

Nationalism, Physical Education and the French mission in Public Force of São Paulo: an imagined community (1906-1913)

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Abstract

The objective of this paper was to analyze the São Paulo State interests in the reform of its police, and in the organization of a Physical Education School, and, in particular, observe and analyze its prerogatives regarding to the construction of a national identity. For this was done a historical research which had as sources, government documents and the newspaper "Correio Paulistano" between the years 1906 and 1913. It concluded that the "paulista" militarization aimed a strategic position of leadership and influence in building of a disciplined Brazil, finally, an imagined community in order and progress.

KEY WORDS: History; Physical Education; Militaries; São Paulo.

Introduction

At the beginning of the XX century, the Brazilian Army institutional profile went through deep changes. Around 1900, the institution still had a body of officials weakened in terms of technical knowledge. The soldiers were officers bonded to the troop and with a little or none higher education, been formed, basically, in the military quarters, these officers outdated in terms of strategic and tactics doctrines lived their careers in the service routine of the precarious military barracks, badly equipped and with obsolete weaponry¹.

The military organization, not only in the Brazilian context, but in Latin America, sought out modernization in order to surpass its structural inherited conditions of a very close colonial past. While a Prussian army represented in Europe the emphasis in a body of professionalized militaries that had knowledge in ballistics, railways, engineering, strategic planning, the colonial army glimpsed the glory, the heroes, and a courtesy within their followers². With a history ruled by the presence of the metropolis at the colony, the Latin American militaries would have the support of an European army in wartime. Yet at the XIX century, with the experience against the Paraguayan War, or the Brazilian War as to Paraguayans, highlights the need for investment in the military organization. For Celso CASTRO³, decades later, at the beginning of

the XX century, the Brazilian military institutions were outdated and divided in two groups: between "fighters" and "scientifics". The "fighters" were officials bonded to the troop without higher education, behind the times, that lives their careers at the quarters, yet the "scientifics" were formed by the Military School of the Red Beach, with formation in exact sciences, but with scarce utilitarian knowledge in the battlefield. However, the desire for modernizations, as describes CASTRO³, approximates the army in the 1930 decade to the international French experience in the soldiers formation. In the reform of the military institutions, it was interesting to print in the soldiers a image of a "Nation in arms", anyway, to understand the military formation role as a nationality school, of national identity, beyond pragmatics defense aspects, finally, guardian and developer of the nation.

As so, we can think in the construction of an identity, or as points ANDERSON² in a imagined community, were military institutions collaborates in a project of identification associated also to disciplinary corporal practices as the physical education, that for its turn had the function of instil national values in a more wide population that remains out of the quarters. In this sense, we can think of a reorganization of this premise, revealing other conflicts that permeates the construction

of a national identity with specific features, as for example, in the context of São Paulo, which adheres to the identity representations, and at the same time, resist to them, in a constitution of an identity of its own, displaced from national representations under construction in other contexts, such as, for example, at Rio de Janeiro.

For that, within a historical record delimited between the years of 1906 and 1913, in which the São Paulo's government, through its economics and politic goals, hired a French military mission fifteen years before central government (the French mission in Rio de Janeiro dates of 1921) to prepare its police.

Method

We have done a historical research about the subject, which had featured itself by raising data sources about the French military mission and the structuration of the Physical Education School of the Public Force of São Paulo. The data sources were determined by government documents, in specific, the presidential of the State of São Paulo reports, as well as, mass-circulation newspapers, collected in the Public Archive of São Paulo. To think of the newspapers as a source, we must understand that in the European context of the period it was more affordable than, due to its low cost, the books, and contributed in that way to a reading massification⁴⁻⁵. In Brazil, specifically in São Paulo, the main newspapers reach a wider diversity of readers, connected to the trade business and the world of work, but also, become support and vehicle of the construction of public visibility of innumerable cultural practices⁴⁻⁵. Thus in the São Paulo capital city, the mass-circulation newspaper was a primary

Results and discussion

In the national scenario, the alliance between Minas Gerais and São Paulo was marked by conflicts, and the pact instituted from 1898 between the federal government and the oligarchies, did not eliminate the rate of uncertainty in the political system in effect. This relation between the central government and the other federation units demonstrated that the political alliance was not imposed by the Brazilian southeast region. By the opposite, the preeminence of São

The consequences of this project correspond to the structuring process of the "Physical Education School of the Public Force of São Paulo".

