

Monuments and war memorials can have the function of celebrating the performance of a people and their heroism. In Brazil, the Armed Forces retain all aspects of this memory, administering monuments and honoring their dead in different contexts based on elements that emphasize their official narrative. The institutionalized memory of the dead is present in Brazil in several military mausoleums, in which internal conflicts are ignored in the name of an institutional unit. While in other countries the civic cult of the dead is celebrated, in Brazil the discourse of combating communism was and still is the privileged narrative in the events of celebrations for the military dead. Since the Vargas Era (1930-1945) with the event of the Communist Intentona (1935), the monuments and graves of the military dead have been spaces for the exhibition of this narrative, in which the individual is not celebrated but the institution, in this case the Armed Forces is that they are praised. The political use of the dead is evidenced in this analysis in which dying in war means the perpetual engagement of the individual to the institution. In addition to the international conflicts that had Brazilian participation, recently the military dead of the period of the military dictatorship (1964-1985) also started to participate in these celebrations. Although interned, in barracks and military institutions, such dead people had their memories molded to correspond to these narratives.

Keywords: Memory, civic cult of dead, monuments.

#### The political use of the dead

The political use of the dead has become a theme recently worked on by historiography. The History of Death is characterized as a field of investigation that allows researchers to analyze the power relationships involved in celebrations and remembrances as well as their resignifications in different historical contexts.

The civic cult of the dead is a construction in which the narrative of human losses in armed conflicts aims to historicize these deaths and establish a memory of these events. The two World Wars were remarkable phenomena in this attribution of the historical meaning of dying in war and the celebration of these soldiers.

Unlike great powers that were the scene of world military conflicts, Brazil was not configured in theater of operations with significant deaths in wars. However, we have a history marked by diverse movements and disputes that resulted in military battles and victims. The way in which this memory is approached in Brazil is the theme of this article, which aims to ask what is the relationship between those killed in war and the memory of the Armed Forces? How do these most diverse dead in war converge to a dominant narrative on the part of the Armed Forces? What narrative this is and how it was constituted over time are also other questions that we intend to raise in this analysis.

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The time frame refers to the period between 1935 and 2020 and is based because the idea of combating communist danger persisted in most celebrations of the fallen in combat. In some moments the narrative was emphasized and in others it appeared camouflaged, yet it is possible to notice the permanence of this speech in funeral celebrations by the military.

We use sources from Brazilian journals in which the evidence of the association Armed Forces and dead in conflict is demonstrated, in the period corresponding to 1935 and 2020.

The civic cult of the dead

The end of the First World War (1914-1918) marked the transformation in attitudes towards death in war. Most of the soldiers' corpses remained on the old battlefields, transformed into military cemeteries. The symbolic dimension of the collective death was represented by the figure of the unknown soldier. Monuments and ceremonies by the unknown soldier were inaugurated in London, Paris, Rome, Portugal, etc., with the pacifist intention and to demonstrate the universal dimension of the dead in action. Most of these monuments were built in 1921.

It can be seen in the case of military cemeteries, military mausoleums and monuments that all this memory is built in favor of a political message that wants to be linked to its function as depository of the remains of certain men who were part of this institution. Many funeral monuments are transferred from cemeteries to public places precisely to intensify this dimension of sacrifice for the collective.

Pierre Nora identifies in the relations with the places of memory the articulation between respect for the past - real or imaginary - and the feeling of belonging to a given group; it also observes the articulation between the collective conscience and the concern with individuality, that is, between memory and identity (NORA, 1992).

As Catroga states, the family constitutes the individual's first nucleus of belonging. The family mausoleum constitutes that space in which the subject is integrated into a common past, belongs to a different nucleus (CATROGA, 2009). Military mausoleums "hijack" this belonging and other memories are introjected in relation to the dead buried there.

Such aspects can be observed in the military mausoleums present in Brazil and built in the 20th century. The idea of belonging to the group is a privileged aspect in the collective burials of the mausoleums to the Dead of the DNOG, in the Mausoleum of the Fallen in the Communist Intentona of 1935, the Monument to the Heroes of Laguna and Dourados and the Monument to the Dead of the Second World War. These are some examples of monuments that sought to confirm the idea of institutional memory in these places where the individual's death should be remembered.

