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Before the court of public opinion: *Imprensa de Lisboa* and the 1921 press workers' strike

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ABSTRACT

This article is a study of *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, a periodical created by professional associations of journalists, printers and distributors of Lisbon newspapers in 1921, during a period in which they were on strike. This conflict brought a significant portion of the Portuguese capital's press to a standstill, except for a handful of publications, namely those created in that same context. Alongside and against *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, newspaper companies published *O Jornal*. Meanwhile, *A Batalha*, the official organ of the General Confederation of Labour, to which the unions on strike were affiliated, continued to be published. The aim of this research is, firstly, to analyse the relation between the goals of the strike and *A Imprensa de Lisboa's* coverage not only of the conflict itself, but also of a set of other topics and events seen as matters of interest to a wider public opinion, i.e. beyond the interests of the industrial working class. Secondly, it aims to identify similarities and differences between the agenda and contents of *A Imprensa de Lisboa* and *A Batalha*, to clarify to what extent the strategy pursued by the former meant keeping a distance from the points of view commonly voiced in the workers' press.

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Introduction

In early 1921, a strike by journalists, printers and newspaper distributors interrupted the publication of most newsprint media in Lisbon. The list of demands put forward by the Federation of Book and Newspaper Workers (Federação dos Trabalhadores do Livro e do Jornal), affiliated with the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), to the newspaper companies included a variety of demands, namely wage rises.¹ Their proposal was rejected, which led the newspaper workers' assembly to sanction the strike. On learning of this decision, the newspaper directors sent a communiqué to their printers announcing that production would be suspended as soon as the strike began and, at the same time, that a collective newspaper would come into print.

Besides the duration of the strike, which lasted several months, and its interprofessional nature, the unique character of this event lies precisely in the way in which journalism was placed at the service of the struggle by both sides of the conflict.² The newspaper companies produced *O Jornal* – the product of a conglomeration between *A Época*, *O Diário de Notícias*, *A Pátria*, *O Século* and *A Capital* – which was in print

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during the first two months of the strike. At a later stage, and until the strike came to an end, their efforts turned to publishing *O Diário de Notícias* and *O Século*. On the opposite pole of the dispute, *A Imprensa de Lisboa* (IL) emerged under the direction of Campos Lima (an attorney and prominent anarchist intellectual), owned by the professional associations of press workers, printers and newspaper distributors. Meanwhile, *A Batalha*, the information organ of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), remained in publication.

From the outset, this was a broad conflict, extending beyond the strict defence of the material interests of either workers or companies. It was, rather, a clash between two distinct public spheres, the bourgeois and the proletarian, engaged in a fight to conquer public opinion. Starting from a historical viewpoint, the present article examines the IL news coverage, which did not focus exclusively on the strike, but included other current affairs. The goal is to understand to what extent this coverage expresses the widening of the chasm between the two public spheres or, on the contrary, the pursuit not only of an agenda, but of a set of terms and political standpoints seen as more consensual, in the name of a speedier and more pragmatic resolution to the conflict. Besides IL, the study also considers the issues of *A Batalha* published during the strike, to pinpoint similarities and differences in the work of daily newspapers that, in theory, shared the same goals. It focuses, in particular, on news articles covering the funeral ceremonies of unknown soldiers and public shows of support for the war-wounded, topics which, on the face of it, had a rather tenuous connection to the strikers' interests and sympathies. Finally, it analyses the way in which newspaper companies and their directors are represented in IL and *A Batalha*.

By focusing on the actions of newspaper workers and their relevance to an analysis of the development of journalism in Portugal, this research work fits within the framework of a historiography that favours the analysis of labour relations and the conflicts they generate, rather than of the individual figures – the founder and/or director, the intellectual and/or writer.³

Conflict and the press in the First Portuguese Republic

The press workers' strike reflected the post-war context, marked by an economic crisis and political polarization. The rise in the price of essential foodstuffs, associated with capital flight, speculation and the devaluation of wages, set the tone for the escalation of workers' struggles. In 1919, the National Workers' Union (União Operária Nacional) gave way to the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), which gathered a greater number of trade unions and workers. A few months earlier, the daily newspaper *A Batalha* had begun its nation-wide distribution. Both the means of action, particularly the strike, and the revolutionary goals they pursued, drawing inspiration from the 1917 Russian Revolution, were, for governments of various types and companies of various sizes, the materialization of 'a fear which until then had been vague and remote'.⁴

