

Construction of the myth of national hero: Eduardo Gomes and his performance in the tenentist Movement

Construção do mito de herói nacional: Eduardo Gomes e sua atuação no Movimento Tenentista

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Traduzido por Gabriela Edel Mei

Resumo: O artigo compreende a construção da imagem de herói nacional em torno de Eduardo Gomes. A hipótese é que o mito legitimou sua candidatura ao cargo de presidente da República pelo partido União Democrática Nacional em 1945 e 1950. A elaboração da imagem baseou-se em memórias de sua participação no Levante do Forte de Copacabana e na Revolta tenentista de 1924, ou seja, em sua atuação como revolucionário durante a Primeira República. Contudo, cabe questionar: quem construiu o mito? A que a legenda de herói nacional conveio? De que maneira a sociedade respondeu à construção do mito? Este estudo, através da análise de imprensa e correspondências, responderá essas indagações.

Palavras-chave: Eduardo Gomes; Herói; Eleição presidencial de 1945.

Abstract: The article comprises the image construction of national hero Eduardo Gomes. The hypothesis is that the myth legitimized his Republic presidential candidacy by the União Democrática Nacional party in 1945 and 1950. The elaboration of the image was based on memories of his participation in the Levante do Forte de Copacabana and the Revolta tenentista de 1924, that is, in his determination as a revolutionary during the First Republic. However, it must be asked: who built the myth? What did the legend of a national hero do? How has society responded to the construction of the myth? This study, through the press and letters analysis, will answer these questions.

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Keywords: Eduardo Gomes; Hero; Presidential election of 1945.

Eduardo Gomes: brief biography

Eduardo Gomes was a character of intense political participation in Brazil. He was born in Petrópolis (RJ) in 1896. Son of Jenny and Luís Gomes. His family hold possessions and were heirs of names related to politics. In 1916, he entered the Military School of Realengo, in Rio de Janeiro. Finalized the course in December of 1918, was declared candidate-of-the-officer of the arms of artillery. In that same year he enrolled in the Special Course of Artillery, concluding in 1919. In December, he became second lieutenant, being transferred to the 9th Regiment of Artillery, in Curitiba. In January of 1921 he was promoted to the first lieutenant.

It was under the rank of first lieutenant that Eduardo Gomes participated in the Revolt of Copacabana Fort, held in Rio de Janeiro in July, 1922. He also acted in 1924 in the tenentist Revolt in São Paulo. After the movement, he was arrested when he traveled to Paraná with the intention of joining Miguel Costa-Luis Carlos Prestes Column. He spent the following years now imprisoned, now a refugee. Annoyed in May 1930, Eduardo Gomes participated in the Liberal Alliance, acting in the Revolution of 1930 that put an end to the First Republic.

After the revolutionary movement of 1930, Eduardo Gomes dedicated himself to the military career. He participated in the creation and directed, in 1931, the Military Airmail¹. In 1932, he fought the rioters of São Paulo, contributing to the understandings promoted by the Provisional Government and the state of São Paulo. After the revolutionary movement of 1932, Eduardo Gomes resumed his activities in the Military Airmail. He served as commander of the 1st Aviation Regiment and was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1934. He participated, under this patent, with legalist forces against the uprising organized by the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB) in 1935.

After the New State was inaugurated in 1937, Gomes requested exoneration of the command of the 1st Aviation Regiment. In 1941, after the creation of the Ministry of Aeronautics, he was promoted to Brigadier and then appointed commander of Air Zones I and II, with headquarters in Belém and Recife. In Pernambuco, he worked in the construction of air bases with US financial investments. The politician played a prominent

¹ The National Airmail aims to integrate the various regions of the country, allow government action in communities difficult to access and develop aviation.

role in the relations between the Brazilian government and the United States during World War II. In September 1944, he was elevated to Major-Air Brigadier.

