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### **HANS LAZAR, MASTER OF PROPAGANDA**

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## Hans Lazar, master of propaganda

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In 1938, an Austrian national, Hans Josef Lazar, arrived in Spain as representative of the Transocean news agency. Months later, he became press attaché for the German Embassy in Madrid and ambassador Eberhard von Stohrer's confidant. From that point onwards he would become the main architect of German propaganda campaigns in Spain throughout the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Even in the midst of the power struggles between Joachim von Ribbentrop and Joseph Goebbels, his two masters, and the defeat of 1945, Lazar would managed, both figuratively and literally, to survive. Protected by the Spanish government, his name conveniently disappeared from the list of Nazi officials that the Allies pretended to extract from Spain in order to de-Nazify her. However, although Lazar had quite an important role in German politics regarding Spain during World War II, he remains a mysterious and elusive figure. Always present when we approach the analysis of the German presence in Spain in this period, his figure never reveals itself clearly enough. In fact, most references to him in Spanish historiography are based in written testimonials. Statements by diplomats and members of the elite, such as Ramón Garriga or Samuel Hoare<sup>1</sup>, fostered, even further, that mysterious and almost omnipotent characterization of Lazar. Moreover, the chapters journalists such as José María de Irujo and Juan Juárez Camacho<sup>2</sup> had devoted to the character are full of factual errors and rely too much in biased witness accounts, contributing to surround the character more by mystery than clarity. Notorious exceptions are Ruhl and Sáenz Francés' references to the character, as they base their appreciations on German documents in the first case, and the press attaché's memoirs in the second<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, no specific study on Lazar has surfaced yet.

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<sup>1</sup> Ramón GARRIGA: *La España de Franco. Las relaciones con Hitler*, Madrid, G. del Toro, 1977; Samuel John Gurney Hoare TEMPLEWOOD: *Ambassador on special mission*, London,, Collins, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Jose María IRUJO: *La lista negra : los espías nazis protegidos por Franco y la Iglesia*, Madrid, Aguilar, 2003; Javier JUÁREZ: *Madrid, Londres, Berlín : espía de Franco al servicio de Hitler*, Madrid, Temas de Hoy, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Klaus-Jörg RUHL: *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich" : España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, Madrid, Ediciones Akal, 1986, and Emilio SÁENZ-FRANCÉS SAN BALDOMERO: *Entre la antorcha y la esvástica : Franco en la encrucijada de la II Guerra Mundial*, San Sebastián de los Reyes, Actas Editorial, 2009.

I will argue in this paper that such a study on Hans Lazar can serve as a window into the conflicted and convulsed first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as a better understanding of several aspects and problems that characterize the period, specially those related to World War II, such as the place of ideology in the employment of elites within the Nazi regime, a better understanding of the functioning of the Nazi state, the way in which Nazi propaganda was designed for Spain, or why was the German embassy in this country the largest of the Reich.

Hans Josef Lazar, born to Alfred Lazar, an Austrian national born in Croatia, and the Turkish Sophie Missu, in Constantinople in 1895, was an Austrian national of Armenian origin. His father had worked as a dragoman, namely an official interpreter and guide for Arab, Persian and Turkish countries and European states, for the Austrian consulate in the Ottoman Empire<sup>4</sup>. Later on, while serving as press attaché in Spain, Lazar would be suspected of being a Jew, quite improbable given his origin but handy as a way to disqualify him. In fact, Lazar's characterization as Jewish, which we owe to NSDAP's suspicions and witnesses' reports, such as those of Aline Griffith and Samuel Hoare<sup>5</sup>, is a good example of the wide dissemination of Anti-Semitism in Western Europe. Being well connected, presenting a mysterious and transnational life trajectory, and having dark skin, was enough to believe he was a dangerous and sneaky Jew.

We know nothing of Lazar's childhood or first adulthood, but we do know he established his residence Göstling an der Ybbs and was attending classes of Law in the University of Vienna, a degree which he never completed, when, being 20 years old, was drafted for the Austrian-Hungarian Army. He left for the front in March 1915, as the 97 Infantry Regiment's platoon leader, but was severely injured over a year later. In fact, he spent the remaining years of the conflict receiving hospital treatment<sup>6</sup>, which according to witness accounts made him addicted to morphine<sup>7</sup>. After being discharged

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<sup>4</sup> Auswärtiges Amt / Politisches Archiv / Hans Lazar Akt. 8.624, 8.625, and 8.627.

<sup>5</sup> Journalist José María Irujo relies on Aline Griffith's testimony, who assured him during a private conversation that she had discovered Lazar's Jewish origins, Jose María IRUJO: *La lista negra : los espías nazis protegidos por Franco y la Iglesia*, p. 74. Given the controversial and extremely fantastic character of Aline Griffith's memoirs, tending towards exaggeration, and the fact that Irujo's account on the character is full of factual errors, the authenticity of this data is highly unlikely. ALINE: *The spy wore red: my adventures as an undercover agent in World War II*, 1st ed., New York, Random House, 1987; Samuel John Gurney Hoare TEMPLEWOOD: *Ambassador on special mission*.

<sup>6</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt. 8.624, 8.625, and 8.627.

<sup>7</sup> Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 2002, p. 274.

in May 1918, he re-entered service and was assigned to the support troops in Constantinople, where he reached the grade of Lieutenant and remained until the end of the conflict, being transferred to the military reserve and officially disarmed in January 1919<sup>8</sup>. His war service granted him an invalidity pension<sup>9</sup> and several awards: the Military Merit Cross (3<sup>rd</sup> Class), the Bravery Medal (1<sup>st</sup> Class) – equivalent to the German Iron Cross –, the Karl Troop Cross<sup>10</sup>, the Wound Medal, and the War Commemorative Medal. He was also awarded both the Iron Cross (2<sup>nd</sup> Class) and the Iron Crescent (aka Gallipoli Star)<sup>11</sup>, which is even more striking.

