

World War One and Authoritarian Thought in the Lusophone World

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Abstract

The goal of this article is to analyze the impacts of Portugal's participation in the First World War, especially emphasizing the construction of an authoritarian, conservative, and anti-republican culture policy. It also tries to understand the polarization process of the Portuguese Army between the conflict and the coup d'etat on 28 May, 1926.

Keywords

First World War; Portuguese Army; Rights

Resumo

O presente artigo tem por objetivo analisar os impactos da participação de Portugal na Primeira Guerra Mundial enfatizando, sobretudo, a construção de uma cultura política autoritária, conservadora e antirrepublicana. Procura também entender o processo de politização das Forças Armadas portuguesas entre o conflito e o Golpe de Estado de 28 de maio de 1926.

Palavras-chave

Primeira Grande Guerra; Exército Português, Direitas

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Introduction

Who was it that killed him? [...]

It was those who glorified the memory of the assassins of King D. Carlos and Prince Luiz Filipe, who went on pilgrimages to their graves with flowers and speeches, recommending their criminal examples to schoolchildren; it was those who herded those same children through the streets of Lisbon bearing banners with cynical emblems; it was those who taught you, the legendary people of Lisbon, to make bombs and who made every honest and obedient worker a member of a secret society, a cowardly institution by virtue of its methods, its irresponsibility and its impunity [...].²

The above text was published in a small, unsigned, and undated book, which, as its content makes clear, was written between the death of the dictator Sidónio Pais³ and the coup d'état of 28 May 1926. It demonstrates how important the construction of the ephemeral dictator's memory was for Portugal and the Portuguese.⁴ Sidónio Pais's example is not unique. After the Spanish Civil War, for example, there occurred an inflation of death-related commemorations through the perpetuation of mourning and its associated rites. The cult of the 'fallen' reached its apogee in the construction of the political myth of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange. His funeral was celebrated in Burgos Cathedral, in November 1938. By then, his name had already been engraved on its outer wall, an action repeated in all of Spain's churches as they fell into Nationalist hands;

² 'Quem foi que o matou? [...]. Foram aqueles que glorificaram a memória dos assassinos do rei D. Carlos e do príncipe D. Luiz Filipe, que iam em romaria às suas sepulturas com flores e discursos apontar o seu criminoso exemplo às creanças das escolas; foram os que conduziram pelas ruas de Lisbôa essas creanças exibindo pendões com distintos cynicos; foram os que te ensinaram, legendário povo de Lisbôa, a fabricar bombas e que de cada trabalhador honesto e ordeiro fizeram um membro duma sociedade secreta, instituição covarde pelos processos, pela irresponsabilidade e impunidade [...]' *Dr. Sidónio Paes*. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. S/R, 1918.

³ A Major in the Artillery and Professor of Integral and Differential Calculus at the University of Coimbra, Sidónio Pais (1872-1918) was always an opponent of liberalism and parliamentary democracy in Portugal. Responsible for the 1917 coup d'état, he governed Portugal as a military dictator for a year until, in December 1918, a Freemason shot him dead at Rossio train station. See Samara, 2010: 371-395.

⁴ On 28 May 1926 a coup d'état put an end to the First Portuguese Republic (1910-1926) and unveiled a military dictatorship which, beginning in 1928, underwent a transition to a corporatist civilian dictatorship under the command of the then Minister of Finance, António Oliveira Salazar. The *Estado Novo* (New State) itself came into being only in 1932 with the introduction of a new Constitution. On the timeline of the Portuguese dictatorship, see Cruz, 1988: 38-47.

to his name were added those of the respective locality's sons fallen in combat for the Nationalist cause (Calero, 2010, 257-282).

Portugal and the War: The Stymied Intervention

In Portugal, on the other hand, participation in the Great War of 1914-1918 had been so frustrating that it resulted more in embarrassment than in enthusiasm. The republican government was incapable of imposing its commemorative plans, with the result that some of the monuments intended to strengthen the collective memory of Portugal's involvement were only concluded in the 1930s or even the 1940s (Correia, 2009, 361; Correia, 2015). On the eve of the military dictatorship, the magazine *Ordem Nova* [New Order], founded by young activists from *Integralismo Lusitano*, complained of the absence of any state policy towards disabled veterans (Alvares, 1926: 195-197).