Eduardo Gomes disputed the presidential election of 1945 by the legend of the National Democratic Union. He has been defeated. However, this did not prevent him from being chosen again by the party for the 1950 elections, in which he again did not win the office of President of the Republic. During the first democratic experience, Gomes was opposed to Vargas and his labor legacy. He was invited by Getúlio Vargas to be Minister of Aeronautics, but he refused. In the government of Café Filho (1954-1955) he assumed this cargo. In September 1960, Eduardo Gomes was promoted to air marshal. In 1964, he was one of the main articulators in the conspiracy for the civil-military coup that deposed President João Goulart. In 1965, he resumed the position of minister of the Aeronautics, remaining until March of 1967. Eduardo Gomes died in 1981.

Movement of tenentist: Eduardo Gomes and the heroic memory

Eduardo Gomes became a public figure when he participated in the Levante do Forte de Copacabana in 1922. The revolt began the tenentists manifestations that took place during the First Republic. It is possible to learn the Tenente Movement in two phases. The first covers the revolts of 1922 and 1924. The second phase has its proclamation in 1924, but its main articulation takes place in the Miguel Costa Column - Luis Carlos Prestes. It is important to emphasize, however, that tenentism was a process of constructing collective consciousness and identity. Thus, the relations between the events are not ignored, as well as the importance of the 1924 Revolt to organize and define the plans of the revolt military that marched Brazil between 1925 and 1927.

This division is thought based on the interests that motivated the rioters. The tenentist movement begins in context of dissatisfaction of the army before the treatment that they had received from the government of Epitacio Pessoa, but mainly, due to the nonconformity with the victory of Artur Bernardes for president of the Republic, that was intensified with the episode of the letters false. The revolt occurred in reaction to the arrest of Hermes da Fonseca. There was no interest in changing the Brazilian political and social structure. The interest was to prevent the government of Artur Bernardes.

The uprising of 1924 expressed the maturing of collective interests. There was a pattern of social and critical changes to political structures. However, it will be

demonstrated throughout the text that, just as in 1922, the São Paulo revolt was motivated by the defense of the Army and criticism of the government of Artur Bernardes.

On October 9, 1921, the year of the presidential election, *Correio da Manhã* published an article entitled “Injurious and Outrageous.” In it, there was the transcript of an alleged letter written on June 3 of that year, written by Bernardes, then president of the state of Minas Gerais, addressed to Raul Soares. In correspondence he refers to Marshal Hermes da Fonseca as “sargeant without composure’. Concerning the Army, he suggested that Eptacio Pessoa, President of the Republic, should repress the indiscipline of the military, “severely punishing these bold, arresting those who have left the discipline and removing these anarchist generals very far. If the Eptacio, with fear, does not answer, use diplomacy, that after my recognition we will settle accounts”.²

The next day, another letter was published by the newspaper. In this, written on June 6, 1921, Bernardes disagreed with another extension of the Convention, because he was apprehensive of the arrival of Nilo Peçanha. He believed that his opponent would be capable of everything. He asked Raul Soares to remove all difficulty without worrying about expenses.

The Military Club on the same day of publication of the letter, met the partners to deal with the subject, under the presidency of Hermes. At the table was sent a motion signed by the 80 members present declaring the incompatibility between them and Artur Bernardes and evidenced the non-acceptance of Artur Bernardes as president of the Republic:

To the nation - the Military Club - organ of the armed classes - it judges of its duty to declare that the public concept emitted by Mr. Artur Bernardes, in his letter of June 3 last, put the Army in the contingency of reacting immediately. Why, or Your Lordship is right to qualify us as a venal scoundrel, or to uselessly outraged the Army. In the first hypothesis, the Army must be dissolved because the defense of the Nation can not be entrusted to [...] and scoundrels; in the second, Your Lordship. It created absolute incompatibility between you and the Army. There is, therefore, a dilemma with a single solution: either our dissolution, or the Army does not accept that Your Lordship. Be the President of the Republic.³

² “Injurious and Outrageous.” *Correio da Manhã*, edition 8255, October 9, 1921, p. 2

³ “Meeting of the Military Club”. *Correio da Manhã*, October 11, 1921, edition 8257, p. 3.

Artur Bernardes denied the authorship of the letters. The Military Club set up a verification committee to prove its authenticity. Antônio Augusto de Serpa Pinto was responsible for evaluating the veracity. On the other hand, the advisers of Bernardes commissioned the experts Simões Correia and general Alexandre Barbosa Lima. Simões Correia defended in his report falsification by decal. Already the expertise of the Military Club concluded authenticity of the letters.

