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Историческая память о сопротивлении режиму Нового государства в современной Португалии

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**The memories of the resistance to Estado Novo
in contemporary Portugal**

Аннотация. 25 апреля 1974 г. в результате бескровной «Революции гвоздик» пал один из самых долгоживущих авторитарных режимов в Южной Европе (Новое государство). В современной Португалии за последние тридцать девять лет историческая память о сопротивлении авторитарному режиму играла особенно важную роль в деятельности левых партий и общественно-политических движений. В данной статье рассматривается важность реконструкции событий прошлого в новых формах политического протеста на фоне глобального финансово-экономического кризиса.

Abstract. On April 25th, 1974, the Portuguese «Carnation revolution» ended one of the longest dictatorships in Southern Europe (Estado Novo). During the last thirty-nine years, the political and cultural memories of the opposition and resistance to «Estado Novo» have played an important role in Portuguese politics, namely in left wing parties and sociopolitical movements. This article examines the renewed importance and significance of this historical memory, in the context of severe socio-economic crisis, focusing on the most recent forms of political protest and social mobilization that closely relate to it.

Ключевые слова: Новое государство, политическая оппозиция, салазаризм, политические партии, политическая культура, историческая память, современная Португалия.

Keywords: *New State, political opposition, salazarism, political parties, political culture, historical memory, contemporary Portugal.*

Singing Grândola

On 15th of February 2013 a group of activists in the galleries of the Portuguese Parliament interrupted the Prime Minister P.P. Coelho, the leader of the centre-right coalition (formed by the PSD – Social Democratic Party and CDS-PP – Social Democratic Center-Popular Party), in office after the June 2011 elections, singing a well-known 1970's Portuguese protest song «*Grândola Vila Morena*». After leaving the Parliament, one of the protesters, from the «*Que se Lixe a Troika*» (Screw Troika) movement, explain to a journalist that it was a symbolic action designed to remember, like it is said in that song, that the power belongs to the people (10).

In the statement, signed by Screw Troika movement and sent to the newspapers and radios the choice of *Grândola* was once again explained: to convey «the feeling of democracy necessity that respects people's but not the international institutions needs, which command the country's destiny» (10). The movement was referring to the so-called «*Troika*» – the trilateral commission (International Monetary Fund, Central European Bank and European Union) that assesses the economic situation and negotiates the terms of the Portuguese bailout¹.

A few days later a group of activists interrupted M. Relvas speech, the minister of Parliamentary Affairs, this time in Gaia (a city in the northern part of the country), singing *Grândola* and demanding the government's resignation. *Grândola* returned once again to the Parliament on 26 June 2013, when a group of citizens turned their back on the prime minister (a powerful gesture of rejection) chanting that well-known protest song.

These were not isolated actions, but a part of single socio-political struggle, first, against the socialist government (until June 2011), and then, in the new political cycle after the elections, against the

¹ *The seventh update of the Memorandum of Understanding on specific Economic Policy Conditionality is dated May 2013. The last evolution was done in May-June 2013.*

PSD-CDS government, and its austerity measures – the «cuts» in public services, and tax incveases.

In a recent survey the majority of the respondents (70%) considered that the economic crisis had a major impact on their quality of life (15, p. 20). Unemployment and underpaid jobs are the main problems in Portuguese society¹. Mostly young people, who are affected by these problems, started to build their own organizations, different from the classical labour unions, to defend their rights.

In a deeper level, the reasons for the political and social crisis are much more complex and structural. Although this article discusses the Portuguese case, it cannot be understood without analysing it as a part of Global Financial Crisis. It must be said that there is an «asymmetric construction of the euro» and a tendency to «cause more social inequality between European countries and with each of them» (24, p. 8).

According to *Quality of Democracy Barometer* (15), the majority of the Portuguese (65%) are little or not satisfied with the democracy functioning and it is clear relation between this opinion and the economic situation (15, p. 23). A more profound question, closely linked to «several pathologies that affect the democratic order and its legitimacy», namely the «twin crisis of representation and participation» (18, p. 4) can be asked.

