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The Geopolitical Worldview of Aginter Press: a State-Backed Anticommunist Private Network in the Cold War

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Abstract

During the Cold War, a constellation of state-backed private networks emerging from diverse right-wing milieus operated across Western countries to produce and circulate anti-communist propaganda. One such network was Aginter Press, active under Portugal's Salazarist authoritarian regime. Although frequently mentioned in the historiography of political violence, Aginter Press remains poorly understood, particularly regarding its intellectual and geopolitical production, as opposed to its better-known paramilitary activities.

This article addresses this gap by examining Aginter Press's ideological and geopolitical output through a previously unstudied archive of its publications. By reconstructing its analytical frameworks and representations of international conflicts, the article reassesses Aginter Press's position within the broader landscape of Cold War right-wing anticommunism. The findings

challenge interpretations that depict Aginter Press as a neo-fascist clandestine organization or as a residual expression of the international fascisms defeated in 1945. Instead, the article argues that Aginter Press functioned as a state-backed private network embedded in transnational far-right circuits, whose worldview largely aligned with mainstream Cold War anti-communist paradigms. By situating Aginter Press within its wider political and geopolitical context, this study contributes to a clearer understanding of the interplay between authoritarian states, private networks, and ideological production within the Western anti-communist camp.

Keywords: Cold War; Anticommunism; State-private networks; Aginter Press

Introduction: Aginter Press as a countersubversive state-private network

The Cold War was a crucial period during which state and non-state actors collaborated to implement a wide range of projects aimed at countering political, social, and cultural phenomena perceived as domestic or international threats (van Dongen, Roulin and Scott-Smith 2014; Laville and Wilford 2006). That collaboration was not defined by rigid state control over non-state actors, but rather by the state's provision of a strategic framework and coordination that extended beyond the capacities of any single individual or group (Lucas 2003). These kinds of activities took diverse forms and served multiple functions (Cunningham 2003), relying on state–private networks that targeted areas deemed particularly vulnerable to subversion—such as universities, intellectual circles, the media, trade unions, and social movements (Lucas 2006; Scott-Smith 2011).

Research on these networks has expanded significantly in recent years, generating an extensive set of case studies with a strong emphasis on North America and Western Europe. Yet the intellectual and geopolitical frameworks promoted by non-state actors aligned with Western regimes remain understudied. In addition, the literature has largely privileged democratic contexts, overlooking Western authoritarian regimes, whose importance in structuring transnational flows of ideas, practices, and resources during the Cold War was nonetheless decisive (Dubler and Großmann 2024). While a considerable body of literature has emphasized the terrorist and paramilitary dimensions of transnational networks (Gerlach 2020) operating under the aegis of authoritarian right-wing regimes, scholarship has tended to underestimate their role in producing and circulating

geopolitical analyses that framed the global struggle against communism (Boholavsky and Brocheta 2020).

Among the Iberian authoritarian regimes, the case of Spain has attracted some scholarly attention (del Hierro 2022; Calleja 2017). In contrast, the case of Portugal remains largely underexplored, despite the country's crucial relevance to Cold War dynamics, namely due to the war in Africa (1961–1974) which makes the *Estado Novo* authoritarian regime a relevant case for understanding the intellectual dimension of these networks between state and non-state actors in the formation of an anti-communist geopolitical worldview.

Salazar's regime fostered state–private counter-subversive networks operating domestically and internationally, involving security agencies, military actors, right-wing extremists, and foreign partners. Yet existing scholarship has largely reduced this phenomenon to the activities of the PIDE/DGS, overlooking the broader ecosystem of actors and practices. By contrast, very limited attention has been devoted to one of the most intriguing non-state networks operating in Portugal during the final decade of the authoritarian regime, Aginter Press, whose activities both in the Metropole and in the African colonies were conceived and articulated with explicit reference to the broader international counter-subversive landscape (Pimentel 2025; Tíscar 2014; Jesus 2012). Founded by Yves Guérin-Sérac and former *Organisation armée secrète* (OAS, Secret Army Organisation) refugees in Portugal, Aginter Press established networks in France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy, promoting global anti-communist (Baxa 2025; Calleja 2018; Albanese and del Hierro 2016). The organization has been interpreted in diverse ways: some authors consider it the Portuguese branch of the secret NATO-linked "stay-behind" network that operated across Western Europe during the Cold War (Guerra 2025; Jesus 2015; Ganser 2005), while others associate it with PIDE/DGS, portraying it as the Portuguese cell of an international fascist network with transnational reach (de Castro 2024). Archival and documentary evidence highlights its operational capacity, revealing the involvement of numerous collaborators linked to Italian groups responsible for the wave of "black terrorism" and its close connections with foreign structures, controlled by the secret services (Marone 2025; Ventrone 2022; Tobagi 2022; Ravelli 2021; Bale 2017; Gomes 2014).

Functionally, Aginter Press acted as an intelligence and political organization, targeting individuals and groups deemed enemies of Portugal, particularly in its African territories (Albanese 2024; Marchi 2019; Lucat 2018; Roberts 2017; Jesus 2012; Ferraresi 1996). Operating

under the cover of a news agency, it trained far-right militants in clandestine warfare, sabotage, and terrorism, while serving as a nexus connecting former Nazi operatives, OAS veterans, and neo-fascist groups across Southern Europe (Guerra 2023; Schir 2022; Hänni 2020; Picco 2018; Piccoli 2025). Overall, existing academic studies have offered a rather schematic and empirically limited portrayal of Aginter Press: an anti-communist, neofascist organization that functioned as a transnational hub for clandestine training, political destabilization, and coordination among extremist networks. By contrast, Aginter Press constitutes a particularly valuable case for examining the intellectual production of counter-subversive networks, notably their geopolitical analyses designed to influence public opinion through the diffusion of an anti-communist worldview. For this reason, Aginter Press deserves far more empirically grounded attention, capable of situating its activities within the broader transnational dynamics of Cold War anti-communism. An in-depth analysis of Aginter Press's intellectual production thus allows for a more nuanced understanding of how state and non-state actors jointly constructed European perceptions of internal and external threats, and how these perceptions translated into the transnational engagement of private networks in counter-subversive activities across Western Europe.