The military, who were unsure of the government's treatment of them, had revealed dissatisfaction with civilian-ruled politics in the face of the release of letters allegedly written by Bernardes and authenticated by the Military Club's verification commission.

On February 3, 1922, Oldemar Lacerda confessed to the directors of the Military Club that he falsified the letters. They, however, did not disclose it. Although, with the confession of Oldemar Lacerda and the testimony by experts that the document was not true, the opposition press of Bernardes continued describing the personage as enemy of the Army.

Correio da Manhã and *Jornal do Brasil* refused to agree that the letters were forged. On June 10, 1922, *Correio da Manhã* published an article discussing the case of the letters. He said the document, in addition to the Army-Navy expertise, received a verifying report from Edmond Locard, a European professor. According to the news, the berdardism clung to the possibility of decal of the letter, that could only be discovered by microphotographic process. Locard, then, “[...] after the application of the microphotography, proposed by Mr. Simões Correa not only rejected the hypothesis of the decal, but also after other examinations he declared, with the authority and probity of his name, that Bernardes' letter is "authentic".”⁴

The result of the presidential election of 1922 guaranteed victory to the official candidate, as expected. The opposition then called for the opening of "Court of Honor", with a view to replacing the National Congress in the function of recognizing the elected candidate. However, such a request was rejected by the government.

At the end of May 1922, elections were held for governor of the state of Pernambuco. Candidates pleaded for Carlos de Lima Castro, then president of Recife, representative of the official plaque, and José Henrique Carneiro da Cunha, indicated by the opposition. The victory, as was a routine in the First Republic, was the candidate who had the support of the federal government. After the election, conflicts began in Pernambuco, due to the two

⁴ “The recognition”. *Correio da Manhã*, edition 8497, June 10, 1922, p. 2.

candidates having declared themselves victorious.⁵ Under justification of maintaining order, federal forces occupied Recife for three days. The discontented population, mobilized by Joaquim Pimenta, labor leader, occupied buildings, in resistance to legalistic forces.

At the end of June 1922, Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, president of the Military Club, was contacted through correspondence by officers who served in Pernambuco. They were dissatisfied with the federal intervention in that state and the role played by the Army in that episode. In response, Hermes da Fonseca sent a telegram to Jayme Pessoa, commander of the Military Region of Pernambuco:

[...] I come fraternally to remind you meditate terms arts. 6 and 14 Constitution, to exempt your name and the noble class to which we belong from the curse of our patricians. The appeal I am making to our illustrious consortium is to satisfy the demands of our comrades, in order to support them in this critical emergency, which seeks to divert armed force from its destiny. Confident of your patriotism and zeal for the perpetuity of the army's love for the people of our land. Do not forget that political situations pass and the Army remains.⁶

The Minister of War, João Pandiá Calógeras, sought Hermes da Fonseca to confirm if he was really the author of the correspondence, which he admitted without hesitation. For that reason, Pandiá Calógeras ordered that Marshal Hermes da Fonseca be arrested for 24 hours on July 2, 1922. As justification to reprimand him, Calógeras said that the military, by being associated, is not exempt from the duties of subordination and disciplines provided for in the legislation governing the armed forces; he doubted the word of his superior - president of the Republic; declared "solemn and unequivocal" statements that Epitacio Pessoa was intervening in Pernambuco and expanding illegal orders; among other arguments.⁷

On the same day that Marshal Hermes da Fonseca was arrested, the military club board published a note assuming responsibility for the telegram sent to Jayme Pessoa. They reported that the attitude of the President of the Club resulted from a unanimous

⁵ Subsequently, political groups in Pernambuco came to an agreement and chose to govern the state, between 1922 and 1926, federal judge Sérgio Loreto.

⁶ "Topics and News". *Correio da Manhã*, June 30, 1922, edition 8517, p. 5.

⁷ *Jornal do Brasil*, edition 157, July 2, 1922, p. 5; *O Paiz*, edition 157, July 2, 1922, p.5.

deliberation, taken in session held on June 28⁸. In response, Pandiá Calógeras gave orders to close the Military Club for six months.