Interestingly enough, the Armenian Lazar managed to stay out of Turkey for the precise duration of the Armenian genocide, only to go back shortly after, and then start working, between 1920 and 1927, not only for *Neue Freie Presse* and *Ullstein-Dienst*, but for the *Türkische Post*<sup>12</sup>, a German newspaper founded in 1926, which served the interests of the *Deutsch-Türkischen Vereinigung* (Berlin), the *Türkisch-Deutschen Handelskammer* (Frankfurt am Main), and the *Deutschen Handelskammer* (Wien)<sup>13</sup>. His Catholicism<sup>14</sup>, his family's diplomatic connections to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, his military assistance to the Ottoman Empire, and his possible ignorance about the genocide might well explain why he was not at all affected nor worried by the event.

Later on, because of the sudden death of the Romanian king, Ferdinand I, which had made impossible for the *Agence Roumaine* to take care on its own of the press-related interests of the Austrian government, and on the recommendation of Theodor Hornbostel, Austrian legate in Turkey, Lazar was requested to serve as special correspondent for *Amtliche Nachrichtenstelle*<sup>15</sup>, the official Austrian news agency. For a decade, between July 1927 and October 1937, he would combine his job as representative for the Austrian government with other activities, acting as well as representative for Southern Europe for the *Wolffs Telegraphisches Büro*'s (aka *Wolffs-Büro*), a position he was already holding before arriving at Bucharest, and, after its

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<sup>8</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and 8.625.

<sup>9</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624.

<sup>10</sup> Awarded to those who had served at the front at least for 12 weeks.

<sup>11</sup> He was also awarded the Red Crescent Medal, which rewarded services to the Red Crescent, AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624

<sup>12</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.625

<sup>13</sup> Lazar was in charge of feature articles and local news until April 1927, *Türkische Post*, Digitales Archiv, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, <http://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/list/title/zdb/24360788/>, last accessed January 2016.

<sup>14</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.625.

<sup>15</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624, 8.625 and Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar.

dissolution, for the *Deutschen Nachrichtenbüro* (DNB), and the *Deutschen Wirtschaftsdienst* in Romania, as well as rapporteur on the Little Entente and the Balkan League for different newspapers<sup>16</sup>. During his stay in Bucharest, he would marry, on 5th June 1937, baroness Helene Petrino<sup>17</sup>.

Lazar developed a very intense activity in Romania, which led to his appointment as press attaché to the Austrian government in Bucharest in 1931, although he had been effectively acting as such, at least, since 1929<sup>18</sup>. A year later, on the recommendation of Lukes<sup>19</sup>, Austrian legate in Bucharest, and against Lazar's wishes, he was granted the Silver Medal for his services to the Austrian Republic. His activities led him to establish a wide network of contacts among the Romanian, Austrian and German elites. His ability to influence the press and establish links to Romanian politicians and journalists granted him the Order of the Crown of Romania's Commander's Cross and the Order of the Star's Officer's Cross, two of the highest decorations in the country, and his appointment as president of the Foreign Press Association for two years in a row following the institution's creation<sup>20</sup>. In 1935, because of his valuable contribution to the protection of Austrian interests and thanks, once again, to the recommendation of an Austrian legate in Bucharest, as well as the recognition he had among the Romanian elites, he was awarded the title of *Regierungsrat*. This decision seems to have also been influenced by Lazar's complaints on his salary, which he considered was lower as it should because of the exchange rate. However, in Eugen Hauenschild words, Austrian legate in Rumania, Lazar deserved such recognition because he had skilfully used his social abilities and personal relations in favour of Austria:

“Dank seiner besonderen Fähigkeiten, seines ungewöhnlichen Taktes und gesellschaftlich gewandten Auftretens hat sich Lazar amtlich und privat eine Ausnahmestellung geschaffen. Dieser Stellung und besonders seinen freundschaftlichen Beziehungen zu hochgestellten Regierungs- und Parteimännern sowie zur rumänischen Presse hatte und hat die Gesandtschaft dauernd wertvolle Informationen zu verdanken; darüber hinaus ist Lazar sehr oft in der Lage und immer bereit, durch seine Beziehungen auf inoffiziellm Wege sehr beachtenswerte Dienste

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<sup>16</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and 8.625.

<sup>17</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624.

<sup>18</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, (ÖSTA) /ADR, BKA/AA, Ordnen und Ehrenzeichen, 23 Orden 2/18, Zl. 27865/1929.

<sup>19</sup> ÖSTA/ADR, BKA/AA, Ordnen und Ehrenzeichen, 13 Pers 77, Zl. 275934/1932.

<sup>20</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and ÖSTA/ADR, BKA/AA, Ordnen und Ehrenzeichen, 13 Pers 77, Zl. 275934/1932.

zu leisten und Interventionen durchzuführen, welche sonst gar nicht möglich wären. Endlich unterstütz er die Gesandtschaft seit Jahren dadurch, dass er laufend en Informationsdienst über die hiesige Presse versieht“<sup>21</sup>

Nonetheless, German sources are extremely divided regarding the evaluation of this period. While some informants described Lazar as a true German at heart, even if not by blood, and trustworthy confidant for the *Abwehr*, others insisted on his allegiance to the patriotic Austrian elites and his estrangement from German circles<sup>22</sup>. These contested reports surfaced specially around 1939 and 1940, after his appointment as press attaché, on the recommendation of Eberhard von Stohrer. Given that Lazar was not a member of the NSDAP - although he was a member of the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* -<sup>23</sup>, and that he had helped Stohrer get rid of Goebbels' trusted men in Spain, as it will be explained, it's not surprising that most of these unflattering and distrustful reports originated within the ranks of the Nazi party. In fact, some members not only reproached him his distaste for the organization but also advised against his employment by the Reich<sup>24</sup>. His connection to Theodor Hornbostel, who had been arrested and sent to Dachau in March 1938<sup>25</sup>, which Nazi leaders constantly evoked, could not work in his favour. On the other hand, according to one of the most favourable reports, between 1929 and 1932, Lazar, described as an “Arian Armenian”, had been the best informant for the *Abwehr*, and a trustworthy confidant to the Reich. The report stated as well his usefulness to Germany during the conflict with Austria, as a representative for the DNB, and cited as possible backers to the Austrian: Wilhelm Wolf, last Foreign Affairs minister in Austria, Josef Eckhardt, Austrian legate then residing in Berlin, and Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of the *Abwehr*, among others<sup>26</sup>.

