

## For the good of sport and the nation: relations between sport and politics in the Portuguese New State (1933-1945)

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to analyze the relations between the phenomenon of sport and politics in the Portuguese New State during the period 1933-45. What was the relationship established between the Salazar regime and sport? In what way did the government act with regard to sport and how did this relationship adapt to (and shape) the plans for social control that were put forward during the period of the New State? In seeking to obtain a better understanding of these relationships, I examine how sport was employed as a strategy for achieving a consensus and following this, to note how these same relationships were used as a part of Salazar's propaganda, as well as to boost his image. Finally, I undertake a case study that is concerned with the most significant occasion when Salazar's image was bound up with the Portuguese sports movement – the opening ceremony of the National Stadium.

### **Keywords**

History of Sport; Salazarism; Consent

The leading sportsman of Portugal – is Salazar. The Head of State is usually an athlete because this is essential to overcome any problems that arise. The qualities of an athlete comprise strength of spirit, decisiveness, thoughtfulness, shrewdness, vision, poise, combativeness and simplicity – all the attributes that are recognized and extolled in Salazar. It is necessary to be strong and an athlete to steer a ship of State through rough seas and the turbulence of stormy skies. It is not only muscles that define an athlete but also and perhaps more significantly, the spirit, mind and heart. For this reason, it can be said – it must be said – that Salazar is the leading sportsman of Portugal. *Os Sports*, 12th June, 1944<sup>2</sup>.

At first sight, in the epigraph above, Alberto Freitas, a journalist for the magazine *Os Sports*, seems to have employed considerable poetic and journalistic license in the rhetorical expressions he used to link Oliveira Salazar to the phenomenon of sport. The occasion was the opening ceremony of the National Stadium on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1944, when the Portuguese sporting community celebrated the New State and its relationship with sport. By means of an image that has nothing to do with the sporting movement or issues of a general kind relating to the body, Salazar<sup>3</sup> is heralded as the main benefactor of the national sporting movement.

Apart from the fact that it was to the obvious advantage of a periodical to make an allusion to Salazar, especially when the whole paper was geared to assisting the propaganda of the regime<sup>4</sup>, what was the nature of the relationship established between the government and sport? Despite Salazar's apparent indifference to the matter, – which he himself recognized in a speech made in 1933<sup>5</sup> –, in what way did his government act towards the question of sport and how was this adapted to (and shape) the plans for social control put forward during the period of the New State?

This article seeks to understand how sport came to be deployed as one of the tools for creating a consensus within the Salazar regime<sup>6</sup>, in what de Grazia (2002) called the

“culture of consent”. In the view of this writer, this “culture” referred to a set of activities and culturally-centred practices that were seemingly depoliticized, among which sport is singled out here since it was organized by State departments with a view to bringing people closer to the regime in power. Hence the aim of this study is to analyze the ways in which the people and the State of Portugal can be drawn together through the mediation of sport.

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Other writers employ a different model to explain the sports phenomenon; in this case, it is regarded as a useful means of distracting people so that their attention is drawn away from political issues. Among these, it is worth mentioning Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi (1979: 153-163), who analyse the cultural situation of Francoist Spain during the 1960s. They highlight the existence of a cultural climate that led to an evasion of immediate social realities and a complete withdrawal from political concerns and interests. Carr and Fusi describe the situation as a “culture of evasion”, which reflected the absence of the State in cultural production and left it at the mercy of private interests, since it was only involved with consumption and completely detached from political or intellectual concerns. The regime thus benefited from a politically-anodyne culture that was designed to create an image of the nation as being satisfied and without problems – this distracted the public from key issues in the field of politics.

Thus it can be seen that sport is a plastic element that can be used as a tool of political propaganda and a means of bringing about a consensus and an image of national achievement. At the same time, it was seen by the government as a factor of evasion and fed to the people as such, although it is very difficult to estimate its effectiveness in either case. In reality, rather than attempting to measure these features, it is of greater value to understand that both approaches to sport coexist and have influenced the adoption of policies in the area of sport.

These are the questions that act as guidelines for this study which is centred on the period when the New State<sup>7</sup>, was being established between 1933 and 1945. In attempting to answer them, a series of articles from the Portuguese press are drawn on, together with documents from the Torre de Tombo National Archive in Lisbon. Lectures and speeches by members of the sporting and political elites of the period are also made use of, as well as contemporary studies of the subject under analysis. Since academic studies on the History of Sport in Portugal are still in their early stages, there is little work available on sport during the regime of Oliveira Salazar, which can enable this study to enter into a dialogue. However, among these, studies carried out by Domingos (2004), Serrado (2008) and Serrado and Serra (2010) can be cited.

With a view to understanding the relationship established between the Salazar regime and sport, this article sets out by examining how sports activities were employed as a strategy for reaching a consensus so that it can be made clear how this was bound up with Salazar’s propaganda and personal image. Finally, an analysis is conducted of one of the most significant occasions when the image of Salazar was linked to the Portuguese sports movement – the opening ceremony of the National Stadium.

### **Salazarism, Sport and Consensus**

The political exploitation of sport was a common factor in several States during the 20th Century and was not restricted to authoritarian regimes. (Arnaud, 2002; Holt, 2002). However, the model of State intervention in the sporting arena adopted by authoritarian regimes, especially by the Italy of Mussolini (Teja, 1998; 2002) and Nazi Germany (Kruger,

1998; 2002) became a model that was followed by several governments in the interwar years which espoused Fascism as an ideology, like Francoist Spain (Aja, 1998; 2002) and the Portuguese New State.

