

PORTUGAL 1974 / 1984

In 1974, Portugal had a revolution. By 1984, what was left of the occupations, the land take-overs, the changes and the dynamic class struggles?

From the

End of Empire

To the

Empire of the End

+ O Jornal Combate

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New Introduction: Late Winter 2004

This Pravda text from Portugal written by Julio Henriques during the early 1980s ventured into areas the ultra left grouping Combate - which had been spawned during the momentous period of the failed Portuguese revolution of 1974-5 - and which the writer was loosely affiliated, rejected as irrelevant. A book of Combate's editorials was published under the title "State Capitalism or Private Capitalism" and reading it today is to be reminded of how fierce the debate on this central issue then was. The origins of State capitalism, Combate correctly believed, could be found in Marx and was in stark contradiction to the other, revolutionary, Marx. The system of State Capitalism pertained especially in the former Soviet Union, China, Cuba, N. Korea, and in post bellum Vietnam but also included the large nationalised sectors such as then existed in Britain, Italy, France etc.

Combate was especially critical of such woolly notions beloved by Trotskyists in particular, of "nationalisation under workers control", slogans which once again are beginning to appear in bankrupt economies like Argentina - e.g. the Bruckman textile factory in Buenos Aires occupied in 2003/4 and run by its 300 women workers. In the brave new world at the-end-of-history the question of state v private capitalism has been decisively settled in favour of the latter and is no longer deemed to be of any importance except amongst the anti-globalisation movement that has overwhelmingly opted for the former 'solution' to capitalism's ills. Likewise the question of the supersession of art increasingly meets with blank stares and even outright hostility despite art's ever growing bankruptcy on a scale that adds new meaning and fathomless depths to the fable of the emperor with no clothes. It is this supersession of art which figures so prominently in the Pravda article. Ideally it should have been inserted into the State/Private capital debate and formed part of an attempt to go beyond all three terms and to practically make each of them historically redundant.

The cover of this edition of Pravda features a bowler hatted, Portuguese fascist still clutching a model of Vasco da Gama's boat though cracking up himself, whilst behind him there looms an integrated, fashion conscious art/media oriented youth (punk was then all the rage) that was destined in his stead to now take over worldwide and that far exceeded the dreams of territorial imperialism. That is why the inverting of the End of Empire to the Empire of the End is so pertinent and imparts a directness to the notion Toni Negri's opaque, side stepping book, Empire cannot achieve. The whole point of the text is to show

NOTES:

[1] The initial initiative to set up Combate came from Joao Bernardo, Rita Delgado e Joao Crisestomo, the latter since deceased. Joao Bernardo e Rita Delgado had been members of a clandestine Marxist Leninist group, the Revolutionary Communist Committees (CCR) which resulted from a split in 1969 of a Maoist organisation, the Portuguese Marxist Leninist Committee.

[2] Certain people can be mentioned here and apologies to anyone left out. Antonio Leitao, Julio Henriques, Diogo..... Julio..



probably inevitable anyway, given the pressure of world capitalism) but to dwell on the positive aspects of the experience which was a rich one and one which we offer here in retrospect. It is the workers' movement which is important and not some hurt egos of a few of its members, it was one of the first and richest oral history experiences, as well as being active participants in it.

Combate was a product of its time, there was no internet, no mobile phones, and in many respects it seems old-fashioned. And of course, it is. In today's world video and Internet and SMS may be a better means of communications (as in the French struggles in 2006) but in the Portugal of the 1970s this was not available. However, it should be said that from the first issue (and the last one was a stencilled effort) Combate would not have survived without the help of the self-managed workers in the printing press where it was published. Many thanks to them.

At the start of 1975 the northern members opened up a bookshop called Contra A Corrente and started editing small pamphlets, either printed or stencilled. The bookshop was a meeting place for members of Combate but was also used by other groups of a libertarian or autonomist tendency without conditions. In October 1975 the Lisbon members opened a bookshop, also called Contra a Corrente with the same objectives. Some 31 pamphlets were in Portuguese as well as some in English and French.

What is certain is that in the pages of the 51 issues of Combate there is a repository of all that happened within the workers' movement in 74-75. It is a goldmine for researchers and for anyone interested in the workers' movement of this time, probably one of the great experiences of the end of the 20th century. It is in this vein that we put out these issues, in Portuguese only at the moment. A collection of essays, called (Capitalismo Privado ou Capitalismo de Estado N'ó ' Escolha!, Porto: Afrontamento, 1975). And it is worth noting that the book Portugal. The Impossible Revolution? (Londres: Solidarity, 1977; also available on the internet, which was translated into Portuguese as Portugal: A Revoluao Impossivel?, Porto: Afrontamento, 1978), by Phil Meyler, one of the various foreigners who were directly involved in Combate right up to the end., contains many references and quotes from the Combate.

Lisbon 2006:

Joao Bernardo, Rita Delgado, Jose Elesio Melo e Silva, Phil Mailer.

how the recuperated rebellion of modern art played such a major role in the disorientation and pacification of the Portuguese uprising. This central tenet has lost none of its relevance despite the time lapse. The fact that Portugal was then considered to be something of a third world enclave in a first world Europe only adds force to the argument no place on earth is now immune from such a critique despite lame attempts to fence it off as euro-centric and therefore of restricted application.

