

The satirical press and the struggle for cultural hegemony in Spain: a case study on *La Traca*, 1884-1938

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ABSTRACT: *La Traca* was a weekly magazine published in Valencia between 1884 and 1892 and between 1909 and 1938, with periods during which it was not published because of governmental censorship. Because it was written in Valencian, the vernacular language of where it was published, it did not go beyond being a magazine of local, or at most regional, interest, circulation and importance. However, its editor, Vicente Miguel Carceller, made the decision in 1931 to edit the magazine in Spanish and he thus conquered the country's market, resulting in circulation figures that no other publication had ever reached. *La Traca* was the most loved and hated of all satirical publications. This article explores its characteristics and its ideology, it investigates how it resolved its conflicts and the terrible ending destiny afforded it. We work on the hypothesis that laughter helps dissolve cultural hegemony, since it balances on the edge between what is real and imagined; what is possible and dreamed.

KEYWORDS: *La Traca*; Spanish satirical press; Cultural hegemony; Francoist repression.

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RESUMEN: *La prensa satírica y la lucha por la hegemonía cultural en España: el caso de La Traca, 1884-1938.* *La Traca* fue una revista semanal que se publicó en Valencia entre 1884 y 1892 y entre 1909 y 1938, con algunos periodos de ausencia obligada por imposición gubernativa. Mientras se escribió en valenciano, la lengua vernácula del lugar de edición, no pasó de ser una revista relevante, pero de tirada e importancia local o a lo sumo regional. Sin embargo, su editor, Vicente Miguel Carceller, tomó la decisión en 1931 de editarla en castellano; y de ese modo conquistó el mercado peninsular, llevando a la revista a cifras de tirada que ninguna otra publicación había alcanzado jamás. *La Traca* fue la más querida, pero también la más odiada de las publicaciones satíricas. El artículo indaga en sus características y en su ideario, en cómo resolvió los conflictos en los que se vio envuelta y en terrible final que le deparó el destino. Trabajamos sobre la hipótesis de que la risa es un campo en el que también se dirime la hegemonía cultural, puesto que se sitúa en el filo de lo real y lo imaginado, de lo posible y lo soñado.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *La Traca*; Prensa satírica española; Hegemonía cultural; Represión franquista.

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POPULAR CULTURE, CULTURAL HEGEMONY AND SATIRICAL PRESS

La Traca, whose last issue was published in 1938, during the Civil War, was the most widely circulated satirical publication in the history of Spain. This record was held until the end of 1976, when the circulation of *Interviú* hit almost one million copies. With his editorial initiatives, between 1909 and 1938 the editor of *La Traca* became a millionaire - when this word was still synonymous with very rich (Malboyson, 1932; Laguna, 2015). *La Traca* magazine defined an era (Laguna & Martínez, 2016), but its memory has faded with time and with the Francoist repression.

La Traca went through different stages. The first stage, its launch and establishment in Valencia, was between 1884 and 1892. During this first stage, it was a republican weekly newspaper with a lot of text and few pictures; it achieved some success and the government authorities fought hard to stifle it. It was quiet for a few years following that period, even though there were several satirical newspapers imitating its style, until 1909 when a very young editor, Vicente Miguel Carceller, relaunched it. It was stable from 1912 and until 1923, and with the beginning of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship it went through a stage of extraordinary creativity. It remained in print during the dictatorship but was forced to alter its title to *La Sombra y La Chala*. The magazine was always published in the city of Valencia and wanted to reflect the supposed Valencian character (hedonistic, jovial, carnivalesque) in its text and images. The local language, although seen as peculiar, full of colloquialisms and extremely fused with Spanish, was its communicative resource until the editor, Vicente Miguel Carceller, decided to change this in 1931: from the proclamation of the Second Republic (April 14, 1931), the language of the publication would be Spanish, although the publication would retain its barrage of colloquial expressions and include direct translations from Valencian. The linguistic change, now written entirely in Spanish, helped *La Traca* become the most widely circulated satirical publication in the history of Spanish periodicals. Some editions reached almost half a million copies. Its readers were called *traqueros*; some of its linguistic resources became popular terms and are even used today; its characters became part of popular culture.

For these reasons, and because it was a republican and anti-clerical magazine that had erotic (*suggestive*) undertones, *La Traca* should be defined as the publication that most influenced the construction of a popular culture and which stood up to the hegemonic culture of the time, during the period running from 1884 to the Civil War. It has been correctly pointed out (Ramón, 2015) that there was a cultural war raging in Spain prior to the civil war (1936-1939), in which Catholicism was using modern methodologies to push its reactionary agenda (media, voluntary associations, mass demonstrations, educational intervention, allocation of women to positions of responsibility). The counterpart of this belligerent Catholicism was anti-

clerical republicanism and its sharp and cutting satirical press, such as the magazines *El Motín* (Madrid), *La Campana de Gracia* (Barcelona) or *La Traca* (Valencia).

The impact of these publications is easy to understand. In 1930, the city of Valencia had 320,000 inhabitants, its surrounding region had little more than a million, and illiteracy still affected 36% of the population. When *La Traca* was born in 1884, the population in the city of Valencia was below 200,000 and its illiteracy rate was close to 70%. That is to say, the publication accompanied the process of urbanisation and literacy of the citizen population, and benefited from them both. Moreover, the linguistic change of *La Traca* in 1931 supposed yet another notorious expansion of the market. The editor, Vicente Miguel Carceller, had editing experience, he had published the bullfighting weekly newspaper *El Clarín*, in Spanish since 1922, and five years after taking over it had the largest print run in Spain (Laguna, Martínez, Pineda, 2016).

Because Vicente Miguel Carceller, one of the most popular press editors in Spain during the first third of the 20th century, operated from Valencia (and not from Madrid or Barcelona) the success of *La Traca* has not been explored much, despite its popular importance. Popular culture is 'common sense' embodied within the context of a historical period: what popular classes think and feel. Far from depicting the popular classes romantically, as 'the people' transmitting linguistic, folkloric or literary essences, *La Traca* depicts them in the Gramscian sense, as a heterogeneous social group, formed by simple mercantile and commercial, old and new objectives, as employees, paid and unpaid working women, and by marginal groups, boarding the productive system. These people, who make up the concept of popular culture, will very soon be replaced by those of the subordinate classes. Be that as it may, the subordinate classes are not only subordinate because of their position in production and relation to power (and the coercive artefacts of the State), but also because of their difficult position in the dialectic of hegemony.

