

Mourning and the civic cult of the dead: tensions in the public memory of the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution (São Paulo, 1932-7)*

Marcelo Santos de Abreu*

RESUMO

O artigo trata das tensões da memória pública da Revolução Constitucionalista, baseando-se na análise da invenção do culto cívico dos mortos em combate entre 1932 e 1937. Procura-se compreender a relação entre o luto como expressão dos sentimentos pessoais da perda e o culto cívico dos mortos, que estabelecia um sentido político preciso para a morte dos combatentes.

Palavras-chave: memória; culto cívico dos mortos; Revolução Constitucionalista de 1932.

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the tensions of the public memory of the Constitutionalist Revolution based on the analysis of the invention of the civic cult of the dead soldiers between 1932 and 1937. It seeks to understand the relationship between grief as the expression of personal loss and the civic cult of the dead, which established a political and historical meaning for the death of combatants.

Keywords: memory; civic cult of the dead; 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution.

MOURNING AND MARTYRDOM IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PUBLIC MEMORY OF THE CONSTITUTIONALIST REVOLUTION

The number killed in the constitutionalist ranks after three months of fighting was not higher than 634 of the volunteers and soldiers involved in the movement.¹ Nevertheless, numbers cannot express the significance that the death of combatants had, both at that immediate time and after the conflict. Numbers were not considered, and are still not considered, rather the names were. This involves the singularization, through inscription in collective memory, of the individuals who had sacrificed themselves in favor of an idea that was more than them: the cause of the Constitution and regional autonomy. In the defense of these principles of political order, after October 1932 the

* Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. Avenida José João Dib, 2545. Progresso. 38302-000 Ituiutaba – MG – Brasil. mabreu@pontal.ufu.br. This research received financial support from Capes in the form of a doctoral study grant, 2007-2008.

fighting continued in other forms: in the massive production of poems, short stories and historical novels, and testimonies dedicated to ensuring the memory of 1932 in the perspective of the ‘revolutionaries,’ vivid historical scriptures that composed what Menotti Del Picchia defined as a ‘literary war’;² in inscriptions on of graves and monuments in cemeteries and public squares; and in the civic rights who took the bodies as their center. All of these movements came together in an immediate fight against being forgotten, a struggle intersected by the attribution of a political meaning to the ‘martyrdom of São Paulo,’ and more specifically to its martyrs – which still continues today every 9 July.

The rhetoric of martyrdom was used even before the beginning of the armed conflict, as it was used in the mobilization that resulted in the revolutionary movement. On 23 May 1932 the first ‘martyrs’ fell in Praça da República: Martins, Miragaia, Drausio and Camargo, whose initials formed the acronym MMDC, thereby giving a name to the organization responsible for the civil and military mobilization, and since the 1950s to the society entrusted with the preservation of the memory of the Constitutionalist Revolution. If we take the constitutionalist movement to be a *social drama*, following the propositions of Victor Turner for a reading of the symbolic action which characterizes social conflicts,³ what happened in Praça da República can be taken to be an important act, because the principal forces in conflict at that time become visible during this event. After a rally defending regional autonomy and the liberal principles of political reform, then concentrated in the clamor for re-constitutionalization, the crowd headed to the headquarters of the Liga Revolucionária Paulista and Partido Popular Paulista. On the way they tore down signposts with the names of events and people linked to the 1930 Revolution and ‘attacked’ the offices of newspaper that supported the provisional government, culminating with an attack on the head office of the ‘Octoberist’ organizations. Members of the Liga and the PPP reacted to the uncoordinated movements of the ‘constitutionalists’ and fired on the crowd from the building in which they were, resulting in the death of the first four ‘martyrs’ and the wounding of a fifth who would die some months later.

It can be stated, to use a plastic metaphor, that this event summarized the lines of the Constitutionalist Revolt. It is thus important to stress that from the events in Praça da República onwards, echoing the divisions that were clear beforehand, though molded by the meanderings of the internal disputes of each group, the fields of opposition were diametrically separated: thus

‘Octoberists’ and ‘constitutionalists,’ ‘centralizers’ and ‘federalists,’ ‘authoritarians’ and ‘liberals,’ and ‘dictatorials’ and ‘democrats’ all confronted each other.⁴ The deaths in the public square led, in a movement characteristic of the ritual process, to the constitution of these dualities which separated political affiliations in relation to well demarcated precepts. From then on regimenting passions on behalf of the ‘cause of the Constitution’ implied remembering the ‘young victims’ as a symbol of regional unity, subsuming internal conflicts and differences in the state in the name of the ‘cause of São Paulo’ against the ‘dictatorials’ identified with the provisional government. Using Katherine Verdery’s metaphor about the use of death in the reconfiguration of the moral frameworks of societies⁵, it can be said that at that instant the political life of the dead bodies had begun.

