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'Finding Out Whereabouts of Missing Persons': The European War Office, Transnational Humanitarianism and Spanish Royal Diplomacy in the First World War[†]

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ABSTRACT

A hybrid of personal and state humanitarian action, King Alfonso's European War Office in Madrid's Royal Palace reached across social classes, rival camps and continents, enabling Spain to pursue a policy of active neutrality in the First World War. Opened in 1915 in response to the large number of desperate requests addressed to Alfonso XIII from around the globe inquiring about the whereabouts, treatment and repatriation of loved ones (both soldiers and civilians), the Office was run by a relatively small team of up to forty-six staff members, aided by Spain's extensive diplomatic network abroad. Unlike the International Prisoners-of-War Agency established by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the European War Office opted to file and retain all missives from requestors, resulting in a large collection of letters and over 180,000 files stored in the Royal Palace Archive. This exceptional, multi-lingual collection offers unique insights into the war, yet it remains unknown to the international scholarly community. Over one hundred years since the foundation of the Office, this article highlights a highly significant and understudied case of transnational history at the intersection of royal diplomacy, neutralism and humanitarian aid.

KEYWORDS

First World War; Spain; neutrality; humanitarianism; prisoners of war; civilian deportees; missing persons; King Alfonso XIII; transnational history

In the summer of 1916, Madrid's Royal Palace received a letter from Bombay penned by one Jaiji Merwanji Chhapkhanawalla. It began,

I understand that His Majesty King Alfonso is kindly finding out whereabouts of missing persons during the present disastrous War and, being led to believe that His Majesty takes particular pains and personal interest in tracing such missing persons and communicating their present address to their dear ones, I a poor Parsi woman (a British Indian subject) has ventured to approach His Majesty with a request in connection with my missing son.¹

Thousands of letters similar to this one arrived in Spain over the course of the First World War and for several years thereafter. Requests came from cities across the globe – Aberdeen,

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[†]The article is dedicated to the staff at Patrimonio Nacional and especially at the Royal Palace Archives – Juan José Alonso, Javier Fernández and Antonio Alonso Zimmerli – to the former President of Spanish National Heritage, Alfredo Pérez de Armiñán, for bringing the subject to my attention in the first place, and to the Master of St Cross College, Oxford, Carole Souter, for her continuous support and vision.

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Buenos Aires, Constantinople (Istanbul), Paris, Posen (Poznań) – asking for news of soldiers and civilians on both sides of the conflict. The European War Office (*Oficina de la Guerra Europea* in Spanish, also labelled *Oficina Pro-Cautivos* by some scholars) was opened in 1915 to manage these appeals, often addressed directly to the king of Spain, requesting information on the whereabouts, treatment and repatriation of loved ones. It was housed in the Royal Palace and operated under the aegis of the king's Private Secretariat. Alfonso XIII was determined not to leave these requests unanswered and, as the head of a neutral state, he was able to set in motion humanitarian operations *via* personal connections and diplomatic channels that would not have been available to belligerent states. Within the Private Secretariat, a relatively small team of up to forty-six staff members handled over 180,000 files with connections to all five continents, drawing on Spain's vast diplomatic network.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva had established an analogous humanitarian enterprise at the very beginning of the war – the International Prisoners-of-War Agency, a much larger organisation at the time and certainly far better known today. After indexing written requests for information, the Agency destroyed the original letters.² In contrast, Spain's European War Office filed and kept all written requests; thus, the letters stored at the Royal Palace Archive form an exceptional collection offering unique insights into the war. The collection has gone unnoticed by international scholars of the Great War until now. One hundred years on, this article illuminates a highly significant and understudied case at the intersection of royal diplomacy, neutralism and humanitarian aid.

1. Literature – missing in action

The role of Spain in the First World War is a relatively new subject of research. Historian Francisco J. Romero Salvadó notes that 'it was not until 2002 that the first monographic study of the subject in all its complexity and context appeared'.³ More recent scholarship on Spain's neutrality in the First World War has focused on the relationship between the domestic and international spheres, showing that Spain was a much-contested neutral battlefield for propaganda,⁴ intelligence,⁵ and belligerent economic and military strategy.⁶ Equally, scholars have examined the intense cultural and intellectual debate that surrounded the war in Spain.⁷ The recent shift to a global and transnational approach in historical research has permeated the study of Spanish neutrality, as exemplified by the work of historians Carolina García Sanz and Maximiliano Fuentes Codera. However, this new trend has not yet touched Spain's European War Office, which is a prime target for transnational study.⁸

In her online entry on Spanish neutrality in the *International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (to some, 'the most relevant project in this development [transnational approaches to WWI]⁹), García Sanz identifies the 'civil war of words' between Spanish intellectuals and among the broader public as one of the two main avenues of research in the historiography of Spain's wartime role. The other consists of Alfonso XIII's 'humanitarian initiatives', with reference to Juan Pando's work on the king of Spain's 'peace commitment'.¹⁰ Although García Sanz starts the entry with the caveat that 'neutrality is still an understudied issue within the historiography of the First World War', she later refers to the king of Spain's humanitarian work as an 'example of this analytical trope', which may lead to the interpretation that the European War Office is a well-researched subject.

Published in 2002, Pando's book, *Un rey para la esperanza: La España humanitaria de Alfonso XIII en la Gran Guerra*, is indeed the first contemporary attempt to use a vast amount of untapped archival material to examine Spain's humanitarian activities during the war. Almost twenty years later, however, new research based on the Royal Palace's collection has yet to follow Pando's work, which may explain why Spanish scholars continue to reference *Un rey para la esperanza* as the main *opus* on the subject. However, the book is mainly a narrative account of

the war's military development, sometimes battle by battle, with passing references to the letters in the European War Office's archive. Accordingly, Pando takes a fair amount of poetic licence, sometimes at the expense of factual correctness.¹¹ The book, which is often challenging to navigate due to its convoluted style, contains several unreferenced quotes and inaccuracies, such as repeatedly referring to Princess Beatrice of Battenberg as King Alfonso's sister-in-law rather than as his mother-in-law,¹² or retelling the story about the laundress who supposedly popularised the wartime letter-writing to Alfonso XIII, despite a lack of factual evidence.

By not engaging with the historiography on humanitarianism, Pando crucially fails to identify the unique nature of the collection, that is, the fact that the letters in Madrid were filed rather than destroyed. Importantly, Pando's book was written before the documents in the collection were digitised and described, meaning he could not consult the entire corpus and his only descriptors were nationality and status (civilian or military). In contrast, the digital collection, on which this article is based, allows for searches by date, location, name of the missing person, petitioner and recommender, name of the battle and location of disappearance, and the nature of the case's resolution. These search functions now allow scholars to identify trends beyond nationality and adopt a truly transnational approach. The current article specifically explores the early letters that prompted the Office's early activities, and the last few that arrived, tallies the total number of files and the outcome of searches, connects the Office with other humanitarian organisations, and zooms in on some personal cases that reflect the global nature of the enterprise.

Recent non-Spanish historiography has focused on the role of international humanitarian organisations such as the ICRC and the YMCA, and the plight of interned civilians and prisoners of war.¹³ Other research has looked at the humanitarianism of traditionally neutral states such as Switzerland and the Vatican.¹⁴ Royal initiatives abroad and at home, mostly established by royal women, have begun to garner some academic attention. They include the Bureau founded by Crown Princess Margaret of Sweden (a British princess by birth) which sent parcels of food and clothing to prisoners of war in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia during the war; and humanitarian efforts by Queen Mary of Britain and Empress Zita of Austria-Hungary, investigated by Judith Rowbotham and Christopher Brennan, respectively.¹⁵ Yet, overall, royal wartime humanitarianism remains a relatively neglected subject. Indeed, monarchy has remained a virtually entirely neglected First World War area (except for the German Kaiser) and was almost stigmatised as a European history First World War topic associated with popular hagiography and inaccessible private royal archives, which may also explain the neglect of this source.¹⁶

Another entry in the *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, entitled 'Humanitarianism (Spain)' and published in 2017 by Fuentes Cordera, acknowledges that 'in the case of the king's humanitarian initiative, despite some brief accounts, no line of research has been developed to its full potential' and that 'little is known beyond the Spanish borders'.¹⁷ The absence of any mention of the humanitarian aid provided by the king's Private Secretariat to prisoners of war on both sides of the conflict in Heather Jones' essential book, *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914–1920*, or to imprisoned civilians in Matthew Stibbe's most recent publications on internment, can be seen as confirmation that the subject has not yet entered the historiography of the First World War in languages other than Spanish.¹⁸ Moreover, there is no chapter on Alfonso XIII in the recently published *Monarchies and the Great War* in Palgrave's Modern Monarchy Series, even though the edited volume makes an effort to explore the less familiar narratives of monarchs in Belgium and Italy.¹⁹

Fuentes Cordera is also right to observe that the treatment of this subject in Spanish historiography itself is, likewise, still inadequate. Indeed, although the title of Fernando Ramos's and David Capdevilla's article – 'Dos caras de España en la I Guerra Mundial: De la mediación humanitaria de Alfonso XIII al suministro logístico a ambos bandos' [Spain's Two Faces during World War I: From Alfonso XIII's Humanitarian Mediation to the Logistical Support of Both Sides] – is no

doubt eye-catching, the study in reality adopts a local approach, examining the boom in the fish-canning industry in Vigo, Northern Spain, during the war.²⁰ The authors' overall argument is that Spain pursued a double policy, literally feeding on the war while at the same time helping to save hungry prisoners of war. However, their research on the latter aspect is limited and makes no use of archival material.²¹ Similarly, Margarita Barral Martínez's chapter 'De neutralidad obligada a neutralidad activa a través de la acción humanitaria: Alfonso XIII y la Oficina Pro-Cautivos durante la Gran Guerra' [From Forced Neutrality to Active Neutrality through Humanitarian Action: Alfonso XIII and the *Oficina Pro-Cautivos* during the Great War], which is the most recent publication on the subject written by an historian, is not based on the material handled by the Office that is available for consultation at Madrid's Royal Palace Archive.²²

Since 2015, the Royal Palace Archive has digitised and described thousands of letters and files that were created by the Office, yet later forgotten or ignored. The significant efforts of the Archive's staff resulted in an exhibition entitled 'Cartas al Rey. La mediación humanitaria de Alfonso XIII' organised in Madrid's Royal Palace by Patrimonio Nacional, the Spanish equivalent of Royal Historic Palaces. On the day of the official opening on 8 November 2018, in the presence of many European ambassadors, King Felipe VI unveiled a plaque outside the entrance to the archive to honour the Office's humanitarian activities in the war. The memorialisation had taken one hundred years.

The exhibition catalogue – only released in Spanish – is the first publication to include four chapters based on the digitised collection.²³ Although these chapters are written from an archivist's perspective (all five authors – Juan José Alonso, Mar Mairal, Reyes Utrera, Javier Fernández and Lorena Martínez – worked at the Royal Palace Archive, and the first three served as co-curators of the exhibition), they provide a thorough initial contribution to the subject.²⁴ Additionally, Mairal acknowledges that the numbers suggested in her chapter are, by necessity, provisional since the files had not been fully described at the time of publication in September 2018.²⁵ The collection has now been fully catalogued and uploaded onto a subject-specific search engine. However, the platform is in Spanish and is currently available for consultation only on site at the Royal Palace Archive. Senior staff at the Archive hope to make it accessible to the general public and to the broader research community in the future.

The reasons why the literature has been largely silent on the subject are complex. Although the situation is now changing, the focus after the war in historical accounts was very much on the battlefields rather than on neutral activities. As a case in point, Spain – like Denmark, for that matter – is not mentioned at all in Jörn Leonhard's monumental history of the First World War, *Pandora's Box: A History of First World War*.²⁶ Although he was a key figure in Spain's humanitarian aid in the Great War, research on Alfonso XIII has centred on the monarchy-versus-republic debate and the role he played in Spain's unstable and violent political climate in the first half of the twentieth century. This focus and the dominance of other lines of historical inquiry on Spain, such as the Spanish Civil War and the transition to democracy in the 1970s, help explain the reluctance – or lack of interest – of scholars to engage with Spain's humanitarian activities during the Great War. Furthermore, careful research on the European War Office collection requires a command of Spanish and several other European languages, including French, English, German, Portuguese and Italian.

This article is based primarily on unexplored or under-referenced material in Madrid's Royal Palace Archive, from what is now known as the European War Office collection, as well as from the Alfonso XIII collection. The latter includes correspondence and reports written by Spain's ambassadors in Europe's capitals, mainly addressed to Emilio Torres, Private Secretary to the King, and written for his and the king's reference, but also material related to the ICRC, personnel files and King Alfonso's private letters to and from other heads of state and family members spread across the European royal courts. Additional material comes from Madrid's Royal Palace Library, the Spanish National Historical Archive, the Instituto Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid, the

General Administrative Archive in Alcalá de Henares, the ICRC in Geneva, the Austrian State Archives and the Austrian National Library in Vienna.

The purpose of the article is fourfold. First, to make the European War Office's humanitarian action known to the international scholarly community and to incorporate the subject into the English-language historiography of the First World War. Second, to engage with recent trends in the historiography focused on neutrality, royal diplomacy, prisoners of war and civilian internment. Third, to ground the topic in careful archival research and diversify the source base for the study of humanitarian action in the war. Finally, to contribute to the globalisation of First World War historiography, despite the European War Office's misleading Eurocentric name.

