

Contemporary European History

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CEH>



Additional services for **Contemporary European History**:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

'Woe Betide Us If They Win!': National Socialist Treatment of the Spanish 'Volunteer' Workers

MARICIÓ JANUÉ I MIRET

Contemporary European History / Volume 23 / Issue 03 / August 2014, pp 329 - 357

DOI: 10.1017/S0960777314000174, Published online: 26 June 2014

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0960777314000174

How to cite this article:

MARICIÓ JANUÉ I MIRET (2014). 'Woe Betide Us If They Win!': National Socialist Treatment of the Spanish 'Volunteer' Workers . Contemporary European History, 23, pp 329-357 doi:10.1017/S0960777314000174

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

‘Woe Betide Us If They Win!’:

National Socialist Treatment of
the Spanish ‘Volunteer’
Workers

MARICIÓ JANUÉ I MIRET

Abstract

During 1941 the need for workers in Germany increased. As a result, the National Socialists requested allied and neutral countries to recruit volunteer workers. The total number of volunteers from these countries employed by the Nazis during the Second World War was similar to the total number of the civilian workers from occupied Poland. In spite of the better conditions offered to these volunteers and the efforts to indoctrinate them, the National Socialists failed to attract them to their cause. This article examines the reasons for this failure, taking as an example the case of the Spanish volunteers. The research is mainly based on the documents of the German-Spanish Society (Deutsch-Spanische Gesellschaft, DSG) of Berlin, which was the principal intermediary between the Spanish volunteers, and the National Socialist and Spanish authorities.

This article examines the treatment of volunteer workers from allied and neutral countries employed in Germany during the Second World War, taking as an example the case of the Spanish volunteers. The article tries to explain why, despite the fact that these volunteers came from sympathetic countries, the National Socialists failed in their attempts to attract them to the Nazi cause.

The first part of the article analyses the status of the volunteer workers who went to Germany during the war in relation to the whole of the Nazi foreign workforce, as well as the tactics used to win over the volunteers to Nazi totalitarianism once they had arrived in Germany. The subsequent parts of the article focus on the case of the

A previous draft of this article was delivered in 2010 as a presentation at the Thirty-Fourth Annual Conference of the German Studies Association in Oakland. I would like to thank the reviewers of *Contemporary European History* for their very useful comments, which helped me to improve this article.

Universitat Pompeu Fabra, C) Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-7, E-08005 Barcelona, Spain; maria.janue@upf.edu

Spanish volunteers, analysing how the National Socialists managed their supervision and indoctrination.

Thanks to previous studies regarding the dispatch of Spanish volunteer workers to Nazi Germany during the Second World War, we know how the authorities of Spain organised their recruitment, transportation and initial care.¹ These studies highlight two aspects. First, that the Spanish authorities, who at that time were unable to guarantee work and subsistence for a large part of the Spanish population,² deliberately deceived the workers about the conditions of voluntary work in Germany. Secondly, that sending the workers failed to achieve the Spanish leaders' objective of paying off a considerable part of the debt they had contracted with Nazi Germany for its help during the Spanish Civil War. The debt was only slightly reduced.

However, in contrast to our knowledge of the role played by the Spanish authorities, until now we knew virtually nothing about how the National Socialists, who were the original driving force behind the initiative, influenced the recruitment of the workers and, above all, how they organised their supervision once they arrived in Germany. The analysis of this question is of historical interest for two reasons. Firstly, it allows us a more precise interpretation of the dispatch of the 'volunteer' workers to National Socialist Germany by the Francoist state. Further, it helps to widen our perspective on how the National Socialist regime engineered the exploitation of other people, even neutrals or sympathisers, in order to benefit itself.³

This research is mainly based on the documents of the German-Spanish Society of Berlin (Deutsch-Spanische Gesellschaft Berlin, DSG), the principal intermediary between the National Socialist authorities, the Spanish administration, and the Spanish volunteer workers.⁴ In February 1942, this society declared:

Our greatest wish and the principal aim of our work is to ensure that the Spanish workers return to their homeland as friends of Germany. The fact that we are dealing with thousands of people makes our task a difficult one, but it should be borne in mind that these workers permit German men to join the army. If we do not treat these Spanish workers well, they will soon stop coming in the numbers that we desire.⁵

¹ See Rafael García Pérez, 'El envío de trabajadores españoles a Alemania durante la Segunda guerra mundial', *Hispania*, XLVIII, 170 (1988), 1031–65; and José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles de Hitler* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2002). See also Wayne H. Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the New Order* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2000); and Harmut Heine, 'El envío de trabajadores españoles a la Alemania nazi, 1941–1945', *Migraciones y Exilios*, 7 (2006), 926.

² See Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany*, 124–5; and Miguel Angel del Arco Blanco, 'Hunger and the Consolidation of the Francoist Regime (1939–1951)', *European History Quarterly*, 40, 3 (2010), 458–83.

³ See Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007); on the foreign workers, see 181–90.

⁴ The DSG's documents were confiscated, together with those of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut Berlin (IAI), at the end of the Second World War by the United States armed forces, deposited in the US National Archives in Washington, and microfilmed. The microfilms are currently in the IAI and the original documents are in the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GSTA).

⁵ IAI 927 (9 Feb. 1942), DSG to Herrn Gesandten Dr Schmitt, Munich.

This declaration of principles raises the question of whether the DSG succeeded in achieving its aim. The article arrives at the conclusion that it did not and casts light on the reasons why, despite its efforts, it failed.

The status of the volunteers in Nazi Germany's foreign workforce and their integration into totalitarianism

The volunteers were one of the categories of foreign workers employed in Nazi Germany. The other categories were forced civilian workers, POWs and concentration camp inmates. In the summer of 1944, the total number of all foreign workers in Germany was over seven million, that is, more than a quarter of the total number of workers.⁶ The estimated total number of foreign labourers in Germany from 1939 to 1945 is about 13.5 million. Among them, 8.4 million were civilian labourers (a third of them women) both forced and volunteer – but not including concentration camp inmates.⁷ In 1943 the Nazi authorities estimated that there were over three million volunteer foreign workers in Germany.⁸ Nevertheless, more recent calculations have concluded that the total number of volunteers lies somewhere between 1.1 and 1.5 million.⁹

Homze and Herbert, the authors of the two main books on foreign workers in Nazi Germany, agree that there was no defined plan for the use of foreigners for the German economy. Decisions and actions were determined by the evolution of the war, by its effects inside the country, and by changes in power relations inside the polycratic Nazi universe.¹⁰ The principal aim of the Nazi use of foreign workers was economic exploitation, but this was based on two determining factors, the first of which was racial. According to Nazi racial prejudice, at the bottom of the scale were Jews and Gypsies, who were facing annihilation. Following them were Poles and Soviet citizens, regarded as subhuman '*Untermenschen*'.¹¹ At the top of the hierarchy were citizens from Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Flanders, who were considered Germanic. The second determining factor was political. According to this, most other

⁶ Mark Spoerer and Jochen Fleischhacker, 'Forced Laborers in Nazi Germany: Categories, Numbers, and Survivors', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 33, 2 (2002), 169–204, 171.

⁷ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 'Forced Laborers', 186, 197.

⁸ GSTA, I.HA. Rep. 218, 258, [1943] Reichsamtsleiter Mende, Leiter des Amtes für Arbeitseinsatz der DAF: 'Selbstverantwortliche Ausländerbetreuung in Deutschland'.

⁹ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 197.

¹⁰ See Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labour in Germany under the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Edward L. Homze, *Foreign Labor in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967). See also Ulrich Herbert, 'Labour and Extermination: Economic Interest and the Primacy of Weltanschauung in National Socialism', *Past and Present*, 138 (1993), 144–95; Kim C. Priemel, 'Into the grey zone: Wehrmacht bystanders, German labour market policy and the Holocaust', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10, 3 (2008), 389–411; and Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh and Christoph Thonfeld, eds, *Hitlers Sklaven: Lebensgeschichtliche Analysen zur Zwangsarbeit im internationalen Vergleich* (Vienna: Boehlau, 2008); English trans. as *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Laborers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

¹¹ On the '*Untermensch*' philosophy, see Homze, *Foreign Labor*, 39–44.

foreigners were divided into Axis and non-Axis aliens.¹² Usually the categorisation of these other foreigners inside the Nazi racist scale was opportunistic and changed with the time, that is to say it depended on the political interest the Nazis had in each moment for each of the countries. As long as the Nazis thought the support of the Spaniards was relevant for their imperialistic objectives, they defended the doctrine of the Hispanic race disseminated by the Francoist regime.¹³

In the course of the Second World War, as more and more Germans were needed as soldiers, the demand for workers in the arms factories and the industries that supplied the German population increased commensurately. The Nazi authorities tried to prevent the German population from perceiving that their living conditions were deteriorating in order to maintain popular support for the regime.¹⁴ A solution was found in the recruitment of forced workers, both POWs and civilians, in the occupied countries of eastern Europe (*Ostarbeiter*). They came from Poland and, after the summer of 1941, more often from the USSR. In the autumn and winter of 1941/2, the lack of manpower had become so important to the regime that one of the factors to be taken into account in every major decision was what impact it would have on the labour situation.¹⁵

In March 1942, Fritz Sauckel was appointed general plenipotentiary for the employment of manpower (Generalbevollmächtigter für den Arbeitseinsatz, GBA). This appointment was designed to reduce tensions between the headquarters of the armed forces (directed by Wilhelm Keitel), the ministry of arms and ammunition (directed by Albert Speer), and the German 'labour front' (Deutsche Arbeitsfront, DAF, directed by Robert Ley). From his position, Sauckel directed the forced deportation of some five million foreign workers to Germany.¹⁶ The total number of civilian workers from Poland and the USSR employed by the Nazis between 1939 and 1945 is calculated to have been 1.6 and 2.7 million respectively.¹⁷ In accordance with the Nazi '*Untermenschen*' philosophy, the workers from these countries had no civil rights at all. Tens of thousands died of malnutrition, disease and violence.¹⁸ Regarding gender, the lower a nationality figured on the racial hierarchy, the higher was its percentage of deported women workers (51% in the case of the Soviet workers).¹⁹

¹² Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 'Forced Laborers', 171.

