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Triunfo

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Summary

Triunfo: from a popular magazine to an Enlightened magazine (history and significance of *Triunfo*, 1946-1982)

The subject of this dissertation is the rise and fall of the Spanish magazine *Triunfo* (1946-1982), which played an essential role in the shaping and ideological development of the cultural and intellectual resistance to the Franco dictatorship starting in 1962.

In the last ten years, expanding circles recognized that the magazine played such a central role; describing how it did this is the primary objective of this research. I will show that the magazine reconstructed the 'democratic reason' and will explore of what that consisted and how it was formulated. My thesis is that *Triunfo* played an important role in bringing about a 'cultural transition', which made the 'political transition' (1975-1982), which happened after Franco's death possible. By informing the Spanish public and by forming it from a progressive perspective *Triunfo* acted as a *parallel university* and filled many academic voids of Franco's Spain.

A secondary aspect of this research is the decline of the magazine at the time the democratization took place after Franco's death in 1975. This brings us to the question that formed the basis for this research in 1990: the question of the apparent paradox of the disappearance of one of the, if not *the* most important spokesman for the restoration of democracy, at exactly the moment that this was mostly completed. A few months after the last issue of *Triunfo* was published in August of 1982, the socialists won the Spanish elections with a large majority of the popular vote.

Using the magazine, the development of the cultural resistance against the Franco dictatorship is illustrated and, an important secondary objective, I explain how the ideological adventure of *Triunfo* was possible in a hostile context and under Government censorship. A good understanding is only possible if the (long) history of the magazine, as it developed after 1961, is described. *Triunfo*, which at first had certain connections to the official culture, was founded in 1946 as a popular magazine and primarily concerned itself with the movies. After 1961 it transformed to a 'general informational magazine', a preeminent spokesman for what is defined here as 'cultural anti-francoism'.

This dissertation is an ideological 'biography', or 'history', of the magazine, which means that institutional and editorial aspects are only then examined to the extent that they are necessary in order to formulate answers to the questions that form the guideline for this book. In summary those can be described as: a) What constituted *Triunfo's* reconstruction of the 'democratic reason?', b) How was it possible that this was formulated during Franco's

dictatorship?, and c) What factors led to the decline of the magazine during the so-called political transition?

The magazine's course of life, to stay with the biography analogy, is determined by the magazine's contents. The analysis of the discourse of *Triunfo* is, therefore, always of central importance in this book. It is studied in its context by relating historical circumstances to editorial processes. In order to come to a correct analysis of the specific discourse of the magazine during the dictatorship, a thorough understanding of the dialectic with censorship is also crucially important. To study how the government received the magazine, I have based my discussion on the documentation that can be found in the Spanish 'Central Government Archives', the majority of which was obtained from the former 'Ministry of Information and Tourism' (MIT). By studying the persecution of the magazine by Franco's regime, this research also wants to contribute to the history of oppression of the Spanish people by the Franco regime, a subject which is still taboo to a degree. This is especially true for the last decades of this regime, the period in which Spain became part of the European Common Market on an economic level, due to politics of the so-called technocrats.

For the examination of institutional and editorial aspects of the magazine, the memories of former employees, foremost those of the founder, editor-in-chief and, during some periods, publisher of the magazine, Jose Angel Ezcurra Carrillo, are an important source of information. Understandably, due to the clandestine character of the real objectives of *Triunfo*, documentation such as memoranda of editorial meetings or correspondence relating to the real objectives of the magazine does not exist. What has been preserved of the former *Triunfo* archive is further intertwined with Ezcurra's personal archive, which unfortunately is not freely accessible. At my request, the former editor-in-chief did provide me with a lot of documentation from his archive, however, which has been invaluable for doing this research.

Practically all 'memories' I refer to were formulated in the early nineties, about ten years after *Triunfo* was discontinued. This was achieved through questionnaires I distributed among former employees, which were often followed by a personal interview. Another important source of 'memories' are the transcripts of the symposium *Triunfo en su Época (Triunfo in its Era)* which was held in 1992 at the 'École de Hautes Études Hispanique' in Madrid. Ezcurra added a first historiography of the magazine with the title *Crónica de un empeño dificultoso (Chronicle of a difficult endeavor)* to these transcripts. The memoirs of the former editor-in-chief were clearly inspired by and written after the symposium. In general, taking into consideration the special character of 'Memories' as a source of information, great care was taken to assure that correct references were given. Where

different viewpoints or conflicting opinions exist, these are always described carefully.

