

The Monarchists and the Great War: the practices and representations of counterpropaganda

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present a cultural approach to the Great War within the social and intellectual field of monarchist thought, reconstructing its practices and discourse about the conflict. By deciphering the contents and instruments of counterpropaganda, an analysis is made of the contribution of monarchists both to the formation of a social conscience (public opinion), which gradually became more and more opposed to the war effort, and to the creation of a social atmosphere that favored revolutionary action between 1914 and 1919.

Keywords

Great War, counterpropaganda, public opinion, revolution, monarchists.

Resumo

Neste artigo, procura-se uma abordagem cultural da Grande Guerra dentro do campo social e intelectual monárquico, reconstruindo as suas práticas e representações sobre o conflito. Trata-se de analisar o seu contributo, decifrando conteúdos e instrumentos da contra-propaganda, na edificação de uma consciência social (opinião pública) que lentamente se opôs ao esforço de guerra; e na criação de uma atmosfera social que favoreceu a acção revolucionária entre 1914 e 1919.

Palavras-chave

Grande Guerra, contra-propaganda, opinião pública, revolução, monárquicos

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Introduction

In the last few decades, there has been a renewed interest in the history of the Great War. This has been increasingly studied through historiographical approaches to cultures and mentalities, which have gradually tended to prevail over political, ideological and military approaches. With the analysis now being focused on the discourse, practices and representations of this conflict, the writing of the cultural history of the Great War has strengthened the connections between memory and national identity, opening up new directions for research (Prost, 2002). These new paths are defined through the study of other objects or documents, such as memoirs, photos, films, State schools, posters or literature, which have proved invaluable in creating a social and cultural history of the Great War and understanding the collective psychology of the nations involved in the conflict (Winter, 2006).

In adopting this approach, the study of propaganda and counterpropaganda acquires a fresh interest that goes far beyond merely writing the political, ideological or military history of the Great War. In fact, for the first time, this conflict led to the total mobilization of nations around a common goal, in which propaganda played an important role. Internally, propaganda was used to stimulate patriotic values, promote loyalty to the Government and foster a hatred of the common enemy, by creating a “stereotype” (Afonso, 2008: 68). Propaganda was needed in order to persuade and to seduce, convincing people of the legitimacy of the war and the necessity for each nation to become involved in the conflict. Its aim was to convince people by resorting to lies, making them believe in something that was not real. It was regarded as a necessary lie that could be used to mobilize a nation towards concerted action, and to create a national conscience about a war that was seen as fair and necessary (Subtil, 2006). It could even be used to stimulate belligerence in a neutral nation, raise the troops’ morale in combat or diminish the motivation of the enemy. The Great War was probably the first conflict in which propaganda became inseparable from public opinion (Paddock, 2004: 3).

In the Portuguese case, it is generally agreed that the governments of the First Republic did not establish a propaganda machine designed to communicate with public opinion, nor did they even take advantage of the State’s institutions to stimulate patriotic values. In France, for instance, primary schools played an important role in reinforcing patriotic values and creating a nationalist fervor that did not exist in 1914 (Prost, 2002: 73-89). Even so, in Portugal, a campaign was conducted in support of the war effort, making

use of several propaganda instruments, such as the press, books, posters, photos, illustrated postcards, lectures, films and demonstrations. Apart from the interventions of politicians and officers linked to the Democratic Party, such as the “young Turks” (Santos, 2012: 245), republican propaganda was largely produced by republican intellectuals or others that were ideologically close to the republican cause. The republicans’ aim was to develop cultural projects centered around belligerence, which included magazines, books and the press. Jaime Cortesão, João de Barros, Teixeira de Pascoais, Guerra Junqueiro, Teófilo Braga, Raul Proença, Leonardo Coimbra, Gomes Leal and Henrique Lopes de Mendonça, among others, should all be mentioned here, even though they had different affiliations. Magazines such as *Atlântida*, *A Águia* and *Alma Nova* also stood out through their defense of the Allied cause, based on cultural arguments. “Saudosismo” was a predominant value at that time, linked to the *Arte de Ser Português*, by Teixeira de Pascoais. War was seen as a regenerating catastrophe, an ideal answer to the needs of “collective achievement”, reattaching the present to the threads of historical tradition. The conflict was supposed to mark the beginning of a new era of “heroism”, seen as a necessary sacrifice to wake the nation up from its apathy, and involving it in a crusade for humanist values and democracy. As can be demonstrated, this was the propaganda of elites addressed to an enlightened and educated public. The love of the motherland, as celebrated by João de Barros in *Ode à Bélgica* (Barros, 1914) or *Oração à Pátria* (Barros, 1917), did not reach down to the common people. For these, Jaime Cortesão wrote a didactic text entitled *Cartilha do Povo* (1916), explaining the war and justifying the need for belligerence through the use of simple and understandable dialogues. Together with the magazine *Portugal na Guerra*, edited by Augusto Pina and published in 1917, this book was one of the few propaganda instruments sponsored by the State (Santos, 2010b).

