

## MASTERS AND SERVANTS; THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA

For the majority of the general population, the African nation of Equatorial Guinea may be little more than an exotic African backwater, located somewhere behind the Congo. However, in recent years, it has begun to fill some column inches in the popular press, principally due to the implication in a coup attempt there of Mark Thatcher, a son of a former British Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the emergence of Equatorial Guinea as a significant player in twenty-first century world affairs may not be as surprising as currently considered, principally due to the discovery of vast deposits of oil in the country and its surrounding waters.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this burgeoning geo-political importance, the hitherto ostracized dictator Teodoro Obiang Nguema<sup>3</sup> and Equatorial Guinea have come in from the international cold in recent years and Malabo has a line of Western suitors wooing it and queueing up to share in the country's transformation. Indeed, one could even speculate on how the discovery of these oil deposits fifty years ago could have changed the course of not only Equatorial Guinea but, moreover, of Francoism and by extension, contemporary Spain.<sup>4</sup>

Spain is mentioned here not only for the purposes of this article but because, for almost all its modern history, Equatorial Guinea, or the colonial territories of Fernando Poo and Río Muni,<sup>5</sup> as they were previously

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<sup>1</sup>This coup was originally planned for early 2004 but the plotters were arrested at Harare Airport in Zimbabwe in earlier and, in the ensuing trial, Sir Mark Thatcher was implicated as one of the masterminds behind the alleged coup plot.

<sup>2</sup>Indeed, Equatorial Guinea has been referred to by some commentators as "the new Kuwait".

<sup>3</sup>Obiang came to power after killing his uncle in a 1979 coup. Born in 1942, the President for life is referred to as "God" by his subjects. He received his military training in Spain at the elite Zaragoza academy, which was also attended by the current Spanish King, Juan Carlos I.

<sup>4</sup>For a comprehensive account of this period in Spain, see the recent Ross, C. *Spain 1812-1996*. London: Arnold, 2002.

<sup>5</sup>Throughout the course of this article, place names, except where explicitly stated, will be referred to in the context of the time-frame being discussed i.e. Spanish colonial names e.g. Fernando Poo and Río Muni will be predomi-

known, was ruled by Spain and Spain and the Spaniards remain the most powerful external influence in the political, economic and cultural life of its former colony.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Equatorial Guinea also plays a vital role in contemporary Spanish history as one of Spain's last colonial outposts and the territory served as the *alma mater* for many of the most hardline and intransigent members of Franco's infamous *bunker* of the 1970's including Luis Carrero Blanco who had first served in Río Muni in 1927.<sup>7</sup>

Given the long history of Spanish involvement in Equatorial Guinea, there is an unusual dearth of literature on the subject and most studies have tended to concentrate on linguistic questions or on the development of an indigenous literary tradition in Spanish.<sup>8</sup> Although of clear importance, there has been very little academic work carried out on society or history in Equatorial Guinea before its independence from Spain in 1968 and in an attempt to redress this,<sup>9</sup> this article aims to focus on a hitherto untouched academic subject, the background to and

nantly used as the greater part of the article discusses the Spanish colonial period. However, the new name for Santa Isabel, Malabo is used when discussing Equatorial Guinea in a contemporary context.

<sup>6</sup> There is a dearth of objective or independent academic studies on the Spanish colonial experience in Equatorial Guinea but some excellent studies are Liniger-Goumaz, M. *Brève Histoire de la Guinée Équatoriale*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988 and Nerín, G. *Guinea Ecuatorial, historia en blanco y negro (hombres blancos y mujeres negras en Guinea Ecuatorial; 1843-1968)*. Barcelona: Ediciones Peninsula, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Carrero Blanco was a close associate and intimate confidant of Franco throughout the period of his dictatorship in Spain (1936-1975). Appointed prime minister by Franco in June 1973, he was killed by a car bomb on December 20<sup>th</sup> of the same year. Responsibility for this killing was claimed by the Basque separatist group, ETA.

