

## **Clandestine Communications: Notes on the press and propaganda of the anti-Franco resistance (1939-1975)<sup>1</sup>**

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Culture and political propaganda in conditions of clandestinity provide unusually interesting material for reflection on persuasive discourse in general, and on the effects of communications media in particular. The sociology of communications, based primarily in the United States, and empirical in its origins, has been prone to two types of fallacies whose very negativity throws light on the question of clandestine communications. The first error, made at the level of subject matter, is to reduce the wide variety of phenomena which can arise in a clandestine context to a simple dialectic of propaganda and counter-propaganda. The second, this time at the level of epistemology, is to limit the study of persuasion to the so-called effects of communication, the positive or negative results of specific messages on opinion, taken as susceptible to analysis by quantitative methods.

The counter-propaganda fallacy, which has provided us with some work which is not entirely without interest – mainly on persuasive techniques in war time, and on the characteristics of Hitlerian and Stalinist discourse – has either completely ignored clandestine forms of culture and propaganda, or has considered them as part of persuasion and espionage in the various circumstances prevailing in time of war, whether hot or cold. The source of this fallacy must be sought on the one hand, in the political/military interests which have for the most part lain behind research carried out in the United States, and, on the other, in the naive and mechanistic ideology which informs a large part of such research, and which leads to a consideration of clandestine communicators as agents of one or other of the world powers, generically identifiable by their similarity of ideology.

The fallacy of effects has likewise led to the exclusion of all those forms of communication which are supposedly irrelevant because lacking in effect. In the case of clandestine propaganda, duly considered under the heading of counter-propaganda, its negligible effects are said to render its study uninteresting.

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The basis of this fallacy is also to be found in two oversights. The first is that the empirical sociological study of the effect of a specific communication itself forms part of the totality of persuasive discourse in a given society; or, in other words, that quantitative analyses of public opinion are also part of public opinion. The second oversight concerns the isolated consideration of communications, separate from the semantic universe in which social culture exists. This has raised the question as to whether rather than the message creating an effect on the public, the opposite may not in fact be the case,<sup>2</sup> and leads eventually to argument over effects in the field of interaction, for there is no communication, however unidirectional, in which some type of interaction is not produced.

These are the obstacles which have impeded the systematic study of this aspect of social communication. The incentives, in my view, for opening up this new field of investigation, which has so far been limited to the history of the press, to journalistic essays, or to that ambiguous – and also American – form, the “underground”, are various. In the first place, a deeper awareness is needed of the model which corresponds to the totalitarian state, regarding which there already exists a bibliography which, if not complete, is at least considerable. Under totalitarianism the absolute annihilation of the opposition is only achieved in genuinely exceptional, and brief, situations, and thus it is impossible to study communication in this type of state without including a consideration of clandestine modes. In the second place, there is the particular interest aroused by this form of communication in countries which have recently emerged from dictatorship, and where it is possible to carry out, in addition to historical reconstructions, concrete research into the communicative model which has been functioning up to very recent times for a large part of the present-day political class. The Spanish case has special additional attractions, such as a peculiar richness and variety of the clandestine model, which means it is possible to find virtually every type of communicative mode in the past 40 years of the country’s history. In the third place, there is the attraction of studying communication within clandestine groups, and their interaction with the repressive forces in a society in which programmed violence – between the state and terrorist groups – occurs increasingly frequently.<sup>3</sup> It is, moreover, no secret that any former militant of the various anti-fascist resistance groups in Europe is familiar with particular forms of behaviour current among the armed groups which today operate in Italy, Spain and – to a limited extent – in Germany. It should not be forgotten that not only in terms of methods, but also in terms of ideology, there exists, formally, a certain continuity between the present-day phenomenon and the more or less peaceful anti-fascist resistance movements. Fourthly, and finally, there is the stimulus such a study provides for the study of political communication in general, in that clandestine persuasion is a form of persuasion without an audience, or with a limited audience, for which it is possible to isolate more

completely the form chosen by the originator, beginning with the discourse and the conditions in which it is produced.

But in addition to these stimuli of a theoretical nature, I believe I can point to an attraction of a more directly political nature, which ought to lead experts in mass communication to concern themselves more closely with situations involving political resistance. The political changes which have taken place in recent years throughout the world show that progressive movements lack, in the vast majority of cases, a clear policy as to how they should frame their communications in situations of resistance, and are even less clear as to how they can capitalise on the communications channels developed clandestinely once they find themselves able to operate legally. The cases of Spain and Portugal are singularly clear examples of this process, in that both demonstrate a political reverse suffered by the labour and popular movements under democracy as compared with the possibilities they were able to develop under dictatorship.