Methodology and Research Outline

The objective of this paper is to deepen scholarly understanding of Aginter Press by analyzing a range of international conflicts and geopolitical developments during the 1960s and 1970s, which serve as the lens through which the worldview propagated by the organization can be more fully grasped, particularly within the Cold War context where anti-communist and pro-Western positions were most actively contested. This study assess Aginter Press's intellectual and countersubversive production, examining how its analyses sought to equip anti-communist activists, journalists, intellectuals, and politicians with ideologically grounded interpretations of global events, conceived as tools to strengthen their engagement within their respective spheres of action. By investigating this dimension, the paper aims to reconstruct the organization's world vision and its role in shaping transnational anti-communist discourses.

Methodologically, the research is based on a private archive of documents produced by Aginter Press and preserved by the Portuguese far-right militant Luís Fernandes Carasso (1947-2019), who maintained close links with the organization during the 1960s and 1970s. Mr. Carasso,

ideologically aligned with neofascism, participated from a young age in several nationalist organizations of the Salazar regime—namely, the *Mocidade Portuguesa* and the *Legião Portuguesa*—as well as in far-right student movements such as *Movimento Jovem Portugal*, the *Frente Nacional Revolucionária*, and the *Movimento Vanguardista*. While studying in Paris in the mid-1960s, he collaborated with the PIDE as an informant, monitoring Portuguese émigré circles in France and facilitating communication between informants in North Africa and the political police in Lisbon. He later served as a paratrooper in Mozambique during the colonial war and, following almost two years of imprisonment in a FRELIMO concentration camp, fled to Spain after the Portuguese democratic transition. There, he joined the final activities of the clandestine far-right organization *Exêrcito de Libertação de Portugal* (ELP), where Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and French neofascists, including members of Aginter Press, collaborated.

The Luís Fernandes Carasso archive comprises twenty-two Aginter Press bulletins, fourteen official letters addressed to the organization's correspondents worldwide, and eight geopolitical special reports, which together provide a unique foundation for exploring the intellectual and ideological dimensions of Aginter Press's transnational anti-communist project. Finally, this archive is supplemented with additional bulletins published by Aginter Press recovered during a raid conducted against the Italian neo-fascist group Europa Civiltà. These documents were rendered accessible to researchers following their digitization by the archivists with the Casa della Memoria in Brescia, Italy.

The article is structured in two main sections. The first outlines the genesis of Aginter Press, its scope, and the transnational web it cultivated, highlighting the diversity of its activities and the range of actors involved. The second section examines the organization's geopolitical worldview through an analysis of primary source documents, focusing on three central pillars: a nuanced anti-communism, a vigilant anti-liberalism, and a commitment to defending the West, including its presence in Africa under colonial and racially hierarchical regimes.

Aginter Press: Origins, Structure, and Liaisons

Aginter Press was founded in Lisbon in 1966 by Yves Guérin-Sérac. Officially registered in April 1970 as *Société Aginter – agency of press and publishing*, the initiative originated with Maria da Paz Barros Santos, a prominent radio journalist who had assumed leadership of the informational

sector of the *Emissora Nacional*—the authoritarian regime's public broadcaster—at the end of the 1950s and later directed the nationalist program *A Voz do Ocidente*. Conceived as a press agency, the Aginter Press project was explicitly devoted to disseminating Portugal's narrative on the African conflicts within a broad transnational milieu of anticommunist publications, targeting Catholic, nationalist, ultraconservative, and far-right outlets worldwide rather than mainstream media (Marchi 2013). For this reason, the first headquarters of Aginter Press was located at the premises of *Emissora Nacional* at Rua do Quelhas n.2, Lisbon, later moving to a property in Lapa neighborhood (Lisbon) offered by Commander René Vallantin—a central figure in the French refugee network and a trusted intermediary with Portuguese authorities. This relocation illustrates the informal, yet decisive support provided by individuals embedded in the *Estado Novo*'s authoritarian structures. Aginter Press did not operate in isolation. Its emergence and consolidation can be traced to the first half of the 1960s, when OAS refugees arrived in Portugal, assisted by former French far-right militants in Lisbon who had fled the collapsed Vichy regime after 1945. These newcomers were supported by Portuguese far-right networks, including the *Legião Portuguesa* and *Movimento Jovem Portugal*, which provided safe houses and logistical support. When Aginter Press began to formalize its structures under the leadership of Maria da Paz Barros, it also started receiving backing from key sectors of the *Estado Novo*, including the PIDE/DGS and senior officials in the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. Figures such as Vallantin played a central role, facilitating safe houses, visa arrangements, and liaison with the PIDE. Portuguese far-right militants viewed Aginter Press as part of a broader European crusade against communism and decolonization. This convergence of French exiles, Portuguese radicals, and segments of the authoritarian state was crucial to Aginter Press's survival, expansion, and its capacity to operate transnationally.