After his stay in Romania, in September 1937, Lazar was sent to serve as press attaché to Berlin. This appointment was made on a two years limited contract, as because of his war injuries he had been declared physically unfit to serve as a federal public servant<sup>27</sup>. There he established a tight connection to the Austrian foreign affairs minister Wilhelm Wolff, who appointed him as head of the press department on 11 March 1938.

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<sup>21</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624.

<sup>22</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and 8.625.

<sup>23</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.625.

<sup>24</sup> AA / Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar.

<sup>25</sup> Günter BISCHOF, Anton PELINKA, y Michael GEHLER: *Austrian foreign policy in historical context*, Contemporary Austrian studies, New Brunswick, N.J., Transaction Publishers, 2006, p. 45.

<sup>26</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar.

<sup>27</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624.

Nevertheless, according to NSDAP's reports, the arrival of Helmut Sündermann made him disappear few days later<sup>28</sup>. Before his disappearance, his connection to Wolff and the German circles, specially the German Propaganda Ministry (RMVP)<sup>29</sup>, granted him the dubious honour of reading the *Anschluss* proclamation to the foreign press correspondents in Vienna on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1938<sup>30</sup>.

Having been relieved from his position as head of the press department, in June 1938, Lazar was granted a vacation permit, and travelled to Burgos. He soon asked for a vacation extension until his new position was determined. In the meantime, he requested authorization to cooperate with the Foreign Affairs Ministry (AA) and the RMVP in Spain. Nevertheless, he assured he would be back in Berlin by the end of the month. The interesting fact is that he did not address this request to the Austrian administration but to the AA in Berlin, who granted him his wish on the condition he kept Gottfried Aschmann, head of the AA's Press Department in the loop<sup>31</sup>. According to his own account, it was around that time when he established further contacts with the AA and Ribbentrop himself, who decided to send him to Spain as representative of Transocean in July<sup>32</sup>.

Lazar left Berlin without leaving any address details or telling anyone where he was going and, according to the Austrian administration, against orders to remain in his post. Months later, this prompted the dissolution of his contract with the Austrian government, the deprivation of his title as second-class legation councillor and the annulment of his pension. Lazar tried to reclaim his rights, after assuring he had reported on his new assignment, stating that his transfer to the AA within the framework of the *Anschluss* seem not only logical but legal, and reminding the administration of his valuable services to the Austrian government, services which he had lent in detriment of his professional advancement. Having enlisted the help of his various protectors over the years, among them Wilhelm Wolff and Eberhard von Stohrer, he managed to claim his pension in the 1950s<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.625.

<sup>29</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624.

<sup>30</sup> Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, p. 274.

<sup>31</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624.

<sup>32</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624 and AA / Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar.

<sup>33</sup> AA / PA / Hans Lazar Akt 8.624, Akt 8.627, Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar, ÖSTA/ADR, Zentralbesoldungsamt, Zl. 64-3646.

The well-connected Lazar arrived in Spain, ready to put his skills and connections at the service of Transocean. Transocean was technically a private news agency, placed under government's control since World War I, and particularly focused on the dissemination of pro-German news in the Americas and East Asia. The agency served as a powerful propaganda instrument during the two world wars, also in Spain, and its connection to the German regime was a well-known secret<sup>34</sup>. It's hardly surprising that Lazar was assigned to a secretly agency of the Reich, as he had already been serving commercial and political German interests since the 1920-30s. As soon as he arrived in rebel-controlled Spain, Lazar began to build an intricate network of interests and contacts both with German and Spanish authorities, especially with the German ambassador, Eberhard von Stohrer.

Nazi propaganda activities in the peninsula had been intensely on going since the beginning of the civil war, thanks to the RMVP, who had established two propaganda oriented organizations there: the *Sonderstab* Köhn and the *Antikomintern*. The *Sonderstab* was a press office, set up in Salamanca, and commanded by Willi Köhn. Its objective was to contribute to the consolidation of Franco's regime, as well as to establish strong relationships between Germany and Spain, which meant delivering a wide array of propaganda material and Spanish translations of German publications. They relied strongly on Falange's support, eager to learn more about Nazi organizations and ideologies, whose members they invited to visit Germany. In fact, four members of the *Sonderstab* were Spanish nationals closely tied to the single party. On the other hand, the *Antikomintern*, responsible for the first edition of a fortnightly Spanish language news-sheet, *Informaciones Antibolcheviques*, was in charge, as its named stated, of anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaigns. This organization, which received financial assistance from the Nazi *Auslandsorganisation*, organized exhibitions, publications and radio broadcasts, supported nationalist propaganda over republican-held areas and advised Franco's director of Propaganda at the front<sup>35</sup>. In 1938, before Lazar's arrival, this office was absorbed by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior, but

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<sup>34</sup> Heidi J. S. EVANS: "'The Path to Freedom'? Transocean and German Wireless Telegraphy, 1914-1922", *Historical Social Research*, 35, 1 (2010), pp. 215-216; Jens ALBES: *Worte wie Waffen : die deutsche Propaganda in Spanien während des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Schriften der Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Essen, Klartext, 1996, pp. 105-107; André UZULIS: *Nachrichtengagenturen im Nationalsozialismus : Propagandainstrumente und Mittel der Presselenkung*, Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe III, Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main; New York, P. Lang, 1995, p.94.

<sup>35</sup>Lorna WADDINGTON: "The Anti-Komintern and Nazi anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the 1930s", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42, 4 (2007), pp. 574-594.



maintained its cooperation with the RMVP through the press and propaganda delegation of Franco's single party (FET)<sup>36</sup>.

But RMVP's organizations were not the only channels available in Spain for the dissemination of Nazi propaganda. The DNB, for example, which had been operating in Spain since the 1930s, managed to sign an agreement with the Spanish news agency *Fabra* in 1934. A year later, both organizations worked together to set up an agency to deliver articles of Nazi origin to the Spanish Press, under the name *Servicio especial de colaboración internacional*, which to the general public appeared as an exclusively Spanish initiative<sup>37</sup>.

