

Inconvenient Belligerency: the Representation of the Allies in the Blue Division's "Hoja de Campaña"

EMILIO SÁENZ-FRANCÉS SAN BALDOMERO

University of Deusto, Bilbao

ABSTRACT

The task of the chapter is to examine the contents of the newspaper of the Blue Division (the Spanish volunteer unit that fought in the Russian front, together with the German army, in World War II). This analysis of the "Hoja de Campaña" [Campaign Leaflet] is centred on the perception of the Allies, distilled from the texts and cartoons of the publication. This is an original study, first of all because it is quite the first such approach to the contents of the "Hoja". Apart from this, the methodology used has a bearing not only on the necessary study of the texts of the publication but also on its graphic element, as an attractive story line to define the persistent images on which the perception of the Allies was built.

El objetivo del artículo es realizar una aproximación a los contenidos del periódico de la División Azul (la unidad voluntaria española que combatió en el frente ruso durante la II Guerra Mundial), la "Hoja de Campaña". El análisis se centra en la percepción de los aliados que destilaba de los textos y del humor gráfico de la publicación. Se trata de una aportación novedosa ya que, en primer lugar, el artículo supone la primera aproximación monográfica a los contenidos de la "Hoja de Campaña". Por otro lado, la metodología empleada incide, además de en el necesario análisis de textos aparecidos en la publicación, en el uso del elemento gráfico como un atractivo hilo conductor con el que definir las imágenes persistentes sobre las que se construyó la percepción de los aliados en la "Hoja de Campaña".

El artículo se divide en cuatro apartados principales, el primero de ellos aborda cuestiones previas sobre la perspectiva con la que cuestión de la imagen de los aliados fue abordada, en una publicación en la que el adoctrinamiento era un objetivo prioritario claro y en un contexto político de afinidad con el Fascismo y el Nacionalsocialismo. La particular metodología empleada es, así mismo, objeto de reflexión de esta sección.

El segundo apartado realiza un repaso de las distintas fases por las que la "Hoja de Campaña" pasó a lo largo de sus cuatro años de historia, cifradas tanto en el análisis del mensaje como en la evolución de elementos tipológicos externos.

El siguiente apartado, “Retratando a los Aliados I. Los Aliados Occidentales” se centra en el análisis de cómo el discurso ideológico sobre la necesaria beligerancia entre España y Europa, por un lado, y los aliados occidentales, por otro, fue construido. La comicidad y una perspectiva fuertemente arraigada en argumentos históricos se erigen claramente como los dos elementos que definen con mayor precisión la percepción del Reino Unido y los Estados Unidos.

Finalmente, el cuarto apartado presta atención al caso de la Unión Soviética, en cuyo frente se desarrolló la peripecia de la División Azul. En este caso, la perspectiva resulta totalmente diferente y, si bien las referencias de carácter racista son minoritarias, el objetivo es, desde una descarnada beligerancia ideológica, presentar el comunismo como algo corrupto, monstruoso y tiránico.

A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject.
Sir Winston Churchill.

INTRODUCTION. CLEARING UP SOME METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

On the eve of the 22 June 1941, the German Army started a massive attack on the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa); the Second World War entered in a completely new phase that was to take place in the Russian steppes and that proved to be ultimately decisive in the defeat of the Wehrmacht. For the three previous years of the war, relations between Nazi Germany and General Franco's Spain were determined by an uneasy balance in which Spain showed quite a complete commitment to the Axis policy but without any definite commitment to enter the war. The invasion of Russia was widely celebrated in Spain: for the supporters of the regime it was the beginning of a necessary revenge against communism, the main foe of Francoist Spain, ultimately responsible for the Spanish Civil War; for the Spanish leaders it meant also that the main war scenario and its dangers were now far away from the Spanish borders. In that context, the Spanish Council of Ministers took the decision to send a volunteer division, commanded by Spanish Army officials, to collaborate with the so-called joint European effort against communism. By doing this, previous German pressure on Spain was appeased, while Franco got rid of some of the most belligerent and inconvenient members of the *Falange* [Phalanx] (the ruling party) who, together with many university students and army officials, jubilantly joined the unit and were to provide a very specific ideological input into the Division.

