

I could not start without thanking the invitation for me to be present here, in particular to Professor David Berry and the Anarchism Research Group. It's a particularly generous invitation, since what I intend to present here is part of an ongoing work for my doctorate thesis, which is still in a phase that can be considered initial. As such, my presence here and the opportunity to share this work and these ideas with all of you is especially exciting for me, as I may benefit from your commentary, critique and questions. This is why I am particularly grateful for this opportunity.

As the title of my talk indicates, I don't intend to look solely at anarchism, or to anarchism in itself, but to insert it in a broader context and set of relations that marked it in a period of Portuguese history in which anarchism registered a very significant presence, especially due to its influence in the midst of the working class in the big cities, as well as in some intellectual circles. I don't know if you are familiar with the history of anarchism in Portugal, or even with the dimension of that presence – a presence which may be compared, with no exaggeration, to that which was registered in Spain during the same period –, however, assuming that the majority isn't familiar, during the course of this presentation I will attempt to briefly introduce a few aspects of the history of anarchism in Portugal, or accompany some of the ideas that I want to share here with commentary that may aid in explaining some aspects of that history.

But before we look deeper into the Portuguese case, allow me to explain what I intend with this work and why I consider the simultaneous approach of State and Anarchism important, by contrast and in its relation, especially in the context of Portuguese history – although it seems to me that this exercise might be extended to other contexts, and that the importance of doing so doesn't derive from any national specificity.

We are all familiarised with the intense agitation and unpredictability that was felt during the 19th century in Europe, a situation which was caused by a set of transformations associated with events like the French Revolution or processes such as the Industrial Revolution. We are equally familiarised with the eruption, in the political scene, of many social groups which, up until then, were distant or excluded from it. It's in that scenario that we watch the affirmation of modern State powers and the emergency of numerous social movements, in many cases antagonistic to their

institutions and existence. Anarchism, which emerged as an autonomous political doctrine in the second half of that century, was one of those emergent forces.

The rhythm and intensity of those transformations wasn't the same in every place. In Portugal, these were concentrated essentially in the great urban centres and came at a later stage. Not even the industrialization or the social implementation or the territorial presence at a national scale of the power of the State hit the same level of strength as in other contexts. However, this doesn't mean that these didn't happen or weren't felt. With a period whose beginning we can identify as circa 1890, in the so called *Ultimatum* crisis, a historical moment that signals a change in the history of contemporary Portugal, coincides the growth of anarchism in the country and the start of a gradual transition to practice of what up until then was predominantly doctrinal production, a transition which was consonant with what was then verified in various other countries (e.g., Daniel Guérin, cited in Berry, 2009)

But the observation of the simultaneous consolidation of these two antagonistic forces, the State and anarchism, can't be limited to the confirmation of a temporal coincidence, as if they were two parallel realities distant in space and only sharing the same historical moment. The intense conflict that anarchism fought with the State had repercussions in the modes of action of anarchist militants as well as State agents. It's based on this presupposition that the work in progress assumes that the history of this political culture will contribute to a better understanding of the process of affirmation of State authority, just like the history of the exercise of this authority will work towards a better comprehension of the organizational forms that anarchism took. To this effect, what we intend to study is, on one hand, the social and organizational practices, open or infra-political, situated in margin to the State; and, on the other hand, the history of the forms through which the State, in a police and political level, interpreted, responded and was conditioned in the face of social dynamics built in its margin.

In synthesis, I base myself on two starting points **[SLIDE]**:

- One, that the **State**, and the institutionalization processes of its powers, is not foreign to the social movements that are built beyond it or against it and that, for that reason, its study will be incomplete while its relations with society and the practices, groups and agents that compose it aren't considered – these being relations that often assume a conflictual character

- Two, that **anarchism**, an anti-authoritarian and anti-State political culture is not, despite those specificities, foreign or impermeable to the action of the State, as if provided with an autonomous will, effect of an immanent logic to its ideology, independent to the social conditions in which it exists, invulnerable to other discourses, ideas and practices that surround it, sympathetic or opposed to it. In that sense, I should add that when I speak of the relations between anarchism and the State, I also mean the relations between anarchism and other “concurrent” political ideologies that fight to attain the State’s power and, thus, have political State projects.

