

## 25 APRIL AND ITS IMPACT IN PORTUGAL AND THE WORLD

The 25 April coup brought the longest-surviving European dictatorship to an end.

Just as Samuel Huntington did in his book, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late-Twentieth Century*,<sup>1</sup> I am going to begin with a song by José Afonso. At twenty-five past midnight of 25 April 1974, his song, *Grândola, Vila Morena*, was played on Rádio Renascença as a signal confirming military operations, that had been months in the planning, were going ahead. Officers, who were members of the Movimento das Forças Armadas - MFA (the Armed Forces Movement), got out of their barracks to take part in their missions to put an end to the Estado Novo (meaning New State) regime.

### CONTEXT PRIOR TO 25 APRIL

What dictatorship was this? What were its structural axes, maintained despite a diversity of conjunctures?

The dictatorship endured for decades. The military dictatorship that came to power in 1926 paved the way for the Estado Novo, a constitutionalised dictatorship with a nationalist, authoritarian, corporatist and colonial ideology and practice.

The Estado Novo banned free trade unions and political parties, supported censorship, established a political police force (PVDE/PIDE/DGS) and created such organisations as the Mocidade Portuguesa (Portuguese Youth) and the Legião Portuguesa (Portuguese Legion), both inspired by Italian Fascism.

The defeat of Nazism and Fascism in the Second World War did not result in the collapse of the Estado Novo. The regime was even a founding member of NATO. However, it did lead to the introduction of some changes: for example, the regime did allow opposition candidates to emerge in elections, although repression by the political police and censorship continued. Other example of this adaptation was the revision of the 1933 Constitution, bending to the winds of decolonisation blowing around the world following the end of the Second World War. This led to the regime changing the designation “colony” to “overseas province” (as applied to Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and S. Tomé and Príncipe in Africa and to Goa, Damão, Macau and East-Timor in Asia and Oceania).

Throughout the 1960s, while most things remained essentially the same, some things did change.

There was a wave of mass emigration from Portugal to France, Germany and other countries, with the population of the country falling over between 1960 and 1970. The regime established a new relationship with European markets, which led to some economic growth, although starting from a very low level.

During the long 1960s up to 1974, some opposition groups gained strength, like the communists, while the socialists established a political party. New political forces also emerged, including progressive Catholics and the radical left. There were also social struggles - involving the student movement and factory and service workers; a clandestine new union organisation was created, Intersindical, which continues to exist to this day.

When, in 1968, Marcelo Caetano replaced Oliveira Salazar - the figurehead of the Estado Novo (which was also known as the Salazar regime) - there were some hopes for liberalisation. However, despite some early moves in that direction, changes were ultimately limited to renaming organisations and department (Censorship became Prior Examination, the political police, PIDE (State and International Defence Police - an acronym which had become a noun on its own), was renamed DGS (roughly General Security Division)).

While all this was going on, the country was involved in a colonial war in Africa. The war began in Angola, in 1961, spreading to Guinea-Bissau in 1963 and to Mozambique in 1964. By the middle of the decade, Portugal was fighting a colonial war on three separate fronts, two

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1 Samuel Huntington (1993) *The Third Wave. Democratization in the late Twentieth Century*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press.

of which in territories much larger than Portugal. This war required equipment and men, which were provided through compulsory military service and by the permanent corps of the armed forces. On the eve of 25 April, the number of deserters and objectors increased. The student movement and the opponents of the Estado Novo spoke out against the colonial war, with questions beginning to be asked from within a military that had supported the regime for decades. There was an acute shortage of professional officers within the military, leading to the extension and multiplication of military commissions in Africa. By 1974, it seemed as if there was no end to the war in sight, with Guinea-Bissau declaring independence in 1973 and the situation in Mozambique deteriorating. The war had been raging for 13 years.

#### **PREPARATIONS FOR 25 APRIL**

25 April was intended to bring this state of affairs to a conclusion and to end the colonial war.

With there being no prospect of the war being won militarily, from the summer of 1973 junior professional officers organised regular meetings, both in the colonies, and in Portugal, distancing themselves from the Combatants' Congress, a then recent rally of extreme-right officers. They also began to question the laws that allowed their seniority to be bypassed by officers then hastily moved up the ranks to serve in the war.