¹³ See Dawid Danilo Bartelt, 'Rassismus als politische Inszenierung: Das Ibero-Amerikanische Institut und der Día de la Raza', in Reinhard Liehr, Günther Maihold and Günther Vollmer, eds, *Ein Institut und sein General: Wilhelm Faupel und das Ibero-Amerikanische Institut in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2003), 67–129.

¹⁴ See Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries*, esp. 346–62; and Alf Lüdtke, 'The Appeal of Exterminating "Others": German Workers and the Limits of Resistance', *Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992), 46–67.

¹⁵ Herbert, 'Labour and Extermination', 168.

¹⁶ After the war, Sauckel was condemned to death at the Nuremberg Trial for the deportations and was executed in 1946.

¹⁷ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 187.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 171–3.

¹⁹ Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153.

From the summer of 1940, POW and civilian workers, both forced and volunteer, had also been recruited in the conquered and the collaborating territories of western Europe, beginning with France, and followed by Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. Initially, in these countries, labour policies were controlled by the local authorities and German demands were channelled through the national labour administrations.²⁰ Civilian forced workers were not required to leave their countries and employment in Germany was, in principle, offered on a voluntary basis. After the appointment of Sauckel in 1942 foreign labour administrations faced the dilemma that compliance with German demands was the only way to prevent direct intervention. With the advent of total war, the German occupying authorities managed labour requisitioning directly, but with the help of local administrations to track down recalcitrant workers. In the Netherlands and Belgium most of the deported workers were jobless or 'anti-social' elements.

With regard to France, the number of civilian workers employed by the Nazis between 1939 and 1945 is calculated at over one million.²¹ About 250,000 were volunteers (probably a third of them women).²² Two main features characterised the French volunteers. The first was that they were drawn from the most deprived groups of their society, with unemployment being the most common reason to go to Germany.²³ The second was that explicit political commitment amongst them was rare. Among those that had any such commitment Communists were the most numerous single group. Different reasons may explain this:²⁴ sometimes employers or prefects compelled militants into 'volunteering' to get rid of them; in some cases, Communists were already in prison and, like other prisoners, were offered release in exchange for signing a contract to work in Germany; some Communists may have decided that they would be safer if they left communities where they were known, and where they had to face the wrath of old enemies (or of former comrades, given the fact that the Communist Party itself was divided after the Hitler–Stalin pact); finally, it may also be that Communist leaders spurred some militants to go to Germany. However, most of the French people who volunteered to work in Germany had no political affiliations.

The French volunteers who went to Germany during the first two years of the war had often been subjected to various forms of compulsion. This is one of the reasons why it may be inaccurate to label them 'volunteers'.²⁵ In June 1942,

²⁰ See Lagrou: *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 134–8. See also Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 97–100.

²¹ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 187. The French POW labour force has been calculated at over 1.2 million.

²² On the forced and volunteer French workers see Richard Vinen, *The Unfree French: Life under the Occupation* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), esp. 116–23.

²³ Lagrou, *The Legacy Nazi Occupation*, 150–2.

²⁴ Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 119–20.

²⁵ Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main: J. W. Goethe University/Fritz Bauer Institute, 2008), 1–31, and http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/files/993/original/pdf_Mark_Spoerer_Zwangsarbeit_im_Dritten_Reich.pdf (last visited 17 Apr. 2014); English version Mark Spoerer, *Forced Labor in the Third Reich* (Frankfurt am Main: J. W. Goethe University/Fritz Bauer Institute, 2010), 1–32, and http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/files/1065/original/pdf_Mark_Spoerer_Forced_Labor_in_the_Third_Reich.pdf (last visited 17 Apr. 2014).

the Vichy government announced the institution of the 'relief' (*relève*), which aimed to trade three French workers for every released French POW.²⁶ Under this scheme, French workers were to be encouraged to volunteer to go to Germany. However, in practice, many of them were coerced. On 4 September, a month before a similar law came into force in Belgium, legislation on 'the use and management of labour' made this coercion explicit. As a result of these laws, workers who had gone to Germany as volunteers lost their right to take leave or return to France at the end of their contract so that, in effect, they became forced labourers. The delivery of French workers would not liberate POWs, but only allow the 'transformation' in Germany of an equal number of POWs into free civilian workers. Therefore they were subjected to the same conditions as any other civilian in the Third Reich, as only POWs enjoyed the international protection of the Geneva Convention. In February 1943, Vichy instituted the Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO), which required men born between January 1920 and December 1922 to perform two years of compulsory labour service.

It is worth mentioning that some of the workers recruited by the Nazis in France were exiled Spanish republicans who had fled Franco's dictatorship.²⁷ Among the Spanish republicans exiled in France, some 12,000 to 13,000 were made POWs and interned in concentration camps. Between 17,000 and 18,000 were used as forced workers in German industry or in the construction of public works and war fortifications. Another 15,000 stayed in the occupied zones and were integrated into the Foreign Workers Companies without receiving a wage. Some members of this group chose to go to work in Germany or enlisted in the Todt Organisation, which carried out military engineering projects using both volunteers and all kinds of forced workers, and in which working conditions were harder, but wages and food better.

During the year 1941 the need for workers in Germany increased. As a result, the National Socialists requested allied and neutral countries to recruit volunteer workers. In the cases of allied and neutral countries, the conditions for sending volunteers were established in an agreement. The first country to sign such an agreement was Italy, which between January 1938 and spring 1943 sent approximately 500,000 volunteers to Germany.²⁸ The total number of Italian civilian workers used by the Nazis during the war is calculated at 960,000.²⁹ In the case of the

²⁶ See Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 197–9, 247–79, 281–2. See also Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 138–9.

²⁷ See Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany*, 140; García Pérez, 'El envío de trabajadores españoles', 1063–5; Ramón Garriga, *Las relaciones secretas entre Franco y Hitler* (Buenos Aires: Jorge Álvarez, 1965), 281–3; Heine, 'El envío de trabajadores españoles', 21; Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 207–8; Mercedes Vilanova, 'Arbeit, Verfolgung und Tod nach dem spanischen Bürgerkrieg', in Plato, Leh and Thonfeld, *Hitlers Sklaven*, 36–44; Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 117.

²⁸ On the Italian volunteers, see Brunello Mantelli, 'Camerati del lavoro': *I lavoratori italiani emigrati nel terzo Reich nel periodo dell'Asse 1938–1943* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1992). See also Cesare Bermani, *Al lavoro nella Germania di Hitler: Racconti e memorie dell'emigrazione italiana 1937–1945* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1998), 33.

²⁹ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 187. After the Italian change of alliance in September 1943, 600,000 Italian soldiers were exploited by the Nazis as forced labourers, Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 133.

Italian workers, too, hardship seems to have been the main reason for volunteering. Subsequently, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Spain also signed similar agreements.

The basic rules for the supervision of the foreign workers were established by the GBA in regulation number four, dated 7 May 1942.³⁰ The DAF, which was responsible for native German workers, also took over the responsibility of the foreign workers once they had arrived in Germany.³¹

The DAF was the largest of all the mass organisations attached to the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP). It had been created with the assets of the German trade unions, which had been dissolved in May 1933. In practice, all workers and employers were forced to become members. In line with the totalitarian aims of the regime, the DAF's mission was to control and indoctrinate workers with regard to both their work and leisure activities.³² In November 1933, the popular National Socialist community 'Strength through Joy' (NS Gemeinschaft 'Kraft durch Freude', KdF) was created as a section of the DAF. This section organised and promoted 'bourgeois' leisure activities workers had until then been denied. One of the most popular was the organisation of holiday trips for workers through the programme 'Travel Near and Far' (Nah- und Fernreisen). The KdF also promoted the frustrated project of the Kdf-Wagen, which promised to help workers to finance the purchase of a Volkswagen (VW), the 'people's car', by means of a public loan. In the same way, the Kdf organised a number of leisure activities of an artistic and cultural nature for workers.

Regarding the foreign volunteer workers who came to Germany from the allied and neutral countries, their supervision by the DAF was carried out by the following three agencies: the DAF central office for employment (Amt für Arbeitseinsatz), the DAF regional administrations (Gauverwaltung der DAF), and the German companies that had contracted them. In exercising its task of supervising the volunteers, the DAF could also consult the diplomatic and consular representations of the workers' countries of origin. At the beginning, only passive action was expected of these official representations. This means that, according to the regulations of international law, they would only act in the case of non-compliance with signed international agreements. However, as the number of volunteer workers increased, the National Socialist authorities began to consider the need for more active collaboration in the supervision of the workers by their countries of origin, even if always under the general supervision of the DAF.

Italy under Mussolini was a pioneer in institutionalising collaboration between the volunteer workers' country of origin and the DAF. The Italian Fascist Confederation

³⁰ This regulation is reproduced in GSTA, I.HA. Rep. 218, 258, [1943] Reichsamtsleiter Mende, Leiter des Amtes für Arbeitseinsatz der DAF: 'Selbstverantwortliche Ausländerbetreuung in Deutschland'.

³¹ See Ronald Smelser, *Robert Ley: Hitlers Mann an der 'Arbeitsfront': Eine Biographie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1989); regarding foreign workers, see 264–7.

³² On the DAF's ideas on the organisation of the workers' leisure time, see Smelser, *Hitlers Mann*, 208–15; and Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1991), ch. 7 'Arbeit und Freizeit', 232–72.

of Industrial Workers (CFLI), appointed two representatives for each of the DAF regional administrations where there were Italian workers. This system would afterwards be extended to the rest of the allied and neutral countries that sent volunteer workers.

