

## Presentation

### Dossier Media and Power in Historical Perspective

The motivation for organizing the dossier *Media and Power in historical perspective* came from the observation that, in recent years, the debate has intensified in different sectors of society, both in Brazil and in the world in general, regarding the role of the traditional and new medias. Questions such as whether these means have acted as an element that acts to strengthen or weaken democracy, as mechanisms to legitimize the order or to incite political and social unrest, as tools for articulating demands and establishing new collective bonds, or as a catalyst for social breakdowns, atomization and dispersion of behaviors and actions. In view of the complexity of the contemporary scenario, therefore, the dossier's proposal was to compose a varied framework of research that addressed relevant issues relating to the media, especially from the point of view of historians and historians.

The objective, now achieved, is to allow a broader look in time and space that focuses on cyclical or longer-term transformations regarding the media, its history, its importance and its relations with various conceptions of history and configurations of power. The result, materialized here and brought to the public, expresses the initial wishes of the organizers and underlines this fruitful field of research that has been developed in the country.

The political problematic and the power relations that permeate political subjects, class and party organizations, the social imaginary, culture, religion and the consumer market in contemporary times stood out in the set of texts. The selected articles are exemplary both for researchers in the field and for a less professionally committed reading, but interested in the relationship between politics, partisan or not, and the so-called mainstream media throughout the 20th century. If the press is an inherent part of the democratic game, as a tool it serves different interests, disputed, sometimes violently, and can become both a catalyst and an incentive to strengthen laws, institutions and the most diverse social groups in formation or transformation, as well as being a disturbing agent for the deepening of free, supportive and plural ways of life.

As an explanatory element for the temporal focus of the researches present here, it is important to highlight the increasing facility for accessing the collections and newspapers of major Brazilian newspapers, many now available *online*, facilitating a more agile consultation of larger series of old editions of newspapers and magazines. Historians have

taken advantage of this new opportunity very well and, despite continuous technical and structural challenges in the collections, they are duly equipped with an already solid theoretical and methodological tool specific to our discipline to handle this exploratory task.

Let's get to the texts! We chose to present the articles in chronological order, based on the themes they address, with no intention of plastering temporalities, but indicating a broad process, which runs through the political and economic contexts of republican Brazil, during the last century.

Dossier opens the article by Gabriel José Brandão de Souza, entitled "*Between disputes and negotiations: the historical construction of the cocoa region from the newspaper Gazeta de Ilhéos (1901-1904)*". In the dossier, the author analyzes "the process of building the historical narrative of the cocoa region, based on political and ideological disputes between groups of elites in the city of Ilhéus-BA at the beginning of the 20th century". For that, it uses *Gazeta de Ilhéos* as its main source. According to Souza, it is important to "understand how these groups started to use the press not only as a diffuser of ideas and ideals, but as an important political opposition party, thus composing another strategy of the political game in addition to violence, focused on for the transmission of their opinions and the dispute for spaces of power."

On the trail of reflection on the political uses of the press, Douglas de Souza Angeli, in "*To stop voting is to vote for the enemy*": *Catholic Church and press in the construction of voters in Rio Grande do Sul (1945-1950)*", addresses the theme "proposing to understand the mobilization aiming at the construction of voters in the initial period of the democratic experience, that is, the construction of an interest in the act to vote when the elections return, the creation of national political parties and the significant expansion of the registered electorate". For Angeli, for this it was essential "the performance of specific agents [...]: the Catholic Church, the Catholic Electoral League and the Catholic press". Using the newspapers *Correio Rio-Grandense*, *Jornal do Dia* and *Unitas* - bulletin from the ecclesiastical province of Rio Grande do Sul, the author states that "the construction of the Catholic voter" was, at that moment, "driven on the basis of a markedly anti-communist speech, articulated to the Church's strategies for positioning the State and to the practices of mobilizing the clergy and the Catholic Electoral League with a view to enlistment and voting".

The following article deals with the same geographical and temporal space, changing the focus for the analysis of discourses aimed not at politics, but at the construction of a social imaginary about the city of Porto Alegre and the “dangerous classes”. In “*A city in the shadows: The world of bas-fonds (Porto Alegre - mid 1950)*”, Marluce Dias Fagundes studies how the center of Porto Alegre had its landscape transformed at that time. For the author, it is noticeable in the sources “a contrast of light and shadows. As “modernity” advances through the streets of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, “social and moral decay” invades these same streets. A region that even today is present in the social imaginary of the city is Rua Voluntários da Pátria - part of it recognized as a “red light district”. To understand this “world of *bas-fonds*”, Fagundes uses “the analysis of the local press, especially the *Jornal Diário de Notícias*, between the years 1954 and 1960, also highlighting “some cases of sexual crimes of seduction that reached the Police and Justice”.

Leaving Rio Grande do Sul, we go to Rio de Janeiro, still in the 1950s. Letícia Sabina Wermeier Krilow, in the article, “*A slum represented: disputes over nominations and meanings in the pages of Rio de Janeiro newspapers (1951-1954)*” analyzes it as part of the “great Rio press” - *Correio da Manhã, Jornal do Brasil and Última Hora* - represented the housing areas called slums during the Second Vargas Government (1951-1954)”. According to Krilow, the relevance of the work occurs “when we consider that, in the post 1945 period, Brazil went through an accelerated process of industrialization and urbanization, however, such processes did not occur spontaneously, as well as generating several consequences, not all positive, the that caused serious questions”. In this sense, the author considers that “one of the most impacting phenomena was the great increase in housing areas called slums”, and, therefore, “it becomes relevant to analyze the way this urban space was represented in the newspapers”. For her, “taking into account the great power of legitimizing/delegitimizing ideas that the media have, we note that the way in which the slum is represented can interfere or legitimize political decision-making - public policies - which it makes it possible to glimpse which projects of society are being disseminated, and such representations are inscribed in what Bourdieu calls a symbolic struggle, also highlighting disputes between those newspapers”.

