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Penalba-Sotorrio, Mercedes  (2023) Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: A Comparative Analysis of Nazi and Fascist Propaganda. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 58 (1). pp. 26-49. ISSN 0022-0094

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220094221074817>

Publisher: SAGE Publications

Version: Published Version

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Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: A Comparative Analysis of Nazi and Fascist Propaganda

Journal of Contemporary History

1–24

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DOI: 10.1177/00220094221074817

journals.sagepub.com/home/jch**Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío** 

Department of History, Manchester Metropolitan University,
Manchester, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern
Ireland

Abstract

This article analyses Fascist and Nazi propaganda during the Spanish Civil War, asking how both nations exploited the conflict and how they interacted with each other and the emerging Francoist state. In so doing, the article highlights the propagandistic value of Nazi-fascist cultural policy and sheds light on the development of the Nazi-fascist alliance. It shows how despite Italy being in many ways at the forefront of the intervention, the development of tight Nazi-falangist relations, among other factors, led to the replacement of Fascist Italy by Nazi Germany as a model for the rebirth of the nation in Spain. This, in turn, sheds light on the Nazi-fascist Alliance, showing how Italy's wide-ranging propaganda originated from a place of self-perceived weakness rather than strength. German–Italian relations were marked by a complex and non-linear dynamic of admiration and jealousy, collaboration and competition, which made itself evident in the Spanish conflict and beyond.

Keywords

cultural policy, Franquismo, fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, propaganda, Spanish Civil War

Corresponding author:

Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío, Department of History, Politics and Philosophy, Manchester Metropolitan University, Room 455, All Saints Campus, Geoffrey Manton Building, M15 6LL Manchester, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Email: m.penalba-sotorrio@mmu.ac.uk

Shortly after the coup of 18 July 1936, Adolf Hitler decided to support Francisco Franco's fight against the Second Republic by providing much-needed transport for Franco's Moroccan troops. By the end of August 1936, the German intervention escalated, but the most important German contribution to the rebel war effort was the deployment of the Condor Legion, which increased the number of German fighters in Spain from 600 to 800 in mid-October 1936 to 4423–4623 by the end of the year.¹

The Italian intervention started slightly later. Despite having supported several antirepublican movements on the Iberian Peninsula in the early 1930s, when the time came to support the 1936 conspiracy, Mussolini hesitated. When he finally decided to intervene, it seems French and British action, or the lack thereof, held more influence than the German intervention, although this too had some influence in the decision-making process. The anti-French stance of Fascist Italy, closely linked to Italian imperial designs for the Mediterranean, finally led to intervention with the deployment of troops in October–November 1936.² More importantly, the Italian contribution heavily surpassed the German one. As Javier Rodrigo has highlighted 'Mussolini disbursed the equivalent of an entire year of armed forces expenditure – 8.5 billion lira – in Spain', which eventually involved the deployment of 78,474 men to the peninsula. Moreover, if we also account for the cost of reinstating the material sent by Italy to Spain, and in many cases donated at the end of the conflict, the total expenditure would increase to more than 11 billion.³

The Nazi-fascist intervention in Spain, which presented both ideological and opportunistic elements, was accompanied by large propaganda campaigns, which aimed to consolidate and increase both countries' influence over the emergent regime. The centrality of propaganda to the consolidation and international image of these nations and a still much-needed evaluation of their influence over Franco's regime has produced numerous studies in the field. It is important to highlight here the works of Ingrid Schulze and Lorna Waddington for the German case, and Alejandro Pizarroso Quintero for Italy.⁴ Moreover,

1. R.H. Whealey, *Hitler and Spain* (Lexington 1989), 7–8. On the Nazi intervention, see A. Viñas, *La Alemania nazi y el 18 de julio* (Madrid 1974).

2. I. Saz, 'Fascism and Empire: Fascist Italy Against Republican Spain', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 13, 1–2 (1998), 116–34; J. Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista: Italia en la guerra civil española* (Madrid 2016), 59–60 – recently translated to English by Routledge (2021) under the title *Fascist Italy in the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939*; A.d. Grand, *Italian Fascism: Its Origins & Development* (Lincoln 2000), 119; J.F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton 1975); A. Cassels, 'Was There a Fascist Foreign Policy? Tradition and Novelty', *The International History Review*, 5, 2 (1983), 266–7; M. Heiberg, *Emperadores del Mediterraneo* (Madrid 2003), 63; J. Gooch, *Mussolini's War: Fascist Italy from Triumph to Collapse, 1935–1943* (London 2020), Section: The Spanish Quicksand.

3. J. Rodrigo, 'Fascist Civil Warfare: Mussolini's Wars in Spain and Italy, 1936–1945', in M. Alonso, A. Kramer and J. Rodrigo (eds.), *Fascist Warfare, 1922–1945* (New York 2019), 99; Gooch, *Mussolini's War...*, Section: The Spanish Quicksand.

4. I. Schulze Schneider, 'Alemania y la guerra civil española: información y propaganda', *Spagna contemporanea*, 26 (2004), 57–83; L. Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern and Nazi Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda in the 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42, 4 (2007), 573–94; A. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie" (algunos aspectos de la intervención propagandística italiana en torno a la Guerra Civil española)', in M. Tuñón de Lara (ed.), *Comunicación, cultura y política durante la II República y la Guerra Civil: II Encuentro de Historia de la Prensa* (Bilbao 1990), 442–259; A. Pizarroso Quintero, 'Italia y España franquista: información y propaganda (1939–1945)', in J.A.G. Galindo, J.F.G. Lozano and M.I.S. Alarcón (eds.), *La comunicación social durante el franquismo* (Málaga 2002), 33–54.

the field of cultural diplomacy has also shed considerable light on the topic, particularly through the works of Maricío Janué and Jesús de la Hera for Germany and Rubén Domínguez for Italy.⁵ Although these studies are essential to the history of Nazi-fascist propaganda in the Spanish Civil War, they are naturally limited by their focus, which provides a good overview of one or the other country, but not of the propagandistic actions of the Nazi-fascist alliance as a whole. The result is often an imbalanced or incomplete interpretation of the significance of this propaganda. Studies on Italy, therefore, argue that fascist propaganda during this period was further reaching than Nazi propaganda, yet studies focused on Germany challenge this argument, citing the rapid development of German networks and the importance of the Spanish Civil War to their international Anti-Bolshevik campaign. Using archival sources from Spain, Germany and Italy,⁶ I will show how these divergent perspectives owe much not only to the lack of comparative studies in the field but also to the distinct aims and strategies deployed by each nation.

Additionally, it is important to place this study within a broader context. In this sense, recent studies on the Nazi-fascist alliance, particularly those by Benjamin Martin and Christian Goeschel,⁷ have shown the importance of looking more closely at the dynamic of cooperation and competition that characterized German–Italian relations. This dynamic had a direct effect on both the construction of the New (fascist) Order and the gravitational pull that these regimes exercised on the European right-wing political spectrum, further influencing and contextualizing the transnational history of fascism and fascisticized movements. In this sense, the approach adopted here aims to employ the methods of comparative history to help provide further answers to these broader transnational questions. As Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka have argued, while we need to consider a global framework that allows us to account for transnational developments and linkages, it is impossible for historians of transfers and entanglements to identify and analyse these phenomena without making use of comparison.⁸ Therefore, what I do in this article is apply a comparative framework to identify and highlight the entanglements between German and Italian policy. Given the importance of the

5. M. Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas durante la Guerra Civil española: el papel de la Sociedad Germano-Española de Berlín', *Iberoamericana*, Nueva época, Año 8, 31 (2008), 27–44; M. Janué i Miret, 'Relaciones culturales en el «Nuevo orden»: la Alemania nazi y la España de Franco', *Hispania*, LXXV, 251 (2015), 805–32; J. Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania en España en el periodo de entreguerras* (Madrid 2002); R. Domínguez Méndez, 'Note sulla politica culturale del fascismo in Spagna (1922–1945)', *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, 12, 4 (2012), document 5; R. Domínguez Méndez, 'La Società Dante Alighieri in España durante los años del fascismo italiano (1922–1945)', *Historia* 396, 3, 1 (2013), 45–70.

6. I have made use of the holdings of the *Archivo General de la Administración*, the archives of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* and the *Ufficio Storico dell' Stato Maggiore dell' Esercito*, as well as the published collections of German and Italian diplomatic documents (*Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945* and *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*). I would also like to thank Javier Rodrigo and Marco Carrubba for providing me copies of the *Ufficio Storico dell' Stato Maggiore dell' Esercito* (USSME) documentation.

7. B.G. Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture* (Cambridge, MA. 2016); C. Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler. The Forging of the Fascist Alliance* (New Haven 2020).

8. H.-G. Haupt and J.r. Kocka (eds.), *Comparative and Transnational History* (New York 2009), 1–30.

Spanish Civil War to the establishment of the Axis, an analysis of the key propaganda networks and tools used by both nations and the ways in which Nazi-fascist relations shaped those campaigns can shed light not only on the history of the Spanish Civil War but on the nature and dynamic of the Nazi-fascist Alliance more broadly. Here was an alliance marked by a complex and non-linear dynamic of admiration and jealousy, collaboration and competition.