This movement of army captains became increasingly politicised and continued organising even after the government revoked the laws that were harming them professionally. Some months later, in an attempt to find a way to end the colonial war, the captains called for the overthrow of the regime.

This movement, the MFA, encompassed several different views. The MFA included officers close to General António Spínola, who had recently distanced himself from the regime and called for a political rather than a military solution to the war, and who proposed the creation of a federation of independent states, inspired by the Commonwealth. Inside the MFA other officers demanded the colonies be granted the right to self-determination and independence. This group included officers from the centre-right to the left of the ideological spectrum.

Of significant importance in describing this military movement was the existence of a political programme done in the weeks leading up to the coup. The Programme closed down the Estado Novo's executive and legislative bodies with the creation of the Junta de Salvação Nacional (roughly translated the National Salvation Council), and abolished the Mocidade Portuguesa and the Legião Portuguesa, the organizations inspired by Italian Fascism. It also expressed that peace would be achieved by political rather than by military means. It showed concern for the poorer sections of society and promoted an anti-monopoly strategy. It closed down the censorship and other repressive state entities, asserted trade union freedom and allowed political association, while calling for the formation of a civilian government within three weeks and elections to a Constituent Assembly within a year. Which is what happened.

This MFA Programme became part of the constitutional law that guided Portugal until the 1976 Constitution was approved.

#### **25 APRIL**

##### **From coup to revolution**

By the late afternoon of 25 April, it was clear that the Estado Novo was no more.

Although there was a previous political programme, which was debated and discussed among officers of various opinions, Spínola's intention was to immediately discard it. On the night of 25 to 26 April, military officers who had directed the coup from the MFA Command Post engaged in a heated debate with Spínola and other officers. Because of these discussions, some changes to the programme were made. The parts that promised to release all political

prisoners, the abolishment of the political police in the colonies and granting the colonies the right to self-determination were removed from the political programme, then released.

However, pressure from the public – who had in the meantime taken to the streets, and who were surrounding the headquarters of the political police and the jails holding political prisoners, plus the activities of left-wing military officers meant that, in practice, all political prisoners were released, and the political police was abolished in Portugal. It was our Storming of the French Bastille, the Portuguese 14th July: a clear sign of a break with the past, a symbolic break with the previous regime.

The dictatorship that had governed for more than 40 years fell in a coup that would have been bloodless but for the shots fired into the crowd from the premises of the political police prior to its surrender.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, which had been declared a national holiday, the people took to the streets again in massive demonstrations, and in an atmosphere of joy and a desire to be part of something new. The revolutionary process was about to begin.

### **Revolutionary phases**

As in many other revolutionary processes (Russia and France, for example), the Portuguese revolution went through several phases.

The start and end points of phases of the Portuguese revolution were dates such as the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1974 and the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1975, which involved right-wing movements (mainly Spínola supporters), which were then defeated and followed by turns to the left. It was followed by a Hot Summer and a Hot Autumn. The 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1975 was another important date in the Portuguese revolution, but this time the result was the removal from power of some forces associated with the Communist Party and the radical left.

There were six provisional governments during the revolutionary period, only one of which did not have members of all parties represented in the first government: the PSD, PS and, PCP. Without a Constitution, during these two years the government shared power with the National Salvation Council, the Conselho de Estado (State Council) and the Conselho da Revolução, (Council of the Revolution), with the latter consisting of military officers and representing the “institutionalisation of the MFA”.

An electoral logic coexisted with this political events, which were accompanied by significant social movements. In 1975 there were elections to a Constituent Assembly. The voter turnout was massive.

In total, seven parties were elected to the Constituent Assembly, where they wrote the 1976 Constitution. According to this new Constitution, a series of elections had to be held. In that same year, the Portuguese had to elect a parliament, a president, local authorities and autonomous governments in the Azores and Madeira. For Boaventura Sousa Santos, this series of elections to all the bodies in existence represented “constitutional normalisation”.<sup>2</sup> The revolutionary process came to an end in 1976.

While its powers were greatly reduced by the 1976 Constitution, the Council of the Revolution was abolished with the constitutional revision of 1982. With the end of this military body and through constitutional revisions in general, some authors (such as António Barreto and António Costa Pinto) have been able to claim the year 1982 represented the end of the “transition to democracy”.<sup>3</sup>

However, to understand the essence of the Portuguese revolutionary process, we must look at the international situation, to the colonial question, the economic

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2 Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (1990) *O Estado e a Sociedade em Portugal (1974-1988)*, Porto, Afrontamento. This idea was taken up again in subsequent works.