The article first addresses King Alfonso's educational and family background to shed light on his vast and influential network as a European royal and as the head of a neutral power who could cross the divides caused by the war. This biographical information is intended to underscore the importance of his personal connections in the work of the Office. The article then turns to examine the key myths surrounding the foundation of the European War Office and analyses how the Office began and later structured its humanitarian activities, including a brief comparison with the ICRC and a review of its links with other humanitarian organisations. The following section discusses the role of women as petitioners, recommenders, employees and volunteers at the Office. Finally, the article describes how the Office's operations ended in 1921, three years after the signing of the Armistice.

2. Family matters

Like other senior European royals of his time, King Alfonso XIII of Spain (1886–1941) was related to ruling families on both sides of the conflict. He was the posthumous son of Alfonso XII (1857–1885) by his second wife, Archduchess Maria Christina of Austria (1858–1929), who served as queen regent for sixteen years until her son came of age in 1902. Maria Christina was Emperor Franz Joseph's cousin twice removed and also sister of Archduke Friedrich of Austria, supreme commander of the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War, and Archduke Karl Stephan, a Grand Admiral in the Austro-Hungarian Navy and later a candidate for the throne of the newly created Kingdom of Poland.²⁷ Her younger brother, Eugen, was appointed field marshal and commander of the southwest front. King Alfonso's maternal uncles were thus heavily involved in Austria-Hungary's war effort.

Partly as a result of these ties to the Habsburg dynasty, in late February 1918 the last emperor of Austria, Karl, who was only a year younger than King Alfonso and had married Princess Zita, of the House of Bourbon like King Alfonso, asked his cousin – on account of his 'noble and generous purpose, many times demonstrated, in granting your valuable support to the currents in favour of peace' – to transmit a secret message to the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson.²⁸ Heretofore unreferenced Spanish archival material reveals that, according to the Spanish ambassador to Washington, Wilson seemed 'pleasantly surprised' upon reading the mis-sive and 'deeply grateful' for Alfonso's mediation in the matter, even if it was ultimately unsuccessful.²⁹

Throughout the war, King Alfonso frequently wrote to his uncle Friedrich's wife, Archduchess Isabella, and their daughter, Princess Maria Christina (Christa to her friends), and played an active role in securing the safe passage of his cousin's husband, Hereditary Prince Emanuel of Salm-Salm, along with Christa.³⁰ He wrote to both his aunt and cousin on the occasion of the German U-49 submarine incident in Cádiz in the autumn of 1917, when the submarine's commander, for whom King Alfonso had vouched personally, fled the port after having given his word to remain interned in Spain.³¹ The Spanish foreign minister, the Marquis of Lema, informed Spain's ambassador in Berlin that 'the potential consequences are immeasurable'.³² King Alfonso wrote to Isabella that 'they [the German government] compromised the friendship of the only nation that

remained neutral, and this by their own free will [...] Farewell. My aunt, I'm glad it's not an Austrian submarine; they are always gentlemen and grateful for the services they have received.'³³

Based on material in the archives of the German Foreign Ministry, researcher Jesús Perea concludes that Spain had to endure further pressure from the Entente after the incident, which would explain why King Alfonso wrote fervently to his Austrian relatives and asked his cousin Christa to 'speak to Cécile because it's important to act quickly'.³⁴ He was referring to Cecillie of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, wife of Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany, to whose second son, Louis Ferdinand, King Alfonso was godfather,³⁵ and whom Christa called her 'other best friend'.³⁶ To settle the matter, Germany placed a similar submarine at the disposal of the Spanish authorities in the Austrian port of Pula (in present-day Croatia).³⁷

In his 2018 book *Raising Heirs to the Throne in Nineteenth-Century Spain: The Education of the Constitutional Monarch*, Richard Forsting notes that King Alfonso's education included instruction in French, German and Latin from the age of eight so that he would be able to represent Spain abroad. Forsting also identifies 'a strong bond to the military and his mother's close supervision' in his education³⁸ and notes that his 'earliest exercises in a foreign language preserved in the palace archives are in German', no doubt as a result of his mother's Austrian origin.³⁹ King Alfonso's command of several foreign languages helped him build and maintain old and new family bonds across Europe and participate actively in Spain's humanitarian action during the war. Alfonso Merry del Val, later Spanish ambassador in London during the war, taught him English and joined his Private Secretariat, and Alfonso continued to take English lessons after he came to the throne.

His wife, Victoria Eugenie (Ena), was a Hessian princess by birth and a granddaughter of Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom, in whose household she had grown up. She was first cousin of both the Russian Czarina Alexandra and of the future King George V of Britain; her godfather had been Emperor Friedrich III of Germany, and his son, Emperor Wilhelm II, was also her cousin. Partly as the result of the Act of Settlement of 1701, Alfonso and Ena's marriage was the first between a Spanish and an English royal since 1554, exceptionally bringing the traditionally distant Catholic and Protestant royal families of Europe together at the Spanish court.⁴⁰ Queen Ena's uncle, Prince Louis of Battenberg (later known as Louis Mountbatten), served as First Sea Lord of the British Navy until October 1914. Her younger brother, Prince Maurice of Battenberg, was killed in action at Ypres on 27 October 1914. In a letter to King Alfonso, he had assured his brother-in-law that he would 'give [the Germans] hell' while hoping ('unberufen' – in English 'touch wood') he would come to no harm. Maurice ended his letter with a plea for Alfonso to look after a certain Camilla of 14 Maida Vale, London, 'if anything happens to me'.⁴¹

In short, King Alfonso XIII was related by blood or marriage to the reigning sovereigns of all the great monarchies of Europe: Austria-Hungary, Germany, Britain and Russia. Perhaps uniquely, he also bridged the longstanding rift between Catholic and Protestant monarchies in Europe. He leveraged these family links to help keep Spain out of the war and resolve many of his relatives' tribulations, and he engaged royal women as mediators in the conflict. Notably, family members on both sides of the conflict trusted Alfonso's influence and magnanimity in their moments of hope and anxiety, including his brother-in-law Prince Maurice, his cousin Princess Christa, and Emperor Karl. The thousands of letters that reached Madrid's Royal Palace from all social classes and many countries were, to some extent, an extension of this well-known trust in Alfonso.

3. The origins of the office – dispelling the myths

Two oft-repeated – yet unsubstantiated – myths surround the creation of the Office. The first is that the letter prompting the Office's establishment was written by a French washerwoman who was searching for her husband. The story is presented as fact in a variety of media. The History

Channel, for example, claims that ‘it all started by chance when the King of Spain received a letter from a French laundress’;⁴² a Twitter post issued by the Spanish National Archives in 2018 refers to a ‘laundress, wife of a soldier missing in the Battle of #Charleroi 1914’ who had written a letter to the king;⁴³ and even Codera’s entry on Spain’s humanitarianism in the *International Encyclopaedia of the First World War* mentions ‘the story of a French laundress who had asked the king for help in locating her husband’;⁴⁴ which is repeated in his pioneering book on Spanish and Argentinian neutrality.⁴⁵ The myth of the French laundrywoman can be traced back at least to Julian Cortés Cavanillas’ book *Alfonso XIII y la Guerra del 14*, published in 1976, an idealised biography that includes no footnote references to the European War Office collection. ‘It came as a spark, from a letter that a poor laundress from the Gironde wrote to the king of Spain,’ writes Cavanillas.⁴⁶ It was only in 2019 that Alonso picked up on the laundress myth and asserted that no letters in the collection matched the French woman’s profile.⁴⁷ More importantly, there is no mention that she was a laundress in the newspaper article that appears to be the source of the myth, which simply describes her as a young French woman.

The second myth surrounding the founding of the Office is that the news that the French laundress had found her husband thanks to the king of Spain was published in the French newspaper *La Petite Gironde* on 18 June 1915. This assertion can be traced (at least) back to Victor Espinós’s publication *Alfonso XIII y la guerra: Espejo de neutrales*. ‘An article in the departmental newspaper *La Petite Gironde* is the basis, like the seed, of the first public promotion of the enterprise’, he wrote in 1918.⁴⁸ It was repeated in numerous publications, ranging from Enrique González Fernández’s article on King Alfonso’s humanitarian action published in 1995 to newspaper reports printed in *ABC* in 2017 and *La Vanguardia* in 2019.⁴⁹ Again, it was not until 2019 that a scholar, in this case Barral, questioned whether the original story had been published in *La Petite Gironde*. Indeed, she notes that ‘we have not found such a story in that issue of the local French newspaper.’⁵⁰ My own research shows that there is no mention of the story in any issue of *La Petite Gironde* published during the war.

Instead, a story entitled ‘Grâce au roi d’Espagne elle a retrouvé son mari’ [Thanks to the king of Spain, she has found her husband] is recounted on the front page of *Le Petit Journal*, one of the most widely read national newspapers in France, on 18 June 1915. The piece itself dates from 17 June and is signed by ‘our correspondent’ in Bayonne, near the border with Spain. Therefore, it is probable that the newspaper cutting kept in Madrid’s Royal Palace Archive – which is unlabelled, unlike the rest of the clippings in the folder – is from a reprint the following day in a local newspaper. The confusion about the name of the newspaper is possibly due to the conflation of *Le Petit Journal* with the soldier’s origin in the Gironde, in southwestern France.

News of the work of the Office travelled widely, as the exponential increase in the number of files processed that month attests. A letter from Bournemouth, addressed ‘from father to father’ to King Alfonso, attached a British newspaper cutting dated 19 June entitled ‘King Alfonso: Kindly response to appeal by a soldier’s wife. From our special correspondent. Paris.’⁵¹ While the Office had been receiving requests since the previous summer, growing to 59 requests processed in April 1915 and 125 in the following month, the number of military files rose dramatically to 1,374 in June, with 19, 20 and 21 June particularly frantic days, confirming that the report published in *Le Petit Journal* had reached a broad audience in France and beyond, something that would have been possible only for a well-known newspaper with a wide circulation. Interestingly, a month later, *Le Petit Journal* put its publicity outlets and headquarters at the disposal of the deputy of the former department of Seine-et-Oise, Aristide Prat, to found the *Union des Familles de Disparus*, an association dedicated to searching for missing soldiers.⁵² Prat himself forwarded letters of request to the Office during the war and published a newspaper article entitled ‘L’Espagne et nos prisonniers de guerre’ [Spain and our prisoners of war], in which he commended King Alfonso’s ‘generous concern’ and reassured French families ‘that they can expect much from his [the king’s] benevolent and energetic action’.⁵³ Prat later edited a leather-bound

pamphlet entitled *À sa Majesté Alphonse XIII, Roi d'Espagne: hommage de reconnaissance des familles françaises*, printed by the *Union* over which he presided.⁵⁴

The king's private secretary referred to the European War Office as both the 'Sección de prisioneros y heridos de guerra' [Department of War Prisoners and Wounded] and the 'Oficina de información de guerra' [War Information Office].⁵⁵ The various names used at the time imply that the Office was not a straightforward government department; instead, resources and staff were channelled through the King's Private Secretariat (*Secretaría Particular*). Some scholars and commentators refer to the Office as the Pro-Captives Office⁵⁶ or *Oficina Pro-Cautivos*,⁵⁷ which is also the term used in Jorge Díaz's historical novel *Cartas a palacio*.⁵⁸ It is likely that they all took the term from Pando, who states that the official name was *Oficina Pro-Cautivos*.⁵⁹ When describing and digitising the thousands of documents in the collection, however, the Royal Palace Archive staff decided to name it the European War Office (*Oficina de la Guerra Europea*), based on the heading featured on the folders, and this article follows that convention.⁶⁰

4. The first requests

In early August 1914, the Russian government asked the Spanish Ambassador in Saint Petersburg whether Spain would be prepared to protect Russian interests in Austria-Hungary if diplomatic relations between Russia and Austria were to break down.⁶¹ Spain accepted mandates to protect Russian nationals in both Austria-Hungary and Germany. Spain also accepted a mandate for the protection of Serbs in Austria-Hungary, a policy that Ambassador Castro in Vienna naturally found uncomfortable, given that the initial declaration of war had been issued by his host country against Serbia. However, as it was a *fait accompli*, he had no choice but to acquiesce, much to his later distress.

Indeed, during the first month of fighting, all enquiries about civilians came from Russia. The first case file opened by the Private Secretariat was about a Russian doctor, Hélène Lorenz, who had been staying in Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary), a well-known spa town in Bohemia, in the summer of 1914. Her brother, Led, sent a telegram (in French) to the king of Spain from Moscow on 16 August 1914, pleading, 'in the name of Jesus, Your Majesty will not refuse me'.⁶² The religious reference played on a shared Christian faith and possibly projected his view of the Russian Czar's proximity to God onto the King of Spain. (Later, many British supplicants would address King Alfonso as 'Your Imperial Majesty', again in reference to their own monarch, who was also Emperor of India.)⁶³ Led Lorenz pledged that any costs incurred would be repaid to the Spanish government.