I believe that this subject, around which one could structure the whole of the political debate on the Spanish “transition” and the Portuguese revolution and counter-revolution, is of vital importance for those countries which are currently living under dictatorships or reactionary regimes, and whose labour and popular movements are obliged to express themselves in clandestine forms. Much more important than knowing how to express oneself under such circumstances – a skill which, after all, can be learned in the same way in any part of the world, though at the cost of much blood and many sacrifices – is knowing how to arrive at the moment of political change having preserved certain organs of the popular press from the coming manoeuvres of reactionaries; having created that progressive utopia (as it still remains), a press agency independent of the major information circuits; or in a position to force through the democratic and public control of the media. This subject, which I can only outline here, since its discussion would involve a much more extensive political debate, should shed light on a great many of the concepts employed by the left and by grass-roots movements, which, although they often point to the issue of power over the media, nevertheless tend to turn the history of this power, and along with it all authentic future possibilities, into abstractions. The type of mistake which should be avoided is that which, for example, has been committed in Spain, where an entire chain of local newspapers belonged to the Falange is to be sold to the private sector because of the fear on the part of the right of a press which might be open to control by the left, but also because of a left which is incapable of proposing and supporting in a determined fashion alternatives of cooperative power, popular control, or even municipal or regional control for this type of press.

The reflections presented here on the model of clandestine communication under Franco do not pretend to be a complete study of, nor even a coherent approximation to, all the problems raised. Neither the scope of this necessarily limited work nor the state of research into the subject would permit such a claim. What is offered here, however, are some notes on the main components – historical in some cases – of the underground resistance in Spain, along with some first working hypotheses and some suggestions for further research. Such a modest aim would be more than fulfilled if this contribution served us an introductory guide to a subject which is very little known, and thus requires the attention of students and the studiously inclined.

### **I. The Levels of Clandestine Communications**

The term “Clandestine communications” is here understood in its broadest accepted sense: that is, as referring to the totality of communicative activities carried out outside the law and with the identity of the protagonists concealed as far as possible. Defined like this, clandestine communication would include both the traditional media of clandestinity – press and radio – and the inter-personal communication which takes place within the banned political organisations; both propaganda actions – slogan-painting for example – and propaganda through action – such as the demonstration or the act of terrorism.

Within clandestine communications it is possible to pick out three levels of complexity, which undoubtedly correspond broadly to the organisational levels attained by the opposition to the regime, but which appear always to arise simultaneously, though in varying degrees of intensity. Thus there is a first stage, or level, of information, which corresponds to the creation of a minimal organisational structure. The basis of communicative work is the collection, or transmission of data. A second level, of propaganda, corresponds to the extension of the limited organised nuclei and their intervention in social conflicts. The basis of communicative work here is political persuasion through proselytism, and agitation or propaganda on a scale intended to be massive. The third level, the formation of a culture, corresponds to the consolidation of numerous organised (and stable) nuclei – insignificant in comparison with the bulk of citizens who are neither organised nor linked to the underground movement – in which there appears both a lucidity absent from the information and propaganda – and compatible with the concept of art – and distinct forms of behaviour and ways of life. These three levels are established in opposition to the prevailing power with the aim of counteracting its effects: they include information against censorship; propaganda against the subjugation of awareness through terror and totalitarian propaganda; culture against lack of culture and against official culture.

A good example of the stage at which information is of prime importance is provided by the first phase of franquismo up to the end of the Second World War. Information at this time came in the form of data from allied sources on the state of the conflict – carefully censored by the Franco regime – and the diffusion of the data primarily through interpersonal networks. But it also came in the form of espionage and networks of support for the French resistance. In this context the broadcasts made by the BBC and its news bulletins<sup>4</sup> throughout the war need to be studied, as does their later utilisation by the few organised nuclei or by particular individuals who, in some cases, went so far as to circulate typewritten letters informing circles of friends of developments in the war. During this same period a large proportion of organised militants inside Spain worked on tasks resembling espionage work, from the formation of networks to facilitate entry to and exit from the country, to the production of information, both strategic and political. Interestingly, it seems to have been the nationalist parties of Catalonia and the Basque country<sup>5</sup> which became most intensely involved in this type of work. In discussing this period, it is important not to forget the role played by information in relation to repression, not so much on account of its political content as of its use in locating disappeared relatives who had been jailed or killed.<sup>6</sup>

The same period also saw the production of propaganda, but on a very small scale, and more closely resembling a first attempt than a genuinely proletysing and persuasive effort. Information continued to play a primary role right up to the death of Franco, in direct relation to the intensity of the censorship. Propaganda itself, which for a certain type of recipient may not be convincing, played an informative role because of the lack of information available from the legal media. In the final decade of Franco's rule clandestine press agencies began to form and to survive for fairly long periods, informing the opposition nuclei and providing a valuable source of news for the foreign media.<sup>7</sup> Curiously, several of these arose during periods of exceptional repression, in which press censorship was increased and news of repressive actions and violations of human rights by the regime became more common.<sup>8</sup> The informative role of the humanitarian organisations – Amnesty International, the Solidarity Commissions, Caritas – is one of the most noticeable aspects of this period, and one which can be seen to be a constant under all authoritarian regimes.

Propaganda, on the other hand, is not characteristic of any specific period, and the history of franquismo is therefore effectively a crescendo whose only possible conclusion is the death of the dictator. At the end of the 1960's, however, there occurred a point at which the extent of the propaganda clearly surpassed its informational role: on top of the proliferation of party publications and of those of workers and scholars came increasing quantities of the persuasive products of the underground resistance, as painted slogans, placards

demonstrations and pamphlets made their appearance on the streets of towns and cities. The extent of the propaganda apparatus of the opposition – clearly limited when looked at in comparison with the extent of the legal media – should not, in my view, be seen in terms of effectiveness, but in terms of its organisational role propaganda becomes, in a clandestine situation, the principal means of preserving organisational identity itself, a system of self representation for each group,<sup>9</sup> rather than a means of persuasion.