Social cultures are neither homogeneous nor closed. They are territories of confrontation (Hall, 1984). For the ruling classes it is relatively easy to build cultural and ideological forms that are able to generate an inclusive social narrative, that is, with a tendency for everyone, regardless of the place they occupy in that society, to make it theirs. In addition, it is relatively simple for them to do because they often have privileged access to the instruments of the State (to begin with, regulated education) and the means of production and the media, disseminating the narrative and culture. At the very least, the subordinate classes - insofar as they experience social dialectic and do not become, once or perennially, passive entities transited by official discourse - put forward their own narratives, cultural and ideological forms that are often lived not only as speeches for emancipation, but as emancipatory narratives in themselves. Finally, and as Therborn stated (1987: 67), the "construction of a discursive order in a certain society is the historical result of the struggles delivered by social forces at crucial moments of crisis and

contradiction”, and these struggles have very different textures. It goes without saying that the media are principal actors in the territory of cultural confrontation, beyond the concrete features that they show.

When Ramir Reig studied the Valencia of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to try to explain the rise of the Republican political movement led by Blasco Ibáñez and the typology of his contacts and relations with the labour movement, he was impelled to write a last chapter on labour and popular culture. Here we could clearly see working societies’ resistance to capital and their decision to create their own cultural universe, a labour culture outside the official culture, designed to train workers in the field of conscience. It seems that Reig was aware of the subordinate classes’ heterogeneous composition, and included in his explorations the enormous relevance of what he called the ‘popular tradition’, a tradition initially associated with a great number of weekly newspapers written in vulgar Valencian and of satirical or festive character (Reig, 1982, 305-370).

The popular tradition, unlike the labour culture traditions, had a transversal character: so much so that the conservative right and the progressive left tried to tailor a dress to that tradition, but had very different designs for it. *La Traca* emerged from one of those designs. Obviously, it had a long list of predecessors, from the time when *Saro Perrengue y el Dotor Cudol* - the first Valencian satirical newspaper - wrote about the Constitution of 1812 and succeeded in extending a form of popular liberalism that buried the Old Regime. That first satirical newspaper from 1820 emerged from the popular subliterate of the 18th century: the Colloquies and Relationships, which the ever-growing public much enjoyed (Gomis, 2015).

La Traca was similar to its predecessors, but it was also quite original or perhaps simply seized the opportunity. It was born at a time the bourgeoisie had finally closed the revolutionary cycle that had taken place between 1808 and 1874 (Sebastià, 2001). It was perfectly aware that it had not been the only actress in the drama, but it would make clear that the final act was hers, the diva of the new scene and try to shade other protagonists who had been competition to her and her future. The year it occurred was 1874; its name, Restoration. It is no surprise that when *La Traca* appeared ten years later, the date and the fact are often cited as nefarious. *La Traca* belonged to one of those defeated revolutionary traditions, but which stubbornly lived on: republican democracy. When media laws were softened, many newspapers of this genre in Valencia, Madrid, Barcelona and other places began to stir and show that they were alive, the ‘ugly duckling’ who was willing to grow and become, if possible, a great lady and in political regime.

La Traca was strengthened by its path full of obstacles, apparitions and disappearances, sudden changes, but also by its popularity and growing influence. According to our hypothesis, *La Traca* built a universe and a philosophy which infected a good part of the political left and served to generate a common or transversal heritage with

associated, but not identical, ideologies. *La Traca* was a common home for republicans, socialists, anarchists and communists, who, after the proclamation of the Republic on April 14, 1931, shared certain cultural similarities, including the new political powers that the republican state was building.

Thus, *La Traca* was also appreciated by its detractors, by the social groups that held the economic power and levers of social and cultural influence, but which had lost political power, e.g. an enemy to beat. Even more so when, in 1931, the editor of *La Traca* made the decision to publish the magazine in Spanish: that is, to spread the satire interwoven in the Valencian popular tradition to all potential readers of the subordinate classes throughout Spain. Its audacity was topped off with success. *La Traca* became a large player in the dispute over cultural hegemony, as did other projects also headed by the editor Vicente Miguel Carceller. Maybe that is why it might be a good idea to start this story at its end. This way we might better understand that the physical elimination of the copies of *La Traca* and those that made it possible was not only a settling of scores, but an obvious act of revenge against those who had successfully disputed cultural hegemony.

AN ABRUPT END

There are very few Spanish newspaper archives with a significant number of *La Traca* copies. Because no complete collection exists, we are unable to fully consult the more than 1,300 issues that *La Traca* published throughout its history. This publication had the largest circulation in the Spain of the Second Republic.

This is not a loss or an oversight; it was a calculated annihilation. The destruction of *La Traca* copies during the post-war period must have become an every-day activity. For the winners in the conflict, and once those copies that could be used as evidence against the staff of *La Traca* were safely stored, the destruction of the newspaper was necessary. It had offended the church, which in turn legitimised the ‘Crusade’; it had turned republicanism into a battering ram against the depraved monarchy and hypocritical conservatism; it had questioned bourgeois morals; it had dared to caricaturise the figure who was now the Generalissimo and Leader by the grace of God. For those defeated in this War, the disappearance of *La Traca* and any copies they may have at home, symbolised the washing of a past committed to the ‘traquera philosophy’, a republicanism that went beyond democratic formalism and whose aim was to usher in a civic, critical and playful culture.

Valencia, and specifically a press editor and cultural entrepreneur, exported that journalistic vision to the rest of Spain, but that vision was turned into a public enemy in 1939. *La Traca* had been able to identify with the Republic from a political perspective and, in addition, had tried to culturally influence it through unofficial channels, associated in a different way to the history of the republican political cultures that existed until then. When the

Second Republic arrived, *La Traca* reappeared and announced:

Ya está aquí LA TRACA, el periódico republicano y festivo que durante un cuarto de siglo ha venido publicándose en Valencia. En mayo de 1924 fue arbitrariamente suspendido por un gobernador de la Dictadura. Hubiéramos podido hacer reaparecer el periódico de nuestros amores dos años después, en virtud de amnistía, y no quisimos. Así como el insigne Blasco Ibáñez dijo antes de morir que no quería que su cadáver reposara en España hasta que ésta tuviera República, nosotros juramos no darle vida a LA TRACA hasta que la gloriosa bandera tricolor ondeara en los balcones del palacio real. ¡Y lo hemos conseguido! [LA TRACA is back, the republican and festive newspaper published in Valencia for a quarter of a century. In May 1924, it was arbitrarily suspended by a governor of the Dictatorship. We could have re-launched our favourite magazine two years after its censorship, by virtue of an amnesty, but we did not want to. Just as the famous Blasco Ibáñez said before his death that he did not want his body to lie in Spain unless it was a Republic, we swore not to give life to LA TRACA until the glorious tricolour flag waved on the balconies of the royal palace. Now it does!] (*La Traca*, April 21, 1931).