3 Pinto, António Costa (ed) (2015) *A Busca da Democracia. 1960-2000*, volume 5 of the *História Contemporânea de Portugal. 1808-2010*, organised by António Costa Pinto and Nuno Gonçalo Monteiro, Lisbon, Objectiva e Fundação MAPFRE, chapters by António Barreto and António Costa Pinto.

transformations, the cultural changes and the significant social movements that shaped it. It is to some of these changes that I now turn.

## **AXIS OF CHANGE**

### **Democratisation**

One of the obvious changes brought about by 25 April was democratisation. Not only was the political police abolished right from the outset, but the political prisoners were released, and the exiles, deserters, objectors and regime opponents allowed to return.

Both in practice and in law, the “fundamental freedoms” – freedom of expression, association and meeting –, that had always been demanded by opponents of the Salazar regime, were granted immediately.

The unions were restructured. There was also an intense debate on the issue of having a single central union, with this thesis emerging victorious. The (mostly) Communist Intersindical became the only trade union federation in Portugal at the time (but not today).

The clandestine political parties came out of hiding and many new ones were formed, with 14 parties contesting the first free elections.

From a standing start, Portugal was able to organise and hold free elections to a Constituent Assembly in 1975 – the first free elections with universal suffrage for several decades. Turnout at the election was 92%, with most people voting for the first time. There were long queues outside polling stations, and the images were beamed around the world. The result was uncertain. These were the parties elected to parliament (PS-38%, PPD-26%, PCP-12,5%, CDS-8%, MDP-4%, UDP-1%, ADIM – 1%). Broadly speaking, these parties still represent the basis of the Portuguese party system.

The 1976 Constitution remains in force today, although it has gone through several revisions.

This Constitution, like many others (remember the French Revolution had three constitutional texts) was drafted in a revolutionary context.

In the Portuguese case, the Constitution was produced after more than 40 years of dictatorship and without an inspirational document on which it could model itself. It was the result of the labours of the parties represented in parliament (which ranged in ideology from Christian Democrats to an organisation headed by Maoists), with each offering their own proposals. They wrote the Constitution in the context of large-scale social movements (the parliament building was surrounded at one point by protesters) and in the midst of powerful international pressures in the context of the Cold War, with the great powers uncertain of what way Portugal was going to turn.

The Constitution assumed a double legitimacy: that of the elected bodies; and that of the revolution. It sought to reconcile “representative” and “participative” democracy. It expressed its support for the rule of law and for fundamental rights and freedoms (within a demo-liberal matrix). It expressed too the goal of “to ensure the transition to socialism by creating conditions for the democratic exercise of power by the working classes”, expressing socialist ideals (demonstrating its concern for equality and social solidarity). Moreover, it was a product of its time and contained several anti-colonial articles.

### **Decolonisation**

While the colonial war was largely responsible for the birth of the MFA that gave rise to 25 April, it is no less true that the war did not end immediately. Despite speaking of peace and the need to find a political solution, the new government’s initial announcements and the programme that had been presented to the country the day after the coup contained no recognition of the right of the colonies to self-determination.

Effectively, as defended on the day of the coup, which led to changes being made to the MFA Programme, the new president of the republic, General Spínola, wanted as much continuity as possible, which to him meant a federal solution for Portugal and its colonies and,

at a date to be decided, a referendum of the people living in the colonies, including the Portuguese settlers.

This was clearly not the position of the liberation movements in Portugal's African colonies, nor was it the dominant view within the MFA, nor of the centre and left-wing political parties in Portugal. It was also not the outcome desired by many people, who immediately protested against the continuation of the war, and which was followed a few days later by a popular campaign to prevent soldiers from embarking for the colonies to relieve the stationed troops.

In the absence of official recognition of the right to the independence of the colonies, the leaders of the liberation movements, who had been fighting Portugal for several years, stepped up their struggle. The standstill continued: Spínola wanted a ceasefire before negotiations, while the liberation movements demanded recognition of their right to independence before agreeing to any ceasefire.

