
A Sense of Hopelessness?

Portuguese Oppositionists

Abroad in the Final Years of the *Estado Novo*, 1968–1974

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The article examines the role played by the Portuguese oppositionist diaspora in the final years of the Estado Novo dictatorship (c. 1968–c. 1974). It advances an explanation for the apparent lack of success met by several exile groups when trying to persuade the Western democracies to withdraw (or at least reduce) their support for Lisbon's authoritarian regime during a period in which the public was increasingly aware of human rights abuses. The choice of this particular juncture is justified for several reasons. Firstly, it was a time of renewed expectations regarding a possible liberalisation of the regime in the aftermath of the replacement of the incapacitated Oliveira Salazar by the younger Marcelo Caetano (September 1968), an event that confronted the different sections of the Portuguese opposition with a number of dilemmas, both at home and abroad, and exposed rifts that would take some time to repair. Secondly, this was also an epoch of momentous social and cultural change in Europe, with obvious ramifications for the political orientations and attitudes of those who, for different reasons, had decided to leave Portugal in the 1960s. Finally, the vicissitudes of the East–West détente are seen here as equally important for understanding the opportunities and limitations of the anti-Estado Novo opposition abroad.

Dissension, factionalism and schisms have, throughout history, often been associated with the experience of exile. The Portuguese opposition diaspora in the 1960s and early 1970s was no exception, with the bitter disagreements that fractured the Patriotic National Liberation Front (*Frente Patriótica de Libertação Nacional*; FPLN) the example that best illustrates this situation. Notwithstanding this, on the eve of the collapse of the dictatorship it was possible to discern a greater willingness amongst the important opposition groups to link up their efforts. These included, in particular, the Portuguese Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Português*; PCP) and the Portuguese Socialist Action (*Ação Socialista Portuguesa* ASP) / Socialist Party

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(*Partido Socialista*; PS), led by Álvaro Cunhal and Mário Soares, respectively. However, in general, the impact of the initiatives undertaken by the opposition in exile was modest. Moreover, it is hard to single out any of their actions as a key factor in the process that led to the overthrow of the regime in April 1974, which, after all, is the ultimate objective of any organised dissident movement.¹

In this article I will try to explain the reasons for this failure, while proposing to investigate whether other ‘intermediate’ objectives,² including raising awareness amongst the European public and their democratic governments about the persistence of the dictatorship in Portugal, the mobilisation of Portuguese emigration circles and the actual joint efforts among the opposition diaspora, were achieved or not. I will start by describing the context which led to the emergence of a new constellation of groups of Portuguese exiles in the early 1960s (concentrated mainly in Western Europe) and provide a brief description of their socio-cultural profile, ideological orientations and ways they integrated into the countries in which they had settled. Then I will present their views on the strategy that they thought most appropriate to overthrow the dictatorship and the type of society they had idealised to succeed the authoritarian system in Portugal. The final section of this article will take stock of the attitude of the Western European powers towards the Salazar and Caetano regime, as well as the evolution of international perception regarding the situation in Portugal, in order to try and understand how these factors were echoed in the aspirations and efforts of the Portuguese opposition movement during this period.

Given the scarcity of general overviews on this particular topic (in the English literature, at least), I have chosen to present a more panoramic view of the oppositionists’ experience in exile, to the detriment of a denser and more in-depth analysis of particular cases. With this I hope to put this issue on the research agenda of scholars studying exiles and opposition in post-Second World War Europe and encourage future comparative analyses. Footnotes will be mainly used to point out some of the most important research produced regarding the Portuguese case, as well as memories and oral histories of former exiled oppositionists and some interviews conducted by the author.

Geographies of Exile

In September 1968, when the token handover of the running of the New State (*Estado Novo*) took place with the appointment of Marcelo Caetano as Salazar’s successor as head of government, a significant number of Portuguese opposition figures were

¹ On the causes that led to the demise of the *Estado Novo* see Kenneth Maxwell, *The Making of Portuguese Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), as well as Phillippe Schmitter, *Portugal: Do Autoritarismo à Democracia* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 1999).

² In this context it seems appropriate to use the ‘spectrum of objectives’ proposed by Idesbald Goddeeris to evaluate the effectiveness of the action of the exile groups – an analysis grid that provides for interesting comparative analyses. See Idesbald Goddeeris, ‘The Temptation of Legitimacy: Exile Politics from a Comparative Perspective’, *Contemporary European History*, 16, 2 (2007), 395–405.

outside the country, some as a consequence of forced exile, such as Álvaro Cunhal, the leader of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), others, such as Mário Soares, a prominent Socialist lawyer, as 'deportees' to the colonies.³

The Portuguese opposition diaspora had grown significantly since the late 1950s, after a hiatus during which expatriation for political reasons had become less frequent (in part due to a series of events related to the victory of Franco in Spain in 1939 and the situation of widespread war that Europe experienced until 1945). The first wave of new exiles occurred as a result of the resurgence of activities against the regime immediately after the 1958 presidential elections. The campaign of General Humberto Delgado brought together various opposition currents for the first time in a long while and provided a younger generation with their first significant political experience. In spring 1959, animated by the 'pre-insurreccional' environment that the electoral contest had produced, individuals involved in Delgado's candidature created new structures, the Patriotic Action Councils (*Juntas de Acção Patriótica*; JAP), to prepare the ground for actions that could lead to the fall of the regime. One of these would take place on 11 March that year, the so-called Cathedral Coup (*Golpe da Sé*), prepared by figures from the National Independent Movement (*Movimento Nacional Independente*), also linked to Delgado. Its failure was the first of several that led to coup attempts aimed at the overthrow of the dictatorship. Formed in the spirit of 'anti-fascist unity', the JAP quickly resented the clashes between the more wayward and romantic elements and the disciplining zeal of figures linked to or close to the PCP. They were therefore relatively easy prey for the *Estado Novo*'s political police (*Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado*; PIDE), which between 1959 and 1960 made a significant number of arrests. It was at this juncture that several oppositionists, some better known than others, decided to leave the country. Some managed to receive political asylum in embassies of Latin American countries in Lisbon, sometimes after taking refuge in their premises for several months (the cases of Delgado, Henrique Galvão and several participants in the *Sé* coup). In January 1960 another, more spectacular, departure took place, the escape of Cunhal and other known PCP militants from the Peniche Fort. These individuals were then sent to various countries in the Eastern Bloc, where an important community of communist exiles would be established in the 1960s, particularly in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Romania – the latter the headquarters of Radio Free Portugal, which began broadcasting in 1962.⁴

Until 1962 the most active core of oppositionists outside Portugal lived in Brazil, where the government had long tended to show a relatively liberal attitude towards initiatives carried out by the individuals who had settled there since the years of

³ Soares was deported to the island of São Tomé, a Portuguese colony in West Africa, as retaliation for his alleged role in leaking to the foreign press details concerning the involvement of Portuguese Cabinet ministers in a prostitution ring (the *ballet rose* scandal).