The extension of the logic of trade union action to the sphere of intellectual workers, such as journalists, was an added concern. Despite their symbolic status, journalists were in fact forced to 'rent out their hands and minds at the service of others',⁵ generally for a rather low rate. Against this backdrop, in 1904, still in the period of the Constitutional Monarchy, the Press Workers' Professional Association (Associação de Classe dos

Trabalhadores da Imprensa) was created. In 1917, this same association joined the Book and Newspaper Federation (Federação do Livro e do Jornal), whose capacity and initiative depended largely on the mobilization of printers. Among the latter, the tendency to be involved in professional associativism can be traced back a long way (the first strikes dating back as early as 1872), springing from an acute awareness of the gap between their qualifications and their wages.⁶ One of the main goals of the Book and Newspaper Federation was, according to Alexandre Vieira, a printer who was then director of *A Batalha*, 'to do away with [...] the kind of wall that until then had divided the greater portion of manual workers and intellectual workers, even though they joined forces in a common task and faced identical hardships'.⁷

Despite the small media market, tailored to the tastes of an urban elite and mostly taken over by newspapers linked with specific political factions, some publications were already drawing closer to a more news-based brand of journalism.⁸ Gradually, this began to assimilate features and criteria from foreign publications: concern with sales numbers, advertising revenue, coverage of less divisive topics (sports, human interest stories, sensational events) or political analysis more focused on personalities or administrative acts.⁹ However, apart from the dubious notion that the coverage of such matters was stripped of ideological bias, the journalism practised by *O Século* or *Diário de Notícias* did not approach all subjects in the same manner. Trade union actions and initiatives were generally reported with a degree of hostility, which goes some way towards explaining the emergence of a workers' press.¹⁰ *A Batalha* is arguably the publication that best embodied this point of view, with a daily circulation somewhere between 20,000 and 25,000, supported by a solid funding and distribution network.¹¹

Calling itself *the mouthpiece of the workers' organization*, the project involved the creation of a newspaper that could balance a partisan slant with a more strictly news-giving vocation. Its outlook was the polar opposite of conventional journalistic discourse, echoing the style and tone of the radical press, 'by putting feelings into words, by expressing grievances, by proposing political strategies and economic solutions, by bringing hope'.¹²

The very existence of this type of press had a political significance, as it expressed the workers' capacity for self-organization and autonomy, forgoing public or private investment. In this sense, it falls within the kind of *counter-publicsphere*¹³ constructed in parallel with, and against, the hegemony of a bourgeois public sphere. Jürgen Habermas' idealized portrait of the public sphere, according to critiques by authors such as Nancy Fraser or Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, draws a space for discussion which, despite the self-proclaimed universality of its themes and publics, affords limited access to subaltern social groups. The latter, then, end up mobilizing other spheres 'of withdrawal and regroupment',¹⁴ through which they create the possibility of a discourse on their own terms. Yet, according to Negt and Kluge, the development of a *proletarian public sphere* requires, in its initial stages, the creation of a 'medium of intercourse that relates the particular interests of the productive sector and society as a whole to one another',¹⁵ that is, it requires it not to remain closed in on itself and to be able to gain ground at the expense of the twilight of the bourgeois public sphere. At first sight, the strike by journalists, printers and newspaper distributors seemed to follow this strategy, in other words, that of transforming, in the words of Luís Trindade, 'a conflict within newspapers into a conflict between newspapers'.¹⁶ Yet, as

the same author points out, the escalation of the conflict did not translate into a radicalization of the discourse but, on the contrary, into a position of political neutrality.

Moderation and mildness in the conflict

The circumstances that resulted in the foundation of IL would lead it to devote a large portion of its content to the justification of its own existence. In its inaugural issue, the newspaper describes itself as a publication that

will not defend the petty interests of any capitalist, or be tied to any bank or financial group, but simply aim to do an honest work, to provide the public with trustworthy information and to lend a voice to its aspirations, with no other concern than to serve the general interest.¹⁷

The convergence of the interests of various professional sectors is also underlined, namely the workings and feasibility of such an effort:

The way the newspaper is produced, the patent dedication of all its collaborators and, above all, the order, organisation and work methods, with no need for the command, supervision, or surveillance of an employer, will serve as a clear demonstration of the value of the spontaneous accord among workers for the accomplishment of a collective work.¹⁸