Two additional telegrams from Russia followed within a fortnight requesting news from Karlsbad, a sign that a significant number of well-off Russians were still travelling to the spa resort despite mounting tensions between Austria-Hungary and Russia over unrest in the Balkans. With the outbreak of war, the Archpriest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Karlsbad, Nikolai Ryzhkov (Kyskow in the European War Office file), was arrested by the Austrian authorities and later sentenced to death. However, as the files in the collection show, he was pardoned in June 1917 as a result of King Alfonso's intervention and exchanged for Andrei Sheptytsky, the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.⁶⁴

Wasta Martianowa wrote (also in French) from Moscow on 26 August 1914 to enquire about her daughter, Proscovie Mowenko, and her two grandchildren, aged sixteen and eighteen.⁶⁵ Michel Frenkel's 'devasted wife and children' telegraphed two days later from Russia to explain that he was staying at a sanatorium in Karlsbad.⁶⁶ Many Russians were holidaying in Marienbad (now Mariánské Lázně),⁶⁷ another elite spa town in Bohemia, as well as in Moravia,⁶⁸ Galicia⁶⁹ and Berlin.⁷⁰ There was also a Russian (probably Jewish) student, Paul Goldmann, in Liège, Belgium, whose parents wrote from Rostov-on-Don sending a 'humble prayer desperate parents

help find son'.⁷¹ The children of Madame Binus addressed their request to the Queen of Spain, appealing to her sensibility as a mother, a pattern repeated in the collection.

The first military cases to arrive at Madrid's Royal Palace were French. Inquiries about French soldiers missing in or around Germany were directed to the European War Office in part because Spain had formally agreed to represent French interests in Germany. On 11 August 1914, the Spanish ambassador in Paris wrote to the Spanish minister of state, Lema (a copy reached the king's private secretary), to say that the French 'Political Director has just told me on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs that France gratefully accepts Spain's offer to take France's interests in Germany under its protection. In Austria, they will be taken care of by the United States Ambassador when rupture takes place.'⁷² Additionally, in November 1914, the Spanish consul in Bordeaux informed Lema that the French government was very grateful to Spain for agreeing to represent French citizens in the Holy Land after the declaration of war with the Ottoman Empire.⁷³

Although the literature on how these services were triggered is scant,⁷⁴ the archival material suggests that, as a neutral power, Spain both volunteered and accepted requests to act as a protecting power. James J. Blake defines a 'protecting power' as a 'state that agrees to act on behalf of another at the latter's request within the territorial jurisdiction of a third state'.⁷⁵ He adds that 'the protected state also makes arrangements to reimburse the protecting power for any expenses it may incur on the former's behalf'.⁷⁶ Although Russia did indeed send over substantial funds, Ambassador Castro in Vienna noted that Belgium and Serbia, whose interests Spain also had agreed to protect in Austria, had sent none.⁷⁷ Indeed, Howard Levie observed in 1961 that, despite numerous precedents, the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conferences had not codified this international practice.

It was the Geneva Convention of 1929, relating to the treatment of prisoners of war, which was to incorporate the notion of a protecting power into international law, culminating 'in the 1949 Geneva Conventions to which most nations of the world are parties'.⁷⁸ Therefore, although responsibilities and provisions remained undefined in the Great War, Spain's actions, such as inspecting prisoner-of-war camps, contributed to the concept's refinement through practice. In fact, historian Bruno Cabanes argues that 'World War I and its aftermath represent a decisive turning point in the redefinition of humanitarianism: a profound transformation of pre-war humanitarian practices and humanitarian law into an assertion of "humanitarian rights"'.⁷⁹ The work carried out by Madrid's European War Office fits this assessment. Spanish Ambassador Quiñones certainly thought that the Office's endeavours constituted 'significant progress' in the development of international humanitarianism when he accepted the French Foreign Ministry's proposal to write the prologue to one of their publications about prisoners of war.⁸⁰

5. Spreading the word

On 5 August 1915, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, one of Germany's most influential liberal newspapers at the time, published an article by its Geneva correspondent entitled 'Gefangenenhilfestelle des Königs von Spanien' ['The king of Spain's prisoner-of-war help desk']. The article explained that French newspapers had reported on King Alfonso's actions, and proceeded to give a detailed account of how the Office functioned (although the journalist did exaggerate some figures, such as the identification of 7,000 prisoners). 'As soon as a request arrives at Madrid's Royal Palace', he explained, 'the sender is informed that the search has started. Usually, the king forwards the request to the Spanish ambassador in the country where the prisoner is thought to be. As soon as the report comes back, the prisoner's family is sent all the information that could be found'.⁸¹ Two weeks later, given the 'impossibility of replying to the innumerable letters received' as well as the 'delicate' diplomatic matter of taking charge of people that were not officially under Spain's diplomatic protection, Torres wrote to Ambassadors Polo in Berlin and Castro in Vienna to tell them to seek to correct the reports actively.⁸² On 17 September the Austrian news agency, the *Korrespondenz-Bureau*, explained that unlike Russians and Serbians, Austro-Hungarians should

refrain from writing to the king of Spain.⁸³ Yet the following year, in June 1916, Ambassador Polo informed the German foreign minister that 'H. M.'s Private Secretariat has been obliged, given the numerous petitions received daily and the generous sentiments of His Majesty, to reply to all the requests addressed to him, without distinction as to the nationality of the petitioner'.⁸⁴

Indeed, the European War Office ultimately did not concern itself solely with prisoners of the countries for whom Spain acted as a protecting power, as Barral has suggested. In fact, the Office's final number of military files for both Germans and Austrians amounts to 12,365. Another case in point is that, although Spain did not represent Britain, the former diplomat and Spanish finance minister Guillermo J. de Osma forwarded to the Office more than twenty-five requests, of which at least three concerned British soldiers: Algernon P. Warren,⁸⁵ G. M. Clarke⁸⁶ and Ernest George Sydenham. Regarding both Warren and Sydenham, Osma asked Torres to reply to Antonio Pastor at Balliol College, Oxford, later the Cervantes Professor at King's College, London. Osma was the first modern Spaniard to graduate from Oxford after the Universities Tests Act of 1871 fully opened the historic universities of England to non-Anglicans; he was also the founder of the first modern Spanish endowment at Oxford, negotiated by his old Oxford friend, Maurice de Bunsen, the British ambassador in Vienna when the war broke out and under-secretary in the British Foreign Office throughout the conflict.⁸⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising that Osma recommended British (and notably Oxford-related cases) to 'so zealous an instrument of His Majesty's mercy'.⁸⁸ A report sent to the Office from Berlin dated 23 May 1917 confirmed that Warren, who was a second lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps, had been found at the Crefeld (Krefeld) prison camp in Germany.

In 1927, Arthur Hardinge, who had been the British ambassador to Spain during the war, wrote in his memoirs: 'It would indeed be difficult to exaggerate the beneficent effect of the Spanish Sovereign's humanitarian activities in diminishing the destructive effects of the war, or the numbers of lives which they saved'.⁸⁹ Ten years earlier, in 1917, a French journalist and historian, Albert Mousset, published *Alphonse XIII et les oeuvres de guerre*, where he commented that 'the work of His Majesty Alfonso XIII belongs to this mediating activity of Spain of which it is the most personal and generous expression'.⁹⁰ Torres gave journalists access to the Office, thereby collaborating in the issuance of various publications that were mostly laudatory in nature, including Espinós's book and other materials inspired by it, which label the Office's work as 'the most Christian work of their king'.⁹¹ The fact that they were so encomiastic made them less authoritative and probably contributed to the limited scholarly attention that this humanitarian enterprise received.

In 1919, the Spanish community in Argentina sent an album with 68,000 signatures, dedicated to King Alfonso 'the humanitarian, on his birthday, on the occasion of his altruistic intervention on behalf of the underprivileged of the great European war'.⁹² Also in 1919, the Office organised an exhibition to benefit the Spanish Red Cross showcasing artworks created by prisoners held in German and Austrian camps that had been visited by Spanish inspectors, and whose reports have been kept in the European War Office collection (Table 2).⁹³ In the summer of 1918, the Department for Prisoners of War within the French Foreign Ministry published a compendium of reports written by Spanish inspectors of German camps; its introduction acknowledged that the book would be incomplete 'if it failed to mention a name [King Alfonso's] that history will respectfully associate with all the efforts made during this war to improve the fate of prisoners', adding that 'by his repeated interventions [...] HM King Alfonso XIII has acquired imperishable gratitude and recognition from the French government'.⁹⁴ Thus, the king's humanitarian action was internationally acclaimed both during and immediately after the war.

6. Similar but not the same

The International Prisoners-of-War Agency in Geneva and the European War Office created similarly sophisticated and methodical indexing systems, yet with some significant differences.

According to Stibbe, the Agency had a staff of 1,200 by the end of 1914 and handled up to 30,000 letters and postcards a day.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, the Office had a relatively small team of up to forty-six staff members at its peak and handled about 180,000 files in total.⁹⁶ Other than the sheer difference in scale, another critical distinction is that the Agency created a first set of index cards based on the lists of prisoners submitted by the warring countries, followed by a second set of cards on the basis of requests for information, which they would then compare to determine whether they related to the same person. In contrast, the Office created its initial files as a result of requests, not from formal prisoner lists. This difference in methodology and the vastly different volume of letters probably explain why the Office kept the letters while the Agency destroyed them.

Both the Agency and the Office organised their material based on nationality and status (military or civilian), and both combined French and Belgian subjects. The Agency used cream-coloured paper for all requests, whereas the Office colour-coded their military material: yellow paper for French and Belgian soldiers, blue for British (*ingleses*), green for Italian, white for German, red for Austrian and light orange for Russian. The colours were taken from each country's colour book, a diplomatic style guide.⁹⁷ Cases of civilian and military repatriations were documented on larger sheets of paper, pink and blue respectively. The organisational system clearly reveals that professional Spanish diplomats ran the Office.

Furthermore, the nature of the two-set card system at the Agency was static; in other words, none of the material created in Geneva left the Agency's offices. In contrast, a section of the *fiche* or form produced at the Office was torn off and dispatched to Spain's legations and embassies abroad by post. In the case of an Italian soldier who had gone missing while fighting against Austro-Hungarian forces, for example, the Office would send a section of the green *fiche* pertaining to that case to the Spanish embassy in Vienna. The embassy would be asked to fill in the section and return it to the Royal Palace. If Spain did not have a formal arrangement to safeguard the interests of the missing individual's country of origin, then the embassy would liaise with the relevant protecting power's diplomatic delegation there, obtain the information and report back to the Office. Meanwhile, Madrid would use standardised letters in foreign languages to reply to the person who had made the request (or to a third party if needed) and send updates relating to their enquiry as appropriate.

Another important difference between the Agency and the European War Office was that the latter coordinated its efforts and made use of Spain's vast diplomatic network to carry out its humanitarian mission. In one case logged in July 1917, the Office filled in a white form upon receipt of a request from Mrs John Haig of Edinburgh in search of her son, William, who had disappeared in Kut, Iraq, in January 1916: 'I take the liberty of appealing to his Majesty seeing by the papers the good work you have been doing in helping heartbroken mothers concerning their missing soldier sons', she wrote.⁹⁸ The Office cut off a section of the form with William's details and sent it to Spain's legation in Constantinople. Meanwhile, they would have also replied to Mrs Haig to say that they had begun the search. As the stamp on the cut-off section reveals, Spanish diplomats in Istanbul checked the soldier's details against local lists of prisoners and casualties and reported back to the Royal Palace that William had not been found. The form was stamped 'negativo-desaparecido' and returned to Madrid.

In the spring of 1916, a letter signed by Sekunda Strebel arrived from Halle in Saxony; she was looking for her sister Hildegard, a German nun at Mary's Convent and School in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, in British India. The receipt of her letter, written in German, set in motion a search conducted by the Spanish ambassador in London, who reported back to the Royal Palace on 2 February 1917 to say that 'it is assumed that she has not moved from her usual residence, the British having respected a considerable number of German and Austrian religious people who had been in Allahabad since before the war'.⁹⁹ The information could then be relayed to her sister in Germany, further proving that the enterprise worked across the divide of the Great War. In another instance, the German military attaché in Spain, Arnold Kalle, better known for his affair

with Mata Hari, informed the Office that a Mr G erault had died in combat on 5 December 1914 in Cameroon. Kalle returned G erault's wedding band to his wife in France through the European War Office and assured her that he had been buried in Africa with military honours.¹⁰⁰ The outcome of the requests from Mrs Haig and Sekunda Strebel demonstrate that the European War Office's forms travelled thousands of miles and across continents.

While most requests came from unknown individuals, the Office also received some from or about famous individuals, such as the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, Russian ballet dancer and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky, Italian composer Giacomo Puccini, British poet and writer Rudyard Kipling, French singer Maurice Ch evalier, French painter Jean-Paul Laurens and the Austrian-Jewish theatre director Max Reinhardt, later co-founder of the Salzburg Festival.¹⁰¹ The collection also contains files relating to the Romanov family, perhaps because Spain was the protector of Russian citizens in enemy countries; moreover, King Alfonso had extensive pan-European dynastic family ties, and he was concerned about the future of Spain's own monarchy. In fact, in February 1918, the king wrote a letter addressed to 'mon cher Michel' in reply to the czar's youngest brother's request for news about the state of his properties in Poland and certain funds deposited in a bank in Berlin. Grand Duchess Olga of Russia, Queen of the Hellenes, wrote in October 1918 asking King Alfonso to assist the Russian imperial family (which had in fact been executed in July): 'Unless immediate help very little hope for them', she telegraphed. Two months earlier, on his return from the front in France, King George V had written to King Alfonso: 'I would be extremely grateful if you would exert all your influence in the way you believe to be most effective to rescue the Imperial Family of Russia from the deplorable situation in which it finds itself at this time'.¹⁰² His wife, Queen Mary, had also written in her own name to support King Alfonso's attempts to assist Grand Duke George Mikhailovich, Olga's son-in-law, who would nevertheless be executed in January 1919. As one book review of *The Race to Save the Romanovs: The Truth Behind the Secret Plans to Rescue Russia's Imperial Family* puts it, 'the true surprise and hero of the book [is] Alfonso XIII of Spain'.¹⁰³ These requests were all coordinated through the Office and reflect the room for manoeuvre that the well-connected king of a neutral country had carved for himself.