The aim of this chapter is to study a specific manifestation of this ideological input: the representation of the Allies in the Division's newspaper, the “Hoja de Campaña” [Campaign Leaflet]. When considering the best approach to the theme of this study, I started to think about how to construct a complex theory about the way the image of the world outside Europe was presented to the soldiers of the Division by the “Hoja”. I thought about constructing some kind of matrix in order to present the hierarchy of the main messages in relation to the subordinate ones, with the aim of discovering the se-

cret correlations, the hidden affinities of structures, as the historian of prehistoric times works with the ever-complex layers of an archaeological site. The reading of Victor Klemperer's essential essay *The Language of the Third Reich*, together with my fascination with the British tradition of satirical cartoons in the line of the "Punch" magazine, gave me a more accurate idea of my aim, that is, to use the graphic images of the "Hoja de Campaña" to illustrate (this is clearly the word that more accurately suits the task) the persistent images of the perception of the Allies in the Blue Division's "Hoja de Campaña". The reading of Klemperer's book shows that the propaganda messages, the whole language of the Third Reich – what he called *Lingua Tertii Imperii* – was based more on simplicity and repetition than on complexity, the result being, nevertheless, overwhelmingly effective:

And the LTI (*Lingua Tertii Imperii*), as powerful as poor, and almighty because of its poverty, reigned even over the most persecuted victims and, of necessity, the mortal enemies of National Socialism, even amongst the Jews, in their letters and conversations, even in their books insofar as they were able to publish them¹

In the case of the "Hoja the Campaña", this took the form of a baroque and intricate language in which the essential *leit motivs* of the German world view were merged with those of Spanish propaganda, of the Spanish political message in the early years of Franco's regime. This message was, in any case, not revolutionary at all, but clearly within the trends of the tradition of the Spanish extreme right throughout the 19th century (Gibraltar being a recurring issue), that is, the repetition at full scale of all the limitations and frustrations of the most recalcitrant Spanish traditional right, now with a new façade of fascist aesthetics, together with an abuse of religious imagery. The canonical example and guidance for this trend of thought in the early part of Franco's regime is *Reivindicaciones de España* [Spanish Demands], published in 1941 by Fernando María Castiella and José María de Areilza, both to become Ministers of Foreign Affairs (in very different political contexts). The book is a catalogue of the imperial aspirations of the New Spain, previously unachievable due to low Spanish morale and the conspiracy of Great Britain with France.

For a long time Spain has not had a Foreign Policy, has not confronted its political contours with a determined will to impose itself..

[...] History is made or is suffered, there are no more options [...].

Since the middle of last century this policy (the European policy of France and Great Britain) has been based upon the idea of 'European Balance' [...]. It destroyed the political perception of Christianity and Unity, envisaged by Spain in a more just era²...

This idea of the message of the "Hoja the Campaña" as a reinterpretation of the secular frustrations of the Spanish traditional right connects with another important idea: repetition. A stereotype, and this contribution deals mainly with stereotypes, constructed as a means of indoctrination, is not only successful because of the element of truth that is exaggerated and/or amplified but also because of the repetition of the message. In that sense, the repetition of images, charged with intention, can work much better than the repetition of complex concepts in a series of intricate texts. As an acid critic of the

so-called American way of life, for instance, “The Simpsons” television series has paid attention to all the transnational stereotypes and repetitions – far from innocent³ – of American popular culture; ridiculing for example the stereotype of France as some kind of demon of Europe. The power of this and other national and transnational images and insights of American culture shows clearly how this repetitiveness, simplicity, and lack of innocence in the message not only worked well with the “Hoja de Campaña”, in which an intellectual elite tried to fix an indelible message in the minds of the, to some extent, politically ignorant mass of soldiers, but also in other contexts. In that sense, it is far from a coincidence that Tony Richardson, in his movie about the Crimean War, *The Last Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968), used cartoons along the lines of those that appeared in the British newspapers during the conflict to show both the simplicity of the message transmitted to the British population and its effectiveness. Both of these characteristics suit perfectly the striking effect that cartoonists seek to have on their audience, reflecting the well known proverb that states that an image is worth more than a thousand words. Accordingly, I consider that it would be interesting and representative of the essence of the whole newspaper to use the satiric images of the “Hoja” as a way of exemplifying how images of the world outside the German-dominated continent were constructed. Moreover, in the recent years cartoons have become a specific subject of study for historians. As a pioneer in this area, the University of Kent, in the United Kingdom, created in 1973 a *Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature* devoted to the research on this specific issue, having created an online archive of 85,000 pieces of cartoon artwork mainly of British origins, an initiative worthy of imitation by other European universities.