For this to happen, it would be necessary to escape two dominant tendencies in anarchism studies: on one hand, the one that tends to be centred on anarchist doctrines, through the study of its main ideological currents and authors; on the other hand, the one that tends to treat anarchism in its relation to the classes and working class movements, and not identifying it as a “structured social group” (to use the expression used by João Freire¹, a Portuguese sociologist, to describe the anarchist milieu). I stress, thus, the intention of looking at the anarchist groups and organizations in their prefigurative dimension, that is, as spaces of creation and concretion of new forms of sociability (formal or informal, built in opposition or in margin to the State), of its institutions and inherent logics.

Naturally, I won’t be able to probe all of these aspects here. Above all, I intend to underline the importance of this relation, mutually constituent, which united these two forces and significantly conditioned their evolution – but also that, in spite of it, tended to be left out of both the histories of anarchism and the histories of the State.

We can start by remembering one of the factors that give special interest to the relation between these two forces in particular. Practically since its beginning, an aura of terror and violence remained associated with anarchism. Some of its positions and some historical events that anarchism and anarchists were associated with certainly helped to build this impression. However, perhaps more important than these intrinsic factors for the construction of this image is the role played by extrinsic elements, such as the diverse forces to which anarchism was antagonistic: in a few words, the State and the political forces that moved in its spectrum, and the Capital. Especially if we bear in mind that the recourse to forms of violent individual action, or “terrorist” action, only

¹ João Freire. *Anarquistas e Operários*. (Porto: Afrontamento, 1993).

corresponded to a fraction of the anarchist medium and that, still, mainly about the period in question, the recourse to violent methods wasn't exclusively anarchist.

Synthetically, we can say that, **on one hand**, [SLIDE] the successes and failures of anarchism can't be explained **exclusively** through the particularities and inconsistencies that many authors indicated, such as its excessive individualism and weak organizational ability (something that Daniel Guérin referred to as two of the biggest preconceptions towards anarchism²); **on the other hand**, that the State and its repressive instruments were formed in great measure as a response to the various emerging social movements and, in particular terms, to anarchism – that organizational plan not being limited to a national level but being structured on an international scale, as a number of works about the creation of international polices and inter-governmental protocols (established with the purpose of dealing with the anarchist “threat”) show. Accordingly, a series of recent investigations about anarchism in various countries allow us to reinforce the idea that the decay of anarchism was due, as much or more than to internal factors, to its growth and social impact allied to the development of a State that knew how to cement and effectively organize itself in order to ensure the monopoly of violence (which is, in a way, paradoxical).

In the same way, it's impossible to comprehend the violence associated with anarchism through this so-called individualist “inclination” or through a supposed nihilistic or destructive appeal, since as a comparative exercise shows, the majority of the attacks and violent actions triggered by anarchists take place in periods when the repression is more intense and it's harder to act collectively in an organised fashion.

Let us look, now, to the history of anarchism and the State in Portugal.

My work studies the period between 1890 and 1933 [CHRONOLOGY SLIDE]. The choice of these two dates is related to diverse factors that derive both from anarchism and from the State, and which I should explain quickly. First, in 1890 occurred an incident with tremendous impact in the political life of the country, and which had profound consequences to be prolonged during the following years. In the start of that year, the British government made an ultimatum to Portugal, demanding the recalling of military forces from the territory between Angola and Mozambique (which Portugal claimed as its own). The concession of Portugal to the British demands was

² Cf. Daniel Guérin. *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism* (Oakland: Ak Press, 2005 [1970])

seen as one of the greatest humiliations in the history of the country, which had as the most immediate consequence the fall of the government a few days later. This was, naturally, the arrival point of a bigger political crisis and the deterioration of Portuguese economy registered in the previous years. A situation which was unfavourable to an emergent bourgeoisie which felt increasingly stagnated in the face of the contradictory interests of the national crown. However, because of its impact and by signalling a rupture, this is also the starting point to a set of social and political transformations, with repercussions on the level of state institutions that will mark the country in the following years.