In November 1938, Spain created a state news agency, EFE, which received its information from DNB, Transocean and the Italian Stefani. Such a strong dependency on the Axis was also explained because its two correspondents, José Antonio Giménez Arnau and Ramón Garriga, ardent pro-Axis falangists, were established in Rome and Berlin<sup>38</sup>. Additionally, some Spanish journalists who worked in Berlin during World War II had served in the *Sonderstab Köhn*<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, Lazar managed to break a deal with *ABC*, *Informaciones*, *Madrid* and *Vanguardia* newspapers in order to allow for the Spanish correspondents in Berlin to send their articles and pieces directly to the Spanish press through EFE<sup>40</sup>, which guaranteed the German embassy a considerable control over the media coverage of the war, and prevented Spanish censorship in some cases. Meanwhile, the embassy made use of minor Spanish news agencies, Arco and Faro, to disseminate articles, and opinion pieces among the provincial newspapers<sup>41</sup>, and created *Berliner Briefe*, which provided articles of interest to 50 Spanish papers, which didn't know they were receiving articles directly from the embassy<sup>42</sup>. Additionally, the NSDAP found a close collaborator in the foreign section of Falange, established in Berlin in 1936, led by Luis Casaús, which showed special interest in receiving propaganda, and reports on the organization of the Nazi state. Furthermore, the ties between FET and the Nazi party would be tightened by Wilhelm von Faupel's activities

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 574-594.

<sup>37</sup> Ingrid SCHULZE SCHNEIDER: "Alemania y la guerra civil española: información y propaganda", *Spagna contemporanea*, 26 (2004), p. 59.

<sup>38</sup> Antonio César MORENO CANTANO: *Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936-1945)*, Tesis doctoral, Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, 2008, p. 120.

<sup>39</sup> Ramón GARRIGA: *La España de Franco. Las relaciones con Hitler*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>40</sup> AA/PA Botschaft Madrid 716.

<sup>41</sup> AA/PA Botschaft Madrid 716.

<sup>42</sup> AA/PA Botschaft Madrid 788.

as president of the *Iberoamerikanisches Institut* in Berlin<sup>43</sup>. The institute was, in fact, the centre of what Bowen has called the Spanish pilgrimages to Nazi Germany<sup>44</sup>, in which Lazar was also instrumental<sup>45</sup>. No one of importance in Spain was deprived of an invitation to visit Berlin<sup>46</sup>.

The chaotic and polycratic nature of the Nazi<sup>47</sup> was reflected in Spain, where several organizations officially or unofficially dependent on the Reich and NSDAP's institutions competed for control and influence over Spanish politics<sup>48</sup>. Therefore, Berlin's political struggles had their counterpart in the peninsula. Such was the case of the Ribbentrop-Goebbels rivalry, which reproduced itself in the confrontation between ambassador Stohrer and the *Sonderstab* Köhn, which had been partially designed to compete with the *Wilhelmstrasse*<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, Köhn had no sympathies for Stohrer, who he defined as an old-school diplomat, "the worst kind"<sup>50</sup>. Unsurprisingly, Lazar decided to position himself on favour of Ribbentrop's agenda, as he was the one responsible for his appointment as correspondent in Spain.

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<sup>43</sup> Wayne H. BOWEN: *Spaniards and Nazi Germany collaboration in the new order*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 2000, pp. 13-14, 26; Reinhard LIEHR, Günther MAIHOLD, y Günter VOLLMER: *Ein Institut und sein General : Wilhelm Faupel und das Ibero-Amerikanische Institut in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, Bibliotheca Ibero-Americana, Frankfurt am Main, Vervuert, 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Wayne H. BOWEN: "Spanish pilgrimages to Hitler's Germany: emissaries of the New Order", *The Historian*, 71, 2 (2009), pp. 258-279.

<sup>45</sup> Wayne H. BOWEN: *Spaniards and Nazi Germany collaboration in the new order*, pp. 87-88; Antonio César MORENO CANTANO: *Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936-1945)*, p. 324.

<sup>46</sup> Javier TUSELL: *Franco y Mussolini*, ed. Genoveva GARCÍA QUEIPO DE LLANO, Barcelona, Planeta, 1985, p. 118.

<sup>47</sup> Franz L. NEUMANN: *Behemoth; the structure and practice of national socialism*, London,, V. Gollancz Ltd., 1942; Ian KERSHAW: *The Nazi dictatorship : problems and perspectives of interpretation*, London, E. Arnold, 1985; Aristotle A. KALLIS: *Nazi propaganda and the Second World War*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 40-62. On the chaotic nature of Nazi foreign policy: Hans-Adolf JACOBSEN: "The structure of nazi foreign policy, 1933-1945", in ed. Christian LEITZ: *The Third Reich : the essential readings*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1999, pp. 53-93; Manfred FUNKE: *Hitler, Deutschland und die Mächte : Materialien zur Aussenpolitik d. Dritten Reiches*, Bonner Schriften zur Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1976, pp. 138-174.

<sup>48</sup> Angel VIÑAS: *Franco, Hitler y el estallido de la Guerra Civil : antecedentes y consecuencias*, Alianza ensayo, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2001, p. 183; Emilio SÁENZ-FRANCÉS SAN BALDOMERO: "The Ambassadorship of Hans Adolf von Moltke (1943): The Turning Point in German-Spanish Relations during the Second World War", *German History*, 31, 1 (2013), pp. 25-26.

<sup>49</sup> Lorna WADDINGTON: "The Anti-Komintern and Nazi anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the 1930s", pp. 582-583.

<sup>50</sup> Elke FRÖHLICH, (ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels : Serie 1 (1923-1941)*, vol. 6, Munich, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 1995-2001, p. 248.

Lazar and Stohrer, who had been responsible of German propaganda campaigns in Spain during World War I<sup>51</sup>, got along really well and shared a common interest in the dissolution of the *Sonderstab* Köhn. In Lazar's words:

“los esfuerzos del Escuadrón de Propaganda [*Sonderstab* Köhn] por asegurar la implicación de España en esa guerra por encima de todo y al precio que fuera cobraban formas de nerviosismo y agitación cada vez mayores. Este objetivo era imposible de alcanzar sin eliminar la delegación diplomática existente. Había que marginar al embajador Von Stohrer y sustituirle por el Sr. Köhn. Este trabajo sucio se realizó con todo tipo de medios; su alcance desbordó los círculos alemanes y penetró hasta en sectores españoles. Era lógico que el Escuadrón de Propaganda buscara el apoyo de la Falange o de las diversas tendencias políticas agrupadas bajo ese nombre”<sup>52</sup>.