Although Fascist Italy had already established direct contact with several antirepublican movements, Nazi Germany had some contact with fascist groups like the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista* and the Falange, and even financed the right-wing newspaper *Informaciones*, but did not see Spain as a priority.⁹ The Spanish Civil War gave Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany the opportunity to expand their influence in the peninsula. Germany's cultural reach in Spain followed on earlier cultural diplomacy networks, including scientific and cultural exchanges, many of them centred on the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin, the German-Spanish Society in Barcelona and the German schools. Between 1910 and 1934, Germany received 25% of all Spanish researchers who received funding from the *Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios* to study abroad, becoming their second favourite destination, surpassed only by France, whose strong imprint over the Spanish Second Republic was not without tensions. Moreover, soon after their rise to power, the Nazis transformed many, if not all, of Germany's cultural and scientific institutions abroad into instruments of propaganda.¹⁰ It is, therefore, unsurprising that cultural diplomacy was to become the springboard of Germany's propagandistic activities in Spain.

In early 1936, Wilhelm Faupel, director of the Ibero-American Institute, became the head of the German-Spanish Society. This appointment was highly significant because the Society not only arranged academic exchanges but also directly supported the foreign section of the Falange – the Spanish fascist party – in Berlin. Furthermore, Faupel's appointment as special ambassador to Franco confirmed the temporary success of the Reich Propaganda Ministry's (Promi) strategy in Spain, which prioritized contact with the Falange, over the German Foreign Ministry's desire to focus on Franco and his cabinet. In fact, after subdued activity during the Second Republic, Faupel's leadership and the society's dependence on the Promi allowed it to increase its budget considerably. Over the course of the civil war, the German-Spanish Society came to welcome the heads of Hisma-Rowak – the industrial complex that monopolized

9. I. Saz, *Mussolini contra la II República: hostilidad, conspiraciones, intervención (1931–1936)* (Valencia 1986); Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*, 330; X.M. Núñez Seixas, 'Spanish Views of Nazi Germany, 1933–45: A Fascist Hybridization?', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54, 4 (2019), 858–79; L.L. Waddington, *Hitler's Crusade: Bolshevism, the Jews and the Myth of Conspiracy* (London 2012), 85.

10. Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*; R. Liehr, G.n. Maihold and G.n. Vollmer, *Ein Institut und sein General: Wilhelm Faupel und das Ibero-Amerikanische Institut in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main 2003); Janué i Miret, 'Relaciones culturales en el «Nuevo orden»...', 809, 811. On France's cultural importance in Spain, see F. Pérez-Camino Arias, 'La significación de Francia en el contexto internacional de la Segunda República española (1931–1936)', PhD thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (1990). We are still missing, however, a study of how German-italian influence directly affected French cultural policy in Spain.

German–Spanish trade – to its board, showcasing the connection between propagandistic, cultural and economic interests.¹¹

Fascist Italy's cultural diplomacy, on the other hand, had been mainly channelled through the Spanish section of the *Società Dante Alighieri*, founded in Barcelona in 1910, not least because the city was home to 2000 of the 5000 Italians living in Spain.¹² Technically, a private organization whose fascistization was completed in 1931, the Dante aimed to nationalize the Italian emigrant community and to foster the study of Italian as a foreign language.¹³ Language learning, however, had a propagandistic value, given that the lack of Italian speakers had been the main obstacle to fascist proselytizing since the 1920s. The fascist government, considering language the gateway for both Italians and Spaniards to their glorious Roman tradition, encouraged the *fasci* – the foreign organization of the fascist party –, particularly the one in Barcelona, to start language courses. In the 1930s, this policy led to an increase in activity: from targeted distribution of periodicals among right-wing parties, to the translation of key Italian works into Spanish.¹⁴ Imports of Italian publications increased rapidly starting in 1934, and especially after the elections of February 1936, often upon request by Spanish citizens themselves. The main objective, therefore, of these interwar activities was to fascistize Italian emigrant communities, considered the first phase of fascist infiltration abroad.¹⁵ However, attempts at promoting fascism in Barcelona were neither sufficiently broad nor successful, while the *Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalità di Roma* was not particularly active.¹⁶

The Italian presence in Spain gathered pace in the mid-1930s. The first Cultural Institute opened in Barcelona in 1934, and, in the midst of the war of Ethiopia and the run-up to the civil war, several Dante committees were nominally established in other cities, including Madrid. The only one that worked, however, was the one in Catalonia. With the war, the Dante halted its growth, while Cultural Institutes – created directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – emerged all over Spain. Still, the modest size of the Italian community and the stronger reputation of French and

11. M. Janué i Miret, 'La cultura como instrumento de la influencia alemana en España: la Sociedad Germano-Española de Berlín (1930–1945)', *Ayer*, 69 (2008), 27–30, 32–33; Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas...', 30–1.

12. R. Domínguez Méndez, 'La fascistización de las escuelas italianas en el extranjero. El caso de Barcelona (1922–1929)', *Historia de la educación: Revista interuniversitaria*, 33 (2014), 233–4.

13. Ibid. 249; Domínguez Méndez, 'La società dante alighieri...', 48, 55.

14. R. Domínguez Méndez, 'Apuntes sobre la exportación del libro italiano en España durante el ventennio fascista', *Ogigia: Revista electrónica de estudios hispánicos*, 14 (2013), 39; Domínguez Méndez, 'La società dante alighieri...', 51.

15. Saz, *Mussolini contra la II República...*, 93.; L.d. Caprariis, "'Fascism for Export'?: The Rise and Eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'Estero', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35, 2 (2000), 156–7.

16. A. González i Vilalta, 'La propaganda fascista italiana en Barcelona (1934–1936)', *Historia y Política*, 18 (2007), 255–72; R. Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España (1922–1945) sociabilidad, propaganda y proselitismo', unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad de Valladolid (2010), 297–8.

German schools compared to Italian ones helps to explain the limitations encountered by Italian cultural diplomacy in Spain before 1936.¹⁷

The limited cultural diplomacy conducted by both nations immediately before the outbreak of the Civil War did not preclude them from rapidly expanding their cultural and propagandistic activities following their military intervention. Here, existing cultural networks provided a ready-made channel for an increase in propagandistic activity, while lending this propaganda further credibility. In fact, both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy noted the strong connection between cultural diplomacy and propaganda. Although German sources often used cultural policy and propaganda interchangeably as intrinsically related terms during this period, fascist authorities considered language learning, the core of traditional cultural diplomacy, to be at the centre of any propaganda activity. In this sense, the highly ideological character of Nazi-fascist cultural diplomacy, as well as a tendency to micromanage all aspects of cultural policy abroad,¹⁸ made the already porous borders between cultural diplomacy and propaganda almost non-existent. This, however, does not mean that the cooperative aspect of cultural diplomacy was totally obliterated by propaganda needs, but that this cooperation could only take place within a highly limited space, shaped by the imperialistic and nationalistic objectives of all involved. These constraints, as well as the pre-war experience, shaped the development of Nazi-fascist propagandistic activity during the war.

The deployment of specific propaganda operations followed the military intervention of both countries. In the case of Nazi Germany, the conflict saw the development of different operations, which served distinct purposes and reflected the very different approaches to the foreign policy of its two ambassadors: Wilhelm Faupel and Eberhard von Stohrer. The first operation, the *Antikomintern*, was established in 1936 immediately after the outbreak of the conflict. This agency, whose main aim was to capitalize on the propagandistic value of the Spanish Civil War to the Nazi international anti-Bolshevik campaign, worked with the *Auslandsorganisation* – the foreign organization of the Nazi party –, the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop* – Ribbentrop's unofficial Foreign Ministry – and, from late 1936, the *Sonderstab Köhn*.¹⁹ The second propaganda operation on the peninsula had been planned in autumn 1936 as part of Hitler's decision to appoint Faupel as ambassador to Salamanca, following the personal recommendation of Willi Köhn – general consul in Spain – and against the wishes of the Ministry of Foreign

17. Domínguez Méndez, 'La Società Dante Alighieri...', 54–55, 60, 66–67; R. Domínguez Méndez, 'De la propaganda cultural al proselitismo fascista: las escuelas italianas en España (1922–1943)', *Investigaciones históricas: Época moderna y contemporánea*, 33 (2013), 187.

18. G. Scott-Smith, 'Cultural Diplomacy', in A.R. Holmes and J.S. Rofo (eds.), *Global Diplomacy. Theories, Types and Models* (Boulder 2016), 182–3, 187–8.

19. Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the Antikomintern during the Spanish Civil War, Institut für Zeitgeschichte (IfZ) MA 70; Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern...', 583–5. For more information see V. Koop, *Hitlers fünfte Kolonne: Die Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP* (Berlin 2009); M. Bloch, *Ribbentrop* (London 1992). On Nazi propaganda abroad, see: P. Longerich, *Joseph Goebbels: Biographie* (München 2010); Z.A.B. Zeman, *Nazi propaganda* (London 1965); A.A. Kallis, *Nazi propaganda and the Second World War* (New York 2005).