But *La Traca* had never stopped being published. It had changed covers. During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, *La Sombra* and *La Chala* were still being published with the subtitle that had always identified it: ‘semanari pa la chent de tro’ [The newspaper for people of thunder]’. Now, more than ever, from April 14, *La Traca* was identified with the inheritance of Blasco Ibáñez and with the emergence of a new regime where the ‘values’ of the publication and its ‘philosophy’ could unfold unhindered. As it was able to do this, and as it was able to circulate almost half a million copies for certain editions and an average of 300,000 copies, it was entirely expected that the enemies of the Republic also happened to be its enemies. “The popularity of *LA TRACA* - explained the journalist Enrique Malboison (1932) - has reached places no publication has reached. It was attacked by the most important right-wing publications; it was mentioned in Congress and talked about on stage”. The propaganda fed the public’s expectation for each new edition. To the point where on July 25, 1931, it thanked the ‘favour’ with the following words:

La propaganda contra *LA TRACA* se ha generalizado. Los curas, en el púlpito; los monárquicos, en sus órganos de prensa; las beatas, en sus cuchicheos, todos contra *LA TRACA*, y *LA TRACA* cada vez más pujante, más viril, más pletórica de vida y entusiasmos... trescientos, cuatrocientos, quinientos mil ejemplares semanales. ¡Medio millón! ¡Seguid, seguid haciéndole propaganda! (*La Traca*, 25 de julio de 1931). [The propaganda against *LA TRACA* has become widespread. Priests in the pulpit; monarchists with their media instruments; the goody-goods and their gossip, all against *LA TRACA*, and *LA TRACA* thrives from it, becomes more virile, fills with life and energy... three hundred, four hundred, five

hundred thousand weekly copies. Half a million! Keep it up, keep up that propaganda!] (*La Traca*, July 25, 1931.)

All those who had ‘propagandised’ *La Traca* did not want to preserve its memory after April 1, 1939. Nor the memory those who produced it. The post-war period not only destroyed paper, but also lives. The editor and collaborators of *La Traca* were in the spotlight. In the province of Valencia, the Francoist repression shot 3,128 people in the immediate post-war period. Most belonged to parties and unions that had been part of the Popular Front and the power structures that emerged to respond to the coup d’état of the summer of 1936, the Popular Committees. From a socio-labour perspective, most of them were manual workers (Gabarda, 1993). It is striking, to come across a businessman in the grim list. There were very few. One stands out, perhaps, over others: Vicente Miguel Carceller.

At seven o’clock in the afternoon of June 28, 1940, the editor was shot in the Paterna cemetery. It was the culmination of a persecution that had begun on June 10 the previous year, when the Social Political Brigade of the new victorious power issued an order of arrest against those implicated in *La Traca*: “Certain collaborators of the vulgar, obscene and impudent Valencian newspaper *La Traca* are hidden in this capital, the magazine that stood out because of its anti-clerical and anti-patriotic campaigns, defamatory against everything that represents the order and peace of Spain...²⁷”.

A few days later, Carceller, Enrique Gramaje Juan, Buenaventura Vidal Vidal, José María Carnicero Hernández and Carlos Gómez Carrera (Bluff) were arrested. Other collaborators, such as Diego San José or the illustrator Echea, were not found because they were already being held in prisons in Madrid. Their lives were probably saved by the bureaucratic flaws of repression. Carlos Gómez Carrera, Bluff suffered the same fate as Carceller on that same day. Enrique Gramaje died in prison on December 17, 1939. Another *La Traca* collaborator, Modesto Méndez Álvarez, was also shot in Paterna. Thanks to the large amount of support he received, Carnicero was able to save his skin and left prison in 1942, but was banished to Badalona and died young and forgotten (Ríos, 2015: 275).

The rage against *La Traca* was very evident. Someone must have thought that once the war ended, the rage would subside. *La Traca*, however, had a reputation as the alternative ‘vision’ of History, contrary to the dominant narrative, of being a transgressive magazine that was constructing a culture that the hegemony envied. It is very possible that the satire of *La Traca* had become revolutionary in times of revolution, the Civil War.

REPUBLICANISM AND ANTI-CLERICALISM, TO BEGIN WITH

In the 1880s, republicans, anarchists and socialists used the concepts of education and culture in an equivalent sense, and referenced the channels used to reform the

formation offered by the State, i.e. the current hegemonic political and social groups (Luis, 1994: 3-4).

The republicans were divided into several fractions, but they had a common culture, associated by similar ideas, practices, calendars, rites and forms of sociability. Firstly, they were united by the criticism of the restored monarchy and the hereditary component of the monarchical institution as irrational within a (presumed) liberal system of government. Conversely, the Republic was considered a deposit of civic virtue, where tolerance, justice, equality, human rights (identified with the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen of the French Revolution), democracy and fraternity came together. Another point of union in ideological terms was anti-clericalism, beyond irreligiosity and more an anti-clericalism that tended to focus on religious orders and, especially, on Jesuits. Although republicanism was anti-dynastic, it tended also to confront the other extreme of the political scale, those who judged that 'liberalism was sin', the Carlists, legitimists or traditionalists (Diego, 2008).

Beyond ideas, there is a way to live them. It was a lived ideology, materialised in rituals, sociability and celebration. The republican ideas were lived in groups and meetings, which in turn resulted in the creation of republican centres, mainly in the form of social clubs, which were places of recreation, active reading of the republican press, test grounds for public speeches and spaces for ritual celebrations. Republicans also considered the street as a space for mobilisation, but when they could not use it (when the government would not allow it), they were able to fall on these informal social clubs. Here they could celebrate the anniversary of the First Republic or another relevant event in the 'republican calendar'; receive leaders of their formation and have meals with them, high-power political meetings; sponsor secular schools, mutual aid and even resistance societies, republican committees to activate electoral campaigns, subscriptions or combative newspapers, etc.

Without going into the socio-economic background that associated collaborators with popular republicanism³, what is certain is that republicanism had a clear proselytising vocation and used propaganda to spread its ideas. The Republican or People's Cards (the literature of combat), rallies and public action carried out by committees, and especially, the press, were the most effective channels to carry out this propaganda.

The press was highly valued, and had overcome many obstacles. Legislation on the liberal press, through focusing on the editor and previous editions, had done all it could to obstruct the republican press. When they did not succeed, even when the object of their attacks did not even exist, the surveillance was palpable. In spite of everything, the republican press looked for its subterfuges: the most frequent was to appear as satirical media. This is how it became aware of the critical power of humour and satire; and in addition to satirical texts, it could print distorted images through caricature.