Part of the political game in Portuguese democracy is played by political parties as key agents. In the 2011 elections PSD was the most voted party (38,66%), followed by the Socialist Party (28,05%); CDS-PP had 11,71 % votes; the electoral alliance CDU (Unitary Democratic Coalition) of the Communist Party and the «Partido Ecologista "Os Verdes"» (Ecological Party «The Greens», founded in 1982) had 7,90%; and finally –«Bloco de Esquerda» (Left Bloc) had 5,17%². Other political parties, with less than 2% (ranging from the 1,12% of the extreme-left

¹ According to the National Institute of Statistic (INE) the unemployment rate in the second quarter of 2013 was 16,4% (См. A taxa de desemprego estimada foi de 16,4% – 2. Trimestre de 2013. Instituto Nacional de Estatística. – Mode of access: http://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_destaque&DESTAQUESdest_boui=151971819&DESTAQUESmodo=2)

² For electoral results consult Comissão Nacional de Eleições (Elections National Committee) created after the 1974 Revolution (см. Comissão Nacional de Eleições. Resultados Eleitorais – Mode of access: http://eleicoes.cne.pt/sel_eleicoes.cfm?m=raster).

PCTP/MRPP¹ to the Humanist Party with 0,06%), could not elect representatives. Almost 42% of the electorate did not vote in the last legislative elections, which is in a sharp contrast with the low level of abstention (8,34%) at the first free elections on 25 of April 1975 (19).

We must say that in the developing «third-wave» democracies the skepticism about parties and politicians is stronger than in established one. According to a recent survey data, collected in Portugal 47% of respondents consider that the party politics limits the citizen's participation (15, p. 29). Some social movements claim their independence from the parties, precisely, as the one of their most relevant and distinctive characteristics.

In recent years, very interesting examples of social and political movements have appeared in European countries, as more and more citizens want their voice to be heard. These social movements are plural, heterogeneous, have no traditional leaders and composed by people of different age groups and political sensibilities. Some of that people had prior political experience, but most of them have to learn in process.

There are different political and social initiatives ranging from the usual forms like demonstrations and general strikes to the «new» experiences, like «occupations» that recall the social dynamics of the revolutionary biennium after the 1974 Revolution. For example, on 25th of April 2012 in Porto, the building in the Fontinha neighbourhood was «occupied» and a collective self-managed camp was created there.

The social media are used in a very interesting way, showing the existence of communication networks that are not mediated by traditional political agents and organizations like parties or labour unions. On 12th of March 2011 a demonstration organised by the «*Geração à Rasca*» (Desperate Generation) protest movement, with the help of «Facebook», gathered thousands of people in Lisbon and Porto streets, mobilizing people who were not engaged in political parties. The intended protest was non-partisan, laic, and peaceful and had an aim to reinforce the participatory democracy. Soon after that the «12 March Movement» (M12M) was created.

In May 2011 the Rossio Square (Lisbon) was temporarily occupied at the same time as the «acampada» (camping, occupying public spaces like squares) movement began in Spain, calling for «Real democ-

¹ Communist Party of the Portuguese Workers.

racy, now!». Later, on 15th of October the Portuguese social movements joined a global protest and in numerous Portuguese cities thousands of people took the streets, defending a participatory democracy «for transparency in political decisions, for the end of an imposed precariousness and for the right to work...» (8). In Lisbon the demonstration ended in front of the Portuguese Parliament (Assembleia da República), where all most popular public events and demonstrations took place.

On 24th of November 2011 a general strike called by the CGTP (General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers)¹ and a demonstration of the «15 October Movement» took place. Near the Parliament the several incidents of police brutality and detentions took place.

The new general strike was called by CGTP on 22 March 2012 and again other social movements (namely the «15 October Platform») were present in the Lisbon's demonstration. This day was marked by police using excessive force over the demonstrators in Chiado, Lisbon.

On 15th of September 2012 the «*Screw Troika, we want our lives!*» demonstration gathered 1 million persons on the streets of the thirty Portuguese cities in a protest against austerity. Until the end of the year several events took place, namely with numerous musicians and artists. Just like it had been during the New State dictatorship, music and performances had a counter-hegemonic message.

