

Spain and Portugal, 1837–1974: British Foreign Office Confidential Print

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Britain's relationships with Spain and Portugal have been among its closest, and most complicated, ties to the European continent for hundreds of years. **Imperial rivalry persisted into the nineteenth century and colours the earlier documents within this collection**. Yet there was also widespread economic co-operation and a spirit of friendship with roots in the Napoleonic Wars. **Later, in the first half of the twentieth century, Britain's interest in Spain hinged on its volatile politics—the swings from extremes of right and left which characterised the interwar years, culminating in the Spanish Civil War and the rise of Francisco Franco as dictator**. Throughout that conflict, Britain was forced to balance its desire to shore up democracy and roll back fascism, with its commitment to appeasement and unwillingness to be drawn into a messy ideological struggle. **During this period, Portugal also became a right-wing dictatorship under António de Oliveira Salazar and his Estado Novo movement**. After 1945, both regimes were reimagined as a sturdy bulwark against communism and Spain, Portugal, and Britain were allies once more, albeit uneasy ones.

The collection comprises 84 items, many of which are bound volumes in excellent condition, amounting to over 27,000 pages. This material is principally correspondence and reports, sent between British diplomats and envoys in Spain and Portugal, and civil servants in the Foreign Office in London. It offers unrivalled insights into the numerous changes and reconfigurations which the Iberian countries experienced during this period.

Topics which are covered in particular depth are the nineteenth-century imperial tensions experienced around territories such as Cuba and Gibraltar; the development of normalised economic and trade arrangements between Britain, Spain, and Portugal; Britain's controversial policy of non-intervention during the Spanish Civil War; and the management of complex relationships between Britain and the two right-wing regimes in the years after the Second World War. The date range of the collection extends to 1974, meaning it covers the end of the Estado Novo in Portugal and all but the final year of Franco's rule in Spain.

This collection will be of interest to historians of Spain and Portugal. **It will also prove valuable to students, educators, and researchers interested in political thought and diplomacy, as well as in key historical themes, such as empire, totalitarianism, and war**. It will likewise appeal to those situated within the fields of economics, international relations, and political science.

VISIT COLLECTION

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