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An Act of 'Emotional Rescue': Homosexuality and Resistance in Lagos, Portugal (1965)

Abstract

In the summer of 1965, several youths were arrested and publicly shamed by the GNR (Guarda Nacional Republicana) in Lagos, on the Algarve, for the 'crime' of homosexuality. Despite the silence of official and press channels on the events, the arrests were analysed by two foreign sources, one a German police science journal and the other a British volume on homosexuality in society. What the sources reveal is that rather than public opprobrium against the youths, indignation was expressed at the GNR's actions. Sympathy for the young men was engendered in on-lookers in what this article terms an act of 'emotional rescue' and resistance against the norms, values and practices of the dictatorship. By means of the contextualization of the events as part of the rising tourist economy and recent queer theory, the article contributes an alternative understanding of LGBT history and resistance to authoritarian regimes.

Resumo

No verão de 1965, vários jovens foram presos e publicamente envergonhados pela GNR (Guarda Nacional Republicana) em Lagos, no Algarve, pelo 'crime' de homossexualidade. Apesar do silêncio dos canais oficiais e da imprensa sobre os acontecimentos, a detenção dos jovens foi analisada por duas fontes estrangeiras, um jornal de ciência policial alemão e um volume britânico sobre homossexualidade na sociedade. O que as fontes revelam é que mais do que o opróbrio público contra os jovens, manifestou-se a indignação pública perante a actuação da GNR. A simpatia pelos jovens foi engendrada nos espectadores no que este artigo

denomina um ato de “resgate emocional” e resistência às normas, valores e práticas da ditadura. Por meio da contextualização dos eventos como parte da economia turística em ascensão e da teoria queer recente, o artigo contribui para uma compreensão alternativa da história LGBT e da resistência a regimes autoritários.

Keywords

Homosexuality, Portugal, Lagos, Dictatorship, Resistance

Palavras-chave

Homossexualidade, Portugal, Lagos, Ditadura, Resistência

Introduction

In the 2019 Eurobarometer report on discrimination, some 69% of those questioned in Portugal expressed the view that there was nothing wrong with sexual relations between people of the same sex, an increase of 10% from 2015. The same year, 78% accepted that LGBT people should have the same rights as heterosexuals (European Commission, 2019).[1] Portugal has been, in the European context, one of the most accommodating countries in respect of LGBT rights and recognition, and although it took time to decriminalize homosexuality after the 1974 revolution, something accomplished as late as 1982, there has been an equal age of consent since 2007, and from 2018, reassignment surgery has not been required to change one’s legal gender. Although all surveys are inherently problematic, not least because of the relatively small numbers participating in them and the differences between people’s professed ideas at the time of inquiry and those expressed in other more quotidian scenarios, the data show

evolution towards tolerance and acceptance of a wide range of sexual, gender and bodily positionalities.

While this survey shows a general move towards acceptance, it cannot be claimed, however, that the battle for equality has been won. Discrimination, despite legal guarantees, is common in Portugal and the rise of new authoritarian and 'far-right' discourses threaten the gains made. Within this context, this article seeks to open up a space for the reassessment of two interrelated aspects of LGBT history: first, it wishes to problematize the notion of a steady and inexorable trend from oppression towards toleration over the last fifty years, and, second, leading from this first assertion, it aims to open up a window onto the past that does not necessarily coincide with the narrative according to which the dictatorial *Estado Novo* (New State) of António de Oliveira Salazar and Marcello Caetano (1933-1974) was simply a bleak period of repression, intolerance and abjection for lesbian and gay people.[2] This second objective requires an immediate caveat as it may appear not only counter-intuitive but also politically risky: this article is not suggesting that the *Estado Novo* and the early years of democracy were devoid of real and sustained suffering on the part of LGBT people.

An apology for the crimes of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship could not be further from this article's aims. On the contrary, what this piece attempts to do is further erode the perception, propelled by the regime itself, that it was successful in controlling all facets of life and that it was able to manage and silence all expressions of dissidence effectively.[3] While acknowledging the totalitarian aspirations of the regime and the effects that these had on daily existence, the article aims to recoup historical moments and acts of everyday resistance to discrimination and oppression and present them, following the work of David Harvey (2000), as 'spaces of hope' within the history of the Iberian dictatorships. In so doing, the article questions the regime's aspiration to not only control the population politically and physically but also its attempt to govern perceptions of time and change in daily life. The 'temporal style'

(Sabrow, 2005) of the regime was designed to produce an account of national chronology that was as stable, linear and immutable as the convergence between the regime's consolidation and the path laid out for the destiny of Portugal. Such a manoeuvre in favour of the 'timeless' alignment of traditional values embodied by the regime was instantiated in initiatives such as the 'Congresses of the Portuguese World' and Exposition of 1940, which juxtaposed significant dates (1140 as the 'foundation' of Portugal; 1640 as the recuperation of national independence from Spain), and 1940 as the securing of Portugal's restoration as a Catholic, corporativist, historical unity expressed by and in the form of the *Estado Novo* (Corkhill and Almeida, 2009; Rosmaninho, 2008).

This reassessment of dictatorial time and social control is inspired by the work of Reinhart Koselleck and a number of queer theorists of time. Koselleck maintained that perceptions of historical time are always plural, constitute a site of conflict and are not felt or experienced as a singular entity. He argued that 'we might speak, not of one historical time, but of many that overlie one another' (Koselleck, 2002: 110). This insight allows us to evince moments of resistance in the interstices of the mechanisms of regime control. A repressive apparatus with its own internal reactions to notions of time, 'progress' and 'modernity' such as the Salazar regime, existed in conjunction and in conflict with dissident responses to some of the fundamental premises upon which the regime was established. Different understandings of the time-locked stasis that the regime sought to impose were able to emerge or co-exist. Acts of resistance during the regime's life, whether sustained, planned or 'informal', in the sense meant by Scott (1985; 1990), helped to materialize contestations against the totalitarian aspiration to control all aspects of people's lives and experiences against the backdrop of a supposedly unchanging conservative time-scape.