In the case of the constitutionalist movement, it was sought from the beginning to give the mourning, the personal and family feelings of loss, the contours of martyrdom, the conscious giving up of life in the name of a faith. Nevertheless, the individual sacrifices did not mark, as in religious martyrdom, belief in transcendental potencies. The constitutionalist martyrology did not serve to assure those killed in combat a place in heaven. It was attempted during and after the conflict, to weave out of the mourning higher political demands, conferring a precise meaning on the singular losses, moving beyond the lack of meaning for their death to guarantee the anonymous ‘heroes’ a place in history, as is done in the civic cult of the dead that is constituted in modernity⁶. This, thus, involves a secularized martyrdom which marks the belief of each fallen combatant in a principle of political organization – liberalism – and their devotion to a place, São Paulo, understood as a space through which the national and the national state were constructed – a recurrent theme in the historic culture that informed the enlightened elites of the region.⁷ Animated by that civic enchantment and perhaps even more by the belief in the necessary role of São Paulo as a protagonist in the national scenario, 20,000 volunteers presented themselves, who together with the regular troops of the Public Force and the mutinous army units, formed a force of around 35,000 men who would precariously fight the better supplied forces of the ‘provisional government’ until the defeat sacramented in the surrender on 2 October 1932.⁸

This text seeks to discuss the effectiveness of the civic rituals created in the process of the construction of public memory in the 1932 Constitutionalist Revolution. As has already been noted the civic cult of the dead was located between the feelings of mourning and the attribution of historic meaning to

the singular deaths of combatants, an attribution which gained form in the secular martyrology of 1932. This, thus, involves discussing the limits and the fractures of these intentions in the immediate invention of the memory of the event. It should be clarified before continuing what is meant by public memory. John Bodnar, studying the memorial practices and the politics of memory in the United States, defines the concept. According to him, public memory is woven by the plot between official memories and popular memories of historic events. The former are attributes of the dominant groups in the public scenario, whether or not they are represented in the state, and seek to mold the past to the image of their political interests. Popular memory, hard to identify with a precise group, was characterized by a more fluid formalization of lived time. In relation to the commemorations this tension was expressed, for example, in the different understanding of civic dates. While the groups engaged in the celebration dress these days in severity and formalisms which are expressed in public rites destined to update the past, the others invest the time in leisure. When what is involved is the commemoration of traumatic events, such as wars and their deaths, the anonymous creators of a popular memory invest in family memories and affection to weave the memory, while individuals and organizations committed to their prominent position in the political scenario claim the history and weave the ties between personal losses and a triumphant narrative of the nation or region which they identify with.⁹

These tensions in the constitution of public memory refers to difficulties of *affiliation*, *identification* and *distinction* that social memory establishes. For Fernando Catroga, the family become the social core where the introjections of the memory as a *norm* is affirmed. In this world regulated by affection rather than knowledge, affiliations are established through genealogies, i.e., by a texture that links distinct generations. The family is the first instance in which individuals identify themselves as part of a group with a past, assuring the integrity of an *I* in light of the anomic chaos of the pure course of time and its evident end, death. The production of this feeling of belonging and continuity in time beyond a singular life equally produces the first *distinctions*, since it establishes the individual as part of a collective gifted with their own past. Memory, thus, links individuals *vertically* to groups and entities, and *horizontally* “to an experience interlocked with time (subjective and social), submitting them to an ‘eschatological affiliation’ guaranteed by the (sexual and historical) reproduction of generations and by a survival impulse, even if only in the memory of the living.”¹⁰ In the case analyzed in this article, these indications allow us think how it is possible to go beyond the exclusive

affiliation to a family memory, consubstantiated, among other things, through mourning, promoting *identification* with encompassing historical processes and social entities. It is precisely this *feeling of belonging* of each individual, family and social group to a common history that the official memory of the Constitutionalist Revolution, characterized by the civic cult of the dead, sought to establish.

To understand this process, it is necessary to understand the invention of the cult of the constitutionalist soldier and its political meanings at its beginnings, i.e., between 1932 and 1937. The work centers on this period, seeking to show the constitutive elements of the civic cult, also highlighting the fractures in the public memory it was sought to tie together. Afterwards, in a conclusive way, the limits of the civic cult are pointed to using certain indications which might not be sufficient as proof. Nevertheless, the final part is based on the idea that no memory is sufficiently coherent to cover all the others and subsume other memories.

THE INVENTION OF THE CIVIC CULT OF THE DEAD IN THE CONSTITUTIONALIST REVOLUTION (1932-1937)

During the civil war the ‘constitutionalist’ dead killed in combat found their rest in badly ornamented graves near the battlefields, along the roads or in cemeteries in neighboring cities. Sometimes the mortal remains were moved to morgues in São Paulo or in the interior cities from where the dead were from. Their names, depending on their celebrity, made the pages of newspapers, an ephemeral inscription of their memory often limited by the censorship imposed by newspapers in order to avoid ‘defeatist’ appeals. Therefore, it was only at the end of the armed conflict that the civic cult of the death began to be created, configuring the most visible, and perhaps the most effective, initiative related to the creation of public memory of the political event. Between 1932 and 1937 two episodes can be distinguished in the invention of that civic cult: the first between November 1932 and November 1933 was the appropriation of All Souls Day as the proper moment to celebrate the ‘martyrs’ in cemetery recesses; the second, beginning in July 1934 and lasting till July 1937, was characterized by a distancing from the religious cult and a move towards a lay cult which used public spaces, such as streets and squares.