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In these regimes, sport represented an important means of strengthening inner cohesion and boosting national prestige, both inside the country and abroad. Although of limited effectiveness and scope, these practices sought to convey a message that was in line with the values and aspirations of the dominant regimes, such as “discipline, respect for one’s adversary and for the law, persistent work and unfailing enthusiasm, which according to Salazar Carreira<sup>8</sup> (1948;: 17) could be taught through sport. It can thus be seen that the discourse surrounding sport highlighted the fact that, – as pointed out by a number of critical theories of sport (apud Vaz, 2006) – it was possible to reproduce relationships that were ideologically valued by bourgeois society, such as the sense of a social hierarchy, obedience, opportunities for social climbing, success and efficiency. Nonetheless, it should be remembered that it also served as a place for the expression of resistance and making demands.

Two discursive domains can be highlighted where the phenomenon of sport was employed with the aim of mobilizing a part of civil society and bringing it closer to the institutions of the regime, as an expression of the culture of consensus. In the first place, sport was regarded as a tool for the eugenic and civic improvement of youth and secondly, as a means of social control, in particular during the leisure time of workers. In both cases, sport was given prominence rather as a practice than as a spectacle, and this accorded with the central concern of the public authorities. Sport was thus viewed and supported as a means of health and education or rather, as an essentially amateur activity that was closer to physical education than a competitive spectacle. But how did this discourse about the phenomenon of sport become embedded in the state institutions that had been set up as a means of mobilizing civil society?

First of all, as a tool for the eugenic and civic improvement of youth, sport was regarded as an essential feature of the whole educational process. Beginning with gymnastics and ending in sport, Physical Education was a great driving-force that could encourage a youngster to become healthier and stronger and which could thus build up a strong nation for the future. In the case of Portugal, there was a prevailing view that the people were weak and decadent and that it was only through physical activity that one could bring about a regeneration of “the Portuguese race”. This is constantly being underlined in speeches made throughout the 1930s and 1940s as in the case of the words of Durão Ferreira, Secretary of State and Inspector-General of the Portuguese National Youth Organization, delivered during the First Meeting of its leaders in October 1937:

(...) with regard to the Portuguese, we still urgently need to carry out a reevaluation of the race in the interests of conducting a relentless campaign against the causes of our physical decline, from teratological heredity to the abysmal depths that the lives of the Portuguese people have sunk into.

Racism? No. Simply the improvement of a race that through its abuses and unruliness has forgotten how much it owes to the homage and perfection of its Creator (Ferreira, 1938: 19).

Sport thus took on the role of a regenerator of youth and it was through this practice that it was thought Portugal would build up its future strength and become a strong and virile people, and match the characteristics of the new government of the New State. Hence,

the practice of sport was in the strategic interests of the State which had the duty of supporting – and for some even controlling – national physical activity.

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Although the practice of gymnastics and sports had taken place in Portuguese education since the First Republic (1910-26), it had never been properly regulated and its professionals were ineffective through a lack of training. In spite of the discourse of the New State in support of sport, the situation continued without any major changes until the beginning of the 1940s when the Portuguese State began to pursue a more vigorous sports policy, as noted by Ricardo Serrado (2010: 251). This fact is made clear in the words of Álvaro Frade, leader of the Portuguese Youth Movement in 1942:

Infant and primary school education in the private sector does not provide teachers with the skills required to organize games and exercises that are suitable for the first period of physical activity. The first contact of the Portuguese Youth Movement with primary schools bore out the full extent of this failing. The little children, many of whom showed visible signs of physical blemishes, were imprisoned, neglected, backward and wretched.

(...)

In the last stage of schooling, that of the undergraduate, physical education does not have any official recognition. (...) Our university athletes are not given enough moral support and lack facilities and equipment. The little they manage to achieve is the result of a good deal of energy expended by some of the more dedicated students who do not hesitate to seek any kind of cooperation (Frade, 1942: 10-11).

The Portuguese National Youth Organization [Mocidade Portuguesa (MP)] played a crucial role in the national sports policies. Set up in 1935, under the inspiration of the Italian Opera Nazionale Balilla and the German Hitler Youth Movement, the Portuguese organization had to embrace all young people whether they were attending school or not. From its origins, the Youth Organization had very close ties with sport, which was its principal means of reinvigorating the Portuguese people. It was imbued with physical and sports activities from its beginnings and its first National Commissioner Francisco José Nobre Guedes, had been Secretary-General of the Portuguese Olympic Committee since 1919.

Nobre Guedes was a keen supporter of physical education and sports as the principal means of regenerating the Portuguese people and in his view, they constituted one of the main functions of the Youth Movement (Mocidade Portuguesa, 1938: 9). It was from physical activities (among which sport featured prominently and was the most popular), that the new Portuguese man could emerge. This was a new healthy person who contrasted with the race that was wasting away and was viewed as the outcome of the First Republic that the New State sought to supplant.

A sign of the importance of sport for the proper functioning of the Portuguese Youth Movement can be noted by examining the national budget for 1938<sup>9</sup>. 14% of the budget forecast for that year was earmarked for sport (9% for the purchase of sports equipment and 5% for “Special Training”, or instruction in sports). This was only exceeded by the amount set aside for the 12th Anniversary Celebrations of the so-called National Revolution of 28th May that accounted for 30% of the budget (15% for the event itself and 15% in the form of donations made up of free uniforms to be worn by the people processing in the parade). The same document states that the budget ended up by not being granted owing to the large expenditure of the civic celebrations, which had

squandered more than half of the budget for that year. Notwithstanding this, an important indicator of the importance of sport is the fact that the amount spent on it was higher than for example, "Literary and artistic education and propaganda" (which only accounted for 10.3% of the budget, 0.75% shared between "exhibitions and prizes, 6.8% for "publications", 1% for cultural exchanges, 1.25% for cinema, and 0.5% for "broadcasting").