In light of these interpretations, this article offers an exercise in looking back to the past, not to reaffirm single or unitary understandings of history, but in order to participate in

an act of what one author has termed 'emotional rescue'. In her book, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*, discussed more extensively below, Heather Love blends a non-teleological approach to history with an emotional endeavour that aims not to bind us to the past but to provide solace in moments of difficulty in the present and the future (Love, 2007: 31-52).

In order to recuperate this past as part of historical memory under dictatorship, the article focuses on what was without doubt a relatively minor and almost certainly practically unknown incident in the southern region of the Algarve in the mid-1960s. In the context of the regime's hostility to homosexuality as a 'deviant' and destabilizing practice, which undermined the centrality of the heterosexual family as a unit, the established gender roles of the period and went against the prerogative of sex primarily for reproductive purposes, the local police sought to crack down on the growing visibility of same-sex activity in the newly touristic town of Lagos. The events elaborated upon below involved the arrest and attempted public shaming of a group of local youths, many of whom engaged in 'trade' or paid sex with foreign tourists in the town. Some of these individuals may well have been homosexual themselves and may have identified as such; others, on the other hand, may have identified as heterosexual, performing sexual acts primarily for remuneration. The public shaming of these youths undertaken by the local Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR), however, did not spark the opprobrium anticipated by the authorities, engendering instead a range of emotions from pity through to solidarity and outright rejection of the punitive action. Further, the shaming provoked an act of defiance on the part of those detained. How significant was this act of resistance and the refusal to endorse the scorn propelled by the dictatorship? What significance does it have for the history of the dictatorship and sexuality?

After a short discussion of Love's and others' work on the textures of queer history, this article, following the style suggested by classic studies of micro history, with its focus on

quotidian events that illuminate broader processes, first presents the case of the arrested youths by drawing on the only two sources known to exist, both of international origin, which describe the events. It then outlines the culture of paid sex in the context of tourism in the Algarve and Mediterranean as seen through the eyes of criminologists and sexologists at the time and the recent historiography of the phenomenon. It then broadens out to discuss the legislation and attitudes prevalent in the *Estado Novo* in respect of homosexuality, before concluding on the significance of the case for queer history in Portugal.

Reparative readings and affective history

While Heather Love's book on 'backwards' readings of history seeks in part to recuperate the significance of depressing accounts of LGBT life, focusing on the abject, the failures, the repression and the violence in order to counter overly positive and teleological readings of LGBT history tailored towards a triumphalist present, this article employs some of the more 'positive' aspects of her approach and seeks to resurrect moments of resistance that refused the association between homosexuality and perversion and the resultant repressive measures exercised by both 'democratic' and authoritarian regimes. Although we would fully concede that, as Love writes, 'the history of queer damage retains its capacity to do harm in the present' (Love, 2007: 9), it is feasible that new histories of the past can be written and that the connections between past resistance and resistance in possible future scenarios can be identified and mobilized. By looking at the past differently, a 'reparative' reading, following Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, can be offered (Sedgwick, 2003). As Love acknowledges on the first page of her volume, the stakes are high, but epistemologically, historically and ethically they are worth taking: 'For groups constituted by historical injury, the challenge is to engage with the past without being destroyed by it' (Love, 2007: 1). Love's words coincide with the

empowering strategy offered by Didier Eribon (1999), whereby *l'injure*, the insult, a little like the description 'queer' itself, can be turned into a potent tool of resistance against normativity.

Initially, it may be argued that an injustice has been done to Love's book by what has been presented as its focus on shame and negativity as parts of the gay past. Although these sentiments cannot be denied and were often overwhelmingly dominant in LGBT life, it is perhaps, however, this starting point that allows Love to articulate the move from a Foucauldian 'effective history to [an] *affective* history' (Love, 2007: 31; emphasis added), that is, the attempt to rise to the challenge of 'how to incorporate a difficult or shameful past into the vision of a more promising future' and it is this aspect that this article takes as its central justification (Love, 2007: 105). This potentiality was enabled by Love's own 'backward step' (Love, 2007: 147), by thinking *with*, not *against*, backwardness, a move that, following Carla Freccero, responds to the embracing of 'queer spectrality' or the ability to allow oneself to be haunted in order to then open up the possibility of a reparative future (Love, 2007: 151; Freccero, 2006). In tandem with Freccero's queer spectrality, opposition to 'chrono-normativity', as articulated by Elizabeth Freeman (Freeman, 2005; 2010), argues for a view of 'perverse modernities' not subject to a heteronormative vision, but one which also rejects the linear temporality of progressive history. By employing spectrality and opposing normative understandings of time, we disrupt the *Estado Novo*'s attempt to engender a regressive modernity and a society based on traditional values as well as questioning its effects in the history of the regime itself.