1. The monarchists against the war: strategies and instruments

Counterpropaganda used the same mechanisms of communication and persuasion in seeking to influence public opinion. In Portugal, it systematically attacked the State’s war efforts and its mobilization of the troops, creating a state of mind that made the opposition’s revolutionary activities much easier.

The nation was divided at that time into interventionists and anti-interventionists (Meneses, 2010: 267-276). Despite their leading role in the opposition to the war, the monarchists were not alone in this political crusade. Many republicans joined them,

especially Machado Santos and Brito Camacho's friends, as well as socialists and unionists. This was indeed a vast political and social grouping that did not accept the participation of Portuguese troops in the European theatre of war, for whom only the defense of threatened territory, including the African colonies, could legitimize the mobilization of the Army. The study of this systematic opposition to the government's war policy is important for understanding the political and social divisions that determined the evolution of the First Republic until 1926, and for explaining the political radicalization that took place in these troubled years between 1914 and 1919 (Meneses, 2000; Santos, 2010).

In this sense, the Portuguese experience was different from that of the rest of Europe, where opposition to the conflict was promoted mainly by pacifist and antimilitary movements that gradually came to favor desertion (Prost, 1992: 58-71). In Portugal, despite the appeals for peace made by Catholics and socialists, the war years were marked by permanent disturbances, insurrections and revolutions, attempted coups and military actions, reflecting the growing animosity to the party of war and to the main republican leaders, especially Afonso Costa. Can the subversive behavior of the army be analyzed without taking into account this counterpropaganda activity? In my opinion, this is not possible, nor can one minimize the effects of counterpropaganda on public opinion, which reacted violently to the high prices and poverty imposed by the war economy (Santos, 2010: 355-357).

The monarchist movement was divided into several political and ideological tendencies, which explains the diversity to be noted in the discourses and strategies that were adopted. The monarchist cause was not a political party, nor was it even a cohesive and homogeneous movement. Despite the dynastic division between 'miguelistas' and 'manuelistas', Dom Manuel was able to count on the loyalty of different doctrinal groups, including the traditionalist nationalists (the integralists and all the neo-traditionalists) and the group of liberal-conservative constitutionalists. The monarchist cause included many Catholics as well, who were torn between the adoption of modern conceptions of the nation state – Christian democracy – and a continuation of political traditionalism. These divisions serve to explain the existence of two antagonistic responses to the war: a pro-England one and a strong pro-Germany one, which accepted the idea that Germany's victory in the war could favor the restoration of the throne (Santos, 2010: 179-242).

A powerful propaganda campaign opposing Portugal's involvement in the European war was directed against the political orientations of Dom Manuel, which were made public in August, 1914. The last king of Portugal, now exiled in England, called upon

his fellow countrymen to lend their ‘patriotic’ support to the State’s efforts and to participate in the conflict alongside the Allies (Santos, 2010: 277). However, his supporters did not heed his pleas. In general, monarchists had a great admiration for Germany, including some of the groups that were very close to Dom Manuel. At the same time, the hatred that was directed against England as the main supporter of the Republic had been gradually increasing since 1910. This situation gave rise to both a pro-German discourse and an anti-war one at the same time (Santos, 2010: 331; BNP, ELM, doc. nr. 12061, letter from Luís de Magalhães to Dom Manuel, August, 1916).

It is therefore understandable that anti-war propaganda was not made openly, as this might seem unpatriotic. At the same time, censorship and the preventive actions taken by the police meant that the anti-war rhetoric did not circulate easily. Censorship was introduced through Law nr. 45, of March 28, 1916, but by that time a monarchist newspaper had already written that “of all the countries of Europe, the one where the right to write about the war, about how people feel and how they think, is most weakened is undoubtedly Portugal²” (*A Monarchia*, nr. 5, 08-02-1916, p. 4). This periodical, whose opinions were close to those of the reactionary faction, mainly regretted that the monarchists could not openly proclaim their ‘admiration’ for Germany: “so that those who, like us, are admirers of the Germans, their discipline, science, order and hard work are in serious danger of having their possessions taken and their ribs crushed³” (*A Monarchia*, nr. 5, 8-02-1916, p. 4). In fact, any demonstration against the military intervention was labeled as “pro-German”, and all those who opposed Portugal’s participation in the war were treated as traitors (Silva, 2006: 387).