<sup>8</sup> See for example Ndongo Bidyogo, D. *Antología de la literatura guineana*. Madrid: Ed. Nacional, 1984 and for an excellent survey of the fortunes of the Spanish language in Equatorial Guinea, Quilis Morales, A. and Casado-Fresnedillo, C. *La lengua española en Guinea Ecuatorial*. Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1995. Two more recent studies are Ngom Fayé, M. "Literatura africana de expresión española." *Cuadernos*, 3 (2003), Centro de Estudios Africanos de la Universidad de Murcia, Murcia, pp. 11-135 and his more recent Ngom Fayé, M, ed. *La recuperación de la memoria: creación cultural e identidad nacional en la literatura hispano-negroafricana*. Alcalá de Henares: Ed. Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Amongst the few published works are Evuna Owono Asangono, A. *El proceso democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial*. Torrejón de Ardoz: Ed. Ceiba, 1994 and the older Ndongo Bidyogo, D. *Historia y tragedia de Guinea Ecuatorial*. Madrid, Ed. Cambio 16, 1977.

course of, the Spanish Civil War in Equatorial Guinea.<sup>10</sup> As Equatorial Guinea was an integral part of Spanish territory at the time, the trajectory of the war there provides a fascinating sideshow to the cataclysmic events in Spain that would shape the country's contemporary history. Furthermore, an analysis of how the war and its eventual outcome was viewed by the local population provides us with some very interesting insights and variations on the much-studied socio-political divisions of Civil War Spain and their roots.<sup>11</sup>

The Spanish Civil War will undoubtedly be remembered by history as one of the great tragedies of our time. A bitter and bloody conflict, the repercussions of which still resound throughout contemporary Spain, it pitted Spaniard against Spaniard and brother against brother in a three-year long struggle which would leave Spain with the legacy of a tattered social fabric and a ravaged and impoverished country.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the fact that Spain has risen almost phoenix-like from the ashes of the Civil War carnage to take her place once more amongst the European family of nations has been one of the great political and social miracles of the latter half of the twentieth century. The Spanish Civil War has been of particular fascination to many due to its international and ideological nature. Seen as a proxy war between the minions of communism and a new world order against the old forces of tradition, religion and capitalism, Spain immediately became the chessboard for an international struggle of conflicting ideologies, a struggle which would evolve into the Second World War and in its final metamorphosis bring the world close to Armageddon in the heady days of the Cold War that have left such an indelible imprint on our recent history.

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<sup>10</sup>A preliminary version of this article was given as a paper at the 2004 Annual Conference of the Association of Contemporary Iberian Studies (ACIS), that was held at the University of Limerick. Given the dearth of published material on this topic and its academic novelty, the author was encouraged to pursue his research in this area and he is very grateful to the colleagues at the conference who gave this encouragement and many helpful suggestions which shaped the direction of this article. He would also like to extend this gratitude to ACIS for allowing the work to be presented for the first time in a public arena.

<sup>11</sup>See for example Preston, P. *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*. London: Macmillan, 1978 or the excellent new re-issue of the seminal Brennan, G. *The Spanish Labyrinth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

<sup>12</sup>There are many comprehensive studies of the Spanish Civil War. Amongst the best and most complete are Jackson, G. *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War*. New York: John Day, 1974 and Thomas, H. *The Spanish Civil War*. New York: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961 or the recent publication in Spanish, Vilar, P. *La Guerra Civil Española*. Barcelona: Ed. Crítica, 1999.

As such, we often tend to see the Spanish Civil War in monochrome terms, black versus white; *vencedores* contra *vencidos*; right versus wrong. However, when the war is taken outside an exclusively Spanish setting, these divisions do become somewhat blurred and the Irish experience in Civil War Spain is one example where one sees at times a highly paradoxical but clearly identifiable crossover in ideological make-up between some members of O'Duffy's Irish Brigade who fought for Franco and the International Brigades who fought against him.<sup>13</sup>

However, the Spanish Civil War in Equatorial Guinea presents us with a further novel perspective on the conflict and while the aim of this article is by no means to demean the importance of the great ideological battles that were being fought on Spanish battlefields, it does present a new and interesting dimension to the conflict that surely merits further study. As aforementioned, the background to and course of, the Spanish Civil War in Equatorial Guinea is an academic subject that has been hitherto neglected although quite an amount of archival material does exist in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Army Archives in Spain and I am indebted to them for their assistance along with the Embassy of Guinea Ecuatorial in Spain, the Casa de Africa in Madrid and various academic institutions in Equatorial Guinea itself, notably the National University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE) and the Centro Cultural Hispano-Guineano.<sup>14</sup>

