

The Revolution, Now and Forever:
Preface to the New Edition of
Jaime Semprun's *Manuscript Found in Vitoria*

By Miguel Amorós

In the course of the 1960s, the expansion of capitalism had abruptly provoked a cultural crisis or, as one says today, a crisis of values. Society had unintentionally allowed new vital necessities to grow within it and come into direct conflict with the old norms. These new necessities became flammable material without anyone expecting it. Economic development had entered into violent contradiction with the ideological structures that were creating an atmosphere of frustration conducive to feelings of being uprooted and dissatisfied, feelings that are dangerous when they exceed the artistic and literary domains, as the revolts of the era would soon show. The most important and fruitful of these revolts was that of May 1968. One of its most visible results was that it produced a generation of young people who were radically opposed to the consumer society or, rather, the society of the spectacle; these were young people who could not be captured politically because they looked beyond politics, because, to them, all the political parties were absurd and integrated. This was a generation that did not seek its liberty or its identity in the modernized State or an updated society, but in the ruins of all social conventions and institutions. It was a lost generation, of which Jaime Semprun¹ was a brilliant exponent.

The proletariat was beginning to manifest itself in a vigorous and historic fashion, and the class struggle appeared in very innovative aspects as the activity through which the proletariat recognizes itself and becomes aware of its principal mission, which can not be anything other than the total subversion of archaic society. Situationist critique, by showing all that was false and ruined in social and political life, and by formulating the most daring and truest aspirations that underlay the battles of the times, had a big impact on the *enfants perdus*² of the era and, for many, played the role of Ariadne's thread, thanks to which their restless minds found the luminous road of revolution amidst the obscurity of its indecisive

¹ Born in Paris in 1947, Jaime Semprun was the son of the famous Spanish writer and politician Jorge Semprun. Jaime died in 2010, one year before his father. Cf. <http://www.notbored.org/jaime-semprun.html>.

² French in original.

beginnings. Or, in other words, it became the tool of mediation with reality, thanks to which they came of age in a very particular fashion.

The Situationist International (SI) also awoke a strong desire to imitate [the SI] among many misfits, which were attempts that could only fail because, once the battle of the barricades of May had passed, the abstract repetition of one or several details couldn't produce any real results. Far from the terrain of the real struggle, this activity invariably drifted towards either adventurous and limited activism or pretentious and defeatist passivity. Jaime saw this during his first collective meetings and experiments, not all of which were frustrating. At one of these meetings, he came to know the ex-situationist Eduardo Rothe,³ who shortly afterwards introduced him to Guy Debord, a person who'd already become a legend. This brief contact with Debord marked the mind of Jaime Semprun and had an influence on the evolution of this thinking that was even greater than the influence of May 68.

According to Debord, who sought to distance himself from old companions such as Vaneigem and Viénet,⁴ the dissolution of the SI had been necessary because it had to avoid becoming a mystifying avant-garde. At the time, if one wanted to render service to the revolution, it wasn't enough to respond to the question, "What is to be done?" but to respond to "What is happening?"⁵ In his fashion, Debord revolved around the famous thesis on Feuerbach.⁶ It was in these terms that he addressed himself to Eduardo Rothe in a letter dated 21 February 1974: "The principal work that, it appears to me, one must engage in – as the

³ Born in Venezuela, Rothe was a member of the Italian section of the SI from 1969 to 1970. Debord continued to be in communication with him until June 1974.

⁴ Raoul Vaneigem resigned from the SI in November 1970; René Vienét in February 1971. The SI itself disbanded in September 1971.

⁵ Cf. Debord's letter to Rothe dated 21 February 1974: "What today prevents the Vaneigems from writing – even in the *quantity* of their fuckery, they have been very sober – is the fact that the epoch no longer simply demands a *vague* response to the question 'What is to be done?' (they could formerly say a few banalities, becoming always more comical: for example, that the strike at Kiruna was on this side of the Paris Commune, whereas it is, rather, a question of surpassing it! And they think *in petto* this 'astute' response: 'to do' what Debord would do). It is now a question, if one wants *to remain in the present*, of responding to this question almost every week: '*What is happening?*' It is this richness of the return of modern history that puts their poverty into the light of final judgment, and condemns them to silence."