Affairs in Berlin.²⁰ The *Sonderstab*, led by Köhn himself, was set up in Salamanca and worked closely with the Promi. It had a team of more than 60 people,²¹ including four Spanish nationals eager to serve the National-Socialist cause. Through these agencies, Nazi Germany aimed to strengthen the anti-Bolshevik campaign and prevent Spain from falling back into the orbit of Britain and, especially, France.²² Although the *Antikomintern* maintained its operation until it was no longer needed, the *Sonderstab* would be pushed out of the picture between 1938 and 1939, following the arrival of Hans Lazar, representative of the news agency *Transocean*, who had been sent to Spain by Ribbentrop himself.²³ Although there was clearly competition between the *Sonderstab* on one hand, and Hans Lazar and Eberhard von Stohrer on the other, Nazi propaganda benefitted from a considerable level of coordination, initially between the *Sonderstab* and the *Antikomintern*, and from 1938 onwards through the concentration of all propaganda activities in the hands of Hans Lazar.

As in the case of the *Sonderstab*, Fascist plans to establish a press and propaganda office followed the recognition of Franco's government in late 1936. The *Ufficio Stampa e Propaganda della Missione Militare Italiana in Spagna* (USP), while connected to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, worked independently of Roberto Cantalupo's ambassadorship. Guglielmo Danzi, close friend of the new foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano, was appointed to lead the USP in December 1936, although it seems the office was not fully set up in Salamanca until January 1937. The office started out with 26 people, including some Spanish collaborators, but reached more than 70 members over the course of the conflict.²⁴ It was, therefore, similar in size to the *Sonderstab*, and was further supported by the *fasci*, which continued to emerge over the conquered territory. Up until Danzi's replacement by Carlo Bossi, fascist propaganda had two key aims: fascistize Spain and win the war. But there was also a desire, very early on, to limit Nazi influence in Spain, despite the fact that Mussolini and Hitler had already started to coordinate their support for Franco in August 1936.²⁵ As Cantalupo was told upon his appointment as ambassador, 'You will work with the Germans against the Germans'.²⁶ For Fascist Italy, any sort of Nazification could take place only to their detriment.

20. Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*, 338–9; Document 125, *Aufzeichnung des Reichsministers des Auswärtigen*, 18 November 1936, *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945. Serie D: 1937–1945, Band III Deutschland und der Spanische Bürgerkrieg 1936–1939* (Baden-Baden 1951), 117.

21. Deutsche Pressepropaganda in Spanien, Auswärtiges Amt Politisches Archiv (AA/PA) Botschaft Madrid 716.

22. This desire to counteract French and British influence on the peninsula was another continuity with the interwar period, Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*, 325, 347. See also the *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615.

23. AA/PA Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and Botschaft Madrid Personalakten/Hans Josef Lazar.

24. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 445, 447, 450–451; Pizarroso Quintero, 'Italia y España franquista...', 36; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 205.

25. B.R. Sullivan, 'Fascist Italy's Military Involvement in the Spanish Civil War', *The Journal of Military History*, 59, 4 (1995), 703.

26. R. Cantalupo, *Embajada en España* (Barcelona 1951), 57.

Although Fascist Italy had good reason to be concerned by the Nazi presence in Spain, Germany – although careful not to allow Italian influence to surpass its own²⁷ – had, in principle and in propaganda terms, a more international objective in mind. In the words of Berhardt Taubert, they aimed to “assume leadership of a powerful [gewaltig] global force” dedicated to the extirpation of international Bolshevism²⁸ and the Spanish Civil War presented a golden opportunity to do so. The *Antikomintern* was in charge of exploiting the conflict internationally, portraying it as proof of the Soviets’ global subversive activities. This organization had been created in 1933 to lead the propaganda fight against Bolshevism on the international scene. With this objective in mind, the Third Reich fostered the emergence, in as many countries as possible, of *Antikomintern* organizations, which, though they were closely related to German foreign policy, appeared to be independent. The Spanish branch published a fortnightly Spanish language news-sheet, *Informaciones Antibolcheviques*, organized exhibitions and radio broadcasts, supported nationalist propaganda in republican-held areas and advised Franco’s director of propaganda at the front.²⁹ The organization worked along two lines: to supply the rebel Army with anti-communist materials and to gather materials on the fight against Bolshevism in Spain in order to strengthen the anti-communist campaign abroad. In this sense, the *Antikomintern* was more interested in placing the Spanish Civil War at the centre of their anti-Bolshevik campaign abroad than spreading the ideals of National-Socialism as such.³⁰

The work of the *Antikomintern* was clearly laid out. The agency followed precise instructions to stay on message – presenting the civil war as the result of a Bolshevik conspiracy that predated the July coup – and to avoid upsetting the Spanish rebels. As such, war propaganda was central to its activities. On the one hand, anti-Bolshevik materials provided by Germany helped pro-Francoist mobilization. On the other, as the German sources clearly state, it was necessary for the rebels to place anti-Bolshevism at the core of their propaganda for the Nazi campaign abroad to succeed. The only way to ensure this was to provide the right support in a way that did not diminish the actions and efforts of the Spanish military. In this sense, strengthening the reputation of Francoist Spain as a place of order and reconstruction vis-à-vis the Red Terror helped Nazi objectives in Spain and abroad. In order to reach these objectives, the *Antikomintern* organized several exhibitions that drew heavily on *Antikomintern* materials. That was the case of *Bolshevismus ohne Maske* or ‘Bolshevism unmasked’, which was exhibited throughout Germany and

27. Gooch, *Mussolini’s War...*, Section: The Spanish Quicksand.

28. Waddington, *Hitler’s Crusade...*, 99.

29. Ibid. 99–100; Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the *Antikomintern* during the Spanish Civil War, IfZ MA 70; Waddington, ‘The Anti-Komintern...’, 574–94.

30. Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the *Antikomintern* during the Spanish Civil War, IfZ MA 70; Waddington, *Hitler’s Crusade...*, 132. This is not to say both *Antikomintern* and *Sonderstab* did not collaborate from time to time. In fact, the *Antikomintern* relied on a liaison attached to Faupel’s staff and worked with the *Sonderstab* to disseminate many propaganda materials, Minutes of an *Antikomintern* conference between members of the *Antikomintern* and the *Sonderstab Köhn* in Salamanca, October 6, 1937; Waddington, ‘The Anti-Komintern...’, 584.

Austria between 1937 and 1938.³¹ Presenting Bolshevism as an octopus poised to take over the world, the exhibition relied heavily on Goebbels' speech, *Die Wahrheit über Spanien* (The Truth about Spain), and religious propaganda, showing the anti-Christian character of communism, usually referred to as the Godless International.³² They even planned an exhibition in Spain and an international conference of the *Antikomintern* that do not seem to have ever taken place.³³ However, the most important outcome was the publication of *Das Rotbuch über Spanien*. Released in June 1937, the book was a compilation of pictures and evidence on the Bolshevik conspiracy in Spain, presenting the Popular Front as a facade at the service of the Soviet Union. In four months, they sold 100,000 copies, which also served as the basis for many other anti-Bolshevik publications.³⁴ Additionally, all materials collected served to furnish their propaganda campaigns in Latin America as well as to assist Ribbentrop's ambassadorship in London.³⁵

In 1938, the *Antikomintern* office was absorbed by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior but maintained its cooperation with the Promi through the press and propaganda delegation of Franco's single party (FET). In fact, the Spanish office, which worked in tight connection with the German *Antikomintern*, was led by Ángel Ribera de la Portilla, a Falangist who, years later, would become General Director for Propaganda. Until its dissolution in March 1939, the organization ran a news service called *Servicio Antimarxista*.³⁶ With these campaigns, the Nazis aimed to provoke an anti-communist

31. Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the *Antikomintern* during the Spanish Civil War, IfZ MA 70. It is important to note, however, that this careful attitude towards the Spaniards, in the sense of preventing any offence of tension, was present also among the German military. It is telling, for example, that Wolfram von Richthofen, commander of the Condor Legion, highlighted in his diary how it was important to let the Spaniards talk and then repeat their ideas back to them. He was also very careful in keeping private his negative assessment of the Spaniards' military performance, see S. Schüler-Springorum, *La guerra como aventura: La Legión Cóndor en la Guerra Civil española 1936-1939* (Madrid 2014), Section Españoles 'nacionales'.

32. A.C. Moreno Cantano, 'Propaganda del odio: las exposiciones anticomunistas en el Tercer Reich', *Historia y Comunicación Social*, 19, (2014), 177–9; J. Goebbels, *La verdad sobre España* (Irún 1998); Waddington, *Hitler's Crusade...*, 104.

33. Luis Sánchez Maspons, Press and Propaganda Delegate in Berlin, to Joaquín Rodríguez de Cortázar, Head of Press Exchange and Propaganda Abroad in Salamanca, 7 December 1937, Archivo General de la Administración AGA 9 (17.12) 51/20891; Waddington, *Hitler's crusade...*, 137.

34. Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the *Antikomintern* during the Spanish Civil War, IfZ MA 70; Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern...', 585.

35. During the Spanish Civil War, the *Deutsche Fichte Bund* published almost as many articles and leaflets in Spanish as in German, more than in any other language. IfZ MA 742 NSDAP Teil 4 – 1936: German, 2650000; Spanish 1870000. 1938: German 2050000; Spanish 2550000. Hitler's speech in 1938: German 570000, Spanish 680000. Goebbels' speeches between 1934–38: German 860000; Spanish 770000. At the same time, the *Deutsche Fichte Bund* asked FET's Foreign Section in Salamanca to include their anti-Bolshevik publications in their correspondence with other organizations abroad, Theodore Kessemeier to José del Castaño, 10 February 1939, AGA 9 (17.12) 51/20891. Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the *Antikomintern* during the Spanish Civil War, IfZ MA 70; *Rotbuch über Spanien: Bilder, Dokumente. Zeugenaussagen. Gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Anti-Komintern* (Berlin 1937).