Other funerary spaces could be mentioned, but our objective is to identify the political use of the body of the dead by the military in collective mausoleums. The Monument to the Fallen in the Communist Intentona of 1935 was built in 1938, with the purpose of serving as a mausoleum for those killed in the conflicts between the Army and insurgents in November 1935. This event undeniably inaugurates the cult of the dead by the communist danger in Brazil .

#### The Monument to the Fallen of 35

The monument was commissioned by the State, but precisely by the Brazilian Armed Forces with two initial functions: to serve as a deposit for the funeral urns of the dead in the so-called Communist Intent of 35, and secondly to serve as a place of memory, in which this event would be remembered and remembered by the military institution with its intentions to promote the institution itself.

The event that led to the deaths and the subsequent construction of the monument is known in Brazilian historiography as Intentona Comunista. It was an attempted coup by a portion of the Brazilian army, aided by the financial support of some foreign and national elements linked to the Communist Party of the then Soviet Union. The uprising took place on November 23, 1935, and specifically reached army barracks in three Brazilian capitals: Natal in Rio Grande do Norte, Recife in Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro, then also the federal capital. Until November 27, the rebellion had been controlled by forces loyal to the Vargas government of the Brazilian army. The death toll was 31, including 7 officers.

The question of where to bury the dead in this conflict ended up generating conflicts within the military institution. The separation between squares and officers was evident and counterproductive in the event's tribute and remembrance ceremonies. While the soldiers were buried in the São Francisco Xavier Cemetery, known as Cemitério do Caju, the officers were buried in the São João Batista Cemetery, more elite in this period and the preferred one for the tributes made by the Army since 1936.

To solve this problem, since the emphasis that the number of victims was large and that it was necessary to honor everyone and that the "red danger" was still latent, the Army orders the construction of a mausoleum, in São João Cemetery Batista who could receive the remains of everyone involved in the attempted coup.

The attempt to provide greater visibility to such monuments was constant throughout the 20th century. Some of these civic-commemorative tombs were transferred from the cemetery space to squares or parks where these elements were sought to be highlighted.

It is clear what the German historian Koselleck noticed when comparing the funeral monuments in Germany, France and Italy and perceiving in these as places the attempt to

constitute a moral and civic lesson given by the dead, from their tombs (KOSELLECK, 1992). In this sense, the author perceives the functionalization of images of death through the political interests of the living as regards the monuments to the dead.

With the military coup of 1964, the Armed Forces promoted an appreciation of all the celebrations in which, in some way, the military were involved. Such celebrations would contribute to confirm the legitimacy of the military's presence in power. From this moment on, the institutionalization of the celebration takes on a new meaning. The November 11 celebrations are associated with the fight against communism. The anachronism of such an interpretation is explained by the attempt to celebrate any event in which the Armed Forces, in this case, the Navy, had accomplished some heroic feat and fought the good fight.

It was in 1968 that the Brazilian Army decided to transfer the monument from the São João Batista Cemetery to Praia Vermelha in Rio de Janeiro, intensifying the celebrations in relation to the facts that originated the monument, it started to be characterized as a historical monument, since its function was transferred from just a mausoleum to a place where a past is relived and celebrated. In this case, the Army's emphasis on the commemorations carried out on this monument is in its fight against the communist threat in Brazil, a topic that was widely discussed in the whole context and mainly in 1968.

As of this date, the celebrations held since then at the Monument to the Fallen of 35 had the intention of reliving the event, thus considering it a kind of "founding act", in the case of the Brazilian Army unit.

The sculptures made by the artist reinforce this founding act of the unit. On the left side of the work's pedestal is the marble bas-relief figure of a Brazilian Navy soldier. In fact, no soldier of this force participated in the events that took place in 1935, that is, his presence there in the work of art shows the construction of an idea of unity among the Armed Forces, which did not actually occur (CASTRO, 2002). Seeking to legitimize the role of the Army, the military celebrations on November 27 at the Monument to the Fallen of 35 use the monument in an attempt to consolidate the symbolism around 35 and also 64 (CASTRO, 2002).

