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COUP D'ÉTAT, REVOLUTION, CIVIL WAR: TOWARDS A THEORY OF INTERMITTENT CIVIL WAR IN THE FIRST PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC

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Abstract

Historians Fernando Rosas and António Telo developed the idea of “Intermittent Civil War” to explain the nature of the political conflicts that crossed the First Portuguese Republic and the tendency to resolve them through armed action, particularly regarding the various clashes of arms that, in general, changed the historical evolution of the Republic. The text is divided in two chapters. The first presents the events that could be defined as an “Intermittent Civil War”. The second chapter conceptualizes the concepts in question: Revolution, Coup d’état / Pronouncement “Pronunciamento” / “Pronunciamiento”), War, Civil War (Intermittent Civil War). The conclusions relate the events with the concepts and presenting the relationships between the defined notions, what they mean in practice, and the political crisis of the First Portuguese Republic.

Key Words: Portugal, Civil War, First Republic, Intermittent Civil War, Revolution, “Coup d’état”

Introduction

Historians Fernando Rosas and António Telo developed the idea of “Intermittent Civil War” to explain the nature of the political conflicts that crossed the First Portuguese

Republic and the tendency to resolve them through armed action, particularly regarding the various clashes of arms that, in general, changed the historical evolution of the Republic. Fernando Rosas was the author of a longer study on the violent nature with which Portuguese political regimes in the 20th century were changed. In this study, Fernando Rosas acutely reflected and substantiated the violent nature of the transformation of political regimes in Portugal in the contemporary period, but did not distinguish between the modalities in which this armed transformation occurred.⁽¹⁾

This paper aims to analyse how the violent transformation, by armed force, of political regimes, took place in Portugal, theorizing about the concepts (and their practice) of pronouncement (“pronunciamento”/”pronunciamiento”) /and or/coup d’état, revolution, and, with a special focus on this last, due to its originality, “intermittent civil war”. Through this theorization, it also reflects on the rhythm and more specific characteristics of how society received and dealt with the transformation imposed by the use of armed power.

One of the ideas that raised here is that the clash of arms – the most violent form and which can already be considered war – an essential characteristic of the First Republic, reflects a deeply divided society, with strongly separated ideals, for which only the subjugation of the opponent made possible a transformation of the regime.

More than focusing on the idea of war, the text will present several concepts related to the First Portuguese Republic’s clashing events and the way they emerged in the society in a relational and connected interaction. Precision in the conceptualization of each will provide a way to connect and relate one with the other ensuring a more systematic view of political violence in the First Portuguese Republic. Indeed, more than discussing certain events and how they could be understood, their correlation with other events and a broader perspective could give a better and broader idea of the political crisis of the First Portuguese Republic. The political crisis of the First Portuguese Republic is not an event or several independent events, but a long and complex process, political, ideological-cultural, social-economic, military, and inter-relational process.

The text is divided in two chapters. The first presents the events that could be defined as an “Intermittent Civil War”. The second chapter conceptualizes the concepts in question: Revolution, Coup d’état / Pronouncement “Pronunciamento”/”Pronunciamiento”), War, Civil War (Intermittent Civil War). The conclusions relate the events with the concepts and presenting the relationships between the define notions, what they mean in practice, and the political crisis of the First Portuguese Republic.

1. See Rosas, Fernando, *Lisboa Revolucionária. Roteiro dos Confrontos Armados do Século XX*, (Lisboa: Tinta-da-China), 2007. Telo, António José, “Revolução e Contra-Revolução em 1915. O Primeiro Ciclo da Beligerância Portuguesa”, in *O Assalto à Escola de Guerra. 1915-2015*, (Lisboa: Academia Militar), 2015, 17.

The Historical Circumstances

The Portuguese First Republic (1910-1926) and its long ending (1926-1934) were marked by several armed clashes, short in duration, that almost always produced a change or break in its historical course. As stated by the philosopher Walter Benjamin, revolutionary changes radically cut the normal course of history. Revolution, indeed, he said, are an interruption of what is believed to be the natural historical movement. But if the Portuguese First Republic armed clashes are revolutionary if we follow Walter Benjamin dictum, in changing the historical course that was previously thought to be the normal current, they are also clashes of armed force in which two groups battled to subjugate the opponent to their will. To understand what this means, this chapter will present the several armed movements that changed the evolution of the Portuguese First Republic.

The first one, was the movement which create the Portuguese Republic.