This struggle was framed within Stohrer's opposition to the so-called parallel channels, who tried to force Spain's complete integration into the Axis<sup>53</sup>. Stohrer's and Lazar's style fitted better with a more traditional and conservative way of seeing politics and diplomacy. This attitude, understandable if we consider their life trajectories, was very common among German diplomats, and loathed by the NSDAP's elites and Hitler himself. This moderate view on Spain's place within the Reich's foreign policy strategy did not disregard the possibility of bringing Spain into the conflict, but was open as well to work towards the stabilization of Franco's regime, and ensure the future provision of raw materials, which Germany would need for the war effort.

Stohrer, with Lazar's support, managed to ensure the dissolution of the *Sonderstab* and the replacement of Hans Kröger as head of propaganda activities for Hans Lazar, who was appointed press attaché in July 1939, against Transocean's wishes<sup>54</sup>. Their temporary victory over the parallel channels sealed their friendship, which resulted in a fruitful collaboration on propaganda matters. Stohrer became one of the most important protectors of Lazar, preventing in several occasions the NSDAP's attempts to remove him from office<sup>55</sup>. Nevertheless, few years later Lazar would prove that he knew better

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<sup>51</sup> Lorna WADDINGTON: "The Anti-Komintern and Nazi anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the 1930s", pp. 573-594; AA / PA / Botschaft Madrid 716.

<sup>52</sup> Emilio SÁENZ-FRANCÉS SAN BALDOMERO: *Entre la antorcha y la esvástica : Franco en la encrucijada de la II Guerra Mundial*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>53</sup> Emilio SÁENZ-FRANCÉS SAN BALDOMERO: "The Ambassadorship of Hans Adolf von Moltke (1943): The Turning Point in German-Spanish Relations during the Second World War", p. 30.

<sup>54</sup> AA / Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar and Akt 8.627.

<sup>55</sup> Klaus-Jörg RUHL: *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich" : España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, p. 42 and 313; AA / Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar.

as to put all eggs in one basket. When the pressure of the parallel channels resulted in the dismissal of Stohrer as ambassador, plans to remove Lazar as well were halted by José María Doussinague<sup>56</sup>, general director of foreign policy.

Lazar established close relationships with the editors of the main newspapers as well as with several journalists, and close friendships with prominent Falangists, particularly those linked to the press department, such as Enrique Giménez Arnau, Dionisio Ridruejo, and José María Alfaro<sup>57</sup>, whose appointment as undersecretary of press and propaganda was celebrated at the press attaché's apartment in Salamanca<sup>58</sup>. Thanks to these social skills, even some newspapers previously critical of Germany, shifted their views<sup>59</sup>.

The press attaché had a monthly budget of 200.000 pts for the purpose of buying advertising space for German companies in the Spanish Press. However, just 25.000 pts were set aside for this purpose, most of the money was actually used to bribe Spanish journalist and publishers<sup>60</sup>. A good example was the publication of *¿Por qué lucha Alemania? Cómo se ha empujado a Hitler a la Guerra* written by Federico de Urrutia (pseudonym José Joaquín Estrada)<sup>61</sup>, paid by the embassy to help Spaniards "correctly" assess the German invasion of Poland. Furthermore, the editors-in-chief of the most important Madrid newspapers received daily instructions from Lazar<sup>62</sup>. Additionally, Lazar's friendship with prominent falangists working for the press offices of the Ministry of the Interior made it possible for German authorities to even censor, from time to time, certain publications on the international situation issued by the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs<sup>63</sup>. Those same contacts allowed the German embassy to

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<sup>56</sup> Lazar's memoirs in Emilio Sáenz-Francés San Baldomero: *Entre la antorcha y la esvástica : Franco en la encrucijada de la II Guerra Mundial*.

<sup>57</sup> Antonio César Moreno Cantano: *Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936-1945)*, p. 127.

<sup>58</sup> AA/PA Botschaft Madrid 788.

<sup>59</sup> AA/PA Botschaft Madrid 788.

<sup>60</sup> Ingrid Schulze Schneider: "La propaganda alemana en España 1942-1944", *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie V, Historia contemporánea*, 7 (1994), p. 374.

<sup>61</sup> Eduardo Ruiz Bautista y Pedro Barruso Barés: "La propaganda alemana en España durante la II Guerra Mundial", en ed. Antonio César Moreno Cantano: *El ocaso de la verdad: propaganda y prensa exterior en la España franquista (1936-1945)*, Gijón, Trea, 2011, p. 194.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Longerich: *Propagandisten im Krieg : die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, München, R. Oldenbourg, 1987, p. 305.

<sup>63</sup> Antonio César Moreno Cantano: *Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936-1945)*, p. 148.

ensure censorship of books and publications written by Jewish authors or damning to the Axis<sup>64</sup>.

But Lazar did not restrict himself to the dissemination of propaganda pieces sent from Berlin, he also made it his responsibility to adapt these propaganda materials to the Spanish case, by working in close contact with the AA<sup>65</sup>, something particularly evident in the official Bulletin for political information issued by the embassy<sup>66</sup>. This bulletin, issued to Spanish authorities, appeared in order to keep Spanish elites informed on the evolution of the conflict, and it was published three times a week, with an edition of 45.000-60.000 copies<sup>67</sup>. Thanks to Lazar's networking abilities and the friendliness of the Franquist government, the bulletins were actually issued to a larger audience, meanwhile the British one found a much narrower public<sup>68</sup>. Nevertheless, the press attaché's skills as propagandist encountered limitations. A close look at a prominent and clearly pro-Axis newspaper, such as the falangist *Arriba*, shows that though the paper tended to reproduce German arguments when their interests coincided – articles regarding UK's attitude toward neutral countries, and antidemocratic statements –, it did not when their interests clashed. This became evident in the media coverage of Germany's invasion of Poland or the German-Soviet alliance, although the newspaper was never truly critical of Germany.