And so, despite some cases of fraternisation between opposing forces on the ground and in a few informal negotiations, the war continued. It was mainly Spínola's declaration of July 1974 recognising a people's right to self-determination, including independence, that brought the war to an end in the context of formal negotiations in which the African partners were the liberation movements that had been recognised by the then OUA (Organisation of African Unity) as the legitimate representatives of their people for having taken up arms – rather than other groups that had meanwhile emerged.

Despite some setbacks resulting from the opposition from some Portuguese settlers and the continuation of fighting after 25 April, the African colonies achieved their independence.

The independence of Guinea Bissau, which had been declared in the liberated zones on 24 September 1973, was recognised by Portugal in the summer of 1974. The PAIGC, which led the new country, also led the independence of the Cape Verde islands on 5 July 1975. Mozambique had declared its independence on 25 June 1975 under the leadership of FRELIMO, São Tomé and Príncipe's independence came on 12 July, while Angola, where there were three liberation movements in conflict with each other, finally freed itself from Portuguese control on 11 November – very close to the significant date of 25 November 1975.

The independence of East Timor, in Oceania, was yet to be secured, as the colony had been invaded by Indonesia in December 1975.

There were many Portuguese in the African colonies, particularly in Angola and Mozambique. Most of them returned to Portugal in 1974 and 1975, either by air or by ship, leading to a 500,000 increase in the country's population. They became known as the *retornados* (the returned) – despite some of them having been born in Africa and many of them being the African families of Portuguese settlers. Generally speaking, their integration into Portuguese society went reasonably smoothly and they never formed a pressure group. One thing that may explain this fact is that they dispersed around the country rather than concentrate in one place. Another factor was the type of public support provided, through credit (a commitment to the future) and not through an indemnity (that is, linked to the past). In addition to this, the *retornados* constituted an enterprising and qualified group mostly still with a connection to Portugal, which contributed to this success.<sup>4</sup> They also brought with them other customs, like a different view of the body and a love for the open air.

#### **New relationship with the world**

Portugal had, for many centuries, an empire and colonies. The events of 25 April ended this status without causing any widespread identity crises.

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4 Pires, Rui Pena (2003) *Migrações e Integração: Teoria e Aplicações à Sociedade Portuguesa*, Oeiras, Celta Editora.

The old type of relationship between Portugal and Africa ended, with a new relationship taking time to establish. This new relationship became possible only following Portugal's admittance to the European Economic Community (EEC), after which the country began operating as a go-between in the relationships between Europe and Africa. In Asia, as it had done with the rest of the world, Portugal was able to normalise its relations and to resolve the conflicts surrounding its former possessions in India.

Third-World ideologies were very much in vogue during the revolutionary period and even came to be regarded as an alternative to either of the two main power blocs. This was also because of doubts that existed over the EEC's interests, with the PS pushing for stronger links with Europe. In 1977, the first Constitutional Government, which was led by the PS, applied for EEC membership.

Portugal led diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the Socialist Bloc.

Despite the radicalisation of the left and the protests against NATO during the revolution, Portugal remained a member of the alliance of which it was a founding member.

If it was necessary to choose a single idea to describe Portugal's new status in the family of nations in 1976, it would be the normalisation of the country's relationships with the world and becoming a respected partner within the UN and its various organisations.

While this normalisation was the dominant trait of Portugal's new diplomacy, there were many upsets during the two-year revolutionary period, which took place amidst the Cold War. While it continued to offer the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) its backing, the Soviet Union did not seem interested in any deeper involvement in the Portuguese reality. The fear that the "non-democratic left" would grow was of great concern to NATO, the United States, Europe and Spain, all of which got involved in Portuguese politics: not by sending troops (as could have happened following the attack on the Spanish embassy during the collapse of the Franco regime), but rather by supporting parties that opposed the PCP and the radical left. There were even those who supported networks of bombers.

The events of 25 November 1975 prevented the emergence of greater bipolar confrontations in Portugal.

### **Economic transformations**

With the years 1974-76 being years of revolution, it was clear and perhaps inevitable there would be major economic changes.

Power relations changed, with workers being represented in management structures and, in some cases, through the introduction of "worker control". Many companies were taken over by their employees, either in the wake of labour problems or because of their owners abandoning the country.

The third sector, especially cooperatives, also grew a lot.