- 3/5 October 1910, Lisbon – The foundation of the Portuguese First Republic. An insurgency, mixing civilian and military personnel, generally of low rank, although led by an admiral, started a revolution after a period of conspiracy. They expected to rally the majority of the army garrisons of Lisbon to their cause, which did not happen – only two units, Infantry 16 and Artillery 1, as well, joined. Additionally, the main battleships of the Portuguese Fleet, including its only modern cruiser, failed in the beginning. In very general terms, the insurgents entrenched themselves in the Rotunda zone, which at the time was almost in the outskirts of Lisbon, and resisted to the assaults of the military garrisons that remained loyal to the King, Manuel II, but without any faith. **The** basic action, in land, was a continuous gunfire between the distinct armed groups, and some artillery duels between the cannons of the Ajuda Garrison, defending the monarchy, and the pro-republicans at the rotunda. On the River Tagus, republican insurgents received some naval support, but without control of the D. Carlos Cruiser, the most powerful ship in the Portuguese Navy, they could not secure control of the Tagus Bay. On the afternoon of October 4, sailors of the D. Carlos Cruiser mutinied against the monarchy and joined the republican side. The odds turned against the King Manuel II and his supporters. The King decided to leave Lisbon, attempting to arrive to the North of Portugal to mobilize forces against the republican insurgents. It was too late. On the morning of October 5, a mixed demonstration of civilians and military personnel led to the complete disintegration of the army units defending the Portuguese Monarchy. The republican leader at the Rotunda, Captain Machado dos Santos of the Navy, arrived at the royal armed forces headquarters and compelled the commanding general to surrender. At 1200 on October 5, 1910, the Portuguese Republic its official proclaimed from the Balcony of the Lisbon

Town Hall. The armed revolution and the ensuing battle, ended an eight hundred years monarchy marking one of the most radical breaks in historical evolution.⁽²⁾

- 5/16 October 1911 – the First Monarchic Incursion, one year after the proclamation of the Portuguese Republic. A more radical monarchist faction attempted to provoke a national mobilization against the new Republican regime. A small monarchic army, of a few hundred men under the command of Army Captain Paiva Couceiro, entered from Galiza, in the north of Spain, in the eastern region of Portugal, in the area of the Bragança District, and occupied the small town of Vinhais. Republican forces, a mix of armed civilian volunteers, navy sailors, in general, strongly ideologically republican, and army battalions mobilized throughout Portugal to strike back, pursuing the monarchist forces. For a week, they, more than fighting, engaged in a game of pursuit. The monarchist avoided the republicans, while the republicans, tried to catch them. The monarchists hoped for a massive popular national uprising in support of the King and the Monarchy. When, it was clear to the monarchists, that something like that would not happen, they withdrew to Spain, ending the incursion.⁽³⁾
- 6/13 of July of 1912. The Second Monarchic Incursion. The second incursion by the Paiva Couceiro monarchists was better prepared. About 1000 (*one thousand*) men were mobilized under Paiva Couceiro's command. The monarchists wanted to assault three villages, and the main objective was the city of Chaves, but in reality, the final purpose was to incite all the rural country, at the time, comprised the majority of the population, against the Republic. However, the objective and the purpose failed, this time, was heavily paid in blood. The republicans, consisting of civil volunteers and military personnel, resisted to the monarchist offensive, stopped them, and expelled them from the positions they had taken in the beginning. Paiva Couceiro tried to keep its defeated forces within Portugal, now reduced to little more than 200 (*two hundred*) men, hoping for the desired national uprising, but after several days, with no sign of the popular pro monarchist uprising, and hunted by republican forces, what was left of the monarchist army, returned to Spain. It was the end of the monarchic incursions.⁽⁴⁾
- 14/15 May 1915, Lisbon – The triumph of the radical republicans and the total belligerency war project. The victorious Republican Revolution did not start a historical movement of normalcy, on the contrary, the revolutionary process gained its own moment and continued to evolve after the end of the Portuguese Monarchy. A permanent crisis permeates the entire Portuguese First Republic. And

2. Among others, Rosas, Fernando, *Lisboa Revolucionária*, 41-43, Telo, António José, *Primeira República I. Do Sonho à Realidade*, (Lisboa: Editorial Presença), 2010, 99-143.

3. For a Synthesis, Valente, Vasco Pulido, *Um Herói Português. Henrique Paiva Couceiro (1861-1944)*, (Lisboa: Alêtheia), 2006, 101-107.