Lazar's influence in Spain continued to grow over the years and, according to Garriga, by 1942, 432 people worked for the press attaché<sup>69</sup>. This figure also reflects the importance of the German Embassy in Spain, which by 1941 was the largest of the Reich. There were 500 people working at the Embassy in Madrid and 38 German consulates in Spain, along 4 more in Spanish Morocco and Tangier<sup>70</sup>. Interestingly enough, it was also in 1941 when, worried by the wide dissemination of pro-Allied

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<sup>64</sup> *Íbid.*, p. 259.

<sup>65</sup> Peter LONGERICH: *Propagandisten im Krieg : die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop*, p. 305.

<sup>66</sup> Mercedes PEÑALBA SOTORRÍO: "German Propaganda in Francoist Spain: Diplomatic Information Bulletins as a Primary Tool of Nazi Propaganda", *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*, 37, 1 (2012), Article 3.

<sup>67</sup> Ingrid SCHULZE SCHNEIDER: "Éxitos y fracasos de la propaganda alemana en España: 1939 - 1944", *Melanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 31 (1995), p. 202.

<sup>68</sup> Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, p. 282.

Ramón GARRIGA: *La España de Franco. Las relaciones con Hitler*, p. 422.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Klaus-Jörg RUHL: *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich" : España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, pp. 47 and 279.

propaganda, Stohrer and Lazar decided to launch their most important propaganda campaign, known as the *Grosses Plan*. The plan, approved in January 1942, was implemented with the support of the Spanish government and FET's commitment. In fact, these propaganda activities were to be implemented by Spanish agents, while being secretly controlled by the German Embassy.

The scope of the plan was certainly impressive. Organized in five different sections, the agents of the *Grosses Plan* would flood Spain with a wide array of publications, oriented to influence public opinion. The project was characterized by the combination of black propaganda and counterpropaganda tactics. Group A, formed by pro-German Spaniards, was in charge of the dissemination of propaganda material, especially the embassy's information bulletin. By February 1942, they had 15.000 members and had compiled a list of 500.000 potential collaborators. Group B was to infiltrate the post offices, in order to push forward Nazi propaganda while destroying pro-Allied propaganda. Group C, exclusively formed by Falangists, was in charge of destroying pro-Allied propaganda, identifying pro-Allied Spaniards, disseminating German propaganda and spreading rumours favourable to the Axis and damning to the Allies. These activities included, from time to time, beating up those they found spreading pro-Allied propaganda. Group D was also in charge of countering pro-Allied propaganda, and had the support of the Spanish office for homeland security. Group E, formed by civil war veterans, was also in charge of disseminating propaganda material. During 1942, the embassy published 56 different information sheets, many focused on proving Nazism catholic character. In total they distributed 9 million copies, which coexisted with other German publications that had been circulating prior to 1942. Thanks to FET's support and the financial help of I.G. Farben, Lazar managed to keep the plan active until 1944<sup>71</sup>. Within this framework, the German Embassy also ensured certain cooperation from the Spanish government in order to facilitate the dissemination of Nazi propaganda in Tangier and Spanish Morocco. A campaign that grew stronger in 1942<sup>72</sup>.

Along with the *Grosses Plan*, specifically concerned with Spain, the press attaché and Eberhard von Stohrer turned their gaze to Latin America, displaying an unsurprising

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<sup>71</sup> Ingrid SCHULZE SCHNEIDER: "La propaganda alemana en España 1942-1944", pp. 371-386; Klaus-Jörg RUHL: *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich" : España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, pp. 41-42; Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, pp. 290-298.

<sup>72</sup> Klaus-Jörg RUHL: *Franco, Falange y "Tercer Reich" : España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, pp. 148-149.

and clear continuity with German activities in World War I regarding propaganda campaigns<sup>73</sup>. Nor it was an exclusive initiative of the German embassy in Madrid. In February 1939, the *Deutscher Fichte Bund*, which provided FET with updates on world events, press releases, and short articles favourable to Nazi Germany, came to propose an agreement to the single party. In order to fight their common enemies, in clear allusion to Jews, the *Deutscher Fichte Bund* intended to enlist the efforts of Falange's foreign section to disseminate its propaganda in Latin America<sup>74</sup>. Although there's no confirmation FET signed such an agreement, the fact is that, on October 8th, 1940, Falangists informed Lazar they regularly reproduced articles from the embassy's information bulletins in their publications for Latin America<sup>75</sup>. However, this did not seem enough for the German embassy.

Trying to leverage the cultural traction Spain had in Latin America, Lazar directed his efforts to the establishment of a radio station in the area that, under Spanish coverage, would serve German interests. Even though initial attempts to ensure Spain's cooperation in this matter failed, his efforts came to fruition during Ramón Serrano Suñer's trip to Berlin in 1940. During the visit, Antonio Tovar, undersecretary for press and propaganda, and Vicente Gallego, EFE's director, met with Paul Schmidt, head of the AA's press department, with whom Lazar maintained close contact. In case Transocean could no longer function in America, Schmidt wanted EFE to disseminate Nazi propaganda and news in the region, without revealing, of course, the origin of such information. As EFE director refused, Lazar continued negotiations with Serrano and Tovar. The negotiations produced, finally, the Schmidt-Tovar agreement in June 1941, which, among other things, implied the installation on the Spanish border of a broadcasting station for EFE paid by the German government. Madrid would become the link between Nazi Germany and Latin America. The selection and dissemination of these propaganda materials, which should stress neutralist and international aspects, would be managed by a conjoint commission formed by Falangist and Nazi officials, and would be partly financed by Germany. But the opposition of EFE's director, who purposely slowed down the process, prevented the agreement's complete application. By the end of 1941, and under pressure, he only approved four of the thirty EFE

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<sup>73</sup> Jens ALBES: *Worte wie Waffen : die deutsche Propaganda in Spanien während des Ersten Weltkrieges*, p. 244.

<sup>74</sup> Wayne H. BOWEN: *Spaniards and Nazi Germany collaboration in the new order*, p. 54.