Though this text was pretty much ignored in Portugal others dealing with cultural matters from the ultra left - and peppered with a tepid situationist flavour - did create a furore in the Portuguese press but only because they lambasted content (the shots tended towards the cheap) having no critique of form. Thus a publishing outfit Antígona unleashed a storm of controversy when it described Fernando Pessoa as a fascist (Pessoa -1883-1935 was a brash, innovative publicity-conscious, poet/almost anti-poet who was the very epicentre of Portuguese Futurism in the early 20th century). Antígona's was a gesture designed to shock but does not carry the weight of the Pravda article published here and merely pandered to the ruling fascist/antifascist ideology then current in the immediate aftermath of the failed Portuguese revolution. Antígona had published a contemporary edition of Pessoa's dialogue O Banquero Anarquista - The Anarchist Banker. (Though written from a Stirnerite perspective, none the less, anarchist banking, though for different reasons is yet again popular with the anti-globalisation movement). Pravda around the same time had published articles reproducing works by the Russian avant-garde of the early years of the 20th century such as Tatlin, Rodchenko, Malevich etc, justifying this step backwards as necessary given the "cultural backwardness" of Portugal.

Phil Meyler who lived in Portugal at the time and produced through Solidarity in Britain by far the best book in any language on the Portuguese revolution was one of the few people at the time to begin a relevant critique of Pessoa. Whilst helping translate the following text by Julio Henriques, in conversation he pointedly dismissed Antígona's description of Pessoa as a fascist rightly insisting that Portuguese Futurism was preferable to Italian Futurism because it was anti-militaristic, an opinion Phil unfortunately didn't develop further. Phil's later book on the negation of science - And Yet it Moves is also published on this website:

www.revoltagainstplenty.com

PUBLISHERS NOTE: Reprinted by invisible hands because the texts on this site are so damn good and we've been reading them since we were teens!

The following is the original pamphlet as published in English

Preamble on Portugal:

The following text outlines the new terrain of commodity domination in Portugal that among other penetrating analyses delivers a sharpened critique of art.

In the advanced world art has more or less taken over from religion as the sphere of containment and illusory hope, or more precisely today, illusory hype. One is not merely talking of the art of museums and mildewed volumes here but how art has encroached on every aspect of life: as fashion, film, TV, advertising, magazines, design, architecture, space, consumer choice, holidays, marketing of water etc. The list appears endless. To an increasing degree art invades the sphere of production as well as consumption. Now where the merger of art and business is most complete, a nauseating contradiction arises between a business-like need to proclaim creativity (in reality its opposite) as distinct from the cynical amassing of money. Capitalists exploit others but rarely conceive of themselves as just plain robbers.

With the glaringly obvious decline in music's rebellious image, arts popularity has tended to become more visual again, concerned with tactile appearances. In the mid 80's the figure of the auctioneer is the one that compels attention in the two foremost capitals of art: London and New York. The paradoxical combination of snuffy pedantry, and a keen eye for price fits in with the trend towards global equitisation and soaring real estate values in the major financial centers. With banks beginning to set up art advisory services, art has become an investment outlet as never before attracting money in search of quick gains and appreciating assets.

The reality of this artistically coloured dire alienation makes an updated critique of art more urgent than ever. Yet despite the existing amnesia (where everything appears as new and not a wearisome repeat) anti-art hostility has not been stifled. In many ways it is more broadly based than ever due to the link between art and gentrification and the class re-structuring of old urban centers. But all too often this critique stumbles as if unsure, afraid to be branded philistine as well as poor.

The old slogans: "Art is dead do not consume its corpse", "We must realise art through suppressing it" aren't wrong - they have merely lost their cutting-edge through failing to become more specific about today's horrendous conditions.

BM BLOB: SUMMER 1987.

crats (the PPD) while situated to the right of the Socialist Party did not raise huge obstacles to the successive military governments or the Communists. Combate, at this time, considered State capitalism to be a bigger danger than private capitalism and this was the main emphasis in terms of its practical activity as well as its political analysis. This was the situation at the time and while, in hindsight, neo-liberalism and market economics have become the dominant ideology in the Portuguese (and world) ruling class, this was not the situation in 1974-75.

Combate did not have any paid up members; it was open for anyone to attend as long as they adhered to the general principals of the manifesto and while there were a core group^[2] which met at least once a week, there were others who drifted in and out or came along when certain struggles were being discussed. There was a group in the south (in Lisbon) as well as a group in the north (Oporto). Sometimes workers from a particular factory would turn up to discuss their struggle and these would get involved in preparing the next issue, Sometimes and the meeting were large, especially in the height of the struggle, and sometimes there would be the usual people, perhaps a core group, which varied, of 5 to 8 people.

Seven of the eight pages of Combate dealt with the ongoing struggles in the factories, the land, in the Army barracks and in the neighbourhoods and one page was used to analyse the current situation as discussed by those present. The seven pages were devoted to interviews, factory and neighbourhood bulletins, interviews which were transcribed in full and while this led to certain repetitions and sometimes long-windedness as people repeated points already made, it was considered useful since it was not up to us to make cuts or omit things that we didn't agree with. There were never any complaints from workers' committees about misrepresentation.

One page was devoted to an editorial and although this was discussed by all present there probably could have been more there democracy here, generally it was written by one person. Of course the heat of the moment, the need to get something out, deadlines etc, meant that someone (usually Joao) took on this task. It might have been better, in retrospect, had we asked some of the workers groups to participate more and possibly write their own editorials on what was happening. In any case, if the experience is ever repeated in some form or another this is something worth considering. When the workers' movement collapsed Combate also collapsed amidst internal recriminations which is usual in these matters and a certain amount (though not much) of bitterness followed. However, it can be said that on the collapse of Combate, the members all went our separate ways and followed separate paths. What is important here is not to dwell on this collective failure, (a collective failure which was

1976, these parties too lost their usefulness to become mini-leftist organisations on the margins of society.