Censorship did not make the opposition’s life any easier, but, in actual fact, this was offset by the inefficacy (or the absence) of the regime’s propaganda and the lack of an information policy that explained its political options. According to some quarters of the British press, some of the suspicions of the Portuguese people, which were manipulated by the opponents to the war, were caused by the government’s “lack of honesty” and its policy of “secrecy and repression”. As quoted in the republican newspaper *A Capital* (and therefore one that must be considered above suspicion), the editor of *The Times* wrote that the sacrifices imposed on the people obliged republicans to explain “exactly what the

² “(...) de todos os países da Europa aquele em que o direito a escrever sobre a Guerra como se sente e como se pensa, está mais tolhido é sem dúvida Portugal.”

³ “(...) de forma que quem como nós, seja admirador dos alemães, pela sua disciplina, ciência, ordem e trabalho, corre sério risco de ver tenir os seus haveres e amolgar as suas costelas.”

situation is and what measures the government is taking⁴” (*A Capital*, 03-12-1916, p. 1). The army officers also complained about the government’s “lack of honesty”. In 1917, when preparing the shipping of troops to Flanders, a group of 35 Officers from Infantry Regiment nr. 7 delivered to several other regiments a copy of the letter that they had sent to the President. In it, they demanded publication of “the note in which England asks us for our personal aid, thus proving that our departure for the battlefields is not a mere political whim⁵” (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, caixa 1263, pasta 1, doc. nr. 54).

The “lack of honesty” was exploited by counterpropaganda. This was used mainly by the countries involved in the war to influence the populations of the enemy countries. This was not, however, the case with Portugal; there are signs which suggest that some propaganda handed out by monarchists had its origin in German espionage, or that, at least, it may have been financed by Berlin (Meneses, 2000: 206). As far as Portugal was concerned, however, such propaganda had to be seen in the context of the political and revolutionary activity that the monarchists and their allies were perpetrating against the Republic. The main instruments of this propaganda were the pamphlet, the manifesto and the flyer, as well as direct contact with the population. The press explained the strategy of communication that was adopted in these counterpropaganda instruments, revealing that the anti-republican combat was being effected “through flyers, leaflets and brochures (...).The flyers use strong wording and warning phrases, while the pamphlets and brochures are romantic and use discursive language; all of these are profusely distributed, and, of course, at a low price. They even make use of the distribution of explicit engravings, and have managed to have products placed in shops that use these as their advertising⁶” (*A Monarchia*, nr. 9, 22-02-1916, p. 2). On its front page, the *A Monarchia* newspaper used inflammatory phrases, printed in bold letters or underlined in order to emphasize them. Frequently, these were resounding statements made by high-ranking republicans, which were used to shock public opinion, such as, for example, this one: “At the banquet at the São Carlos Theatre, Dr. Alexandre Braga said that our abstention from the conflict was – a sacrifice⁷” (*A Monarchia*, nr. 1, 25-01-1916, p. 2). Despite all this, the

⁴ “(...) exactamente qual a situação e quais as medidas que o governo toma.”

⁵ “ (...) a nota em que a Inglaterra nos pede o nosso auxílio pessoal, provando assim que a nossa partida para os campos de batalha não é um mero capricho político.”

⁶ “(...) por meio de prospectos, folhetos e brochuras (...) Nos pasquins usar-se-á de estilo arrebatador e frases de sobreaviso, e nos folhetos e brochuras, de forma romântica ou em palestras; tudo isto distribuído profusamente, e a preço baixo o que não puder deixar de ser. Usar mesmo de distribuição de gravuras explícitas, e conseguir que no comércio apareçam produtos com elas pro reclame.”

⁷ “ (...) O Sr. Dr. Alexandre Braga no banquete de S. Carlos disse que a nossa abstenção no conflito era – um sacrifício.”

realistic press could not be explicitly involved in the anti-intervention campaign, at least after 1916. That is why, apart from a few exceptions, the sources for the study of counterpropaganda are to be found in clandestine “literature”.

2. Counterpropaganda

The propaganda against the war intensified in 1914, particularly after the revolution of October 20, which was regarded as the first organized movement against Portuguese belligerence. (Santos; 2010b: 292). By this time, the first pamphlets had appeared in military units, without mentioning an explicit author, but simply signed by “a patriot”, by “a Portuguese familiar with the situation” or by “a friend of the people”. They came hidden in French newspapers and were delivered by mail to the military units with the handwritten instruction “Read this and pass it on”. These pamphlets were then stuck on the walls of villages and towns throughout the country. The fact that they were first delivered to the military units can be explained by the “fear of going to war”, according to the words of a monarchist officer (ADG, Fundo General João de Almeida, letter from Eurico Cameira, 4-10-1914). The idea was to take advantage of this fear and stop the belligerence, forcing the army to intervene by force (Santos, 2010: 284-285).