This kind of statement, where the newspaper pleads its own cause, can be found not only in the editorials, but also in a section titled 'Our Movement'. There, IL responded to accusations by the press companies' dailies, but also described the initiatives, forms of support, assemblies and negotiation processes by the 'Executive Committee for Wage Rises'. However, the two daily editions of IL would come to address other issues, developing an agenda beyond the interests of the professional corporations involved, its aim being 'to turn *A Imprensa de Lisboa* into a true organ of public opinion'.¹⁹ In an article reflecting directly on this concept, the newspaper defined it as 'the aggregate collection of conscientious verdicts, diverging in detail [...] but coming together in a virtuous and noble synthesis'.²⁰ With this in view, the newspaper committed itself to pushing the press workers' struggle to the background 'whenever other interests of a more general nature call upon our journalists' pen to pursue its guiding and mobilizing mission'.²¹ The historical ambiguity of the concept of public opinion is manifest in these discourses: while, on the one hand, it is compared to a form of 'court' or 'tribunal',²² whose rulings must be respected and complied with, on the other, the role of journalism in general, and of IL in particular, was seen as a form of guidance and mobilization of that very authority.

The claim to a privileged relationship with this synthesis could be interpreted as a tactical element geared towards the success of the strike. Firstly, in both its content and its form, it was an attack on the newspaper companies, since IL was one publication among others in a relatively small market, bringing about not only the suspension of newspaper production, but an added element to the competition. Secondly, it responded to the newspaper companies' accusations of IL's *red censorship* and its alleged subjugation to the Bolshevik agenda of the CGT.²³

Even though IL and *A Batalha* had obvious shared goals, these accusations led to the effort of creating some distance between them, partly the result of the varied political composition of the strikers, who ranged ‘from the traditionalist monarchist to the libertarian extremist’.²⁴ The differences between the two journalistic projects were duly emphasized from the outset. While the organ of the CGT was classified as ‘essentially a combat newspaper’, IL ‘aimed to prevent the damage the public would suffer from a lack of information and [to be] an organ where the questions that interest not only the workers, but the whole population, were discussed’.²⁵

If any doubts remained, the coverage of the conflict would bring whatever divisions there were to the fore. In a text penned by Carlos Rates,²⁶ *A Batalha* underlined the political significance of the social composition of the strike:

In the fight waged between the manual proletariat and the capitalist forces, the intermediate classes – doctors, engineers, writers, journalists, accountants, military officers, etc. – will be forced to choose between being crushed by the proletariat and triumphing, shoulder to shoulder with the proletariat. Journalists have opted for an alliance, a path cleared by the managers of the companies themselves and which spared them from being crushed in the formidable battle which is about to be fought.²⁷

The alliance between printers, distributors and journalists was seen by IL in an altogether different light. Faced with *O Jornal*’s allegations concerning the journalists’ adherence to the movement, IL saw their participation as a moderating, rather than disruptive, factor.

Is it not widely known that the lack of education of a portion of the working classes is what, to a great extent, does not allow them to restrain themselves, with greater poise or less commotion? The influence of intellectuals, in fact, can only have the effect of giving method and awareness to a movement that will only prove troublesome if it is unruly and falls wholly in the hands of inflamed and violent agitators.²⁸

After all, as another editorial acknowledges, ‘Jesus of Galilee himself, even though he saw himself as God, was never ashamed of having been born in a carpenter’s home, or of having lived among fishermen and humble people’.²⁹

The strike itself is described as a form of violence to be used only as a last resort. The agreements reached with *O Tempo* and *O Jornal do Comércio e das Colónias*, which contemplated a 50% salary increase for all categories, expressed an openness to negotiation and dialogue, a course that had been rejected by the newspaper companies. The strike, so it was argued, did not spring from a desire, but rather from an external imposition: ‘by pushing those who wish to work into them [strikes], a very serious crime is committed, one which, sooner or later, will weigh heavily on their conscience’.³⁰

Given this reconciliatory mission, the proposal to stage solidarity strikes was rejected, and the strikers would only accept donations. This stance, so it was stated then, aimed to prevent the protests from spreading, given that ‘such an attitude on our part would be cause for other classes and the greater part of the republican population to become unsettled’.³¹

The meanings of the unknown soldier

The concern with the verdict of public opinion led, concurrently, to a careful selection of themes and the organization of public campaigns, a common practice among newspaper

with a more explicit political vocation.³² In this process, the distance between the positioning and worldviews of IL and *A Batalha* would become increasingly obvious.

