

**The beautiful woman and the grocer.
Representations about war, sport and the press in
the Portuguese 20th century**

**La mujer hermosa y el tendero.
Representaciones sobre la guerra, el deporte
y la prensa en el siglo XX portugués**

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Abstract: This article portrays the way the Portuguese sports milieu, through its press, followed, portrayed and analyzed the two main world war conflicts of the 20th century. It is a multifaceted portrait of the First and Second World Wars from the main Portuguese sports newspapers, ideologically framing the ideas of Portugal and Europe, as well as the role of sport in highly militarized and war contexts. It studies the social and cultural role of three 20th century “men” (the sportsman, the journalist and the soldier) and three social phenomena (sport, journalism and war), in an integrated and comparative way, in two different and troubled periods (1914-18 and 1939-45) of contemporary Portuguese, European and world history. The newspaper is the source for this article, focusing on different journalistic genres and their contents (e.g., editorials, news, reports, opinion chronicles), produced by the main Portuguese sports newspapers in each period. These publications are the most popular, published in the two main urban areas (Lisbon and Porto), with national distribution and reading, and regular publication throughout each phase of the analysis: 1914-18 – *O Sport Lisboa*; 1939-1945 – *O Norte Desportivo* (Porto), *Os Sports* (Lisbon), *Sporting* (Porto) and *Stadium* (Lisbon). From these sports newspapers, different events, figures and concepts are analyzed, such as the binomial war-peace or democracy-fascism. The role of sport and physical

education in contemporary society is considered, both from the Portuguese (I Republic and Estado Novo) and European perspectives. It analyzes the dynamics of international relations in the context of the two wars, based on sport and the Portuguese press, drawing (symbolic) portraits of different ideologies and geographical regions (North and South), as well as countries such as Great Britain, France (“the beautiful woman”), Italy, Germany (“the grocer”) or Finland. The (media and popular) imaginary of some of the most outstanding political figures of the first half of the 20th century, such as Roosevelt, Hitler or Mussolini, are also analyzed.

Keywords: politics, press, sport, war, Europe.

Resumen: Este artículo pretende abordar de qué forma el contexto deportivo portugués, a través de su prensa, siguió, retrató y analizó los dos principales conflictos bélicos mundiales del siglo XX. Es un retrato multifacético de la Primera y la Segunda Guerra Mundial en los principales periódicos deportivos portugueses, enmarcando ideológicamente la representación tanto de Portugal como de Europa, así como el papel del deporte en contextos altamente militarizados y bélicos. Se analiza el papel social y cultural de tres “hombres” del siglo XX (el deportista, el periodista y el militar) y de tres fenómenos sociales (el deporte, el periodismo y la guerra), de forma integrada y comparativa, en dos épocas diferentes y convulsas (1914-18 y 1939-45) de la historia contemporánea portuguesa, europea y mundial. Siendo la prensa periódica la fuente de investigación, nos centramos en los diferentes géneros periodísticos y sus contenidos (por ejemplo, editoriales, noticias, reportajes, crónicas de opinión), producidos por los principales diarios deportivos portugueses, en cada período. Se analizan las publicaciones deportivas más populares, editadas en las dos principales áreas urbanas (Lisboa y Oporto), con distribución y lectura nacional, y con publicación regular a lo largo de cada fase del análisis: 1914-18 – *O Sport Lisboa*; 1939-1945 – *O Norte Desportivo* (Oporto), *Os Sports* (Lisboa), *Sporting* (Oporto) y *Stadium* (Lisboa). A partir de las publicaciones deportivas se analizan diferentes hechos, figuras y conceptos, como el binomio guerra-paz o democracia-fascismo. Se considera el papel del deporte y la educación física en la sociedad contemporánea, tanto desde la perspectiva portuguesa (en la I República y en el Estado Novo) como europea. También se analiza la dinámica de las relaciones internacionales en el contexto de las dos guerras, a partir del deporte y la prensa, dibujando retratos (simbólicos) de diferentes ideologías y regiones geográficas (Norte y Sur), además de países como Gran Bretaña, Francia (“la mujer hermosa”), Italia, Alemania (“el tendero”) o Finlandia. También se retrata el

imaginario (mediático y popular) de algunas de las figuras políticas más destacadas de la primera mitad del siglo XX, como Roosevelt, Hitler o Mussolini.

Palabras clave: política, prensa, deporte, guerra, Europa.

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Introduction

The historical, interpretative and analytical dimension of this article is based on the triangle sport-war-journalism in the first half of the 20th century, with a focus on the two world wars. One of the works that described this epistemological triangle, founded on the human dimension and the international scenario, was published precisely at the end of this century (1999) under the title *The 20th Century Man*, coordinated by Ute Frevert and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt. The sportsman, the journalist and the soldier were three of the fourteen «men of the 20th century» studied, making it all the more important to examine each of them, thus embodying the Portuguese reality itself from an international standpoint.

The analysis of the sportsman, dealt with in Chapter IV by Christiane Eisenberg, gave an extensive view on the First World War period, taking as starting point the German phenomenon, stating that this conflict meant «a breakaway in the history of sport in that almost all armies that took part in the dispute organised competitions and promoted training activities to boost the morale of the troops when the contenders moved on to a war of opposing positions in 1916-1917».¹ The most popular sports were athletics, football and handball, more than the traditional military-type of sports such as shooting and fencing. The First World War was a «sort of ‘publicity act’ for sports, with far-reaching consequences for the years beyond 1918». In the aftermath of the war, the number of sports clubs, practitioners (many of whom returning from the war) and sports fans increased exponentially, and competitions definitely lost «the elitist nature they had before 1914». Sportive language itself ended up being contaminated by the war terminology of the time, with the sport competition being dubbed «a clash», wherein the manly and masculinising elements around the idea of sport predominated. Amateur sport gained momentum in the aftermath of the war,

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¹ Christiane EISENBERG: “El deportista”, in Ute FREVERT y Heinz-Gerhard HAUPT (ed.), *El hombre del siglo XX*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2002, p. 108-113.

stressing the need for sportsmen to «do their part for the community, be it their nation, their club or their team». Sportsmen appeared as «selfless heroes ready to make the sacrifice». The outbreak of the Second World War determined a «rupture» in European lives, with profound implications. With the comeback of the idea of the sports hero, prepared for tremendous feats, yet modest, and whose victories would «always be for the glory of their team and the State», the idea of the «superman»² advocated during the fascist movements was dropped to some extent.

As regards the specific cases of journalists (Chapter VI, by Jorg Requate) and soldiers (Chapter XIV, by Thomas Kuhne), these «20th century men» related equally and inevitably to the two world wars. In the former, the main mission of journalists was to «support the ruling regime and make a seminal contribution to its legitimisation».³ The use of information and the influence on the media became part of the direction of wars, with the «imposition of a strict censorship» and the transformation of the press «into an instrument of propaganda» of governments being «something natural». This was not, however, enough to prevent differing opinions and «confrontations between the press and the military».⁴

Regarding the latter and the concept of the soldier, there was a «theoretical construction»⁵ of the idea of «martial virility» during the First World War that would prevail until 1945, in particular in Germany, offset by a «more pacifist stance» of the French and the «cult of heroes»⁶ of the English – we will seek to situate the Portuguese case in this analysis.