A good example of this mechanism is provided by the party press. The existence of a publication which can speak for the organisation is the precondition for the organisation's credibility. To organise is, above all, to communicate at an interpersonal level, but it is not possible to organise without that faith in the life of the organisation which is furnished by its written organ. The party press is intended in many cases not merely as something to be read but as something to be distributed, with all that this implies in terms of an organisational and political act. And there is a further point. Organising and reorganising, splitting into new fractions, usually begins with the propaganda apparatus the party organ. Fractional struggles are mainly waged around the propaganda apparatus in the most technical sense of the term.

But perhaps the most illuminating example of this phenomenon is provided by certain slogan-painting campaigns carried out in Catalonia. In which all that was painted was a single letter within a circle: "P" for protest; "A" for amnesty, and "L" for liberty. The walls of certain cities would repeatedly be covered with these curious symbols over a period of several months. They were written with chalk, with felt pens or with spray paint, but the only people who understood their meaning were the militants involved in the campaign, or at most small circles of sympathisers. The function of subjective affirmation appears very clearly here in the self representation which this type of communicative activity performs.

Finally, with regard to the third level – clandestinity as culture – it must be said that there exists clandestine culture from the moment that the clandestine nuclei establish a form of existence. In so far as there is a clandestine ethic – a repertory of usages and customs – there is also the possibility of broader communicative modes: cinema, theatre; literature, sales outlets for illegal cultural products from books to lithographs. On a normally very-limited scale there was clandestine culture practically from the very moment of Franco's victory, in the form of anonymous poetry,<sup>10</sup> limited editions of literary texts – in Catalan for instance – or talks. From the 1960's onwards this culture was extended until it came to exceed the bounds of clandestinity, though not always of illegality, and it became closely associated with the culture which was tolerated by the regime, the Nova Canco, cine-club circuits, independent theatre, etc., while still retaining areas of obligatory illegality, as in the

case of the Catalan Pen Club, which was wholly an underground organisation until the death of Franco, or the subterranean existence – more extra-legal than illegal – of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans.<sup>11</sup> As can be seen, the reconstruction of the resistance simply at the level of culture is one of the most interesting tasks which can be tackled today in the field of the study of communications during the Franco era, always taking into account that the anthropological sense of the term, which involves the ways of life and forms of behaviour of the clandestine society, must be dealt with along with the sociological sense, which involves cultural production.

## **II. Propaganda and Action**

The fundamentally anarchist principle of propaganda through action, which lies behind a large part of the proletarian terrorism which has taken place in Europe since the end of the XIX century, can arise only in a society in which mass communications media have begun to function, and in particular, in which newspapers have begun to circulate.<sup>12</sup> Propaganda through action is effective, however, only to the extent that the media reflect, even in a partial and mutilated form, the events of daily life. The press and media in general under Franco did not fall into this category until the Press Law of 1966 was introduced. Propaganda through action was limited up to this date to libertarian groups which took advantage of the psychological effects of spectacular blows against the regime by giving the sensation that there exists a tough and invincible resistance movement, even in spite of the fact that the media may limit reports of such incidents to those in which a militant dies at the hands of the police. The actions of the libertarian groups, which have been amply explained in recent publications,<sup>13</sup> normally had two simultaneous objectives: to accumulate funds for the maintenance of the organisation and the finance of its publications, and to serve as propaganda. The effect which these attacks produce on public opinion is fascinating, and has been taken up on many occasions in different types of publications, including literary ones.<sup>14</sup>

Once the Press Law came into effect, all the opposition groups clearly saw the possibilities it presented for propaganda through action, understanding that the best way of carrying out anti-Franco propaganda was to make sure that the media reflected, however partially, what went on in the streets. From 1966 onwards a large number of opposition activities were organised which no longer concentrated on the political character of the action itself or on its real content but on the possibility of its being reported in the press. This in itself obliged the opposition to build up networks of contacts and of information which would permit the news to be passed on to trusted journalists without risk. This fact, which has undoubtedly been underemphasised, is at the root of the non-clandestine communicative phenomenon which

developed from 1966 onwards and which benefited from many aspects of the ideas and the culture of the underground resistance, involving many of the same people. This was the growing democratic movement within the press, which waged a constant battle with the authorities in its attempts to raise the ceiling of the permissible. Clearly a history of the resistance from the point of view of its communications will have to include a detailed analysis of the evolution of the press and of the democratic journalists' movement.