There is one further consideration at this point. This is the tendency to fix homophobia spatially in one place as discussed by Rahul Rao in his recent book *Out of time: The queer politics of postcoloniality* (Rao, 2020). In this volume, Rao argues that the ease with which homophobia is detected and analysed in countries such as Uganda, where there has been a long history of tolerance but also recent legislative moves to criminalize homosexuality, is more a

reflection of western prejudice and intellectual laziness than it is of an accurate understanding of the country's history. Again, while not wishing to minimize the Salazar regime's oppression of lesbians and gay men, we can show that there were degrees of acceptance of homosexuality within the broader population that went against the dictatorship's stated sexual values. Some of this acceptance and indeed resistance may well have arisen from the anticlericalism of the past or the durability of leftist ideas in certain parts of the country. The regime, therefore, was not hegemonic in its control of spaces, mentalities and practices. The very fact that it was only in the immediate post-revolutionary period from April 1974 that many public toilets renowned for same-sex encounters were closed also breaks with the repressive-progressive timeline so often reiterated. The new democratic regime sought to extirpate what it viewed as hangovers from the past, including homosexuality, and activities that were deemed unsuitable in a democratic, revitalized, morally pure present were marked for elimination (Higgs, 1999: 134).[4]

Gay in Lagos in 1965

The 1960s were a period of social and political change in Europe and such developments also affected sexual behaviour and the expectations of populations in respect of sexual freedom, abortion, contraception and homosexuality (Herzog, 2011: 133-175). Such a wave did not arrive in Portugal with immediate effect and the regime was attentive to what it identified as a threat posed by changing mores and, in concrete terms, the new ideas and behaviours brought by tourists who arrived on Iberian shores. In these countries, as Herzog observes, 'the combination of authoritarian Catholicism and the perseverance of fascist regimes into and through the post-World War II decades together enforced highly restrictive sexual cultures, especially with respect to controls on female sexuality' (Herzog, 2011: 103). The existence of homosexuality continued to be an object of regime surveillance and repression, although testimonies of individuals detained have indicated that political and sexual dissidence were

usually processed separately by the regime (Almeida, S., 2010: 145). The case of the communist militant Júlio Fogaça, apprehended in a hostel in the company of another man in the coastal location of Nazaré in 1962, displayed both dimensions, having been judged by the Tribunal Plenário for his political 'crimes' and by the Tribunal de Execução de Penas for his 'pederasty' (Almeida, S., 2010: 146). As a result of his detention for homosexuality, he was expelled from the Communist Party (PCP) for 'moral irregularities' (Almeida, M., 2010: 74-75).

The events of 1965 in Lagos, therefore, must be understood in this immediate context. In addition, and quite exceptionally, in contrast to a lack of local written evidence, they transcended the local dimension and became the brief focus of international attention.[5] In a police science journal published in Munich, West Germany, Lagos resident Thomas P. Becker examined the attempt by the town's authorities to 'contain' homosexuality.[6] Publishing his report in November 1965 in the review *Die neue Polizei*, Becker outlined the police action in Lagos earlier that year and the local population's failure to share the regime's vilification of the captured youths (Becker, 1965). This action reached a further international audience in the English-language book written by the criminal psychiatrist Donald J. West, *Homosexuality*, the first edition of which was published in 1955 and which was part of the growing attempt to reassess the place of 'sexual deviance' within criminal law. In the second revised edition of 1968, West related the details of the Lagos case in the context of wider studies, such as that of the Danish police officer Jens Jersild on the proliferation of homosexual 'trade' on the Mediterranean coast (West, 1986: 128-129; Jersild, 1956). West was careful, nevertheless, to point out that despite the fact that homosexual prostitution was 'particularly rife' on the coast, this did not mean necessarily that 'these populations have more sexual deviants' (West, 1986: 128). Most likely, he went on to state, the high volume of homosexual transactions was a result of socio-economic factors, such as unemployment, the effects of rapid urbanization and the

stark contrast between rich and poor. This set of circumstances particularly affected 'numbers of unsettled youths' in these areas without 'visible means of support' who turned to prostitution during the tourist season (West, 1986: 128). In the absence of local evidence, the sources drawn on to examine this incident are, therefore, admittedly limited; the article endeavours, nevertheless, by listening to the silence, to interrogate the significance of the events recorded.

In his book on homosexuality, West noted that, according to Becker's police report, a quarter of the male tourists visiting southern Portugal were homosexuals 'seeking adventures and prepared to pay' and, given the fact that 'girls in that region are closely guarded from any pre-marital sex experience', the young men in the area 'turn all the more readily to homo-erotic practices' (West, 1986: 128). West's analysis is evidently strongly indebted to what may now be termed a 'social constructionist' account of sexual behaviour, which foregrounds the context of sexual interactions rather than positing a transhistorical interpretation of 'sexual identity'. Indeed, in some respects, these activities were viewed by West as 'circumstantial' homosexuality. As we will now see, however, this category was not absolute and West's language betrays a certain degree of essentialism in his perception of the youths, describing them as 'juvenile homosexuals' probably as a result of his reading of Becker's report. The description of events by West, nevertheless, is worth citing in full: 'In Lagos, the police rounded up some of the most popular of the juvenile homosexuals, shaving their heads and painting their scalps, and then parading them in the market place to excite public scorn. Their action proved rather ineffective, because it aroused sympathy for the branded youths' (West, 1986: 128-129).