In this article, these three elements (sportsman-journalist-soldier) and phenomena (sports-journalism-war) will be treated in an integrated manner, along the interpretative line recommended by Martin Poley⁷ for historical studies on sport. The two world wars are thus «events» from which historians are able to outline «contextual relationships»,⁸ central to the historical analysis of any contemporary phenomenon.

To analyse these events and the triangle formed by the said phenomena, we will base our work on periodicals as a source of privileged information,⁹ specifically the main Portuguese sports newspapers of the First and Second World Wars, to find

² *Ibidem*.

³ Jorg REQUATE: “El periodista”, in Ute FREVERT & Heinz-Gerhard HAUPT (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 160-170.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Thomas KUHNE: “El soldado”, in Ute FREVERT & Heinz-Gerhard HAUPT (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 392.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Martin POLLEY: “History and sport”, in Barrie HOULIHAN (ed.), *Sport and society*, London, SAGE, 2009, pp. 56-74.

⁸ Douglas BOOTH: “What do we do? How do we do it?”, in Murray PHILLIPS (ed.), *Deconstructing sport history – a postmodern analysis*, Albany, State University NY Press, 2006, pp. 40-74.

⁹ Jeffrey HILL: “Anecdotal Evidence: Sport, the Newspaper Press and History”, in Murray PHILLIPS (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 118.

«comments on what was happening» – in the sense of the «mirror effect»¹⁰ of the press. We sought to identify ideas and concepts related to the aforementioned triangle, focusing on the relation between sport and war in its many guises,¹¹ based on the press¹² and a *corpus* created and selected for the purpose – in line with Roland Barthes¹³ proposal, construed as a «finite collection of materials» (relevant newspaper articles on the topic, as editorials, opinion columnists, journalist reports or news), «determined beforehand» – main sports periodicals, the most relevant in Lisbon and Porto during the two periods, with national distribution and impact.¹⁴

The beautiful woman and the grocer's: representations about the First World War

The first period under analysis begins in 1914, the year in which the European conflict significantly worsened. It was the logical consequence of the escalation of rivalries between the European powers, whose difficult coexistence was evident in the relation to the new spheres of influence, in an environment aggravated by growing nationalisms.¹⁵ The diplomatic doubts and contradictions of the main European countries regarding the Balkan affairs, exacerbated on June 28 of that year with the assassination of the Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, rekindling the increasingly latent hatred towards Serbia. One event that could have provoked only a localized dispute resulted in the start of the bloodiest war within the borders of Europe,¹⁶ for which the activity of the military alliances, created in previous decades, were largely to blame. In July, Serbia received support from Russia, which did not stop Austria from declaring war on the Serbs, after having asked Germany to condemn Serbia. With the war declarations that ensued the following month, two warring blocs were formed: one composed by Serbia, Russia, France, Belgium and Great Britain, and another by Austria, Germany and Turkey. When Europe went to war, the Portuguese press were quick to announce the news, for instance in the Portuguese sports newspa-

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Luc ROBÉNE (ed.): *Le sport et la guerre, XIXe et XXe siècles*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012.

¹² Ibidem, pp. 119-170. For representations and narratives in the Portuguese press during the First World War, see Noémia Malva NOVAIS: *Imprensa e I Guerra Mundial, Censura e Propaganda, 1914-1918*, Caleidoscópio, 2016; or Jorge Pedro SOUSA: *A Grande Guerra. Uma crónica visual*, Media XXI, 2013, and Id. (ed.): *Balas de Papel: A Imprensa Ilustrada e a Grande Guerra (1914-1918). Estudos Sobre Revistas de Portugal, Brasil e Espanha*, Media XXI, 2015.

¹³ Martin BAUER and George GASKELL: *Pesquisa qualitativa com texto, imagem e som*, Petrópolis (Brazil), Vozes, 2002, p. 44.

¹⁴ See Francisco PINHEIRO: *História da imprensa desportiva em Portugal*, Porto, Afrontamento, 2011, pp. 97-112; 244-257.

¹⁵ See Geoffrey WAWRO: *A Mad Catastrophe, The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire*, Basic Books, 2014.

¹⁶ See Peter HART: *The Great War, 1914-1918*, London, Profile Books, 2014.

per *O Sport Lisboa*:¹⁷

I do not lament the war. The hideous silence of the mind is far worse than the brutal noise of epic battles, shining with light like swords. All that is grand, majestic, just and totally necessary comes to a halt. Only the unmeasured ambitions of men, the dulled hatred of races, besides the intoxication of blood, stir in madness...

After all, I am too inferior to even stop worrying about this funereal joy or this cowardly pleasure of devouring the news of the setbacks of the war and the enthusiasm of that Latin country (France), as adorable as ours, squirming like a beautiful woman in the brutal and hateful arms of a German grocer.¹⁸

The ideological position of the Portuguese sports milieu is evident, as is the concern about this conflict between European powers. In August 1914, the European panorama seemed uncertain, as *O Sport Lisboa* stressed in its 29 August edition, stating that «the war is taking on such a complicated, so amazingly complicated form that no one, not even the greatest political and military scientist, has an idea of what tomorrow might hold».¹⁹

This uncertainty remained in place until 1918, with the Portuguese sports press following the conflict,²⁰ sometimes highlighting some glimpses of the European spirit of socialisation among peoples, even among enemies. In its 30 January 1915 edition, *O Sport Lisboa* reproduced a letter that had been published days before in the English periodical *Times*, written by an English doctor who was on the front lines. He told a story set on Christmas day 1914, that the Pope had proposed a general armistice, which the Allies refused. Despite this, at certain points on the English front, a few hours of truce were unofficially agreed with the Germans, which were used for special get-togethers, as the British doctor described:

Extraordinary scenes took place between trenches. At the battle front, our soldiers and the Germans crawled out of their trenches and mingled, chatting or trying to make themselves understood, exchanging cigarettes, etc. Some of our troops even went to the German trenches, and were cordially received by

¹⁷ Published in Lisbon, originally under the name *O Sport Lisboa e Benfica*, it was the only Portuguese sports newspaper to work regularly during the war (1914-18). It was a strident supporter of Portugal joining the war alongside the Allies and a promoter of sport in the conservative Portuguese society.

¹⁸ Z.Z.: “Crónica” [Chronicle], *O Sport Lisboa*, 8 August 1914.

¹⁹ Z.Z.: “Crónica” [Chronicle], *O Sport Lisboa*, 29 August 1914.

²⁰ The front pages that elucidated the conflict the most occurred when renowned sportsmen died in combat, for instance, the news about French sportsman Jean Bouin (cf. *O Sport de Lisboa*, 10 October 1914).

the enemy! They organised a singing concert that ended with the Saxons singing ‘God save the king’ at the top of their voices.