The reasons for these constraints lie in the symbiotic relationship between victory and defeat which resulted from Portugal's participation in the Great War. It is true that it was on the victorious side; but its participation as an effective force was so disastrous that one is unable to speak of it in terms of a triumph. One veteran summarized Portugal's fate in the following terms: "having joined the ranks of the victors, our attitude was that of the vanquished."⁵ Such sentiment results from the fact that Portugal was disappointed by the failure to obtain greater bargaining power in the field of international relations. Moreover, while belligerence had as an objective the quelling of internal disputes through nationalist resurgence, the result was the precise opposite: it contributed decisively to the deepening of the Republic's crisis. It seems, in fact, that demobilization and disinterest in the war were a constant from the moment war was declared until its conclusion. As the newspaper *A Monarchia* put it after the declaration of war,

Germany had just declared war on us, and the Portuguese received the terrible news without the straining of a sinew, without a nerve shuddering, without its soul soaring trembling with febrile emotion. Not a day went by without the Admiralty, or Mr. Leotte do Rego, or whoever it is that runs today's Navy, publishing official statements in the newspapers informing us that careful watch was being kept on the harbor at Lisbon, and later at Leixões and Setúbal, no ship being now able to arrive once the sun has set

⁵ Mardel Ferreira, 'Vitória Mutilada'. *A Guerra*, May 1926, cited in Meneses, 2006: 129.

– proof positive that there is the expectation that in those parts some aggressive move by the enemy is expected. And everyone shrugged their shoulders, bound together by irresponsibility and lack of sense.⁶

As the crisis deepened and the Republic's hesitations came to the fore, anti-liberal political forces begin to close ranks, achieving that unity which proved decisive for the success of the 28 May coup.

The discrediting of the Portuguese presence in the war had begun even before Portugal had effectively entered the conflict. It was as old as the offer to fight alongside Great Britain. Thus, in January 1916, *A Monarchia* gave great prominence to an article which, in a mocking tone, pointed out, “According to *The Times*, the Portuguese government, led by the present President of the Republic, *proposed, offered*, to send a Portuguese expeditionary corps to the British government.”⁷ On the same page, it welcomed the war, which, in the opinion of its writers, was confirming the superiority of monarchies over republics. One could now discern

*the unquestionable triumph of the Monarchies. Whoever wins, William II or George V. But real monarchies, which have taken up once more the pure doctrinal current, which the Great Revolution had cut, and whose legal statutes will be underscored by King and cannon like. In other words, kings anointed by divine right will replace the liberal kings and the short-term heads of state.*⁸

⁶ ‘A Alemanha acabára de nos declárar guerra, e o povo portuguez recebia a noticia terrivel sem o estremecimento de um musculo, sem uma crispação de nervos sem que a alma vibrasse de emoção febril. Não houve um só dia da semana finda que a Majoria ou o sr. Leotte do Rego ou lá quem dirige as coisas de Marinha, não fornecesse notas officiosas aos jornaes informando da cuidadosa vigilancia da barra do Tejo, e apoz da de Leixões e Sado, onde navio algum já pode entrar depois do sol posto, - prova de que por allí se espera alguma tentativa de agressão por parte do inimigo. E toda a gente encolheu os hombros na mesma inconsciencia e incensatez’. ‘Que faz o Governo?’ in *A Monarchia*. N. 13, 10 March 1916, 3. Jaime Daniel Leotte do Rego (1867-1923), mentioned in the text, reached the rank of Rear Admiral in the Portuguese Navy. He served in Mozambique and in São Tomé, of which he was Governor. A Freemason, he was one of the main proponents of Portugal's participation in the war. <http://ihc.fcsh.unl.pt/pt/recursos/biografias/item/4355-rego-jaime-daniel-leote-do-1867-1923> Site consulted on 7 March 2016.

⁷ ‘Segundo o “Times” o governo portuguez de 1914, presidido pelo actual sr. Presidente da Republica, propôz, ofereceu, ao governo inglez a ida de um corpo expedicionário portuguez para a guerra.’ *A Monarchia*, 25 January 1916, 2.

