

Prisoners of *Benevente*¹

Os prisioneiros do Benevente

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RESUMO

O artigo discute a repercussão pública da deportação, no ano de 1919, de 23 imigrantes, incluindo o militante Everardo Dias, no paquete *Benevente*. Esse episódio revela características importantes da repressão contra o movimento operário no Brasil ao intensificar um debate sobre a violação dos direitos de trabalhadores estrangeiros, prática que se tornou comum durante a Primeira República. Além disso, o episódio evidencia a importância da imprensa na batalha travada pelo movimento operário em defesa das vítimas da repressão. Palavras-chave: movimento operário; imigrantes; deportação.

Abstract

This article analyzes the public repercussions of the deportation of 23 immigrants in 1919, including the militant Everardo Dias, on board the steamer *Benevente*. This episode reveals important features of the repression of the labor movement in Brazil, since it raised a debate about the violation of the rights of foreign workers, which had become a common practice at that time. Furthermore, it is possible to see in this episode the importance of the press in the battle that labor movement fought in defense of the victims of repression.

Keywords: labor movement; immigrants; deportation.

In his book *Memórias de um exilado (Episódios de uma deportação)* [Memories of an Exiled (Episodes of a deportation)],² published in 1920, Everardo Dias left a record of one of the instruments of political persecution of immigrants accused of involvement in the workers' movement in Brazil. In its 102 pages, the book narrates the imprisonment and the voyage on the *Benevente* packet steamer of 23 individuals deported at the end of 1919, including the author himself. The work portrays a striking experience in Dias' long trajectory in social struggles in Brazil, and in the lives of many other foreign activists and workers during the period known as the First Republic. In

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addition, the book is also profoundly linked with the debates held in the press at the time about the meaning of the deportation of foreign workers for the Brazilian workers' movement, for the individuals affected, and for their families.

The expulsion or deportation – since both terms were used indistinguishably at the time – of immigrants had then become a recurrent practice, and although the workers' movement was not the sole target of this action,³ it became the principal theme in the debate about the production of legislation to control and expel foreigners,⁴ and also, as we will see here, the great source of an intense and dramatic fight against these measures. For this reason, investigating the debate in newspapers and other publications about the events involved in the expulsion of Everardo Dias constitutes an exercise of analysis which permits distinct elements in the same context to be glimpsed. On one hand, it shows the characteristics of an artifice which became common in the first decades of the republican period: the expulsion which terrorized and affected many immigrants; on the other, it reveals the conditions which resulted in an uncommon outcome for the large majority of these individuals: the annulling of the expulsion and the return of Everardo Dias to Brazil. These two sides of the events which involved the episode of *Benevente* also demonstrated the importance of the press in the development of a dispute over the rights of immigrant workers in the Brazil of the First Republic.

Amongst the prisoners deported on the *Benevente*, Everardo Dias was the one who most produced evidence about the events, not only in the book he would publish after his return to Brazil, but also in the letters he wrote and which were published in the press and publicized by politicians, such as Deputy Maurício de Lacerda (a federal deputy for Rio de Janeiro), and finally in the repercussion of the events related to his arrest and deportation. Dias' trajectory helps us understand the difference between what was publicized about him and about the other prisoners in the same vessel. Born in 1883 in Pontevedra, Spain, Everardo Dias came to Brazil when he was two or three, since his father, a freemason, primary school teacher, republican typographer and revolutionary, Antonio Diaz, had to flee the country. In Brazil, Everardo became a teacher, account, freemason and free-thinker. He also worked as a typographer and journalist and became very close to the print workers, who were very combative at that time.⁵ As an anarchist he joined in his youth Oreste Ristori and Benjamim Mota in the São Paulo Free Thinkers' Association. He also worked as a typesetter in *Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper and edited another, called *O livre pensador*.⁶