The newspaper O Globo of November 28, 1978, dedicated an entire page of its edition to describe in detail the celebration around the Monument and the event that originated it. In addition to photos of the then President Geisel placing a wreath at the site, information about the mass held in memory of the dead, and various articles on the subject were highlighted on that date. The headline titles are representative of this use of the dead for political use. In one of them, the past / present relationship is evidenced: "General guarantees that a new attempt will be repudiated" and "Communism cannot enter Brazil". The meaning of the celebration

appears with the headline "In 1935 decided for freedom". The brutality of the event and the deaths is highlighted with another subtitle "Act of passion and savagery".

The trauma caused by the military regime, however, played a contrary role. Everything related to the theme and its celebrations and monuments are ignored by those who criticized or fought the Military Dictatorship, including those who suffered persecution in the period. The Monument of the fallen in 35 as a historical monument represents the celebration of a built memory in which a certain message is relived at each commemoration around the work.

We realized from the periodicals that until 1990 the ceremonies alluding to the date were quite prestigious. They counted on the frequent presence of the President of the Republic himself. Today there is a total abandonment of the monument as a memorial function. The idea of a monument's identity function has been lost and in the case of a monument military in Brazil makes the issue even more controversial due to the twenty years of military dictatorship.

A change occurred in 2007, in the face of numerous measures that favored those who were persecuted and disappeared politicians during the military regime, a new controversy started on the celebration of November 27, with accusations by the military that they were censored in these celebrations.

It is noticed that several elements affected the erasure of this remembrance. Among them is the question of modern life, with its fast pace, guided by presentism. Coupled with a deliberate denial of this memory, this causes the monument to be ignored, even though it is located in a prime spot in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and even more so, next to the second most visited tourist spot in this city which, by itself, it is already the most visited city in the country. However, from the new polarization shown in Brazil from 2008 onwards, this ceremony has once again become a highlight in the Armed Forces' calendar of events.

The event of the 1935 communist uprising called the Intentona Comunista, a violent military uprising, caused the destruction of the Military School building in Praia Vermelha that was during reaching in the confrontations with the rebels. Its demolition made room for the construction of the Laguna e Dourados Monument, with the possibility of building a gigantic square on the site. Until then, Praça General Tibúrcio, another combatant from Paraguay, did not exist.

#### Monument to the Heroes of Laguna and Dourados

For Celso Castro, the attempted communist coup in 1935 founded the notion of fighting the common enemy in the Army (CASTRO, 2002). Although in the history of the Army several internal revolts were common in the 1920s and 1930s, only in 35 did the threat come from outside. In this event, the fighting was between members of the institution itself. The conflicts generated by different ideals. As the only previous external enemy was Paraguay

during the Triple Alliance war, in the late 1930s again the external enemy is a threat to the Armed Forces. This time, however, the influence of the external enemy occurs within the framework of the institution itself.

The Monument to the Heroes of Laguna and Dourados is another funerary space that was used for the narratives of the Armed Forces as strongholds of the defense of the Fatherland. It can be seen that the monument, idealized in principle to celebrate the centenary of Independence in 1922, ended up being used for other symbolic functions by the Armed Forces.

But what is this monument about? The conflict in which Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay declare war on Paraguay is known as both the War of Paraguay and the War of the Triple Alliance. The motivations for this war were due to the process of formation of National States in the region. It was a coalition war against a single enemy, a total, modern war that deeply affected the countries involved.

It is characterized as an event in which for the first time it united the country, with soldiers from all regions of the national territory, around a common enemy. Hence the patriotic character of the war.

Faced with a conflict that lasted almost 6 years, the episode of Retreat from the Lagoon became symbolic. It was a tragedy, the number of Brazilians killed and injured was huge. The defeat of this passage by the Brazilian Army served as an example of how the homeland should behave in similar situations. The soldiers died, but fell bravely, saved cannons, went hungry, did not desert, always fighting for their country.

The war ended with the defeat of the enemy. Paraguay was defeated. Militarily destroyed. The military defeat, but the moral superiority made the Retreat from the Lagoon to be part of one of the remarkable episodes in the history of the Brazilian Army. The event itself celebrated at this funeral monument is a military defeat, but a justification for the soldiers' deaths for the common good.

