

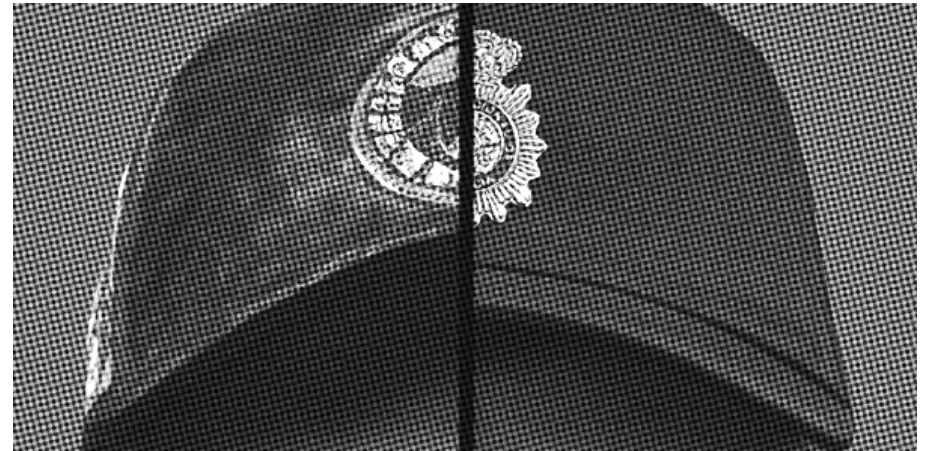
This manual was written by activists who have experienced police infiltrations first hand, which were uncovered between the years 2022 and 2024. It is aimed at all past, present and future activists, as well as all organisations and groups that are in any way concerned about the security of their spaces.

# Handbook for Exposing an Undercover Cop



No Trace Project / No trace, no case. A collection of tools to help anarchists and other rebels **understand** the capabilities of their enemies, **undermine** surveillance efforts, and ultimately **act** without getting caught.

Depending on your context, possession of certain documents may be criminalized or attract unwanted attention. Be careful about what zines you print and where you store them.



## **Handbook for Exposing an Undercover Cop**

### **Original text in Spanish**

Manual para destapar a un policía infiltrado

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[loquesomos.org/libre-descarga-manual-para-destapar-a-un-policia-infiltrado](https://loquesomos.org/libre-descarga-manual-para-destapar-a-un-policia-infiltrado)

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achieve. Therefore, basing discursive defence on this “peaceful” or “harmless” character is to condemn ourselves to never being able to change things and to limit our struggle. We believe that there are plenty of arguments to dialectically confront these practices and not fall into these errors.

The same happens with using the “legality” or “illegality” of infiltration methods as a central argument. If they are illegal, tomorrow they will change the law to make them legal. The point is to assume that the state has no red lines in its war against the organised working class.

That does not mean that at specific moments and as part of specific strategies we cannot use their illegality to open certain fronts, such as, for example, the lawsuits filed against infiltrators in Barcelona, Girona and Valencia, or the complaint for threats against one of the infiltrators in Madrid.

We, the editors of this manual, hope that, as activists, you will find this document useful in some way. In it, we have used and expressed our learnings and experiences in all the police infiltration processes we have suffered, so that you can start from a more advanced point than we had to start from at the time, which was almost a point zero. Although we have cleared the way as much as possible, we are leaving you a contact method so you can send us your questions and specific suggestions, as well as your learnings, with which we can expand the manual even further.

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behind them and that practically everything an infiltrator does or doesn't do is calculated and does not obey to individual initiative.

We also observe that there are many good reasons why people fall into the same categories without being an infiltrator; our framework is not infallible. For example, there may be good reasons why someone has no contact with their family, or why people disappear for a while. Exhaustion is also a common reason for militants to withdraw.

Furthermore, not all undercover stories are exactly the same; there will be variations. Each case is unique and the infiltrator will adapt to what their team orders them to do depending on the circumstances and the specific moment of the infiltration.

Another important issue that we have unfortunately had to deal with in some of the cases is the lack of collaboration of some militants who at some point met the infiltrator. This obstruction of the investigation was due to bad relations or past (or even present) quarrels. It takes a high level of vision and political maturity to know when and where these attitudes should be set aside. Every detail, no matter how small, can help confirm or rule out a suspicion.

The fact that someone does not fit the pattern does not mean that any suspicion should be dismissed. Finally, we would like to make an important point. Although it may be well-intentioned, we believe that using the “peaceful/harmless” nature of the organisations that have suffered police infiltration as an argument against it only serves to extinguish any revolutionary potential and is a strategic error that can be costly in the long run.

It is clear that these organisations and social movements do not pose an immediate danger to the State and that they “only” engage in civil disobedience and what are considered “crimes” against bourgeois legality (stopping evictions, anti-fascist self-defence, pickets, strikes...) But one thing is how organisations and social movements are now (in terms of context, organisational capacity, correlation of forces, etc.) and another is how they may be in the future depending on the aspirations and horizons we want to

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# Conclusions

If you come across someone whose story fits some of these boxes, it does not necessarily mean that you are dealing with an infiltrator. It simply means that your suspicions warrant further investigation. As we have said before, this manual is a guide, a starting point, not a way to prove a case or a magic formula.

Although we have detected common patterns in the Spanish and UK cases, this does not mean that there cannot be others that have not yet been proven. The idea is to continue updating this manual over time and as new cases emerge. That is why it is also important to keep all the information and data on each of them, as they can help to continue completing the pieces of the puzzle that make up a police infiltration.

Police infiltrations have historically been considered a taboo subject, for many different reasons (shame, “weakness,” inability to manage, etc.) This has meant that no type of militant experience in this regard has been properly transmitted and that it has not been possible to generate tools and mechanisms that would make it possible to correctly manage suspicions or even prevent infiltrations. That is why we emphasise once again the importance of making cases public, gathering information, creating tools and passing on what has been learnt.

Of course, we strongly advise against spreading rumours based solely on suspicion, and recommend that they be seriously investigated as soon as possible. Unconfirmed rumours do a lot of damage and can destroy organisations from within, regardless of whether or not there is any real infiltration.

It is important to remember that, although there may be common features in the way infiltrators act, there are also a number of differences, depending on the objectives assigned to them, the type of group or environment they are going to infiltrate... They may even start out following certain patterns but change them as the infiltration progresses. Let's not forget that they have a whole team

We are aware that many of us believed or have believed that undercover agents had a code of conduct, that there were things they would not do. We point out some of them so that we can become aware of the extent to which they go and not rule out an investigation.

Some people believe/believed that undercover agents never:

- Commit illegal acts.
- Have sexual relationships with their targets.
- Have a job with a contract (at the same time as being undercover). Sergio worked several months in two jobs with his false identity, probably to strengthen his story and silence possible suspicions.
- Study while enrolled with their false and real identities.
- Introduce a real family member/friend to the group in which they are infiltrating.
- Involve civilians and people unconnected to the national police force in the infiltration, to support or protect the infiltrator's alibi.
- Have any kind of public document in their false identity (ID card, driving licence, social security, bank account, mobile phone, rental contract...)
- Make it so part of their invented story is real (María from Girona with her family and friends, or Sergio with his firefighter brother).
- Get cool tattoos, like Dani or Sergio.
- Use dating apps as a way of getting close to the activists or environments they are targeting.
- Collect biological samples from colleagues without any kind of consent, as well as biometric evidence.
- Have the police falsify company payrolls (without the companies' knowledge) for the rental contracts of the flats where the infiltrators live.

