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“The communist has to dedicate himself to the cause of communism and has no time for anything else.”

Arnaldo Matos, 1939-2019

Published: O PÚBLICO/The Public newspaper, February 22, 2019

<https://expresso.pt/politica/2019-02-22-O-comunista-tem-de-se-dedicar-a-causa-do-comunismo-e-nao-tem-tempo-para-mais-nada.-Arnaldo-Matos-1939-2019>

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Communist revolutionary, made Twitter a weapon of intellectuals. The historic founder of PCTP / MRPP and the most unlikely phenomenon of that social network died this Friday. *Expresso* republishes the interview it gave to the newspaper in December last year



The cup of coffee is near the bottom of the scale of uncertain units of measurement. Just above the cup, but clearly below the cup. Which is not to say that, under the right circumstances, the small cup cannot seem huge. So big that there is an idea and everything that men try to do with it. "If none of us do anything, the revolution will continue," says Arnaldo Matos, founder of the PCTP / MRPP, a man who likes coffee as much as he likes to drink it slowly. And that he is convinced - Karl Marx hanging on the wall to see everything is his witness - that that cup will be empty. "If capitalism is not put to an end, capitalism will put an end to itself."

Certainty, however, cannot lead to leisure. "The communist has to dedicate himself to the cause of communism and has no time for anything else", he explains. The communist, even one who will be an octogenarian within months, wakes up early and wastes no time telling the world that sleep is over. Just over two weeks ago, on Friday, December 7, Arnaldo Matos started at seven in the morning and soon after the attack. The target? Pierre Moscovici, European commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs Union, who had been decorated by Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa at the Palace of Belém the previous day. "How can such a bastard be decorated by Marcelo ?! Ah! darn dogs ... ", he wrote on his Twitter account.

At the party headquarters, on Avenida do Brasil, in Lisbon, during a conversation with *Expresso*, Arnaldo Matos used another expression to refer to Moscovici - one that describes a degree of direct kinship and that rhymes with struggle. Except that weapons have to suit battles. And although the war has been practically the same for six decades, the way of fighting the old communist, whom they called the "great educator of the working class", has changed in the last year and a half. More precisely since it came across Twitter, the giant social network, created in 2006 in the USA, which has more than 335 million users worldwide sharing small messages of 280 characters (tweets started with just 140 characters). It was as if Arnaldo Matos had suddenly discovered a Trojan horse standing at his door.



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“It is exactly that. It is a way to fight the enemy from within. Not Twitter, but the system where it is inserted. If we repair well, we can do this in any company”, guarantees Arnaldo Matos. The revelation took place in late summer 2017, through the fault of Donald Trump, President of the United States of America and a kind of chief tweeter. “I was intrigued by the way in which one of these, of the extreme right and the most reactionary in the world, has the support of the American working class. It was not the intellectuals who elected him, it was the working class - and that is the problem. This led me to study the phenomenon”, he explains, still without having touched the cup of coffee.

The study phase was relatively short. On September 7, 2017, comrade Arnaldo Matos gained a virtual life and, thanks to him, national Marxism launched itself on the wings of the blue bird that is the image of Twitter. “Guterres became a lackey of the imperialists and a man of Donald Trump's hand. Instead of peace, it promotes war. What a big deal!”, He wrote, in the first tweet in the history of the PCTP / MRPP. At issue was the UN threat of economic sanctions against North Korea. That same month, Arnaldo Matos sided with the Catalan independence and did not miss an opportunity to attack the then Minister of Defense, Azeredo Lopes, regarding the theft of arms in Tancos: , a donkey? And if the donkey does not resign, no one dismisses the donkey ?!” The fact that he was fighting infiltrated behind enemy lines did not make Arnaldo Matos, overnight, a specialist working with computers, mobile phones

or tablets. In fact, he is the one to say that he does not know how to use “all the potential” of the machines. “I don't know how to work with any of this. I have a cell phone, a good cell phone, but I don't get along with all these things ”, he admits. The Twitter account “Arnaldo Matos - @ArnaldodeMatos” is, rather, a team effort - has 3428 followers, counted this Tuesday morning. “My partner is the one who takes care of that. She passes on things, chooses messages and publishes tweets ”, explains the founder of PCTP / MRPP. “Yes, I do this job”, confirms Cidália, the Portuguese teacher who lives with Arnaldo Matos and who is always around.