36. Undated report on the anti-Bolshevik propaganda activities of the *Antikomintern* during the Spanish Civil War, IfZ MA 70; *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615; Rodrigo González Ortín, *Extremadura bajo la influencia soviética*, (Badajoz 1937), 197–209; Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern...', 574–94.

psychosis in Europe as they had done before the *Machtergreifung* in Germany.³⁷ By 1939, Nazi propaganda officials believed they had succeeded, at least in blaming the Soviet Union for the Spanish Civil War and placing the conflict at the centre of international debates on communism.³⁸

Italy also used the Spanish Civil War to warn international public opinion against the dangers of communism, particularly in Latin America, where Italian fascism aimed to use anti-Bolshevism to bring the region into the orbit of Roman Latinity.³⁹ An ambitious objective, given Italy's lack of influence in the region and the harmful effect that their intervention in Spain had in nations like Mexico and the United States.⁴⁰ Equally, the Italians happily contributed their own anti-Bolshevik materials to the Francoist propaganda campaigns,⁴¹ and it is possible that an Italian proposal to hold an anti-communist world congress in Madrid or Seville – which does not appear to have taken place – referred to the same international conference the *Antikomintern* was preparing in collaboration with the Falange.⁴² Although we have not found conclusive evidence of this, both proposals were made in 1937 and it would be easy to surmise that their postponement and final abandonment had much to do with the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the non-aggression pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which made criticism of the Soviets highly inconvenient. In this sense, it is important to note that anti-Bolshevism was not just a rhetorical device. It was widely shared among many pro-Franco fighters.⁴³ Yet, despite this shared interest in anti-Bolshevik propaganda, the Italians did express concern about entering into direct collaboration with the Germans in this area. As Leonardo Vitteti pointed out, the increase in anti-Bolshevik propaganda on Germany's part was understandable, but the Nazis also took advantage of this propaganda to distract Britain from the aggressive Nazi foreign policy by further stoking fears about the Italian presence in the Mediterranean.⁴⁴ Such reservations were shared by other diplomats. The Italian consul to Munich, without opposing further collaboration with the Germans in these matters in principle, pointed out that this could lead to confusion on the nature of both regimes.⁴⁵ It was, obviously, not the first time fascist elites expressed concerns

37. Zeman, *Nazi propaganda*, 102.

38. Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern...', 584.

39. Ciano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to all diplomatic representatives in Central and South America, 15 August 1936, Document 741, M.d.A. Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939* (Roma 1993), vol. IV, 814.

40. F. Savarino, 'Bajo el signo del Littorio: la comunidad italiana en México y el fascismo (1924–1941)', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 64, 2 (2002), 120, 133; Bernardo Attolico, ambassador in Berlin, to Ciano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 11 December 1936, Document 572, M.d.A. Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939* (Roma 1994), 646–7.

41. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 449.

42. On the Italian proposal, *ibid.* 450; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 185.

43. M. Alonso Ibarra, 'Guerra Civil Española y contrarrevolución. El fascismo europeo bajo el signo de la santa cruz', *Ayer*, 109 (2018), 269–95.

44. Chargé d'affaires Leonardo Vitteti to the Foreign Affairs Minister, Ciano, 14 August 1936, Document 735, Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939*, vol IV, 805–6.

45. The General Consul to Munich, Pittalis, to the Foreign Affairs Minister, Ciano, 12 September 1936, Document 52, Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939*, vol V, 52.

about fascism losing ground in the face of National-Socialism. Hitler's rise to power in 1933 had already led to an intensification of fascist propaganda abroad and cultural diplomacy.⁴⁶

Such concerns could not disappear in the face of the very obvious increase in German propaganda activity in Spain. The Italian ambassador to Madrid, Orazio Pedrazzi, immediately noted the strength of the German colony in the country⁴⁷ and highlighted how, following the outbreak of the civil war, the Nazis had rapidly reactivated a long-standing network of institutions and collaborators in Spain. The Italian propaganda office, he added, paled in comparison to theirs. But it was not just a question of propaganda, Nazi Germany had contacts and emissaries everywhere that mattered, among the Falangists, the Carlists, the Air Force and, of course, the Francoist press office in Burgos. Although Pedrazzi noted that German propaganda was not directed against Italy, he still believed it should not go unanswered. He proposed to counteract German pressure by intensifying contacts between the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) and the Falange and the Carlists, particularly with their youth organizations. This policy owed much to the German example: 'The Germans do so and they create a vibrant atmosphere in their favour'.⁴⁸ Moreover, while Pedrazzi correctly highlighted the 'Italian flavour' of the Falange, he expressed concern about the Falange's attraction to National-Socialism. A worry conveniently stoked by the French ambassador, who had warned him that the Falange reserved 'German-like surprises' for Italy. The only solution was to stay close to the Falange, while increasing their support of the Carlists. Pedrazzi was not wrong when he identified the almost unhealthy obsession Germans like Faupel had with the Falange, which he considered a mistake. The Carlists, he thought, while less prominent nationally, held strong positions in certain regions and, more importantly, they had proven to be faithful and loyal friends of Italy. This preference for the Carlists was shared by Danzi, who rapidly established contact with them and the Falangists, as well as with the press office in Burgos.⁴⁹

46. B. Garzarelli, 'Fascismo e propaganda all'estero: Le origini della Direzione generale per la propaganda (1933–1934)', *Studi Storici*, Anno 43, April–June (2002), 491–9, 512. For further information on German-Italian relations during the fascist era, see Á. Alcalde, 'Towards Transnational Fascism: German Perceptions of Mussolini's Fascists and the Early NSDAP', *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 19, 2 (2018), 176–95; C. Goeschel, 'Italia docet?' The Relationship between Italian Fascism and Nazism Revisited, *European History Quarterly*, 42 (2012), 480–92; S. Reichardt and A. Nolzen, *Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland: Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich* (Göttingen 2005).

47. At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the German colony numbered between 13,000 and 15,000, although some Italian reports overestimated its size, citing 50,000 members. See Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*, 381; S.G. Payne, *Franco y Hitler: España, Alemania, la Segunda Guerra Mundial y el Holocausto* (Madrid 2008), 44; Report on the political and military situation, 28 June 1937, USSME, F6, b336.

48. Orazio Pedrazzi, ambassador in Madrid, to Ciano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 July 1936, Document 627, Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939*, vol IV, 704; 8 September 1936, Document 34, Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939*, vol V, 32–6.

49. Orazio Pedrazzi, ambassador in Madrid, to Ciano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 18 October 1936, Document 241, Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939*, vol V, 270–1. Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 183; Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 449. Faupel's obsession with the Falange also threatened to hinder German-Spanish military cooperation. According to Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, both him and the *Auslandsorganisation* tended to recruit German veterans already settled in Spain as military instructors, who all too often turned out to be pro-falangist agitators,

Danzi's USP shared some of the objectives of the *Sonderstab*, such as the compilation of propaganda material for domestic and international purposes. In this sense, the Italians placed high importance on documenting their own intervention to further consolidate the regime at home. Something that the German sources also highlighted.⁵⁰ However, this was not the only purpose of Danzi's office, which went into high gear during the first half of 1937, acting as a news agency for the Italian press, distributing as many Spanish-language leaflets on fascism as possible, dropping propaganda over enemy frontlines, distributing photographs among foreign journalists and publishing a bulletin showcasing the progress of Italian fascism, which was distributed to 70 newspapers, as well as a weekly mural newspaper. Additionally, the USP showed a particular interest in radio and film.⁵¹ Apart from the well-known activities of the *Istituto Nazionale LUCE*, which found a strong competitor in the German UFA,⁵² Danzi's office paid close attention to broadcasting for both propagandistic and economic reasons. The Italians worked to intercept European and Republican broadcasts and to provide propaganda materials, music and news items to all rebel broadcasters. Although the primary objective here was to support the war effort, particularly when their own men were fighting on the frontlines, broadcasting opened economic opportunities that both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany wanted to exploit, a clear instance in which Nazi-fascist propagandistic and economic interest aligned. Here, however, the Italians lost the first battle to the Germans, who quickly provided the financial and technical assistance needed to establish *Radio Nacional de España* (RNE), the rebel radio network. The broadcasting station itself was provided and set up by German technicians in January 1937. In return, the network committed to broadcasting a daily 15-min programme covering German news and one hour per week dedicated to German music and culture.⁵³ The idea had come from Goebbels himself, who considered the establishment of the station a priority, as it would help the rebels stay on message: 'Popular, non-military, state-led antisemitism and anti-Bolshevism. Insist on all this. This way, the Italians won't win the game'.⁵⁴

which caused complaints from the Spanish military, see Schüler-Springorum, *La guerra como aventura...*, Section Españoles 'nacionales'.

50. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 444; P.L. Cascio, 'La retaguardia italiana: el discurso del fascismo italiano en la Guerra Civil Española. El caso de la narrativa y ensayística publicada en Italia entre 1937 y 1942', *Revista Universitaria de Historia Militar*, 3, 6 (2014), 99–100; A. Aquarone, 'La guerra di Spagna e l'opinione pubblica italiana', *Il canocchiale*, 4–6 (1966), 3–36; L. Casali, 'L'opinione pubblica italiana e la guerra civile spagnola', *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, 42, 52 (1984); *Kulturbericht* written by Rudolf Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Botschaft Madrid 615.

51. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 447–9; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 206–7.

52. The USP also opted to distribute its newsreels and materials for free, following the German model, F. Monguilot-Benzal, 'El núcleo foto-cinematográfico del Instituto LUCE: un órgano de propaganda fascista en Salamanca durante la Guerra Civil Española (1936–1939)', *Archivos de la filmoteca: Revista de estudios históricos sobre la imagen*, 56 (2007), 159–60.

53. I. Schulze Schneider, 'Alemania y la Guerra Civil española: información y propaganda (1936–1937)', in *La Guerra Civil española 1936–1939, Congreso internacional, Madrid 27, 28 y 29 noviembre de 2006* (Madrid 2008), 17–9.

54. H. Raguer, 'La guerra civil vista por Goebbels', *Historia 16*, XIV, 153 (1989), 26.

The German influence over RNE did not preclude any influence from Italy. In fact, Italy broadcasted a news bulletin for the *Corpo de Truppe Volontarie* (CTV) from this station. However, it seems the situation also encouraged Italy to explore other options, like setting agreements with *Unión Radio*, *Radio Requeté* and *Radio Falange*, which in some cases included broadcasts in Italian. The most important initiative, however, was the establishment of *Radio Verdad*.⁵⁵ The prominence of Italian broadcasts within these initiatives highlights the importance that war propaganda – that is, propaganda addressed to one own's combatants and the enemy – had for the Italians. This was not the case for the Germans, who, having a much smaller footprint in terms of fighters, did not share this need. Military needs, however, did not blind Danzi and others to the economic possibilities that Franco's victory could bring in terms of broadcasting. Accordingly, the Italians entered negotiations with the rebels to provide them with broadcasting technicians and technology and maintained *Radio Verdad*, renamed *Radio Verdad Italo-Española* in 1939. Italy managed to reach some agreements that allowed them to have a share of the Spanish broadcasting sector after the war, but their advances were hindered by Germany, who continued to compete with them in this area.⁵⁶

In terms of propaganda, Nazi Germany would turn out to be Italy's most direct competitor.⁵⁷ Germany's advances in this area were already noticeable in the energetic activities of Faupel and the *Sonderstab*, whose main objective was to help consolidate Franco's regime as well as to establish strong relationships between Germany and Spain. This meant delivering a wide array of propaganda material and Spanish translations of German publications. In order to do so, they increased their activity, especially by feeding articles to the Spanish press – sometimes through bribery – and publishing two news-sheets: *El Observador del Reich*, a fortnightly bulletin on different aspects of German culture, politics and society, which supplied material to the Spanish news agency *Fabra*, and the weekly and better written *ASPA*, specifically addressed to Falangist leaders. Both publications made a special effort to highlight the social achievements of National-Socialism, although they also included anti-communist propaganda. Among others, Falangist newspapers like *Arriba* and *Amanecer* made use of the articles and news disseminated through *ASPA*.⁵⁸ This was not intended to interfere with the domestic politics of the rebel zone or to press Franco to give preferential treatment to the Falange, yet Faupel's conviction that the strength of any future alliance with the new Spain relied on the unequivocal triumph of the Falangists led to his increased involvement in Spanish politics. This attitude is unsurprising, however, given that he had been pursuing such a policy as the head of the German-Spanish Society, and that this

55. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 448–50, 453; A. Pizarroso Quintero, 'Intervención extranjera y propaganda. La propaganda exterior de las dos Españas', *Historia y Comunicación Social*, 6 (2001), 66; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 209–10.

56. Pizarroso Quintero, 'Italia y España franquista...', 37–8; see also USSME, F18, b45.

57. Pizarroso Quintero, 'Italia y España franquista...', 46.

58. AGA 9 (17.14) 51/21105; Hans Kröger to the German Embassy, 12 May 1939, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 716; Schulze Schneider, 'Alemania y la guerra civil española: información y propaganda', 60; A. Pizarroso Quintero, *Historia de la propaganda: Notas para un estudio de la propaganda política y de "guerra"* (Madrid 1990), 375.

organization and the Ibero-American Institute continued to support his work along these lines.⁵⁹

Thanks to these institutions and an increasing admiration among Falangists for National-Socialism, Faupel found a close collaborator in the foreign section of the Falange, established in Berlin in 1936 and led by Luis Casaús. This organization, directly supported by the German-Spanish Society until February 1937, showed special interest in receiving detailed information on the organization of the Nazi state and facilitated travel arrangements for Germans who wanted to travel to Spain to film the war. Moreover, the organization expressed a direct interest in receiving Nazi propaganda to disseminate in Spain and willingly shared information with the Germans on the amount and type of propaganda they received from Italy and Portugal.⁶⁰ Still, Faupel seemed eager to counteract Italian attempts to influence the formation of the new regime. In March 1937, he noted a considerable increase in Italian cultural propaganda: 'It seems as if in every shop there is a portrait of Mussolini. Local tradespeople have been well-stocked with books in Spanish that describe fascism and the work of developing fascism in Italy'.⁶¹ If Nazi Germany wanted to safeguard its future interests on the peninsula, it would be necessary to provide translations of key works on National-Socialist legislation and structures, including on hygiene and eugenics. Consequently, he asked the Ibero-American Institute to compile a bibliography. He also requested postcards of the Führer and other Nazi personalities to counteract the overwhelming presence of Mussolini's portrait across rebel Spain.⁶² Also concerning were, according to Faupel, the increased contacts between the Falange and the PNF, particularly constant attempts by the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* to influence the Falangist youth organization. In response, he intensified contacts between the Falange and the Hitler Youth through the German-Spanish Society and worked with Baldur von Schirach to fund a German-Spanish summer camp in Germany.⁶³ Moreover, the *Sonderstab* asked the Promi to arrange for 30–40 places in the leadership schools of the *Hitlerjugend* to be reserved for Falangists,⁶⁴ showcasing the tight connection between Nazi cultural policy and propaganda work. Education and training were clearly the best guarantee for effective propaganda within the Falange, which in turn would influence the government and the rest of the country.

59. Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas...', 27–44.

60. Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas...', 27–44; W.H. Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the New Order* (Columbia 2000), 13–4, 26, 29. See correspondence between the foreign section of the Falange and several German organizations, particularly the *Auslandorganisation*, the *Sonderstab* and the *Deutsche-Fichte Bund*, AGA (9) 17.12 51/20891.

61. Wilhelm Faupel, ambassador to Salamanca, to the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Berlin, 12 March 1937, AA/PA, Madrid Botschaft 615. On the contacts between the Falange, and other political parties, with the PNF, see Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*

62. Wilhelm Faupel, ambassador to Salamanca, to the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Berlin, 12 March 1937, AA/PA, Madrid Botschaft 615.

63. Correspondence between Wilhelm Faupel and Baldur von Sirach, June–July 1937, AA/PA, Botschaft Madrid 703.

64. Kröger, legation council, to the Propaganda Ministry, 19 November 1937, AA/PA, Botschaft Madrid 703.

March 1937, however, saw a shift in policy from Berlin, which sidelined the Berlin Falange and prioritized Germany's support for Franco and the war effort. This meant that Faupel required permission from the Spanish authorities before handing out invitations to visit Germany, so as to ensure that such invitations would not hinder the rebel war effort.⁶⁵ Although he took note of this change, he continued to support the Falange in ways that did not always benefit Spanish–German relations. This attitude relied heavily on his pro-Falangist stance but Danzi's activities must also have played a role in encouraging this behaviour. The Italian diplomat had approached Franco in January 1937 to encourage him to give his regime a clearly fascist character. In order to do so, he offered to launch a widespread propaganda campaign, which, through print, radio and film, would foster an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding for fascism. He even took credit for inspiring Franco's decision to create a single party and began working, alongside Vicente Gay – delegate of the Francoist *Junta* for cultural relations and also on the Nazis' payroll – on the ideological platform of said party, convinced as he was of the increasingly Italophile character of the Falange.⁶⁶ Danzi had to abandon his collaboration with Vicente Gay under Ciano's orders, but his desire to fascistize Spain had already been noted by Faupel himself: 'Signor Danzi, the very young and extremely active leader of the local *fascio*, some days ago gave General Franco or his brother a draft made by him, Danzi, of a constitution leaning heavily on the Italian model. From statements which Franco made to me, I do not believe that he will consider adopting this draft. [...] The best thing Franco could do would be to put into immediate effect some of the proposals for reform which have already been prepared by the Falange, partly with German collaboration, and make use of suitable representatives of the Falange itself for this purpose.'⁶⁷ Despite Danzi's intense activity, Faupel was confident Germany would leave its mark on Francoism through falangist social policies that were being developed with Nazi assistance. For him, the purpose of this ideological (and propagandistic) work was threefold: ensure an alliance with Spain, transform the country into a key source of raw materials in the future and prevent any further influence on the country on the part of France and Britain. Although Fascist Italy was not his main concern, any fascist advance in this area could endanger, or at least hinder, his own agenda.