Everardo Dias participated in the 1917 general strike in São Paulo and the 1918 insurrection in Rio de Janeiro, and took part in the general strike in October 1919, once again in São Paulo. He was one of the organizers of the ‘*Clarté Group*’ in Brazil in 1921 and 1922. In the middle of the 1920s he joined the Communist Party of Brazil. After the military uprising in São Paulo, he was arrested in 1924 and remained in prison until 1927. He was arrested again in 1935 in São Paulo, spending time in the Maria Zélia and Paraíso prisons. Everardo Dias can be considered an important example of what scholars of the area see as the heterogeneous nature of the workers’ movement in Brazil, with “widespread experiences and situations in the class,” and whose history cannot be confused with that of any party.⁷ In addition to having published works about freemasonry and about his experiences as an activist, Everardo Dias had an intense trajectory in which he also conquered the respect and admiration of activists from other groups before dying in 1966. In 1919 Dias was able to count on the contributions of individuals from different tendencies in the struggle against his expulsion and mentioned this at the beginning of his book *Memórias de um exilado*. He also highlighted the work of persons such as Nicanor Nascimento⁸ and Maurício de Lacerda (who defended social causes as deputies), as well as the support of freemason colleagues.

Between the end of October and the beginning of November 1919, when the *Benevente* left Guanabara Bay carrying 23 immigrants as prisoners to be handed over to their respective nations of origins, the newspapers carried various reports about strikes, arrests and deportations. After the events during the São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro strikes in 1917, and the various repressive measures which followed, the reactionary movements entered a period of reflux in 1918, with the occurrence of some localized strikes. In the first half of 1919 strikes were returned to, this time with a greater mobilization capacity. A new strike involving various factories began in São Paulo, with specific demands, but also a list of general demands, as in 1917. The eight hour working day once again appeared as one of the principal demands, followed by others such as “weekly rest, equality of pay between men and women, the recognition of workers’ right organization and expression and the reduction in the price of basic foodstuffs.”⁹ The demands for increased wages and an eight hour day also emerged in Rio de Janeiro, and generalized strike movements occurred in Salvador, Recife and Rio Grande do Sul. However, while the difficulties faced by workers – both native Brazilians and immigrants – and their demands were practically the same in 1917, in 1919 the repression assumed significantly greater dimensions with the imprisonment of leaders, police attacks on

meetings and the deportation of activists. Part of the press which was in some way sympathetic to the movement discussed the repression and also felt its effects.¹⁰

In October 1919, *O Combate* newspaper, published in São Paulo and directed by Nereu Rangel Pestana (who would later also participate in the ‘*Clarté Group*’), highlighted the size of the strike in the electricity company Light (involving approximately 10,000 individuals) and the other categories who adhered to the movement: workers from *Cotonifício Crespi*, *Fábrica de Tecidos de Juta*, *Estamparia Matarazzo*, workers from the São Paulo Railway workshops, construction workers, workers from the Lusitânia factory and from Casa Tolle, employees from the hat and railway factories amongst others. According to the newspaper, on 24 October the deportees from the new wave of oppression on board the *Princesa Mafalda* packet steamer included activists such as Gigi Damiani, described as one of the writers of the libertarian São Paulo newspaper *A Plebe* (directed by Edgard Leuenroth), as well as Sylvio Antonelli, a plasterer who had drafted the libertarian periodical *Alba Rossa*, and Alexandre Zanelli, “stoneworker and secretary of the opening session of the Communist Congress,” who had replaced Antonelli at the head of *Alba Rossa* in the months before his arrest. In relation to allegations made by the police that there had been warrants for the expulsion of their individuals since 1917, *O Combate* also highlighted:

Damiani, Zanelli and Antonelli took part in the events which followed the general strike of July of that year. The first two have lived in Brazil for more than 20 years, while Gigi, having proved this with public documents, obtained from the Federal Supreme Court an order of *habeas-corpus*, filed by Dr. Evaristo de Moraes.¹¹

The following day the periodical published the information in the arrest reports which the director of the Office of Investigations and Arrests, Virgílio do Nascimento, had supplied to the commission of machine operators and drivers of Light. After the description of the accusations against the activists, *O Combate* insisted that in reports “there had to appear the period of residence for the three deportees and it is a pity that the police had not regularly prosecuted them for the facts imputed to them...”¹² The director of *O Combate*, Nereu Rangel Pestana, even wrote an article in *Diário Popular* against the deportations and in defense of the expelled journalists, especially Gigi Damiani, rejecting the accusations presented by the police and denouncing their

illegality due to the time of residence of those expelled. The article was reproduced days later in the newspaper *A Plebe*.¹³