In Valencia, the satirical press tradition balanced democracy and republicanism, with magazines such as *El*

Mole by José María Bonilla (from 1837) until the appearance of *La Traca* in 1884, passing through Constantí Llombart. The founders of *La Traca*, Manuel Lluch Soler and Luis Cebrián Mezquita were friends and disciples of Constantí Llombart, the republican who had worked hard to bring the Valencian popular culture closer to the republican culture. For that reason, *La Traca* inherited the battle between two ways of understanding Valencian popular culture: one that sought to mould it into conservatism and which the dynastic conservative Teodoro Llorente commanded over, and one, represented by Llombart himself, which sought to merge it with a progressive and democratic liberalism. The story is well known and we will not go into it again but we have to state that *La Traca* represents a resumption of combat.

This is the only way to explain the harassment it suffered during its first year of life while living under a conservative government: the publication faced seven criminal prosecutions in its first 365 days of life. It is important to note that the direct persecutor was José Botella Andrés, a conservative politician who learnt his trade through José Campo Pérez, Marquis de Campo, just like Teodoro Llorente himself.

In 1885, a republican newspaper in Madrid reported on Botella's obsession:

Hay en Valencia un periódico saladísimo escrito en *chés*⁴ que se titula *La Traca*. Claro está que abuso que coge le aplica un sinapismo y autoridad que se desliza, le arrima una paliza. Pues bien, al señor Botella le escuece *La Traca* y ¿cómo dirán ustedes que se ha rascado la picor? Pues imponiendo al colega una multa de 2.000 reales, sin decir por qué ni para qué. Pero para que se vea lo popular que es el señor Botella y el odio que *La Traca* inspira, lo mismo ha sido enterarse los valencianos de la multa que acudir en tropel a la redacción del colega y reunir entre comerciantes, literatos, abogados, propietarios y gentes en fin de todas clases y condiciones la multa impuesta por el tremendo Botella. En fin que Botella ha caído en mala parte, en un país donde sólo se usa el porrón. Y que *La Traca* sigue valientemente defendiendo los intereses de los valencianos. [There is a spicy newspaper in Valencia written in *chés* called *La Traca*. Of course, it simply applies mustard poultices to all its ills and the abuse it receives, but the authorities are hard up on it. There is one in particular, Mr Botella, who finds *La Traca* to be a boil on his backside, and how do you think he has scratched this itch? By fining the good editor of this magazine 2,000 reales, without explaining what for or why. As proof of how popular Mr Botella is, and the hatred that *La Traca* inspires, as soon as Valencians heard about the fine, they flocked to the editor's office where merchants, writers, lawyers, proprietors and people from all kinds of classes and conditions contributed what they could to pay the fine imposed by the dreadful Botella. In short, Botella is no longer loved, unsurprising in a region where its people only use porrones [word play on botella, meaning bottle and porrón, a traditional wine pitcher]. We hope *La Traca* continues to valiantly defend the interests of Valencians.] (*El Globo*, October 7, 1885).

El Globo was not misguided. The people from *barrafs* and *traca*, that is to say, the Valencian popular classes, had distinguished themselves in the past (and would do so in the future) by their approach to republicanism. During the reign of Amadeo de Saboya and the First Republic, the city of Valencia voted republican, and the province gave rise to more than fifty, very active, Republican committees. In 1884, and despite the obstacles created by the government, *La Traca* was to reclaim that history and recover the satirical criticism of the political and ecclesiastical powers. It would circulate until 1892, with a large advertising portfolio, proof of its success. It was not the only one. In 1890, *La Traca* was mentioned in the Congress of the Deputies within a debate on corruption and political despotism (*La Correspondencia de España*, 30/4/1890). In 1892, *El Eco de Teruel* (4/9/1892) said in verse: “Leo *El Imparcial*, *El Rayo*,/ *La Fe*, *La Traca*, *El Motín*,/ Más dejo a todos al fin / Y hago de mí capa un sayo” [I read *El Imparcial*, *El Rayo*,/ *La Fe*, *La Traca*, *El Motín*, / And I read many more / I do whatever I please]. Even though the magazine was written in *chés*, *La Traca* was read in Madrid and Teruel, and possibly other places. *La Traca*, like *El Motín*, the famous magazine edited by José Nakens, had become an inescapable reference for republican criticism.

The Traca disappeared in 1892, possibly because it could not withstand the governmental pressure inflicted on it. In any case, the seed had been planted.

DICTATE MORALITY AND CONFRONT IT

Five years before the death of the first *La Traca* editor, Manuel Lluch Soler, Vicente Miguel Carceller was born in Valencia. It was the year 1890; *La Traca* was on the street; Blasco Ibáñez began to build his republican leadership through the newspaper *La Bandera Federal* and, four years later, *El Pueblo*.

Carceller took over the company and became editor of *La Traca* at just 19 years old. That was in 1909. It was the beginning of an exciting career as an editor and cultural promoter that would lead him to also publish other newspapers such as *El Clarín*, *El Piropo*, *Bésame*, *El Fallero*, *El Cuento del Dumenche*, *Nostre Teatro* and *El Chorizo Japonés*, as well as collections of pocket novels (traditional Spanish poets, Bandidos Famosos [Famous Outlaws], the *Bésame* collection and the political collection, Fifi, etc.). The festival calendar (fallas), popular festivals (the bullfights), the body and the senses (eroticism, suggestiveness), literature, theatre and republican and Valencian politics in unison will always be its referents. Its style: sensationalist. Carceller sought confrontation because it resulted in publicity; he looked for self-reference because he wanted to be news; he created events in which he and his publications were the epicentres of the action. Carceller played with Eros and Thanatos, the extremes of life; and connected with men's primary passions. His publications thus reached a wide-variety of audiences, despite the sensationalism being simply a package and a strategy.

A press catalogue of the time outlined the *La Traca* journey from the second decade of the twentieth century, as a path paved with republican ideas and suggestive tendencies (Navarro, 1928: 116). The first was a constant; the second, a novelty. Neither were accidental; eroticism enhanced the anti-clerical and republican message, in itself a transgressor.