Unfortunately for Faupel, his meddling in Spanish politics, particularly around the events that precipitated the Unification Decree – the fusion of all rebel political parties into a single party – led to his replacement by Eberhard von Stohrer in late August 1937. This, however, did not put an end to his close relationship with FET, which

65. Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas...', 36.

66. *Ufficio Storico, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito* (USSME), F6, 327; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 185, 190, 196.

67. Wilhelm Faupel, ambassador in Salamanca, to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, 1 May 1937, Document 248, *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945. Serie D: 1937–1945, Band III Deutschland und der Spanische Bürgerkrieg 1936–1939*, 237.

he continued to pursue after resuming his role at the head of the German-Spanish Society and the Ibero-American Institute in early 1938. From Berlin, he continued to foster the relationship between the Women's Section and the Youth Organizations with their Nazi equivalents and re-established formal academic exchanges between both countries.⁶⁸ Moreover, Faupel soon transformed the Society and the Ibero-American Institute, which now shared the same building, into the centre of Spanish pilgrimages to Nazi Germany, making sure that no one of importance in Spain was deprived of an invitation to visit Berlin,⁶⁹ a role the institute continued to perform after the end of the civil war.

March 1937 was also important for Fascist Italy. That month, the CTV suffered a humiliating defeat in Guadalajara. As noted by Javier Rodrigo, few armies have been the object of more ridicule than the Italian army in Spain.⁷⁰ It was at this point that the prominent presence of so many Italian soldiers, once highlighted by German diplomats as obvious propaganda for Italy,⁷¹ turned against them. Moreover, their defeat seemed to favour the Germans. In a CTV report, the Italians, still reeling from the humiliation, complained bitterly about the Spaniards' ingratitude and noted how, despite the limited military support provided by the Germans, 'with their rigid and imperious attitude, they are heard much louder than the Italians, they [the Germans] are more prestigious and admired [than us]'. The report, however, blamed the Spaniards more than the Germans: 'They have inherited the ferocity of the inquisitors, the duplicity and untrustworthiness of the Arabs, the haughtiness of the Grandees of Spain'. This made them unable to properly repay Italy's kindness.⁷² What this report and others did not recognize, however, was that fascist propaganda could magnify rather than mitigate their humiliation due to its tendency to boast about every Italian success in a way that made it seem as if the war was actually being fought between the Republicans and the Italians. Complaints on these issues eventually led to the production of two LUCE newsreels, one for Italian consumption and another for Spanish consumption.⁷³ In this sense, the gap between propaganda and performance, as well as jealousy and unease among the three allies, more than the actual military prowess or efficiency of the Italians made

68. Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas...', 38–9; Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the New Order*, 13, 50; Janué i Miret, 'Relaciones culturales en el «Nuevo orden»...', 814–5; A. Morant i Ariño, 'Envers la Nova Europa (i tornada). La col·laboració de la Secció Femenina i del Fronte de Juventudes en les activitats "culturals" de les Joventuts Hitlerianes (1940–1943)', in ed. Cabana, Lanero & Santidrián (coords.) *VII Encuentro de Investigadores del franquismo* (Santiago de Compostela 2011), 571–81; T. Morant i Ariño, 'Spanish Fascist Women's Transnational Relations during the Second World War: Between Ideology and Realpolitik', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54, 4 (2019), 834–57.

69. W.H. Bowen, 'Spanish Pilgrimages to Hitler's Germany: Emissaries of the New Order', *The Historian*, 71, 2 (2009), 258–79; J. Tusell, *Franco y Mussolini* (Barcelona 1985), 118.

70. Rodrigo, 'Fascist Civil Warfare...', 103.

71. *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615.

72. USSME, F6, b335.

73. A.F.d. Terán, 'Relaciones cinematográficas del primer Franquismo: Cifesa, UFA y Cinecité', unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad CEU San Pablo (2013), 93–4; Monguilot-Benzal, 'El núcleo foto-cinematográfico del Instituto LUCE...', 161, 167.

them the subject of ridicule across the rebel camp.⁷⁴ Here, the Italians proved much less mindful of Spanish sensibilities than the Nazis. It is also true, however, that while Italy wanted to highlight its participation, Germany benefitted from concealing its activity in order to strengthen its anti-Bolshevik campaign, which partly explains these opposing attitudes. Something that did not escape German pilot Hans Frieder Rost who, in his diary, highlighted how the Italians took credit for every aerial victory, while they had to do everything in secrecy.⁷⁵

To make up for the setback, Danzi was ordered to reorganize the USP, for which he received an increased budget, 185,000 pesetas, by July 1937. Faupel worried about this development, overestimating Danzi's monthly budget at 240,000–500,000 pesetas and expressing concern about the Italian embassy's influence over some military circles. He did, however, believe that Franco was fully aware of the key military contribution by the Germans.⁷⁶ The USP increased its activity, trying to improve its war propaganda. Most of its budget was devoted to the publication of *Il Legionario*. This paper, which ran from March 1937 to August 1938, was written in Italian and aimed at the Italian troops, although it was also made freely available to Spanish soldiers. This centring of propaganda activities on the CTV is not surprising given the circumstances. Moreover, it seemed to respond to criticism of Danzi's work, which was not only excessively biased but paid more attention to the demoralization of the enemy than to the morale of their own soldiers. However, German reports, written after Faupel's departure, dismissed this propaganda. According to Rudolf Bobrik – council to the German embassy –, the oversaturation of Spanish media and the directness of fascist propaganda had the opposite effect, making the Italians the laughing stock of the rebel zone.⁷⁷ Eventually, Danzi's bloated budget, clashes with the *Missione Militare Italiana in Spagna* (MMIS) and the Italian ambassador as well as his notorious and costly lifestyle, led to his dismissal in August of 1937.⁷⁸ The almost simultaneous departure of Danzi and Faupel marked the beginning of a shift in both propaganda campaigns. Without neglecting contacts with FET, their successors paid more attention to winning the war and ensuring a long-term political and economic alliance with Spain, than to meddling in Spanish politics. Both nations aimed to maintain good contacts with all political factions in rebel Spain and to avoid throwing their full support behind any of them.

Danzi was soon replaced by Carlo Bossi, previously Italian consul in Barcelona. Bossi's main objective was to clean up the USP's books, which involved considerable budget cuts.

74. On the military performance of the Italians, see Gooch, *Mussolini's War...* On how issues like cultural stereotypes and practical aspects like the higher salary of the German soldiers shaped relations among Spanish, Italian, and German combatants, see Schüler-Springorum, *La guerra como aventura...*

75. Cited in *ibid*, Section Italianos.

76. USSME, F6, b335; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 206; Faupel, ambassador in Salamanca, to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, 9 July 1937, Document 390, *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945. Serie D: 1937–1945, Band III Deutschland und der Spanische Bürgerkrieg 1936–1939*, 344.

77. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 454–7; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 210–1; *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615.

78. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 451–2; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 211.

He further prioritized propaganda campaigns aimed at his own soldiers, including the launch of a travelling library and eventually replacing the costly *Il Legionario* with cheaper and more readily available publications.⁷⁹ He did not, however, neglect Italy's long-term objectives of making Spain into a reliable ally. In this sense, the USP launched a propaganda campaign centred on corporatism, which, in tandem with Ernesto Marchiandi's work, heavily influenced the *Fuero del Trabajo*, clearly inspired on the *Carta del Lavoro* of 1927, the basis of fascist labour law. Although the Italians recognized that the final document could easily become a paper tiger, the campaign illustrated the political purpose of the USP.⁸⁰ In fact, nazi-fascist influence did encounter some limitations in Francoist Spain. Despite promising signs, like the existence of *Auxilio de Invierno* – the falangist welfare agency created in the image of the German *Winterhilfe* – and increasingly close contacts between falangist youth groups and Nazi-fascist organizations, already mentioned in this article, not every axis-inspired initiative was to succeed. That was, prominently, the case of the project for the reorganization of the Spanish single party, championed, among others by Dionisio Ridruejo, the party's general propaganda officer. The project, heavily influenced by National-Socialism, would have increased the power and influence of the party beyond limits acceptable to Franco.⁸¹ Its rejection clearly marked the lines that could not be crossed, namely that any Nazi-fascist-inspired initiative could only be developed if it served to further consolidate Franco's power, never the opposite.

In the meantime, Eberhard von Stohrer replaced Faupel as German ambassador to Salamanca. The new ambassador, who had been the original choice of the German Foreign Ministry, had already served in Spain during the First World War. The problem was that the *Sonderstab*, which had been partially designed to compete with the *Wilhelmstrasse* and behaved as a sort of parallel embassy,⁸² did not let go of its bad habits once Faupel left for Berlin, causing constant problems to Stohrer and tarnishing German–Spanish relations. Moreover, Köhn had no sympathies for Stohrer, whom he defined as an old-school diplomat, 'the worst kind'.⁸³ The *Sonderstab*'s insistence on promoting National-Socialism instead of falling in line with the Embassy's guidelines, complaints on the part of the Spanish government and the arrival of Hans Lazar – a skilled propagandist, who would ally himself to Stohrer – would be the end of the group's presence in Spain, which was finally dissolved in July 1939.⁸⁴

79. Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda del "Corpo Truppe Volontarie"...', 452–7; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 212.

80. Viola, ambassador in Salamanca, to Ciano, Foreign Affairs Minister, 20 January 1938, Document 59, M.d.A. Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939* (Rome 1999), vol VIII, 65; USSME, F6, b336; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 191–9.