Becker's report is much more detailed than West's and it shines further light on the events. Becker states that the most renowned of the youths were rounded up and 'brought to the police station with gentle force four months ago [that is, presumably, in July or August 1965]. There they were subjected to persistent interrogation and then shaved. A broad, red cross

with a caustic ink that is very difficult to remove was applied to the now bare scalp. They were released with instructions to go through the most heavily trafficked streets of the centre and to spend some time in the market square. Those punished in this way left, initially depressed, but later more free and self-confident and not caring about the opinion of the people, whom they had long given to understand that they were homosexual, went the prescribed route and then stayed for some time in the market place' (Becker, 1965: 250-251). In addition to exposing the nature of police brutality in the area (in the lead-up to the actual incident, Becker details how a boy caught stealing a chicken had had his fingernails pulled out), the excerpt shows how the police must have been following the youths for some time as they were already associated with homosexuality in the locality and were 'renowned' or, in West's words, 'popular' in Lagos. The youths themselves were also cognisant of the fact that the local community was aware of their activities. The punishment, in terms of the head-shaving, was usually employed for political prisoners, but clearly for the local GNR, which, alongside the PSP (Polícia de Segurança Pública), was in charge of policing public order crime and morality,[7] these individuals were to be treated as criminal elements. The daubing of a red cross on their heads was a kind of baptism by one of the regime's appropriated symbols, that of the fourteenth-century Order of Christ. Religion, nation and militarism were thus bound together and emblazoned on the youths as a chastising act of branding.

According to Becker, from what appears to be a first-hand observation, the reaction of the public was not precisely as expected by the authorities. He states: 'The population watched the presentation with interest and curiosity, but there was no sign of general outrage against the punished, no crowd formed, and neither mockery nor scorn was heard, as the initiators of the action had probably intended. After a few hours the interest subsided and the next day it was only an amusing talking point' (Becker, 1965: 251). The lack of negative reaction from the passers-by allowed Becker to reflect on the nature and effectiveness of the punishment meted

out to the youths, declaring it to be outmoded and counter-productive: 'Today, a good four months after the example, after the hair of the punished has almost grown back to its old length, one has to come to the conclusion that such medieval methods are not even good as a deterrent, let alone to make the punished alter their ways' (Becker, 1965: 251). Although Becker does not discuss the symbolism behind the red cross, the brutality of the treatment of the youths served to highlight the traditionalism of the country as viewed by a northern European versed in other police methods. Becker's views, in addition, were not devoid of a certain expression of superiority with respect to the 'advanced' policing techniques of the North.

Following on from the public's initial indifference to the authorities' intentions, a new range of feelings started to emerge among the observers. Rejection of the police action became explicit and, even more of note, the locals begin to display empathy for the degraded youths: 'It is also strange that the majority of the residents, when they subsequently assessed the action, spoke out against the police's actions and publicly expressed their sympathy with those whose heads had been shaved, people with whom they had not even spoken before' (Becker, 1965: 251). Although Becker does not tell the reader how he came to this assessment or in what forum the locals made their views heard, the role of informal resistance and of gossip, in this case presumably in the market square and beyond, against the authorities in totalitarian regimes should not be underestimated. Neither should the importance of a feeling of fatigue for the repressive actions of the dictatorship be minimized.

Becker argued that such opposition to the police action and 'sympathy' with the detained may well have had certain ramifications. He finished his observations with the following remark: 'For the person in charge of the operation, the whole incident may have unfortunate consequences. At least that is what some of those affected hope, who are now trying to take legal action, to gain justice, especially since nothing can be proven conclusively against the young people'. This may have been a forlorn hope, however, as the 'police, and

especially the Guardia [sic, for 'Guarda'] Republicana, are not exactly afraid of such a prospect. It almost never happens that those responsible are publicly held accountable' (Becker, 1965: 251). The very fact that the youths apparently entertained such an denunciation of the GNR's action, nevertheless, comprises an act of resistance in itself. Although the incident would no doubt soon be forgotten by most and in all likelihood never came to court, it had the potential of becoming something larger in the mentalities of many, stoking up resistance against the action of the police and the edicts of the *Estado Novo* more broadly.

Tourism and Sex in the Algarve

In assessing the propensity or otherwise of youths to engage in same-sex practices in the Mediterranean area, one should avoid the exoticization of the region and facile considerations about the relatively free sexual mores that supposedly existed in this area. Although the allure of the Mediterranean has been a constant in the modern period, especially for those seeking an environment where sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular were not so tightly controlled as in Northern Europe (Aldrich, 1993), Orientalizing tropes do more to obscure understandings than illuminate realities on the ground. Having said this, given the lack of legal measures against homosexuality throughout most of the nineteenth century and parts of the twentieth century in countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy and France, and a *de facto* cultural acceptance in some parts of the North African Mediterranean countries, sanctions were often lighter and same-sex practices were sometimes seen as part of daily culture. Clearly, in the years of the dictatorships in Iberia, this tolerance did not prevail on the part of the authorities, although public attitudes may have been different. The tension between legal, cultural and social practice is encapsulated by theories corresponding to what one historian many decades ago called the 'Mediterranean model' of homosexuality (Dall'Orto, 1989). Rather than homosexuality constituting an identity or a demand for recognition, Giovanni Dall'Orto argued

that especially male homosexuality was signified along the 'active/passive' axis whereby 'effeminate' men were penetrated by an 'active' partner. Effeminate men were viewed and possibly viewed themselves 'more like women' and the active partner was able in the process to maintain his masculine demeanour and reputation. Both, nevertheless, under the Old Regime legislation, could be classed as 'sodomites'. In the early twentieth century, when the categories 'sexual inversion' and 'homosexuality' became common in expert fields such as the sexual sciences and psychiatry, individuals may still have operated according to the framework indicated by Dall'Orto. The 'stigma' of homosexuality, therefore, for 'active' partners at least may not have obtained so clearly as penetration was often conceived as a mark of virility.