On 14th of November 2012, the day of a general strike and a national demonstration, the police charged violently over the protesters in S. Bento. In Lisbon that night became the stage of violent protest and police persecutions. On 2 March 2013 the «*Screw Troika*» movement, using one of the verses of *Grândola* lyrics², called for demonstration on the streets for the dismissal of the PSD government and against its austerity measures.

Singing *Grândola* was, therefore, part of this ongoing political process of social mobilization with a revitalization of civic participation. For a large number of groups and political agents in Portuguese society, this is a battle against the neoliberal economical principles, the sup-

¹ *The largest labour union federation, politically in the PCP's sphere of influence.*

² «*O povo é quem mais ordena*» meaning that the people are in charge and the power belongs to the people.

posed destruction of the welfare state and the loss of the «conquests» of the 1974 Revolution and democracy.

The «*Movimento das Forças Armadas*» (Movement of the Armed Forces – MFA), a key political agent in the 1974 Revolution, had an apparently simple program: Democracy, Decolonization and Development. The last idea or «promise» today seems to be unfulfilled, in light of recent economic policies and their social consequences. One of the most important dimensions of democracy for the Portuguese is the state's capacity to insure a minimal quality of life level (15, p. 22). In Portugal less than 30% people expressed optimism about their future (16, p. 148).

In this sense, this is a battle that calls upon the past of resistance and revolution in the fight for one of the paths that will lead to the future. The song, which is used in these protests, *Grândola Vila Morena*, was written by Zeca Afonso (1929–1987) and recorded in France in 1971 as one of the tracks of the album «*Cantigas do Maio*» (May Songs). This singer-songwriter was one of the most important voices among those who use their music as a form of political protest and cultural resistance during *Estado Novo* (New State), from 1933 to 1974.

In March 1974 A. Zeca sang *Grândola* in Lisbon in a very emotive and memorable concert and that was one of the reasons why the military involved in the conspiracy choose it to be used in the radio show «*Limite*» as the second signal for the beginning of the military operations that overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship on 25th of April 1974 (the Carnation Revolution).

In addition to the political context of its use, it is also important to analyse the content of this song. According to its lyrics, *Grândola* (a southern Portuguese city) can be seen as an ideal and utopian place, the «land of fraternity». There we could find a «friend in each corner» and «egalitarianism in each face». In *Grândola* there were no enemies, no political police, and no eavesdroppers (called «*bufos*» during the New State). It was the town where «the people rule». In the recorded version, the choir, in the traditional southern Portuguese way of singing, represents the power of a collective voice, and therefore, of collective action.

Having a strong emotional and political meaning, *Grândola* became an «anthem» of the 1974 Revolution. It is a song that reminds people of the hardships of the past, but also of resilience and victory. It is,

clearly, a part of the heritage of the *anti-fascismo* (anti-fascism), that is to say the narrative of the opposition and resistance against the New State.

P. Vieira wrote about the appropriation of the revolutionary imaginary in this political moment, suggesting three distinct connotations that make this song particularly effective as a protest catalyst and as a starting point to analyse the social and political moment: *Grândola* summons a sentiment of nostalgia regarding a heroic past of Portuguese history; this song appeals to a revitalization of political activity; finally, *Grândola* works as a metonymy of the Badiou's «Communist Hypothesis» (26).

In the last thirty-nine years *Grândola* has been often sang and heard. At the end of the annual commemorative parade of the 1974 Revolution, that «walks down» the Liberty Avenue and ends at Rossio in Lisboa, and after the speeches, the crowd sings *Grândola* as the closing act of the day.

The use of this song in a protest context, not a commemorative one, constructs new meanings adding an anti-neoliberal protest to the anti-fascist struggle.

The political culture of the resistance against the New State

The twentieth century historiography, the period of the dictatorship, is one of the most important work fields for several social scientists: «Towering over other issues lies Salazar's New State: its origins, its nature, its ability to survive for so long, its place in a wider European context, its demise and its consequences» (1, p. 1). The nature and definition of the New State regime is an important issue for the Portuguese contemporary history and historiography where coexist distinctive interpretations. The definition of the regime as fascist is not unanimous and some scholars hold that that concept does not apply to the Portuguese case; instead the regime is characterized as authoritarian.