Given this initial contextualization, we deem relevant to verify the interests and reasons that led the State of São Paulo to reform its police, and organize a physical education school, having as central purpose observe and analyze its prerogatives related to the construction of a national identity. We problematize, specifically, in this essay, how São Paulo adhered and resisted to this sentiment of belonging to its nation, observing the organization of its police and a militarized physical education school.

tool for notoriety. As a relevant instrument of public recognition, it was very used by political and government forces divulgence of its achievements. For example, the newspaper "Correio Paulistano", was a vehicle inserted in the political field as a branch of the Brazilian Republican Party in the São Paulo's capital. The choice of this source, as central, justifies itself by the necessity of comprehension of the terms and official interests that permeated the French mission at the São Paulo capital. Besides that, the time lapse between the years of 1906 and 1913 allowed the construction of a more precise narrative regarding its meanders, centralized mainly in the steps of its commander, Paul Balagny.

Respecting the timeframe of this study, it has been collected 23 documents about the French mission, which 13 were analyzed in this essay. The documents not analyzed provided redundant information, already presented in the documental body, or did not contribute to the elucidation of the research problems.

São Paulo and Minas Gerais were subjected to a careful balance, which for its turn depended on alliances with other States, mostly from northeast and south⁶⁻⁷. Since these uncertainties dwelled during this political regime, São Paulo mobilized itself and started to seek changes that would bring security against possible conflicts in its internal politics.

For this end it was fundamental the construction of a regional identity that was not separatist, but

that also served the cultural and political framework to the constitution of a feeling of belonging to São Paulo that would guarantee some homogeneity, that finally, would associate the interests of a coffee producer aristocracy, that had a backland and conqueror past, with a growing population, mainly, of proletarian immigrants, having its metropolis as one of the biggest cities of immigration in the world⁸.

These worries were present in the restructuration of the Public Force of São Paulo, name given to the Military Police in the beginning of the XX century, in the year of 1905. During all the First Republic, São Paulo intended to confirm those economic interests and its political primacy was supported by the institution of an extremely militarized police, a real “São Paulo’s army”, which would carry strong nationalists features, besides supplant by dexterity, preparation, size of its headcount, and logistics, even the national armed forces⁹⁻¹⁰.

Hastily, we can infer that such project denies the national identity to substitute it for a regional one, or, on the contrary, think that the regionalism remained just in that nationalism, imagining an ideal community, correcting the deviations from the national, affording to São Paulo State a leadership position in the constitution of a collective Brazilian identity. Observe the project of structuration of the Public Force and, specifically, the organization of a physical education school yet in 1910, can teach us about these choices in the political and cultural scope, at last, observe the construction of a national archetype.

However, to Benedict ANDERSON², in order to think about the organization of the National States, we could characterize them as imagined political communities, since its counterpart members do not know each other, “although all of them have a lively image of the communion within themselves” (p.32). A feeling that symbolically aggregates a community of persons that do not recognizes themselves most of the time. Instead of thinking about the invention¹¹ that always lead us to interpretations about the nationalism mask, the falsity of its presumptions, think about it in the context of a community imagined, lead us to an interpretation about the choices of these groups limited by the territorial and political boundaries regarding what must be evidenced or silenced in the constitution of an identity. Therefore, the community does not starts from zero, it is imagined highlighting its positive values and criticizing its swerves stem from choices. As claims ANDERSON²: “it is the comprehension of the nationalism aligning it not to political ideologies

consciously adopted, but the big cultural systems that preceded it, and stem from which it emerged, even to fight them” (p.39).

Therefore, we must look at its military structuring not only as a politic republican movement, but also as constitution of a discipline culture, organization, symbol and direction to the whole country. ROSEMBERG¹⁰ reports that in 1905, the President of the State of São Paulo, Jorge Tibiriçá, anticipated the new place of the Public Force in this project, since he considered it a police without a politic, impartial, rewarded and, therefore, professionalized. Nonetheless, we describe here the government representations to this new police, which for ROSEMBERG¹⁰, was distant from the reality of the most popular representations about it.

