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**The Other Side of Protest Music:
the extreme right and skinhead culture
in democratic Portugal (1974-2015)**

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Abstract

Although Portugal does not have a significant radical right presence in its party system, in the last decades the country did witness the development of a neo-Nazi skinhead movement that expressed its white nationalist nature and goals through the musical genres of Rock Against Communism (RAC) and the related Oi!. Utilizing various historical sources, this study contextualizes the development of nationalist music in Portugal, both before and especially during the democratic period (1974-2015). It focuses on its protagonists, domestic and international networks, as well as on the few attempts to establish a common cause with radical right-wing political parties at the turn of the century and in present times.

Contributor Notes

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*We are being deceived for more than
a generation
But we will not sit down
We will make the revolution*

'A Nossa Luta' (Our Struggle),
LusitanOi

Introduction

The first Portuguese skinzine *Combate Branco* (White Combat) was launched in the Summer of 1987 and agitated the youth milieu of the country's extreme right. The cover reproduced a skinhead armed with a baseball bat in front of a Celtic cross and having at his feet the tattered flags of the Soviet Union, the United States and Israel.



Figure 1: the first issue of *Combate Branco*

The editorial was adamant: 'Our main goal is the organization of the Portuguese skinhead movement'. There are two relevant elements attached to this 1987 publication: the still embryonic

state of the skinhead movement in late 1980s Portugal, *and* its self-positioning on the extreme right of the political spectrum.

Importantly, the skinhead subculture appears perfectly in tune with broader socio-cultural dynamics in Portugal. As noted in a historical-sociological study by Lia Pappámikail (2011: 221, 231, 233), the behaviors and trends of Portuguese youth, are characterized by three main undercurrents: first, the late adherence to fashions from abroad, second, the low level of politicization in the eighties, and finally, the 'time gap' in Portugal in terms of reception of foreign musical waves and influences. Given these conditions, it is not surprising that the Portuguese skinhead subculture, and especially its music scene, has been relegated in the specialized literature to a rather marginal position compared to its international counterpart scene (Cotter 1999: 114).

Despite its marginalization, however, the Portuguese skinhead subculture demonstrated, since its origins, a marked tendency towards internationalization. The first *White Combat* issue not only devoted ample space to the history of the 'European skinhead movement', but also portrayed bands, skinzines, and musical labels from France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Britain, the Netherlands, and thereby devoted attention to music as a potential political weapon. In short, for young radicals, who grew up in the rarefied atmosphere of Portuguese extreme-right groups in the 1980's, music was seen, and felt, as a convenient, faster, unmediated, and easier outlet to express their anti-system and revolutionary views.

This article has two goals: to describe the musical environment of the extreme-right in Portuguese democracy and to

provide an explanation for the apparent contradiction between its domestic weakness and its strong integration internationally. In particular, the paper explores a) the crucial role played by the skinhead subculture in the development of an extreme right music scene in Portugal, b) the distrust for and lack of interest in extreme right music at a party level, c) and the role of the international radical right music scene in the promotion of Portuguese music. The article starts by introducing the international dynamic of extreme-right music and how this influenced the Portuguese scene. This is followed by two chronological sections: the first one dedicated to the roots of skinhead subculture in Portugal (focusing especially on the mid-1980s), and the second to the time frame between the late 20th century and early 21st century, and the relationship between the musical scene and the radical right party system in that period. The study pays attention, in both periods, to the international connections, which allow the authors in the conclusion to emphasize the capacity of a small and marginal skinhead subculture to find echo and support abroad through transitional musical networks. In doing so, this study aims to understand the Portuguese Skinhead music from both a historical and current-day perspective.

Methodologically, this study bases itself on historical primary sources collected in publications of the Portuguese skinhead movement since its founding, and on interviews (9 in total) of prominent figures of the Portuguese nationalist music scene.¹ The article

¹ The section on the roots of the skinhead subculture draws on interviews with members of the older generation (1960s and 1970s), such as Vítor Luís Rodrigues and Diogo Pacheco de Amorim. In terms of the younger generations

surveys the impact of transnational dynamics on hybridizations and mutations in the Portuguese music scene, and takes a closer look at the development of Nazi Rock in Portugal and its organizational and commercial dimensions. Particular attention is given to the recent strategy of promotion of Portuguese Oi! bands over the internet, taking into account both the prominence of online platforms in the musical diffusion of the extreme right (Futrell et al. 2006: 296; O'Callaghan et al. 2013: 9), and its shortcomings, due to the lack of a strong extreme-right culture in the country (Caiani and Parenti 2011: 736). This article fills a lacuna in the research on the relationship between music and radical right wing politics in Portugal. It is a lack that has been noted by scholars such as Brown (2004: 171-172) and Jipson (2007: 451). With some exceptions (see Zúquete 2007; Marchi 2010; Almeida 2015) the study of Portuguese right-wing radicalism and extremism is still underdeveloped, at a party level and even more so at a cultural level, a state of affairs that only enhances the relevance of this study.

The roots of the skinhead subculture

This section provides an overview of the historical dynamics of the international skinhead subculture that are relevant to the subsequent development of its Portuguese counterpart. Scholarly literature has for a long time looked at the 'darker side of music' – to use the expression of Reebee Garofalo – underlining how the public use of music is intimately linked to the history of

(1980s, 1990s and 2000s) the interviewed were Carlos Lima, Duarte Branquinho, João Martins, and João Verissimo.

human culture itself, especially in times of conflict (Shekhovtsov 2013: 330-331). Within the vast bibliography on the politicization of music and on youth subcultures' links to musical strands, the theme of the skinhead subculture has gained increasing attention in academia, particularly from the end of the 1990s. This allows us today to have a clearer picture of the origins and evolution of the skinhead music scene. Its roots are to be found in the 1960's British Mod subculture – particularly in its 'hard Mod' variant. It was critical of certain 'upper class' stylistic compromises, viewed as a deviation, and was fascinated by the culture of 'rude boys', the working class Jamaican immigrants of the neighborhoods of London (Brown 2004: 157). In this first phase, the working class rebellion ethos of the skinhead movement did not have any political connotation, despite a progressive accentuation of ethnic tensions between black and white elements. This was due to the characterization of reggae's identity as unattractive, even discriminatory, toward white audiences (Cotter 1999: 116). The politicization in the strict sense takes place with the second wave of skinhead subculture that emerged once again, in Britain, but in the late 1970s and coming straight from the punk movement. In this sense, the first phase's influences from reggae music and ska are replaced by punk rock, especially a variant of street punk (faster and angrier), characterized by typical themes of the working class: the so-called British Oi!. Through Oi! a considerable part of the skinhead movement claimed their own white identity, or rather, the identification between being white and being British. The politicization of this skinhead revival was facilitated by the degradation of Britain's socio-economic reality between the 1970s and 1980s: economic crisis,

lack of jobs, high rates of immigration, a diffuse racial prejudice, and an identity crisis due to the loss of empire and the new reality of approximation to continental Europe. All of these factors were integrated and radicalized through music and nonconformist behavior by large sections of the working youth, no longer attracted to traditional left parties and, at the same time, coveted by the extreme right, aware of the political potential of this youth rebellion (Worley 2012: 340).

