La conspiración del General Franco y otras revelaciones acerca de una Guerra civil desfigurada: (Barcelona: Crítica, 2011)
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The author of this study is a distinguished academic historian and professor at Madrid's prestigious Universidad Complutense, who has also held office as a civil servant and a diplomat. Ángel Viñas has a lengthy record of publication, specializing in twentieth-century Spanish history and international relations.

The book begins with a brief (7-page) introduction by the author, which explains that the book has been published to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the military uprising of July 1936, which kicked off the Spanish Civil War. The author distances his work from the 'refritos o … autorrefritos' which he suggests will flood the market at this time. He explains that this is an innovative historiographical study based on newly uncovered primary sources, which will deconstruct the Francoist mythology surrounding the uprising and the war that followed. In particular, the book will detail the existence and influence of an anti-Republican conspiracy involving Spanish and British actors. This has been made possible by the recent declassification of crucial British government papers, which have facilitated investigation also of the British propaganda that flooded Spain during the 1930s,. As the author points out, not one of the three books on the Security Services published in the UK in 2010, in response to the declassification of the same papers, addresses the Spanish question.

The study is divided into three chapters and an epilogue. Chapter 1, "16 de julio de 1936: Franco se subleva. El gran secreto del *Dragon Rapide*," deconstructs the most basic elements of the traditional narrative of the uprising and its outbreak (the *Dragon Rapide* of the title was the name given to the British-built aeroplane that brought Franco from the Canary Islands to his troops in Morocco). Viñas shows how the most decisive machinations of the weeks leading up to the uprising took place in Britain, with the crucial support of sympathetic British journalists, diplomats and civil servants. The British element of the conspiracy, he argues, was written out of history at the behest of both MI6 and the Franco regime.

Chapter 2, "Inglaterra contra la República: el éxito jamás autorreconocido de los conspiradores civiles," explores how the conspirators (British and Spanish) succeeded in turning the British government against the Spanish Republic during the months leading up to the uprising, aided by a

total change of personnel in the British Embassy in Madrid in the summer of 1935, which put in place a new and inexperienced team that was no match for the conspirators. The importance of this new narrative, according to Viñas, is that it turns the traditional narrative of Nationalist and Republican international politics on its head. The truly influential international relations were not those of the Republicans with Russia and the international communist movement, but of the Nationalists with a small but influential group of right-wing Britons.

Chapter 3, "La batalla por la verdad: historiar la guerra civil en su contexto," takes the form of a thorough and nuanced reflection on the development of the historiography of the Civil War over the last three quarters of a century. Viñas examines and deconstructs the central elements of the process of 'mystification' that he identifies as fundamental to the regime's survival after 1939.

The study closes with an epilogue, archly titled "Reflexiones para aficionados a la desmitificación y conclusiones." It includes a thorough bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and an excellent index.

This is a ground-breaking work by one of Spain's foremost contemporary historians. It is based on extensive original research, which has uncovered material of clear international significance. The writing style is clear, often witty, and sometimes idiosyncratic – very far from the conventional circumlocutions and (dare I say it) pomposity of much Spanish academic prose. This should mean that in stylistic terms, it is relatively straightforward to translate, and to maintain the distinctive authorial voice.

Evidently, the focus on British archival resources, and the crucial protagonism of British journalists, diplomats, politicians and other activists, make this a story of great potential interest to a British audience with interests not only in Spain and the Spanish Civil War, but also in 1930s politics, the history of the security services, and international relations more generally. My sense is that it has good possibilities – it's a great story, energetically told – but that it needs some revision and/or reframing, in order to play up the British connection. On the most basic level, a change of title to include a reference to the Anglo-Spanish subject matter would help this no end.

This is a summary of the report by Kirsty Hooper