⁶ *Author's note*: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in diverse manners; what is important is transforming it." Karl Marx, 1845.

complementary contrary to *The Society of the Spectacle*, which describes frozen alienation (and the negation that is implicit in it) – is *the theory of historical action*. One must advance *strategic* theory in its moment, which has come. At this stage and to speak schematically, the basic theoreticians to retrieve and develop are no longer Hegel, Marx and Lautreamont, but Thucydides, Machiavelli and Clausewitz.”

The events that took place following the fall of the Caetano government in Portugal on 25 April 1974 unexpectedly offered Debord the terrain for historical action that he sought. Portuguese capitalism had wanted to modernize itself when the modernization it sought was only an archaism that failed everywhere, leaving behind two opposed movements: one in favor of the rapid formation of a political and union-based bureaucracy; the other in favor of the autonomous affirmation of the proletariat. Debord could only make use of very limited forces in his strategic operation: in Lisbon, there was Afonso Pinto Monteiro, who had translated *The Society of the Spectacle* into Portuguese,⁷ and, in Florence, Eduardo Rothe, whom Debord encouraged to move to Portugal. Debord explained to Afonso that “the exposition of a revolutionary perspective must still consist of describing and explaining *what takes place* day after day, and is never satisfied with the ridiculous, abstract proclamation of general goals” (letter dated 8 May 1974).⁸ To Eduardo, Debord wrote, “the first condition would obviously be that, in Lisbon, ‘our party’ would be able to constitute – or join? – an autonomous group that has its own basis of expression” (letter dated 8 May 1974).⁹

In case a real revolution broke out, Debord would personally go to Portugal, even if he didn’t know Portuguese, and he would appeal to other companions. The news was encouraging and the things could go far. This wasn’t May 68, but it was

⁷ Cf. letter from Debord to Ribeiro de Mello, dated 15 May 1971:
<http://www.notbored.org/debord-15May1971.html>

⁸ “The principal objective of Portuguese revolutionaries must thus be to make the current situation *a real revolution for our time*. Denouncing the global spectacle and the ‘revolutionary spectacle’ of the overdue birth of bourgeois democracy, they must expound the *minimum programme* of such a revolution. This minimum programme is easily found: it is all that has been made, said and written, moreover, *advanced* in the world over the course of the last ten years. But *especially*: the exposition of a revolutionary perspective must still consist of describing and explaining *what takes place* day after day, and is never satisfied with the ridiculous, abstract proclamation of general goals.”

⁹ In addition to Rothe and Monteiro, that group would, according to Debord, include “Gianfranco [Sanguinetti], Paolo [Salvadore], and no doubt several others.” (Letter to Rothe dated 8 May 1974).

getting closer. In Lisbon, the team of Afonso and Eduardo had formed the Council for the Development of the Social Revolution and had posted in the streets a notice like the one issued in Milan.¹⁰ But at the end of August, the revolutionary process encountered difficulties because the various revolutionary clubs couldn't manage to get unified, while their enemies (the Social Democrats, the General Staff of the Army, and the Stalinists) took up their positions. The worst thing was the fact that, after several months and despite the support of the former situationist Patrick Cheval,¹¹ Debord's friends did not seem to the task, for they missed the opportunity of the workers' demonstration in September. Nevertheless, the information that Debord received about the demonstration called by the Inter-Enterprises Committee in February 1975 gave him hope. "It is clear that the modern proletariat has never gone as far as this, not even in Hungary, where foreign factors distorted the game," he wrote to Afonso Monteiro on 24 February 1975, urging him "to show the profound meaning of this autonomous organization, the very *logic* of its action, and to put it on guard against all those who would fight against it."

The information transmitted during the successive visits of Antonia Monteiro (Afonso's companion) and Eduardo led Debord to conclude that there actually *was* a revolution in course in Portugal, even if the international press was attempting to hide it, and this revolution would probably be defeated, given the successful reconstruction of governmental power and the determination of the exploiters of the world to stop the revolution. In this state of things, the advanced groups could not do much more, due to their lack of means and the fact that final phase would take place on a much vaster terrain. But Debord tried to delay the final phase in this way: "The revolutionary situation in Portugal is *almost totally unknown* today in all the milieus – even the extremist ones – in all the other

¹⁰ *Author's note*: "Notice to the Portuguese Proletariat on the Possibilities of Social Revolution," dated 24 May 1974 and making use of the same title and much of the same text that the Italian section of the SI, which had then included Eduardo as a member, used for the flyer it had distributed in Milan on 19 November 1969. [*Translator*: For an English translation of the Italians' flyer, visit: <http://www.notbored.org/avviso.pdf>.]