<sup>75</sup> Archivo General de la Administración, 9 (17.12) 51/20891.

correspondents proposed by Lazar, even though Serrano had approved the list personally; interestingly enough, one of them was the correspondent assigned to the USA. In the end, although Falange laid off Gallego, because of his opposition to Lazar and FET's plans, and his allegiance to the pro-allied minister of foreign affairs, Francisco Gómez-Jordana, the agreement wasn't fulfilled<sup>76</sup>.

Not even the dismissal of Gallego could counteract the fact the tides were changing. When, in 1943, Germany tried to proceed with the installation of the broadcasting station, Jordana's campaign to limit Lazar's and Falange's pro-Axis activities was escalating, and Franco was already losing faith in Germany and turning to the Allies. Jordana claimed the agreement had been signed without his knowledge, and only when Lazar showed him his own copy, was Franco brought into the loop. The dictator said that such an agreement had been made without his consent and ordered to return the broadcasting material to Germany<sup>77</sup>. However, long into 1943, Jordana, was still reproaching the general secretary of the party, José Luis de Arrese, over the pro-Axis orientation of the party's press, which was contrary to his directives<sup>78</sup>. Not even the new censorship measures taken by the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry were sufficient to contain FET's pro-Axis enthusiasm<sup>79</sup>.

Every time Lazar encountered an apparently insurmountable obstacle, he managed to find a solution. At the same time, he had been negotiating the signing and fulfilment of the Schmidt-Tovar, he established contact with Enrique Meneses, a Spanish national working in Paris who, following the fall of France, decided to offer his services to Germany. He owned a news agency, *Prensa Mundial*, which had originally been used to disseminate French propaganda to Latin American countries. In 1941, *Prensa Mundial* began to disseminate Nazi propaganda in the region and, in due time, even provided Germany with the long-awaited broadcasting station<sup>80</sup>. Moreover, the agency, to which renowned Spanish writers contributed - e.g. Azorín, Gregorio Marañón y Moya, Carlos

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<sup>76</sup> Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, pp. 277-282; Antonio César MORENO CANTANO: *Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936-1945)*, pp. 154-159; Peter LONGERICH: *Propagandisten im Krieg : die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop*, p. 176; Archivo General de la Universidad de Navarra / José María Doussinague / 008 / 002 / 048.

<sup>77</sup> Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, p. 288; Archivo General de la Universidad de Navarra / José María Doussinague / 008 / 002 / 048.

<sup>78</sup> Javier TUSELL: "La etapa Jordana (1942-1944)", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, H. Contemporánea*, 2 (1989), p. 178.

<sup>79</sup> Antonio César MORENO CANTANO: *Los servicios de prensa extranjera en el primer franquismo (1936-1945)*, pp. 281-282.

<sup>80</sup> Manuel ROS AGUDO: *La guerra secreta de Franco, 1939-1945*, p. 282.



Sentís, Rafael Sánchez Mazas, and Álvaro Cunqueiro among others -, sent news to the Peninsula as well, where they were properly supervised and, if need be, censored by Lazar<sup>81</sup>.

Given Lazar's skilled management of propaganda campaigns, we cannot be surprised that Hitler came to describe the Spanish press as the best in the world<sup>82</sup>. Years later, on writing his memoirs, Lazar would try to tone down his contribution to the pro-Axis character of the Spanish press, as he came to jokingly reflect on how he should have tried to make the Spanish press less pro-German<sup>83</sup>. However, not even the most skilled propagandist could counteract the hard realities of the front and the conflict's evolution. The shift in Spanish politics partly originated by Jordana since his appointment as foreign affairs minister found, albeit slowly, its counterpart in Spanish media. This new attitude that provoked confusion among Falangists, as the complaints of one local leader of the single party reflected: “[No sé] si le rompo la cabeza a toda esa gente que se ha vuelto anglófila, si los meto en la cárcel a la mera manifestación que hagan, o si por el contrario les tiendo la mano y me vuelvo yo uno de ellos”<sup>84</sup>.

The new state of affairs fostered a new NSDAP intervention against the press attaché, when after the 20 July plot in 1944, the Gestapo investigation allowed for the purge of the diplomatic corps, always suspicious of not being Nazi enough. This inquest led to the interrogation of Eckhardt Tertsch, one of the diplomats who worked in the Press department with Lazar, because of his close ties to Josef von Ledebur, clear supporter of the Austrian independence movement and some damning reports who connected him to this organization. The investigation offered a perfect opportunity for the elites of the NSDAP to get rid of Lazar, who had always been regarded as politically suspicious, once and for all. Police attaché, Paul Winzer, recommended his return to Berlin in order to interrogate him, arguing his Austrian origin, his suspicious aspect which betrayed his non-Arian character, his lack of sympathy for the Nazi ideology and, obviously, his connection to Tertsch made him a plausible accomplice to the plot. According to Winzer, a joke circulated in Madrid, which stated that Lazar was busy sewing a black

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<sup>81</sup> AGUN / Gregorio Marañón y Moya / Caja 61.

<sup>82</sup> Adolf HITLER et al.: *Hitler's table talk, 1941-1944 : his private conversations*, New York City, Enigma Books, 2000, p. 694.

<sup>83</sup> Lazar's memoirs in Emilio SÁENZ-FRANCÉS SAN BALDOMERO: *Entre la antorcha y la esvástica : Franco en la encrucijada de la II Guerra Mundial*.

<sup>84</sup> Local Chief of Falange to the delegate of Popular Education, 8-10-1943, AGA 5 781.

and yellow Austrian flag in order to hoist it when the time came<sup>85</sup>. His previous connections to Austrian members of the elite who had been arrested following the Anschluss made these suspicions only more credible. Nevertheless, Winzer had to admit that he considered it doubtful that Lazar had known anything about the plot beforehand. Finally, he conceded to conduct Lazar's interrogation in Madrid, in presence of Sigismund von Bibra. The press attaché assured that his only conversation with Tertsch on the plot had taken place after the fact, and concerned how they were going to handle such information in the Spanish press<sup>86</sup>. Above suspicion, Lazar's position as press attaché remained unchallenged, whether Tertsch wasn't as lucky. Deprived of his post, he was arrested and sent to the concentration camp of *Sachsenhausen*<sup>87</sup>.