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Sport was thus one of the pillars that underpinned the Portuguese National Youth Organization, including its educational and eugenic features. It gave priority to gymnastics in the most basic phases of education and sports practice to the older pupils where competitions were held in various areas such as football, swimming, rowing and horse riding, as well as gymnastic displays. National university championships were also held which included representatives from Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra and involved competitions in activities such as football, athletics, shooting and roller skate hockey<sup>10</sup>. In 1942, events were organized with the *Jeunesse Française*, which involved competitions in athletics, basketball, fencing and swimming.<sup>11</sup>

Even among women in the Portuguese Young Women's Movement (*Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina*), sport began to feature prominently, although it had a specific function within the role that women were expected to fulfil in the New State. This is highlighted in one of the organization's pamphlets issued by the Secretariat of National Propaganda:

Physical Education in the M.P.F [Portuguese Young Women's Movement], has two aims: - to allow its members to compete for health reasons and also - why not? - to make them more beautiful, with a beauty that is wholly natural and acquired and where all the gestures and movements of the body are correct; the games and sports that they practise also enable them to improve the qualities of their character.

The Portuguese Young Women's Movement only thought physical education was harmful if it was carried out to excess. It did not want its members to become so athletic that they lost their feminine gracefulness or pay so much attention to their body that they forgot they had a soul (Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina, s.d: 39-40).

At this point, attention should be drawn to the socially cohesive value of sport. As well as providing youth with physical training, this exercise provided a strong incentive for young people to come together and join an organization. With gymnastics being given priority in schools, the Portuguese Youth Movement was one of the spaces devoted to the practice of physical activities. In this way, sport ended up by becoming one of the main strategies for attracting youngsters to the Portuguese Youth Movement and thus bringing them closer to the regime. Although Vieira (2008: 167) states that "there was a depoliticized climate in the sporting environment of the Youth Movement which was devoid of any proselytism", the active involvement of young people in the official youth organizations of the New State was in itself the kind of political participation that was coveted by the government. Sport was thus carried out both as the outcome of a consensus and as an instrument of evasion.

The same issue arises with regard to the importance of the sports phenomenon, together with another factor referred to earlier - sport as a means of socially controlling the leisure time of workers. It was for this reason that the New State followed the Italian *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* [National Recreational Club] and the German *Kraft durch Freude* [Strength through Joy Movement] by setting up the Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho (FNAT) [National Foundation for Joy at Work] in 1935. The State body that was

responsible for the free time of the workers organized holiday camps, hiking trips, excursions, conferences, musical and theatrical performances, educational activities through the cinema, radio programs, public libraries and a wide range of courses and other activities in which links to sport featured prominently (Valente, 1999: 44). This was highlighted by Torgal (2009) as being one of the main organs of propaganda in the New State.

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With the slogan “more people on the field and fewer on the bleachers” (Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho [National Foundation for Joy at Work], 1945, p.15), FNAT declared that it sought the physical improvement of Portuguese workers through practising sport and gymnastics, with a view to making them more willing to work and more productive. At the same time that the message was being conveyed that sports activities were helping to make Portuguese workers healthier and more efficient, it was also being claimed that sport served the purpose of alleviating tension at work and acted as a means of evasion by steering workers away from industrial disputes.

It is this capacity to control the leisure time of workers that can be regarded as one of the essential features of FNAT, and sport acted as a key driving-force in drawing the workers to this entity. As, for example, in laying down the rules for a ping-pong championship, “the National Foundation for Joy at Work (...), with its Gymnastics and Sports Commission acting as an intermediary, employs physical education as a useful means of distracting the Portuguese worker” (Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho, 1942: 3). The practice of sports was a “useful distraction” for FNAT, in so far as it meant that the worker was kept under the aegis of the State even in his free time.

FNAT organized several sporting tournaments with the aim of attracting a larger number of affiliates to its Centers of Joy in Work and Centers of Public Recreation. In the case of the sports that required specialist trainers such as athletics, training centers were organized with instructors who were especially prepared for their work in the Foundation. In the same way, it provided sportsgrounds for workers who wished to practise sports like football and basketball that did not need specialist training. (Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho, 1945: 16-17). Sports practice thus operated as a key mechanism in drawing workers closer to FNAT.

FNAT began to hold corporate sports championships in 1940, with a shooting tournament. In the years that followed there were various kinds of competitions in football, basketball, volleyball, swimming, table-tennis, cycling (from 1946), tug-of-war competitions and athletics (Fundação Nacional para Alegria no Trabalho, 1949). Hence from the time of the first shooting tournament in which 201 athletes from 23 teams took part, the competitions rapidly expanded. In 1941, there were also football and swimming competitions with the shooting involving a total of 691 athletes. In 1945, the number reached 2,665 workers, competing in seven activities (shooting, athletics, basketball, football, swimming, table-tennis and volleyball). Football has shown its strength as the most popular sport in the country for decades. In 1941 it was responsible for 63.4% of the enrolments in the FNAT competitions with 438 participants. By 1945, when there was a greater diversification of sports championships, football accounted for 41.6% of the participants and included 1,108 workers (Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho, 1949).

Gymnastics was also an important activity for FNAT, which thought it served a “utilitarian and educational” purpose (Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho, 1949: 60), since it had “the task of improving the physical condition of the people while at the same time giving rise to more competent and productive workers” (Domingos, 2004: 308) by making

them better prepared physically. Between December 1940 and June 1944, gymnastic teams from FNAT had already held 12 displays in festivals and ceremonial occasions, including the First Festival of Gymnastics in the Park Edward VII in Lisbon and the opening of the National Stadium in 1944 (Fundação Nacional para a Alegria no Trabalho, 1945: 12 and 36).

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Although Sport was a key feature of the national mobilization campaign, it does not seem to have been one of the main strategies of the political propaganda of the New State. This may have been because of the apparent distance from the key figures in the Salazarist propaganda of the time – António Ferro and Salazar himself. However, despite the fact that it was not driven by the top echelons of political power, the phenomenon of sport was not absent from the propagandist policies which were consolidated during the first phase of the New State.