In particular, in this convoluted socio-political context, the British neo-fascist party – the National Front (NF – founded in the late 1960s, peaking in the following decade, and continuing to exist today) – invested heavily in a recruitment campaign aimed at skinheads, in order to strengthen its militant base and extend the area of supporters through music. The architect of this operation was Ian Stuart Donaldson (1957-1993), the lead vocalist of Skrewdriver, originally a non-political punk band that would eventually adopt the skinhead fashion and Oi! music and exhibit openly neo-Nazi affiliations – with the band becoming one of its long-lasting symbols. In 1979, Ian Stuart, in collaboration with the youth section of the NF – the National Youth Front (YNF) – deepened the merger between skinhead subculture, music Oi! and right-wing extremism. They did so through events such as Rock Against Communism (RAC) – as an alternative to Rock Against Racism (RAR) organized by the extreme left – and with the foundation of the White Noise Club (WNC) and the label White Noise Records financed by the NF (Shaffer 2013: 467). The Skrewdriver frontman was also a pioneer in the internationalization of the first skinhead bands: in 1984 he promoted a collaboration between the WNC and the

German music label Rock-O-Rama, which began producing and distributing the RAC music genre in many Western countries; in 1987, he left the NF and founded the white power network Blood & Honour, which would become the leading proponent of the RAC music scene in the 1990s (Brown 2004: 164).

Later, this British-German axis – accompanied by a prolific music scene in Northern Europe, France, Italy and, after the fall of Communism, Eastern Europe – is reinforced by the US-based white nationalism movement, which was to contribute decisively to the production and distribution of skinhead music (Kaplan and Weinberg 1998: 95; Durham 2007: 31). Because of the US Constitution, the extreme-right music scene flourished much more easily in the US than in Europe, where tighter laws constricted it mostly to underground circuits and to the informal sector (Cut and Edwards 2008: 12). This transnational dissemination also involved the expansion of different types of music also targeted by the extreme right: in addition to Oi!, also Black Metal, Folk music, and Neofolk (Spracklen 2013: 415). This plurality of genres of music converges, however, in the uniqueness of the thematic inspiration that characterizes this music scene, leading to its labeling as ‘Hate Rock’ or ‘Nazi Rock’ and, more generally, ‘Hate Music’, ‘White Racial Extremist Music’, and ‘White Noise’. Activists usually prefer the designation ‘White Power Music’ or ‘White Pride’ music. Many active promoters and music publishers advanced the White Music scene. A few established a name for themselves such as Blood & Honour (no longer active), the US-based Resistance Records (still active), and the France-based Rebelles Européens (active in the late 1980s and early 1990s). There have also been other minor labels, which

emerged from internal divisions and schisms from the major ones, and a network of small record labels and distributors – not only of music but all sort of accessories (Jipson 2007: 149; Shekhovtsov 2012: 280). Today, the online white nationalist community Stormfront showcases many White Power music bands, events, and so forth.

Specifically regarding Oi! – generally viewed as the most effective tool among young people – the lyrical content of different bands from different nationalities reproduce common themes: hatred of the Other (be it non-white, gay, partner in or child of an interracial marriage), conspiracy theories (from the system and its repressive forces called the Zionist Occupation Government – ZOG), chauvinistic nationalism, contempt for conventional political behavior, pride to belong to and fight for the white race considered superior to the Other, opposition to multiracial society and their treacherous white enablers (communists, socialists, liberals, progressives), a hero-cult of people such as Ian Stuart Donaldson, the Nazi Rudolf Hess, Robert Mathews (leader of the subversive terrorist group ‘The Order’), and Norse gods (relating to ancient Scandinavia) (Shekhovtsov 2012: 283). This communion of the themes – and its pervasive anti – system and revolutionary ethos – gives White Power Music a meaningful ideology and a shared identity, facilitates the recruitment of militants among young people, and financially sustains and fund its organizations (Court and Edwards 2008: 5).

Membership in the white power music scene can be both physical and virtual – which has obviously increased with the arrival of the Internet and the explosion of online forums and social media. The

White Power Music scene provides its adherents with a sense of participation in a community (connecting with likeminded people, no matter how distant), and reinforces individual commitment to a movement that is marginalized – which may enhance its allure among young people (Futrell et al. 2006: 294). Over the years, the spread of this musical genre caused a reversal in the relationship between this subculture and ideology: it is no longer the skinhead who becomes a right-wing extremist, but the right-wing extremist who identifies himself/herself with the skinhead subculture (Brown 2004: 163).

Between late authoritarianism and the transition to democracy

In the second half of the 20th century, the relationship between the radical right and expressive culture in Portugal is somewhat complex. The most prominent militants of the radical nationalism of the postwar period are intellectuals mainly engaged in poetry and theater. The journalist Amândio César debuts in the early 40s, with a book of poetry dedicated to the Spanish Civil War, and two of the founders of the nationalist magazine *Tempo Presente* (1959-1961) – Florentino Goulart Nogueira and António Manuel Couto Viana – are already, in the late 1950s, rising figures of theatre and poetry. This artistic tradition continues through the 1960s, when the involvement of Portugal in the African Wars boosts nationalist militancy. Nationalist student leaders like Jose Valle de Figueiredo, who came from the world of literature, and renowned activists of the University of Lisbon, such as Rodrigo Emilio, achieved fame in poetry, with works that were also highly political: for example, the collective work *Vestiram-se os poetas de soldados* (The

poets dressed as soldiers) (1973) and *Poemas de Braço ao Alto* (Poems with the arm raised high) (1983).