The military reacted to the arrest of Marshal Hermes da Fonseca. At dawn on July 5, days after the repression, the lieutenants organized a movement of opposition to the federal government. Then there was the Levante do Forte de Copacabana. Under the leadership of Captain Euclides Hermes da Fonseca, son of Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, the lieutenants took the Fort of Copacabana. Other garrisons participated in the movement: Military Village, Vigia Fortress, Realengo Military School and 1st Engineering Battalion. In Niterói, members of the Navy and Army rebelled. In Mato Grosso, under the command of General Clodoaldo da Fonseca, uncle of Hermes da Fonseca, the 1st Military Circumscription also participated in the revolt. Before the leadership of the revolt was made by relatives of Hermes da Fonseca, it is evident that the fuse for the movement to occur was his arrest.

The federal government, through the Army, easily controlled the Levant, preventing the continuation of the revolt. Initially, Pandiá Calógeras worked in order to obtain surrender of the rioters. However, they wanted to negotiate, which, firmly, the government refused. The movement ended on July 6, when the rioters, faced with the impossibility of victory, marched on Avenida Atlântica, in Copacabana, toward legalistic forces. Among the participants were lieutenants: Newton Prado, Eduardo Gomes, Siqueira Campos, Mario Carpenter and the civilian Otávio Correia. Eduardo Gomes was the one who gave the idea of the rioters to march against the legalistic forces. He left the conflict with an exposed fracture in his left femur.

The rioters were tried under article 107 of the Penal Code: "To try, directly and by facts, to change by violent means the political Constitution of the Republic, or the established form of government. Penalty: banishment to heads, and co-rulers to seclusion for five to ten years".⁹

Eduardo Gomes was not seen as the "head" of the movement, but rather as a co-defendant, since his punishment was the prison, instead of exile as was the case of Siqueira Campos. In 1923, due to habeas corpus, Eduardo Gomes was released. Days before leaving his prison decree he fled to Mato Grosso, where he was a refugee until the Revolt of 1924.

On July 5, 1924 a new uprising organized by the Army's low-ranking officers broke out. The date was no coincidence, she honored the first conflict of opposition to the federal

⁸ "The federal intervention in Pernambuco again intensely concerns the national opinion". *Correio da Manhã*, edition 8519, July 2, 1922, p.1.

⁹ "The events of July last year". *Correio da Manhã*, Thursday, December 27, 1923, edition 9058, p. 3.

government organized by the lieutenants. The conspiracy of the uprising had as idealizers: Henrique Ricardo Hall, Vítor César da Cunha Cruz, Miguel Costa, João Francisco Ferreira de Souza, Joaquim Távora, Eduardo Gomes, Arlindo de Oliveira, Nilton Estillac Leal, Thales Marcondes, Osmar Soares Dutra, Paulo Weber Vieira da Rosa, Diogo Moreira de Figueiredo e Emílio Miranda. It was led by General Isidoro Dias Lopes (SILVA, 1971, p. 366).

Eduardo Gomes acted to revolt the 4th Battalion of Hunters and the 1st, 2nd and 4th Infantry Battalions. He was commander of the aviation of the rioters. In this role he was responsible for the mission of bringing 30,000 revolutionary manifestos to the quarters of the Military Village of Rio de Janeiro and, also, a bomb, whose destination was the Catete Palace. However, forced landing of the plane was necessary in the region of Cunha, in the interior of São Paulo, which was dominated by legalistic forces. In order not to be arrested, Eduardo Gomes pretended to be an officer at the behest of the government. He managed to flee to Aparecida, also in the state of São Paulo, and then to Rio de Janeiro, where he took refuge.