This is absolutely authentic. The regiment even played a football match with the Saxons, which they won by three to two. The Saxons and our soldiers arranged a singing concert for this evening, taking an oath not to initiate any conflicts before midnight.²¹

The role of the news about the socialisation between enemies²² was symbolic, imparting a more human aspect to a war that both sides hoped would be short, but which lasted for four years. Trench warfare, also called «position warfare», followed the war of movement, leading the two sides to «bury themselves»²³ in the ground, transformed into mud during the winter. This war scenario remained almost unchanged between December 1914 and March 1918, during which time the front did not move in real terms.

The stabilisation of the war brought some calm to the societies involved, and the conflict began to be viewed in a natural way, especially in the countries further away from the centre of Europe, such as Portugal and England. On a visit to England in early 1915, a contributor to *O Sport Lisboa* witnessed the British society return to normality, characterising the war as a clash between the «right» (represented by the Allies) and the «force» (the Triple Alliance).²⁴ Despite being directly involved in the conflict, England benefitted from its geographical position – an island far from the mainland where the battle raged –, giving it a greater capacity to reflect on the issue and to prepare for post-war times. In December 1915, the University of London began a series of lectures on the war conflict, with the first lecture on «War and the political unity of the British Empire», by scholar J. H. Morgan. The novelty of the war seemed to reside in the concept of nationalism, with the *O Sport de Lisboa* newspaper quoting Morgan when he stated that «the war has put an end to the belief of internationalism and that this belief must be replaced by another – that of nationalism.»²⁵ Thus, according to the prestigious British professor, the «lesson» to be drawn from this war was that future conflicts «will no longer be wars between armies, but between people, between nations».²⁶

²¹ A Redação: “Um desafio franco-alemão, disputado na frente da batalha” [A Franco-German match played on the front lines], *O Sport Lisboa*, 30 January 1915.

²² The story plot of the French film *Joyeux Noël* (2005), directed by Christian Carion.

²³ Cf. Isabel Pestana MARQUES: “Os portugueses nas trincheiras: vivências comportamentais”, in Nuno Severiano TEIXEIRA (ed.), *Portugal e a Guerra*, Lisboa, Ed. Colibri, 1998, pp. 71-87; William PHILPOTT: *Attrition – Fighting the First World War*, Little, Brown Book Group, 2015.

²⁴ MOCHO: “Carta de Inglaterra” [Letter from England], *O Sport Lisboa*, 6 February 1915.

²⁵ Álvaro de LACERDA: “Apreensões futuras” [Future concerns], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 4 December 1915.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

The war would also produce what Eric Hobsbawm²⁷ characterised as a build-up of «genuine, if sometimes short-lived, outbursts of mass patriotism in the main belligerent countries».²⁸ There were two sides of the same concept of nationalism: on one side, nationalism as an ideology supported by the nationalist movements; and on the other side those that advocated a broader, more inclusive nationality. The former claimed and appealed to the creation or aggrandizement of the «nation» – in a bid to resist, oust, submit or eliminate «foreigners» (of which the Dreyfus case was the most blatant example) –, while the second group considered such nationalism insufficient, urging that it be extended to the defence of the language, religion and other «more powerful and mobilising interests or forces, whether old or modern».²⁹

The war brought with it the strengthening of the «cult of strength» and of the «cult of strong power», concepts that the nationalism of those times transmitted to the first fascist movements,³⁰ under development in this phase. In the eyes of the founders of fascism, the Great War would be the clear proof that «the masses march under the impulse of myths, images and feelings»,³¹ presenting itself as «a laboratory where the ideas anticipated over the first ten years of the century actually occurred.»³² Despite this rise in nationalism, which would affect how the Portuguese viewed themselves and Europe, the German society was indicated as the one that largely imposed itself in the European panorama. And while it was not able to dominate warfare, its idea of nationhood did not subside, quite the opposite, in fact:

Once the central empires have been defeated, the German civilisation will come out as winners, that is, we will have to copy the processes used by the Germans in industry, commerce, agriculture, the arts, and the sciences to achieve what they have achieved – build a strong, indestructible nationality, with their own way of life and a high and common goal in view, and a determined and deliberate will to execute it, using every means offered by science to achieve it.³³

Despite the value attached to the «Germanic civilisation», France remained the cultural reference for the Portuguese. The German development was even branded as a kind of consequence of French genius, in which «the French discovered and the

²⁷ Eric HOBSBAWN: *A Era do Império, 1875-1914*, Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 1990, p. 205.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 206.

³⁰ Zeev STERNHELL, Mário SZNAJDER and Maia ASHÉRI: *Nascimento da Ideologia Fascista*, Venda Nova, Bertrand, 1995, p. 43.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ Álvaro de LACERDA: “Palavras vãs” [Empty words], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 30 December 1916.

Germans produced; the French invested and the Germans applied; the French saw themselves in the mirror, pleased with themselves and their genius, while the Germans kept their eyes firmly on the microscope to see how many tonnes of gold they could squeeze out of each *micron* of the French genius». ³⁴ While for the French the individual was the unit, for the Germans it was the group, in a kind of battle between individualism (French) and collectivism (German).

As the First World War waged on, two other countries were held dear by the Portuguese press: England and the United States of America. They stood out (as did the Germans), not by their individuality, but by their collective organisation, decisive in a period of warlike conflict. The lack of organisational capacity was flagged as one of Portugal's problems, which had to prepare an army in a short period of time – as did the English and the North-Americans –, yet achieving the opposite of what their Allies had achieved. The newspaper *O Sport de Lisboa* acknowledged precisely this issue on 30 November 1918, recalling that «two nations had gone to war, but at the beginning none of them had armies, so to speak», ³⁵ and these two countries were «England and America». However, «these two countries formed and trained two colossal armies», «achieved thanks to their splendid organisation». ³⁶

Another dominant discourse during the conflict was the need to preserve peace once it was achieved. The concept of peace generated mistrust, as it was associated with a period of more than 40 years – between the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) and the beginning of the Great War (1914) –, which had been dictated by the arms race and preparation by war. Concepts such as «armed peace» and «perpetual peace» ³⁷ prevailed between 1871 and 1914, and the Portuguese press feared that the same would happen after the First World War – which is what ultimately happened:

When the nations emerge from this bloody struggle, when the massive cannons are taken back to their arsenals, when the warships sail back to their harbours, when the lathes are set to make work tools instead of instruments of war, they will start another war – perhaps among themselves – bloodless, lasting longer, and in which each nation will seek to subvert the other or others, by an avalanche of their products and thus acquire the money they lack for the manufacture of new, more terribly destroying devices of war. This is called... peace! ³⁸

³⁴ Agostinho de CAMPOS: *Latinos e Germanos*, Lisboa, Livraria Bertrand, 1923, pp. 30-31.

³⁵ MIROMA: “Ainda e sempre” [Still and always], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 30 November 1918.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ Dominique VENNÉ: *O século de 1914*, Porto, Civilização Editora, 2009, p. 27.