Before describing these changes, it is necessary to point out that the creation of the cult of the death in the Constitutionalist Revolution always

occurred in the existing gaps between Brazilian civic and religious cultures, to which were added elements external to the national frontiers. Another important observation about the interpretation presented in this work is related to the groups who took charge after November 1932 of the remembrance of the event through civic rites that took the dead as their center: it was the most intellectualized parts of São Paulo society who organized the visits to cemeteries, the more formalized 'civic pilgrimages,' the moving of the dead and the parades of former combatants in the capital. For these social groups, immersed in a particular historic culture, dressing mourning in the mantle of secularized martyrdom, which symbolically asserted the inscription of each of the dead in history, was a gesture with precise meanings that could be understood. For other social groups, however, mourning persisted as the pain of the loss of loved ones, an expression of the contemporary relationship with death defined by the privatization of dying and the remembering of the dead.¹¹

There is, thus, a dual tension in the creation of the cult of the dead that will be described here. On the one hand, the civic cult of the dead and its political meanings as expressions of the lettered culture of the elites did not escape the fractures of São Paulo society, since the constitutionalist martyrology, which founded the official memory of 1932, would not be equally interpreted and received by all social groups. On the other hand, between the commemorative gesture with a political backdrop of the civic cult of the dead and the feelings of mourning characteristic of the privatization of death, there is a difference of intentions in relation to the memory of the fallen, in other words making them objects of a new type of public civic enchantment and reserving for them the universe of family memories, circumscribing to the private affective field, a space in which memory and feelings of the past as collective phenomena have their beginning.

A final observation is necessary: the tensions in the creation of the public memory of the event are only perceptible through sparse indications in the documentation that describes the invention of the civic cult, since the press sources, such as *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Folha da Manhã* and *O Correio Paulistano*,¹² are themselves products and producers of the memory of the 'martyrdom of São Paulo.' However, the writing of history as a 'burial gesture' committed to the truth has long since learned with what fragments the dead can be made to talk in their silenced lives.¹³ We shall start with one of these.

On 19 November 1932 the libertarian newspaper, *A Plebe* referred to the combatants and the meaning of the civil war in the following terms:

Ah! With what infinite sympathy we lament the victims of such a nefarious evil, the victims of their own naivety and good faith, the victims immolated in the interests of third parties, the nefarious butchers of this naive, incredulous and dedicated people!... And what immense contempt we send to these political executioners, this multitude of speculators of the entire caste who subordinated the interests of the region and of the nation to their own interests, those who created tremendous conflicts to be resolved at the cost of the blood of the naive and the pure of heart, and the voices of the false pastors throwing them into a tremendous shock seeking death and killing reciprocally!¹⁴

A dissenting voice among others that did not survive to the present day, *A Plebe* did not escape, despite its libertarian creed, from making references to the religious universe to describe the dead to whom it devoted sympathy: ‘immolated victims,’ ‘the blood of the naïve,’ ‘pure of heart.’ And to disqualify the ‘nefarious butchers,’ ‘political executioners’ and ‘multitude of speculators,’ all resumed in the head – and in the heart? – of the writer under the epithet of ‘false pastors.’ Might the appropriation of the religious discourse have had an ironic tone here? This is possible, but the seriousness of the death and the deference that it awakens reserve the use of this figure of language solely to the ‘false pastors.’ The text is presented as a response to the commemorations of All Souls’ Day held a few days previously, in which the capital’s cemeteries served as a stage for ‘civic orations’ in homage of the dead, highlighting their sacrifice for São Paulo and for Brazil, an image of the past widely diffused by the state press. It was precisely against this interpretation of the civil war and the feelings attributed to their dead that the dissident voice of *A Plebe* was directed, denouncing the class interests behind the conflict and its commemoration. A diminutive but eloquent signal of the social fractures that since the beginning of the cult of the dead it had been sought to deny.

On 2 November 1932, according to the mainstream press, *Paulistas* in the state capital and in the rest of the state went to cemeteries for the annual celebration of their dead. According to reports, in all these holy fields, from the poorest to the richest, to the communion of morning typical of a very old pious attitude was added to the memory of the dead in the ‘Paulista cause.’ Everything indicates that at this initial moment there was a certain orchestration in order to ensure that All Souls’ Day as a special moment in the civic cult of the combatants. In the cemeteries of Consolação, São Paulo and Araçá – no word of the poor morgue of Quarta Parada –, the largest concentrations of former volunteers occurred. In Consolação, in a gesture that

was possibly repeated in other morgues, Catholic associations and the Assistance for Widows and the Mutilated covered the tombs of combatants with flowers donated by florists. In all the cemeteries the traditional outdoor mass was followed by an infinity of 'civic orations' to the combatants, possibly presented with 'important declamations,' one of the styles used in the 'literary war' that began at that time.¹⁵