### Salazar and Sport

Being a circumspect and reserved person, António Oliveira Salazar had an image that was in striking contrast with the ideal sportsman. He was both a Titular Professor at the University of Coimbra, and President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) and seen as the guiding light of the nation. He was thus viewed as a man linked to the intellect and opposed to matters related to the body. He personified a characteristic type of Portuguese person who sought to forge a New State – a devout Christian, son of peasant farmers and a simple working man. He was not seen as someone who was close to the people but as a father figure who was austere and strict and a disciplinarian who cared about the future of his family and the nation (Paulo, 1994).

In view of Salazar's remoteness from sport, it is not surprising that it did not feature among the top priorities of the State propaganda. In addition, although António Ferro, a powerful figure involved in the Salazarist propaganda machine of the period (Ramos, 1992, 1999; Paulo, 1994), had close ideological affiliations with the propaganda of Fascist Italy, he did not share its interest in sport. Ferro, a "modernist" person created his "politics of the spirit" on the basis of the arts and popular culture. Nonetheless, Ferro was not detached from the sports world like Salazar. As well as having held the position of President of the Portuguese Tennis Federation from 1941 to 1946<sup>12</sup>, and been Director of the Secretariat of National Propaganda (SPN), he had been dispatched by the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* to follow the Portuguese football team during the Olympic Games of 1928, in Amsterdam. As he had been sent as a literary reporter, Ferro recognized, (at times with expressions of great surprise), that a strong nationalistic symbolic power emerged from the national team. In the first encounter that Portugal had – against the national team from Chile – he declared in his characteristic literary style:

An afternoon in springtime, a blue afternoon, a Portuguese afternoon that our players brought with them in their baggage along with our flag. There are twenty thousand people in the stadium, twenty thousand souls – souls of every race – who are thinking about Portugal, who have their eyes fixed on us, who remember our place on the map and who recognize our independence in the independence of our team... International sport is a great lesson in geography which governments must understand and seek to foster. The Amsterdam Stadium during the Olympic Games is a living map that is shifting before our eyes and felt through the pores of our skin.<sup>13</sup>

Stirred up by the nationalistic feeling that the game aroused, António Ferro compared football to a war. And on experiencing the first goal of the match, the litterateur declared: "It hurts, it really hurts. That ball in the back of the net afflicts me like the sight of a



Portuguese corpse on foreign soil"<sup>14</sup>. The victory at the end of the match against Chile made him to allude to a miracle for the Portuguese race. Referring to key moments of national identity, Ferro writes:

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And it is thus that the miracle happens, the eternal miracle of our race, the miracle of Aljubarrota [victorious battle against Spain in 1385], the miracle of «Ilustra Casa de Ramires» [The Illustrious House of Ramirez – famous novel by Eça de Queiroz], the miracle of the victory that originated from our own defeat, gave rise to our self-esteem, and our pride in our race and gave birth to our soul that is always superior to our body!! (...) Long live Aljubarrota, yes! And Alcacer-Kibir [Battle in 1578 in which the Portuguese were defeated by the Moroccans]?<sup>15</sup>

However despite all the enthusiasm displayed by António Ferro when he covered the Portuguese team in the Olympic Games, sport only featured rarely and sporadically in the National Portuguese propaganda when it was under his command. As Teja (2002) and Arnaud (2002) argue, sport was a great tool of national propaganda when there was a victory. In this way, success in the playing field was reflected in the success of the political regime in force and a demonstration of the power of the nation. In the case of Portugal, the weakness of the national representatives of sport compared with their European rivals, especially in the most popular sport – football – may have been an obstacle to its use as a tool for propaganda.

The best example of this weakness occurred in 1934, in the elimination round of the World Cup in football, which took place that year in Italy. Portugal and Spain disputed for a place and two matches were played, the second in Madrid. The confidence of the media was greatly in evidence and it came armed with a large radio broadcasting system organized by the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* which relayed the event to the main centers of the country. However, a 9-0 defeat ended the Portuguese dream of taking part in the world event and showed the harsh reality of Portuguese football at that time.

It is likely that that lack of any prospect of good results being achieved in the international arena was a key factor that had a great influence on the decision not to include sport in the core of national political propaganda between 1933 and 1945. Since no significant victories had been won in the field, it could not be represented as a symbol of the development and success of the nation and regime. It was only during the 1960s, with the international victories of Benfica and when greater prominence was given to selecting the Portuguese team, that the domain of sport began to be seen as one of the key factors of Salazar's propaganda.<sup>16</sup> However, this did not mean that sport, and much less football, was completely detached from the official propaganda of the New State, as was pointed out earlier.

Despite the fact that the key figures of the State remained aloof from sport, it would be misleading to think it was kept at a distance from the center of power. Even if Salazar did not attach any great importance to sport for his political schemes, the leaders of the sporting arena definitely did not share this impression. Moreover, in the process of consolidation, the representatives of sport forged an alliance with the new government and thus secured an important means of funding and sponsoring for the sports movement in Portugal.

The first measure taken to draw sport closer to the Salazarist regime took place with the "1st Congress of Sporting Clubs", which was held on the initiative of Raul de Oliveira, editor of *Os Sports* and organized by this fortnightly newspaper. This event took place

in the period 26th November – 3rd December 1933, and brought together the main sports figures of Portugal including its leaders and journalists. The event made clear that there was a need to lay stress on forging a relationship between the State and sport. This is evident from the titles of some of its theses such as “State assistance for sports organizations”, “The creation of municipal and national sportsgrounds”, “The higher entity of a sports organization and its relationship with the State” and “Exemption of rights on articles about sport destined to colonial *clubs*”.

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In his speech at the opening ceremony, transcribed on *Diário de Notícias*, Raul de Oliveira directly mentions the importance that sport will have in the country’s new plans that were being implemented by Salazar:

Mr. Minister of Education – you must keep watch over the education of the people. Schools are required for this but there is also a need for stadiums, swimming-pools and gymnasiums. Because should the day come when Portugal has a sizable population of intellectually clever people but only a minority with a capacity for struggle and hard work in the open field, the country will be irremediably lost.