The ideological project of *Triunfo*, as it developed after 1961, was to some extent a spontaneous process –meaning that it wasn't based on a clearly defined plan– which were centered around the editor-in-chief. Ezcurra assembled an editorial staff of progressively inclined people, mostly from editorial pools of the stage magazine *Primer Acto* and the movie magazine *Nuestro Cine*, who agreed on a number of basic principles but mostly found common ground in their aversion of the Franco regime in a period in which 'left wing' still defined itself in relation to Marxism and the way in which communism was practiced.

The current study is organized in four periods that are discussed in as many chapters.

A first chapter is dedicated to what is here interpreted as the forerunners of the general cultural magazine *Triunfo* as it developed after 1961.

It primarily concerns the popular movie magazine *Triunfo*, founded in 1946 and published by Jose Angel Ezcurra, who in 1948 also became the editor-in-chief. That Ezcurra got permission to publish a magazine in the forties was the result of the good relations his father, also a journalist, had with the authorities. I show that the popular movie magazine *Triunfo* was one of the few 'open windows to the West' and that, contrary to what has been assumed to date, its content cannot unambiguously be described as an ode to the mass culture of the Franco regime and the capitalistic world. Despite the connections the magazine had with the official culture, it also provided its readers access to cultural expressions that were taboo in the eyes of the Regime. In this way, the public was brought into contact with the often idealized culture of the West. The magazine also informed about the movies of the European avant-garde and was the most important promoter of the Spanish avant-garde movie of the fifties of which the directors Bardem and Berlanga were the most important advocates. And, even though the most frequent contents – the lighthearted documentaries about the movie world– reveal a significant measure of idealization of consumer society, it is equally true that more liberal customs than those that were propagated by the Franco regime were promoted this way. This is especially true of the relationship between men and women and the role of women in society. The first manifestations of the critical discourse of the magazine as it would develop after 1961 can be seen as well, especially in the articles of theater and movie critic Jose Monleón who, with Ezcurra, was a key figure in the renewal of *Triunfo* in 1962.

Further, three very different, because left-oriented and specialized, magazines are briefly discussed as forerunners; the movie magazine *Objetivo*

(1952-1956), the theater magazine *Primer Acto* (1957-to date), and the movie magazine *Nuestro Cine* (1961-1969). Ezcurra was the official publisher and editor-in-chief of these magazines; ideologically others mainly determined the contents. Ezcurra did come into contact with the intellectual and anti-Franco Spain this way, however. He identified with its ideals more and more, which in the end resulted in the metamorphosis of *Triunfo* after 1961. Besides being closely related to the new awareness of its founder, the renewal of the magazine was also clearly related to changes in Spanish reality. When Spain starts to come out of its isolation and starts orienting more toward the West, the time appears ripe to make an attempt to change the popular movie magazine to a more ambitious 'magazine for general information'.

The next two chapters discuss the most important period of the history of the magazine, 1962-1976. In this period, *Triunfo* becomes the symbol of the intellectual and cultural resistance against the Franco regime. Because the ownership of the magazine changed in 1970, which had an obvious effect on its relationship with the Government, this period is split into two phases.

Between 1962 and 1970, the advertising company Movierecord, which evolved into a true multinational company in the sixties, published the revised magazine. The Belgian owner, Jo Linten, a former employee and friend of Léon Degrelle, had a good relationship with the Ministry of Information and Tourism. One of the paradoxes of the history of *Triunfo* is that it was able to develop into a left-engaged magazine in the shelter of these, at least, questionable circumstances. When Movierecord is, at least indirectly, taken over by Opus Dei, then the leading fraction in the Franco regime, Ezcurra, who was still editor-in-chief of the magazine, starts publishing the magazine again. As of this moment, the Spanish Government makes a number of serious attempts to assure that the magazine is discontinued by forbidding its publication and by imposing high fines. The magazine's increasingly strong defense of civil liberties in the broadest sense as well as the many allusions to the backwardness and the internal conflicts of the Franco regime, were a thorn in the flesh for the regime.

Like the movie magazine, the new *Triunfo*, 'magazine for general information', which first appeared on the 9th of June 1962, pays a lot of attention to cultural themes. The big difference is that these more and more frequently have a political undertone. This trend can be seen, not only in articles about theater, literature, movies, or the arts, but also in the discussion of other popular-cultural subjects such as, for example, the rise and influence of television or the meaning of the vast popularity of the Beatles. Because they didn't want to be a mouthpiece for the Government's distorted information, hardly any attention was paid to national politics. In contrast, more room is made for documentaries and articles about many subjects

abroad including political events. This type of reporting was not only used to inform about international events, it was increasingly used to make reference to the situation in Spain. It should be clear that the outrageous limitation of the freedom of expression made it impossible to use straightforward language. Whoever tries to write from another ideological background than the ruling one under censorship will try to hide his 'forbidden' message by using what I call 'avoidance strategies'. Furthermore, the extratextual value is significant; the reader is expected to always 'read between the lines' and understand many indirect references. The important expert in this journalistic technique, also known as 'meta-language', was Eduardo Haro Tecglen, who, starting in 1962, wrote about foreign politics as a regular contributor from abroad.

