



# Hunting Nazis in Franco's Spain

*David A. Messenger*

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In the waning days and immediate aftermath of World War II, Nazi diplomats and spies based in Spain decided to stay rather than return to a defeated Germany. The decidedly pro-German dictatorship of General Francisco Franco gave them refuge and welcomed other officials and agents from the Third Reich who had escaped and made their way to Iberia. Amid fears of a revival of the Third Reich, Allied intelligence and diplomatic officers developed a repatriation program across Europe to return these individuals to Germany, where occupation authorities could further investigate them. Yet due to Spain's longstanding ideological alliance with Hitler, German infiltration of the Spanish economy and society was extensive, and the Allies could count on minimal Spanish cooperation in this effort.

In *Hunting Nazis in Franco's Spain*, David Messenger deftly traces the development and execution of the Allied repatriation scheme, providing an analysis of Allied, Spanish, and German expatriate responses. Messenger shows that by April 1946, British and American embassy staff in Madrid had compiled a census of the roughly 10,000 Germans then residing in Spain and had drawn up three lists of 1,677 men and women targeted for repatriation to occupied Germany. While the Spanish government did round up and turn over some Germans to the Allies, many of them were intentionally overlooked in the process. By mid-1947, Franco's regime had forced only 265 people to leave Spain; most Germans managed to evade repatriation by moving from Spain to Argentina or by solidifying their ties to the Franco regime and Spanish life. By 1948, the program was effectively over.

Drawing on records in American, British, and Spanish archives, this first book-length study in English of the repatriation program tells the story of this dramatic chapter in the history of post--World War II Europe.

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