It is also during this period that the growth of anarchism is intensified, and in which it's affirmed as a force capable of disputing the social ground with other political forces, such as the republicans and the socialists.

As for the limit date, 1933 is the year of institutionalization of the dictatorship of Salazar's New State, after a period of seven years of military dictatorship. For anarchism, that year represents the passing to a condition of absolute clandestinity, with the end of free syndicalism and the entry in a corporative regime of syndicalist organization characteristic of fascist regimes.

Between these two dates, it's worth registering the fall of the monarchy and the implementation of the Republic in 1910, as well as the *coup* that leads to the instauration of the military dictatorship in 1926. All these events being profoundly connected to the changes that characterise anarchism throughout these years.

Synthetically, we register in this period the growth and waning of anarchism and, more important to our purpose, we have a temporal coincidence in which the growth of anarchism is simultaneous with the affirmation of modern State powers in Portugal.

Let's look at it step by step. **[1890 SLIDE]** One of the biggest effects of the *Ultimatum* crisis was the sound appearance of the Republican Party, the force which better capitalised the discontentment with the situation of national politics, and the only one that seemed to have the legitimacy to present itself as the defender of national interests. That growth of republicanism is interrupted by a revolutionary blow undertaken by some of its figures, in the city of Porto, in January 1891. A strong

repression falls on the republicans, which helped to stress the divergences between the defenders of a gradual evolution and the vindicators of the utilization of violent means for the implementation of the Republic. As I will look to demonstrate, this division in republicanism and, in particular, the radicalisation of some of its members will have a great influence in Portuguese anarchism up until the fall of the monarchy.

In the same period, anarchism, up until then with an irregular growth and greatly dominated by individualist tendencies, starts to grow in the working class means, with the creation of class associations or the entrance to existing groups, contributing to the increasing unpopularity of the parliamentary tactic advocated by the Socialist Party. It is also in this context that begins the approximation between anarchists, republicans and some socialists, made especially through the joint organization of groups and initiatives of anti-clerical nature.

The most significant of those actions was the realization of the Socialist Anti-clerical Congress, in 1895, because of the Commemorations that signaled the 7th Centennial of Saint Anthony, and which took place in Lisbon (he was the patron saint of the city). During these commemorations, one of the corteges was stoned and the anarchists were accused of taking the lead in these actions. About 200 people were jailed and, of the 21 that were brought to trial, 14 were indicted of “being anarchists”, based on them having been distributing the *Propaganda* journal (a libertarian periodical), having let out “cheers to Anarchy” and “death to the Jesuits”, as well as having attacked the authorities. These incidents, along with the jailing and trials, concentrated the attention of the authorities and the press in the activities of libertarian groups, making the conservative press develop a vast campaign “against the anarchist danger”³.

It's in the sequence of these events that, in February 1896, comes what was baptised as the “miscreant law” by anarchists and republicans. The aim of this law was to criminalize “subversive” ideas and practices, in particular the anarchist ideas, sentencing to prison and exile, to the Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia, those that professed the “anarchist doctrines”.

³ Cf. António Ventura. *Anarquistas, Republicanos e Socialistas em Portugal* (Lisboa: Cosmos, 2000), 94-6.

We must open a parenthesis in relation to this “law of exception”. Firstly, it arrives **two years after** the approval of a similar law in France and **two years before** the realisation of a secret Anti-Anarchist Congress, which took place in Rome and gathered governmental representatives of 21 countries (among them, Portugal) for one month. In the Portuguese context, the arising of this law has a few peculiar outlines. Above all because anarchism in Portugal never had any violent expression, especially when compared to other countries. Also, it’s equally remarkable that the target of the law was anarchism, when the biggest threat to the Portuguese State came from republicanism, through the aforementioned insurrectional attempt of a *coup d’état*.