As in most other belligerent countries, the Portuguese soldiers who died in the First World War were the object of a policy of consecration and memory, which involved the creation of what George L. Mosse calls the 'Myth of War Experience'. By 'drawing the sting from death in war and emphasizing the meaningfulness of the fighting and sacrifice', its aim was to make an 'inherently unpalatable past acceptable, important not just for the purpose of consolidation but above all for the justification of the nation in whose name the war had been fought'.³³ This kind of liturgy was thus part of a broader Republican civic cult which, in theory, aimed to grab hold of the power of symbolic mediation in the hands of the Church.³⁴

The need to counter the portrait of IL drawn by *O Jornal* led the former to proclaim its adherence to this cult. As early as 16 March 1921, days before the bodies of two (unknown) soldiers from the European and African combat fronts were to be brought ashore, IL announced the arrival of one of the fallen, claiming that he belonged to

that Race of heroes that have spread the name of Portugal far and wide, and it is the Tagus, the very same Tagus that saw the departure of the caravels, and that was then a witness to the sun's prayers upon the restless waters that whispered the tales of our adventures, that same Tagus now welcomes into the waves' wet arms the unknown body of this Portuguese who, in France's age-old soil, fell to the ground as he shouted the name of his Homeland!³⁵

Besides being promoted to a symbol of the Portuguese nation and included in the long lineage of its heroes, namely those who departed in the caravels and started the process of formation of the colonial empire, the Unknown Soldier would be invested with other meanings by IL. As an *empty or floating signifier*, stripped of its individual life story, the unknown soldier was meant to acquire a much broader resonance or set of references. However, according to Laclau, the connection between a signifier and a signified is never fully concluded, and the latter may be contested by other chains of equivalence, with distinct signification projects.³⁶ The context of the unknown soldier's death made it easier to attach him to ideals of justice and freedom, to the 'image of our people, who have so often fought in anonymity for the defence of humanitarian ideas and for the aspiration to an ever more perfect and progressive social and political stage'.³⁷ For that reason, and seemingly evoking the conflict with the newspaper companies, the unknown soldiers 'shall rest more peacefully in their graves, blessing those who are still working and fighting for a greater Portugal, free from oppressors and schemers'.³⁸ At the same time, the portrait of the unknown soldier as a popular figure served as an antidote to attempts at appropriation of the signifier by other interests. Anonymity, according to IL, opened up the possibility of him being defined as

someone who deserves, not only for his heroism, but also for his feelings and ideas, our deepest sympathy. That is why each one of us fantasises this unknown hero as an unfolding of ourselves, endowed with our own feelings, ideas, aspirations. He thus belongs not only to our race, but to our close circle, as our equal, a comrade, even a friend.³⁹

Thus, and aiming critically at the Catholic ceremony that presided over the deposition of the dead in the monastery of Santa Maria Vitória, in Batalha (Leiria), a sign of the Portuguese Republic drawing closer to its Catholic sectors,⁴⁰ the newspaper argues that

the 'unknown soldier cannot [. . .] be taken over by an exclusive faction, whether religious or political, wanting to make him their own'.⁴¹

Despite the claims of the unknown soldier's polysemic nature, which spilled beyond the military sphere, these commemorations did not fail to evoke the soldier's sacrifice for the homeland. Contrary to what had been, and still was at the time, the predominant position within the trade union movement, IL defended Portugal's participation in the First World War, arguing that 'the newspaper workers on strike who defended the country's entry into the war were neither misguided nor wrong, and did not harm their country with their propaganda'.⁴² An initiative that accompanied the funeral procession of the unknown soldiers through the streets of Lisbon on 9 April was reported in a derogatory way, described scornfully as the throwing of 'countless pieces of paper protesting against the war and against demonstrations in honour of the Unknown Soldier'.⁴³ A few days after the deposition of the two soldiers' mortal remains, IL claimed to have proven 'that its key concern is none other than serving the interests of the public, informing them and adding its voice to the aspirations of the general mass of the population', doing nothing else but 'reflect[ing] the general opinion among Republicans'.⁴⁴

Finally, the publication organized a campaign of solidarity with the war-wounded. It is important to note that, contrary to what happened in other countries, such as Germany or Italy, the nationalism of the Portuguese ex-combatants did not gain a reactionary quality, conducive to fascism, remaining close to republican ideals and values.⁴⁵ Towards the end of April 1921, the Ministry of War ordered the suspension of the Arroios War-Wounded Re-education Institute (Instituto de Reeducação dos Mutilados de Guerra de Arroios, in Lisbon), devoted to the motor rehabilitation and career guidance of veterans, a decision that implied the discharge of the centre's residents. In a plea to the members of parliament, the newspaper recalled that

[t]he glorious relics of Portugal, this heroic country of unparalleled traditions, with a history where the path of the caravels is indelibly carved on seas never before sailed [. . .], all this procession of pomp and laurels, of heroic acts and epic feats, of honour and civility, is now being trampled underfoot, crumpled, shattered, as if a muddy sponge was wiped, in retaliation, over all its pages, each of its lines, each of its letters.⁴⁶