¹¹ It doesn't seem likely that Cheval and Debord were working together. In a letter to Gianfranco Sanguinetti dated 31 January 1975, Debord wrote, "unfortunate Patrick [Cheval] telephoned me. He seemed very disappointed to find out that I already knew the story, and I suppose that otherwise he would have let it be understood that he had something to tell me, which necessitated a meeting. He again invited me to meet up with him and I again said that I surely did not have the time at the moment."

countries: whatever happens, it will be important to publish abroad the maximum of the truth.”¹² It was at that moment that Jaime Semprun entered the scene.

Eduardo had already drafted a text about the modern revolution but it had the weakness of hardly mentioning Portugal. The text had to be rewritten and illustrated with anecdotes, but Eduardo’s material and emotional situation, always unstable, prevented him from having the tranquility necessary for such an urgent task. To make things worse, Debord had broken with him for a personal reason, but had went on to fabricate imprecise accusations about “lies,” “fakery,” “poverty” and “incompetence.” Although he’d promised to rewrite the book in question, Eduardo returned to Lisbon and later disappeared to Venezuela. Conversant with the affair, but only knowing Portugal from Eduardo’s fragmentary narratives and the articles from *Le Monde* that Debord had mentioned, Jaime had to meet his first important challenge: in less than a month, write the book that would reveal the Portuguese Revolution to the world. He fulfilled his mission masterfully, finishing the book in April [1975]. Gérard Lebovici, the owner of Champ Libre, was diligent: on 16 May, *The Social War in Portugal* was in the bookstores.¹³ Debord found it to be magnificent and declared that this was “the first time that one could read such a book *before* the defeat of a revolution” (letter dated 31 May 1975).

The importance of a Spanish translation was essential because the proximity with Portugal allowed for the possibility of contagion. In both countries, the workers’ movement constituted the sole barrier to the parliamentary modernization supported by the Stalinists. Factory workers in autonomously coordinated assemblies went out into the streets on 17 June and 4 July in Lisbon and on 19 July in Porto, refusing to support either the Stalinists or the Socialists. Debord told Jaime, “these facts must especially be mentioned in the postfaces of subsequent foreign editions” (letter dated 23 July 1975).

In fact, Jaime had managed things so that the Ruedo Ibérico publishing house in Paris and Tusquets in Barcelona were also interested in *The Social War*. Tusquets had a translation made, but censorship by the Franco regime prevented its distribution in Spain. Finally, the book and an epilogue were published in August in Paris as part of an ephemeral collection edited by Xavier Domingo (future journalist for *Cambio 16*) titled *El Viejo Topo*¹⁴ and previously edited by Ruedo Ibérico. There were also German and Greek editions of the book. Paradoxically, the Portuguese translation of it wasn’t published until the following year, 1976.

Everything seemed to going well; Debord was very satisfied with the

¹² *Author’s note*: letter from Debord to Monteiro dated March 1975.

¹³ For our translation of this pamphlet into English, see <http://www.notbored.org/social-war.html>.

¹⁴ Spanish for “The Old Mole.”

success of the book and, at the same time, came up with the idea of another one, this time an attack on the French ideology: *Précis de récupération*.¹⁵ Debord even set up a room in his country house for Jaime and Anne [Krief]. The couple's summer stay did not live up to Debord's expectations, and they were bid goodbye with a certain coldness. When Jaime proposed a new meeting, Debord made it known through his wife, Alice, that he was too busy. Then, nothing. No response after the completion of the *Précis de recuperation*. Jaime was disconcerted and wondered about the reason for the sudden end of their cordial and amicable relations. He wrote a letter, dated 6 February 1976, which received a nebulous response from Debord on 11 February: "I willingly admit that all this is mostly a matter of personal taste. Here, as in the use of life and the preferences among those whom one encounters in it, it is certainly not a matter of expounding upon and supporting one's own tastes, in the perfectly vain goal of rallying to them those people who have different ones."