4. Valente, Vasco Pulido, *Um Herói Português*, 108-117.

that crisis had the first culminating point with the outbreak of the First World War. The Portuguese society became divided between “*guerristas*” (the belligerent party) and “*antiguerristas*” (a broad group, from the more radical pacifists, to Germanophiles, and proponents of limited war intervention, primarily aimed at defending Portuguese colonies). In the beginning of First World War, moderated republicans controlled foreign and military policy, which was defined by a strong support to the old ally, Great Britain, with a moderated military intervention, aligned with British needs, mainly, if necessary, in the Portuguese African Colonies. The second, more radical Republican Revolution, occurred on 14 and 15 May 1915. As in October 1910 Revolution, a mix of military, now primarily from the Armada, the Navy Fleet, which revolted against the moderate government (under General Pimenta de Castro). The Portuguese Navy controlled the Bay of the River Tagus and shelled the government military units which tried to occupy the insurgent’s garrisons. At the same time, the insurgent republicans tried and succeeded in controlling the garrison buildings that were in the possession of the government’s military forces. The subjugation of the Army Arsenal (now the Military Museum) marked the end of the government army units. With the fall of Pimenta de Castro’s government, the “*guerristas*” republican insurgents started the path that will push Portugal into the belligerency in the First World War and to the defeats at the hands of the Reich’s Army in France (*La Lys*, 1918) and in Mozambique (in 1917 and 1918). As in 1910, a new rupture happened in 1915. The path towards full belligerency in the First World War was imposed upon the Portuguese Nation and its people, disrupting any potential normal historical course.⁽⁵⁾

- 3/8 December 1917, Lisbon – the defeat of the radical republicans – and an attempt to revive the Portuguese 1st Republic; By 1917, as in other European countries ravaged by war, Portugal was in a state of profound crisis, well visible during the 19-21 May 1917 Potato Revolt in Lisbon, a popular in which a hungry and angered proletarian population looted general stores – the assaults continued throughout the summer and autumn; simultaneously, strikes broke out in several sectors of the economy; troops were sent to Lisbon to maintain order, in a nation that had send several expeditionary forces to the First World War in Africa and in France. On 3 December 1917, a military revolt supported by the civil population, overthrew the last “*guerrista*” radical republican government. The fighting lasted for three days. The military rebellion entrenched, as had happened in 1910 at the Rotunda, and fought against the government forces, basically, the navy sailors, the last defenders of the radical belligerent republic, who tried, in several assaults and a lot of fire skirmishes to dislodge their enemies from their position, without success. In the end, this attritional fighting produced the collapse of the already

5. Among others, Rosas, Fernando. *Lisboa Revolucionária*, 43-46. See also, Telo, António José, *Primeira República I*, 318-326. Telo, António José, “Revolução e Contra-Revolução”, 7-8.

very crippled radical government on 8 December 1917. The leader of the new revolution was Sidónio Pais, an army major who had previously been a professor of mathematics at the University of Coimbra and, until Portugal's break in relations with the Reich, the Portuguese Ambassador in Berlin. It could have been a new beginning for the Republic. As President of the Republic, elected after winning the political power, Sidónio Pais tried to create a new Republican Regime, in the form of Presidentialism, with a tendency toward Caesarism or to more modern authoritarianism. However, failed. The national crisis continued, and his political allies fractured, because they were, in fact, so different ideologically. Sidónio Pais was assassinated on 14 December 1918.⁽⁶⁾

- 19/1-13/2/1919, Lisbon and Oporto – The “*Monarquia do Norte*” Monarchy of the North and the last monarchist attempt to restore the Monarchic Regime in Portugal. The “*Nova República Velha*” (*The New Old Republic*) survives. The death of Sidónio Pais opened the idea, among several monarchist and some conservative political factions, that it was possible to restore the Monarchy. The monarchists planned to seize power simultaneously in Lisbon and Oporto. However, the sudden proclamation of the Monarchy in Oporto on 19 January 1919, surprised the Lisbon monarchist conspirators. Under the command of Aires de Ornelas, they tried to create a stronghold at the Fort of Monsanto hills on the outskirts of the city on 22 January 1919. The monarchist proclamation on the other hand, led to the mobilization of all different republican factions and parties. A massive armed crowd, supported by military personnel of the garrisons in Lisbon, assaulted the monarchist position on the Monsanto hills. Facing the risk of being slaughtered by the republican armed crowd, the Lisbon rebellious monarchists surrendered. Then, it was necessary to mobilize the military forces to strike the North Monarchy, which had controlled all the north of Portugal and was trying to advance to the south. The navy, always very republican, blocked the northern coast of Portugal, and bombarded with its guns, military positions on the side of the monarchists. An army, composed of numerous republican officers and soldiers, who had been in Flanders during the World War, moved northward, with fighting starting near the city of Aveiro. The counterattack of the republicans decided the conflagration in favour of the Portuguese Republic. A new Republic, that was the old Republic – a “*Nova República Velha*” (*the New Old Republic*) beginning again.⁽⁷⁾
- 18/4/1925, Lisbon – A failed “*Military Coup*” attempt to end the Portuguese First Republic. The New Old Republic would last seven more years, from 1919 to 1926. It will never achieve a moment of equilibrium, amid continuous crisis, the nation, or the elites of the nation, started to look for a strong political solution,