La Traca reappeared in 1909 and consolidated definitively in 1912; in 1911, the Anti-Pornography League was established in Spain. A Catholic magazine affirmed shortly after:

A diario se exhiben en los sitios más céntricos, en los kioscos y puestos de periódicos, en los escaparates de ciertas librerías que hay en ciertas calles, las postales, los folletos obscenos con títulos y portadas que despiertan los impulsos pasionales. Y esos folletos los ven vuestros niños que pasan camino del colegio. Y se fijan en ellos con ahínco. Siguen en ruta; pero la imagen torpe queda en su imaginación. Vendrá después a ella cada vez más insistente en la hora del estudio, en sus sueños que debían ser castos. Y caldeará su sangre y sacudirá sus nervios. Hasta que trémulos, mirando a todas partes acuden al puesto maldito y compran el libro infame. Después el torpe despertar de los apetitos sexuales circulará entre los compañeros de colegio a hurtadillas en las salidas de estudio. Y si los niños tienen libertad dejarán de ser vírgenes casi antes de ser Hombres. Y si no la tienen agotarán las que habían de ser fuerzas fecundas en un vicio degradante. Llegarán al matrimonio enfermos o gastados. Y la raza irá agonizando poco a poco (...) [Everyday, in kiosks and newspaper stands, windows of certain bookstores in certain streets and on postcards, obscene pamphlets with titles and covers that stoke cardinal impulses are exhibited in the most public places. They are seen by your children who are on their way to school, and your children stop to look at them. They continue walking; but the image remains in their minds. This image reappears insistently, when they are studying and when they dream dreams that should be chaste. It heats up their blood and shakes their nerves. Until tremulous, looking from side to side, they enter that damn store and buy that despicable book. After the awkward awakening of sexual appetites, they will stealthily pass the book among their schoolmates. If children are allowed, they will cease to be virgins almost before they become Men. If they are not, they will exhaust what should be their impregnating strength to a degrading vice. They will be sick or worn out when they marry, and our race will continue to agonise little by little (...)] (*Revista Católica de Cuestiones Sociales*, XXII, March 1916, 191).

The alarm felt by Catholics, albeit a little hyperbolic, had some truth to it. In 1911 a journalist wrote that pornography in Spain was exclusively an urban phenomenon and “does not exceed or even equal that of many large capitals and cities in Europe”, stating that almost all pornography was imported and “our traditional licentious writers are almost all forgotten”, but in 1916 the adjective ‘sicalíptico’ [suggestive] was undergoing a process of expansion and the authors of sexually themed narratives - Felipe Trigo, Hoyos y Vinent, Eduardo Zamacois, Álvaro

Retana, etc. - were well-known and recognised on the streets, and festive magazines proliferated (*KDT*, ¡Ahí va!, *La Hoja de Parra*, *Flirt*, *Cosquillas*) (Litvak, 1993, López, 2001).

La Traca began to incorporate eroticism, even mixed with anti-clericalism, early, in 1912. So pederast priests and friars, libidinous nuns or the confessionals as hot beds of sex, became habitual jokes. The magazine, with great creative display and containing increasingly more images, created its own characters - Nasia Cacherulo Bleda, Serafin Sebollino Chorrissples - and mixed together hedonism, *joie de vivre*, suggestiveness and criticism of everything reactionary.

La Traca stood up to not only the dominant culture, but also established morality (Guereña, 2013). The League Against Pornography had the backing of the government's presidents (Salaün, 1992). The Catholic Church was very protective of its educational machinery. In 1902, the Catholic Congress of Santiago de Compostela opposed the movement towards allowing parents to choose the education of their children, i.e. between Catholic or public schools. Catholicism's struggle against secular schools began with the century, but increased with the tension from the Tragic Week in 1909. In 1910, a General Assembly for Teaching and Education was held, in which Catholics stated, "the Spanish State must prohibit, as provided by the fundamental law of the Kingdom, any non-Catholic school". However, as Yvonne Turin (1967, 97) explained, "almost all secondary education and a significant part of primary teaching in Spain was in the hands of the Church" at the beginning of the 20th century. The liberal governments tried to soften these contours; the republicans, tried to alter them definitively.

La Traca's war against a religious establishment that sought to monopolise education and dictate public morality was fierce. *La Traca* sometimes confronted them head-on. In April 1916, José Calpe, *La Traca's* initial partner who had provided financial support to establish the publication, broke relations and decided to launch *La Matraca*, a magazine very similar to *La Traca*. The explanation for this rupture was outlined in the first issue of that new weekly:

Apartats de *La Traca* (periòdic que tants esforços mos costà pera donarli impuls), a causa de que repugnen a nòstra dignitat sèrtes campanyes infamants, vils, baixes y asqueroses, ham desidit reanudar nòstre contacte en eixe públic que tant ha favorit a nòstra casa natal. Mosatros no podem consentir que aparega com a nòstra la redacció de un libelo venenós (...) Nòstre caràcter alegre, festiu y bullanguer per exselència, no permetix que alquilem nòstres plumes a qui viu a cósta del honor dels demés (*La Matraca*, 21 de abril de 1916)⁶.

However, this rupture takes place when Carceller is summoned for legal proceedings after two accusations against *La Traca* for public scandal are brought forward. That is, Calpe preferred to tame the magazine's content and moderate the tone, while Carceller was not willing to do so. *La Traca* was to be radical, or not be published at all.

The editorial strength of *La Traca* was accompanied by an increase in its graphic content. The vignettes are still very scarce during the first period (1884-1892), but their numbers increase slowly from 1912 onwards.

In 1924 - when Primo de Rivera's dictatorship was eight months old - *La Traca* was denounced, suspended and its printing press closed because of an irreligious caricature. Two months later, Carceller rented a third-party printer and launched *La Sombra*. For more obscure reasons, *La Sombra* stopped publishing and its successor emerged on April 17, 1926: *La Chala*. In *La Sombra* and *La Chala*, political criticism was cornered, but the provocative images remained. Such that when *La Traca* returned in 1931, *La Chala* would still be sold in kiosks, written in the classic Valencian language of the street, with mostly erotic and anti-clerical content, with covers that often included nude females.

La Traca's suggestiveness and anti-clericalism and the publications of its lineage should not be seen as only sensationalist arguments thrown at the market by an editor attentive to consumer tastes. While it is evident that this was partly the reason and that the editor in question, Carceller, was crowned with success, there is also another side: the suggestiveness and anti-clericalism were part of a discursive strategy to undermine dominant morality, to remove the power from the hands of the political and dominating groups.

A BLASCOESQUE VALENCIANISM

Valencia was the most republican city of Spain. The political movement created by journalist and writer Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, obtained uninterrupted electoral majorities during the period between 1901 and 1923. In 1908, Blascoism took the shape of a political party with the Partido de Unión Republicana Autonomista (PURA). Its daily voice was the newspaper *El Pueblo*. A newspaper that enhanced its Valencianity - although it confronted the political Valencianism of the time - provided that it aligned with Catholic and reactionary thought. Vicente Miguel Carceller and his newspaper, as well as other editorial initiatives, were at the forefront of the Valencian-Blascist movement and gave it its most genuine form.