Mr. Minister of War – you are entrusted with the sacred mission of defending the fatherland and this requires men who are strong, mentally alert, agile, accustomed to struggle and instilled with the courage that only a full awareness of their own strength can engender. These people can be found in the ranks of the sportsmen.

The Director of the Secretariat of National Propaganda is responsible for the propaganda of the country and recognizing the value of all the measures taken both within and outside the borders of the country. National sport constitutes a propagandist force that is able to attain the most far-reaching objectives.

To the President of the Republic, Head of State and Supreme Judge of the Nation. It is important for the people to be strong so that they can continue to fulfil their civilizing mission and assert the vigor of a race that once knew how to issue laws to the world and will always have to navigate a course to find its place in the family of nations.<sup>17</sup>

The speech was a direct interlocution with illustrious figures from the government who met each other there. The opening ceremony of the event included the presence of the President of the Republic, General Oscar Carmona, and the Ministers of War, Luiz Alberto de Oliveira and Public Education, Alexandre Alberto de Sousa Pinto. Only António Ferro, Director of the Secretariat of National Propaganda was not present but sent Augusto Cunha as his representative.

Raul de Oliveira attempted to show the two key areas where sport could be of use in forming the New State – in the eugenic training of youth which could create a strong healthy populace and in national propaganda. The issue of eugenics was incidentally the main argument used by those who favored a greater involvement of the government in sport. Raul Vieira, the then President of the Portuguese Federation of the *Football Association* (FPFA), argued in a thesis presented to the Conference (and published the following year) that: “Any amount of expenditure devoted to improving the physical constitution [of the nation] should be regarded as productive because the stronger a country is, the more robust its race will be” (Vieira, 1934: 9).

However, the official recognition of sport in Portugal only began to occur in 1942, with the setting up of the Directorate-General of Physical Education, Sports and School Health

(DGEFDSE). Established in 1942, the purpose of the body was to “supervise and foster (outside the Portuguese Youth Movement) the physical education of the Portuguese people and introduce discipline into sport”<sup>18</sup>. The DGEFDSE sought to impose State control over the clubs and associations of civil society which until then had been on the sidelines of State power, although they had been broadly aligned to the policies of the regime. Apart from including among its objectives, a desire to “introduce discipline into sport”, the DGEFDSE did not supersede the Portuguese Youth Movement and FNAT, which maintained control over youth and corporate sport<sup>19</sup>.

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The Directorate-General acted as an official arm of the government for the national sports organization. Direct action was taken through which various agents in the sporting field convened a congress in 1933, although not in the form that many had expected. Soon after the event had been set up, the *Os Sports* newspaper provided evidence of this disagreement and expressed support for the proposal of the government. It stated that whereas the leaders of the groups in the sporting field wanted an entity made up of its representatives, the State had decided (quite rightly in the opinion of the editor) to create a body that was imposed by itself and had “unquestioned authority”<sup>20</sup>.

By means of the DGEFDSE, the State attempted to instil its view of sport into clubs and other associations. In other words, sport was essentially regarded as an educational tool and was fundamentally amateur. The outcome of this was a discourse about sports practices that was grounded on the principle of preparing future generations and in which sport was assigned a key role. Thus it was only through “amateurism” that the educational function of sport could be accomplished.

It is thus clear that in its preparatory phase, the New State was not a stranger to the notion that sport could be a means of propaganda and indoctrination. Even though closer ties between sport and the State were not established on a continuous basis, on specific occasions, the analogy was stressed, particularly at times of sports festivals as will be seen in the case that follows.

### **The Image of Salazar and the National State**

In the closing ceremony of the Sports Clubs Congress in 1933, a huge parade of athletes and gymnasts was organized which processed as far as Terreiro do Paço [public square in Lisbon] and was followed by a commission appointed for the event, that took the deliberations of the congress to Salazar and presented him with some of the suggestions and aspirations of the Portuguese sports figures. Thousands of people assembled at the roundabout where Marquês de Pombal monument was completed and paraded as far as the Praça do Comércio, on 3rd December, 1933<sup>21</sup>.

Salazar received the representatives of the Congress in his private office at the Finance Ministry. All the resolutions that had been passed by the Congress were combined in the form of their main petition – the construction of a National Stadium. They justified their request by stressing the political importance it would have for the nation:

from the standpoint of international relations since sport has helped to bring peoples together and as an extremely important factor in the propaganda of the nation. One can cite how this has been carried out in for example Czechoslovakia with the work of the « Sokols » [youth sport movement founded in Prague], in Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Uruguay, Italy etc.<sup>22</sup>

After listening to the delegates from the Congress and noting their suggestions in an official document, Salazar spoke directly through a microphone to the crowd that awaited

his already prepared response, in the Praça do Comércio. The Head of State ended his speech with a promise that was aimed at every athlete in the country:

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Since I fully understand your feelings and aspirations, I believe, as much as I do in the resurgence of our Fatherland and the virtues of our youth, and that this can be fulfilled in an orderly and definite way by all of you that are now present here. It is for this reason that the first thing of all is the construction of the National Stadium – let us rejoice because we will soon have a National Stadium (Salazar, 1935: 271).

Eleven years later, the National Stadium was being opened in one of the main official festivals held by the New State<sup>23</sup>. In the sporting tributes to the regime, no amount of praise was spared for Salazar and his contribution to sport. Even though it was in the midst of the 2nd World War, when the government had to undergo rationing and other difficulties that were caused, it held a huge civic ceremony to mark what was seen as Salazar's main contribution to sport. And even eleven years on, his promise had not been forgotten (in reality, it was constantly being whipped up by the sporting press<sup>24</sup>).