6. Among others, Rosas, Fernando. *Lisboa Revolucionária*, 48-49.

7. Silva, Helena Moreira da, *A Monarquia do Norte. 1919*, (Matosinhos: Quidnovi), 2008.

and when we use the term strong, normally, we refer to those who have the force to impose order – the national army. On 18 April 1925, now, indeed, a military coup had taken place, later known as the General's Coup, and for the first time, the leading conspirators were active-duty Generals. Part of the Lisbon garrison – Machine Gun Battalion, Train Sappers Battalion, and Queluz Artillery – started a movement, with the objective of mobilizing other military garrisons, to force the government's fall. They entrenched themselves in the Rotunda. Its leader, General Sinel de Cordes went to the Carmo Headquarters to negotiate the surrender of the government. Unfortunately for him, the President of the Republic, Manuel Teixeira-Gomes, and two government ministers – two military ministers, one from the Navy, Admiral Pereira da Silva, and the other from the Army, Lieutenant-Colonel Vitorino Godinho, were hard politicians who refused to yield to pressure. Instead of forcing the government's fall, General Sinel de Cordes was arrested. Then, the government started a counterattack. The military coup failed.⁽⁸⁾ However, it left a lot of lessons for the future, that were very well learned. A year later, a military movement started in the city of Braga, on 28 May 1926. The military revolt then started a march toward Lisbon, mobilizing along the way other military garrisons. They arrived in Lisbon with 15,000 troops. Negotiations between the leaders of the military movement, the Presidency and the government of the Republic started. Finally, after several political arrangements, on 31 May 1926, the Republican Parliament was dissolved. It was the end of the Portuguese First Republic.

The Intermittent Civil War, a Theory

The Portuguese First Republic last fifteen and half years. In such a short regime period, seven armed clashes occurred between opposing political enemies. These clashes however, were the major action among other violent actions that characterized the Portuguese First Republic, going from assaults by armed mobs on political adversaries' installations and newspapers, to violent strikes, generally, proletarian strikes, to social and economic riots, mainly during the First World War, and even to political assassinations or attempted assassinations of politicians and social figures. indeed, Portuguese society was immersed in political and social violence, which regularly erupted into armed clashes between opposing political and military forces. These are the circumstances that justify the idea of an intermittent civil war, erupting from some sort of permanent larvae civil war.

To define with precision the idea of war applied to this period, we have to think how specific these armed clashes are in a very political volatile context, produced by a society in dialogical crisis. We would look to three or indeed four terms that are usually used to define some forms of violence. One of them was often used at the time for

8. Rosas, Fernando, *Lisboa Revolucionária*, 55-56.

presenting these clashes – revolution. Another term, which in general, is applied when military violence changes political evolution and results in a regime transition – the “*Coup d’état*”. A third term, “*Pronunciamento*” (*Pronouncement?*) may also be related to the first. Finally, we must return to the concept of war, to think, why this concept its better applied to understand the clashes of arms that affected the First Portuguese Republic and the process of regime change in that period.