⁸ ‘o triumpho inadiavel das Monarchias. Vença lá quem vencer, Guilherme II ou Jorge V. Mas Monarchias a valer, retomada a corrente pura da doutrina, que a Grande Revolução cortára, e cujos estatutos foraes serão firmados pelo Rei e pelo Canhão. Quer dizer: reis ungidos de direito divino substituirão os reis liberaes e os chefes de Estado a curto-prazo.’ 1916: Anno de pezadelo e de libertação,’ in *A Monarchia*, 25 January 1916: 3.

However, this praise for the war did not imply agreement with the Portuguese interventionist project. The following month, the same newspaper questioned Portugal's capacity to wage war and the reasons which brought it into the conflict. The first problem was the good relations hitherto enjoyed with Germany: "It seems a done deal that the government will oblige Portugal to participate in the European conflict, which is none of its business [...] In the Ministry of War the mobilization of an army to go and fight is being prepared, side by side with the British, against a nation that has never attacked us."⁹ Amid much irony and criticism of the republican regime, notably of Afonso Costa, the newspaper doubted that a "general sense of indignation" could be generated.¹⁰ At the same time, *A Monarchia* noted the weakness of the Portuguese Army, which resulted from political strife within its ranks.¹¹

General Pimenta de Castro, Prime Minister between January and May 1915, had also refused the option for war. He argued first of all that Britain had unilaterally declared war on Germany, which excused Portugal from any duty towards its ally. Pimenta de Castro added that the army was not ready for such an enterprise: "To join the war in Europe today is not the same as fighting the natives in our possessions. And Portugal lacks the means and the indispensable preparations to succeed in a war with other civilized countries."¹² The article in question attacked Portugal's subservience in front of Britain and wondered about the British Empire's real strength:

Servile to the most abject of extremes [...] It seems as if England is pleased with all the unrest in Portugal, so that the Portuguese might not become citizens and she not lose this fiefdom [...] the great, the superb, the majestic British Empire, running majestically to shake the hand of, to embrace, this vile scum, might it not be in fact a decadent Empire?¹³

⁹ 'Parece que é ponto assente o governo obrigar Portugal a participar no conflicto europeu, para onde não é chamado [...] no ministerio da guerra se prepara a mobilização de um exercito para ir combater, ao lado dos inglezes, e contra uma nação que jamais nos hostilizou.' Sempre vamos à guerra? *A Monarchia*, 11 February 1916: 2.

¹⁰ 'sentimento geral de indignação.' Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² 'Ir hoje, para a guerra europeia, não é o mesmo que ir combater o gentio nas nossas possessões. E Portugal está desprovido dos elementos e dos preparos indispensaveis para se afoitar numa guerra com paizes civilizados. Uma pagina de história. O que diz o General Pimenta de Castro.' Ibid: 5-6.

¹³ 'Servis até á extrema abjecção [...] Parece que a Inglaterra se compraz com o desassocego em Portugal, para que os portuguezes não venham a fazer-se cidadãos, e ella a perder este feudo [...] O grande, o soberbo, o magestoso imperio brittanico, correndo majestosamente a apertar a mão, e abraçar essa vil canalha, acaso não será um imperio em decadencia?' Ibid:6.

The declaration of war dates back to March 1916. After a struggle between ‘interventionists’ and ‘anti-interventionists,’ the scales weighed in favor of the former when the British government asked Lisbon to seize German merchant ships which had taken refuge in Portuguese waters. Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses has written recently on tensions within the republican camp. He demonstrates that even among the main republican parties there was no consensus regarding Portugal’s participation in the conflict (Meneses, 2009, 267-276).