Even with these difficulties found to foster this culture in the police body, to accomplish its desires, the government of São Paulo chooses for a foreigner mission able to stem from its own experience to guide the ways of this new police. Its structuration was a result of a political and economic growing process of the State of São Paulo, but also from the aim of becoming a national reference, anticipating itself from its own national army professionalization. The restructuration in the way of act and think about the Public Force of São Paulo, at the same time that inflicted greater autonomy to the State, constituted a way to be followed by the Brazilian nation³.

It was up to, therefore, Jorge Tibiriçá an effective action, who enters into negotiation with the French government for a military mission in São Paulo. For him, the French militaries would be the most qualified to understand the Brazilian temper, this in a time in which a part of the national culture was under strong French influence. The French government indicates, then, the “Chef. De Bataillon Du 103 Regiment d’Infanterie” Paul Balagny to head the French Mission, accompanied by the captain Raoul Negrel and the Tenant André Heneix de La Brousse, that came to São Paulo in March 21st, 1906, arriving at Luz Station. Two days later, a local press reports, specifically at the journal “Correio Paulistano”, in its first page, the first official appointments of the mission:

The French officials that instructed the Police Force, Mr. Commandant Paul Balagny, Captain Raoul Negrel and Tenant André de La Brousse, were taken yesterday at 1 o’clock in the afternoon to the Secretary of Justice by Mr. Lechèvre de Teuille, vice-consul of France, and there presented by Mr. Coronel Argemiro Sampaio, General Commandant to Mr. Dr. Washington Luiz. Mr.

Secretary of Justice, by his turn, accompanied them to the Palace where were hosted by Mr. Captain Joaquim Coutinho, that introduced them to the reception room. Presented by Mr. Dr. Washington Luiz, the French instructors entertained a slight speech with Sr. Dr. Jorge Tibiriçá, President of the State, withdrawing then towards the residence of Tenant Georges Plantade, where they are found hosted¹² (p.1).

Personal tragedies and polemics involving the French militaries marked the adaptation of the foreigners into their first year of mission. One of the missionaries Raoul Negrel, was murdered at the Luz Quarter, causing condolences manifestations of the “Correio Paulistano” journal:

In this manifestation of a legitimate and spontaneous sentiment, there is the whole soul of a society that seeks to attest the memory of a beloved deceased and its condolence and solitude. These are ultimate praises that consecrate itself by affection, those who leave dignified and followed by the wishes of the ones still stunned by the incomprehensible cruelty of a destiny. Still once the inhabitants of this capital will demonstrate their intense pain for the disgrace that came to hurt us, accompanying this burial of a soldier fallen in his office, victimized by the carbine of a barbarian murderer.

Serve it at least of leniency to our sorrow these tributes. For its sincerity, for the pain it express, may it abound in the majesty of a plea that a people addresses to whom was worthy, to whom was noble, for that also the imposing, inevitable demonstration of our protest against this crime that abate us. [...] Coronel Balagny went up directly to the room where the body of your friend and comrade was found, happening then an indescribable scene of affection and grievance. The distinguished military, unable any longer to save the apparent calm that had maintained until then, burst into sour sobbing, gazing with rapt tenderness the dear brother in arms who had just lost. This expansion of friendship, so eloquent and sincere, intensely moved the by-standers and provoked equal rapture in Ensign La Brousse and Statt Müller that, following the example of their Commandant, until then have conserved the serenity of effort of good will¹³ (p.1).

The cause of the murder is not revealed by newspapers, however, it did not seem to be an isolated fact, since even the chief of the mission, Paul Balagny, in that same year got involved in a

misfortune with a journalist officially invited to a duel notified by the press in the “Correio Paulistano”:

There has been, by an insignificant reason, a mailing switch between Mr. Eugenio Hollender, director of the Messenger de Saint Paul, and Coronel Paul Balagny, chief of the French mission, this official was deemed seriously offended by the expression indelicate used by the journalist with references to the person of the official of the French army. Intending for a full appeasement or a reparation by arms, Coronel Balagny sent along to Mr. Eugenio Hollender at 8 o'clock yesterday morning Lords of la Brousse and Statt Müller, in order to notify him of their entrusted mission. Refused the duel Mr. Eugenio Hollender, by pleading to be this outrage process foreseen by our penal code¹⁴ (p.4).

