

From "Total Espionage" by Curt Riess



pp. 236-7 - Re Falange, Cristeros, Sinarquistas, espionage in Mexico

It was the Calero fiasco and the increasing vigilance of the Policia Secreta--effectively aided by the labor unions--and the increasing collaboration between the Policia Secreta and the United States authorities, which decided the Axis espionage chief to use the Spanish Falange as a front.

The Falange had established their foreign bureau at first in Milan, then had transferred it in September 1938 to Salamanca. It went under the title of Departamento Nacional del Servicio Extranjero de la Falange Espanola Tradicionalista. Dependable sources declare that there was a pact between Hitler and Franco, permitting German control of Spanish foreign activities. In any case, late in 1938 money was poured into the Mexican Falange, and by the beginning of 1939 most German propaganda was distributed by the Falange. The Foreign Department of the Falange was later merged into the Consejo de Hispanidad which was formed in the winter of 1940 in Salamanca, in the presence of Heinrich Himmler and--interestingly enough--Lieutenant-captain Canaris. Its avowed aims were the spreading of Falange doctrines in Latin America and the preaching of Axis collaboration everywhere. It constituted a second league between the Falange and Axis espionage, this time evidently via the Gestapo and the Ribbentrop Bureau. Consejo agents took precedence over Falange chiefs, and Nazi methods for extorting funds and services from the large Spanish colony in Mexico were introduced. Attempts were made to install Falange agents as consuls everywhere--not always with success.

The German espionage system used the Falange as its payclerk, especially to finance the so-called Sinarquista movement.

This was revival of the former Cristero movement, which in 1926-27 had specialized in blowing up trains and other useful work. Its name, incidentally, was a puzzle to those interested in getting their facts straight. Even the Sinarquists themselves did not know. Some said it meant that they were for the introduction of order and discipline; some said it meant that they recognized no earthly rulers, for the state should be ruled by God alone.

Question of name aside, the Sinarquists were a large murder gang, in West and Central Mexico, who waged guerrilla warfare against labor unions (which they denounced as Communistic) and against peasants to whom President Cardenas had given land. They were organized after the fuehrer system, of course. For a time, Manuel Zermeno was fuehrer. He was succeeded by Salvador Abascal, a friend of Brito Foucher's, who had to flee to Berlin after his plot failed. Abascal gets plenty of money from somewhere, controls ten thousand armed men, and has the Sinarquists organized on a military basis with an Intelligence Service, hideouts, and arms caches. The Sinarquists must be considered today the most dangerous fascist movement in Latin America....