Despite a strong presence of artists on the radical right of the Portuguese political scene, there was not a collective effort to employ artistic creation in the service of radical right politics. Throughout the authoritarian regime – known as the *Estado Novo* (New State) which was toppled in April 25, 1974, after 48 years of rule – this absence of militant music can be explained by the prohibition of institutionalized political parties and organizations. As a consequence, the radical right that was internal to the regime had to limit its action to the publication of newspapers and magazines or invigorating ephemeral associations. In those same years, the anti-regime forces found in music an instrument of opposition to the regime, through the emergence of the so-called protest song (Corte-Real 1996: 144-157). During this period the radical right never felt the need to seek alternative instruments to affirm itself politically. It is only at the beginning of the 1960s, with the outbreak of the overseas war, that the country witnessed the mobilization of the extreme right-wing, and a nationalist politicization of its youth.

Overall, there was a general absence of use of the arts as a political mobilization tool. Yet one exception were the *Órfeão académico* (Academic Choral Society OAC) – in which several young nationalists participated, eager to uphold student traditions which were contested by the left as a tool of Salazarism. Another exception were the *Oficina de Teatro da Universidade de Coimbra* (Theatre Workshop of the University of Coimbra (OTUC), used by nationalist University of Coimbra students in their

anti-Marxist struggle during the academic crisis of the 1960s. Even more marginal was the use of music as a political mobilization tool. Although the authoritarian regime had indeed promoted Fado and folklore (folk music) in order to reinforce a Portuguese identity (Sardo 2014: 65-67), these two musical genres were not specifically used – at least not in a strictly political sense – by extreme-right militants. The only notable exceptions were the vinyl record *Comício* (Rally), by the nationalist militant Manuel Sobral Torres, with poems by Couto Viana, and the *Requiem por Jan Palach*, in memory of the young philosophy student who immolated himself in 1968 in Prague shortly after the Soviet invasion (Marchi 2009: 340). Written in 1970 by José Valle de Figueiredo and with music by his comrade Manuel Rebanda, this Requiem was broadcasted on state television, with some degree of success, as recalled by a nationalist militant:

It quickly became a reference song for Portuguese-nationalist revolutionaries, alongside the poems of Jean Pax Mefret, Leo Valeriano, Compagnia Dell'Anello, Michel Sardou, Angelo Branduardi and, more recently, Chris de Burgh. (Martins 2006)

With the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1974, the passage of the radical right to the anti-system opposition, especially during the years of the democratic transition, provided a new impetus to the politicization of the arts and, in particular, to the use of music as a political tool. In those years of disarray for the right-wing of the old regime (now losing its ground), the nationalist militant youth of the 1960s and 1970 was at the forefront in organizing the most radical right-wing of the parties of the Portuguese political space. These included the Movimento

Federalista Português / Partido do Progresso (MFP/PP, Portuguese Federalist Movement / Progress Party) and the Movimento de Acção Portuguesa (MAP, Portuguese Action Movement). Throughout these radicalized times of Portugal's transition to democracy – and especially during the so-called Revolutionary Process in Progress (PREC), a period which witnessed the hegemony of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and of the extreme left, with strongholds in the military – these young radical right-wing militants began using the artistic forms that they were familiar with, including music, to mobilize against the status quo. This trend is further accentuated during the period of exile in Spain: that is, when many militants went from militancy in parties (repressed during the PREC) to illegal militancy in Spanish-based groups such as the Movimento Democrático para a Libertação de Portugal (Democratic Movement organizations for the Liberation of Portugal, MDLP) and the Exército de Libertação de Portugal (Liberation Army of Portugal – ELP).

Among these radical-right activists, the composer and songwriter José Campos e Sousa stood out. Although initially influenced by the environment of left-wing protest songs, he ends up politicizing in an opposite right-wing direction after the revolution. In 1975, he started a solo career and his first recordings include texts of militant nationalists' poets. In Madrid, José Campos e Sousa edited *Cancioneiro da Resistência* (Songbook of Resistance), containing poems by Fernando Pessoa and Guerra Junqueiro, but also by the French fascist Robert Brasillach, as well as, Sousa's contemporary comrades Diogo Pacheco de Amorim, Luís Sá Cunha, António Marques Bessa, António Manuel Couto Viana, Rodrigo Emilio and

José Valle de Figueiredo. At the time they were all members of the MDLP or ELP. Of all the songs, the poem 'Ressurreição' (Resurrection) by Diogo Pacheco de Amorim acquired a special status. Written in the 'hot summer of 1975' (as the radicalized political period in Portugal came to be known, with the extreme-left and more moderate forces competing for hegemony), 'Resurrection' reveals the expectations of the extreme-right for a vast popular uprising against the communists, leading to the renaissance of the idea of the nation:

It is a Homeland breaking chains / It is a silence that sings again / It's a return of the embattled heroes / Of the city that fights again / [...] / And the red flags are already burning / In the fields there are war cries.

With the end of the PREC, this popular 'redemptive' surge never materialized – Portugal followed a conventional, reformist, 'normal' process of transition to democracy. 'Resurrection' however, remained a true nationalist hymn for all the nationalist media that were active during the period of democratic consolidation (1976-1982). As recalled by an official of Movimento Nacionalista (Nationalist Movement):

Even if it ['Resurrection'] did not become a symbol of the truly patriotic and liberating national uprising, it did not exit, however, never ceasing to be celebrated and then sung, not only among the exiled groups in Spain, but also in the patriotic network in Portugal – which received it through thousands of tapes. [...] The 'Resurrection' then became the anthem of the movement [Nationalist Movement], sung in street, in every meeting, in camps and urban gatherings. [...]

And it also became a challenge to sing it openly, a sign of renewal, in a tired and deceived country. In the biggest patriotic demonstrations, held in Lisbon during the 80s, the 'Resurrection' were sung, supported by more effective sound stereos. And the hymn-march became an ordinary thing (Luís 2006).

At a historical juncture where the Communist party was already declining in terms of conquest of political power (after its peak in the mid – 1970s), but where the extreme left was still very influential in civil society (through its cultural and media power), the necessity of employing music as an instrument of affirmation of extreme right-wing forces – in a sort of Gramscian struggle for cultural power – was widely felt. This is testified by José Campos e Sousa, in a 1979 interview to the right-wing weekly *A Rua* (The Street):

I consider myself a right-wing singer, and I know there's more. Unfortunately we have not yet met. It's time to come together, to respond to our opponents, who in the field of arts 'multiply themselves' doing a great number of things because they work seriously and our good will alone is not enough to overcome them. (Luís 1979)

This union of nationalist singers working together for right-wing political organizations, however, never saw the light of day. In those years, the two extreme-right parties – the Partido da Democracia Cristã (Party of Christian Democracy, PDC) and the Movimento Independente para a Reconstrução Nacional (Independent Movement for National Reconstruction, MIRN) – showed zero inclination to use music for political mean, in contrast to the collective mobilization around music present in

other European political groups. This held true even for their own youth organizations, which, in the case of MIRN, had a relatively strong presence in some schools. As a consequence, José Campos e Sousa, in the next decades, was condemned to limit his music intervention to sporadic events organized by the nationalist and monarchical milieus. Still, his discography, some of it clearly nationalist – such as *Portugal Sempre* (Portugal Always, 2000) and *Por Portugal e Mais Nada* (For Portugal and Nothing Else, 2009) – circulated widely in nationalist media, mostly within the older generation of the 1960s and 1970s. However, his songs never became the mobilizing soundtrack for any sort of right-wing movement or political party.