However, despite these setbacks that demonstrates the arrival in Brazil have happened in a troubled way, we can notice that Paul Balagny was a leadership politically very present, which allowed him to undertake substantial changes in the police organization, besides have been responsible for the structuration of a physical education school, the first of this kind in Brazil, founded in 1910. The creation of this institution was preceded by the reorganization of fencing classes that were taught in the Public Force since 1995, introduced by Italians, and modified by the French. In addition to the fencing courses, the practice of gymnastics was also highlighted by the French with the creation of the Body School, structure responsible for conducting the physical education course, been it divided in two sections, one composed of fencing, led by Captain Delphin Balancier, and other of gymnastics with the commander of Captain Louis Lematrie, both formed by the main physical education school in France, the Joinville-le-Pont. Another marking aspect generated by the formation of the Body School was that since the moment the gymnastics and fencing have made part of this organization, both had its first regulation document formalized by the Decree-law 2349/1913, February 14th¹⁵.

These government choices certainly involved political aspects, but also, cultural. Prioritize an European physical education, in particular, of French origin, translated the representation of discipline, organization, gestures objectivity, so particular of the gymnastic practiced in France in the XIX century, that had as a characteristic a rationalization of the movements in a scientifically controlled practice¹⁶⁻¹⁸.

The physical education in that scope strived in its application for a rigid doctrinaire formation of a consolidation of an *esprit de corps* (team spirit), features absent in the Military Police of São Paulo until the beginning of the XX century, and were inserted by the French mission through constant trainings^{10,19}. The new physical education of French inspiration was applied having as objective raise the physical strength, bringing economic utility to gestures produced by the soldiers²⁰.

The government of São Paulo, then, would give great importance to the changes made by the mission, what is evidenced by the constant parades, and for its exhibition and presentations done by occasion of the official meetings of national and international authorities that had in their itinerary visits to the quarter of the 1º Battalion of the Public Force of São Paulo. As, for example, the visit of the Coronel of the French Army Ferdinand Goubeau, publicized in 1907, in the “Correio Paulistano:

Returning to France have been at this capital, in passing, the Captain of the Infantry French Army Mr. Ferdinand Goubeau, Coronel-Commandant of the military mission that for ten years instructs the Peruvian army in Lima. That officier visited yesterday the Luz quarter, where he attended to an exercise of the 1º Battalion and in the afternoon went to have dinner at the residence of Coronel Paul Balagny. Sir Ferdinand Goubeau did not withhold his extraordinary admiration for the advance of our police and the progress of the beautiful city of São Paulo. Today, Captain Goubeau will depart for Rio, taking a steamboat toward his country which for two years he do not visit²¹ (p.1).

We have realized that the São Paulo authorities, mostly, the Secretary of Justice and Public Security, Washington Luís, envisioned an exhibition of the military power of the State through the demonstrations performed by the police to the prominent visitors. Anyway, his police was a cause of proud to the São Paulo authorities. In the official visit of the Governor of the State of Bahia, the newspaper “Correio Paulistano”, described the article entitled “Dr. José Marcellino”:

At the internal courtyard of the vast and elegant quarter, the 1º Battalion under the command of Sir Tenant-Coronel Pedro Arbues, performed modern exercises, splendid evolutions, that were greatly appreciated²² (p.2).

It is noticed that the organization of that police in European standards had become a São Paulo example to the nation. Its authorities made compliments

to the French mission performance regarding the proposed objectives in official documents, and also the leadership of Paul Balagny. In the report of the President of the State, entitled “Message to the State Congress”, from 1913, Rodrigues Alves affirmed:

At the 21st day of the current month ends the contract of the French Mission, which extension, for one more year, has yet been agreed by our Legation in Paris. Coronel Paul Balagny will be replaced in the leadership or the mission by Lieutenant-Coronel Antoine François Nérel, who is an officer of proven competence. Coronel Balagny must regress to the army's effective service in obedience to the military rules of his country. The distinguished official completely achieved the entrusted mission, to whom the State of São Paulo owes great recognition by the services rendered. Indeed, the French mission. Under the guidance of Coronel Balagny, fundamentally changed our Public Force, impressing upon it this austere feature of a perfectly organized militia. All in all, in this militia, was object of the most intelligent and dedicated efforts on the part of this official - the customs that are today very sober and severe in all person of the Force, the rigorous discipline, the exact concentration of the duties since the un-patented until the most elevated hierarchies, the different technical skills solidly acquired in the perseverant exercises and maneuvers, the resistance to fatigue acquired though gymnastics and the long hours excursions of 20 to 30 kilometers, the absolute righteousness in all the movements, the remarkable skill in shooting, the perfect diligence with the uniform, equipment, attitude, march - in sum, all these efforts superiorly maintained during about seven years, transformed the Public Force of the State of São Paulo in this disciplined and brilliant Corporation, always ready to assist the claims and destination that are reserved to its elevated mission of defense of the rights and constituted authorities²³ (p.35-7).