Jaime remained quite perplexed. He wanted Debord to explain to him how his tastes and preferences, so similar to Jaime's, could change so fast. But he didn't insist, understanding that explanations wouldn't change anything of the essential facts. It was several months later that he learned the real motivation. Debord confessed to him,

I had the impression that our relations had taken another turn after an evening in which we had dinner at the home of several young workers, almost all of them unemployed. I was surprised by the great severity of your judgment of those people, by your leaving their place, especially considering, at least according to your own writings and conclusions, so many sad pro-situs have successively surrounded you that you now occasionally need some time to see through them and reject them [...] I certainly don't want to exaggerate the significance of this quite-harmless incident, but it is a fact that, since then, I've remarked that there is no longer the same sympathy between us. (Letter of 26 December 1976.)

Their characters were incompatible. A spirit as straight-forward and open as Jaime's collided with the unpleasant and devious [*esquinado y sinuoso*] spirit of Debord because of an insignificant discussion to which the first accorded no importance but from which importance was extrapolated by the second. Subsequently, Jaime was free to act as he wished but, for Debord's entourage, he

¹⁵ *The Summary of Recuperation*, published by Editions Champ Libre in 1976, not yet translated into English.

was out of bounds. It only took a little time for him to perceive this.

While the revolution was dying out in Portugal, the process that it had begun appeared even more vividly in Italy and Spain. It was precisely the repression against this movement that caused my exile from Spain to the environs of Paris in May 1975. I fell upon a copy of *The Social War in Portugal* in an anarchist bookstore and, in this book, I found the keys to understand the process underway in Spain. I wrote to Champ Libre in the hope that it could put me in contact with the author. Jaime responded positively by letter and invited me to an evening at his place on the rue de Tréville. We spoke about everything. Jaime knew a lot about the Spanish Civil War because, in 1970 and 1971, he'd worked on, even written parts of the book by his uncle, Carlos Semprún-Maura, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Catalonia*,¹⁶ which would soon be published in Catalan. Many of Jaime's pages revealed an agile and trenchant style, while the style of his uncle was stiff and pedagogic. The *Summary [of Recuperation]* was published in January 1976.

After a time, we agreed to collectively draft a text in Spanish that would describe the situation in Spain in the context of the tension in Europe following the Portuguese Revolution, the strategy of tension in Italy, and the fall of the colonels' regime in Greece. Jaime brought his strategic analysis, derived from his Portuguese experience, and I brought concrete knowledge of the Spanish, councilist strikes. This combination was born in March 1976, when we produced a pamphlet intended for militant distribution in Spain, under the Clausewitzian title *The Spanish Campaign in the European Revolution*. We addressed ourselves to the striking workers as "Internationals of the Spanish Region," thus taking up the geographical designation used at the beginning of the workers' movement by the First International, and we signed ourselves "The Uncontrollables," thus reclaiming the slanderous name that the coalition formed in 1936 by the Republican bourgeoisie and the political and union-based bureaucracy gave to the parts of the revolutionary proletariat that obeyed no one else and fought against their internal and external enemies.¹⁷ The pamphlet wasn't widely available because we had few contacts and a portion of the press run fell into the hands of

¹⁶ *Revolución y contrarevolución en Cataluña (1936-1937)*, not yet translated into English.

¹⁷ Note that, in December 1979, Champ Libre brought out Guy Debord and Alice Becker-Ho's Spanish-to-French translation of a text signed by "An Uncontrollable," titled "Protest to the libertarians of the present and the future about the capitulations of 1937" and originally published in an anarchist newspaper in Valencia in March 1937. Our French-to-English translation of this text appears here: <http://www.notbored.org/incontrolado-preface.html>.

the Guardia Civil at a border-control checkpoint. A parallel project was to write a book that would describe the prior Spanish revolution from the point of view of its most-radical protagonist, the founder of the group “Friends of Durruti” (*Agrupación de los Amigos de Durruti*), Jaime Balius, who then resided in a sanatorium in Hyères. I wrote to Balius, encouraging him to write his memoirs, but he was confined to a wheelchair and had difficulty writing because of decreased access to the necessary documents. This project was set aside, but not abandoned.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the Spanish workers’ movement had entered a new phase, without any union or political brakes to stop it. The modernization of Francoist Spain could not permit itself the luxury of seeing “soviets” in full development – this is why the principal leaders gave the order to fire upon the demonstrators. When they did, on 3 March 1976, Vitoria became the inflection-point of the process. From that moment on, the workers had to either coordinate themselves against power at a new, national level by fighting against all the obstacles that blocked their route, or await what was to follow by retrenching themselves in the centers in which resistance was strongest. Pass on to the offensive or remain on the defensive. We intended to publicize this choice on the peninsula by publishing a book. Fortunately, in May a thick dossier full of tracts by and documents about the workers in Vitoria fell into our hands.¹⁹