In addition to this intensification of the repressive action by the police, the campaign directed especially against foreigners was intensified after the incident which involved the death of four anarchists in a bomb explosion in São Paulo. Three of the dead were Portuguese, and one was Spanish. *O Estado de S. Paulo* newspaper, despite denouncing ‘police violence’ against activists, stated that the police were fighting a leadership which was “numerically insignificant, of hallucinations and exploiters,” who “did not love [our city], nor estimated it, because they were not born under our sky, nor in their veins does our blood run.”¹⁴ Newspapers which opposed the activist immigrants had been intensifying their accusations for a number of years, seeking to divide the workers between naive Brazilians and ‘dangerous’ socialist or anarchist foreigners, affirming the legitimacy of the laws of expulsion. On the other hand, workers’ newspapers, or ones that were sympathetic to the movement, denounced irregularities and even the illegality of the deportation, since the 1891 republican constitution had guaranteed *resident* foreigners the suspension of the penalty of expulsion.¹⁵

In October 1919, *A Plebe* newspaper denounced the deportations of immigrants as a strategy to dismember the workers’ movement in the country. In order to contest the image that foreigners were responsible for strikes and for the spread of movements such as anarchism, the newspaper emphasized that repression was a fruit of an articulation that was also international on the part of the bourgeois and, thus, what was happening was a class conflict, not one of nationalities:

The foreigner and Brazilian hoarders are not yet satisfied. They have exploited and reduced to hunger the proletariat of cities; they have robbed peasants, deceiving them so they buy their beans and rice at whimsical prices, reselling them with fabulous profits, and now that the settling of accounts is approaching, they raise deafening screams in the large press for rent, pointing to the foreigner anarchists as being solely guilty for the general malaise...

And Sr. Epitácio has ordered the first wave of undesirables to be embarked.¹⁶

Brazilians and foreigners were on both sides of the conflict and thus the expulsions of workers and militants were not legitimate. *A Plebe* continued in the same edition to expose the violations of immigrants’ rights in the article “Who are the expelled: how does the government respect the laws which it

actually made,” with a list of “comrades summarily expelled by a dictatorial order of Sr. Epitácio Pessoa”:

Three of the expelled were arrested only 24 hours prior to being embarked. None of them were given notice and nor could they say farewell to their Brazilian families..., nor did they have the means to bring with them clothes or funds.

Due to the time they have lived in Brazil, none of those expelled should have fallen under the provisions of the old law about undesirables and so little under the new one still in preparation.

... The law was trampled on by the feet of the same individuals who claim to have it enforced and respected.

The deportees are:

José Romero, 29 years of continuous residence in Brazil, married and with a Brazilian daughter, employed in commerce.

Galiano Tostões, carpenter, 11 years of residence and with family here.

Ricardo Correa Perpetua, 11 years of residence, employed in commerce.

José Madeira, painter and employee of Light, 6 years of residence...¹⁷

Finally, the article stated that the deportees would publicize in Europe the conditions faced by immigrants in Brazil to discourage the arrival of new individuals. *A Plebe* announced the result of the meeting organized by the Workers’ Federation of Rio to combat the deportations, and that the representative of the association of Metallurgical Workers had stated it had knowledge that the police possessed a list of forty workers to be expelled, thereby proposing “an intense movement of working classes through daily sessions and rallies, in order to prepare them to march *en masse* to forcefully or in any other manner prevent their expulsion.”¹⁸

During October *A Plebe* stamped on its pages accusations of arrests and deportations, proclaiming the urgency of workers to organize themselves and to protest against these actions. On the front page of the 16 October issue were new accusations that more workers had been deported on the packet steamer *Demerara*. The same issue also had an article signed by Everardo Dias, in which the latter showed himself to be extremely indignant with the comments on the pages of the *Jornal do Commercio* which stated that workers’ societies were dominated by ‘imported elements’ who exploited ‘in a thousand manners’ the naive Brazilian workers. In relation to the accusation that worker leaders were ‘imported,’ Everardo Dias responded questioning who had imported those individuals, also noting the names of industrialists who paid for

advertisements in *Jornal do Commercio*, with names indicating that they were also foreigners: “the Matarazzos, the Gambas, the Puglisis, the Carbones, the Pepes, the Streets, the Sicilianos.” These immigrants were not attacked by the *Jornal do Commercio*, because they financed it, promoting the “scoundrels of journalism.”¹⁹