In April 1917, Gustave Ador, president of the ICRC in Geneva, addressed a letter to King Alfonso acknowledging that the ICRC 'is deeply grateful to Your Majesty for his effective intervention on behalf of the victims of the war'. Since the king's voice was 'always listened to', he continued, he asked whether the king would support the Committee's appeal to belligerents to return prisoners after a year of captivity.¹⁰⁴ Similar requests followed from Ador that spring, including a letter dated 12 June, in which he asked for his son-in-law and collaborator Fr ed eric Barbey to be received at the Royal Palace in order to establish closer relations with the Office.¹⁰⁵ Barbey even obtained an audience with King Alfonso on 23 June.¹⁰⁶ On his return to Geneva, Barbey wrote to Torres and asked whether the Office would take up his suggestion to forward to the ICRC all the requests received in Madrid.¹⁰⁷ There is a separate document in the file related to Barbey's visit to Madrid, which he may have left with Torres during his trip to Spain, explaining that 'if this arrangement is accepted in Madrid [...] (search) applications should be made on a form similar to those used in Geneva'.¹⁰⁸ The Office continued its activities until after the war and did not change its forms, indicating that it agreed neither to stop its work nor to be subsumed under the ICRC in Geneva.

Barbey also keenly requested from Torres that Ambassadors Polo and Castro confidentially share with the ICRC the reports on prisoner camps filed by Spanish inspectors in Germany and Austria from the late summer of 1917.¹⁰⁹ The foreign minister, Lema, wrote to the president of the Spanish Red Cross to inform him that Spain would forward the request to receive the prisoner camp reports to the relevant warring states.¹¹⁰ There are copies of some of these reports in the ICRC archives in Geneva, meaning that Spain was successful in obtaining permission to share sensitive materials with a third (non-state) party.¹¹¹ Although the ICRC was indeed a larger enterprise, it remained a private organisation, whereas the Office was a head of state's private

enterprise, operationalised through both a neutral state's diplomatic apparatus and its monarch's personal network.

Barbey also asked Torres whether King Alfonso would support a conference of neutral Red Cross societies in Geneva, which he did. Spain sent General Mille, the president of the Spanish Red Cross, and Torres, as the King's special envoy, to the conference in September 1917. Among other matters, the conference chair Edouard Naville acknowledged that 'His Majesty's efforts to secure the cessation of reprisals against hospital ships have been successful. The Conference wishes to express to His Majesty its deep gratitude for this new service, after so many others, to the cause of humanity,' thus illustrating King Alfonso's engagement in other humanitarian activities during the war.¹¹² In 2006, Stibbe noted that the 'Agency's files, with the exception of records relating to individual prisoners, have recently been opened for scholarly use' and that these included reports written by ICRC inspection teams and the proceedings of the 1917 conference.¹¹³ In fact, these proceedings and the reports written by Spanish inspection teams had been accessible in Madrid's Royal Palace Archive since the early 1980s, if not longer.¹¹⁴ Had it not been for the protracted silence over Spain's humanitarian action, international historians would not have needed to wait for an additional twenty years or more to access these materials.

The Office also developed links with other private and state bodies which acted across borders. For one, *Bureau International Féministe de Renseignements en faveur des Victimes de la Guerre (à Lausanne)*, a philanthropic organisation with special focus on the plight of civilians,¹¹⁵ worked closely with the Spanish embassy in Berlin. However, from March 1917 onwards, the embassy asked the Bureau to send their requests directly to the 'Secrétariat de sa Majesté le Roi d'Espagne' and put at its disposal the diplomatic bag of the Spanish legation in Berne. There are at least twenty-five files in the collection bearing the name of the Bureau's founder and president, Antonie Girardet-Vielle, most of them concerning the plight of families (the Mansard, Pennequin-Dubois and Picotin Kolosky) and widows such as Madame Lemoine Poulet.¹¹⁶ Although the *Auskunfts- und Hilfsstelle für Deutsche im Ausland und Ausländer in Deutschland* (Information and Assistance Bureau for Germans Abroad and for Foreigners in Germany), founded in October 1914 by Dr Elisabeth Rotten, does not appear to be listed in the Office's collection, Girardet-Vielle's correspondence with the Office speaks warmly about Rotten as the Bureau's correspondent in Berlin and as someone who urged Girardet-Vielle to ask Torres for support with the repatriation of children. Rotten, a Swiss national and, according to Stibbe, in 'a curious half-way position between bourgeois respectability and militant feminism,'¹¹⁷ engaged in the pacifist movement and later in several progressive educational projects, including the German League for the League of Nations and the New Education Fellowship.¹¹⁸ There are also letters from historically more established and traditional organisations, such as the *Auskunftsstelle des Johanniter-Ordens über Verwundete* (Protestant), and from the Apostolic Nuncio in Madrid, Cardinal Francesco Ragonesi, mainly forwarding to the Office requests he had received from France and Italy.¹¹⁹

Barral calls into question the personal nature of King Alfonso's venture and suggests that the creation of the European War Office was attributable to the king's private secretary, although she complains that there is no access to the relevant material. This is a surprising claim, since the documents are in a publicly accessible archive. She is right to assert, however, that 'it was the state that took on the task of representing the wide range of interests of the contending countries in the respective hostile territories.'¹²⁰ However, it was the Office, not the state administration (as she appears to indicate), that gave meaning to Spain's status as a protecting power. A case in point is seen in the reference letters sent by Santiago Alba Bonifaz, who held several ministerial portfolios during the First World War. As finance minister, he wrote on 18 July 1916, 'Do not be surprised that I am frequently obliged to trouble you, because unfortunate friends of mine with relatives who are prisoners of war come through me to seek the pious intervention of our August Sovereign to obtain news or to try to improve the fate of the captives.'¹²¹ He enquired after the son of his French friend M. Roederer. Two years later he wrote to Torres as

minister of public instruction and fine arts, requesting a search for Oscar Masuy of the Belgian grenadiers.¹²² Had the enterprise been a state one, Alba Bonifaz, who was a member of the cabinet, would not have sought assistance from the king's private secretariat.

Despite their different political party affiliations, all four Spanish prime ministers who held office during the Great War – Eduardo Dato, the Count of Romanones, the Marquis of Alhucemas and Antonio Maura – also sent reference letters to the Royal Palace.¹²³ At least twenty-two registered cases are associated with Dato, thirty-eight with Romanones, thirty-four with Alhucemas and fourteen with Maura. They wrote both while holding office (there were nine different governments in the course of the war) and as parliamentarians. One of Dato's letters, requesting a search for Edouard Thierry, a French soldier, reads: '[M. Durallet] wishes to obtain news of the whereabouts of a missing son. I would be grateful if the service carried out at the king's private secretariat would oblige him.'¹²⁴ On one occasion, Romanones simply forwarded to his 'querido amigo Torres' a letter that had reached him about an Italian soldier, Amilcare Bonsignore, who had been captured in the Trentino.¹²⁵ The archival evidence makes it clear that the government was not involved in performing Spain's humanitarian work but allowed it to be carried out; moreover, cabinet members often requested help from the Office in a personal capacity.

7. The work of the office in numbers

The most up-to-date breakdown of the materials held in the collection of the European War Office is shown in the table and bar chart below. The military files mostly concern French and Belgian soldiers, with a smaller number relating to Germans, British and Italians (Table 1). The Ottoman, Bulgarian, Serbian and Romanian cases represent the smallest number of military files in the collection. However, a large proportion of files relate to the protection of civilians in occupied territories. There are a considerable number relating to military exchanges and repatriations, suggesting that the Office played a mediating role in several of these negotiations. As for the results of the searches (Figure 1), while only 150 files remained unprocessed – the number is so small that it is not visible in the bar graph – most resulted in the subjects remaining unfound, although a significant percentage were found alive, including those who were wounded or imprisoned, and a small number turned out to be deceased.

An example of an unresolved case is the search for Frank Chhapkhanawalla, an Indian engineer on the torpedoed Belgian relief ship *Harpalyce*, sunk in April 1915. As Mrs Chhapkhanawalla from Bombay explained in her letter to King Alfonso, the articles found on the dead body taken to be that of her son led her to believe they were of some 'other person probably of Chinese or Japanese nationality'. This confusion gave her 'a ray of hope to believe that probably my son

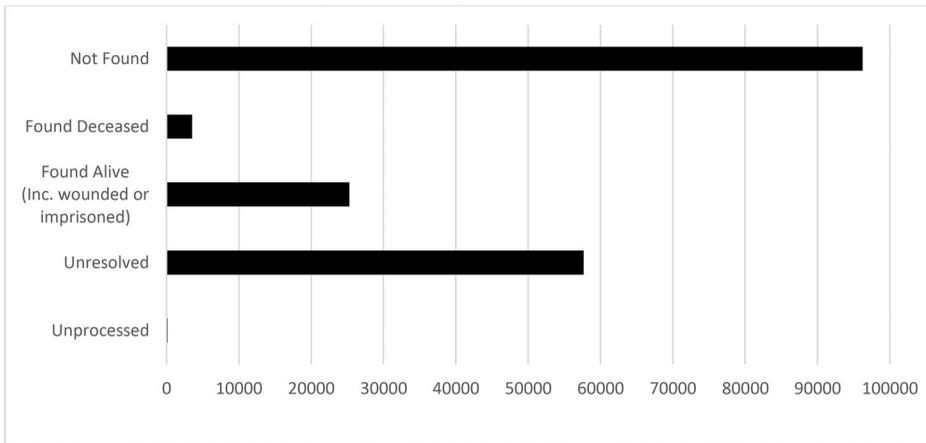
Table 1. Breakdown of military files by nationality, and civilian files. AGP, OGE.

Austro-Hungarian military files	1,924
British military files	6,164
Bulgarian military files	7
French and Belgian military files	94,918
German military files	10,441
Italian military files	4,262
Ottoman military files	1
Portuguese military files	165
Romanian military files	20
Russian military files	117
Serbian military files	15
United States military files	26
Civil protection files in occupied territories	48,955*
Civil protection files pertaining to Spaniards	259
Military exchange and repatriation files	13,657 ³

³All nationalities, but predominantly French and Belgian.

Table 2. Breakdown of reports by Spanish inspectors on camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. AGP, OGE and AGP, RAXIII.

Reports sent by the Spanish embassy in Berlin	2,609
Reports sent by the Spanish embassy in Rome	14
Reports sent by the Spanish embassy in Vienna	276

**Figure 1.** Breakdown of search results. AGP, OGE.

was picked up by some enemy craft [...]’ and led her to ask the king to make ‘inquiries in all war prisoners’ camps’. She even sent a copy of her son’s photograph to ‘assist His Majesty in his self-imposed charitable work’.¹²⁶

More positively, the European War Office found Sergeant G. Allan, the husband of Bella Allan from Aberdeen. He had gone missing in Portuguese Mozambique in late July 1918 and was located at the Lazarus Orphanage in Ghent six months later.¹²⁷ A year earlier, a request had arrived at the Office from a Sephardic Jewish family in Constantinople searching for Behor Elnkave, who had emigrated to Argentina and whose family in Turkey had not heard from him in a year and a half. The Spanish embassy in Buenos Aires informed the private secretary to the king that Elnkave had been ‘found deceased’ – he had passed away in September 1916 – and asked the Office to deliver his farewell letter to the family so that they might feel a sense of closure.¹²⁸

Through the Office’s work, Frida Rübcke, who had written from Posen in Prussia (present-day Poland), received the news that the German soldiers Carl A. Jensen, Georg Kimmel and Max Erwald Baericke had been found alive in Luanda, Portuguese Angola, in 1917.¹²⁹ Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the conflict, Sylviane, an eight-year-old Parisian girl, wrote to King Alfonso to request that he facilitate the transfer of her uncle, Achille Delmont, a prisoner whom the Office later found in Hameln camp in Lower Saxony, to neutral Switzerland. She told him that ‘mama always cries since her brother has been in prison [...] [She] got a card yesterday saying that he was starving to death.’¹³⁰ King Alfonso took a personal interest in the matter and in 1919 Sylviane wrote again to thank him for having returned her uncle to them a year earlier.