This model is displayed clearly in literary works of the period and in the early reports of sexual science. In Abel Botelho's *O Barão de Lavos* (1891), the eponymous baron seeks out youths for sex on the streets of Lisbon. He is, however, an ostensibly heterosexual and married man, as Higgs points out (Higgs, 1999: 128), and in the novel, 'very much of its period', 'nobody is portrayed as exclusively homosexual with long-term partners of the same sex or age group' (Higgs, 1999: 131). The baron's search for same-sex 'trade' is not given a separate existence from heterosexuality. Within the sexual sciences, it was only in the 1920s that any exclusive distinctions between hetero- and homosexuality were consolidated as theories of 'sexual inversion' began to take hold (Silva, 1895). Such theories, however, were not hegemonic in expert, state or public minds even by the 1960s.

In the Algarve over this decade, the specific circumstances surrounding the development of international tourism, as Donald West pointed out, created opportunities for both locals and foreign visitors. Although not as extensive as some other parts of the Mediterranean, such as the Spanish *costas* and localities in Greece and Italy, the Algarve underwent a process whereby tourism was converted into one of the main sources of income, especially on the strip located between Lagos in the west and Faro in the centre of the Algarve

coast. New resorts, such as Albufeira and Quarteira, once small fishing villages, sprouted up to cater for the rising demand.

Certain resorts began to harbour a reputation for being more open to a homosexual clientele. Some distance from the Algarve, the island of Madeira, possibly in part due to the upper class English traditions to be found there, became such a place. Albufeira, supposedly from the time when the British songwriter Cliff Richard owned a house there, also grew in reputation. According to one testimony, Salazar effectively turned a blind eye to this phenomenon, although this could be a *post facto* interpretation (Almeida, S., 2010: 169-170). In the south, according to Fernando Cascais, the existence of well-known *maricas*, or effeminate young men, was tolerated in villages and these individuals were 'inseridos socialmente' (well-integrated into society) (Almeida, S., 2010: 170). Cascais argues that the *maricas* were 'pre-homosexual' as in rural localities there was no knowledge of the 'homosexual' as a medico-legal category. Once such knowledge started to appear, and with it the notion of perversion, *maricas* as visible figures began to disappear. It is possible therefore that the Lagos case discussed here was situated at the intersection of the rural, traditional understandings of effeminacy and a 'pre-homosexual' mentality on the part of participants and observers.

In his report, Becker writes that homosexuality was visible and common in the tourist localities of Spain and Portugal. He notes, for example, that 'What is striking about it [the visibility of the youths] is in part how they flaunt their homosexuality, yes, they actually display themselves in cafes and restaurants without being reprimanded in any way' (Becker, 1965: 251). Not only this, but, 'It is fair to say that roughly 15 to 20% of the male population in the South are homosexual and about half have homosexual experiences' (Becker, 1965: 251). Quite where Becker derived this information from is unclear, but it does hint at the extent of the practice and public levels of acceptance. All told, this made for a 'terrifying' reputation for

homosexual trade in the Algarve as all currencies were accepted. The degree to which the regime saw this as a threat or a phenomenon in need of control within this locality, however, is not clear before the incident of 1965. There appears to have been no systematic reporting on morality, identifying homosexuals and lesbians, as there was during the 1940s under the Spanish dictatorship (Roura, 1998: 143-214), although the youth organization, the *Mocidade Portuguesa*, the female version, the *Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina* and the women's organization, the OMEN,[8] among others, would have played a policing role to some degree.

To judge from the local press, the spectacular rise of the tourist trade in the Algarve was met with a mixture of trepidation and excitement for the cultural changes but also the financial rewards it would entail. Although newspapers in the locality did not mention the events referred to by Becker and West, probably as a result of regime censorship and their 'scabrous' nature,[9] they dedicated extensive sections to the developing tourist economy, visits by foreign tourists, and, discussed some of the less positive consequences of the tourist trade. They also, as we will see, addressed some aspects of the behaviour and morality of the youth along the Algarve coast.

The national *Diário de Notícias* remarked in early July 1965, just before the inauguration of the new Faro airport, that the Algarve was poised to become one of the tourist gems of the country (Anon, 1965a). This appreciation would have been shared by many *algarvios* and certainly by the regional press, which tended to follow regime ideology closely and supported the developmentalist objectives sponsored by the dictatorship. This stance was not voiced uncritically, however, and the lack of preparedness, the environmental destruction and loss of traditional Algarve architecture and culture were regular features of the local press (Gil, 1965).

Such concerns were typical of regions that embraced tourism rapidly from a low base. Infrastructural worries also peppered the Algarve press. In early January 1965, one regular writer for the Vila Real de Santo António-based *Jornal do Algarve* wrote about how the year would be decisive for tourism in the region but wondered whether the airport would be ready in time and also asked whether there would be enough food for the busy months of July, August and September (Luz, 1965).[10] Others, writing in the Faro-based *Correio do Sul* that same month expressed their desire for a promising year of expanded tourism (Cota, 1965). Developments, whether of hotels, rail links, or new night clubs were reported on (Anon, 1965c), but so too were over-priced food and drinks in bars.

The inauguration of the airport at Faro in the late summer and the eventual establishment of direct flights between various European, especially Scandinavian countries and the Algarve (Anon. 1965d), were praised as heralding a new era. Tourism receipts were recorded and Faro was enrolled into the experience of 'world tourism' (Pontes, 1965; Franco, 1965). Such interest in tourism in the Algarve, however, was not confined to the summer: it was also predicted that Scandinavians, and Swedes in particular, would be arriving in search of 'sun and sand' even in the autumn and winter.[11] Such an influx, one commentator wrote in the *Correio do Sul* without a hint of irony, resulted in a tourism sector that 'cresce como um efebo' (grew like an ephebe) as the foreign visitor 'bronzeia-se nas praias' (gets tanned on the beaches) (Lopes, 1965).

