CULTURAL POLICY AND PARALLEL DIPLOMACY AS FRANCO’S TOOLS TO FACE INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF HIS REGIME

Katerina Papaioannou
University of Patras (GREECE)

Abstract

In this study, we address and analyze how the Franco regime exploited cultural strategy in order to address the international negativism against Spain. More particular, we overview the cultural policy followed by Franco for facing the international condemnation of the regime.

Our purpose is to draw conclusions from the research and evidence about whether Spain, even in that difficult period of its history at every level - political, social, cultural, had conceived the power of culture and the extent to which Spain drawn up and implemented a cultural strategy during a rather unfavourable period for the country. During that period, having come out of a bloody and devastating civil war which ended in favour of Dictator Franco and the enforcement of his regime, Spain turned a page in its history; the involved course of events was expected to be equally difficult for the country. Spain received particular negativism on behalf of the international community while the dictatorship of Franco was clearly condemned. This attitude resulted, once again, in the marginalization of Spain depriving its participation in the development and world progress.

The Franco regime having fully conceived and understood the power of the cultural elements of Spain, began to implement a clear cultural strategy in order to win over countries with which Spain shared cultural elements, such as religion. In this context, we present our analysis on how the Franco regime tried to address and reverse the internationally imposed condemnation as well as on the role of the cultural strategy and parallel diplomacy during that period.

Keywords: Francoism, Cultural policy, parallel diplomacy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Spain, in 1939, having come out of a bloody and devastating civil war, which ended in favour of the dictator Franco and was followed by the enforcement of his regime, opened a new page in its history which was expected to be equally difficult for the country. International partners faced Spain with great negativity and the Franco’s regime was clearly condemned. This resulted once again to the marginalization of Spain, thus making it hard for Spain to be part of the process of development and international progress. The Franco regime having fully understood the power of the Spanish culture began to implement a clear cultural strategy in order to win over countries with cultural elements, such as religion. It is worth mentioning that the Franco regime has been a popular subject of research and study by relevant analysts. However, in this study we present an innovative approach which, instead of focusing on surveying characteristics of the period under consideration from a historical perspective, rather aims to capture the effort of the Francoist regime to face the imposed international condemnation using as a main tool the development of a cultural strategy.

2 INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF THE FRANCO REGIME AND PARALLEL DIPLOMACY

The immediate postwar international condemnation the Franco regime faced, led to the selection of strengthening the existing cultural policy and transformation it into a kind of parallel diplomacy. In order to address the negativism clearly declared in the international scene, Franco turned to cultural relations for winning allies and improving, as much as possible, the external image of the new regime. The main feature of this practice was cultural propaganda, which was seen as a way to weaken the external siege imposed on the dictatorship. The primary goal of the regime was to exploit positive results of their policy in the cultural sector in order to ideologically legitimize the regime in a particularly unfavourable international environment. Cultural diplomacy was in line, to some extent, with foreign policy in order to reduce the international revulsion against the dictatorship and face the attack Spain...
experienced mainly for the practice of exile especially to Latin America. The Franco regime used cultural activities to promote positions and arguments while there were always propaganda elements behind these actions.

However, direct propaganda was avoided for not raising suspicion to individual recipients. The goal of attracting individuals and groups ideologically related and interested in the Spanish culture remained, even for individuals and groups sceptical for the political system of Spain (Gómez-Escalonilla, 1992, p. 419-462).

In this overall negative context, the response of the Franco regime was the use of Catholicism as a support for the dictatorship in the international scene, especially in European and American Catholic circles. Catholicism was the only enclave supporting the dictatorship and could act as a supportive factor at an international level, since its international network could enable a more subtle parallel diplomacy in relation to official envoys of the Spanish regime (Redondo, 1999). Indicative is the participation of representatives of Catholicism in the Institute of Hispanic Culture (Instituto de Cultural Hispánica (ICH)), which was founded in 1945 and preserved a consultative role to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Franco regime allocated significantly increased resources towards the development of the strategy for intensification of cultural exchanges in order to use them subsequently as a basis for the development of a propaganda campaign. The foreign policy of the dictatorship intended to improve, as much as possible, relations with the two major Western countries which emerged as winners from the 2nd World War, namely Great Britain and USA, while trying to recover allies in Latin America (Espadas Burgos, 1987).