⁴ For an overview of the trajectory of the opposition after the 1958 election see, D. L. Raby, *Fascism and Resistance in Portugal: Communists, Liberals and Military Dissidents in the Opposition to Salazar* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1991) and Irene Pimentel's, *A História da PIDE* (Lisbon: Textos & Debates, 2007), as well as *História da Oposição à Ditadura 1926–1974* (Porto: Figueirinhas, 2014).

the insurrection against the dictatorship, or *Revivalho*, in the 1930s. With its vast community of Portuguese emigrants, a prosperous economy and a common language, the former colony offered attractive conditions for Portuguese dissidents – with the only drawback being the geographical distance, which strongly limited the impact of anti-Salazar activities, generally confined to carrying out meetings on symbolic dates and publishing magazines with restricted circulations.⁵ The arrival of an impatient and charismatic personality such as Delgado, surrounded by a number of younger collaborators, altered this state of affairs. His most notable impact was the celebrated seizing in January 1961 of the *Santa Maria* liner in the Caribbean, an operation carried out by a group of Portuguese–Spanish oppositionists, led by Henrique Galvão, which for two weeks gave the anti-Salazar struggle an unprecedented international visibility. In 1964, however, with the advent of the military dictatorship, the situation of these individuals in Brazil became much more complicated, with some of them now being watched by the Department for Political and Social Order (*Departamento de Ordem Política e Social*), which maintained regular contact with PIDE, its Portuguese counterpart.⁶

Indeed, by around the mid-1960s, it was clear that Western Europe had become the major settlement hub for those who decided to leave Portugal (including some of the ‘overseas provinces’⁷) to avoid imminent arrest, escape military service and the war in Africa or for other reasons of a political nature. To some extent this can be considered a movement which ran parallel to the wave of Portuguese economic emigration (made up, in large part, of humble peasants from the northern and central regions of the country), stimulated by the economic bonanza of the more industrialised countries of Western Europe. Between the end of the 1950s and the mid-1970s around 1.1 million Portuguese chose this destiny, in particular in France and the Federal Republic of Germany, encouraged by the receptiveness of local authorities regarding the employment of foreign workers in their more labour-intensive sectors.⁸

The year 1962 saw a major university protest movement develop in Lisbon which, perhaps more than any other thing, showed how deep the fault lines were in some of the usual bastions of support for Salazarism. The so-called ‘academic crisis’ of that year was another opportunity for the intense politicisation of many students from

⁵ On the Portuguese opposition in Brazil in the 1950s onwards, see Douglas Mansur, *A Oposição ao Estado Novo no Exílio Brasileiro* (Lisbon: ICS, 2006).

⁶ Heloísa Paulo, ‘Um olhar sobre a oposição e o exílio no Portugal de Salazar’, in Heloísa Paulo, coord., *Memória das Oposições 1927–1974* (Coimbra: Minerva, 2010), 181.

⁷ This was the case for a significant number of European young people from Mozambique, the generation that had been politicised in the late 1950s. See Carlos Leone, *O Essencial sobre os Estrangeirados no Século XX* (Lisbon: INCM, 2005), 34–5.

⁸ See Eduardo de Freitas, ‘O Fenómeno Emigratório: a Diáspora Europeia’ in António Reis (dir.), *Portugal Contemporâneo 1958–1975* (Lisbon: Publicações Alfa, 1989), 193–5 and Maria Ioannis B. Baganha, ‘As correntes emigratórias portuguesas e o seu impacto na economia nacional’, *Análise Social*, 128 (1994), 959–80. The emigration policies of the *Estado Novo*, with special focus on the French case, are studied by Victor Pereira, *La dictature de Salazar face à l’émigration. L’État portugais et ses migrants en France 1957–1974* (Paris: Presses Sciences Po, 2012).

the middle class and the elite, some originating from traditional Catholic sectors, until then unconditionally loyal to the regime.⁹ Since fulfilling military service now involved the possibility of being sent to the war in Africa, many decided to seek a new life outside Portugal. Between 1961 and 1974 it is estimated that the number of those evading military service (draft dodgers and deserters) may have reached an estimated number of between 110 and 170 000, and the percentage of those who abandoned the country following that decision was certainly very high.¹⁰ The motivations and behaviour of these individuals was certainly varied, but sources suggest that a significant number gradually acquired a greater willingness to question the policies of the regime, especially when based in countries where access to information on the colonial war and European decolonisation was freely available. Some of these exiles or expatriates were involved in setting up various deserter committees in countries such as France, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, the three of them partners with Portugal in NATO. For activists in ‘anti-imperialist’ networks in Western Europe, these committees took on an important role in their ‘communication strategy’: they were the proof that, contrary to the propaganda proclaimed by the *Estado Novo*, the continuation of the wars in Africa was far from being a consensual goal in Portuguese society.¹¹

The case of draft dodgers and deserters helps to illustrate the conceptual difficulties inherent in an exact definition of the condition of ‘exile’, as has indeed been mentioned in the literature focusing on this phenomenon.¹² It seems undisputed that within the large Portuguese diaspora established in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s only a minority would have left Portugal for fear of being subjected to repressive measures, or because they intended to start some kind of overseas activity against the regime. However, in the category of non-economic emigrants, consideration has also to be given to the existence of a considerable number of individuals anxious to escape the oppressive cultural atmosphere of the *Estado Novo*, but whose involvement in initiatives of a civic and political nature abroad took on a more sporadic and discreet character, and who were therefore not identified by the Portuguese authorities as a danger to ‘national security’. They may perhaps be referred to as ‘expats’ (or

⁹ On the 1962 academic crisis, see the testimonies of the protagonists in AAVV, *Cem Dias que Abalaram o Regime. A crise académica de 1962* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2012).

¹⁰ Estimates from the Portuguese press of May 1974 (based on official sources), quoted by Irene Pimentel, ‘A deserção, opção política e ética para combater a guerra colonial’, in Ana Rosenheim et al., *Exílios. Testemunhos de exilados e desertores portugueses na Europa* (Lisboa: Associação de Exilados Políticos Portugueses, 2015), 125.

¹¹ On the theme of avoidance of military service and exile, see Miguel Cardina, *Margem de Certa Maneira. O Maoísmo em Portugal. 1964–1974* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2011), 263–79. See also Pimentel, *A História da PIDE*, 207–9. The publications of these deserter committees (such as *Deserção* or *Vôz do Desertor*) are analysed in José Pacheco Pereira, *As Armas de Papel. Publicações Periódicas Clandestinas e do Exílio ligadas a Movimentos de Radicais de Esquerda Cultural e Política 1963–1974* (Lisbon: Temas & Debates, 2013).

¹² For an introduction to these conceptual issues, see Yossi Shain, *The Frontier of Loyalty: Political Exiles in the Age of the Nation State* (Hanover, NH, and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1989) and Victor Pereira, ‘O exílio português na Suíça, 1962–1974’, in Maria I. Rezola e Pedro A. Oliveira, coord., *O Longo Curso. Estudos em Homenagem a José Medeiros Ferreira* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2010), 305–29.

even, if we wish to retrieve an old term, ‘foreignised’/ *estrangeirados*¹³) and, although playing a less prominent role in opposition-based activities (committees, campaigns, demonstrations) they nevertheless bore witness to the situation of political oppression in Portugal in the countries in which they settled.

The substitution of Western Europe for Latin America as the most prominent geographical location for anti-Portuguese exile at the end of the *Estado Novo* also includes an African ‘parenthesis’, namely the experience of Algeria, a country which between 1962 to 1965 – the period corresponding to the leadership of Ben Bella – acted as a powerful magnet for the Portuguese oppositionists who were keen to face the dictatorship with a more militant posture, if necessary through armed action. The idea of transforming the Patriotic Front for National Liberation (*Frente Patriótica de Libertação Nacional*; FPLN) into a great unifying platform for different currents, groups and organisers of the Portuguese opposition did not last long. In 1964 violent disagreements between its leaders led to its rupture and the emergence of a parallel organisation (the ‘Portuguese Front for National Liberation’). Some months afterwards, the assassination of Humberto Delgado (February 1964), who not long before had fallen out with the leadership of the FPLN, as well as the overthrowing of Bella in a military coup, robbed this nucleus of much of its prestige and relevance. In 1973, with the PCP already removed from its leadership, the Front were once again shaken by internal dissent, following the capture of its broadcasting service the *Voice of Freedom*, the propaganda organ of the Algiers group, by activists of the Revolutionary Brigades (on which see below in this section).¹⁴

Moreover, it should also not be forgotten that for those who had felt they had languished within the narrow cultural vision of the *Estado Novo*, the perspective of having to adapt to the idiosyncrasies of a society where the rigours of Islam continued to make its presence felt in numerous social and cultural spheres of life must have confused many Portuguese exiles in the former French colony.¹⁵ If the experience of exiles was also inseparable from a wish for freedom from the customs of a macho and hypocritical society, such as that of Portugal under Salazar, then Western Europe, experiencing the culmination of the libertarian wave of protests, offered possibilities for personal ‘emancipation’ which were incomparably more attractive.¹⁶

¹³ For a questioning of this concept applied to the realities of the twentieth century, see Carlos Leone, *O Essencial*.