The concept of propaganda through action, classically associated with the most radical libertarian movement, was enriched with the appearance of new forms of action whose only meaning lay in the possibility of being transmitted and amplified through the legal media: occupations of churches, hunger strikes, demonstrations with few participants, meetings held in secret but whose aim was to cause street disturbances on particular days, etc. The state of exception brought in 1969, by limiting the possibilities for the most active opposition militants to meet one another, created the conditions in which numbers of people not exceeding 1000 for each of the major cities, began a series of lightning demonstrations, which shortly took on a violent nature. This type of demonstration – known in Spanish either as “lightning” or “ghost” demonstrations – could be organised up to four times per day using the same people. The repressive conditions thus created the conditions for the radicalisation of the opposition. The relatively significant influence of the extreme left in Spain can also be explained in the light of this development.

Propaganda in the more restricted sense, however, is represented primarily by the unwieldy corpus of the written press. Its weight among the whole gamut of anti-Franco propaganda is determined by the lasting nature of the printed word, which makes it possible to study the functioning of clandestine communication in this particular field. The same cannot be said of propaganda through action, of painted slogans, handwritten posters – which were of great importance in the University – or of the radio broadcasts in Spanish from the socialist countries. Only in one case, that of the most important radio station, Radio Espana Independiente, is it possible to work with archives which have been preserved since the station was founded, and it appears that at the time of writing this is being done by the last director of the station, Eduardo Mendozana, who is preparing its history.<sup>15</sup>

However, it must be said of the famous “Radio Pirenaica” (the name by which the station was popularly known) that the work it carried out was not strictly speaking propaganda, in spite of the fact that this was the intention of its backers, but rather the reinforcement of communist (and to some extent anti-Franco) opinion among not inconsiderable sectors of the population who had no other means of maintaining a small spark of hope. The role



played by REI, which is now hard to assess since to do so would involve an a posteriori analysis of the audience, must have been fundamental in the rural areas most distant from anti-France agitation, and which in the last elections had shown a reasonable communist presence. "It is possible, however", says one of the station's editors,

that in the collective memory of the country REI will remain simply as a cry against Franco, perhaps exaggerated, always triumphalist. undoubtedly pamphleteering, but in spite of everything, a voice of hope for many years – all the years of franquismo – for all the vanquished and persecuted; a voice which said insistently that not all was lost, and that with struggle, sacrifice and patience a way out could be found<sup>16</sup>

No work exists on the clandestine press which covers the entirety of the period, or which covers the clandestine publicity work carried out in Spain as a whole.<sup>17</sup> The most complete inventory of titles so far made, which covers only those publications distributed in Catalonia, extends to some 800 titles. Although the case of Catalonia is certainly exceptional, as is that of the Basque country, and it is not possible to extrapolate this figure to arrive at an estimate for the whole country, nonetheless the almost unmanageable magnitude of the whole corpus is clear. This figure, however, is balanced by the small circulation of this type of publication, which normally amounts to between 200 and 3,000, and only exceptionally reaches more than 10,000, although the number of people who read each edition is certainly greater than for the legal press.

Within the clandestine press as a whole the party newspapers hold first place as regards the number of publications and distribution, being particularly numerous in the last decade of the Franco regime, when there was a notable increase in the number of parties and political groupings. There are some publications – a few only – which occupy an exceptional place within the range of this type of press. These are the few party organs which cover virtually the whole of the period, and which allow us to follow the evolution of the organisation itself, and of the regime, without a break. The press belonging to the Communist Party is the most noteworthy of these, and is also representative of a constant found in other countries which have been ruled by fascist regimes.<sup>18</sup> As an exponent of party journalism it exemplifies in its most acute form the stereotyped and pamphleteering language which one finds virtually throughout the spectrum of the clandestine press. Of particular interest is its adoption of the Stalinist mode of language, whose characteristics remain visible almost up to the final stage of the regime, when the Communist Party opted for what is known as "Eurocommunism", a phenomenon which, moreover, has not yet been analysed from a linguistic viewpoint.<sup>19</sup>

After the party press, that of the labour and union movements is the richest and most complex, in spite of its limited geographical coverage and its normally short duration. Up to the later part of the 1960's it did not occupy an important place in the panorama of the opposition. The publications of the traditional union federations – UGT and CNT – are of limited value throughout the period, and it is necessary to await the arrival of the new labour movement which formed around the Worker's Commissions<sup>20</sup> in order to find a journalistic resurgence. This resurgence surpassed in importance the party press itself, demonstrating the leading role of the working class in the political struggle of the final years of the dictatorship. This type of press presents a wide range of variants, from the bulletins of the branches or regional organisations of the Workers' Commissions, to the factory or workshop bulletin, via the local or district publication. It is the factory press that one can find publications closest to the counter-informational model; that is printed material produced, distributed and read in close connection with the assembly, or workshop and inter-sectional organisations, and which belongs to an organisational development typical of the "autogestionario" ("self-management") tendencies.

Closely related to the workers' press is the neighbourhood press, which also appeared at the end of the 1960's, as a result of the activities of the labour movement in the "barrios" (local neighbourhoods), whether for motives of solidarity or for organisational reasons, resulting from the decision to organise the Worker's Commissions by geographical zones.<sup>21</sup> The essentially labour-oriented nature of these publications was soon lost in the face of the increasingly harsh conditions in the most downtrodden quarters of Spain's urban areas, and there occurred a reorientation towards a different sort of demand. Very soon, at the beginning of the 1970's, with the progressive, though tortuous process of legalisation for the neighbourhood associations (asociaciones de vecinos), the clandestine organisation and press tended to disappear. Their place was taken by the associations' bulletins, whose freedom was considerable so long as they were distributed internally.