The objectives of the 1924 Rebellion of the Tenentiste were known as reforming the constitution, establishing a secret and compulsory vote, repealing the law of the press, preserving the autonomy of the judiciary and guaranteeing free and compulsory primary education.¹⁰ However, days after the outbreak of the movement, the rioters published a note in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* informing the motivations of the revolt:

[...] the National Army could not and could never accept the government of dr. Artur Bernardes, with respect to him. Notwithstanding the known facts, the grave offenses directed by him to the Army persist. [...] The Army has no ambitions and does not want to be stationed. [...] In this sense, the leaders of the revolutionary movement want to set an example that lends authority to their criticism of Republicans who, until now, have occupied the high posts of the country's administration and who, with rare exceptions, have not been able to serve it in their interests.¹¹

It is possible to understand that the rioters were perceived as guarantors of the honor of the Nation and the Constitution that had been infringed by civil governors, especially Artur Bernardes, who, never could be accepted by the Army, since from his candidacy to president of the Republic, offended the military through the episode of the

¹⁰ Letter from Isidoro Dias Lopes to Azevedo Lima, Foz do Iguaçu, February 27, 1925. Public Archive of the State of São Paulo, collection "Letters of the Revolution of 24".

¹¹ "A statement from the leaders of the movement." *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 10, 1924, edition 16596, p. 1.

letters. Subsequently, as head of the federal government, he punished the military with arrests and transfers, and ruled on state of siege. It is also noted in the publication of the manifesto of the rioters that there is no definition of a program of measures, as the movement was later defined and known.

One can therefore think that, in the immediate aftermath of the revolt, the lieutenants had no platform for social demands and structural changes in politics, only dissatisfied with the policy and treatment the Army received from the federal government. However, the movement inaugurates the beginning of a political project, in which there is the defense of the deposition of the president of the Republic, moralization of the political system, secret ballot and compulsory public education.

José Augusto Drummond (1986) analyzes that the context of political crisis was not an unambiguous explanation for the lieutenants to rebel. According to the historian, what motivated the rioters again to demonstrate against the government of Arthur Bernardes was the threat of expulsion of the Army to the participants of the Insurrection of 1924 and the nonconformity of being judged by the article 107 of the Criminal Code. This work corroborates with the analyzes made by Drummond.

After the movement, the insurgents were again tried under article 107 of the Penal Code. In the autos of his defenses there are:

The aim of the revolt of 22 was to prevent Bernardes from taking possession of him, as a result of his injuries to the National Army, in the letters assigned to him, provoking a very strong exaltation of spirit. After his inauguration, the president, then recognized, kept most of the country in a permanent state of siege, used the force to depose the government legally constituted in the State of Rio de Janeiro, practicing numerous antidemocratic attacks that constituted the main germs of revolution of 24. With these grounds we are asking for acquittal, because the July 5, 24 movement was a collective resistance to arbitrary acts of the Federal Executive, to act violators of the Constitution to which they also owe government and governed obedience and respect (SILVA, 1971, p. 406).

It is important to consider that the statement of defense is an act of avoiding the arrest of the defendants and exile to the heads of the revolt. However, it is possible to observe the discourse of criticism to Bernardes for his actions against the Army and to understand the perception of the military as protectors of the Nation, those who resisted

the arbitrations and fought to guarantee the Constitution.

Eduardo Gomes participated in the tenentist revolts of 1922 and 1924 and served as a member of the Army, a group with which he shared identity, political thought, interests and a horizon of expectation. He did not participate in the Miguel Costa Column - Luis Carlos Prestes. He was arrested before joining the movement. Thus, the character was involved only with the first moment of the Tenentist Movement. Their actions, therefore, are linked to the corporation of the revolt military. They are collective interests that permeate the defense of the Army and the ideology of this one like guarantor of the order that had been dismantled by the civilians that governed the country.

1945 Presidential Election: building the Hero

In late 1944, before Getulio Vargas called presidential elections, Eduardo Gomes was sought by Virgílio de Mello Franco, Juracy Magalhães, Ari Parreiras, Prado Kelly and Juarez Távora to begin preparations for the founding of a national opposition party to the federal government. National Democratic Union. Major-brigadeiro Eduardo Gomes was chosen to be candidate for the presidency of the Republic. The choice of the presidential succession was, as Maria Victoria Benevides analyzed, to have high military rank, legend of hero and tradition of democratic struggles, allied to "clean name" (BENEVIDES, 1981, p. 42)

Eduardo Gomes, as narrated above, served as a revolutionary lieutenant in the First Republic. The lieutenants were acclaimed national heroes because of the importance they had for ending the "corrupt", "oligarchic", "fraudulent" government, as the "Old Republic" was called by those who would build the new government. The military known in the tenentist movement in this context did not only represent the military dimension of the 1930 Revolution: tenentism embraced the revolutionary ideals characteristic of those who participated in the Liberal Alliance. Mário Lanna Júnior wrote: "It is, above all, a revolutionary movement. As a savior of the country, he denounced the demoralization of political customs by the oligarchies, who should be banished from politics, corrupting institutions, specifically the armed forces". (LANNA JÚNIOR, 2010, p. 347).