At the end of the month of October, newspapers stated that many workers had already returned to work, but that the arrests, disappearances and deportations of workers continued. At this moment *O Combate* released the first list of prisoners who were to be deported on the ships *Benevente*, *Órbita* and *Belmonte*. The news stated that the individuals were anarchists with Portuguese, Spanish and Italian nationalities, but the police refused to give their names. According to the newspaper, by 30 October only the prisoners Annibal Paulo Monteiro, Antonio Costa, Manuel Gonçalves, Antonio Silva, Albano dos Santos, Abilio Cabral, João Carlos, Alexandre Azevedo, Manuel Ferreira, Manuel Gama and Alberto Augusto de Castro had been embarked on the *Benevente*. Although the name of Everardo Dias had not yet been mentioned, *O Combate* stated that “the police were having some difficulties in relation to the deportations,” since the Spanish consul did not seem willing to supply passports for its subjects, without the reasons for this having been clarified.²⁰

After the announcement of the arrest and deportation of Everardo Dias, the newspapers *A Plebe* and *O Combate* began to announce not just protests against the new expulsions, but also letters written by Everardo Dias about how his comrades, both Brazilian and immigrants, in the same situation as him, were being treated in prison, and the situations related to his own embarkation, along with the other deportees on the *Benevente*. Dias was arrested on 27 October, but the first letter authored by him to be published in the newspapers was dated 2 November, written at the beginning of the deportation voyage. This letter was read by Deputy Maurício de Lacerda on the podium of the Federal Chamber of Deputies on 14 and 17 November, *O Combate* announced both its read by the deputy and also part of its contents. On 22 November *A Plebe* also communicated Lacerda’s attitude, publishing the complete transcription of the text and described Dias as a “guardian of books in a commercial house in S. Paulo, a journalist, Brazilian due to his longstanding naturalization, with six Brazilian children, a voter, and who had performed public functions.”²¹

The letter had been written when Everardo Dias was already on the vessel, and narrates the details of his arrest in São Paulo, his transport to Santos, the

deplorable conditions of the cell and the beating he suffered. He states that early one morning

I was taken from my cell and brought to a patio, where eight or ten soldiers with carbines were waiting for me standing at attention. Never before was I so barbarously beaten, receiving 25 lashes on my back! Imagine – after three days and two nights without eating, without drinking, naked and with a horrible cold in Santos, since it was always raining, burning with fever, and with a dry mouth, not being able to speak, I was beaten like a tramp or thief.²²

The letter ends with a request to his comrades in Brazil to support his children. In addition to the denunciation of the way the prisoners were treated, the information provided by Dias also helps to clarify another point: individuals who the police declared were not in their power, thereby avoiding the fulfillment of *habeas corpus*, in fact had already been arrested.²³ The struggle against the expulsion of Everardo Dias was waged by his comrades in Brazil while he was still on *Benevente*. The judgment of the petition of *habeas corpus* by Everardo Dias resulted in a denial by a vote of the majority of the STF. However, Epitácio Pessoa ceded and Dias did not land in Spain, returning to Brazil at the beginning of 1920. His account was published in a book that year, revealing numerous details in his journey.

Everardo Dias dedicated a large part of *Memórias de um exilado* to details about other activists and workers he met during his arrest and the deportation voyage. Dias mentioned that João Pimenta and Righetti had also been arrested and taken, along with him, to Vila Matias, in Santos, where they were confined, according to his description, in a ‘cubicle’ infected with fecal materials, a ‘dung-heap,’ with black scrawled on walls. The police obliged them to strip naked and afterwards they were beaten. From there Dias was once again sent to São Paulo, where he met other prisoners. When these prisoners were received in Rio de Janeiro, Dias comments that he told the *delegado* of the central police station that he not been fed and that he had not been able to drink or sleep for four days. His degraded appearance much have moved the *delegado*, who provided ‘coffee with bread,’ to which the prisoners are said to have reacted: “Here at least we will not die of hunger!” (Dias, 1920, p.17-35).

Dias describes the moment he was interviewed by a Spaniard who had been presented to him as a journalist, but whom he afterwards discovered was the Spanish consul. To the consul Dias reported his militant activities, high-

lighting that he believed that he had not committed any crime. On being questioned about his nationality:

Declared that I did not consider myself Spanish, since while I was born in Spain, I had had come in my early infancy to Brazil, and had learned to read here, here I had passed my boyhood, and become a man, and had created a family, here I had been active in politics, being an elector, a public employee, etc.