Within the clandestine press as a whole, the university publications and others produced by students occupy a distinct category. Curiously enough, they followed a pattern which was the reverse of that followed by the neighbourhood publications. The beginnings of the student movement were channeled through the Spanish University Union [Sindicato Español Universitario], a Falangist organisation of which membership was obligatory, and which was subjected to assault, beginning with its directly elected posts, until it was totally destroyed in 1966, when the (illegal) democratic student unions were created. Up to that point a significant proportion of the students' desire to express themselves was channeled into course and faculty bulletins. But the destruction of the fascist union obliged the students to

take up clandestine publication, which, although much more irregular and weak than in other sectors of society, was to follow a similar pattern of growth. The most interesting part of the student press is that which was produced in the years 1968 – 69, when the display of imagination clearly reflected the tendencies prevailing in the rest of Europe at the time. In general, however, it may be said that the student press followed the model of pamphleteering publications, produced in a language accessible only to the initiated, combined with the unintelligible slang of schematic marxism.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to these major categories of publications – those of the parties, the workers, the neighbourhoods and the students – there are others which cut across this type of classification. These include literary publications, principally from the first half of the dictatorship, when even literature was practically proscribed if it did not fit strictly the ideals of fascism;<sup>23</sup> theoretical magazines, produced by collectives of independent militants; to which must be added the theoretical publications of the parties, which were normally of a higher intellectual level than their other organs of expression; information bulletins produced by unified solidarity commissions or by semi-professionalised collectives; and the publications of unitary bodies such as the Catalan Assembly or the Democratic Juntas, of an informative nature or in the form of political manifestoes.

In addition there is the large volume of pamphlets and non-periodical publications, which certainly represent the bulk of what appeared in print, but are also the most difficult to track down and classify. Their value was greatest in the periods of organisational vacuum, such as occurred in the 1950's, and they often depended on the initiatives of small groups if not of individuals. A large part of the political campaigns and mass mobilisations of this period were the result of propaganda operations based on the pamphlet, sometimes typed and copied innumerable times.

### **III. Areas and Networks of Resistance**

The first area of clandestinity after the Republican defeat was undoubtedly the prison system. Immediately after the war there were more militants in jail than in the streets. They were the first who had the chance to reorganise their parties and unions. The first references to clandestine publications are to those produced by hand, or on tiny presses, in the prisons themselves. The Burgos jail was described at the height of the Franco era as the “marxist university”, and from there a special programme was sent out for Radio Espana Independiente.<sup>24</sup> It may safely be said that the most solid party structure was formed in the jails, if one leaves aside that formed abroad by exiles.

Chronologically, the University was the second area which was opened up for clandestine organisation, in spite of the repressive activities of falangist students. The first generations of new militants were to emerge almost exclusively from the University, beginning with the reorganisation of the FUE around 1946 and the formation of the Front Universitari de Catalunya in 1945. The university arena must be thought of as a place of political training (self-taught in the early years, and later with the assistance of the liberal and marxist teachers), of agitation through cultural activities and – exceptionally, through political agitation as such – as a centre for organisational relations. But from the mid-1960's onwards it became the principal theatre of political, agitational activity in the country: assemblies were held here, and there was political publicity work in the form of wall posters, slogans and the clandestine press. All this proliferated within the classrooms as nowhere else, the product of the hypersensitivity of the students and their constant mobilisations.

The influence of university members in the opposition organisations, including trade unions, clearly reveals the role played by this arena of political activity in the organisational development of the opposition. It is interesting to note how the efforts of the last ministers of education under the dictator were directed towards putting a stop to political activity within the University, even reaching the extreme of creating a short-lived University Disciplinary Police (*Policla de Orden Universitario*) and of recruiting for it junior personnel from the ranks of the Police. It was all in vain. In spite of the crisis which overtook the student movement a few years before his death, Franco was never able to control the University.

The factory comes into its own as a focus of clandestine activity in the 1960's, and not without difficulty. Exercising the right of association and expression within a firm is not easy even under democratic regimes. In spite of all the problems, however, the contacts made between workers in the same shop or production line on entering or leaving the factory, lunch-hour encounters, and the meeting in the washroom all played a decisive part in the organisational process. But this fragile form of communication was not enough, and there was a need for the external communications networks formed by the parties, unions and workers' commissions if coordination, strike calls and assemblies were to be possible – even more so if bulletins were to be produced. The task of organisation in the workers' movement is harder than in any other area, and very quickly requires a space free from repression. From the 1950's onwards this space was provided by the Church. Until the death of Franco religious buildings were to serve as venues for workers' meetings and as sites where their publications could be printed.

Under Franco, the church tended to take on (from the 1950s, and more especially the 1960's onwards) a role similar to that played at certain moments under feudalism, reviving institutions such as the right of asylum in church buildings. A model of this type of activity was provided by the Benedictine community of Montserrat, which became a genuine focus for anti-Franco culture and aid to the opposition. As proof of this role, Montserrat holds one of the best archives of the resistance press, built up through the innumerable contacts the community established with practically all the groups and organisations involved.