An analysis of this particular kind of pamphlet literature, clandestine as it was, proves that its intention was to influence the reluctant members of the army and public opinion in the provinces, from where the mobilized contingents would emerge. Suggestion, exaggeration and falsehood, among other devices, were the basic mechanisms used to spread the political and ideological message intended to intensify the tension and the hatred felt by the population, and to widen the gulf between public opinion and politicians. In order to understand the contents of those pamphlets and flyers, some of which were produced abroad, it is important to remember that the republican rhetoric sought to legitimize the Portuguese involvement in the war by invoking some of the clauses of the country’s treaty of alliance with Great Britain. Then there was the threat to the colonies, as well as a vague and ill defined “Spanish threat” (Teixeira, 1996). These were arguments that were not understood by the public opinion, which by now was, generally speaking, alienated from the war. Through its participation in the conflict, the Portuguese Republic actually sought to revive the country’s historical tradition of greatness and Portugal’s former “destiny of expansion”. That is to say, the war was seen as the modern equivalent to an epic story of heroism and sacrifice (Santos, 2010: 168-169). But, ultimately, it was in

the name of justice that propaganda upheld the decision to engage in a military intervention alongside the allies.

However, for the Republic's adversaries, belligerence was designed above all to consolidate the regime and the Democratic Party itself, through the use of diplomacy and by concentrating on foreign affairs (Santos, 2010:337). Conscious of this hidden political agenda, monarchists tried to dismantle the republican propaganda with the help of their unexpected allies. But, more than that, they intended to spread fear and anger in Portuguese society and make way for the restoration of the monarchy.

The lack of clarity to be noted in the republican propaganda favored the monarchists' strategy. Nobody understood the strange threads of diplomacy that bound Portugal's participation in the war to the Luso-British alliance, and which considered that Portugal and Germany had already been at war since 1914. It was not easy to understand the demand that was contained in Britain's formal request for help. The regime's ambiguous policy, which had determined the need for military intervention without assuming it publicly (Vincent-Smith, 1975), paved the way for the counterpropaganda strategy of depicting the war as the regime's private business, necessary in order to "consolidate the Republic".

In *O Thalassa*, a humoristic periodical edited by Jorge Colaço, a cartoon depicted the war as a prize awarded to the Democratic Party in 1914. Afonso Costa and Bernardino Machado, the heads of government at the time, rejoiced with the beginning of the war and the postponement of the elections due to take place at the end of the same year. Another quite different newspaper, *Restauração*, stated that "as there has been no request nor even any invitation, as the nation's security is not under threat, and as the national opinion does not demand it, why should we intervene and for what purpose? (...) It seems to us that in this gesture of foolish generosity, there is more concern with safeguarding the Republic than with dignifying the nation"⁸ (nr. 25, 22-10-1914, p. 1). The pamphlets repeated these arguments, claiming that participation in the war should be a matter of "national conscience", since it was "everyone's blood" that was involved.

Propaganda against the war did not only exploit the image of the Portuguese soldier shedding his blood in order to defend foreign territories. In fact, a closer analysis of this literature shows that there was little interest in such political and ideological considerations as the conflict of cultures and civilizations or the defense of international laws. These were

⁸ " (...) não havendo pedido nem sequer convite, não perigando a segurança da pátria e não exigindo a opinião nacional, intervir porquê e para quê? (...) Quer-nos parecer que neste gesto de generosidade tola se olha mais a salvar a república do que a engrandecer a pátria."

also the arguments of the pro-allies (Santos, 2010: 253-255). The message in the pamphlets was directed mainly at emotional and irrational feelings, especially the fear of death. The horrors of war, death and the waste of human lives lay at the core of the imagery that was used as counterpropaganda. In fact, the destructive violence of the conflict was noticed immediately after its beginning. Another cartoon published in *O Thalassa* broached the subject of the destruction of European civilization in an ironic fashion, showing the most primeval appetites of Man in his destructive voracity. The cartoon was entitled “Assembleia geral da pancadaria” (General Assembly of the Fighting). In it, Jorge Colaço depicted, in the background, the massacres, the violence and the destruction. In the foreground, we can see a Moroccan and another African native witnessing the European savagery and remarking: “And they say that we are savages⁹” (*O Thalassa*, nr. 73, 13-08-1914, p. 5. See Appendix 2).