Following the 11 March 1975 coup attempt, the state nationalised large sections of the banking and insurance industry, then later, during the so called Hot Summer, it nationalised transport companies and some manufacturing industries, thereby creating a strong state business sector.

While these were years of inflation, with wage increases and the introduction of the 14 months' annual salary, Portuguese living standards improved substantially. The introduction of the national minimum wage and of unemployment benefits made it possible for people to see life differently. Families became more concerned about the present: and they bought fridges, washing machines, cars and other goods.

These changes were deeply felt in the urban world, but also in rural areas, where they were mainly caused by the Agrarian Reform.

In the south of Portugal, an area of large estates, the land changed hands (as after the civil war between liberals and absolutists in XIX century). Now the abandoned estates and the ones with the larger areas were nationalised. Collective Production Units and Cooperatives

were established, offering the region's mainly seasonal workers full-time guaranteed employment.

### **Social movements**

In the two years following 25 April 1974, Portugal experienced a revolutionary period that was full of unexpected events, difficulties, setbacks and upsets at the hands of the people and the many social and political groups.

There was a demand for rights already common in other countries, such as the right to strike. In the spring and summer of 1974 (just as had happened in 1910, following the proclamation of the Republic in Portugal), a strike wave broke out, although this time there was the PCP, the communist party, uncannily claiming the strikes were part of the "right's game". More conflicts broke out in the months that followed. There were struggles for other goals, such as wage increases or employment guarantees. The workers, and the people in general, expressed themselves through demonstrations, meetings and of commissions of many kinds.

Other organisations emerged in addition to the unions. Workers commissions were created, within private- and public-sector businesses and services, and where they did not organise the businesses directly, in self-management, they were often represented on the management boards.

In the large estates across the south of the country, the unions organised production in the new areas of the Agrarian Reform. In the rural north, which was an area of smallholdings, owners and tenants of the small farms started contesting old rent laws, demanded the rise in prices paid for their farming products, and the restitution of the common lands to the people. With the support of the Catholic Church, they however stood against the southern rural movements that had challenged property rights.

Local power was one of the conquests of the revolution, consecrated in the democratic elections to its institutions in 1976. But local improvements began immediately after the 25 April coup. A series of infrastructural projects finally brought electricity, clean water, sanitation or roads to many communities out of the main urban areas.

This territorial dimension relates to the question of housing. Several newly-built social housing boroughs were occupied in the days following 25 April. The new authorities tried to stop these occupations, but they were just followed by more occupations, now of empty private properties. The ever-latent housing problem that now had become a major demand of the people, led the government to introduce the Serviço de Apoio Ambulatório Local (the SAAL), meaning Local Outer Support Service, which helped provide housing, preferably in the same location, to those living in poor condition, mainly by offering them the tools and support (architects, etc.) to build their own houses through collectively organised popular movements.

Residents' Associations had been created prior to this and many more were set up in this new context. As well as attempting to solve the housing problem, Residents' Commissions also campaigned for child support (by creating nurseries and organising after-school activities for children), for sports equipment, green spaces, community centres and healthcare.

The Residents' Commissions and the Workers' Commissions sought to coordinate their activities at the local, regional and national levels. Many thought these commissions, which were bodies of "popular power", could represent the basis for another state power; while for others they were a complementary, independent or even dangerous reality.

Collectives and associations flourished in this spirit of appreciation of the public and the common, with a focus on educational activities in a country in which 26% of the population (over the age of 10) was illiterate.

Cultural activities also stepped down from their normal pedestals, with some artists working alongside the people to create murals on the streets and squares, or through the population taking part in plays by well-known companies, or by projecting films in

neighbourhoods and villages without cinemas. These and other cultural activities also took place in schools and workplaces. The decentralisation movement established cultural centres outside Lisbon and Porto. It was not by chance that the military left their units to take part in the so-called *Cultural Dynamization* and Civic Action Campaigns (in Portuguese *Campanhas de Acção e Dinamização Cultural*).

The education system was extended and altered. New educational experiments were attempted, with the common denominator being taking the pupils out of the schools to experience the world around them. These experiments were known by a number of names. Perhaps the most unique was the Student Civic Service, which involved activities designed to benefit the community. This service was situated in the school year between the end of secondary school and the start of university and was intended to overcome the problem of an avalanche of university applicants at the start of the 1974-75 academic year.

