

In my thesis „German-Hispanic Bilateral Relations 1939-1940 I deal with the evolution of high level cooperation between Nazi Germany and Francoist Spain. The primary point of these two dictatorships' relations was determined by the results of Spanish Civil War that directed Franco into the orbit of the Axis Powers. After the outbreak of WWII Spain decided to exercise so-called benevolent neutrality very tilted towards Germany. Under the impression of overwhelming German expansion this neutrality was abandoned in June 1940 and transformed into non-belligerence state. From there on it was only a little step to the real declaration of war on Britain. Franco's main goal of this policy was to join the victorious side in time. Spanish motivation was to take an advantage of this new opportunity and conquest part of Northern African territories on the expense of France. Franco longed for reestablishment of erstwhile Spanish colonial empire. This main reason of Franco's will to lead the exhausted country into another war paradoxically prevented Spain from the entry. Hitler appeared not to assure Spain's territorial gains in Morocco for Spanish cooperation during planned capture of Gibraltar. His intention was to keep the loyalty of Vichy in Africa. Germany feared that handover of French territory into the hands of Spain would mean disillusion and desertion of French colonies to the Allies. Nevertheless, Franco was not willing to take any risks of the war without clear guarantees of his claims in Africa. In December 1940 Spain decided to wait despite having agreed to sign the secret protocol at the notorious meeting in Hendaye. This phase of the most intense efforts aimed at bringing Spain into war as another Axis member then ended up by Spain's first rejection.