In this context, IL organized a benefit recital, attended by the then Head of Government, Bernardino Machado, and which included a play, piano and cello solos, as well as a poetry recital.⁴⁷

Both the discourse around the unknown soldier and the organization of charity soirees for the war-wounded were unfamiliar territory to the editorial staff of *A Batalha*. Revolutionary syndicalism, mostly of the anarchist persuasion, was one of the main forces opposed to the sending of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps to Flanders and Mozambique in 1916. In fact, this event was responsible for an added radicalization of the trade union movement. In addition to the anti-war propaganda in newspapers, pamphlets or plays, there were several strikes in armament factories, as well as arson fires in military establishments.⁴⁸

Although this stance was not consensual within the anarchist camp in Portugal, traversed by international schisms, *A Batalha* assumed, from its very beginning (when the war was already over), a critical stance on the participation of Portuguese troops in the international conflict, as well as all its related ceremonies. The necessary

desacralization of the unknown soldier meant, first and foremost, an analysis of the symbol's mode of production. This soldier is, so the newspaper claims

whatever the dreamer wishes it to be. At times the symbol is a beautiful form that forces minds to understand and feel an incontestable truth; at other times, it is an ignoble speculation presented by charlatans. The bourgeoisie has transformed the Unknown Soldier into a symbol. [...] The bourgeoisie now celebrates an individual who fought, in the Great War, for private property, the sovereignty of the capitalist caste, prejudice, the curtailing of popular liberties, economic inequality, the exploitation of the poor by the rich.⁴⁹

A Batalha wanted to invest it with an altogether distinct symbolism, turning it into a signifier of the 'multitude of victims the war has spawned in its disgusting womb'.⁵⁰ These remarks, in turn, did not escape the attention of *O Século*. Drawing a direct link with the press workers' strike, the daily newspaper levelled harsh criticism at the pieces published in *A Batalha*,

where contempt for national sentiment and reproach for participation in the war [...] could not be more glaring and abominable. It is with these enemies of the Fatherland that the newspaper strikers are siding with; these are the people who speak in their name and, astonishingly, seem to express the feelings of authorities whose mission cannot be anything but an absolute refusal of such doctrines and such creatures.⁵¹

Naming the other

IL's alignment with what they deemed to be the causes and values of public opinion would materialize in the denunciation of those who, by dint of their actions, posed a threat. Their criticism was aimed, firstly, at the newspaper workers who refused to join the movement, nicknamed 'canaries' (as 'yellow' was a term commonly used to refer to scabs). These pejorative terms often appeared in a humorous section ('A Rir'), signed by Esculápio, a reporter from *O Século*:

Oh gorgeous bird all yellow/ You little scoundrel/ So blond and mellow/ The colour of quince bark, so droll/You are cute as a lark [...].

But as fate so dark/ Has made you my tormentor/My one and only wish/Is to have you with rice on a dish.⁵²

Besides earning the epithet of traitors, the quality of their writing was also called into question. Labelled as a 'cabbage leaf', the edition of *O Jornal* was the output of 'journalists who have never been able to put a news story together, who give themselves this pompous title to make something of themselves'.⁵³ Their preferential targets, however, were the directors of newspaper companies. In addition to pointing out the prevalence of monarchist and/or conservative tendencies among them,⁵⁴ and denouncing the working conditions imposed by managements who 'see journalists as nothing other than *labour force*',⁵⁵ IL put special emphasis on the threat of the formation of a press monopoly. This operation, so the publication argued, involved the two most important dailies in Lisbon, *O Século* and *O Diário de Notícias*, and the milling company Companhia Industrial de Portugal e Colónias (also known as Moagem). In various pieces in the segment 'Afinal de quem é *O Século*?' ('Who truly owns *O Século*?'), contacts between the management of

O Século and the economic group, owner of *Diário de Notícias*, were described in detail. One should mention that this consortium had already been the target of a campaign by *O Século* under the former director Silva Graça who, in the meantime, had left the country. This newspaper's management was then under the direction of Manuel Guimarães, also the owner of the daily newspaper *A Capital*, and José Rugeroni, Silva Graça's son-in-law. The acquisition of *O Século* by Moagem would bring the country's main daily newspapers under the control of one single owner. And so 'the job was done. High finance, born and enriched four years ago, no longer needed to fear the major press organs when going about its sinister business'.⁵⁶ The conflict with the press workers, as IL would have it, was part of this plan, since 'the longer *O Século* continues on strike, the more chances there are for these speculators to convince Silva Graça to sell the newspaper to the financial group that covets it'.⁵⁷ And so it came to be shortly after, in 1922.