¹⁴ On the Algerian experience, see D. L. Raby, ‘Portuguese Exile Politics: The “Frente Patriótica de Libertação Nacional”, 1962–1973’, *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 31, 1 (1994), 77–89; Judith Manyá, ‘Les Portugais d’Argel 1962–1974’, *Actes du Colloque Interdisciplinaire: Nouvelles Perspectives de la recherche française sur la culture portugaise* (6–7 Fév. 2007), http://www.msh-clermont.fr/IMG/pdf/o6-MANYA_51-58_.pdf and Susana Martins, *Exilados portugueses em Argel. A FPLN das origens à rutura com Humberto Delgado 1960–1965*, PhD dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2013.

¹⁵ In this regard see the testimony of the doctor Mário Moutinho Pádua, in exile in Algiers in the second half of the 1960s, *No Percorso de Guerras Coloniais* (Lisbon: Edições Avante!, 2011), where the discrimination that women were victims of in Algerian society is widely commented on.

¹⁶ Testimony of Ana Benavente to the author (5 Apr. 2012). On this atmosphere, see also Maria Filomena Mónica, *Bilhete de Identidade* (Lisbon: Alêtheia, 2005).

Despite it being impossible to carry out a reliable quantitative analysis, the indications offered by testimonies of various kinds suggest that the most significant centres of exiles were scattered throughout France, United Kingdom, Switzerland and, to a lesser degree, West Germany, Italy, Belgium and some Scandinavian countries. Expatriation in countries on the other side of the Iron Curtain was limited primarily to individuals whose opposition to the dictatorship had developed under the PCP. The latter is also difficult to quantify, in addition to being an experience less covered in either the academic literature or in memoirs (and the few reports there are on this do not always resist the temptation to settle scores with the history of the PCP and the regimes which were in power at the time in Eastern Europe¹⁷). It is also important not to lose sight of the much lower attractiveness of the socialist bloc among the Portuguese candidates for exile, even among those who did not ideologically identify themselves with the bourgeois-capitalist regimes of Western Europe. In the 1960s there were few potential exiles lacking the necessary information to leave them reluctant to accept models of so-called 'real socialism'. Events such as the crushing of the Prague Spring by Soviet tanks (a pretext for various exiled militants to start the process of distancing themselves from the PCP)¹⁸ made it difficult for the socialist bloc to be able to capitalise on the disenchantment that elements of Western youth felt in relation to the way that power in their societies was organised. This is not to say, however, that such individuals were indifferent to other modern revolutionary myths – the Chinese 'cultural revolution', one of the major totalitarian experiences of the twentieth century, held an enormous fascination for the Portuguese radical left,¹⁹ as did other 'revolutionary utopias' experimented with in the Third World (a spell which was also cast on a generation of European leftists).²⁰

In most Western countries Portuguese exiles benefited from a condescending, though sometimes understanding, attitude from the respective authorities, which was more pronounced from the mid-1960s onwards. Although the solidarity generated by hostility to communism (for which joint participation in NATO gave an institutional expression) had not ceased to exist, the unpopularity of the colonial wars waged

¹⁷ See, for example, the reports of former members of the PCP in exile during the crushing of the 'Prague Spring' in 1968: Cândida Ventura, *O Socialismo que Eu Vivi* (Lisbon: O Jornal, 1984) and Rui Perdigão, *O PCP Visto por Dentro e Por Fora* (Lisbon: Fragmentos, 1988). The latter refers to a stay of several years in Romania as an experience with some elements characteristic of an underground experience, 'but a "golden" clandestine experience because we enjoyed enormous privileges granted to the high *nomenklatura* of "socialist countries"' (55). Information on the communist experience of exile in the Eastern Bloc can also be found in Adelino Cunha, *Álvaro Cunhal, Retrato Pessoal e Íntimo* (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2010).

¹⁸ In addition to the reports of Ventura and Perdigão, see the volume on the historian and PCP militant, Flausino Torres, exiled in Prague (1967–68): Paulo Torres Bento, *Flausino Torres. Documentos e Fragmentos Biográficos de um Intelectual Antifascista* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2006), as well as the memoir of Helena Cabeçadas, *Bruxelas: Cidade de Exílios* (Lisboa: Chiado Editora, 2014).

¹⁹ See Miguel Cardina, *Margem*.

²⁰ See R. Gildea, J. Mark and N. Pas, 'European Radicals and the "Third World": Imagined Solidarities and Radical Networks, 1958–73', *Cultural and Social History*, 8, 4 (2011), 449–72.

by the regime, and, perhaps, a clearer awareness of the iniquities of its political and judicial system, made several Western European governments more reluctant to be associated with the *Estado Novo*. This ambiguity, however, lasted almost until 1974. In countries like France, for example, dominated by right-wing governments interested in cultivating good relations with Portugal at the military and strategic level, the judicial authorities had always refused to hand over Portuguese draft dodgers, deserters or elements linked to the opposition to their counterparts.²¹ However, on several occasions, the limits of that ‘hospitality’ was clearly signposted to the Portuguese oppositionists whenever they took a more militant attitude or carried out actions potentially embarrassing for bilateral relations with Lisbon. As will be mentioned later, even social democratic governments tried to be careful in the support they were willing to give to the non-communist elements of the opposition in order not to compromise their diplomatic relations with Portugal.

It appears that the number of exiles who successfully applied for ‘political refugee’ status was reduced (which can perhaps be explained by an instinctive distrust of state bodies, even those in democratic countries), and many experienced regular difficulties in obtaining papers to work or travel.²² However, if these adversities and related anxieties are evoked by exiles when recounting their experiences, there are also those who mention the development of a *laissez-faire* attitude on the part of the authorities with regard to their legal situation, their relative easy insertion into the labour markets of their host countries (although often in low-skilled and badly paid jobs) and their opportunities to start or continue higher educational studies.²³ Organisations supporting refugees, including the French CIMADE (the *Comité inter-mouvements auprès des évacués*, an NGO created by Protestant students during the Second World War), or the Association of Portuguese Immigrants in Belgium, also played an important role in the initial settling of many of the Portuguese political exiles (and a considerable number of African students who had decided to join the independence struggle and flee Portugal).²⁴ In countries such as Switzerland, France, the United Kingdom and Belgium many exiles were able to complete their

²¹ Victor Pereira, *La dictature de Salazar face à l’émigration*, 365.

²² Based on documentation from the PIDE/DGS archive, Irene Pimentel, *História da PIDE*, 209, refers to the existence of 108 Portuguese political refugees in France (date not specified, but in the context of late 1960s/early 1970s), a figure that the author considers far short of the number of political emigres who settled there. Victor Pereira in *Les Exilés Politiques Portugais en France de 1958 à 1974* (Rouen, Mémoire de Maîtrise: 2000), 29, refers to the number of 314 successful applications (out of a total of 608) for political refugee status made to the *Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides* for the 1958–1974 period.

²³ Interview with José Medeiros Ferreira (scholarship holder at the University of Geneva), 13 Jan. 2010. On these academic paths, see João Freire, *Pessoa Comum no seu Tempo. Memórias de um Médio Burguês de Lisboa na Segunda Metade do Século XX* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2007) and Fernando Pereira Marques, *A Praia Sob a Calçada. Maio de 68 e a ‘Geração de 60’* (Lisbon: Âncora Editora, 2005), both exiled in France from the late 1960s/mid 1970s.