The ritual is repeated every day, several times a day, “because people expect me to say something”. He sits at the table in front of a blank sheet and writes. “Most of the time it comes out right the first time,” he says, amused. “I write a little, draw a line. A little more, another line. ”On an A4 sheet, the 280 characters represent four and a half handwritten lines across the width. “I managed to make Twitter a weapon for intellectuals. The space is so small that anyone can reach the content ”, he says, proudly. But there are things that don't change - and the need to subvert is one of them. As a rule, on Twitter the latest posts appear at the top of the page. “I changed the way I read this. Normally, you need to read from the bottom up, but my Twitter is read from the top down, which is how you read in Portuguese.

Let us return to an idea already discussed as an example. Arnaldo Matos, seated at the table at the PCTP / MRPP headquarters, says the following: “If capitalism is not ended, capitalism will put an end to itself. There will be a revolution against capitalism and that revolution is imposed by the nature of things. ”On Twitter, if the two phrases were introduced in that order, the last one would be the first to appear. “Changing this takes a lot of work. The whole scheme has to be subverted and then it is necessary to introduce something else, the beauty of the literary text. If it doesn't exist, people don't read it. ”Thus, Arnaldo Matos writes on the blank sheet, from top to bottom, and Cidália transcribes it on Twitter, from bottom to top. It is the call to change everything so that nothing changes.



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On Monday, December 10, Arnaldo Matos published a photo early in the morning showing António Costa, Catarina Martins and Jerónimo de Sousa. Comment: “A question to the workers: is this not all putedo?” Then he

isolated each one and opened fire. With the photo of Catarina Martins, he wrote: "A question to the opportunists of the Bloc: if health is bad, if the minimum wage is low, if teachers are abandoned, if civil servants are not raised, etc., etc. and such, why did they approve the Budget and support the Government?" Along with Jerónimo de Sousa: "A question to the PCP social-fascists: if the country is so bad, why did they approve the Budget and support the Government?" With the image by António Costa, to whom a clapper was added to his neck, the following is written: "A question to Monhé: if the country is doing so well, It was not the first time that Arnaldo Matos used this term to address the prime minister. "My monhé, our monhé, are expressions that I use with anything affectionate. It is an expression that is racist in Mozambique, but here it is not quite like that ", he tells Expresso. A few months ago, after an identical display of "affection", Arnaldo Matos was accused of racism on his own Twitter page. "They gave me strong and ugly because of that, and I didn't give up. But I don't regret it, I don't think I went too far on this issue. "Still, he sent messages to explain to some people, closer to the Prime Minister, who were offended. The question arises every day, as confirmed. "Sometimes, Cidália warns me that I'm going too far. And I respect it. But there was an issue that didn't work. This day, the subject was, and is, the pediatric ward of Hospital de São João, in Porto. "I think I went too far when I sent the Government to shit. But it is the limit. It is intolerable that there is a Minister of Finance who, allocating a budget to build a pediatric ward for children in Porto affected by cancer, cut that budget. This is intolerable. I have the right to call it everything, and not just monhé. It is not that much ahead in the class struggle, but it shows that... In the class struggle there is a phase in which hatred arrives. You can't kill your opponent by looking at him and crying ... We may think we shouldn't kill him, but if we're fighting with him ... I've been to the war ... "

For a moment, it is as if Arnaldo Matos had lost his white hair and moustache and was, again, the man who appears with his arm raised in the photograph of a 1976 rally. Or the guy who shakes hands with a young José Ramos Horta, from Fretilin, passing through Lisbon and stopping at the MRPP headquarters, days after the Indonesians invaded Timor, on December 7, 1975. Or the leader who, at the Pavilhão dos Desportos, in March 1976, said to each and every one of the communists: "Whatever the sacrifices because it will pass, no matter how long it takes to fight, and your fight can only be a prolonged fight, you know that the red rays of the dawn of the true democracy, the dawn of bread for all who work, that dawn is about to arrive. That is to stay. "

Yes, he is again, but he is no longer the same. The PREC years were the years when the MRPP painted Rossio red, marked the anniversary of Stalin's death

and when he looked at China as the “red base of the Proletarian World Revolution”, wishing “long, very long life to Chairman Mao Zedong ”. Today, everything has changed and when you look back at two of the bloodiest regimes of the 20th century, the words are not the same. “Stalin was a man who attended the seminary and was almost a priest. Philosophy had a conception that could never come close to Marxism. Everything he wrote has nothing to do with Marxism ”, explains Arnaldo Matos.