Consensus may well have emerged solely in relation to the absolute need to defend the country’s overseas possessions. In the face of the constant negotiations between Britain and Germany about the division of colonial space, in 1914 the Portuguese Government had dispatched troops to Africa, namely Angola and Mozambique. As Aniceto Afonso explains, “[...] although the idea of intervening in the European theatre did not generate unanimous support among republicans, no one questioned the mobilization of expeditions to Africa.”¹⁴ Many republicans, whether military or civilians, urged the need for military intervention based on the overriding need to protect these overseas possessions (Meneses, 2006, 125-126). In fact, republicans and anti-republicans alike showed that this was the sole issue capable of uniting the Portuguese.¹⁵

Uncertainty regarding the advantages of participating in the war and the well-known unpreparedness of the CEP (*Corpo Expedicionário Português*) led to a deepening of the internal crisis, constant desertions from the Army in Portugal and, in the end, Sidónio Pais’s military coup on 8 December 1917. The year-long dictatorship that followed was responsible for a slowing down of the Portuguese military effort – or, as General Ferreira Martins, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the CEP put it, its “winding down.”¹⁶

Most likely this decision to reduce the Portuguese presence at the front resulted above all from political considerations. Sidónio Pais’s priority was the nature of the regime, creating space in which civilian forces might remain active, even in wartime. The phenomenon now referred to as *Sidonismo* had as its fundamental goal the establishment of a political regime. It possessed all the elements needed to build it: a popular and charismatic leader; the reorganization of political forces, including the formation of a new party, the

¹⁴ ‘embora a ideia intervencionista no teatro europeu não tivesse apoio unânime entre os republicanos, ninguém pôs em causa a mobilização de contingentes para a África.’ Afonso, 2009: 290.

¹⁵ Thus, while after the fall of the *Estado Novo* (New State) the incoming republican political culture identified the commitment to colonialism as a hallmark of the supporters of the deposed regime, the fact remains that during the First Republic the overseas territories were viewed as a patrimony which was an integral part of the country’s national and political identity. See Monteiro; Pinto, 2005: 51-65.

¹⁶ ‘amenização.’ Martins, 1934: 333.

Partido Nacional Republicano; a rewriting of the electoral decrees, granting suffrage to the illiterate; and, finally, doctrinaire elements with which to revise the Constitution, bringing in, for example, the parliamentary representation of professional associations. This was a project for the establishment of a presidentialist and proto-corporativist regime (Ferreira, 1992: 70-71). In this way, and despite the formation of a new political party, the *Sidonista* project marked, in the eyes of its supporters, a rupture with politicians and their parties. The idea of a corporative model was thus reconciled with the negation of conflict and private interests as represented in the traditional parties. As one commentator put it, “[Sidónio Pais] was contemptuous of politicians because his great intelligence and his generous heart told him that politics was the deadly evil that had invaded the nation’s organism.”¹⁷ What was needed, then, was to recover the true national soul.

The war was thus fought half-heartedly. Although he made an effort to please the victorious regimes alongside which Portugal had fought, Sidónio Pais was viewed as a traitor by the defenders of armed intervention in the conflict. The somewhat embarrassed welcome given to the first returning veterans demonstrated the regime’s difficulty in dealing with this inheritance. Having risen to the presidency in the wake of a coup against the Republic’s leading figures, notably Afonso Costa and António José de Almeida, the dictator could not enthusiastically support a war effort begun before his brief consulate (Meneses, 2006: 111). So far as the mobilization of civil society is concerned, three distinct groupings that supported the dictatorship can be identified: first, those who were content with the declaration of a state of emergency; second, those who defended the creation of a new regime; and, finally, the monarchists, intent on restoration. Sidónio Pais hesitated between the first two alternatives, constantly rejecting the monarchist solution (Meneses, 2006: 72). In any case, a new regime, the *República Nova*, began to take shape. Of 77 senatorial seats, 28 were attributed to representatives of professional associations, including both employers or employees; doctors, lawyers and engineers; civil servants; and faculty members at universities, artistic academies, or high schools. The remaining 49 seats were attributed to the common electorate, nine of which were reserved for political minorities. In addition, the widening of the electoral body brought the number of registered voters to 900,000, increased from the 300,000 or so at the beginning of the Republic.¹⁸

¹⁷ ‘Elle despresou os politicos porque a sua grande intelligencia e o seu generoso coração lhe diziam que a politica era o mal de morte que tinha invadido o organismo da nação.’ *Dr. Sidónio Paes*. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. S/R, 1918.

¹⁸ *Ibid*; see also Ramos, 2009: 589.