In the 1980s, the Portuguese extreme-right parties disappear *de facto* from the political party system. PDC and MIRN forfeited any political aspirations, turning into little more than empty vessels. Ironically, and with the coming of age of a new generation that was less interested in political parties and more interested in fashions and foreign subcultures, the association between this ideological field *and* music acquired increased relevance thanks to a dual phenomenon. Firstly, the emergence in the mainstream Portuguese pop/rock scene of vastly popular groups such as Heróis do Mar (Heroes of the Sea, formed in 1981) and Sétima Legião (Seventh Legion, formed in 1982), that became icons of Portuguese rock (and remain so today), while carrying a nationalist message. Secondly, these times also witnessed the emergence of the skinhead subculture, with its musical environment and instrumentalization by the organized extreme right.

As for the nationalist pop/rock bands, the ties between both bands and the radical right can be seen in the lyrics that often

appealed to heroic feats of the past, and pride in the country. Also, its nationalist iconography and aesthetics (clothing, the use of the bracket with Christ's cross – a symbol used in the New State – and the heavy use of the Portuguese flag) contrasted with the left-wing revolutionary iconography averse to any signs of nationalism. Finally, these new groups broke with the tradition of songwriters of the 1960s and 1970s (Araújo 2016: 18-19). However, they did not advance a political project, notwithstanding a number of singular instances such as the militancy of the bassist and lyricist of Heróis do Mar, Pedro Ayres Magalhães, in the radical group Axo. What happened is that the rise of these bands, between 1981 and 1984, coincided with the shift to the right of Portuguese politics, after the 'revolutionary parenthesis', which made music also a tool, and an expression, of the polarization of society. In this context, the testimony of radio and TV musical host Júlio Isidro, about the phenomenon Heróis do Mar, is emblematic:

Before even appearing on television they debuted on a radio morning show called *Febre de Sábado de Manhã* (Saturday Morning Fever). There were demonstrations outside [of the radio station] that went beyond mere nationalism: with young people doing the salute with the outstretched arm. I had to go outside [and] calm the waters. (*Ípsilon* 2011)

Although more marginal, the phenomenon of Skinhead subculture in Portugal is much more significant to the relationship between the extreme right and music. It is to this that we now turn.

Nationalist music in a fully consolidated democracy

Nineteen eighty-three. In the month of February the music magazine *Música & Som* (Music & Sound) published an article dedicated to the British phenomenon of Rock Against Racism (RAR). Its author asked rhetorically when its extreme-right response (Rock Against Communism, RAR) would come to Portugal (Gomes 1983). In fact, during the years that the British radical right promoted Rock Against Communism, the Portuguese Skinhead movement, associated with this musical movement, was still in a rather embryonic stage.

As recalled by João Veríssimo (2014), a nationalist music entrepreneur, in the first half of 1980s there was no clear distinction in Portugal between the skinhead scene, music Oi! and RAC. The bands did not form with the intent of becoming members of the skinhead subculture, or of a certain genre, let alone of carrying a political identity. This distinction would only emerge in the late 1980s. Before the emergence of neo-Nazi skinheads, there were already in Portugal, bands which presented themselves as street-punk but were clearly influenced by Oi! music. For example, the most famous street-punk band from the early 1980s, Mata-Ratos formed in 1982-83, included two skinhead members but was nevertheless totally apolitical (Lemos, 2011). Their first LP released in 1986 by the mainstream label Valentim de Carvalho (EMI) registered a great sales success. Also, bands that were originally punk, and made the transition to Oi! music, such as the Grito Final, with popular songs such as 'Ser Soldado' (Being a Soldier) and 'Bairro da Fome' (Neighborhood of Hunger) from the LP 'Divergência' (1986), did not convey any political message.

When Oi! music arrives in Portugal, as the genre of the Skinhead movement, it is racially and politically conscious, and in line with the RAC. In this respect, the first proper Skinhead band was Maravilhas de Portugal (Wonders of Portugal), founded in late 1984 and dissolved in 1987. Its only production was a homemade audiocassette *Solução Final* (Final Solution) with a cover of a skinhead with a flag with a Celtic cross. The band's goal was to make Skinhead fashion and Oi! music a tool of expression of nationalist ideology in Portugal. In fact, in this first phase of the Skin movement, this handful of radicals have no proximity or interest for the old and decaying radical right parties that emerged during the democratic transition, including the PDC and the MIRN. No wonder that in these early times, where the skin movement is relatively isolated, the tape *Solução Final* is technically of very low quality, without any distribution or dissemination through concerts. Its only success was that one of its most feisty nationalist tracks, 'Portugal aos Portugueses' (Portugal to the Portuguese), was broadcasted on the national radio station Radio Comercial, in the show *Lança Chamas* (Flamethrower), Portugal's very first Heavy Metal Radio show, presented by the late António Sérgio, a famous music radio host.

In 1987, Guarda de Ferro (Iron Guard) replaced Maravilhas de Portugal as a more developed Oi! band. Their cover of 'Portugal to the Portuguese' was of a much higher technical quality, and became one of its classic songs. With the name inspired by the para-fascist Romanian movement of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the band was formed exclusively by neo-Nazis skinheads: Carlos Lima (already leader of the skinhead group at the base of the Maravilhas de Portugal), Filipe Marques,