81. See Draft for a reorganization of F.E.T. y de las J.O.N.S., AGA, 9 (17.02) 51/18956; D. Ridruejo, *Casi unas memorias* (Barcelona 1977), 195; M. Peñalba Sotorriño, *La secretaría general del Movimiento: construcción, coordinación y estabilización del régimen franquista* (Madrid 2015), 140–6.

82. Waddington, 'The Anti-Komintern...', 582–3; K.-J. Ruhl, *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich": España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Torrejón de Ardoz 1986), 46.

83. E. Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* (Munich 1995–2001), vol 6, 248.

84. See correspondence between Eberhard von Stohrer and the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Berlin in *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945. Serie D: 1937–1945, Band III Deutschland und der Spanische Bürgerkrieg 1936–1939*, 770, 772–3, 782, 784 and AA/PA R29854.

The Lazar-Stohrer tandem marked a shift in Nazi propaganda, pulling away from Faupel's radical pro-Falangism and prioritizing the construction of a long and stable relationship between both countries. In this sense, Lazar rapidly expanded his network of contacts, establishing a strong relationship with high officials in the Spanish government, the editors of the major newspapers and, particularly, influential Falangists.⁸⁵ German propagandists continued to expand the reach of the German news agency *DNB*, which had a strong relationship with the Spanish news agency *Fabra*. Since 1935 they had been running the *Servicio especial de colaboración internacional*, a joint initiative that delivered articles of Nazi origin to the Spanish press, while appearing as an exclusively Spanish operation. The Axis influence over the media only increased in November 1938, when Spain created EFE, a state news agency, which absorbed *Fabra* and received most of its information from the German *DNB* and *Transocean*, and Italy's *Stefani*.⁸⁶ Although the Italians also provided materials to the Spanish press and pursued the introduction of Italian writers in Falangist journals, the reach of the *DNB* – which the Italians complained sought to sideline the Italian *Stefani*⁸⁷ – and Lazar's contacts with Francoist elites would soon translate into an increase in Germany's presence with respect to Italy's, which would only grow with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Still, by 1938, both nations continued to work towards the construction of solid cultural relations with Spain. As part of this long-term strategy, Bossi assisted in the creation of new *fasci*, which more than tripled in number between 1936 and 1938. This was particularly significant because, along with the Italian institutes of culture, the *fasci* organized their own language courses, which Ciano believed were the cornerstone of their cultural policy.⁸⁸ Bobrik noted the fervent activity of the *fasci* and other organizations, like the news agency *Stefani*, but did not think much of it. His general tone was dismissive of Italian propaganda, which he considered too open and often counterproductive. What is clear, however, is that language learning was central to both Germany and Italy, not only because it brought Spain culturally and ideologically closer to the Axis but because of its commercial value.⁸⁹ Here, once again, the dividing line between propaganda, cultural diplomacy and commercial interest seemed to evaporate. In this sense, both nations were also aware that translations and continued exports of books to Spain

85. A.C. Moreno Cantano, 'Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936–1945)', unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad de Alcalá de Henares (2008), 127.

86. Schulze Schneider, 'Alemania y la guerra civil española...', 59. Bobrik also noted the success of this service during the civil war, *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615; Moreno Cantano, 'Los servicios de prensa extranjera...', 120.

87. V. Peña Sánchez, 'Intelectuales y fascismo. Contribución al estudio de la cultura italiana del *Ventennio Fascista* y su repercusión en España', unpublished PhD thesis, Universidad de Granada (1992), 253–6; Report on the political and military situation, 28 June 1937, USSME, F6, b336.

88. Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 213; Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 323–7.

89. Bobrik, for example, considered that the lack of German readers in Spain made his work much more difficult and recommended an increase in translations, *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615. And Italy developed a strong policy to increase, among other things, the number of language courses in Spain, particularly in school, Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 311.

served to make inroads into the Latin-American market. Significantly, Germany refused to grant Spain a monopoly over the translation of German books to Spanish.⁹⁰

Matters improved further for the Axis when the Francoist regime made German and Italian mandatory foreign languages in high school, which helped to erode French influence. This measure, and the willing collaboration of Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, head of the *Instituto España*, further facilitated the Axis strategy of increasing book imports, which now found a greater number of willing readers. It seems, however, that his actions tended to benefit the Italians much more than the Germans.⁹¹ In any case, the cultural and economic value of this strategy stoked fascist competitiveness. Italy increased imports of books – 117,565 in 1938 alone, extended invitations to political and professional elites to visit Italy, provided scholarships and published the journal *Legiones y falanges* in collaboration with FET. This fervent activity responded to the concerns of the *Istituto per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero*, increasingly wary not only of Nazi activities but also of Italy's lack of coordination in terms of cultural policy, which threatened the pre-eminence of fascist culture among the Spanish rebels. Both the increase in imported books and the organization of a travelling book fair for Spain and Portugal responded to Italy's desire to counteract similar Nazi initiatives.⁹² As a result, Spain was inundated with Nazi-fascist publications, and the *Instituto de Estudios Políticos* became a channel for the introduction of fascist and Nazi ideas.⁹³ Here, the strong link between cultural diplomacy and propaganda becomes even more noticeable. As Aristotle Kallis has highlighted, the most effective propaganda must make use of a shared vocabulary and terminology that can bridge the gap between the traditional social systems that the propagandist aims to modify and the alternative values and ideas they seek to impose.⁹⁴ In this sense, the promotion of language, literature and legislation paved the way for a more positive reception of propagandistic arguments and leitmotifs

90. *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615; Italy had been exploring this avenue during the interwar period, Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 138, 337; L. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel: acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo* (Madrid 1992), 99.

91. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel...*, 85–9, 97; Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*, 388–9, 397; Sánchez, 'Intelectuales y Fascismo...', 251–5; Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 215–6; Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 333; *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615.

92. Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 213–4; Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 314. Nazi Germany organized one book fair in Salamanca in 1938, followed by another one which, between December 1938 and July 1939, travelled through Seville, Malaga, Granada and Bilbao, Janué i Miret, 'Relaciones culturales en el «Nuevo orden»...', 815; Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 341.

93. Domínguez Méndez, 'Apuntes sobre la exportación del libro...', 8–10; Janué i Miret, 'Un instrumento de los intereses nacionalsocialistas...', 27–44; N. Sesma Landrín, 'Importando el Nuevo Orden. El Instituto de Estudios Políticos y la recepción de la cultura fascista y nacionalsocialista en España (1939–1943)', in F. Gallego and F. Morente (eds.), *Rebeldes y reaccionarios. Intelectuales, fascismo y derecha radical en Europa* (Mataró 2011), 243–79.

94. Kallis, *Nazi propaganda...*, 4.

rooted in a shared – although not exempt from contradictions – vision of the New (fascist) Order.⁹⁵

Fascist Italy's increasingly reactive policy towards Nazi propaganda was the reflection of a political shift in the Spanish political arena. Although Italy had been the model for Falangists and pro-fascists in Spain for a long time, by 1937, Nazi Germany began to replace Fascist Italy as a model. The years 1937–43 mark the high point of Spanish admiration for Nazi Germany.⁹⁶ This was not exclusive to Francoist Spain; Giuseppe Bottai remarked in July 1938 that 'Nazi Germany appears to have become the benchmark for our fascist faith. A trip to Germany is a feather-in-cap for party functionaries hoping to advance'.⁹⁷

As a result, Italian competition with Germany increased over the last months of the war, and it is no surprise that the Italian ambassador, Viola, expressed a certain *schadenfreude* at any setback experienced by the Germans. That is what happened in July 1938 when Stohrer became increasingly concerned by anti-Axis propaganda and approached Viola to ask for a concerted action towards Franco to deal with it. If we are to believe Viola, the German setback, which would have placed Stohrer in a vulnerable position akin to that of Faupel in 1937, was really down to their bombing of Cerbère and Portbou against Franco's orders, tense mining-rights negotiations between Spain and Germany, and the psychology of the Spaniards – particularly regarding their Catholicism – which he deemed incompatible with the Nazis. He happily noted that Italian–Spanish relations, on the other hand, were excellent and that anti-Axis propaganda was aimed exclusively at Nazi Germany. As such, he saw no reason for supporting Stohrer.⁹⁸ Simultaneously, Ottavio de Peppo – head of the Foreign Affairs cabinet – recommended exploiting the Spaniards' religious sentiments to weaken Germany's position, in light of the undoubtedly harmful effect that Nazi policy towards the Austrian church was having on Catholicism.⁹⁹ This was not the first time the Germans registered difficulties in their cultural and propagandistic work. Early that year, Bobrik had already noted that many Spaniards, some within relevant political circles, believed that the war would have been over already if foreign powers had not intervened in pursuit of their own interests. The best way to counteract these issues was to avoid imposing attitudes and pursue indirect cultural propaganda.¹⁰⁰ Yet, the Cultural Agreement brokered by

95. On the New Order and recent research on how different – but always anti-liberal – ideas of Europe were negotiated in the international cultural arena, see J. Dalfinger and D. Pohl (eds.), *Mussolini, Hitler, and the purging of Europe, in A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler*, (Oxon 2019).