We know that all these things have been done by undercover police, and we will surely not know many others.

# Handbook

“I had heard that when armies of ants were on the move, if they came to a river they had to cross, the ants at the front would throw themselves into the water, piled one on top of the other as they drowned, offering their own bodies as a bridge for those behind.”

— *Kobayashi Takiji, An Ant Hill of One's Own and Other Proletarian Stories*

## Who wrote it?

This manual was written by activists who have experienced police infiltrations first hand, which were uncovered between the years 2022 and 2024. It is aimed at all past, present and future activists, as well as all organisations and groups that are in any way concerned about the security of their spaces.

## What are the objectives?

The objectives we set ourselves when writing this document were as follows:

- To pass on the experience and knowledge we have acquired as a result of police infiltrations and which we lack when it comes to dealing with them, including how to prevent them.
- To increase the culture of security among organisations and groups.
- To send a very clear message to activists about the police and the State: they are not infallible, and we refer you to the facts. There are cracks in the way they operate and we want to expose them in a public and accessible way.

## Is it advisable to make it public?

Before writing this manual we considered all the options and we had some doubts. Should we make public the information we have and the information we have obtained in each of the cases we have uncovered and published? What if it jeopardises investigations already underway? What if the police change their infiltration methods from now on?

We weighed up all the pros and cons of making such a document public and we also consulted and evaluated the United Kingdom (UK) experience in this regard and our conclusions are as follows:

- We consider it essential to make public all the information and data obtained in the cases uncovered so far and which had not yet been published. Obviously we are not referring to morbid and sensationalist details that could expose us unnecessarily and that do not contribute anything useful to the objectives we are seeking, but rather to the issues that really help to understand how these repressive practices work. Making this public is very likely to help many organisations to discover infiltrators and/or to rule out possible suspicions.
- The fact that only a few of us have such important information means that we can only pass it on to organisations that are close to us and/or that we trust, thus promoting the logic of individualism and cronyism through the “every man for himself” approach, and that this small group of people are responsible for investigating suspicions, thus burdening us with a responsibility and a workload that would be logistically impossible to assume. In addition to how dangerous and unsupportive it would be to leave this possibility to our criteria and will, also significant hierarchies and an abuse of power could arise.
- It is evident that the police are aware of these investigations and that just by reading the articles published so far in the media they will have detected patterns in common in all the cases we are looking at and that are helping us to refine our ideas about how infiltrators work. With that alone they could

them. As we say, each organisation will have to make its own assessment. The recommendations, based on our experiences, are as follows:

- Ask for a **work history** without giving them any time to prepare it (at that moment, all they need is a code sent via SMS).
- Request a **birth certificate**. In the cases of Sergio, Dani, Marian and Carlos we have verified that the response given by the Civil Registry to the request for their birth certificates is negative, that is to say: THEY DO NOT EXIST, they do not have birth certificates. This is a big difference with the UK, as there the false identities of infiltrators were obtained from deceased babies. There can be two situations:
  - ▶ The first would be that the person under investigation is not aware that they are being investigated and the request is made without their knowledge. In theory, only the person concerned can request it, but if you have their basic details (name, surname and ID number) you can request it.
  - ▶ The second would be as a method to prevent infiltrators: the new activist is asked to request their birth certificate in the presence of other members of the collective. But the contact details have to be yours so that they reach you and not them. They can send it to you by email or post.
- In general, **any official document** that you can think of that you can obtain without the person under investigation knowing, or in the worst case, with their knowledge but that you can manage the timing of.

## Are there any red lines?

The cases that have come out so far allow us to dispel these myths or red lines about what an undercover police officer did or did not do.

where the person under investigation supposedly lives, by obtaining the title deed or finding out the contact with the owner, we can pull on that thread to compare stories. Or if they say they work in a specific place, we can find out as discreetly as possible whether or not this is the case.

On YouTube and the internet there are videos and photos of police officers swearing in as career civil servants, and also of when they start doing their training in different cities. Although in recent years the promotions have been huge (2,000/3,000 people), it may be possible to blow the whistle and locate them, as happened in Sergio's case. Those who have social networks with their true identity, feeling they can get away with it, use them as if we would never be able to get to them. In Carlos's case, one of the confirmations that helped to channel the case was to locate his Instagram account because he followed the profile of the town hall of his village.

In short, there are many leads to follow if you have a minimum of information about the infiltrator's false identity. It is useful to obtain this information, for example, during a period of pre-membership. Our job is not to act as private detectives, but any information (name, surname, telephone number, place of study, place of work, previous militancy, place of origin, social networks, address, etc.) that can be obtained during this period can facilitate a future investigation. Although meeting new people should be for the basic purpose of socialising and not so much (or not solely) for security.

## **Possible useful (but not infallible) filters before someone becomes a member in your organisation**

As we mentioned in the final reflections on the research process, there is no such thing as 100% security, and each organisation will have its own needs and priorities in this respect, taking into account its way of working, objectives, etc. With these ideas we do not want to encourage paranoia or that all spaces have to apply

be thinking about changing police strategy, if they haven't already done so. Perhaps after the publication of this document they will make that decision. So why publish it anyway?

On the one hand, we have seen that police infiltration tactics are extremely similar in the UK and in Spain and have been in use for decades. In other words, the State has a formula that works for it (and we refer you to the facts) and, therefore, changing it would mean abandoning that successful formula and risking trying another without any guarantee that it will work properly.

On the other hand, is there any channel today that is common to all the activists, internal, accessible and sufficiently secure so that this information does not reach the police, including possible infiltrators among the activists? Unfortunately, the answer to that question is clearly no.

Another possible drawback of making this document public would be to jeopardise investigations into possible infiltrators currently underway. It is true that this could happen and that they might flee upon learning that they are under investigation, or at least upon realising that some of their tactics have been publicly exposed. If they flee, it is one less undercover police officer in our organisations. If they stay, we have a good chance of catching them. In any case, we weigh up, on the one hand, the fact of influencing one or more investigations, and on the other hand, that all activists know how to detect a possible infiltrator. In our opinion, we clearly opt for the latter.

In addition, one more reason that has convinced us to make the manual public is the UK experience and the conversations we have had with them about this issue. When we asked them if they had had these internal discussions, they told us that they had but that they had still decided to publish it. We also wanted to know if, after publishing it and with a few years of hindsight, the balance was positive. And they gave us a resounding yes. As a result of its publication, it was possible to discover many more infiltrators in organisations that had had access to that document and with which they had no contact whatsoever. Let's not forget that if that document had reached us years ago, perhaps the damage and the

duration of the infiltrations in the Spanish State would have been much less.

There may be several reasons why a collective or a group of people do not want to make public the fact that they have an undercover police officer (shame, ego, not wanting to admit “weaknesses,” not having the capacity and/or means to manage it, etc.) The truth is that, although it may seem understandable, the only thing that this concealment leads to is the insecurity of our groups and environments, the inability to obtain valuable information from these cases that would help us to continue discovering patterns and information that would serve to uncover more cases and obtain more tools.