Although presented as a press agency, Aginter quickly evolved into a covert operational center. It provided cover identities and journalist accreditations for former OAS militants and other radical activists, enabling international mobility and clandestine missions. Its activities included psychological warfare, sabotage, and counter-guerrilla training, aligning with Portugal's counter-subversion strategy during the colonial wars. Some operations involved infiltration of African liberation movements and participation in conflicts such as Biafra. Over time, Aginter expanded its scope, connecting with transnational anti-communist networks such as the World Anti-Communist League (WACL). In this phase, Aginter resembled NATO's "Stay Behind" structures

rather than neo-Nazi networks like Odessa. Lisbon thus became a strategic node in the global Cold War confrontation, where ideological militancy intersected with pragmatic collaboration. The *Estado Novo* regime tolerated, and at times supported, Aginter Press because its activities aligned with Portugal's strategic interests in Africa and its broader anti-communist agenda. However, this support was never fully official; it operated through informal channels and selective financing. The agency's ability to function depended on the regime's willingness to integrate radical networks into its counter-subversion strategy while maintaining plausible deniability in international diplomacy.

After the Carnation Revolution in April 1974, Aginter Press's archives were seized by the military but later disappeared, leaving significant gaps in reconstructing its full operational history. Nonetheless, the evidence underscores that Aginter Press was not an isolated initiative but a product of the intersection between French far-right exiles, Portuguese authoritarian institutions, and radical nationalist activism. Its trajectory illustrates how Portugal served as a sanctuary and operational hub for transnational anti-communist networks during the late Cold War.

The question as to how extensive the Aginter Press network was, and how influential the actors they engaged with were, remains unclear due in part to the lack of primary sources. However, declassified court documents and private archives make retracing a portion of these liaisons possible. For example, one 1975 report from the *Serviço de Coordenação de Informações* (SDCI), a transitional-period Portuguese secret service that operated after the fall of the Salazar regime and was controlled by far-left military factions, summarizes part of the liaisons between the organization and external collaborators by using primary source documents found in the Aginter Press and PIDE/DGS archives.[1] Here, a list of journalists who corresponded with Aginter members include: Giano Accame, Italian right-wing editor of the magazine *Il Borghese* and member of the neo-fascist party *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, Suzanne Labin, French socialist and anti-communist writer, Gerard Hupin, Belgian royalist politician and founder of the newspaper *La Nation Belge*, Miguel Loria, pseudonym of Argentinian journalist and informant for the Spanish Falange named Víctor Hugo Bruni Albrieux, and William F. Buckley Jr., American conservative writer and founder of the *National Review* (Cerrano 2014).[2] This latter correspondence is of note not only due to the key role Buckley played in the consolidation of the American conservative movement

[1] "Aginter Press," in CdM, Corte di Assise di Milano, Annotazioni di Procuratore Generale, Faldone Rosa 024, Allegati 1-30, Allegato N.2, n.d., n.p.
[2] Ibid, p. 65-68.

but the fact this correspondence can be corroborated (Nash 2006). In October of 1967, Jay Salby, the only known American member of Aginter Press, contacted the *National Review* founder regarding the possibility for Buckley to interview King Faisal of Saudi Arabia.[3] Salby identifies himself as "the representative of Aginter Press of Lisbon in Madrid" and that for its correspondents "it is customary to obtain the representation of a foreign anti-communist newspaper or magazine for the interior Portuguese press card" further adding that:

> As we work shoulder to shoulder with the Portuguese government in many things that are more inclined to sword than pen, we only do this to openly conform to interior regulations. All that is required is a letter authorizing me as your correspondent in Lisbon. Naturally I will send you through your brother anything of interest for [the] *National Review* and of course do not propose to collect one cent for anything I do.[4]

This document underscores two important aspects of Aginter Press's *modus operandi*. Firstly, it highlights how Aginter Press members indeed did, by their own admission, work with the Salazar regime in an armed capacity and that it sought ties with other anti-communist publications, not exclusively for the sake of information sharing but also to provide its agents with journalistic cover. While the ties listed here don't indicate that the individuals who exchanged information with Aginter Press fully endorsed their worldview nor were they entirely aware of its members' activities, it does indicate which writers and publications shared, at least according to Aginter Press members, a friendly ideological disposition towards theirs. Regarding the question of how influential Aginter Press's reports were, little information exists aside from one instance where it is cited by Louisiana congressman John R. Rarick as a "Lisbon-located international intelligence digest" in a speech given in the House of Representatives in October 1968 on the Black Panther Party.[5] Thus, from these few documents it is possible to parse together a picture of Aginter Press

[3] "Jay Salby to William F. Buckley, Jr.," October 26, 1967, *William F. Buckley, Jr. Papers* (MS 576), Series I, General Correspondence, 1944–1969, Manuscripts and Archives, Box 45, Yale University Library; Salby mentions that he knew Buckley's brother Reid and that Salby's contact was "his majesties' ambassador in Brussels."
[4] Ibidem; Buckley would confirm Salby's appointment as *National Review's* correspondent in Portugal on November 22nd of that same year.
[5] John R. Rarick. *The Anatomy of a Revolut*ion, October 8, 1968, Extensions of Remarks, 90th Congress – 2nd Session, Congress.gov.

as both an armed organization working for the Salazar regime and an anti-communists intelligence digest with a global reach.

Aginter Press as a propaganda organ for transnational anti-communism.

Aginter Press positioned itself as an international anti-communist propaganda service, publishing detailed bi-monthly bulletins, under the header *veritas ubique* (truth everywhere), and reports of global affairs filtered through its ideological lens allowing its subscribers to draw on a corpus of detailed reports to help them interpret current events. In fact, in an undated report sent to Aginter correspondents, the organization explicitly states its intention is to aid a "worried elite, increasingly aware of its civic responsibilities," to "orient themselves in the present and thus better foresee the future." The report continues, adding that Aginter's "highest ambition" is to form a "society of study and thought [...] united around the fundamental values of Western civilization."[6]

However, what this looked like in practice is not clear from this statement. Therefore, drawing from available Aginter Press reports, we illustrate how the organization acted as an informational service capable of uniting right-wing journalists, politicians, and intellectuals from different ideological traditions in assessing world politics through a distinctly Atlanticist anti-communist perspective. An examination of the corpus of special reports, internal bulletins, and communications circulated to correspondents reveals two overarching and interrelated thematic axes. First, Aginter Press consistently advances a rigidly anti-communist interpretation of geopolitical conflicts, civil wars, and domestic unrest, construing global politics as a Manichaean confrontation between revolutionary communism and a Western world undermined not only by its enemies but also by liberal actors portrayed as politically weak, accommodative, or incapable of effective resistance. Second, the publications articulate a clear alignment with regimes identified as belonging to the "Western world" and with the defense of so-called Western values, which are presented as Aginter Press's primary ideological reference points. Within this framework, actors opposing such regimes—or failing to actively support them—are systematically delegitimized and labeled as Marxists, terrorists, subversives, or manifestations of liberal weakness.