Portuguese historiography tended to seek “ravacholistic epidemics” to justify the emergence of this law. Notwithstanding, as has been stressed by some authors, if we take a look at the cases that are generally referred to as part of this “epidemic”, even not reaching a dozen and not being able to be unequivocally attributed to anarchists, the most significant ones happened before 1892, namely the bombing against a great industrial and another against an aristocrat – with exception to the previously mentioned incidents of the Centennial of Saint Anthony and the stoning, two weeks before the approbation of the law, of the royal carriage by an individual. Excluding these cases, the most mediated incident involving an anarchist was the aggression, by cane, of a conservative parliamentarian that had insulted Louise Michael in an article published on a newspaper⁴.

Before this, and in light of some of the mentioned works about the creation of networks of international political cooperation (or even through a few works on the history of anarchism in national contexts), it’s possible to state that the emergence of this law can’t be explained by the violent character of anarchism in this country. In other words, what the Portuguese case demonstrates is that the level of repression is not necessarily proportional to the level of anarchist action (violent or not), and the means that the State mobilises and creates with that intention aren’t a direct answer to the actions of these groups, that is, its understanding can’t depend solely on internal factors or a simple logic of “cause = effect”. In this case, the law seems to have, above all, a preventive trait, and appears to correspond to a series of procedures that were being adopted internationally to criminalise anarchism. It is known that Portugal (more from

⁴ Ventura, *Anarquistas, Republicanos e Socialistas*. 93-4

international sources than documents present in national archives) participated in every anti-anarchist international convention and subscribed to all the decisions taken there.

As we can imagine, this law and all the legislative and repressive mechanism developed by the Portuguese State during these years had a great impact on Portuguese working class and anarchism – until, at least, the fall of the monarchy, period in which these laws of exception are revoked.

The repression that falls on the libertarians immediately alters its relation with the remaining forces opposed to the Monarchy. The Socialist Party, already distant, completely steps away, contributing to reinforce the criminal nature of anarchists and underlining the importance of the regime in collaborating with a reformatory party that intended to organise the working class. On the other hand, the republicans, also a target of repression and weakened after the failure of the *coup* in 1891, grow closer to anarchists, strengthening the connection that was started because of the anti-clerical initiatives that they had developed together.

The political persecution that the republicans were also a target of and the possibility of the law being used against some of the militants, namely of the more radical side, made the Republican Party the only organised force to take a stand against the “miscreant law” side by side with anarchists. In the following years, it will participate in all the campaigns that condemned the laws of exception and called for their end. The success of this rapprochement to the republicans, which will define the organizational forms of anarchists in the following decade, can be explained in a number of ways. In part, on one hand, the anarchists saw in the republicans a legal platform to contain state repression. On the other hand, the republicans saw in anarchists a way to enlarge their support base, mainly concentrated in the urban middle class and without influence in worker class means.

But this rapprochement had other consequences. Despite the increasing influence in the working class, the fragmentation of the libertarian medium and the near clandestine nature of its action prevented its militants from potentiating syndical organization. Many of them chose to concentrate their efforts in backing the republicans, along with a group of possibilist socialists that had gone into rupture with the Socialist Party. A part of that collaboration happened in secret organizations that privileged violent methods of action, such as the **carbonari** – a group which will be

fundamental to the success of the revolution of 1910, which proclaims the Republic in Portugal. Another part of this collaboration, perhaps the most visible, took place in more open groups, gathered around various initiatives and publications. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the distinction between these two groups was not linear, since some militants were part of both.

[1900's SLIDE] All of this contributes to, during the course of the first decade of the 20th century, the division of anarchism between “**interventionist anarchists**” or “reformist anarchists”, as they called themselves, and “**pure anarchists**” that favoured action in syndicates or in exclusively libertarian organizations and considered any form of cooperation with parties or political reformist forces to be absurd and contradictory **[INTERVENTIONIST vs. PURE SLIDE]**.