The rhetoric of death is one of the essential components in this counterpropaganda. Thus, as in the rest of Europe, the favorite target of the speeches of those opposed to the war was the female audience, in their dual role as wives and mothers. The destruction of both Portuguese homes and families was described in a simple and suggestive language, so as to provoke an emotional reaction: “Portuguese Women, those criminals, who have trampled all over the family and religion, wish to send your husbands and children to the slaughter like lambs¹⁰” (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1276). In a 1914 pamphlet, one of those “friends of the people”, addressed the Portuguese with exalted imprecations against the war and the Republic:

“People, army, old men, women and children of my unfortunate country, please listen to me..

The fatal moment of your complete ruin is drawing nearer, the moment of the dark misery of your homes, the dishonor of your families, the death of your motherland.

You must all awake and unite as one to destroy that more than infamous republic, which for four years now has abused your patience and is dragging you down to ignominy and death.

So, take up arms!

⁹ “E nós é que somos selvagens.”

¹⁰ “ (...) ‘Mulheres Portuguesas’, esses celerados, que tanto têm tripudiado sobre a família e a religião, querem mandar os vossos maridos e filhos para o matadouro como borregos.”

It is essential to defend not only the nation's honor, but your own as well.

Remember that it is not only these unfortunates, who are now being sent to slaughter, that will flood the battlefields with their blood.

Every month, and indeed perhaps every week, fresh victims will be continuously sent to sacrifice, to take the place of those who have been slaughtered like cattle, for the master, to whom the Republic has sold you, in other words the English, will fatally oblige the nation to maintain the number of men that were sent at the beginning. This means that all men aged between 18 and 50 will continue to be sent to the slaughter, in order to be killed or rendered incapable. [...]

Think about this, Portuguese women and mothers. [...]

Save your husbands and sons from death and dishonor and shout with me

To arms!

Down with the accursed republic, death to the traitors!"¹¹ (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1276)

The widely disseminated image of war as a “European slaughter” of sons and husbands, the victims of some sort of unfortunate business deal, fighting as “slaves to the British”, was circulated in pamphlets, letters and other subversive documents sent to the army officers. This process was to intensify after 1916, when Portugal requisitioned German ships, on February, 23. A monarchist newspaper announced in large letters that

¹¹ “Povo, exército, velhos, mulheres e crianças do meu desditoso País, ouvi-me.

Aproxima-se o momento fatal da vossa completa ruína, da negra miséria dos vossos lares, da desonra das vossas famílias, da morte da vossa Pátria.

É preciso acordar todos e todos unidos como um só homem derrubarmos essa mais do que infame república, que há 4 anos abusa da vossa paciência e vos arrasta à ignomínia e à morte.

Às armas pois!

É indispensável defender não só a honra nacional, mas também a vossa própria.

Lembraí-vos que não são só esses infelizes, que agora são mandados ao *matadouro*, que com o seu sangue vão inundar os campos de batalha.

Todos os meses e quem sabe mesmo todas as semanas serão continuamente mandadas novas vítimas ao sacrifício, para tomar o lugar dos que forem sido [sic] abatidos como rezes, pois o *dono*, a quem a republica vos vendeu, isto é, o Inglês, obrigará fatalmente o País a manter o número de homens que de princípio fossem enviados, quer dizer, todos os homens de 18 a 50 anos irão sendo mandados sucessivamente ao açougue para serem mortos ou inutilizados. [...]

Pensai nisto mulheres e mães portuguesas. [...]

Salvai da morte e da desonra vossos maridos e filhos e gritai comigo

Às Armas!

Abaixo a maldita república, morte aos traidores!”

this was the “Finis” of the motherland and wrote that “all that remains is for you to go and irrigate the foreign land with your blood¹²”. In a text that was full of inflammatory expressions such as “holocaust” and “sacrifice”, the appeal to the “Women of Portugal” was renewed: “Weep for the fact that your home will be left without its backbone, who has made it so abundant and happy! Mothers! Weep for your sons who, in order to satisfy the unspeakable conveniences of a political faction, will fight against the formidable cannons of the powers at war.¹³” (*A Restauração*, nr. 11, 29-02-1916, p. 2-3).

In fact, the diplomacy of the democratic and evolutionist Republic had finally paid off. The participation of Portugal in the war took place under the psychological trauma of more than two years of trench warfare. Pictures of the wounded, of those killed in combat and of the destruction of fields and cities circulated both in newspapers and magazines (see *Ilustração Portuguesa*, 1914-1916). This knowledge increased the fear and the animosity of public opinion, giving rise to feelings that counterpropaganda sought to take advantage of. The idea was again reiterated that participation in the war was nothing more than a business that was being managed by the Republicans. This exaggerated lie circulated in papers and in rumors, as can be seen in a description published by the press, which the Government was forced to deny: “It is said everywhere that three Portuguese citizens went to the French Ministry of War to volunteer to lead an army of 20,000 to 60,000 men into battle, in return for one pound in gold for each man that they took with them¹⁴” (*Monarchia*, nr. 1, 25-01-1916, p. 5).