[6] "Aginter Press communication to correspondents," AGP, n.d, n.p. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive. Note that Aginter Press is shortened to AGP in all other endnotes.

Aginter Press and the unmasking of the Twofold Enemy: Communism and Liberalism

Serving as the primary and most consistent theme, anti-communism is the frame through which Aginter Press justifies its endorsement of the various political actors, movements, and governments that it reports on. For example, in an article entitled "Brazil, another Greece" published in January of 1969, the political situation in Brazil following the 1964 military coup is presented as a necessary reaction to the "slow contamination" of the Latin American nation by communists.[7] In fact, the army under the leadership of general Artur da Costa e Silva is presented as the restraining force against "attempts at re-Bolshevization."[8]

Furthermore, the title of this article also is indicative of Aginter Press's support for the Greek colonels' dictatorship which came to power under similar circumstances in 1967 using the excuse of a potential communist takeover to justify its coup d'etat (Kassimeris 2006). Additionally, the article's author draws parallels with the 1964 Brazilian coup and the 1958 putsch in Algeria by the "group of seven," an alliance of right-wing activists and military officers opposed to the independence of Algeria. Here the author writes how the 1964 coup represents "a sort of American version of the 13th of May 1958 in Algeria," comparing the French and Brazilian officers for having both "carefully studied the techniques of Marxist revolutionary political warfare" and "thrown their sword into the debate in order to interrupt the rigorous process."[9] Therefore, from this article alone it is possible to grasp how any intervention against what Aginter Press deems a communist movement or the threat of a communist insurrection is justifiable.

While the opponents of communism are presented as a homogenous group of righteous combatants, the communists themselves are subdivided into different camps by Aginter Press – those being the Soviet camp and Chinese camp. Presented as equally dangerous, the distinction serves to clarify how the readers of Aginter Press's reports ought to view each country and its allies with the USSR representing a geopolitical threat while the PRC presents a more ideological challenge. In an article dated February 28, 1970, this distinction is illustrated as part of a "great schism" within the larger "communist religion."[10] Here the Chinese are presented as having an

[7] "Brésil - une autre Grece," AGP, n. 34, January 15, 1969, p. 1. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[8] "Brésil - une autre Grece," AGP, n. 34, January 15, 1969, p. 4. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[9] "Brésil - une autre Grece," AGP, n. 34, January 15, 1969, p. 2. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[10] "U.R.S.S. - Chine: la Lutte des Imperialistes," AGP, n. 55, February 28, 1970, p. 1, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974; Note, henceforth Casa della Memoria is abbreviated CdM.

advantage over the Soviets in their ability to inspire revolutionary activity in Third World countries who, through their "Maoist ambassadors," export their particular interpretation of Marxism abroad.[11]

Fundamentally, the Aginter Press analyses situate China and Cuba, along with their supporters "dispersed across the continents," as the "true believers of the Marxist religion" thus positioning the USSR as a Marxist state "tempted by secularization [..] by the separation of Church and State in the name of technical efficiency." Consequently, Moscow is described as an "inefficient dictatorship" that no longer believes in the "advent of the paradise promised by Marx."[12] Therefore the challenge presented by the Soviets is geopolitical rather than ideological. Using the invasion of Czechoslovakia and border conflict with the PRC as examples, Aginter Press presents the Soviet Union as an imperial power bent on securing its sphere of influence and its old Tsarist borders rather than a promoter of global revolution.

Still, while this distinction is presented as a means to identify the specific ways in which Soviet and Chinese communism threaten the Western world, Aginter Press reminds its readers of their fundamental similarities writing that:

> Nevertheless, it would be dangerous to mistake the nature of this competition. The Russian and Chinese goals converge [on] the triumph of Marxism. Their tactical ideas are similar: both Russians and Chinese apply, against the Free World, the double game of peaceful coexistence and violent revolution.[13]

However, within the Marxist ideological universe envisioned by the authors of Aginter Press, the dualistic vision of politics between those halting the advance of Soviet and Chinese style communism and those who promote it is still noticeable. Following the appointment of reformist politician Alexander Dubček as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in January of 1968, the government in Prague sought to transition from Soviet-style socialism to a more democratic form of socialism "with a human face" (Bischof, Karner and Ruggenthaler 2010:

[11] "U.R.S.S. - Chine: la Lutte des Imperialistes," AGP, n. 55, February 28, 1970, p. 7, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974.
[12] "Le Grand Echiquier du Monde URSS-Chine-USA-Europe-Tiers Monde" AGP, n. 36, February 28, 1969, p. 2. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[13] "U.R.S.S. - Chine: la Lutte des Imperialistes," AGP, n. 55, February 28, 1970, p. 7, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974.