After the exposure of several cases of national police officers infiltrating social and political movements (housing, anti-racism, anti-fascism movements, etc.), activists and organisations have many doubts and questions: How were they discovered? Is there a method or formula for finding them? How can an investigation be managed? How do we know if someone we know or who is active in our organisation is an undercover police officer?

We are going to try to answer all these questions based on our experiences.

Although we will talk about it later, unfortunately it is never so easy to confirm suspicions: there is no public database of undercover police officers, and finding evidence is a long process of investigation, even if there is a lot of evidence against them.

Successful investigations into infiltrators usually start with suspicions raised by the infiltrator and are usually detected by people who are more sympathetic to them and who end up creating an investigation group. Taking the UK as a reference, the first step taken by the group was to share and discuss their concerns internally. From their conclusions, we can see that over the years they have observed good and bad practices in this regard, but the important thing is that it is the internal group that controls the process, since it begins and ends within it.

where that specific information appears. For example, thanks to this search we were able to find out that Sergio had obtained a law degree from the UNED (Spanish National University of Distance Education) during his infiltration.

- **“Nota de localización” (location note):** This is an informative document issued by the Land Registry which provides information on the Land Registries in which a person has some registered right over a property. With this, for example, we can find out what properties the infiltrator has and the address of his home/homes with his real identity, since his name, surname and ID number are public through the BOE.
- **Search by vehicle ownership:** This is a procedure that can be done online and only the vehicle registration is necessary. For example, in Marian's case, there was a vehicle registration in which he had been seen at some point and thanks to that information obtained with the vehicle ownership, the real identity could be corroborated.
- **Expert in photography:** Through different photos of the infiltrator, some of their real life and others of their fake life, an expert can determine that they are the same person, as El Salto and La Directa have done in some of the cases.
- **Social networks of their real identities:** In many cases, although it may seem surprising and probably due to the sense of impunity they feel, infiltrators and the people they have told you about have accounts on social networks (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook...)

All this data can help establish a starting point in an investigation. For example, if we know the specific date on which they began to infiltrate, and taking into account that they almost always use the same name in both identities, a first screening can be done in the corresponding BOE and all those containing that name can be selected from the list. Many can be ruled out by looking at social networks.

Or if we know the date of birth of the suspicious person and we know someone we trust with access to data, we can check one by one to see if their dates coincide. If we know the specific address

DNI). Due to data protection laws, the full DNI is not included, which makes the investigation a little more difficult.

- They **start infiltrating** a few months after graduating as police officers, therefore the BOE to look at is the one corresponding to that year (e.g. Sergio graduated in May 2014 and in July of that same year he landed in Moratalaz).
- They spend a year or so at the Ávila Academy, therefore, this is also a **fact to bear in mind** when deciding whether or not to suspect someone (based on the age of the suspect).
- Creation of their **fake social networks** almost as soon as they infiltrate.
- **Videos and photos** of graduations and the work placements they do once they leave the Academia de Ávila (on YouTube, in internet news, etc.) That's how Sergio was caught.
- An almost definitive way of contrasting a real identity and a false one that is being investigated is through a person of trust who has access to data (for example, health personnel) and checks if the **dates of birth** of the false identity and the real identity coincide.
- **Property title deeds:** With this tool you can find out who owns a house or premises. Practical application: you suspect someone and you know the address where they live, you get the title deed for the flat and you see who the owner is and if it fits with the story that the person under investigation has told you.
- **Studies:** In the cases that have come to light so far, it has been proven that some infiltrators enrolled in university using their false identities and also that at least two, Sergio and Lucía, did so using their real identities while they were undercover (in order to be able to sit the internal inspector exams in Sergio's case). Another example is that of Carlos and Dani; in both cases they supposedly studied a vocational training course in air conditioning maintenance and repair.
- **Search by ID Number (or any other data) with quotation marks:** When entering the infiltrator's real or fake ID in the search engine with quotation marks, the results will show

## Why is it important that the group is the one that controls the process?

1. For reasons of discretion:
  - If the suspect is not a police officer and the rumour spreads, it could seriously affect their image and reputation and cause psychological and emotional damage.
  - If the suspect is in fact a police officer and finds out that they are under investigation, they could take action (divert attention, destroy evidence, take reprisals...)
2. For reasons of time management: not depending on anyone, not being pressured to obtain results, etc.
3. For reasons of interest: it is true that alternative media such as La Directa and El Salto have played (and are playing) a fundamental role in all the cases of undercover police officers uncovered because they allow the activists who discover them to remain anonymous and because they serve as a media loudspeaker when it comes to denouncing them. But sometimes we may have different objectives and ways of operating, which is why we consider it essential to manage the timing and information from this initial research group.

## Why do we have to be active political subjects in the investigation?

Most cases are initiated on the basis of suspicions from the environment. We can and must take action. We have the means and the capacity to investigate these suspicions without depending on anyone else, giving them the appropriate political perspective and always subordinated to militant interests and no others. We know that infiltrators who are not uncovered move to other collectives and assemblies. Therefore, we have the political responsibility to investigate, make visible and act in cases of suspicion.

Having suspicions is not enough, as they alone never justify spreading rumours. If there are well-founded suspicions, it is the responsibility of the group that is investigating to provide solid evidence to back up their claims. We must avoid making unfounded accusations without having done a proper investigation. This behaviour, without the necessary checks, can lead to the destruction of groups and cause irreparable political and personal damage.

In this manual we provide information, common patterns, guidelines and recommendations on possible problems you may encounter when starting an investigation, as well as possible security measures to prevent infiltration. Much of the text consists of the experiences of recent cases in Spain and good practices developed over the last decade in the UK.

- Does the person you are investigating have any of the COVID vaccines? If so, you can ask them to show you. We have also verified that none of the infiltrators ever showed this document (some even claimed to be anti-vaccine, which is not such an unusual thing even in our circles). Therefore, depending on the explanations they give or their reaction to your request for the digital document (COVID passport) it could also be a sign of suspicion and a thread to pull on.

## 17. Mobile phones

Another very interesting and highly relevant aspect: the phone numbers used by the infiltrators. We have corroborated that the infiltrators from the same graduating classes use numbers acquired through prepaid cards, and that they coincide in the numbering. For example, María, Dani, Ignacio José and Ramón, who were from the same graduating class, their numbers started with 631. Lucía and Carlos, also from the same year group, had 604209458 and 604209448. Sergio's was 654, and Marian's 650.

This information could be useful for checking something in any investigation you may be conducting.

## Important data

- They have the **same name** in their real and false identities (except for Marc, who was Ignacio José, and Marta, who was called María Ángeles or Marian). They tend to have a double-barrelled name (for example, Sergio in the real one and Sergio Manuel in the false one, Lucía and María Lucía, Carlos and Juan Carlos...)
- **VERY RELEVANT:** They have the same date of birth in their real and false identities.
- Their **real name** is in the Official State Gazette (Boletín Oficial del Estado, BOE) and, until 2022, on their National Identity Document (Documento Nacional de Identidad,

Obviously, and as with every pattern in common, a person who is not an infiltrator may have very good reasons for not having social networks until that moment and creating new ones, or having broken with their past and not keeping old friends... But it is a fact to bear in mind.