Given his responsibility both in this business operation and in the strike, Manuel Guimarães would be specially targeted by IL. As the strike wore on, the violence of the words escalated, and rhetoric turned to offence and insult.⁵⁸ The way in which the director of *O Século* and owner of *A Capital* is portrayed is paradigmatic of this evolution, and among the insults one finds explicit references to his African origins, in turns of phrase such as 'a black man's coup'⁵⁹ or 'soba' [African tribal chief].⁶⁰ The use of this kind of terminology would be particularly evident in a piece in which the news of the arrival of the unknown soldiers in Lisbon is addressed alongside an attack on the director of *O Século*. Under the title 'Tirem de lá o estrangeiro enquanto é tempo'⁶¹ ['Get the foreigner out while there is still time'], the article warned that:

The cheers and the fervent words to be written in honour of these esteemed visitors will be dictated by an unworthy monster, someone with no idea of the meaning of patriotism, dignity, honour and pride, the son of a black woman and a white man, and they will be inspired by a foreigner [Rugeroni, of Italian nationality] who has no place at the helm of a newspaper that belongs to the Portuguese.⁶²

Throughout the text, Manuel Guimarães is described as an 'unqualified foreigner' and a 'shameless half-breed' (in the subtitle), as well as 'the shady figure of a cheap, crippled, funereal mannequin, a donkey's skull, a mulatto, who stinks of sweat and is happy to walk about in nothing but a loincloth'.⁶³

Strange though it may seem to find such phrases in a newspaper produced by striking workers, they were part of a set of common representations of African or mixed-race individuals, echoing the notion of their structural backwardness when compared to the white population.⁶⁴ And the nexus among nationalism, colonialism and racism was not unprecedented in IL. In an editorial that examined the claims of the governments of China and South Africa to territories under Portuguese rule (Macao, and Angola and Mozambique, respectively), the possibility of the independence of the Portuguese colonies was rejected, given the lack of an 'economic and social context that would allow them to manage their own destinies, something that would imply the settling of a European population capable of driving them forward with no interference or assistance from the metropolis'.⁶⁵

This point of view, however, was far from consensual within the trade union movement. At its founding congress in 1919, the CGT had approved the thesis entitled 'The

Workers' Organization of the Colonies' ('A Organização Operária das Colónias'), which began with a condemnation of colonialism. The same position was taken by *A Batalha*, where, from the beginning, we find content that criticizes the Republican colonial policy, coverage of the actions of the workers' movement in the colonies, and support for the initiatives of black organizations and parties.⁶⁶ To a large extent, this agenda was the result of the contributions of Mário Domingues, a writer and journalist of African-Portuguese origin and one of the first intellectuals to defend the self-determination and independence of colonized peoples.⁶⁷ In an article published during the shutdown of the Lisbon press, addressing a civil service strike in São Tomé, Domingues associated this event, driven by a revolt against the economic situation, to other desires that 'naturally harbour in the spirit, spurred by injustices and acts of barbarism committed by the European – it is the uprising of the race, a revolt against the white man's supremacy'.⁶⁸

Besides the so-called 'canaries' and the newspaper companies, IL also targeted the complicity of the governments of Liberato Pinto and Bernardino Machado, which supplied newspaper companies with printers from within the military, without whom *O Jornal*, in the beginning, as well as *O Século* and *O Diário de Notícias*, later, could not have been published. This breach of neutrality, which helped the newspaper companies hold their ground in the negotiations, expressed 'an efficient strategy' which meant, on the one hand, the silencing of 'newspapers suspected of animosity towards the republicans', and, on the other, the 'publication of a newspaper controlled by the companies that [...] is more invested in denouncing the situation than in scrutinizing the government's actions'.⁶⁹

After four months, and following the failure of several negotiation processes, the strike came to an end. The return to work of the editorial staff of *O Século* at the end of April led to the executive commission for wage rises to sign an agreement with various newspaper companies, such as *A Época*, *A Luta*, *Opinião* and *Diário de Notícias*, laying out wage rises of around 40%. In *O Século* the increase was smaller, not exceeding 35%, since the previous salary table was higher than that of other publications. Both in *O Século* and *O Diário de Notícias*, the journalists that took part in the strike movement were not rehired.