In November 1933 similar scenes were repeated in the capital and in the interior with greater importance, in a more organized movement aimed at the convergence of the feelings of mourning and the civic designs that surrounded those killed in action. An observer of that day, reinforcing the feeling of social cohesion towards the remembrance of the political event represented on the individual tombs, stated that the 'multitude of people' that had come from Araçá and Quarta Parada, where they had visited their dead, headed in the same direction as "the multitude of elegant elites, whose dead were in the aristocratic cemetery of Consolação." Both were headed to block 2 of São Paulo cemetery, a tomb where there were buried the "bodies of the heroes who belonged to all Paulistas, who died for S. Paulo and for Brasil, brothers in the great common causes, without differences of political creed or social position."¹⁶ This description, even in a summarized form, of the appropriation of All Souls' Day for civic purposes involves a precise indication of the meaning that the cult of the dead would assume at its beginning: the rites reinforced the unity in the remembrance as a metaphor of regional unity in favor of the constitutionalist cause and all their corollaries, in other words in defense of political liberalism and state autonomy.

A major formalization of the civic cult, and therefore of the reinforcement of the linking of mourning with political meanings, began with the 1934 commemorations and lasted until 1937. At that moment, already breathing the climate of reconstitutionalization, recognized as a victory by political groups from São Paulo despite their divisions, the organizers of the civic cult were able to leave the cemetery recesses and take to the streets, the public space, the place where mass politics was processed. It was under the influx of this new perception of politics that the civic cult was defined through the concern about commemorating the anonymous individuals sacrificed for the constitution. Achieving an order that intended to be democratic, based on the general will emanating from the communion of autonomous individuals, the commemoration of the dead assumed the tonalities of a civic pedagogy. More precisely the civic rites collaborated in the institution of political relations that were supposed to characterize the new order, based on the capacity of the

common man to choose, the anonymity of the crowd. Singularizing the anonymous dead for their heroism corresponded to this objective. This aspect meant that the civic cult of dead constitutionalists was molded to the difference of the sacralization of the 'great man' through funeral rites.

The mortuary rituals surrounding the 'great men' were a constitutive trait of the republican historic culture, which was echoed in its French origins: from the creation of the civic calendar to *statuemanía*, the 'commemorationism' of the Third Republic served as a model.¹⁷ Similar to the funerals of Victor Hugo, during the First Republic, civil burials were held for: Machado de Assis in 1908; Afonso Pena and Euclides da Cunha in 1909; the moving and internment of the mortal remains of Joaquim Nabuco in 1910; the Barão do Rio Branco in 1912; Pinheiro Machado in 1915; Osvaldo Cruz in 1917; the moving and burial of the bodies of D. Pedro II and Rodrigues Alves in 1921; Rui Barbosa in 1923.¹⁸ All were persons recognized in their life for their exceptional qualities in culture or politics. Their deaths only guaranteed their definitive inscription in national history – funeral rites with a civic character were the actual form of this inscription and symbolized the homage that the nation as a whole paid to individuals who expressed their genius, and their moral and intellectual qualities at the highest levels.¹⁹ Thus, in relation to the cult of the dead of the Constitutionalist Revolution, there was already a historic culture in which the dead were one of the favorite objects. It can be said that the invention of the civic cult that was created in São Paulo took advantage of the established tradition, guaranteeing the symbolic effectiveness of the mobilization of the dead in public memory. However, the bodies which were their object were of a diverse nature from those of 'great men,' because the rite was instituted around the common dead, the men from the trenches. Thus, there was a need to resort to other models for their invention. My argument is that the commemoration of the constitutionalist soldier appropriated the cult of the citizen soldier created in Europe at the end of the Great War.

Some similarities between the two forms of commemorating the war dead indicate the affiliation of the civic cult created in São Paulo with the European civic culture, especially the French. Beforehand it is necessary to focus on the attention given to the ceremonies for the moving and inhumation of the unknown soldier on 11 November 1920. Carried out simultaneously in London and Paris, the cities where the mortal remains would be interred in Westminster Abby and under the Arc de Triomphe respectively, the ceremonies were widely reported in the São Paulo press.²⁰ Furthermore, the references to the First World War were a constant in reports in the press and the literature about

1932, especially the analogy between the constitutionalist soldier and the *poilu*, since both were identified as combatants against ‘tyranny.’ At least to the enlightened elites, the Great War and the celebration of its dead constituted objects of interest, which allow the inference of the European affiliation of the *Paulista* cult.

Looking at studies on the cult of the citizen soldier illustrates the similarities. First, the memory of the war was celebrated in both cases by more intellectualized groups, as was noted above in the case of São Paulo. In second place, the civic cult of the dead in São Paulo and in Europe took place between cemeteries and public squares and through transfers between religious and civic culture. In third place the two cults affirmed the civil character of the commemoration of the dead and reinforced the egalitarian bias of the experience of war, since only the names of the dead comrades were remembered, without any distinction of the ranks they had held on the battlefield. Finally, the European and Paulista rite sought to symbolically assert the prominence of the common man in the political scenario of a society of masses.²¹ In the impossibility of a detailed description of civic rituals between 1934 and 1937, I will present here just its principal elements to confirm the hypothesis raised.

