N. Franco Occupies Catalonia

(Thematic Correspondence to Chapter Fifteen)

With the occupation of Barcelona by Franco’s army on 26 January 1939, the first phase of the occupation of Catalonia came to an end. That same day, General Fidel Dávila issued a proclamation establishing the first regulations of the occupation. After Brigadier General Eliseo Álvarez Arenas was appointed head of the new Barcelona Occupation Services (Servicios de Ocupación de Barcelona), a new proclamation on 27 January set the occupying régime’s regulations, which would be in effect in Barcelona until 1 August 1939. The preamble showed clearly the new régime’s attitude towards Catalonia.

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(From La Vanguardia, 27 January 1939)

The General Don Fidel Dávila Arroyo, General of the Northern Army, has issued the following proclamation:

I, Fidel Dávila-Arroyo, General of the Northern Army, hereby declare:

Now that the criminal effort by the powers that subjugated Catalonia in order to put it at the service of sinister and undignified plots has been annihilated, and the city of Barcelona has been rescued by the Nationalist Army, I order:

Article 1. The city of Barcelona and the other liberated Catalan provincial territories shall be reintegrated into the Spanish sovereign state, whose head is the
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Generalísimo of the land, sea, and air forces, Captain General of the Army and the Navy, and National Chief of the Spanish Traditionalist Phalange and the Assemblies of National Syndicalist Offensive (F.E. Tradicionalista y de las Jons), his Excellency Don Francisco Franco Bahamonde.

Article 2. I declare invalid all orders and appointments made by the rebels holding power after 18 July 1936.

Article 3. All laws of the new state announced in the 'Official Bulletins' (Boletines Oficiales) will go into effect as of today. In agreement with the principle of national unity, the honour of being governed on equal footing with the rest of its sisters in the rest of Spain will be returned to the Catalan provinces (Law of 5 April 1938).

Article 4. Military jurisdiction will be exercised by the corresponding authorities and courts, as determined by the 28 July 1936 edict from the Committee for National Defence and other relevant regulations; in this region, permanent military tribunals will have jurisdiction over all crimes committed and will use emergency summary procedures.

Article 5. For the exercise of powers determined by the legislation in effect, all appointments deemed necessary will be made, and any disobedience of my orders or the orders of authorities or designated agents of authority will be considered acts of rebellion or treason, according to the circumstances, and will be brought before the permanent military tribunals, as will disobedience of any other order deemed necessary.

Article 6. All arms, explosives or incendiary devices, as well as valuable objects, documents and personal effects that are not legitimately possessed will be immediately turned over to the authorities and police. The sole act of disobeying this order, of failing to report immediately the known possession or concealment of such objects, or of aiding in the escape or concealment of the guilty, will itself be considered to be a sufficient motive for incurring the legal repercussions indicated in the previous Article, even without further criminal culpability.

Article 7. All authorities and governing bodies will answer directly to military advisors (Auditoría de guerra) regarding any matters relating to judicial procedures; for this reason, the illustrious territorial advisor will exercise not only his own powers but also those powers given by this order, subject to delegation with the requirement that they be used in accordance with the instructions he deems necessary.