8. Women and the European War Office

Spanish women, like Carmen Sánchez de Movellán, who were not direct family members of the missing persons, acted as petitioners or referees, writing directly to the king to request or support a search.¹³¹ Among them was Adela Crooke, Countess of Valencia de Don Juan, Osma’s wife, whose private collection holds several postcards written by French soldiers addressed to ‘chère marraine’ dating from 1916 through to early 1918 (and even a few written after her death

in January 1918) because she served as a *marraine de guerre* – a wartime pen pal corresponding with soldiers who were unable to receive mail from their loved ones.¹³² The postcards show black-and-white images of ‘Verdun bombardé’, a church burned by the Germans in northeast France, and a colourful card captioned ‘une pensée de l’Alsace’, a province that had been lost to the Prussians in 1871.¹³³

Crooke wrote to the Office on 8 November 1917 in support of her godson Robert Bardy’s request – written from the American Hospital in Paris – that his mother, who had been in Brussels since the start of the war, be allowed to return to France to take care of him.¹³⁴ He explained that he was a former soldier with tuberculosis and asserted that he was of ‘no military use’.¹³⁵ On another occasion, she wrote to request that the brothers Pierre and François Buttin be moved from their prison camps in Germany to Switzerland on account of their ill health. ‘Sorry to bother you, but it’s a very deserving family – out of seven sons, the father has six in the war’, she added.¹³⁶

In his correspondence with Adela, Javier García de Leániz, a lawyer, conservative politician, treasurer of the Supreme Assembly of the Spanish Red Cross¹³⁷ and her trusted advisor, wished her a happy 1917 by expressing their shared desire for a prompt French victory.¹³⁸ In another, he wrote to her as ‘a Spaniard, who must console [her]self for being a Spaniard by taking refuge in [her] adoptive mother country of France’,¹³⁹ while he called the Germans barbarians and used the derogatory term, ‘*alemanuchos*’.¹⁴⁰ The Countess of Valencia de Don Juan, a noble title dating as far back as the fourteenth century, her husband Osmá, and Carmen Sánchez de Movellán (daughter of the first Marquis of Movellán) certainly fail to conform to the conventional narrative that the Spanish aristocracy, as a whole, favoured the Central Powers.¹⁴¹ Their recommendation letters, as shown above, offer new insights into the networks and affiliations of many individuals who would otherwise fall into the broad-brush monolithic categories peddled by the established historiography.

The archivist Mairal notes that the Great War saw women enter the administrative workforce at the Royal Palace for the first time.¹⁴² In a letter to her direct superior at the Office, Camila Nebot anxiously explained that she had to take her ailing sister away from Madrid for a week but that, on her return, she wished to work the hours she had missed, ‘for I wish you would not deduct my salary because I am in need of it due to the many expenses I have in caring for my sick relatives’.¹⁴³ The Great War offered women the opportunity to support their families as primary breadwinners. The Office’s staffing decisions reflected the wartime trend of employing more women in administrative positions, although – as in other fields – such breakthroughs were rarely permanent.

As the demands on the Office grew exponentially in a short time, additional staff were hired on a temporary basis. Josefina Alarcón, who had joined the Office in August 1917, wrote a poignant letter to Torres in late October 1918: ‘It is with a sorrowful heart that I hear about the peace that will soon be signed between nations. And I am sorry, because I know that many of the employees in your secretariat will be dismissed. I beg you, do not abandon me; I have only you to support us both.’¹⁴⁴ It is telling that she wrote the letter in French, as if to remind Torres of her language skills.¹⁴⁵ The paradox is that Alarcón, who by then had become seriously ill, worked hard to end the suffering of families and prisoners, but that their plight, in turn, supported both her and her sister. However, unlike at the ICRC, where in November 1918 the first woman – Renée-Marguerite Cramer – was elected to its governing body,¹⁴⁶ women working in the European War Office did not reach to the highest echelon. After all, the Office, in contrast with the ICRC, was not an organisation intended to last beyond the end of the war.

Other women, including (French)¹⁴⁷ nuns in Madrid,¹⁴⁸ helped as well, albeit on a voluntary basis and from home. One such example was Adrienne Loder de Albéniz, wife of Alfonso Albéniz, who was himself the son of the renowned Spanish pianist and composer Isaac Albéniz and later served as ambassador to the League of Nations. In December 1915, she wrote to Torres in English and asked him:

If I could be of any use with regard to filling up those 'prisoners' letters'. In the French and English sections, I think I might be useful [...] You cannot imagine how delighted I shall be to help you in your most charitable and benevolent task [...] I am sure that the 'bienveillance' [magnanimity] of His Majesty in this matter will never be forgotten when the history of the Great War comes to be written. So please make use of me and give me heaps of work. It shall be my 'contribution de guerre'.¹⁴⁹

After the war, men who worked at the Office received Medals of French Gratitude (*Médaille de la reconnaissance française*); the women did not. As was the case in other contexts, 'for all the praise of women's undeniably important work for their wartime societies, the postwar world was unwilling to accord it equal recognition'.¹⁵⁰

9. Unfinished business

Requests continued to arrive at the Office even after the signing of the Armistice. There were 827 cases registered on or after 11 November 1918, 302 requests in 1919 and 13 requests in 1920. Of the latter, several concerned the sending of money to loved ones trapped in occupied territories, such as the case of the Beusquart-Desplanque family. Since late 1916, M. Beusquart-Desplanque had regularly sent his wife and children in Lille money through the Office; the funds travelled from the Gard, in southern France, to the Royal Palace and were then transferred to the Spanish embassy in Berlin and from there to his wife in German-occupied northeast France.¹⁵¹ Similarly, M. Censier-Vermeulen had sent his family 200 francs every month *via* Madrid since the autumn of 1916.¹⁵² Stibbe notes that the Agency in Geneva handled 'the equivalent of over 18 million Swiss francs in cash'.¹⁵³ According to Mairal, the Office transferred 345,823.35 francs and 85,178.915 marks in total, as well as smaller quantities in other currencies, mainly sent to occupied France and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁴ For instance, in mid-1917, Triandafilos Tsamousis sent his father 100 dollars from San Francisco to Constantinople *via* Madrid.¹⁵⁵ After the end of the occupation, families moved and the last transfer often never reached them.¹⁵⁶ In these last few cases, the Office attempted to return the money to the senders.¹⁵⁷

Desperate enquirers continued to write to ask for news of missing persons even after the signing of peace: an Italian wife in search of her husband, who had disappeared in France in 1918;¹⁵⁸ an 'old mother' in a 'very sad situation' asked about her prisoner-of-war son who had been interned at Heinrichsgrün (now Jindřichovice) camp in Karlsbad in Austria-Hungary, twenty days before the Armistice;¹⁵⁹ and Mme Crouzet in Montpellier inquired on behalf of an Italian mother whose son had disappeared in May 1917 at Monte Santo di Gorizia in present-day Slovenia.¹⁶⁰ In September 1919, perhaps signalling a partial return to administrative normality after the war, the case of a boy writing from Bilbao on behalf of his four siblings (all under the age of ten) whose Spanish mother had died recently and whose father was a German civilian interned in France, arrived at the Spanish Embassy in Paris directly from Foreign Minister Lema. Torres, however, had written to Ambassador Quiñones the day before to announce that Pedro Halfmann's case would reach him through Foreign Ministry channels. He added that King Alfonso was particularly interested in the matter and would like 'steps to be taken as effectively as possible to secure Halfmann's prompt release'.¹⁶¹ The trend noted in the collection is in line with Stibbe's findings on civilian internment after the Armistice:¹⁶² the end of the war had not put an end to searches for missing persons, and families continued to ask the Royal Palace for assistance. Thus the Office remained open until February 1921.¹⁶³

In 1924, although the Office had by then been closed for three years, Madeleine Doutreligne, a Belgian woman who had been condemned to death for espionage during the war, arrived at the Private Secretariat with the Countess de Rochechouart. Doutreligne, who had run an exclusively female civil resistance network,¹⁶⁴ asked to be shown around the Office to see her file and requested copies of the materials about her. She also wished to 'thank the king for his valuable intervention', for her life had been saved thanks to his intercession.¹⁶⁵ It is possible that the message written by British Ambassador Hardinge to Lema to convey King George V's 'respectful

expression of gratitude' for King Alfonso's 'recent action in connection with the death sentences passed by the Imperial German Military Authorities in Belgium on certain French citizens and Belgian subjects, including two ladies, for offences against Martial law', referred to Doutreligne. The letter continued: 'The prompt and generous action of Your Excellency's Royal Master in appealing to [...] the German Emperor has been happily crowned with a success, which justifies us in hoping that [...] the death penalty will not be carried out.'¹⁶⁶ The death sentences of Anna Bénazet, Mr Walravens – the chaplain of the Belgian military – and his sister Marguerite, and sixteen Bosnians of Serbian origin were also commuted, among others.¹⁶⁷ Regarding the last case, Emperor Karl of Austria-Hungary wrote to King Alfonso on 26 March 1917: 'it is with particular pleasure that I accede to Your wishes'.¹⁶⁸ However, King Alfonso could not save the life of Edith Cavell, a British nurse well known for helping Allied soldiers to escape Belgium, although the collection also contains a file on her, including her farewell letter to her fellow nurses before she was executed.¹⁶⁹

10. Conclusions

'For me, neutrality is something that has imposed a suspension, a parenthesis in all the movements that we can carry out in the international order; Spain's international policy was suspended [...] when the war broke out on 4 August 1914 [...] Everything is suspended, absolutely suspended, until the war is over,' declared the Spanish Prime Minister to parliament in June 1916.¹⁷⁰ According to Romanones, Spain's neutrality was an interruption of its international policy. In contrast, Switzerland's neutrality was the continuation of a traditional foreign policy. As a report published shortly after the war put it, Switzerland's neutrality enabled it 'to render far greater services to humanity than if it had joined the struggle. It is permanent neutrality which has enabled the International Red Cross [...] to develop its fruitful activity [...] For four years, it was able to provide hospitalization and transportation for victims of the war, supply prisoners and civilians in all directions, and transmit countless letters establishing a precious link between those brutally separated [...].'¹⁷¹ Spain's neutrality allowed it to provide humanitarian aid coordinated by the Royal Palace, and for thousands of letters and requests to be processed and filed. It can be said that the Office's humanitarian endeavours rendered Spain's neutrality active, despite its perceived passivity.

Like the ICRC's Prisoners-of-War-Agency in Geneva, the European War Office was conceived as a temporary organisation. For the ICRC, however, mitigating the consequences of war was a permanent organisational motivation, so it continued this work during the Second World War when it set up the Central Agency for Prisoners of War. The Office's creation was a consequence of Spain's status as a neutral protecting power and of King Alfonso's role as a monarch with close family ties on both sides of the Great War. The Office developed further in response to the pressures of international demand. It was funded privately by King Alfonso and supplied humanitarian aid that the state administration did not. The network of legations, and the sophisticated and systematic work procedure resulted from Spanish diplomats' playing a leading role in its daily operations. The Office was therefore a privately sponsored humanitarian entity under the umbrella of the Spanish state, yet outside the Spanish government's direct mandate. However, the personalisation of the enterprise in the figure of the Spanish King, while it made its humanitarian work possible, also contributed to its oblivion, linking the fate of King Alfonso with that of the memory of the organisation. A Republican Spain (and, later, a Francoist Spain) were unlikely to wish to remember Alfonso XIII positively and, perhaps as a result, forgot about the Office.

To some extent, Spain's important humanitarian role in the First World War was echoed in the Second World War. As shown by José Antonio Lisbona, individual diplomats and Spanish foreign service officials 'were able to save around eight thousand Jews from deportation and likely extermination'.¹⁷² However, in the Second World War, according to Lisbona and Bernd Rother,

the head of state, General Francisco Franco, did not do enough to protect Jews from persecution. Instead, he took credit after the war for what Spanish diplomats had achieved at their own discretion: another case of humanitarian work using a state network while working outside direct government control. In contrast, the king of Spain took the initiative and offered his continued support to the cause throughout the First World War.¹⁷³

Furthermore, the cases coordinated by the European War Office show the complexity and global nature of the enterprise, despite the region-specific name of the collection. Indeed, the connections the Office developed to all five continents, from Bombay to Buenos Aires, indicate the global nature of the First World War and thus the need to further globalise its historiography. At the crossroads of royal diplomacy, neutralism and humanitarian aid, this article has shed light on a rare and little-known archival collection that captures both the global nature of the Great War and the individual suffering of all those affected by it.¹⁷⁴

The European War Office collection opens up many new avenues for research. Separate and comparative detailed studies based on nationality may provide further insights on the social experiences of war at home and highlight trends on the war front. Similarly, a great deal can be learnt from the 2,899 reports on prisoner camps written by Spanish inspectors and later sent to the Royal Palace. The possibilities are nearly limitless, including matching request letters and prisoner files with the Spanish inspection teams' reports. For example, an initial exploration reveals a request made by a certain Lieutenant Charles de Gaulle from Ingolstadt camp in Bavaria to the Spanish inspectors in May 1918 – a very small but nonetheless new detail in de Gaulle's well-studied biography.¹⁷⁵ Along with the almost 49,000 civilian files in the collection, further analysis will enrich the growing historiography on the experience of prisoners of war and interned civilians.