Paulo ‘Maluco’ (Crazy) and ‘Gordo’ (Fatman). The influence of foreign Oi! bands is evident. And so is the band’s membership in RAC, as shown by tracks like ‘Skinhead’ and ‘Botas’ (Boots). This more mature Oi! experience is still incipient, however, because of a tiny Portuguese nationalist scene. This is especially true if we compare the Portuguese situation to that in other European countries, where in these same years there was already a musical circuit and a strong political milieu that led to the rise of several bands, and an eager, receptive audience. The absence, in Portugal, of a pre-existing nationalist music scene and an organized radical right political culture is the great limitation for musicians looking for an audience. It was a very insular experience. This problem was also common to punk bands in general, that often acted in a very small and not very functional circuit. Thus, the potential market for Maravilhas de Portugal, as well as Guarda de Ferro, remained circumscribed to the few dozen Skinhead urban gangs to which the band members belonged. For this reason, there were never organized concerts in Portugal. Guarda de Ferro, for example, only gave one show, already in 1991, and exclusively to skins. This was the case despite the intense activity of skinheads in terms of both importation and distribution of materials and of imitation of themes and styles produced abroad. As recalled by Carlos Lima, the Portuguese Skinheads have always viewed with admiration the organizational capacity of networks such as the Italian Veneto Fronte Skinhead (VFS), whose musical events were a reference not only to the national and international skinhead movement but also for the young neo-fascist party Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI). Lima emphasizes that this absence of an organized structure, whether a

movement or a political party, and the prevalence of do-it-all militants, in practice limited the action of the Portuguese nationalist bands, who never wanted to take responsibility for musical events where there would for sure have been confrontations and clashes.

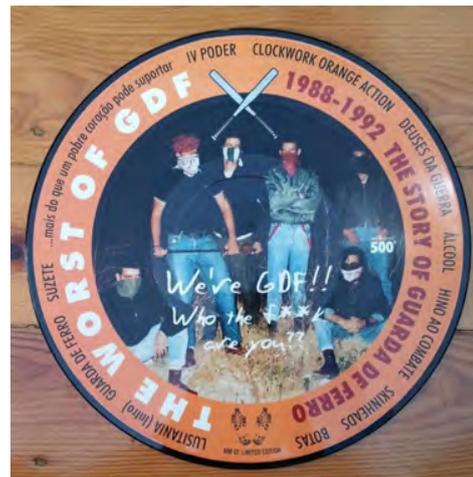


Figure 2: CD compilation of Guarda de Ferro

The struggling nationalist music scene and the absence of organized parties set into action a dual strategy by music radicals: first, to join ephemeral nationalist factions in order to attract militants to the music; second, to intensify relationships and ties abroad, in order to get support for music production and the import of records, fanzines, and merchandising. With regard to the first point, the rapprochement between the Skinhead music scene and organized political movements took place in the late 1980s, between the Skinhead group behind the bands Maravilhas de Portugal and Guarda de Ferro, and the Movimento de Acção Nacional (National Action Movement, or MAN, in its Portuguese acronym). MAN was founded in 1985 in the outskirts of Lisbon (in Amadora, more precisely) by nationalists that did not belong to the skinhead counterculture (Marchi 2010). Thus, in 1987, the first issue of the skinzine *Vento do Norte*

(Northern Wind), published on the same page the member registration form for MAN and the catalog of Bicheiro Audio Sound (BAS), both located in Amadora. If the MAN was presented as the home of Portuguese nationalists, BAS was described as an 'organization dedicated exclusively to publicizing and promoting groups and musical genres that [...] are far from the usual mainstream music market [...] with the goal of disseminating the works of musicians (both Skins and non-skins) that have joined the nationalist cause' (*Vento do Norte* 1987). In its second issue (of 1988), the editorial of the *Vento do Norte* is signed by the leader of MAN, Luís Paulo Henriques. He appealed to nationalist youth to put together an anti-system movement and build up the 'Nationalist and People's State' (1988). This editorial was complemented by the article *Para fortalecer o MAN* (To strengthen MAN) along with organizational information. It also featured the BAS catalog with two-dozen foreign RAC groups, with a special emphasis on the tape *Solução Final* by Maravilhas de Portugal. These were the only issues of this Skinhead fanzine, which also published in the center pages, interviews respectively with the French Legion 88 and the Italian Plastic Surgery. The cooperation between the Skinhead music scene and the non-skin nationalist movement is highlighted through the words of the founder of the Maravilhas de Portugal, Carlos Lima, which also appeared in the skinzine:

The Skinhead, wherever he/she is, is a nationalist, or rather, part of this movement is located within revolutionary national organizations throughout the [European] continent, militating actively in initiatives taken, for example, in France (by the PNFE [Parti Nationaliste Français et Européen] or Britain (NF [National

Front])... In Portugal there is an allegiance of Skins to the NATIONAL ACTION MOVEMENT (MAN), an organization to which I am proud to belong, trying to do my best as a National Revolutionary; the integration of Skins in Nationalist movements has been the target of dissenting opinions by various European leaders; the question is the following: are skins valid militants and assets, or demagogic provocateurs? It is up to us to put an end to this issue, demonstrating our ability and organization, building a serious NR militant consciousness, not only by simply subscribing to the movement, but also by working for the cause to which we all are dedicated: the Portuguese, and European, Cause. (Lima 1988a)

Already in *Acção* (Action), the official bulletin of MAN, Carlos Lima not only credited the resurgence of nationalist music in the 1980s to the Skinhead movement, but also singled out Ian Stuart, lead singer of Skrewdriver, as an inspiring model crucial for mobilization: 'many Skins swelled the ranks of National Front and other nationalist movements, making the passage from terrible thugs of the poor neighborhoods of the suburbs of London, to conscious militants' (Lima 1988c). In this sense, Carlos Lima, underlined the fact that the Skinhead music genre 'serves also as a vehicle of the European Nationalist Revolutionary Message' (Lima 1988b). Thus, a photograph of the band Guarda de Ferro and a MAN membership form accompanied his article.

This strategic rapprochement between Skinheads and nationalists was at the heart of the court case against MAN (on trial for being a fascist and violent organization) brought to the

Constitutional Court; even if, in truth, this rapprochement was hardly consensual among the Portuguese extreme right-wing. It is true that in 1989 the nationalist veteran poet Rodrigo Emilio, who was close to MAN, celebrated in verse the Skinhead comrades (Emílio 1989). However, only two years earlier, in presenting the network connections between organized extreme right and skinhead music scene in Europe, the Porto skinzine *Combate Branco*, underlined the fact that 'there is much to do [in Portugal], [and] we must work hard and disciplined, avoid compromising mixtures, and establish goals' (Renato 1987).

The reality is that this supposed harmonization between the nationalist organizations and the Skinhead milieu was merely instrumental. The few national-revolutionary organizations counterparts to MAN – such as Jovem Revolução (Young Revolution) – never had a project of cooptation of skin militancy, and barely approached the musical scene in their publications. The MAN itself distanced itself from the surrounding skin movement following the murder by a skinhead of a Trotskyist leader of the Socialist Revolutionary Party in 1989 at a concert at MAN's party headquarters. Subsequently, it abandoned any reference to music as a form of political action. The 1990 *Ofensiva* (Offensive) newspaper, which was a failed attempt by MAN to regain the initiative, showcased this departure from musical strategy.