From the political participation of Eduardo Gomes as a tenentist and therefore, as Lanna Junior, participant of the revolutionary movement that was had like savior of the homeland, was constructed around the public figure of the personage the image of national hero.

The hero legend remained and intensified in the years that followed. José Murilo de Carvalho analyzes that "heroes are powerful symbols, incarnations of ideas and aspirations, points of reference, fulcrums of collective identification; are therefore effective instruments for reaching the heads and hearts of citizens at the service of the legitimation of political regimes "(CARVALHO, 1990, p. 55). The myth has in its elaboration the intention to provide hope and comfort in the face of threats.

The construction of nationalist symbols is always bound to memory. It is necessary to recover their identity, to value their achievements, and therefore to turn to the past to validate opinion in the present. In the case of the construction of national heroes, Carvalho considers that it is an effective instrument to legitimize political regimes. Thus, it is possible to relate that the construction of the legend of hero around Eduardo Gomes was based on group experiences that identified in the First Republic the consecration of the ills of Brazil and saw in Gomes the importance for its rupture through its participation in the movement tenentist. Subsequently, his legend was recovered by Virgílio de Mello Franco, Juracy Magalhães, Ary Parreiras, Juarez Távora and Prado Kelly when thinking about the heroic character to again save the country, now a dictatorship. He built, therefore, around Gomes a historical memory.

Memories are collective experiences. For that to be the case, the resumption of the national hero legend around the figure of Eduardo Gomes was revived with memories that were shared by a group that had common notions and which were still making sense in the present time, in this case, in the context of the crisis of the New state. The purpose, therefore, of constructing the national hero myth about Eduardo Gomes to run for the presidency of the Republic by the UDN was part of a strategy to reach the minds and hearts, as well as legitimize the party's defense to the end of the Vargas legacy.

On February 28, Constitutional Law No. 9 was promulgated, which set the ninety-day deadline for the elections to be marked and the electoral law drafted. Among the parties founded were the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) and the National Democratic Union (UDN) that dominated the political game in Brazil during the years of democratic experience (1945-1964).

The National Democratic Union was officially founded on April 7, 1945. It was created as movement, opposition front, bringing together of former state parties and political alliance between new partners. The opposition front added the most varied political tendencies and historical roots. Characters such as Arthur Bernardes - a politician who symbolized the First Republic -, Ademar de Barros - ex-auditor of São Paulo, and who

did not have the confidence of the São Paulo elites - and Osvaldo Aranha - a friend and ally of Getúlio Vargas, Exteriors.

Faced with the variety of UDN cadres, which included dominant politicians from the period before the 1930 Revolution, the party was regarded by the population as desirous of regaining the power it had lost since the Revolution. Thus, the UDN was seen as pretentious to return to the past - at the time of the halt vote, the long working days, the bad salaries. It did not come, therefore, to save the population from an authoritarian, fascist, manipulative, violent government - as the UDN accused the Vargas regime. The party, with victory, could lead Brazil, and the workers, to the conditions of life of the past - that of the previous Vargas government.

The elitist impression of the National Democratic Union was corroborated by the rallying participants. According to Hermes Lima's account of a rally held at Pacaembu, in São Paulo, on June 16, 1945, when Brigadier Eduardo Gomes presented the UDN platform:

upon entering the stadium I was grounded. Full of the social ones of a select audience, elegant even, in which there was a large contest of ladies, hat and gloves, but the general empty. It was a politically confusing spectacle, the huge sports plaza, half dead, half well compounded, even on the palms with which he greeted the candidate and applauded his speech (BENEVIDES, Op.cit., P.45).