However, in an atmosphere that was so politicised and unstable, several student dissident organisations exploded onto the scene, with the student movement losing its former strongly left-wing inclinations.

While some students and volunteers got involved with literacy and public health campaigns, young doctors also followed an unforeseen path. Given the generally poor state of the nation's health system, the state introduced a new law that made newly-qualified doctors do an extra internship, working in the peripheral areas for a year.

As we have been seeing, several social groups (military, architects, students or doctors,) left their usual spheres at these times.

If before we have discussed examples of social movements appreciated by the left, now let us turn to movements of a very different nature.

The social movements that are more difficult to label emerged from struggles surrounding media organisations, including the *República* newspaper and Rádio Renascença, the Portuguese Church's Radio Station.

The *República* was a newspaper that opposed the Estado Novo, and which was directed by members of the PS. There came a point when, because they disagreed with the content of an article, the printing staff refused to print the newspaper. Thus, a dispute ensued between the printers and administrative staff on one side, and the majority of the newsroom, director and owners on the other. The printers and some journalists who supported them came together and occupied the newspaper offices, expelling the director, and continued publishing it for some weeks. The government took an interest in the case, but their ruling that the newspaper should be restored to its director was not complied with, largely due to the large street demonstrations that emerged and the support for the occupiers by the radical left-wing military forces who had been sent to ensure compliance.

Rádio Renascença belonged to the Catholic Church. There were several labour disputes there which, according to the workers, were due to the censorship practised by the owners. One of these disputes resulted in the station being taken and occupied by the workers. Again, during the weeks that followed, the problem remained unresolved. The back and forth continued for several months until, after the events of 25 November 1975, control of the station was returned to the Church.

These two conflicts, known as the *República* and Rádio Renascença Cases, were viewed as attacks on broad freedom of expression by some Portuguese parties and these Cases were known and discussed internationally. The Socialist Party and, later, the Popular Democratic Party, both resigned from the government in protest at the events at *República* and Rádio Renascença. This led to the breakup of the governing coalition and the subsequent collapse of the 4th Provisional Government. Neither the PS nor the PPD were involved in the short-lived 5th Provisional Government which followed. When the PS and PPD once again took part in a government, alongside the PCP, they then had more ministers. The logic had changed, with the

composition of the government reflecting the results of the recent election to the Constituent Assembly.

There was real competition between the demonstrations surrounding these cases, with many of them, in the north and centre of the country, resulting in attacks on PCP and other left-wing party headquarters, and on trade unions. These were very broad social movements with a very heterogeneous political and social composition.

Finally, one other movement with clearly defined aims – although not the result of demonstrations – was the one that led more attacks on the headquarters of left-wing organisations and planted several bombs during 1975 and 1976, while forest fires swept the country.

### **Behaviour**

This explosion of social movements took place while behaviours were changing, including in the relations between social groups, between genres, the new dignity afforded to women and children, and in ways of dressing and behaving. The cultural dimension of these changes to daily life was not separate from the social movements. Without in any way seeking to reduce it to politics, the public space changed, and, with all these events, the idea of citizenship got affirmed.

### **NATIONAL IMPACT**

For the Portuguese, 25 April represents a civic and historical landmark. It was the day of liberation that brought democracy, a country at peace and no longer a colonizer, an open European country that had secured social achievements.

It should be noted that during the revolutionary period there were very few fatalities – under 20 – with the majority of these the victim of counter-revolutionary forces. The purges were moderate. As for the old leadership, although there were no agreements with the new leadership, some of its members stayed in the country, while others fled to other countries as exiles – that was the case of the President of the Republic and of Marcelo Caetano and some of his ministers. Some members of the political police, involved in crimes and torture, were arrested and placed in custody. When their cases came to court (those that were tried), their punishments were light and, as the time they had already served preventively was considered, they were quickly released from prison.

### **INTERNATIONAL IMPACT**

The events of 25 April and the days and months that followed in Portugal caught the world by surprise. The country was looked upon with interest and incredulity. The fall of the dictatorship was headline news everywhere.

The end of the colonial war would always be good news, despite the fears by some who believed their independence would help increase the influence of the Eastern Bloc or of Third-World socialists.