²⁴ See Victor Pereira, ‘La Cimade et les Portugais en France de 1957 à 1974: une aide sous le signe des guerres coloniales’, unpublished paper, 2012 and Heloísa Paulo, ‘Um olhar sobre a oposição e o exílio no Portugal de Salazar’, in Heloísa Paulo, coord., *Memória das Oposições*, 177–186.

university education, often with scholarships from local institutions or occasional subsidies granted by non-governmental organisations;²⁵ some were quick to obtain posts in academia, public services and international bodies,²⁶ thus qualifying the exile's image as 'one of the saddest fates'.²⁷

Can we speak of 'communities of exile' as opposed to groups of individuals who shared only certain subjective affinities and only in circumstances of adversity? Perhaps something halfway between these two situations is closer to reality. Despite the sometimes bitter ideological divisions between them, it is undeniable that their generational and social proximity led them to share a set of cultural references, attitudes and worldviews. Many had attended the same universities in Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto and came from petty bourgeois and middle-class families who venerated the memory of the First Republic and who had always been hostile to the Salazar dictatorship. However, several known cases suggest that in the 1960s this disaffected group already included a significant number of Catholics in the process of distancing themselves from the *Estado Novo*.²⁸ Those who had reached adulthood in the late 1950s and the early 1960s would have been more influenced by the cultural and symbolic ascendancy of the PCP and by French intellectual life, even if these 'generational' categories should not be interpreted too rigidly. Those who acquired their political consciousness in the second half of the 1960s were already closer to the libertarian and hedonistic spirit of '1968', of Anglo-Saxon popular culture, while their militancy options reflected the divisions of the international communist movement, with particular emphasis on those resulting from the Sino-Soviet split.²⁹

With the exception of the PCP – always present with their cells and 'fellow travellers' – it is difficult to speak of well-structured political organisations in the various exile circles in this period. One of the exceptions was the Portuguese Socialist Action (*Ação Socialista Portuguesa*; ASP), the predecessor of the present-day

²⁵ This was the case with the rather symbolic support offered by the Portuguese Committee of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (*Congresso para a Liberdade da Cultura* – a body later 'denounced' for its links to the CIA) to some oppositionists and exiles. The history of this committee (active between 1965 and 1974) remains to be done. See, in any event, the articles of its former head, João Bénard da Costa, 'Cultura e Liberdade (I)', *Público*, 12 June 2005 and 'Cultura e Liberdade (II)', *Público*, 19 June 2005.

²⁶ For the case of Switzerland, see Ana Benavente et al., *Pátria Utópica* (Lisbon: Bizâncio, 2011), as well as Victor Pereira, 'O exílio português na Suíça, 1962–1974'; for the United Kingdom, Pedro Aires Oliveira, 'Generous Albion? Portuguese anti-Salazarists in the United Kingdom, c. 1960–74', *Portuguese Studies*, 27, 2 (2011), 175–207.

²⁷ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 46.

²⁸ See, for example, the case of several 'progressive Catholics' (including some former seminarians) linked to LUAR, mentioned in the testimony of José Hipólito dos Santos, *Felizmente Houve a LUAR. Para uma História da Luta Armada contra a Ditadura* (Lisbon: Âncora, 2011), 120. For an overview of the emergence of a Catholic current increasingly alienated against the regime, see José Barreto, *Religião e Sociedade. Dois Ensaios* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2002).

²⁹ Miguel Cardina, *Margem*.

Socialist Party, founded in Geneva in 1964. With nuclei scattered throughout Latin America and several European countries, and including figures with long records of opposition to Salazar, the ASP would only manage to obtain recognition from the Socialist International (SI) in 1972. Its initiatives abroad were always dependant on the individual efforts of a handful of activists who had carried out their political ‘apprenticeship’ in organisations such as the Juvenile Movement of Democratic Unity (*MUD Juvenil*) in the immediate post-war period, and it was not always easy for them to forge bonds with a younger generation.³⁰ The ASP only leapt into the limelight thanks to Mário Soares, who established himself in exile in France in 1970 and quickly became the internationally known face of the non-communist Portuguese left.³¹

Those remaining groups not affiliated with either the communists or the socialists had more uneven paths and were generally inconsequential. After the experiences of the Revolutionary Action Movement (*Movimento de Acção Revolucionária*; MAR) and the groups that united under the umbrella of the FLPN, the organisations (if they can be called as such) that attracted a certain number of followers during the *Marcelista* period were largely made up of students radicalised in university struggles in the second half of the 1960s, with an obvious predominance of so-called ‘Marxist-Leninists’ (i.e. Maoists) groups.³² Perhaps it is best to speak above all of informal networks of individuals who, apart from some ‘civic’ or ‘cultural’ work with the immigrant communities (such as promotion of literacy or information on social rights in the host countries), and some involvement in local student movements, generally limited themselves to publishing occasional manifestoes or newspapers and magazines with limited circulations.³³ Despite the disillusionment that many experienced in relation to the classic tactics of the communist opposition – particularly its preference for ‘frontism’ inherited from other eras – not everybody identified themselves in actions involving a more proactive struggle, particularly armed actions. They frequently limited themselves to producing a dense theoretical analysis on the possibilities of ‘class struggle’ in Portugal, placing less confidence in those kinds of more ‘subjective’ methods. The organisations that went down these paths in this period, with footholds in countries like France, Belgium and Algeria – the League of Unity and Revolutionary Action (*Liga de Unidade e Acção Revolucionária*; LUAR) and the Revolutionary Brigades – showed a lower level of ‘doctrinal’ elaboration, either,

³⁰ Susana Martins, *Socialistas na Oposição ao Estado Novo. Um Estudo sobre o Movimento Socialista Português de 1928 a 1974* (Lisbon: Casa das Letras, 2005).

³¹ On this period of Soares’s life and his activities, see Maria João Avillez, *Soares. Ditadura e Revolução* (Lisbon: Público, 1996).

³² See the map of this constellation of groups in Miguel Cardina, *A Esquerda Radical* (Coimbra: Angelus Novus, 2010).

³³ José Pacheco Pereira, *As Armas*, 63, publishes a list of the print runs of some of these exile and underground periodicals. Most had print runs of 500–1,000 copies. The ‘collective’ that published the *Cadernos de Circunstância* was the most ambitious – the magazine printed 2,000 copies and as for the pamphlet published by some of its activists, *Classe Operária*, this reached 5,000. The vast majority of this literature was published in France.

in the case of the former, claiming a ‘confused anarcho-Marxist-Leninist ideology’, or claiming inspiration from the libertarian tendencies of movements that emerged in the 1960s (such as the Dutch *Provos*) or the revolutionary paths that emerged from the Marxist student world in Italy.³⁴

A common aspect to all of these was their relative inability to mobilise their emigrant compatriots – to a certain extent, the representatives of the exploited Portuguese masses abroad – to undertake initiatives against the regime, despite the success that some had achieved in unionising certain compatriots, or the constitution of autonomous Portuguese sections within trade unions in the host countries.³⁵ Factors such as the cultural and social gap (perhaps not as wide as is sometimes supposed because of the proximity established in common workplaces such as factories) may have contributed to this lack of receptivity; but more decisive may have been the fear that many migrants experienced in relation to a possible retaliation from the Portuguese authorities – a feeling very widespread in emigration circles.³⁶ As Victor Pereira has underlined, the intimidating effects of Salazar’s police abroad were based on a paradox. For various reasons (financial and administrative but also political and diplomatic), the International and State Defence Police (*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*; PIDE) was only occasionally present in some of the main centres of Portuguese exile in Western Europe, never having the means which would have enabled it to carry out fully effective surveillance on the movements and activities of the oppositionists. But the reputation of omnipotence it enjoyed was such (largely built up by the anti-fascist left, which in its publications alluded to fantastic numbers of PIDE agents and informants abroad) that a significant part of the migrants and exiles never broke free of the fear that the political police had ingrained in them.³⁷ Indeed, although exaggerated, the image of a PIDE able to extend its tentacles into the heart of many democratic states was not completely divorced from reality, as could be proven by the complex operation mounted to achieve the assassination of Humberto Delgado in Spain (1965), or the collaboration of the French information and counter-intelligence services in the process that led to the arrest of Hermínio da Palma Inácio, a leading member of LUAR, in 1972–73.³⁸

³⁴ On the ‘confused ideology’ of LUAR see the testimony of José Hipólito dos Santos, *Felizmente Houve a LUAR*; on the Revolutionary Brigades, see Isabel Lindim, *Mulheres de Armas. História das Brigadas Revolucionárias* (Lisbon: Objectiva, 2012), especially the personal testimony of Isabel do Carmo (‘As mulheres nas Brigadas Revolucionárias’), where reference is made to sources of ideological inspiration for the organisation.