For Combate, it was the actual forms of spontaneous organisation of the workers that more important rather than the particular demands made by the workers' committees since we saw this as the basis of workers' democracy and the means to destroy the hierarchies of State capitalism. Some of the strike bulletins reproduced in Combate were written in a language and logic that put the problems of Capital in a nutshell and spontaneously expressed it. An Efacec Inel strike bulletin wrote, 'Our struggles are just and if we strike we shall be heard. This is why we must organise not only against this or that boss, in this or that factory, but against the capitalist system as a whole. Comrades often ask: 'If there were no bosses, who would give us work?' We all know that to work we need a factory, machines and raw materials. We also know that other workers made the factory and the machine, just as it was other workers who sowed the cotton, worked the wool or dug up the iron ore. It therefore isn't the boss, who gives us work, but the miner, the metalworker, the farmhand. Where did the boss get his money to have his factory? Very easy comrades!. We gave it to him. It is the only way to make a fortune. Those who did the work only get what is necessary to survive. It is the workers who produce the surplus, which the boss uses to buy machines. Since it is workers like us who run the factory, why are the bosses needed?' Such was the quality and clear-headed writing of workers at the time. Combate, the newspaper, is full of such gems. In many ways, what was valuable here was the way in which workers could just talk truthfully about life, about the quality of life and about aspirations and not feel under pressure to say the 'right thing'. What was characteristic about Combate, as many workers at the time pointed out, was that it was 'believable', you got what you read and that was that. In some ways we became a mirror to the anti-capitalist movement organised by workers, who were the vanguard, not us, and they were workers who for the first time in their lives felt some power and dignity and were given the means to express it.

The fundamental split in Portuguese society, for Combate, after the 1974 coup was between the various modalities of State capitalism and the attempt to increase the direct power of the workers from the bottom up, without recourse to the state apparatus, while developing organisational autonomy and economic self management. The Communist Party through successive military governments had installed State Capitalism and the various extreme leftist parties either actively collaborated with this project or at least went along with it. The Socialist Party, on the other hand, was divided between those who wanted to go along with the military governments and the Communist Party and those who wanted a European style liberal capitalism and thus conspired with the right and extreme right and with the United States Embassy. The Social Demo-

PRAVDA

The following is the entire content of Pravda Number 3 (minus a short poem written in a neo-futurist style). Pravda is basically a continuation of the Subversao Internacional project which lived for six issues between 1977-79, part of which had been related to Combate. Pravda, which is by far the most interesting magazines published in Portugal today, can be obtained by writing to P.O. Box. 449, 3008 Coimbra, Portugal. This translation, put together with the help of individuals in Lisbon, London and New York, has been OK'd by the author.

The front cover of Pravda Number 3 depicts the old Portuguese Fascist obsessed with an ideology of overseas empire and Vasco da Gama, while behind him lurks the modern Portuguese youth obsessed with a cold, artistically stylish, designer alienation. In fact it perfectly illustrates the content of the text. (Translators note)

FROM THE END OF EMPIRE TO THE EMPIRE OF THE END

1974 AND 1984 ARE TWO IMPORTANT DATES FOR US. 1974 IS LINKED TO THE FIRST SUBVERSIVE WAVE OF IMPORTANCE TO HIT PORTUGUESE SOCIETY SINCE THE 20' S AND TO THE MEMORY OF A SOCIAL WAR WHOSE PROGRAM AIMED TO GET RID OF SUBMISSION TO THE "COLDEST OF MONSTERS". ON THE OTHER HAND, THE EMBLEMATIC 1984 EVOKES A FUTURE OF CONTINUALLY UNFOLDING ALIENATION - A FUTURE WHERE THE "COLDEST OF MONSTERS" HAS BEEN ABLE TO ROBOTIZE THE WORLD OF HUMAN BEINGS.

Through the aid of a coup that integrated it into the modern institutional dynamic of class Portuguese society, Portuguese society left one tunnel to enter another. The model precepts were provided by the democratic capitalism of a refined Europe. On the 25th of April, 1974, the gilded phase of the national empire whose retinue of civilized horrors and commonplace atrocities could fill many a volume, came to an end. It was the declared end of a (relative) political autarchy; the old solution hit upon by the fascist regime in a favourable international context. Based on agricultural subsistence and cautious industrialization it was a paupers' capitalism. Availing itself of this solution it hoped to limit the unavoidable formation of an industrial proletariat, the King Kong so feared by Salazarism.

This technological and political integration into a universe that - very superficially, is the universe of the state and the market - was avowedly proclaimed as the only alternative to the homegrown empire. The expanding complex of market relations dictated its laws - subterranean as it were - to the political practitioners of manipulation. In institutional and technical terms such integration was bound to have its ups and downs, optimistic and pessimistic phases - and - came about gradually rather than all of a sudden. This slowness is, however, normal because it is the speed at which modern decomposition travels and Portuguese society is more profoundly a part of that process now. In the unspeakable TV studios, a reconciled, complacent, unkempt youth, an active follower of Porto's "marginal rock" scene says, "we have to learn to live with the crisis". Integration is exactly that. It's significant that it was a youth around 20 who looked so artistic that said it. Because in an even more pronounced way integration into Europe means integration into the decadence of this latest of Roman Empires, the empire of wage labour and the sophisticated technology of robots.

"I BELIEVE I'M IN HELL; THEREFORE I AM THERE" (Rimbaud)

10 years on, after April (as one says using the progressive couplet), only one goddess is ever mentioned: disillusionment. Everything fades into nothingness, even the memory of how the tumultuous liberating energy in the wake of Italy's social subversion transferred here the cry "we want everything" heard in Milan and elsewhere. Either all or nothing. And those who wanted everything like us ended up with nothing, this nothing with only enough space in which to blaspheme against the social gods. Because our hearts will not yield to the advance of this shit which merely stifles us.