9). Although a detailed analysis of the Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia lies beyond the scope of this article, it is nonetheless important to note that the conflict opposed reformist actors rallying around Alexander Dubček to hardline factions supported by Moscow. Reflecting this interpretation, Aginter Press's coverage of the 1968 events, notably in the September 1969 article entitled "Return to Stalinism," expressed sympathy for "Czechoslovak youths […] deserving of compassion" for challenging the communist system and portrayed Dubček as a "victim" of the "communist Moloch that devours its children."[14] This description of Dubček, a leading communist politician, as a victim is noteworthy. Regardless of his political sentiments being opposed to those of Aginter Press, he is nonetheless presented as "difficult to blame" for the "serious errors in judgment regarding Soviet imperialism" instead of just another communist opponent.[15] Therefore, Aginter Press presents opposition to the Soviet or Chinese as the most important value that distinguishes between the forces of good and evil, regardless of one ideological background.

While communists are presented by Aginter Press as the main entity threatening the survival of Western civilization, the publication equally attributes the perceived weakness of liberalism as facilitating the rise of communism. The way Aginter Press attacks liberalism is done in either a direct or indirect fashion. Regarding the latter, liberal values and liberal political positions are presented as weak and ill-prepared to combat communist subversion. Here for example, in an article from September 1969 entitled "the Switzerland of America" which discusses the political situation in Uruguay, the Latin American nation is presented as the victim of Marxist infiltration because of its liberal values.[16] The author writes how Uruguay's "social progress, political liberalism, and economic prosperity made the country a land of welcome and hospitality" and "no doubt for these same reasons, so as to better penetrate the South American continent, that Marxist subversion chose Uruguay as its platform."[17] Similarly, in another article from the same bulletin entitled "Students attack Christian Democracy," the Chilean *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* is sardonically described as priding "itself on liberalism: freedom of conscience, freedom of the

[14] "Retour au Stalinisme," AGP, n. 47, September 30, 1969, p. 11-12. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[15] Ibidem.
[16] "La Suisse d'Amérique", AGP, n.46, September 15, 1969, p. 11, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974.
[17] Ibidem.

press, freedom of association, etc" which "even extends to allowing the freedom to plot against the country's security."[18]

To make their position abundantly clear, Aginter Press directly confronts the liberal ideology in an undated special report entitled "Tomorrow what." Here, in a section entitled "The Absurdity of Liberalism" the publication presents the ideology not as a "system" but as a "rule" which "proposes no solutions; it accepts them all."[19] The passage continues with its author arguing that:

> Liberalism [...] disposes of no solution. It allows the void to be filled by parties, each proposing its own. The state becomes the stake in a permanent battle, with alternating victories and defeats. This contradicts the fundamental rule of life in human societies, which is duration. Moreover, there is here a renunciation of intelligence, abandoning its essential duty, which is to guide, correct, order, and give form.[20]

Therefore, the liberal project is deemed by Aginter Press as both empty and ineffective at safeguarding the West against communist subversion as it "is enough [for the liberal] that everything proceeds according to forms reputed to be legal, and necessarily absurd, since their free application may very well lead to the abolition of legality itself."[21] This critique is reminiscent of Cold War conservative philosophers such as James Burnham who, in 1964 had similarly written in his book *Suicide of the West* that liberalism "permits Western civilization to be reconciled to dissolution; and this function its formulas will enable it to serve right through to the very end" (Burnham 2014: 305).

In addition to its criticism of liberalism as an ideology, Aginter Press develops the narrative that certain communists specifically will embed themselves covertly into mainstream parties and movements to present themselves as harmless actors. In the aforementioned article on Brazil from January 15, 1969, "three fronts" were pushing for the "re-bolcheviziation" of Brazil, those being

[18] "Étudiants a l'Assaut de la Democratie Chretienne" AGP, n.46, September 15, 1969, p. 8, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974.
[19] "Demain Quoi" AGP, n.d., p. 8. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[20] Ibidem.
[21] Ibidem.

politicians, students, and clergymen who opposed the military dictatorship.[22] Particular attention is dedicated to the *Frente Ampla* (Broad Front) of Carlos Lacerda, the former Governor of Guanabara and member of the classical liberal center-right party *União Democrática Nacional*. This political movement sought to rally opponents of the regime under President Costa e Silva. Of Lacerda and his front, Aginter Press writes that it is a "simple technique" used to unite "various non-Marxists, called upon to provide temporary reassurance" but once the regime is overthrown then these other forces are discarded while the Marxists take control. Parallels are drawn between the Brazilian front and those created by the Vietnamese, Algerian, and the Africans living under Portuguese rule to push the notion that these liberals are tools of Marxist subversion. The article concludes with the author adding that, in the case that the "operation" fails, then "the great recitation of lamentations begins in all the press organs" with the members of the front being described not as Marxists but as "liberals respectful of fundamental freedoms."[23]

Interestingly a similar approach is undertaken when confronting another belief system anathema to that of Aginter Press – Islamism. In an article dated July 15, 1969 covering the topic of Arab politics, the notion of "Arab liberalism" is confronted directly with the author describing it as "another imposter."[24] The author elaborates on this point stating that "Islam is naturally, fundamentally fanatical" and while it could assume the "appearance of liberalism," this would not last since "societies overtaken by the Muslim wave had no other choice than to become pariahs or to convert."[25] Thus, Aginter Press deems the liberal ideology, its values, or lack thereof, and those who profess themselves to be liberals as a threat against Western civilization, albeit one less existential than that presented by communism.[26]

Aginter Press and the defense of Western hegemony: illiberal Atlanticism and anti-decolonization

[22] "Brésil - une autre Grece," AGP, n. 34, January 15, 1969, p. 2. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[23] Ibidem.
[24] "Sur la Civilisation dite Arabe," AGP, n. 44, July 15, 1969, p. 4. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[25] Ibidem.
[26] Additionally, the so-called liberal press is attacked by AGP. In a report from November of 1969, the publication argues that the "major European press" is "clearly marked by a left-leaning liberalism" which results in a biased presentation of news emanating from the United States and Latin America. Specifically, these European news agencies are criticized for their consistent reproduction of articles published by the *New York Times*, a newspaper that AGP characterizes "of a pro-communist tendency" (see "L'information conditionnee," AGP, n. 50, November 15, 1969, p. 18. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive).