³⁸ Álvaro de LACERDA: “Palavras vãs” [Empty words], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 30 December 1916.

Despite the distrust in peace, which would take on a punitive tone in relation to Germany (seen as the main party responsible for the war), the end of the conflict would be welcomed in the Portuguese and international context, as would the peace process. This was a way to avoid the outbreak of a new war conflict on a global scale. The subsequent signing of the Treaty of Versailles,³⁹ the creation of the United Nations⁴⁰ and Germany's strategy of weakening and control, together with the collective memories of the horrors of war made it possible to think that the peace that came out of the war would be stable and long-lasting. According to the main Portuguese sports newspaper, *O Sport Lisboa*, of 30 November 1918, «there was good reason to believe that at least our children and us will not see world peace disturbed again».⁴¹ However, war was to return two decades later. The peace between 1918 and 1939 was again a preparatory period⁴² for another war conflict on a global scale.

a) *Identity dilemmas in Portugal at war*

The First Republic (established in 1910) and the republican movement⁴³ were beginning to assert themselves in the Portuguese context when the First World War broke out. As a political reaction, on 7 August 1914 the Congress of the Republic approved a set of principles to govern the Portuguese foreign policy. It was stated that Portugal would not shirk its international commitments, especially the alliance with England. A military expedition was ordered to head to Angola and Mozambique⁴⁴ to strengthen the borders against the Germany hostile activity in the region, since the Germanic ambitions in relation to the Portuguese overseas territories were well known. Portugal, however, took an expectant stance, as *O Sport Lisboa* acknowledged on 5 September 1914, pointing out that «half of the world was engaged in the war, as the other half watched, in excruciating expectation, the unfolding of the horrific catastrophe».⁴⁵

In the first months of the conflict, it was evident to the press that Portugal would end up siding with the Allies, confirming the historical alliance with England. And, should the Allies win, the young Portuguese Republic would achieve several objectives: stave off the threat of losing the colonies, coveted by Germany (in 1912-13 a second Anglo-German agreement was signed on the partition of the Portuguese colo-

³⁹ Michael S. NEIBERG: *The Treaty of Versailles*, NY, Oxford University Press, 2017.

⁴⁰ The forum for settling disputes between countries, the predecessor of the United Nations (UN) (Cf. Charles RIVERS: *The League of Nations*, CreateSpace IPP, 2018).

⁴¹ MIROMA: "Ainda e sempre" [Still and Always], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 30 November 1918.

⁴² Ibidem, pp. 114-388.

⁴³ Nuno Severiano TEIXEIRA: "Portugal na 'Grande Guerra', 1914-1918", in Id. (ed.), *Portugal e a Guerra*, Lisboa, Colibri, 1998, pp. 55-70.

⁴⁴ On the colonial dimension of this conflict, see *First World War Studies*, 10 (2019). <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rfww20/current> [last consulted on 20-01-2020]

⁴⁵ A Redação: "Notas e notícias" [Notes and news], *O Sport Lisboa*, 5 September 1914.

nies); ward off the «Spanish threat»,⁴⁶ stamping out their Iberian ambitions; obtaining the international recognition of the Republic, ruining the royalists' ambitions to return to power; and strengthening the «European commitment»⁴⁷ of Portuguese rulers, who now defended, on an international level, the concepts of liberty and right, after having done so at domestic level on 5 October 1910 with the establishment of the Republic. The idea of sending Portuguese troops to help the Allies thus gained broad consensus:

The situation of Portugal, a colonial power and an ally of England, requires the generous sacrifice and intense aid on our part which we will give. To remain behind, given the special condition in which we find ourselves, and in view of the tradition of our race and our army would be a show of cowardice, which future generations would not forgive and which we ourselves would not admit today. Only the nations accustomed to the comfort of a situation which depends entirely on the situation of others will stay behind. Not us. We, the peaceful and simple people will finally join our blood to the generous blood that today tints our friend, France. Every European man is fighting in the war. The Portuguese will also show how this little race of the West learned how to fight and die honourably from books from old times.⁴⁸

The concepts of race, bravery and heroism were evoked to justify Portugal's entry into war, in addition to political and geostrategic factors. Certain events, such as Italy's involvement in the conflict in May 1915 alongside the Allies created pressure among the press for Portugal to join the war. The sports medium was in favour of that opinion. *O Sport de Lisboa* campaigned to that end, questioning the political powers and public opinion, on 5 June 1915, when the day would come «for the Portuguese race, in a burst of dignity and patriotism, to follow the noble example of our Italian brothers».⁴⁹ According to the main Portuguese newspaper, «to be of Latin blood and to stand back watching the struggle of our race fighting against barbarism is a shame for which history will hold us severely accountable».

The ideological characterisation was evident, in a conflict between the «Latin» world (e.g. France and Italy), advocating freedom and progress, and the world of «barbarism» (Germany). The war represented a conflict between decadence (the Entente Triangle) and regeneration (the Allies): on one side, the defence of progress, criti-

⁴⁶ Hipólito de la TORRE GÓMEZ and Josep SANCHEZ CERVELLO: *Portugal en el siglo XX*, Madrid, Istmo, 1992, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

⁴⁸ Alberto LIMA: "A guerra" [The war], *O Sport Lisboa*, 17 October 1914.

⁴⁹ A Redação: "A Itália e a França na guerra" [Italy and France in the war], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 5 June 1915.

cal spirit, individuality, liberty and an international order based on rights, «values rooted in the spirit of an old Latin culture, which irradiated from heroic France»;⁵⁰ and on the other side, obscurantism, reaction, collectivism and the reason of force in the life of peoples and in the relations between states, «embodied by the Germanic colossal barbarism».⁵¹

Portugal eventually joined the conflict on 9 March 1916, with the declaration of war by Germany. The Portuguese government acceded to England's request to commandeer all German merchant ships that had taken refuge in ports in mainland Portugal, islands and colonies. Between February and July 1916, Portugal commandeered seventy German and two Austro-Hungarian ships, thus becoming completely involved in the First World War. The political class, in general, was satisfied with this position, seeing in the Portuguese military participation «the perfect way to discipline the country and to convert it to the Republic, to provide it with a loyal army and even to guarantee a part of the presumed post-war modernity for Portugal».⁵² The declaration of war was received cautiously by the Portuguese sports milieu, which saw it as an opportunity for the country to wake up from the «lethargic state» into which it had fallen:

Germany has just declared war on Portugal. It is not for us to analyse or even track the causes of the conflict. All we have to do is confirm the fact. And the fact is that we, today, a small nation of 6 million people, are at war with a country with 60 million souls! We should never forget these numbers, so that we, always superficial in our judgements, do not lose sight of the enormity of the situation in which we find ourselves and grasp its scope. Let this fact be our wakening from the depths of the lethargy into which we have fallen, to the great struggles of modern life. It is not the time for verbiage – it is time for action. We are not prepared for this conflict. Well, let us prepare ourselves, now, immediately.⁵³

Discourses of national regeneration were back to this «poor, exhausted, backward and anarchic country, with no military means or the money to pay for them».⁵⁴ For this very reason, and although the militarist path brought with it benefits,⁵⁵ the

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Hipolito de la TORRE GÓMEZ and Josep SANCHEZ CERVELLO: op. cit, p. 18.