## 15. Photos

In general, infiltrators are very reluctant to appear in photographs, individual or group. They are also very reluctant to share photographs of themselves or their family, friends, past... They always claim complicated or problematic situations that justify it.

In several of the cases (Sergio, María...) it has been proven that the infiltrators have obtained a multitude of photos of militants with the excuse of “making jokes” or “making memes” or immortalising encounters and moments of leisure in a context of maximum trust. Keep an eye out for this.

It has also been proven that the infiltrators share photos with each other to provide cover and to help each other. For example, the cases of Ignacio José and Dani. As we mentioned in the stories of each of the policemen, both were infiltrators in Barcelona and were from the same promotion, together with María and Ramón. Well, the police planned the first two stories of their false identities in such a way that they were brothers (one was Daniel Hernández Pons and the other Marc Hernández Pons) so that if one of them was suspected they could give the other as a reference.

## 16. COVID

- Was the person you are investigating active in the political movement when the pandemic began? How did he or she act? We have verified that the infiltrators who were there at the start of the pandemic coincidentally returned to their places of origin just a few days before the declaration of the state of emergency. Each one with a different excuse.

# Suspicious

## Do you have suspicions?

It may seem a strange way to start dealing with the subject, but wondering where and when suspicions began is a good starting point. We don't suspect a person just like that, but there are usually reasons why there is concern, a feeling of something strange.

As activists, we not only develop our theoretical or agitational skills, but we are also able to observe and analyse our environment and, in some cases, also develop an instinct about the people around us. Most suspicions can start when we observe their clothing, their political opinions, their social networks, their lack of roots, a void in their life story or simply that they are a strange person who does not fit in. Let's not forget that social and political movements attract all kinds of personalities, and therefore suspicions at this level can be many and will surely be unfounded. But it is useful to recognise when and why those suspicions began.

Another form of suspicion comes from retrospective review once the cases that come to light have been read. That is to say, realising months or years later that a (former) colleague fits the pattern too well, even though they may have been a great activist who did a lot of actions, including some illegal ones, and that while they were your colleague, you would have sworn they were not an infiltrator.

We add a circumstance that has also been very common in cases in both Spain and the UK: the abrupt, unexpected and inexplicable departure of the comrade (later revealed to be an infiltrator) from the organisation, usually citing serious family issues (sickness of a relative) or work-related issues (change of job, transfer, etc.)

Whatever suspicions you may have, it is a valid starting point. But we have to be aware that they are just that: a starting point. And as we have repeated and will repeat throughout this document, the fact that several of the patterns we describe coincide is not proof

of anything and many of them are very common in our environments. Let's not forget that all their actions are designed to fit in with reality and not arouse suspicion, so they are even common situations.

**How to act once you have formed a suspicion is the important thing.**

## Be prepared for the opposite to be proven

If doubts arise about someone's behaviour or past, this does not mean that they are an infiltrator. There are many legitimate reasons why someone might hide their past, act unpredictably and/or suddenly disappear. It is vital that we enter the process with an open mind and that we are prepared for reality to prove us wrong.

It is always better to be able to “clear” someone than to confirm your worst fears. Approach the investigation assuming that it is better that there is a positive result and that, therefore, you have been wrong, than to directly assume the worst.

Starting an investigation with the firm conviction that someone is an infiltrator, when in reality they are not, will lead you to try the impossible: to prove something that is false, with the dangerous consequence of destroying that person's reputation in the process. Sometimes the fact that no evidence is found against them is simply because there is none.

## Be prepared not to find answers

The world of police infiltration is an intrinsically secretive world, and every effort is made to ensure that it remains so. There is no magic wand that provides clear answers. The current discoveries of police infiltrators are the exception, not the rule. Several of them were discovered as a result of chance coupled with suspicions from those around them, system errors and gaps in the story. In the UK, there were decades when, after years of investigations, there was no firm evidence and no clear answers.

example, Carlos and Lucía entered to occupy the place left by Sergio when he left the two organisations in which he was involved. We also know that in other cases another infiltrator paved the way for them, although we are not yet in a position to talk about it. With regard to movements, it is important to bear in mind that they can move around, even if they have been expelled on suspicion but this has not been made public. An example of a movement is that of Carlos, who has to go to Vallecas because the youth collective that he infiltrated was dissolved. Or Ignacio José and Ramón, who even participated simultaneously in several organisations and spaces at the same time.

- **Reactions once discovered:** Although it may seem very obvious, none of the infiltrators discovered have acknowledged that they were indeed undercover. Neither to the press who contacted them before publishing the story nor to their “colleagues” and “friends” in all kinds of situations. They have denied it despite compelling evidence such as photos or videos of them dressed as police officers. We assume they are doing this as police protocol, causing even more damage, if that is possible. The only exception was the case of María, who admitted in a video call that she was a police officer, as well as explaining how a police station contacted her to work as an infiltrator once she had taken the oath of office and confessing that there were more police officers undercover in cities such as Malaga, Salamanca and Granada.

## 14. Social networks

Another common pattern we have found is that infiltrators create the social networks they use shortly before starting the infiltration. When investigating a suspect, the social media part is very important. In addition to seeing when they were created, you have to look at the followers/friends they have, because it is rare for someone to only have people they have just met and no one from their past (this connects with the lack of roots in question 1). You can even see on Instagram how many times they have changed their username.

**Warning:** The opposite could also be true.

### ***13. Have they suddenly disappeared and avoided all contact? (disconnection/extraction)***

This question could be a section in itself, as the “exit strategy” or “extraction” is one of the aspects of the operation for those investigating a possible police infiltration. In all the cases we know of, the infiltrators have done a “job” for several years (some have lasted less because they have been caught, like Mavi, and others more, like Sergio who was there for 7 years or Marian, who lasted until he was 35), and then they have left relatively abruptly (they get a job, a relative becomes seriously ill, etc.)

It is quite revealing to see how two strategies are used again and again, sometimes in combination:

- Change of job.
- Seriously ill family member. (There were several cases where this happened. For example, María said that her father had very severe cancer, although with a prognosis of possible recovery. This situation, in addition to being used to reinforce empathy with the activists, served to progressively withdraw from the environment.)

And what is more important, they disappear completely from their militant life. With regard to their social life, they maintain some isolated contact, almost always online. For example, Carlos and Sergio continued to keep the telephone number of their false identity active, even though many months and even two years had passed since they “disconnected.” María, on the other hand, did maintain more intense online contact. We understand that this is to maintain a thread of connection with the environments where they were infiltrated in case they need to return at any time.

Within this section, there are two very relevant issues to which you should pay close attention in your processes:

- **Relays and movements:** In several of the cases we have detected that relays are made between the infiltrators. For

## **The research group**

Our experience shows that the suspicions that come independently from several people are the ones worth considering. It is through these collective suspicions that we can form an affinity group to carry out the investigation. This approach also avoids situations in which a single person manages to persuade others that slight suspicions constitute definitive proof.

In groups, checks and balances tend to work: an action or situation that seems suspicious to one person may have a natural explanation when someone with more knowledge of the person or the situation explains it.