Moreover, the collection's digitisation allows for searches by date, war fronts or even according to the battle where a particular soldier is reported to have disappeared. A future detailed analysis of a specific war front may further highlight the transnational nature of the fronts and the dynamics triggered at home after a particularly (in)decisive or bloody battle. For instance, a preliminary analysis of the African front files in the collection reveals several requests to Madrid for news of Portuguese and German soldiers who had disappeared in Tanzania. Similarly, dozens of letters from Germany followed the defeat of the German *Schutztruppe* in Cameroon in the spring of 1916 and their retreat into neighbouring Spanish Guinea, which resulted in many German soldiers being interned on the island of Fernando Po (now Bioko) or transferred to the Iberian Peninsula. These testimonies could add a new layer to the small but growing historiography of Cameroon's German past, colonial captivity and the subsequent links between German soldiers-turned-prisoners or refugees and Spain.¹⁷⁶

Finally, we still await detailed studies on societal views on the war – other than those of Spanish intellectuals – that use (new) archival material, especially on the aristocracy.¹⁷⁷ In other words, both strands of research that García Sanz announced as constituting the primary lines of research in the existing historiography on Spain and the First World War (that is, Spain's humanitarian action and social division over the war) have been shown here to be in need of renewed attention. It should be noted that García Sanz qualifies the social division over the war by observing that scholars need to move beyond a primarily domestic approach.¹⁷⁸ Research in the Office's archives will enable scholars to uncover important international networks operating at the time, both within and beyond Spain. Moreover, there is an article to be written exclusively on the social insights that can be gained from a detailed study of the Office and another on the interplay between the royal humanitarian project and the Spanish government-led policy of neutrality, both of which lie beyond the scope of the present article. All these future avenues of research could be addressed in a much-needed scholarly monograph on the European War Office.

On 29 July 1916, Antonio Fabra Ribas, a Catalan socialist involved in the strikes against the government in the Tragic Week of 1909 in Barcelona, and later a member of the Spanish

Socialist Party's executive committee,¹⁷⁹ wrote an article entitled 'At Madrid's Royal Palace' in *L'Humanité*, a Parisian daily newspaper founded by Jean Jaurès, leader of the French section of the Workers' International. Fabra explained the detailed functioning of the Office and the value it brought: 'they have certainly helped to alleviate much pain and trepidation [...]'.¹⁸⁰ He added that 'it is obvious that after the hostilities have ceased, the archives of the *Servicios de la guerra europea* will deserve to be consulted by those [...] trying to write the history of the tragedy playing out today in the theatre of Europe [...]'.¹⁸¹ More than a century later, this article has finally followed Fabra's exhortation. A 1918 publication on prisoners of war in Germany issued by the French Republic's Foreign Ministry read: 'the King of Spain has given the highest proof that political neutrality – far from meaning moral neutrality – is compatible with the most active and militant interventionism in the service to humanity'.¹⁸²

Notes

1. Chhapkhanawalla to the Private Secretary of His Majesty King Alfonso of Spain, 19 July 1916, Madrid, A[rchivo] G[eneral de] P[alacio] (AGP), O[ficina de la] G[uerra] E[uropea] (OGE), 28656/9.
2. International Committee of the Red Cross, 'The Archives of the International Prisoners-of-War Agency 1914–1919', n.d., https://grandeguerre.icrc.org/Content/help/Introduction_en.pdf.
3. Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, 'Spain and the First World War: The Logic of Neutrality', *War in History*, xxvi (2019), 44–64, 45. See also Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, *España 1914–18, Entre la guerra y la revolución* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2002).
4. Francisco Javier Ponce Marrero, 'La propaganda alemana en España durante la primera guerra mundial: una aproximación' in Fidel Gómez Ochoa (ed), *La Guerra: retórica y propaganda (1860–1970)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2014), 139–54; Francisco Javier Ponce Marrero, 'La propaganda en España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial: algunas reflexiones sobre sus condicionantes y modelos' in Francisco Javier Ponce Marrero and María Fernanda Rollo (eds), *Poder, comunicaciones y propaganda: reflexiones desde el sur* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2016), 145–63; Ilaria Biagioli, 'Neutrality as a Battlefield. The French Catholic Propaganda in Spain during the First World War' in José Leonardo Ruiz Sánchez, Inmaculada Cordero Olivero and Carolina García Sanz (eds), *Shaping Neutrality Throughout the First World War* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2015), 149–164.
5. Fernando García Sanz, *España en la Gran Guerra. Espías, diplomáticos y traficantes* (Barcelona, Galaxia Gutenberg: 2014); Eduardo González Calleja and Paul Aubert, *Nido de espías. España, Francia y la Primera Guerra Mundial* (Madrid: Alianza, 2014).
6. Carolina García Sanz, 'British Blacklists in Spain During the First World War: The Spanish Case Study as a Belligerent Battlefield', *War in History*, xxi (2014), 496–517; Carolina García Sanz, *La Primera Guerra Mundial en el estrecho de Gibraltar: economía, política y relaciones internacionales* (Madrid: Universidad de Sevilla/Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2012); Francisco Javier Ponce Marrero, *Canarias en la Gran Guerra, 1914–1918. Estrategia y diplomacia: un estudio sobre la política exterior de España* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2006).
7. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, *España en la Gran Guerra Mundial. Una movilización cultural* (Madrid: Akal, 2014); Andreu Navarra Ordoño, *1914. Aliadófilos y germanófilos en la cultura española* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2014); Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Volver a la Gran Guerra: Sobre la relación entre los debates políticos e intelectuales y su impacto en la sociedad española' in Carlos Sanz Díaz and Zorann Petrovici (eds), *La Gran Guerra en la España de Alfonso XIII* (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2019), 169–88.
8. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'El giro global y transnacional: las historiografías de la Gran Guerra tras los centenarios', *Historia y Política*, xliii (2020), 389–417; Carolina García Sanz and Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Los combates por la neutralidad en la Gran Guerra: una propuesta desde el caso español' in David Alegre Lorenz, Miguel Alonso Ibarra and Javier Rodrigo Sánchez (eds), *Europa desgarrada: guerra, ocupación y violencia, 1900–1950* (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2018); Carolina García Sanz and Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Toward New Approaches to Neutrality in the First World War: Rethinking the Spanish Case-Study' in Ruiz Sánchez et al. (eds), *Shaping Neutrality*, 63–82; Carolina García Sanz, 'Repensar la neutralidad en la Gran Guerra. Una lectura en clave europea' in Pedro Ruiz Torres (ed), *Volver a pensar el mundo de la Gran Guerra* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2015), 183–208.
9. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, *Spain and Argentina in the First World War: Transnational Neutralities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 4.
10. Carolina García Sanz, 'Spanish Neutrality' in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer and Bill Nasson (eds), *1914–1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*

- (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2015), https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/spanish_neutrality/2014-10-08.
11. Juan Pando Despierto, *Un rey para la esperanza: la España humanitaria de Alfonso XIII en la Gran Guerra* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2002). See, for instance, the following passage: 'El general se marcha, confiado en que el teniente sabrá escoger el momento para comunicar a su padre, y comandante en jefe, la pérdida de su segundo hijo. Con 24 días de diferencia', 123.
 12. Pando, *Un rey para la esperanza*, 169–70.
 13. Matthew Stibbe, 'The Internment of Civilians by Belligerent States during the First World War and the Response of the International Committee of the Red Cross', *Journal of Contemporary History*, xli (2006), 5–19; Arnd Bauerkämpfer, 'National Security and Humanity: The Internment of Civilian "Enemy Aliens" During the First World War', *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, xl (2018), 61–85. On humanitarian aid to prisoners of war on the eastern front, see Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captives on the Eastern Front. The Legacy of the Great War* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002) and Reinhard Nachtigal, *Rußland und seine österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegsgefangenen (1914–1918)* (Remshalden: Greiner, 2003). On the YMCA, see Jeffrey S. Reznick, *Healing the Nation. Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain During the Great War* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2004); Kenneth A. Steuer, *Pursuit of an 'Unparalleled Opportunity': The American YMCA and Prisoner-of-War Diplomacy Among the Central Power Nations During World War I, 1914–1923* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
 14. Cédric Cotter, *S'aider pour survivre. Action humanitaire et neutralité suisse pendant la Première Guerre mondiale* (Geneva: Éditions Georg, 2018); Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: humanitaire et culture de guerre, 1914–1948 populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre* (Paris: Éditions Noësis, 1998); R. Norton, 'Benedict XV and the Save the Children Fund', *The Month*, xxviii (1995), 281–3.
 15. Bronwyn Griffith (ed), *Möt en prinsessa före sin tid Daisy Kronprinsessan Margareta 1882–1920* (Stockholm: Swedish Royal Court 2021); Exhibition at the Swedish Royal Palace, 'Daisy. Crown Princess Margareta' <https://www.kungahuset.se/royalcourt/media/pressreleases/pressreleases/daisycrownprincessmargareta.5.1847ddfb1791265cbf41beb5.html>; Judith Rowbotham, "'How to be Useful in War Time": Queen Mary's Leadership in the War Effort 1914–1918' in *Monarchies and the Great War, 191–223*; Christopher Brennan, *Reforming Austria-Hungary: Beyond his Control or Beyond his Capacity? The Domestic Policies of Emperor Karl I November 1916 – May 1917* (PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012), 242–3. For more on Zita see, Tamara Griesser-Pečar, *Zita: Die Wahrheit über Europas letzte Kaiserin* (Bregish Gladbach: Lübbe Verlag, 1985), 18.
 16. I would like to thank Professor Heather Jones for helping me frame this sentence.
 17. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Humanitarianism (Spain)' in Daniel et al. (eds), *International Encyclopedia*. There are two sentences in English based on Pando's book in Romero Salvadó, 'Spain and the First World War', 56.
 18. Heather Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Jones briefly acknowledges Spain's role as follows: 'Spanish delegations, inspecting the condition of French prisoners in German war-front *Kommandos* as part of Spain's role as the neutral "protecting power" for French captives in Germany, found that some French prisoners in work *Kommandos* were not receiving regular parcels or the collective bread or biscuit deliveries and were suffering from malnourishment as a result', 265; Matthew Stibbe, *Civilian Internment During the First World War: A European and Global History, 1914–1920* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Stefan Manz, Panikos Panayi, Matthew Stibbe (eds), *Internment During the First World War: A Mass Global Phenomenon* (London; New York: Routledge, 2018).
 19. Two and a half pages appear on King Alfonso's humanitarian action in Javier Tussell and Genoveva Queipo de Llano, *Alfonso XIII: el rey polémico* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001), 299–301; and a paragraph in Antonio Niño, 'El rey embajador. Alfonso XIII en la política internacional' in Javier Moreno Luzón (ed), *Alfonso XIII. Un político en el trono* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), 264–5.
 20. Translations from Spanish and other languages into English are my own. Where appropriate, I have provided the original quote in the endnotes.
 21. Luis Fernando Ramos Fernández and David Caldevilla Domínguez, 'Dos caras de España en la I Guerra Mundial: De la mediación humanitaria de Alfonso XIII al suministro logístico a ambos bandos', *Historia y comunicación social*, xviii (2013), 223–44.
 22. Margarita Barral Martínez, 'De neutralidad obligada a neutralidad activa a través de la acción humanitaria: Alfonso XIII y la Oficina Pro-Cautivos durante la Gran Guerra' in Díaz and Petrovici (eds), *La Gran Guerra*, 119–39.
 23. Patrimonio Nacional and Fundación Santander (eds), *Cartas al rey. La mediación humanitaria de Alfonso XIII en la Gran Guerra* (Madrid: Ediciones El Viso, 2018).
 24. María del Mar Mairal Domínguez, 'La Oficina de la Guerra Europea' in *Cartas al rey*, 189–248; Juan José Alonso Martín, 'La Gran Guerra en el Archivo General de Palacio. La ayuda humanitaria de Alfonso XIII' in *Cartas al rey*, 151–88; Reyes Utrera, 'La Gran Guerra en imágenes' in *Cartas al rey*, 289–335; Javier Fernández Fernández and Lorena Martínez García, 'La protección de los prisioneros durante la Gran Guerra. Las visitas

de los delegados españoles' in *Cartas al rey*, 249–89. See also Juan José Alonso Martín, 'Fuentes documentales sobre la primera guerra mundial en el archivo general de palacio' in Díaz and Petrovici (eds.), *La Gran Guerra*, 341–67.

