council, as they are already sufficiently engaged in this regard, and it will not be so easy for them to recede from the position taken up earlier’. While expecting that the Soviet draft would be unacceptable for the British and that they might turn it down, Gromyko expressed the view that such a draft should, nevertheless, be submitted for the consideration by the Council ‘in order to fix our stance on this issue. Politically, it would be surely favorable for us. Let British and others pull back and compromise themselves in the eyes of public opinion’. It should be noted that the Soviet diplomat particularly considered the British, not the Americans as his main opponents.

He also assumed that ‘*our partners*’ (quite so for the time being. – *A. S.*) would offer a resolution in the spirit of the Tripartite declaration, then it would be necessary ‘to use all opportunities to strengthen the content of the resolution in the direction desirable for us’. And further he asserted: ‘Our tactics should be reduced to the fact that the Security Council

¹⁰ RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 128. D. 963. L. 12, 13.

adopts a resolution even if it lacks political firmness', since not to take the decision at all, being limited just to an exchange of opinions 'would be politically unprofitable to us'.¹¹ Leaping ahead, it may be stated that when it came to the discussion of the Spanish issue at the Security Council, Gromyko had to assert a much more radical stance there.

Gromyko's draft envisaged to call upon all countries, both members and non-members of the United Nations, to sever diplomatic relations with Spain as a measure aimed at the elimination of the Franco regime. Three items were proposed as a substantiation: the regime in Spain that had come to power with the support of the German and Italian fascism, was not compatible with principles of the UN Charter; Franco had granted asylum to German war criminals; the Spanish regime constituted a threat to the peaceful existence of peoples.¹²

Thus, both a wide international anti-Francoist campaign supported by the Soviet Union, persistence in the promotion of the Spanish issue at the Security Council, and an obvious intensification of the help to Spanish guerrillas became links of one chain. Everything pointed to the fact that by that time, Moscow developed a certain plan of action for which full implementation the whole range of favorable conditions was, however, required. But even in the absence of a successful influence on the situation in Spain itself, this country represented major interest as a trump in the political confrontation with the West under conditions of the established 'Cold Peace'.

The Tripartite declaration by the USA, Great Britain and France received one more peculiar response from the Eastern side of the 'Iron Curtain', connected with the fact that the item on the 'provisional government' meant the disregard of the republican 'authority' already existing in exile. And exactly a month later, when communist Santiago Carrillo went into the Giral's government, the first recognition of this government followed: the corresponding statement was made by Poland, it happened on April 5, 1946. On April 7, Romania broke off its relations with the Franco regime. On April 13, Yugoslavia announced the official recognition of republican Spain. At the end of the month, Bulgaria broke off the diplomatic relations with Franco, and in July, the republican government was recognized by Hungary.

As to the USSR, it never recognized republican institutions in exile and even spoke about such a possibility. The most complex, accruing like a snowball scope of international problems of that period demanded a carefully verified balance of containment and resoluteness. When some months later Giral, on his request, met with Molotov in Paris, the latter stated as follows: 'Do not ask me about the recognition of your government by the Soviet Union, we have no such a possibility. All socialist countries have already recognized you, and this is all we could do' (Tunon de Lara *et al.* 1976: 212).

Simultaneously, the Soviet Union made a resolute attempt to pinpoint the Spanish issue at the UN, acting this time through its ally – Poland. The matter was that right in the beginning of 1946, a Polish representative went into the UN Security Council for two years as a non-permanent member. The representative was quite an extraordinary person – Oscar Lange, a prominent economist, who used to live about 12 years in the West, professor of the Chicago University, and later a member of the Central Committee

¹¹ AVP RF. F. 06. Op. 8. File 34. D. 533. L. 1–2.

¹² AVP RF. F. 06. Op. 8. File 34. D. 533. L. 3–4.

of the Polish United Workers' Party, member of the Academy (Palyga 1986: 86). He was one of a few outstanding emigrants, non-Communists, who agreed to cooperate with the USSR in forming a new Polish coalition government. Lange visited the Soviet Union in spring and autumn of 1944, met with Stalin and Molotov¹³, participated in the discussion of the Polish issue during the visit to Moscow by Churchill and Mikolaichik, Prime-Minister of the Polish government in exile (Sierocki 1989: 148–154, 183–186). His anti-fascist, anti-Francoist beliefs were quite sincere. In a word, it was an extremely advantageous figure in terms of promoting 'independent democratic' initiatives.

In early April, the Polish government sent a letter addressed to the UN Secretary General proposing to take up the Spanish issue on the agenda of the Security Council. Not wishing to put themselves in an ambiguous situation, the USA and Great Britain agreed to do it.