Disillusionment in relation to what, however? To politics -because this disillusioned populace believed government could be something other than the governed reduced to being agents of their own humiliation. A people at such a pitch of disillusionment were once so sure that politicians were there to serve them, whereas their actual function is to make use of people and their pitiful illusions. They were also sure that the economy referred to a peaceful redistribution of goods honestly produced, whereas in fact it is the official religion compelling the wretched to put up with the mire they wallow in. They likewise were sure that people in the State and para-state would listen to them when in fact their purpose is the professional manipulation of generally held naive views. One can only pity people who do not realize that "politics is the art of preventing people from busying themselves with what they venerate". (Valery)

sions amongst various workers that workers in similar situations could learn from their comrades and contribute their experiences and that the most advanced experiences could unite them in a common front or at least stimulate relations between the various workers' groups.

The problems of Workers' Committees were highlighted in all issues. An example from *Combate* no 13 (Dec 1974) quoted a worker from Setenave, the big ship building company from Setubal, south of Lisbon as saying 'The last General Assembly had no interest for me. It just discussed a load of matters that had nothing to do with the problems at hand. Parties attacked parties, you're MRPP, you're PRP and so on 'It shouldn't be as a member of a political party that one attacks the Committee but as a worker.' Another worker interviewed pointed out that that the Committee was recalled for 'fraternising' with the management and said, 'More members of the base committee must go on the Workers' Committee. Everyone should know someone on the Workers' Committee'. These were some of the nitty-gritty problems which faced the Committees and which *Combate* tried to call attention to.

This movement, in any case, owed nothing to the leftist political parties which on the whole were taken totally by surprise by events. The Communist Party, very influential in the military governments of 1974-75, tried to build up the embryonic trade union bureaucracies at the expense of the Worker's Committees and tried to halt the self-management movements in a way that wanted to promote its own brand of State Capitalism based on nationalisations. Even in the large estates in the south where workers were generally supportive of the Communist Party the collective occupations of land came from the initiative of the farm-workers themselves. The Communist Party slogans were 'for an increase in wages' and where direct repression couldn't work they tried to use the nationalised banking system to run the companies and estates in self-management through the granting of credit facilities and in this way control them. None of the other extreme left parties (like UDP, PRP, MES or MRPP) had any preponderant role in the self-management movement at the time. In reality, these leftist parties were the political arm of certain military factions, and this relation to the armed forces showed that they had not really separated themselves from the Capitalist State and were really only interested in their own brands of State Capitalism. Certainly the militants of these parties in the factories where they were present were very active and played a role in the Workers' Committees. But at long as the Base Movement remained strong these militants were confined to carry out the directives of the General Assemblies and not those dictated by the parties. Party banners were forbidden in many Assemblies and on demonstrations by 1975 and the parties were regulated to a secondary position. And, of course, when the base movement began to decline and the workers' committees became more isolated, after November

In 1974, after the initial experiences of such companies like Sogantal and Charminha where factories were occupied by the workers and self-managed, the workers taking on all tasks inside the factory, the experience spread to hundreds if not thousands of factories. Actually, many bosses afraid of the boldness of the popular wave fled the country, leaving the factories abandoned and the staff without pay. The occupations started off as a survival mechanism for the workers. It was in this way that in industry and commerce self-managed companies came into being, from tiny units to large enterprises. Large estates (latifundios) in the south were occupied and cultivated collectively. By mid 1975, a huge part of the Portuguese economy and society were directly in the hands of the workers and run by the workers.

It was in this background that the newspaper Combate was published in Portugal. The first issue of Combate, along with the inaugural Manifesto is dated 21st June, 1974 and the last number, N. 51 is dated February 1978. The first 10 numbers of Combate[1] were published weekly. N. 11, (Nov 22 1974) to N. 47 (Oct 22, 1976) was almost fortnightly with some gaps. The counter coup of Nov 1976 which sought to establish constitutional representative democracy brought in policies which made occupations more difficult and the last four issues N. 48 (dated Feb 1977) to N. 51 (Feb 1978) became more and more difficult to organise and therefore more irregular.

The idea was to produce a non-ideological newspaper that would publish reports about these occupations and experiences of self-management. Many of the occupied factories at this time, were producing their own bulletins and broadsheets telling and discussing the issues that were at stake inside the factory and it was thought that these bulletins could be reproduced in their entirety (and not just quoting certain sections, as other newspapers were doing, in keeping with their own ideologies). Workers' Committees were interviewed and could tell their own stories in their own words. As well as that round table discussions by members of various Committees were organised and taped and these discussions transcribed and reproduced in full.

The aim of Combate was to publicize the struggles of the workers and their forms of struggle, whether in industry or commerce as well as the struggles in agriculture, both north and south of the country, as well as the Neighbourhood struggles. Also, Combate focused in on all struggles against military discipline which was especially important given the context that the armed forces were directly involved in the government and enjoyed enormous prestige for having overthrown the fascist regime. Combate also focused in on worker's struggles in other countries and almost all issues contained news of these struggles. Those producing Combate hoped that by publishing these articles and by reproducing the factory bulletins, as well as organising discus-

But in the midst of this disillusionment can be glimpsed the presence of something negative when it comes to human beings allowing themselves to be governed like sheep. And that is a passivity that leads to political indifference. However, from the angle of the State, this passivity is only acceptable up to a point. When it becomes transformed into a generalized indifference there is a danger it will no longer satisfactorily correspond to the dynamic required or desired by a democratic capitalism and its political organization.