Conceived in the 1920s, the monument was only opened in 1938, without the bodies of the honorees. The names with plaques and medals with the faces of the fallen from Laguna and Dourados were there, but the remains of the heroes had not yet been translated.

The news about the arrival of the ashes of the heroes of Laguna and Dourados is highlighted in the newspaper O Globo on November 1, 1941. The five combatants would come from Aquidauana in Mato Grosso to São Paulo, where they would stay for two days to be honored. They would pass through Pindamonhangaba to pay homage to the Army in that region and then go on to Rio de Janeiro.

In the headline the emphasis that the remains would go to the funeral monument appears in the title. The text also informs about the existence of the crypt in the place, already prepared for this function since the inauguration of the monument in 1939.

Finally, on November 15, the date of the celebration of the Proclamation of the Republic, the burial ceremony of the remains is held in the crypt. In the initial project, the Monument would be ready for the celebration of the centenary of Brazil's Independence on September 7, 1922. However, the Monument was actually inaugurated as its function as a crypt in the celebration of the Republic, something much more symbolically relevant for the military. With the headline *O Brasil o heroes de Laguna*, the story tells how the ceremony was, with military and civil aspects, a mass and the presence of the authorities, among them the President of the Republic Getúlio Vargas.

The Monument was passed to the care and responsibilities of the State of Guanabara to the Brazilian Army in 1961.

As can be seen in different funerary spaces, since 1964 the connection between those killed in battles for Brazil and their connection with the armed forces and the sense of history, that is, the fight against the external enemy, has intensified. Even though the historical event took place in the imperial period, its use in the war discourse against the external enemy is defended by the military with greater emphasis from 1964 onwards.

On October 29, 1964, the *Correio da Manhã* reports the commencement of the centennial celebration of the Retreat from the Laguna that would go on until 1970, in a text signed by the Minister of War, General Costa e Silva in which he defends that the most important feature of the event it was its character, now military, now national.

On the centenary of the Retreat from the Lagoon, in 1967, large ceremonies were held at the monument. With the title "Fire evoking the heroes of Laguna", the July 11, 1967 edition of the *Jornal O Globo* broadly highlights the half-page itinerary of the celebrations. In these matters, the periodicals highlight the celebration in which the Fatherland and the Glory, in addition to the defense of foreign interests are present words.

In the *Jornal do Brasil* of November 28, 1973, the speech of General Reinaldo Melo de Almeida is published, which highlights in this ceremony the presence of the then president Médici. The ceremony is for the birthday of the General's class, whose name was Laguna and Dourados. This ceremony is maintained by the classmates of the General, then occupying the post of President of Brazil and who necessarily paid homage to the dead of the monument to the heroes of the war of Paraguay. General Almeida's speech on this occasion indicates that 38 years after the formation of those officers, they are still celebrating the struggle of the dead brothers for defending sovereignty and fighting against other people's interference.

The opportunities to refer to historical events and the present and the enemies of their contemporaneity were emphasized in all these events, such as the one on January 8, 1977. General Médici was no longer president, but he appeared together with the vice president of the General Adalberto Pereira dos Santos.

Still in 1978, the monument received another honoree. The remains of Captain Medical Candido Manoel de Oliveira Quintana were transferred to the funeral monument of Laguna e Dourados with great military ceremony.

On May 28, 1978, *Jornal O Globo* reports the event as follows: "Crypt of Praia Vermelha receives another hero". He was the grandfather of the poet Mario Quintana, also present at the event. One of only two survivors of the 12 doctors sent on the Laguna Expedition, Captain Quintana died in Alegrete, having been buried in a family mausoleum. Only in 1978 were his remains transferred to the Monument to the Heroes of Laguna and Dourados. Receiving all military honors, the ballot box passed through Porto Alegre before heading to Rio de Janeiro.

Praça General Tibúrcio is a prominent space for celebrations of the Armed Forces and their past. The dead buried there were transferred from different cemeteries to compose and justify this narrative of military unity. Still, the cemetery was not entirely abandoned in military celebrations and their uses.