³⁵ On this aspect, see the memories of one of those exiled in the United Kingdom, Sacuntala Miranda, *Memórias de um Peão nos Combates pela Liberdade* (Lisbon: Salamandra, 2003).

³⁶ On these relationships, see Victor Pereira, ‘Emigrés surveillés. La PIDE et les Portugais en France’, *Latitudes*, 21 (Sept. 2004), 3–12 and, from the same author *Les Exilés Politiques Portugais*.

³⁷ For a consideration of the effectiveness of the PIDE in France, see Victor Pereira, *La dictature de Salazar*, 351–403.

³⁸ On the conspiracy leading to the murder of Delgado, see Frederico Delgado Rosa, *Humberto Delgado. Biografia do General Sem Medo* (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2008), particularly Chapter 24. On the arrest of Palma Inácio, see Victor Pereira, *La dictature de Salazar face à l’émigration*, Chapter 9.

The 'Marcelista Spring' As Seen from the Outside

Schematically, differences between the various currents that made up the Portuguese oppositionist diaspora can be discerned by looking at two specific points. The first relates to the strategy that was thought best able to accelerate the end of the dictatorship, the second with the type of society that was idealised for a post-authoritarian Portugal.

When Marcelo Caetano succeeded Salazar in September 1968 various debates took place in opposition circles, including those from the political emigration. Would the new government just be a revamped version of the old system? Or was this the start of a process of opening and liberalisation which would allow for an effective democratisation of Portuguese political life? And if this hypothesis was plausible, should the Portuguese anti-fascists play a role in a negotiated transition to a Western-style democracy?³⁹ These expectations were partly fuelled by the reputation of Caetano as a reform-minded ruler, as well as the awareness that the economic and social changes experienced by the country since the beginning of the decade (largely stimulated by the effects of its accession to EFTA in 1959) had encouraged important segments of the regime's elites to be sympathetic towards a more technocratic, modernising and pro-European governance.

In the first months of the new situation, Caetano did in fact adopt some symbolic measures (authorisation for the return of some exiles/deported individuals, the release of political prisoners, the promise that the forthcoming general election would take place within a framework of greater freedom, a more liberal legislation for trade unions) which seemed to herald political liberalisation in Portugal. Albeit cautiously, certain opposition sectors were willing to see if Caetano would honour the expectations created by his 'political spring'. Some exploratory contacts were undertaken between one of Caetano's trusted individuals and Soares himself, interested in understanding how far Salazar's successor could go in terms of concessions that would confer credibility to his policy of openness.⁴⁰ Despite these initial expectations having worn off at the end of the first months, socialists, progressive Catholics and, indirectly, the PCP itself, were willing to present lists of candidates to the legislative elections of November 1969, even knowing that in the past similar overtures had failed to bring about meaningful changes.⁴¹ Their approach, however, was severely criticised by more radical circles on the left, including political

³⁹ On these initial expectations, see Fernando Rosas, 'O marcelismo ou a falência da política de transição no Estado Novo', in J. M. Brandão de Brito, coord., *Do Marcelismo ao Fim do Império* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 1999), 15–59 and Rui Ramos, 'Nossas memórias de Marcelo Caetano (ensaio para uma análise histórica)', in M. Braga da Cruz and R. Ramos, org., *Marcelo Caetano. Tempos de Transição* (Lisbon: Porto Editora, 2012), 465–506.

⁴⁰ On the in consequence of such contacts, see Joana Reis, *Melo e Castro. O Provedor que Dizia Sim à Democracia* (Lisbon: Casa das Letras, 2013), 92–5.

⁴¹ On the opposition in this period, see João Madeira, 'As oposições de esquerda e de extrema-esquerda', in F. Rosas and Pedro A. Oliveira, *A Transição Falhada. O Marcelismo e o Fim do Estado Novo 1968–1974* (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2004), 91–135. See also Cadernos de História do PCP, *O Governo de Marcelo Caetano, Tentativa de Salvar a Ditadura* (Lisbon: Editorial 'Avante!', 1997).

emigrants. For some of them such participation was the same as repeating mistakes made by the opposition at previous historical junctures, particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War, when Salazar had committed himself to holding ‘free and fair’ elections in order to acquire some semblance of legitimacy before the allied powers. According to these critics, the ‘legal’ windows opened by the regime were nothing more than expediciencies to distract the masses from the only credible alternative to the defeat of fascism in Portugal: the pursuit of forms of ‘class struggle’ (strikes, collective protests), which would gradually exacerbate the sense of exploitation amongst the workers, thus helping to create a ‘revolutionary situation’.⁴²

The fact that the 1969 elections took place, once more, under conditions that were far short of the promises made by the leaders of the regime and were followed by a crackdown directed against opposition figures who had been vocal in them reinforced the idea that the extinction of the *Estado Novo* could only occur through violent means. This idea was not alien to the political culture of the Portuguese opposition. Since its Sixth Congress in 1965 the PCP had forged a strategy (‘Road to Victory’) for the overthrow of the dictatorship around the concept of ‘popular national uprising’, which involved a combination of legal and illegal methods to ‘radicalise the masses’, cause the breakdown of the regime’s security apparatus and make room for a general uprising, based on a coalition of workers, peasants, intellectuals and the more ‘enlightened’ sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and middle classes. In many ways this approach did not differ from previous party strategies (with the exception of the period known in its official history as the ‘rightist deviation’, situated between the Congress in 1957 and the recapture of the leadership by Cunhal in 1960–61). The new factor was that the PCP now faced a potentially embarrassing challenge from sectors to its left, as outlined in the context of the difficulties experienced by the regime in 1961–62 and various international developments (revolution in Cuba, Sino-Soviet split, anti-imperialist liberation struggles) which had exerted a strong impression on the younger fringes of the opposition.⁴³ One of the characteristic facets of some of these was the demand for ‘concrete actions’ against the regime, actions that would eventually uproot the ‘masses’ from their apathy.

This challenge persuaded the Party of the need to redesign its strategy in a more ‘militant’ sense, on the one hand, and to engage in initiatives that had hitherto been denounced as adventurist and irresponsible, on the other. After some years of elaborate preparations, from 1970 to 1972 the Armed Revolutionary Action (*Ação Revolucionária Armada*; ARA), an organisation created by the PCP for that specific purpose, would carry out a series of sabotage and bombing operations against targets selected in Portugal, mostly identified with the defence and overseas policy of the

⁴² For an example of these points of view, see the observations made in November 1968 by the ‘collective’ of *Cadernos de Circunstância*, published by one of the political emigre groups of the extreme left in France in the late 1960s. *Cadernos de Circunstância* 67–70 (Porto: Afrontamento, 1975).

⁴³ For a summary of the evolution of the PCP in the years from 1950–70, see Carlos A. Cunha, *The Portuguese Communist Party’s Strategy for Power, 1921–1986*, PhD dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1987, 225–40. See also the more recent approach by João Madeira, *História do PCP. Das origens ao 25 de Abril [1921–1974]* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2013).

regime (military installations, NATO command, warships).⁴⁴ These attacks were preceded by the actions of another opposition organisation, LUAR, which despite showing a less efficient operational capacity, managed to garner an equivalent, or even greater, notoriety, through spectacular actions in Portugal and abroad (robberies of banks and Portuguese consulates in European countries). Between 1971 and 1974, a third-party organisation, also based outside Portugal, the Revolutionary Brigades (*Brigadas Revolucionárias*, founded by two PCP dissidents Carlos Antunes and Isabel Carmo) would also be active in this specific fight, carrying out a handful of initiatives which, symptomatically, involved the help or collaboration of members of a more radicalised ‘progressive Catholicism’.⁴⁵

The impasse that developed in Portugal after the 1969 elections, the absence of substantive policy reforms and, more importantly, the continuing wars in Africa, helped foster a kind of competition between the different currents and opposition groups to see who would be able to present the most impeccable revolutionary credentials. For many of these the establishment of a bourgeois parliamentary democracy, even if based on a social contract comparable to that which had been established in most of Western Europe after 1945, was an undesirable outcome, as this would do no more than legitimise the mechanisms that ensured the hegemony of the capitalist forces in Portuguese society. In fact, a radically anti-capitalist perspective permeated the rhetoric and analysis of virtually all oppositionist groups.⁴⁶ As many liked to point out, their motivation to fight ‘fascism’ was not only rooted in the desire to replace its ‘political superstructure’. What was intended was to start a revolutionary transformation which would significantly alter the economic and social structures of the country, making possible the supremacy of the working class and the building of a ‘socialist society’.