Along with anti-communism, the second major throughline present in the Aginter Press reports was a strict belief that Western values had to be safeguarded both in the West, namely Europe and North America, but also in areas strategically important to Westerners, such as Africa and Latin America. Fundamentally, this translates into a worldview informed by limited Atlanticism and anti-decolonialism where the United States and NATO are assessed positively to the extent that they are seen as guarantors of Western interests, whereas white-ruled African regimes, including apartheid South Africa, are presented as legitimate and necessary allies in the global struggle against communism.

The status allocated to NATO in the reports published by Aginter Press is positive. However, a close inspection presents a positive frame in so far as NATO operates as a foil against communism in Europe. For example, in an article published in February of 1970, the author argues that the dissolution of the Atlantic pact would "allow [the Soviet Union] to spread revolutionary struggle more effectively in Europe, eventually seize power in a country like Italy, and above all to block what they see as a threatening danger, the unity of Europe."[27] This thesis is elaborated in an article published October 15th of the following year where Aginter Press argues that the policy of détente with the Soviet Union is nothing more than a "trap" and that the possibility for NATO's elimination as a step towards rekindling ties between the East and West "would create a dangerous imbalance in favor of Moscow" and "remove the United States from the defense of Western Europe."[28] Thus these articles paint a picture of NATO as a useful entity to protect the West against communism. While these statements certainly indicate that Aginter Press is supportive of NATO, it would be incorrect to frame them as total Atlanticists. In an article entitled "NATO and the Reduction of Forces," published in the same edition as the previous article, the alliance is described as having "lost much of its cohesion and authority" after the French withdrawal in 1966 with its lack of action during the Prague Spring demonstrating this.[29] In the concluding paragraph, the author spells out the threat that NATO plays by rendering Western Europeans complacent, writing that:

[27] "Detente = Dislocation de l'OTAN," AGP, n. 54, February 15, 1970, p. 14, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.
[28] "Le Dossier de l'ouverture à l'Est" AGP, n. 39, October 15, 1971, p. 8, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974.
[29] "L'OTAN et la Reduction des Forces" AGP, n. 39, October 15, 1971, p. 13, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ," December 12, 1974.

> If Moscow decided to attack Western Europe, European forces would be quickly overwhelmed. And the United States, thinking of recalling its troops, might be tempted to do so. NATO is an illusory alliance that now deceives only the Europeans themselves.[30]

Similarly, the United States is presented in a manner that is positive as long as it safeguards so-called Western interests. In an article published in February of 1971, the Nixon administration's "Vietnamization" strategy is praised as a sensible strategy to ensure communism remains contained in South Asia without the continued presence of the American military.[31] The author writes how "Nixon's policy [is] aimed to assign greater political responsibility to his Southeast Asian allies" while providing "all necessary logistical assistance, including technical, specialist, and military advisory support."[32] When compared to the aforementioned article on the apparent disservice NATO plays to the European Western powers by allowing them to foster complacency, here Nixon, and consequently American foreign policy, is praised on the basis of its anti-communist underlying poster that understands the necessity for regional and national independence. Still, this analysis is foiled by the critical coverage of the United States with examples including Washington's 1966 sanctions on Rhodesia which resulted in the United States having to import its chromium from the Soviet Union.[33]

Although Aginter Press extends only critical and conditional support to the United States and NATO, it explicitly endorses the white-ruled regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa, together with the Portuguese colonial government, framing them as central bastions of Western values on the African continent. This is done explicitly in an article dated May 31, 1970, with Aginter Press stating that, unlike the French government which gave up its holdings in Asia and Africa in the late 1950s, Rhodesia "is a heroic example" of a nation refusing to capitulate to subversive "Marxist totalitarianism" as is also Salazar's Portugal "another European example of the same refusal."[34]

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[30] Ibidem.
[31] "La nouvelle guerre d'Indochine," AGP, n. 26, February 15, 1971, p. 12-13, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.
[32] "La nouvelle guerre d'Indochine", AGP, n. 26, February 15, 1971, p. 13, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.
[33] "Une Constitution d'equilibre," AGP, n. 56, March 15, 1970, p. 14, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.
[34] "Sur le discours du Président Nixon," AGP, n. 60, May 31, 1970, p. 11, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

Special attention is dedicated to the issue of apartheid, that is the policy or racial segregation that existed between Whites and Blacks in South Africa however the same term is used in the Aginter Press analysis to describe similar policies implemented in Rhodesia. In an article entitled "Mr. U Thant Protests" published in July of 1969, Aginter Press reacted to the comments of the Secretary General of the United Nations against the referendum in Rhodesia to become a republic. Mr. Thant, who in his comments described the nascent republic as racist, is attacked and his ideas described as "gibberish."[35] On the contrary, the article goes on to defend Rhodesian policies describing apartheid as a temporary solution to prevent the murder of White citizens from Black reprisals adding that the murders of ethnic Indians in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania serve as examples as to why apartheid is necessary. This is spelled out explicitly in the final paragraph:

> There is hope that when the passions inflamed by the absurdity of blind world dictatorship are extinguished or calmed, it will be possible to reconcile the races. Alas, this is impossible today because the Marxist world has made racial hatred an element of its strategy, and because the blindness of the colored masses has led them to adhere to deception. Time must be gained. This is the meaning of Rhodesia and apartheid."[36]

After the proclamation of the Rhodesian Republic on March 2, 1970, Aginter Press defends the country's constitution against accusations of white supremacy from the "biased and accusatory" press by instead arguing that it was written "with the idea of preventing the European minority from being crushed by an African population more than ten times larger in number, it also appears to have been established in a spirit of justice and balance." Thus, the apartheid regime is framed as an egalitarian one that seeks to promote "equality between the two communities" and not one based on a two-tier judicial system.[37]