When a group starts an investigation it is important that there are guidelines in place from the start: Who can the group talk to about the issue? How can confidentiality and discretion be ensured? What will be done if suspicions are proven or disproved?

Investigating the life of someone you considered a fellow activist or friend is never easy. That's why it can be useful to bring someone into the process who is trustworthy but has no ties to the suspected person and can guide the rest of the group. This person can have different roles, such as making sure the process stays on track, helping someone manage their emotions by taking some kind of responsibility, or even helping to close the investigation if it's not working.

An equally important task is to question assumptions and consider the evidence critically, for example, helping the group to avoid assuming that they have more evidence than they actually have and the danger of jumping to conclusions.

Although it is possible to carry out this process individually, people who have conducted research have realised that they would have preferred to have a group around them.

## Burnout

Burnout, unfortunately, is quite common in these situations. It is something that is rarely talked about or addressed correctly.

This exhaustion is often associated with a feeling of loss of control, even a certain obsession. In turn, this leads to a lack of perspective, and to seeing threats everywhere. Paranoia is a common manifestation that can lead to a witch hunt against anyone who has ever been perceived to have said something out of place or acted differently.

There is a fine line between acting on instinct and reacting to paranoia. And this is another reason why a group process is usually preferable, as the symptoms of burnout can be recognised and addressed.

24 hours a day and they monitor them through the microphones of their electronic devices (watches, mobile phones, computers, etc.) There have been situations in which there was a lot of noise where the infiltrator and their team were: as they could not know what was happening, they would notify the nearest patrol to come and check on the excuse of a “routine check” so as not to arouse suspicion. Furthermore, in several of the cases it has also been verified that some of the flats in the same building where the infiltrators lived were inhabited by police officers, and when it wasn't the case there was a national police station a short distance away.

- Reacting with excessive, albeit concealed, concern at the loss of control of information or at the uncertainty of unforeseen situations, last-minute changes, improvised plans, etc. Many of us can identify with this nervousness at the loss of control, but it may be something to bear in mind during the investigation.
- One situation that caught the attention of Ramón's fellow activists in Valencia, given his militant profile, was that he plucked his eyebrows.

## ***12. Have there been strange court cases or lack of interest on the part of the police?***

Sometimes undercover agents have been inexplicably removed from a court case. In Sergio's case we know this happened on at least two occasions, and on another occasion in Carlos' case. Three complaints that we never received and for which, coincidentally, we cannot access the document in which the case is argued to be closed. Or it may be that your organisation experienced a notable lack of police interest during the period when the infiltrator was part of their group, or that people were not arrested when it seemed obvious that they should be. We now know that those responsible for the infiltration sometimes looked the other way during the course of illegal actions, and that they distanced themselves from the action so as not to have to arrest anyone.

## ***10. Do relationships centre on key people or on those around those key people?***

It is common that, after becoming involved in a group, they “target” key people and become very close to them, both personally and in their activism. This often leads to them being seen from the outside as “X’s right-hand man,” which is useful, in addition to getting closer to their objective of obtaining information, for quelling possible suspicions or for gaining credibility in the organisation.

## ***11. Have you detected anything strange or contradictory?***

In our investigations we have found a series of distinctive features that are worth paying attention to if they arise:

- Documents with names different from the one we know (sometimes it is easy to explain, something like this is not always unjustified).
- Real social networks: Mavi was discovered partly because of this. She said she went to a ballet school in Granada and the name she gave corresponded to one in Almeria, her real city of origin. They found her real social networks and the real and false surnames did not match. María had explained that she offered her services as a dog sitter through a specific application. This profile really existed and made it possible to corroborate her real address, a fact that later made it possible to reveal her identity.
- Not having the skills they claim to have, especially if they are related to their supposed job. Or not knowing enough about a subject they claim to be very interested in. For example, Ramón and Mavi said they had never done martial arts and yet in their first classes they attracted attention precisely because it was noticeable that they had knowledge about them.
- Reacting to surprise situations in ways that indicate training. It has been proven that infiltrators have a team behind them

# **The Investigation**

## **How can suspicions be investigated?**

### ***1. Write down the suspicions***

It’s a small step, but it shouldn’t be underestimated. Taking the time to write down the reasons for your suspicions helps to focus and clarify what is worrying you. It also helps to assess the essence of your fears and present your concerns to the rest of the group. Share your knowledge and compare notes.

Writing down everything you know about the person can help, especially what initially aroused your suspicions. The aim is to gain as broad a perspective as possible and add clarity.

### ***2. Evaluate the initial suspicions***

The following section is based on techniques used for years by the National Police. The analysis of the infiltrators discovered has allowed us to elaborate this document and reconstruct a good part of the patterns used. The result of the study of their methods has been condensed into 17 basic questions and more data with which we are working.

Although these questions and data may be useful in various contexts, the answers are based on how the Spanish State operated in cases uncovered between 2022 and 2024, and several of them also in the UK.

You can apply the questions and data to the person you suspect, or use them as a starting point. If someone “ticks” a high percentage of them, then it is likely that the suspicions are well-founded, but you still need to investigate further and in more depth to confirm them.

### ***3. Organise the data***

As the investigation unfolds, organise the information clearly (for example, by topic). Draw timelines, maps, lists of contacts, events and places where that person may have been. Look for gaps in the timeline of events and make a list of people who may be able to fill them in. Knowing for sure what we have and what remains to be investigated, especially if working in a group, is essential.

Take the time necessary to discover and document what you have heard and who said it. Bear in mind that there will be people and groups who do not want their name to appear publicly or to be associated with infiltration, but their information about the cases may be important and we should try to include it in the investigation. Also assess the credibility of the sources, people may have resentments or prejudices that influence their memories.

Remember: keep your materials safe! Imagine the terrible impact this information would have if it were discovered that the person you are investigating was not actually an infiltrator, or if it were to reach the police and compromise the investigation.

### ***4. Confirm or discard suspicions***

This stage has to be thorough by nature: investigate every aspect of the person's account, look for clues and inconsistencies. The aim is to establish whether the identity with which they presented themselves is real, or whether, on the contrary, we are dealing with an infiltrator using a false identity.

It is very useful to review the profiles of infiltrators published so far to get an idea of what kind of details to look out for. But remember that each case is different and that some aspects are more important than others.

Other things to check could be the extent of their existence outside the group in which they are active, and whether their personal and employment history, etc., are correct. You could try to confirm their existence by tracing their past: whether they really studied at the

Note: This question is especially relevant in the UK context, where infiltrators were agents with a long history and experience in the police and military forces, where these driving skills are acquired. In our current context, infiltrators have a different profile (recently graduated agents) and, therefore, they may not have these skills, although in their real identity they have at least a driving licence because it is a requirement for the national police exam. Sergio, for example, had all the driving licences, which helped him to carry out many logistical tasks in which driving trucks or vans was required.

### ***8. What is their attitude or personality like?***

The charm, friendliness and general kindness of the infiltrators is often commented on. They are seen as willing to do anything they can to help. They are very conciliatory, they shy away from any kind of controversy (their own or others').

