



THE WINDS OF APRIL, GRÂNDOLA, AND MONTE DEL CASTRO

The small Alentejo village of Grândola became part of Portugal's historical imagination after the broadcaster Leite de Vasconcelos of Rádio Renascença, aired the song "Grândola, Vila Morena" by José Afonso as the final signal for the start of the Revolution of April 25, 1974. The song, composed in honor of the town, was the signal chosen by the organization of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) to launch the revolutionaries. The song played 25 minutes on April 25 as a second call for the attentive military personnel who were waiting for the musical signal in the barracks. As a conclusion to an institutional crisis, within 24 hours an uprising of Army captains carried out a revolution that ended a dictatorship that had lasted for four decades (Rezola, 2007). It brought an end to the longest dictatorship in Western Europe in the 20th century. It was the beginning of a revolutionary process that would agitate the country until 1976.

This monument, which I present here, is not in Grândola, nor even in Portugal, but is located near Monte del Castro in Vigo, a Spanish city in the region of Galicia. It is curious because there is a controversy surrounding this tourist attraction. Although it is not officially confirmed, there is a theory in the air linking this monument to the Franco period in Spain. Furthermore, there are frequent graffiti and urban art interventions on the monument with antifascist themes. For example, we can observe the cheek of the soldier painted blue, perhaps alluding to a clown or a similar figure. However, without being aware of this detail at the time of my visit, its existence reminded me of the poetry contained in the Revolution of April 25. Not because of the architecture itself, much less its symbolism, of course, but because of the strength of nature. The imposing flowers emerging at the tip of a rifle, like them, the Portuguese people had their own strength—as strong as flowers always are—embodied in the beautiful carnations that heralded the dawn of democracy that was approaching in this country in 1974.

After the song "Grândola, Vila Morena" played as a warning of a new era to be built in Portugal, a few minutes past 3 a.m. on April 25, the studios of Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP) were occupied by revolutionaries. This was the first of five targets to be taken in the city of Lisbon. They were followed by the Portuguese Radio Club (RCP), the National Broadcaster, the general headquarters of the military region, and the airport. The RCP broadcast the Movement's first communiqué, which asked the population to calm down, but did not yet explain the direction of the revolution (Reis, 1990). Only in the morning, around 7 a.m., did an MFA communiqué with the political orientation of the revolution and its significance—Portugal's liberation from the Estado Novo—get broadcast on RCP.

In 2024, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the process that returned democracy to the Portuguese people. By studying the past, it is possible to build a bridge with the present, assimilate temporal clippings and better understand current phenomena. In a world today marked by violent polarizations and constant attacks on democracies and human rights, it is urgent that we think about and build a questioning society that reflects on the media, social and political processes of the past, constructing a collective memory that contributes to the solidity of present and future democracy.

The Angolan writer Agualusa (2017, p.11) wisely observed that "memory is a landscape contemplated from a moving train." A democratic society necessarily requires the assimilation of the past, that is, understanding the contexts that led history to the events of today, the rescue of the fleeting images glimpsed from within the train Agualusa refers to. According to Halbwachs (1968), memories are reconstructions of past time based on testimonies, deductions, and reconstructions, which is why they may appear distorted, like a landscape seen at high speed. Memories are collective, even though they are produced individually when we are part of a social group (Halbwachs, 1968). April 25 is a significant date for the Portuguese, whether for those who lived through this period or others. The collective unconscious of the people is marked by this memory, which is naturally collective.