Following, Marcelo Marcon discusses in “*O Globo and the disputes on the scene: Brizola and the creation and an emblematic acronym, the Democratic Labor Party*”, the way the newspaper O Globo elaborated its speech in the dispute process for the domain of the acronym PTB (Brazilian Labor Party) between Leonel Brizola and Ivete Vargas, and the

consequent creation of the PDT (Democratic Labor Party)". According to Marcon, "this occurred in the process of political opening of the Brazilian military regime and party reorganization" and, through the analysis of sources and historiography, he understands "that O Globo supported Ivete Vargas and invested in Leonel Brizola's political disqualification, since the newspaper and the gaucho politician had different views on the direction of Brazilian politics".

We moved forward during the military dictatorship with the article by Pricila Niches Müller, "*Business in China: the relationship between media and power in the diplomacy of the Geisel Government (1974-1979)*". In it, the author studies the "relations between the press and foreign policy in Brazil, focusing on the analysis of the position of press bodies regarding the foreign policy of the Geisel government (1974-1979), which sought to diversify partnerships with employment of a so-called "pragmatic, responsible and ecumenical" policy. The emphasis of such a policy, according to Müller, was "in the initial establishment of the strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China, including at the level of embassies between both countries". Aiming to "investigate how the formation of a partnership between Brazil and China is portrayed in the main Brazilian press in the context of the years that comprise the Geisel Government", the article specifically addresses "the representation made by the press about the possession of General Ernesto Geisel and the government's foreign policy, as well as an analysis of the issue involving the press and "public opinion".

Luciana Rossato, in "*Youth and advertising in the pages of the weekly magazines Veja and IstoÉ (1980s)*", studies the relationships between the consumer market, youth and the press. The thought-provoking article elucidates "how ideas about youth were conveyed by the print media through advertising in the 1980s in Brazil, a period marked by political openness and the expansion of the consumer market". Rossato uses documentation "composed of 30 advertising pieces published in *Veja* and *IstoÉ* magazines over the course of that decade". The analysis uses "the concepts of youth by Margulis and Urresti (1996) and Abramo (1997), the concepts of consumption by Feathersone (1995) and the means and mediations of Martin-Barbero (2008)". In the advertising pieces, the historian notes "that the selected magazines were aimed at a specific group of young people, belonging to a certain social class, and spread a concept of youth and being young linked to freedom and a life marked by multiple possibilities of choice".

Closing the Dossier, Thaíse Ferreira da Luz, with the text "*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: the representations of the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo about the three main candidates for the Presidency of the Republic in the 1989 elections*", carries out an analysis "on the

representation of political figures in the print media". Luz's intention is "to verify how the construction of the image of the three main candidates for the 1989 presidential election, Fernando Collor de Mello, Leonel Brizola and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, was carried out by the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* and, in what way these representations elaborate a symbolic construction of these candidates". To this end, the author observed "the use of images in the pages of *O Estado de São Paulo* and the discursive construction of the journal, in the same edition".

A Dossier like this does not propose to exhaust a set of themes or research proposals, but to compose a sample, however small, that can assist in further developments, especially, pointing out theoretical-methodological solutions and new themes and research problems. Such diversity and the eventual encounters and disagreements demonstrate that the wealth of Brazilian historiographical production is consolidated and extremely lively and active.

Finally, closing this presentation, it seems to us to be important to position ourselves as historians committed to the problems of our time. Therefore, the cover image selected for this edition was inspiring: *Che reading the newspaper La Nación*.

Ernesto Guevara de La Serna, Che, was an Argentine revolutionary, combatant of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, executed with the help of CIA agents in Bolivia on October 9, 1967. Che had his image published worldwide in the mainstream media, printed and televised, in prints of T-shirts, posters and different fashion accessories, even transformed into a commodity, linked to the political and economic system that he spent his entire life fighting and because of that dead. Thus, we do not look for inspiration here in Che's "image", but in the theoretical and practical agent he was. The coherence between thought and action was characteristic of his trajectory, as well as his ability to act in the world in order to transform it according to his vision of how he should be.

As history professionals, educators and researchers, who are immersed in an era marked by the resurgence of more or less wide-open forms of fascism, our active response, our praxis, must be up to the task. From our place, from our trench, which are public universities, now under severe attack, we believe that it is a duty to mark solidarity and action that meets the interests and needs of black and peripheral peoples, indigenous peoples, women, LGBTs, of the working class, in short, of those whose very lives are in many ways threatened.

And the university must be your right space! Che spoke to Cuban students in 1959:

What do I have to say to the University as an article first, as an essential function of his life in this new Cuba? I have to tell him to paint black, to paint mulatto, not only among students, but also among teachers; to be painted as

a worker and a farmer, as a people, because the University is not the heritage of anyone and belongs to the people of Cuba, [...] and the University must be flexible, paint black, mulatto, of a worker, of a peasant, or of running out of doors, and the people will break it and he will paint the University with the colors that he sees fit<sup>1</sup>.

May the anti-fascist struggle in all Latin America and the world be a winner!

*Irinéia Franco*

*Luiz Alberto Grijó*

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<sup>1</sup> *Speech at the auditorium of the Central University of Las Villas (upon receiving the honorary doctorate) December 28, 1959* In Ernesto Guevara. **Selected Works**. CEME - Miguel Enriquez Studies Center, Chilean Archive, p. 148.