At the same time, the Franco regime tried to promote institutional organizations responsible for cultural issues. The Council for Cultural Relations (Junta de Relaciones Culturales (JRC)), which had presented limited activity during the period after the civil war, was reactivated in order to coordinate various relevant initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores) and the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación Nacional). Furthermore, a new branch of the Institute of Hispanic Culture was founded in London.

A similar branch was created in the USA, which, however, was eventually limited to the provision of a position of Spanish professor at the Catholic University of Washington. To strengthen relations with Latin America, all kinds of scholarships (for students, teachers, priests) were provided, donations were made to Pontificia Universities, many books were sent, and later the Council of Hispanity (El Consejo de la Hispanidad) was dissolved and replaced with the Institute of Hispanic Culture (Instituto de Cultura Hispánica) (Gómez-Escalonilla, 1992).

The Supreme Council for Scientific Research (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC)) emerged as the leading academic institution of that period. Its activities were devoted to the creation of new horizons in the field of international cultural and scientific relations in cooperation with the sector of diplomatic services.

Actions of the Supreme Council for Scientific Research were often associated with sensitive areas of foreign policy. In addition, it was responsible for the nomination of candidates for scholarships for international studies and for inviting foreign teachers to live and engage in professional activities in Spain, with particular emphasis on those coming from the Anglo-Saxon world (Puig-Samper Mulero, 2007). Depending on the scientific field of activity, France, Italy were the main destinations of fellows, while UK and the USA followed. Despite the Spanish intentions, approach to the USA was quite limited. The American interest was minimal because of censorship limitations imposed on the cultural panorama of Spain, lack of intellectual freedom, lack of incentives for scientific research. Spain did not manage to participate in networks activated and maintained by the USA government for strengthening the transatlantic cultural stream, such as the Fulbright Program and the International Information and Educational Exchange Program. It was the intensification of the Cold War that allowed the Spanish integration in these knowledge transfer channels and the creation of human capital by these means, which proceeded in proportion to the integration of Spain into the American military machine (Portero, 1989).

At a European level, the reconstruction of the Spanish cultural infrastructure progressed very slowly. Of particular interest was the case of Great Britain, because of the Spanish interest for a political approach and also because the Franco regime did not face strong disapproval in Great. Britain. The case of France and Italy were more complicated. A strong disapproval for the Franco regime continued to exist among political circles and public opinion. In order to reverse the existing negative
climate. Spain proceeded to the renovation of the Academy of Spain at the Paris University Campus. At the same time, teaching of Spanish in France was intensified. In Rome, the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Rome resumed its activities in 1947 under the direction of the Superior Council for Scientific Research (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas). In the year that followed, the final restoration of other institutions like the Academy of Fine Arts started while since May 1949 the Institute of Language and Literature in Rome has resumed its activities. Outside these countries, a discreet cultural presence was maintained in Portugal and there was a moderate increase in student exchange with Switzerland (Fonseret Moreno, Calero, 2016).

However, after the ‘50s, there was a change in the way the Spanish regime was faced. The emerging Cold War began to change the international climate since the confrontation between the USA and the Soviet Union favoured the gradual international recovery of the Franco regime (Torre Gómez, Jiménez Redondo, Pardo Sanz, 2011). Although, at a political and military level, the dictatorship slowed down the process of full integration of Spain in the basic structures of the Western world, the cultural sector created bridges in an easier way. The military agreements with the USA significantly contributed to the reduction of the deficit of scientific and technical personnel in Spain and encouraged cooperation in other areas, which contributed to the economic and educational modernization (Hernández, 2015).

3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Spanish leaders consistently exploited the dynamics of cultural action in their attempt to address crisis situations and also as a means for public diplomacy in order to provide additional value to the international promotion of Spain. Interest in the cultural sector arose from the need of Franco’s Spain to win allies and create a more acceptable external image of the dictatorship. The use of cultural diplomacy as a supplement for the achieving specific objectives of the Spanish foreign policy was an "ace" in the hands of those in authority. However, the potential of Spain in cultural diplomacy was limited, since the country suffered significant limitations imposed by the Franco regime regarding freedom of thought, expression and creation. In any case, the emphasis placed on cultural action depended on the expectations of the Franco regime regarding the targeted country with Latin America, the USA and Western Europe laying on the main lines of this cultural action.

REFERENCES