In terms of the Portuguese nationalist music's integration into the European circuit, its capability to internationalize was remarkable, especially taking into consideration the marginal position of the Portuguese extreme-right. In 1989, the first professional recordings of Guarda de Ferro were released by the French label

Rebelles Européens, which included three tracks on the vinyl *Debout Vol.4*. The French paid the production costs, with the promise to include the Portuguese band in projects with renowned RAC bands like Skrewdriver and No Remorse (they would later appear in a compilation with bands like Lionheart and Verde-Bianco-Rosso). The Rebelles Européens worked again with the Portuguese in 1992, releasing an original album by the Guarda de Ferro, this time also with the Bootboyz Records label (João Veríssimo too would release the album in a picture-disc format). Dissolved in 1993, Guarda de Ferro was much more successful abroad – with editions in Australia, France, Germany, and by the US-based label White Noise Records. In Portugal, it remained for the most part unknown: the only copies circulating were those provided by the French publisher to the band and distributed among comrades, or the few copies sold between 1996 and 1998 in the music store Palladium, managed by a nationalist militant. Despite these international connections, the Portuguese group was never invited to play outside the country, not even in neighboring Spain. True to the traditional diffidence Portuguese nationalists felt with their Spanish comrades, the Portuguese Skinhead from late 1980s only crossed the border to watch the concerts organized by the Spanish nationalists, which, incidentally, had a much livelier music and nationalist scene.

The dawn of the twenty-first century: A new attempt at political-musical wedlock

With the disappearance of MAN, the nationalist music followed a separate path from party building efforts during the 1990s. On the party front, the first half of the 90s is characterized by new attempts

by nationalists. These came from the old regime or the generation of the 60s and 70s, especially in newspapers such as *Agora* (Now) or formations such as the Aliança Nacional (National Alliance). Aware of the growth of extreme-right parties in Europe (mainly the Movimento Sociale Italiano and the French Front National), these new groups, however, were totally indifferent to the use of music to capture the new generations.

Music, thus, continues to be a Skinhead business. From this environment emerged in 1993 the band LusitanoOi. This band included the founder of the Guarda de Ferro, Filipe Marques and the MAN militants, Duarte Branquinho and Miguel Temporão. Temporão was also a music producer with the Dogs of War label, which released the *Soldados de Rua* (Street Soldiers) CD, and with the label Metralha (Shrapnel), which released the first work of LusitanoOi (later reissued by a French black metal label). The relative independence of these nationalist militants from organizations of the classic radical right is evident in an interview to the British skinzine *Final Conflict*. In this interview LusitanoOi painted a bleak portrait of the nationalist movement in Portugal:

At the moment there are three bands: us, Extremo [Extreme], and Combate [Combate]. There were other bands like Guarda de Ferro, Bulldogs da Pátria, Confronto, and others. The Portuguese Constitution forbids parties and fascist organizations. There have been a lot of Nationalist parties that usually haven't lasted too long. Some of the bigger ones were the MAN – National Action Movement [...] the MAN was raided by the police and declared extinct by the Constitutional Court. The FDN (National Defense Front) was also

raided by the police in the early 90s. [...] Nowadays there are a lot of small parties that aren't as radical as the MAN or FDN. There is the National Alliance, the Right-Wing Nationalist Front and others (LusitanoOi n.d.).

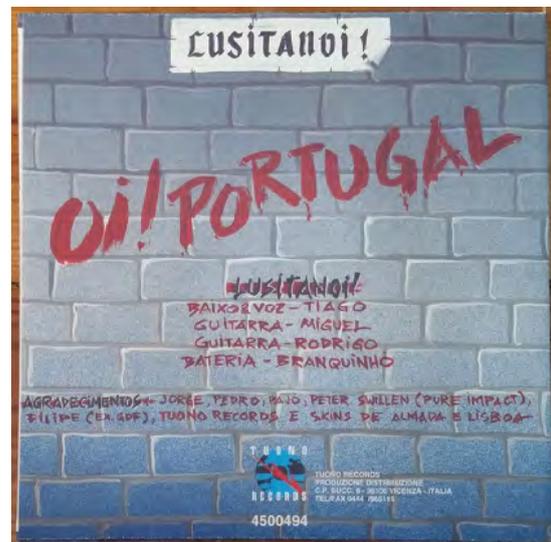


Figure 3: LusitanoOi EP *Olho por olho, dente por dente*

Just as the Guarda de Ferro, LusitanoOi also aroused the interest of foreign labels; the EP *Olho por olho, dente por dente* (An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth) was released by the Italian label Tuono Record. Most releases were in fact limited editions that were sold almost exclusively abroad; only 10% of the releases circulated in Portugal, exclusively in the skinhead and soccer supporter milieus. Especially important was the Lisbon/Almada based record store Soldier. This was the only store that for a long time distributed international RAC in Portugal. It was run by a veteran of the Portuguese skinhead movement, and former militant of MAN, Fernando Pimenta (aka Himmler).

On the musical field, the most emblematic example of the need to internationalize was the relationship established between the Portuguese and

the Spanish skinhead cultures. The 1998 organization *Ordem Lusa* (OL), founded by Miguel Temporão (a former member of *LusitanOii*), accepted the supervision by the Spanish Blood & Honour, becoming the Portuguese chapter of that transnational organization – which would later succumb in the confrontation with the other significant transnational neo-Nazi organization, the Hammerskins. But until then, *Ordem Lusa* is the Portuguese political group most active in using music as a vehicle for the organization of nationalists.