Italy was also the first country to create an Italian union co-ordination office with the DAF (Ufficio sindacale italiano di collegamento con il DAF, USI), which represented the Italian government in the DAF central employment office.³³ The agreements for the dispatch of volunteers later signed with the other allied and neutral countries established that each of these countries would set up an office of representation attached to the DAF central office in Berlin. In France, in March 1942, the Vichy government established a 'Service for French Labour' in Germany, which had an office in Berlin and officials scattered across Germany.³⁴ The Spaniards, too, created a special office in Berlin to manage the volunteer workers affairs. These offices of representation of each country of origin were financed by taxes paid by the workers to the DAF. According to the Nazi authorities, these offices were to mediate between the DAF and the governments of each country, and to appoint the foreign representatives in the regional administrations of the DAF.

These foreign representatives had to follow guidelines published at the beginning of September 1942. Their work consisted of three aspects. First, they had to give support to the DAF in its supervision of foreign workers in the Reich. Secondly, they had to encourage coexistence between the German population and the foreigners in their workplaces and camps. Thirdly, they were to promote workers' wellbeing, improve their performance at work, and maintain order and discipline while, at the same time, taking into account cultural differences. The task of the foreign representatives also included local mediation between the volunteers, the companies and their work camps, and the DAF's local administrations. Mediators were chosen who usually worked with their fellow-workers in the same company or work camp. The mediators carried out their task partly after work and partly by being excused by the company from part of the working day while receiving the same salary. It was hoped that, through contact with these mediators, the foreign representatives in the DAF regional administrations could quickly detect any problems that might come up. If they could not solve them themselves, they would contact the higher authorities of the DAF. The foreign representatives in the regional DAF administrations were to inform the DAF about their actions (contacts, letters, visits), so that the DAF could intervene whenever it considered that the companies, the workers, or the German population were affected. The DAF also expected foreign representatives to act on behalf of DAF whenever the workers from their countries were in the wrong.

As in the case of German workers, the DAF also assisted the volunteer workers in organising their leisure time and their 'spiritual' and cultural education. It was with this objective that the Italian national office for leisure time (Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro), which had been created in 1925, installed a subsidiary office in Berlin,

³³ See Mantelli: '*Camerati del lavoro*', 184–7.

³⁴ Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 287.

where it worked in collaboration with the KdF. In the same way, albeit without achieving the same degree of sophistication as the Italian fascists, other countries also created different forms of 'camaraderie' among their workers, as in the case of the French 'Foyers'. At the same time, the DAF took the initiative in organising different entertainment activities itself. The DAF also supported some of the activities proposed by foreign organisations from countries with similar political regimes, such as the celebration of national days.

The conditions the Nazis offered to the volunteers proceeding from neutral and allied countries were better than those of other foreign workers. In spite of this, most neutral nations were reluctant to send workers to the Reich. In addition, Germany's relations with the neutral countries fluctuated with the ebb and flow of the war. After the Nazi defeat in Stalingrad at the beginning of 1943, when Germany's future position became uncertain, the neutrals, along with Germany's allies and people in the occupied areas, reacted accordingly.³⁵

The dispatch of the Spanish volunteers to Germany and the role of the Spanish government

After the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the Nazi regime was in a favourable position to consolidate its influence on Spain. The German contribution to Franco's victory had resulted in a significant debt, which could be used by Germany in every bilateral negotiation. Shortly before the end of the war, Franco had joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, which had been concluded between Germany and Japan at the end of 1936 (and which Italy had already joined in 1937). In addition, the Germans could count on the support of the Germanophile circles of the Falange, the Spanish fascist party. Nazi influence was also enhanced by the context of intellectual isolation, autarchy and pronounced fascist orientation, which was dominant during the early years of Francoism.³⁶

After the outbreak of the Second World War, Spain was incorporated into the Nazi plan to redefine the European economic space. The German war industry became dependent on Spanish supplies. This triggered increased German interest in incorporating Spain into the Axis. Nevertheless, for the Spanish authorities, anti-communism was an ideological priority. They therefore rejected the German–Soviet pact which was in force between the summer of 1939 and 1941. From June 1940, Spain officially maintained a policy of 'non-belligerence', which meant that it would not intervene militarily even though it supported the Axis Forces.

³⁵ Homze, *Foreign Labor*, 64–6; Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 131–3.

³⁶ Carlos Sanz Díaz, 'Relaciones científico-culturales hispano-alemanas entre 1939 y 1975', in Sandra Rebok, ed., *Traspasar Fronteras: Un siglo de intercambio científico/Über Grenzen Hinaus: Ein Jahrhundert Deutsch-Spanische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010), 361–80; and Nicolás Sesma Landrín, 'Importando el Nuevo orden: El Instituto de estudios políticos y la recepción de la cultura fascista y nacionalsocialista en España (1939–1942)', in Ferran Gallego; Francisco Morente Valero, eds, *Rebeldes y reaccionarios: Intelectuales, fascismo y derecha radical en Europa* (Mataró: El Viejo Topo, 2011), 243–80, 252.

However, in May 1941, a reorganisation of Franco's government took place. The more fascist sectors of the Falange lost power in favour of the more Catholic sectors and those sectors of the army which did not want to bring Spain into the war. In reaction, the more radical sectors of the Falange, aware that only a victory of the Axis forces could change the situation within Spain to its advantage, decided to intensify its relations with Berlin.³⁷ It was precisely in this context that the director of the DAF, Ley, tried for the first time to convince Gerardo Salvador Merino, Spanish national delegate of the Falangist labour unions, to send volunteer workers to Germany.³⁸ In spite of this, the German–Soviet Pact prevented such an agreement.

Nonetheless, with Germany's invasion of the USSR in the summer of 1941, the ideology of the Anti-Comintern Pact was revived and could again be highlighted as evidence for the affinities between the two countries.³⁹ Spain accepted a greater degree of involvement in the war by sending the 'Blue Division' to the eastern front. The Blue Division was made up of Falangist volunteer soldiers and Germanophile army officers committed to the Axis cause.⁴⁰ Therefore, in the case of the Blue Division, ideological affinities, above all anti-communism, played a more significant role as a motivation for joining than in the case of the volunteer workers.⁴¹ The first recruitment of Blue Division soldiers produced 18,000 volunteers but, in the end, approximately 46,000 would fight in the East.

In addition, Spain signed the Hispano–German Agreement for the Employment of Spanish Workers. The negotiations between the German and Spanish authorities

³⁷ Walter L. Bernecker, 'Alemania y España en la época del nacionalsocialismo', in Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda and Henning Wegener, eds, *España y Alemania: Percepciones mutuas de cinco siglos de historia* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 2002), 155–81, 177; Lorenzo Delgado López-Escalonilla, *Diplomacia franquista y política cultural hacia Iberoamérica 1939–1953* (Madrid: Centro Superior de investigaciones Científicas, 1988), 161 ff; Maricío Janué Miret, 'La atracción del falangismo a la causa nacionalsocialista por parte de la Sociedad Germano-Española de Berlín durante la Guerra Civil española', in Miguel Á. Ruiz-Carnicer, ed., *Falange: Las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)* (Zaragoza: Institución 'Fernando el Católico' (C.S.I.C.), 2013), 240–61; and Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España: Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), 342–3.

³⁸ See Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi*, 97–8; García Pérez, 'El envío de trabajadores españoles, 1037–8; Rafael García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich: Las relaciones económicas hispano-alemanas durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1994), 258; Garriga, *Las relaciones secretas*, 234; Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 46–53; and Klaus-Jörg Ruhl, *Franco, Falange y III Reich: España durante la II Guerra Mundial* (Madrid: Akal, 1986), 68; [Ger. orig., Klaus-Jörg Ruhl, *Spanien im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Franco, das Falange und das 'Dritte Reich'* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1975)].

³⁹ See Bernecker, 'Alemania y España, 177; Wayne H. Bowen, *Spain During World War II* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 40, and, id., *Spaniards and Nazi Germany*, 40, 103–55; Lorenzo Delgado López-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel: Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992), 166; Janué Miret, 'La atracción del falangismo'; 'La cultura como instrumento de la influencia alemana en España: La Sociedad Germano-Española de Berlín (1930–1945)', *Ayer*, 69 (2008), 21–45, and ead., 'Imperialismus durch auswärtige Kulturpolitik: Die Deutsch–Spanische Gesellschaft als "zwischenstaatlicher Verband" unter dem Nationalsozialismus', *German Studies Review*, 31 (2008), 109–32.

⁴⁰ García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 263–9; Xavier Moreno, *La División Azul: Sangre española en Rusia, 1941–1945* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005).

⁴¹ Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany*, 103–23.

to reach an agreement for the dispatch of the workers took place in Madrid during August 1941. The main obstacle to the agreement was the German claim that Spain should settle its pending debt for the help it had received from the Third Reich during the Civil War.⁴² Finally, the Spanish authorities agreed, in an additional protocol, to set up a compensation fund for the war debt, in which the volunteer workers' savings would be collected and retained by the Germans.⁴³ The exchange value of these savings in pesetas would be paid by the Spanish state to the workers' families. In compensation for administrative costs, the Reich would pay ten marks to the Spanish state for each volunteer.

This Spanish concession to German interests has been explained by its potential advantages: the decrease of unemployment in Spain and the improved skills of the workers in question. It should be kept in mind that in 1941, just two years after the end of the civil war, even the Spanish authorities admitted that unemployment 'produced misery and despair' and 'constituted a shadow that darkened Spanish homes'.⁴⁴ At that moment, the Spanish internal market supply of food, fuel and raw materials was in a disastrous state and, consequently, some firms had had to reduce the working day or even close.⁴⁵ Besides this, when explaining the Spanish acceptance of the agreement, the political interests of the then minister of foreign affairs should be taken into account: Ramón Serrano Suñer, Franco's brother-in-law, favoured a diplomatic approach to Germany in order to reinforce his position in the Francoist government.