In latter years the task carried out by the parishes was assisted and complemented by the new legal and social centres and neighbourhood associations, which became new venues for meetings, and whose existence permitted militants a way of life very close to normal. In order to make a contact it was no longer necessary to wait for the lengthy period required to arrange a meeting on a street corner.

None of these clandestine arenas of activity would have been able to function without dense networks of contacts, formed mainly by the parties, which enabled them at any moment to put militants from different sectors in contact with one another, coordinate actions in widely separated locations, and, fundamentally, to inform – to report isolated actions to the rest of the opposition. The internal party bulletins, typewritten sheets in the form of internally circulated reports, thus became the means by which the opposition as a whole centralised information and formed a picture of the overall situation, though such bulletins were often only of use to the organisation's own cadres. From the point of view of the leaderships, the main problem was that of collecting sufficient good data to be able to follow developments in the opposition movement without a break. In a sense, the possession of power in an organisation is no more than the possession of the maximum amount of information and, as a consequence, the maximum authority to interpret "reality". The very possibility of publication for those organs with a coverage going beyond the strictly local depends to a large extent on the availability of networks of natural correspondents in the persons of the militants of the group. This fact has additional significance for the information published in party organs: it is assumed, even though it is not always true, that the party which reports a particular action is the party which has carried it out. It is at this level, and not at that of direct competition for information, where rivalry and competition also exist among the various publications.

Within these networks the most important element is normally the professional militant, whose characteristics have been amply explained from many different points of view, including the cinematographic.<sup>25</sup> The figure of the "liberado" is the most attractive object of

study for those seeking a picture of communications in underground resistance: a person whose life is a continuous deception – false documents, a disguise rather than clothing – who is in a constant state of alert, watching every step and taking infinite precautions before contacting anyone; who writes in code, whether noting an appointment or a telephone number, or even communicating by telegram, letter or telephone; who spends almost the whole day transporting information, part of which is the political evaluation of the moment made by the leadership, when the militant is contacting the grass roots, or vice versa. With the exception of those militants who emerged during the Civil War, the majority of the professionals who worked during the Franco period were a product of the repression itself; militants who combined a legal and underground existence went over to a life lived wholly clandestinely as a result of the repression to which they were subjected.

#### **IV. External Influences**

The underground cannot be thought of as a closed system growing solely through generational and socio-economic change. Some of the most influential agents of change, as will be seen, also act directly as factors of politicisation inside the country. Thus, the principal sources of economic stability for the Franco regime, such as tourism and emigration, which had a decisive effect on the changing structure of the country, at the same time produced noteworthy ideological effects.

In the case of tourism, which was constantly subjected to dissuasive propaganda by the Spanish exile community, these effects came about indirectly, operating on cultural habits, the normal climate and also on political opinion. In the case of emigration, on the other hand, the political work which the Spanish parties and trade unions carried out in the countries of the European community resulted in the formation of broad sectors of politically aware workers who, when they returned to their country, would frequently join the most advanced elements of the working class, both in terms of their professional training, and their trade union and political experience.

Without this type of outside influence, to which one must add the study trips and tourism of the petty bourgeois – from which it was customary to bring back some anti-Franco “souvenir”, bought in a bookshop or acquired through a contact in exile – the role of the underground itself would be quite different. In fact, exile and clandestinity, although in many respects contradictory, to the extent that they even produced splits within the organisations themselves, were two interconnected worlds which cannot be understood in isolation from one another. The most extensive literature to date has come from the world of the exiles, often as a result of the work of the exiles themselves.<sup>26</sup> But, in any case, it is necessary to

understand both worlds as closely interrelated. To give as an example: it is impossible to understand fully the underground resistance without taking into account the role played by certain publishing houses set up in exile; nor is it possible to understand the experience of exile without the role played by the concept, both mythical and frightening, represented by the “interior”, from which there frequently arrived escapees, more exiles and freed prisoners.

One of the keys to the continuity of tradition, to the preservation of some identifying signs, but also to the successive waves of international pressure on the Franco regime, must be sought in the continuous flow of information between exiles and the interior. Without this circuit, none of the historic political parties, and no institution or achievement of the II Republic, would exist today, and nor, we can be certain, would much of the historical awareness of the anti-Franco movement. In a sense, exile acted as an external bank, in which historical capital from the interior could be accumulated, even after the repression had completely obliterated a publication, an organisation or a movement.

#### **V. A Homeostatic Model**

By way of conclusion it is worth discussing some of the characteristics of the clandestine publicity machine in its relation to the opposed, repressive, machine of the state. The first simile which comes to mind is the homeostat, an apparatus for maintaining a constant balance of pressures. Effectively, the extent of the clandestine machine is a direct function of that of the repressive machine. When repression turns to tolerance, the clandestine becomes public, and thus the double pressure remains constant. When the repression increases, so does the underground resistance, although at times the effect takes a while to show itself clearly. In Spain, only the early years of dictatorship, which correspond to the military victories of the Axis, saw total war, a war of exterminations, against the remnants of the political structure of the Republic. Even at this time, as was also the case in the worst years of Nazi Germany, a certain degree of resistance continued.