It is evidenced, in this way, the disparities of memories and opinions about Eduardo Gomes. If, on the one hand, it was part of the strategy of the party to have the politician as candidate for president of the Republic for being known national hero due to participation in the tenentist movement and, thus, contributed to put an end to the Oligarchic Republic. At the same time, it united around the UDN politicians benefited by the First Republic.

Michael Pollak states that memory is "an extremely important factor in the sense of continuity and coherence of a person or a group in their reconstruction of themselves" (POLLAK, 1992, p.5). In this way, memory and identity are related to the individual's sense of belonging to a social group. Pollak also analyzes that group memory often consists of battles, disputes over which version will predominate from the same episode. Memory and forgetfulness are parts of the same coin. You need choices about what to remember and what to forget.

It is observed that there was a battle of memories around the figure of Gomes. The character was hailed by the UDN as a solution to the Vargas dictatorship. But the workers

wanted to leave Vargas? In constructing the legend of Gomes as a member of the tenentist movement and of the Liberal Alliance, it was tried to emphasize its involvement to put an end to the First Republic. However, it is necessary to realize that the Revolution of 1930 closed the Oligarchic Republic and put Vargas in the power. Thus, on the one hand, Gomes had been acclaimed as a national hero, and on the other, in the context of 1945, he became an opponent of the political character that centralized the government, created labor laws, provided greater social participation in politics, which not only contributed to the end of the First Republic, but continued the process of disruption to the rule of oligarchies.

It is important to emphasize that it was part of Getúlio Vargas' strategy to build places of memories that enhance his figure. Pierre Nora analyzes:

The places of memory are born and live from the feeling that there is no spontaneous memory, that it is necessary to create archives, that it is necessary to keep birthdays, to organize celebrations, to pronounce funeral compliments, to notarize minutes, because these operations are not natural. [...] Without commemorative watch, history would soon sweep them away. They are bastions upon which to lean. But if what they defended was not threatened, neither would they have the need to constitute them. (NORA, 1993, p. 13).

Vargas built several places of memories. The daily schedule *Hora do Brasil* on the radio, in which Alexandre Marcondes Filho, Minister of Labor, Industry and Commerce, spoke weekly focusing on the social legislation produced, regulated and reformed from 1930 was a place of memory built in the Vargas government. Ângela de Castro Gomes describes: "the history of social laws, their content, their polemical points, all this was treated by the minister in a pedagogical and even paternal way" (GOMES, 1988, p. 233). The celebrations of Labor Day (May Day), President's birthday (April 19), New Year's birthday (November 10), were part of Vargas's political strategy to propagandize his government and build the President's memory as the creator of labor laws. All the measures taken since the Revolution of 1930 involving the social question were sent directly to Vargas.

On the other hand, the opposition to the Estado Novo, which is part of the National Democratic Union, conscious of the importance given by the workers of the social laws promulgated by Vargas, attempted to disassociate the image of the President from the benefits they gained from the labor legislation. Carlos Lacerda, one of the main leaders of

the UDN, in a rally promoted by the National Union of Students (UNE) in Rio de Janeiro, spoke:

The demagoguery of the New State thinks that it has won the support of the working class with its mystifications. In fact, labor legislation is not the work of the dictatorship, but a liberal revolution. And it suppressed all the freedoms of the working class, reducing the unions to a simple fascist machine.¹²

Carlos Lacerda defended that the labor legislation was not the work of Getúlio Vargas, but of the liberal revolution - the Revolution of 1930. He criticized the labor achievements by saying that they suppressed the freedoms of the working class and reduced the unions to fascist maneuvers. Therefore, it is perceived that his discourse tries to disassociate the labor laws from the personification of Getúlio Vargas and to despise them. Virgílio de Mello Franco, first secretary general of the UDN, follows the same position as Carlos Lacerda. In *The UDN Campaign*, he reports:

The people, continually impoverished, were also politically uneducated and generally held in ignorance, brutalized by misery, poisoned by propaganda. Of this propaganda an example is significant: the one given by mr. Vargas as "father of the poor" and creator of the Brazilian legislation on labor and social security. We all know that the consul Vargas and the system that embodied his conception of the state is that we must transform the unions of living realities, organs free of democratic expression, into simple bureaucratic machines emanating from the state. But propaganda relieved of the creation of the trade unions was the name of the man who had taken workers away from union freedom and the right to strike (FRANCO, 1946, p. 53-54).