To manage the sending of the volunteers and to fulfil the conditions of the agreement, the Spanish authorities created the Inter-ministerial Commission for the Dispatch of Workers to Germany (Comisión Interministerial para el envío de trabajadores a Alemania, CIPETA).⁴⁶ The first president of the commission was Pelayo García Olay and the technical secretary, Marcelo Catalá Ruiz. This commission was responsible for the recruitment of the workers, the conditions of their contracts of employment, the organisation of the examination boards for professional qualifications and health, the supply of clothes, the organisation of the trips to Hendaye at the French frontier, representing the workers before the German authorities, and the granting of subsidies to the workers' families. The registration of the workers in Spain was entrusted to the provincial statistics and employment offices of the Francoist labour unions. In these offices the workers received information about the offers and the working conditions and filled out a form on their personal, familiar and professional situation. From that moment onwards, the workers could

⁴² See Janué Miret, 'La atracción del falangismo'.

⁴³ Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (AMAE), Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7; García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 260; Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 122, 259–70.

⁴⁴ Statement of the civil governor of Barcelona in 'Importante reunión para resolver el paro obrero', *La Vanguardia* (25 Nov. 1941), 6.

⁴⁵ Ruhl, *Franco, Falange y III Reich*, 36–8.

⁴⁶ Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 71–4. A copy of the CIPETA regulations in AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7.

sign individual contracts with the representatives of the different German companies for a period of two years (at first only for a year with one company, with the possibility of extension for another year with the same or another company). In the first month as many as 25,000 workers registered in the Spanish offices but, until the end of 1941, only some 4,200 could be transported to Hendaye.⁴⁷

The CIPETA opened a 'Special Delegation' in Berlin, which was first located in the German delegation of the Falange and later in the Spanish embassy. Nevertheless, until May 1942 this delegation lacked a budget. The post of delegate was occupied by Enrique Pérez Hernández, who had previously been regional delegate of labour in Madrid. The CIPETA only agreed to take care of the workers sent to Germany by the Spanish government as volunteers, as Franco's regime did not recognise exiled republicans as Spaniards.⁴⁸ The delegation in Berlin was also to take care of the political education and the leisure-time activities of the volunteers through its propaganda service, always in collaboration with the German authorities. The press spokesperson of the CIPETA office in Berlin declared in the summer of 1942 that the institution was undertaking its difficult mission 'with increasing success', in close contact with the Reich Ministry of Labour, the DSG and the foreign language services.⁴⁹ In reality, the task of the commission and its office in Berlin was hampered by the scarcity of economic and administrative resources.⁵⁰ In this regard, the case of the CIPETA does not seem to have been dissimilar to that of the Service for French Labour in Germany, which likewise had a small staff and little power to control the decisions taken by German employers.⁵¹

At first the Nazi government made vague requests for up to 100,000 workers to be sent to Germany, but more specific requests made later were for 25,000 workers in a first phase plus 23,000 more in a second.⁵² There was demand for Spanish workers in the fields of metallurgy, building, chemistry, mining, as well as in agriculture and forestry. Although the first expeditions of Spanish volunteers set off in the autumn of 1941, the CIPETA's lack of economic resources caused a delay and no further workers were sent during the first three months of 1942.⁵³ In the end, the Nazi government's appeals regarding the desired number of Spanish workers to be sent to Germany were not fully met and only a total of about 10,000, fewer than a quarter of the desired number, were sent. The agreement for the dispatch of Spanish workers

⁴⁷ García Pérez, 'El envío de trabajadores españoles, 1044; Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 97.

⁴⁸ Garriga, *Las relaciones secretas*, 281–3; Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 142.

⁴⁹ *Enlace*, I, 6, 9 Aug. 1942, 2.

⁵⁰ García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 262.

⁵¹ Vinen, *The Unfree French*, 281–2.

⁵² AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 17.9.1942), Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Apunte para el Sr. Ministro, Reservado, Comisión Interministerial Permanente para el envío de Trabajadores españoles a Alemania (CIPETA). See also García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 258; and Garriga, *Las relaciones secretas*, 234, 281.

⁵³ García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 262; Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 97; see also the announcement of the renewal of the contracting of workers in *La Vanguardia* (2 June 1942), 6, and of the departure of the workers in *La Vanguardia* (5 Aug. 1942), 5.

considered, but in May 1942 the CIPETA established that the wives of the workers who were already working in Germany could join them if they obtained a contract of employment. We know however that some of them were already in Germany before this decision by the CIPETA was taken. Thus in the summer of 1942, Carmen Tobías, who had been in Germany since September 1941, was working at Verda Boots- und Motorenbau in Berlin and contacted the DSG because she had no accommodation.⁵⁷ Moreover, towards the end of 1943, Emilia Moral, the 66-year-old unmarried orphan of a Spanish consul, asked the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an allowance to go to Germany to work as an interpreter for the volunteer workers because of her adverse economic situation.⁵⁸ Given that she had already received work offers in Germany, she also asked that her journey to Germany be paid for, as was the case of the other volunteer workers, but the ministry of labour refused to do so. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, argued in favour of paying the woman's travel expenses 'on humanitarian grounds'. It even proposed that, given that she was the orphan of a colleague, she might be offered a modest post in the CIPETA delegation in Berlin, where the knowledge of French and German she claimed to have could be useful. From the summer of 1942, the Spanish authorities also permitted minors over 17 years old to be sent to work in Germany and regarded this as highly desirable.⁵⁹

The workers who went to Germany were treated by the Spanish authorities as heroes and celebrated in Germany as 'proof of collaboration and of European solidarity working towards victory over the sinister powers'.⁶⁰ As a result of the positive propaganda the Germans had put out regarding the model factories of the Reich, where German workers were shown surrounded by all manner of comforts, the Spanish volunteers went to Germany convinced that they would live in a paradise. The Spanish press published that, as soon as the workers were settled in their jobs, they would be able to report on 'the reality of the magnificent conditions offered by the German Reich to the Spanish producers willing to be contracted'.⁶¹ However, when the volunteers were confronted with the reality of a Germany which had been at war for two years, their disappointment was immense.⁶²

The Deutsch-Spanische Gesellschaft as mediator for the Spanish volunteers

Regarding the Spanish volunteers, the DAF delegated part of its responsibilities, both in respect of general supervision and the organisation of leisure activities, to the

⁵⁷ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (2 July 1942), file of Carmen Tobías.

⁵⁸ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 4 Dec. 1943), Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores.

⁵⁹ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 11 June 1942): conversations between the representatives of the CIPETA delegation in Berlin and the GBA, minutes.

⁶⁰ See *La Vanguardia* (25 Nov. 1941), 2–5, 4.

⁶¹ *La Vanguardia* (30 Nov. 1941), 'Envío de productores a Alemania', 4.

⁶² Garriga, *Las relaciones secretas*, 281–3.

DSG. Consequently, the DSG became the main intermediary between the National Socialist authorities, the Spanish administration and the volunteer workers.

The DSG, founded in Berlin in 1930, was based on previous German–Spanish associations which had emerged in Germany as a result of the First World War.⁶³ The fact that Spain had remained neutral during this conflict had increased German interest in the country. The members of the society and its board of directors had worked for the diplomatic service and newspapers, in literary and artistic circles, and in different fields of Hispanic studies. The society worked to promote cultural and economic relations between the two countries through conferences, exhibitions, debates and other activities. The aim was to establish links between the elites of the two states so that decisions taken by the Spanish authorities would be favourable to German interests. The importance the German authorities gave to the creation of the DSG is evident from the fact that the opening ceremony was held in the Reichstag and was attended, not only by the members of the board of directors of the institution itself, but also by Germany's foreign minister, the president of the Reichstag, the Spanish ambassador and the president of the Ibero–American Institute of Berlin (IAI). This institute, which had been founded not long before by the Prussian minister of science, art and culture, would regularly lend its facilities to the DSG for the organisation of a number of events. Consistent with the conservative and nationalist values of the association's members, after the proclamation of the Spanish Second Republic in April 1931, the DSG adopted a deliberately low-profile attitude and reduced its activities to a minimum.

From 1933 onwards, with power in the hands of the National Socialists, the most characteristic feature of the DSG was its increasing politicisation and, consequently, its subordination to the propagandist and proselytising objectives of National Socialism. A growing number of representatives from the state and NSDAP organisations joined the DSG's board of directors. Furthermore, this politicisation resulted in a notable increase in the financial capacity of the institution, as it now received official subsidies, and was, as a result, able to increase its activities considerably. In February 1936, Wilhelm Faupel, a retired German army general with a highly authoritarian personality and similar values, became president of the society.⁶⁴ This was to have an immediate effect on the DSG's conduct. Faupel, who had already been president of the IAI since 1934, aspired to become a figure that could not be ignored by the state, the single party, and its economic, cultural and political elites or by their counterparts in Spain. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War increased the importance of Hispano–German relations in the eyes of the National Socialist authorities. This provided Faupel with the opportunity he had been seeking to turn the DSG into a leading intermediary in the relations between, on the one hand,

⁶³ Regarding the DSG, see Janué i Miret, 'La cultura como instrumento'; and ead., 'Imperialismus durch auswärtige Kulturpolitik'.

⁶⁴ Oliver Gliech, 'Wilhelm Faupel: Generalstabsoffizier, Militärberater, Präsident des Ibero–Amerikanischen Instituts', in Reinhard Liehr, Günther Mailhold and Günther Vollmer, eds, *Ein Institut und sein General: Wilhelm Faupel und das Ibero–Amerikanische Institut in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2003), 131–279.

those Spaniards who supported Franco and, in particular, those from Falangist circles who were sympathetic towards National Socialism and, on the other hand, state and party authorities in Germany.⁶⁵ Faupel was appointed Germany's first ambassador to Franco's Spain. However, the fact that he failed to subordinate his own relationship, and that of the DSG, with the Falange to the approval of the Francoist authorities resulted in his dismissal.