"El Señor Carceller, com a home lliure, es republicà; com a fill de València, es valensianista"⁷, read *La Traca*, on August 18, 1918. Carceller would note a few years later when Blascoism abandoned its traditional centre-left position and fell into the arms of Lerroux, i.e. The republican right led by Sigfrido Blasco⁸:

Siempre militamos en el formidable partido que creó Blasco Ibáñez, aquel titán de la pluma por el que sentimos verdadera idolatría. A su lado, al lado del eximio maestro, aprendimos a amar a la República y a sacrificarnos por su ideal.

Siempre en los momentos de lucha nos sorprendió el partido peleando bravamente en la vanguardia. En las horas de paz, cuando en ayuntamientos y diputaciones se reparte el botín en forma de empleos y cargos públicos, brillamos por nuestra ausencia ¡Jamás pedimos

nada a nadie! Nuestras campañas fueron siempre desinteresadas, en beneficio de un ideal hondo y honestamente sentido.

Somos suscriptores de *EL PUEBLO* desde nuestra más tierna infancia. Su ilustre fundador nos distinguió con su fraternal cariño que se refleja denodadamente en la valiosa colección de cartas tuyas que poseemos. Con sus hijos nos une un afecto desinteresado y una bien sentida y cordial amistad, pero esto no es obstáculo para que, consecuentes en nuestros ideales de toda la vida, y haciendo uso de nuestra salvaje independencia, huyamos de Lerroux como huimos siempre y digamos bien alto: Blasquistas, toda la vida; Lerrouxistas jamás. [We always fought hard in the formidable match that Blasco Ibáñez created, that titan of the pen whom we truly idolise. At his side, next to the eminent master, we learned to love the Republic and to sacrifice ourselves for his ideal.

During the moments of struggle, we were always surprised by his brave fighting in the vanguard. During peacetime, in town halls and city councils, when the booty was being divided up as jobs and public postings, we shine because of our absence. We never ask anyone for anything! Our campaigns were always for the benefit of a deep and honestly felt ideal.

Since our earliest childhood, we have subscribed only to *EL PUEBLO*. Its illustrious founder distinguished us with his fraternal affection, vigorously reflected in the valuable collection of his letters that we possess. We are united to each-other and his children by a sincere affection and a well-felt and cordial friendship, but this will not retain us - consistent with our lifelong ideals, and making use of our savage independence - from fleeing Lerroux as we always flee and from saying as loud as we can: Blascoists, for ever; Lerrouxists never.]

Thus, *La Traca* would disprove an idea frequently retold by historiography: the impossibility of a Valencian Blascoism. Angeli Castanyer (1905-1974), a member of the political party Valencianista d'Esquerra in the 1930s and a signatory of the Norms of Castellón, wrote about Valencian Blascoesque⁹:

“Blasco Ibáñez se asomó al valencianismo pero se dio perfectamente cuenta de que el valencianismo era también un problema de cultura, de recuperación sustantiva de nuestra personalidad, y que no era posible sustraerse al sentido reaccionario que forzosamente habrían de imprimir a la obra de reconstrucción espiritual los elementos intelectuales llamados a crear la ortodoxia valencianista. Entendió que debía apartarse, que no era suyo contribuir a todo aquello que había de implicar una reacción, por mucho que pudiera y debía justificarse, y dejó hacer a los demás (...).” [“Blasco Ibáñez peeked into Valencianism but he was perfectly aware that Valencianism was also a question of culture, a substantive recovery of our personality, and that escaping the reactionary sense that would necessarily have to be printed would be impossible, when spiritually reconstructing the intellectual elements needed to create Valencian orthodoxy. He understood that he had to move away, that it was not his place to contribute to everything that would cause a reaction, however much he could and should justify himself, and simply let others do it (...).”]

Therefore, he let others do it, and that is when Carceller and *La Traca* came in. Blasco's newspaper, *El Pueblo*, frequently announced the *La Traca* editions as if they were their own¹⁰:

“Extraordinario de *La Traca*

Según anunciamos oportunamente, mañana aparecerá el número extraordinario del valiente y festivo semanario *La Traca*. El sumario es brillantísimo y en él figuran firmes de singular prestigio. Nuestro insigne maestro Blasco Ibáñez y nuestro queridísimo señor director Sr. Azzati enaltecen con sus trabajos literarios las columnas de *La Traca* y a juzgar por la excelente presentación y el gusto artístico de los jóvenes traqueros, auguramos un éxito de venta brillantísimo.

Ya lo dicen ellos mismos humorísticamente: Preu, 10 séntims, ¡Compreulo y mos fareu un favor!” [“*La Traca* special edition.

As announced, the special edition of the brave and festive weekly newspaper *La Traca* will be on the stands tomorrow. It is absolutely brilliant and is written by authors of singular prestige. Our distinguished master Blasco Ibáñez and our beloved director Mr Azzati extol their literary works on the columns of *La Traca* and judging by the excellent presentation and the artistic taste of the young traqueros, we predict a brilliant sales success.

They already said it themselves humouristically: Preu, 10 séntims, ¡Compreulo y mos fareu un favor! [Price, 10 cents. Buy it and you'll be doing us a great favour!.”]

El Pueblo, written in Spanish, has, as it were, a version in Valencian: *La Traca*. Consideration is often given to the before and the after of the Norms of Castelló (1932) that tried to bring order to the grammar and the spelling of the Valencian language; but *La Traca* expressed itself in a language that has no rules - or those that it does have, are its own - one that aims to mimic the speech of the labourer, or the man on the streets of the city of Valencia, to be understood without fuss, to - history comes from afar - oppose the academic styles cultivated by the literary disciples of Teodoro Llorente, who are supporters of Lo Rat Penat society.

The consideration is true, but it does not deserve the reproach of considering *La Traca* to be a publication on the margin of Valencianism and even on the margin of the emergence of the Valencian language. In 1914, Carceller had participated in the constitution of the Valencian Youth party, but that same year he affirmed that if his teacher, Constantí Lombart, was reborn, “he would die of shame”. Until 1918, Carceller served Blascoism in the Partido de Unión Republicana Autonomista. Later that year he was expelled from the La Democracia social club - PURA headquarters - for the good reception he gave to the Valencian Declaration published by *La Correspondencia de Valencia*. On November 28, 1918 *La Traca* published one of the strangest covers in its long history, with the heading ‘Vixca la República Nasionalista’ [Long Live the Nationalist Republic] and with the four red bars on a gold background, the flag used by King Jaime I the Conqueror when he founded the Kingdom of Valencia in the

thirteenth century. The expulsion of Carceller from the La Democracia social club was not a consequence of the Valencian Declaration federalism, but because of the fact that it was promoted by people who were shaping the Unió Valencianista Regional party, closely aligned with the bourgeois and conservative Lliga Catalana.