The local press also highlighted some of the problems beyond environmental and cultural destruction. Although the ability of the press to critique the regime was reduced and tightly controlled, several commentators remarked on the behaviour of the local youth and the ineffectiveness of the authorities to bring them to heel. Crimes, apart from speeding cars and the occasional over-charging for goods on market stalls (Morna, 1965: 1), were, however,

barely reported in order to maintain the regime's façade of peace and tranquillity. In the three regional newspapers discussed here, the *Jornal do Algarve*, the *Correio do Sul* and the *Jornal de Lagos*, nevertheless, articles did address what was understood as a loss of direction in young people and the rise of youth delinquency in various localities. In early January 1965, a writer in the *Correio do Sul* responded to a young man who had written to the *Jornal do Algarve* to refute the comments made in a previous article about the state of the youth. Rather than censorious, the *Correio* writer simply remarked that the youth had always been the same across time, that things would seem different when the young writer arrived at his forties when certain phenomena, such as the Beatles, would seem banal (Clara, 1965). It is quite possible that the 'artificiality' of modern life and the impact of tourism were at the heart of an address by the local pianist Dália de Lacerda lamenting the decay of the youth, the temptations present and the drift away from nature (Lacerda, 1965). The editors of the *Jornal de Lagos* coincided with Lacerda's concerns and urged a general campaign of 'regeneration' to restore values to the young.

It was in the *Jornal do Algarve*, however, that most ink was spilt on the state of the youth. In particular, the regular column within the paper written by Manuel Geraldo, 'Notícias de Lagos', was most consistent in raising these issues and it is here that we may potentially have expected to see some comments on the incidents identified by Becker. This, however, was not to be the case. The discussions of youth morality and the demand that the police act, nevertheless, can be read as part of the climate of denunciation of youth indiscipline and petty crime in the town. The call by Geraldo on the GNR to act, in particular, may have had a direct impact on the events identified by Becker. In January 1965, Geraldo complained that a group of youths had proffered insulting words to a young girl in Lagos. Fortunately, some soldiers had intervened to berate them and to defend the dignity of girls and women (Geraldo, 1965a). This was followed up by Geraldo with a call for the local police, the Polícia de Segurança

Pública (PSP) and the GNR to intervene against the 'desvairados vádios, noctivagos' (uncontrollable late-night vagrants) and the 'mocidade transviada' (derailed youths) that lurked in the town. Geraldo demanded that the GNR patrolled the streets at night in plain clothes as the resources provided for the PSP, funded locally, were insufficient to permit a sustained intervention (Geraldo, 1965b). Similar complaints were voiced later that year, with one writer identifying Teddy Boys in Faro as the culprits of damage to cars and the difficulties that the PSP had in controlling these 'energúmenos' (low life) (Viegas, 1965). Finally, Geraldo returned in November 1965 to complain of the late-night antics of the youth and need for the GNR to step up its presence. A 'good lesson' meted out at the GNR station would do the trick, the author argued (Geraldo, 1965c). It was clearly this kind of lesson that had been given to the homosexual youths earlier that year.[12]

The *Estado Novo* and Homosexuality

According to Fernando Rosas, the *Estado Novo* in Portugal was a 'specific modality' of fascism, based on hierarchy, Catholicism, violence, repression, the control of the armed forces and corporativist organization (Rosas, 2012, cited in Martins, 2017: 41-42). Part of the totalitarian project, especially in the period between the early 1930s and the end of World War Two, was to ensure the 'bases de um pensamento único e (re)fazer a Memória para uma História representativa e legitimadora do seu Poder' (foundations for a single ideology and to (re)make memory in tune with a representative and legitimizing expression of history and the regime's power) (Silva, 2008: 355). This 'management' of what could be evoked and also that which could be forgotten in national terms was at the centre of the regime's repressive project (Silva, 2008: 355). As with other authoritarian rightist or fascist regimes in the 1920s and 1930s (Nash, 1991; Saraceno, 1991), the politics of gender and sexuality were central to the

Portuguese regime's ideology. The sexual politics of the *Estado Novo* were conservative and women were accorded a strict and predominantly domestic role (Cova and Pinto, 2002). Maternity was signalled as women's destiny and the construction of the 'new man' as a moral, 'palingenetic' force was incorporated as part of the regime's praxis (Rosas, 2008). This new man would form the head of the family, would undertake 'honest toil' and would reinforce the corporativist structures that the regime imposed.

As part of this privileging of reproduction and heterosexuality over other forms of sexual expression, the regime developed a range of attitudes from silence to antipathy to outright disdain for homosexuality and this often extended to violent repression. Although homosexuality was not a central concern of the succession of authoritarian regimes established in the late 1920s in the run-up to the consolidation of the *Estado Novo* under Salazar in 1933, opposition towards it fell into a broader concern about order, the traditional family and the replication of the typical Portuguese household, and also towards 'unproductive' individuals. It was within the latter category that homosexuals were aligned legally speaking along with the *vadios*, the homeless, unemployed and itinerant without fixed abode.