“Interventionist anarchism” was based on a deterministic and evolutionist conception of society, which saw in the proclamation of the Republic – something that seemed imminent – a step towards a libertarian society. According to their perception, to each political regime was connected a type of man created by said regime: “in the liberal a democrat is foreseen; in this one, the republican, the socialist, the libertarian”. Before this, some of its militants didn't spare criticism to those that “moved by purist scruples opposed themselves to a convergent action towards the attainment of small achievements, preferring utopian maximalist solutions that lead, in practice, to immobilism”⁵. In the words of one of its most prominent defenders, Bartolomeu Constantino, “we are not for the Republic but for a purifying revolution. (...) We accept it [the Republic], just like we accept everything that means progress, which does not make us republicans”⁶. For him, whoever abstained from cooperating in the next revolution was favouring the monarchy. The “pure” or “intransigent” anarchists, as they were called, didn't believe that the proclamation of the Republic brought any significant changes, as the Republics in other countries attested. In the words of a militant, the “republican victory, far from favouring, would further embarrass anarchist action, since it would result in a **perfecting of the State and an increased effectiveness of its mechanisms**”⁷. In simpler terms, and to once again call upon the terms of a militant (advocate of the participation of anarchists in an eventual republican revolutionary act, and in no other occasion), “the change from monarchy to the republic would be

⁵ Heliodoro Salgado, in Ventura, *Anarquistas, Republicanos e Socialistas*, 198

⁶ Bartolomeu Constantino, in Ventura, *Anarquistas, Republicanos e Socialistas*, 137

⁷ In Ventura, *Anarquistas, Republicanos e Socialistas*. 190-1

equivalent to the individual who dressed in clean clothes, without having cleansed himself.”

In 1901, this collaboration between anarchists, possibilists and republicans is formalised through the creation of the Free Socialist Federation, the first platform with a national plan of action and structure, at least in theory. Just to stress its plurality, in one of their first manifests, released in 1902, some “notable thinkers” were evoked, such as Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malon (the French possibilist), Karl Marx and Jean Grave.

The premature jailing of some of their members (accused of being behind some incidents related to a worker strike), made it so that the biggest action of this group targeted, precisely, the law of February 13th. 1896. Throughout the whole country, tens of conferences took place and articles were published all over the press, calling for the end of the law and the liberation of all who had been convicted because of it.

As I mentioned previously, the Portuguese monarchy never recovered from the *Ultimatum* crisis and the regime never recovered political stability. During the first decade of the 20th century, the conditions worsened and, in 1906, João Franco – the author of the “miscreant law” of 1896 – arrives to power, starting to govern in a dictatorship a few months later, increasing repression and political persecution. It’s in this context that two other remarkable events take place before we reach the Republic: another attempt of a republican revolutionary *coup* and, three days later, the regicide **[REGICIDE SLIDE]**. The regicides can’t escape and end up killed by the king’s guard, being posteriorly identified as republican members of the *carbonari* – by then, the anarchist *carbonari* had dissolved to be integrated in the republican *carbonari*, and thus, the one that the regicides were a part of was composed by radical republicans as well as a few anarchists. This episode is symptomatic, once again, for showing that violence in Portugal as a way of political action was as much or even more connected to republicans than anarchists.

As in other contexts, the appearance of clandestine groups that advocated means of violent action – in this case, the *carbonari* – shifted attention from syndical organization. Despite having plenty of organizational constraints, anarchism had enough space to grow in influence, creating the bases of what would characterise its hegemonic presence in the midst of the working classes in the following two decades.

In short, we can say that up until the fall of the monarchy anarchists had an ambivalent attitude towards the State, considering, as we saw, that a transformation of regime could bring benefits. That's what leads to the determinant participation of anarchists in the success of the revolution of October 5th, fighting in the streets next to the meagre military dissident forces, when many republican leaders had already fled, thinking the revolution to be lost **[REVOLUTION AND BOMB SLIDES]**.