⁵² Vasco Pulido VALENTE: *A «República Velha» (1910-1917)*, Lisboa, Gradiva, 1997, p. 87.

⁵³ Álvaro de LACERDA: “Estado de guerra” [State of war], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 18 March 1916

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 86.

⁵⁵ See Jorge Pais DE SOUSA: “Afonso Costa e Manuel Teixeira Gomes na missão que negociou em Londres, no verão do 1916, as condições financeiras para a participação de Portugal na I Guerra Mundial. Na proto-história da integração europeia”, *Revista Universitária de História Militar*, 3-5 (2014), pp. 11-34.

country was unable to reach consensus and national unity around Portugal's intervention in the war. Instead, social and political divisions were aggravated. However, the sending of Portuguese troops to the war scenario on 30 January 1917⁵⁶ helped boost the morale in Portuguese society. The main sports newspaper, *O Sport de Lisboa*, mentioned it on 17 February 1917 stressing that the country was going through a «period of renaissance»,⁵⁷ destroying «age-old centuries and a new era is about to dawn».⁵⁸

War appeared as the appropriate means to destroy «all the formulas of old civilisations», awakening «all the spirit of creation and construction, assassinating all nostalgic and regressive sentimentalism», as artist Almada Negreiros wrote in his *Ultimum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX* [Futurist ultimatum to the Portuguese generations of the 20th century] in December 1917. But while the departure of Portuguese troops to France was seen as an example of renewal, the harsh conditions found at the front (imposed by winter and life in the trenches), as well as the cruelty of the clashes with the German troops (leading to many casualties on the Portuguese side, especially in the Battle of Lys on 9 April 1918) soon had the feelings of inferiority back on the newspapers, aggravated, once again, by the comparison with other countries. The newspaper *O Sport Lisboa* was the only Portuguese periodical to publish regularly during the war, offering, therefore, in 1918 various comparative reflections on the realities lived throughout the conflict. In its 17 August edition, the reputed journalist Álvaro de Lacerda compared «the soldier's education»⁵⁹ in England and Portugal, claiming that the English soldier had their «mind on pleasant and educational pastimes», spending hours in military instruction and on playing fields. By «contrast», the Portuguese soldier's barracks were «always the same damp and cold house», with no one to look after their education, being «one more element of demoralisation».

English progress seemed to be based on «self-effort», and should serve as an adage for a country (Portugal) discouraged by a «friar-type of education» (understood as the influence of the Catholic in Portuguese society) – one of the causes pointed out by *O Sport Lisboa* for Portugal's backwardness. In its 7 December 1918 edition, the newspaper commented that «in England, the mainstream cult of self-effort, which forms a strong people, who know what they want and what they can do, is developed from the cradle to school».⁶⁰ In Portugal, the «friar-type of education» had «crept»

⁵⁶ The first Brigade of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps left for France, and a second contingent left the following month.

⁵⁷ Álvaro de LACERDA: “A jornada do Algarve” [Algarve events], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 17 February 1917.

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

⁵⁹ Álvaro de LACERDA: “Porque não?” [Why not?], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 17 August 1918.

⁶⁰ Álvaro de LACERDA: “Costumes portugueses” [Portuguese customs and mores], *O Sport de Lisboa*, 7 December 1918.

into the Portuguese, who expected «everything» from «divine benevolence» and «nothing» from their «own efforts». According to the newspaper, the lack of «work habits» was another characteristic of the Portuguese, stating that they were «hardly accustomed to working, because we do not have working habits, we do not know how to appreciate the efforts of others, and we prefer to speak ill of everything and everyone, distorting all intentions and undermining all initiatives».⁶¹

Some of these characterisations of national identity continued after the war, especially until 1926, when the military dictatorship put an end to the republican regime, paving the way to the fascist movement. It dictated the imposition of prior censorship on the press, conditioning journalistic approaches of a more ideological nature, although the imaginaries generated by the First World War were still recurrent in the newspapers. There was a collective need to keep the «legacy»⁶² and the «teachings»⁶³ of war alive, and sports was considered, «by all civilised peoples»,⁶⁴ an «effective collaborator in the promoting of a nation».⁶⁵ The «inclusion of physical vigour, achieved through sport, in the characterisation of the post-war ideal of the European man» was an idea strengthened by the conflict,⁶⁶ also applicable to the Portuguese man. It was only natural that European fascist movements of the early 1920s, such as the Italian fascist movement, began to instrumentalise sport as a «renewing element of the race»⁶⁷ and creator of an ideal of «fascist body».⁶⁸

Portuguese sport and its press saw a dramatic growth in the inter-war period,⁶⁹ as a result of the popularity of sports such as football,⁷⁰ cycling⁷¹ or boxing.⁷² In addition to the legacy(ies) of the First World War, which remained present in the 1920s and 1930s Portuguese sport and press, other war conflicts were covered by the sports newspapers, such as the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy under Mussolini and, in particu-

⁶¹ Ibidem.

⁶² On the concept of the legacy of the First World War, see John RAMSDEN: “The legacy of the Great War”, *Contemporary European History*, 5:1 (2008), pp. 133-138.

⁶³ A Direção: “Poucas palavras” [A few words], *Os Sports*, 6 April 1919.

⁶⁴ F.G.: “Noção errada” [The wrong approach], *Os Sports*, 20 April 1919.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

⁶⁶ See Francisco PINHEIRO: *A Europa e Portugal na imprensa desportiva, 1893-1945*, Coimbra, MinervaCoimbra, 2006, p. 109.

⁶⁷ Oliveira VALENÇA: “Itália fascista! Itália desportiva!” [Fascist Italy! Sporting Italy!], *Sporting*, 31 October 1923.

⁶⁸ On the concept of “body fascism”, see Julie GOTTLIEB: “Body fascism in Britain”, *Contemporary European History*, 20:2 (2011), pp. 111-136.

⁶⁹ See Francisco PINHEIRO: *História da imprensa desportiva...*; José NEVES and Nuno DOMINGOS (ed.): *Uma história do desporto em Portugal, Vol. I-III*, Quidnovi, 2011.

⁷⁰ See João Nuno COELHO and Francisco PINHEIRO: *A Paixão do Povo – História do Futebol em Portugal*, Afrontamento, 2002; Ricardo SERRADO and Pedro SERRA: *História do Futebol Português* (2.^a ed.), Prime Books, 2014.

⁷¹ Ana SANTOS: “História do ciclismo”, in José NEVES and Nuno DOMINGOS (ed.), op. cit., pp. 13-36.