As Almeida has pointed out, concepts of homosexuality were formed at the juncture of legal medicine, psychiatry and the law. The legislation of 1886 allowed for the punishment of same-sex activity and was in place until 1982. Article 71 of the 1886 Code, upon which much subsequent legislation would be based, punished with 'security measures' those who engaged habitually in 'acts against nature', comprising internment in a psychiatric institution, a workhouse or agrarian colony, surveillance, and exclusion from certain professions (Almeida, M., 2010: 47; Bastos, 1997; Cascais, 2016). The 1912 criminalization of 'acts against nature' would be incorporated into the 1954 Penal Code, which entailed the adoption of the notion of 'dangerousness' and security measures (Cascais, 2016: 108). In the case of the *Estado Novo*, the repression and vilification of lesbians and male homosexuals was extended from the

legislation passed under the democratic republic and strengthened the opprobrium cast on upon them in the early 1920s as a reaction, among other factors, to literary work with homosexual content by figures such as Judith Teixeira and António Botto (Klobucka, 2018: 89). The most well-known of the internment measures permitted by legislation were comprised by the detention houses, the most famous of which was the 'Mitra' in Lisbon created in 1933, centres which included all those deemed to be a 'social danger' to society at the time. Between 1933 and 1951, some 12,000 people, prostitutes, homosexuals, unruly children and mentally ill were admitted to these centres (Almeida, M., 2010: 74). Such figures are in addition to those men and women detained and tortured by the secret police and those deported to Portugal's African possessions as punishment (Almeida, M., 2010: 74).[13] In the first decade of the *Estado Novo*, police activity against lesbians and gay men was extensive, as historian Ana Correia has proved through an examination of the available police records (Correia, 2016; 2017).

A survey by the Catholic University Youth organization between 1964 and 1965, just before the Lagos events, showed that some 77% of males and 83% of females approved of virginity up to marriage and only 7% of students approved of any kind of mechanical contraception (Freire, 2010: 39). Indeed, until 1974, any publicity for contraception was illegal, even in medical journals (Almeida, S., 2010: 11). The question of female prostitution for men, however, was a somewhat different issue. As in some other predominantly Catholic countries in a similar period, such as Argentina and Spain, prostitution was permitted as a 'legitimate' outlet for men, a way of sustaining marriage and, in fact, as a buttress against homosexuality. It was only in 1962 that prostitution was prohibited, thus ending a period of regulation (Freire, 2010: 178).

The ability of the regime, therefore, to 'contain' homosexuality, to use Becker's words, and to govern sexuality in general was ample and drew on a range of legislative measures and social attitudes. As tourism began to become consolidated in the 1960s, however, numerous

threats emerged on the horizon of the regime's durability and hegemony. The illegalized Community Party had begun to reorganize in the 1940s and, in particular, sank its roots into rural society, including the Alentejo and, to a much lesser extent, the Algarve. A set of events rocked the regime in 1961 alone. The liner, 'Santa Maria', was hijacked by opponents to the regime, led by Henrique Galvão, in January 1961, a situation only resolved with United States and Brazilian intervention. An insurgency began against colonial rule in February and March 1961 in Angola, the beginning of a long and devastating set of colonial wars ending with the defeat of the Portuguese forces and declarations of national independence for the colonised territories. Partly as a result of this war and broader discontent within the military, the 'Abrilada' of April 1961 saw an attempted coup and overthrow of Salazar from within the army, led by the Minister of Defence, General Botelho Moniz (Rodrigues, 2013). 'Internal dissidence' increasingly became the target of regime ire. Given the changing legislation on female prostitution for men in 1962, sexual mores were also in a state of flux. A crack-down on 'renowned' homosexuals in an internationally visible locality, Lagos, in order to shore up the image of the regime was therefore consistent with the tightening up of social and political liberties.

An 'Affect-Genealogy' of Same-Sex History in Portugal

Although it was sometimes possible for gay men to dodge police control and repression and for women living together to 'pass' as friends or relatives, even for long periods of time, this was more difficult for 'effeminate' men (Louro, 2018: 78-79) and for those who engaged in 'trade'. The Lagos incident clearly falls within this category. The individuals concerned were not, however, imprisoned, fined or interned, but put on public display and were punished as a deterrent to others, possibly as part of a broader campaign that displays how youth was becoming an expanding terrain in dispute. It is possible that a message was also being sent to

foreign homosexuals who came to Lagos for sex; the police may well have been less keen to arrest them, however, because of the legal complications and so as not to deter international tourists from holidaying in Portugal,[14] thus treading a fine line between permissiveness and repression. Whether the youths were self-identified as 'homosexuals' or not, such individuals fell victim to the application of security measures by the regime as dissolute members of society in need of control. The self-identification of the Lagos youths, therefore, is a moot point as some of them, according to both West and Becker, quite clearly did identify as homosexuals; others, however, were probably seeking financial retribution alone.

Whether homosexual or not, members of the community apparently supported the youths and did not consent to the public shaming that the authorities expected. Such an attitude may well have reflected a number of motivations. Many of the youths, according to Becker, were known to the local population. It is possible that locals' lack of approval for the police action, and indeed their bemusement or even amusement, responded to concerns about the ability of the youths to earn money for families from tourists in a poor and under-developed region of the country. It is also possible that lower levels of religious observance – Simpson and Louceiro (2021: 201) have referred to a 'de-Christianized' Faro – together with the growing influence of oppositional groups, such as the PCP, were factors, although the previous negative attitudes of the party towards homosexuality may discount this. Although there may have been a general climate of 'homophobia' at the time, it is possible that both personal ties and regime fatigue within the 'grey zones' of the population combined in a rejection of the police action (Hernández Burgos, 2013). The longstanding presence of the *marica* in the south and the very presence of foreign homosexuals may have contributed to the airing of a different expression of freedom not experienced in other parts of the country. While the resistance on the part of the youths and the solidarity of the local population may not qualify as an 'heroic act' of resistance (Martinho, 2016: 173) on a large scale, it certainly constituted a quotidian

rejection of the regime's values and provides evidence of a loss of support for its coercive mechanisms. Beyond passivity and indifference to the regime,[15] it was an example of 'an act of those who chose to confront arbitrariness' in an active manner (Martinho, 2016: 173). It can, therefore, be viewed as a 'local' act of resistance from below (Hernández Burgos, 2013: 17; 22-23), significant and durable for those involved at the time, but also unexpected by the regime's authorities.