25. Mar Mairal, 'La Oficina', 212. Sadly, her untimely death just months after the exhibition launch did not allow her to complete the research.
26. Jörn Leonhard, *Pandora's Box: A History of the First World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).
27. Lothar Höbelt, *Stehen oder Fallen? Österreicher Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 112.
28. AHN, King Alfonso to Wilson, n.d., M° de Exteriores, H3144 file 30. The American document held in the Papers of Woodrow Wilson was published in an obscure collection intended for Kaiser Karl's beatification. See Elisabeth Kovács, *Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie?* v. 2, (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2005), 296–9. After the early death of Empress Zita's husband in 1922, King Alfonso offered her a home in Lequeitio, Northern Spain.
29. AHN, Riaño to Alhucemas, 26 Feb. 1918, M° de Exteriores, H3144 file 30.
30. AHN, Martí to Romanones, 4 Feb. 1916, M° de Exteriores, H3139 file 18. The file on the Prince of Salm-Salm held at the AHN is extremely small, whereas the file in the European War Office collection is comparatively large, suggesting that the negotiations were carried out from the Royal Palace, not from the ministry. Pando writes (225) that the spouses travelled separately, taking different routes back to Austria. However, a close reading of the OGE file shows that they travelled together, much to King Alfonso's displeasure. This is corroborated by the AHN file.
31. AHN, Lema to Polo, 8 Oct. 1917, M° de Exteriores, H3143 file 6.
32. Jesús Perea Ruiz, 'Guerra submarina en España (1914–1918)', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, xvi (2004), 193–229, 216.
33. Alfonso XIII to Archduchess Isabella of Austria, 12 Oct. 1917, AGP, RAXIII, 12906/29.
34. Alfonso XIII to Princess Christa Salm-Salm, 12 Sept. 1917, AGP, RAXIII, 12906/29.
35. Alfonso XIII to Princess Cecilie, 14 April 1922, AGP, RAXIII, 12906/21.
36. Princess Christa Salm-Salm to Alfonso XIII, 21 Jan. 1910, AGP, RAXIII, 12906/29.
37. Perea, 'Guerra submarina', 217.
38. Richard Forsting, *Raising Heirs to the Throne in Nineteenth-Century Spain: The Education of the Constitutional Monarch* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 74.
39. Forsting, *Raising Heirs*, 77.
40. 'Treaty concerning the marriage of H.R.H. Princess Victoria Eugenie Julia Ena with H.M. King Alfonso XIII of Spain', 7 May 1906, Kew, The National Archives, FO 93/99/47.
41. Prince Maurice Mountbatten to Alfonso XIII, 18 Sept. 1914, AGP, RAXIII, 12906/5.
42. Canal Historia, 'Alfonso XIII, candidato al Nobel de la Paz gracias a su proyecto humanitario', 15 July 2014, <https://canalhistoria.es/blog/alfonso-xiii-candidato-al-nobel-de-la-paz/>. 'Todo comenzó de manera casual cuando el rey de España recibió una carta de una lavandera francesa [...]'
43. Archivos Estatales, 8 Nov. 2018, <https://twitter.com/ArchivosEst/status/1060466456129748992>: 'Una lavandera, mujer de un soldado desaparecido en la Batalla de #Charleroi 1914, escribe una carta al Rey.'
44. Fuentes Codera, 'Humanitarianism (Spain)'.
45. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, *Spain and Argentina in the First World War: Transnational Neutralities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 62.
46. Julian Cortés Cavanillas, *Alfonso XIII y la Guerra del 14* (Madrid: Alce, 1976), 59. 'Surgió como un chispazo a consecuencia de una carta que una pobre lavandera de la Gironde escribió al Rey de España'.
47. Alonso Martín, 'Fuentes documentales', 345. He suggests that the woman might be Suzanne Bahougne from the Gironde. However, she explains in her letter that her husband disappeared on 29 August at the First Battle of Guise, not Charleroi. It seems he was found at the Quedlinburg camp, but later went missing again. AGP, OGE, 27084/6, Jean Gilbert Bahougne file.
48. Victor Espinós, *Alfonso XIII y la guerra: Espejo de neutrales* (Madrid: Vassallo de Mumbert, 1918), 71. 'Un suelto del diario departamental La Petite Gironde es la base, como la semilla, del primer impulso público de la obra'.
49. Enrique González Fernández, 'La obra humanitaria del rey Alfonso XIII durante la Primera Guerra Mundial', *Mar oceana: Revista del humanismo español e iberoamericano*, ii (1995), 284; Fernando García, 'La desconocida faceta humanitaria de Alfonso XIII en la Primera Guerra Mundial', *La Vanguardia*, 7 Aug. 2019, <https://www.lavanguardia.com/cultura/20190807/463467219720/exposicion-cartas-al-rey-cuando-alfonso-xiii-ayudo-europeos-castigados-primer-guerra-mundial.html>; Almudena Martínez-Fornés, 'Alfonso XIII, el Rey que convirtió el Palacio Real en una oficina de la esperanza en la I Guerra Mundial', *ABC*, 14 Feb. 2017, https://www.abc.es/cultura/abci-alfonso-xiii-convirtio-palacio-real-oficina-esperanza-guerra-mundial-201702120111_noticia.html.
50. Barral Martínez, 'Alfonso XIII y la Oficina Pro-Cautivos', 122.
51. Russell to Alfonso XIII, AGP, OGE, 26616/7.

52. Aristide Prat (ed), *À sa Majesté Alphonse XIII, Roi de Espagne: hommage de reconnaissance des familles françaises* (Paris: Union des familles de disparus, n.d.), 4.
53. Aristide Prat, 'L'Espagne et nos prisonniers de guerre', newspaper clipping, AGP, RAXIII, 12243/3; 'sollicitude généreuse' and 'qu'elles peuvent espérer beaucoup de son [le roi] action bienveillante et énergique'.
54. *À sa Majesté Alphonse XIII*.
55. AGP, Personnel, 7931/9, Carmen Ruíz del Árbol file.
56. Fuentes Codera, 'Humanitarianism (Spain)', 2.
57. RTVE, 'Alfonso XIII, redentor de cautivos', 30 July 2006, *Paisajes de la Historia*, <https://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/paisajes-de-la-historia/paisajes-historia-alfonso-xiii-redentor-cautivos/636603/>; Barral Martínez, 'Alfonso XIII y la Oficina Pro-Cautivos', 120.
58. Jorge Díaz, *Cartas a palacio* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2013).
59. Pando, *Un rey para la esperanza*, 245.
60. Files at the AHN are also labelled under the name European War.
61. Marquis of Cartagena to Lema, 4 Aug. 1914, AGP, RAXIII, 15253/5.
62. AGP, OGE, 29294/14, Hélène Lorenz file. 'Au nom de Jesus, Votre Majesté ne me refusera [sic] pas'.
63. AGP, OGE, 26614/21, Joseph Frodsham file; AGP, OGE, 26616/7, E. C. G. Russell file.
64. AGP, OGE, 28895/34, Arcipreste Kyskow file.
65. AGP, OGE, 29294/13, Proscovie Mowenko file.
66. AGP, OGE, 29301/47, Michel Frenkel file. 'Femme enfants désolés'.
67. AGP, OGE, 29294/4, Pierre Ivanovitch Tarasoff file.
68. AGP, OGE, 29301/49, Dvordjak family file.
69. AGP, OGE, 29294/17, Jeanne Ismailska file.
70. AGP, OGE, 29294/1, Families Malandes, Sboff, Stilk, Skriepinski and Boudagoff; AGP, OGE, 29301/50, Madame Binus file.
71. AGP, OGE, 29294/20, Paul Goldmann file. 'Humble prière parents désespérés aider retrouver fils [...]'
72. Ramírez de Villaurrutia to Lema, 11 Aug. 1914, AGP, RAXIII, 15253/5.
73. Quiñones to Lema, 1 Nov. 1914, AGP, RAXIII, 15253/3.
74. Raymond Probst, *'Good Offices' in the Light of Swiss International Practice and Experiences* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1989); David Newsom (ed), *Diplomacy Under a Foreign Flag: When Nations Break Relations* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1990).
75. James J. Blake, 'Pragmatic Diplomacy: The Origins and the Use of the Protecting Power' in Newsom (ed), *Diplomacy Under a Foreign Flag*, 6.
76. Ibid.
77. Castro to Torres, 26 Sept. 1914, AGP, RAXIII, 15253/15.
78. Howard Levie, 'Prisoners of War and the Protecting Power', *The American Journal of International Law*, lv (1961), 374–397, 381.
79. Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3.
80. Acceptance letter from Quiñones, July 1918, AGA, 54/5978, Política 6 – Prisioneros 2.
81. 'Gefangenenhilfestelle des Königs von Spanien', *Berliner Tageblatt*, 5 Aug. 1915, AGP, RAXIII, 12243/3.
82. Torres to Lema and Torres to Castro, 18 Aug. 1915, M^o de Exteriores, H3033, file 1, 'Correspondencia general referente a prisioneros de guerra'.
83. 'Erfundigungen in Madrid nach Kriegsgefangenen', *Korrespondenz-Bureau*, 17 Sept. 1915, Austrian State Archives (AT-OeStA), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA), MdÄ Zeitungsarchiv 180-2.
84. AHN, Polo to Amalio Gimeno, 13 June 1916, M^o de Exteriores, H3136, file 20, 'Sobre la actividad de la Oficina de la Guerra Europea de Alfonso XIII en Madrid'.
85. AGP, OGE, 26592/14, Algernon P. Warren file.
86. AGP, OGE, 26576/32, G. M. Clarke file.
87. Marina Pérez de Arcos, 'Guillermo J. de Osmá. Un (triple) pionero español en Oxford', *Revista de Occidente*, cdlxxvii (2021), 71–82; Marina Pérez de Arcos, 'Individual, Institution, and Impact: The Untold History of the Osmá Studentship in Spanish Studies at Oxford', *Hispanic Research Journal*, xxi (2020), 276–320.
88. Osmá to Torres, 23 April 1917, AGP, OGE, 26592/14, Warren file.
89. Arthur Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in Europe* (London: J. Cape, 1927), 263.
90. Albert Mousset, *Alphonse XIII et les oeuvres de guerre* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1917), 11. 'L'oeuvre de Sa Majesté Alphonse XIII appartient à cette activité médiatrice de l'Espagne dont elle est l'expression la plus personnelle et la plus généreuse'. In June 1916, Austrian and German newspapers reported that prominent Spaniards had put Alfonso XIII's name forward for the Nobel Peace Prize, which the ICRC won in 1917. See 'Der Nobelpreis für König Alfons', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 14 June 1916, AT-OeStA, HHStA, MdÄ Zeitungsarchiv 180-2.
91. Blanca de los Ríos, *Mensaje de ferviente adhesión y gratitud que las mujeres españolas elevan a Su Majestad el rey Don Alfonso XIII, consolador de las víctimas de la guerra mundial* (n.d.).

92. 'Un album con 68.000 firmas', *El Debate*, 17 May 1919, AGP, RAXIII, 12243/3. The album is said to have been signed in May. 'El humanitario, en el día de su cumpleaños, con motivo de su altruista intervención en favor de los desvalidos de la gran guerra europea'. In *Spain and Argentina*, Fuentes Codera mentions neither the collection of signatures nor King Alfonso's humanitarian action. For more on neutral Spain and Argentina in the First World War, see Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Hispanismo y neutralismo: articulaciones transnacionales en España y Argentina durante la Gran Guerra', *Historia Contemporánea*, lxxiii (2020), 419–52; Carolina García Sanz and María Inés Tato, 'Neutralist Crossroads: Spain and Argentina Facing the Great War', *First World War Studies*, viii (2017) 115–32.
93. Cruz Roja española, *Exposición de trabajos artísticos hechos por prisioneros en los campamentos de Alemania y de Austria, visitados por delegados españoles* (1919); AGP, RAXIII, 12253/18. The exhibition included a painting of a vase of poppies, the 'canvas' being a paper groceries sack, by the Italian prisoner F. Piavallanti in the Frankfurt am Main camp.
94. 'Introduction', 12–13, draft of the book handed over to Ambassador Quiñones in Paris, Alcalá de Henares, A[rchivo] G [General] de la [A]dministración, 54/5978 (Prisioneros), Política 6 – Prisioneros 2. *Rapport des délégués du gouvernement espagnol sur leurs visites dans les camps de prisonniers français en Allemagne, 1914–1917* (Paris: Hachette, 1918).
95. Stibbe, 'The Internment of Civilians', 10.
96. Mairal 'La Oficina de la Guerra Europea', 198.
97. Alonso, 'Fuentes documentales', 347,
98. AGP, OGE, 26602/50, William G. Haig file.
99. AGP, OGE, 28644/20, Hildegard Strebels's sister's file.
100. AGP, OGE, 27307/9, Gérault file.
101. AGP, OGE, 29351/6, Paul Fredericq and Henri Pirenne file; AGP, OGE, 28539/41, Vaslav Nijinsky file; AGP, OGE, 26686/37, Mario Giaccai and Giulio Giovannoni file; AGP, OGE, 26565/45, John Kipling file; AGP, OGE, 26961/45, Maurice Chevalier file; AGP, OGE, 26860/22, Jean Pierre Laurens file; AGP, OGE, 28564/62, Alexander Moissi file.
102. 'Je vous serais extrêmement reconnaissant de vouloir exercer toute votre influence de la façon que vous croyez être la plus efficace afin de délivrer la Famille Impériale de Russie de la situation déplorable où Elle se trouve à ce moment.'
103. Helen Rappaport, *The Race to Save the Romanovs: The Truth Behind the Secret Plans to Rescue Russia's Imperial Family* (London: Windmill Books, 2018); Aidan Jones, 'Review: *The Race to Save the Romanovs: The Truth Behind the Secret Plans to Rescue Russia's Imperial Family*', *Royal Studies Journal*, vii (2020), 134–136, 134.
104. Ador to Alfonso XIII, 28 April 1917, AGP, RAXIII, 12265/6. 'Est profundamente reconnaissant à Votre Majesté de son intervention si efficace en faveur des victimes de la guerre' and 'toujours écoutée'.
105. Ador to Spanish Minister (unnamed), 12 June 1917, AGP, RAXIII, 12265/6.
106. Barbey to Torres, 23 June 1917, AGP, RAXIII, 12265/6.
107. Barbey to Torres, 5 July 1917, AGP, RAXIII, 12265/6.
108. Direction des services de renseignements sur les militaires appartenant aux armées de l'Entente, n.d. AGP, RAXIII, 12265/6.
109. Barbey report, 'Relative au traitement des prisonniers de guerre dans les pays belligérants', 22 June 1917, ACICR, C Gi A 15–17.
110. Lema to General Eladio Mille, 3 Sept. 1917, ACICR, C G1 A 16-13.
111. Fabrizio Bensi (ICRC archivist), email to the author, 8 July 2021. 'A few hundred inspection reports by officials of the Spanish Legations'. There are a total of 2,899 reports held at the Office.
112. Conference proceedings, AGP, RAXIII, 12265/07. 'Les efforts faits para Votre Majesté pour obtenir la cessation des mesures de représailles sur les navires-hôpitaux ont été couronnés de succès. La Conférence tient à exprimer à Votre Majesté sa profonde gratitude pour ce nouveau service rendu après tant d'autres à la cause de l'humanité.'
113. Stibbe, 'The Internment of Civilians', 6.
114. Patrimonio Nacional, 'Archivo General de Palacio', n.d. 42, https://www.patrimonionacional.es/sites/default/files/2018-09/fondos_documentales_agp_0.pdf.
115. <https://www.e-periodica.ch/cntmng?pid=emi-001:1916:4::7>.
116. AGP, OGE, 29194/57 Familia Mansard y otras familias y civiles a petición de la Oficina Internacional Feminista de Información en favor de las Víctimas de la Guerra de Lausana file; AGP, OGE, 29036/044 Familia Pennequin-Dubois y otros file; AGP, OGE, 28883/1 Familia Picotin Kolosky y otros civiles por los que socilita repatriación Antonie Girardet-Vielle file; AGP, OGE, 28883/1 madame veuve Lemoine Poulet y otros civiles file.
117. Matthew Stibbe, 'Elisabeth Rotten and the "Auskunfts- und Hilfsstelle für Deutsche im Ausland und Ausländer in Deutschland", 1914–1919' in Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp (eds), *The Women's Movement in Wartime: International Perspectives, 1914–19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 194–210, 206.

