

« **FOR A BETTER LIFE** »  
**PORTUGUESE EMIGRATION**

A photographic essay by

**Gérald Bloncourt**

Greater Paris - Lisbon - Oporto - Chavès - Pyrenees - Hendaye  
1954- 1974



Photo 01 - **The Portuguese at work in France.**  
Construction worker. Greater Paris - 1965



Photo 02 - **The Portuguese at work in France.**  
The building site of the Montparnasse Tower. Paris -1971



Photo 03 - **The Portuguese at work in France.**  
Building workers in the site dormitory. Greater Paris -1970



Photo 04 - **The Portuguese at work in France.**  
Going to work on the morning shift at Citroën. Paris -1965



Photo 05 - **Portuguese slums around Paris.**  
Abbé Pierre's campsite at Noisy-le-Grand -1954. They have just arrived from another slum in Lisbon, Portugal.



Photo 06 - **Portugese slums around Paris.**

The little Portuguese girl of the Saint Denis slum, Paris -1969 – My friend Maria.

This photo was on the poster advertising the “For a better life” exhibition in Lisbon in 2008.

The little girl recognised herself, and contacted me. Her name is Maria, and her gaze has not changed. She is now a teacher in Coimbra, Portugal, and has two children. Forty years after this photo was taken, we have become friends.



Photo 07 - **Portugese slums around Paris.**

« J'accuse ! » Champigny sur Marne slum - 1964.



Photo 08 - **Portugese slums around Paris.**

The slum's hairdresser. Champigny sur Marne - 1964.



Photo 09 - **Portugese slums around Paris.**

A Portuguese immigrant in the muddy street amongst the slum dwellings. In the distance, new apartment blocks that he may have built but where he will never live - 1967.



Photo 10 - **Portugese slums around Paris.**

A little Madonna of Misery. Aubervilliers -1957.



Photo 11 - **Portugese slums around Paris.**

Letter boxes. Champigny sur Marne slum - 1964



Photo 12 -

**Portugese slums around Paris.**

Workmen housed in dormitories close to the building sites hang out their washing. Greater Paris - 1970



Photo 13 -

**Portugese slums around Paris.**

Fetching water : there is only one place to get water for the whole camp. Champigny sur Marne, a few kilometres away from Paris, the city of lights - 1964



Photo 14 -

**Retracing the steps of the emigrants.**

Portugese immigrants arriving at Austerlitz train station, with all their belongings on their backs. Paris - 1965



Photo 15 -

**Retracing the steps of the emigrants.**

A family of immigrants on the train between Hendaye and Paris. A woman, her mother, and her two sleeping children - 1965



Photo 16 -

**Retracing the steps of the emigrants.**

Crossing the Pyrenees secretly, by foot. The men walk on in silence, in the cold, behind their guide. They will have to cross freezing cold torrents, and avoid being caught by the Spanish military - March 1965



Photo 17 -

**Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship in 1966.**

Even in Lisbon people lived in slums and had to carry water home.



Photo 18 - **Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship in 1966.**  
Even in Lisbon people lived in slums and had to carry water home.



Photo 19 - **Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship in 1966.** Oporto.



Photo 20 - **Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship in 1966.**  
A village in the region of Chavès (northwest Portugal). The houses are built of stone but the mud and the misery are the same as in the slums in France.



Photo 21 - **Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship in 1966.**  
A rural country, frozen in traditions that the dictatorship maintains in a state of poverty, from which the Portuguese seek to escape.



Photo 22 - **Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship in 1966.**  
A little shepherd in a straw coat, in the mountainous region of Chavès.



Photo 23 - **A new Portugal - 1974.**  
The Carnation Revolution. Lisbon, April 29, 1974. The crowds give flowers to the soldiers.



Photo 24 - **A new Portugal - 1974.**  
Demonstration by Portuguese in Paris, in front of the Salle Pleyel hall, demanding the end of the colonial wars in Africa (Angola and Mozambique) – May 1974