Finally, we must entertain the possibility that the public's rejection of the police action was, at least in part and on the part of some, an act of 'affective' solidarity and empathy for the plight of yet another group oppressed by the *Estado Novo*. As such, the local population, as 'ordinary' individuals under the dictatorship, performed what can be described as an act of emotional rescue for these youths. Its legacy touches us today in ways that disrupt the regime's own story of unity in favour of hegemonic 'order' against the 'dissolution' of sexual values. It confirmed homosexuality as 'possible' in the town in an unexpected and unpredictable manner. The 'strategic function' of homosexuality, to follow Hewitt's formulation, was to highlight not only the existence of other forms of sexual expression, but also to enable homosexuality to become a resource against the police's actions and the regime's values (Hewitt, 1996). It is, of course, ironic yet significant that it took international voices to highlight the tensions around sexuality, youth and resistance in this particular case. The local Lagos police action was, in a demonstrable sense, out of step with the mood of the population and the expectations of the period, despite what the local press may have been reporting on youth 'crime'. The act, in addition, inflicted a chink, however small and however unreported, in the armour of the mirage of eternal timelessness that the regime sought to rehearse, providing another vision of aspirational modernity more in touch with the values that tourism, international contact and openness brought. Time, in this sense, may well have had a role in legitimizing the regime, but it also played a part in its own loss of legitimacy (Sabrow, 2005: 366; Griffin, 2015). The sexual

norms and the chromo-normativity of both regime and teleological LGBT histories are thereby disrupted by the Lagos incident of 1965.

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[1] For the situation of the LGBT population in Portugal more broadly over the last decade, see Nogueira and Oliveira (2010) and Santos (2016).

[2] The terms employed to describe 'LGBT' history and experience need some qualification. Throughout this text, I refer to lesbians, gay men, homosexuality and LGBT. In 1965, there were no 'LGBT people'; expert and popular discourses employed other terms, which were often much less affirmative, and which reflected other meanings. In light of this, for the most part, I use the terms in vogue at the particular time.

[3] This piece draws inspiration from texts such as De Grazia (1992), where different forms of resistance to the fascist project are discussed. Pereira and Domingos (2020) explore the ways in which the regime ruled in Portugal but do not examine issues relating to sexuality. Simpson and Louceiro (2021) note that histories of 'everyday life' under the Salazar dictatorship have only recently begun to emerge.

[4] This fact does not hide the fact that such places were also policed up to 1974. See Louro (2018: 87).

[5] As will be seen from the press reports of the time, discussed below, there was no mention of the events. There is no documentation held on the case by the Lagos Municipal Archive (personal communication 11 March 2021) and a visit to the archives held at the central PSP station in Faro, to which some GNR documentation has been transferred, has provided no further materials.

[6] The article was signed 'By Thomas P. Becker, Lagos (Portugal)'.

[7] These two police forces were part of the repressive apparatus of the state, alongside other bodies such as the PIDE and Judicial Police. The effectiveness of them varied across the country; the GNR influence was greater in Braga while the PIDE was most feared in Faro in the later days of the dictatorship (Simpson and Louceiro, 2021: 207-212). In small localities, it was primarily the GNR that policed communities in questions of 'moral decency' (Simpson, 2021: 409).

[8] On the women's organization's campaign in favour of decency on beaches, 'contra a pornografia, o nudismo, a satã sensualidade' (against pornography, nudism, and Satanic sensuality) from the 1930s onwards, see Freire (2010: 78).

[9] Decreto-Lei No. 22.469 (1933) stated that freedom of expression was guaranteed within the terms of this decree and that censorship prevailed. Article 3 read as follows: 'A censura terá sòmente por fim impedir a perversão da opinião pública na sua função de fôrça social' and should act to support the morality of the administration and the fundamental principles of society. Almeida, S. (2010: 147) also argues that because of the predominant 'pudor social' on homosexuality, the PIDE, at least, rarely made reference to this issue.

[10] The lack of preparation and the infrastructural deficiencies of the area were raised by the Algarve's deputy in parliament, Colonel Sousa Rosal. See Anon. (1965b).

[11] This was partly due to the establishment of a Portuguese tourism office in Stockholm. See Anon. (1965e). Overall, foreign tourists outnumbered Portuguese in terms of hotel occupancy. It was remarked in Anon. (1965f) that in June 1965, the number of tourist nights slept in the Algarve was 44,008, of which 30,442 were foreigners.

[12] Palacios Cerezales (2007: 1132) points to the regular beatings proffered in GNR and PSP stations.

[13] A law of 1920 allowed for the deportation of homosexuals to the overseas territories for long periods (Almeida, S., 2010: 70).

[14] Becker (1965: 251), hints at this: 'The city administration and, of course, the police are very well informed about this [prostitution], and in many places people are now considering what means can be used to stop the goings-on of the young people, since they cannot and will not do anything about the tourists who bring the precious foreign currency'.

[15] I do not intend to disqualify acts of indifference in resistance to dictatorships but rather, in this case, suggest that this was a more *active* rejection of the regime's values than 'passivity'. On this question with respect to the rural Galician population under the Franco regime, see Cabana Iglesia (2010). Simpson and Louceiro (2021: 200) have also rejected the adscription of passivity to victims when analysing the action of the PIDE and subjects' resistance to the authorities.

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