It is at this juncture that politicians intervene with a broader view of business. They are, so to speak, the State's reserve of consciousness. A diffuse movement that reacted to this indifference to politics (which is always para-statist) began to become apparent in Portugal some years ago. The re-invention of politics (or something like it) had become imperative. Its aim was to prevent politics from becoming totally discredited in the eyes of the entire people because if this happened, it could turn into something else. Starting with the repudiation of politics, it might end with people refusing to be governed. So with this in mind, a number of politicians in reserve (like Joao Martins Pereira (1) or Maria de Lurdes Pintasilgo (2)) began to inveigh against "the politics of petty politicking". By putting it like this they had at once denounced themselves because a politics that is not petty has yet to exist. Wanting to persuade us otherwise they had exposed themselves as State reservists. These reservists, while expressing the gravity of the situation, had already turned to creating organizations able to intervene on the political scene. There already exists a Left Liberal Club -a Eanist party (3) -which if there were more room would not have to wait long. This reinvention of politics has thrown up all kinds of curiosities -like those who talk of a "liberal-libertarian alliance" , a notion which the magazine A Ideia (4) subscribes to (c/f "Diario de Lisboa 31-12-84).

“ ALL THE WATER IN THE SEA WILL NEVER SUFFICE TO WIPE AWAY ONE DROP OF INTELLECTUAL BLOOD “ (Lautreamont)

But if so many people endlessly persist being so disillusioned, it is undoubtedly due to the illusions that existed during that brief interval when a subversive liberty dared to conceive of abolishing the State and politics, professing as its goal the realization of a community without gods or masters. During these two years in which liberty failed to materialize, illusions and illusionism were effectively dominant. Today when we read leftist publications dating from this era we are struck dumb. How was it ever possible to be so daft? The extreme-left of this era -some fragments of it are still around - must bear a heavy responsibility for the institutionalising of the subversive social movement, giving themselves up through this to a fool's paradise. With its loud-mouthed pretensions

O Jornal Combate

to leadership it systematically set itself against the tendencies towards social autonomy. Clearly it never managed to lead anything but it certainly helped suffocate the revolutionary energies that had appeared spontaneously. With the slippery tongues of militants accustomed to university gatherings and such, the most experienced amongst them (almost automatically proclaimed leaders of these phantom “proletarian parties”) knew how to manipulate others lacking any political experience thanks to a language employed by the doctors of propaganda. And if they weren’t always capable of drumming up a following to form the “party’s mass organization”, they certainly did manage to demoralise, confuse and stop them from believing in themselves and their own capacity for action, collective discussion and the revolutionary possibilities of the moment.

As can be expected with the passage of time, the more coherent or more expert overseers from the sects, became well placed political leaders like the shrewd Acacio Barreiros (5), ex-leftist belonging formerly to the “Vontade do Povo” (The People’s Will), or like the cunning Eduino Vilar (6), ex-head of operations for the Portuguese Communist Party (ML), now an entrepreneur diligently doing business with China. Or they would fix those up, who might fit into the category of working class leaders, with suitable jobs, in ministries, the newspapers or the TV alongside intellectual pimps. Those who continued along another course, provoking the government to crack down on them, didn’t, to judge from the case of Isabel do Carmo (7), acquire any greater lucidity. This shameless, snotty nosed woman compared the Polish proletariat in the throws of revolution to the Nazis hordes.

Today nothing of this extreme-left remains except the infamy and lack of intelligence they demonstrably used against the subversive autonomy of the proletariat in ‘74/’75. If some of these extreme-left factions still make themselves heard, it is in order to search nowadays for the holy grail of politics, or because of some fanatical self-interested crusading endeavour.

“THERE IS NO GREATER HELL TO MEN THAN THE STUPIDITY OF THEIR FELLOW CREATURE” (De Sade)

Albeit the father of all this, the Stalinist party, is something else. It plays successfully on social amnesia, conservatism and a general unhappiness. Amnesia, first of all, because the large number of workers who follow it quickly forgot how by attacking strikes in 1974 the CP had shown just how miserable it was, particularly since these strikes were initiated by an autonomous proletariat escaping its control and therefore dangerous to it. These striking workers relied on themselves and did not wait in hope of the statist and para-statist

After the military Coup of the 25th of April 1974, in Portugal, and the overthrow of nearly 50 years of fascism and right-wing repressive regimes there followed a year and a half of profound social transformation, which just about challenged every aspect of Portuguese society. What started off as a military coup turned into a profound attempt at social change from the bottom up, involving all aspects of Portuguese society and became headline news, on a daily basis, in the world media. This was due both to the intensity of the struggle as well as the fact that the right-wing Francoist regime was still in power in neighbouring Spain and there was uncertainty as to how these struggles were to pan out and what effect they could have on Spain and Europe in general. In the aftermath of the coup, workers began to question the authority inside the factories, an authority that had always been structurally related to the fascist regime and it was in this vacuum that the Workers’ Committees came into being. Depending on the balance of forces inside the factories these Committees either limited themselves to exerting pressure on the bosses or else set up a parallel management structure alongside the boss’s administration, in many cases substituting it. In working-class areas Neighbourhood Committees were set up and Committees ran almost all factories and neighbourhoods for the period up to November 1975 when another military coup reinforced liberal parliamentary democracy and brought Portugal into the mainstream of European capitalism.

In 2006, very few people outside Portugal can even remember these events given that Portugal was quickly recuperated into the European Union and the so-called democratic fold and the whole experience was deemed a storm in a teacup and is barely mentioned these days. However, recent events in Latin America where there is the experience of going from fascism to ‘liberation’ has revived an interest in Portugal in the 1970s. These involve the splits in the army where some army battalions throughout Latin America assist in factory and land takeovers etc and parallel to some degree the Copcon experience and there is a huge potential for a direct democratic movement of the base. Indeed some of the main institutions, the army and the cops are split - all of which point to Portugal as some early indication of the process and the potential disintegration of the ultra-repressive state apparatus. So, in putting up this website, which reproduces all the issues of Combate we are not just interested in some eccentric experience of mulling over the past but it is meant to put that experience out there as something to be learned from.

organization the CGT, led by Emidio Santana, and more oriented these days to cultural issues, feminism, prisoners, ecology. The paper appears to support the Spanish CNT-U which split with the deadweight of the historic CNT a few years ago.