On 9 July 1934, contributing to displace All Souls’ Day as a moment dedicated to the commemoration of those killed in action, for the first time a parade of former combatants was organized, as well as ‘civic pilgrimages’ in interior cities. Great efforts were made to guarantee the simultaneity of commemoration throughout the state, guaranteeing the presence of former combatants from interior cities in the civic parades in the capital. In São Paulo city the rituals began with the dawn ‘in the civil cradle of the revolution,’ the Faculty of Law in Largo de São Francisco. The entire morning was dedicated to visiting the cemeteries, spaces where each group for former combatants, organized according to the patriotic battalions to which they belonged, and families could pay homage to their comrades and loved ones. In the necropolises in the capital, pious scenes were repeated similar to those devoted to those who ‘had fallen on the fields of honor’ in November 1932 and 1933: masses, the placing of flowers on tombs, prayers. This was the moment of renewing mourning through the evocation of each of the fallen by their tombs.

In the part of the afternoon in the environs of Araçá and Consolação cemeteries, former combatants, wearing civilian clothes, and members of the ‘rearguard,’ consisting of organizations that sustained the war effort, met to start the march through the streets of the capital. The evocation of each death

in particular, metaphorically following the affirmation of their belonging to a collective movement, remembered in the public space by a rhetoric of the very precise march.²² Leaving from spaces dedicated to the remembering of the dead, the march headed towards Avenida Paulista, where those watching waved São Paulo flags as they passed by. The order of the former combatants in the march obeyed a disposition that hierarchized the different 'sectors' of the war of two years before: North, East (Minas), South, the South of Mato Grosso and the Coast, followed by the 'rearguard.' The first three 'sectors' corresponded to theaters of operations where the fight against the 'dictatorials' was the bloodiest: the Paraíba Valley, the bastions of Mantiqueira on the Minas Gerais border and the Paraná border. The bodies in the march thus represented the entire regional space, guarding the differences in the sacrifices which the combatants and inhabitants of each 'sector' made for the 'Paulista cause.'

Step by step the formation approached Trianon Park, where there was a cenotaph representing all the dead and a podium where Pedro de Toledo and the mutilated watched the march. In this place the combatants saluted, devoting their intentions to all their fallen companions, to the mutilated and to the only authority figure paid homage in the entire ritual process, the old Pedro de Toledo, civil governor during the revolution, a man above parties, the only remaining reference of the São Paulo political groups during the 1932 movement. The simultaneously salute of the only civil leader of the revolution present at the celebration and of all the dead, who still did not have a monument appropriate to the lay cult that had been established, equaled the 'great man' to the common man. After this came a significant gesture, the march continued until the confluence of the Paulista and Brigadeiro Luis Antonio avenues, going towards the city center. The march ended precisely in Largo de São Francisco in front of the austere façade of the Faculty of Law, which was specially adorned for that occasion with the 'flag with thirteen stripes.' Here the march dispersed. Some, despite the rain, returned, without any prior coordination, to the cemeteries to remember *their* dead once more.

What did the march enunciate? It left clear the interlinking between mourning, as the private cult of the dead, and the civic cult which overlapped the individual and family memory of the dead, the remembrance of the sacrifice of São Paulo for Brazil. This significance was completed with the representation of the civil character of the Constitutionalist Revolution, which mobilized the men of the crowd willing to surrender their lives in the name of the ideal of constitutionalization. As in the French civic rituals in honor of the dead of the First World War, the men and the women in the parade wore their

daily clothes, marking their formal equality in the political universe. The march in the capital symbolized the equality between different individuals by bringing together at the same time residents of the capital and the interior, combatants and the rearguard, the 'great men' and the common dead, represented in a cenotaph similar to what was built in front of Whitehall in the 1920 London ceremonies. However, at the same time the civic rituals of that 9 July reinforced the social differences which marked the regional space.

First, because the hierarchies in the Paulista space were reaffirmed, submitting the interior to the capital, converted into the center of a complex ritual which extended through the territory of the state with the 'civic pilgrimages' as the mirror of the civic parade in the capital. Second, because it attributed to certain group a prominent role in the commemoration as the metaphor of its protagonism in history. Starting with the dawn in the Faculty of Law, the rituals ended in the same 'civil cradle of the revolution,' as if to indicate that in that precise place the men were forged – or the 'false prophets' – who had the leadership abilities to conduct the destinies of all Paulistas and Brazilians. The symbolic assertion of the right to leadership of the most education, and the Paulistas, is consistent with the desire to construct an 'enlightened democracy' which enchanted the Paulista elites at that time.²³ As a manifestation of the beliefs and interests of the groups which organized the first civic ceremonies, the exclusive nature of the desired political relations became patent.