Still, and despite the announced political reforms, there remained the feeling that *Sidonismo* would only last for as long as the war did. The *República Nova* was never more than a project without a constitutional solution. In a country that had entered the conflict in March 1916 and dispatched its first contingent to the Western Front only the following year, the coup was simply a way of marking time. A little over a month after the armistice, Sidónio Pais was assassinated at Rossio train station, in Lisbon. With this event, there began the tension between the reality of his regime and its memory, as propagated by his followers. The simple fact is that, from a strictly political point of view, the dictatorship was always an incomplete regime. There were elections but no new constitution; there were councils, but these did not deliberate. As a result, this incomplete nature, related to the fact that the enthusiasm initially generated by corporate representation had gradually cooled off, led the government to rapidly lose its credentials. The strikes that occurred throughout 1918 also led to the mounting erosion of the Sidónio Pais dictatorship (Cabral, 2007: 87). Consequently, the regime was faced once again with the choice between Monarchy or Republic, eight years after the latter's triumph (Ferreira, 1992, 73). But there was a twist: 1914-1918 were the years in which the political and ideological tendencies of a fascist or proto-fascist character began to gain traction (Cabral, 2007: 75).

The mounting crisis and the political and military turmoil of October/November 1918 led many authors, such as the republican Raul Rego and the historian José Medeiros Ferreira, to see signs of the early demise of *Sidonismo* in those months.¹⁹ However, my point is the precise opposite: the dictator's tragic death was crucial for the strengthening and the continuity of *Sidonismo* until the fall of the republican regime in 1926. Sidónio Pais was an officer and Portugal was at war for practically the whole of his tenure. Nevertheless, it was precisely the Armistice and his death which brought about a significant increase in chaotic military interventions, carried out by independent factions devoid of any institutional sense (Ferreira, 1992: 74-75). While the armed forces broke down into various factions, fragmenting and undertaking isolated and unrelated coups, civilians were busy organizing themselves. Examples of the military division can be found in the counter-revolutionary *Monarquia do Norte*, which began in the city of Porto on 19 February, three days after the pro-republican rising led by the Santarém regiment. Despite these fragmented and more or less fragile actions, it should be noted that the *Sidonista* coup and the war had politicized the Portuguese armed forces to such an extent that military intervention in politics became a constant feature of the second phase of the Republic's existence (Ferreira, 1992: 80):

¹⁹ Rego, 1978: 56; see also Ferreira, 1992: 75.

“While the question of Portugal’s participation in the war was of extreme importance to the parties and other political forces, it was absolutely decisive for the evolution of the armed forces and their growing role in the country’s political life.”²⁰

Sidónio Pais – The Reference Point for Mobilization

Corporative dictatorship, victorious under António de Oliveira Salazar, was one alternative to the increasingly worn out Republic. The repeated crises faced by Portuguese liberal republicanism questioned its ability to implement a political project on a larger scale. Against this background, various opposition groups came together to confront the existing system of liberal representation and present Portuguese society with a new alternative. In most cases, this opposition was carried out under a markedly anti-liberal profile, although there was as of yet no unanimity on some important points, such as the nature of the new regime to be built. Sidónio Pais’s tenure as President of the Republic, although brief, allowed for the creation of a set of reference points which, to a great extent, served to steer this anti-liberal militancy. Fragile though this guidance was, it was still much clearer than it had been before the *sidonista* dictatorship (Leal, 1994: 97).

In February 1918, the Integralist newspaper *A Monarquia: Diário Integralista da Tarde* set out the reasons why Integralists were now supporting Sidónio Pais: “It is with the Fatherland’s remaining soul that Mr Sidónio Pais finds himself collaborating, through one of History’s mysterious laws, in the preliminary labors of Portugal’s true restoration.”²¹ As monarchists, Integralist activists divined the possibility of a restoration in a Portugal left rudderless by liberalism and democracy. At the very least, their support allowed them the space in which to make their case for monarchy.²² Little by little, however, they came to understand, with a modicum of realism and of respect, the path set out by the dictator: “Mr Sidónio Pais, a republican, will not bring back the Monarchy, because his dignity prevents him from betraying his convictions.”²³ As a result, they defined their stance as one of “critical support” for the new regime, refusing to accept any significant position of

²⁰ ‘Se a questão da participação de Portugal na guerra foi de extrema importância para os partidos e outras forças políticas, ela foi absolutamente decisiva no que respeita à evolução das forças armadas e ao seu crescente papel na vida política do país.’ Cabral, 2007: 80.