However, more than a departure from Blascoism, that November 28, 1918 edition of *La Traca* was a reconciliation, given that it contained an article written by the then director of *El Pueblo* and leader of the Unión Republicana Autonomista Party, Félix Azzati Descalici. Carceller does not want to get rid of the federal inheritance of Blasco Ibáñez and Constantí Llombart, and he will not get rid of it.

When in 1931 he decided to publish *La Traca* in Spanish, the magazine's alter ego, *La Chala*, continued being published in Valencian. Along the way, with *El Cuento del Dumenche* (1914-1921) and *Nostre Teatre* (1921), among other publications, he showed not only his interest in Valencian and Valencianism but something else that was even more relevant: his intention to build a different kind of Valencianism, one that was not horizontal, inter-classist and culturalist, a left-wing Valencianism, associated with republican struggles. The option of a language that was not regulated was an option that would include the *people* (in the Blascoist meaning of the word) and not an attempt to extract a Valencian language from overly-cultured channels and throw it in, weakened, to an everyday and thus inconsequential context of the popular classes. In fact, Carceller's magazines were decisive in promoting narrative and theatre in Valencian (Simbor, 1990). On October 14, 1933, Carceller inaugurated a theatre on Calle Ruzafa in Valencia, which he named Nostre Teatre.

TIMES FOR BRAVE FIGHTING: THE REPUBLIC

In the summer of 1932, the ultra-Catholic *Diario de Valencia* was already deeply scandalised by the expressive freedom *La Traca* had, and welcomed that the governing authority had decided to take action the matter:

Los abusos de *La Traca*

Por fin el gobernador civil de esta provincia ha dado un toque de atención al director de *La Traca*, amonestándole sobre los abusos de su grosero semanario, que en tiempos principalmente de la República ha desarrollado una labor de propaganda totalmente inconfesable. (...) *La Traca* es un semanario que se ha desviado totalmente de los cauces legítimos por donde debe discurrir la vena de toda literatura fina y humorística. Fue en sus principios una vibración aceptable de nuestra fibra popular, expansión de nuestra idiosincrasia, que dice ironía y sátira de un tono digno y elogiabile. Pero bien pronto derivó en una orientación inmoral, abiertamente sicalíptica, y sus grabados y leyendas estaban escritos con tinta de albañal, salpicaduras soeces que, revelando un gusto estragado, envilecen toda pluma y mancha al lector.

Sus abusos fueron tan intolerables, que fue necesario se decretase la suspensión. Mas ahora ha renacido con nue-

va pujanza y vigor y su edición en castellano ha culminado, llegando hasta las montañas del Norte, no volando como hacen las plumas bien cortadas que por su noble estilo dan fuertes aletazos como de garza real, sino arrastrándose por el lodazal de la crónica escandalosa y echando como las cucarachas el estiércol inmundo de la calumnia y de la bilis anticlerical (...). [*La Traca* has gone too far

The civil governor of this province has finally reprimanded the director of *La Traca* by admonishing him on his base weekly magazine, which in times mainly during the Republic, published works of utterly unspeakable propaganda. (...) *La Traca* is a weekly newspaper that has deviated completely from legitimate channels through which all fine and humorous literature must flow. During its beginnings, it was an acceptable reflection of our popular fibre, expansion of our idiosyncrasies, which is irony and satire in a dignified and praiseworthy tone. However, it soon derived in an immoral, openly erotic publication, and its images and texts were drawn and written in sewer ink, with splashes of vulgarity, which revealed a perverted taste that de-means all pens and stains all readers.

It was intolerable, and went so far its suspension was essential. But now it has been reborn with new strength and vigour and its edition in Spanish has culminated, reaching the mountains of the North, not flying with the well preened feathers given by a noble style, but crawling in the quagmire of its scandalous chronicle and by being throw away like the cockroaches that emerge from the filthy manure of slander and anti-clerical bile (...)] (*Diario de Valencia*, 16/8/1932).

Not everyone had the same opinion. The veteran lawyer and journalist Tomás Rivera Delgado wrote in the Madrid Republican newspaper *La Voz*:

¿Ustedes no han leído *La Traca*? Pues les voy a dar un consejo y es que cuando tengan necesidad de purgarse gástense un realito y léanla, pues es un estimulante para limpiar el estómago de todas las comidas indigestas que en él se hallen acumuladas (*La Voz*, 17/3/1933). [Have you not read *La Traca* yet? Well, here's some advice: when you next need to purge yourself, and really treat yourself, grab a copy and read it, because it's a stimulant that'll cleanse your stomach of all the indigestible foods you have eaten (*La Voz*, 17/3/1933).]

After the initiation of the Republic until then, two important things had happened: *La Traca* had not only reappeared, but it had adapted to the Spanish market by being published in Spanish. *La Chala* continued to be published in Valencian and maintained the same editorial line. *La Traca*'s success however was unparalleled: it was to become the most popular magazine in republican Spain.

The second thing to happen was that the fundamental issues of *La Traca* did not change, but they began to be expressed more forcefully, in an attempt to take advantage of the new constitutional regulations allowing press freedom. Criticism of the monarchy and those who had made or supported it, anti-clericalism and increasingly

risqué eroticism (often through the process of mixing anti-clericalism and eroticism), were the dominant issues and were expressed with *joie de vivre* and cheerfulness.

A whole series of booklets emerged around *La Traca*, some erotic, others political, edited by the Carceller Publishing House, giving it the platform that entailed. In 1931 and 1932, there were frequent proclamations of the new state of affairs, with headings such as *Catecismo de la República*, *La bandera de la libertad*, *El espíritu de Fermín Galán* [*Catechism of the Republic*, *The flag of freedom*, *The spirit of Fermín Galán*], etc. In 1932, the series *Los Crímenes de la Iglesia* [*Crimes of the Church*] was published, where “Clerical disgraces are detailed. For only 30 cents! A ridiculous amount for the useful, interesting and brave booklet: CRIMES OF THE CHURCH! Deaths, rapes, degeneration, sexual inversion. Vice and crime.” In 1933, sociological and ideological dissemination arrived with texts dedicated to a variety of currents of thought: *Socialism*, *Anarchism*, *Communism*, *Fascism*, etc.

The consequence: “The popularity of *LA TRACA* was greater than any other publication ever had been. It was attacked by the most important right-wing publications; it was mentioned in Congress and talked about on stage” (Malboyson, 1932). Because it was not only the collections edited by the Carceller Publishing House, but offered by the weekly newspaper itself. It also covered the usual themes, anti-monarchism, eroticism, anti-clericalism, but with an unusual rawness. As an example: the cover of September 26, 1931, showed a republican matron throwing insecticide over friars and rectors, with the following footnote: “Spanish fanatics thought that religion would overthrow the Republic, but we now know that’s not true. It’s simply a matter of hygiene. You can get rid of that parasitic stench with water and soap and a little insecticide”.