96. Núñez Seixas, 'Spanish Views of Nazi Germany...', 858–79.

97. Cited in P. Baxa, 'Capturing the Fascist Moment: Hitler's Visit to Italy in 1938 and the Radicalization of Fascist Italy', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42, 2 (2007), 240. By 1937, the number of German delegations to Italy had increased so much that Hitler only allowed those who counted on his personal authorization to travel there in an official capacity. See Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler...*, 72.

98. The ambassador in Salamanca, Viola, to Ciano, minister of Foreign Affairs, 3 July 1938, Document 280, M.d.A. Esteri, *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani. Ottava Serie: 1935–1939* (Rome 2001), vol IX, 376–8.

99. The head of the cabinet, De Peppo, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ciano, 3 July 1938, Document 281, *ibid.* vol IX, 378. On the Austrian situation, R.V. Luza, *The Resistance in Austria, 1938–1945* (Minneapolis 1984), 66–72.

100. *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615.

Sáinz Rodríguez, the most important Nazi initiative in this area, was halted by the Vatican's mistrust which eventually forced Franco's government to drop the project.¹⁰¹

As the war approached its end, the Axis sought to play a part in the reconstruction of Spain. Propaganda and cultural policy were soon mobilized in the interest of economic opportunism. Italy grew increasingly wary of Germany's activities in this area: 'the few businesses that are there, they [the Germans] want to do it themselves and for that purpose they have invaded the country with an army of traveling salesmen'.¹⁰² In fact, many cultural exchanges were intended to ensure Italy's participation in the reconstruction effort.¹⁰³ However, here the Germans proved to be strong competitors, particularly thanks to the rapid expansion of the HISMA-ROWAK industrial complex and, according to Stohrer, their superior advertising work.¹⁰⁴ To try and fight the Germans for a piece of the Spanish market, the MMIS proposed to organize an exhibition in order to showcase the military and media technical equipment they could provide to the Spaniards. Competition with the Germans in terms of price and technology is probably one of the reasons why the Italians donated so much equipment to Spain upon leaving the country at the end of the war. Donations that, incidentally, would harm their own performance in the Second World War. In the coming years, looking to curtail the increasing Nazi influence over the Spanish rebels, Italy designed a broad cultural program with a budget of 70,000 lire centralized in the new *Istituto Italiano de Cultura* established in Madrid. Italian investment, however, would be halted with the outbreak of the Second World War.¹⁰⁵ In the German case, though, Lazar's continued presence in Spain between 1938 and 1945 increased the reach of German propaganda and cultural diplomacy to new heights...that is, until things started to go wrong for the Axis.¹⁰⁶

Although fascist propaganda was wide-ranging during this period, Nazi Germany ended up in a much more beneficial position while investing less effort. Higher military involvement on the part of Italy necessarily put war propaganda at the centre of any campaign. This was further highlighted by the propagandistic value of their military intervention in the domestic sphere. Nazi Germany's participation, on the contrary, was militarily

101. Agreement for spiritual and cultural collaboration between Spain and Germany, 1939, AGA 5 (15) Lg.19927; Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel...*, 99–100; J.M. Sanchez, 'The Popes and Nazi Germany: The View from Madrid', *Journal of Church and State*, 38, 2 (1996), 372–3.

102. Cantalupo, *Embajada en España*, 74.

103. Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 333.

104. On the development of economic German-Spanish relations, see: R.García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich: Las relaciones económicas hispano-alemanas durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Madrid 1994); C. Leitz, *The economic relations between Nazi Germany and Franco Spain, 1936–1945*, (Oxford, 1994); P. Barbieri, *Hitler's shadow empire: Nazi economics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge 2015); The ambassador's notes, 25 October 1937, Document 455, *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945. Serie D: 1937–1945, Band III Deutschland und der Spanische Bürgerkrieg 1936–1939*, 408.

105. On the MMIS initiative, see USSME, F18, b9 and b45, F6, b327, b336; Sullivan, 'Fascist Italy's Military Involvement...', 711; Domínguez Méndez, 'La política cultural del fascismo en España...', 314, 364–5; Pizarroso Quintero, 'Italia y España franquista...', 36. The Italian desire to consolidate its influence in terms of press and propaganda vis-à-vis its competitors, Britain, France and Germany, was present from the beginning of the conflict, Rodrigo, *La guerra fascista...*, 208–9.

106. M. Peñalba-Sotorrio, 'Beyond the War: Nazi Propaganda Aims in Spain during the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 54, 4 (2019), 902–26.

significant but less costly in terms of men. This also gave propagandists free rein to focus more on other objectives, such as capitalizing on the Spanish Civil War for their international anti-communist campaign and reactivating a strong cultural policy, which could strengthen Spanish–German relations and protect Germany’s economic interests in Spain. Moreover, the Nazi anti-Bolshevik campaign could only be successful if Nazi Germany concealed, as much as possible, its intervention in the country. This required, therefore, a more careful deployment of propaganda and tighter collaboration with the Spaniards. Regardless of its effectiveness, this attitude contrasted greatly with that of the fascist propagandists, who were more worried about showcasing the strength of fascism than avoiding any offence to their allies. This, combined with a broad discoordination of their propaganda activities, harmed their chances of success.

In both cases, however, we see increasing attempts, in 1937, to fascistize or nazify Franco’s regime at a fundamental juncture in its development. Yet, the common shift in policy, following Danzi and Faupel’s departure, towards a propaganda strategy centred around preserving a long-term alliance with Spain and preventing Franco-British influence points towards a revalorization of traditional foreign policy objectives over exclusively ideological ones. The nationalistic agenda of both regimes naturally imposed itself over any potential desire to make Spain into a miniature version of National-Socialism or fascism. Cultural diplomacy and propaganda, which inevitably became enmeshed during this period, proved central to achieving these objectives. This further shows how, as demonstrated by Benjamin Martin, both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy made use of the mechanics of internationalism and culture to infiltrate other nations’ cultural markets and steer their policies and populations towards the construction of a New (fascist) Order, one ultimately geared towards ‘Germany’s domination of the continent’ and in the case of Fascist Italy, Rome’s centrality to European culture.¹⁰⁷

The civil war was also a turning point in Spanish–German relations, one which saw Fascist Italy’s political influence over the Spanish right decrease in favour of Nazism. Here, Nazi Germany benefitted from a centuries-old scientific and intellectual relationship¹⁰⁸ which made reactivating its old cultural networks easier once the war started. This, paired with a very clear propaganda focus and Lazar’s skill, produced a steadily growing network that would prove very useful during the Second World War. Fascist Italy, on the other hand, conducted a campaign that was as large as it was uncoordinated, a problem the Italians tried to solve in 1939 by centralizing all cultural activities. Italy’s mistrust of Nazi Germany and its reluctance to accept a subaltern position to National-Socialism led Italy to conduct a reactive propaganda policy in Spain. Although German sources became increasingly indifferent to, if not dismissive of, fascist propaganda by 1938, Italy continued to perceive Germany as one of its strongest competitors. Therefore, the extent of fascist propaganda in Spain responded more to fascism’s self-perceived weakness than to its strength. The end of the Spanish Civil War, which came with a decrease in Italian propaganda activity, further confirmed Fascist

107. Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*, 6–7, 11.

108. Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania...*, 434; *Kulturbericht* prepared by legation council R. Bobrik, February 1938, AA/PA Madrid Botschaft 615.

Italy's regression in Spain vis-à-vis Nazi Germany. This was part of a wider development of German–Italian relations, in which Nazi-fascist nationalist and imperialist objectives inevitably clashed, at times, with each other. Although this relationship was dominated by Nazi Germany, Italy's refusal to relinquish its own ambitions engendered a dynamic of collaboration and competition, reciprocity and hostility, often plagued by petty jealousies and national stereotypes,¹⁰⁹ which manifested itself very clearly in the Spanish arena.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Hannah Malone and, particularly, Christian Goeschel for their support and the opportunity to present the first drafts of this work at their conference on the comparative cultural history of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (Berlin 2019), and at the Rethinking Modern Europe Seminar Series at the Institute of Historical Research in London (2021). The author also wants to thank the University of Manchester Cultures of Diplomacy Group for providing a much-needed space for helpful debate. Special thanks to those who provided comments and questions on this work, particularly Charlotte Faucher, Lucy Riall, Matthew Kerry, Neil Gregor, Craig Griffiths, Mahon Murphy and Nick Piercey.

Funding

This research has been funded by the Irish Research Council [Project: GOIPD/2014/485 The Axis Brotherhood: the role of propaganda and FET-NSDAP relations in Spanish policy during World War II] and by the Madrid Government (Comunidad de Madrid-Spain) under the Multiannual Agreement with Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in the line of action encouraging youth research doctors, in the context of the V PRICIT (Regional Programme of Research and Technological Innovation). (Referencia SII/PJI/2019-00257).

ORCID iD

Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2774-7556>

Biographical Note

Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrío is senior lecturer in European Modern History at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is author of *La Secretaría General del Movimiento: construcción, coordinación y estabilización del régimen franquista* (*The General Secretariat of FET y de las JONS. Construction, coordination and stabilization of Franco's regime*), and several articles on the history of Francoism, and German–Spanish relations during the Second World War. She is currently working on a monograph on the development of Nazi propaganda campaigns in Spain and Spanish–German relations during the Second World War.

109. Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*, 11; Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler...*, 7, 90, 295–6.