And China? “In China, there was a conflict in which I also participated, because I was in Macau. I thought that the Mao revolution, with its humanitarian character, dedicated to respect for the people, of loving the people above all things, thought that it was a path. But it is not. China has become the great imperialism of the 21st century. The path must be objective. It is not a problem of the heart of men, but of objectivity of acts. And then I saw that we had to go back to Marx and 'Capital', to understand how it is possible to move from the capitalist mode of production to the communist mode of production. This is the path and the stage I am currently in. ”

A path that began to be traced, officially, just over two years ago, with the publication of “Teses da Urgeiriça” - “the theoretical work of deepening Marxism produced by comrade Arnaldo Matos”, in the words of Carlos Paisana, in which the failure of the Russian and Chinese revolutions is analyzed. A scientist's look at two attempts to make pure coffee from the cup and apply it to reality. “When Lenin arrives and says that the revolution becomes a workers' and communist revolution, he said the biggest nonsense of his life. There was not enough economic development to sustain a communist revolution. This only appears when the development is such that my friend does not need a salary ”, he explains. "It is necessary to know the content of Marx's work, and that is what makes me struggle."

It is not too risky to classify the current phase of the founder of the PCTP / MRPP as a phase of pure Marxism. “We are Marxists and we are based on a science. It is unthinkable to have a communist who does not know Marx and we attach great importance to the scientific part of our work. Marxism is a problem of science. Social media is a pest for a party. People think they don't have to study, that they can just say what's on their mind. But what comes to mind is the product of the class struggle - it can be good or it can be bad. If a worker thinks he has the right to express what is on his mind, I tell him that he has no right to express what is on his mind. You have to express a scientific theory, not what you have in mind. It is necessary to study ”, assures the man who was once the great educator.

The MRPP - Reorganizing Movement of the Proletariat Party was founded on September 18, 1970, in a house on Estrada do Poço do Chão, in Benfica. The first Lenin committee includes Arnaldo Matos, João Machado and Fernando Rosas and elects Matos as secretary-general: “It doesn't matter whether we are many or few when it starts; it matters to know if our line is the most fair and correct, if our methods are truly Leninist. If so and if we know how to apply the first and practice the second, we will soon grow and fight with us ”, they wrote. And there are things that don't change. “How many militants do we have? I won't tell you how many we are, but a renewal process is underway. ” In 2020, when the 50th anniversary is celebrated, the PCTP / MRPP (Communist Party of Portuguese Workers, is the other acronym) will hold a congress. “You can't do it earlier because we don't have people prepared to do it”, admits Arnaldo Matos. The great schism of 2015, which led to the departure of Garcia Pereira's party, is an unresolved issue. “The split, from an ideological point of view, is not yet over. But we have already managed to show everyone who Garcia Pereira is. He's a successful lawyer, and that's where he should stay”, he shoots.

In that year, Arnaldo Matos, who since 1979 was not officially linked to the party - remaining however as the ideologue, reference figure and maximum theorist - launched a violent attack on the then leader of the PCTP / MRPP, his friend and godson, accusing him of have failed across the board in the legislative elections. A letter published in “*Luta Popular*”, the party's official organ since 1971, signed by Espártaco, one of Arnaldo Matos' names, pointed out the failure of the leadership, despite the fact that it has “the best objective conditions ever to achieve its political objectives. immediate: a general political situation of profound repudiation for the policy of governmental austerity, about 800 thousand euros in cash, derived from the law on party financing, and a member of the central committee's standing committee with a weekly television program on ETV [Garcia Pereira] ”. Weeks of laundry washed in the public square followed, with accusations of all kinds from side to side and many requests for self-criticism.

“I did not take advantage of anyone: I am not a militant, I am not a leader, the only thing I do is to make known what I have learned. I know what a Leninist party was, and I know what it led to. I know what a Maoist party was, and what it led to. These parties do not serve. You need to create others. But how? Well, from the movement of that class that will change the world ”, guarantees Arnaldo Matos.