The end of the Spanish Civil War with the victory of the Francoist forces gave the DSG the opportunity to play a more prominent role. However, these favourable circumstances were soon upset by the outbreak of the Second World War. The Spanish authorities' rejection of the German–Soviet Pact temporarily complicated institutional relations between the two countries. However, Germany's invasion of the USSR in the summer of 1941 served to revitalise the DSG's activities. This new situation enabled the DSG to take on a new responsibility: with the agreement of the DAF and its subordinate organisations, the DSG became adviser to the Spanish volunteer workers who went to Germany.

In its role as intermediary between the volunteers, the Spanish authorities and their National Socialist counterparts, the DSG received reports from Pérez Hernández, the head of the CIPETA delegation in Germany, about the most serious incidents and complaints that the Spanish workers had addressed to him. One of the tasks taken over by the DSG was to assist in the inspection of the work camps wherever they were located. One of these visits took place at the beginning of January 1942, when the director of the DSG, the lawyer Dr Hans-Joachim von Merkat, paid a visit, on behalf of the society, to the work camp of Norddeutsche Motorenbau GmbH in Berlin–Niederschöneweide. On this occasion, Merkat made a detailed report on the living conditions in the camp and the reasons for the workers' protests.⁶⁶

Because of the obvious advantages to be gained from a knowledge of German, the DSG also tried to find enough teachers to give classes to those workers who requested them. In order to do this, the DSG contacted the DAF recruitment office to ask the companies to communicate how many Spanish workers were interested in learning German.⁶⁷ The companies themselves were responsible for paying the teachers.⁶⁸ The DSG, for its part, would provide a co-ordinator responsible for organising the courses. Later the DSG was forced to pass control of the organisation of the courses to the Deutsches Volksbildungswerk, which reported to the DAF. Thus, in the summer

⁶⁵ See Janué Miret, 'La atracción del falangismo'.

⁶⁶ For the report of the visit, see GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 258 (9 Jan. 1942), Merkat, 'Bericht über den Besuch des spanischen Arbeiterlagers der Nordbaumotorenwerke, Berlin–Niederschöneweide, Berliner Str. 139. Streng vertraulich!' Merkat had been director of the DSG since the autumn of 1938, having also been director of the IAI previously. He would later take part in the Second World War as an officer. Finally, he became a minister of the Federal Republic under Adenauer.

⁶⁷ IAI 935 (5 Feb. 1942); GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 258, Aktennotiz betreffs Deutschunterricht für die in Berlin befindlichen spanischen Arbeiter (memo regarding German lessons for Spanish workers in Berlin).

⁶⁸ IAI 927 (9 Feb. 1942), DSG to Herrn Gesandten Dr. Schmitt, Munich.

of 1943 the latter informed the DSG that it had no information regarding the Spanish workers' attendance at the courses as these were given to all the workers together.⁶⁹

Aware of the deficiencies in medical care, the DSG, in agreement with the Reichsärztekammer, also undertook to organise a medical service for the volunteers in Germany. In order to carry out this task, the society sought doctors with a knowledge of Spanish. Many of them would come from the Deutsch-Ibero-Amerikanische Ärzteakademie, an institution attached to the IAI that employed and assisted doctors of Latin American origin who were living in Germany.⁷⁰ Regarding this issue, the CIPETA delegation in Berlin collaborated with the DSG, among other things, by providing information that the latter requested regarding workers who were living in different German cities at that time.⁷¹

But of all the activities carried out by the DSG involving the Spanish volunteers, the one which demanded most work was that dedicated to the workers' affairs. In this direct supervision and assistance provided from the society's headquarters, a key role was played by Dr Edith Faupel, head of the support department (Betreuungsabteilung) of the IAI and wife of the president of the IAI and the DSG. During the Second World War, Edith Faupel worked more and more for the DSG. Whenever a worker made a personal request, the society opened a file with that worker's personal details and any relevant information about his past in Spain and his stay in Germany.⁷² A typical request for mediation is that of the worker José Pérez González in the summer of 1942. He requested that the company for which he had been working since December 1941, the Mitteldeutsche Stahl- und Walzwerke Flick Kommanditengesellschaft, provide him with a certificate of good conduct to enable him to change jobs, as his present occupation was not related to his skills.⁷³ In a similar vein, but in a more desperate tone, Francisco Utande Matarranz wrote to E. Faupel in February 1943 declaring that he 'would sooner go to prison than set foot in the Admos workshop . . . I have worked as a volunteer . . . in this factory without any explanation, as my contract indicated I should go to another factory'.⁷⁴ In cases like this, E. Faupel personally contacted the offices of the DAF and asked them to accede to the volunteers' requests to change company in order not to give the Spanish delegation more arguments to support their insistent supposition that the workers have not been employed in the

⁶⁹ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 467 (13 July 1943), Böttlicher to Faupel, Aktennotiz. Btr.: Deutschkurse für spanische Arbeiter.

⁷⁰ On the origins of this academy, see André H. Reggiani, 'Medicina y *Kulturpolitik* en la era del nacionalsocialismo: La Academia Médica Germano-Ibero-Americana (1936–1939)', *Ibero-Online.de*, 3, I (2005), 57–74, http://www.iai.spk-berlin.de/fileadmin/dokumentenbibliothek/Ibero-Online/Ibero_Online_03_1.pdf (last visited 17 April, 2014).

⁷¹ IAI 935; GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259, 17.3.1942 (Berlin), E. Pérez-Hernández, Spanish embassy, head of the special delegation for the inspection and supervision of the Spanish workers in Germany, to Frau Faupel.

⁷² GSTA, I.HA. Rep. 218, 258 and 259. We have found 47 files.

⁷³ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (8 July 1942), G. Müller to José Pérez González and (12.7.1942), José Pérez González to Frau Müller, Lankwitz.

⁷⁴ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (Berlin, 23 Feb. 1943), Francisco Utande Matarranz to Frau Dr. Edith Faupel.

way that had been agreed.⁷⁵ In the case of Utande, as in other cases, the efforts of E. Faupel were successful and some months later he wrote thankful to her 'Mother, I swear to you . . . , the time does not go by without seeing in my eyes the image of your person'.⁷⁶ The workers' gratitude to Edith Faupel for acting as intermediary between them and the German authorities is evident from many of the letters written by them to the 'Honourable Doctor Faupel', whom they called the 'mother of the Spanish workers'.⁷⁷

The DSG also intervened regarding the workers' holiday trips to Spain, one issue that caused many headaches. According to the Hispano-German agreement of 22 August 1941, all the Spanish workers who had come to Germany between November 1941 and January 1942 had the right to travel to Spain during Christmas 1942. The 3,580 workers who were estimated to be eligible for this journey were not allowed to travel independently but were obliged to use five special trains chartered for this purpose between twelfth and sixteenth of December 1942 and which would pick them up in Berlin, Leipzig, Hanover, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Saarbrücken and Metz.

Problems began to arise when, at the beginning of December, the Spanish authorities warned their German counterparts that they would be unable to provide sufficient trains to transport the workers once they had arrived at the Franco-Spanish border. They therefore requested that the journey be made by groups of forty workers a day.⁷⁸ However, according to the German authorities, the organisation of transportation in small groups could not take place until the end of January 1943.

It was not long before the DSG began to receive requests from the workers to help them to spend the holidays in Spain that they had suddenly been denied. The society contacted the DAF in order to try to resolve the issue, but the latter referred them to the Spanish authorities, whom they considered responsible for the situation. In an interview held on 10 December 1942 at the headquarters of the CIPETA delegation, its director agreed that the Germans were not to blame and asked the society to do its best to ensure that the workers had their holidays, even if these were shorter than originally planned.⁷⁹ In the end, the mediation of the DSG at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs resulted in the latter successfully persuading the German Ministry of Transport to provide the Spanish workers with a special train to take them to an assembly point (Auffanglager) in the south of France, from where they would be taken in groups to Spain.

Finally, the DSG's tutelage of the Spanish workers also included the planning of their leisure time. One of the society's main activities consisted in providing

⁷⁵ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (15 July 1942), E. Faupel to the DAF.

⁷⁶ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (Berlin, 25 June 1943), Francisco Utande Matarranz to Frau Dr. Edith Faupel.

⁷⁷ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (17 April 1942), letter from Félix Ruiz Ruiz to Edith Faupel.

⁷⁸ GSTA, I.HA. Rep. 218, 258 (2 Dec. 1942), DAF, 'Eilt sehr! Inhalt teilweise vertraulich! Btr.: Familienheimfahrten der spanischen Arbeiter'.