Equatorial Guinea is probably the least well known Spanish-speaking country in the world.<sup>15</sup> Situated on the west coast of Africa and encircled by the Francophone Camerouns and Gabon, it is composed of a coastal region, where the city of Bata is located and five offshore

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<sup>13</sup>See Keene, J. *Fighting for Franco*. London: Leicester University Press, 2001 for a good account of foreign involvement in the Nationalist ranks. For an account of foreign participation in the defence of the Spanish Republic, two good sources are Castells, A. *Las brigadas internacionales de la guerra de España*. Barcelona: Ed. Ariel, 1974 and the older Brome, V. *The International Brigades, Spain 1936-1939*. London: Heinemann, 1965.

<sup>14</sup>Academic research on Equatorial Guinea in the above institutions is hampered by the strained and unpredictable relationship which exists between Spain and Teodoro Obiang's Equatorial Guinean regime. The fact that the leader of opposition to Obiang, Severo Moto, still lives in exile in Spain is an obvious obstacle to any improvement in the relationship and in Malabo, Spain is continuously identified with efforts to destabilize and topple Obiang's regime.

<sup>15</sup>Unlike another often forgotten colonial outpost, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea does not even have a centre of the Instituto Cervantes, the cultural wing of the Spanish government. The only former colony that is vying with it for most isolated status in the spanish-speaking world may be the disputed territory of Western Sahara (the former Sahara Española).

islands with the administrative capital, Malabo, being situated on the largest, Bioko. Its population of almost 600,000 is even by African standards, quite young and unlike many of its neighbours, there has been little emigration in the contemporary period. On the contrary and mainly due to the discovery of oil, there has been, in recent years, a growing increase in economic migration to Equatorial Guinea from poorer neighbouring states such as Ghana and Benin.

It was in 1471, twenty years before Columbus reached America, that two Portuguese sailors, Fernao do Poo y Lopes Goncalves first set foot on the mainland of Equatorial Guinea and its offshore islands, the largest of which would bear in time the name of the former. At this time, the main interests of these European navigators was discovery of new territories and, as such, conquest and exploitation would come later. Therefore, the Portuguese left Equatorial Guinea alone until the beginning of the sixteenth century when, inspired by the proposals of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas in Chiapas (Mexico), the slave trade began in earnest and from the Gulf of Guinea, thousands of natives were captured and transported to the new Portuguese and Spanish territories in America.

No attempt was made to colonize the country until 1778 when Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of El Prado after intense negotiations led by the Conde de Floridablanca, Carlos III's prime minister. This treaty in effect gave Equatorial Guinea to Spain in return for a Spanish withdrawal from Portuguese territory that had been seized in Brazil.<sup>16</sup> However, Spanish colonization was not at first very successful with a mutiny during Joaquin Primo de Rivera's expedition in 1780 and real control of the colony continued to remain in the hands of the Portuguese slave-traders up until the mid-nineteenth century. During this period, British interests also enjoyed a growing sphere of influence in the colony with the foundation of Clarence City, present-day Malabo, in 1827 and an influx of Methodist missionaries.<sup>17</sup> However, British interest in the colony was quite benign and of a predominantly economic nature but in response to the expansion of British influence and growing German interests in the region, Spain did return in strength to the colony with Carlos Chacón being named first Governor-General in 1858 after leading a Spanish expeditionary force back to the colony.

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<sup>16</sup>By virtue of this treaty, Spain returned to Portugal the disputed territories of Santa Catalina and Río Grande in the south of Brazil.