Lazar's ability to survive came into play, once again, after the war ended. That wide network of contacts he had established among Spanish elites came to be very convenient when the Allied authorities came knocking at Spain's doors. At first, he prevented his deportation alleging his medical condition<sup>88</sup>, but that was merely a temporary solution. Then, he tried, as many others, to gain protection from the Vatican in order to achieve his safe return to Germany, without the Allied authorities deporting him there and interning him in a de-nazification centre<sup>89</sup>. In the end, alongside other prominent officials, he gained protection from the Spanish government. José María Doussinague guaranteed this protection in exchange for Lazar destroying his copy of the Schmidt-Tovar agreement<sup>90</sup>. Some contemporaries of Lazar, such as Ramón Garriga, unaware of the difficulties that operation Safe Haven entailed<sup>91</sup>, came to see his "salvation" as proof of him being a double agent for the British government. Nevertheless, given the strong opinions our Austrian character provoked among British

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<sup>85</sup> AA / PA / R100740.

<sup>86</sup> AA / PA / R100740.

<sup>87</sup> Sebastian WEITKAMP: *Braune Diplomaten : Horst Wagner und Eberhard von Thadden als Funktionäre der "Endlösung"*, Reihe Politik- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte,, Bonn, Dietz, 2008, p. 72.

<sup>88</sup> Carlos COLLADO-SEIDEL: "Zufluchtsstätte für Nationalsozialisten? Spanien, die Alliierten und die Behandlung deutscher Agenten 1944-1947", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 43 (1995), p. 153.

<sup>89</sup> David A. MESSENGER: *Hunting Nazis in Franco's Spain*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2014, Chapter 2.

<sup>90</sup> "Como Lazar estaba incluido en las listas presentadas por los aliados de quienes ellos querían que fueran expulsados de España y enviados a Alemania, le indiqué que la mecanógrafa encargada de copiar esas listas se saltaría por descuido (underlined in the original document) el nombre de Lazar si él destruía ese documento", Archivo General de la Universidad de Navarra / José María Doussinague / 008 / 002 / 048.

<sup>91</sup> David A. MESSENGER: *Hunting Nazis in Franco's Spain*.

diplomats and the fact that no documentary evidence on the matter has surfaced so far, there's no reason to support Garriga's allegations.

In February 1946, Lazar reported back to the Austrian Foreign Affairs Ministry and offered his services, which were understandably declined<sup>92</sup>. Later on, he moved to Brazil where he lived with his sister, Elena (Nina) Lazar-Calich, after the death of his wife in 1951. In 1954, he remarried to Renate Baronin Thermann, but divorced her few years later. He kept working as a publicist until the end of his life and returned to Vienna in 1958, where he died the 8<sup>th</sup> of May of 1961, leaving his sister as only heir<sup>93</sup>. Defined as the German embassy's grey eminence<sup>94</sup>, dictator of the Spanish press<sup>95</sup>, and even a spider in its web<sup>96</sup>, Lazar's image remained surrounded by mystery and speculation.

Lazar's transnational trajectory and activities do not only provide a window into a convulse period of European history, but prove themselves revealing in several ways. As it has been explained, Lazar remained, during his stay in Spain, a loyal servant of the AA, having probably been the press attaché who received the most detailed instruction from the ministry<sup>97</sup>, which proves, once more, Goebbels' limited power outside the Reich's frontiers. This fact, in turn, shifts the focus to the importance of Spain within German foreign policies, policies that dealt not just with a possible Spanish military intervention but also with the advantages that a neutral Spain could provide. The scope of the propaganda campaigns in Spain, as well as the fact that this country hosted the Reich's largest embassy, suggest that Germany's diplomatic relations during World War II were more important than some historians have considered, therefore challenging the notion that the Nazi regime, from 1941 onwards, was only concerned with the Eastern front, disregarding diplomatic and cultural relations with other countries.

It has been argued in this paper that Lazar can't be characterized as a fervent Nazi or a committed ideologue, but more as an opportunist that knew how to identify where the

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<sup>92</sup> Rudolf AGSTNER: *Handbuch des Österreichischen Auswärtigen Dienstes*, Forschungen zur Geschichte des österreichischen Auswärtigen Dienstes, Wien, Lit, 2015, p. 340.

<sup>93</sup> ÖSTA/ADR, Zentralbesoldungsamt, Zl. 64-3646

<sup>94</sup> Rudolf AGSTNER: *Handbuch des Österreichischen Auswärtigen Dienstes*. 340

<sup>95</sup> *New York Times* article, AA / PA / Botschaft Madrid Personalakten / Hans Josef Lazar.

<sup>96</sup> Jose María IRUJO: *La lista negra : los espías nazis protegidos por Franco y la Iglesia*, p. 67.

<sup>97</sup> Peter LONGERICH: *Propagandisten im Krieg : die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop*, p. 305.

true core of power laid at each time. This fact prompts a re-evaluation of the importance of ideology versus more down to earth considerations, such as personal relations and networking abilities in shaping up lives and careers within political systems that place a high importance in ideology. It should also make us reconsider the feeble line that separates a servant of the Reich and a Nazi, which reveals the tensions and struggles characteristic to the Nazi regime.

Finally, it seems clear that Lazar's case does not only reflect the chaotic and polycratic nature of the Nazi regime, but also the "working toward the Führer" mentality<sup>98</sup>. Such an environment allowed public servants, such as Hans Lazar, to progress professionally as well as to build up networks of influence to serve their own personal agendas. As long as these agendas did not conflict with Germany's primary objectives in the Peninsula, Lazar was free to act as he pleased. In fact, not only his skills as propagandist but also those networks he managed to establish were responsible for his continuity as press attaché until the end of the war, despite several attempts of Nazi officials to remove him from his post. The chaotic and polycratic nature of the Nazi state may as well have been the most suitable environment for the professional development of a man like Hans Lazar.

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<sup>98</sup> Ian KERSHAW: ""Working towards the Führer": reflections on the nature of the Hitler Dictatorship": *Stalinism and Nazism : dictatorships in comparison*, Cambridge; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 88-107.