As the revolution progressed, groups around the world looked at the country differently. While some expressed a great deal of empathy for some aspects of the social movements, others – as has already been said – were mistrustful of some of the economic ruptures and of some of the political forces in presence, having concerns about the new Portugal's place in a bipolar world. However, this revolutionary process, with all its “excesses” seemed necessary to put an end to the colonial war and to some repressive structures of the regime.

In fact, the period 1974-76 in Portugal was a landmark on some levels. In truth, Portugal experimented with some new situations and some of the social movements brought new ground in participation and in the construction of a future by the people, with Portugal becoming a reference in the field of social emancipation.

The strength of these social movements was unanimously underlined at the time, and today is a topic of discussion in works of History and other Social Sciences.

The reason for this has been the subject of debate.

Boaventura Sousa Santos called attention to both “politico-military events” and also to the “vast social and cultural movements that caught up individuals, families and social groups”, arguing that the nature of these months came from “[this] creation, or better, explosion of social movements following the coup”. In this text, written before the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the author considers that this “undoubtedly the largest and most profound social movement in the history of post-war Europe”, which he viewed as an expression of a revolutionary crisis with a duality of powers, or of the impotence between the state on the one hand and the popular movement on the other.<sup>5</sup>

In his description of Portugal in flux, Philippe Schmitter noted that, in the context of the dismantling of the state apparatus, the importance of social struggle, the scale and dimension of which in Portuguese society will have generated something that at the time was understood to be an alternative form of power called “popular power”.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, Schmitter said: “in Portugal... the swift and unforeseen collapse of the *ancien* regime left a vacuum that was filled by the most diverse variety of unions, neighbourhood associations and social movements. Some observers were so impressed by their capacity for spontaneous mobilisation and the radicalisation of the demands that foresaw the emergence of a new form of political domination *based on popular power*. After the elections in Portugal – and after the last group of radical military officers had been removed from office – these exaggerated expectations quickly dissipated.”<sup>7</sup>

Rafael Duran Muñoz and Diego Palacios Cerezales attribute this strength of the social movements to the collapse of the state apparatus and its forces of order (such as the police) and to the new structure of opportunities the social movements understood was present, moving forward with the conviction that they would not be repressed.<sup>8</sup>

The rupture that existed on 25 April allowed these social movements to move forward. Unlike the experience in neighbouring Spain, Portugal’s revolutionary years represent a transition to democracy by rupture, without a pact between the leaders of the dictatorship and the new democratic leadership. And this is how it is treated by social science.

Emphasising the role of the Portuguese revolution, Samuel Huntington claims it launched a new revolutionary wave in the Mediterranean, Latin American and Eastern European worlds.

However, Philippe Schmitter, who was concerned with the problems of the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, went a little further: he saw 25 April as the first event of a wave of global democratisation, just like the waves that had taken place in 1848 and then again at the end of both the First and Second world wars.

More modestly, however, one thing is certain: the Franco regime in Spain and the Colonels’ regime in Greece both collapsed soon after the events in Portugal. And it is also not too much to note that the former Portuguese colonies soon followed their own paths.

While the international context changed for Portugal, it also changed with Portugal.

### **ESPOIR (HOPE)**

To understand what happened in Portugal we must address the revolutionary identities. In similar international experiences, the new social practices enabled the creation of revolutionary identities. From this collision of the problematic of revolutionary identity, it would seem pertinent to make use of the idea conveyed by the French term *espoir* (hope).

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5 Santos 1990: 7.

6 Schmitter, Philippe, *Portugal: do Autoritarismo à Democracia*, Lisboa, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 1999, 373-401. Despite the different periodisation, see Huntington 1991.

7 Schmitter 1999: 409 (no notes). See Schmitter 1994: 403-445.

8 Duran Muñoz, Rafael (1997) *Acciones Colectivas y Transiciones a la Democracia. España y Portugal, 1974-1977*, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales. Palacios Cerezales, Diego (2003) *O Poder Caiu na Rua. Crise de Estado e Acções Colectivas na Revolução Portuguesa (1974-1975)*, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

André Malraux developed the idea in his 1937 novel *L'espoir* and the 1938-39 film *Sierra de Teruel*.<sup>9</sup>

I use the term *espoir* to mean hope as a collective dimension, which Malraux called the "brotherhood" of men who, despite being able to express their individuality, encounter a greater sense of being within the brotherhood, the collective shared hope for a new society that would be without significant social inequalities resulting from the transformation and overcoming of existing social hierarchies. Malraux identifies this collective hope with a life in which man is able to choose between "the infinite possibilities of his destiny".<sup>10</sup>

These works, produced at a moment in the Spanish civil war when it was obvious that the ideals for which Malraux struggled, both with his gun and his pen (and which optimised his vision of *espoir*), were losing the war. Those are a book and a film about one of the 20th century's most difficult conflicts, of a time that was marked by a large degree of emotional involvement.