The image of war as a business run by politicians influenced the tone of propaganda during 1916, precisely when the Army was being prepared for battle at Tancos. The region was flooded with revolutionary agents and propaganda that encouraged the officers to reject mobilization (Marques, 2004: XXVI). At the time, the military police apprehended several pamphlets originating from Spain, suggestively entitled “Soldiers or sheep?”. At the end of 1916, during the uprising led by Machado Santos, a pamphlet was published entitled “Os Bandidos vendilhões de carne humana” (The bandits that deal in human flesh), which insisted on the idea of seeing the war as a trade in soldiers. It was then revealed that 1,500 soldiers had already been killed in Africa, either in combat or by hunger,

¹² “ (...) falta unicamente ir regar a terra estrangeira com o nosso sangue.”

¹³ “ (...) Chorai que o vosso lar vai ficar sem o braço forte que o tornava farto e alegre! Mães! Chorai os vossos filhos que as conveniências inconfessáveis duma facção política, vai atirar contra os canhões formidáveis das potências em guerra.”

¹⁴ “ (...) Diz-se aí por toda a parte que três portugueses foram oferecer ao ministério da guerra francês levarem para os campos de batalha um exército de 20.000 a 60.000 homens, contanto que recebessem uma libra em ouro, por cada homem.”

and that the same thing was about to happen to several thousand more: “90,000 Portuguese men – sold or hired out to foreigners – are ready and still waiting to be sent to the slaughterhouse of Europe. The proceeds from their sale will be paid to the peddlers, thus considerably increasing their already large fortunes stolen from the Country and the People, and unscrupulously spreading widowhood, orphanage and misery, and, who knows?, perhaps even prostitution too¹⁵” (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1262).

The years of 1916-1917 were not marked only by the mobilization of 55,000 soldiers belonging to the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps. The intensity of propaganda and counterpropaganda increased, being reflected in the growing political and social tension. The revolutionary activity of monarchists, republicans, unionists, socialists and workers became stronger, and they participated together in conspiracies and revolutionary activities. In the monarchist world, conspiracy took in the form of direct contact with the population, this being the strategy recommended in a memorandum sent to 46 monarchists, including nobles, local political bosses and priests. The memorandum asked for propaganda against the war, counting on the “provincial simplicity” to demonstrate “how greatly the Portuguese are missed in their home lands and among their families since those who have gone to war will certainly not return¹⁶” (Santos, 2010: 335-336). In 1916, the authorities recognized that the war “was not a popular issue” and that there was a “deep sense of revolt” against participation in the war in foreign territory (Meneses, 2010: 58). The attempted coup of December 13, 1916, led by Machado Santos and involving both monarchists and unionists, led to an elucidative pamphlet being handed out in Lisbon:

“That the Portuguese should happily
Defend himself against the German
In the Portuguese colonies
Why not!!!

But that he should leave this land
That he should go to France and die

¹⁵ “(...) Ainda à sua espera, estão prestes a seguir para o Matadouro da Europa 90:000 Portugueses, Vendidos ou Alugados a Estrangeiros, cujo produto de venda reverterá a favor dos vendilhões, aumentando-lhes assim consideravelmente as suas já grandes fortunas roubadas ao País e ao Povo, semeando, sem escrúpulos, a viuvez, a orfandade, a miséria e, quem sabe, se a prostituição.”

¹⁶ “ (...) a falta que os portugueses fazem à sua terra e às suas famílias, pois pela certa, não voltarão os que seguirem para a guerra.”

To save England
Most definitely not!!!¹⁷

Viva a Pátria Portuguesa!” (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1262)

During 1917, counterpropaganda went hand in hand with conspiracy. Civilian and military groups spread rumors, according to which “the troops that went to France” would not come back; they would be vanquished by the Germans and would end up as “slaves to the Germans”; “it is the English who are deceiving us and what they wish is to save their own people¹⁸” (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1263). In towns like Évora or Viseu, the military regiments received propaganda against the war. In the case of Viseu, where there was a very active cell led by Visconde do Banho, the population was deeply hostile both to the republicans and the war (Santos, 2010: 342).

The idea was to increase the population’s hatred of the war and lead the soldiers towards revolution, preparing them for “desertion and revolt”. The Army’s state of mind explains why in August, 1917, 6 officers, 37 sergeants and 1,102 corporals and soldiers failed to present themselves at the time of the embarkation. (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1263). In the provinces, many youngsters who were old enough to be mobilized deserted by crossing over the Spanish border, especially those who came from areas where a large volume of “pro-German” propaganda was to be found in circulation (AHM, 1.^a Divisão, 35.^a secção, cx. 1262, pasta 1).