Revolution

The term was generally, applied by contemporaries of the Portuguese First Republic to define the armed clashes that led to political and regime transitions during that period. Machado dos Santos called “revolution” to the overthrown of the Portuguese Monarchy in his book he wrote on 3-5 October, titled precisely “*A Revolução Republicana*” (The Republican Revolution).⁽⁹⁾ Revolution was, for the republicans, in general, a mythical political word, related with the French Revolution, that many want to emulate.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, as some scholars argue, if violence it presented in radical political change, revolution is much more than mere violence and, in some situations, can occur without violence, , especially without war violence. Indeed, the early stages of the French Revolution were almost quite peaceful. It was in the confrontation with resistances, and in the acceleration of the changes to break those resistances that political violence erupted, expanded, and ultimately escalated into war.⁽¹¹⁾

For Walter Benjamin (as already mention before) revolution was more than just violence, a break with the current movement of history, a cut in the historical process that changed its course abruptly and radically. Walter Benjamin states:

“The awareness of destroying the continuum of History is characteristic of revolutionary classes at the moment of their action” and further on, reinforces this idea by observing that the “messianic halt” is “a sign of revolutionary opportunity” to “force a certain epoch leaving the homogeneous flow” of time.⁽¹²⁾

Expanding on Walter Benjamin’s ideas, Eric Hobsbawn, scalping the idea of Revolution, said that it is a reflection of the aspiration for radical change in historical, political and social reality.⁽¹³⁾ Revolution, more than being seen as an act, must be looked as a process that changes reality – in this process, war could be an instrument, but alone, violence

9. Santos, Machado dos, *A Revolução Portuguesa, 1907-1910*, (Lisboa: Sextante Editora), 2007.

10. Valente, Vasco Pulido, *O Poder e o Povo, A Revolução de 1910*, (3ª Edição Revista e Corrigida), (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores), 1999, 64.

11. See for an overview of the phases of the French Revolution, Beaurepaire, Pierre-Yves, Marzagalli, Silvia, *Atlas da Revolução Francesa*, (Lisboa: Guerra e Paz), 2024, 51-77.

12. Benjamin, Walter, *O Anjo da História*, (Edited and Tranlated by João Barrento) (Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim), 2010, 18-19.

13. Hobsbawn, Eric “La Revolución”, em Roy Porter e Myklas Teich, Eds., *La Revolución en la Historia*, (Barcelona: Editorial Critica,) 1990 (1986), 57-8.

and fighting, are not a revolution. A revolution is the radical transformation of reality, the changing of the current of History – “The term generally denotes a transformation from one form of the state to another, and is usually held to involve violence”.⁽¹⁴⁾ Indeed, political transformation could and generally results in violence, but it is not a determined consequence of radical social and political change. Radical political change can also happen without violence. What always happens in revolution is change and with it, a process of transformation. José Manuel Sardica, following scholars such as Stanley Payne and Jack Goldstone, observes that Revolution is indeed a process, not an event.⁽¹⁵⁾ But he also sees that the acceleration of history, produced by the revolutionary process, can entail a “torrent revolutionnaire” (sic in the text) and can push with it intense political violence.⁽¹⁶⁾

The armed clashes of the Portuguese First Republic could be seen, not in themselves, as a Revolution, but as part of the revolutionary process. The battling violence is an instrument of change, but the change itself was the purpose and the end of the revolution and only when all the process ends, revolution ends. The seven clashes that had been presented, contributed to this change, but the revolutionary process continued until the purpose was achieved – the establishment of the Republican government, Portugal's entry into the First World War, the Regime change led by Sidónio Pais or with the Fall of the Portuguese First Republic whose first act was the closure of the Parliament.

“Coup d'état”

It could be used a general definition presented in the *Britannica Encyclopaedia* to describe a coup d'état as: “The sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. The chief prerequisite for a coup is control of all or part of the armed forces, the police, and other military elements. Unlike a revolution, which is usually achieved by large numbers of people working for basic social, economic, and political change, a coup is a change in power from the top that merely results in the abrupt replacement of leading government personnel”.⁽¹⁷⁾ A “Coup d'état” is a violent movement to overthrow the government or the dominant political government power. As was also mentioned by *Encyclopaedia*, the purpose is to change who controls power, not who transforms society. Indeed, the definition of *Britannica Encyclopaedia* echoes with the main academic definitions on “Coup d'état”. For Monty G. Marshall and Donna Ramsey Marshall from the Center for Systemic Peace, a “Coup d'état” as “a forceful seizure of executive authority and office by a dissident/opposition faction within the country's ruling or political elites

14. Hoffman, John, *A Glossary of Political Theory*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 2007, 161.

15. Sardica, José Manuel, *Terminar a Revolução, A Política Portuguesa de Napoleão a Salazar*, (Lisboa: Temas & Debates / Círculo dos Leitores), 39.