⁷² Nuno DOMINGOS: “Homens ao minuto – Para uma história do boxe nas décadas de quarenta e cinquenta”, in José NEVES and Id. (ed.), op. cit., pp. 167-216.

lar, the Spanish Civil War. However, the triangle of phenomena addressed in this article would only be further accentuated, in the Portuguese context, with the outbreak of a new conflict on a global scale.

Second World War, the «graveyard of hopes»

The Second World War was the result of rivalries between European empires (Germany, Great Britain and France) and between ideological backgrounds (fascism, communism, liberal democracy), even though this view should be more comprehensive (Norman Davies, 2008). The pre-war situation in Europe in the second half of the 1930s ended on 1 September 1939 with the invasion of Poland by German troops. The Portuguese sports milieu reacted immediately, with the main sports newspaper in northern Portugal, *O Norte Desportivo*, stating two days after the invasion, in a profoundly regretful way, that «the cannons have begun their work – inglorious and cruel»⁷³ and «their terrifying chant» was «sowing death on the borders of Poland, who is giving the world yet another example of noble sacrifice». Poland was presented as «an example of sacrifice», in a clear stance (defending the «small» countries against the threat of the great powers) by the newspaper. This position would be one of the editorial features of the Portuguese press during this period. The war was defined as «the madness of dominance»,⁷⁴ denoting a certain disappointment with some countries and political figures, especially towards Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany – after all, they had used sports as a means and an instrument for preparing the youth for war:

Germany, so proud of its sporting advancement, so meticulous in preparing its athletes, so proud of the efforts of its practitioners, did not refrain from sacrificing all this constructive effort to a delirious idea of senseless domination. Germany wanted to create strong men to sacrifice them to the selfishness of an imperialism that revolts all men of sound mind and soul.⁷⁵

The Portuguese sports press disagreed with the warlike action taken by Hitler's regime. The warlike events of 1939 vindicated the different voices that in the 1920s had foreseen the outbreak of a terrifying war if the necessary preventive measures were not taken. The concerns of the Austrian politician and philosopher Coudenhove-Kalergi, embodied in 1923 in the text «European Manifest», took shape in 1939. Kalergi warned of the division of Europe in the face of a «triple danger: first, an over-

⁷³ Joaquim Alves TEIXEIRA: “A guerra” [The war], *O Norte Desportivo*, 3 September 1939.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

whelming war; second, servitude to Russia; and third, material ruin». ⁷⁶ He therefore called for the creation of a Pan-Europe (or United Nations of Europe), an organization that would bring together the European democracies in order to avoid a new «war of extermination that will make Europe a vast cemetery». ⁷⁷ When the conflict broke out, the Portuguese sports press exhibited this symbolic image: «What a graveyard of hope the awakening of war has created! Men, the puppets of a mistaken idea of the impossible domination of a race, fight fiercely in Poland, already burden by so many sacrifices. The end of the war hides in a distant haze». ⁷⁸

Another conclusion to be drawn from the sports press was that the war did not seem surprising, emerging as an inevitability of the events that had affected Europe and the world in previous decades. On 5 May 1943, Lisbon's main sports newspaper, *Os Sports*, ⁷⁹ commented that the war «hardly came as a surprise to most nations». ⁸⁰ The «signs of the impossibility of avoiding the fuse» had been around for a long time and so «many countries had prepared themselves in advance to bear the inevitable consequences resulting therefrom and soon began rationing some products and raw materials». ⁸¹

For the Portuguese press, England was one of the countries that apparently had neglected to prepare for war, where the «cult of the weekend» ⁸² was revived in the years leading up to the conflict – English families enjoyed their weekends to go for walks, returning to work only on Monday. As the press pointed out, this weekend ritual was one of the adages of the English sloppiness, incomprehensible at a time when the continental powers, with their fascist ideology, prepared for war. In this period, various newspaper published articles under the title «sport and war» to get into reflections at cross-purposes on both concepts, in different countries and distinct social realities:

The newspapers claimed that while Europe worked feverishly, the British ruling classes played golf, fished for trout or raised roses in their gardens. The British 'weekend' habit was ingrained in the spirit of the nation, from the King to the lowest subject, and this was known in Europe. It was even said

⁷⁶ Richard COUDENHOVE-KALERGI: “Os Estados-Unidos Europeus” [The European United States], *Seara Nova*, 12 August 1926, p. 466-467.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁸ Joaquim Alves TEIXEIRA: “Consequências da guerra” [Consequences of the war], *O Norte Desportivo*, 10 September 1939.

⁷⁹ Founded in Lisbon in 1919, it would be one of the most important Portuguese sports newspapers until 1945.

⁸⁰ João VASCONCELOS: “O sonho e a realidade” [The dream and reality], *Os Sports*, 5 May 1943.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*.

⁸² A Redação: “O desporto e a guerra” [Sport and war], *Os Sports*, 25 July 1941.

that the disturbers of international peace would engage in their coup d'état on the weekend, so that the British cabinet could not take action until Monday.⁸³

The idea of leisure associated with sport is portrayed in this excerpt, which attempted to describe the pre-war English reality. These circumstances changed on 3 September 1939, when Great Britain, like France, joined the war after Nazi Germany refused to withdraw their troops from Poland, a country allied to the British and the French.⁸⁴ Germany thus accomplished the expansion into central Europe, turning westwards the following year.

a) *Finland, the «Olympic nationality» of small nations*

At the end of 1939, the Portuguese press also covered another warlike conflict. As part of the defensive expansionist strategy adopted by the Soviet Union, Soviet troops invaded Finland in December of that year. The Soviet government aimed to gain strategic territorial advantages and impose a political administrative subordinated to Soviet interests. The conflict attracted the attention of the Portuguese press because it exemplified the eternal struggle between a «small» country (Finland) and a «big» communist one (the Soviet Union). And although theoretically inferior, the Finns defended themselves against the attacks of the Red Army, which met with serious difficulties in breaking the Finnish defensive lines, and peace only came about three months later.

In the opinion of the Portuguese magazine *Sporting*,⁸⁵ Russia had a «revolting attitude, full of hypocrisy, an attitude for which it can never be forgiven»,⁸⁶ as it was a «colossal nation, but still very backward» that had invaded Finland, «a country in where civilisation is not a myth, a very small homeland to great champions, a peaceful and sporting country para excellence». For the Portuguese magazine, «if education is to be comprehensive, it has to be looked at under three aspects– intellectual, moral and physical –, Finland is unarguably a great country, one of the most advanced in Europe and the world».⁸⁷

The Portuguese press's interest in Finland was largely due to the fact that this Nord country was a model of success to the «small» European nations, in which Por-

⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁴ To explore the Portuguese position, see António TELO: *Portugal na Segunda Guerra Mundial*, vol. I e II, Vega, 1991.

⁸⁵ One of the most important Portuguese sports magazines, founded in Porto in 1921 and regularly publishing until the early 1950s.