Between 1934 and 1937 the centrality of the capital and of the dominant social groups was reinforced. The formalization of the cult of the dead would continue, gaining a greater dimension with the organization of the moving of bodies from cemeteries in the federal capital, from interior cities and from graves on battlefields to the São Paulo necropolis. Between 1932 and 1935 the moving of the remains of volunteers and soldiers of the constitutionalist army was carried out in an erratic manner by family members, veterans from the battalions and other civilians involved in the war effort and the commemoration of the dead. The transfers and burials did not follow any prior coordination and did not coincide in a precise time and space. In 1936 and 1937, with the unprecedented reinforcement of the cult of the dead, the moving and the burial of 46 and 92 volunteers respectively was organized, most of whom were identified as 'students' and 'soldiers.' In these two years the movement of mortal remains to the São Paulo cemetery led to an unprecedented integration of the region in comparison with previous years. The *Centro Paulista* set up in Rio de Janeiro, in a partnership between associations of former combatants,

state and municipal governments, and other civic associations, assumed the coordination of the movement of the bodies, which were done at a specific time, between 8 and 9 July, leaving from various parts of the state, but especially the old North Sector (the Paraíba Valley), and converging on the same cemetery.

During those years the morning of 9 July was dedicated to the reception of the bodies in the North Station, a civic procession to the São Paulo cemetery, where the Liga das Senhoras Católicas (League of Catholic Ladies) had a funeral mass said, followed by the burial and civic orations by the tombs which invariably remembered the collective sacrifice, the individualized martyrs and the exception qualities of these common men. A large 'crowd' took part in the civic pilgrimage along with political authorities and representatives of volunteers and other groups engaged in the 1932 war. The day which began with the raising of flags in Largo de São Francisco, from where could be heard the salute of 23 and 9 shots marking 23 May and 9 July, continued, after the funeral procession and the burial, in the afternoon with a parade along Avenida São João, where the cenotaph was located. In 1936 the parade included a 200 meter long São Paulo flag, carried by representatives of civic association involved in the war effort. In 1936 and 1937 the air was decorated with the colors of São Paulo in the flags waved by those watching, as well as on the bodies of the women who wore black, red and white, or on the buildings and shops in the windows of which were hung the 'thirteen stripes' flag. In the interior cities the civic pilgrimages were repeated in harmony with what was occurring in the capital, with a grandeur and synesthetic appeals proportional to the resources of each location.

In the succinct description of the invention of the civic cult of the dead of the Constitutionalist Revolution between 1934 and 1937, 1936 is of great importance in its development. This year marked the dislocation of the cult of the dead in cemeteries to the lay public space, from religious contrition to civic exaltation. Finally, it is important to emphasize that in this process the historic meaning of individual deaths was reinforced, converting the rites into a time of celebrating regional unity above all differences, updating the communion of proposition that had encircled the 'Paulista cause' in 1932.

As time went by the references to 'hearts bereaved' by the loss of loved ones slowly disappeared in the discourse of the press. Can the silencing of this mourning be attributed to the success of the civic enchantment while it was being developed? Had appeals of secularized martyrdom substituted the prayers which re-sent the memories of the fallen to the affective universe of

the families? The bells that rang out marked the victory of the seduction of official memory over personal and family memories. Aware of the silence that the documentation produced, it is possible that the civic appeals of the cult of the dead grazed the personal feelings of loss by the importance they adopted from 1936 onwards. Finally, it is equally possible that the inscription of those who fell in combat as compensation was worthwhile, since in that scenario it was hoped that São Paulo could return to the center of political power with the presidential campaign of Armando de Sales Oliveira: the projection of the future desired by the living and the dead came close to being achieved. However, as is well known, the coup on 10 November, hatched with the connivance of liberal-constitutionalists in order to combat subversion, would halt the future of Paulista hegemony and the development of the civic cult of the dead.

THE LIMITS OF THE CIVIC CULT OF THE DEAD AND ITS MEANING

During the *Estado Novo* the memory of the dead would return to the cemeteries and to the contrition of the religious cult. It would be harbored in family memories, returning to the universe of affection where memory is created, until it would be activated once again. It can be noted that during the *Estado Novo* period there was not a single moment when the dead were not evoked to *re-presentify* the political event. It also has to be noted that whenever this memory was updated it was mentioned in the large São Paulo newspapers, albeit on the inside pages with a small headline on the front page, in contrast with the eloquent grandeur of the headlines which reported on the civic rites between 1934 and 1937. Other periodicals, with smaller numbers of readers, dedicated much more space to the commemoration of the event.