Pierre Laborie proposes that "memory intervenes in the fabrication of opinion by the influence of the dominant representations of the past. In turn, opinion plays a decisive role in social validation and in the legitimation of memory by giving credibility to its discourse through its dissemination [...]". (LABORIE, 2009, p. 80-81). Laborie also points out that memory is the space in which a point of view is articulated as the truth of the fact, seen in:

¹² *Diário de Notícias*. Rio de Janeiro, March 8, 1945.

it is made of authenticity, precisely attributed to memory, a kind of guarantee and certainty of truth. By successive displacements, it passes from the memory that carries a truth to the memory place and expression of the truth about the past. What was a narrative, a representation or a point of view of the past becomes the history of that past (LABORIE, Op.cit., 92)

From the analyzes of Laborie and Pollak it is possible to understand that the discourses of Lacerda and Franco narrate the memory that they possess, which legitimizes their opinions on the Vargas government. It should be noted that these were opponents of the New State in dispute for power. Thus the discourse of opinions had the purpose of deconstructing the myth of "father of the poor" and propeller of social rights built around Getúlio Vargas. However, as has already been elucidated, there was a battle of memories, in which the memory of the workers, who greatly contributed to the places of memory built by the New State, legitimized the opinions that disagreed with the UDN's expositions of ideas.

The Brigadier's campaign was intensely accompanied by the press. In São Paulo, the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, and *Correio da Manhã in Rio de Janeiro*, *Diário Carioca*, *Diário de Notícias*, reproduced the speeches of Eduardo Gomes in the cities. Assis Chateaubriand's *Diários Associados* sponsored the candidate's campaign throughout the country. It was due to the press, the construction of the Brigadier's positive image and, above all, the optimistic climate regarding victory in the elections.

In the elections of two of December of 1945, Eurico Gaspar Dutra was victorious, obtained 55,39% of the votes. Yeda Fiúza had 9,7%, Eduardo Gomes reached 35%. The elections, therefore, consecrated the victory of Dutra, but mainly evidenced the political force of Getúlio Vargas, since Vargas indicated to the population that they voted in Dutra. The National Democratic Union managed to overthrow the New State, but far removed from the prestige of Vargas. On the loss of the elections, Virgílio de Mello Franco looked positively at the events of 1945. According to him, the fact that "demolishing the dictatorship was a wonderful, if not miraculous, triumph" (Franco, 1946: V). However, the defeat of Eduardo Gomes surprised everyone corelionary of the UDN.

Despite his defeat at the polls for Eurico Gaspar Dutra in December 1945, his name had been acclaimed by the country as a nationalist hero of an unquestionable nature, as can be seen in the narrative of Virgílio de Mello Franco:

Having given everything he can of himself, as in 1922, in 1930, in 1935, and in 1937, the man of action and thought, the solitary man, that is, the free man, consistent with his noble past, returns immaculate to the fellowship of his comrades.[...] But the country that thinks, feels and craves, realizes clearly that Eduardo Gomes was, is and will continue to be the man of exceptional forces. And because it is written that his immense strength will still be employed in the service of the country, no one doubts his fate (FRANCO, Op.cit., p. 82).

The above quote shows that there is exaltation to the past of Eduardo Gomes. Thus, memory influences the opinion about the character in the context of the 1945 elections. The construction of the opinion was based on performances in the tenentist movement of 1922, in the Revolution of 1930, in the combat to the communist movement of 1935 and in its distance from the government before the dictatorship of new state. Thus, opinions about the character were constructed through reinterpretations of the past. There is, therefore, interaction between lived and learned, lived and transmitted, as Pollak (1989) says. Thus, one can understand that the legend of a hero, a nationalist, committed to his country and savior, was built on the basis of the participation of Eduardo Gomes in the public life of the country and had the purpose of political propaganda for candidate for president of the Republic in 1945 and later in 1950.

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