⁸⁶ João SARABANDO: “Finlândia” [Finland], *Sporting*, 4 December 1939.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

tugal⁸⁸ was included (thus forgetting its African dimension and the idea of a colonial empire). The press referred to Finland as «our Olympic nationality»,⁸⁹ capable of successfully representing the sports of the «small» countries against the poor of the «big» nations:

After the major nationalities – the USA, England, France and other countries had already seen their flags hoisted on the Olympic flagpole –, the nationals of the smaller countries who never had that satisfaction and pride got their revenge in Finland, whose anthem echoed once, twice and three times in a row in the stadium, celebrating its victory. And we took Finland's victories as our own, and as a victory of all small countries that, like Portugal, never had a chance to win.⁹⁰

Finland participated in sports competitions against the «big» nations, but it was a different matter when it came to warlike conflicts, even with the backing of strategic support. The United States of America, Great Britain and France criticised the Soviet invasion, supporting the Finns by supplying them with military equipment. The United Nations condemned the invasion and expelled the Soviet Union from its forum. However, despite the heroic Finnish opposition, the Soviet military power was devastating, to the great regret of the sports press. For *Sporting* magazine, Finland was a «victim», characterising the Nordic country as «the most charming and beautiful corner of old Europe» and the Finns as «the most perfect men on earth».⁹¹

b) *France, the second homeland to the Portuguese*

War raged in Europe between 1939 and 1940. For the Portuguese sports milieu and its press, the major concern was for «our second homeland» (France) – and expression often used by Oliveira Valença,⁹² the director of the sports magazine *Sporting*, who had fought in the First World War alongside the French. On 29 January 1940, Oliveira Valença signed the editorial «A nossa segunda Pátria» [Our second homeland], where he clarified his position and that of the magazine *Sporting*: «Someone

⁸⁸ The first Portuguese Olympic gold medal was won in 1984 by Carlos Lopes, in the Los Angeles Olympic marathon.

⁸⁹ A Redação: “Nós, os que veneramos a Finlândia” [We who worship Finland], *Sporting*, 11 December 1939.

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁹² A sports journalist from an early age, he was also an industrialist, trader, sports manager and media entrepreneur. When he was studying in Paris in 1914, he enlisted and joined the French troops, for whom he fought until his return to Portugal. His connection to France would always be present in the editorials of the *Sporting* magazine, which he directed between 1924 and the 1950s.

once wrote: ‘A man has two homelands – his own and France.’ We think she is fair to those who were once fortunate enough to live there».

The German invasion of Western Europe began on 10 May 1940, with the occupation of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, after the fall of Denmark and Norway. Shortly after, on 14 June, the Germans took Paris. The proximity to the French reality translated, in the Portuguese sports press, the need to place the French on a different level to the German or the Italians, associated with all evil going on in Europe. Thus, sports journalists described one same action carried out by a French or German man differently. The sports magazine *Sporting* made it clear on 29 January 1940 that «a Frenchman plays sports for physical culture, to enjoy himself, and never with the aim of becoming a superman to ‘épater’⁹³ [impress] strangers».⁹⁴

Besides the cultural affinities with France, the sports press revealed a certain feeling of revolt and deceit towards the German and Italian fascisms. In the 1930s, Italy, under the rule of Mussolini, and Germany, led by Hitler, were regularly presented by sports journalists as examples of progress and development in sport.⁹⁵ The scenario changed with the outbreak of the war. In Portugal, two of the leading directors of sports periodicals in the 1930s and 1940s – Oliveira Valença in the Porto-based *Sporting* and Raul de Oliveira⁹⁶ in the Lisbon-based *Os Sports* – had fought in the First World War alongside the French and other Allies. These emotional and sentimental bonds resulted in texts supporting and praising the spirit of the French, as did *Os Sports* on 6 November 1942 when it stated that «Suffering, pain, tears, mourning of the soul, uncertainty, adversity – none of this alone is enough to destroy the spirit of the French, to annihilate their faith, nor break pace of their life».⁹⁷

Expressions of support to France gained momentum as the Allies took hold in the Third Reich. The liberation of Paris in mid-1944, was one of the highlights of the French glorification on the pages of Portuguese sports newspapers. It led the director of *Os Sports*, Raul de Oliveira, to share in Oliveira Valença’s idea (of France as a «second homeland»), placing the French nation on a second line of devotion, with the French capital portrayed as the centre of the universe, a fountain of an inebriating humanism:

⁹³ In this context, ‘épater’ takes the meaning of “to squash; to flatten”, in *Dicionário Francês/Português*, Porto, Porto Editora, 1983, p. 225.

⁹⁴ Oliveira VALENÇA: “A nossa segunda Pátria” [Our second homeland], *Sporting*, 29 January 1940.

⁹⁵ To explore the relation sport-fascism, see Daniele SERAPIGLIA (ed.): *Tempo libero, sport e fascismo*, Bologna, Bra, 2016.

⁹⁶ He was part of the CEP, the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in the First World War. He directed *Os Sports* between 1929 and 1945, and was one of the best sports journalists of his generation.

⁹⁷ Alberto FREITAS: “A França” [France], *Os Sports*, 6 November e 1942.

Paris! Heart of France! Soul of the World! Paris has regained control of itself, is back in the hands of France, of the Latin world, of the entire work through which its unmistakable spirit radiated.

Paris is liberated! Let us salute her with emotion and fervour, trusting that her contribution to the war will be the torch-bearer of peace and brotherhood among men.⁹⁸

The liberation of Paris and the rapprochement of the Allies to Rome – both cities symbols of European identity – both led the Portuguese press to focus on the idea of peace.

c) *The fears of peace in a torn apart Europe*

In 1944, there was a certain amount of disbelief and uncertainty about the concept of peace,⁹⁹ as the peaceful period between the wars (1919-1938) had been nothing more than a preparatory interregnum for a new conflict and there was a strong and latent fear of it happening again after the Second World War:

The world is at war! But never was there so much talk of peace! See the inconsistency of man: now that he has peace, as there has never been in the world, he longs for peace; but when he was at peace, he thought only of war, he prepared for war, he did not know how to avoid war, or did not wish to avoid it! Was there ever any peace on earth? The fact that there is no war does not imply that one is living in peace. No! Man does not know peace, does not know what peace is, does not warm up to the idea of peace.¹⁰⁰

In mid-1944, the resurgence of the idea of peace was closely related to the successive victories of the Allies, anticipating the end of the conflict. The European reality seemed to be coming returning to what it was in 1939, in a kind of eternal come back, as reported by the newspaper *Os Sports* on 1 September 1944, a symbolic date marking the fifth anniversary of the war. According to journalist Neves Reis, «all the plans of those who promoted the war tumbled» and «the winners of yesteryear became the losers of today». This marked «the beginning», where the «borders that were widened have receded» and the «allies of yesterday are enemies now. The weapons are

⁹⁸ Raul de OLIVEIRA: “Em França” [In France], *Os Sports*, 26 August 1944.

⁹⁹ On the concepts of peace, war and sport, see Martin HUNCOMBE and Philip DINE: “Introduction: War, Peace and Sport”, *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 13:4 (2020), pp. 337-341.