This is the case of the *Paulistânia* magazine, which reported on the Constitutionalist Revolution and its commemoration in its issues from 1940 onwards, giving it increased coverage after 1946, reaching its apex in the 1950s. In all its issues the central theme of the constitutionalist martyrology was repeated, in other words the death of the common man ennobled through his devotion to the 'cause of São Paulo.' Nevertheless, it is in this publication that we can find an eloquent indication of the limits of the civic cult of the dead of 1932. In issue no. 23 in 1948 an article by César Borges Schmidt remembered Paulo Virgínio, a *Caboclo* from the town of Cunha killed by the 'dictatorial' troops because he would not provide information about the position of the 'constitutionalist' forces. On a full page the author described the natural and

human landscape of the mountainous region of Cunha to qualify the heroism of the *Caipira* (redneck) people. According to Schmidt, the defamation of the *Caboclo* did not correspond to historical reality, since there were many examples of the abnegation of the heroism de *Caipiras* and *Caiçaras*. Virtues that were sheltered in a daily routine made hard by the natural life that forged his qualities as a father of a dedicated family, ‘a fervent believer,’ ‘a predestined laborer’ and a ‘patriot.’²⁴ According to the author,

Paulo Virgínio, a *caipira* from Taboão, is one of these examples of *caboclo* heroism. His story lives today in the lyre of the *sertanejo* bard and in the heart of the people of Cunha, for this reason the chronicles of the events in which he figured to such an extent was not told as much as it should have been.²⁵

The author continues his text and then tells the story that was missing, giving the details of the ‘martyrdom’ of Paulo Virgínio: his imprisonment, torture and death by the grave he had dug with his own hands. According to the author: “In the heat of combat the conscience of men and the meaning of nationality is tempered. An example of inflexible character the nobleness of spirit, Paulo Virgínio did not die in vain.” This assertiveness was completed with the reference to the cult of the memory of the *Caboclo* hero which still lasted in Cunha. Holding their guitars close to their chest, the *Caboclos* sang about “the deed of one of their own, the memory of someone who scarified himself for the good cause.” Appearing after this, respecting the traits of the *Caipira* accent in accordance with the folklorists, was a song which supposedly indicated the adherence of *Caipiras* the civic enchantment of those martyred in 1932. Although it is very long, it is worth citing:

*I will tell you about something,
Which happened
During that revolt
I did not see anyone resolve it.*

*There was much scorn of the family,
Many hearts were hurting
About the death of Paulo Virgínio,
Which only to talk about sounds crazy.*

*In the neighborhood of Taboão,
Where he was living,
They took him out of his house.
He left distracted.*

*They brought him downriver,
He came very deluded
To the house of Mr Laurindo
Where he was received*

*This was very early
The sun had not yet risen.
They put him into cold water
As soon as the day had dawned.*

*They took him from the cold water
They put him in boiling water:
Frost lay on the fields
Like ground salt.*

*If it had not been for the revolt
This man would not have died.
His children would still have a father,
His wife a husband.*

*O poor family,
How much it suffered
With the absence of their father
For the dear little children.*

*They brought him close to bridge
Where he was killed.
They made him dig his grave,
Since he was distraught.*

*After the grave was made
He claimed his request.
Told him to call Benedito Maria
Who was his guaranteed friend.*

*And he made the request
Of what had happened
They told him to turn around
And gave him 18 shots in the ear.²⁶*

It is worth asking: where did the narrator of Paulo Virgínio's story see in these rhymes the echo of the 'good cause'? Actually, this is a critique of the 'revolt,' since if it had not been for the revolt, the family of the dead man would still have a husband and father. While the 'Sertanejo bard' sang the memory of the dead comrade, they remade the memory of the register of the mourning and the personal losses that characterized the remembering of the dead in the family memory and in highest civic values exalted since 1934 in the civic cult of the dead. This suggests that the enchantment of martyrdom represented in the funeral rite was only audible to the groups interested in its construction, for those for whom the memory of the fallen had become an aim of political redemption.

NOTES

¹ For a count made for commemorative purposes, see, MONTENEGRO, Benedito. *Cruzes paulistas: os que tombaram em 1932, pela glória de servir São Paulo*. São Paulo: Empresa Gráfica Revista dos Tribunais, 1936

² Menotti del Picchia used this metaphor in his evaluation of Arnon de Mello's book, *São Paulo venceu!*. cf., MELLO, Arnon. *São Paulo venceu!* 4.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Flores e Mano, 1933. p.267.

³ See TURNER, Victor. *Dramas, fields and metaphors: symbolic action in human society*. Ithaca; London, Cornell University Press, 1974.

⁴ For a description of the event and some visions of the divisions of the political field in the 'case of São Paulo,' see, BORGES, Vavy Pacheco. *Tenentismo e revolução brasileira*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1992.

⁵ See VERDERY, Katherine. *The political lives of dead bodies; reburial and post-socialist change*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

⁶ See CATROGA, Fernando. *O céu da memória; cemitério romântico e culto cívico dos mortos*. Coimbra: Livr. Minerva Ed., 1990.

⁷ See ABUD, Kátia. *O Sangue Itimorato e as nobilíssimas tradições; a construção de um símbolo paulista: o bandeirante*. São Paulo: USP-FFLCH-Departamento de História, 1985. (Doctoral dissertation); VELLOSO, Monica Pimenta. *A brasilidade verde-amarela; nacionalismo e regionalismo paulista*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV/CPDOC, 1987. (mimeo.); LUCA,

Tania Regina de. *A Revista do Brasil; um diagnóstico para a (N)ação*. São Paulo: Ed. Unesp, 1999; e FERREIRA, Antonio Celso. *A epopéia bandeirante; letrados, instituições, invenção histórica (1870-1940)*. São Paulo: Ed. Unesp, 2002.