11. *Fragil* An ex-bakery with post-modernist pipes all over the place (post modernism being part of the recuperation of a revolutionary critique of architects and architecture). This pseudo-bar was in the vanguard of gentrification of the old Lisbon working class neighbourhood, Barrio Alto. *Fragil* is the most modern of modern bars; once inside it could be New York or London or, for the future, Moscow.

12. *Jornal de Letras* A not very successful attempt by a major Lisbon weekly to create culture. Recent headlines have included the social democrat Arrabel's "I sleep by day and write by night" as well as "There has never been as much culture in Portugal". Generally boring articles are always signed by their generally boring writers who are usually related to the Socialist Party or its various fractions.

The Independent: Thursday 21st May 1987

Lisbon's hero gets 15 years in jail

One of the heroes of Portugal's 1974 military revolution that ended 48 years of Fascist rule, Lieutenant-colonel Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, was sentenced to 15 years in prison yesterday for founding and leading a terrorist group. The prosecution had asked the tribunal for a maximum 20-year sentence.

"This trial is a political farce," the 51-year old grey-haired Lieutenant-Colonel told *The Independent* through a bullet-proof glass screen before the final session in the two-year-long trial began. He is expected to appeal against the sentence. Otelo was charged with founding and leading the Popular Forces of April 25th (FP-25) terrorist organisation, named after the left-wing coup that restored democracy.

Sixty-three co-defendants were charged with belonging to the group, which was accused of aiming to "subvert the institutions of a democratic state", a series of assassinations, bombings and bank robberies. Sixteen of the co-defendants were acquitted.

Otelo, one of the strategists of the "revolution of Carnations" was arrested along with many others in June 1984 in a nationwide police swoop on FP-25. He denied any involvement in the FP-25, but acknowledged creating a three-pronged political project that foresaw an armed revolt to bring the workers to power in the case of a right wing backlash.

dispensers of officialdom. Tamed, as the proletariat has been by politics, the economy and the spectacle, it lacks the capacity for such autonomous behaviour nowadays and follows whoever defends its existence in a chaotic world lacking any perspective. Being in the business of politics the CP has to survive as an opposition and, within the context of Parliamentary democracy where it dutifully carries out this role, it cannot but invest in this opposition. But the CP also plays on the prevailing conservatism. To mention only the most obvious example -the dreadful rubbishing of the revolutionary movement in Poland -which caused very few of its militants to question it: sickened by its stance the number of militants who left the party, could certainly be counted on the fingers of one hand. The CP also plays on the general unhappiness when it comes to profiteering (just like any party does, but the CP more successfully than the others) from the effects of the existing unparalleled atomization, reducing individuals to voters and television viewers. Thus it can display itself to the mass of the proletariat as caring about political solidarity as a substitute for the lack of social solidarity.

As to governing parties, as long as this state of affairs lasts they, of course, just go on drooling happily. Because parties are people. And these people dribble at the thought of becoming a representative of the people and defending it. The rewards for such a sacrifice is not to be found in heaven but on earth. Politicians spend their lives rolling in it.

The military who change regimes in Portugal are left, after each historical coup, to slumber for years on end. It is the well-deserved rest of the warrior. General Vasco Lourenco (8) in an interview on "Culturando" radio program marking the 25th of April celebrations pointedly mentioned some banquets as the kind of activity an association of the same name was engaged in. Just hear these well-earned belches. War nowadays for them is just one big blow out.

It is a war for integration. Though not constituting an effective part of the already renowned EEC, Portugal already forms a part of the vast Empire of the End which puts itself on a war footing as far away as the Azores, in order to intimidate and dissuade its own internal barbarians. And now we can also set out to enjoy the immense pleasures of the decline of the west: sun and leisure, boredom without frontiers, scientific brainwashing -and so much coughing up blood. On the threshold of the nuclear quagmire the major choices have already been made for all eternity. Everything points to the same strategic end. Namely, that individuals, already reduced to mere things, shall immediately agree to submit once more so that tomorrow they shall submit even more at less cost. With that distant end in view cautious progress is of the essence. Fear being the soul of business, integration into the EEC is explicitly for us integration into the common fear that undoubtedly has the highest level of productivity on the

face of the earth. Confronted with such a fate why have specific fears, why have a Portuguese fear?

In the Empire of the End we are already living a life tailor-made for it. It is the empire of a social world turned upside down or one that in this waking nightmare of real organizational incommunicability, will force us to turn upside down anyway. Our new Passage to India goes from work to mental alienation. However it doesn't happen overnight. In a way it is possible to survive with the vague morbid hope that things will get better, allied to the certainty it is just that, a vague morbid hope.

Because the essential human sickness, having reached such a pitch, is not lack of money. Having and possessing money will never be comprehensive enough. Or as the property speculator, Manuel Alentejano (9), reiterating an old hypothesis said, "where there are men there is money and where there is money there are people who stop buying". Incommunicability is the human sickness - money just merely puts that space between human beings going about their business, reducing it to a transaction between things. People are thingified. Having allowed themselves to be reduced into becoming a mouth-piece for the commodity, they are unable to speak without money. Agreed they do chatter a lot amongst themselves but they touch one another and talk to each other merely to keep their separation in good working order. This is a muffled, anodyne form of warfare brought about by the internalisation of money as being an ineluctable necessity if one is to relate and get on. (When corporate commodities talk it is really silence speaking.) What they call the crisis, which constitutes a moment (the culture of humiliation by money), merely accentuates an incommunicability that already existed prior to it.

So we have decadence and an unparalleled boom in technology. Obeying the imperious rhythm of the machine humanity, in order to survive in this rarefied atmosphere, gets bogged down in the mud of efficiency cursing push buttons despite every satisfaction.