With the revolution and the implementation of the Republic, that attitude will change radically. The first months of the Republic are marked by hundreds of strikes, done in hope that the claims would be more easily answered in the new political framework. The attitude of the republicans before this cycle of strikes quickly ends all the illusions of the working class movement. The government, faced with the failure of the intermediary role that it tried to play between the patronage and the working class (with the workers remaining unyielding in their demands), starts to show impatience and hostility. The first national police is created (Portugal, contrary to almost every other European country, still didn't have a national police force), battalions of volunteers, mostly part of the *carbonari*, receive military training to defend the Republic against its "enemies" and new laws are created **[VOLUNTEERS SLIDE]**. Faced with the demand for legislation on strikes (excluding an article in the Criminal Code of 1866 that punished lockouts and strikes with fines or imprisonment), the government, even though claiming to recognise the right to strike, creates a special committee to play the aforementioned intermediary role in the ongoing strikes and to formulate a legislative framework to deal with these types of situations. The law that regulated the right to strike comes in December 1910, two months after the revolution, and is massively rejected by the working class, becoming known as a "fraud-decree". Even though it revoked the previously mentioned law of 1866, its terms are vague enough to include all types of situations, demanding the early announcement of strikes weeks in advance or creating penalties for "disturbances of public order"⁸. It's the first step for the divorce between the Republic and the working classes, which was made irreversible when the newly-formed police, the Republican National Guard, kills two workers in a strike that took place in Setúbal, in 1911.

For the anarchists, the collaboration with republicans and the State becomes impossible. The "interventionists" become divided between those that definitively stand

⁸ E.g. Ventura, *Anarquistas, Republicanos e Socialistas*. 218

for the Republic and those that forsake it due to their libertarian ideal. The relationship with the State is no longer a question; alliances with other pro-State political forces are ended; any expectations towards the State cease to be (even though the anarchists continue to be a determinant force in the defence of the republic every time the monarchists or, later, fascist groups look to attain power through force). All efforts are directed, from then on, to the consolidation and creation of specifically libertarian groups and syndical organization, taking advantage of the discontentment towards the regime that had spread throughout the working class milieu. In May 1911, the biggest Working Class Congress of this country takes place, while there were plans to create a General Work Confederation – a desire which is delayed until the next Congress, in 1914.

The strikes continue, even though the rhythm of the first months slowed down. **[1912 GENERAL STRIKE SLIDE]** In January 1912, the first General Strike in the history of the country takes place, convened in solidarity with a group of rural workers in Évora who were striking and saw their most prominent syndical members be imprisoned. For the first time since the beginning of the Republic, the government suspends all guarantees and military and police forces surround, during dawn, the Syndical House, where a few hundred workers were concentrated, and who were forced to abandon the building with the threat of it being destroyed by artillery. Hundreds of workers are arrested and taken to ships berthed alongside the coast.

The republican discourse was already, then, uniquely that of the defence of the social order (even though some of their members, namely the “volunteers” that acted in defence of the regime, continued to resort to violence to attack religious targets, or even syndicalist targets). The anarchists and syndicalists start to be accused of acting under the orders of reactionary forces, namely the monarchists, aiming to discredit and defeat the republic, and the speech starts to once again be built towards the criminalization of libertarians – with any pretext being suitable to make arrests or to close syndical houses. In spite of all that, the working class movement, in rapid growth, already possessed a dimension and structure that weren't affected by the actions of the government. To finish, in 1920, in the heyday of the anarchist movement in Portugal (at the time, one of the three most read daily newspapers in the country, with a circulation of hundreds of thousands of copies, was an anarchist journal, *A Batalha*) a new proposition to create “laws of exception” is made in the parliament, presented as “something that went

against the will of the Government but that the public security demanded". It is criticised and rejected by the parliament, but in 1921 a "Tribunal of Social Defence" is created, composed by two judges named by the Government, with the purpose of dealing with "criminals of social offences and bombers."