The prestige reached by the leadership of Paul Balagny in the São Paulo scenario was evident. Present at dinner parties with the President of the State, receiving national authorities, as the historian of the war that had his work on Napoleon reviewed by Leopoldo de FREITAS²⁴ in the “Correio Paulistano”, anyway, evidence supporting the relevance of the French mission in São Paulo. Placed as an example, the mission instilled the sentimentalism of the patriotic love for the motherland. After all, even in the colonized countries that would have

reasons to sustain its nationalism in the hatred of imperialist governments of yore, had in their cultural expressions of nationalism a speech that was not significantly anchored in the opposition to Europe². In other words, the Europe, and specifically, France was a symbol of discipline and organization to the country. The São Paulo population could translate those values to the construction of its own identity, and at the same time, collaborate, to a national image re-signified, or better, of a community imagined as European, as an example of discipline and organization. Logically, these were the representations of the São Paulo authorities, imbued with the desire to lead the formation of a national identity, which at one time was imagined as modern, but that do not abandoned the romantic nationalism, defensive and not aggressive, inspired, for example, in that patriotic feeling of the turn of the XX century, from Afonso CELSO²⁵, which extolled the beauties of an exuberant nature^b.

Upon these two assumptions, by one side the admiration for the European ordination, and by the other, the feeling of belonging and boosterism for the Brazilianness, by its characteristics related to the bucolic, the nature, the community made their decisions. Admired the population of São Paulo, in that first decade of the XX century, the foreignness and the European habits. Thus, the speeches of a French military gained echo in the local press, and his symbols served as inspiration. For example, on the occasion of Paul Balagny's farewell mission in Brazil, the military of the Public Force paid tribute with a present, in particular, a bust of Napoleon Bonaparte. The "Correio Paulistano" publicized the event:

It is today, at 8 o'clock in the night, that will be taken in effect, in the quarter of the Luz, the farewell party promoted by the officials of Public Force of the State, in a tribute to the Coronel Paul Balagny, just dismissed of the French mission, in order to retire to his country, to complete the period of service in one of the regiments of the army. São Paulo officials will offer the illustrious military a beautiful bust of Napoleon, in bronze, a high artistic value work, as a souvenir for his services to the Public Force. Will also be inaugurated on the occasion, the portrait of the Coronel Balagny in oil, in one of the rooms of the quarter. [...] We welcome cordially with the tributes paid to such devoted and intelligent server of our valiant Public Force, to which we take the assurances of our sincere solidarity for such a fair appreciation tribute²⁶ (p.5).

The local press monitoring also praised the job done by the São Paulo government and by the French mission regarding the organization level reached by the São Paulo's police through a range of physical exercises and military movements. Mainly, the "Correio Paulistano" that openly associated to the Republican Party of São Paulo, accompanied, highlighted, praised the work of Paul Balagny. It is through this source that we observe the choice of specific commemorative dates that would deserve the attention of the Public Force, evidenced by parades and public exhibitions of a militarized gymnastic. These preferences allow us to delimitate that the national identity was not denied by the São Paulo's army, but rather, enhanced. However, it was restricted to the republican values, for example, dates allusive to the empire, as the independence day, were ignored. The silences of the Public Force regarding monarchy, which contrast with the current parades of September 7th (Brazilian Independence Day), reveal the limits of this identity. Yet, in relation to the proclamation of the Republic, the parades were annuals, highlighted in the pages of the "Correio Paulistano":

Have already begun the preparations for the big parade of the November 15th, in the Moóca prairie, at 9 o'clock in the morning. Yesterday, the first Public Force Battalion, a crew of the Fire Department, a company recruits and the body of cavalry, did exercises in that location, which were assisted by Dr. Washington Luis, Secretary of Justice, Coronel Paul Balagny, chief of the French instructors, have organized the instructions for the graduation²⁷ (p.5).