<sup>17</sup>Foremost amongst these early British colonists were Commodore Bullen who first took Fernando Poo and Captain William Fitz Owen who established a permanent colonial settlement on the island and founded the city of Clarence in honour of the Duke of Clarence, William IV. Spanish colonists would later re-christen the city Santa Isabel and, today, it is known as Malabo, the capital of modern Equatorial Guinea.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the colonial struggle for territory in Africa continued and a weakened Spain lost considerable swathes of the Gulf of Guinea to France and Germany with the tacit approval of the interminable Paris Conference that was dividing up Africa at the time amongst the colonial powers. Coinciding with the crisis of '98, these losses were a grave affront to Spanish pride and in a direct response, the recently named Marquis of Muni and Governor General, Pedro Jover Tovar, lamenting that the Conference of Paris had been "*un verdadero despojo a un país desmoralizado*"<sup>18</sup> and how Spain "*ha salido del Continente negro del modo mas cursi posible*",<sup>19</sup> committed suicide aboard the ship "Rabat", which was taking him back to Spain.<sup>20</sup> However, Spanish involvement in Equatorial Guinea was far from over and in many ways, Equatorial Guinea would, after 1898, increasingly help to feed Spain's imperial ambitions and compensate for its colonial losses in South America and the Philippines. Black Cubans were brought from the lost territories in America to populate Spain's African colony and missionaries began to set up permanent outposts. In 1907 Río Muni was divided up into six administrative areas with the island of Fernando Poo divided into four. Exploitation of the colony's natural resources and, in particular, its forests began, along with the cultivation of cacao with the simultaneous creation of a *Guardia Colonial* in order to protect the colonists.

The arrival in power of Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1923 after a military coup hastened the initiation of a recruitment drive to strengthen the Spanish Army that was embroiled in a bitter colonial war in Morocco.<sup>21</sup> A fundamental part of this initiative was the encouragement of the recruitment of colonial subjects and the colonial question returned to the centre of the Spanish political agenda. In order to facilitate the recruitment of colonial subjects and increase control over

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<sup>18</sup>Comments attributed to Jose María de Areilza y Fernando María Castiella, both writers and politicians in Franco's Spain. The comment roughly translates as "the pillaging of the colonies of a demoralized country".

<sup>19</sup>Statement attributed to the chief Spanish negotiator, León y Castillo who was also the Spanish ambassador to France at the time. It translates as, "Spain had left the dark continent in the shabbiest way possible".

<sup>20</sup>See Bolekia Boleká, J. "*Panorama de la literatura en español en Guinea Ecuatorial.*" *El Español en el Mundo; Anuario del Instituto Cervantes*, 2005. Barcelona: Círculo de Lectores, 2005. pp. 100-102.

<sup>21</sup>For a good contemporary account of the Moroccan Wars and their impact on contemporary Spain, see Harris, W. *France, Spain and the Rif*. London: Edward Arnold, 1927 or for an in-depth analysis, the much more recent Balfour, S. *Deadly Embrace; Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Spain's remaining colonies, a series of controversial laws were passed during Primo de Rivera's regime which determined the legal status, entitlements and obligations of natives and colonists. The enforcement of these laws came under the aegis of the newly created *Patronato de Indígenas* in 1928 and when Alfonso XIII went into exile and the first Spanish Republic was declared on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1931, there was great hope amongst some of the native population that certain laws might be repealed or that a new body would be set up that would serve better the interests of the native population.

However, the Republican government in Spain, which quickly embarked on a policy of granting greater autonomy to constituent parts of the Republic such as Cataluña and the Basque provinces, did not extend this campaign to Fernando Poo and Río Muni and during the lifetime of the Second Republic, colonial rule was actually strengthened and the territory "pacified" in the official parlance.<sup>22</sup>

From May, 1931 onwards, there was a growing Spanish interest in the economic potential of Equatorial Guinea and under the supervision of successive governor-generals, namely Sostoa, Lemua and Manzanogue, the colony was turned into a giant factory with the native population working between twelve to fourteen hours daily in the large cacao plantations or lumberyards. The arrival of the Republic diluted the importance of the role of Claretian missionaries who had offered one of the few possibilities of social advancement for the native population<sup>23</sup> and by the time Alcalá Zamora's personal confidante, Sánchez Guerra was installed as Governor-General in 1935, the native population was in a worse position than ever with laws forcing them to purchase their food and other products from their plantation masters in what amounted to little more than legalized slavery. The heady days of the Popular Front government in Spain in the first half of 1936 had aroused great

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<sup>22</sup>For a good study of the Second Republic in Spain, see Robinson, R. *The Origins of Franco's Spain; The Right, the Republic and Revolution, 1931-1936*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1970 or the long Arrarás, J. *Historia de la segunda República española (4 vols.)*. Madrid: Ed. Nacional, 1970.