²¹ ‘É com a alma remanescente da Pátria que o Sr. Sidónio Paes se encontra colaborando, por uma lei misteriosa da história, nos trabalhos preliminares da verdadeira restauração de Portugal.’ ‘O Senhor Sidónio Paes,’ *A Monarquia: Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 271, 16 February 1918.

²² Braga, Luís de Almeida. ‘Sem equívocos,’ *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 316, 9 March 1918.

²³ ‘O sr. Sidónio Paes, republicano, não fará a Monarquia, porque a sua dignidade o impede de trair as suas convicções.’ Raposo, Hipólito, ‘Os Modos de Sentir e Pensar a Geração Nova,’ *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 271, 16 February 1918.

responsibility: “Monarchists can support the government, can even serve it in political posts, but can hardly serve as ministers while they are monarchists and the Republic remains a Republic.”²⁴ Opposed to the holding of elections,²⁵ they nevertheless participated in them when they occurred: “One does not fight evil by turning one’s back on it; to the contrary, one must confront it in order to undo it.”²⁶ In any case, the adopted electoral system, which incorporated corporatist representation, was welcomed by the Integralists: “[...] the principle of technical representation, one of the fairest and most victorious aspirations to political truth, was welcomed for the principles that underpin it already and which can be used against electioneering politicians [...]”²⁷

The dictator’s death did not bring the young Republic the dreamed-of stability. Rather, the contrary happened; the crisis deepened. In this respect, it is worthwhile analyzing the perspective of anti-republican unity established by *Sidonismo*. To a large extent, it established itself against the will of the dictator. Sidónio Pais, like so many men of his time, drank from the waters of positivism and scientism and was close to the ‘advanced ideas’ of the Republic and Freemasonry, going as far as to display sympathy for the radical and socializing perspective of French republicans; Émile Zola at their head (Silva, 2003: 55). At the same time, the fact that he had served the Republic’s government in Berlin as Ambassador to Imperial Germany did not make him pro-German, as much of the literature he generated seeks to establish (Cabral, 2007: 75-95). In correspondence dated May 1914 and addressed to his friend and former Minister of Industry and Commerce in the first years of the Republic, Manuel de Brito Camacho, Sidónio called for the strengthening of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. Among the reasons for this was the protection of Portugal’s colonies. It is true that he attempted to prevent both the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Germany and Portugal’s intervention in the war. However, it was not Germanophilia which drove him, but rather fears for the future of the Republic should it involve itself in a conflict outside Africa (Silva, 2003: 66). His profile was thus very

²⁴ ‘Os monárquicos podem apoiar o governo, podem mesmo servi-lo em cargos que sejam políticos, mas dificilmente serão ministros enquanto forem monárquicos e a republica fôr republica.’ Monsaraz, Conde de. ‘Ressentimentos,’ *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*. N. 354, 15 May 1918.

²⁵ Amaral, João do, ‘O Integralismo no Parlamento,’ *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 278, 17 January 1918.

²⁶ ‘Não é voltando as costas para um mal que ele se combate, é pelo contrário indo ao seu encontro que se pode obter sua correcção.’ Cordeiro, Xavier, ‘Os Modos de Sentir e Pensar da Geração Nova,’ *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 347, 18 April 1918.

²⁷ ‘o princípio de representação técnica, uma das aspirações a verdade política mais justa e mais vitoriosa foi bem acolhido pelas bases que se dela aproveitam já hoje e apenas vieram combater os políticos eleiçoeiros [...].’ Raposo, Hipólito, ‘As Classes no Senado,’ *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 361, 8 May 1918.

different from the religious and mythical character which some of his followers attempted to impose on him – a character fused with the very history of the country itself:

Great People, rich deposit of the Nation's noblest traditions, magnanimous people who with your arms built this Fatherland [...] Your History is made of Apostles of an Ideal. That is why you acclaimed him as an envoy from Heaven, who had come not just to drive out a criminal government and a criminal president, and an unworthy parliament, moneylenders at the Temple of the Fatherland, but also to restore peace to your conscience, order and tranquility to your home, bread and comfort to your sons, and exalt in foreign eyes this beloved Fatherland, as unhappy as it is loved. On the altar of the Fatherland, in the sacred pantheon of those great Portuguese, which either genius or sanctity immortalized, you have just placed, amid flowers and tears, in a sweet corner, the great President – for he was as brave and heroic as Nun'Álvares, as idealistic and fearless in the discovery of new horizons and serene in the realization of a great dream as the Prince of Sagres [Henry the Navigator], as Vasco da Gama, as the Corte-Reais.²⁸

In this sense, it is worth reinforcing the idea that *Sidonismo* was a victorious ideology. The actual opinions and values of the dead dictator counted for little. Despite its difficulties in consolidating itself as a regime, it preserved its ability to bring together all the forces opposed to the Republic. Sidónio's death, thus, gave life to *sidonismo*.

The Integralists, who, as we have seen, had positioned themselves as 'critical supporters' of Sidónio, began to see the murdered dictator as a destiny-assigned reference point for Portugal. Nevertheless, they continued to point to Sidónio's insistence on a republic as his great weakness: "He who Freemasonry pushed off his chimera-like pedestal

²⁸ 'Grande Povo, rico depositario das mais nobres tradições da Nação, povo magnanimo que fizeste com teu braço esta Pátria... [...]. E é de Apostolos do Ideal que a tua historia é feita. Por isso o aclamaste, como a um enviado do Céu, que viera não só a expulsar um governo e um presidente criminosos, e um parlamento indigno, vendilhões do Templo da Pátria, mas a trazer a paz á tua consciência, a ordem e a tranquilidade ao teu lar, o pão e o conforto aos teus filhos, a engrandecer aos olhos estrangeiros esta querida Pátria, quanto mais infeliz tanto mais estremecida.

No altar da Pátria, no pantheon sagrado dos grandes Portugueses, que o génio ou a santidade immortalizou, tu acabas de collocar, por entre flores e lagrimas num cantinho bem carinhoso o grande Presidente – porque elle foi corajoso e heroico como Nun'Álvares, idealista, temerario na descoberta de novos horizontes e sereno na realização dum grande sonho, como o Infante de Sagres, como Vasco da Gama ou como Córtes Reaes [...]' *Dr. Sidónio Paes*. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. S/R, 1918.

was the victim of the regime which he tried to save. Sidónio Pais never understood that he was an instrument in the hands of destiny and that he could not have done as he wished.”²⁹ Despite this difference, even these most autonomous of supporters, so wary of a formal engagement with *Sidonismo*, did not stop evoking the dictator.

Ideological currents, political parties, and civic associations of a conservative and authoritarian nature allowed for convergence within various segments of opposition to the Republic. Among the former, although divided into republican and monarchist factions, unification occurred around a nationalist, anti-liberal and authoritarian project. Among the political parties, one can cite the *Partido Republicano Conservador* and the *Partido Nacional Republicano Presidencialista*. As far as civic associations are concerned, *Ação Nacionalista – Centro do Nacionalismo Lusitano*, *Ação Nacional* and *Cruzada Nacional Nun’Álvares Pereira* all deserve a mention. This was a space disputed by republicans and monarchists alike, which allowed for a widening of the anti-republican field.

The growth of anti-liberal groups did not mean, however, that there was unity among them. In its very first edition, the Magazine *Ordem Nova* pointed towards the fragmentation of the various political currents, even on the right. Curiously, it was those who were most independent within the various rightist tendencies who denounced their lack of unity:

One day we open *A Época* and we read Mr Alfredo Pimenta calling the *Diário de Lisboa* “our esteemed colleague,” just when Mr Raul Proença, in a most honorable attitude, must deal with the anger of the mainstream press for a noble gesture in the face of a proposal to play an acting part in a farce of the ‘court of honor’ variety. Then it is the Saviors of *Cruzada Nun’Álvares* who behave like epileptics at the Nationalist Congress, losing all prestige in the eyes of the country, every day warier and more disappointed with elixirs... In today’s Portugal, leaving aside some small groups, there is no homogenous party, no united current. Where one finds four men with identical points of view (or an identical lack of points of view, which is also common), one will find also a tendency for that group to split into two