This study is the first serious attempt to analyse the contents of the “Hoja de Campaña”. This is mainly because the newspaper is held in very few Spanish newspaper libraries. The only copies I know of that are not in private hands are those held in the Military Archive in Ávila and in the Archive of the Blue Division Brotherhood in Madrid. The difficulty in obtaining access to the former, together with the impossibility of making readable photocopies of the publication, due to its broadsheet format, makes the opportunity of having free use of a complete collection of the “Hoja” from a private archive, an opportunity not to be missed⁴. In this sense, it is important to emphasize that, with the characteristics we have mentioned, the “Hoja” was the only source of German propaganda in Spain after its drastic diminution in the peninsula in 1943⁵.

THE “HOJA DE CAMPAÑA”: AN OVERVIEW

The first issue of the “Hoja de Campaña” appeared on 4 November 1941. From the beginning it was given priority by the Germans within the administration of the Division and a fine printing press was put at its disposal in Reval. The history of the “Hoja” can be divided in different stages that covered both the period of the Blue Division in Russia, and of the Blue Legion, the diminished unit (about 2.000 members) that remained at the front from autumn 1943, after the withdrawal of most of the combatants fighting in the Division. No issue ever exceeded ten pages.

The early issues of the “Hoja”, from 4 November 1941 to 4 February 1942, were published irregularly, usually every three days but sometimes every week. These issues were based mainly on German military communiqués, the reports of the German Propaganda Division and, to a lesser extent, on original texts prepared by Spaniards, humorous pieces and a growing number of satiric cartoons. These texts were increasingly edited and altered by the Spaniards responsible for the “Hoja”, nominally, in the case of the first issues, Ramón Sedo Gómez. From 11 January 1942, the headlines of the “Hoja” included a motto: *Por una España Mayor y una Europa más Justa* [For a Greater Spain and a More Just Europe].

Perhaps the most interesting phase of the “Hoja de Campaña” was the year 1942, up to the end of the Commandership of General Agustín Muñoz-Grandes. From January, the publication acquired the shape of a formal newspaper, with a remarkably high editorial standard. During this period the “Hoja” became clearly independent of the German communiqués and reports. The content was mainly based on political articles and news from the fronts and from Spain, prepared and edited by the staff of the Division. The cartoon section became much more important, with two main cartoonists, who signed their comic strips as Teo and Kim. Other cartoonists, of less importance, signed with the pseudonyms of Rasputin and Eos. Apart from them, we must consider the possibility of external collaboration coming directly from Spain or from the German Propagandist Division.

The period from December 1942 until October 1943, under the Commandership of General Emilio Estebán-Infantes witnessed the timid ideological retreat of the “Hoja”. The most belligerent political articles tended to disappear, together with the political cartoons. Adverse references to the western allies mutated into an even greater hostility towards Soviet Russia.

The third phase was the period of the Spanish Legion until the last number of the “Hoja de Campaña” on 18 March 1944. In December 1943, the “Hoja” changed its name to “Hoja de Campaña de la Legión Española de Voluntarios” [Campaign Leaflet of the Spanish Legion of Volunteers] to reflect the reduced Spanish presence in Russia after the withdrawal of the main body of the Division. This final period, in which the formal features of the publication were retained, is defined by a renewed belligerence in both articles and cartoons. During these months, the publication – that during its whole history was almost free from the restrictions of Spanish censorship – played a role radically opposed to the guidelines coming from Spain. The anger of the remaining ‘intelligentsia’ of the Division at the withdrawal of the Spaniards led them defiantly to turn Franco’s portrait upside down in the office where the “Hoja” was produced⁶.

PORTRAYING THE ENEMY: THE WESTERN ALLIES

The portrayal of the Western Allies envisaged by the propaganda of the Division was based on some prominent elements clearly demonstrating that the message was not a perfectly balanced one. Historical arguments are a main feature, ridicule a primary

task. The prospect of Anglo-Saxon defeat (the category of Anglo-Saxon is presented as antagonistic to European identity) is present, first of all, as the final result of a history defined by successive cunning attempts to destroy the power and vigour of the so-called continental system that was being finally developed by Germany's leadership. This predominant historical approach is responsible for a certain emphasis on the British case over the American. The historic grievances of Spain in relation to Great Britain are altogether older and greater than those against the United States, which derived mainly from the 1898 war between the two countries.

(During the Spanish War of Independence): The attitude of England was typical. Once Spain was invaded by the French, the British troops landed in the peninsula, in Portugal, to be precise, as liberators, so they were able to create what they are now seeking in vain with the so-called second front. And as they played the role of liberators in Spain, they were doing the same in America. Military men and advisors were attached to Bolivar and other American caudillos. The study of how important the influence of the Anglo-Saxons - English and Yankees - was in the formation of the separated world of Spanish America, condemned to be the prey of more powerful countries, has yet to be undertaken. [...]