Most of them are very empathetic and approachable people with great audacity in understanding and dealing with the emotions, conflicts and personal crises of those around them. They usually offer to listen and be an emotional support, but always with caution, never being intrusive in the privacy of the other.

That does not mean that at certain moments they cannot adopt other types of strategies when it comes to positioning themselves in conflicts because that is what their superiors recommend.

### ***9. Do they have money problems?***

They are often willing to help people with money, for example, by waiving petrol expenses or buying rounds of food or drink. Sometimes they claim that expenses are already covered in some way, for example through their work.

They are not necessarily ostentatious, they may even complain about their financial situation or appear to need to be careful with their spending so as not to stand out, but they still always seem to have access to money.

that of Carlos: he had hardly any decoration, it gave the impression that no one really lived there, the water from the tap was brown. Also that of María, who lived for three years in a tourist apartment without changing a single picture, an apartment that at that time had been converted into a regular rental due to the lack of tourists during COVID.

The houses they live in, or in which they claim to live, always have a “lucky” factor when it comes to getting them: it's the flat “of their uncle,” “of a friend of their mother's,” “their boss lets them have it for a cheap rent,” etc.

Although there are also cases in which the infiltrator never went up or showed anyone the flat where they supposedly lived.

If you know the exact address, it's a good thread to start pulling on by obtaining the property's title deed.

## ***6. How did they become involved in the organisation or its circles?***

We are referring to the first contact or experience that the infiltrator talks about when they join the political collective. In most cases, they have been to activities in open spaces with limited political content: food banks, community gyms, feminist book clubs... This serves as “endorsement” when it comes to starting to be active in a more politicised space. It tends to generate more confidence than saying you've never been to anything. It is very important to pinpoint the exact moment in time when it appears and the place where it does so for the first time.

## ***7. Do they have exceptional driving skills or do they have a driving licence with almost all permits?***

Something that is said about many infiltrators is their above-average driving ability, which is not surprising considering the requirements to be a national police officer.

schools they say they did, whether they worked where they say they did, etc.

The date of birth is always important information, and in our cases the false one usually coincides with the real one. Also the stories about their childhood, family, work, etc. It is not uncommon for infiltrators to use details from their “real” life to give credibility to their story, although the degree to which these details are valuable is relative. In some cases, these fragments of information have been decisive, while in others they have been of little help. It is very difficult to predict what will be important and what will not, so it is best to record absolutely everything.

It is usually a slow process of eliminating possibilities. It is a question of determining whether someone is a “ghost”, someone who seems to exist, but who vanishes when you try to investigate their past.

## ***5. Contact or incorporate more people into the group***

When you reach the point where you think your suspicions require further confirmation, you will probably have to talk to other people who knew him. This step can require a lot of care: the people you approach must be aware of the group's agreements and understand the sensitivity of the process.

Be aware that the people you approach may get angry, go into shock or outright denial. And prepare well to avoid your suspicions being rejected and a reaction getting out of hand, and also to avoid mere suspicions leading to people being exposed without further investigation.

Make sure that new people are given space and support to process the news. In this step you should make it clear that the investigation, for the time being, is still just that, and that no conclusions have been reached yet. You should also emphasise the confidentiality agreements.

To explain that we suspect someone who may be a good friend or have a relationship with the people we approach to get more infor-

mation, we need to be very sensitive. Each person reacts differently and we cannot always foresee how the situation will turn out. But one of the things that should distinguish us from the police and the State is that we have a sense of responsibility towards our comrades, even if we have political differences with them. At this point you should consider preparing the support that both you and others may need.

Express the individual needs in your group, and always keep each other informed about who is doing what.

Intuit what each person is willing to contribute. Some will want to be involved in all aspects, others may be concerned that the investigation will be a “single issue” that will leave aside the rest of their political activities, but they are still interested in the decisions. In addition, there are certain issues to be aware of, such as balancing divergent needs (e.g. privacy and taking action) and the risk of burnout and exhaustion.

## Results of the investigation

The research is unlikely to produce definitive results. Absolute certainty about undercover police officers has only been achieved when their real name has been discovered. In some cases this has been revealed by carelessness and mistakes on the part of the undercover officer in question that made it possible to discover it, as in the case of Dani, who gave a USB stick to a fellow activist thinking that he had deleted the information it previously contained. They managed to recover photos of him in his police uniform at the Ávila Police Academy, photos with his fellow police officers, etc. In other cases, the ability of the group to follow all possible leads and carry out good investigations has made it possible to reveal their identities.

Below we list the possible results of the investigations.

As we have mentioned several times throughout the manual, there are common patterns but also exceptions. In this case, the undercover agent in Girona did introduce her real family and friends to her partner, she even gave the real name and profession of her friend and her mother, as well as taking him to the house where she really lived with her mother. But they didn't just meet on one occasion, the undercover police officer's mother played an active role throughout the entire undercover operation, via telephone and daily video calls.

Furthermore, even if there is no contact with their environment, some of the family references they allude to during the infiltration may coincide with those of their real life. For example, Sergio said he had an older brother who worked as a firefighter in Santiago, and it was true.

### ***4. Does their work or their “personal” life make them absent for long periods of time or many short periods?***

It seems that many undercover agents have “jobs” that force them to be absent for long periods of time, up to several weeks at a time (usually in the summer). These jobs or personal absences would provide them with money (for example, in Sergio's case, when he went to Galicia to see his family, he would come back saying that his grandmother had given him 500 euros, which allowed him to justify being unemployed for a while, or María used to be absent in the summer and said it was to work intensively at a yacht club in Mallorca and thus be able to support herself financially).

### ***5. Did their house seem uninhabited?***

A common theme was how unwelcoming or uninhabited their houses were, although with some exceptions. There were some materials arranged in an orchestrated way in the house that they wanted to signify “political militant.” The lack of a “personal touch” or material possessions also seemed evident. A very clear example is

story and thus ensuring greater trust in the environment in which she was operating. Who would suspect a friend/activist/partner if you know their mother and friends? That is why it is important to remember details of these people, addresses, etc., for the purposes of the investigation.

## ***2. Are their political ideas almost non-existent or underdeveloped?***

In most cases, infiltrators have had very little to say about the politics of the movement they infiltrate. Although they show an interest in listening to others, they contribute little and generally avoid or distance themselves from these debates. On the other hand, they are “model militants” in terms of their involvement in logistical issues, treasury, attendance at assemblies, actions, etc.

When they do show interest, it tends to be superficial, or from the position of active listening as a way of learning, and the books and reference material they have are standard, popular material that shows little depth or breadth.

**Warning:** This is something that could be applicable to many people in the movement in general, but in certain circles that shallowness is remarkable.

## ***3. Has anyone met their family?***

Some infiltrators never talk about their family, while others do so a lot. However, the opportunities to meet them never come up, there are always excuses. Infiltrators may show photos and other materials indicating the existence of supposed family members, and comment that they have close relationships with them.

Others have invented stories about abusive relationships (and used them to gain trust), but talk incoherently about how they are going to see them. Sometimes family crises, such as a seriously ill parent, are used as an excuse to be away for long periods of time.