In one of its last editions, as a kind of final review of the process, IL acknowledged problems in their work during this period and underlined a lack of consensus around the content of that work:

Was there too much violence? Were there personal attacks that could have been avoided? Perhaps. But while all of it wasn't always seen as appropriate by some of the strikers, was not endorsed by all of them, and cannot be offered as a model of the proper attitude of journalists, its failure serves as a natural form of correction.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Throughout the four months in which it was published, IL tried to link its status as the voice of the striking workers with the defence of a journalism at the service of public opinion. These goals materialized, in the first place, in an ambivalent discourse on the movement from which the newspaper sprang. While praising the virtues of the coalition between intellectual and manual workers, journalists were portrayed as a kind of

vanguard that curbed the printers' revolutionary impulses. As in its openness to a negotiated solution, the publication's content would echo this effort at moderation. The submission to the 'court of public opinion' would lead, then, to a more diverse agenda, beyond providing information about the strike.

The push for a more strictly news-based journalism, alert to the plurality of points of view in both Portuguese society and the newspaper's own newsroom, aimed at a new ground of legitimacy, grounded on a supposedly neutral and impartial form of knowledge. The space given to the coverage of the unknown soldiers' funeral ceremonies and to the campaign in favour of the war-wounded expressed an approximation to public opinion or, as they themselves acknowledged, to 'general republican opinion'. The goal, one could argue, was to gather political support from sectors closer to the government as a means of stopping the supply of military printers to newspaper companies. This strategy led to the reproduction of a nationalist worldview which started, as we have seen, with the inclusion of war veterans and victims in a long lineage of heroes and events tied to the process of the formation of the Portuguese colonial empire.

This use of the past, a fruit of its particular configuration in the present, reflected, then, the construction of a memory that had been gaining ground since the end of the nineteenth century and had since become the official narrative.⁷¹ The formation of republicanism in Portugal owes much to the evocation of the country's sixteenth-century imperial past, whose spirit was expected to have a regenerative effect on present generations, for whom it served as a model.⁷² Above all, the memory of these events served as a rebuke to the monarchy's colonial policy, which culminated in the episode of the so-called 'pink map' in 1890.⁷³ At the same time, this nationalism had a secular and universalist vocation, claiming to be part and parcel of an evolutionary path towards the improvement of humanity. After the establishment of the First Republic in 1910, this ideology would serve to legitimize not only the modernization of the colonial apparatuses, but also Portugal's participation in the First World War. Regardless of its limited success, evident in the many concessions to the Catholic hierarchy, this event encouraged the regime's attempt to form a 'church for the nation'.⁷⁴

By aligning itself with this type of civic religiosity, IL would end up contributing to the reproduction of an ideological framework which, even if it was not a political strategy as such, nevertheless created, in the words of Billig, 'the condition for conventional strategies, whatever the particular politics'.⁷⁵ While nationalism does not fall within a specific political programme, the set of meanings that can be attached to the nation is limited. In this sense, each nation and its respective nationalism carry a historical and political charge that not only precludes some conceptualizations, but also privileges some narratives and configurations over others.⁷⁶ The historical reciprocity between nationalism and racism is conspicuous in the Portuguese case, whose imperial condition meant that the identification of ethnic similarities and differences served as a supplement to the affirmation of the nation.⁷⁷

The fact that IL used the 'court of public opinion' as a compass and deemed it essential to the success of the strike, pushed the newspaper to keep a distance from the rationale that one would expect to preside over a workers' press, that of giving voice to the 'counter-products of a proletarian public sphere'.⁷⁸ Instead, the publication reproduced an ideological framework within which there was room to oppose the attempt to form an

oligopoly in the press, but no room to call into question the structural components of national identity.