Divided Spain, with a lifeless foreign policy, remained attached to the system of the British Empire. Spanish liberalism surrendered to England the Gibaltars of our economy, trains, banks, power stations [...]

Germany experienced in 1914 and 1939 the same assault from the same beast. [...]

The fact that England has an heir in the United States can be seen as a problem. But the resolute polarisation of the United States in an Anglo-Saxon and anti-European sense is the result of a confrontation with Spain [...]

[...] 1898 had a clear meaning in International Politics. By our defeat the United States and England sealed their definitive friendship and their solidarity of language, culture and blood, while hatred for Europe aroused hatred against Germany in American leaders, especially in Roosevelt⁷ [...].

In this historic perspective (as was stated above, the re-emergence of an extreme Spanish right approach, developed during the 19th century), the most interesting new element is the presentation of the Second World War as the final step in a common struggle of the European countries in which the role of Spain is presented as essential, in a clear attempt to increase the value of the Spanish stock options within the countries orbiting around the Axis or in some kind of alliance with it. The Spanish Civil War is, in this sense, presented as the first step in the fight for a new European order:

This (is) the world of the Pitts and the MacKinleys, the one that it was necessary to destroy, so life would not continue to be a gift only for the British and the Americans but a right for all [...] two young empires helped us in our tasks as the old democracies shielded themselves behind "non intervention" trying to destroy Spain⁸.

Indoctrination was a clear task of the "Hoja de Campaña" mission. The formation of a highly committed new class for agitation and propaganda, prepared for future action in the peninsula, was a German hope and a British fear. In that sense, the case of Gibraltar was the most representative of the grievances that the Blue Spain expected to settle with the democratic powers in the likely event of Spain's entry into the war. This tendency is characteristic of the Muñoz-Grandes era.

ENTRE MARINOS



La vergüenza de España.



Fig. 1

"Conversation between sailors:

-What do you see?

-The Shame of Spain".

Gibraltar was one of the main topics of the "Hoja de Campaña" during 1942.

Source: "Hoja de Campaña", 4 May 1942.



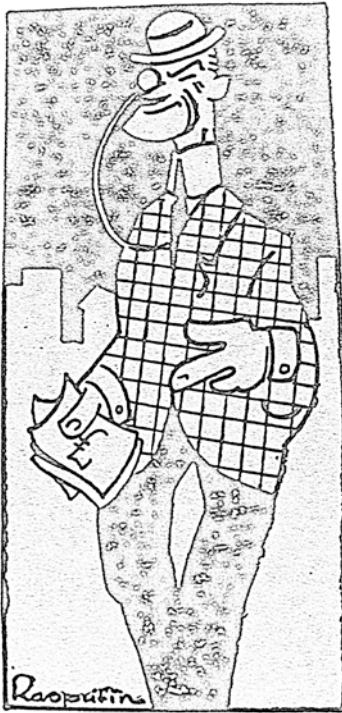
LA EMPRESA NACIONAL NO HA TERMINADO!

Fig. 2

"The national mission is not over!"

Ejecting the British from Gibraltar was considered the main future task for the members of the Division.

Source: "Hoja de Campaña", 1 July 1942.



ESTAMPA MADRILEÑA —
*En hijo de la Gran Bretaña, encargado de
«hacer ambiente».*

Fig. 3
Image from Madrid
A son of Great Britain with the task of “creating ambience”.
Fighting, even violently, British propaganda was expected
to be one of the main tasks for the soldiers of the Division
after their return to Spain.
Source: “Hoja de Campaña”, 14 October 1942.



*Vista panorámica de un anglófilo que ha
pretendido hacer propaganda, cerca de un
repatriado de la División.*

Fig. 4
“Panoramic view of an Anglophile who tried to
make propaganda with repatriated member of
the Division”.
Source: “Hoja de Campaña”, 11 November
1942.

England, liberal England, stole Gibraltar from us.
 France, sweet France, slowly deprived us of our rights in Morocco.
 If we forget it we will be as unworthy as our predecessors.
 BUT REMEMBERING MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY ACTION⁹.

Criticism of British Imperialism appears as one of the main features in the ideological litany of the Division. While the Axis powers were fighting together voluntarily, British military power was based firstly on having other countries fight their battles – “It is well known that England had always a great ability to get other countries to fight her wars, in the name of the liberty of the oppressed peoples¹⁰” – and, in moments of desperation, on conscription and exploitation of her dominions. This criticism of British Imperialism seems to generate no contradiction with the claim of a new Spanish North African Empire.