<sup>23</sup>The Claretians have been one of the most important religious orders in the trajectory of the modern history of Equatorial Guinea both up to and after independence in 1968. The current leader, Teodoro Obiang, was educated by the Claretians and the continuing influence of this religious education can be seen in his private audience and meeting with Pope Benedict XVI in December, 2005. The first Spanish missionaries to arrive in Fernando Poo had been Jesuits but due to external problems in Spain, they were expelled in 1872. A good account of the early role of religion in the colony is contained in Castro Antolín, M. L. "Organización de la Guinea Española en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX". *Estudios Africanos*, 27-28 (2001), Asociación Española de Africanistas, Madrid, pp. 57-103.

expectations amongst the native population and their leaders and there were rumours that a "model colony" might be established under French influence but such rumours never became a reality. Laws were put in force which prohibited the sale of alcoholic drinks to natives, their purchase of property and most importantly, the native population still lacked any legal status or rights as Spanish citizens upon the outbreak of hostilities in Spain in July, 1936 and the onset of the Spanish Civil War.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, there was only one political party in Equatorial Guinea, the *Frente Popular* with only about 150 members and, as could be expected, it was a much diluted version of the peninsular *Frente Popular*. Ideologically, it was much closer to social democracy than communism and it was dominated by a group of middle-class intellectuals who were an integral part of the colony's elite. However, as the events of July, 1936 began to unfold and news of Calvo Sotelo's assassination reached the colony on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1936,<sup>24</sup> several political meetings were organized and there were various incidents between groups of "laicos"<sup>25</sup> from the *Frente Popular* and "clericales"<sup>26</sup> clustered around the landowners of the Casino.

As bank accounts were frozen in the colony and shipments failed to arrive from Spain, the political temperature rose throughout the summer until the 19<sup>th</sup> of September when Lt. Col. Serrano, the chief of the *Guardia Colonial* organized a uprising on Fernando Poo against Sánchez Guerra, the Republican Governor-General and following the instructions of Franco's government in Burgos, he assumed the role of Governor-General himself and declared a state of war with the immediate imposition of martial law.

The Civil War had now begun on the colony and Miguel Hernández Porcel, the Vice-Governor based on the mainland in Bata and himself a member of the *Frente Popular*, refused to recognize the authority of Serrano and the territories were henceforth cut off from each other. As a consequence, Francoist supporters or "clericales" on the mainland organized a march on Bata on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1936 that aimed to force Hernández Porcel to recognize the authority of Serrano

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<sup>24</sup>The assassination on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1936 of the Nationalist leader, José Calvo Sotelo by Republican sympathizers (in revenge for the murder of José Castillo by Falangists a day earlier) is often seen as the spark that ignited the already planned July 17<sup>th</sup> uprising of General Franco and his co-conspirators and the outbreak of Civil War the next day.

<sup>25</sup>Literally meaning "lay people", it was attributed to Republican supporters who were, in the majority, anti-clerical.

<sup>26</sup>Literally meaning "clerical supporters", it was attributed in Equatorial Guinea especially to supporters of the Nationalist rebels in Spain who enjoyed the firm backing of the Catholic Church.



and support the military rebellion in Spain. Hernández Porcel despatched a force to stop the marchers from reaching Bata and it is noteworthy that when both groups met, they were of course led by white officers with their battalions made up entirely of native, black soldiers. As the groups met at Comandachina, near the River Ekuku, the first group shouted "*Alto en nombre de la Republica*"<sup>27</sup> which was met by the other group's cry of "*Viva el Ejercito, Arriba Espana*".<sup>28</sup> A short battle ensued with the Republican pro-government force emerging victorious but with two native soldiers killed in combat. On the orders of Hernández Porcel, the ringleaders of the "clericales" were then expelled from Bata with most arriving in Gabon from where many travelled to Fernando Poo, which was now a nationalist stronghold.