The consul took note, showing himself impressed with the atrocities committed against me. (ibid., p.37)

According to the author, the consul had interrogated all the Spaniards, while the immigrants of Portuguese origin did not have access to any representatives from their nation of origin. Everardo Dias sought to demonstrate in his narrative that the initial concern of passengers and crew with the presence of prisoners on the vessel was replaced by feelings of solidarity when the reason for deportation was revealed: the fact that they were strikers. With this Dias sought to emphasize the difference between these prisoners and ‘common criminals’ who were also targets of expulsions. Following this he described the prisoners with whom he had come to live on the *Benevente*: “Five are from Rio, six from São Paulo and the rest from Santos, S. Bernardo and Alto da Serra” (ibid., p.41-43), and how the individuals organized to deal with eating, cleaning, etc. However, the principal concern of the author was to list the name of each of the prisoners, as well as the reasons for their expulsion and some of the important conditions about the lives of these individuals in Brazil, as can be noted in these cases:

João Carlos – He was at home in Santos when the bailiffs arrested him. He attributed his arrest to his being on strike, since he did not even go out on the street. Thrown into prison in Vila Matias, he spent three days naked, without eating, and before being embarked for Rio, he was badly beaten. He had been 22 years in Brazil and both his wife and his children are Brazilians!

...

Antonio Perez – He was secretary of the minutes of the General Union of Railway Workers and worked in the workshops of E. F. Central do Brazil. He had come to Brazil as a boy and had lived in the country for eight consecutive years. For being part of that association and for being found with bulletins which proclaimed the strike of that group, he was arrested and deported! He is single, but leaves his old mother abandoned.

...

Manuel Gama – Among the men of good heart and with altruistic feelings, he should figure among the foremost. During the 1918 flu he volunteered as a nurse, working day and night without rest to treat the ill in that dreadful epidemic. Instead of gaining a medal for benevolence for his love for his neighbor, he got a passport as a “subversive of the public order” for being secretary of the League of Civil Construction and being a vendor of *A Plebe...* (ibid., p.44-50)

With elements like these, the author gave great emphasis to the fact that the majority of prisoners were immigrants who had been in Brazil for many years – which in itself should have guaranteed them rights as resident foreigners – as well as the fact that they had families in Brazil: parents, spouses and most especially Brazilian children, which also constituted a requirement which should have guaranteed the right to Brazilian citizenship. Everardo Dias described the events of the voyage, the reception and support of the passengers on the vessel, and communication which he managed to achieve with comrades when he was still in the capital of Bahia. With the date of 5 November the *Hora Social* newspaper from the workers of Pernambuco registered the violence of the local police when the *Benevente* was there, and also the better conditions found, since the prison cells in Recife, according to Dias, were superior to those of São Paulo: “There is a latrine in the back, bunks and a taps with a grimy tin of butter serving as a mug. If we had had these facilities in Santos!...” (ibid., p.53-55).

At that moment of the narrative, demonstrations of solidarity on the part of newspapers and workers in Pernambuco gained space. When the prisoners were once again embarked, the author affirmed that the police were more ‘humanized’ and the treatment received was better:

The crossing is the same. At the canal bridges we saw some curious people who waved to us sympathetically and made disguised signals. Passing a certain bridge, a dark-skinned boy on a parapet opened a newspaper and pretended he was looking at the last page. The title was perfectly legitimate: ‘Spartacus’! When he noticed that we had seen it, he slowly folded the newspaper, he took off his hat and lost himself among the other people.

These proofs of coy affection and of solidarity moved us to tears. (ibid., p.58-59)

Moreover, when back on the ship the prisoners received some packets sent by their comrades on land: they included some copies of *Hora Social*,

packets of tobacco and some money, which was distributed among four deportees who had none. There was also a concern with the destiny of prisoners to be handed over to authorities in Portugal and in Spain (*ibid.*, p.58-64). Finally, the work was dedicated to those who fought in his defense and who had achieved his release, as has been mentioned, and he also stated that he was unaware of the progress of these disputes while he was on the *Benevente*. Only when he reached Spain and was prevented from disembarking, did he learn he was returning to Brazil. With the publication of the book, he divulged not only the information about the irregularities of some expulsions, emphasizing the characteristics which should have guaranteed immigrants rights, but also the feeling of Brazilian identity.