At the heart of these genuine clusters -which might be that of sheep -there lies a genuine separation: a neurotic speech impediment when it comes to talking about the self or getting to the bottom of things. Submission to the imperious dictates of an order based on police power. This is the trilogy making up the social hell that gives birth to the modernization of the State and robotisation. Integration has always been thus. And the subversion of the 25th of April having failed, it failed in order to make room for this.

"Socialism, transition and the Portuguese case" is the most famous and the most Leninist. Since 1976 he has been partaking in international conferences and is one of the prime movers of the two conferences held in the USA on "Contemporary Studies in Portuguese Society". In contemporary Portugal he has moved from one managerial position to another.

2. Maria de Lurdes Pintasilgo *Catholic left-technocrat and ex-UN bureaucrat she was selected to head a caretaker government before the last elections .She launched her own down-home style presidential campaign but was rejected by all the large parties and lost.*

3. The Eanist Party *Named after Ramalho Eanes, the strong man in sunglasses who led the right wing 1975 counter-coup but was modernized and modified by the modernizing tendencies within the armed forces movement. Elected President in ' 76, and again in ' 81 he could not run for office a third term and so created his own political party, the Democratic Renovation Party, around his image of "being above" the dirty business of politics and as an attempt to invent some credibility for Portuguese politics...*

4. A Ideia *An anarchist review under the directorship of Joao Freire, it publishes semi-sociological, workerist and historical-academic theses about Portugal.*

5. Acacio Barreiro *Angry young Maoist of the ' 70' s, he was elected as the sole member of UDP where he imagined himself as some sort of "Voice of the People" and the Albanian Communist Party. With the collapse of the extreme-left he, like so many others, joined Mario Soares' Socialist Party and the big time.*

6. Eduino Vilar *Ex-leader of the Stalinist PCP (ML) and official delegate to Chinese Embassy functions .He has profited from an import-export company between Portugal and China.*

7. Isabel do Carmo *Part-time medico and ex-leader of the PRP and one of the sponsors of the Otelo presidential campaign, she was accused of armed activities as leader of the Revolutionary Brigades and was imprisoned for over a year but finally released due to pressure from members of Parliament. She is now a health writer for a Lisbon weekly .*

8. General Vasco Lourenco *A now loafing around general who was with the Captains' Movement before April 25th '74 and led the abortive March '74 military revolt for which he was imprisoned in Mozambique. After April 25th he joined the Social Democratic wing (and the group of 9) and finally became a member of the "Council of Revolution" which presided over the counter-revolution. His erstwhile friend Otelo Saraivo da Carvalho is on trial, framed for supposedly being related to the State infiltrated (and probably created) terrorist organization FP-25 (Popular Forces of April 25th -c/f newspaper cutting below).*

9. Manuel Alentejo *Property speculator convicted of armed robbery and serving a long prison sentence.*

10. A Batalha *Former newspaper of the now defunct anarcho-syndicalist*

carry out an agreed upon action. But to await the detonation of this libertarian movement is untenable. For one thing it is just not true and for another, it masks the real situation whether it applies to anarchism or a society where anarchism is defined by its absence. If we are in a desert we are better off knowing it so that when we come to cross it, we do so without impaired vision and phantom traveling companions .

Given the context of isolation, the most pressing action does not consist in giving free reign to an activism that is bent on demonstrating that the inexistent libertarian movement, in spite of everything, exists. Anything that might occasion reflection on the causes of isolation appears more important to us, although this shouldn't stop practical actions that are possible in the present context. This society survives largely on illusions which are its "ideas". But the fact that these illusions have to be organized and dispersed on a broader scale each time by various specialized State sectors does show that such illusions meets up with a resistance and that, socially, there is something real here that clamours to become a reality. As regards demolishing the social edifice which survives thanks to the illusions it generates, out of revolutionary necessity an important action has plainly to be carried out to put an end to its wavering existence. Everything that society contains in the way of values that invigorate it needs to be demolished piece by piece. As this is happening an engine will be uncovered fit only for the scrap yard. At this point, it is essential to deprive hope of that disgusting religious nourishment that always agrees to an indefinite postponement in line with programmed hints coming from the owners of this world. The solution to combating isolation does not lie in creating bodies that have to be artificially filled up with people who simply have no existence at the core of this creation. Organisationites are barren and deadly dull.

The practical critique of individual libertarians is not something that takes place outside of even their own immediate possibilities. But it must be seen to be impracticable as long as the dominant worry is political, linking itself to the forms that a particular libertarian current uses. When determining targets and the enemy it is essential to go beyond generalities.

TRANSLATION NOTES.

(1) Joao Martins Pereira *Taking a degree from the Instituto Superior Technico in Lisbon he went onto the University of Paris where he took courses in Labor Social Science and the Sociology of Labor. On the editorial board of various anti-fascist magazines before 1974 he became Secretary of State for Industry and Industrial Economy in the 4th Provisional Government, at a time when the PCP needed to call in reservists since it was losing face in the onslaught of the autonomous social movement. After '75 he wrote various books, of which*

INTO THE NOISY SILENCE, ENTER SINGING, TO TAKE A TUMBLE

After 10 years of decomposition ushered in by the "crises" Portuguese society does not possess the subversive energies capable of effectively declaring themselves openly. There is no lasting expression of the need to supersede everything belonging to present-day pathological social relations and the responses they elicit. There are some publishing concerns which though of inestimable value are not enough when all is said and done. Especially since their respective existences hermetically sealed units has not facilitated any corresponding communication And given the situation we are in, this should not be a luxury at all.