Although the PCP was comparatively more cautious in its analysis of the ‘revolutionary conditions’ in Portugal (and the possible geopolitical implications of a socialist revolution in the Iberian Peninsula), and advocated the need for a democratic transition (until the election of a constituent assembly), its perspective also included a radical break with the power of the plutocracy and ‘capitalist monopolies’, holding the Bolshevik Revolution as its mythical reference point.⁴⁷

It should be noted that these positions also ended up contaminating socialists, whose 1970 (ASP) and 1973 (PS) programmes offered a much more radical flavour than was the hallmark of mainstream social democracy programmes in Western Europe (with the possible exception of the French Socialist Party (SFIO/PS)). In its Declaration of Principles adopted in 1970 in Basel, the ASP undertook a clear turn

⁴⁴ See Raimundo Narciso, *A.R.A. – Acção Revolucionária Armada* (Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 2000).

⁴⁵ António Araújo, ‘A Paz é Possível: Algumas notas sobre o caso da Capela do Rato’, *Lusitânia Sacra*, 16, 2004, 431–63.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the case of the appropriation of this rhetoric by the opposition which was heir to the republican–*reviralista* tradition, fully analysed by José Barreto, ‘As nacionalizações e a oposição ao Estado Novo’, *Análise Social*, 151, 2 (1999), 509–54.

⁴⁷ On the PCP’s loyalty to the mythical reference of October 1917, see Carlos Brito, *Álvaro Cunhal: Sete Fôlegos de um Combatente* (Lisbon: Edições Néelson de Matos, 2010).

to the left, setting itself up as a Marxist inspired ('not dogmatic') socialist movement whose main goal was the construction of a 'classless society' in Portugal.⁴⁸ This commitment of Portuguese socialists to mark their differences vis-à-vis European social democracy was again witnessed in a series of documents adopted in 1973, under the process that led to the foundation of the PS – curiously, under the auspices of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which after its Bad Godesberg Congress of 1959 had accepted, unambiguously, the legitimacy of the capitalist market economy.

Clearly, this racialised rhetoric was no stranger to the influences that many of these activists were exposed to in countries where the Portuguese opposition in exile was present. After all, there was a full tide of radicalism that had captured the imagination of European/Western youth in the second half of the 1960s – an intellectual *movida* in which all Portuguese exiles, in one way or another, took an active part. The question, however, is to know to what extent all this militant effervescence had some kind of strategic path or direction. Indeed, between 1969 and 1974 a part of the Portuguese opposition abroad seemed to have reached a stalemate. On the one hand, there was the hangover from the events of May 1968 in France, as well as from Portugal's own elections in October 1969, which ruled out the prospect of a radical change in the European 'bourgeois-capitalist' status quo and instilled a sense of disenchantment and helplessness in enthusiasts of a rapid revolutionary change. Although this was not sufficient to shake the utopian worldview of many, it seems to have encouraged some to retreat to a more private sphere and others to search for a deeper understanding of the factors that allowed for the resilience of the *Estado Novo*.⁴⁹

The appearance of journals, such as that which was created by a group of exiles in Geneva (*Polémica*), proposing an unorthodox Marxist analysis of the situation in Portugal, was an important indicator of this more 'introspective' trend.⁵⁰

However, although here too the signs were sometimes contradictory, it would seem clear that, from the point of view of its international reputation, the Caetano regime was far from enjoying a comfortable position, mainly because of its colonial policy. In the late 1960s all the European powers had dismantled their formal imperial structures and, adding to this, the feeling of empathy for large sections of their public opinions in relation to an anti-imperialist, pro-Third World agenda was growing. Portugal not only seemed anachronistic in the way it was clinging on to the vestiges of its overseas empire but was also criticised for being heavily involved in all sorts of 'neo-colonial' initiatives in Africa, in collusion with the forces of 'large international capital'.⁵¹ The embarrassment that this could bring to the *Estado Novo* did not go unnoticed by the Portuguese exiles. In addition to the presence of some of them trying to stand

⁴⁸ Susana Martins, *Socialistas na Oposição ao Estado Novo*, 173.

⁴⁹ On this reflex see, for example, the testimony of M. Villaverde Cabral in Guya Accornero, 'Da militância política à investigação científica: história de uma vocação', in P. Alcântara da Silva and F. Carreira da Silva, org., *Ciências Sociais: Vocação e Profissão. Homenagem a Manuel Villaverde Cabral* (Lisbon: ICS, 2013), 39–68, esp. 57–67.

⁵⁰ On this, see J. Pacheco Pereira, *As Armas*.

⁵¹ On this atmosphere see, among others, Pedro Aires Oliveira, *Os Despojos da Aliança. A Grã-Bretanha e a Questão Colonial Portuguesa 1945-1975* (Lisbon: Tinta da China, 2007), esp. Chapter 7.

out in anti-imperialist initiatives, from actions of the Anti-Apartheid Movement to targeted campaigns against specific foci (the construction of the Cahora Bassa dam in Mozambique or the visit of Caetano to London in 1973), others would even receive requests to focus their academic activities on a critical study of Portuguese colonialism.⁵²

A significant convergence of the oppositionist forces also began to increase their expression in relation to the colonial problem. The dragging on of the wars in Africa eroded the influence of an older generation of oppositionist politicians who had maintained some loyalty to the national-imperialist positions characteristic of the Republican political culture in Portugal. In the early 1970s the adoption of strong anti-colonial positions, and the unconditional acceptance of the right of African peoples to their self-determination, were to be found throughout the Portuguese opposition, even if some nuances and differences were able to persist as regards the specific content of a future decolonisation policy. This vagueness, however, would have prevented members of the Portuguese opposition and African nationalist organisations from being able to explore opportunities for further anti-colonial collaboration – here an exception may be made for the role of the PCP with the liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies, but the content of this cooperation still remains opaque.

Be that as it may, the truth is that, from 1972, the growing difficulties for Caetano, and the evident failure of reformist attempts undertaken by the figures related to the ‘liberal wing’ of the regime,⁵³ would at least facilitate a rapprochement between the two main forces of the Portuguese opposition in exile – the Communists and the Socialists, whose leaders, Cunhal and Soares, had both been based in Paris since 1967 and 1970, respectively. The atmosphere of détente that prevailed in Europe, which had allowed a ruler such as Willy Brandt to develop his *Ostpolitik*, also seems to have been decisive for the opening of a dialogue between two forces that, until then, had regarded each other with the utmost suspicion. Under the influence of the ‘Left Union’ and the Joint Programme entered into by French Socialists and Communists in 1972 (and perhaps animated by the percentage of the vote achieved by the two parties in the French general elections in March 1973⁵⁴), Soares and Cunhal, from September of that year, were able to put aside some of the differences that separated them and meet on a ‘platform’ to oppose and overthrow the dictatorship.⁵⁵

⁵² This was, for example, the case for Eduardo Sousa Ferreira, a law student exiled in West Germany since 1962 and very strongly supported by the Ebert Foundation. Among his essays, see *Portuguese Colonialism in Africa. The End of an Era* (Unesco, 1975), with an introduction by Basil Davidson.

⁵³ On the ‘liberal wing’ and the most pro-European sectors of Marcelist power, see Tiago Fernandes, *Nem Ditadura, Nem Revolução. A Ala Liberal e o Marcelismo 1968–1974* (Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 2006) and José Manuel Tavares Castilho, *A Ideia de Europa no Marcelismo 1968–1974* (Lisbon: Edições Afrontamento, 2000).