16. Sardica, José Manuel, *Terminar a Revolução*, 41.

17. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Coup d'Etat”, Encyclopaedia Britannica, in <https://www.britannica.com/topic/coup-detat>, consulted 19 of July 2024.

that results in a substantial change in the executive leadership and the policies of the prior regime (although not necessarily in the nature of regime authority or mode of governance).⁽¹⁸⁾ A similar view appears in another research project on “Coup d’état”. For the Cline Center Coup d’État Project Dataset, a coup is “organized efforts to effect sudden and irregular (e.g., illegal, or extra-legal) removal of the incumbent executive authority of a national government, or to displace the authority of the highest levels of one or more branches of government”.⁽¹⁹⁾ In both definitions, the main idea is the change in the ruling elite or leadership power. As the name implies, it’s a sudden break, a unique event, a “coup”, a cut, swift and decisive, that contrasts completely with revolution, a process, which could be a very long process. Both research projects had a more precise drawing of a “Coup d’état”, of its moments or its movements.

The Center for Systemic Peace contrast the “Coup d’état” with other situations:

“Social revolutions, victories by oppositional forces in civil wars, and popular uprisings, while they may lead to substantial changes in central authority, are not considered coups d’état. Voluntary transfers of executive authority or transfers of office due to the death or incapacitation of a ruling executive are, likewise, not considered coups d’état. The forcible ouster of a regime accomplished by, or with the crucial support of, invading foreign forces is not here considered a coup d’état.”⁽²⁰⁾

Social Revolutions which are based in popular movements, such as popular uprisings are not “Coup d’état”. Indeed, they can lead to substantial changes, which means, a process of social, political, and economic transformation, rather than a simple cut in power. As seen, here, the move is much closer to a revolution than to a cut in the heads of political power.

The Cline Center’s definition is presented immediately below in their text:

“1. Initiating actor(s): There must be an actor or group of actors initiating the event. 2. Incumbent Targets: Actors targeted for removal may include any incumbent that exercises control over national policy. Primary targets of a coup are individuals or groups that command executive authority (...). 3. A threat to leaders’ hold on power: A relevant coup event must be a credible, short-term, and direct threat to an incumbent leader or leaders. 4. Irregular Means: Initiators must use irregular means to seize, remove, or render powerless

18. Marshall, G. Monty, Marshall, Donna Ramsey, “Coup d’état events, 1946-2018. Codebook” Center for Systemic Peace, Last Update, 25 July 2019, [accessed, 3 December 2024], <https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/CSPCoupsCodebook2018.pdf>

19. Peyton, Buddy, Joseph Bajjalieh, Dan Shalmon, Michael Martin, Jonathan Bonaguro, and Scott Althaus. 2024. “Cline Center Coup d’État Project Dataset Codebook”. Cline Center Coup d’État Project Dataset. Cline Center for Advanced Social Research. V.2.1.3. February 27. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. doi: 10.13012/B2IDB-9651987_V7 [accessed, 3 December 2024], [file:///C:/Users/APDav/Downloads/Cline%20Center%20Coup%20d%27%C3%88tat%20Codebook%20v.2.1.3%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/APDav/Downloads/Cline%20Center%20Coup%20d%27%C3%88tat%20Codebook%20v.2.1.3%20(1).pdf)

20. Marshall, G. Monty, Marshall, Donna Ramsey, “Coup d’état events ...”

the incumbent target. (...)5. Organized effort: There must be an organized effort (whether successful or unsuccessful) that leaves the incumbents in a titular, de jure position of power subordinated to a higher authority (a military junta or supervisory council) that is the de facto executive leadership.”⁽²¹⁾

The precision of the definition, the definition of the actions which have to be taken in account to defined a “Coup d’état” show that it it’s a merely political or more correct ruling power imposed through violence. Indeed, it is an armed pronouncement movement and, in general, a one-sided violent action. The victorious party, using violence, generally imposes its will on an opponent who lacks the means to resist to its adversary’s action.

In Portugal and in Spain, the term used to define a form of “Coup d’état” that basically used a single movement, an expression of a threat intended to compel a ruling power to step down: “Pronunciamento” in Portuguese or “Pronunciamiento” in Spanish:

“For some, like the late Portuguese historian and polemicist Vasco Pulido Valente, pronunciamento is always “an intervention by commissioned military officers [...] that seeks to replace a government or regime without violence.” According to this view, which was influenced by the works of the Spanish historians Miguel Alonso Baquer (1983) and Julio Busquets (1982), a pronunciamento must be led by the military officers, and it is mainly, if not exclusively, a military process. The objective is always to overthrow the government. Pronunciamento is therefore an alternative word to designate a coup. This is the more traditional interpretation and is especially dominant in Portuguese academic circles.”⁽²²⁾ A “Pronunciamento” is a soft “Coup d’état”, without bloodshed, but relies on the threat of extreme violence to subjugate the adversary.