Jaime, making use of his experience, got to work and in October we had a presentable text to which we gave the title *Manuscrito encontrado en Vitoria* (“Manuscript Found in Vitoria”), taking our inspiration from Potocki.²⁰ Jaime met with Lebovici to propose the publication of the *Manuscrito*, but he had nothing but objections to the text. Jaime took these objections literally, that is to say, as things to change with a view towards improving the book, without understanding that Lebovici had in fact implicitly refused to publish it. Doubting nothing and confident, Jaime re-elaborated the text with Lebovici’s “criticisms” in mind and presented him with the new version in December – this time meeting up with a formal refusal. Naïve and almost innocent, Jaime wasn’t used to the customs of publishers, who *don’t say yes* instead of *saying no*. If Jaime had not endured this treatment on the previous two occasions (*The Social War* and the *Summary of*

¹⁸ *Author’s note:* in June 2003, [my book] *La revolución traicionada. La verdadera historia de Balius y Los Amigos de Durruti* was published in Barcelona by Virus Editorial.

¹⁹ *Author’s note:* *Informe Vitoria, enero-abril 1976*, Grupo de trabajo Alternativa, May 1976 and, later that same year, Ruedo Ibérico, Gasteiz. *Vitoria: de la huelga a la matanza*, both of which gave us first-hand information.

²⁰ Count Jan Potocki (1761-1815), author of *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa*.

Recuperation),²¹ it must have been *because* of something or someone. The most logical deduction was that the one responsible for Lebovici's change of attitude was Debord, but if Jaime knew that he didn't figure among Debord's friends, it was doubly naïve of him to ask Debord, "I have quite understood that I am no longer among your friends, but must I understand that I must henceforth count you among my enemies?" (letter of 17 December 1976, Éditions Champ Libre, *Correspondance*, Volume 1).²²

This mistake²³ allowed Debord to affect a spotless innocence and allowed Lebovici to claim that his personal judgment was sheltered from all influences.²⁴ In fact, Debord had received a photocopy of the manuscript, to which he didn't respond, which in his eyes proved that he'd played no role in Lebovici's rejection. Nevertheless, Debord did not find the *Manuscrito* to be excellent. "It is not a matter of a basic political disagreement. I approve of the revolutionary intentions of the Spanish proletariat, and of the authors who approve of them. This [nevertheless] doesn't give sufficient force to the work."²⁵ In his opinion, the book didn't give a coherent explanation of what was taking place in Spain, a very debatable statement if one doesn't provide examples of this supposed incoherence. Debord added that he found the book "much more revolutionary and much more interesting than those that Champ Libre had already published on Ireland and Italy,

²¹ Both had been published by Champ Libre: in 1975 and 1976, respectively.

²² See <http://www.notbored.org/semprun-17December1976.html> for our translation of this letter from Semprun to Debord.

²³ Debord was not Semprun's friend but not *necessarily* his enemy; Debord tended to attack his enemies publicly and did not ignore them or work against them, behind the scenes; the rejection of a third book, even after the acceptance of the prior two, doesn't mean that the *fourth* one will also be rejected, it might be accepted; etc.

²⁴ *Author's note*: letter from Debord to Semprun dated 26 December 1976.

[*Translator*: <http://www.notbored.org/debord-26December1976.html>.]