In the case of Everardo Dias, already naturalized, these same elements were used to combat his imprisonment and expulsion in both the press and the courts. Like it had done in defense of other immigrants expelled or threatened with expulsion, *A Plebe* argued that, in addition to his age when he entered the country:

he is a naturalized Brazilian, a voter and has six Brazilian daughters, all minors of age. Without the least contemplation of the destiny of his daughters – six Brazilians– without the least respect for the laws of which they claimed to be defenders, the owners of this poor rich land treasonably expelled him as an anarchist.

What point has this land reached! We are ashamed of being Brazilian!²⁴

News about him continued in 1920, with comments on his return to Brazil. *Benevente* finally arrived in Rio de Janeiro on 1 February, but Everardo still had to wait to disembark, since the vessel had ‘contagious diseases’ and for this reason was sent to the leper colony on Ilha Grande.²⁵ *A Plebe* even suggested that the measure was only intended to prevent demonstrations of support for the activist.²⁶ After finally disembarking, Dias was interviewed by various reporters, describing the three months he had spent on board the vessel and stating that like his case the deportees Manuel Perdigão and Francisco Ferreira were also not able to disembark in Spain. However, there were no comments about their return. In the book, Everardo explained that the two disembarked in Vigo on 6 January.²⁷

In the following months *O Combate* continued to announce the occurrence of other deportations and even a letter sent by Everardo to the newspaper, stating that he felt threatened by the São Paulo police.²⁸ Everardo Dias’ expulsion even had repercussions in Europe thanks to a leaflet published by

Gigi Damiani. In his denunciation of the lack of rights of immigrant workers in Brazil, Damiani commented on Everardo's activism, his writings in the press, and his expulsion. He also translated part of Dias' letter, dated 2 November 1919 and published in *O Combate*, concluding that his return to Brazil was possible because he was a well-known journalist, with friends in high places, also because of the participation of freemasons in the government. This made the case of Everardo Dias, in his words, a 'special case' different from the large majority expelled from Brazil.²⁹

However, the history of the prisoners on the *Benevente* also allows the identification of common elements in the arguments made in defense of workers and activists from the workers' movement who were threatened with deportation or those actually deported. Both the best known activists and those whom the newspapers revealed little about were described in the pages of newspapers favorable or sympathetic to the workers' demands as individuals who were being treated as 'common criminals,' in other words, as those arrested and expelled for various crimes, including robbers, thieves and pimps, amongst others. The criticisms of the deportations made in the context of worker demonstrations, thus, did not question the use of the measure against these individuals. The principal concern in the denunciations was to differentiate between workers and criminals, and thus provide a very clear response to the fact that the measures of repression occurred in a growing process of the criminalization of the workers' movement by the state (Batalha, 2000, p.55).

Following this the newspapers sought to argue that immigrant workers should be treated as Brazilian citizens, irrespective of whether or not they had been naturalized. Although Brazilian workers involved with the workers' movement were also victims of imprisonment, expulsion from the country was an even more violent measure for immigrants and their relatives. The newspapers released other correspondence sent by expelled immigrants and also frequently published actions of committees in favor of the imprisoned and deportees, which sought to attract support and funds for the defense of arrested workers and also for the support of the families of those expelled.³⁰

The criteria of *residence* as a requirement for citizenship, present in the constitution, caused widespread dispute during the First Republic, and was severely questioned by defenders of the expulsions. However, it allowed many to appeal against the illegality of the deportations. This could be identified in the way that Everardo Dias described his imprisoned comrades, continually highlighting numerous irregularities: individuals who did not know the reason for their arrest and expulsion; individuals with different degrees of

involvement in the workers' movement; individuals who had lived in Brazil for long enough to be considered *residents*; individuals with Brazilian spouses or children – who for this reason should have been treated as Brazilian citizens – and naturalized individuals. Moreover, the allegation of the existence of a 'Brazilian identity,' despite their foreign origin, became recurrent among the threats of expulsion, as Everado Dias himself did in his account in *Memórias de um exilado*. The aim of these expressions of identity or of a feeling of belonging to a Brazilian nation reinforced the notion of a right, as a Brazilian citizen, which prevented their expulsion.