Certainly, *La Traca* and the vast majority of leftist publications used female stereotypes in their anti-clerical invectives, usually subjugated to the power of the Church, which hindered the full growth of their political rights. At the very least, gender studies should be constructed through dialectical relations and it is noteworthy here that the right-wing Catholic press insisted on dominating the will of women, when there was a risk that these - mothers, wives, girlfriends - could influence men’s. The treatment of women in publications such as *La Traca* was not only a manifestation of machismo, but also a response to the strategies of the clerical right. Again, a positioning against the dominant culture and morality.

THE FINAL BATTLE

When war broke out, *La Traca* acquired a markedly anarchist tone. In May 1937, a special edition in homage to the anarchist Durruti was published. In June, Carceller expressly addressed the editor of the newspaper *Nosotros*, the spokesperson for the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), asking him to exchange copies.

The copies of *La Traca* that are kept in the Historical Memory Archive of Salamanca, as well as the copies that we have consulted in other war archives, focused on exposing that the war in Spain was the work of international fascism, in praising the popular movement resisting them and in ridiculing the military and, especially, the figure of Franco, who was constantly shown as egomaniacal and effeminate. Franco is the Inverted General, the *Generálísimo Invertidísimo*. On the first anniversary of the coup d’état that provoked the Civil War, Carceller sent a letter to Franco that, without his knowing it, was premonitory [source text rhymes]:

Franco: ¡Ten piedad de mí! (...) Ten piedad de este traquero humilde como una cabra; como un cordero inocente (...) Si me perdonas la vida yo te juro que *LA TRACA* se convierte en *La Gaceta* de Burgos o Salamanca. Te alabará como a un santo; ensalzará tose campañas; proclamará tose victorias y silenciará tose planchas. Dirá que eras lo caudillo más que genial que hay en el mapa; que te gustan las mujeres y que a los hombres rechazas. Que Queipo no bebe vino; que se un estratega Aranda; que se valiente Cabanellas y Cascajo un as de espadas (...). Franco: serénate un poco y perdona a este canalla, que si siempre te atacó, hoy se arrepiente y te alaba. Arrodilladito y contrito te lo suplica cono ansias tú novato servidor. El Director de *La Traca*¹¹. [Franco: Have mercy on me! (...) Have mercy on this traquero that is as humble as a goat [word play as goat in Spanish can mean crazy], and as innocent as a lamb (...) If you pardon me, I swear that I will turn *LA TRACA* into the Burgos or Salamanca Gazette. I will praise you as a saint; extol your campaigns and proclaim your victories and silence the press. I will say that you are the most excellent leader in the world; that you like women and that you reject men. That Queipo does not drink wine; that Aranda is a strategist; that brave Cabanellas and Cascajo have an ace of spades (...). Franco: calm yourself and forgive this scoundrel, who has always attacked you, today he repents and praises you. Kneeling and so contrite, I, your novice servant, beg of you pleading. The Director of *La Traca*¹².] But Franco had no mercy.

CONCLUSIONS

La Traca represents the long and intense struggle that will be waged from the late nineteenth century in Spain to define what should be the representative culture of the subordinate classes; to establish whether they will be subject to the rules and values advocated by the Church and defended by the most affluent social sectors, or a culture based on the pleasure of living, which the protagonists of *La Traca* represented each week. Because, as noted by Stuart Hall, popular culture is “a site where ‘collective social understandings are created’: a terrain on which ‘the politics of signification’ are played out in attempts to win people to particular ways of seeing the world” (Storey, 2002: 17-18).

La Traca was an obvious means of distraction, its splendid drawings suggested the pleasure of partying and sex. But for many Spaniards, it was also a way to under-

stand reality, especially the reality developing in April 1931. After its reappearance, the weekly now offered a simplified and coherent vision of events for the people it addressed: It explained to them why Alfonso XIII was guilty and must pay for his crimes with his life, or it carefully explained to them through vignettes, how members of the clergy were corrupt. In short, it outlined to them that the future of republican democracy, the government of the people for the people, was undergoing another coup, by the church. Just after suggesting this and having sold half a million copies towards the end of May 1931, convents and churches were burnt and set on fire. *La Traca* was on fire too. And when it was burnt out, after the end of the war, in addition to a political dictatorship controlled by the military and police institutions, a moral dictatorship was enforced by the religious institution. In other words, many different battles were fought between 1931 and 1939, and the battle for cultural dominance was as important as the others; in the end, it was the Church that regained its traditional role of “shaper of consciences and minds”, fostering a culture that “perfectly responded to the needs of the victorious social bloc” (Baldó, 1988: 110).

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NOTES

- 1 “Weekly newspaper for the people of thunder”
- 2 Historical Archive of the Defence (Madrid). Valencia Fund. Summary 7470. Year 1939. Box 20701/no. 2. ‘File: Vicente Miguel Carceller and others’.
- 3 It is worth remembering Enric Sebastià and José Antonio Piqueras’ thesis outlining that republicanism was initially supported by those who were negatively affected by the wide panoply of feudal traditions that continued to exist after the bourgeois-liberal revolution; traditions that in some cases (consumption tax, the *quintas* military service, the *matriculas de mar* to recruit sailors for the navy, etc.), were in practice until the twentieth century. (Sebastià & Piqueras, 1987).
- 4 Colloquial expression to refer to the Valencian Language.
- 5 Traditional recipient for wine.
- 6 We will leave *La Traca* (newspaper that took such hard work to move forward), because certain dishonourable, vile and disgusting campaigns have affected our dignity; we have decided to start another that will connect with our favourite public, from our birthplace. We cannot consent that a poisonous libel appears as our own (...). Our cheerful, festive and rowdy character par excellence will not allow our texts to be substituted, who lives at the expense of the honour of others.
- 7 “As a free man, Mr Carceller is a Republican; and as a son of Valencian parents, he is Valencianist.
- 8 *La Traca*, 23/9/1933
- 9 http://www.duntempsdunpais.cat/blasco-ibanez-el-hombre-el-artista-y-el-politico-su-idea-sobre-el-problema-autonomico-su-influencia-social-en-la-politica-valenciana/#_msoanchor_1. *El Pueblo*, 24/7/1912.

- 10 *El Pueblo*, 24/7/1912.
- 11 *La Traca*, 18/9/1937.
- 12 *La Traca*, 18/9/1937.

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