The DNOG Monument to the dead

Brazil's participation in the First World War (1914-1918) did not have the traumatic impact faced by other nations. In addition to sending a medical mission to France, Brazil contributed to the Naval War Operations Division (DNOG). This mission was sent in August 1918 and during the journey to the Strait of Gibraltar, its final destination, the crew suffered from the Spanish Flu. The Spanish flu epidemic caused the death of thousands of civilians and combatants in this period, with contamination and death not being a specific feature of Brazilian sailors.

The Brazilians killed by DNOG by the Spanish flu were buried in a specific cemetery in Bel Air, Dakar. There were 156 sailors who died and did not impact the nation as it did in other countries at that time. They were even forgotten. Ten years later, in 1928, his remains were then transferred to the DNOG Monument to the Dead at the São João Batista Cemetery in Rio de Janeiro.

The homage to these war fighters was not carried out without conflicts and disputes. The transfer of bodies was marked by numerous obstacles and did not occur at once. We observed the press as early as May 1927, commenting that the exhumation of the bodies would be postponed due to climatic issues. For the newspaper *A Noite*, the period of heavy rains in Dakar would make it impossible to exhume the bodies. The transfer of most of the



dead occurred in 1928, but not all of them came to Brazil on this date (PIOVEZAN, GRASSI, 2014). According to the newspaper A Batalha on January 31, 1931, on that date the remains of five sailors from the Frontin Division would still be transferred (DNOG was also named because it was commanded by Admiral Frontin). The rest of the remains were transferred at a later date to the rest of the dead who arrived in 1928. In ten years, forgetting the event, in addition to the mockery and ignorance of the mission and the relevance of Brazilian participation, in addition to the neglect of the dead individuals and their families, affected the memory and celebrations of this event in the country.

The attempt to force unity and identity in the Brazilian Armed Forces can be seen in the DNOG Mausoleum. The monument comes from the Latin monumentum, which derives from monere ("to warn", "to remember"), the remembrance of something. In this case, the biggest war conflict that humanity had witnessed until that moment.

As observed in other funeral monuments, from 1964 onwards the celebrations on the day of the Armistice at the Mausoleum also add to the discourse of combat against foreign forces and their danger. In articles published in the O Globo newspaper from the years 1964 to 1972, the political use of the Mausoleum and the justification of its dead is demonstrated in the speeches and Orders of the Day during that period.

It is in the year 1967 that the anachronism of this celebration is evident. The headline of the newspaper O Globo of November 12, 1967 highlights the articulation between DNOG and the fight against communism. With the title "Tribute to the Heroes of the Navy inspired Warning and Alert", the admiral highlights the relationship between the past and the present, as if the past taught that the Navy should always be alert against dangers because the enemy never rests, in this case, the enemy would be the communist threat.

The defense narrative against the enemy represented by communism affected the celebration of innumerable spaces of memory for the dead of war. In the case of the Monument to the dead of Brazil in the Second World War until the fight against Nazifascism was at certain times overshadowed by this justification.

#### The Monument to the Dead of Brazil in World War II

Brazil's participation in the Second World War (1939-1945) was marked by the loss of 466 combatants during the offensive in the Italian theater of operations in 1944 and 1945. The dead soldiers were buried in the Military Cemetery of Pistoia and remained there until their transfer to Brazil in 1960.

This transfer was a wish of the commander of the FEB (Brazilian Expeditionary Force), General Mascarenhas de Moraes, who was committed to bringing the fallen soldiers to their homeland. The war ended in May 1945 and the design, construction and transfer of the remains of Brazilians took more than a decade to end the conflict.

Finally, in 1960, the funerary urns with the remains of the combatants are brought and deposited in a monument built especially for this purpose, the Monument to the Dead of Brazil in the Second World War. Located in a privileged region in Rio de Janeiro, the project had the original objective of integrating the population to this memory space. The FEB was not only made up of military personnel, on the contrary, the vast majority of the contingent that formed the FEB had origins in the Brazilian people and not professionals in the armed forces.

Although since the original idea there was an exchange of guards between the three armed forces, Navy, Army and Air Force, after the military coup of 1964 the presence and occupation of space only by the members of these forces becomes evident.