The Churchills, the Edens and other warmongering politicians who broke the conservative prudence of old Neville Chamberlain never imagined that the powerful imperial mess of arrogant Albion would have to endure such difficult moments.

The moment of hurling into war other countries such as Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, Greece or Yugoslavia, milestones of British shame, is over. Now as insular power is blocked for fear of an invasion, the British have to appeal to soldiers from the Dominions (...) Britain has to turn to Indian, Australian and New Zealand soldiers¹¹.

The “Hoja” also refers contemptuously to the imperialism of the United States:

Modern Japan has fought for many years for the establishment of a more just Asiatic order.



Fig. 5
 “Natives of the British Empire pledging allegiance to the Viceroy”.
 This illustration represents British imperialism as oppressive. Note that all the British carry guns and a noose hangs overhead.
 Source: “Hoja de Campaña”, 8 March 1943

Yankee imperialism cynically forgets that the Monroe doctrine has always restricted such a reasonable purpose. Anglo-Saxon assistance to Chiang Kai-shek's China has always been, in this sense, highly revealing¹².

Referring specifically to the war, the “Hoja the Campaña” presented to the combatants, the *Guripas* [Soldiers], flagrant and blameworthy misinformation about the reality of the war, the nature of the Third Reich and all the myths of German propaganda about the nature and mission of the conflict.

Today we are fighting together with the most powerful army of the world and the German weapons are destroying the old fallacies of the democratic powers, opening a path for a new social order that offers to men a world worth living in and to countries a more righteous distribution of wealth, together with the reestablishment of their spiritual values¹³.

In the last days of emphasis on the so called Anglo-Saxons in the “Hoja de Campaña”, just before the rhythms of the Spanish internal policy required a change of direction in the Spanish press (much less radical in the case of the “Hoja”), the most improbable arguments of German propaganda found a unfortunate place in the pages of the Blue Division newspaper.

The Anglo-Saxons believe that with their accusations they create themselves a certain shield of virginity that makes us forget their acts of atrocity. But a long time ago the men of London - perfect gentlemen - had taken the war outside the rule of any international law. In the last months they have used all means to terrorise defenceless people. (Explosive) Pencils, pens, small items have been thrown by aeroplanes, not to injure soldiers, but children [...]

The Anglo-Saxon fighters, especially Roosevelt's disciples, are proud of disturbing cities with this means of fighting. But they will not elude the hour of punishment because everyday all their brutal acts against all the principles of humanity and civilization are registered in the book of the memory of some country with indelible memory¹⁴.

The same argument was used again two months later.

We have heard of another ‘glorious’ enterprise undertaken by the enemies of Europe: “the city of ... has been attacked by enemy bombers that dropped huge amounts of explosive objects such as pens, pencils, flashlights, dolls, match boxes etc” [...]. These terrorist acts go beyond any political concept of fighting behaviour [...]

(These methods) are inspired by the methods and systems of the gangsters of New York and Chicago¹⁵...

Finally, as a way of summing up all of these representations of Anglo-Saxon intentions, it is worth including here a satirical poem published in March 1942, together with a cartoon, in which a gipsy foretells the future to a circumspect Britain, represented by a stereotypical British gentleman (Fig. 6). The poem, humorously and effectively reproducing the typical accent of Andalusia, relates how the gipsy, after summing up all the previous evil deeds of the King of the seas, foresees all the disgraces that await him, including sharing the grave of the Americans in the East and in the Philippines and, inevitably, losing Gibraltar to the soldiers of the Blue Division.

La Marmita

Fig. 6
The Pot
A gipsy woman with a baby telling a British gentleman's fortune.
Source: "Hoja de Campaña", 23 March 1942.

The British Fortune

Come over here, lord of the waves,
And let me read your fortune,
I'll tell the end of all your ills
On the high seas.

Give me your hand, tourist,
And I will discover
The calculating reasons
For all your presumption.

When you were a young man
With a smart umbrella
You got together with three others
And carved up the high seas
Arguing over the peace.

There is a friend in your life
Who is suffering in chains,
And who is cursing the day
That you messed with him.

You were a thieving magpie
To an innocent dove;
You were so bold as
To snatch the seven nations
Who now are no longer

Slaves in your power.
 A pigeon came along,
 A bold and brave pigeon
 Who took them one by one.

You were stabbed in the back
 And stopped being a lord.

Your bad ways were passed on
 To a dopey cowboy

Who wanted to be a gangster,
 Conning the whole world,
 Roping all the poor suckers
 Into the commie gang.

I can see some nasty stuff
 In the lines of your palm,
 I see a grave, that's common.
 There are your distant relations
 Who are crying over the pity
 Of a painful loss
 Over in the South Pacific
 And the Philippines.