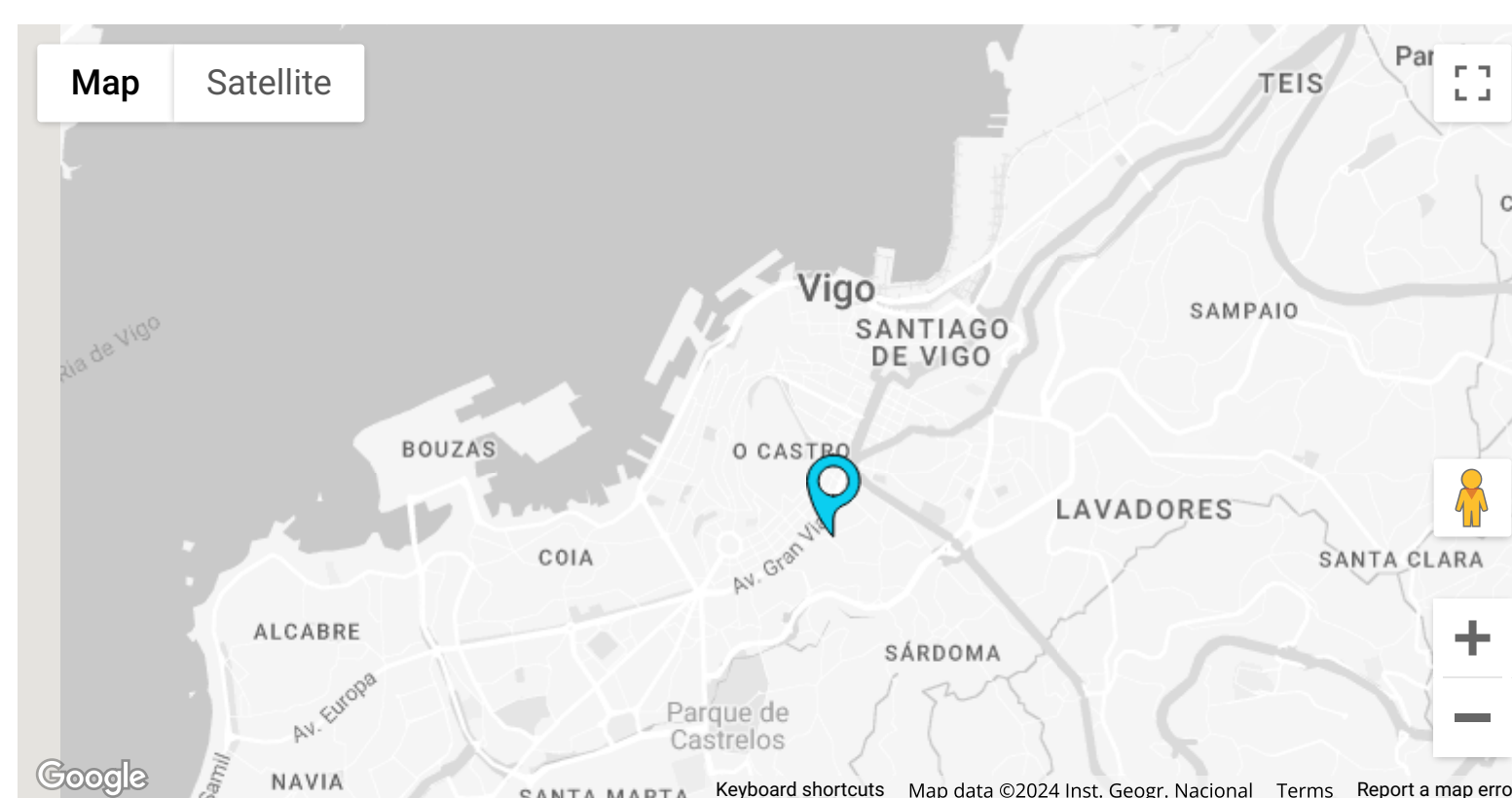
The path of our memories— which sometimes resembles a labyrinth in the midst of the crises of media and political reliability that we are going through — can, and should, lead us to reflection in society about the events unfolding in the present, based on journeys already navigated in ancient times. . . After five full decades of continuous democratic construction, the winds of April 25 continue to blow in Portugal, reviving the collective memory of this historical period that still holds the vivacity to propose the hope of a world where the strength of flowers overcomes rifles, as we contemplated in the Carnation Revolution and the ascent of Monte del Castro.

Text and photo: [Vinicius Zuanazzi](#)

References:

- Agualusa, J. E. (2017). The seller of pasts. Quetzal.
- Halbwachs, M. (1968). Collective memory. Vértice.
- Reis, A. (1990). Contemporary Portugal Vol. 6. Alfa.
- Rezola, M. (2007). 25 April: Myths of a Revolution. Esfera dos Livros.

LOCALIZAÇÃO



LOCAL: VIGO

LATITUDE: 42.2323294

LONGITUDE: -8.7260303

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