For the newspapers favorable to the workers, the violation of the rights of the activist foreigners was recognized as a strategy aimed at dismantling the workers' movement as a whole. This did not signify that all the divergences between the different current of the movement had been overcome; between immigrants and Brazilians, or between the immigrants themselves; between workers with different levels of qualification or between different generations of workers. However, this discourse revealed an important mobilization of relations of solidarity and of articulation among immigrants of different nationalities and Brazilians, to guarantee rights to immigrants and to legitimate their presence and their actions in worker demands and in the worker press.

Finally, the history of the *Benevente* prisoners also demonstrates that, despite the fact that all the irregularities were well known, as was the illegality of many of the expulsions carried out during the period, it remained difficult for the large majority of victims to have their rights respected, or even to reverse the expulsion measures. Nevertheless, although the case of Everardo Dias figured as 'special,' its repercussion intensified the actions of the press against police arbitrariness and the lack of respect of Brazilian authorities for their own laws. Once again the press played a very important role in the mobilization strategies of workers, by declaring the legitimacy of the presence of immigrants in the labor market and of their demands within the country.

NOTES

¹ The article presents some of the results of the post-doctoral research financed by Fapesp in the Centro de Pesquisa em História Social da Cultura (Cecult/Unicamp) between 2009 and 2012.

² DIAS, Everardo. *Memórias de um exilado (Episódios de uma deportação)*. São Paulo: s.n., 1920.

³ Menezes states that expulsions affected pimps, tramps, beggars and thieves, amongst others.

MENEZES, Lená Medeiros de. *Os indesejáveis: desclassificados da modernidade: protesto, crime e expulsão na Capital Federal (1880-1930)*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UERJ, 1996. p.18.

⁴ BONFÁ, Rogério L. G. As expulsões de estrangeiros e a defesa da soberania na Primeira República brasileira. *História Social*, Campinas (SP): Unicamp, v.16, p.63-85, 2009.

⁵ Being a freemason and a libertarian at the same time like Everardo Dias, was not, as Ridenti emphasizes, a surprise for the period in question. Having been initiated in June 1904, Dias became a significant member and even published texts related to freemasonry. RIDENTI, Marcelo. *Brasilidade revolucionária: um século de cultura e política*. São Paulo: Ed. Unesp, 2010. p.18-21.

⁶ BATALHA, Claudio Henrique de Moraes (Org.). *Dicionário do movimento operário*: Rio de Janeiro do século XIX aos anos 1920, militantes e organizações. São Paulo: Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2009. p.58-59.

⁷ HALL, Michael M.; PINHEIRO, Paulo Sérgio. *A classe operária no Brasil: 1889-1930*. Documentos. v.I. São Paulo: Alfa-Omega, 1979. p.10.

⁸ Deputy Nicanor Nascimento's actions in relation to the rights of foreigners resident in the country can be evaluated in the discourse of those most responsible for preparing the laws of expulsion in this period: GORDO, Adolpho. *A expulsão de estrangeiros: discursos pronunciados na Câmara dos Deputados, nas sessões de 29 de novembro e de 14 de dezembro de 1912*. São Paulo: Espíndola & Comp., 1913.

⁹ BATALHA, Cláudio H. M. *O movimento operário na Primeira República*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2000. p.53-55. For the increase of the tensions in Rio de Janeiro, see also MENEZES, 1996, p.45.

¹⁰ HALL, Michael M. O movimento operário na cidade de São Paulo, 1890-1954. In: PORTA, Paula (Org.). *História da Cidade de São Paulo: a cidade na primeira metade do século XX*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2004. v.3, p.280. For Campos, some newspapers demonstrated a certain sympathy to the strikers' demands, including *O Estado de S. Paulo*, *O Combate*, *Fanfulla*, *Piccolo* and *O Diário Popular*. At various moments some of these were accused of subversion. CAMPOS, Cristina Hebling. *O sonhar libertário: movimento operário nos anos de 1917 a 1921*. Campinas (SP): Pontes; Ed. Unicamp, 1988. p.70.

¹¹ "O movimento operário". *O Combate*, 24 out. 1919, p.1. "Presos... Por quê?" and "Como se deu a prisão de Gigi Damiani", *A Plebe*, 23 out 1919, p.1. For the news about how Damiani was arrested, the periodical revealed that it drew on *O Combate*. Luigi (Gigi) Damiani arrived in Brazil in 1899, helped to found and contributed to various anarchist periodicals. See: TRENTO, Angelo. *Do outro lado do Atlântico*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1988. p.223-224.