This is not a merely academic discussion, being also present in the public sphere, and at a moment when the Portuguese society is facing social, political and economic cleavages. In August 2012, Portuguese historian M. Loff's book review of *História de Portugal* (2009), coordinated by Rui Ramos, sparked a huge controversy among social scientists, showing different perceptions about the Portuguese twentieth century and the New State. For what concerns us here, it is important to

acknowledge M. Loff's position. The historian argued that Rui Ramos was proposing an interpretation of the New State that deconstructed the dictatorial image of Salazarism (7).

In the discourse and life narratives of those who opposed and fought the dictatorship it is not uncommon to find the word «fascist» (referring to their political enemies) and «fascism» (as the definition of the regime). During the last thirty-nine years, after the Carnation Revolution, the political and cultural memories of the opposition and resistance to the New State and the anti-fascism narrative have played an important role in Portuguese politics, in the activities of left wing parties and political and social movements. The «resistance ethos» is an important feature, or virtue, for the left wing militant, based on a very clear choice that defined (and still defines) a political character.

The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) was founded in March 1921, during the Portuguese First Republic (1910–1926) and played a key role in the resistance against the New State. In its program there is a section dedicated to the «Fascist dictatorship»¹. The history of the period is described as one of the darkest periods of Portuguese history, for those who dared to fight for the rights of the people, for liberty and better living and work conditions were subjected to persecution, prison, torture and murder (14). Those persecuted by the dictatorship are the heroes of the narrative of resistance and they still maintain their symbolical and political capital.

The PCP maintains the narrative of the resistance and «sacrifice» alive. The historical leader of PCP, Álvaro Cunhal (1913–2005), had a public image forged in the struggle against the New State and this was a major part of his political and symbolic capital. A. Cunhal, a politician, an intellectual and an artist, joined the party in 1931 being 17 years old, lived clandestinely, and knew prison (from which he escaped in January 1960) and exile. He returned to Portugal immediately after the 1974 Revolution, became a minister in the first Provisional Government and was elected to the Democratic Parliament, where he remained until 1987.

¹ There is a reference to the 48 years of «fascist dictatorship», including in a single historical period the Military Dictatorship (1926–1933) and the New State (1933–1974).

In 2013, year of the centenary of A. Cunhal's birth, the Communist Party planned a series of commemorative events, from conferences to exhibitions, and the publishing of a photo biography of the communist leader. At the opening ceremony in Lisbon, January 2013, the PCP secretary-general, Jerónimo de Sousa, talking about the importance of A. Cunhal, pinpointed the link between the past experience and the future, as the «example» and a theoretical reference (4). In June, the name of Álvaro Cunhal was given to an avenue in Lisbon.

The Socialist Party (PS) in its Declaration of Principles traced its political roots. This document draws a connexion between the contemporary socialism and the nineteenth century sociopolitical movement. But it also claims that this organization was «born and grew in the fight against the fascism and for the democracy establishment. It's history identified with the resistance to dictatorship and with the construction of pluralist and socially advance democracy» (9).

Mário Soares (born in 1924), the historical leader of the Socialist Party, also played a very important part in the political activity against the dictatorship, was arrested, deported and exiled. He played a very important role as a lawyer, defending the political prisoners and representing the family of Humberto Delgado, the opposition candidate in the 1958 presidential elections, who was killed in Spain 1965 by members of the secret police.

In 1973 M. Soares was one of the founding members of the Socialist Party and was elected to the post of its secretary-general. M. Soares arrived at Lisbon just a few days after the 1974 Revolution. He was appointed to the position of minister of Foreign Affairs of the first three Provisional Governments. Several times being a Prime Minister (1976-1977 and 1983-1985), M. Soares was elected President of the Republic in 1986 (being the first civilian president since the 1974 Revolution) and again in 1991. For the majority of public opinion, Mário Soares is closely related to the decolonization process, started after the Carnation Revolution, and, in the democratic period, is one of the key figures of the Portuguese European integration.

Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc) presented itself for the first time in the 1999 elections. Defined as a political movement that assumes the legal form of a political party (25) and having diverse ideological legacies and backgrounds (some party militants had fought the New State regime), *Bloco* also claims the heritage of Portugal that broke «...with 48

years of dictatorship and lived a revolution where rights, freedoms and democracy, openness to the world, decolonization and the hypothesis socialist merged forever in a single word: April» (2).

Social Democratic Party (PSD), founded in May 1974 by Francisco Sá Carneiro, Francisco Pinto Balsemão and Joaquim Magalhães Mota¹, does not have the narrative of an historical background of struggle against «fascism» or «colonialism». The same can be said about Social Democratic Center Party (CDS), founded after the 1974 Revolution: «(...) indeed the CDS, which integrated sectors of the Portuguese society that espoused conservative authoritarian values, was on the verge of being declared illegal (...)» (12, p. 310)

Since the period of the Military Dictatorship (1926–1933) and during the New State there were several groups and political agents that were active against the regime, from republicans to communists, from socialists to extreme-left, and from liberals to Catholics. There were a wide range of attitudes and activities towards the regime from armed actions to participation in an opposition electoral campaign. These men could be part of a clandestine party, fight in their work place or in schools and universities. The opposition and resistance to the New State were not, of course, exclusively composed of party militants.

In fact, there was no real consensus in Salazar's regime, only the appearance of such, in a society deprived of civic rights, of free press and political pluralism. The regime, with professionalized political police, used «low-key terror in a rigidly controlled police state» (5, p. 386). The New State invested in the depoliticization of the Portuguese society, destroying the idea, very common in liberal republicanism of the beginning of the twentieth century, that people ought to participate in political life being a *citizen*. Mass participation could only be a choreographed one, to support the regime and not to be understood as a collective actor.

The Portuguese historian Fernando Rosas argues that the New State had the support of the dominant classes of society. The political behaviour of the middle classes was far more complex. In the periods of the «great fears» (of the «red Spain» during the Spanish Civil War, or the fear of communism during the early Cold War years) the level of

¹ In 1974 the party was called Popular Democratic Party (PPD). Legalized in January 1975, it was renamed, after October 1976, PSD.

acceptance of the regime was high, but in different political situations middle classes' position could change from criticising the regime to supporting the opposition. The poorest classes of society and the heterogeneous world of workers were hostile and resisted the New State (21, p. 14).

These anonymous actors of anti-fascism are, however, outside traditional accounts of opposition to the New State. Through oral history and personal interviews it is possible, however, to encounter, in life narratives, people who resisted internalizing or integrating into one's identity the core principles of the New State (23). In 1933, the regime created a propaganda machine of ideological reproduction, the National Propaganda Office (SPN later renamed National Information Office – SNI), in order to win hearts and minds, fighting the «battle for the souls». Besides the SPN, other structures and organizations, namely schools, conveyed not only the political ideas of the New State but also in a more diffuse way the patterns of understanding life, gender differences and moral codes. And some of those «invisible» premises still linger in Portuguese political culture. In some life narratives, the ideas of order, obedience, compliance and of an uncontested authority, in a world where everyone had his place (giving the idea that social mobility was not possible or desirable) and had to obey, are remembered as key features of the Portuguese mentality, that are, still today, difficult to de-construct (23).

Cultural resistance played an important role in changing the worldview imposed by the New State and in the formation of political identities that still subsist today. Both cultural practices and contents are cornerstones of the alternative ways of thinking. There were series of books, both literary and political, that formed a «resistance canon» and were important to the politicization process and the construction of an alternative political identity (23, p. 106-107). The same can be said about films (especially those programmed in film societies) and about music. *Grândola* is an example of the songbook of the resistance, but besides this song there were many others, from Zeca Afonso or other singers or songwriters. Music was, in fact, a way to spread the message.

The sociability of those who were against Salazarism was, of course, plural; nevertheless there were some key features that we can summarize. Reunions were organized to commemorate political dates that were not celebrated in the official calendar. So in a way, the opposi-

tion chose its own festive days, that had a political signification. In these meetings the «intervention songs» where sung (both the Portuguese and those from other people's resistance and struggles), poems were read and, last but not the least, politics was discussed. The college students could organize gatherings or dances that allowed man and women to be in the same space, promoting gender integration. Those cultural practices and sociabilities blended together leisure and politics.