²⁹ ‘Aquele que a Maçonaria fez tombar para sempre do seu pedestal de quimera foi uma vítima do regimen que pretendeu dar visibilidade. Sidónio Pais não chegou a compreender que era um instrumento nas mãos do Destino e que jamais poderia guiar ao seu gosto.’ Correia, Félix, ‘O Simbolo’, *A Monarquia. Diário Integralista da Tarde*, n. 515, 8 January 1919.

groups of two. Soon one will have to include a heading, in the laws that govern associations and the rules of collectives, entitled “On the Split.”³⁰

As a result, the presumed unity of the right was the result of a victorious coup rather than of a unified program of action. Of course, the postwar setting strengthened a Pan-European sentiment of opposition to the liberal system. Portugal was not, as a result, an isolated case. It is not for nothing that Eric Hobsbawm labelled these years the “Fall of Liberalism” (Hobsbawm, 1995: 113-143). Other events, foremost among them the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, must therefore be seen as elements to consider in the European – and world – crisis of the 1910s and 1920s. In the Portuguese case, wherein a comparison can be established with the case of Primo de Rivera in Spain, the memory of Sidónio Pais as a fallen hero strengthened not only anti-liberalism but also the prospect of an intervention by the Armed Forces (Leal, 1994: 161). In this way, civic associations and political parties opened the way for military action and the resulting overthrow of the republican regime.

Conclusion

The First World War played a key role in the fall of the First Republic and the subsequent rise of the *Estado Novo*. Alongside the military question that was opened up by the notorious failure of the Portuguese army’s participation in the fighting in Flanders, there stood the coup d’état carried out by Sidónio Pais. The two episodes, participation in the conflict and the dictatorship, contributed decisively towards the politicization of the armed forces, which took up the moralizing discourse of order against the anarchy of ‘politicians.’ The many *pronunciamentos* which occurred between Sidónio Pais’ murder and the victorious coup of 28 May 1926 prove this. Nevertheless, civic forces also reorganized

³⁰ ‘Um dia abrimos “A Epoca” e vemos o sr. Alfredo Pimenta a chamar *nosso prezado colega* ou coisa assim ao “Diário de Lisboa”, justamente quando o sr. Raul Proença numa atitude honrosíssima, arrosta com as iras da grande imprensa e tem um nobre gesto perante a proposta que lhe faziam para tomar parte como actor numa fantochada género “pendencia de honra”. Depois são os Salvadores da Patria da Cruzada Nun’Alvares que nos aparecem epiléticos no Congresso Nacionalista, desprestigiando-se perante o País, cada vês mais desenganado e desiludido dos elixires... Não há hoje em Portugal, tirando um ou outro grupo pequeno, um partido homogéneo, uma corrente unida. Onde há quatro homens com pontos de vista idênticos, (ou com idêntica ausência de pontos de vista, o que também é vulgar), há também a tendência para se scindir esse agrupamento em dois grupos de dois. Dentro em pouco será preciso incluir nas leis sobre associação e nos estatutos das colectividades um titulo denominado: “Da Scisão”...’ ‘Signos Tristes,’ *Ordem Nova*, Year 1, Vol. 1, 1925: 36. The text makes a reference to Raul Proença (1884-1941), republican and democrat. See Reis, António. *Raul Proença, biografia de um intelectual político republicano*, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda, 2003.

themselves – if slowly – along anti-liberal lines. The various conservative blueprints – republican or monarchist – provided proof of the growing isolation of republican Jacobinism. The latter's ability to sustain the regime in the name of a long-term project was ebbing away. Not all who opposed the republicans, of course, were *Sidonistas*. Many had even opposed the dictator, but his tragic death and the return to power of a bankrupt regime suited all of the opponents. It became both a point of reference and a focus of reverence. All that was missing was the unity that 1926 would bring: unity of the Army and civic forces *against* the Republic. The path to take could be decided after the regime's overthrow. As in war, the death of Sidónio Pais was transformed into a source of commemoration. There is no need here to consider the degree of sincerity or opportunism of those who evoked the first of Coimbra's dictators. What mattered for Portugal was their efficiency – about which there can be no question.

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