¹² "O movimento operário – O que diz a polícia de Damiani, Zanella e Antonelli". *O Combate*, 25 out. 1919, p.1. In the analysis of the expulsion from Rio de Janeiro, Silva states that they also never mentioned the time of residence of the deportees to reinforce the government's cause with the Federal Supreme Court in the judgment of the appeals for revoking the expulsions: "the less data about the life of the immigrant, the greater the advantage

of the police to obscure their past.” SILVA, Érica Sarmiento da. “Greves, dinamites e boicotes: os galegos anarquistas no Rio de Janeiro”. *Maracanan (Revista do programa de Pós-graduação em história)*, Rio de Janeiro: Uerj, n.6, jan.-dez. 2010.

¹³ “Os Deportados”. *A Plebe*, 29 out. 1919, p.1.

¹⁴ *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 23 e 26 out. 1919. In relation to this event, see also HALL, 2004, p.280.

¹⁵ Art. 72 assures “Brazilians and foreigners resident in the country the inviolability of rights to liberty, individual security and property,” abolishing for both the punishment of imprisonment and judicial banishment. Coleção das Leis da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil de 1891. *Constituição da República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1892. p.17. The laws of expulsion created during the First Republic had to deal with the question of *residence*. See BONFÁ, 2009.

¹⁶ “Canalha! É aproveitar enquanto é tempo”. *A Plebe*, 10 out. 1919, p.2.

¹⁷ “Quem são os expulsos: como o governo respeita as leis que ele mesmo fabrica”. *A Plebe*, 10 out. 1919, p.2.

¹⁸ *A Plebe*, 12 out. 1919, p.3.

¹⁹ “Outras expulsões: o proletariado carioca reage com valentia – E os de S. Paulo?”; DIAS, Everardo. “Cafajestes do jornalismo”. *A Plebe*, 16 out. 1919, p.1.

²⁰ “A deportação dos anarquistas de S. Paulo – uma desinteligencia entre o consul hespanhol e a policia do Rio”. *O Combate*, 31 out. 1919, p.1.

²¹ “Expulsão de anarquistas – o sr. Mauricio de Lacerda lê, na Câmara, uma carta de Everardo”. *O Combate*, 17 nov. 1919, p.1.; “O vandalismo da policia de S. Paulo: para o Sr. Presidente da República ler, e para a Nação julgar”. *A Plebe*, 22 nov. 1919, p.1. Ver também “Uma infâmia”. *A Plebe*, 1 nov. 1919, p.1.

²² “Expulsão de anarquistas...”, cit., p.1.

²³ “Onde está Pimenta?”. *A Plebe*, 6 dez. 1919, p.2.

²⁴ *A Plebe*, 1º nov. 1919, p.1.

²⁵ “Everardo Dias – sua chegada ao Rio, a bordo do *Benevente*”. *O Combate*, 2 fev. 1920, p.1; “O caso Everardo Dias – nova ordem de ‘habeas-corpus’ em seu favor”. *O Combate*, 3 fev. 1920, p.1; “O regresso de Everardo Dias”. *A Plebe*, 7 fev. 1920, p.2; “A odisseia de Everardo Dias – o que a vitima da policia contou a um jornal do Rio”. *A Plebe*, 21 fev. 1920, p.4.

²⁶ For Ridenti, the repercussions of the Everardo Dias case in the press and of his return revealed his prestige and his relations with the dominant circles of society. RIDENTI, 2010, p.34-35.

²⁷ “O regresso de Everardo Dias – o que ele conta aos jornais cariocas”. *O Combate*, 9 fev. 1920, p.1; DIAS, 1920, p.81.

²⁸ “O movimento operario – o ‘Demerara’ levou os primeiros deportados”. *O Combate*, 16 abr. 1920, p.1.

²⁹ DAMIANI, Gigi. *I paesi nei quali non si deve emigrare – La questione sociale nel Brasile*. Milano: Umanità Nova, 1920. p.26-29. Recently, Ridenti presented a similar conclusion by stating that both the repercussion of the Everardo Dias case and his return revealed his prestige and his relations in the dominant circles of society. RIDENTI, 2010, p.34-35.

³⁰ See, for example, *O Combate*, 24 nov. 1919, p.3; *A Plebe*, 31 jan. 1920, p.4; “A voz dos deportados”, *A Plebe*, 27 dez. 1919, p.2.