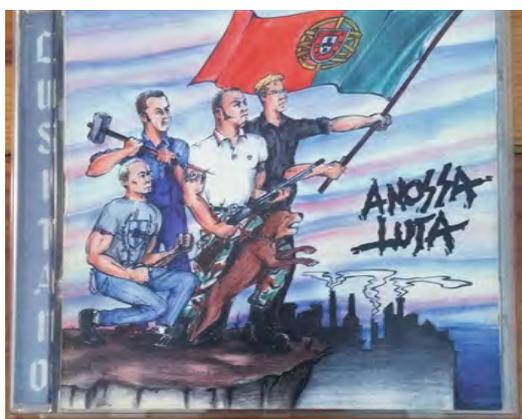


Figure 4: LusitanoOi CD cover

In the early 2000s, the Partido Nacional Renovador (National Renewal Party – PNR) emerged in the Portuguese political party-system. Thanks to the confluence of elements of the older radical right generation and the newest generation of MAN, the new party slowly became the functional equivalent of other radical right parties that were expanding in Europe – although never with the same degree of success, mobilization, or impact (Zúquete 2007). It has always remained on the fringes of the political system and never achieved parliamentary representation. Nevertheless, their mental map reveals a new, clean-shaven, nationalist group, and the PNR has been the only *populist* radical right political party in 21st century Portugal. Its use of music as a political

tool, however, has been for the most part desultory and limited. *Ordem Lusa*, for example, kept its distance and autonomy from the new political party. So, when on April 24, 2001, the *Ordem Lusa* organized the concert for its second anniversary, it showed no interest in interacting with the PNR. In its fanzine, the OL announced that '[it] exists to promote and defend the Portuguese and European culture as well as support the Skinhead culture', but that 'it has no political objectives'. The anniversary concert itself is devoid of any partisan purpose, 'it was an historic day for the Portuguese nationalism and the Portuguese Skinhead movement. [...] It is through this type of events that boosts and develops the Skinhead culture and team spirit' (*Ordem Lusa* 2001). In reality, both skinhead elements, as well as members of *LusitanOii* (in the case of drummer Duarte Branquinho), were present at the foundation of PNR, even taking on roles as leaders and candidates for election, but they have always kept separate their roles as political actors and musicians. The absence of a symbiosis between nationalist parties and music is a recurring theme in Portugal: nationalist parties never felt the need to use music as a way of attracting the youth, while musicians lacked the will to make the transition from music to organized party structures.

Thus, in the early years of the PNR, the Portuguese music scene continued evolving through its own, politically autonomous, dynamic: the band *Endovélico* (named after the God *Endovelicus*, worshipped by the Celtic tribe *Lusitanians*) emerged in 1999 as a hatecore group, close to *LusitanOii* until their disappearance in 2003. *Endovélico* also prioritized its internationalization, and its releases were produced by the Spanish label *Ratatat*. But, unlike its predecessors, they were also interested

in the technical improvement of its work and performance, and became the first Portuguese group to take part in many concerts at national and international level. The group pursued two goals: to increasingly integrate the transnational network Blood & Honour in order to play in Germany, Italy, England and the United States; and to escape the restricted circuit of the extreme right in order to compete in the commercial hatecore market.



Figure 5: First issue of the skinzine *Blood & Honour Portugal*

Similarly, Endovélico showed no interest in interacting with the PNR, but with the transnational Skinhead network instead (Endovélico 2005). This replicated a common attitude of Skinhead music groups active in Portugal since the second half of the 1990s. Previous examples include: Filipe Marques Portugal edition of the first two issues of the international fanzine NADSAT, containing a CD of the Italian band Zetazeroalfa; the band Combate's release

of RAC tracks and appearance in international compilations such as Brother No More Wars, with the tracks 'Por Portugal' and 'Together forever'. The SHS, founded in 1998, also showed up in international skinzines, where they stressed their indifference to any sort of organization: 'We are Skins, or at least we defend these ideals. The drummer does not have an established profile. And we do not belong to any organization, because to have ideals does not require organizations' (SHS). No wonder, therefore, that the first issue of the skinzine *Blood & Honour Portugal*, in October 2004, while profusely describing the relationship of the Portuguese with foreign comrades, made no reference whatsoever to the PNR.

There was, however, a short period in which the relationship between music and extreme right politics gained traction. This interval started in 2004 – 2005: a turning point for the Portuguese Skinhead movement, with the leadership of Mário Machado, an old militant of MAN (and of Ordem Lusa). He decided to reintroduce the strategy of the late 1980s: the attempt to tie the Skin movement with the extreme-right party in order to influence, through involvement in its militancy, the PNR's political platform. To this end, Machado took two steps: on the one hand, he 'conquered' the PNR, by facilitating the rise to presidency of José Pinto Coelho, a nationalist militant from the 1970s. Coelho was against the opinion of the more traditionalist current within the party and favored collaboration with the Skinheads; on the other hand, Machado aimed for the conquest of the hegemony *within* the Skinhead milieu. This attempt led to the creation in 2003 of a musical group, the Ódio (Hate), and its subsequent integration in 2005 in the Hammerskin neo-Nazi movement: the Portuguese Hammerskin (PHS). The

hegemony of the skinhead scene (after a period of tension and struggle with Blood & Honour), left the field open to co-opt the militant skinheads to the PNR militant base, through projects such as the Forum Nacional (National Forum) and National Front (Frente Nacional, FN), which worked to coordinate, both online and offline, militant nationalists of different origins (Almeida 2014: 240-241). The peak of the collaboration between the Skinheads and party nationalists is reached with the manifestation of 18 June 2005 against crime linked to immigration. This brought together five hundred nationalists, a size for an extreme-right rally not seen at least since the 1970s (Marchi 2012: 105; Chang 2014: 241-248). As for the musical dimension, the Hammerskin Ódio, later renamed Bullet 38, represented, technically – and compared to Endovélico – a step backwards (they only managed to release a CD-R). Its importance, however, had more to do with the overall project of re-launching the Portuguese extreme right. Thus, the foundation of the band is explained as follows:

It was a necessity for our movement, because until that moment it did not exist any active NS band in Portugal. [...] Ódio is making history in the Portuguese nationalist movement, and it already is the nationalist band that gave more concerts in Portugal and abroad (Ódio 2005).

Indeed, Ódio gave several concerts in Portugal – including participation in official events (for example a biker concentration in Faro, or a popular party organized by the local authorities of Caldas da Rainha) – and abroad, with Spanish bands, at a time when Portugal was also visited by Italian producers of the Hammerskin circuit. The Portuguese

Hammerskins music was also present in early years of the new PNR leadership, especially in concerts attended by a few hundred participants – in Lisbon South Bay in particular. In April 2007, the Juventude Nacionalista (Nationalist Youth – the youth organization of the PNR) promoted, on the fringes of the party conference Formas de Activismo na Europa (Ways of Activism in Europe), the joint music gig of Ódio / Bullet38 and the Spanish Asedio and Brigada Totenkopf (Rodrigues 2007).



Figure 6: Album *Morte aos traidores* (Death to the traitors) by Ódio

In a context of growing tensions between competing nationalist groups around the PNR, the cooperation project between the political party and the Skinhead base would collapse due to the vast repressive operation that hit the Portuguese extreme-right in 2007. The judicial operation was due to the criminal activity of the skin group of Mário Machado, and led to the arrest of several prominent members of the Portuguese Hammerskins, including the leader and vocalist of Ódio / Bullet38. Machado would subsequently be incarcerated for racial discrimination, illegal firearm possession, and a series of offenses related to bodily harm. In this manner, the enlargement project of the militant base of the PNR through subcultural

expressions such as music ended abruptly.