⁸ cf. HILTON, Stanley. *A guerra civil brasileira; história da Revolução Constitucionalista de 1932*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1982. p.104.

⁹ See BODNAR, John. *Remaking America; public memory, commemoration, and patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

¹⁰ Cf. CATROGA, Fernando. *Os passos do homem como restolho do tempo: memória e fim do fim da história*. Coimbra: Almedina, 2009. p.25.

¹¹ See ARIËS, Philippe. *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort em Occident; du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Paris: Seuil, s.d.; and CATROGA, Fernando. *O céu da memória*, op. cit.

¹² For the descriptions that follow below, the editions of *O Estado de São Paulo* and *Folha da Manhã* consulted were: Nov. 1932; July and Nov. 1933-1937. While for *O Correio Paulistano* they were from July-Nov. 1934-1937.

¹³ CERTEAU, Michel de. *A escrita da história*. – 2.ed. – Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2007; GINZBURG, Carlo. *Mitos, emblemas e sinais: morfologia e história*. Trad. Federico Carotti. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007; CATROGA, *Os passos do homem como restolho do tempo*, op. cit., p.38-46.

¹⁴ Cf. A sinistra aventura. *A Plebe*, São Paulo, 19 Nov. 1932, p.4.

¹⁵ See MELLO, Arnon de, op. cit., p.267.

¹⁶ Mausoléu do Soldado Constitucionalista. *Folha da Manhã*, São Paulo, 3 Nov. 1933, p.6.

¹⁷ See OLIVEIRA, Lúcia Lippi de. As festas que a República manda guardar. *Estudos Históricos*, Rio de Janeiro, v.2, n.4, p.172-189, 1989; CARVALHO, José Murilo de. *A formação das almas*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994; KNAUSS, Paulo. *Imagens Urbanas e Poder Simbólico; esculturas e monumentos públicos nas cidades do Rio de Janeiro e de Niterói*. Niterói: UFF-PPGH, 1998 (Doctoral Dissertation). For a similar case to this appropriation, but in another national space, see, CATROGA, Fernando. *O céu da memória*, op. cit.; CATROGA, Fernando. As ritualizações da história CATROGA, Fernando. Ritualizações da história. In TORGAL, Luis Reis, MENDES, José Amado and CATROGA, Fernando. *História da história em Portugal, sécs. XIX-XX*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 1996, p.547-671; CATROGA, Fernando. *Nação, mito e rito; religião civil e comemoracionismo*. Fortaleza: NUDOC-UFC/Museu do Ceará, 2005.

¹⁸ See BEM-AMOS, Avner. Les funéailles de Victor Hugo. In: NORA, Pierre. *Les Lieux de mémoire – 1*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997, p.425-464; and GONÇALVES, José Felipe. Os funerais de Rui Barbosa: um estudo de caso da construção fúnebre de heróis nacionais na Primeira República. *Estudos Históricos*, Rio de Janeiro, n.25, v.1, 2000. Available at: www.cpdoc.fgv.br/revista/asp/dsp_edicao.asp?tp_edi=U. Accessed in Feb. 2010.

¹⁹ In relation to heroification, see, CASSIRER, Ernst. Las lecciones de Carlyle sobre el culto

del héroe. In: *El Mito del Estado*. México (DC): Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997. p.222-263.

²⁰ Homenagem aos soldados mortos na guerra. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, São Paulo, 5 Nov. 1920, p.1; As homenagens da França aos *poilus*. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 11 Nov. 1920, p.1; A remoção do soldado desconhecido para a Catedral de Westminster. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 12 Nov. 1920, p.1.; Desfile do povo ante o Arco do Triunfo. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 12 Nov. 1920, p.1; A inumação de um soldado desconhecido sob o Arco do Triunfo. *O Correio Paulistano*, São Paulo, 11 Nov. 1920, p.5; A remoção para Westminster do cadáver de um soldado inglês desconhecido. *O Correio Paulistano*, São Paulo, 12 Nov. 1920, p.5.

²¹ See MOSSE, George. *Fallen soldiers; reshaping the memory of the World Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; LAQUEUR, Thomas W. Memory and naming in the Great War. In: GILLIS, John R. (ed.) *Commemorations; the politics of national identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. p.150-167; and PROST, Antoine. Les monuments aux morts. In: NORA, Pierre. (dir.). *Les lieux de mémoire – 1*, op. cit., p.199-223.

²² In relation to the rhetoric of the march as an inscription that establishes relations between *space* and *time*, see CERTEAU, Michel de. *A invenção do cotidiano – 1: artes de fazer*. Petrópolis (RJ): Vozes, 1994. p.179 ss.

²³ See CAPELATO, Maria Helena. *Os arautos do liberalismo*; imprensa paulista, 1920-1945. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1988.

²⁴ SCHMIDT, César Borges. Paulo Virgínio. *Paulistânia*, São Paulo, n.23, May/June, 1948. p.14.

²⁵ SCHMIDT, 1948, p.14.

²⁶ SCHMIDT, 1948, p.13.