## ***1. It is proven that they are not an infiltrator***

In the best case scenario, we will be able to eliminate suspicions about the individual in question. But it is not enough to reach this conclusion and consider it settled. We will have to communicate our conclusions to everyone with whom the issue has been discussed. We insist that we cannot destroy a person's reputation through innuendo or by allowing rumours to persist. A decision will also have to be made as to whether or not to tell the person under investigation.

For some of them it will mean a degree of transparency that needs to be assessed, but others may take it very badly. Other groups have decided simply not to mention the investigation, something that may have the drawback that the story lingers on.

Depending on how widespread the suspicions are among the people, the issue may come up again.

Remember that if the material gathered falls into the wrong hands, that information could be used against the person under investigation. So if the suspicions prove to be wrong, destroy the information gathered.

## ***2. We are not sure***

The world of police infiltration, informers, snitches, confidential informants and private spies is murky by nature. It is run by State structures with professionals and mechanisms that do everything possible to hide activities and create covers. Many of us may have legitimate reasons for not always being completely open about our past or our personal histories. If we add to this the fact that our political movements have increasingly internalised a culture of security and respect for the privacy of others, we find ourselves in a situation in which recognising an undercover cop is quite difficult.

If you suspect someone who is or was in your assemblies or collectives, you must realise that there is a good chance that you will never know if these suspicions are or were unfounded.

It is possible that you are focusing in the wrong direction: perhaps the problem lies with someone else in the group (who may be spreading rumours to cover their tracks), or the problem is that people in the group are careless about security, or the group is subject to technological surveillance. In any of these cases, it may be best to put suspicions aside for the time being. You can approach the problem from other perspectives: consider what your collective or assembly does and what the risks are of taking that direction, or whether the leaks prevent you from continuing to carry out political action with the methods you have chosen.

We suggest that a good way to deal with the issue is to be aware of security needs and take every possible precaution in this regard. Have an open and honest debate about possible threats to your political project and what measures you can take to counter them.

In many situations you will never be 100% sure that someone is an infiltrator. Which leaves you with the unpleasant decision of what to do next. For example, in the context of the Public Inquiry into Undercover Policing in the UK, the Undercover Research Group and other groups made public information about infiltrators that, despite the fact that there was no definitive evidence, they did consider to have sufficient indications to confirm it. In these cases, the small doubts they had led them to limit the information they published: they decided not to publish photos or full names.

In Spain there are similar cases but for the moment it has been decided not to publish them until definitive evidence is available. One example could have been the case of Marian, who was expelled from Mothers Against Repression in 2021 but whose true identity could not be 100% proven with evidence until 2024.

### ***3. If you are right...***

If you have found definitive evidence, or circumstantial evidence so important that it cannot be ignored, you will need to think carefully about the next steps. It is almost always a good idea to go public, as most infiltrators are active or could potentially be active again in more territories and movements than we might think.

- Lucía Rodríguez de Ves: [eldiario.es/politica/policia-espio-colectivos-sociales-madrilenos-durante-tres-anos-agente-infiltrada\\_1\\_11312665.html](https://eldiario.es/politica/policia-espio-colectivos-sociales-madrilenos-durante-tres-anos-agente-infiltrada_1_11312665.html)
- María Isern Torres: [directa.cat/una-policia-sinfiltra-tres-anys-en-els-moviments-populars-de-girona](https://directa.cat/una-policia-sinfiltra-tres-anys-en-els-moviments-populars-de-girona)

## **The 17 questions we work with**

### ***1. No life background? Lack of roots?***

Generally, infiltrators have little background. They often have a “story”: where they are from and why they left. Details are usually scarce, and there is very little overlap between their previous world and their militant world. It is rare to come across friends or see photos of their “previous” life, even if they talk about them or the suspect says they are going to see them. As these identities are created for these infiltrations, they have no past and we will find nothing about it in any record or on the internet (except for what they may have done with the infiltration already underway, such as sports races they may have signed up for or university enrolments).

In the vast majority of the cases on which we have based this text, the infiltrator's city of origin was not the same as the one they infiltrated. We assume that this was to avoid them being recognised or their past being more easily verified (Sergio was from Santiago and infiltrated Madrid, Dani was from Mallorca and did so in Barcelona, María was also from Mallorca and infiltrated Girona, etc.) The case of Marian would be the exception as she was from Aranjuez and led her fake and real life there too.

They usually justify moving to a different city to the one they live in for work or study reasons (nothing unusual, the vast majority of people do it for that reason).

**Warning:** In the case of Girona it has been confirmed that María introduced real family members and friends (who were not state officials) to the activists in the areas where she infiltrated. We assume that this was done under the pretext of reinforcing her

# Research Material

## Links for each case

The first thing we would like to emphasise before starting this section is the great importance of reading every article that has been published in the media about the cases that have been uncovered. We were able to discover several of them precisely after reading the first ones, as we detected the common patterns and many of them coincided with the suspected persons. To centralise this information, we have listed links that take you directly to the articles (in Spanish and Catalan).

All links are available here.<sup>1</sup>

- Carlos Pérez Moreno: [elsaltodiario.com/policia/policia-infiltrado-movimientos-sociales-madrid-juancar](https://elsaltodiario.com/policia/policia-infiltrado-movimientos-sociales-madrid-juancar)
- María Ángeles Gómez Armendáriz: [elsaltodiario.com/policia/marta-estupa-dos-decadas-infiltrada-movimientos-sociales](https://elsaltodiario.com/policia/marta-estupa-dos-decadas-infiltrada-movimientos-sociales)
- Ignacio José Enseñat Guerra: [directa.cat/un-agent-de-la-policia-espanyola-sinfiltra-a-lesguerra-independentista-i-al-moviment-pel-dret-a-lhabitatge](https://directa.cat/un-agent-de-la-policia-espanyola-sinfiltra-a-lesguerra-independentista-i-al-moviment-pel-dret-a-lhabitatge)
- Daniel Hermoso Pérez: [directa.cat/dani-el-segon-talp-destat-per-espiar-lactivisme](https://directa.cat/dani-el-segon-talp-destat-per-espiar-lactivisme)
- María Victoria Canillas Sánchez: [elsaltodiario.com/policia/identifican-una-agente-policia-infiltrada-movimientos-sociales-madrid](https://elsaltodiario.com/policia/identifican-una-agente-policia-infiltrada-movimientos-sociales-madrid)
- Ramón Muñoz Fernández: [directa.cat/un-talp-policial-en-lactivisme-de-valencia](https://directa.cat/un-talp-policial-en-lactivisme-de-valencia)
- Sergio Gigirey Amado: [elsaltodiario.com/policia/seis-anos-infiltrado-movimientos-sociales-madrilenos](https://elsaltodiario.com/policia/seis-anos-infiltrado-movimientos-sociales-madrilenos)

<sup>1</sup><https://notrace.how/resources/read/handbook-for-exposing-an-undercover-cop.html#header-links-for-each-case>

These groups may also be affected and should be made aware of the case.