The normal situation, then, was a war of positions. The resources invested by both sides to contain the other increased: police and communicational resources (tolerance or integration as regards communicative practice) on the part of the state; technical resources (improvements in security, improvements in communications technology, and, in the case of the Basque country, improvements in the military infrastructure); and communicational resources (improvements in persuasive efficiency) on the part of the opposition. In all cases the overall result was inefficiency: the police never succeeded in fully dismantling the clandestine structures even though they constantly claimed to have done so and the underground press never achieved persuasive efficiency in spite of the belief in persuasion

which the clandestine organisations developed. The point of such efficiency lies in the constant demonstration of strength and of existence which results from perfecting the clandestine apparatus. The only way to combat this is politically, by integrating the underground into the legal structure. The final result is a new situation in which the competition between the police, with their efforts to repress, and the opposition, with its efforts to persuade, becomes obsolete, but in which the legal media play a role of the first importance, while at the same time the structure of parties and unions, strongly united through their lengthy experience of resisting repression,<sup>27</sup> expands into the public arena.

Publicity in the Germanic sense of the term<sup>28</sup> does not, then, function under a single-party regime as it does under democratic regimes, but takes place at two levels or spheres of manifestation of opinions, the public, legal sphere of the authoritarian state, and the clandestine and illegal sphere of its opponents. The only mediation between the two spheres occurs either through their permissive dissolution or through the actions of the repressive apparatus – principally the police and the judiciary – who demarcate the boundaries between them in a vain effort to bring about the prevalence of the public sphere alone.

The public sphere, for its part, acts with the aim of ignoring the clandestine sphere and occupying its space. The clandestine sphere, meanwhile, aims to occupy the space of the public sphere, and to legitimise itself as authentic public opinion, and acts with these aims in view. In practice, it is a “laboratory” public opinion, limited to politicised elites. It tends to align itself with the classical model of public opinion typical of radical democracy: all militants have the means to intervene in the public debate – a simple duplicating machine is all that is needed, and there are no legal impediments other than the very uncertain ones presented by organisational discipline; “public” instances then respond by taking up positions with regard to other opinions or events, in a parody of the functioning of democratic legal systems; “public opinion” then manifests itself in effective actions; the institutions of authority do not penetrate the public, which acts in a relatively autonomous fashion.<sup>29</sup>

Public opinion, however, does not exist in this case because of the impassable border which separates these two great circuits of communication. There does exist to a certain extent, however, a mechanism for the identification of the citizen with one of the two spheres of publicity; a mechanism which tends to disappear as soon as one arrives, without any form of break, at the transformation of the homeostat of *franquismo* into the public opinion-without-opinion characteristic of the present democracies (described by authors such as Habermas<sup>30</sup> as “plebiscite democracies”) as against the classical bourgeois revolutionary model of public opinion.



From the point of view of social communication and of public opinion, it is curious to observe the regression which has taken place, through which a press strongly marked by resistance to authority has been domesticated and the political debate and participation which existed in ever-widening circles of society under the dictatorship have been practically eliminated. The conclusions one could draw from this reflection are, however, outside the scope of this article, although there is clearly no better way of illuminating the future than to study the past as if it were the present. If these lines have served to any extent in helping to understand the past, and therefore to model the future, their author will be more than satisfied, for this alone is the desirable function of knowledge. Like Sophocles's old Tiresias or Gramsci,<sup>31</sup> blindness in the face of the present with a desire for clear sightedness in the face of history: past and future.

### Notes

1. This text was first published in the anthology *Sociologia de la comunicaci3n de masas*, Miquel de Moragas, editor, Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 1979. Reprinted by permission of the author. It was translated from the Spanish by Phil Gunson. English translation Copyright International General 1981.
2. Umberto Eco "Does the Public Harm Television?", Bologna, 1973
3. Paolo Fabbri, a teacher at the University of Bologna, is the person who, to my knowledge, has concerned himself most with the semiotic and communicative problems raised by terrorism
4. Max Gallo, *Historie de la Espagnefranquist*, Paris, 1971, p. 117
5. In practice, in Catalonia it was the Front Nacional de Catalunya and the remnants of the zpoum, and in the Basque country the PNV, which concerned themselves most with this sort of task. For the case of Catalonia, see *Vint anys de resistència catalana (1939-1959)*, by Fabre, Huertas and Ribas, Barcelona, 1978, p. 103 ff. For the case of the Basque country see the personal testimony of Joseba Elosegui in *Quiero morir por alga*, Barcelona, 1977, pp. 245-261.
6. The execution of the president of the Generalitat of Catalonia. Lluís Companys, was reported precisely because of the existence of these information networks
7. The most noteworthy cases of this type of activity are represented by "Avui; Servei Català d'Informació" and "API" ["Agencia Popular Informativa"]. See *Prensa catalan clandestina (1970-1977)* by Crexell, Barcelona 1977, and *La premsa clandestina a Catalunya (1939-1975)* by Bassets, Bastardes, Bonet, Labrador, Gifreu; Barcelona, 1979.
8. This type of agency is typified by the Karl Marx Committee of, Madrid, promoted by, among others, Eva Forest, which carried out extensive and valuable clandestine publicity work in areas mainly linked to the repression, beginning with the state of exception of 1969. The Committee was known as the "quevedos" on account of the verses from a Spanish poet with which they headed their bulletins: "A starving people does not know how to fear death, the dispossessed people still has weapons".
9. The action of the communications media as media for the selfrepresentation of the group involved has been developed by Professor Harry Pross of the Freie Universität of Berlin, at a seminar held in the Faculty of Information Sciences in Barcelona ("Medios de comunicaci3n y cambio social") between 26 February and 2 March 1979
10. Popular anonymous poetry, which circulated in the form of typed, or later, photocopied, sheets, will some day have to be subjected to a thorough compilation and criticism. This form of clandestine expression lasted right up to the death of the dictator, on the occasion of which, in Barcelona, there were circulated some verses entitled "L'auca de l'enfad3s o la mort del cagalastics."