⁷⁹ IAI 935; GSTA, I.HA. Rep. 218, 258 (10 Dec. 1942), E. Faupel, Aktenvermerk.; AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Exp. 7 (4 May 1944), Delegado Especial Antonio de la Fuente a Presidente de la CIPETA.

the volunteers with books and other publications closely related in ideology to National Socialism and Falangism. The magazine *Enlace*, the 'Newspaper of the Spanish workers in Germany', was published regularly by the CIPETA delegation in the German capital from August 1942. This was a Falangist-oriented propaganda newspaper. The first issue featured a speech by Hitler about the Blue Division.⁸⁰ In the paper, a declaration by the minister of foreign affairs, Serrano Suñer, could be found in which he declared Spain could not stay neutral in the war.⁸¹ When relations between Spain and Germany deteriorated rapidly after September 1944, the publication of the magazine was taken over by Faupel and it took place in the offices of the IAI and the DSG.⁸² The DSG also organised movie shows for the workers, although from the summer of 1943 they faced serious distribution problems.⁸³ Similarly, the society organised a number of evening performances in the factory canteens featuring Spanish dancers or puppet shows. Other activities that the DSG promoted in the work camps included talks accompanied by slide shows about historical events or landscapes, sporting events and exhibitions of drawings, carvings and other handicrafts.⁸⁴ The DSG also organised recreational excursions for the workers on public holidays. Thus, at the end of May 1942, a total of about 400 Spanish workers and convalescent Blue Division soldiers were taken by the society on a river excursion to the Spree lakes.⁸⁵ In summer 1943, coinciding with the moment when the Spanish authorities decided to stop sending volunteers, the society managed to charter a steamer with a capacity for up to 650 passengers to take the workers from Berlin to Neu Helgoland. Although the workers were obliged to pay for the trip themselves, the company subsidised the cost of the food.⁸⁶ A further steamship excursion scheduled for the next month had to be cancelled because the company's management, the Reichsbahn Neuköllnische Heide, where 300 Spaniards worked, refused to pay their maintenance costs.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ *Enlace*, I, 1 (3 Aug. 1942), 1. Again in *Enlace*, I, 7 (23 Aug. 1942), 1.

⁸¹ *Enlace*, I, 1 (3 Aug. 1942), 8.

⁸² Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, 'Un nazismo colaboracionista español? Martín de Arrizubieta, Wilhelm Faupel y los últimos de Berlín (1944-1945)', *Historia Social*, 51 (2005), 41-8; Rodríguez Jiménez, 'Los esclavos españoles', 156-7.

⁸³ GSTA, I.HA.Rep. 218, 467 (8 July 1943), Bötticher (DSG), Aktennotiz. Btr.: Spanische Filme in Deutschland zum Einsatz vor span. Arbeitern. Regarding the collaboration of the National Socialist film industry in the production of films by the Francoist regime in Spain, see Manuel Nicolás, *La intervención velada: El apoyo cinematográfico alemán al bando franquista (1936-1939)* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2004).

⁸⁴ GSTA, I.HA.Rep. 218, 467 (9 July 1943), Aktennotiz. Btr.: Betreuung der spanischen Arbeiter in Deutschland durch die Deutsch Spanische Gesellschaft.

⁸⁵ *Enlace*, I, 2 (10 June 1942), 3.

⁸⁶ GSTA, I.HA.Rep. 218, 467 (28 Aug. 1943), DSG to Herrn Amtmann Lubitz Reichsbahndirektion Berlin.

⁸⁷ GSTA, I.HA.Rep. 218, 467 (2 Sept. 1943), Aktennotiz Betr. Ausflug mit dem Dampfer 'Vaterland'; (7 Sept. 1943), DSG to Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen; (9 Sept. 1943), Certified. DSG to DAF.

The failure of the National Socialists to attract the volunteers

There are three main reasons why the National Socialists failed to attract the volunteers: wages, living and working conditions, and the development of the war. That these are the fundamental reasons is supported by documentation that comes not only from the volunteers themselves, but also from the Spanish authorities, as well as, in Germany, from the DSG, the DAF and the managers of the German companies where the volunteers were located.

Regarding the economic reasons, although for most of the workers economic deprivation was the main reason for going to Germany, once in Germany they felt that the wages they receive from the German companies did not compensate for their efforts. From the beginning, the complex transfer operations resulted in a delay of between four and six weeks before the money was received. While the first Spanish 'producers' had departed for Germany at the end of November 1941, it was not until the middle of February 1942 that the Spanish newspapers reported the arrival in Spain of their first savings.⁸⁸

The economy was also one of the fundamental reasons for the Spanish government to restrain the recruitment of volunteers. The fact that the Spanish state had to pay the transfers made by the workers to their families with its own money created costs which were too high. This problem became even greater due to the black market activities of the volunteer workers in Germany. The Spanish government restricted the size of the transfers each worker could make. Nevertheless, the Nazi authorities hindered the implementation of this restriction, as they preferred to maintain worker satisfaction at no cost to themselves.⁸⁹ A letter sent to the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that the workers were using illegal means to obtain permits to visit Spain with the aim of bringing back coffee to put on the black market in Germany. They were able to cross the borders without difficulty as the border police accepted their bribes.⁹⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the black market activities of the workers had expanded to the point that it could be assumed that interest in going to Germany was based more on the desire to make a quick profit than to work there regularly.⁹¹ Sometime afterwards the CIPETA found it necessary to ask for a confidential investigation of the activities of the staff of the CIPETA delegation in Berlin, as many of them received their entire salaries in Madrid. The president of the CIPETA wanted to find out by what means those functionaries were able to live without their salaries.⁹² The Spanish ambassador in Berlin informed the president

⁸⁸ 'Los primeros ahorros de los productores españoles que trabajan en Alemania han llegado a España', *La Vanguardia* (12 Feb. 1942), 2.

⁸⁹ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 26 Oct. 1943), [Satorres to Franco], Los trabajadores españoles en Alemania.

⁹⁰ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 25 Oct. 1943), Laureano Conde to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁹¹ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 4 Nov. 1943), Satorres to the minister of foreign affairs.

⁹² AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 25 Nov. 1943), president of the CIPETA to the delegate of the CIPETA in Berlin; AMAE, Archivo de

of the CIPETA that some members of the embassy's staff also made excessive use of the black market, and that this was the only way that these civil servants could live without their salary.⁹³ In the end, even the secretary of the CIPETA delegation in Berlin had to be expelled because of black market activities, the use of the transfers of savings to send money to Spain and the sale of Spanish passports to foreign citizens.⁹⁴

But without a doubt, the fundamental reason for the failure of the National Socialists to attract the volunteers were the deficient living conditions they encountered in Germany together with their disappointment for the fact that this conditions did not correspond to the promises they have been made before in Spain. To begin with, although the Spanish volunteers were told that they would enjoy the same social insurance that the DAF provided for German workers (they would be incorporated into the general system), an agreement on this question was not reached until February 1943.⁹⁵ This did not, however, affect the living conditions of the Spanish labour migrants.⁹⁶

A report signed by a Spanish volunteer highlights the failure of the German authorities to keep the promises they had made about working conditions of the workers prior to their departure from Spain.⁹⁷ José Rodríguez Quiroga reported that when he arrived at the metallurgic company Gleitlager AG, situated in Berlin, he was obliged to work in front of the furnaces for three days without suitable clothing or footwear. On the third day, he was forced to remove the vessels containing the molten metal at temperatures of 1,500 degrees, with danger to himself and his workmates, given their inexperience. He was subsequently instructed on how to operate a machine, but due to a misunderstanding, which was impossible to rectify as the company did not have an interpreter, he was assigned to jobs such as pushing extremely heavy carts, removing metal waste from the floor with his hands, or loading and unloading boxes weighing a hundred or two hundred kilos near the furnaces. Despite the fact that the contract he had signed included a clause stating that the Spanish volunteers would receive the same treatment as the German employees, the former were housed in camps together with forced labourers. Their wages were lower than those promised in Spain and after deductions had been made to pay for their maintenance the workers could not save any money. Moreover, a number of workers

Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 29 Nov. 1943), president of the CIPETA to the Spanish ambassador in Berlin.

⁹³ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 13 Dec. 1943), Spanish ambassador in Berlin to the President of the CIPETA.

⁹⁴ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 22 Feb. 1945), Antonio de la Fuente, Jefe de la delegación especial para la inspección y tutela de trabajadores españoles en Alemania a Presidente de la CIPETA, Madrid.

⁹⁵ The agreement in AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid 1.1.1943), 'Acta' and 'Anteproyecto sobre régimen de seguro social de los productores españoles que se encuentran trabajando en Alemania'. The announcement of the signature of the agreement in *Enlace*, II, 5, 6 Mar. 1943, 5. See Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 70, 79.

⁹⁶ García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 353.

⁹⁷ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 467 (Berlin, 22 Sept. 1943), report signed by José Rodríguez Quiroga.

were denied without justification their right to the holidays they were entitled to after having worked for a year. The majority of them had ‘experienced the “GESTAPO”’.

Regarding the hygienic conditions in the camp (*Lager*), the author made a point of denouncing its dirtiness, poor ventilation and lack of adequate toilets and washing facilities. While a number of toilets were reserved for Germans, the Spaniards were obliged to share those used by the forced labourers. The toilet doors had been deliberately removed, ‘as if we were people unconcerned with cleanliness, and we were forced to resign ourselves to going, like animals, to foul places which were exposed to the public gaze’. But what he found most revolting about the work camp were ‘the hordes of rats that day and night invaded it, climbing onto the beds; on more than one occasion I had the unpleasant surprise of finding two or three among the bedclothes when I woke up’. In addition to this, the Spanish workers were obliged to sleep without sheets. They also had to use bowls to wash in and make their own meals, despite the fact that in Spain they had been told that they would have a cook. They were often forced to wait in long queues because there were only four kitchens for 150 Italian and Spanish workers and these were also used as toilets and washhouses. After twelve hours work in the factory, plus a two-hour journey to and from the camp, cooking, washing and sewing, there was little time left for sleeping.

This report is even more significant if we consider that at the time he was writing, Rodríguez Quiroga was working at the IAI thanks to the mediation of Edith Faupel, who had rescued him from his job at the company. But, despite the advantageous situation in which, thanks to the mediation of the DSG, he found himself at that time he did not hesitate to denounce the propaganda that was being distributed in the Spanish recruitment centres as untruthful and state that the volunteers could find no other explanation for their disappointment than that ‘we have been shamefully deceived!’