Hold out your hand, laddie,
 And let go of the sterling;
 Who knows, maybe tomorrow
 You'll catch the scarlet fever.

Get a new umbrella, pal
 And let the fruit ripen,
 Your triumph's a long way off

The one who'll carry off the ears
 And the tail of your Rock
 And your skin into the bargain
 Will be the Blue Division¹⁶.

PORTRAYING THE ENEMY II. SOVIET RUSSIA

Communism was always understood as the main foe of Franco's Spain. This perception reached its highest realisation during the years of the World War II. It is worth remembering that the symbolic start of the Blue Division is considered to be the *Rusia es culpable* [Russia is guilty] speech (24 June 1943), delivered by Ramón Serrano-Suñer, in Madrid, as an answer to the spontaneous demonstration that occurred in Madrid after the German invasion of Russia became known.

Comrades: this is not a time for speeches, but for a condemnatory sentence from the *Falange*. Russia is guilty! Guilty of our Civil War! Guilty of the death of José Antonio, our Founder, and of the dead of so many comrades and so many soldiers fallen in that war because of the aggression of Russian Communism! [...] The extermination of Russia is an exigency of History and of the future of Europe!¹⁷

Moreover, the invasion of the Soviet Union ended with a period of certain coldness in the relations between Spain and the Third Reich. As the memoirs of Ambassador von Moltke state:

[...] The dispatch of the Blue Division smoothed things over after the failure of the negotiations for the entrance of Spain in the war by the beginning of 1941¹⁸...



Fig. 7

A representation of the future of Spain in the event of a communist triumph in Europe. Notice the representations of both Gibraltar and England, the latter as a sleeping dog. Spaniards are dressed in typical costumes.

Source: "Hoja de Campaña", 1 November 1943.

While the image of the Western Allies in the "Hoja de Campaña" evolved as the progress of the war began to turn in their favour, the image of Soviet Russia was always dyed with the same hate and with the same belligerency in all the different periods of the newspaper. The even greater predominance of the communist issue with the change of command in the Division was only the result of the need to fill space previously occupied by references to a sector of the Allies whose economic assistance and probabilities of triumph were increasing. Nevertheless, the early references to communism in the "Hoja" stressed the idea of Marxism and liberal democracy as necessary and long-term allies, the latter being a prospective victim of the former. The following paragraph is an extract of a fabricated dialogue between a German and a Spanish soldier about the nature of the war, in the mists of the Russian trenches. According to the Spanish volunteer:

Our first task is, of course, to fight communism. We, Spaniards, have to settle our grievances with the Soviet Union. You know that in 1936 the Soviet Union, with European accomplices, tried to destroy our fatherland [...] (For us) communism is (also) France and England [...] the great western democracies are the natural allies of Moscow¹⁹ [...]

In other and much more unfortunate passages, Judaism is presented as the common link between democracy and Communism.

The Russians, even Comintern itself, are only the principal elements on which the real enemy bases his assault on the whole globe. [...] Your surnames are Democracy, Marxism, Plutocracy, but your unmistakable name is Judaism²⁰.

Without being a dominant tendency, Judaism was accused, along the lines of the more perverse Nazi ideology, of being the hidden power controlling communism and liberal democracy.



Fig. 8
Source: "Hoja de Campaña", 19 October 1943.

The more hideous images were used to describe Soviet Russia.



Fig. 9 and 9b
Source: "Hoja de Campaña", 5 September 1943; 10 October 1943.

If in the case of the Western Allies, ridicule was the main objective, here presenting communism as something hideous, monstrous, tyrannical, crippled with all human deficiencies is quite an obsession.

The misery in which these people live, their hovels where people of different sexes and ages are crammed in a monstrous coexistence, the rudimentary way of working the earth and producing manufactures, the lack of roads and any other ways of communication, all that shows eloquently the results of the Soviet system applied in any country [...]

We are only relating what we are seeing every day [...] WHAT WE HAVE SEEN IN RUSSIA.

Equality here seems to be a fact. All equally dirty and famished. Equally oppressed.

During years and years this demonic madness of the supreme directors of Communism had only a fixed idea: the invasion of Europe [...]

Had Germany not struck first, what would have happened in the event of the Soviet Union launching thousands of tanks and fighters²¹? [...]

This virulence was, nevertheless, mainly directed against ideology and not against the country. This is a clear difference from Nazi Germany, where the war against Russia was based not only on ideological arguments but essentially on racial ones. In the case of the Spanish soldiers fighting in the East, the aim was avowedly religious, and piety was a key element in the Division and in its newspaper: "Being Catholic impelled us to



La enferma y su medico de cabecera

Fig. 10

The ill woman (“Anglo-Saxon democracy”), and her doctor.