Notes

1. The journalists' list of demands was more ambitious, including demands such as an increase in holiday pay, a ban on unjustified dismissal, the protection of trade union members and the confidentiality of sources (Vieira, *Em Volta da Minha Profissão*).
2. Trindade, *Narratives in Motion*.
3. Hardt and Brennen, *Newsworkers*.
4. Medeiros, *A sociedade e a economia portuguesas nas origens do salazarismo*, 155.
5. Tengarrinha, *História da Imprensa Periódica Portuguesa*, 229.
6. Barreto, "Os tipógrafos e o despontar da contratação coletiva em Portugal."
7. Vieira, *Em Volta da Minha Profissão*, 137–8.
8. Sardica, "Imprensa. Títulos."
9. Barros, *O Jornalismo Político Republicano Radical*; Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*.
10. Barros, *O Jornalismo Político Republicano Radical*; Tengarrinha, *História da Imprensa Periódica Portuguesa*.
11. Baptista, *Surgindo vem ao Longe a Nova Aurora*.
12. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism*, 18.
13. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere"; Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere of Experience*.
14. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 15.
15. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere of Experience*, 91, 92.
16. Trindade, *Narratives in Motion*, 168.
17. "Ao que vimos," *Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 1, January 18, 1921, 1.
18. "A nossa solidariedade," *Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 1, January 19, 1921, Edição da tarde [afternoon edition], 1.
19. "A Imprensa de Lisboa," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 1, January 19, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
20. "Opinião pública," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 67, March 26, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
21. "A Imprensa de Lisboa," op. cit.
22. "A nossa atitude," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 1, January 18, 1921, 1.
23. Matos, "Censura Vermelha."
24. "Carta aberta ao chefe de governo, A Imprensa em greve," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 62, March 21, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
25. "Uma intriga," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 20, February 8, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
26. Future leader of a group that splintered off from CGT, supported the Russian Revolution, and would later create the Portuguese Communist Party.
27. João Carlos Rates, "Prosegue a greve dos trabalhadores dos jornais," *A Batalha*, N. 648, January 22, 1921, 1.
28. "Definindo uma atitude," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 4, January 21, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
29. "A Censura Vermelha e o Bolchevismo," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 3, January 20, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
30. "O que os factos demonstram," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 35, February 22, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
31. "Na mesma," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 55, March 15, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
32. Barros, *O Jornalismo Político Republicano Radical*.
33. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 7.

34. Correia, "Celebrating Victory on a Day of Defeat."
35. "Soldado Desconhecido: O que morreu em França," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 56, March 16, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
36. Laclau, "Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?"
37. "Gloria ao Heroe Desconhecido," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 57, March 17, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
38. "Na hora do triunfo," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 76, April 4, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
39. "A homenagem ao heroe desconhecido," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 61, March 21, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
40. Correia, "Celebrating Victory on a Day of Defeat."
41. *Ibid.*, 1.
42. "A Hora da Justiça," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 79, April 8, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
43. "Uma cena movimentada," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 84, April 12, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 2.
44. "As hesitações governamentais," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 83, April 11, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
45. Correia, *Entre a Morte e o Mito*.
46. "Aos parlamentares do paiz," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 96, April 24, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
47. "Pró-Mutilados," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 106, May 6, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
48. Telo, *O Sidonismo e o Movimento Operário*, 98.
49. "O Soldado Desconhecido," *A Batalha*, N. 721, April 6, 1921, 1.
50. *Ibid.*, 1.
51. "Em face da greve," *O Século*, N. 14 047, March 21, 1921, 1.
52. Esculapio, "A Rir...," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 5, January 23, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
53. "Adesões," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 21, February 8, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
54. "A imprensa e as correntes de opinião," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 45, March 4, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
55. "O «lock-out» das empresas jornalísticas," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 10, Lisbon, January 27, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
56. "Afinal de quem é 'O Século?', " *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 13, January 30, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
57. "A caminho da solução," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 76, April 5, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
58. Trindade, *Narratives in Motion*, 174.
59. "A gente de 'O Século' conta impor-se aos governantes," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 32, February 19, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
60. "O Ultimo Recurso," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 32, February 20, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
61. "Tirem de lá o estrangeiro enquanto é tempo," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 73, April 1, 1921, Edição da noite [evening edition], 1.
62. "O Soldado Desconhecido," *A Batalha*, N. 721, April 6, 1921, 1.
63. *Ibid.*, 1.
64. Matos, *The Colours of the Empire*.
65. "Colónias," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 14, February 2, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
66. Castro and Garcia, "A Batalha e a Questão Colonial."
67. Varela and Pereira, "As origens do movimento negro em Portugal."
68. Mário Domingues, "A questão de raças," *A Batalha*, N. 748, May 4, 1921, 1.
69. "Porque não termina a greve?," *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 48, March 7, 1921, 1.

70. “O Nosso Jornal,” *A Imprensa de Lisboa*, N. 112, May 11, 1921, Edição da manhã [morning edition], 1.
71. Traverso, *O passado, modos de usar*.
72. Catroga, *O Republicanismo em Portugal*.
73. This resulted from the ultimatum by the United Kingdom to Portugal regarding its claims on the Macolo territory, between Angola and Mozambique, sovereignty over which was also claimed by the British. The ultimatum included threats of breaking off diplomatic relations and potential military reprisals.
74. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 33.
75. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 99.
76. Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*.
77. Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism,” 1991.
78. Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere of Experience*, 80.

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