In general terms, several of the events presented in the first chapter could be seen as a “Coup d’état” or, in a softer manner, as a “Pronunciamento”. However, unlike in all the situations, armed resistance was expected, and required preparation for combat. Troops and civilians were deployed to tactical positions – mainly entrenched in the Rotunda. More importantly, the purpose in general was not only to overthrow the government, but to assure dominant power in order to modify and transform Portuguese political and national society. The revolutionary vision was always present. For that, they invited the opponents to engage in armed resistance, to fight, to avoid political and national defeat.

War and Civil War

There is an immense research literature dedicated to define war. Debating the term, however, is far from the objectives of the present text. The text will follow some ideas, about war, related on two aspects: the way war acts and the purposes that war serves.

21. . “Cline Center Coup d’État Project Dataset Codebook”, 2024.

22. Cruz, Miguel Dantas, “Pronunciamento / Pronunciamiento: etymological roots”, *Análise Social*, lviii (2.º), 2023 (n.º 247), 415, [Accessed 3 December 2024], <https://doi.org/10.31447/as00032573.2023247.09>, ISSN online 2182-2999, https://repositorio.ulisboa.pt/bitstream/10451/58312/1/ICS_MDCruz_Pronunciamento.pdf

We started with the Online Oxford Dictionary, as an example of a general definition: “a situation in which two or more countries or groups of people fight against each other over a period of time” and “war between A and B the war between England and Scotland”.⁽²³⁾ In contemporary English, war means a fight between two opponents, generally states, but the dictionary also considers fighting between “groups of people”. The main focus in the definition of war is on organized groups of humans fighting each other. To avoid presenting a definition from just one specific author, let us see a more scientific approach from two International Relations specialists, Laurent Henninger and Thierry Wideman

“a conflict born from the encounter of oppose projects, following the path to hostility, with the use of collective and organized violence, to subdue the opponent”.⁽²⁴⁾ This is similar to the definition proposed by the Oxford Dictionary but is a more complex and precise definition. According to these specialists’ war is a confrontation between groups that manipulate violence against the opponent, to subjugate him, to achieve their own objectives. Indeed, both definitions are quite close to the basic Clausewitzian definition of war: “a duel on a larger scale” (...). “Each tries through physical force to compel the other to do his will; his immediate aim is to throw his opponent in order to make him incapable of further resistance. War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will”.⁽²⁵⁾

All three concepts agree in accepting war as the use of violence, between two or more groups that fight each other to impose their own will on the opponent. Two institutional definitions, from the Portuguese Glossary of Military Terms (“Glossário de Termos Militares”), follow the same perspective on the subject:

“Organized violence between political groups, in which the resource to armed struggle constitutes, at least, a potential possibility, aiming at a certain political end, directed against sources of the opponent's power and unfolding according to a continuous game of odds and chance”.⁽²⁶⁾

The glossary, probably not completely pleased with the first definition, presents another one:

“Legal status and form of conflict, involving a high degree of legal equity, hostility and violence in intergroup relations between organized human

23. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, “War”, in Oxford Learner's Dictionary, in <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/war>, [accessed in 18 of July 2024].

24. Henninger, Laurent and Widemann, Thierry, “Guerre”, in Laurent Henninger and Thierry Widemann, *Comprendre La Guerre. Histoire et Notions*, (Paris: Perrin), 2012, 13.

25. Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret), (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1989, 75.

26. Instituto Universitário Militar e Academia de Ciências de Lisboa, “Guerra”, Glossário de Termos Militares, (Lisboa, Instituto Universitário Militar e Academia de Ciências de Lisboa), 2020, 155.

societies or, more simply, the condition law that allows, in an equitable manner, two or more groups' hostiles from engaging in conflict".⁽²⁷⁾

The common ideas in both definitions, are the opposition logic, the hostility, the inherent conflict, highlight war's essential nature as fighting and combat. Armed with the precise definition of the concepts, lets present the theory of Intermittent Civil War.