As always, the promise has been fulfilled. And the wonderful creation which was supervised by our late minister Duarte Pacheco, gives us reason to feel a legitimate pride because once the work in the general plan has been concluded, the New State will be the most complete in the whole of Europe. It is restrained and grandiose – above all, it is a Portuguese achievement, made of Portuguese materials without anything being copied from what exists in other countries.<sup>25</sup>

The festival of sport thus became a celebration of Portugal. The splendour of the event can be seen in the sheer number of people involved in its preparation. The Guild of Industrial Motor Transport, one of several bodies responsible for organizing the transport for the event, issued a detailed report. This showed that 101 buses and 161 taxis were used to take 23,517 people to the public event, as well as a further 112 buses to take 15,136 athletes on the day of the event<sup>27</sup>, together with three carparks for private cars. The stadium which was filled to capacity, could hold about 50,000 spectators but the official estimate of the number of people, including the public and athletes, was about 60,000<sup>28</sup>.

The streets in the surrounding areas of the stadium (between Cais do Sodré and Cruz Quebrada) were closed to the public from 13:45 to 16:30 and from 18:45 to 22:15, with traffic being restricted to transport that was authorized by the organizers of the event. Unusually, the business establishments and industrial premises of Lisbon were closed until 13:00<sup>29</sup>. The Portuguese Youth Movement informed its affiliates that were taking part in the event, that they had to leave the stadium "immediately after the opening ceremony", and return to their homes, owing to the huge number of people who would be coming out of the stadium after the football match<sup>30</sup>. The entry tickets for sale to the public were sold out on the first day<sup>31</sup>, and the search for tickets by the authorities and other government bodies connected with SPN, led António Eça de Queirós, (Deputy Director of the Secretariat and responsible for the distribution of complimentary tickets) to make the following comments:

It is quite clear that in the enormous – I would even say prodigious – bombardment that has been made on me and my services to hand out invitations – that I find myself in the awkward situation of trying to prevent my hard and delicate task from getting completely out of control<sup>32</sup>.

The event became bigger than sport and turned into a symbol of Portugal under the aegis of Salazar, who had led the nation in peace in the midst of a war that had devastated

Europe. This factor was evident in the speech that António Ferro delivered through the microphones of the National Broadcasting Corporation when he stated that “the opening of the Stadium went beyond the limits of a simple sporting festival to attain a higher and more striking significance”, and that “The festival of the opening of the Stadium is thus not only a great occasion of national sport but above all, the apotheosis of New Portugal, that reflects the trust in the reality of today and the certainty of the reality of tomorrow”<sup>33</sup>. And in fact, the opening of the festival was a large civic parade to celebrate the regime and the auspicious future of the country under the command of Salazar.

Once Salazar and Carmona were present in the stadium, the festival began with a gymnastic display by the Portuguese Youth Organization in which thousands of youngsters greeted the authorities with raised arms and afterwards performed athletic exercises. This was followed by sprinting competitions (100m-800m) between athletes who belonged to the clubs of the capital, both won by representatives of the Sporting Club of Portugal. Following this, there was a parade of girls from FNAT and after this, another parade with athletes of various kinds from clubs in the capital and neighboring areas. There were also athletes in horse-riding events wearing red jackets, white trousers and high black boots, shooting competitors carrying their weapons under their arms, fencing competitors clutching swords, as well as football, tennis, rowing, swimming, motor racing, sailing, athletic events, rugby and many others, with the appropriate attire worn for each particular sport<sup>34</sup>.

After the parades, an athlete spoke through a microphone to give a message to the Heads of State and the Government. The thanks to the President Oscar Carmona, were more restrained:

Mister President of the Republic: Your Excellency is a symbol of the resurgent Fatherland and a model for all good people in Portugal, and we give you our first greetings. Without you and without the continuity of the Revolution our resurgence would not have been possible – it would not have been possible to construct the National Stadium!<sup>35</sup>

SALAZAR! We owe you our hope! We owe you our peace! We owe you our present condition!

But from today our debt to you is even greater:

We owe you our certainty! We owe you our joy! We owe you our future!

In the name of all of us! In the name of all those who will come after us and be stronger and healthier! Our sincere thanks Salazar, for having fulfilled your promise!

Thank you for the centuries ahead! Thank you for ever!<sup>36</sup>

The National Stadium thus stood out as one of the two main achievements of the New State up to that time and Salazar was viewed as its founder and executor. The promise he had made eleven years earlier had now been fulfilled, in a period of open warfare, which Portugal had escaped from because of Salazar. It was even speculated by sections of the press and some figures linked to sport that the stadium ought to be named after the President of the Council of Ministers<sup>37</sup>.

In the view of Serrado (2008: 105), the opening of the National Stadium cannot be regarded as an occasion of the political use of sport since “neither football nor sport in general were being politicized nor were the stadiums, *in stricto sensu*, but rather all these

works were simply a sign of the building capacity of the regime". However, it is undeniable that the civic festival that accompanied the opening of the stadium was a unique event in the period here analysed, especially if compared with the opening ceremonies of other public works. It is worth remembering that the opening of the stadium was originally planned to take place during the Double Centenary Festival<sup>38</sup>, "one of the most important 'cultural' or ideologically-cultural events of Salazarism", which led to the documentary produced by the Portuguese Society of Contemporary Cinema (Torgal, 2000: 70).

The link between sport, peace and Salazar would be a feature of propaganda again ten months after the official opening of the National Stadium, when the first encounter took place between the teams of Portugal and Spain on the grass pitch of the National Stadium in Lisbon's Jamor Park.