Source: “Hoja de Campaña”, 4 February 1942.

fight against the capitalism of free thinkers and atheistic communism²². They sought the redemption of peoples under the yoke of communism.

Again we have seen Katia, the child – because Katia is a Russian child of not more than seven years – she rushed into our arms, we embraced her with deepest happiness [...] Her history was as sad has her eyes. We understood it in her short sentences, spoken in broken Spanish and “Ruski” [...] she lost her mother when she was born, years later she lost her father, in the ignominy and perversity of Communism – who knows if he is firing a gun now over the poor place where his daughter lives!. Katia has never known the slightest family affection. At the school of Bolshevik Russia she was not taught to know and to love God. [...] and Katia, even at her age, realised that the Spanish soldiers were in Russia for her redemption and salvation and that of many other children who were born under the cruel and bloody sign of the hammer and the sickle²³

Fig. 11

What the soldier told the *Panenka* [Young girl]

This drawing, accompanied by a humorous text describing an innocent flirtation between the Spanish soldier and the Russian girl, perfectly exemplified the attitude of the “*Hoja de Campaña*” and that of the members of the Division towards the Russian population. In the Spanish case there was no racial hostility, or at least this was far from being predominant. The anger of the newspaper is directed against Russian ideology but fundamentally not against the people.

During the formation of the Division, several minor conflicts arose between the German authorities and the Spaniards in relation to the participation of white Russians in the Division. A former official of the Imperial Army, Ali Gursky, enlisted in the Division, and was defined as an honourable official. His presence, and that of other soldiers and officials of Russian origins, were finally rejected by the Germans.

Source: “*Hoja de Campaña*”, 21 March 1943..



Sadly, this predominant perspective was far from univocal. There was enough space in the pages of the “*Hoja de Campaña*” for the most straightforward racism along the lines of Nazi propaganda. In that sense, we must remember that the intellectual elite of the Division was mainly composed of some of the most recalcitrant Falangists of Franco’s regime, the most committed to the ideal of new Europe proposed by the Axis²⁴. When referring to a visit of some of the soldiers of the Division to the Palace of Catherine, near Leningrad, one article deals with the author’s perception of the degeneration of the Russian race as a whole. In the context of the heterogeneous corpus of ideas that we are summarizing in these pages, this is one of the most disagreeable passages that it is possible to find, representing the most extreme – and less widespread – Falangist ideology, fully under the spell of Nazi ideology.

The curiosity of our soldiers fixed on some details [...] especially [...] the erotic tapestries [...] presenting monstrous sexual aberrations in scenes of crude realism. These tapestries were especially made for the recreation of the degenerate Court of Catherine, the Russian empress. [...]

For ages the Russian court had a reputation for perversion [...] but historians only pay attention to the autocrat and the court, leaving aside the lower classes.

This is clearly the terrible problem faced now by Germany and Europe: The Marxist ideology that threatened to put Europe under the rule of a race crippled by inheritance²⁵.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter was to serve as a comprehensive introduction to the main features of the “Hoja de Campaña”, the newspaper of the Blue Division in Russia and fundamentally to the characteristics of its representation of the Allied side in World War II. The “Hoja de Campaña”, due to its particular circumstances, was able to escape partially from the control of the Spanish censorship. As a result, as some of the initial members of the Division were prominent leaders and intellectuals of the Falange, the newspaper provides a splendid opportunity to track some of the key elements of the ideology of the Spanish regime in a specific moment.

Repetitiveness and simplicity were the key elements on which this portrait of the Allies was based. In any case, this was the result of a not perfectly well balanced or univocal combination of the elements that conformed to the trends of the Spanish extreme right during the 19th century, under a new fascist façade, together with a not always modulated ingredient of German propaganda and Nazi ideology that constitutes the most regrettable feature of the texts of the “Hoja de Campaña”.

While a historic approach and certain comical aspects constituted the key elements used to portrait the Western Allies, demonization and the more hideous and deforming images were the predominant elements of the description of communism and Soviet Russia.

Covering three years of the history of Spain, of the Second World War and specifically of the Eastern front, this essay seeks to provide an initial consideration of a previously unstudied issue. Accordingly, it can be preliminarily stated that the graphic element is one of the most attractive and innovative elements of the “Hoja de Campaña”, and merits use as an initial approach to some of the key contributions of the publication, in order to achieve a better knowledge of Spanish policy during the Second World War and of the Blue Division.