Final Considerations

In September 1968, António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) had an accident that unabled him to remain in office. He was replaced by Marcelo Caetano (1906-1980), the leader of the reformist group. The «renewal in continuity», or the possibility of initiating a process of controlled liberalization, the so called «marcelist spring», proved to be impossible¹, partly because of the deadlock created by the perpetuation of the colonial war (1961 - Angola, 1963 - Guinea Bissau and 1964 - Mozambique until 1974), and of a growing discontent amid a certain parts of the military forces, namely middle-ranking officers. There was an increase in repressions in a context of social conflict, with the mobilization of workers and students, economic crisis in the country with little support from the international community.

On 25th of April 1974, the *Revolução dos Cravos* (Carnation Revolution) ended one of the longest dictatorships in Southern Europe and initiated the third democratization wave (6). For many activists the revolution was a key moment in their personal histories, even a «rebirth» (23, p. 151). The revolutionary period (1974-1975) and particularly the «hot summer» of 1975, witnessed an exponential growth of political and social activism and «the invention of new forms of participatory democracy» (18, p. 11). Those memories are still politically important and remain a source of inspiration.

In Portuguese society different readings and narratives of the 1974 Revolution and the subsequent revolutionary process coexist.

¹ Nevertheless, some of the politicians of the «Liberal Wing» had a political life after the 1974 revolution. One of the examples could be Francisco Sá Carneiro (1934-1980), elected to the New State National Assembly and a key figure of the «Liberal Wing». In 1973 he left his place in the Portuguese Parliament, becoming, after the revolution, one of the founding members of PPD.

In historiography «there are many different interpretations of the roles played by each of the actors in the process: the armed forces, the political parties or movements, and the social forces» (20, p. 85). 1976 marks the end of the revolutionary period, with different ideas of what Portugal should be, and the consolidation of the western type democracy, with civil, political and social rights, free elections and political pluralism.

Fernando Rosas argues that the revolution was the «genetic fingerprint of Portuguese democracy» and that democracy was conquered, not granted (19, p. 282), leaving an important mark in the political milieu. The conquest of the social and political rights was a collective victory that implied the acknowledgment of the long process of struggle and resistance. Politically that past had a very important symbolic capital and those who were identified with the former regime were subjected to «rapid and multidirectional purges» (12, p. 310).

It is clear that «the new democratic institutions associated themselves with the legacy of political opposition to the dictatorship» (12, p. 328). Symbolic measures and institutions, like schools, praising democracy, try to preserve the social narrative of a country overcoming a dictatorship, building a new regime and becoming modern and European.

On 25th of April 2014, when the fortieth anniversary of the revolution will be celebrated, the Aljube¹ Museum – the Museum of Resistance and Liberty in Lisbon – is scheduled for opening, intended to be a place to maintain the memory of the anti-fascist resistance. The creation of museums about this period was «notably absent» before, although some initiatives like the «Museum of the Republic and Resistance in Lisbon» were undertaken (12, p. 328). The name of the new museum makes a very important and direct relation between the resistance to the New State and the conquest of Democracy.

Nevertheless, maintaining this memory alive is a constant struggle. The *Associação Movimento Cívico Não Apaguem a Memória* (Association born of the Civic Movement Do Not Erase Memory) provides an example of it. In 2005 a group of citizens protested against the transformation of the former headquarters of the political police in Lisbon into luxury apartments, regarding it as an outrage to the «memory of the resistance to fascism» (17).

¹ In this former political prison, in April 2011, was opened a temporary exhibition «Voice of the Victims» that gave visibility to the resists' narratives.

The recent social conflicts brought to the public sphere a new dynamics of resistance whose agents sometimes recall the «dark days» of the New State oppression, but also the many forms of anti-fascist resistance, and the forms of political activity which went beyond traditional party politics that followed the 1974 Revolution. The Portuguese social and political context is an interesting object to understand the processes of memory and oblivion, the weight of the past in the present and, in a divided society, the role that the memories of the resistance and of the revolution can have in upcoming events.

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