On 11th March, 1945, 50,000 copies of pamphlets with the heading "What we want is football!" were dropped by airplanes onto the crowd that filled the stadium<sup>39</sup>. The pamphlets dwelt on the hardships faced by the world during the war which was now drawing to a conclusion and highlighted the fact that peace reigned in Portugal. It said that it was possible to count "on the fingers of one hand, those countries which could enjoy on a day like this, such a magnificent spectacle as what could be witnessed at this moment in our National Stadium" (Esteves, 1975: 152). The pamphlet also clearly pointed out that the Communism of the Soviet Union could be seen as the main antagonist to Salazarism. Years before the Soviet Union took part in the Olympic Games<sup>40</sup> and had shown its strength in the field of sport, the pamphlet baldly asked: "Who has heard anybody talk about football in Russia? Football or any other sport, the existence of amusement centers, beaches to relax in, excursions? Nobody!" (Esteves 1975: 153). Sports were thus an important sign of the quality of life in Portugal, and were only possible because of the peace into which the country had been steered by Salazar in a regime of supposed freedom (already towards the end of the war, the antidemocratic Salazarist discourse had altered its tone so that it was more closely aligned with the views of the victorious side), and with Salazar's support, was opposed to the Soviet Union. As the pamphlet stated, "in the end, what we want is football".

### Final Considerations

This article has sought to show that sport was employed in various ways and means by groups linked to power when the New State was being consolidated, with a view to achieving a consensus. Although it did not form a part of Salazar's concerns or propaganda, the popular appeal of sport to the public at large did not go unnoticed by the public authorities.

By acting as a tool in the formation of a consensus, as a factor of evasion and means of distracting the people, (especially through the Portuguese Youth Movement and National Foundation of Joy at Work), the practice of sport was responsible for attaining the ideal of regenerating the "Portuguese race". This was of great importance in forming the 'new man' that characterized the rise of the New State and an auspicious future for Portugal under the new regime.

Despite the fact that Salazar was in practice detached from sport, it occurred sporadically in his national propaganda, as in the case of the opening ceremony of the National Stadium. Its construction during a time of war was not only a sign of the capacity for construction of the regime but also of the links between sports and the quality of life

of the people. The discourse surrounding the event, with regard to the promise kept by Salazar and his supposed connections with sport, was employed by both the regime and the sporting field. The propaganda that emerged harnessed sport to the State, whether it was the outcome of official means or the initiative of other agents, notably those in the realm of sport.

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### Notes

1. I would like to express my gratitude to the Carlos Chagas Filho Foundation for the Support of Research in the State of Rio de Janeiro – FAPERJ – for the scholarship that has allowed me to undertake this research study.
2. Alberto Freitas, “Dezenas de milhares de portugueses envolveram a inauguração do Estádio Nacional numa atmosfera de apoteose à Cultura Física e ao Desporto” [Tens of thousands of Portuguese were involved in the opening ceremony of the National Stadium in a climate of apotheosis to Physical Culture and Sport] *Os Sports*, 12th Jun. 1944, pp.6-7.
3. António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) was the leading figure behind the Portuguese New State and occupied the position of President of the Council of Ministers [Prime Minister] from 1933 to 1968, as well as several ministries in the same period. For further information about Salazar, see Filipe Meneses (2011). With regard to the Portuguese New State and Salazarism, see Torgal (2009).
4. *Os Sports* was a periodical published three times a week and edited by Raul de Oliveira. It belonged to the owner of the newspaper, *Diário de Notícias*, the official mouthpiece of the National Union. (Pinheiro, 2001: 190; Esteves, 1975: 150).
5. Salazar said: “I myself am personally a stranger to all organizations of this kind [sport] but am compelled to follow closely what involves the collective interest (...)” (Salazar, 1935: 268).
6. No authoritarian regime manages to keep itself in power over a long period solely through employing coercion. It is always linked to the need to form a consensus – the hegemony in Gramscian terms – although the

balance struck between the two factors may vary from case to case over a period of time. For the formation of a consensus and dictatorships, see the work compiled by Rollemberg and Quadrat (2010).

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7. I use here the "periodization" [division of history into phases] of the Portuguese New State advocated by Manuel Braga da Cruz (1988). According to this writer, the Portuguese New State can be divided into five distinct periods. The first (1926-1933) was the Military Dictatorship from the time of the Coup d'état of 1926 to the constitutional inauguration of the New State. The second period (1933-1945) was the formation of the New State from the founding of the regime to the end of the 2nd World War. The third period (1945-1961) was characterized by the diversification of the regime. The fourth period (1961-1968), was mainly characterized by the hardening of the regime caused by the colonial wars. The final period (1968-1974) was under the rule of Marcello Caetano, which finally led to the overthrow of the regime after the "Carnation Revolution".

8. Salazar Carreira was one of the most influential names in the field of sports in Portugal during the period of the New State since he was linked to the Portuguese Olympic Committee in 1923 and later the Directorate-General of Physical Education, Sports and School Health. He was also a sports journalist who edited and wrote for *Sporting CP*.

9. Torre do Tombo National Archive, Lisbon. Arquivos of Oliveira Salazar, AOS/CO/ED-1D, ff. 347-366.

10. The University Championships were held in 1942 and 1945, within the period that is analyzed here. Although the championships for 1943 and 1944 had been planned, they did not take place owing to a lack of a framework for the University Centers of the Portuguese Youth Organization. [See Portuguese Youth Organization - University Center of Porto (1942, 1943, 1944) and the Portuguese Youth Organization (1945)].

11. *Jeunesse et sport* [Youth in sport] has 46 athletes in Lisbon who are going to square up to the athletes of the 'Mocidade Portuguesa' [Portuguese Youth Movement] in trials of basketball, fencing, swimming and athletics", *Os Sports*, 27 May, 1942, pp.1-2.

12. The lack of studies or accessible sources on this matter does not allow us to state to what extent António Ferro was an active president of the federation or if his appointment was simply a means of drawing him closer to the public authorities. However, his period of management does not seem to have led to any significant changes within the organization.

13. António Ferro, "A great victory for the Portuguese in Amsterdam", *Diário de Notícias*, 2nd June, 1928, p.1.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. For a critical view of the importance of football and the three 'fs' in Salazar's propaganda, see Serrado (2008).