⁵⁴ The PSF, the PCF and other smaller left forces (‘Left Union’) obtained in total 45.89 per cent of the vote, against 54.11 per cent of the centre-right parties (‘Presidential Majority’). In the elections of 1968, this result reflected an increase of more than 3 per cent.

⁵⁵ José Pedro Castanheira also mentions the experience of the government of ‘popular unity’ of Allende in Chile as one of the factors that may have fostered this process of convergence. See his *Jorge Sampaio. Uma biografia* (Lisbon: Edições Nélson de Matos/Porto Editora, 2012), 414–6.

Their key points expressed the common denominators of their programmes: the restoration of democratic freedoms, the end of the colonial war and the opening of negotiations with a view to preparing the independence of the overseas territories, the emancipation of Portugal from the yoke of ‘monopolies’ and ‘imperialism’ and the formation of a provisional government with the task of preparing elections for a constituent assembly.⁵⁶

Humanitarian Consciousness vs *Realpolitik*

Throughout this period (c. 1968–74), the activities of the Portuguese exiles was never a factor in the calculations of European governments with regard to the *Estado Novo*, which continued to benefit from considerable goodwill from the major Western powers. This attitude, it does not need recalling, had deep roots – in some cases even being embedded in periods prior to the Cold War. Portugal’s participation in NATO, an anti-communist alliance, was the cornerstone of the tolerance that the West dedicated to Salazar and Caetano and the dynamics of détente did nothing to change this state of affairs. In fact, it may even be argued that certain initiatives that symbolised greater European assertiveness in foreign policy, such as Gaullism and the *Ostpolitik* of West Germany, would have even strengthened the international position of Lisbon. The war effort of Portugal in Africa, in particular, benefited from crucial support from France and West Germany.⁵⁷ While Gaullist France felt happy to explore the cooling of relations between Portugal and its ‘Anglo-Saxon’ allies, the West Germans believed in the existence of a certain symmetry between the logic of *Ostpolitik* (‘change by rapprochement’) and an attitude of greater encouragement and openness to the ‘modernising’ regime of Caetano – in both cases, it was believed, increasing links with European liberal democracies could only erode the influence of the more static elements of the respective regimes.⁵⁸

Putting aside any gesture or initiative that might offend the Portuguese authorities, some of these countries with greater responsibilities in NATO did not neglect certain elements of what later was designated as ‘soft power’ to give a signal to the opponents of the *Estado Novo*. Through initiatives by ‘para-statal’ entities (political parties, foundations, cultural organisations, trade unions), they sought to achieve a possible balance between maintaining friendly relations with the Portuguese regime, on the one hand, and the creation of some bridges with non-communist Portuguese opposition figures, on the other – with the same applying with regard to the activists of

⁵⁶ Susana Martins, *Socialistas na Oposição*, 217–8.

⁵⁷ On this support, see Daniel Marcos and Ana Mónica Fonseca, ‘French and German Support to Portugal: The Military Survival of the Estado Novo (1958–1968)’, *Portuguese Studies Review*, 16, 2 (2008), 103–19 and Rui Lopes, *West Germany and the Portuguese Dictatorship, 1968–1974: Between Cold War and Colonialism* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2014).

⁵⁸ On the SPD and the *Estado Novo*, see A. Muñoz Sánchez, ‘La Socialdemocracia alemana y el Estado Novo (1961–1974)’, *Portuguese Studies Review*, 13 1–2 (2005), 477–503. The same author also studied the SPD’s relationship with the Spanish Socialists, which followed a very similar pattern. See Muñoz Sánchez, *El Amigo Alemán. El SPD y el PSOE de la Dictadura a la Democracia* (Barcelona: RBA, 2012).

the African liberation movements based in their countries, never officially recognised, but with which many European governments sought to maintain open channels.

Despite finding itself exempt from the most brutal connotations of its Iberian neighbour (again prominent in the final phase of Francoism, in response to the phenomenon of Basque separatism), and the no less fierce reputation of the ‘dictatorship of the colonels’ in Athens, the *Estado Novo* was unable to avoid closer scrutiny of its repressive policies. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed the emergence of human rights as an important issue on the international agenda, largely thanks to pressure from activists dissatisfied with the restrictions imposed by the Cold War on the discussion of abuses by regimes considered ‘friends’ of the West.⁵⁹ As is well known, the situation in Portugal played a not insignificant role in this process. This first happened by entering the radar of the International Commission of Jurists, an NGO founded in 1952 and well known for its role in denouncing human rights violations in the Socialist countries.⁶⁰ The second occurred by ‘providing’ the incident in 1961 which would lead a British Catholic lawyer to be driven to set up Amnesty International (the arrest of two students for making a toast to ‘freedom’ in a restaurant in Lisbon).⁶¹ From that point onwards a significant number of Portuguese oppositionists and figures linked to African nationalist movements (such as the president of the MPLA, Agostinho Neto), would be adopted as ‘prisoners of conscience’ in the context of campaigns in which various elements within Portuguese exile played an active role.⁶²

Despite this new importance acquired by human rights issues at the transnational level (which however should not be exaggerated, at least if we accept the assertion of some recent literature that only from the 1970s does it make sense to speak of a genuine movement dedicated to the promotion of human rights *beyond* state borders),⁶³ cases were rare in which Portuguese exiles and their counterparts from other dictatorial regimes in Southern Europe carried out more regular and consistent cooperation arrangements. The campaign to establish the circumstances of the assassination of

⁵⁹ See Kirsten Sellars, *The Rise and Rise of Human Rights* (London: Sutton Publishing, 2002) and Michael Cotey Morgan, ‘The Seventies and the Rebirth of Human Rights’, in Niall Ferguson, Charles Maier, Erez Manela and Daniel J. Sargent, eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2011).

⁶⁰ On the role of the ICJ, see António Pedro Vicente, ‘A Comissão Internacional de Juristas. Seu contributo para o processo de transição democrática em Portugal e Espanha entre 1954 e 1968’, in *Portugal e Espanha. Um olhar sobre as relações peninsulares no século XX* (Lisbon: Tribuna da História, 2003). The reputation of the ICJ was for some years affected by revelations about surreptitious support channelled by the CIA, but the organisation would free itself of this scandal in the 1970s.

⁶¹ Tom Buchanan, ‘“The Truth Will Set You Free”: The Making of Amnesty International’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37, 4 (2002), 576–7.

⁶² On the involvement of some exiles in the United Kingdom with AI, see Pedro Aires Oliveira, ‘Generous Albion?’

⁶³ For a discussion of some of the main trends of this literature, see Devin O. Pendas, ‘Towards a New Politics? On the Recent Historiography of Human Rights’, *Contemporary European History*, 21, 1 (2012) 95–111. One of the exponents of this literature, Samuel Moyn, argues that the dedication of many activists to the moral cause of human rights can be seen as a response to the disappointments that many of them experienced with ‘betrayed utopias’ of anti-imperialist revolutions in the ‘Third World’ and the socialist countries.

Humberto Delgado, launched in 1965 by opposition figures, lawyers and political figures from various countries (including Catalan exiles), or some joint initiatives presented by Soares and Spanish and Greek socialist leaders, were exceptions, but future research may reveal the existence of other types of co-working and sharing, including that developed between organisations committed to armed struggle in Spain and Portugal,⁶⁴ or between the Portuguese and Spanish committees of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an organisation sponsored by US private and governmental agencies in the context of the ‘cultural battles’ of the Cold War.⁶⁵

Above all, the unpopular colonial wars of Portugal in Africa became the focus of intense scrutiny and international protest, involving committees and activist groups committed to ‘anti-imperialist’ struggles in Africa (within which some Portuguese exiles were affiliated). In July 1973 the revelation by the London *Times* of a massacre perpetrated by Portuguese special forces in Tete, Mozambique, causing an estimated 400 civilian casualties, spoiled the official visit of Caetano to London and galvanised opposition to the regime and to the colonial war in exile circles.⁶⁶ In the British capital, Mário Soares, who was enhancing contacts with British labour leaders, appeared on several platforms on which the Marcellist policy of resistance to decolonisation was discussed, alongside the former representative of Great Britain in the United Nations, Lord Caradon, and the Catholic priest who had gained prominence in denouncing the atrocities committed by Portuguese troops in Mozambique.⁶⁷ The episode also confirmed another underlying trend: the progressive alienation of influential sectors of the Catholic Church (including the Vatican) from the policies of the Estado Novo, particularly in relation to decolonisation, something which was clearly demonstrated in the role played by various figures connected to Spanish and British missionaries circles in the detailed revelation of this and other massacres which also occurred in Mozambique.