11. *Vint anys de resistència* pp. 149-154.
12. The International Workingmen's Association congress held in London in 1881 publicly affirmed the tactics of propaganda through action, making use of the new technology and the latest scientific advances, as well as the clandestine press, against those who supported the legal methods of trade union struggle. V. Nettlau, *La Première Internationale en Espagne 1868-1888*, Dordecht, R. Lambert, 1969, cited by Gerard Brey and Jacques Maurice in "Casas Viejas; Reformism and Anarchism in Andalucía (1870-1933)", in the Supplement to *Cuadernos de Ruedo Ibérico* (Paris) 1974, entitled "El Movimiento Libertario Español".
13. *Sabaté: Guerrilla urbana en España 1945-1960*, by Antonio Tellez, Barcelona, 1978; *Faceries, La guerrilla urbana* by Antonio Tellez, Paris, 1974.
14. *Faceries*. . . , p. 178; *El Movimiento Libertario Español*, op. cit., p. 332; and for the literary version *Si te dicen que caí* by Juan Marsé
15. Forthcoming 1977
16. "Radio Espanya Independent: apunts per a una història", Marcel Plans, in *Nous Horitzons*, (Barcelona) 49-50, December 1978-January 1979
17. In addition to the books already cited, which cover only the Catalan press and in one case only the last few years, there exists a small, basic but very interesting work entitled *Panfletos y prensa antifranquista clandestina*, by Cora, Cuadrado, Galván and Rodríguez, Madrid, 1977. For a detailed bibliography on the subject see the already cited *La prensa clandestina a Catalunya (1939-1975)*.
18. In Europe the oldest clandestine press organ must be the Portuguese Communist Party's *Avante!*, which can claim 44 years underground.
19. For stalinist language see *Lan gages totalitaires* by J. P. Faye, Paris, 1972; and "Propositions pour une approche du discours stalinien", Jean-Michel Brabant, a typed manuscript presented at Urbino, 1978
20. The primitive Workers' Commissions which emerged in the mid-1960's as fruit of the collaboration between workers of widely differing tendencies cannot be identified with the present-day *Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras*, in spite of the fact that the latter appears to be in a direct line of descent from the hegemonic movement within the workers' anti-Franco struggle.
21. *La lucha de barrios en Barcelona*, Equipos de Estudio, Madrid, 1976, especially pp. 24 and 25.
22. A good example of the political literature of the student movement can be read in the magazine *Materiales* (Barcelona), Special No. 1, 1977. There are also good references to these publications in *Els estudiants de Barcelona sota el franquisme* by Josep M. Colober, Barcelona, 1978.
23. *Les Revistes literaires clandestines de l'apostguerra (1939-1952)*, by Maria Carme Ribé in *L'Avez* (Barcelona), 6 October 1977.
24. This is the case with the tram strike in Barcelona in 1951; see *La vaga de tramvies de Barcelona* by Felix Fanés, Barcelona, 1975.
25. The figure of the underground militant is dealt with in the now classic anti-Franco film *La guerre est fini* by Alain Resnais, based on a script by Jorge Semprún published under the same title, Paris 1966. There exists an infinite number of testimonies on the daily life of the militant in the underground in the interviews with militants carried out by the daily and weekly press after the death of Franco.
26. The most complete picture of republican exile is to be found in the six volumes of *El Exilio Español de 1939* edited under the direction of José Luis Abellán, Madrid, 1976, 1977, 1978. In the last volume there is a good bibliography on exile life.
27. This scheme is not valid for the Basque case or for the various armed Basque groups, which follow a very different pattern
28. "Öffentlichkeit" could be translated as "what is public", but in fact expresses a more exact concept corresponding to the Spanish phrase "dar ala publicidad" ("make public"). "Publicidad", however, is difficult to use because of its association with advertising, although it undoubtedly expresses perfectly the concept of "what is public".
29. *The Power Elite* by Wright Mills

30. Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft by Jürgen Habermas, Neuwied, 1971
31. For the theme of the blind seer in Gramsci, see "Gramsci sobre Dante", by Rafael Argullol in *Materiales* (Barcelona), Special No. 2, 1977.