Not only the volunteers themselves protested about their living and working conditions in Germany. If we exclude the propaganda press directed to the workers, it will be very difficult to find a document signed by a Spanish authority, either with a positive comment on the treatment a worker has received in Germany, or expressing a doubt on the complaints received from the workers. One report that Pérez-Hernández, delegate of the CIPETA in Berlin, sent to the president of the DSG, Faupel, in the middle of January 1942 confirms both the inadequate living conditions to which the workers were being subjected and the failure of the German authorities to keep the promises they had made regarding working conditions prior to the workers’ departure from Spain.⁹⁸ Another recurrent protest referred to deductions applied to the wages of the volunteers, which they had not been informed about in

⁹⁸ GSTA, I. HA. Rep. 218, 259 (17 Jan. 1942), Enrique Pérez-Hernández, head of the special delegation for the inspection and tutelage of the Spanish workers in Germany, to Faupel, Verzeichnis der Zwischenfälle und wichtigsten Beschwerden, die die Delegación Especial im Zusammenhang mit den in Deutschland beschäftigten spanischen Arbeitern aufgestellt hat (List of the incidents and most serious complaints that the special delegation compiled with regard to Spanish workers employed in Germany).

Spain. Moreover, there were complaints that the majority of the companies failed to employ them according to their trades, using them instead for the heaviest jobs. The inadequate food offered to the workers was another recurring grievance. In many cases, the workers only received one meal every twenty-four hours and were always given food that was inferior in quality to that received by the German workers. The Spaniards were also aggrieved by the fact that the treatment they received in the German companies was more like that given to prisoners than what they had been led to expect as volunteers. In the Völklingen mines (Saarland), for example, the Spaniards were forced to live behind barbed-wire fences in a POW camp, together with the prisoners, and subjected to continual threats by the camp guards. Yet another complaint involved the lack of medical care for the sick, including cases of injured men having to wait between five and six days before receiving medical attention. In another document sent to the DSG, the delegation of the Falange, the Spanish fascist party, complained that in the chemical company I. G. Farbenindustrie of Heydebreck the volunteers never received their agreed wages and were forced to work in the open air enduring temperatures to which they were not accustomed. He also complained about the inadequate diet and deficient medical care offered to the Spanish workers of I. G. Farben.⁹⁹

During the summer of 1942, the CIPETA and the GBA carried out negotiations with regard to several requests that the former had presented to the latter in relation to working conditions that violated the Hispano-German Agreement for the dispatch of the volunteers. The Spanish authorities protested that the workers were not employed according to their skills and that they were not being paid as agreed. The GBA replied that most of the Spanish workers were not capable of doing the work they had claimed to be qualified for. Another request of the Spanish authorities was that the Spanish workers should never enter into contact with Russian civilian workers or POWs, and the GBA granted this.¹⁰⁰

But what is perhaps more surprising is that even the documents of the DSG express very few doubts about the complaints it received from the workers. Its own reports offered an unquestionable negative vision about the conditions the workers had to endure in Germany. A good example is the report on the visit of Merkatz to the work camp in Berlin-Niederschöneweide discussed above.¹⁰¹ According to the manager's office, the company had at its disposal a translator who had been born in Argentina and also employed a Spanish worker to help with the accounts. The company had entrusted the Argentine translator with the task of acting as intermediary with the workers. However, the workers had preferred to put their confidence in a fellow worker, which met with the company's disapproval, as the worker in question was seen as an instigator of conflicts. According to the

⁹⁹ GSTA, IHA, Rep. 218, 259; IAI 935 (n.d.), Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las JONS en Alemania, Comisión de Camaradas productores de FET JONS 'Vieja Guardia'.

¹⁰⁰ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 11 July 1942), conversations between the representatives of the CIPETA delegation in Berlin and the GBA, minutes.

¹⁰¹ See n. 66.

company, this worker had failed to inform the company's management of some earlier protests by the workers, preferring instead to contact the Berlin delegation of the Spanish CIPETA. Among the complaints that the intermediary made to the Spanish delegation we find that, although the workers had been given leaflets in Spain informing them that they would be able to use the facilities and participate in the activities of the KdF programme, once they arrived in Germany, this had proven not to be true. The complaints about the deductions applied to their wages are repeated here. Despite the fact that it comes from German sources, the report reveals serious shortcomings in the workers' living conditions. It confirms that the workers appeared to be underfed and depressed. Two reasons are mentioned to explain this state of affairs: the fact that they had come to Germany with unrealistic expectations, and the poor standard of their accommodation. According to the report of Merkatz, the workers were housed in huts. The rooms did not appear to be very comfortable at all, were badly lit and were only heated at night, despite the fact that there were two shifts. The beds consisted of sacks filled with straw and the sheets were dirty. The workers had to clean their own rooms, despite the fact that in Spain they had been given to understand that this would not be necessary. They were also responsible for washing their own clothing, which, moreover, was scarce and difficult to obtain. Another source of unrest was the fact that the vast majority of the Spaniards did not know the German language.

In addition, we have other evidence that the authorities of the DAF, too, were conscious of the increasing uneasiness of the volunteers with their treatment in Germany. In the above-mentioned conflict regarding the workers' holiday trips to Spain during Christmas 1942, the DAF accepted the negotiations between the Spanish delegation and the DSG, due to the danger of 'strike action, rebellion, police intervention, disciplinary measures against the workers and the worst situations that can be imagined'. During the conflict, the groups of workers of seven companies declared themselves simultaneously to be on strike.¹⁰² On Christmas Eve, the chief of the DAF published a declaration of gratitude to the Spanish volunteer workers, in which he stated:

Thousands of you have left your families and your fatherland and responded to our call to occupy the posts in German companies which our soldiers have left vacant . . . I am aware that separation from your family and home and the restrictions and difficulties resulting from the war are causing you a range of privations and small discomforts. In cooperation with the Spanish authorities responsible for your care, the DAF will also continue in the future to make efforts to make your life among us as bearable as possible. I am very satisfied with your work and the willingness you have shown over the past year.¹⁰³

In this way the DAF tried to convince the Spanish volunteers of the importance of their work in Germany and its good intentions regarding their living conditions. Despite its efforts, at a time when the Spanish authorities had already decided to

¹⁰² AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 4 May 1944), delegate of the CIPETA to the president of the CIPETA.

¹⁰³ *Enlace*, I, 15 (24 Dec. 1942), 6.

defer the sending of volunteers, it seems that about forty per cent of the workers who left Germany that Christmas to spend holidays in Spain never returned.¹⁰⁴

Even the managers of the companies, who theoretically should have been particularly interested in receiving volunteers, accepted openly that they had failed to satisfy them and acknowledged their increasing hostility, as we have seen in the report of Merkatz.¹⁰⁵ Another example comes from the managers of the German railways in Berlin, who complained that it was impossible to trust the majority of Spanish workers either with regard to productivity or political loyalty.¹⁰⁶ According to the camp authorities, ninety per cent of the workers recruited were linked to the Communist Party. Every day the security services arrested between three and five volunteers in the camp for not working hard enough, refusing to work or carrying out acts of sabotage which, despite the ambiguities of the use of these concepts by the Nazi authorities, can be interpreted as widespread worker opposition.¹⁰⁷ The workers deliberately damaged the company's facilities. Whenever the air raid warnings sounded, a great joy would spread amongst them. The camp authorities could only control them by firing their revolvers.

But there is still another reason for the failure of the National Socialists to attract the volunteers. This could be found in the evolution of the war, which contributed to a gradual cooling of the relations between Nazi Germany and Francoist Spain. In the autumn of 1942, the Spanish minister of foreign affairs was replaced by General Francisco Gómez Jordana, which abandoned Spain's position of 'non-belligerence' in favour of one of 'neutrality'. In this context, José María Doussinague was appointed general director of foreign policy and, as such, president of the CIPETA. At the same time, Ginés Vidal Saura became the new Spanish ambassador in Berlin, replacing the Count of Mayalde. The new president of the CIPETA took the decision to defer sending more Spanish volunteers to Germany. This decision was based on the unsuitable living conditions to which the workers were being subjected.¹⁰⁸ A document sent by the Spanish Ministry of Labour to the minister of foreign affairs stressed both the failure of the Germans to fulfil their obligations and the improper treatment given to the Spanish workers in Germany.¹⁰⁹

In the course of 1943, the Spanish authorities' willingness to cooperate diminished as the evolution of the war became more and more negative for Germany. The last big transport of Spanish volunteers to Germany took place in July 1943.¹¹⁰ A month later, an air raid on Berlin destroyed the Spanish embassy, where the CIPETA was located,

¹⁰⁴ García Pérez, *Franquismo y Tercer Reich*, 352.

¹⁰⁵ See n. 101, i.e. n. 66.

¹⁰⁶ GSTA, I.HA. Rep. 218, 467 (16 Aug. 1943), Böttlicher, Bericht über die spanischen Arbeiter in Deutschland; and (13 Aug. 1943), Besuch im spanischen Arbeiterlager der Reichsbahn Neuköllnische Heide, S-Bhf. Braunauer Strasse.

¹⁰⁷ Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 337–9, 346.

¹⁰⁸ Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 104–5.

¹⁰⁹ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 9 Sept. 1942), Ministerio de Trabajo a Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores, Nota reservada sobre la CIPETA.

¹¹⁰ Rodríguez Jiménez, *Los esclavos españoles*, 106–11.

and the recruitment of volunteers was stopped.¹¹¹ At the end of September 1943, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered the CIPETA to inform the German authorities that circumstances had changed and that at that moment there was a great shortage of workers in Spain, where they were needed for national reconstruction. This would make it very difficult to continue recruiting volunteers for Germany.¹¹² A month later, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered the CIPETA to arrange for the workers' repatriation.¹¹³ In the same month, Spain began the withdrawal of the soldiers of the Blue Division too. In the time to follow the distancing of the Spanish authorities from the Axis powers intensified.¹¹⁴

During the winter of 1943/4, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried several times to repatriate the remaining volunteers. At the end of November 1943, the head of the CIPETA delegation in Berlin, Pérez Hernández, sent a long letter to Spain in which he described the disastrous situation of the embassy and the CIPETA delegation. As a result of this it had proved impossible to help the workers when several had been seriously injured or killed during recent bombardments.¹¹⁵ However, in March 1944 about 3,000 Spanish volunteer workers still remained in Germany and until the end of the war had to endure very difficult circumstances.¹¹⁶ The CIPETA was only dissolved at the end of November 1945.¹¹⁷

As the Spanish authorities gradually distanced themselves from the Axis powers, the activities of the DSG progressively lost their meaning. With the occupation of Berlin in May 1945, the headquarters of the IAI and the DSG were taken over by the Allies. Not long afterwards, the United States army confiscated its properties and archives and appointed a commissioner who was given the task of investigating the IAI's responsibilities under the National Socialist regime. However, this assignment did not extend to the DSG. In consequence, the commissioner neither consulted its documents nor included the society in his reports, while the IAI was dissolved in the autumn of 1945. This is the reason why until now we have not known much about the activity of the German–Spanish Society.