On the other side, the coastal region of Río Muni and in particular, its capital Bata became a Republican stronghold with leaders such as José Sierra Companys, a cousin of the leader of the Catalan Generalitat and Miguel Pozanco dominating the political scene. However, as the war progressed in Spain, the isolation of Río Muni combined with Republican losses in the peninsula rendered the territory's situation extremely difficult as there was only one ship at the Republic's disposal and communication with Spain was now almost impossible. This ship was the ironically named *Fernando Poo* which was converted in 1936 into a prison for missionary priests and nuns along with other clerical conspirators.

When the Nationalist ship, the *Ciudad de Mahón*, arrived at Fernando Poo in October, 1936, it was quickly requisitioned by Serrano and the Nationalists who used it to shell Bata and the aforementioned prison ship, the *Fernando Poo*. Many of the prisoners died on board during the shelling and after an expedition of Moorish nationalist soldiers disembarked in Bata, most of the remaining Republicans fled into the interior from where they reached the Gabonese border. Those that remained were deported to the Canary Islands in November, 1936.

As would be expected, the sector of the population that suffered most from this struggle was the native population who had been caught in the crossfire between both sides and who had endured great privation as the colony experienced a shortage of medical supplies, etc.<sup>29</sup>

The defeat of the Republic was not looked on with great regret on

<sup>27</sup>Translates as "Halt in the name of the Republic", a popular cry which would be heard throughout the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>28</sup>Translates as "Long Live the Army. Up Nationalist Spain". *Arriba España* was the rallying cry of the Nationalist rebel forces and it still has powerful connotations for right-wing groups in contemporary Spain.

<sup>29</sup>For a good account of Equatorial Guinean social history, see the aforementioned Liniger-Goumaz, M. *Brève Histoire de la Guinée Équatoriale*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988.

the part of most of the native population and their tribal leaders and their hopes now rested on the colonial policy of the Spanish nationalists that would not bring them closer to self-determination or independence but would establish almost immediately a stronger and less tenuous link between the native population and the Spanish metropolis. The first step in this policy was the immediate renaming and granting of legal status to the native districts so by 1937, Kogo had become Puerto Iradier, Niefang, Sevilla and Bimbiles, Valladolid.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the Nationalists, in stark comparison with the *Frente Popular*, had definite plans for Fernando Poo and Río Muni and even with the outcome of the Civil War not decided in August, 1938, a decree was passed by the Nationalist government in Burgos that for the first time legally unified Fernando Poo and Río Muni as an integral part of Spanish territory. More importantly for the native population, the Statute of the *Patronato de Indígenas* was reformed on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1938 with as its expressed aim the “*emancipación*” or possible accession to Spanish citizenship of the native population and the building of schools, hospitals, orphanages and leper colonies to improve the plight of the native population.

The emancipation process was undoubtedly the most important and it was not instituted in full until a decree of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1944, that set the conditions for the classification of the natives in two categories, “*emancipados*” y “*no-emancipados*”. Within the “*emancipados*”, there was a further sub-division into those who were fully emancipated and those who were only partially so.<sup>31</sup> Full emancipation would lead to a native having Spanish citizenship and practically all the same legal rights and obligations as a peninsular Spaniard. Importantly, his wife and children would also enjoy the same rights. The only exception was the ban on mixed marriages but this also existed for white Spaniards. However, white Spaniards could have natives as “*concubinas, queridas o amigas ocasionales*”.<sup>32</sup>

For a native to be emancipated, he had to be twenty-one years old, have the necessary maturity to be an adult in the metropolis, possess a

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<sup>30</sup>A similar policy of hispanicization was introduced by the Francoist regime in the Moroccan colonies after the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>31</sup>For accounts of this period, see Sáez de Gevantes, L. *El africanismo español*. Madrid: CSIC, 1963, Díaz Pinés, O. *Los territorios españoles del Golfo de Guinea*. Madrid: Publicaciones Españolas, 1952. The regime-financed CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) also produced throughout the 1950's and 1960's a range of reports on Equatorial Guinea dealing with specific areas of native development in the colony such as education and health.

<sup>32</sup>See the Francoist Decree of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1944 concerning the civil rights and obligations of the native and colonial population of Equatorial Guinea.

professional or academic qualification from a secondary school and he had to have been employed for two years in a Spanish concern. On the other hand, it was also possible to be emancipated for those in the service of the Spanish state with a rank not less than indigenous auxiliary.