Alternatively:

In this occasion, will meet Coronel Paul Balagny, chief of the military mission, who will present the troops, who will pay the tributes, playing the music bands, hornets and drums the National Independence Hymn²⁸ (p.5).

It was not the construction of a regional identity that constituted a parallel sovereignty or substitutive in relation to the national symbols, or even, the inculcation of a São Paulo's nation that argued about the need for independency, defending exogenous factors. Even since punctual references, as the anthem of independence, were present in the festivities of the proclamation of the republic. It was the necessity of placing themselves as a discipline model, extolling the military formation, as well as, symbols, such as the anthem and the national flag. In 1912, the "Correio Paulistano" illustrated through the article "Flag Party" the nationalist commemoration of November 19th:

1) The forces formed at the parade of the Luz quarter sing, accompanied by the music band, the Hymn to the Flag. 2) In the official tribune, Counselor Rodrigues Alves, President of the State, having on his left General Silva Faro, and on the right Sir Dr. Sampaio Vidal and Coronel Paul Balagny, watch the hoisting of the national pavilion²⁹ (p.5).

Paradoxically a foreigner mission was responsible for the encouraging nationalism in the country, since the commemorative dates referring to the republic did not escape from the rites organization, where the symbols and heroes constituted the identification of a community imagined from the feeling of belonging. Nonetheless, on the one hand, the mission strengthened the national identity in São Paulo, on the other hand stirred distrust and internal conflicts with other States, because the French mission enabled the government of São Paulo advertise its military organization. What prompted some controversies, including, in the public opinion, as for example, in relation to the accusation, uttered by the press that Paul Balagny would have smuggled a French military arsenal for the State of São Paulo. The editorial of the “Correio Paulistano” stood up for Balagny and the govern of the State:

Telegrams from Paris publicized by Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo’s newspapers notifies that groundless reproaches made in some agencies of the press from the great French metropolis, regarding Coronel Paul Balangy, honorable chief of the instructor mission of the Public Force of the State. Accordingly, impute to the distinguished military a thing that, due to its clamorous untruth, we cannot let it pass without cabal dispute, such as - he has inserted in the internal politics of the country, he has involved in smuggling of war for the State and that tyrannizes his subordinates. All these assertions absolutely lack grounds. [...] Entirely absorbed by the specialty of the complex instruction, whose leadership in good time it was entrusted, the hard-working procedure of our Armed Police instructor has been in all respects irreproachable. [...] As for the smuggling of war, the invention falls by its own grounds, since São Paulo, at any time, as we have yet affirmed and demonstrated at times, admitted any clandestine armament of its own Public Force³⁰ (p.1).

The political position of the newspaper “Correio Paulistano”, as a supporter of the Republican Party, positioned it on the service of the São Paulo

government aims and projects in the national scenario. The emphasis on defense of Paul Balagny and the attack to the accusations reveal evidences that the mission role was not restricted to the military formation, but also, involved political and economic interests. It also shows, with no doubt, the concern regarding a possible imbalance in the organization of the military forces of São Paulo in relation to the central power. Controversial subject that was immediately depicted as a rumor, both by the Rio de Janeiro’s press, in the newspaper “O Paiz”, in the article “France”, as in the Parisian journal “Temps”, based on testimony of José Maria dos Santos:

The Temps publishes a long letter signed by the Brazilian publicist José Maria dos Santos, in which this Sr. shows the non-existence of a conflict between the federal authorities and those of the State of São Paulo, and, furthermore, denies that the Marshal Hermes da Fonseca, President of the Republic, thinks to put to the electoral act of the referred State. Regarding the accusations that have lately been opposed against Coronel Balagny, recalls Mr. José Maria dos Santos that the federal government asked the French government to maintain the French mission, and claims itself authorized to refute that the mission has inflicted corporal punishments to the soldiers. Affirms Mr. Santos that the officials and the Brazilian soldiers experienced great esteem for the mission that is in São Paulo and a deep respect for their commander, Coronel Paul Balagny. The rumor of weapons contraband, imputed to Coronel Balagny, in the letter of Mr. José Maria dos Santos classified as “puerile”³¹ (p.5).