Basically, what I looked to demonstrate through this quick incursion through the history of Portuguese anarchism, from the point of view of a very particular relationship, was that the decline or failure of anarchism can hardly be explained only by intrinsic factors to anarchism, derived by some organizational inability or individualistic tendency: without understanding the ways in which anarchism is influenced and conditioned by other concurrent political forces (in their majority, fighting to attain State power) or by the action of the State itself, we can difficultly comprehend the successes and failures of anarchism in their whole. I believe it was demonstrated, even if in a brief fashion, how the various structural transformations of the Portuguese State contributed to condition or influence the organizational ways that anarchism adopted throughout the about thirty years approached here.

In a different sense, everything we have just seen might showcase a theoretical debility of a part of the Portuguese anarchism in a certain period of its history, but it also shows, above all, what the work of David Berry or, more recently, of Benjamin Franks highlighted: the impossibility of completely separating the different ideologies and political groups, since the boundaries that set them apart are much more permeable than what can be initial assumed by historiographical or epistemological convenience.

I could also talk about other things from the history of Portuguese anarchism, that seem very interesting to me and can be discussed here, such as the relationship between a weak State (for example, without a police body organised at a national level) and the absence of violence, comparatively with other contexts, when the anarchist movement was so strong. Before anything, it invalidates the traditional equation present in political thought and in many works about the State: that to a strong State corresponds more social order and that to a weak State corresponds more social disorder. In Italy or France, where the State was more solid, it wasn't the State's intervention that hindered the resort to violent methods and terrorist practices – on the

contrary –; in Portugal, with an incipient State in practically all dimensions, before a strong anarchist movement, no actions of great violence were found. As the various studies on anarchism in Portugal reinforce, there wasn't in the country “any particular culture of violent action or illegalism, with a generalized framework”. Violence as a political weapon tended to be used, as in other contexts, in periods of great repression, in which the possibilities of organization were seriously diminished.

With the State being weak and needing, thus, to resort to more diffuse, punctual and not so ostensible repressive actions, like the ones ascertained in other countries, anarchism found conditions propitious to its development in the working class milieu, practically from the period in which it starts expanding in Portugal (the last quarter of the 19th century) – which helps explain its premature relationship with forms of working class organization by comparison to what was seen in other countries. Even though with all the problems that we saw (not only derived from the State, but also from the relationship with other political forces disputing a close political ground), anarchism in Portugal was, thus, able to resort to other means to sustain its growth other than violent and individual action, more spontaneous than organised. When the repressive methods employed by the State became more sophisticated, during the course of the Republic, it was already too late to reverse the growth of anarchism and working class organization. Only the dictatorship managed to shove the libertarian movements into complete clandestinity and, with them, syndical action.

Everything I have just said might seem a bunch of truisms: the repression makes collective organization harder and, as such, encourages resorting to individual isolated acts, tendentially more violent. However, in addition to the absence in great part of the historiography of some of the notes or hypothesis that I advanced here, which justifies their reference, it was my intention to point here a different aspect. The bigger and more violent the act of repression and the bigger its randomness, greater is the space of legitimacy that is created for resorting to different forms of political action, namely, or I should say even tendentially, violent. In other words, indiscriminate repression doesn't just tend to limit the repertoire of common political actions, legal in their majority, and thus increasing the possibility or need to resort to violent forms of action, but it also as a potential consequence the increment of popular legitimation of the use of these means. Thus, if it appears evident that the bigger the repression the smaller is the possibility to act in an organized, efficient and systematic way, that doesn't make it a univocal

solution for the prevention of these forms of action, in the sense that there is a complex negotiation of the involved forces. Repression has other costs (if not in short term, at least in medium/long term) that can never be taken into account in a scenario of latent or active social conflict. This seems to me an important aspect (albeit not very original), for the perspectives that are opened in order to look at the history of anarchism and the State. But, above all, I believe that its importance derives from its timelessness, frequently underestimated.