Rhodesia however is not the only country whose segregationist policies are discussed as the initiatives of the South African government under prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd are similarly

[35] "M. U. - Thant Proteste …," AGP, n. 44, July 15, 1969, p. 8. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive. To be more precise, the word "charabia" is used which roughly means the individual is speaking Arabic and cannot be comprehended.
[36] "M. U. - Thant Proteste …," AGP, n. 44, July 15, 1969, p. 9. In Luís Fernandes Carasso Archive.
[37] "Une Constitution d'équilibre", AGP, n. 56, March 15, 1970, p. 12, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

praised. In an article entitled "South Africa: Apartheid and Elections" the topic of apartheid is again confronted directly and once again presented as a necessary measure. Here it is argued that the "provisional solution found by South Africans was separate development [...] but this does not mean separating groups by force. Rather, it means avoiding conflicts, and respecting peoples who are naturally separated by their history."[38] South African style apartheid is again praised in special report released in January of 1971 entitled "Under the Sign of Violence," where it is elaborated that "the great merit of apartheid is to recognize facts as they are: blacks, whites, Indians, and mixed-race people from different societies with different internal structures and no easily discernible common denominator" and that "mixing these communities indiscriminately would risk dramatic explosions."[39] Therefore, apartheid and similar restrictive policies are deemed by Aginter Press as necessary measures that prevent Black African citizens, newly emancipated from the oppressive and segregationist regimes, from murdering non-Blacks and turning into satellite states for the Soviet Union. It is based on these fears that Aginter Press advocates for the preservation of supremacist regimes in Africa.

The primary threat against those regimes that Aginter Press favors are naturally the anti-colonial liberation movements. While different movements informed by unique ideological beliefs existed and at times clashed amongst each other, Aginter Press frames them equally as subversive Marxists, terrorists, and anti-white movements that cannot be bargained with. For example, in an article dated March 15, 1970 covering the elections in Lesotho, the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) is presented as "pro-Chinese" and its leader Ntsu Mokhehle as a politician that "never hid his communist sympathies" who was "seduced by Beijing."[40] This analysis paints a picture of the BCP using broad strokes that fail to capture the unique dynamics present within the party which was primarily informed by anti-colonialism and pan-African unity than any particular ideology (Grilli 2025). In the same article, similar accusations are leveled against the African National Congress (ANC), the political party in South Africa that is best known for its opposition to apartheid. While the ANC was allied with the South African Communist Party to contrast white supremacy, it by no means sought to bring about Marxist-Leninist regime (Gauger 2017).

[38] "Afrique du Sud: Apartheid et élections," AGP, n. 59, April 30, 1970, p. 12, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

[39] "L'Afrique Européenne", AGP, January, 1971, p. 15, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

[40] "Lesotho : L'enjeu d'une bataille électorale", AGP, n. 56, March 15, 1970, p. 7-8, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

Regardless, Aginter Press plays on these liaisons to present the movement as communist adjacent threat that had "long sought to develop subversion in South Africa."[41]

Additionally, in an analysis of the Portuguese colonial wars entitled "Portuguese Africa Stands Firm" Aginter Press praises the government in Lisbon against the anti-colonial rebels, which are framed as "terrorists." In the article, the author argues that "the vast pacification operation launched two years ago has borne fruit," presenting the Portuguese as fully in control of their overseas possessions in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea.[42] This analysis presents another case of Aginter Press broadly applying negative frames to discredit all anti-colonial activists as a security threat.

These attacks are not exclusively leveled against groups but also against individual actors. For example, Kenneth Kaunda, first president of Zambia and head of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), is described as resting his "humanist doctrine" on "anti-European racism" and that his country has been "transformed into a base for training and attacks not only against Rhodesia, but also against South Africa, Mozambique, and Angola."[43] Kaunda, who was an Anglican schoolteacher prior to his political activity, is described by Aginter Press as adopting a Christian humanist facade to what they call Marxist politics. As the author writes:

> The Zambian president does not conceal his doctrinal foundations, openly acknowledging that he found them in the struggle against colonialism, racism, and capitalism, each described as forms of the exploitation of man by man.[44]

However, this intransigent view of the three countries analyzed above and their policies towards their Black population was not unique to Aginter Press, rather it was a characteristic present in the writings and policies of other anti-communist conservatives. While not pursuing a policy of full normalization, the Nixon Doctrine of 1969 advocated for closer ties with the so-called "White

[41] "Lesotho : L'enjeu d'une bataille électorale," AGP, n. 56, March 15, 1970, p. 8, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

[42] "L'Afrique Européenne", AGP, January, 1971, p. 17-18, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

[43] "Zambie: La pente socialiste de Monsieur Kaunda," AGP, n. 73, March 15, 1971, p. 12-13, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

[44] "Zambie: La pente socialiste de Monsieur Kaunda," AGP, n. 73, March 15, 1971, p. 12, in CdM, Tribunale di Milano, Pr. N. 874/74-A.G.I., Cart n. 22, Fasc n. 66, "Sequestro presso sede di EUROPA CIVILTÀ", December 12, 1974.

Redoubt" to contrast the spread of communism in the region. Indeed, Nixon himself was animated by the belief that built a pro-Western and anti-communist which demanded respect from the United States, not hostility (Michel 2020). Similarly, writing in 1963 for the *National Review*, William F. Buckley describes apartheid as "the spook word of the '60s" arguing the notion that the "Bantu [Black South Africans] could participate in power on equal terms with the whites is the worst kind of ideological and social romance."[45] In a similar vein to Aginter Press, Buckley writes that the decision to provide one man one vote would result in the "elimination in South Africa of Western civilization."[46] However, Buckley does acknowledge the cruelty of apartheid yet ultimately describes it as the only workable solution.