²⁵ In between this remark and the next one that the author will quote ("much more revolutionary . . ."), Debord wrote to Semprun: "I have said, daring an example by touches me personally, that the value of 'The Explosion Point of Ideology in China' (a text too short to be a book) didn't reside in its anti-Maoist radicalism, but in the fact that it revealed for the first time the essentials of what had been happening in China, by giving a coherent explanation, exhaustive in the principal details, of several events that everyone had presented as *unexplainable* (there is much of *this type* of merit in *The Social War*), an explanation that has been confirmed by all that has happened in the last nine years and that was written in a tone of the original epoch." (Letter of 26 December 1976).

to say nothing of the horrors said about Germany” (letter of 26 December 1976). But all the same, if Lebovici believed the book to be not as good as Jaime’s prior two, then he’d done well to reject it. At the time, Debord was more focused on Italy, after having translated the *Truthful Report*,²⁶ and Lebovici mentioned it in passing, as an example of what one might do in Spain.²⁷ It is true that Debord loved Gracián and Jorge Manrique,²⁸ but he didn’t know the country or its dangerous classes, nor did he know what was going on between the Francoist apparatus and the Stalinist “democratic” opposition, apart from what he’d read in the newspapers. He didn’t know the enormous problem that the workers’ movement, freed from the bureaucrats, posed for the reformists. The trip he made with Pierre Lepetit in 1969 had taken place too early, before the events in question took place. And those trips that he made afterwards took place too late (he went to Seville in 1983),²⁹ with the result that his lucidity wasn’t especially brilliant during

²⁶ *Author’s note*: “*Truthful Report on the Last Chances to Save Capitalism in Italy*, published in Milan in 1975 and signed by Censor, a pseudonym behind which one supposed that there hid an enlightened conservative or a cynical reactionary or even a leftist politician. The *Report*, which was actually written by the ex-situationist Gianfranco Sanguinetti, advised the practice of State terrorism in the framework of a strategy of tension as the sole means of saving capitalism.” [Translator: “*aconsejaba el terrorismo de Estado dentro de una estrategia de la tensión como medio único de salvación capitalista*” is a poor, even a misleading description of the *Report*, which advised the *cessation* of the practice of “State terrorism in the framework of a strategy of tension,” which had been going on since 1969, and claimed that “the sole means of saving capitalism” was completing the “historic compromise” with the Italian Communist Party.]

²⁷ Cf. Semprun’s letter to Debord dated 17 December 1976: “Lebovici argues that it is a question of a ‘work of combat,’ a ‘militant’ brochure, as opposed to an exhaustive and scientific book – he strangely gave Censor as an example – which is what suits a serious publishing house such as Champ Libre.”

²⁸ After Debord’s suicide in 1994, *Le temps qu’il fait* published *Stances sur la mort de son père*, which was Guy Debord’s translation of some of Manrique’s poetry from Castilian into French.

²⁹ *Author’s note*: At the time of the campaign in favor of the prisoners in Segovia (1980-1981), Debord situated them at the center of the Spanish social question, when they were in fact a marginal and mixed phenomenon, and this after the La Moncloa Pacts and the liquidation of the assemblies that had been legalized by the new *Estatuto de los trabajadores* (“Workers’ Statute,” which should in fact be called the “Statute Against the Workers”). The majority of the prisoners got out after having served their time, and not thanks to the efficaciousness of the songs

the campaign in favor of the prisoners in Segovia. Nevertheless, his ignorance did not prevent him from “passing on” [*dejar pasar*] Lebovici’s refusal. Jaime believed that he had placed himself in a bad position by reproaching Debord for a hostility that, in his letters, presented itself as a simple difference of opinion or as a frivolous question of taste, and Jaime took time off for a kind of self-critique – such was the respect that he felt for the one [Debord] who had for a moment approached the global revolution and who had subsequently been left out of the festivities, or such was his generosity towards this ill-fated friendship. Relations with Debord, sometimes stormy, sometimes peaceful, continued.³⁰

Champ Libre’s rejection didn’t discourage us, but time was pressing: the transformation of the Francoist regime into European-style parliamentarianism was advancing at a forced march. For my part, I was disposed to give up my exile and return to Spain to see what could be done there, while Jaime didn’t have sufficient contacts to get the *Manuscrito* published in a dignified way. This is why we decided to reduce the book’s size and publish it as a pamphlet, which is also what we did with the *Campaign*, but this time in Spain. I eliminated the quotations from the *Campaign*; I divided the text into two halves, added a quote from the Friends of Durruti at the start of the second part; I translated the whole into Spanish and finished it off by adding several lines that connected the passages. The signature remained “Los Incontrolados.” On the back, I placed the note from the *Campaign* with the text “What One Must Know about Los Incontrolados.”³¹ Jaime put the icing on the cake when, at the Bibliothèque Nationale, he found the original quotation by Donoso Cortés that he used to open the volume and that obsessed him (“When legality is sufficient to save society, then legality; when it is not sufficient, dictatorship”: speech of 4 January 1849). Apologizing for his attention to detail, he would say, “Nothing is too beautiful for the proletariat.”