¹⁰⁰ Neves REIS: “Haverá alguma vez paz no mundo?” [Will there ever be peace in the world], *Os Sports*, 16 June 1944.

turned against yesterday's comrades. The imbalance is universal». ¹⁰¹ And he concluded: «Dreams of ambition and domination that kindled so many brains and inflamed so many hearts faded away and left nothing but a sad memory – that of the hecatomb they caused». ¹⁰²

The war ended in Europe on 8 May 1945 when Germany's Third Reich capitulated. It was a fitting time to again call for peace, an «eternal peace», as the newspaper *Sporting* did, through its director Oliveira Valença. In the article «Chegou enfim» [It has finally arrived] on the end of the war, he stated that «at last, we have peace! A peace we hope will last and may be eternal». ¹⁰³

Besides peace, another political and ideological desire prevailed: that of Europe never having political movements and leaders that could lead it, again, to war, in a reference to fascism and to men such as Mussolini and Hitler: «The war is over and all we wish is that he who is born may never again bring the germ that leads to death – to murder and suicide – in the name of glory, a world that was born to live!». ¹⁰⁴

Although Portugal lived under an authoritarian regime and Prior Censorship ¹⁰⁵ to the press was in force, sports periodicals were very critical of the Italian and German fascist regimes, and with their political leaders. Conversely, Franklyn Delano Roosevelt came into the picture, much appraised and admired by the sports press. The President of the United States of America was touted as one of the war heroes. At the time of his death on 12 April 1945, Oliveira Valença, in *Sporting*, wrote on the 16th a heartfelt article in which Roosevelt was considered the great mentor of freedom and peace, going down in history «as the greatest 'athlete' of our time – the conqueror of lies, of misery and of suffering»:

He was the shining beacon that guided the present generation and the hopes of the future generations. In his presidency, for which he was elected four times, Roosevelt was a true champion of ideas, formulas, principles, all of which based on the friendship of peoples, on the love that each one should feel for his fellow man. A great leader at the service of a great heart!¹⁰⁶

In the month following his death, Nazi Germany capitulated, followed by Ja-

¹⁰¹ Neves REIS: “A morte não quer matar mais!” [Death no longer wants to kill], *Os Sports*, 1 September 1944.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

¹⁰³ Oliveira VALENÇA: “Chegou enfim!” [It has finally arrived], *Sporting*, 19 May 1945.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁵ Censorship in Portuguese sports journalism, see Francisco PINHEIRO: *História da imprensa desportiva...*, pp. 270-274 and 295-298.

¹⁰⁶ Oliveira VALENÇA: “Morreu Franklin Roosevelt!” [Franklin Roosevelt has died], *Sporting*, 16 April 1945

pan in August. Thus ended the Second World War, the greatest military confrontation in history, in which more than 60 million people died. And while the newspaper *Sporting* chose to start the news with the expression «Finally, we're at peace!» in May 1945, on the occasion of the Nazi capitulation, the newspaper *O Norte Desportivo* chose to start its article about the end of the conflict with a different outcry, but just as symbolic:

The War is over! This cry must have lit up the eyes of the youth around the world with joy, the youth sacrificed to mad ambitions, to tiresome hatreds, to ideas of senseless domination.

Those were years of torture. So strong and so alive that even we, in this western part of torn down Europe, feel the bitterness of such loss of lives, so needed to promote a better world.¹⁰⁷

The most tragic war in the world, which left its mark on almost all of Europe, was coming to an end. Portugal, which had lived through the conflict as a neutral country, also saw the end of an international isolation cycle that had lasted almost a decade. First, with the Spanish Civil War¹⁰⁸ that had «cut Portugal off from Europe by land»¹⁰⁹ between 1936 and 1939. Then, the Second World War between 1939 and 1945, which «separated Portugal from the rest of the world by sea».¹¹⁰

Final considerations

This article aims to contribute to the historiography on the relation between sport, war and the press in the period between the two world wars using the sports newspapers as a source¹¹¹ to «bring new insights and stimulating interpretations of the conflicts»¹¹² in the Portuguese context.¹¹³ In the two periods under analysis (the two world wars), we looked at how the political factor influenced the discourses in the Portuguese sports press, and what it caused in the Portuguese imaginary of each period –

¹⁰⁷ A Redação: “Finalmente...” [Finally...], *O Norte Desportivo*, 19 August 1945.

¹⁰⁸ For more information on sports and the Spanish Civil War, see Andrés DOMÍNGUEZ ALMANSA and Xavier PUJADAS i MARTÍ: “Estadios y Trincheras. Deporte y Retaguarda en la Guerra Civil, 1936-1939”, in Xavier PUJADAS (ed.), *Atletas y ciudadanos*, Alianza Editorial, 2011, pp. 169-204.

¹⁰⁹ Mário de OLIVEIRA: “As relações internacionais” [International relations], *Stadium*, 5 May 1943.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹¹ The press as an interpretative source of the First World war, see José Luis AGUDÍN MENÉNDEZ: “El siglo Futuro y la I Guerra Mundial (1914-1918): una visión de conjunto”, *Historia y comunicación social*, 24 (2019), pp. 97-110.

¹¹² Paul DIETSCHY: “Le sport et la Grande Guerre: problématiques et approches historiques”, in Luc ROBÉNE (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹¹³ On the French context, see Paul DIETSCHY: *Le Sport et la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Chistera, 2018.

on the combination decadence-regeneration). A second factor derived from the experiences and affinities of sports journalists, which influenced a great part of their discourses. Finally, the external view/vision, which arose from the international situation itself, with the newspapers regularly publishing news from foreign press (especially the French and English press), or news sent from foreign correspondents and international information agencies and letters from readers living abroad. In general, they portrayed a picture of a developed, progressive, modern, industrialist, militarist Europe, compared with a small, poor, conservative and underdeveloped Portugal.

Europe was portrayed as a threatening continent, to others and to itself, as a bipartite region: the Anglo-Saxon space, representing organisation and progress, and the Latin world (which included Portugal), disorganised, poor and rural.

What we have found common to both periods under analysis is the positive views of France, portrayed as the second homeland to the Portuguese and the «beautiful woman» of Europe, in contrast with Germany, represented by the image of the «brute» grocer. Also common in the Portuguese sports press was the solidarity to the «small» countries when they were attacked by the more powerful nations, as demonstrated by the support to Finland (the Olympic nationality of small countries like Portugal) under the attack of the Soviets.

Finally, the positioning regarding the political personalities that marked the war, accentuated in the Second World War. These newspapers portrayed positive pictures of heroes associated with peace, for example, the North-American President Roosevelt, and the disappointment with Mussolini and Hitler, even though Portugal was living under a fascist regime and the press was subject to prior censorship.

This work clearly opens up new challenges as to the role of the triangle formed by sport-war-journalism in contemporary Portugal, especially in the two periods under analysis. Moreover, it opens future lines of research: which reflections were produced on the wars in the second half of the 20th century? What was the position of the sports press and the sports milieu regarding the colonial war that involved Portugal and its colonies in the 1960s and 1970s? All these research topics clearly build on this study.