On April 17, 1946, Lange addressed the Security Council proposing to break off relations with the regime of general Franco as *causing a threat to the international peace* (in case of the recognition by members of the Council, it would be possible to apply corresponding sanctions against Spain). He claimed that Spain had a big army, while building up its forces on the French border, *etc.*, but the main thing was that Nazis hiding in Spain were engaged in the development of 'new kinds of weapons' (*i. e.*, nuclear bomb). Gromyko, representative of the USSR, supported and supplemented the Polish colleague; however, he had no great number of supporters. The camp of their opponents was headed by a delegate from Great Britain: he did not agree to recognize a threat to peace in Franco's present actions, while turning down a number of allegations as unfounded assumptions. His main objection consisted in the fact that the UN Charter does not grant the right to the interference in internal affairs of another state. After an impartial exchange of opinions, it was decided to submit the Spanish issue for the consideration of a Special Subcommittee composed of five persons and headed by a representative of Australia (Leonart and Castiella 1978: 81–86).

The report by the Special Subcommittee was presented on May 31, 1946. Its conclusions had a dual character. On the one hand, it acknowledged that the Franco regime had gained a foothold with the help of the 'Axis' countries, that it was of fascist nature, kept supporting Nazi war criminals, that executions and reprisals of political opponents occurred in Spain, *etc.* However, the Subcommittee was not in a position to recommend the Security Council to interfere in Spain's affairs, as Franco had neither committed any act of aggression, nor threatened the international peace, although posing a 'potential threat'. In view of this fact, it was proposed to submit the issue to the General Assembly, while recommending it to call on all members of the United Nations to break off any relations with Spain.¹⁴

In June, the report submitted by Subcommittee was discussed at the sessions of the Security Council. The discussion found expression in disputes full of dramatic nature and, eventually, in an irreconcilable collision between the Soviet-Polish and Western 'blocks'. Gromyko argued that all charges against Franco were absolutely proved, and that the Security Council itself should immediately take a decision on sanctions, while

¹³ In the 'Record Book of Persons Received by the First General Secretary' was stated that Lange was received by Joseph Stalin (together with Molotov) on May 17, 1944. The talk lasted for more than two hours (Korotkov *et al.* 1996: 76).

¹⁴ UN. Security Council. Official Reports. 1st Year, 1st Series, No. 2. New York, 1946. P. 183–184.

otherwise risking to undermine its prestige. Even his most zealous supporters – delegates from Poland and France – declared that they were ready to accept the Subcommittee's resolution, despite serious objections, since it advanced the cause of condemnation of Francoism and was supported by the majority of the Council. However, during the voting, Gromyko, practically alone, rejected the resolution, while using the veto right. He reacted in the same way to all other proposals 'threatening' with the submission of an issue to the General Assembly where, as it might be expected, many members would show a due 'vigilance' regarding the interference in internal affairs of another state.

The Australian delegate even has stated as follows: 'Mr. Gromyko should realize that his "no" cannot be applied to each of the submitted proposals, until only his own proposal is left! ... He has removed the majority...'¹⁵

The final resolution of the Council just contained a provision that the Security Council 'keeps monitoring the situation in Spain and leaves it on the list of matters, being under its consideration, in order to be ready to take necessary measures at any time'. All the same, the USSR managed to achieve a temporary blocking of submitting the issue to the General Assembly. But essentially, it meant the lack of any appreciable result of the whole half a year anti-Francoist epic.

However, the attention to the Spanish affairs did not as yet relax in Moscow, which was, in particular, testified by a 'top secret' document considered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August-September, 1946. The author of the document, while referring to the fact that in France there were many Spanish emigrants, active republican organizations connected with the underground, *etc.*, proposed 'to allot a task on the Embassy in France to gather various information regarding Spain for the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to maintain ties with Spanish republican and democratic organizations'. The gathering of information was probably done earlier (through other departments), but now it was planned to organize this activity at a new level: 'to send a skilled diplomatic officer to Paris for dealing with Spanish affairs at the Embassy'. The last decision on the document, by Molotov, with the instruction to draft a nominee was dated September 4.¹⁶

In December 1946, the Spanish issue was, nevertheless, considered by the UN General Assembly. It was included into the agenda on the basis of a written reference by the delegations of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Norway and Venezuela to the UN Secretary General¹⁷. But in order to make the discussion itself possible, it was necessary to resolve such a formality, as the removal of the Spanish issue from the agenda of the Security Council. Here, as it is known, the key was in hands of the Soviet representative.