Upon my return to Barcelona, without a penny to my name, I didn’t have any problem finding a printer to publish the book. This was May 1977. In a borrowed car, I went on a tour through several towns, accompanied by three

written by Debord so that they could be sung by the revolutionary workers (sic). [Translator: “no por la eficacia de las canciones escritas por Debord para que las cantasen los trabajadores revolucionarios” is rather inaccurate: Debord wrote a pair of songs to be recorded by a specific singer, on a specific album, not sung “by the revolutionary workers,” as if Debord fancied himself to be the revolution’s musical director; and, when it came to obtaining the release of the prisoners, Debord did more than write a pair of songs.]

³⁰ It would do so until 1987, when it finally ended, stormily.

Cf. <http://www.notbored.org/debord-8April1987a.html>.

³¹ Cf. <http://www.notbored.org/vitoria.html>.

friends, so we could place copies of the book in the stores. One cannot say that the *Manuscrito* was a great success, but it did not go unnoticed. In December, a French translation appeared in Toulouse, which inspired Jaime to publish the original version [which was in French] in the journal published by Roger Langlais and Bernard Pêcheur, *L'Assommoir*, in fact, in the same issue in which his defense of the Portuguese workers' revolution against the "demoralizing syllogisms" of the ultra-Left appeared.³² In 1979, there was another edition, this time in England, under the auspices of the Wise brothers.³³ In 1981, a third volume by the "Incontrolados" appeared,³⁴ but the end of the autonomous workers' movement and the disappearance of the assemblies from the radical scene blocked theoretical debate and buried the memory of the class struggles of the epoch under tons of official history, told by all the media outlets. Nevertheless, the return of social struggle fed interest in the *Manuscrito*, photocopied innumerable times, republished twice,³⁵ and – unavoidably, in the current moment – published on the Internet. The *Manuscrito* continues to be so disturbing that the aesthetes who work for [the forces of] domination believed it would be a good idea to try to render the book banal by presenting it as a work of art at a repugnant exposition.³⁶

For this new edition, we have sought to introduce the reader to the atmosphere of the era, by concentrating upon the early vicissitudes, the revolutionary and theoretical trajectories, of the author of the *Manuscrito*, who died in August 2010 and who left behind an indelible memory among all those

³² *Author's note: L'Assommoir*, number 3, Paris, 1979. In this same issue, there was an announcement of a mysterious "Encyclopédie des Nuisances." [*Translator*: that would be the formation of the EdN group, which didn't become an editorial collective and begin publishing its eponymous journal until 1984.]

³³ *Wildcat Spain Encounters Democracy 1976-1978* (London: BM bis, no date). According to the publisher's notes, "the theoretical texts . . . collected here . . . [were] translated and compiled London/Lisbon 1978/79." This is the source of the text that, ever since 2001, has appeared at <http://www.notbored.org/vitoria.html>. Because the translation read as if it were a very literal one, done in a word-for-word fashion, it required substantial editorial revision of its syntax and grammar before we could publish it. A brand-new translation would seem to be called for.

³⁴ *Revelaciones sobre el proceso de descomposición del Estado español y sobre los métodos aplicados para remediarlo* ["Revelations Concerning the Decomposition Process of the Spanish State and the Methods to Remedy It"]. This pamphlet analyzed the "Transition" that ended with Tejero's coup.

³⁵ *Author's note*: in 1999 by Literatura Gris and in 2004 by Klinamen.

³⁶ *Author's note: Desacuerdos*, at the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, April 2005.

who can congratulate themselves with being his collaborators and friends.

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<http://losincontrolados.blogspot.com.es/2014/02/preface-de-miguel-amoros-la-reedition.html>.

NOT BORED!’s *The Revolution, Now and Forever: Miguel Amorós’ Preface to the New Edition of Jaime Semprun’s ‘Manuscript Found in Vitoria’* is a translation of “*La révolution maintenant et toujours*” into English. Crosschecked for accuracy against the Spanish original. Posted to <http://www.notbored.org/manuscrito.html> on 6 March 2014. All footnotes and bracketed parentheses [thus] are by the translator, except where noted.