This sort of sentiment did not represent a fluke for the publication since American conservative political philosopher Russell Kirk had already written in 1965 that racism was not the issue facing South Africa, but how to govern a multiracial country when only "a minority is civilized" (Hemmer 2015). Furthermore, the aforementioned James Burnham also displayed a favorable disposition towards the regimes noting that the Rhodesian settlers had turned a region of "savage tribal warfare, disease, hunger, and superstition" into a land of "flourishing agriculture, mining, and industrial activity" (Kelly 2002: 310). American conservatives were not alone in this regard since the British conservative Monday Club also lent its support to the white governments in Africa. Here in particular, the club, animated by its pursuit to safeguard "kith and kin" in the "White Commonwealth," frequently expressed its support for the policies of South Africa and Portugal while acting as the primary entity aligned with the Conservative Party that supported Rhodesian interests. This is made evident via its direct collaboration with the Rhodesian Ministry of Information and promoted the belief, much like Aginter Press, that liberals masquerading as communists wanted to see whites eradicated from Africa (McNeil 2011: 735, 740 and 742).

Conclusion

Based on the textual analysis presented in this article, the characterization of Aginter Press as either a neo-fascist hub of a putative "black international" or as a mere auxiliary instrument subordinated to United States strategic interests appears analytically insufficient. Instead, the evidence supports

[45] William F. Buckley Jr., "South African Fortnight," *National Review,* January 15, 1963, p. 17, 20.
[46] Buckley, "South African Fortnight," *National Review,* p. 20.

an interpretation of Aginter Press as a state-backed private network that combined two distinct but interrelated functions: on the one hand, acting as a node for the recruitment, coordination, and circulation of foreign fighters and military expertise; on the other, producing geopolitical analysis and quasi-journalistic content intended to intervene in international debates on the Cold War. From this perspective, Aginter Press can be understood as an anti-communist mercenary and pseudo-press entity whose ideological framing largely overlaps with that of other conservative and right-wing anti-communist publications circulating in the Western world during the postwar period. While its involvement in covert and violent activities is well documented, the examination of its surviving publications demonstrates that the dominant themes structuring its intellectual output—namely uncompromising anti-communism, a pronounced anti-liberalism, and the defense of what were defined as "Western values"—do not fundamentally distinguish Aginter Press from other contemporary anti-communist intellectual environments. In this respect, its worldview bears notable similarities to that articulated in mainstream conservative outlets such as *National Review*, which likewise interpreted the Cold War as an existential struggle between Western civilization and a revolutionary, expansionist communism. As George H. Nash observed in *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, many conservative thinkers in the late 1950s and 1960s regarded the "continuous, implacable assault on the West by messianic, revolutionary Communism" as the defining fact of global politics. This perception of a civilizational threat, which justified extraordinary political and strategic measures, can be discerned, albeit often implicitly, within the analytical frameworks employed by Aginter Press. Crucially, however, the texts examined reveal no traces of revanchism with regard to the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945, nor any nostalgic or apologetic positioning toward Fascism, National Socialism, or Axis-aligned intellectuals and military figures. Equally absent is any attempt to revive, reformulate, or update the economic, institutional, or political project associated with the fascist "New Order." Rather than seeking continuity with interwar fascist political cultures, Aginter Press situated itself firmly within a postwar anticommunist horizon shaped by the strategic imperatives of the Cold War. Alongside its hardline stance against communism, the publications consistently articulated an illiberal critique of political actors, parties, and governments deemed insufficiently resolute in confronting Marxist movements, which were portrayed as benefiting from liberal permissiveness and ideological weakness. The defense of "Western values" thus occupied a central place in Aginter Press's geopolitical reasoning, translating into a conditional and instrumental form of

Atlanticism in which the United States and NATO were supported insofar as they effectively safeguarded Western states against communist expansion. At the same time, this framework underpinned the organization's support for white-ruled regimes in Africa, particularly in South Africa and Rhodesia, which were depicted not primarily in racial terms but as strategic outposts in a global struggle against communist-backed decolonization movements. The alignment of Aginter Press with the Portuguese authoritarian regime becomes especially clear in its treatment of Portugal's colonial wars, which were framed not as isolated national conflicts but as a vital front in the defense of the West. Within this narrative, the Portuguese colonial empire was presented as an indispensable asset for the containment of communism in Africa, whose loss would allegedly expose the continent to Marxist domination. This reasoning closely echoed the Salazarist regime's civilizational rhetoric, which justified white colonial rule as a contingent necessity for maintaining order, stability, and "civilization" against populations portrayed as politically immature and vulnerable to communist manipulation. Notably, while Aginter Press endorsed cooperation with apartheid South Africa, its analyses did not articulate a systematic racial doctrine or an explicit ideological defense of apartheid as such, instead subsuming these alliances within a broader civilizational and strategic argument consistent with Portuguese authoritarian discourse. Taken together, Aginter Press's geopolitical production can thus be seen as operating at the intersection of multiple anticommunist traditions, functioning as a connective bridge between the anticommunism of Western democratic regimes, that of authoritarian states engaged in colonial warfare, and that of far-right militants originating from conservative, nationalist, Catholic, and neo-fascist milieus. Importantly, the latter constituted only one component within a wider postwar anticommunist culture that did not impose its distinct political heritage on the organization's intellectual output but instead adapted itself to a transnational anticommunism qualitatively different from the ideological universe of interwar fascism and National Socialism. Finally, these findings point toward several paths for future research, notably the need to assess whether it is possible to identify a shared international anticommunist discursive style that cut across divergent ideological traditions during the Cold War, as well as the necessity of further archival work to reconstruct the full operational scope of Aginter Press beyond its public-facing intellectual production.

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