It should be mentioned that initially, there was no agreement of opinion among the Soviet diplomats concerning the expediency of such a step. It was testified by an 'Inquiry on the Spanish Issue' dated October 29, 1946, kept in the UN referent office fund of the RF Archive of Foreign Policy. It informed that Jose Giral, head of the Spanish republican government, approached Molotov with the request to remove the Spanish issue from the agenda of the Council so that it could be considered by the General Assembly. 'Giral's request is invoked by the fact, reported the author Roshchin, head of Department for the UN Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that he hopes to collect two thirds of

¹⁵ UN. Security Council. Official Reports. 1st Year, 1st Series, No. 2. New York, 1946. P. 221–241.

¹⁶ AVP RF. F. 06. Op. 8. D. 534. File 34. L. 16–17.

¹⁷ United Nations. General Assembly. First Committee. Summary Records of Meetings, Nov. 2. – Dec. 13, 1946. Lake Success (New York), [n.d.]. Annexes. P. 352–353.

voices in the Assembly in favor of the recommendation for the UN members to break off diplomatic relations with Franco ... Comrade Molotov (telegram number 933, dated 14. X.46) proposed to satisfy Giral's request ... having at the same time asked for the opinion by Comrade Gromyko regarding this issue. Comrade Gromyko was ill-disposed toward such a proposal, while in turn asking to refrain from the voting in case any country would put forward [such] proposal ...¹⁸ As we can see, it was not the question of imposing the veto in Gromyko's answer though, he merely opposed the removal of the issue namely by the initiative of the USSR. His main argument was that it would be a sign of changing the Soviet line regarding the Spanish issue; besides, he doubted the favorable outcome of voting at the General Assembly expected by Giral.¹⁹

On October 30, Oscar Lange accordingly proposed to the Security Council to remove the Spanish issue from the agenda of the Council and 'to submit all reports and documents on this issue to the General Assembly'. The Polish draft resolution met no objections on the part of Gromyko, having been accepted unanimously²⁰. Probably, the reason for such a step was, apart from Giral's request, the encouraging beginning of the Assembly's plenary sessions: many UN member countries were obviously in favor of taking tough measures against Franco.

The consideration of the issue at the General Assembly was acute, but without the previous heat, the opposing sides were obviously declined toward a compromise, without claims to achieve the impossible. As a result, a resolution was adopted on December 12, once again condemning the regime of Franco. This time, it called on all countries to recall their ambassadors from Madrid (without formally breaking off the diplomatic relations). The key item of the resolution read as follows: 'Unless a government is established within a reasonable time that would legalize the freedom of speech, religion, assemblies, hold elections...', the Security Council was recommended 'to consider the ways of changing such a situation'.²¹ It was no question of any economic or military sanctions against Spain, there was nobody's obvious, even the Soviet, genuine determination to act behind the taken decision. Thus, one year and a half of the involvement in the Spanish situation showed the unrealistic nature of both, Anglo-American appeals and declarations, and the Soviet expectations of 'detonating' mass anti-Francoist riots combined with the campaign to exercise the international pressure.

If the May report by the Subcommittee on the Spanish issue to the UN Security Council and the resolution proposed to it, basically represented a compromise version, the Soviet Union, at the very nonce, did not place its stake on the compromise, instead, it attempted to use a chance of a radical settlement of the Spanish issue. It was the reason for the extremely hard line by Soviet representative at the Security Council. Probably, there was still a hope to enlist sympathies of hesitating Americans showing readiness to go further than the British in their anti-Francoist statements, to act as advocates of democracy, *etc.* However, the 'balanced' position of the USA (to be exact, the lack of the final distinctness of the strategic course as yet), and the traditional British pragmatism turned out to be unshakable. Already by the end of 1946, the Soviet Union had to see for itself the futility

¹⁸ AVP RF. F. 433 (UN Referent Office). Op. 1. File 1. D. 19 (1946). L. 50.

¹⁹ AVP RF. F. 433 (UN Referent Office). Op. 1. File 1. D. 19 (1946). L. 50.

²⁰ UN. Security Council. Report to UN Secretary-General for a period from July 1946 to June 1947, New York, 1947. P. 11.

²¹ UN. General Assembly. Official Reports. 1st Session. New York, 1946. P. 254, 265.

of its efforts to crush the Francoism by means of international pressure in a form that would give advantage to Moscow. Probably, since that moment, the USSR began to be gradually reconciled to the lot that Spain would remain in the area of the political military influence of the West. Spain was not included into the sphere of USSR's prime interests, that was why its insistence in this issue was short and quite relative.

At the same time, the resolution dated December 12, 1946 was one of the last political compromises achieved between 'East' and 'West' on the eve of launching the 'Cold War'. The session of the UN General Assembly revealed the readiness and ability to achieve coordinated decisions in a series of most complicated multilateral negotiations. Thereby, the question of influence of those decisions on the developments in Spain itself receded to the background. The resolution became a peculiar, though not too high, 'peak' of joint efforts in the Spanish direction by the Soviet Union and Western countries. But almost immediately, a short-term and rather problematic rapprochement was replaced by fast divergence of the sides, more and more deep aggravation of relations between them.