The Intermittent Civil War

The events presented in the first chapter can be understood through the concept of war as defined above. In each confrontation, two parties are presented – republicans against Monarchists, radical republicans against moderate republicans, and conservatives and the authoritarians against liberals and socialists, at the end of the First Portuguese Republic, in a crude presentation of the opposing factions. What is really important, is the existence of a duality, the existence of an opposition. Both opponents, then, engage in conflict to impose their positions, their ideas, both want to subjugate the opponent, so the fight, not only politically, but with the use of force, violence, and the manipulation of arms. In essence, all these events are indeed small wars. The recurrence of these small wars means that, somehow, some sort of larvae civil war exists in society, where these bursts from armed violent confrontations originate. So, it can be said, and it can be demonstrated, that the Portuguese First Republic was marked by an intermittent civil war, mirror of a continuous larvae civil war.

The other concepts are not just for contrast. They mirror the Larvae Civil War, a crucial element of the Intermittent Civil War. Rather than seeing the situation in a form of boxes, intellectual boxes, creating an artificial separation between all the events and its relationship, each moment must be seen as an interconnected process. Revolutionary hopes, projects and processes create a "torrent révolutionnaire" from which political radicalization, emerged, with all the dynamics of political violence. Social and political armed movements supported by elements of the armed forces, the proper military hierarchy, completely casted with the political and economic society, tried to impose their dominance over politically relevant opponents: "Pronunciamentos", "Coup d'état" (in many ways seen at the time as revolutions). In the case of armed opposition, they became a common reality in Portugal, mainly in its capital. In general, indeed, the small civil wars resulted from the failure of "Pronunciamentos" and "Coup d'état". They are not realities enclosed in their own boxes, but parts, more precisely, segments, of a broader and more complex revolutionary process.

The Intermittent Civil War represents a segment of a radicalized society and the way it manipulates violence to achieve its political objectives. It is precisely because of it is a part of a process, a revolutionary process, that war, small civil wars appear intermittently,

27. Instituto Universitário Militar e Academia de Ciências de Lisboa, "Guerra", 155.

in cycles, arising when political radicalization achieve extreme objectives and nothing more than the defeat of the opponent is acceptable. The Intermittent Civil War are intermittently as result of being part of something wider. A connection of segments of a process of extreme political radicalization, a network of interrelated intense political conflict that, in such a way, “we see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means”.⁽²⁸⁾ Indeed, the famous Clausewitz formula can be completely applied to the Portuguese First Republic Intermittent Civil War.

Conclusion

The Portuguese First Republic (1910-1926) and its long ending (1926-1934) were marked by several armed clashes, short in duration, that almost always produced a change or break in its historical course.

To define with precision the idea of war applied to this period, we have to think how specific these armed clashes are in a very political volatile context, produced by a society in dialogical crisis. We look to four terms that are usually used to define some forms of violence. One of them was often used at the time for presenting these clashes – revolution. Another term, which in general, is applied when military violence changes political evolution and results in a regime transition – the “Coup d’état”. A third term, “Pronunciamento” (Pronouncement?) may also be related to the first. Finally, we return to the concept of war, to think, why this concept its better applied to understand the clashes of arms that affected the First Portuguese Republic and the process of regime change in that period.

The armed clashes of the Portuguese First Republic could be seen, not in themselves, as a Revolution, but as part of the revolutionary process. The battling violence is an instrument of change, but the change itself was the purpose and the end of the revolution and only when all the process ends, revolution ends.

The definition of the actions which have to be taken in account to defined a “Coup d’état” show that it’s a merely political or more correct ruling power imposed through violence. Indeed, it is an armed pronouncement movement and, in general, a one-sided violent action. A “Pronunciamento” is a soft “Coup d’état”, without bloodshed, but relies on the threat of extreme violence to subjugate the adversary.

28. Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.

The common ideas in all the definitions about war are the opposition logic, the hostility, the inherent conflict, highlight war's essential nature as fighting and combat. All concepts agree in accepting war as the use of violence, between two or more groups that fight each other to impose their own will on the opponent.

The Intermittent Civil War represents a segment of a radicalized society and the way it manipulates violence to achieve its political objectives. It is precisely because of it is a part of a process, a revolutionary process, that war, small civil wars appear intermittently, in cycles, arising when political radicalization achieve extreme objectives and nothing more than the defeat of the opponent is acceptable. The Intermittent Civil War are intermittently as result of being part of something wider. A connection of segments of a process of extreme political radicalization, a network of interrelated intense political conflict.

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