The result of this intense propaganda can be seen in the population’s hatred of Afonso Costa and the Democratic Party. Between 1916 and 1917, Portugal lived in a permanent state of war: populations did not respect the Republican authority and, driven by hunger and poverty, they robbed warehouses and freight trains containing food in several regions of Portugal. Strikes and demonstrations highlighted the workers’ hatred of the last Government of the “Sacred Union”, led by Afonso Costa, while the Unionist

¹⁷ “Que o português sem tristezas
Se defenda do alemão
Nas colónias Portuguesas
Porque não!!!

Mas que parta desta terra
Que vá para a França e que morra
P’ra poupar a Inglaterra
Isso Porra!!!”

¹⁸ “(...) que os ingleses que nos estão a enganar e que o que desejam é poupar a sua gente.”

officers prepared the revolution that would defeat the war policy and give power to Sidónio Pais. In that period, the monarchists' intervention and propaganda against the war reached its highest peak.

The truth is that Dom Manuel and the leading figures in the Monarchist Cause, such as Aires de Ornelas, supported the interventionist policy of the Republic. The pro-allies could not, however, stop the predominant pro-German feeling amongst the rank and file. The most revolutionary section of the Monarchist Cause included Luís de Magalhães, José de Azevedo Castelo Branco, the Visconde de Azevedo and the Visconde do Banho, amongst many others. Abroad, in Spain, the dominant group was the one led by Paiva Couceiro and the influential "miguelista" sector, drawing up plans for the restoration of the monarchy (Santos, 2010: 343-345). Internally, the subversive group linked to the *O Liberal* newspaper, edited by António Teles de Vasconcelos was the one that stood out, consisting of men like António Cabral, Fernando Lindoso, António Costa Pinto and Eurico Satúrio Pires, Paiva Couceiro's officer in Galicia. Besides publishing his chronicles against belligerence, the group maintained an intense subversive activity, producing and handing out pamphlets and flyers against the Republic and the war.

One of the most controversial flyers of the counterpropaganda campaign appeared at that time: the *Rol da Deshonra* (Roll of dishonor). As was known, during that period, from time to time the press would print a "*Rol da Honra*" (Roll of honor), giving an account of the Portuguese casualties in Flanders (*A Capital*, nr. 2592, 06-11-1917, p. 1). The liberal group responded to this public homage to the victims of war by publishing a 14-page flyer, called the *Rol da Deshonra*. The flyer circulated clandestinely throughout the country and was allegedly written by an officer in the trenches. Dated September, 1917, it revealed the position of the armies in the trench warfare, separated by the so-called "no man's land", and organized by the lines of infantry, artillery and the logistical and command backup. The infantry was described as "the zone shelled at the front by the mortars from the enemy trenches, swept by the machine guns and bombarded at the rear by the artillery. It is the zone over which death hovers"¹⁹. This first zone of death contrasted with the "large area of the *capaxins* (toadies or bootlickers)", where it was "impossible to hear the sibilant sound of a bullet": "That is where the general lives surrounded by incompetent bootlickers whose mission is to get fat and have the illusion of an easy life, with a car to drive around in, taking tea at five o'clock and with music being played in front of their house. Also to be

¹⁹ "(...) a zona batida na frente pelos morteiros das trincheiras inimigas, rasada pelas metralhadoras e batida à retaguarda pela artilharia. É a zona onde paira a morte."

found there are all the groups – sons from good families, heirs and princes, *embuscados* (men in reserved occupations or “cushy jobs”), whose mission consisted of setting the example of coming to the front, but, of course, to the “toadies’ front”, and who do not know what danger is, unless they are having a nightmare caused by indigestion²⁰.”

The *Rol da Deshonra* was an important piece of propaganda against the republican rulers, accused of sending Portuguese soldiers to their deaths while the republican officers were given safe military posts in the rear. The flyer’s goal was described in the document: “to clarify the future with the role played by the heroic interpreters, who in Portugal have shown such capability to fight for freedom, the rule of law and justice and have so enthusiastically volunteered to take part in such a disinterested war²¹” (*Rol da Deshonra*, p. 5). The flyer records for posterity the name of the “*capaxins*”, republican officers who came “to make war sitting at their tables in the office, or driving along the roads of France in a speedy car”. Amongst these officers were the names of many soldiers who enjoyed close links with the Democratic Party and occupied the leading positions at the headquarters of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps: Roberto Batista, Fernando Freiria, Pires Monteiro, Helder Ribeiro, Vitorino Magalhães, Vitorino Godinho, Pina Lopes, Sá Cardoso, Álvaro Poppe, among others. This was the group of “young Turks”, responsible for directing the Republic’s war policy, along with Norton de Matos. But the *Rol da Deshonra* did not vilify only the republican officers, whom it accused of avoiding the dangerous trenches. It also listed the names of the sons of the main republican leaders, such as Afonso Costa, Bernardino Machado, Leotte do Rego and Sousa Rosa, who were placed by the Government in safe positions well away from the trenches. Just to give an example: Bernardino Machado’s son was named as an adjutant at the headquarters of the 1st division, while Sebastião Costa, a sapper officer, was appointed as the interpreter at the headquarters.