Intentions of Moscow concerning Spain, originating from the analysis of the actual international situation, changed essentially. There are data (from Franco's personal archive) that attempts to establish contacts between Moscow and official Madrid were made right in that period. The issue were several confidential meetings which took place in late 1946 – early 1947 between a Spanish diplomat (Secretary of the Spanish Embassy in France) and a certain businessman, Swiss citizen, who was an 'authorized representative' of the Soviet side (Suarez Fernandes 1986: 17–30). He conveyed a proposal to enter negotiations in order to achieve agreements between Spain and the USSR in economic and political areas. The Soviet side showed particular interest in the 'repatriation of Russian deserters'; in exchange, they promised the Spaniards to stop accusations of the Francoist regime by the Soviet propaganda, to stop the pressure on the emigration, to remove a threat of external intervention in the Spanish affairs, *etc.*

The Spanish diplomat received instructions to continue negotiations from Carrero Blanco in person, the than right hand of Franco. They concerned conditions on which the relations with the USSR could be improved: Moscow's abandonment of protecting Spanish political refugees; granting of guarantees to Spain not to interfere in internal affairs, and to 'inflate hotbeds of internal conflicts'; repatriation of all Spaniards, 'who stay on the territory of the USSR against their will' (Suarez Fernandes 1986: 20).

Those negotiations were short-cut rather quickly. The last meeting took place in April 1947, after the well-known speech by Truman describing the new American foreign policy doctrine. At the meeting it was pointed out that the favorable moment to establish contacts was missed. Probably, an echo of these (or any others) confidential contacts was the TASS statement published in the *Pravda* newspaper on May 5, 1947. The TASS denied the statement by the Stockholm newspaper *Svenska Morgenbladet*, informing that 'negotiations were held in Tangier and Buenos Aires for already several months between the USSR and Francoist Spain concerning the conclusion of the pact of friendship'; those statements referred to as the foolish fiction were circulated with the purpose of disinformation of the public opinion.

The international climate became really tougher, with the division of Europe promptly coming to an end. Spain should become one of major strategic border lines of 'containment' of the communist expansion. An American military mission, and then

an official American representative were soon sent to Madrid to grant a large loan. The Soviet Union speeded up the establishment of its own system of security on the nearest borders, having left the Spanish boil in the rear of the Western zone of responsibility and occasionally using this sensitive topic in the inflaming political and ideological antagonism. Following the logic of its interests, Moscow, at a certain stage, started to point the edge of 'the Spanish issue' more resolutely against its Western antagonists. And soon after that, Spain was practically completely dropped out of the sphere of its interests for long years.

Seeing the hopelessness of both, the struggle of Spanish guerrillas, and the international pressure upon the Franco regime, the Soviet leadership resolutely drew the line under its Spanish policy. On August 5, 1948, a meeting of CPS leaders Ibarri, Carrillo and Anton with Stalin (Korotkov *et al.* 1997) took place at the Kremlin where it was clearly indicated to them that it was necessary to close up the guerrilla movement and to look for new tactics. According to Carrillo's memoirs, Stalin told that under the new conditions, it was necessary for Spanish communists to develop the work in legal mass organizations, in Francoist Trade Unions in the first place. Henceforth, he advised to use guerrilla groups as security guards for the party leadership, and for the maintenance of underground contacts between cities. Dolores Ibarri recollected that they had tried to object, had spoken about successes of the guerrilla struggle, that workers would not understand them, *etc.*, but in response Stalin had called them 'leftists'. After that meeting heads of the CPS agreed that their position concerning the issue of struggle against Francoism was too leftist, having soon afterward taken the decision to close up the guerrilla movement (Carrillo 1975: 124–125; 1976: 96–98; Ibarri 1988: 146).

Dmitri Volkogonov, who had in one's time got the access to the Archive of the RF President, also informed about the same meeting. He confirmed that, actually, the Stalin's main idea was that communists should 'penetrate everywhere'; besides, the CPS was offered a 'help', amounting to 600 thousand US dollars.²²

Gradually, all attempts to boost the Spanish issue at the UN also came to naught (one of the last unsuccessful and frankly propagandistic initiatives was in May 1949, when the Polish delegation had asked the General Assembly to adopt the resolution actually directed against the USA and Great Britain which 'contributed to the strengthening of the fascist regime in Spain'). The resolution on Spain adopted in December 1946, was already cancelled in 1950. In the world, passions already ran high around absolutely other problems ...

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²² Volkogonov 1995: 239; Archive of Russian Federation President. F. 45. Op. 1. D. 38. L. 105–114.

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