118. Walther Schücking, Helene Stöcker and Elisabeth Rotten, *Durch zum Rechtsfrieden: Ein Appell an das Weltgewissen* (Berlin: Neues Vaterland, 1919); Elisabeth Rotten, *Aufgaben künftiger Völkerbund-Erziehung* (Berlin: Ernest Rowohlt Verlag, 1920).
119. See for example AGP, OGE, 26744/70 Jules Agustin Loiseau file; AGP, OGE, 29485/17 Edoardo Cipollina file; AGP, OGE 29188/20 Auguste Lerel file.
120. Barral Martínez, 'Alfonso XIII y la Oficina Pro-Cautivos', 138.
121. AGP, OGE, 27130/54, M. Roederer file.
122. AGP, OGE, 27958/11, Oscar Masuy file.
123. There is no mention of this in Guillermo Gortázar's new biography, *Romanones: La transición fallida a la democracia* (Madrid: Espasa, 2021).
124. AGP, OGE, 28296/1, Edouard Thierry file.
125. AGP, OGE, 26664/54, Amilcare Bonsignore file.
126. Chhapkhanawalla to the Private Secretary of His Majesty King Alfonso of Spain, 19 July 1916, Madrid, AGP, OGE, 28656/9.
127. AGP, OGE, 26636/67, G. Allen file.
128. AGP, OGE, 28819/45, Behor Elnekave file.
129. AGP, OGE, 26464/68, Carl A. Jensen, Georg Kimmel, Max Erwald Baericke file.
130. AGP, OGE, 29414/41, Achille Delmonte file.
131. Carmen Sánchez de Movellán to Torres, AGP, OGE, 27819/23, Pierre Hausmann file.
132. See Susan R. Grayzel, 'Mothers, *Marraines*, and Prostitutes. Morale and Morality in First World War France', *The International History Review*, xix (1997), 66–82.
133. N. a., Doña Adela's postcards, Madrid, Instituto Valencia de Don Juan. See also Juan Miguel Sánchez Vigil (ed), *Adela Crooke: Pasión por la fotografía* (Madrid: Editorial Fragua, 2019), 41–53. Of the former French Alsace, only the Territoire de Belfort escaped annexation by Germany.
134. Adela Crooke to Luis Silva Carvajal, 8 Nov. 1917, AGP, OGE, 29141/56.
135. Robert Bardy to Alfonso XIII, 6 Nov. 1917, AGP, OGE, 29141/56.
136. Adela Crooke to Luis Silva Carvajal, 26 June 1917, AGP, OGE, 29401/15.
137. Libro de Actas de la Cruz Roja española, Madrid, Spanish Red Cross Archive, PROV9. Leániz served as treasurer from 1901 to 1920.
138. Leániz to Adela Crooke, 1 Jan. 1917, IVDJ.
139. Leániz to Adela Crooke, 6 June 1917, IVDJ. 'Usted como española tiene que consolarse de serlo acogiéndose a su madre adoptiva Francia.'
140. Leániz to Adela Crooke, 18 Jan. 1917, IVDJ.
141. Maria Teresa Insenser-Brufau, *Die Neutralitätspolitik Spaniens im 1. Weltkrieg: mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die öffentliche Meinung und auf die Friedensbestrebungen Alfons XIII* (PhD, Universität Wien, 1987), 58–59; Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Spanish Neutralists, Europeanists and Pacifists in the Great War: Discourses, Practices and International Links' in Ruiz Sánchez et al. (eds), *Shaping Neutrality*, 64.
142. Mairal, 'La Oficina de la Guerra Europea', 191.
143. Camila Nebot to Torres, 23 Aug. 1917, AGP, Personnel, 7929/21.
144. Josefina Alarcón to Torres, 26 Oct. 1918, AGP, Personnel, 7922/18.
145. She had addressed a letter of application in French to Torres on 4 Dec. 1916, AGP, Personnel, 7922/18.
146. Daniel Palmieri, 'The International Committee of the Red Cross in the First World War', 10 Sept. 2014, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/international-committee-red-cross-first-world-war-0>.
147. Barbey report 'Agence des prisonniers du roi d'Espagne: Visite du M. Frédéric Barbey, membre du Comité International', 20 June 1917, Geneva, A[rchives du] C[omité] I[n]ternational de la] C[roix]-R[ouge] (ACICR), C Gi A 15–17.
148. Torres to Adrienne de Albéniz, 26 May 1919, AGP, Personnel, 7922/17; see also Mousset, *Alphonse XIII et les oeuvres de guerre*, 14 f.n. 1.
149. Adrienne de Albéniz to Torres, 29 Dec. 1915, AGP, Personnel, 7922/17.
150. Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow: Longman, 2002), 118.
151. AGP, OGE, 28670/12, Marie Clotilde Beusquart-Desplanque file.
152. AGP, OGE, 28718/49, Censier Vermeulen family file.
153. Stibbe, 'The Internment of Civilians', 7.
154. Mairal, 'La Oficina de la Guerra Europea', 245.
155. The cheque was returned because, once it had entered the war, the United States no longer allowed money to be sent to the Ottoman Empire. AGP, OGE, 28979/26, Triandafilos Tsamousis file.
156. AGP, OGE, 29297/38, M. Gallet file.
157. AGP, OGE, 29297/21, Nathalie Théron Bétrémieux file; AGP, OGE, 29297/38, M. Gallet file.
158. AGP, OGE, 26709/38, Fernando Diarena file.
159. AGP, OGE, 26696/56, Michel Maia file. 'Vieille mère dans une situation bien triste'.
160. AGP, OGE, 26696/55, Pietro Rovai file.
161. Torres to Quiñones, 14 Sept. 1919, AGA, 54/5978, Política 6 – Prisioneros 2, Prisioneros alemanes en Francia, Pedro Halfmann.

162. Stibbe, 'The Internment of Civilians', 18; Stibbe, *Civilian Internment*, ch. 5, '(Not) Ending Internment'; Reinhard Nachtigal, 'The Repatriation and Reception of Returning Prisoners of War, 1918–22', *Immigrants & Minorities*, xxvi (2008) 157–84.
163. 'Cuenta de los gastos extraordinarios ocurridos en la Secretaría particular de S.M. el Rey', Feb. 1921, AGP, RAXIII, 12788/64.
164. Eliane Gubin, Els Flour and Marie Kymper, 'Women's Mobilization for War (Belgium)' in Daniel et al. (eds), *International Encyclopedia*.
165. AGP, OGE, 28738/55, Madeleine Doutreligne file. 'Dar las gracias al Rey por su valiosa intervención'.
166. AHN, Hardinge to Lema, 25 Oct. 1915, M° de Exteriores, H3143 file 1.
167. AGP, OGE, 28852/25, Anna Bénazet file; AGP, OGE, 29238/6, Walravens siblings file; AGP, OGE, 28835/59, sixteen civilian Bosnians of Serbian origin condemned to death in the Banja-Luka process file. Letters of appeal from the Spanish ambassador in Vienna following King Alfonso's instructions date from 31 March 1916 and 3 March 1917. Letters from the Vatican nuncio in Austria date from 20 May 1916 and 26 Feb. 1917. All are available at AT-OeStA/HHStA PA I 814-2 'Intervention des Papstes und des Königs von Spanien zu Gunsten der in Banjaluka verurteilten Hochverräter'. Although forgotten elsewhere, King Alfonso's petition is still remembered today by authorities in Bosnia Herzegovina. See 'President Čubrilović laid a wreath on the monument to victims of the "Great Betrayal Process" to mark Banja Luka's Liberation Day in World War I', 21 Nov. 2019, National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska <https://www.narodnaskupstinar.net/?q=en/news/president-cubrilovic-laid-wreath-monument-victims-great-betrayal-process-mark-banja-lukas-liberation-day-world-war-i>.
168. Emperor Karl to King Alfonso, 26 March 1917, AGP, OGE, 28835/59, sixteen civilian Bosnians of Serbian origin condemned to death in the Banja-Luka process file. 'C'est avec un particulier plaisir que j'accède à Tes vœux formés pour le sort des 16 condamnés à mort dans le procès de Banjaluka. Faisant usage de mon droit de grâce, je suis heureux de pouvoir Te donner une preuve de ma bien sincère amitié. Charles'. An earlier (and more extended) draft of Kaiser Karl's letter to King Alfonso is available at AT-OeStA/HHStA PA I 814-2.
169. AGP, OGE, 29006/039, Edith Cavell file. On the Spanish ambassador in Brussels, see Álvaro Lozano, *El Marqués de Villalobar. Labor diplomática (1914–1918)* (Madrid: Ediciones El Viso, 2009).
170. AHN, Foreign Minister Gimeno to Ambassadors Merry and Quiñones de León, 3 July 1916, M° de Exteriores, H3120, file 9, 'Neutralidad del Gobierno de SM ante la guerra europea'.
171. AHN, 'Mémorandum relatif à la neutralité de la Suisse', 8 Feb. 1919, M° de Exteriores, H3120, file 13, 'Neutralidad observada por varios países'. Interestingly for the overlap of formal and informal humanitarianism, President of the ICRC Ador became the Swiss equivalent of foreign minister in 1917 and president of the Swiss confederation in 1919.
172. José Antonio Lisbona, 'Beyond Duty: The Spanish Foreign Service's Humanitarian Response to the Holocaust' in Sara J. Brenneis and Gina Herrmann (eds), *Spain, World War II, and the Holocaust* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2020), 153.
173. Bernd Rother, *Franco y el Holocausto* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005).
174. This is in line with Annette Becker, 'The Great War: World War, Total War', *International Review of the Red Cross*, xcvi (2015), 1029–45.
175. AGP, OGE, 16964/1661, Ingolstadt report.
176. Isabel Gutiérrez Koester, 'Viva Alemania': internados alemanes de Camerún en España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial, *Filología alemana*, xxvii (2019), 9–23; Jacqueline de Vries, 'Cameroonian Schutztruppe Soldiers in Spanish-Ruled Fernando Po during the First World War: A 'Menace to the Peace?', *War & Society*, xxxvii (2018), 280–301; Mahon Murphy, *Colonial Captivity During the First World War: Internment and the Fall of the German Empire, 1914–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Eduardo González Calleja, 'El internamiento de los colonos alemanes del Camerún en la Guinea Española (1915–1919)', *Endoxa: Series Filosóficas*, xxxvii (2016), 223–36.
177. See a preliminary attempt at looking at Spanish nobility and the war by José Miguel Hernández Barral, 'La nobleza española ante la Gran Guerra: ¿el Gran Cambiazo?', *Rúbrica Contemporánea*, iii (2016), 47–56.
178. García Sanz, 'Spanish Neutrality', 2.
179. Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Socialistas a fuer de liberales, revolucionarios por necesidad: Antoni Fabra i Ribas y Rafael Campalans' in Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, Ángel Duarte, Patrizia Dogliani (eds), *Itinerarios reformistas, perspectivas revolucionarias* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2016), 45–64.
180. Antonio Fabra Ribas, 'Au Palais Royal de Madrid', *L'Humanité*, n. 4486, 29 June 1916. 'Ils ont contribué assurément à soulager beaucoup de peines et à calmer des impatiences [...]'
181. Ibid. 'Il est évident qu'après les hostilités, les archives des Servicios de la guerra europea mériteront d'être consultés par ceux [...] en essayant d'écrire l'histoire de la tragédie dont l'Europe est aujourd'hui le théâtre.'
182. 'Introduction', 12–13, draft of the book handed over to Ambassador Quiñones in Paris, AGA, 54/5978, Política 6 – Prisioneros 2. 'Le Roi d'Espagne a donné la plus haute consécration à cette vérité d'expérience; c'est que la neutralité politique – loin de signifier la neutralité morale – se concilie avec l'interventionnisme le plus actif et le plus militant, au service de l'humanité.'

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