Reality or fiction? The commander of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps, General Tamagnini Barbosa, wrote that this image was a common one in Lisbon. Tamagnini confirms that there were officers who did nothing more than “having fun”, contrasting with a “minority of great officers”: “There was a little of everything: [-] officers

²⁰ “Ahi vive o general rodeado de capaxins incompetentes cuja missão é engordar e ter a ilusão primeira duma vida desafogada, com automóvel para passear, chá das cinco e música a dar concerto em frente de casa. Há ainda os agregados todos, filhos família, príncipes herdeiros, embuscados, cuja missão consiste em dar o exemplo da vinda para o front, mas bem entendido, o «*front capaxinal*», e que não sabem o que é o perigo, a não ser em pesadelo de noite de indigestão.”

²¹ “ (...) esclarecer o futuro com o papel desempenhado pelas heróicas línguas, que em Portugal tanto souberam combater pela liberdade, direito e justiça e tão briosamente se ofereceram para tomar parte em tão desinteressada guerra.”

who spent their time having fun; those who engaged in politics, considering this to be their main function; those who sought out every opportunity to skive off work; those who did their job unsatisfactorily, without any energy, some through a lack of interest, and others through a lack of military education, and because they were riddled with bad habits acquired in performing the demoralized service provided by the garrison²² (Marques, 2004: LXXVII). Apparently, despite the natural exaggeration used in this sort of literature, there was a glimmer of truth to be found in a pamphlet that was already circulating throughout the country by the end of 1917.

After the intervention of the authorities, who made use of an undercover agent, the *O Liberal* newspaper was closed and some of the men responsible for it were expelled from Portugal. However, by that time, the December revolution was already in progress, which would bring to power a strange coalition of forces that had opposed the Republic's war policy. Counterpropaganda, together with economic and social difficulties, had successfully produced an effect, creating an even wider gap between public opinion and the republican governments. In part, "Sidonismo" was a political phenomenon generated by the anti-interventionist sector (Meneses, 2000) and it opened the doors of the Republic to both moderates and enemies. The first were deluded with the idea of authoritarian presidentialism, while the latter were obsessed with the idea of restoration (Santos, 2003).

Conclusion

The propaganda directed against the war demonstrates how well the Republic's adversaries had taken advantage of the ambiguities of the official discourse and had turned the absence of an official propaganda strategy to their favor. Counterpropaganda spread the message that the war was unlawful, as it did not serve national interests, which proved that this was neither a fair nor a necessary war. Its role was to shape a public opinion that was opposed to the Great War and to promote a climate of civil unrest, thus undermining the State's capacity for mobilization and the chances of its obtaining the necessary consensus. As far as the means that were used to spread the propaganda were concerned, and because of the limitations imposed by censorship, counterpropaganda mainly made use of the pamphlet and the manifesto, seeking to persuade public opinion that the war was

²² "Houve de tudo: [-] oficiais que se divertiram; os que faziam política, considerando ser isso a sua principal função; os que procuravam todos os meios de fugir ao serviço; os que cumpriam pouco satisfatoriamente, sem energia, uns por falta de vontade, e outros de educação militar, e por estarem eivados de vícios adquiridos no desmoralizado serviço de guarnição."

nothing more than a business, and arousing a fear of death amongst the mobilized troops. While it is certain that counterpropaganda could not take advantage of the modern media that are now available to address and reach the masses, it nonetheless seems evident that the resources that were used, as well as the subversive context in which they were used, can serve to explain the capacity of penetration of the monarchist revolutionary sectors and their allies against the Great War.

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Appendix 1



Cartoon by Jorge Colaço about the reaction of Bernardino Machado's government to the war, in *O Thalassa*, nr. 73, 13-08-1914 (Caption: The best prize that could have befallen the election ticket)

Appendix 2



Cartoon by Jorge Colaço about the violence of the Great War, in *O Thalassa*, nr. 73, 13-08-1914, pp. 4-5.
(Caption: The Moroccan turns to his companion and says: “And they say that we are savages...”)

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