¹¹¹ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 25 Sept. 1943), Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Trabajadores Españoles en Alemania.

¹¹² AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 28 Sept. 1943), Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores to Satorres, Asunto: Trabajadores españoles en Alemania.

¹¹³ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 13 Oct. 1943), Satorres, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores.

¹¹⁴ Sanz Díaz. 'Relaciones científico-culturales, 365–7.

¹¹⁵ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Berlin, 25 Nov. 1943), Enrique Pérez Hernández [to the Spanish minister of foreign affairs].

¹¹⁶ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 24 Mar. 1944), Spanish ministry of Foreign Affairs on the CIPETA.

¹¹⁷ AMAE, Archivo de Burgos, Acuerdo sobre el empleo de trabajadores, R. 2225, Ex. 7 (Madrid, 24 Mar. 1944), Subsecretario de la presidencia del gobierno a diversos ministros y vicesecretario FET y de las JONS.

Conclusions

Historians have tended to label as 'volunteers' all those civilian foreign workers in Nazi Germany who were not brought to work for the Germans through physical coercion. Despite this fact, the status of the volunteers is under discussion because the scope of the concept of a 'volunteer' worker is unclear.¹¹⁸ In theory, they could claim legal rights and were able to terminate their labour contract in due course. However, as we have seen, this was not always possible, and many who had come as volunteers were forced to stay in Germany.¹¹⁹ Some volunteers were subjected to various forms of compulsion and some were even subjected to physical coercion. Thus, for example, it was not unusual for 'volunteer workers' to be sent to a Gestapo labour education camp as a punishment.¹²⁰ These elements of compulsion and physical coercion appear fundamental for a more precise interpretation of the dispatch of the 'volunteer' workers to National Socialist Germany. I do not claim to mean that, in general terms, the fate of the volunteers can be considered equivalent to that of the other categories of foreign workers. It has already been convincingly proved that, compared to other foreign workers, the living and working conditions of these volunteers were privileged. Their mortality rates were insignificant compared to those of forced workers, not to mention POWs and concentration camp inmates.¹²¹

Even if we exclude the elements of compulsion and physical coercion, we can find other elements that question the appropriateness of the term 'volunteer' to describe this category of workers. In most cases, hardship seems to have been the main reason for volunteering. This is why some historians have interpreted volunteering in Nazi Germany as a case of 'forced economic migration', one of the major social realities of the Second World War.¹²² To avoid ambiguities in the use of the term 'forced' in the context of the foreign workers in Nazi Germany, I would propose to use instead the expression of 'induced' economic migration for these 'volunteer' workers. In this sense, volunteering has been seen as being detrimental to human dignity, when the volunteers were no longer masters of their own decisions because they had to endure conditions which they had no power to change.¹²³ Therefore, even if it seems a paradox, understanding the 'volunteers' simultaneously as a category of foreign workers and as a case of 'induced' economic migration would give us a more realistic approach to the motives of most of them. It also integrates the history of these workers into the social continuities of European history more successfully and thus helps us

¹¹⁸ Mantelli, 'Camerati del lavoro', 16–17.

¹¹⁹ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 173–6.

¹²⁰ Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 338–9.

¹²¹ Spoerer and Fleischhacker, 184; Marc Buggeln, 'Building to Death: Prisoner Forced Labor in the German War Economy: The Neuengamme Subcamps, 1942–1945', *European History Quarterly*, 39 (2009), 606–32.

¹²² Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 131–3.

¹²³ Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 79.

to understand the difficulties that these workers had to face in different European countries once they returned after the Second World War.¹²⁴

Regarding the mechanisms established for the integration of the volunteers into the Nazi totalitarian system, the National Socialist administration reproduced the standard procedure of its political system, which was based on the proliferation of state-owned or semi-owned institutions, working in the same fields and without a clear normative delimitation of their powers. As a result, there was constant competition between these institutions. At the same time, this permitted their respective leaders to establish small power platforms while constantly looking for ways to expand them. Even if these elements were combined with a more modern methodology and technique, they resulted in a notable degree of inefficiency and administrative irrationality. The examination of the treatment the National Socialists offered to the Spanish volunteers has confirmed this. One of the conclusions of this article is that the German authorities failed to keep the promises they had made about working conditions prior to the workers' departure from Spain, and that the DSG could not do much to change this.

In fact, the frustration of the high expectations the Spanish volunteers had regarding the conditions they would encounter in Germany played an important role in their dissatisfaction with life in the Reich. This seems to have been a common phenomenon among western European volunteers, above all those who came from southern Europe, where living conditions in Nazi Germany were highly idealised.¹²⁵ The reasons for discontent provided by the volunteers, including the Spaniards, were usually insufficient wages, problems with the food and accommodation, and rules on home leave.¹²⁶ In addition, demeaning punishments made the volunteers feel even more humiliated and discriminated against. Given the conditions the volunteers had to endure, it is not surprising that a black market system developed. Furthermore, evading work was sometimes used as a form of resistance. There were even some cases of political action with higher risk, like sabotage and espionage.¹²⁷

Considering the frustrating living conditions the Spanish volunteers had to endure, it is not difficult to understand that the DSG, despite its endeavours, was not effective in promoting National Socialism among the workers, despite the fact that they came from a neutral and sympathetic country. In fact, rejection of a Europe under German hegemony seems to have been a generalised phenomenon among western European volunteers despite their national differences.¹²⁸ The reason must be found in the fact that neither Nazi foreign labour employment in general nor that of the volunteers in particular were governed by the will to develop coherent strategies to convince the workers of the Nazi cause.¹²⁹ The western European volunteers, including the Spaniards, were clearly not facing annihilation, as they were not at the bottom of

¹²⁴ See Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 325; Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 129–96.

¹²⁵ Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers*, 78, 98, 114, 325.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 103.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* 326.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 315.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 337.

the Nazi racial scale. But the principal aim of the employment of the volunteers was economic exploitation and, therefore, the complaints of the workers were seldom attended to and often answered with repression.

In its aspiration to become an institution that could not be ignored by the Nazi state, the single party and the Spanish authorities, the DSG saw its future in achieving the satisfaction of the Spanish volunteers, thereby helping to provide the Reich with the necessary workers. Nevertheless, we have evidence that the DSG could not change the dynamics of the Nazi regime and therefore failed. In reality, even a volunteer like Rodríguez Quiroga, who had taken the decision to go to Germany because of his ideological affinities with National Socialism, that is to say, 'as a result of the speech given . . . by Dr Goebbels', after spending some time in the country, reached the following conclusion about National Socialism: 'Woe betide us if they win! . . . subjects with such perverse intentions should not be allowed to take on the noble task of the resurgence of Europe'.¹³⁰

**'Gare à nous s'ils gagnent!': Le
Traitement des travailleurs
'volontaires' espagnols par les nazis**

Au cours de l'année 1941, la demande de main-d'œuvre a augmenté en Allemagne. Les national-socialistes ont donc exigé des pays alliés et neutres de recruter des travailleurs volontaires. Le nombre total des volontaires issus de ces pays qui ont ainsi travaillé pour les nazis pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale était en gros équivalent à celui des travailleurs civils venus de la Pologne occupée. En dépit du fait que ces volontaires bénéficiaient de meilleures conditions et qu'ils étaient la cible d'efforts pour les endoctriner, les nazis n'ont pas réussi à les rallier à leur cause. Cet article examine les raisons de cet échec en se fondant sur l'exemple des volontaires espagnols. Les recherches sont avant tout basées sur les documents de la société franco-espagnole (Deutsch-Spanische Gesellschaft) de Berlin, principal intermédiaire entre les volontaires espagnols, les nazis et les autorités espagnoles.

**'Wehe uns, wenn sie gewinnen!': Der
Umgang der Nationalsozialisten mit
'freiwilligen' Arbeitskräften aus
Spanien**

Im Laufe des Jahres 1941 war der Arbeitskräftebedarf in Deutschland deutlich angestiegen. Infolgedessen forderten die Nationalsozialisten von alliierten und neutralen Ländern die Rekrutierung freiwilliger Arbeitskräfte. Die Gesamtzahl der Freiwilligen aus diesen Ländern, die während des Zweiten Weltkriegs von den Nationalsozialisten beschäftigt wurden, entsprach ungefähr der Zahl der zivilen Arbeitskräfte aus dem besetzten Polen. Obwohl die Nationalsozialisten den Freiwilligen bessere Bedingungen boten und versuchten, sie zu indoktrinieren, gelang es ihnen nicht, sie von ihrer Sache zu überzeugen. Dieser Beitrag untersucht am Beispiel spanischer Freiwilliger, warum die Bemühungen der Nationalsozialisten scheiterten. Die Untersuchung beruht vorwiegend auf Dokumenten der Deutsch-Spanischen Gesellschaft (DSG) in Berlin, die als Hauptvermittler zwischen den spanischen Freiwilligen sowie den nationalsozialistischen und spanischen Behörden fungierte.

¹³⁰ See n. 97.