In 1970, Haro Tecglen, who was an example to many journalists, also becomes deputy editor-in-chief of *Triunfo*. Because Ezcurra, who, with the exception of an occasional main article, never published in *Triunfo*, identified strongly with the ideas of the magazine's 'second man', the latter's influence was to determine the editorial direction of *Triunfo*. Vázquez Montalbán, himself an editor of the magazine starting in 1969, also called him the 'strong man of the editorial staff'. Led by the Ezcurra-Haro duo, the magazine shed the last 'frivolous remnants'. Where the *Triunfo* of the sixties was a kind of combination between a well-illustrated society magazine and an active cultural-political magazine, starting in 1970 the cultural-political involvement spreads to the entire contents and the most famous period in the life of the magazine starts. In this period it transforms into the most radical and, until 1975, also the most widely read magazine of the internal Spanish opposition. With the aid of many, both Spanish and foreign prominent intellectuals, the function of parallel university also reaches its pinnacle during this 'golden age' of the magazine.

Whereas it is possible to study the work of virtually all prominent employees and all of the most characteristic submissions in the period before the seventies, in the period 1970-1976 it becomes impossible to study all the different perspectives and dimensions of the magazine, because of the great diversity in distinguished writers that published in the magazine. I have chosen to limit the analysis to the most characteristic columns and employees.

In both of the central chapters, the analysis –in addition to explaining how it was possible that alternative messages were formulated and to describing the conflicts with the Government– concentrates on how the alternative discourses caused a 'reconstruction of democratic reason'. The reconstruction was accomplished through an approach to culture –whether literature, theater, movies, arts, religion, social, historical, or economic culture– that corresponds with what was known in the seventies as 'new culture'. This does

not include the traditional 'high culture' or the 'low culture' as contrasted to the high culture. In the 'new culture' an attempt is made to connect the cultural inheritance with the approach of the avant-garde. Whereas this specific discourse is already in essence present in the early sixties, starting in 1970 it is emphasized, perfected and intensified by authors who, although they not always agreed with one another, always respected the basic principles of democracy and at the same time agreed in their loathing of the Franco regime. Gramsci's vision that culture can play a role in the liberation of the proletarian masses greatly influenced *Triunfo's* ideology. After all, Gramsci shows in a historical perspective how important the knowledge of culture is for the process through which the lower classes gain insight. *Triunfo* shared Gramsci's opinion that critical knowledge of culture and tradition are a prerequisite in order for the proletariat to take over power. The strategies Gramsci developed in the margin of Marxism were very amenable to the editors of *Triunfo*. After all, they too had to try to change social behavior that was clearly oriented in a different direction, by using ideological formulations. The goal was to form a new anti-Franco avant-garde, which was misleadingly defined as anti-Spanish by its opponents. *Triunfo* tried to reclaim and (re)construct the Spanish cultural identity in the context of Modernity, by showing the context with Spain's own liberal and progressive tradition and by describing the development of this tradition in the rest of the Western world. Driven by a deep 'Sorrow for Spain' they tried to show what Spain could have been had the Franco regime not nipped the modernization process in the bud.

Eduardo Haro Tecglen and Vázquez Montalbán (while both using four or five different pseudonyms) significantly defined the ideological discourse as it is formulated in what is known here as the *Triunfo de las luces* (*Triumph of enlightenment*) between 1970 and 1976. They labored to give the people back their voice and memory, to explain to them the problems the country had, and to provide a future directed toward social change. In short this is what the 'reconstruction of democratic reason' consists of. Hereinafter, the analysis –adopting 'cernudian-eliotian-moltabansized' language –also employs the terms 'memoria', 'realidad', and 'deseo' ('memory', 'reality', and 'desire').

Finally, the different factors that led to the decline of *Triunfo* during the Spanish cultural transition (1975-1982) are set out in the fourth chapter. In doing so the substance of the magazine is no longer discussed in detail because, as I argue, that is not significant for the decline of the magazine. Rather, its substance was continued, adopted, differentiated, and transformed, not only in *Triunfo* itself, but also in the new newspaper *El País* (which became the cultural heir of *Triunfo* even before it was discontinued) and the magazine *La Calle*, established in 1978 as the result of a split in the editorial staff of

Triunfo, which illustrated the crisis in left-oriented circles that took place in the first years of the political transition. In this way, also taking into consideration Ezcurra's insistence that the magazine remain 'independent', which made it increasingly difficult to maintain a competitive position, the most important answers are formulated to the question that inspired this research in 1990.

Translation: Nancy van Noortwijk