Conclusion

Despite the relative success, at least cyclical, of the rapprochement between party and Skinheads, and despite the high level of integration of the latter in the international network of music production and distribution of the extreme right, the reality is that Portuguese nationalism never tried to organize a lasting musical network that would support a nationalist party. According to João Veríssimo, there are two reasons that explain this: the small size and the sparse musical culture of the target audience. In the first case, the size of the nationalist Portuguese market hinders the sustainability of a national extreme-right musical scene. The most obvious indicator is the economic viability of music stores run by militant nationalists – Palladium, Soldiers, and Viriato. They survive by reaching to a much wider audience than just the extreme-right. In these places, the commercialization of nationalist musical materials has always been parallel, marginal and unofficial, to the main commercial activity, *and* in any case, totally cut off from any extreme right party project. Also, the PNR does not sell on its Internet page any sort of nationalist material, and even the party gadgets do not include any kind of musical product. Regarding the musical culture, the Portuguese extreme-right, including the Skinhead subculture, has always been the victim of a marked lack of public awareness of nationalist and European militant music in general. Even at the time of greater cooperation between the various factions of Portuguese nationalism around the PNR, its protagonists have never shown the least

interest in the interplay between music and politics. As stated by the nationalist music producer João Veríssimo (2014):

In Portugal I can say that, at that stage [mid 2000s], we probably had the worst skinheads of Europe in terms of musical culture: with the exception of five names, they knew nothing at all. And keep in mind that we already had the Internet, so it would have been easy to know who had written some songs. It was Skrewdriver. [The Swedish white female nationalist singer] Saga only did a cover. But here [in Portugal] the skinheads would tell you: Man, the songs of Saga are very beautiful.

In addition, the most worthwhile projects from a technical point of view (such as Endovélico's work), suffered from this lack of musical culture. Although they occasionally discovered more innovative musical genres, for instance hatecore, they turned out to be inspired by bands of inferior quality and thus did not reach a wider and knowledgeable audience of this genre. This negative cultural context was of course exacerbated by the systematic boycott of nationalist bands by the most prestigious music magazines. In this regard, the promotion of the *Endovélico* album by the metal magazine *Loud* and the review of LusitanOi in the international magazine *Maximum Rock – & – Roll*, are just exceptions, probably motivated by ignorance regarding the political nature of the bands.

Not surprisingly, João Veríssimo (2014), one of the most diligent actors of the Portuguese nationalist music scene, recalls that his involvement with music happened before and independent of any political identity, which only emerged later through reading and personal reflection. Coming from the punk

underground scene and hardrock, his interest in Oi! Music developed after hearing the album *Une Force, Une Cause, Un Combat*, by the French band Evil Skins (active in the 1980s), that had been suggested by a friend. This happened around 1996 when the only active political subject was the Aliança Nacional, which was of little or zero interest. Although there were some nationalists of the previous generation still musically active, he bought Skrewdriver and No Remorse records abroad, as these did not circulate in Portugal. In his personal journey, the turning point was the purchase of the RAC and Oi! Music file (Evil Skins, Ends stuff, Storm Craft, Defence League, the first edition of the Iron Cross, etc.), bought from one of the early organizers (in the 1990s) of this kind of concerts in Portugal. Thus, in 1999, Verissimo started his activity as a label and music promoter, releasing the vinyl of the band Guarda de Ferro.

The personal experience of this nationalist music producer is emblematic of another factor that determines the limited role of music in nationalist militancy: the absence in Portugal of an inter-generational continuity in the extreme-right. There are occasional overlaps between initiatives promoted by different nationalist generations, but, on the whole, these militant experiences are not located in a continuum that passes through different generations. In other words, the nationalist torch is not passed on. The Portuguese Skinhead has no interest in knowing the previous nationalist music production such as the discography of José Campos e Sousa. This lack of interest also stems from the episodic or isolated character of nationalist music production over the forty years of Portuguese democracy. There has never been, in Portugal, an alternative music scene like in Italy of the

1970s, which created a transmissible musical heritage. Similarly, there was no previous musical tradition that could be co-opted and repeated, as happened in Spain where the lack of alternative music groups was overcome by repeating the songbook of the Falange by artists of the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, the protest music that rose during the democratic transition, and life on the underground by nationalist militants (which could inspire subsequent militants, as examples of tenacity and heroism), left no mark on the next nationalist generation.



Figure 7: lineup of the 'White Xmas 2013' music concert in Lisbon

This generational rupture, between the 1960s/1970s and 1980s/1990s, can also be seen in the different generations *within* the same political Skinhead subculture. Arriving at the present, the latest protagonists of the Portuguese music scene, the Pontapés na Boca productions (Kick in the Mouth productions), for example, are not the result of the Blood & Honour, or Portuguese Hammerskins. They have

autonomously absorbed international influences, and created bands – Legião Lusitana, Gatilho e Oifensiva – that are keen to assert its presence on the web without any party organizational logic.

As stated in an interview in 2014 with the English blog *Fatherland-RAC*: 'No member of Oifensiva are member of any skinhead crew or party, however we support all organizations & parties that fight for our beliefs'. In fact, the interview of Oifensiva demonstrates not only the organizational vacuum from which emerged, but also the break with previous experiences; Guarda de Ferro and LusitanOi are the only two domestic references of a musical heritage much more influenced by international sources:

We decided to start a band in September 2012 because at the time there were no skinhead bands in our country...[...] our main influences are Oi & Rac sound, bands such Combat 84, Skrewdriver, Arresting Officers,

Peggior Amico, Endstufe, Condemned 84, English Rose, Kill Baby Kill, Brutal Combat, Lusitanoi, Guarda de Ferro, Storkraft, Nordic Thunder, 9ème Panzer Symphonie, Skullhead, Legion 88, Kommando Skin, etc. (Oifensiva 2014)

Similarly, the musical events most publicized today in the Portuguese nationalist media are organized by foreign political parties or movements, leading, for example, Portuguese militants to participate annually at the Roman festival Tana delle Tigri of the Identitarian collective Casapound Italia.

To conclude, the nationalist music scene in the last three decades of Portuguese democracy was characterized less by originality and more by the recycling and reproduction of foreign models, with very little organizational interaction with the Portuguese extreme-right – which, itself, has been for the most part fleeting and weak.

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