While Portugal's revolutionary period was nowhere near and as bitterly contested, and while it was not a civil war, it nevertheless seems appropriate to consider the concept of *espoir* to achieve a real understanding of some of social movements that emerged then in Portugal.

In the rapid explosion of some social movements, there was hope in them, especially in the experiences of those involved, that they would surmount the previous social hierarchies and begin the construction of a society that was more equal and in which there existed greater solidarity. Hope that brought different people together, for varying durations and often interrupted by the hard realizations. There were opportunities for fraternisation, with a collective dimension to these collective expectations, where these feelings could inform and generate many other actions. *Espoir* contributed to this by providing an explanation for the deep commitment on the part of individuals, families and social groups, as well as for the width and depth of the social movements, as emphasised by Boaventura Sousa Santos, and for the scale of the mobilisation and the radicalism of their demands, as noted by Philippe Schmitter and Rafael Duran Muñoz.

While *espoir* cannot be generalised to describe all Portuguese society, we can be sure there were new organisational, political, social, cultural and daily practices. The innovations which emerged, even if they were short-lived, cast a sudden light, the signs of which remained in the memory and in society.

The aesthetics and the ethics created and spread by the revolution demonstrate this *espoir*.

The red carnations planted in the barrels of machine guns (instead of bullets) were symbolic of the peaceful nature of 25 April and of the joy of being liberated. These flowers gave their name to the revolution, which is known internationally as the "Carnation Revolution". The red carnations are also featured on Maria Helena Vieira da Silva's famous painting "The Poetry is on the Streets", the title of which is from the poet Sophia de Mello Breyner.

Through the nature of its lyrics and performance, José Afonso's song *Grândola, Vila Morena*, with choral parts, performed by groups and associations throughout Lisbon and beyond, evokes images of the people of the rural south, who have been involved in social struggles since 1910. This song, which was a signal for the revolution, became its anthem.

As with the red carnations, *Grândola* has become a symbol of the Revolution and a founding element of the 25 April aesthetic.

By chance, I heard *Grândola* while at an exhibition entitled the "Five Songs that Changed History" in a museum in Bremen, Germany. Now *Grândola* can be heard in television reports about recent social movements in Greece and Spain and during the election campaign

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9 Ver: Malraux, André (1937) *L'espoir*, Paris, Gallimard; Malraux, André (1996) *Espoir. Sierra de Teruel. Scénario du film*. [Paris], Gallimard.

10 Malraux 1937: 365.

in France, and, most recently, has been sung in various moments by the Catalan movement. In Portugal, *Grândola* is sung at protests, like those that took place while the troika was in the country, (with this responses having gained their own denomination, the *Grandoladas*) as well as during the 25 April marches and celebrations. Like today, April 25 2018.

Grândola, dusky town  
Land of brotherhood  
Here the people lead  
Within you, the town

Within you, the town  
Here the people lead  
Land of brotherhood  
Grândola, dusky town

On each corner, a friend  
In each face, equality  
Grândola, dusky town  
Land of brotherhood

Land of brotherhood  
Grândola, dusky town  
In each face, equality  
Here the people lead

In the shadow of a holm oak  
So old it has forgotten  
I swore to have as a companion  
Grândola, your will

Grândola, your will  
I swore to have as a companion  
In the shadow of a holm oak  
So old it has forgotten

I venture to say it is also the perception of this collective hope that is evident in the social use of carnations and in the singing of *Grândola*, that has led us here and which contributes to explain the national and international impact of 25 April.

*Luísa Tiago de Oliveira*

Departamento de História

Centro de Investigação e Estudos em Sociologia

ISCTE- Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Invited talk, University of Oslo. I am grateful for the invitation.

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