This lack of a corresponding communication is certainly due to a reluctance to discuss problems that transcend the level of chatter that dominates this spectacular society of loud silence. Such un-readiness to discuss what we have to endure also springs from this incommunicability .In the depths of the encroaching quick sands of a State dominated society, this surely represents the surest support given; that the incommunicability of every aspect embracing dominant political and popular discourse (and their determinate practical consequences) flow from this. It goes from a generic dependence to an active submission to State imperatives to mental and material misery.

That the anarchists have been struck down by this unhealthy climate shows how profound it is. Because safeguards against such un-healthiness are useless when it comes to publishing a paper (like A Batalha (10) which has as its only aim (although unconsciously) a desire to see a rich past perpetrated into the present. Or in the case of (A Ideia) accepting as the terrain of liberty something that forms a necessary part of and breathes life into the existing system. In a far from blameless fashion it chose to eulogize art when it is the question of art itself that is in question.

If A Ideia (no 30-31) thought to answer, indirectly of course, texts to do with the critique of art published in Pravda no I, they either failed to understand or their ears had become blocked up. 'To realize art' says an editorial in A Ideia taking up the arguments set forth Pravda "does not mean (...) surpassing it or our settling into the occupancy of a properly administered end of history which renders it dispensable" .This amounts to something else entirely and we put this obscurity down to their unintentional or deliberate incapacity to correctly grasp what the Situationist International had demonstrated in their time. Namely when they theorised the abolition of art already undertaken in practise by the Dadaist movement in the 1920s. For us, it is a matter of counter-posing art as an institutional system, which compensates for capitalist social relations, by an art of living other social relations, relations which would be the fruit of an-

other sort of productive relation where the art of frustration -being a wretched simple-minded banal cultural therapy -would have no place.

The art that is possible in this society does not satisfy us as art because it clearly functions as part and parcel of the institutional capacity of society to integrate. To respect art as a positive thing, as communication, amounts to respect for what social positivity exists within it. Moreover this respect is the result of a wretchedness we viscerally refuse, especially when it pretends to appear before us laden with riches. Given the ever-present spectacle as the active agent for pathological social relations, the function of art is to serve it. And as disalienated communication it is, to say the least, incapable of compensating for what it frustrates. To blandly affirm that artistic expression continues to be an affirmation of liberty is an off-shoot of "impartialism" and a compromise with society that prides itself as being bang up to the minute and modern. It explains how the values that strategically dominate society have been interiorised.

Even here in Portugal, which is a peripheral society, -one where the spectacle is not so resourceful -we constantly run up against the way in which art is rendered indispensable to what exists. "Stir up the mob - that's the remedy"* is a slogan the spectacle has adopted because it absolutely needs this commotion at the heart of the spiritual misery it generalizes. This society, when in crisis, especially when in crisis, has to maintain a dynamic, even if it has to fabricate one. And the artistic alibi, at least, furnishes the illusion of creation in a society where obviously one cannot create anything at all that doesn't comply with its productive logic, which includes the production of illusion. The society of the production of boredom needs art to recompense the ensuing boredom that like the plague contaminates and strikes the social fabric of its neurotic equilibrium.

"O que e preciso e ammar a malta" - an important slogan from the musician Jose Afonso, widely known but much misused.

NOTHING IN YOUR HEAD, EVERYTHING IN THE WAY YOU LOOK

Dissatisfaction and desperation become the elements of a muffled revolt injected like a poison in the fissures of a communication obliged to take on the form of a commodity. It can be seen from the way in which television, always out to modernize its capacity to influence, resorts to the arts. It does so in order to more effectively - more culturally - capture an audience made up of people who spontaneously offer themselves up to be well and truly brainwashed on a daily basis. Significantly when it comes to advertising or artistic propaganda

the 'naive' journalism that's employed gives rise to an involuntary irony. "TV Guide, your guide to permanent entertainment and lavish spectacular", "De-vice shows that are new and different", (Expresson 17-3-85 on the neo-disco bar Fragil (11) of Lisbon). "Create shows that are geared to the audience" (an actor speaking on the radio); "Painting must become a show" (the painter Jose de Guimaraes in Jornal de Letras (12), etc). The proliferation of publications (magazines and newspapers) devoted to listing and covering all kinds of actual or forthcoming spectacles are also significant. The recent way in which all mention of the everyday spectacle is absent merely proves the modern maxim "nothing in your head everything in the way you look". Thus for example, according to the crusading "Hero of the Seas" writing in the no less crusading Jornal de Letras (12-2-'85) the purpose of clothes "like art is to produce a work of art everyday, so you yourself are a work of art". Both are vanguardist propositions which have as their basis the spectacular premise 'You are your own movie'.

In the society of spectators anything that can offset the mental and material poverty of commodity society is welcome. This is the reason why professional renovators of art always appear to us divested of that mask of critical neutrality and impartial which professionally they have to wear. On the contrary we see them for what they really are: as giving cheer -not always involuntarily but certainly in the vast majority of cases -to an era colonized by the disease of organized incommunicability .

"IF IT IS NECESSARY TO WORK THERE IS JUST NO POINT TO LIVING" (ANDRE BRETON)

We have the utmost need to work against work. The era of militant action having passed, we may as well leave all that to political and religious activists - leftovers of just what this world wants to maintain. There are however many important things to get straight. If leftist and right wing militants are in dissociable in aspiring to organize and manage others, the anarchists having got rid of this dead wood, still have difficulty shaking off a missionary spirit inherent in a certain zeal for organizing what doesn't exist. The anarchist idea of affinity groups is no doubt excellent and is best once emptied of this missionary spirit. Once this happens, libertarians, having decided on an action, feel the need theoretically to become part of something greater than this actual affinity group. It is really a kind of ideological sociability in which a nucleus can only exist and do something if it has the feeling it is not all alone.

It's plain to see that here, for many years, there has not been any libertarian movement. There are groups and individuals, which could come together to