17. "Yesterday, the Head of State presided over the inaugural session of the Sports Clubs Congress", *Diário de Notícias*, 27th Nov. 1933, p.1. 335
18. Decree-Law No. 32. 241, 5th September 1942. *Diário do Governo*, 5th Sept. 1942, p. 1135.
19. As stipulated by Clause 5 of Article 7, Decree-Law No. 32.241, the DGEFDSE must "superintend all sporting activities that are not directly subordinated to the Portuguese Youth Organization and the National Foundation for Joy at Work or that do not have a strictly academic character". Decree-Law No. 32.241, 5th September 1942. *Diário do Governo*, 5th Sept. 1942, p.1137.
20. "The physical education of the athletes is outweighing the importance of other sports activities and is beginning to be one of the main concerns of the Directorate-General of Sports", *Os Sports*, 16th Nov. 1942, p.1.
21. The official figures estimate that 4,000 people took part in the parade. "Sr. Dr. Oliveira Salazar was made acquainted with the voting figures of the 1st Congress of Sports Clubs yesterday and promised to go ahead with the construction of a National Stadium", *Diário de Notícias*, 4th Dec. 1933, p.1.
22. "O Sr. Dr. Oliveira Salazar was made acquainted with the voting figures of the 1st Congress of Sports Clubs yesterday and promised to go ahead with the construction of a National Stadium", *Diário de Notícias*, 4th Dec. 1933, p.1.
23. The competition for projects for the stadium was opened in an official document dated March 1st 1934. This envisaged the opening of the National Stadium as a part of the Double Centenary celebrations of 1940 which can be seen as an indication of the symbolic importance of the stadium and of sport in this period. However, owing to the outbreak of the 2nd World War and the financial difficulties of obtaining suitable construction materials, the work which had begun in 1938, was extended to 1944. (Andersen, 2007; Correia, 2006; Pereira, 2007).
24. See, for example, "The promise that has been fulfilled: the National Stadium is going to be constructed very quickly so that the opening ceremony coincides with the Double Centenary celebrations of the Foundation and Restoration of Portugal", *Os Sports*, 8th April, 1938, p.1.
25. "A monumental achievement – promise fulfilled: the purpose of the opening of the stadium and the movement in support of physical culture". *Diário de Notícias*, 9<sup>th</sup> Jun. 1944, pp.1-2. In reality, although the article asserted that the undertaking of the stadium was wholly national in character (a discursive practice which was aimed at underlining the nationalistic fervor that was kindled by sport), it should be pointed out that the project of building the stadium was largely due to the efforts of German architects such as Konrad Wiesner, the assistant of Heinrich Wiepking, who had worked on the Olympic Stadium project in Berlin and was working on the project of the Nuremberg stadium which had not yet been completed (Pereira, 2007: 74). Carl Diem, one of the main

organizers of the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936, also gave advice on the project (Andersen, 2007: 14).

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26. The event also depended on transport provided by the armed forces and other public bodies. Torre do Tombo National Archive, Lisbon. Fundo SNI, cx. 5240.

27. Guild of Industrial Transport Vehicles (1944), Bulletin: special number devoted to the official opening of the National Stadium, Porto. The numbers shown here refer to transport both before and after the event. In other words the people who used the services both to go to the event and return from it, were considered twice in the final figure.

28. It is worth stressing that the population of Lisbon according to the 1940 census was 702,409 inhabitants. In other words the equivalent of approximately 10% of the population of Lisbon was at the event, when account is taken of both the public and athletes involved. "A memorable occasion: the opening ceremony of the stadium constituted a great national affirmation of optimism, discipline and beauty". *Diário de Notícias*, 11th June 1944, p.1; [8th General Population Census VIII (carried out on 12th December 1940): provisional results in the districts, regions and parishes of the mainland and islands relative to the number of families and the population by sexes, Lisbon, National Press, 1942, p.36].

29. Torre do Tombo National Archive, Lisbon. Fundo SNI, cx. 5240.

30. "The National Stadium will be officially opened this afternoon", *Diário de Notícias*, 10th Jun. 1944, pp.1-2.

31. "National Stadium", *Diário da Manhã*, 9th Jun. 1944, p.6.

32. Torre do Tombo National Archive, Lisbon. Fundo SNI, cx. 5240.

33. "Words of António Ferro in a broadcast report on the Stadium", *Diário da Manhã*, 11th Jun. 1944, p.6.

34. "A memorable occasion: the opening ceremony of the stadium constituted a great national affirmation of optimism, discipline and beauty", *Diário de Notícias*, 11th Jun. 1944, pp.1 e 4.

35. "The athletes greet the Heads of State and Government", *Diário de Notícias*, 11th Jun. 1944, p.1.

36. "The athletes greet the Heads of State and the Government", *Diário de Notícias*, 11th Jun. 1944, p.1.

37. Cf. "National Stadium... Salazar Stadium!", *Os Sports*, 31st May. 1944, p. 8. Also see the declaration of Higinio de Queiroz, President of FNAT: "any Portuguese workers who practise sport should join me in voting that from today the National Stadium should start being called the «Salazar Stadium »". "What the construction of the National Stadium means", *Diário da Manhã*, 10th Jun. 1944, p.4.

38. The celebrations of the Double Centenary were organized in Portugal in 1940, to mark the centenaries of the Foundation and Restoration of Portugal (1140 and 1640, respectively). In the middle of

the 2nd World War which had already spread across Europe, the festival of the Double Centenary was an elegiac expression of the Portuguese identity. This accompanied the undertaking of major works culminating in the Exhibition of the Portuguese World which celebrated Portugal, together with its colonies and ex-colonies throughout the world.

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39. A facsimile of the pamphlet was published in Esteves (1975 pp.152-153).

40. Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet sports had remained detached from what was defined as "bourgeois sport". From 1934 onwards, these meetings began to take place again although in a very restricted way. It was only at the Olympic Games in Helsinki that the Soviet Union began to confront the capitalist countries and began to appear as one of the main powers in international sport. For further information about sport in the Soviet Union, see Jesus (2010).

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