Making the information public requires sensitivity. Some steps to follow could be the following:

1. Give prior warning to those people who had contact with the infiltrator. It may not always be possible, but it is important to make an effort in that direction. It is horrible to discover that a former colleague, partner or friend was an undercover cop by seeing their photo on the internet or in the news.
2. Keep in mind which anonymity needs to be protected and make sure that everyone who knew the infiltrator is aware of the need to avoid discovering personal details without permission, such as the real names of the people involved (this is particularly important for people who had strong ties, of any kind, with the infiltrators).
3. Prepare all the evidence and, if you can, organise it with alternative media such as La Directa or El Salto so that they publish it and give it media coverage. Make sure you are in contact with journalists who understand your needs and the emotional effect that these kinds of issues can have on people, even more so if certain people have had close ties with the infiltrator. We are referring to the management of time, the content of the publication, etc. It is also good practice to provide as many details as possible about the activities in which the infiltrator participated, as well as their entire history since they entered, so that other groups and people can contextualise them: memories of names and faces can fade. In this way, we can help others to know who they are talking about and also to identify common points with other cases that have not yet been investigated.
4. The management of this process within the group is essential. Support tools must be prepared for those who will be most affected by the consequences. In our experience, it has been essential to have the support of centres specialised in caring for victims of political violence, abuse and torture, such as Sira.

5. Discourage “I already knew” type responses as much as possible. They are never helpful, especially not for the people affected. Bear in mind that they may still be struggling with feelings of guilt, self-loathing, etc., and these are things that can take years to resolve. What's more, what they reflect is fear, insecurity and non-acceptance. It is clear that if these people “already knew” and did not say or do anything, they would be anything but supportive.

as the agent could not act on the basis of certain information for fear of being discovered or because he was also involved in a court case under his false identity as a militant.

Finally, a frequent question we are asked is how to attract new people back to our organisations. How do we combine openness and security? As we said before, there is no single answer. Each collective will have its own needs and priorities. What matters is to create, from the outset, a culture that responds to the ambitions of the organisation, and that sticks to them. Don't be afraid to ask questions, but be honest about why you are doing so. If you think you need a higher level of security or secrecy, find out what the specific threats you face are and plan how to address them to minimise the risk. There is no such thing as 100% security, but there are always ways to find solutions.

The State may invest heavily in trying to stop us, but thousands of actions have been carried out, many organisations are taking precautions and operating successfully, and this is clear proof that we can outsmart them when we take it seriously.

turning in on our fears. Trying to reduce the risks in order to continue with our political activity.

The point is to analyse what kind of collective or assembly yours is, how open or closed you want it to be, what objectives you have and, based on that analysis, establish security protocols adapted to them in which you all feel comfortable.

## Final reflections

Ironically, a well-conducted investigation can be inspiring and empowering, even though discovering an infiltrator is, at the very least, unpleasant. The material in this manual has been drawn from several such processes and from their participants. In some cases, the groups emerged stronger, although the road we have travelled, and are still travelling, is often rocky.

In writing this document, our idea is not to encourage paranoia, but to reduce it. Accusations are often made based on rumours and speculation that only help our enemies. We have tried to offer some tools and techniques that will allow you to carry out in-depth investigations to put an end to rumours and bad practices and to strengthen us in the process.

Despite all the force with which the police and the State have attacked the organised working class, and the deep damage it has caused us, it has not destroyed us. Giving in to the fatalism that we can do nothing allows them to win. There are still many things we can do, there are many horizons to fight for, and many battles to be fought.

The tactics will change, they will adapt and adjust to the reality on the ground as we find solutions, but what is most important is what made us start out in the political struggle and the emancipatory objectives we are seeking.

We also now know that the use of infiltrators has had unexpected side effects, such as the filing of court cases or indirect assistance with certain actions. We know of cases in which the presence of an undercover police officer has made it possible to protect militants,

# Consequences and Lessons Learned

## What can you do if you discover that you have had an infiltrator among you?

In general, you should be discreet, since in these circumstances there is not only the risk of spreading paranoia, but also the risk that the person in question will find out about the suspicions against him or her. If this happens, they will most likely cover their tracks and disappear before you can confront them.

Most of the nine cases discussed here were discovered in the process of deactivating the infiltrator. They were no longer living in the cities where they infiltrated, but they always left the door open to return, maintaining virtual contact through messages and calls.

Keep in mind that any investigation, regardless of the outcome, can damage the networks of trust within the group. Particularly after the public exposure, this can be a problem if some of the people feel excluded from the process and angry if they did not have the chance to have a say in the decisions.

Once the investigation is over (and again, 100% certainty may not always be possible to obtain), your group may have to work hard to restore trust among its members.

A newly discovered infiltrator can cause significant personal damage on their escape from the situation. The impact of a discovery of this magnitude can divide groups if we do not have the evidence prepared to explain the reason for the investigation. If we do not have all the evidence, it is also possible that the infiltrator will try to turn the movement or other people or organisations against the investigating group, or that they will use their escape to cause friction and internal struggles.

## Mutual support

Investigating and unmasking an infiltrator has a profound emotional impact. The State, for example, provides psychological support to infiltrators, and we should be aware of what an investigation can involve.

You must ensure, at all stages of the process, that you take into account the emotional needs of the people affected, as well as those of the investigators, even though in our cases we were the same people.

## Lessons learnt when providing emotional support during the investigation phase

In the process of investigating infiltrators, confidence in oneself and in how others are perceived is one of the first things to be lost. The personal impact of conducting an investigation is often underestimated.

By uniting among ourselves we can create spaces in which to meet and support each other by sharing experiences and political ideas. This is one of our greatest strengths. It is important to know that each person reacts differently. Reactions will depend on each person's stage in life at the time and their relationship with the infiltrator.

People who are very close to the infiltrator often find it difficult to accept the deception, and it can take a long time for them to understand what has happened. While the investigation is ongoing, it is important to bear this in mind and to present information and evidence in person to help people process the news.

Do not rush decisions: people will need to feel that their needs are being taken into account and therefore they must have a space to express them.

Try to set aside old personal and political quarrels that distract from or affect objectivity during the investigation process.

Each person handles the situation as best they can, and we think it is important to respect everyone's wishes and preferences. Some will prefer not to know anything, others may already have too much on their minds or in their lives to deal with the issue. Once the research process is concluded and the results are presented to the collective or assembly, unease may arise among those who have not been invited to participate in the research group. If not managed well, it can be a delicate issue.

## Paranoia

The fact of believing that you share spaces, assemblies, collectives and/or your life with an undercover police officer can give rise to fears and paranoia. Common symptoms may be seeing spies on every corner or pointing the finger at anyone who has ever done something slightly suspicious. This is something we must be careful of. Many things can influence us, but it is important not to let ourselves be carried away by our fears and to try to be able to carry out a serious investigation. Paranoia does not help, as it only disrupts the process.

If we share spaces and collectives with people who are suspicious and even generate paranoia in them, it is important that they feel listened to and understood. Delicately ask what they believe or fear; listen sincerely but cautiously; challenge any disagreement with respect and be open to the fact that it may not be paranoia but serious concerns.

Another aspect of paranoia is when it disguises itself as “security awareness.” Security is about reducing risks to an acceptable level so that we can continue to do things; paranoia is when the situation gets out of hand and prevents us from doing anything, assuming the general fear of a seemingly invincible State and police force.

The questions we propose help to mitigate some of the paranoia through tangible research and accompaniment. Asking ourselves what we know, what we fear and focusing on real data, usually helps to unmask infiltrators based on objective information, without