The rumor, though, had its repercussion, but did not sustain any interference to the central government with head office in Rio de Janeiro, yet under the influence of the Republican Party of São Paulo, regarding the destiny and objectives and that endeavor. This leads us to infer that São Paulo prepared militarily to consolidate its position of economic and politic primacy in the national scenario. These aims drifted from the separatism, and at the same time, imbued a national identity through republican symbols, a military discipline, orderly and disciplined, translated, at last, by a physical education characterized by the technical rationality. A nationalism of São Paulo, adept of European standards, derived from the immigration. Without doubt, a project of nation parallel to the coastal Brazil, a community imagined as traditional, disciplined,

organized, agricultural and economically developed, adept of European habits that dialogues with this culture, with a militarized physical education.

The strategies adopted by the French Coronel Paul Balagny and his subordinates brought to the military institution of São Paulo a new standard of discipline, hierarchy and physical preparation. The governmental investment in the structuration of a police specializing in a training had as scientific through an European physical education, more specially, French, anchored a project of an organized society, which would serve as an example to the country, and concomitantly, represented the advancements of that State in relation to other units of the Republic.

An imagined identity of São Paulo's populace that laid themselves as responsible for the leadership in the country. Even though would be difficult to define this particular nationalism, because we should have to gather general features, able of identify over a single expression, manifestations of ideas and behaviors, that raises justly in the particularity, in the self-

determination, in the São Paulo's singularity. There is no need to call for many arguments to demonstrate the distance that separates, under the same vocabulary, manifestations with so specific intents: the republican nationalism, the liberal nationalism, the industrial-developer nationalism, the defensive nationalism, the romantic and bucolic nationalism³². In its broader politic significance, we are still unable to construct a typology that contains principles of generality and coherence of a national Brazilian identity, due to the flagrant diversity of contextual application of the construction of these communities imagined and juxtaposed in this continental country. Nevertheless, it is explicit in the context of São Paulo, the cult of national symbols (Flag, anthem, etc) that are placed as paramount in the formation of the sense of national sovereignty. Therefore, the militarization of São Paulo aimed to set São Paulo at a strategic position to lead and influence the construction of a disciplined Brazil, finally, a community imagined in the order and in the progress, as the militaries idealized.

Notes

- a. In the first decades of the XX century, the economic growth of São Paulo enabled the organization of various institutions in the cultural field that provided models for a Brazil imagined as prosper and organized, that many times presented itself as parallels to institutional models based in Rio de Janeiro. The foundation of the University of São Paulo, in 1934, of the Academy of Letters of São Paulo, in 1909, the Medicine School of São Paulo, in 1933, among others, are empiric examples of the aim for distinction of the adjective "of São Paulo" or "São Paulo's".
- b. Afonso Celso de Assis Figueiredo Júnior (1860-1938) was president of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and of the Historical and Geographical Brazilian Institute, author of several books, including the nationalism classic "Why do I boast my country", edited for the first time in 1900²³.

Translator notes

- Brazilian Portuguese, by the time of the publicized excerpts considered in this issue, had grammatical rules and usages already reformed in American English. In the 1760s, Benjamin Franklin have done a campaign to reform the American English spelling (he advocated the discontinuation of the "unnecessary letters "c", "w", "y" and "j" and the addition of six new letters) (http://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/history_late_modern.html), which inflicts the archaism to be felt by the meaning of the words, more than its spelling norms (<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Gun>).
- The word paulista has no translation or equivalent in English, and was translated as from São Paulo, or São Paulo's.

Resumo

Nacionalismo, Educação Física e a missão francesa na Força Pública de São Paulo: uma comunidade imaginada (1906-1913)

O objetivo deste estudo foi analisar os interesses que levaram o Estado de São Paulo a reformar sua polícia, e organizar uma escola de educação física, tendo como objetivo central observar e analisar suas

prerrogativas em relação à construção de uma identidade nacional. Para isso foi realizada uma pesquisa histórica que teve como fontes, documentos governamentais e o jornal "Correio Paulistano" entre os anos de 1906 e 1913. Concluímos que a militarização paulista objetivava colocar São Paulo em posição estratégica para liderar e influenciar a construção de um Brasil disciplinado, enfim, uma comunidade imaginada na ordem e no progresso.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: História; Educação Física; Militares; São Paulo.

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