All in all, however, these perceptions would, at most, have contributed to a more acute awareness of what separated a country like Portugal from the democratic ‘normality’ of Western Europe, despite other states of Southern Europe, such as Spain and Greece, also living under regimes that combined ‘modernising’ agendas with strong political repression. In the period in question, this was not enough to stigmatise Caetano in the eyes of the vast majority of Portugal’s partners in NATO, nor close the door to an advantageous economic agreement with the European

⁶⁴ In an interview with the author (3 May 2012), Fernando Pereira Marques, one of the activists in LUAR, mentioned the sharing of some technical know-how with ETA members in France (during a period prior to 1974, of course).

⁶⁵ On the cooperation between the Portuguese and Spanish committees of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, see Olga Glodyš, ‘La colaboración de los comités español y portugués del Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura en las postrimerías de las dictaduras ibéricas’, unpublished paper, 2013, kindly provided to the author. On the Congress itself, see, among others, Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 2000), 2nd ed.

⁶⁶ Norrie MacQueen and Pedro Aires Oliveira, ‘Grocer Meets Butcher: Marcello Caetano’s London Visit of 1973 and the Last Days of Portugal’s Estado Novo’, *Cold War History*, 10, 1 (2010), 29–50.

⁶⁷ Pedro Aires Oliveira, ‘Adrian Hastings e Portugal: Wiriyamu e outras polémicas’, *Lusitania Sacra*, 19–20 (2007–2009) 379–97.

Economic Community (EEC). Concepts such as ‘human security’ began to gain a certain currency in international relations, which would soon mark the diplomacy of detente in Europe. But to then arrive at something similar to a strategy of democratic promotion, it would be necessary to wait a few further years. Until 1974 the most widespread view in European chancelleries continued to be based on belief in the potential ‘dissolvent’ effects of closer ties between Portugal and Western Europe – here would lie the key to the country’s modernisation, the breakdown of the regime and the adoption of a political solution to the colonial impasse. Recent research has emphasised the comfortable international insertion of the Southern European dictatorships in the security and economic cooperation structures of the West.⁶⁸ They of course would not be the most ‘presentable’ partners from the point of view of the West’s public relations strategy; but the promise of stability that safeguarded NATO’s southern flank was enough to contain expressions of displeasure towards the toleration of these relics from the Fascist era.

Final Considerations

Perhaps this is why a sense of despondency, or even impotence, would eventually prevail in many expatriate circles regarding the chances of a breakdown in the dictatorship, either by way of an internal ‘uprising’, or through any external pressure. Until 1973–74, and despite obvious signs of a certain political exhaustion, the Caetano regime was nevertheless able to take advantage of a relative economic bonanza, while at the same time a routine surveillance and repression machine managed to keep most of the population politically apathetic.

For many oppositionists, the vulnerabilities of the system only became evident after its fall at the hands of the military – and this may explain the tensions that occasionally occurred between the most impatient activists abroad and a ‘domestic’ opposition more sensitive to the risks certain initiatives proposed by exile circles could lead to (a cleavage that was evident at the time of the founding of the PS in 1973). The same could be said for the majority of European democratic governments. Even though many of them felt uncomfortable with the authoritarianism and colonialism of the *Estado Novo*, this was never enough to cause a cut that could jeopardise the cohesion of NATO, an objective which tended to ‘concentrate the minds’ of Western decision makers. Moreover, the lack of a leadership perceived as consensual or legitimate among the broad spectrum of opposition to the *Estado Novo* deprived Western governments of a clear and ‘reliable’ interlocutor – not to mention the fear that many had of the manipulation of any ‘front’ initiative by a PCP which was a recognised expert in these matters.

Even when out of government, the social democratic parties chose to follow a cautious and even relatively cool attitude compared to requests for assistance from

⁶⁸ See A. Muños Sánchez, ‘La Socialdemocracia alemana y el Estado Novo (1961–1974)’ and Rui Lopes, *Between Cold War*.

the non-communist Portuguese opposition – the same being the case, moreover, regarding the other Spanish and Greek formations recognised by the IS.⁶⁹ Overall, this assistance had a symbolic character and, as mentioned, was channelled through parastatal entities so as not to offend the susceptibilities of the authorities of countries that remained within the policy orbit of NATO or the United States.⁷⁰ Whenever comparisons were drawn with the Greeks and the Spanish, the Portuguese exiles had an additional problem – when it came to take stock of the arbitrariness and state violence, the apparent ‘mildness’ of the *Estado Novo* mitigated the impact of their testimonies. Many had difficulty in precisely explaining the kind of claustrophobic atmosphere that the regime had built up over the years based on a ‘preventive’ systematic crackdown that dispensed having to submit its opponents to the massive violence typical of other totalitarian states.⁷¹ But they also had a potential trump card: the enormous unpopularity of the colonial wars in Africa, whose international visibility, especially after the conclusion of the Vietnam peace agreements (1973), showed a tendency to increase. However, as already mentioned, various kinds of factors prevented Portuguese and African nationalist anti-fascists from developing closer forms of cooperation, which could possibly have given greater projection to the common cause which they embraced. The fact that it was the military who, in the end, took to the streets to end forty-eight years of dictatorship, only reinforced the incredulity with which many oppositionists, in the country and abroad, received the first news of the coup of 25 April 1974.

With few exceptions,⁷² this event caused a massive repatriation of almost all the opposition diaspora (as well as many other ‘cultural expatriates’) which would play a role of utmost importance in the construction of Portuguese democracy. On balance, finally, it is possible that the most fruitful aspect of the Portuguese exile in the years 1960–70 was the capital of experience that an entire generation acquired in more plural, cosmopolitan and democratic societies. Even though these aspects were not immediately appreciated, or that many did not establish any link between the personal development opportunities they were able to benefit from and a ‘liberal’ and ‘capitalist’ system that at the time many were said to have repudiated (even in its ‘reformed’ or ‘social-democratic’ version), the fact was that after a few years this ‘cognitive dissonance’ was being corrected. Many ended up reinventing themselves as ‘foreignised/*estrangeirados*’, apostles of the ‘modernisation’ and ‘Europeanisation’ of a society still deeply marked by the legacies of the ‘Ancien Régime’ (Salazar’s or

⁶⁹ On the attitudes of the German Social Democrats regarding Spanish Socialists, see Antonio Muñoz Sánchez, *El Amigo Alemán*.

⁷⁰ See the testimony of Rui Mateus, one of the ASP/PS activists in exile, who, until the mid-1980s most closely followed the international relations of the Portuguese Socialists. Rui Mateus, *Contos Proibidos. Memórias de um PS Desconhecido* (Lisbon: Dom Quixote, 1996).

⁷¹ In an interview with the author (7 Sept. 2013), Manuel Lucena mentioned that a few times such comparisons became almost embarrassing, especially when counting the (dead) victims of Salazarism/Marcelism and comparing this with the Spanish and Greek dictatorships.

⁷² Among exiles who preferred to stay out of Portugal after 1974, one could mention the cases of the writers Jorge Sena and José Rodrigues Miguéis (both in the United States) and the journalist António de Figueiredo (United Kingdom).

even the pre-liberal one). In many cases, their own personal experiences of exile and expatriation began to be evoked in order to illustrate the virtues of such a process of catching-up with modernity, which many, however, consider still far from complete.⁷³

⁷³ See, for example, the testimony of several exiles in Belgium and Sweden in the years 1960–70 in Amadeu de Lopes Sabino et. al., *À Espera de Godinho. Quando o Futuro Existia* (Lisbon: Editorial Bizâncio, 2009).