Small steps start to be taken next year. According to its non-militant and leader, the PCTP / MRPP will run for all 2019 elections: legislative, European and regional of Madeira. In the last legislatures, the PCTP / MRPP was the second of the last, of the parties that did not elect deputies, behind the PDR of Marinho and Pinto. The PAN, with 95,140 votes, managed to elect a deputy. The PDR received 61,632 votes and the PCTP stood at 59,995 - still exceeding the 50,000 barrier that guarantees access to the State subsidy. “Those from Madeira are the ones that are most favorable to small parties. In the latter, it was by 200 votes that we did not elect a deputy. And so we are going to attack hard there”, guarantees Arnaldo Matos, who plays at home in the archipelago.

“I'm from Madeira and I try to go there once a month. My father was a small merchant of wood and wood, at the time of the war, and of contraband, that of the ships. I have been working since the age of eight selling glasses of wine over the counter”, recalls the lawyer, who guarantees not to turn his face to the fight. “You know that this Twitter thing is used to hit me a lot. I also give, but I get tired of being beaten”, he says.

“I respond to all readers, left and right. I also respond to the far-right types. If something I write has comments, I will always give an opinion there. People already know that. Now, if they are rude to a point where it is excessive, when it is not a form of freedom of thought, then I cut them off. But it is rare. Do you know that it is possible to reconstruct a philosophical debate on Twitter? I have done it many times. It becomes a little longer, it's not really the essence of it, but you can talk...”



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This is the paradox in which Arnaldo Matos finds himself. Probably never, as today, he had the means to talk to so many people at the same time on so many subjects - just look at his Twitter account to realize that the breadth of subjects covers everything from international politics to the strike of the Setúbal dockworkers to the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition in Serralves. At the same time, and despite such intervention, the PCTP / MRPP proposals never seemed so unimportant. Whenever Arnaldo's tweets are talked about, there is a tone of joy-irony-shock, a feeling that is not meant to be taken seriously.

“I feel a little bit hurt because they consider me someone from the past, someone for whom time has passed. But the truth is, people are afraid to argue with me. They do not believe that a communist can be like others”, he laments. And then he goes on to attack. “Politicians today are a disgrace, they are imbeciles who don't read a book. But they are the imbeciles that the press likes.” At the end, there is an outburst: “I am a kind of black politician. I am a victim of racism.”

On Friday, December 7, the day that the Indonesian invasion of Timor in 1975 was marked, after attacking Moscovici and knowing the date of the elections in 2019, Arnaldo Matos took to the street to be photographed by Expresso. Cidália was worried about the cold, and came back with her coat in hand. The non-activist and leader of the PCTP / MRPP stopped smoking 18 years ago, but his

health is no longer the same as in other years. “This time affects my breathing”, he confesses. She says the same. But the will remains unchanged. “I am 80 in February. I know I'm going to die, and I'm not afraid. I'm a communist. But the simple fact that I don't know when it solemnly irritates me because I don't know if I will have time to do all the things I want. ”

The present runs at full speed, and the leader tries to run beside him. “Portugal, like France and Belgium, has objective conditions of struggle, as is the case with the 'yellow vest' movement. Only subjective conditions of struggle have not yet met: organization and leadership. But, at any moment, these subjective conditions can be brought together: it will be enough to create independent political committees to unify the strike movement and the movement for the improvement of workers' living conditions and wages. Let us unite! ”, He wrote in two messages on Twitter on Monday, December 10th.

The paper, always the paper. The placards full of advertising, new and old; what covers the tables, where someone got the copies of the “Luta Popular” and the most important documents and leaflets distributed on the street. In Marx's books. In the portrait of Marx. On the blank sheets scattered on the table where Arnaldo Matos, the “Marxist and soul and heart”, writes the messages he addresses to the workers by hand, without filter or censorship. Where the old becomes new. An hour passed and Arnaldo Matos barely touched the cup. The coffee may have cooled, but it is there. It's still there.

The future, says Arnaldo Matos, is promising. “Communism is coming. If we do nothing, capitalism will put an end to itself. There will be a revolution against capitalism and, for communists, that revolution is imposed by the nature of things. Half a percent of the world's population has 90 percent of the world's wealth. It's impressive, isn't it? Never, as today, were there conditions to distribute everything produced equitably to everyone ”Pasted on the door of the party's headquarters, in front of passers-by, there are three A4 sheets with all the messages published the day before in the “ tweet ”, even so , by comrade Arnaldo Matos. It is the new old feat.