As aforementioned, emancipation brought to the natives Spanish citizenship rights, etc. but on a practical level, it permitted them to act as witnesses in court, receive loans to the value of 10,000 pesetas, buy and consume olive oil, buy and consume wheat bread and to drink alcohol in public and in the same establishments as white Europeans. Partially emancipated natives enjoyed most of these benefits also but were not allowed to buy or consume alcohol.

Of course, a whole new legal system and code had to be introduced to give a legal character to these changes and its composition was based on a framework that allowed appeal in the first instance to Territorial High Court in Madrid and in the final instance to the Supreme Court in Madrid.

Such changes may seem today to be nothing more than a system of watered-down apartheid and it is clear from archival material that political, economic and cultural hegemony continued to lie in the hands of the Spanish colonists. However, although it would be an exaggeration to call Francoist colonial policy enlightened, it did offer an initial chink of light for the native population as for the first time, they now enjoyed a legal status and could buy and sell property, etc. Paradoxically, this of course led to the seeds of nationalism being sown and in this first generation of "*emancipados*" we find the fathers of Equatorial Guinean independence such as Enrique Nvó, Acacio Mañé. Bonifacio Ondó and of course, Francisco Macías. Indeed, Macías would be the first elected President of Equatorial Guinea when it finally achieved independence in October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1968.

In conclusion, from a native point of view, one could state that the Spanish Civil War had little real ideological resonance in Equatorial Guinea as under the Second Republic and *Frente Popular* as under the Francoist regime, there still existed a clear division of masters and servants. However, the Francoist regime did have a definite colonial policy albeit one based on an idea of benevolent racial superiority and one must comment upon the absence of any type of policy of native advancement on the part of the Second Republic. On a practical level, it was the native population which suffered the privations and casualties of the Civil War as both sides forcefully recruited them into their respective factions as their foot-soldiers and the food shortages affected primarily the native population and in particular, native children.

That said, it is possible that a progressive colonial policy could have been followed by a *Frente Popular* government if it had had the opportunity but the 1936 military uprising prevented this government from

embarking on any long-term programme. However, it is pertinent to point out that the situation of Equatorial Guinea, outside its economic benefits to Spain, was not mentioned in any *Frente Popular* manifestos, etc. and the Second Republic, which was so active on the question of granting autonomy to the historic nationalities in Spain, was inactive during its life on the question of native rights and the development of the colonies.

The unfortunate legacy of this reality is the distrust in Equatorial Guinea for left-wing movements and the terrible relationship between the Socialist Government of Felipe González from 1982 to 1996 and the regime of Teodoro Obiang in Equatorial Guinea is testament to this.<sup>33</sup> Amongst many ordinary Equatorial Guineans, there is a marked nostalgia for a strong leader like Franco as with any right-wing authoritarian regime, they identify individuals and figures with the improvement of their lot. It is this nostalgia and distaste in many ways for the democracy of the Second Republic which brought Obiang to power in 1979 and has maintained him there since, despite repeated opposition attempts to overthrow him, many with foreign help.<sup>34</sup> Many of these attempts have foundered due to the lack of mass opposition or real interest in establishing democracy and, in this way, although the last shells were fired in the Bay of Bata over sixty-five years ago, one could well argue that the Spanish Civil War and its legacy is still alive and well in Equatorial Guinea today.

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<sup>33</sup>See the aforementioned Liniger-Goumaz, M. *Brève Histoire de la Guinée Équatoriale*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988. The problematic relationship between Spain and her former colony is also amply covered by the Spanish press and in particular by the daily, *El País*. Spain still remains home to many political exiles from Equatorial Guinea.

<sup>34</sup>Indeed, Teodoro Obiang has been one of the longest-serving dictators in Africa and despite allegedly suffering from advanced prostate cancer and being in extreme ill health, he continues to maintain a resilient and tight grip on power. His cult of personality is paramount in a country where in July, 2003, state radio officially declared him a "God" and where many Equatorial Guineans sport a daily uniform of a t-shirt with a photo of the president for life emblazoned across it. Perhaps eerily echoing his mentor in Francoist Spain, Obiang's photograph is omnipresent throughout the country and it is rare to find any location or gathering without a picture of Obiang present.