The *Correio da Manhã* newspaper published that masses would celebrate the democratic success of the Revolution on April 21, 1964, one even in the crypt of the Monument to the Dead. A year later, on April 1, 1965, the first ceremony commemorating the so-called Revolution, or as highlighted by the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper, the victory of the democratic movement was carried out in front of the monument on the initiative of the Military Club and the Naval Club.

The association between the FEB and the military is emphasized by events like this. The presence of General Castelo Branco (a veteran of the war) alongside the commander of FEB General Mascarenhas de Moraes, confirmed this link. As the FEB was glorious and popular, the military intended to articulate the same struggle of Brazilian soldiers in Italy with the struggle against communist danger in Brazil with the 1964 coup. Celebrating the mourning of the dead in the fight against Nazifascism involved understanding and supporting the it fights against the nation's new enemies, in this case the communists.

The articulation between FEB and the Brazilian military regime is the greatest evidence of this manipulation of death rites as a source of political power. It is visible the power of the dead body, the power of the memory of death, and the power of the authority of the dead.

Finally, let's look at recent Brazil and its relationship with the military dead.

The coup of 64 and the new martyrs in the fight against communism

Public representations of death are topics that reveal the cultural, political and institutional history of the societies in which they operate.

The diversity of sources that inform the historian about the attitudes and representations of death indicate countless possibilities for identifying this military memory present in war memorials, funeral celebrations, etc.

Resistance to the dictatorship resulted in about 500 deaths among participants in the urban and rural guerrillas, indigenous peoples and a few dozen civilians and military personnel. Among these we find the character of our last example of how the memory of those killed in combat is used politically.

In the southwest of Paraná, Lieutenant Carlos Argemiro de Camargo was killed on March 28, 1965 in Counter guerrilla operations. His death occurs in the context of fighting the guerrilla of exiled colonel Jefferson Cardim de Alencar Osório. Ronaldo Zatta's research demonstrated how this lieutenant's death was celebrated and raised as a political symbol of the military government's fight against resistance. (ZATTA, 2016). The documentation raised shows that the lieutenant died of problems with his own weapon, that is, accidental and not attack by the resistance.

The researcher demonstrates that in 2015 the confirmation of this cult of the dead victim of left-wing terrorism was the transfer of the lieutenant's remains to the 13th Infantry Regiment, a barracks in Ponta Grossa, in the state of Paraná.

The invention of this celebration confirms the idea that the body of the dead in battle can be used to justify an official narrative, in the Brazilian case the fight against communism.

#### Final considerations

Death and the dead constitute a universe that allows thinking of politics and its strategies as an activity within cultural systems, according to anthropologist Katherine Verdery (VERDERY, 1999). The materiality of these corpses guides the speeches that can be attributed to these deaths. Displaying or choosing these places as spaces for the celebration of certain institutions privileges their visibility while articulating their existence to these specific spheres.

The civic cult of the dead, although widespread in Europe, did not obtain the same appeal here. Also according to the Portuguese historian Fernando Catroga, while the memory that would link individuals vertically, to groups and entities, and horizontally "to a chained experience of time (subjective and social), subjecting them to an 'eschatological affiliation' guaranteed by reproduction (sexual and historical) of the generations and for an impulse of survival, even if it is in the memory of the living "(CATROGA, 2009, p.25). When this does not happen, as in the case of this Brazilian mausoleum, society loses its sense of history. In the Brazilian context, there is an attempt to build a civic cult of the dead from the creation of collective military funeral mausoleums. However, this memory of the fallen in combat for the

Fatherland has become over the years an institutionalized memory in which the Armed Forces reinforce their position and the homage to the dead becomes a homage to the institution.

The divergent readings of a funeral mausoleum for the dead at war are articulated with the context. Brazilians killed in the First or Second World War cannot have their biographies limited to their contribution as members of the Armed Forces. Although the concern with a dignified burial is an attraction and a proof of recognition, a painted and cared place does not necessarily imply the concealment of the individualities of the dead. The identity and belonging to the group does not condemn the individual to be eternally in action, even if symbolic. However, it is clear that military engagement is eternal in the celebrations and celebrations of these soldiers by the Brazilian military. They will always be serving the Fatherland, or rather, serving the desires and needs of these soldiers.

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