NOTES

- ¹ V. Klemperer, *LTI-Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen*, Leipzig 2005. Spanish version: *La Lengua del Tercer Reich. Apuntes de un Filólogo*, Barcelona 2001, p. 38.
- ² J.M. Areilza, F.M. Castiella, *Reivindicaciones de España*, Madrid 1941, pp. 7 and 15.
- ³ It is worth remembering the change of name for fried potatoes from French Fries to Freedom Fries during the beginning of the Iraq crisis.
- ⁴ Neither G.R. Kleinfeld, L. Tambs, *La División Española de Hitler*, Madrid 1983, nor Xavier Moreno's recent work on the division, *La División Azul. Sangre Española en Rusia*, Barcelona 2005, deals with the issue of the “Hoja de Campaña”. The only study about the use of propaganda in relation to the Division is centred on cinema: R. Ibañez Hermandez, *La División Azul en el Cine y la Televisión*, in “Aportes. Revista de Historia Contemporánea”, 2001, 46. See also S. Alegre, *El Cine cambia la Historia: Las imágenes de la División Azul*, Barcelona, 1994. The Brotherhood of the Division published a very limited facsimile edition of the “Hoja”, intended mainly for its members.
- ⁵ The unfavourable evolution of the war for the German Army and the Allied pressure on Franco's regime forced Spain, from the beginning of 1943, to confront the influence of German propaganda in Spain.

- The evolution of German propaganda in Spain during World War II is studied in C. Velasco, *Propaganda y Publicidad Nazi en España Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Algunas Características*, in "Espacio, Tiempo y Forma (Serie Historia Contemporánea)", Madrid 1994.
- ⁶ The action of turning a portrait upside down is quite a tradition in Spanish political protest. After the War of the Spanish Succession, the portrait of Phillip V in Jativa (Museo del Amudín) was turned upside down as a protest for the burning of the city, during the war, by the first Bourbon monarch. This unknown reference to Franco's portrait was related to me by a prominent member of the "Hoja" staff, who asked to remain anonymous.
 - ⁷ "Hoja de Campaña", 6 June 1943. The article was a collaboration of Antonio Tovar, an eminent philologist who, during the war years, held the position of undersecretary for Press and Propaganda. He was the interpreter of Serrano-Suñer in several interviews with Hitler.
 - ⁸ "Hoja de Campaña", 4 February 1942.
 - ⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 February 1942.
 - ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16 March 1942.
 - ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 18 December 1941.
 - ¹² *Ibid.*, 13 December 1941.
 - ¹³ *Ibid.*, 17 February 1942.
 - ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 June 1943.
 - ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 August 1943.
 - ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 March 1942.
 - ¹⁷ "Arriba", 25 June 1941.
 - ¹⁸ *Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive*. R4506/E37.
 - ¹⁹ "Hoja de Campaña", 20 April 1942.
 - ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4 May 1942. Nevertheless, the perception of the Jews in the "Hoja de Campaña" is far from univocal and worth a separate study. In many senses it perfectly reflects the perception of the Franco regime as a whole.
 - ²¹ *Ibid.*, 23 July 1943.
 - ²² *Ibid.*, 15 August 1943.
 - ²³ *Ibid.*, 1 August 1943.
 - ²⁴ The dispatch of the Division can be interpreted, in some extent, as the best way for Franco to get rid of the most inconvenient agitators of his regime, mainly the most extreme Falangists.
 - ²⁵ "Hoja de Campaña", 5 September 1943.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

"Hoja de Campaña", Complete Series 1941-1944.
 Military Archive, Ávila. Blue Division Section.
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive, Madrid.

Secondary Works

Areilza J.M., Castiella F.M., *Reivindicaciones de España*, Madrid 1941.
 Moreno X., *La División Azul. Sangre Española en Rusia*, Barcelona 2005.

Klemperer V., *LTI-Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen*, Leipzig 2005.

Kleinfeld G.R., Tambs L., *La División Española de Hitler*, Madrid 1983.

Ibañez Hernandez R., *La Cruzada Antibolchevique en las Pantallas. La División Azul en el Cine y la Televisión*, in "Aportes. Revista de Historia Contemporánea", 2001, 46, pp. 36-53.

Velasco C., *Propaganda y Publicidad Nazi en España Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Algunas Características*, in "Espacio, Tiempo y Forma" (Serie Historia Contemporánea)", 1994, 7, pp. 85-108.

Sinova J., *La Censura en la Prensa Durante el Franquismo (1936-1951)*, Madrid 1989.